Commonwealth Foundation

Putting Culture First
Commonwealth perspectives on culture and development

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Contents

Foreword

A talented Jamaican musician gives up on a dream, because he can't make money when his music is being pirated. A young girl in Uganda struggles to hear films or stories from her own culture, and grows up trying to find a way out of the country. In India, a wife contemplates whether she could have avoided contracting HIV from her unfaithful husband if only the prevention message had been given in her own language. A ravaged Sierra Leonean society wonders how to heal and find peace, and searches for its own answers. Somewhere in the Solomon Islands, a mother tells her son that there's no money in traditional arts and crafts, and that he must get a 'proper job'.

When insufficient attention is paid to culture, the consequences are acutely felt. Across the Commonwealth, people are instinctively expressing and making the most of their culture and creative resources. Governments and citizens, however, have rarely been able to pin down exactly how culture is connecting with development or move on from this acknowledgement to take practical action, and have therefore rarely been able to offer sufficient support to individuals, cultural practitioners and civil society organisations (CSOs).

At the same time, the lives and livelihoods of Commonwealth citizens are threatened every day by a range of daunting challenges, including HIV and AIDS, climate change and corruption. So some might reasonably ask: why culture? We may enjoy or respect culture and its products, but putting it first and focusing resources on supporting creativity and cultural expression might not seem, at first glance, to help in the eradication of extreme poverty, hunger, disease or conflict.

However, development approaches in their current form are increasingly being recognised as limited – and even flawed. After decades of shifting approaches to development and, as 2015, the target year for achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) approaches, there is little to suggest that the concerted efforts of the Commonwealth's global citizenry and governments are going to be enough. Meanwhile, the necessity of demonstrating immediate results and short-term impact in a donor-driven environment may be preventing the

allocation of necessary resources and commitment to other, longer term, pieces of the jigsaw.

This report, based on close consultation with the citizens, civil society and governments of Commonwealth countries, pays attention to the neglected ingredient: culture. Through our failure to use creativity and cultural expression as a force for social justice, transformation and the articulation of human need, governments and development organisations may find that they are unwittingly letting down the very people in whose name they work.

The integration of culture into development approaches can reap rewards for the people of the Commonwealth. For example, the benefits that creative industries bring in supporting livelihoods and national economic growth have come to light in recent years. Beyond these, however, this report goes on to reinforce arguments that development must be first and foremost about humans, and that development therefore cannot avoid exploring and addressing key questions about one of the very things that makes us human and which humans make: our cultures.

Putting Culture First highlights what the connections between culture and development look like in closer detail, over and above the simple assertion that they exist. For the Commonwealth, this is a debate we urgently needed to begin. In November 2007, 1,500 representatives from 600 CSOs in 59 countries came together to make their voice heard in Kampala, Uganda, at the Commonwealth

People's Forum (CPF), held every two years ahead of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM). For the first time in Kampala, the role of culture was discussed, and the Commonwealth was urged to take forward its work on cultural policy and development. In response to this call, the Commonwealth Foundation was pleased to be able to launch further consultative research between February and October 2008, the results of which form the basis for *Putting Culture First.*

What became clear through consultation was that culture's significance can no longer be ignored simply because it may not fit neatly into existing models or agendas. The initial suggestions from civil society at a Commonwealth level in 2007 that culture may be a missing piece of the jigsaw have been amplified further, in quality and in quantity, through the process of developing this report. Rather than considering culture a luxury to be pursued only after other basic human needs have been met, there is an emerging sense in the Commonwealth that culture and cultural expression provide a foundation for the good society that development is supposed to strive towards. Governments, civil society and donors therefore now need to recognise this in their approaches to development.

There are some who still doubt the significance of a cultural perspective, while there are perhaps more who understand and assert culture's importance, but are faced with the challenge of what this might mean for development practice. Clearly, there remains much work to be done here in providing clarification and mapping a way forward. *Putting Culture First* cannot provide all the answers. Nevertheless, this report is a valuable snapshot of current sentiments and understandings of culture's role in development across the Commonwealth. More importantly, it is also a document to initiate – and shape – future conversations at all levels of the Commonwealth about how we can make the most of culture's potential for social transformation and development.

Mark Collins BA MBA PhD
Director
Commonwealth Foundation
November 2008

Executive Summary

Putting Culture First is the product of extensive consultation with representatives from government, civil society, and the culture and development sectors across the Commonwealth, carried out between February and October 2008.

Although efforts have been made elsewhere to demonstrate the links between culture and development, there has been relatively little recognition of these connections at a Commonwealth level. This report took as its starting point the proposition that culture is a fundamental component of sustainable development. However, this proposition needed refinement, particularly with respect to exactly how civil society and government across the Commonwealth understand culture and development, and the connections between the two. The process of consultation undertaken for *Putting Culture First* highlighted seven key connections between culture and development:

The creative economy and sustainable livelihoods

There is a growing body of work that demonstrates the benefits that national economies can achieve through support for their creative industries. Where high production and distribution costs can inhibit other sectors of the economy, such as agriculture and manufacturing, there is potential for niche markets to be developed based on the creative industries. Particularly for the many small states of the Commonwealth, recognition of and support for the realisation of this potential will be critical in making the most of these opportunities. However, as discussions on the creative economy evolve, it is important to keep sight of the need to build sustainable livelihoods and ensure that new wealth does more than enrich existing elites.

Cultural policy and the 2005 UNESCO Convention

The formation of good cultural policy can reap real benefits for a country's cultural sector, and for maintaining a diversity of cultural expressions. The 2005 UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions provides a new framework to help countries, particularly those with limited government capacity, work towards the formation and implementation of successful national cultural policy. Importantly, the Convention reinforces civil society's calls for meaningful involvement in the initiation, design and implementation of cultural policy.

Culture as a tool for development

Culture can be used as a tool in development interventions. The use of street theatre, radio or popular music can help communicate key health or governance messages. The use of cultural forms can help break down taboos. Culture, in its anthropological sense, can also be a resource, with traditional knowledge supplementing and complementing other development techniques, particularly in the areas of health and natural resource management. Finally, development practitioners are also increasingly realising the necessity of working with the grain of culture and within a cultural context if they are to reach new audiences that might otherwise be inaccessible. This can mean using oral techniques in areas of low literacy, or translating messages into a variety of languages.

Culture as a process for development

Taking a cultural perspective to development interventions might, however, mean something more fundamental than using culture as a tool. Nurturing a genuine respect and understanding for other cultures and world views, based on the knowledge that cultural expression enables communities to change as well as sustain traditions, can be critical to transferring power into the hands of people through participatory development. In this way, people can become the subjects, as well as the objects, of development.

Cultural expression and negotiating identities

Support for a creative environment, in which cultural expression flourishes and in which people can hear voices from their own cultures, can help to build cohesive societies at ease with themselves. It can help individuals negotiate with confidence amongst the multiple aspects of their identity. This can have a subsequent impact in limiting unwanted emigration of skilled workers, in reversing social disintegration, and in helping people to choose the aspects of their identity which they wish to emphasise. Finally, cultural expression can help foster respect and understanding between individuals and groups with different identities, and help resolve conflict.

Culture, crisis and repression

Forms of cultural expression have often been manipulated by dominant leaders and groups during periods of political crisis in which previous systems of authority disintegrate. However, in an environment that supports and values creativity, cultural civil society and creators can also act as a positive force to help societies resolve crises and come to terms with historical experiences. In periods of repression, cultural practitioners and creators can be agents for social change and justice, particularly when political movements or opposition are denied space. A healthy cultural civil society may therefore be important in periods of instability, crisis, or longer term repression.

Rights and culture

Despite historical difficulties in progressing a debate on 'cultural rights', an urgent need is emerging at a Commonwealth level to discuss the place of culture in human rights frameworks. Questions of rights and culture can be looked at in three groupings: the right to live within one's own culture; the right to hear different cultural voices; and the right to an environment that supports creativity. With respect to perceived contradictions between the right to practise one's own culture and certain universal human rights, there is ample room to work within frameworks that accept and value universally agreed rights and principles. Given that rights represent aspirations to equality and actual power, this aspect of culture and development cannot afford to be ignored in future discussions.

Conclusion

Throughout *Putting Culture First,* it is recommended that government, civil society and donors should incorporate a cultural perspective into their approaches to development, and that this commitment should be backed up by resources. There are also a number of more specific recommendations for the Commonwealth, including the formation of a high-profile Commonwealth Commission on Culture and Development to raise political awareness amongst decision-makers and develop further practical guidance on how to make culture central to development.

1. Introduction

This chapter introduces some of the debates surrounding culture and development before setting out an inclusive vision and conceptual framework through which the connections between culture and development can be highlighted.

1.1 The culture and development debate: a new Commonwealth priority?

'This programme views cultural expression as a fundamental human right and promotes inter-cultural learning, creativity, and mutual understanding and influence. It is founded in the belief that development best proceeds, good governance prospers and innovation occurs when there are opportunities for dialogue and people with different identities exchange their views freely in an atmosphere of respect and equality.'

'Programme 1: Culture', Strategic Framework of the Commonwealth Foundation 2008–2012[1]

The debate on culture and development is not a new one. In 1982, the World Conference on Cultural Policies issued the Mexico City Declaration on Cultural Policies, in which it declared that:

'Culture constitutes a fundamental dimension of the development process and helps to strengthen the independence, sovereignty and identity of nations. Growth has frequently been conceived in quantitative terms, without taking into account its necessary qualitative dimension, namely the satisfaction of man's spiritual and cultural aspirations. The aim of genuine development is the continuing well-being and fulfilment of each and every individual.'[2]

Although 1982 represented a landmark shift in global receptiveness to the idea that the two concepts might be meaningfully connected, it was the World Decade for Culture and Development (1988–1997) which went a step further in raising the profile of culture's role in development. Drawing on a definition of development as the enlargement of human choices, the report of the World Commission on Culture and Development argued that support for culture was critical to prevent the 'poverty of a life [which] is caused not only by the lack of essential goods and services, but also [by] a lack of opportunities to choose a fuller, more satisfying, more valuable and valued existence.'[3]

More recently, the global movement to recognise, acknowledge and strengthen culture's links to development has gained further momentum. In particular, there is significant political will currently gathering behind the efforts of civil society and international bodies to persuade governments to take seriously the role of culture in economic development. For example, the *Creative Economy Report 2008*, an initiative of combined UN bodies, aimed to 'present a broader perspective on the potential of the creative economy to assist developing countries to leapfrog into new high-growth creative sectors'.[4] This debate over the fair exchange and trading of cultural products takes place, crucially, in a context of globalisation and fears of cultural homogenisation. In this climate, many feel that cultures across the world are being inhibited from reproducing themselves because cultural expression and cultural products cannot compete within imbalanced global systems of trade. These systems, the argument goes, allow the products and expressions of a handful of countries to dominate. Key challenges therefore remain, both to make the benefits of the creative economy

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1   *Civil Society: A Force for Transformation. The Vision and Strategy of the Commonwealth Foundation 2008-2012* (London: Commonwealth Foundation, 2008): 12.
2   *Mexico City Declaration on Cultural Policies* (Mexico City: UNESCO, 1982): Article 10.
3   *Our Creative Diversity: Report of the World Commission on Culture and Development* (Paris: UNESCO, 1995): 14.
4   *Creative Economy Report 2008: The challenge of assessing the creative economy towards informed policy-making* (New York: United Nations, 2008): 6.
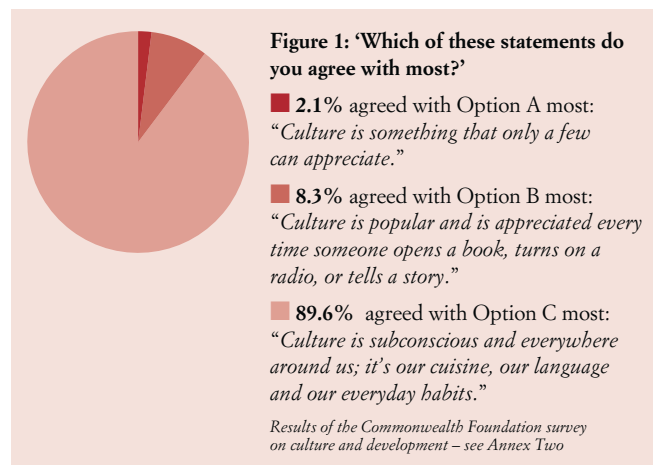
felt at all levels, and also to ensure that a fairer trade in cultural products supports, rather than undermines, cultural diversity. For the Commonwealth, which values its composition of diverse cultures, this debate is a particularly important one. Furthermore, while economic growth remains one dimension of development, other measures and indices of development, including those relating to standard of living and ecological footprint[5], emphasise that other human development angles to the creative economy question must not be ignored.

The notion that culture is intrinsically linked to development, however, has arguably been integrated into development discourses in certain parts of the international community – including Nordic[6] and Francophone countries – more than others. The role of culture has historically been treated as a peripheral issue both by the Commonwealth, as an institution, and by many of its member states. The first signs of a change in this attitude came when the Commonwealth Foundation set up a dedicated culture programme in 2005, and at the Commonwealth People's Forum[7] in November 2007, when over 600 CSOs came together and called upon Commonwealth member governments *inter alia* to take action on issues related to culture.[8] These developments signal that it should now be a priority for Commonwealth governments and others to accelerate a discussion on how the development potential of culture can best be realised. *Putting Culture First* provides a snapshot of some of these key links, and in doing so seeks to give an urgently needed new profile to an issue that is yet to be tackled meaningfully within the Commonwealth.

1.2   A conceptual framework

'In its widest sense, culture may now be said to be the whole complex of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features that characterise a society or social group. It includes not only the arts and letters, but also modes of life, the fundamental rights of the human being, value systems, traditions and beliefs.'

Mexico City Declaration on Cultural Policies, 1982[9]

Figure 1: 'Which of these statements do you agree with most?'

■ **2.1%** agreed with Option A most: "*Culture is something that only a few can appreciate.*"

■ **8.3%** agreed with Option B most: "*Culture is popular and is appreciated every time someone opens a book, turns on a radio, or tells a story.*"

■ **89.6%** agreed with Option C most: "*Culture is subconscious and everywhere around us; it's our cuisine, our language and our everyday habits.*"

Results of the Commonwealth Foundation survey on culture and development – see Annex Two

The terms 'culture' and 'development' are undeniably among the most contested in human history, and differing interpretations have been one cause of the apparent inability to progress a debate on the links between the two concepts. The Commonwealth Foundation's consultative process undertaken for this report, for example, showed that those working in culture and those working in development tend to begin from very different conceptual departure points. While cultural practitioners can often fail to realise the social value of their work, development audiences can likewise undervalue cultural expression in supporting the kind of human development which goes beyond obvious economic or social indicators. There are also nuanced differences in the way that 'culture' and 'development' are perceived in countries of the global 'North' and 'South'. Rather than allowing the contestability of these concepts to present a frustrating impasse, however, this report contends that the Commonwealth is in a unique position to strengthen culture's role in development because of, rather than despite, the diverse perspectives which exist among its constituents.

Some definitions of culture separate identity from creativity. An emphasis on identity looks at culture primarily in its anthropological sense: beliefs, values, social structures and social markers such as dress, language or cuisine. According to this perspective, cultural context is the environment in which development interventions must operate, and so must not be ignored if they are to succeed. Other perspectives of culture focus on creativity and emphasise the importance of cultural expression (for example, arts and crafts, literature, performing arts, film, music and oral storytelling). While 'cultural expression'

5   For example, while the Human Development Index measures development and the Human Poverty Index measures deprivation, alternative models have been proposed with different priorities, including Gross National Happiness. The Happy Planet Index, initiated by the New Economics Foundation (see http://www.neweconomics.org), has gained particular publicity for comparing countries' ecological footprints.
6   For example, the international development agencies of Norway and Sweden both have a commitment to culture in development. See http://www.norad.no/default.asp?V_ITEM_ID=1566 and http://www.sida.se/sida/jsp/sida.jsp?d=440&language=en_US.

7   The Commonwealth People's Forum is held every two years before the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting. It provides civil society from across the Commonwealth with an opportunity to influence the Heads of Government. At Kampala, Uganda in November 2007, Commonwealth civil society issued *Realising People's Potential: The Kampala Civil Society Statement to the 2007 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting*.
8   *Realising People's Potential: The Kampala Civil Society Statement to the 2007 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting* (London: Commonwealth Foundation, 2007): 34.
9   *Mexico City Declaration on Cultural Policies*: preamble.

can be a manifestation of peoples' identity, it is also creative, dynamic and forward-looking. This framework of cultural expression as innovative and creative is central to the approach adopted by *Putting Culture First*.

According to Gould and Marsh, culture is important to development both as a tool but also as a process for development.[10] As a tool, culture can be used to deliver key development strategies, including HIV and AIDS prevention messages. Although there has already been some acceptance of the value of culture as a communication strategy, Gould and Marsh note that 'ultimately its outputs are usually pre-determined by those controlling the development process'. In contrast, the potentially revolutionary quality of the cultural approach to development lies in the fact that it can also be seen as a creative process of expression, providing space for reflection, self-examination, conversation and affirmation of marginalised identities.[11]

Although subtle, these two faces of culture – both as identity and creativity and as tool and process – are the parameters within which much of the following report is grounded. By outlining and describing in detail some connections between culture and development, this report argues that it is possible to move towards a more grounded understanding of both. This would also enable the confusion of the past to be avoided, without prescriptively adopting a narrower definition of what culture or development mean, which in turn would prematurely close down debate and inhibit innovation. It is only by understanding and appreciating the plurality of perspectives on culture and development within the Commonwealth – and how they differ from each other – that substantive areas for future action can be identified.

1.3   *Putting Culture First*

This report explores seven areas in which culture is linked to development. Chapter 2 explores the benefits of the creative economy, not only to the overall growth of national economies but also to building sustainable livelihoods for cultural practitioners and reducing poverty. The new emerging moral imperative of protecting and promoting the diversity of cultural expressions is discussed in Chapter 3, along with the implications that this has for Commonwealth approaches to developing cultural policy at the national and international levels. Chapters 4 and 5 discuss what taking culture seriously might mean for development practitioners. Chapter 4

outlines the instrumental uses of culture as a method for communicating development messages and the importance of culture as a context for development, while Chapter 5 goes on to examine the value of culture for realising the potential of participatory, community-driven development.
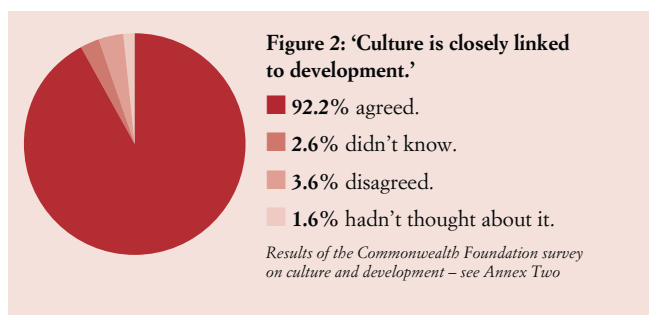
Chapter 6 emphasises cultural expression as a key means of negotiating identity at the individual, community, national and regional level. Chapter 7 turns on its head the proposition that culture, usually seen in the anthropological sense of tradition, is a drag on progress and social transformation, by exploring the ways in which cultural expression and cultural practitioners can in fact often be at the forefront of civil society during socio-political crises, transitions or situations of repression. Finally, Chapter 8 makes the case for looking at the issues in previous chapters through the lens of a human rights framework, and explores in more depth what a 'right to culture' might look like for Commonwealth citizens and how it might contribute to human development.

It is perhaps not surprising that many of the seven themes of culture and development outlined here have significant overlap and interaction, and it is for this reason that connections are deliberately explored and emphasised throughout the report. Each connection between culture and development is a part of a bigger picture, without which its full significance cannot be understood. *Putting Culture First* aims to reflect this through the structure of the report.

Putting Culture First is based upon the findings from research undertaken by the Commonwealth Foundation, and draws on an extensive process of consultation with those concerned with culture and development across the Commonwealth. Between March and November 2008, over 100 government and civil society representatives were consulted face to face. National and regional consultations were held with different sectors – development and culture practitioners, government and civil society – in Barbados, New Zealand, South Africa and Trinidad and Tobago. Further consultations were held with the Commonwealth Foundation's Civil Society Advisory Committee, with Commonwealth diplomats in the United Kingdom, with practitioners working in the field of HIV and AIDS and at the Congress of the International Federation of Musicians. Details of these consultations are summarised in Annex One.

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10   Helen Gould and Mary Marsh, *Culture: Hidden Development* (London: Creative Exchange, 2004): 14. Gould and Marsh also apply a 'Levels Model' to culture's role in development in which culture operates on four levels: culture as context for development, culture as content in development, culture as method within development, culture as expression.

11   The value of creativity in finding personal freedom has been the subject of much philosophical, political and social thought. For an example, see Erich Fromm, *Escape from Freedom* (originally published 1941).

Figure 2: 'Culture is closely linked to development.'

■ **92.2%** agreed.

■ **2.6%** didn't know.

■ **3.6%** disagreed.

■ **1.6%** hadn't thought about it.

Results of the Commonwealth Foundation survey on culture and development – see Annex Two

A further 200 participants, from across the professions, organisations and member governments of the Commonwealth, responded to a widely distributed questionnaire on culture and development, giving their views and opinions on a variety of topics which provided initial interesting statistical data (summarised in Annex Two and presented in graphic form throughout this report). An e-consultation also provided online avenues for participants to communicate their views. Finally, a number of case studies, presented throughout this report, were commissioned to explore in greater depth some of the illustrative connections outlined between culture and development. These case studies, edited to shortened versions here, will be made available in their entirety as additional resources.

The target audience of *Putting Culture First* is as diverse as the participants who provided input. This report is aimed not only at specialist culture audiences already involved in this debate, but also, indeed primarily, at development organisations and practitioners, governments, donors and decision-makers. By illustrating key connections between culture and development, *Putting Culture First* hopes to frame a follow-up conversation at the Commonwealth level that is long overdue. In particular, it is hoped that by placing the connections and points of convergence between culture and development at the heart of the debate, a conversation can be initiated between those who might otherwise have different priorities in the areas of culture or development.

1.4 Different voices, different connections

Across the 53 countries of the Commonwealth, there are many people rich in the resources of cultural expression, and yet who score lowly on human development indices. Within this context, the challenge of how to make the most of these resources faces the majority of Commonwealth citizens and governments.

It is also becoming increasingly clear that culture matters not, as some would have it, as a luxury to be pursued only after economic and social development needs have been satisfied, but rather as a foundation for economic growth, human development and good governance. Nevertheless, there remains an urgent need to move from well-intentioned assertions that culture matters to the provision of practical guidance on how to actually work with culture in development.

This report addresses three key questions:

- What are some of the key ways in which culture is linked to development in Commonwealth countries?
- What might support within the Commonwealth for culture's role in development actually look like?
- Where does the Commonwealth go from here if it is to translate the potential of culture in development into reality?

With this in mind, the conclusion of this report goes on to outline concrete recommendations for follow-up at the Commonwealth level.

An underlying theme of this report is that culture's role in development can be understood in multiple ways by multiple groups and individuals, but that this need not be problematic or conducive to conflict. For example, consultation revealed that cultural practitioners often have a lingering fear that governments may attempt to use culture solely as a tool for nation building or social engineering, challenging their artistic integrity. Others who are not cultural practitioners, however, can feel that if culture is to be non-elitist and of 'social use', it must

move away from a narrow interpretation focusing solely on forms of cultural expression such as literature, music and film. Timeless debates such as these will continue to rage, but the aspiration is that by accepting an inclusive and holistic approach to the many ways in which culture and development are linked, different sectors within the Commonwealth – cultural practitioners, governments and, above all, Commonwealth citizens – can gain in different ways from the multitude of benefits that culture has to offer. If a plurality of voices and perspectives on the issue is to be successfully maintained, then support for civil society's numerous voices, from international development non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to individual artists, will be critical. The idea of linking culture and development is open to monopolisation by different elements contesting its meaning, and the sum of civil society voices will prove central to preventing such monopolisation and inclusively taking forward the concept.

The Commonwealth's primary historical role is often seen to have been in spreading and disseminating certain cultural practices and expressions globally (including, most notably, the English language and sports, but also approaches to democracy, class and education). Within this context, the Commonwealth must tackle squarely difficult questions of how to re-tread historical paths and how to utilise deep connections forged by history to enhance efforts towards protecting and promoting cultural diversity and fostering cultural development. There is an urgent need for the Commonwealth, and all its constituent parts, not to get left behind as this conversation on culture's role in development progresses.

This report makes the case that if the Commonwealth can make culture a foundation for development processes now, then the many sustainable economic, social and human development benefits outlined in this report – not to mention many unexpected ones – will come to fruition. The challenge of putting culture first will ultimately be a test of commitment of resources, prioritisation, political will and, above all, belief, but it will also prove to be a long-term investment that reaps enormous rewards for citizens across the Commonwealth.

2.   The creative economy and sustainable livelihoods

This chapter explores the connection between the creative industries and economic development, and poses the question of how the creative economy can potentially offer alternatives, not only to governments facing recurring economic challenges, but also to the countless marginalised citizens and creators of the Commonwealth.

2.1   The creative economy

'Loosely defined, the creative industries are at the crossroads of the arts, culture, business and technology. In other words, they comprise the cycle of creation, production and distribution of goods and services that use intellectual capital as their primary input.'[12]

Creativity is increasingly being recognised as a resource in generating economic growth. Between 2000 and 2005, trade in creative goods and services increased at a global average annual rate of 8.7 per cent.[13] Although developed economies and rapidly developing countries, such as India, in a Commonwealth context, continue to lead the way, there is real reason to believe that developing economies can derive significant benefit from supporting the creative industries; during this same period, the portion of developing country products rose from 29 per cent of world creative products to 41 per cent.[14] Across the world, there is increasing recognition of the need for developing policies to support the cultural industries as an important part of national economies.

In particular, there is also increasing acceptance amongst some Commonwealth member governments that culture can contribute to gross domestic product (GDP) growth and development of a nation's economy. With significant debate currently focused upon the institutionalised imbalance of trade relations between developed and developing countries, culture may offer a way forward.

Many Commonwealth countries face difficult economic challenges because of limited domestic markets, high production and export costs, and restrictive trade agreements. Because labour, production and export costs can be comparatively low for products such as music, arts, crafts and fashion, many are beginning to see the creative industries as an opportunity to respond to some of these challenges. With advances in technology making possible new ways of distributing cultural products, as well as bridging geographical isolation, there is much to suggest that the landscape of the creative economy will continue to evolve in new and exciting ways.

The Commonwealth has a particularly high number of small states,[15] and is therefore well positioned to maximise the potential of the creative economy as a development option. However, there are significant differences between the economies of small states and other countries, and some key challenges to address. First, in many small states people still do not perceive the development of creative industries to be a viable long-term option, and may need the value proved by further evidence-based research. Secondly, there are unique challenges within small states that must be better researched and understood, including size, markets and difficulties of distribution. The legal and policy environment (which is considered further in Chapter 3) must also be supportive, for example, through the implementation of effective copyright and anti-piracy legislation. The Commonwealth could play a key role here in offering technical assistance to governments of small states which wish to develop their creative economies. Thirdly, the intersection between cultural expression and tourism is an area which requires further analysis and consideration. While environmentally sustainable tourism

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12   *Creative Economy Report 2008*: iv.
13   *Creative Economy Report 2008*: 4.
14   Cited in UNCTAD press release, 20 April 2008. See http://www.unctadx2.org/en/Media/ Press-Releases/Report-debate-show-of-African-art-and-music-to-highlight-development- promise-of-creative-economy/.

15   See http://www.thecommonwealth.org/Internal/151766/about_small_states/. According to the Commonwealth Secretariat, there are 32 small states out of the 53 member states of the Commonwealth. They are defined by a combination of indicators – population (usually under 1.5 million), GNP and total arable land. They can also be characterised by their vulnerability in the areas of defence, security, environmental disasters, limited human resources and lack of economic resources.

Cultural exchange in the Pacific can also generate economic benefits

can support both economic growth and livelihoods, the interaction between tourism and culture is complex and not always positive. There would seem to be a need here for the development of sharper tools for cultural impact assessments of tourism development.

With a new international framework for the protection and promotion of the diversity of cultural expressions (outlined in Chapter 3), there is also growing momentum to exempt cultural products from standard trade liberalisation commitments. The recognition that culture's value cannot be measured solely in economic terms, and that it also holds inherent human value, is beginning to strengthen, rather than weaken, its position in the economies of Commonwealth states. For example, in the Economic Partnership Agreements in 2008 between the European Union and Caribbean Regional Negotiating Machinery, a Cultural Protocol allowed Caribbean cultural practitioners and goods further access to European markets[16]; and this was justified on the grounds of protecting and promoting the diversity of cultural expressions[17]. Furthermore, because cultural expression is rooted in a diversity of cultures, cultural products might be well suited to develop and maximise a range of diverse niche markets, rather than be forced into competition with each other.

There is therefore an urgent need for Commonwealth countries that have not already done so to understand their own creative economies as a serious and sustainable

sector which is capable, under the correct conditions and with continued support, of significant growth. In this regard, research at the local, national, regional and international level into the mapping of cultural industries, as well as how different countries can derive maximum economic benefit from their unique cultural landscape, is an identified area for much-needed further investment. Recent regional initiatives such as the Creative Industries Exchange, an exchange network on Caribbean creative industries launched in 2008 by the University of West Indies and UNESCO, will be important vehicles for facilitating information exchange in this regard.[18]

Perspective from the Pacific: Market development, the role of festivals and traditional knowledge[19]

Difficulties in developing markets

Local markets for cultural products in the Pacific are small; objects made and sold in their country of origin are often bought for everyday use. A second small market is offered by islands' diaspora populations in other countries, who buy objects to sustain links with their cultures. A third market is foreign workers who buy in order to maintain connections with a culture which has had an impact on their lives. The final market segment, the tourist, usually purchases objects as a reminder of a particular experience or place.

Production, distribution and profiting from creative industries can be difficult. There are limited numbers of cultural producers, while isolation and inaccessibility make distribution challenging. Authentic Pacific objects may be purchased regionally, but are rare internationally. In countries, local shops, markets and co-operatives sell directly to local buyers. While national museums and galleries may sell objects, they are often removed from their cultural context and therefore have diminished appeal. Advances in online shopping are opening up opportunities for growth, but this comes with some loss of control for producers over their products.

The value of festivals

Festivals can lay foundations for growing cultural markets, while also playing a key role in the Pacific's cultural renaissance. The Festival of Pacific Arts was established in 1972 and, every four years, brings together over 2,000 participants from 27 island

16   'Economic Partnership Agreement between the CARIFORUM States and the European Community and its Member States: Protocol 3 on Cultural Co-operation'. See http://www.crnm.org/documents/ACP_EU_EPA/epa_agreement/EPA_Protocols_11June%2008_Final.pdf.

17   According to the International Federation of Coalitions for Cultural Diversity, Protocol 3 on Cultural Co-operation recognises "the importance of the cultural industries and the multi-faceted nature of cultural goods and services as activities of cultural, economic and social value". See http://www.ifccd.com/content/eu-cites-unesco-convention-embedding-cultural-cooperation-protocol-trade-pacts.

18   Creative Industries Exchange website. See http://www.creativeindustriesexchange.com.

19   Based on a case study submitted by Rhonda Griffiths. See Annex One for full details.

countries. Dancers, musicians, film-makers, performing artists, craftspeople, painters and writers debate, demonstrate and sell their products to thousands of people.

The Festival is now well established and an important instrument in the preservation and revitalisation of expertise underlying many cultural expressions. Knowledge and skills have been rediscovered and, in some cases, updated and advanced.

Hosting the Festival is a major challenge, but it provides strong opportunities for economic benefits. For Palau, the host country in 2004, sales of traditional woodcarvings brought in over US$11,800. Each of Palau's 16 states earned an average of US$20,000 from sales of food and craft.

The Festival improves infrastructure and facilities and has knock-on benefits for businesses. In Palau, prior to the Festival, the Belau National Museum (US$2.2m) and the Ngarachamayong Cultural Centre (US$2.45m) were opened.

A new legal framework

There has been significant progress towards the legal protection of Traditional Knowledge and Expressions of Culture (TKEC), with growing awareness that a strong legislative framework could help support cultural industries. In an environment in which designs were appearing on carpets, wrapping papers and fabrics, and handicrafts being replicated en masse for unsuspecting buyers, exploitation of TKEC without fair commercial benefits became an issue.

In response, the Secretariat of the Pacific Community and the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat began work with UNESCO. Core Intellectual Property (IP) systems seemed not to protect TKEC, because they work best for individuals or corporations, whereas TKEC has collective or communal ownership. Further, core IP protection is time-bound, while TKEC is held in perpetuity and passed between generations.

In 2002, the Pacific Regional Model Law for the Protection of Traditional Knowledge and Expressions of Culture was endorsed at the first Pacific regional meeting of Ministers of Culture. The policy objective of the Model Law is to protect the rights of traditional owners in their TKEC. It establishes a new range of

A practitioner works on an installation during a regional art manifestation exhibition supported by the Commonwealth Foundation and run by Muvart, an association of contemporary Mozambican artists.

statutory rights for traditional owners and supports tradition-based creativity and innovation, including commercialisation, as long as the traditional owners give their prior and informed consent and share in the benefits.

Looking forward

Protecting TKEC is essential to supporting cultural industries in the Pacific. By 2008, five countries had taken steps to enact the Model Law: the Commonwealth countries of Kiribati, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu, plus Palau. Others called for technical assistance, but a structured programme of action, including additional resources, is needed to implement fully the Model Law.

The Festival of Pacific Arts has also yet to reach its full potential. Merchandising and sponsorship arrangements remain small and international opportunities unexplored. There are untapped possibilities for generating revenue from broadcasting. Significant support may need to be offered if such potential is to be fully realised.

In addition, support to other festivals, fairs and cultural exchanges should be increased. Pacific countries need to begin work to defend their national products against unfair mass production, while seeking access to larger regional and international markets.

2.2 The livelihoods of cultural practitioners and cultural civil society capacity

Some governments across the Commonwealth are adopting strong cultural policies in order to support national industries, while others are beginning to grapple with the challenge of how best to set about doing this. During this important phase, it is important that the voice of civil society and the cultural practitioner should not be lost. From a development perspective, the principal challenges of the creative economy remain: how can the economic benefits of the cultural industries reach the right people, and how can there be a significant departure from experiences in other sectors, where reliance on the 'trickle-down effect' of wealth creation has proved inadequate? Concentration of many benefits of the creative economy, tourism and media sectors in the hands of large corporations, for example, would be a worrying trend. In contrast, there are numerous young creators of the Commonwealth who struggle to survive on the limited income from their cultural products, unless allied sources of secondary income can be developed, such as in social enterprise. As a result too often young people give up on efforts to become cultural practitioners and their potential is left unrealised.

Further, the debate on the creative economy has tended to be led by developed or larger, rapidly developing countries, and be expert-driven, with the result that other factors in cultural production, which may be valued more highly in other developing countries, such as environmental stability and biodiversity, social cohesion and vernacular education, can be undervalued and lost sight of in the debate. Even where civil society voices are strong in the creative economy debate, they have tended to come predominantly from developed and rapidly developing countries. From a development perspective there is a need to ensure that the voices of developing countries and of civil society, including development NGOs, are heard internationally. Further, while an increase in culture's contribution to GDP may be good news, there is a need to investigate the distribution of that income, and the extent to which it contributes to sustainable livelihoods, people's abilities to free themselves from poverty, and social justice.

In the Commonwealth Foundation's consultations with civil society and cultural practitioners in Barbados, New Zealand, South Africa, Trinidad and Tobago, and at the International Federation of Musicians World Congress, a number of key concerns were identified. First, piracy remains a significant threat to the careers and livelihoods of cultural practitioners, in particular those working in the audiovisual field. Secondly, restrictions on the movement of creators and cultural practitioners (often due to tightened visa regulations as a result of security clampdowns) not only present an obstacle to the realisation of intercultural exchange, but also undermine the possibility of sustainable incomes and livelihoods for creators. This is particularly the case for musicians, for whom touring represents a valuable source of income and participation in festivals a key means of exposure to new markets.[20]

Thirdly, there are very real capacity limitations for civil society in making their voice heard in this area. With limited funding for CSOs, including professional associations, a reliance on volunteerism is not enough to overcome the isolation and lack of mobilisation which many practitioners feel is commonplace in the creative industries. Accordingly, civil society tends to feel that its experience and expertise in working in the cultural sector, particularly at the grassroots, is often undervalued and underutilised by government and others. There have in addition often been limitations to the joint working that can exist between different segments of the culture sector (for example, musicians, artists and writers have often failed to work together to achieve shared objectives). However, a successful solution to counter this isolation may have recently emerged, in the form of national, profession-based coalition movements advocating for cultural diversity, united under an umbrella association, the International Federation of Coalitions for Cultural Diversity.[21] It should also be said that many cultural CSOs face challenges in redressing gender imbalance at the level of leadership. During consultations it could not be missed that cultural civil society still tends to be dominated by men. This is a criticism that needs to be addressed.

Fourth, practitioners feel that a free trade approach to the cultural sector is inappropriate. Importing cultural products and saturating domestic markets can have damaging social consequences which go far beyond economic ramifications. The perception that culture

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20 'Musicians' Unions in the Commonwealth: A Key to Cultural Diversity'. Summary report of consultation held by the Commonwealth Foundation, 4 October 2008 (see Annex One).

21 International Federation of Coalitions for Cultural Diversity website. See http://www.cdc-ccd.org.

is increasingly being homogenised across a globalised Commonwealth, with the loss of local identities, is a worrying one for an association which prides itself on promoting diversity and intercultural understanding.

Substantial challenges and questions continue to exist at a pan-Commonwealth level. How can a government nurture its creative economy, and how can a country's creative potential become economic reality? How can we ensure that cultural practitioners, the lifeblood of the creative industries, are able to sell and trade their cultural products fairly? And in the process of answering these critical questions, what can be done to ensure that civil society's experienced voice on these issues is heard by governments?

Areas for further investigation

1. What policy actions are required by developing country governments, particularly in small states, to make the most of the economic opportunities offered by the creative economy, and what support do they need from international actors?

2. How can we make sure that the poor and marginalised benefit directly from the creative economy, particularly through support for the development sustainable livelihoods, beyond relying on the so-called trickle-down effect?

Recommendations

1. Support further research, evidence-building, exchange and profile-raising on the value of the creative economy, particularly in the lead up to the negotiation of key trade agreements.

2. Identify and promote adoption of good practice in how the creative economy can operate as a genuine solution for the development needs of poor and marginalised Commonwealth citizens.

3.   Cultural policy and the 2005 UNESCO Convention

This chapter seeks to explore the role of a new and important UNESCO Convention in providing a framework for countries, particularly those with limited government capacity, to implement successful cultural policy designed to support creative production and enhance cultural diversity.

3.1   The 2005 UNESCO Convention

'To reaffirm the importance of the link between culture and development for all countries, particularly for developing countries, and to support actions undertaken nationally and internationally to secure recognition of the true value of this link.'

Objective 1 F of the Convention on the Protection and the Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions[22]

'This is an important Convention, and one which all Commonwealth countries should look to ratify.'

Ransford Smith, Deputy Secretary-General of the Commonwealth, Marlborough House, 11 March 2008[23]

In March 2007, the 2005 UNESCO Convention on the Protection and the Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions entered force after reaching the required 30 ratifications.[24] Promising a new framework for how we think about culture, the Convention had been ratified by 90 countries worldwide by September 2008.[25] Central to the spirit of the Convention is recognition, in its preamble, of 'the need to take measures to protect and promote the diversity of cultural expressions, including their contents, especially in situations where cultural expressions may be threatened by the possibility of extinction or serious impairment'.[26] The Convention goes on in Article 2 to assert 'the sovereign right' of states 'to adopt measures and

policies to protect and promote the diversity of cultural expressions within their territory'.[27]

The Convention makes direct reference to the value of cultural diversity, and in doing so implicitly draws from the seminal Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity.[28] The Convention should also be seen as part of a package of UNESCO Conventions addressing different aspects of culture, including for example the 2003 Convention on the Safeguarding of Intangible Heritage. The Convention, however, focuses not on cultural diversity in the anthropological sense of ethnic identities, but rather on the diversity of 'cultural expressions' including, for example, music, publishing, film, television and arts and crafts. For the first time, the Convention encourages actual steps towards realising cultural diversity, through the protection and promotion of the diversity of these expressions. Specifically, the Convention supports national governments' sovereign rights to design and implement cultural policy, with the involvement of civil society.

Implementing cultural policy does not, in the Convention's vision, stem from an outdated protectionism simply of one's own national culture, but rather demonstrates a commitment to protecting and promoting international diversity through support for a plurality of national cultures. It is a Convention which is pluralistic, and one which seeks to promote a levelling up of the cultural playing field, by urging fair exchange between cultures. Cultural policy therefore becomes a mechanism not only for developing the creative economy, but also for protecting and promoting diversity. It is suggested that this diversity can reap social and non-economic rewards.

22   *Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions* Paris: UNESCO, 2005): 3.

23   Speech by Ransford Smith, Deputy Secretary General of the Commonwealth, following a Commonwealth Foundation seminar. See Annex Three, *Sharing Strengths: Commonwealth and Francophone engagement with the UNESCO Convention* (London: Commonwealth Foundation, 2008).

24   Jim McKee, 'The UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions: challenges and opportunities for Commonwealth CSOs' in *Commonwealth Culture Toolkit* (London: Commonwealth Foundation, 2007).

25   http://www.ifccd.com/content/after-lull-renewed-momentum-ratification, 10 September 2008. By June 2008, over 80 countries had ratified according to UNESCO statistics, http://www.unesco.org.

26   *Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions* (Paris: UNESCO, 2005): 1.

27   *Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions* (Paris: UNESCO, 2005): 3.

28   *Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity* (Paris: UNESCO, 2001).

The Convention has an additional resonance for Commonwealth countries in three particular respects. First, it promises to change the balance of power in the culture sector by investing in civil society a new role to share responsibility with government. Article 11 of the Convention explicitly 'acknowledge[s] the fundamental role of civil society in protecting and promoting the diversity of cultural expressions'. For the first time at UNESCO, representatives from civil society have also been formally consulted on the drafting of the operational guidelines for the Convention.[29]

Secondly, the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions is more than a cultural convention. It tackles trade issues within the cultural sector. Asserting the sovereign rights of states to challenge conventional wisdom on trade liberalisation by adopting strong cultural policies to protect their cultural expressions, the Convention proposes a new framework of guiding norms which prioritises cultural diversity and human development, while simultaneously appreciating the economic value of the creative industries and cultural sector. The Convention has started to influence trade negotiations, as discussed in the example above of the European Union and CARIFORUM countries.

Thirdly, although tangible benefits for cultural practitioners in developing countries are being realised as a consequence of the Convention, there is an urgent need to confer greater legitimacy upon and further demystify the Convention if it is to act as a strong framework of guiding principles and provide inspiration for future actions, both inside and outside of trade negotiations.

The Commonwealth has had only limited engagement with the Convention so far. While some countries, such as Canada, India and South Africa, have been particularly active in the processes surrounding articulation and ratification of the Convention, Commonwealth countries as a whole have not treated the Convention as a priority.[30] In a seminar organised by the Commonwealth Foundation in March 2008, Commonwealth ratification rates were compared with those of Francophone countries. While two thirds of member states of the Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie have ratified the

Convention, just one third of the 53 Commonwealth countries had done so.[31]

The positive efforts of countries towards the Convention have often been seen as a response to the perceived dominant global role of the United States as an axis of cultural influence and power. However, the Commonwealth, as an association historically attributed with asserting global cultural hegemony through the spread of the English language, has member states which perhaps now do not feel as immediately 'threatened' by a similarly hegemonic role for the United States as, for example, French-speaking countries might.

Further, although conflicting free trade and culture priorities can be a contributing factor to non-ratification, failure to ratify the Convention can also be largely attributed to limited awareness and prioritisation. This would seem to be the case particularly in regions with small states with limited capacity, such as the Caribbean and Pacific. Moreover, during consultation it became clear that even those working in the cultural sector had limited knowledge of the Convention.[32]

It nevertheless remains imperative that Commonwealth countries urgently acquaint themselves with and ratify the Convention. As one commentator observes, 'the higher the number of ratifications obtained, the more legitimate the Convention's objectives and the measures taken to achieve them'.[33] Article 116f of *Realising People's Potential: the Kampala Civil Society Statement* called upon Commonwealth member states to 'ratify the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions and meaningfully involve and support civil society in its implementation at national, regional and international levels, notably in the development and application of cultural policies and strategies'.[34] Civil society at a regional level has also made these calls, first in September 2007 in the Johannesburg Declaration[35], when cultural coalitions and cultural professional organisations from African Commonwealth countries called on member governments 'to promote the ratification and effective implementation of the UNESCO Convention', and again at a Caribbean level in July 2008, when cultural organisations urged Commonwealth Caribbean governments to prioritise ratification and

29   On Monday 23 June 2008 at UNESCO in Paris, a formal civil society exchange session was held ahead of the First Extraordinary Session of the Intergovernmental Committee on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions. During this session, civil society representatives had an opportunity to express their viewpoints. See http://www.ifccd.com/content/civil-society-landmark-exchange-ongoing-discussion or http://www.unesco.org.

30   *Sharing Strengths: Commonwealth and Francophone Engagement with the 2005 UNESCO Convention* (London: Commonwealth Foundation, 2008). See Annex Three for an executive summary of this report from the seminar. During the seminar, it was highlighted that as well as urgently raising awareness of the need to ratify and implement the Convention, steps should be taken towards fostering regional leadership, supporting civil society capacity, and sharing best practice within and outside of the Commonwealth.

31   *Sharing Strengths: Commonwealth and Francophone Engagement with the 2005 UNESCO Convention* (London: Commonwealth Foundation, 2008): 29.

32   'Culture, cultural policy and identity: the case of Barbados'. Summary report of consultation held by the Commonwealth Foundation and National Cultural Foundation of Barbados, 9 July 2008 (see Annex One).

33   Ivan Bernier and Hélène Ruiz Fabri. 'Implementing the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions: future actions' (Québec: Gouvernement du Québec, 2006): 6.

34   *Realising People's Potential: The Kampala Civil Society Statement to the 2007 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting* (London: Commonwealth Foundation, 2007): 34.

35   'Johannesburg Declaration of First Meeting of Coalitions and Cultural Professional Organisations from African members of the Commonwealth' (2007). See http://www.commonwealthfoundation.com/uploads/documents/Johannesburg%20Declaration%20Final.pdf.

Lawrence Hill, overall Best Book winner of the
Commonwealth Writers' Prize 2008

**Figure 3: 'How aware are you of the 2005
UNESCO Convention on the Protection
and the Promotion of the Diversity of
Cultural Expressions?'**

■ **24.9**% knew all about it.

■ **38.3**% knew a little about it.

■ **15.5**% had heard of it.

■ **18.1**% had never heard of it,
but wanted to know more.

□ **3.1**% had never heard of it, and
didn't want to.

*Results of the Commonwealth Foundation survey
on culture and development – see Annex Two*

implementation of the Convention in the Port of
Spain Declaration.[36]

The Commonwealth Foundation continues to provide a
platform for civil society to take to government concerns
about Commonwealth non-engagement with both the
Convention and wider issues related to culture. With
much potentially resting on the success of the Convention,
not least the existence of more constructive and human
norms concerning the exchange of cultural expressions,
it is critical that the Commonwealth should neither get
left behind in the debate, nor fail to make the most of this
emerging mandate for action and change.

3.2   Making cultural policy work

One key principle of the Convention is that states should
retain sovereign rights to design and implement cultural
policy suitable to address their own needs and challenges.
While the Convention provides an important international
framework to guide and shape an overall conversation, it is
in the development of the detail of cultural policy and its
localised application that the battle to protect and promote
the diversity of cultural expressions will be won or lost.

What, then, can cultural policy mean in the
Commonwealth context? As outlined in Chapter 2, there
are clear benefits for the national creative economy and
cultural industries from designing and implementing
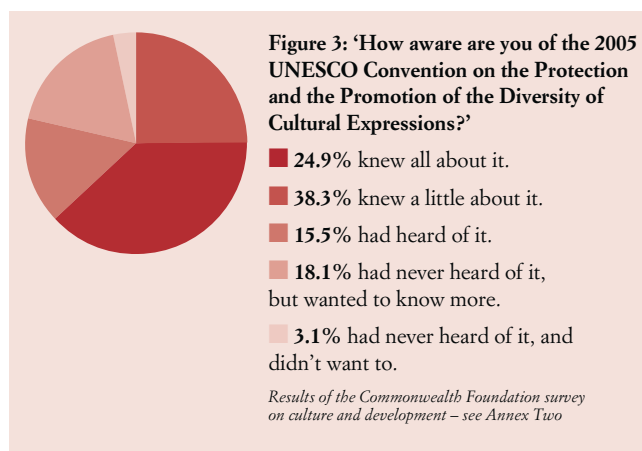
good cultural policy. In some cases, such as the Nigerian
'Nollywood' video industry[37], the creative economy can
arguably flourish even where there is not a supporting
cultural policy framework. Indeed, questions remain
as to whether cultural policy is necessarily causal in
developing a strong cultural sector, or whether it is more
a symptomatic indication of a society and government's
wider commitment to cultural investment. This was
certainly the feeling amongst participants in the survey on
culture and development,[38] 82 per cent of whom agreed
or strongly agreed with the statement that 'when cultural
expressions – such as film, literature, arts – emerge, they
tend to do so without necessarily being supported by
government policies.'

However, while a set of strong cultural policies is not
a prerequisite for a successful creative economy, there
may nevertheless be a general correlation between the
two. There are examples of good practice in successful
attention to and implementation of cultural policy, such as
the successful use of music quotas in Canada[39], and these
could be shared. There seems to be growing awareness of
this, with 92 per cent of participants in the Commonwealth
Foundation survey agreeing or strongly agreeing with the
suggestion that successful cultural policy models should be
shared internationally.[40] There may be a particular role for
the Commonwealth in facilitating such exchange
and sharing.

Cultural policy, however, is about more than simply
developing policies to support the growth of the creative
economy, or state intervention geared towards maximising
the potential of niche markets for cultural products. For
example, decisions over public service broadcasting,

36   'Port of Spain Declaration of First Meeting of Cultural Organisations of Caribbean Member
States' (2008): 1. See http://www.commonwealthfoundation.com or http://www.ifccd.
com/content/caribbean-cultural-organizations-gather-port-spain%E2%80%94affirm-
importance-rapid-ratification-2005.
37   For more information, see http://www.guardian.co.uk/film/2006/mar/23/world.features.

38   See Annex Two.
39   For more information, see
http://www.pch.gc.ca/progs/ac-ca/pubs/can-con/can_con.html.
40   See Annex Two.

its role, and how much support should be given to it have recently been particularly controversial in some Commonwealth countries. Further, there are clear social and non-economic consequences of enhancing or limiting citizens' access to external and/or domestic cultural products. At one end of the spectrum, censorship and inability to access foreign cultural expressions are often associated with authoritarianism. At the other, the social impact of the trend towards a completely homogeneous and globalised culture would also be extreme. Free trade in culture cannot be fair trade.

States' cultural policies, then, must tread this tightrope and find a balance between offering citizens access to a diversity of cultural expressions, including those not from their own cultures, and at the same time ensuring that voices from within their own cultures are supported and heard through market development and practitioner support. In this respect, building positive and fruitful international partnerships and relationships between Commonwealth member states, regional organisations and international organisations such as the World Intellectual Property Organisation and the World Trade Organisation will be critical. As efforts to reform international institutions proceed at a Commonwealth level,[41] the protection and promotion of the diversity of cultural expressions should not be sidelined as an issue.

Many Commonwealth countries, particularly those with smaller and less well resourced state apparatuses, have struggled to develop and implement coherent cultural policies, on either a national or regional level. In one national consultation by the Commonwealth Foundation in Barbados,[42] for example, participants considered there to be limited long-term cultural policy because the government's culture department did not have sufficient staffing and resources. It is therefore not only cultural CSOs which face perennial problems of limited capacity, but also government departments with a responsibility for culture. Giving culture the recognition and status it deserves, and raising its profile within governments, would be one way of beginning to tackle such issues. Commonwealth countries should also share experience and expertise to alleviate the effects of capacity limitations where possible, and here the Commonwealth Foundation could play a supportive role. However, even well-designed cultural policy will not itself ensure a successful cultural sector. Cultural policy must be supported by an ongoing commitment by government, in partnership with civil

society and the private sector, towards its meaningful and sustainable implementation. This suggests, amongst other things, financial commitment.

The process of making cultural policy work and succeed is, however, faced by numerous challenges. In a consultation with civil society, government and cultural practitioners in South Africa, several key points arose. First, there is a clear and ongoing need for the inclusion of civil society in policy planning at early stages. With cultural practitioners being both primary implementers and primary beneficiaries of cultural policy, there is a fear that civil society consultation can be tokenistic. Civil society also needs to be supported wherever possible to work against inherent capacity limitations and a reliance on volunteerism for staffing needs. Civil society, in this context, includes audiences, consumer groups and the citizen, as well as cultural practitioners.

Secondly, there are also concerns that 'cultural policy' can be confused by governments with attempts at nation-building, and that funds can be channelled solely towards efforts to support the social fabric rather than an 'arts policy'. For example, in South Africa it has been argued that the post-apartheid government's immediate need to foster reconciliation and build a united nation meant that cultural practitioners were somewhat sidelined. Culture and cultural expression clearly do contribute to identity affirmation in important ways (see Chapter 6), but cultural practitioners continue to perceive a danger that culture can be hijacked for political means and independence compromised. Bringing proponents of these two arguments to the same table and facilitating a constructive dialogue on culture's role in development remains an important challenge, and one that the Commonwealth Foundation can play a role in responding to.

Thirdly, in the design of cultural policy there is a continuing need to work at levels other than the national. The Commonwealth contains real diversity in forms of governance, at the provincial as well as at the national level. Cultural policy, as in other policy arenas, increasingly needs to reflect this by looking beyond the nation-state as the sole unit of analysis. Provincial and regional possibilities should therefore continue to be explored, including through the provision of appropriate resources and financial support.

It is suggested here that the Commonwealth must take seriously the role of cultural policy in national

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41   In June 2008, the Commonwealth Secretariat hosted a meeting of a number of Heads of Government Meeting to discuss reform of international institutions. The statement from this meeting is available at http://www.thecommonwealth.org/press/31555/34582/180228/100608reform.htm.

42   'Culture, cultural policy and identity: the case of Barbados'. Summary report of consultation held by the Commonwealth Foundation and National Cultural Foundation of Barbados, 9 July 2008 (see Annex Two).

Figure 4: 'How strong are your country's creative sectors?'

■ Rated as an strong creative sector in their country.
■ Rated as an average creative sector in their country.
■ Rated as a weak creative sector in their country.

Music
■ 64.0% ■ 31.2% ■ 4.8%

Art and Craft
■ 50.5% ■ 41.1% ■ 8.3%

Performing Arts
■ 47.3% ■ 45.7% ■ 7.0%

Literature
■ 40.5% ■ 43.7% ■ 15.8%

Film
■ 22.9% ■ 33.3% ■ 43.8%
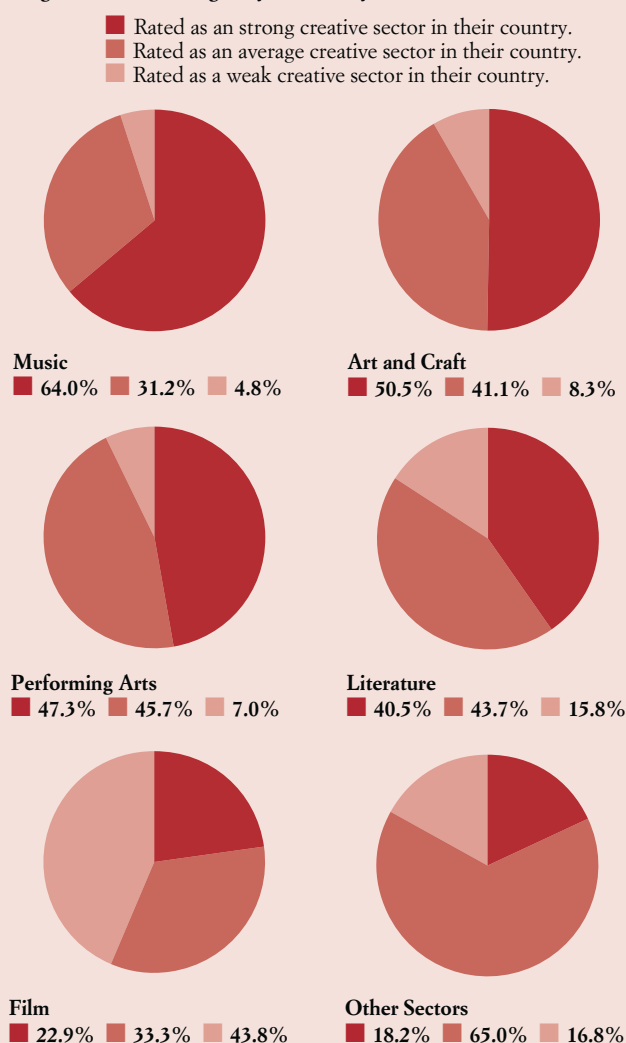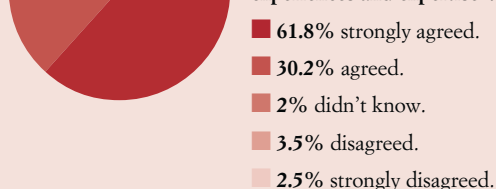
Other Sectors
■ 18.2% ■ 65.0% ■ 16.8%

Figure 5: "'If my country needs better cultural policy, then I think we should work with other countries and international partners to learn from their experiences and expertise".

■ **61.8%** strongly agreed.
■ **30.2%** agreed.
■ **2%** didn't know.
■ **3.5%** disagreed.
■ **2.5%** strongly disagreed.

Results of the Commonwealth Foundation survey on culture and development – see Annex Two

development and planning strategies. Some countries may be in more urgent need of policy measures than others, and one size does not fit all. The 2005 UNESCO Convention recognises this, and acknowledges that states must determine the policies which are most appropriate for their own situations. Nevertheless, there is value in the sharing of experience and expertise, not so much in terms of transferable models of so-called 'best practice' but rather in the mutual exchange of ideas and inspiration. The Commonwealth can – and should – play a significant role in fostering this exchange, research and mutual learning. Ultimately, however, consideration of the possibilities and opportunities provided by good, country-specific cultural policy must come from within countries themselves, through genuine and meaningful conversations between governments and civil society.

Perspective from Singapore: Performing arts and the role of cultural policy at the city level[43]

Setting policy priorities

Although arts in Singapore traditionally had low priority, a change in emphasis came with the publication, in 1989, of the *Report of the Advisory Council on Culture and the Arts*, which aimed to 'promote widespread interest and excellence in the pursuit of the arts in our multi-cultural society, and to encourage cross-cultural understanding and appreciation'.[44]

While the report identified arts and culture as having a positive impact on the economy, it was careful to highlight other key benefits of culture, including quality of life and support for nation-building in an ethnically diverse country. The thrust of Singapore's cultural development, according to the report, was to realise the vision of a culturally vibrant society by 1999.

By 2002, priorities had changed. A second report, *Renaissance City 2.0*[45], launched as part of a wider Creative Industries Development Strategy, focused on support of the creative industries, particularly in arts and culture, design and media. The report's vision was to develop 'a vibrant and sustainable creative cluster to propel the growth of Singapore's Creative Economy', the success of which would be measured by reaching a 6 per cent contribution to Singapore's GDP by 2012, and by establishing a reputation for Singapore as a New Asia Creative Hub.

43 Based on a case study submitted by Michelle Loh Wen Han. See Annex One for full details.
44 *Report of The Advisory Council on Culture and the Arts* (Singapore: Singapore National Printers, 1989): 5.
45 'Renaissance City 2.0' (Singapore, 2002). Available at http://ci.sg/strategyArts.html.

Implementing policy

Within the framework of these two reports, Singapore set about transforming its arts sector. In 1991 the National Arts Council (NAC) was established. A variety of public funding opportunities became available, including grants, scholarships and schemes for studies and international collaborations. The NAC nurtured national arts festivals, such as the Singapore Arts Festival and the Singapore Writers Festival.

At the local level, Community Development Councils offer opportunities for amateur groups and schools to bring about awareness of arts in social cohesion, while the Creative Community Singapore initiative provides opportunities for Singaporeans to use their creative energy to benefit the community.

A focus on new infrastructure has been incorporated into urban planning. This saw the Esplanade, a major performing arts centre, open in 2002. Arts belts have also been created, to house arts organisations and foster culture-led regeneration, and efforts made to enhance arts education, with a plan to position the Lasalle College of Arts and Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts as world-class institutions to retain arts students in the country.

In terms of implementation of cultural policy, Singapore can be seen as a success story. Through sustained funding, investment in infrastructure and enhancement in access to arts education, Singapore has become a creative cluster and progressed far towards meeting the objectives set out in the reports of 1989 and 2002. Though there is a need for further cultural indicators, the number of performances tripled between 1997 and 2007, while ticketed attendance rose from 754,100 to 1,434,900.

One continuing note of caution, however, is that decision-making has tended to be top down and government led. Opportunities to resolve problems through meaningful consultation with civil society and cultural practitioners have rarely been forthcoming.

Right method, questionable ends?

Self expression, personal enrichment, quality of life and nation-building were highlighted in the 1989 report as key benefits of arts and culture. This emphasis has changed. *Renaissance City* 2.0 stresses the economic power of creative talent to the extent that it neglects the less quantifiable benefits of the arts. Singapore uses monetary analysis to justify its support, stating that for every $1 million of expenditure on arts activities, the cultural industries generate a multiplier of 1.66. This is higher than that of the banking and petrochemical industries. As a result, energies in implementing Singapore's cultural policy can be diverted to the landing and organising of prestigious international events, such as the 2008 Formula One Grand Prix and the 2010 Youth Olympics.

This shift in emphasis leaves unresolved questions regarding the development objectives for arts and culture in Singapore. Should the state put money only into investments likely to offer high returns? Should arts organisations exist only to create jobs? Or are there ways in which seemingly conflicting priorities of economic development and human development can be meaningfully reconciled in the future?

Areas for further investigation

1. How and to what extent can cultural policy be linked to the support of development objectives, including those reaching beyond economic development?

2. What else is needed at the national level, including through policy and legislation, to realise the potential of the 2005 UNESCO Convention as a framework for supporting creativity, cultural diversity and the creative industries?

Recommendations

1. Promote greater interaction between government and civil society in the design and implementation of cultural policy, and between the departments of government responsible for culture and other arms of government.

2. Support exchange and sharing of expertise and success stories between culture professionals, including those in government, in different countries and regions of the Commonwealth, on protecting and promoting the diversity of cultural expressions and in raising the status of culture.

4. Culture as a tool for development

This chapter explores what using culture in development might mean for development organisations in particular. First, culture-based methods may enhance the communication of key development messages. Second, it may be critical to work within the cultural anthropological setting if development interventions are to succeed. Third, culturally specific 'traditional knowledge' can be a useful resource on which development organisations can draw.

Recent studies by non-governmental organisation Creative Exchange[46] found that development organisations often lack a real understanding of the value of culture in their own work. One difficulty is that culture – in the sense of arts and cultural expression – is often seen as essentially irrelevant to satisfying the basic needs targeted by many development agencies. Even when human development is about widening choices, access to cultural expressions is still often deemed a peripheral concern by human development professionals. On the other hand, there can be a tacit assumption by these same professionals that knowledge of the importance of 'deep' culture (culture in the anthropological sense of frameworks of beliefs) is already well internalised in development discourses. As Gould and Marsh observe, however, this claim is often unsubstantiated and difficult to prove or disprove, given the impossibility of any kind of monitoring, evaluation or impact assessment. The result is that although culture may often be being used and practised in the pursuit of development, it is largely 'invisible', underestimated and therefore often misunderstood. Nevertheless, there is some emerging recognition of the role of culture as a tool in development, in three key respects, discussed below.

4.1 Communication through culture

Culture is a resource for communication of messages. These messages usually address key development issues in governance, rights, health and HIV and AIDS. For example, in the Caribbean there is increasing recognition that radio and television talk shows can contribute to a climate of accountability and good governance. Elsewhere, education on voting and civic rights can often be transmitted best, particularly in areas of low literacy, by oral and non-written techniques. For example, a project by Rulu Arts Promoters in Tanzania used participatory theatre to raise political consciousness about issues of good governance.[47]

However, while culture-based methods are often talked about in terms of initiating 'behaviour change', there are real limitations to achieving this change, and to establishing a causal link between interventions and changes in behaviour. There is often an assumption that such development messages are the only messages that the audience is receiving. In reality, these messages, even when delivered very successfully, exist as just one part of an enormous cultural web of evolving beliefs and attitudes where messages can reinforce but also contradict each other. The idea of 'behaviour change' through using culture as a communication tool must therefore be tempered with realism and long-term commitment. This report contends that if the concept is to have real value, it must address the underlying and often subconscious aspects of culture in more subtle and nuanced ways. For example, there have been numerous recent attempts to introduce gradually into television soap operas storylines involving sensitive issues such as homosexuality or HIV and AIDS as part of a longer term approach towards behaviour change.

46 Helen Gould and Mary Marsh, *Culture: Hidden Development* (London: Creative Exchange, 2004) and *Routemapping Culture and Development* (London: Creative Exchange, 2003).

47 This is just one of a number of examples highlighted in greater depth as case studies in the Commonwealth Culture Toolkit, a CD launched by the Commonwealth Foundation in 2007 to demonstrate the importance of culture. See http://www.commonwealthfoundation.com/culturediversity/Commonwealth%20Culture%20Toolkit/.

Spotlight on culture-based methods for confronting HIV and AIDS[48]

On 16 July 2008, the Commonwealth Foundation and Commonwealth Secretariat[49] hosted speakers and participants from across the Commonwealth in a workshop at the Fifth Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning to share their expertise and experience on how culture-based methods can help to end HIV and AIDS.

Participants learned how in Malawi, HIV prevention messages were reaching new audiences because local development organisations were moving away from reliance on published written materials, particularly in areas with high illiteracy, and working with the positive aspects of existing local cultures to help break taboos. In India, examples were given of how street theatre performed in local languages had been used to popularise messages about the HIV-related dangers of drug use. In Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, creative use of calypso music had helped persuade over 600 people to have free HIV tests. Participants also learned how in the Pacific development practitioners had achieved success through beginning to work with local chiefs as guardians who have access to and authority over communities of Pacific islanders.

Participants discussed how cultural expression – such as music, dance and theatre – can often be a 'hook' to attract attention from potential audiences and offer a way in to talking about uncomfortable issues. Particularly in areas where new entertainment is not always readily available, audiences are very open to different forms of so-called 'edutainment', especially those that employ humour. Nevertheless, during the discussion there was concern about the potential fatigue of HIV and AIDS prevention messages, and corresponding fear that development practitioners will eventually run out of innovative ways to communicate messages which quickly become part of the background landscape. Therefore, as well as enabling sharing of successful culture-based methods, it was recommended that research be conducted into how long-term strategies to use culture towards preventing HIV and AIDS can be built, and how communities can be empowered further to develop their own messages rather than relying on the development 'message factory.'

© Youth Net and Counselling (YONECO), Malawi

The Yoneco Cultural Troupe communicate HIV and AIDS prevention messages in Malawi

4.2 Using traditional knowledge

During the Commonwealth Foundation's process of consultation, it also became clear that many feel that traditional knowledge can be a resource in bringing about development in different areas. Particularly in the Pacific region, it is felt that traditional and local knowledge are undervalued[50]. Traditional knowledge can incorporate local world views, beliefs, values and practices as well as knowledge in its naturalistic, scientific sense. Many critiques of an over-reliance on traditional knowledge to bring about development have been made,[51] but where development goals coincide with those of the bearers of traditional knowledge, there may be ways to tap into this resource as a complementary source of ideas.

Particularly in the management of natural resources, traditional knowledge (often incorporating a world view in which care for the land is central) can sometimes support the long term sustainability of a community's environment. Food security, which emerged as a huge global issue in 2008, can be strengthened by drawing on local fishermen's and farmers' techniques and knowledge. Rather than providing externally driven resources, such as pesticides or education brochures on 'how to care for the environment', development organisations sometimes find that local communities operating from within their own resources of

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48   For the full summary report from this workshop, see http://www.commonwealthfoundation.com/news/news/detail.cfm?id=434.

49   The Commonwealth Secretariat, established in 1965, is the main intergovernmental agency of the Commonwealth, facilitating consultation and co-operation among member governments. See http://www.thecommonwealth.org.

50   'Making the most of culture in development'. Summary report of consultation held by the Commonwealth Foundation at the regional Pacific CSO Forum, 14 August 2008 (see Annex One). Taking advantage of traditional knowledge as a useful resource was identified by participants as a primary objective.

51   For a good introduction to many of these issues, see Kai N Lee, *Compass and Gyroscope: Integrating Science and Politics for the Environment* (Washington: Island Press, 1994).

Traditional knowledge enables fishing practices to be more sustainable, and can also enhance food production techniques.

traditional knowledge can be the best guardians of their own lands and livelihoods.

While sharing and utilising traditional knowledge may therefore be advantageous for communities, the downside of this comes in situations where traditional and community intellectual property is appropriated. Examples abound of drug companies making enormous profits after discovering a community's use of particular plants, without benefit for the community itself. In the Pacific, as has been seen in Chapter 2, steps have now been taken to provide a legal framework to protect Traditional Knowledge and Expressions of Culture (TKEC) from being raided for their most instrumental aspects.[52]

4.3 Development within the context of local cultures

Development also succeeds best where strategies and interventions take into account the local cultural context. On one level, there is a clear need to operate in line with local realities and to avoid inter-cultural misunderstanding. This seems to be, on the whole, now an accepted wisdom. For example, in the Commonwealth Foundation survey, 38 per cent of respondents highlighted as the top priority the need for development interventions to operate in accordance with existing cultural frameworks.[53]

However, the notion that development agencies should always accept local cultures as they are has historically been more problematic. At the heart of the problem lies the timeless tension between, on the one hand, accepting and respecting the culturally derived morals of others and, on the other, dealing with cultural practices and norms that seem to contravene universally agreed human rights standards of human behaviour. One of the principal objections levelled at the use of culture is that accepting and promoting its role in development also accepts and promotes numerous so-called 'cultural practices' which violate universally accepted norms and basic human rights. Often such cultural practices gain legitimacy because they are labelled as traditional, implying their authenticity and general social acceptance. When practices such as female genital mutilation, widow inheritance or discrimination on the basis of sexuality occur, it is difficult to gain popular support for the notion that one should accept and work within the cultural context. Development discourses are particularly vulnerable to the eternal ethical dilemma of the liberal: how is it possible to accept others' ways of life when others themselves seem so starkly to reject otherness? There is a need to acknowledge the argument that culture can act as a drag on progress and development, and a negation of a trend towards greater

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52 This is explored in greater depth in Chapter Two, 'Perspective from the Pacific: Market development, the role of festivals and traditional knowledge'.

53 Participants were asked to prioritise four approaches in order of how beneficial they were for development. See Annex Two.

freedom and choice, both for minorities and other Commonwealth citizens.

Two counter arguments can be advanced. First, such problems should not be ethically insurmountable for development professionals. It is an entirely coherent perspective to accept the existence of cultural norms and to work within them, without necessarily approving of them or investing them with legitimacy. Development professionals and agencies should work with the grain of culture wherever possible, rather than against it, as development interventions are more likely to succeed when they are reinforced by culture. Drawing on cultural resources, such as folklore, can enhance the relevance of messages. One example of culture being used to share a progressive message of universal human rights is in Uganda, where popular historical and mythical heroines have been used to communicate messages about gender equality.[54]

Secondly, the diversity within cultures needs to be acknowledged. All too often only the negative aspects of culture rooted in tradition are highlighted, when there are often more progressive strands that can be worked with. Culture in the anthropological sense is not a fixed or immutable concept, and instead should be seen as a dynamic and open process in which societies re-interpret and invest with new meanings the reality around them.

Such a realist perspective, however, is arguably one of compromise and fails to provide long-term solutions to close the gap in attitudes and beliefs which may exist between development practitioners and the people they seek to work with. Awareness of culture can be highly important, both with respect to making development interventions culturally sensitive, and therefore more effective, and also in terms of improving existing communication strategies for key development messages. But when culture is used only as a tool for development, the ownership of the process remains in the hands of development agencies, practitioners and donors. As suggested in the next chapter, if participatory, people-centred development is to become meaningful and yet also avoid slipping into an abyss of cultural relativism where 'anything goes', then culture must be more than a tool.

Areas for further investigation

1. How can traditional knowledge be drawn upon and utilised in current initiatives to inhibit climate change and associated environmental degradation, and to support adaptation to change?

2. How can culture-based education and communication messages in HIV and AIDS be kept refreshed and relevant to avoid message fatigue?

Recommendations

1. Development organisations should carry out cultural impact assessments before development interventions, and cultural scoping to determine where culture could be used as a tool to help achieve impact.

2. Progressive strands in traditional cultures that speak to transformation should be identified and emphasised through research and dialogue ahead of development interventions.

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54   *Appreciating the Value of Culture in Development* (Cross Cultural Foundation of Uganda, 2007).

5. Culture as a process for development

Why should development practitioners do more than take culture into account, and why should they put it first?[56] How can power over development processes be transferred to local people and communities, but a rejection of change, transformation and development be avoided? This chapter discusses how culture can in fact be more than 'a rather elaborate megaphone for development messages' – and how it may in fact have the potential to revolutionise existing development discourses and practices, by both decentralising development and by empowering citizens as the subjects rather than the objects of development.

'Plenty of development agencies currently see creative activities as a powerful means of communicating information about health, rights and governance. But do they see beyond its role as a rather elaborate megaphone for development messages? Treating culture as a 'tool' may also be contributing to its invisibility: just as the type of tool used to dig a well is probably not relevant to an evaluation of a well digging project, so the cultural medium for the message rarely attracts comment or attention.'[55]

This report contends that culture is more than 'deep culture' rooted in timeless tradition, and that forms of cultural expressions are more than manifestations of this deep culture. Cultures change and transform over time, and cultural expression can be seen as a central part of this process of constant reinvention which all societies experience. Cultural expression provides a critical space for reflection and self-analysis within societies, and offers a means by which citizens find and use their own voice. As Chapter 7 outlines, this process of reflection is important also as a social mechanism for interaction with changing social environments during periods of crisis.

Particularly relevant for development practitioners is that the fostering of a climate conducive to cultural expression would seem to be critical to making ideas of people-centred, participatory development more than a tokenistic exercise in rhetoric. Participation must mean more for the people of the Commonwealth than existing as objects or targets of development interventions. Support for

cultural expression could therefore be a key mechanism for empowering citizens to create their own solutions to development problems.

5.1 Participatory development

Development interventions work best when they employ the expertise of society's greatest resource – people.[57] Efforts to make people the subjects of development interventions through participatory development have gathered momentum in recent years. The World Bank, for example, has developed a large body of work on what it calls Community Driven Development (CDD). Acknowledging that poor people have often been treated as targets of poverty reduction efforts, CDD claims to 'turn this perception on its head, and treat poor people and their institutions as assets and partners in the search for sustainable solutions to development problems'.[58]

As advocates of CDD admit, however, they perceive real dangers in decentralising too much of the development

55   Helen Gould and Mary Marsh, *Culture: Hidden Development* (London: Creative Exchange, 2004): 22.
56   For an introduction to some of the key issues around making culture the central pillar of development, see Keith Nurse, 'Culture and human development: a policy discussion paper' (Commonwealth Foundation, 2007), a paper prepared for the Commonwealth People's Forum 2007.

57   Louis Helling, Rodrigo Serrano and David Warren, 'Linking community empowerment, decentralised government and public service provision through a local development framework' (World Bank Discussion Paper, 2005).
58   http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/ TOPICS/EXTSOCIALDEVELOPMENT/EXTCDD/ 0,,menuPK:430167~pagePK:149018~piPK:149093~theSitePK:430161,00.html. Also see 'Chapter 9: Community Driven Development', Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers, February 2003, World Bank, available at http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTCDD/ Resources/CDDPRSP.pdf.

Participating helps people take ownership of development solutions

process, and CDD is suggested as just one part of a wider package, implemented when possible and when other criteria have been satisfied. Vested interests, after all, could otherwise manipulate and misuse the idea. As aid effectiveness debates have long struggled to come to terms with, corruption undermines efforts to transfer control over aid and development resources. But if communities can only drive their development within certain boundaries, prescribed from outside, then how realistic is it to believe that the CDD approach will genuinely make those who were previously only the objects of development the subjects instead?

A second approach to participatory development is based on the notion of Endogenous Development. According to one international network supporting its use, Endogenous Development is 'based on local peoples' own criteria of development, and takes into account the material, social and spiritual well-being of peoples.'[59] Acting against an 'implicit Western bias' in development thinking, the rationale of endogenous development is to draw on and appreciate different world-views. Traditionally, these world views have had a spiritual, and often indigenous, element to them. Indeed, 'the main difference between endogenous development and other participatory approaches is its emphasis on including spiritual aspects in the development process, in addition to the ecological, social and economic aspects'.

These spiritual aspects can be difficult for many development practitioners to engage with in concrete terms. In particular, a sole focus on maximising the role of traditional knowledge and world-views can be problematic, both because it runs the risk of pigeonholing 'culture' as something which is not mainstream, and because it fails to promote the dynamic and forward-looking aspects of culture. In fully accepting this view, might there be a risk of consigning people to traditional traps of poverty and powerlessness? The question of how tradition alone can truly bring about forward-facing transformation remains unanswered. It may be best to see traditional knowledge as a complementary resource and tool in the pursuit of development goals, as outlined in Chapter 4.

Nevertheless, despite limitations, these – and other – models of participatory development make a fundamental critique of existing development discourses and practices. An analysis of the imbalanced power relations often embodied in development processes suggests that making people the subjects of development in more than a tokenistic way and without prescriptions will always be difficult.

At the same time, there are emerging concerns that current trends towards a development environment driven by short-term targets in which development organisations must quickly demonstrate results and impact could be damaging, and could fail also to genuinely cater for the human development needs of people, who must remain at the centre of development discourses. To both these critiques, cultural expression may prove to be a missing piece of the jigsaw.

If other human development needs, including the right to cultural expression (see Chapter 8), are to be met, then there may be a need to look at development issues through an alternative lens, in which cultural expression is in fact a principal human need. Exploring the impact of poverty on the development of cultural expressions, for example, would be a way of reversing the issue. Accordingly, there may be other ways, such as through the discipline of cultural studies, to monitor and evaluate the success of development initiatives in penetrating cultural practices and supporting cultural expression. These are worthy of further investigation.

59   COMPAS (Comparing and Supporting Endogenous Development) is an international network based in the Netherlands. For an introduction to the concept of Endogenous Development, see their website at http://www.compasnet.org/ed_1.html.

5.2 The process of cultural expression: a liberationist perspective

If cultural expression through forms such as art, crafts, music, drama, storytelling and performance is understood not only to be a manifestation of already existing culture but also a means through which fluid cultures dynamically examine and change themselves, then there can be clear reasons to offer support for an environment in which cultural expression and creativity flourish. Finding ways of measuring this change may be difficult through the use of conventional development indices, but there are suggestions that other methods, which look primarily at changes in cultural processes and the relation of these changes to power structures, may be able to offer different insights.

Culture can therefore provide a means and arena through which the oft-criticised imbalance of power relations in many development interventions can be addressed. As Gould and Marsh argue, approaching culture as a process rather than a tool can be 'the basis of a liberationist approach that endeavours to explicitly address issues of shifting power and strengthening people's control over the development process. It starts from people's own experience and involves a participatory creative process, the output of which is not pre-determined'.[60]

In terms of action by governments, development agencies and donors, what might this mean? This report contends that support must be offered for the cultural sector, particularly in developing countries. It is sometimes suggested that culture is a luxury which should only be financed after basic needs have been met. However, as this report argues, it is only when people can tell their own stories, reflect upon their messages, and engage in a frank and creative discussion about their own society that development efforts can really begin to prosper.

Cultural expression is a neglected but accessible arena for such conversation, reflection and synthesis. An investment in cultural spaces is an investment in self and community expression and thereby in good governance and sound development. There is, further, a gender dimension in this that needs to be acknowledged. Women are often the pre-eminent bearers of cultural knowledge, but this role, and

Cultural expression is an important part of people defining and articulating their own development needs

intergenerational bonds between mother and daughter which form focal points for cultural reproduction, are often under-recognised. Yet conventional development approaches do not always challenge the dynamics of power that leave women marginalised and unable to play a full role in articulating their needs and identifying their own solutions. Cultural routes offer a way to address this. Enabling an environment of creativity and cultural expression for all gives a voice to the marginalised, and enables deeper, instinctive participation of all segments of society.

Ultimately, making the process of cultural expression central to development interventions can liberate not only Commonwealth citizens from the imbalanced power relations to which the majority have, for a long while in some form or other, been subject, but also development professionals themselves from the accusations of cultural imperialism which have tended to pursue them wherever they work.

60   Helen Gould and Mary Marsh, *Culture: Hidden Development* (London: Creative Exchange, 2004): 14.

Spotlight on culture and development in Uganda[61]

With more than one third of the Ugandan population living in extreme poverty, creative energies are geared towards meeting basic needs such as food, healthcare, shelter and security. Developing cultural human potential through experimentation with local innovative thinking and knowledge is thus not given high priority, either by government or the population in general.

The Cross-Cultural Foundation of Uganda (CCFU) is seeking to change this by promoting an understanding of development as seen through 'cultural lenses', which reflects the wealth of cultural diversity. In an effort to distil evolving perceptions about culture's role in development and identify initiatives where culture is being considered in a positive light in development work, they worked with 40 key resource persons in 2007. They exchanged views on a 'culture in development' approach, and what it might mean in a contemporary Ugandan context. Key areas of discussions included attitudes and perceptions of culture, issues of culture and poverty, and the economic measurement of culture.

First, as a result of Uganda's ethnic diversity, perceptions of culture tend to be fragmented and notions of 'ethnic culture' prevail, as opposed to a national idea. In the absence of a single common language, national identity, or unified cultural thinking, dealing with issues of culture was perceived as a sensitive and difficult task by some respondents.

Secondly, many of the respondents reported that culture is still perceived as 'primitive', a hindrance to development, and irrelevant to the transformational development goals. 'Culture', they observed, tended to be narrowly defined in terms of traditional rituals and practices, especially those considered oppressive and negative, such as female genital mutilation, witchcraft and widow cleansing and inheritance. Positive aspects of culture, such as community labour, the spirit of communal responsibility and accountability, conflict resolution and informal moral education (inculcating values such as honesty, industriousness, or the value of marriage), on the other hand, were rarely acknowledged, utilised or documented by development actors.

Thirdly, in government circles, where 'development' tends to mean economic development, there was a danger that culture would be measured only in terms of its economic value. Efforts are being made to monetise the benefits of cultural industries, by itemising and calculating income generated by cultural activities, creative cultural groups, cultural tourism, crafts and art. While such economic arguments must be made, since it may be partly due to the absence of such quantitative information that culture is given low priority, there is danger in focusing solely on the economic value of culture and losing sight of the bigger picture of social change.

Turning a blind eye to the role of culture in development, including its connections with environment management and protection, health, HIV and AIDS and social discrimination will, respondents argued, only abet marginalisation of productive members of society and inhibit the realisation of their potential to contribute to national development.

Areas for further investigation

1. How can short-term, target driven contemporary development approaches find space and time to nurture long-term investment in creative expression as an arena for debate and articulation?

2. What strategies can be developed for dealing sensitively with situations where aspects of cultural norms clash with universally agreed principles or rights without hindering constructive progress towards participatory, people-driven development?

Recommendations

1. Support should be given for further research into the ways in which monitoring and evaluation of change in cultural expression can demonstrate longer term impact, through the use of 'deeper' methodologies such as ethnography, testimony, or cultural studies.

2. Political will should be built at all levels for the case that cultural expression should be a central pillar in approaches towards development.
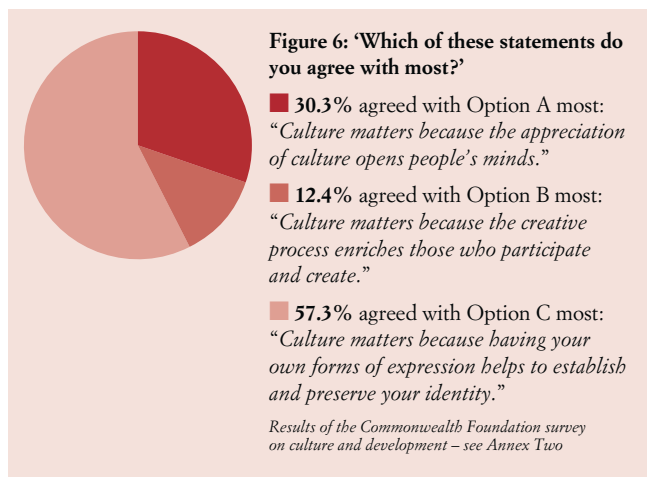
61 This perspective is based on a paper originally prepared by Emily Drani, Executive Director of the Cross-Cultural Foundation of Uganda, for the *Commonwealth Culture Toolkit*: 'Development from a cultural perspective: a view from Uganda' (London: Commonwealth Foundation, 2007).

6. Cultural expression and negotiating identities

This chapter discusses the importance of cultural expression in resolving insecurities and conflicts associated with issues of identity. Across an increasingly globalised world, the confidence of many citizens and groups in their cultures and identities is being challenged. The Commonwealth as an association is united primarily by a shared set of values and priorities,[62] but also by shared historical narratives and experiences. The task of building and rebuilding inclusive national narratives in the light of these experiences was a critical one for many countries in the immediate post-colonial period, and in many cases remains as a challenge.

Figure 6: 'Which of these statements do you agree with most?'

■ **30.3%** agreed with Option A most: "*Culture matters because the appreciation of culture opens people's minds.*"

■ **12.4%** agreed with Option B most: "*Culture matters because the creative process enriches those who participate and create.*"

■ **57.3%** agreed with Option C most: "*Culture matters because having your own forms of expression helps to establish and preserve your identity.*"

Results of the Commonwealth Foundation survey on culture and development – see Annex Two

Today, there is increasing recognition that many communities and groupings of identity – which include those that exist along lines of ethnicity, gender, religion and sexuality, amongst others – face acute difficulties in asserting a confident identity while respecting and understanding other groups. While cultural expression has been used in the past by ethnic groups trying to assert dominance, this chapter contends that cultural expression can also be a constructive and positive force for intercultural respect and understanding. Additionally, many Commonwealth countries face other profound difficulties in building the 'good society',[63] including the

emigration of skilled workers and social disintegration amidst rapid urbanisation and changing social structures. Support for creative expression may begin to provide a Commonwealth solution to some of these Commonwealth challenges.

6.1 Fostering cultural confidence

Cultural insecurity can have several damaging consequences. For example, Commonwealth countries have often experienced widespread emigration of skilled workers, which has seriously inhibited the growth of national economies. The transfer of healthcare workers from developing to developed countries has created an immense strain on the quality of domestic healthcare systems.[64] The 'brain drain' is often perceived to have gutted countries of their best resources and put a strain on national identity. The positive aspects of migration do, of course, need to be acknowledged. Remittances from skilled workers now provide a leading source of income for many developing countries[65]. Migration within the Commonwealth has also significantly contributed to the development of cultural expressions and cultural diversity in countries in which new communities and diasporas grew. Recently, there has been increasing recognition that migration can be circular, and that diaspora communities often maintain strong links with their source countries, over and above remittances. For example, diasporas around the world provide markets for Bollywood films.[66]

62　Commonwealth values, as set out in key Commonwealth declarations, including the 1991 Harare Communiqué, include respect for diversity, human dignity and opposition to all forms of discrimination, adherence to democracy, rule of law, good governance, freedom of expression and the protection of human rights; elimination of poverty and the promotion of people-centred development; and international peace and security, commitment to multilateralism, the rule of international law and opposition to terrorism. For more information, see the Commonwealth Secretariat's website at http://www.thecommonwealth. org/Internal/20723/key_declarations.

63　See Barry Knight, Hope Chigudu and Rajesh Tandon, *Reviving Democracy: Citizens at the Heart of Governance* (London: Commonwealth Foundation, 2002): 111-115. In research conducted in 1999, citizens of many Commonwealth countries noted the sharp decline in social capital and cohesion, and the concomitant decline in associative life, and these were considered to be serious obstacles to building the 'good society'.

64　The Commonwealth Teacher Recruitment Protocol (2005) was designed in order to combat a similar problem facing the migration of teachers.

65　For more information, see http://eldis.org/go/topics/resource-guides/migration/ remittances/impact-of-remittances.

66　For an introduction, see http://www.planetbollywood.com/displayArticle. php?id=051806123941.

Perspectives vary on the causes of brain drains. Clearly, much of the emigration of skilled workers can be attributed to individual economic choices and opportunities. For example, as the case study below from Trinidad and Tobago points out, cultural practitioners in particular are often forced to move abroad in the search for a sustainable livelihood, because of a lack of opportunities in their country of origin. Such movement can help generate intercultural understanding, and the Commonwealth should make efforts to support mutual cultural exchange; for example through continuing to offer and expanding artistic exchange and residency schemes.[67] Advocacy work to relax restrictions on the movement of artists and the development of common standards of good practice in this regard, which as this emerged as a key area of concern for musicians during consultation,[68] should be undertaken at a Commonwealth level.

Nevertheless, although exchange is to be valued and encouraged, artists also have a right to an environment that supports creativity (see Chapter 8) within their own country. Steps to design good cultural policy, as outlined in Chapter 3, could help to enable such an environment.

In all professions, there are many citizens across the Commonwealth who do manage to balance the precarious demands of multiple national identities in which they can be entirely confident. Nevertheless, others may migrate because of a lack of belief in one's own country and the simultaneous lure, often illusory, of other countries' cultures and the opportunities on offer. Within and outside the Commonwealth there are centres of strong gravitational pull, much of which relies upon the dissemination of mass culture. Traditionally, the United Kingdom and now the United States would be included in these countries. For young people, this lack of cultural confidence and lure of the other can be amplified by the other daunting challenges they face, including high levels of unemployment, increasing urbanisation, vulnerability to crime, risk of alienation from society, and competing claims on identity. In efforts to help young people fulfil their creative potential, there is a need both to help them develop confidence in choosing their identities, and also to offer avenues through which they can express themselves.

In addressing issues of diaspora and migration, the Commonwealth should not therefore downplay the influence of cultural processes or the potential role for creative expression in building a culturally confident environment alongside other factors. Yet so far, these have been notably absent from the debate. Furthermore, there may be a role for new technologies in enabling creators to work from their country of choice.[69] An investment in cultural confidence may enable talent to be retained and therefore also prove to be an investment in nation-building; this is a hypothesis which demands further investigation.

Many Commonwealth countries face particular difficulties in building social cohesion and social capital, with youth crime, for example, often perceived as one symptom of failure to build the 'good society'. The trends of globalisation, which have led to movement towards urban centres, the breakdown of traditional extended family structures and the disruption of previously tried and tested modes of transmission of values and practices between generations, are seen to have challenged and weakened the social fabric.[70] Shared historical experiences – mostly those associated with British colonial rule – have led to some shared forms of cultural reproduction. For example, common problems of youth crime might be looked at through the lens of British cultural attitudes towards class and intergenerational relations. The Commonwealth shares in common not only positive cultural values, but also a number of challenges in building the good society. It may also be possible for the Commonwealth, however, to make the most of associated opportunities arising out of historical connections, such as the prevalence of the English language in internet usage.

What, then, can creative cultural expression contribute towards social cohesion and capital? First, working in the creative industries, as outlined in Chapter 2, if good structures and support systems are put in place, is an increasingly viable employment alternative for the excluded to maintain a livelihood. Secondly, cultural community projects can bring people together, and can provide the basis for sustained conversations, future work and connections between people. Thirdly, cultural expression provides a means for people across the Commonwealth to make sense of their world and create and listen to their own voices. In the Caribbean, reggae music was one way – open to all – in which elements of Jamaican society began to come to terms with, critique and address their situation of poverty and perceived

67 The Commonwealth Foundation's International Arts Residencies scheme offer one such form of support. See http://www.commonwealthfoundation.com/artsresidencies.
68 'Musicians' Unions in the Commonwealth: A Key to Cultural Diversity'. Summary report of consultation held by the Commonwealth Foundation, 4 October 2008 (see Annex One). The visa campaign of Freemuse also explicitly responds to the 2005 UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions. See http://www.freemuse.org.

69 'Cultural livelihoods and social cohesion in the Caribbean'. Summary report of consultation held by the Commonwealth Foundation, 7 July 2008 (see Annex One). Participating cultural practitioners felt that because creative industries lend themselves well to new technology (for example, animation), there could be a reduced need for people to gravitate towards large population centres. This point is also emphasised in the UNCTAD *Creative Economy Report 2008*.
70 Barry Knight, Hope Chigudu and Rajesh Tandon, *Reviving Democracy: Citizens at the Heart of Governance* (London: Commonwealth Foundation, 2002): 111-115.

Umalali: The Garifuna Women's Project gives a voice to women of the Garifuna community in Belize

oppression. As the perspective from Trinidad and Tobago at the end of this chapter demonstrates, the impact of the cultural awakening around Carnival should similarly not be underestimated. And as discussed in Chapter 4, increasingly in many countries, including Malawi,[71] cultural expression (for example, street theatre and role-playing) is providing a safe space, free from taboos, in which communities can come to terms with and reflect upon issues related to the HIV and AIDS pandemic in the context of their own community.

In contrast, where people cannot read, watch and listen to their own stories, social reference points tend to come from sources external to the nation or community. In many developing countries, it is very difficult for people to see people like themselves on a film screen, or hear locally generated music. Importantly, this is something which the 2005 UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions seeks to address (see Chapter 3). Cultures can be externally driven, and look to external models of governance, democracy, development and society as utopian visions of what their own society might look like, rather than drawing upon existing domestic cultural resources as a source of strength. When existing local strengths remain unacknowledged and under-utilised, high expectations are often not satisfied. Lack of cultural confidence and belief in the validity and centrality of one's own culture can be damaging not only for marginalised nations, of course, but also for minorities, of all types, and groups within nations. Across the Commonwealth, many individuals, communities, and nations need to assert their culture as part of the development process. However, examples of reversals in these trends do exist, and offer real hope for national development.[72]

Spotlight on Umalali: The Garifuna Women's Project[73]

Descendants of shipwrecked slaves who intermarried with the Carib and Arawak Indians of the Caribbean, the Garifuna people live primarily in small towns and villages on the Caribbean coasts of Belize, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua, transcending national boundaries. Originally forced to Central America after revolting as slaves against British colonial forces in the eastern Caribbean, the displaced Garifuna have struggled to assert their cultural identity. *Umalali: The Garifuna Women's Project*, released on CD in 2008, expands on the story of this community, which is trying to sustain its unique language, music and traditions in the face of globalisation.

Umalali (which means 'voice' in the Garifuna language) began in 1997, when a young Belizean musician and producer, Ivan Duran, began travelling to Garifuna villages in search of exceptional female voices. Duran had realised that, while male musicians usually occupy the musical spotlight, in the Garifuna community women are the true custodians of songs, and are often responsible for new compositions that deal with issues of day-to-day life. The first song selected for the project was 'Áfayahádina', meaning 'I Have Travelled', which tells of an heiress who is celebrating her good fortune. While she has travelled and seen the world, she chooses to remain in her home village.

The release of the album was particularly poignant in the wake of the death in January 2008 of the Garifuna – and Belizean – peoples' biggest star and ambassador, Andy Palacio. The success of *Umalali*, which has received acclamation around the world, is affirmation that the revival of Garifuna culture inspired by Andy Palacio is a beginning rather than an end.

In Palacio's acceptance speech for winning the World Music Expo (WOMEX) 2007 award for the *Garifuna Collective's* album *Wátina*, he had declared that the award was 'an extraordinary and sincere validation of a concept in which artists such as myself take up the challenge to make music with a higher purpose that goes beyond simple entertainment,' and hoped that it would 'serve to reinforce those sentiments that fuel cultures of resistance and pride in one's own.'[74]

71   This example was cited in a Commonwealth Foundation workshop (see the spotlight in Chapter Four for further details). 'Culture based methods for effective HIV and AIDS prevention: what role can distance learning play?' Commonwealth Foundation workshop, 16 July, London. The full report is available at http://www.commonwealthfoundation.com.

72   For example, Thomas Friedman notes the interface between cultural representations and labour in India. Arguably, previous trends of migration have now been countered by India's new position in the world economy and the national sense of pride that this has engendered. Thomas Friedman, *The World is Flat: A Brief History of the Twenty-First Century*, (Farrau, Straus and Giroux, 2005).

73   Based on information submitted by Ivan Duran.

74   http://www.womex.com/realwomex/pdf/AndyPalacio_AcceptanceSpeech.pdf.

6.2 Cultural liberty

Building cultural confidence needs to be about more than simply asserting one's own culture. Cultural production has long been a valued and central component of nation-building strategies, but such strategies do not always promote cultural diversity. In an increasingly globalised world where hybrid identities are commonplace and where people choose to distinguish themselves by emphasising certain differences over others – including ethnic, religious, linguistic and national – it cannot be satisfactory to promote a homogeneous national culture and national identity.

The authors of the report of the Commonwealth Commission on Respect and Understanding,[75] endorsed in the *Munyoyo Statement on Respect and Understanding* issued by Commonwealth Heads of Government in November 2007,[76] stressed that groups may fail to respect and understand each other when a single component of identity is prioritised and where individuals no longer have the option to choose which elements they wish to emphasise of the multiple identities which all human beings inhabit and live. Where citizens negotiate and navigate between different identities in their daily lives, human development can be interpreted as a process of enabling these choices. The challenge of fostering respect and understanding, however, is also tied up with the task of building cultural confidence in societies: how can people be expected to respect and understand each other's cultures if they do not already respect and understand their own? Just as the 2005 UNESCO Convention invites us to envisage a world in which cultural expressions can be shared equally on a level playing field, so the Commonwealth's call for mutual respect and understanding surely demands an initial investment in equality to understand those traditions and narratives which have felt isolated and marginalised.

Cultural expression should ultimately not be a means of affirming and strengthening fixed identities, but of encouraging cultural diversity and cultural liberty, in the sense of chosen identity, and therefore pluralism. This distinction is an important one, underpinning the distinction between the concept of multiculturalism, which is increasingly being critiqued for encouraging silo cultures to develop side by side, and the emerging concept of interculturalism, which focuses on the spaces for dialogue and hybridity between cultural expressions and forms in a spirit of equality (see also Chapter 8). As the United

Nations Human Development Report 2004 outlines, the human development perspective of enabling choice has much to offer for how we think about culture:

'Even though there has been much discussion in recent years about culture and civilisation, the focus has been less on cultural liberty and more on recognising – even celebrating – cultural conservatism. The human development approach has something to offer in clarifying the importance of human freedom in cultural spheres. Rather than glorifying unreasoned endorsement of inherited traditions, or warn the world about the alleged inevitability of clashes of civilisations, the human development perspective demands that attention go to the importance of freedom in cultural spheres (as in others), and to the ways of defending and expanding the cultural freedoms that people can enjoy. The critical issue is not just the significance of traditional culture – it is the far-reaching importance of cultural choices and freedoms.'[77]

Commonwealth countries and citizens are faced by many issues related to identity, and there is an urgent need for further evidence-based research. How do people define their ethnicity, and how can ethnic conflict be avoided? What does it mean to be a woman – or indeed a man – in rapidly changing societies and how do people negotiate these gender identities? When people choose to assert the importance of faith to their identities, as many do, what does this mean for social cohesion, and how can the potential of faith-based co-operation be harnessed to help advance development?[78] In the area of diaspora and circular migration, and corresponding transnational identity communities, how do people navigate between alternate nationalities?[79] How do people interface with and operate between different categorisations of gender, ethnicity and nationality, and how do these change according to contexts? How can people be culturally confident in the choices they face, and choose to be who they are?

Often the political solution to the complexity of multiple identities is an attempt to construct a national identity to which all can adhere. While well meaning, such attempts would seem to be doomed to failure without due consideration of the variety and value of cultures and cultural expressions that may exist in a nation. Once again, there would seem to be significant and largely unexplored potential for an investment in support of a range of cultural expressions and spaces to offer a safe arena for reflection, conversation and negotiation.

75   *Civil Paths to Peace: Report of the Commonwealth Commission on Respect and Understanding* (London: Commonwealth Secretariat, 2007).
76   *Munyoyo Statement on Respect and Understanding,* Commonwealth Secretariat, 2007. See http://www.thecommonwealth.org/document/34293/35144/173176/munyonyo_statement_on_respect_and_understanding.htm.

77   *United Nations Human Development Report 2004: Cultural Liberty in Today's Diverse World* (United Nations, 2004).
78   *Engaging with Faith* (London: Commonwealth Foundation, 2007). This report on the potential for interfaith co-operation calls for urgent engagement with issues of faith related to these questions.
79   These and other issues related to diaspora were the focus of the Fifth Diversity Matters Forum in Malaysia, 19-20 November 2008. Diversity Matters is a regular Commonwealth forum on cultural diversity.

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Carnival in Trinidad and Tobago

Perspective from Trinidad and Tobago: Carnival, steel bands and fostering cultural confidence[80]

Carnival arts, oral traditions and literature

Trinidad and Tobago's Carnival is world famous. The 'Carnival mentality' is talked of as a national trait, while the steelband, originally pounded out from discarded oil drums, has evolved into an orchestra capable of delivering music from classical to folk. The Carnival, and its related festival arts such as music, dance, performance and craft, evolved from a polyglot of traditions, including European masked balls, masking and costume traditions of Africa and Asian traditions.

The island's oral tradition, passed on between generations in everyday interactions, remains a key aspect of Carnival. This tradition combines voice, sound and rhythm and manifests itself in folk forms such as work songs, chants, hymns, calypsos and jokes.

The literary arts also borrowed from European cultures – force-fed through education – and mixed them with oral cultural expressions. A strong literary culture developed as writers sought to recreate the textures and voice of oral cultures in text. However, as with Carnival arts, the literary arts struggled for mainstream acceptance because of their use of local dialects and imagery. They had inferior status and were seen as incapable of expressing abstract or complex ideas.

Cultural expressions developed as a form of self-expression in the face of oppression. Their evolution is a manifestation of resilience despite attempts by colonial and subsequent authorities to suppress them. The Carnival arts can therefore be seen, on the one hand, as catalysts of nationhood, but on the other, because of their origins in rebellion to officialdom, as a source of test and challenge to the state.

Brain drain and international recognition

Writers migrated in the 1950s and 1960s in search of opportunities to publish and be read more widely. This trend continues today, with musicians and singers looking for breakthrough by playing and recording abroad. There may be a belief that there is insufficient appreciation at home and that international recognition is important. Such international recognition can, however, be valuable in enhancing the level of cultural confidence not just of the artists concerned, but also of their home communities.

Significantly, migrant artists continue to maintain strong links with home and return for competitions, such as the National Panorama Championship, Pan Jazz Festival, Soca Monarch and Calypso Monarch; winning domestic awards, after all, confers prestige. The result is that artists continue to feed off home sources for creative inspiration, while their music continues also to be influenced by international experiences.

With increasing inclusion of elements of Trinidad and Tobago cultural expressions in Hollywood and Bollywood films, cultural confidence has grown. The potential for film to bolster national arts, and by extension national confidence, is only now being realised through attempts to establish a domestic film industry.

Yet while such inclusion has bolstered cultural pride, there are mixed emotions, as generally neither local artists nor the islands of the forms' origins receive due credit. The most shocking example was an American attempt to patent the process for the manufacture of pan instruments. The government responded and is now investing in the development of a 'G-pan',

which would standardise notes and improve the instrument's range.

There is evidence that, correctly supported, cultural forms can contribute to economic development, with one government study in 1995 estimating that the entertainment sector was worth US$42.2 million in foreign earnings, 75 per cent derived directly from Carnival.[81]

Consequences for attempts at nation-building and reconciliation

The task of nation-building in Trinidad and Tobago has always faced the challenge – and opportunity – of remarkable ethnic and cultural diversity. Colonisation and forced migration brought African, Indian, Chinese, Syrian and Lebanese populations to the islands.

The oppression and limited space through which Carnival and other cultural expressions evolved forced hybridisation of elements of different cultures. Obscuring class differences, slaves and ex-slaves mimicked their masters, while masters adopted elements of jovial abandon in masked balls and street festivals.

Later, steelband contests became an alternate arena in which fights for local supremacy could be played out. Such conflict can still be seen in the annual Panorama competitions, which witness fierce competition between bands.

It could be argued that a healthy complementarity exists between group identity and national identity in the cultural arena, where tensions can often be diffused. While at one level there is contestation for cultural space and recognition by proponents of the two major ethnic groups, at the artistic level there has been increasing cross-genre and multi-ethnic hybridisation and experimentation, not least in music, dance, craft and cuisine, which has become a dynamic space for articulation of identities.

This diffusion function of the arts is particularly important in a multicultural context, where strong contestation for place and space can become particularly evident during elections. Many believe that because of this cultural 'pressure valve', these tensions have never erupted into ethnic strife of the degree that has plagued other societies with comparable levels of diversity.

Areas for further investigation

1. How can the cultural expressions and forms of minorities be supported and nurtured to the same extent as those enjoyed by majority cultures, without building fences around minorities, and how can spaces and arenas be created to encourage the wider sharing of forms of cultural expression linked to particular identities?

2. What roles can new technologies and the creation of niche creative industries and markets play in preventing brain drains and encouraging national cultural confidence?

Recommendations

1. Governments, civil society and donors concerned with issues related to migration, social cohesion and marginalisation, should support research and pilot activities to investigate further the role that cultural expressions and dialogue between cultural expressions can play in these processes.

2. Practice should be shared on the roles cultural expression have played both in promoting and inhibiting greater respect and understanding and conflict prevention – both positive and negative practice – and good practice distilled and promoted.

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81 Ralph Henry and Keith Nurse, *The Entertainment Sector of Trinidad and Tobago: Implementing an Export Strategy* (Paper prepared for the Tourism and Industrial Development Company of Trinidad and Tobago, 1996).

7.   Culture, crisis and repression

This chapter explores how cultural expression is not only important in building the 'good society' in periods of relative stability and democracy, but also during situations of crisis and repression, when civil society can also draw on creative resources to act as agents of social change. While forms of cultural expression have often been manipulated during such times to bring about extreme, negative change, this chapter explores how cultural expression can also serve as a positive force.

'Lying at the core of our society, art is also a means of bringing about social change. Drama, film and music can help people get to grips with their own lives. Take, for example, youth in deprived areas. Artistic expression is giving them self-respect and belief in the future. Art is often an open platform for freedom of speech, even in societies where that freedom is restricted. This makes art an effective tool for exposing social issues.'

A participant from Uganda, Commonwealth Foundation e-consultation

7.1   Finding meaning during crisis

When political order and moral authority break down or are seriously impaired, the vacuum can be filled by evolving cultural interpretations of a country's socio-political situation. In the absence of strong, legitimate government, a country's active citizenry contributes to this process of infusing ideas with new meaning. During such pressured periods of reflection, analysis and changing social perspectives, cultural civil society and creators are a potent source of innovation and creation in efforts to make sense of and resolve the crisis.

Groups and political actors throughout history have often manipulated cultural symbols and expressions during periods of crisis to suit their own ends or assert the dominance of one particular ethnic or political group over another. It must be recognised also that revolutionary and totalitarian governments have often relied upon manipulating cultural expression. Nevertheless, to use cultural expression as a positive force during periods of crisis it is imperative that the Commonwealth should take seriously and engage with, rather than deny, condemn or negate, culture's role. It is only within this context that the positive elements of cultural expression should be stressed.

Participants in two civil society consultations[82] particularly highlighted the role of culture at critical moments of social transformation. In a consultation with the pan-Commonwealth Civil Society Advisory Committee of the Commonwealth Foundation, participants suggested that research should explore how culture is relevant during sudden transformations and crises, as well as in subsequent periods of healing and reconciliation. In a consultation with government and civil society in Johannesburg, South Africa, participants gave a further example of this when it was suggested that cultural practitioners had been a crucial component of a critical civil society under during the apartheid period.

Situations of crisis and political breakdown need not have pre-determined outcomes. With multiple paths available as possible outcomes, cultural practitioners can play an important role at critical junctures in shaping how citizens and political actors think about their reality and about which paths are viable. While commentary and developments in the political arena of course do much to resolve crises, creative expression can often make more astute, insightful and succinct comments and reflections on a situation. During crisis, the saying that a picture speaks a thousand words rings true. Cultural expressions – whether

political newspaper cartoons, local stories retold with a specific twist, or politically charged songs taken up on the streets – shape meanings and citizens' world views at a time when they are most in need of a new understanding of how their society works, and of how it should work. Tellingly, 78.9 per cent of survey respondents thought that creativity has the potential to transform the way society collectively thinks about and reflects upon itself.

During less tumultuous but equally significant periods of decolonisation and independence, culture and creative expression were important in the emerging and shifting interpretations of political situations across the Commonwealth. Further in-depth research could be undertaken into the role of cultural expression in situations of change in Kenya, Fiji Islands and Pakistan, all of which appeared on the agenda of the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group[83] in 2008, which did not have scope to make this kind of cultural analysis. In these instances, what could be the role of culture in future processes of healing and reconciliation?

Spotlight on freeDimensional[84]

FreeDimensional is a platform which links the art world to human rights issues around the globe. Their aim is to conduct advocacy for vulnerable groups, including by producing tactical media to illustrate critical, contemporary issues. The freeDimensional network,

Issa Nyaphaga. Photo taken by Angele Essamba.
© Image courtesy of Angele Essamba and freeDimensional.

based in the USA, was born of a problem: the need for safe spaces experienced by culture workers at risk. In response to this, freeDimensional developed a system to partner residential artist communities with human rights organisations in order to offer rapid responses and provision of creative safe havens.

Since 2006, freeDimensional has recruited around 50 artistic communities, resource centres and neighbourhood associations. Some of these serve as Creative Safe Haven sites, while others provide a range of support services. During this period, freeDimensional has supported through this service 28 journalists (print, publishing, cartoon/caricature), artists (novelists, poets, painters, filmmakers, musicians), and activists (advocates for prison reform, environment, transparency, LGBT rights, youth engagement, ethnic self-determination) from over 20 countries.

In 2007, this service provided Issa Nyaphaga with three months of accommodation and support in freeDimensional's New York residency. Issa was born in Douala, Cameroon in 1967 and has been an artist since he was seven years old. He grew up in Nditam, a village of the Tikar people, in the heart of the country's equatorial forest. The Tikar are primarily farmers during the rainy season and painters in the summer. Issa was initiated in his early childhood into traditional painting. He learned how to mix mud, natural pigments and other coloured substances, which are used to decorate the walls of houses. Issa was later influenced by various traditional and contemporary styles, finding his voice in cartoon, caricature and visual arts.

In 1990, Issa began working as a political cartoonist for a satirical newspaper, *Le Messager Popoli*. He was tortured and jailed for his cartoons. In 1996, he fled to seek asylum in France where he lived until 2007 when he first moved to New York. Issa Nyaphaga is not only an artist, but also an advocate of freedom of expression. He has endured censorship in the form first of his father's disapproval at his becoming an artist, and later through imprisonment and torture for his political cartoons. Between 1998 and 2008, Issa published more than 10,000 humorous illustrations, drawings and comics in newspapers and magazines. Today, Issa paints cartoons on large canvas and his works are based on global culture.
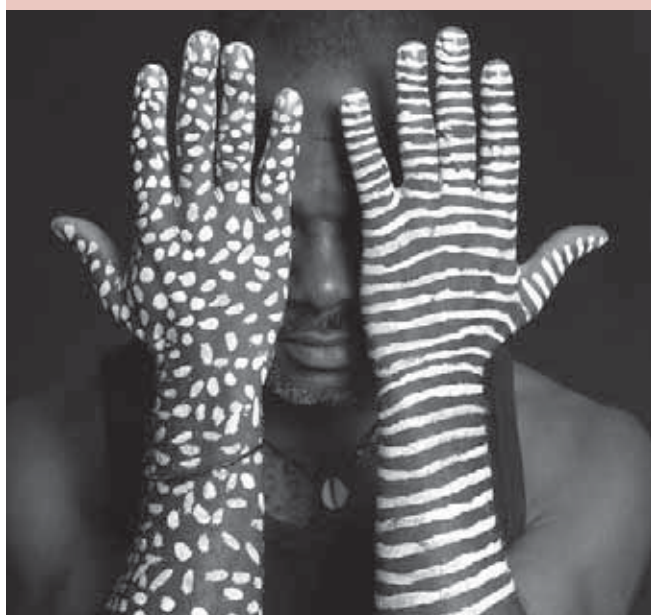
83   For more information on the role of the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group, see http://www.thecommonwealth.org/Internal/38125/cmag/.
84   Based on information submitted by Todd Lester, Executive Director of freeDimensional.

7.2   Expression during repression

Creators can act as a source of strength not only during periods of crisis, but also under stable, repressive regimes. Following the fall of communism in the 1990s, the role of civil society as an anti-repressive force in opposition and confrontation with government became more valued and recognised across the world, from Chile to Haiti. Fortunately, in many Commonwealth countries more cordial relations have prevailed, tending to shape civil society's role into a more constructive one of critical partnership with government and the private sector in achieving development goals. Nevertheless, civil society's independence from government should neither be lost sight of, nor undervalued. During times of repression, when traditional CSOs, including faith-based organisations, trade unions and human rights movements can be repressed, co-opted, or made leaderless, cultural practitioners such as film-makers and artists sometimes still possess limited space in which they can deliver thought-provoking works of creativity. Culture can arguably offer a safer space for reflection and critique, particularly when political space is under attack. In certain situations, this space can be exploited in subtle but meaningful ways. The perspective offered in this chapter from South Africa, an analysis of cultural practitioners during the apartheid period, explores one example of how culture can be important in fostering dissent during repression, in the transition to democracy, and in subsequent processes of healing, reconciliation and development of inclusive national narratives.

Commonwealth membership guidelines require that states should operate in line with Commonwealth values and priorities, including democracy and freedom of expression.[85] Although repressive regimes therefore usually fall outside the area in which Commonwealth organisations can work, the Commonwealth nevertheless maintains an interest and concern for former member states, such as Zimbabwe, and has traditionally followed an approach of keeping the door open on a country's future return. Continued engagement with cultural civil society may be one means of maintaining a relatively depoliticised dialogue and contact during such circumstances. Both in periods of crisis and repression, a strong cultural civil society, acting within an environment which supports or has recently supported creativity, can be a great resource in bringing about social and political change.

Perspective from South Africa: The vanguard of social transformation? Creators during and after apartheid[86]

The apartheid era

Apartheid affected every aspect of human existence in South Africa, and arts and culture were no exception. Who could perform on stage, whose values were catered for in galleries and whose histories were reflected in museums were all determined on the basis of racial classification.

The brutal state apparatus that proscribed freedom of expression resulted in numerous works and artists being banned. Little wonder that many cultural workers engaged in the anti-apartheid struggle. The mid-80s saw this involvement sharpened. A number of discipline-based cultural organisations emerged, including the Congress of South African Writers, the Film and Allied Workers Organisation, the South African Musicians' Alliance, the Performing Arts Workers' Equity and Dance Alliance. Their genesis could be traced to three key and related conditions.

First, the banning of political organisations under the state of emergency provided a space for cultural organisations, which formed a shield for political activity. So instead of mass rallies, important dates in the anti-apartheid calendar were commemorated with cultural events. Secondly, with the banning of many organisations, international donors' funds were now available to fund cultural organisations and activities that occupied these spaces. Thirdly, cultural organisations gained importance because they advised the political movement in exile on the implementation of the cultural boycott.

Notwithstanding repressive conditions at the time, cultural workers produced. Work ranged from didactic, overtly political content articulated through aesthetically poor forms to more technically sophisticated forms with more subtle content. Particular 'brands' such as Athol Fugard and the Market Theatre, still highly prominent, were forged.

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85   In 2006, a Committee chaired by former Jamaican Prime Minister PJ Patterson established that membership requirements for the Commonwealth should be based on the core values of the association. *Report of the Committee on Membership* (London: Commonwealth Secretariat, 2007).

86   Based on a case study submitted by Mike van Graan. See Annex One for full details.

'Mixed Metaphors', a play first produced in 2006, features a performance poet who uses poetry as a vehicle for making sharp and critical social commentary about contemporary South Africa

Transition

The period of transition between 1989 and 1994 which saw the end of the ban on the African National Congress (ANC), the release of Nelson Mandela and the start of political negotiations, was arguably the time of greatest cultural freedom. For artists, there were suddenly no boundaries on freedom of expression. In content, there was a shift from political themes to personal and moral issues, such as sexual identity and religious beliefs.

Aware that the social legacies of apartheid, including unemployment, poverty and poor public health and education, risked relegating culture to the bottom of the agenda, cultural organisations that had aligned themselves to the ANC and the United Democratic Front began to assert their political independence.

It was this principle of political independence that brought the National Arts Initiative (NAI), a non-racial, democratic and politically non-aligned lobby for the arts, into conflict with the ANC's Department of Arts and Culture, which some saw as trying to claim hegemony over cultural transformation. The leadership of the NAI insisted on the democratic right of the arts community to make policy recommendations that could form the basis for negotiation with parties and government. By the end of 1993, the National Arts Coalition, the NAI's successor, had adopted 17 resolutions that, if implemented, would fundamentally change the face of South African arts and culture.

The post-apartheid era

The period following Nelson Mandela's election in 1994 was one of empowerment for the arts community, with government listening to artists, and subsequently adopting much of their demand as official policy. With its primary aim of influencing government achieved and with leaders and activists either being brought into key government positions or suffering from 'struggle fatigue', the National Arts Coalition was dissolved. The participatory process culminated in the White Paper on Arts, Culture and Heritage which was adopted by the Cabinet in 1996 as its official policy.

Within a few years, however, the euphoria had begun to fade. 2000 saw the mothballing of the State Theatre and the loss of nearly 500 jobs, the retrenchment of half of the Market Theatre's staff, the closure of an orchestra in Cape Town and the collapse of numerous cultural NGOs due to an absence of funding.

Most fundamentally, the policy articulated in the White Paper – and based on Article 27 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights that 'everyone shall have the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community and to enjoy the arts'[87] was replaced, without consultation, by a policy in which the value of the arts was determined more by the demands of the market.

Artists who were important allies in the struggle against the injustice of apartheid were subsequently disempowered. If cultural policy is to be successful and if artists are to utilise their experience in bringing about positive social change, civil society must remain empowered and involved in processes of policy implementation, management and adaptation.

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87   *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (1948). See http://www.un.org/Overview/rights.html.

Areas for further investigation

1. How can cultural civil society be supported by donors and the international community during times of crisis without overtly politicising it or treating it as a proxy?

2. What roles can cultural civil society and practitioners play in reconciliation and peace-building processes, and how can they be supported to play these roles without their independence or freedom of expression being compromised?

Recommendations

1. Institutions and bodies which have a mandate to investigate repressive government actions, such as the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group, should expand their scope to include an analysis of cultural contexts, dialogue with cultural civil society and ongoing support for the role of cultural civil society in reconciliation and peace-building.

2. Support should be given for cultural civil society to maintain its critical edge and leadership in post-crisis times, when it is vulnerable to loss of leadership and direction.

8.   Rights and culture

This chapter explores various themes and connections already highlighted throughout this report through the lens of applying a human rights framework. It is suggested that using the language of rights is not only an interesting and fruitful approach to follow, but also that such an approach addresses claims and aspirations to power, in a way that other analyses may not.

'Cultural rights like the right to education and the right to cultural participation have a real-world political strength. They make 'material claims', and claims that have a reasonable chance of being satisfied. They stake out a zone in which it is possible for some quantity of power to change hands. They merit something better than cynicism.'[88]

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights asserts in Article 27 that 'Everyone has the right to freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits.'[89] Article 15 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights declares, *inter alia*, that States Parties 'undertake to respect the freedom indispensable for scientific research and creative activity.'[90] Nevertheless, cultural rights have otherwise been somewhat peripheral in global rights discourses. One reason for this is that cultural rights score lowly in the hierarchy of needs. Only when economic and social rights have been safeguarded, the argument goes, should cultural rights be looked at. Civil and political rights can also be seen as primary rights because they enable other rights, including ones related to culture.

Above and beyond theoretical causes, however, another reason why cultural rights have not figured highly on any putative rights hierarchy is the historical politicisation of global rights debates, in particular through the Cold War dichotomy between civil and political rights and economic and social rights. Until the end of the twentieth century, cultural rights discourses found themselves somewhat sidelined. If rights can be seen primarily as aspirations, then they require both claimants, and the real possibility of material gain. With the notable exception of indigenous rights discourses however, cultural rights have not been

used as a method to advance claims for power in quite the same way that civil, political, economic and social rights have.

What does this mean for the Commonwealth? Should Commonwealth countries take seriously cultural rights, and in what way? First, of course, there is a need to try to define cultural rights.

This report proposes that the issue of rights and culture should be approached from three principal angles: the right to live within one's own culture, the right to hear different cultural voices, and the right to an environment which supports creativity.

8.1   The right to live within one's own culture

'The defence of cultural diversity is an ethical imperative, inseparable from respect for human dignity. It implies a commitment to human rights and fundamental freedoms, in particular the rights of persons belonging to minorities and those of indigenous peoples. No one may invoke cultural diversity to infringe upon human rights guaranteed by international law, nor to limit their scope.'

Article 4, Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity[91]

88   Bruce Robbins and Elsa Stamatopoulou, 'Reflections on culture and cultural rights', *South Atlantic Quarterly,* (Vol. 103 (2/3), 2004): 16.
89   *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (1948). See http://www.un.org/Overview/rights.html.
90   *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights* (1966). See http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/a_cescr.htm.
91   *Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity* (2001). http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/diversity.htm.

One approach understands cultural rights as the right for peoples, including minorities, to live within their own culture. In the Commonwealth Foundation survey, 30 per cent of respondents said that protecting cultural rights should be the primary approach to culture and development.[92] This is, of course, a contested and difficult area.

Often such rights are interpreted as collective rights – rights of the group, for example to hold land collectively or practise customary law. Many recent developments in this area have concerned the group rights of indigenous peoples, with both the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007) and International Labour Organisation (ILO) Convention 169 concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries (1991) critical in setting this agenda. This area remains highly contested, and in 2007 Commonwealth civil society expressed 'outrage at the position taken by the three Commonwealth member states who voted against the adoption of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.'[93]

Although in some areas an interpretation of cultural rights as a community's collective rights has been successfully taken forward, the notion of collective rights has tended to pose significant difficulties for the legal systems of many Commonwealth countries. There can seem to be particular contradictions when customary law, for example, is perceived as undermining state law. It could be argued that when conflicts emerge over indigenous rights they actually relate more to power struggles over land and resources than to perceived conceptual or ideological challenges to the homogeneity of the nation state.

There is a broad debate also on the perceived conflict between collective rights and individual rights in societies which recognise and attempt to practise multiculturalism. At least one author, however, has argued that conflicts often do not actually materialise in practice, despite apparent conceptual obstacles.[94] A practice of multiculturalism which offers recognition of cultural difference and certain communities' collective rights may therefore be a sustainable approach in the long term. Multiculturalism itself is, of course, as mentioned in Chapter 6, an increasingly contested notion, or perhaps rather the way multiculturalism has been applied in practice, and the Commonwealth may need to look beyond the lively debate about whether collective rights are compatible with individual rights, and focus instead on other, less contested ways of enshrining and safeguarding the right to live within one's own culture.

Guidance may be offered by the Fribourg Declaration, launched in May 2007 as a reworked version of a document drafted for UNESCO. The Declaration begins from the starting point that cultural rights 'are currently recognised in a dispersed manner in a large number of human rights instruments and that it is important to group these rights together in order to ensure their visibility and coherence and to encourage their full realisation'.[95] The text goes on to declare, *inter alia*, the right to identity, heritage, participation in cultural life, information and integration into the economy.

The Fribourg Declaration, however, is more than a compilation of existing rights. Importantly, the document seeks to move away from the notion of cultural rights as collective rights, and instead attempts to anchor cultural rights firmly within existing human rights frameworks, noting of the cultural rights it outlines that 'no one shall invoke these rights to impair another right recognised in the Universal Declaration or in other human rights instruments.'[96] In a commentary annexed to the document, it is noted that there is a need to link meaningfully cultural rights to recent efforts to protect cultural diversity:

'The recent development of the protection of cultural diversity can only be understood as an attempt to avoid relativism, anchored in the indivisibility and interdependence of all human rights, and more specifically by clarifying the importance of cultural rights.'[97]

Safeguarding the right to live within one's own culture has posed particular problems when customs or traditions which seemingly infringe universal human rights have been excused under the relativist banner of 'collective rights.' This raises a controversial debate which many would rather avoid. However, with international momentum attempting to give, for the first time, real meaning to a non-relativistic and justiciable concept of cultural rights within the existing framework of universal human rights for the individual, the Commonwealth now has an avenue through which it might begin to tackle the issue of cultural rights.

92   See Annex Two for further details of the survey process.
93   *Realising People's Potential: The Kampala Civil Society Statement to the 2007 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting* (London: Commonwealth Foundation, 2007): 29.
94   Will Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995).
95   *Fribourg Declaration on Cultural Rights* (2007). See http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/ diversity.htm.
96   *Fribourg Declaration on Cultural Rights* (2007): 4. See http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/ diversity.htm.
97   *Fribourg Declaration on Cultural Rights* (2007): 12. See http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/ diversity.htm.

Children around the Commonwealth have a right to a diversity of cultural voices

8.2 The right to hear different cultural voices

A second perspective could understand cultural rights as the right of the consumer to cultural expression. As the positive social effects, such as those outlined in Chapters 6 and 7, of a creative environment are increasingly recognised, a 'right to culture' is well positioned to become a similar social imperative to the 'right to education'. In the Commonwealth Foundation survey, 48 per cent of participants felt that acts of cultural expression or creativity had the potential to transform their audiences,[98] which would seem to be one indication that the rights of access for the consumer of cultural expressions should be considered.

If there was a right to culture in this sense, what would it include? In other words, who might claim this right? The consumer might simply have different levels of personal preference for cultural expressions of varying origins, and consumer choice in this sense could not translate into a 'right'. There is, however, an argument to be made that citizens have a right to cultural expression at both ends of the spectrum of diversity. For example, in an increasingly globalised world, people might have a right to hear voices from their own cultures, along the lines suggested in Chapter 6. However, people might also have

a corresponding right to hear voices from outside their own cultures. Particularly in repressive situations or where attempts to use domestically generated culture for nation-building have been monolithic, there is a case to be made that individuals' cultural liberty and choices are being restricted. Importantly, it might not always require active censorship by governments to violate this posited right to diversity of cultural expression. The right to a diversity of cultural expressions, unlike the right to information or the right to freedom of expression, might be a positive, enabling right requiring governments to be proactive, rather than requiring governments simply to avoid acting repressively. Increasingly in rights discourses, there has been acceptance that similar enabling rights – for example, in the area of social and economic rights – need not necessarily be another burden on governments, but can represent an aspiration towards which governments will work in partnership with civil society, the private sector and international partners.

The right to hear different cultural voices may be of particular importance for children growing up in a world that will potentially be more culturally homogenised.[99] Challenges remain as to how culture can be mainstreamed into education across the Commonwealth. There have been suggestions in the United Kingdom, for example, that a certain number of compulsory hours for cultural activity might be introduced to the curriculum, in line with time set aside for compulsory sporting or physical activity. This report contends that the Commonwealth should remain open and sensitive to the possibility that there may be civil society and government voices increasingly concerned with taking forward the right of adults and children to appreciate and enjoy a diversity of cultural expressions and voices, including their own. The answer here would seem to be cultural policy and its effective implementation.

8.3 The right to an environment which supports creativity

When its potential is developed, creativity offers much to society. As has already been observed, on an individual level, creative expression can help its audience and creators develop and grow, and respect their own and other cultures. Identities can be affirmed and understood, cultural choices enabled and diversity protected and promoted. Communities can start to identify their own development problems and solutions. Society can benefit too. In stable, democratic times societies can become

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98   See Annex Two.
99   For example, see Martin Scott, *Screening the World: How UK broadcasters portrayed the wider world in 2007-2008* (International Broadcasting Trust, 2008).

Children's potential can flourish in an environment which supports creativity

cohesive, gain social capital and become culturally confident of their origins and their direction. In less stable or repressive times, an environment which supports creativity can be crucial in fostering subtle criticism, reflection and reconciliation. Creators themselves can benefit economically from sustainable livelihoods. National economies too can be rewarded by using cultural policy to develop cultural industries and a strong creative sector.

While creativity itself has much to offer, however, it may not be helpful to talk of a 'right to creativity'. Not all individuals, after all, are creative in quite the same way. Nevertheless, individuals might meaningfully be seen as having a right to an environment in which their own creative potential, whatever form it might take, can flourish. Such an environment would involve strong, implemented copyright laws. It would involve having as many markets as possible in which to secure a livelihood from creativity. It would imply reasonably open access to the means of cultural production. For those citizens who are not cultural practitioners, there might be a right to an environment in which they – and other citizens

– can meaningfully benefit from others' creativity; not financially, but by gaining insight, by growing in cultural confidence and by being more able to make informed and confident choices about important aspects of their identities, rather than having them imposed or arrived at by default. In short, an environment which supports creativity is important for cultural practitioners, for those contemplating cultural expression (including children) and for wider society.

As with the right to live within one's own culture and the right to hear different cultural voices, the Commonwealth should consider the possible political advantages for the claimants of recognising cultural demands within a human rights framework. The suggestion is that, with cultural rights discourses increasingly now making efforts to align themselves with universal human rights frameworks, culture and human rights are wholly compatible in a number of ways.

Areas for further investigation

1. How can citizens be offered opportunities, including through education and access to spaces for the production of creative expressions, to explore their own creative potential?

2. How can questions of cultural rights be integrated into the Commonwealth's existing human rights discourses, not least to be examined in terms of their compatibility and relationship with the Commonwealth's mandate to promote respect and understanding between different identities?

Key recommendations

1. Support and resources should be given to education policy that promotes children's access to a diversity of cultural expressions.

2. Connections should be fostered and joint working promoted between civil society working on human rights issues and interest groups based on cultural identity in order to explore common ground and joint working.

9. Conclusion: Where next for the Commonwealth?

This report has begun to explore some of the key links between culture and development in the Commonwealth. These include how cultural expression can benefit the economy (Chapter 2), the diversity of cultural expressions (Chapter 3), the human development agenda (Chapters 4 and 5), the quality of social life and cultural confidence (Chapter 6), situations of political crisis and repression (Chapter 7) and human rights (Chapter 8). It is acknowledged, however, that the Commonwealth's work in this area has only just begun, and the above chapters can only be a skeletal snapshot of current key areas of concern.

'Culture used to be a flower. Then it grew into a tree. Now it has become a fruit. What was yesterday a mere ornament is today the very centre and soul of the human adventure. We used to look upon it as an adjunct; we are coming to see that it is the heart of the matter. And so there is a need for a new approach to development that will at last recognise the decisive role of culture.'

A participant from Uganda, Commonwealth Foundation e-consultation

If flesh is to be put on the bones of the connections between culture and development in the Commonwealth context, much more work lies ahead. Beyond further research and understanding, however, it is essential that there should be high-level political commitment and buy-in, particularly amongst Commonwealth governments, to the idea that culture can be pivotal to development.

Recommendations for the Commonwealth

The Commonwealth as an association has only just begun to engage with the task of how to maximise and realise the potential of culture in development processes. However, there have been an increasing number of calls from Commonwealth citizens, beginning at the Commonwealth People's Forum 2007 and amplified through the consultative process[100] for *Putting Culture First*, for the Commonwealth as a whole to make culture a bigger part of its development work. The Commonwealth simply cannot turn back.
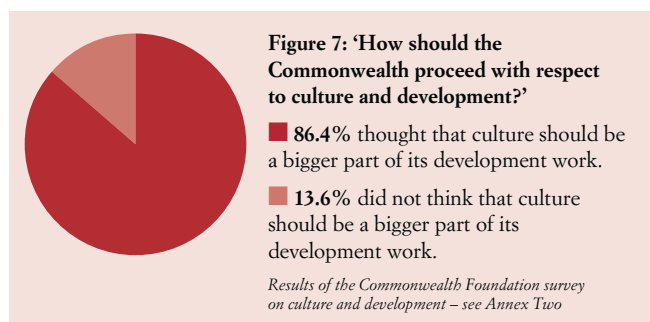
The primary recommendation of this report is therefore that all government, civil society and private organisations concerned with culture and development in the 53 countries of the Commonwealth should begin serious dialogue at the national level on how recognition of culture's role can be integrated into approaches to development. There currently exist a number of gaps in understanding between government and civil society, between some governments and others, particularly in the global North and South, and between cultural civil society and development civil society. Dialogue on culture and development in the Commonwealth, it is recommended, needs to begin by exploring some of the connections outlined here. It is contended that theories and understandings of culture and development, which in their diversity have helped to inhibit a full and proper conversation until now, can follow practice. Further research needs to inform this practice, and to assess what works and what does not. The initiation of serious discussion and shared learning, however, must also be matched by commitment and will at a political level. Without the provision of resources and without making difficult decisions, assertions about the value of culture will remain just words.

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100   86.4 per cent of survey participants thought that culture should be made a bigger part of the Commonwealth's development work (see Annex Two). This was reinforced through the findings of the national and regional consultations (see Annex One).

Figure 7: 'How should the Commonwealth proceed with respect to culture and development?'

■ **86.4%** thought that culture should be a bigger part of its development work.

■ **13.6%** did not think that culture should be a bigger part of its development work.

Results of the Commonwealth Foundation survey on culture and development – see Annex Two

With this primary objective and recommendation in mind, support can and should be offered at a pan-Commonwealth level. The variety of voices offered by civil society, as noted throughout this report, is critical to taking forward culture's positive role in development, and it is important that civil society should therefore be supported to operate in a strong and enabling space. The Commonwealth Foundation, as the intergovernmental organisation with a mandate for culture and civil society in the Commonwealth, should take the lead in responding. But the Commonwealth Foundation should also work with others, including the Commonwealth Secretariat, Commonwealth of Learning,[101] Commonwealth Associations,[102] other civil society bodies, Commonwealth member governments and fellow international organisations to raise the profile of culture on the development agenda urgently.

In the immediate future, the Commonwealth should:

9.1 Develop, as a priority, both a set of principles and also guidelines on how to work with culture in development in practice. Given the urgent need for political commitment, it is suggested that the most appropriate method would be a Commonwealth Commission on Culture and Development, comprised of high profile experts, including with government and civil society experience. The Commonwealth Commission on Culture and Development's findings would raise dramatically the position of culture on development agendas. Future Commonwealth People's Forums (CPF) and Commonwealth Heads of Government Meetings (CHOGM) should act as a focal point for efforts to raise awareness.

9.2 Make culture and development a central and substantive focus for future Commonwealth People's Forums and the processes of civil society consultation and mobilisation that precede them.

9.3 In addition to securing political commitment, encourage, fund and carry out further, evidence-based research. Research, however, should draw not only on empirical data indicating culture's effect on, for example, economic growth and poverty, but also on different academic disciplines, such as cultural studies, and indices of human development which appreciate the importance of cultural expression and cultural practice. This research should inform the Commonwealth Commission on Culture and Development, and have an advocacy edge. It should be made widely available, including in the form of a series of accessible policy briefs, to key policy-makers in order to shape the development and governance agendas.

9.4 Applying the research and policy recommendations, provide evidence and information on culture's role in development to key decision-makers in the Commonwealth, including diplomats, parliamentarians and development practitioners. A series of briefings on culture's role in development could serve as a useful preliminary introduction and contribute to the winning of support and champions. Information could be transferred through training courses, and supplemented by toolkits and training modules on incorporating a cultural perspective.

9.5 Create opportunities to test and apply the practical guidelines issued by the proposed Commonwealth Commission on Culture and Development. In efforts to move beyond previous generalised rhetoric about the role of culture in development and demonstrate the usefulness of linking the two concepts, these practical guidelines are of paramount importance. With this in mind, regionally based projects with particular thematic areas of focus, supported by network-building and targeted grant-giving based on the Commonwealth Foundation's tried and tested civil society grants methodology, would seem to provide excellent opportunities to demonstrate the impact of taking seriously culture's role in development. These opportunities should be created as early as possible. Research and learning generated

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101 The Commonwealth of Learning (COL) is an intergovernmental organisation created by Commonwealth Heads of Government to encourage the development and sharing of open learning/distance education knowledge, resources and technologies. See http://www.col.org/colweb/site.

102 The Commonwealth Associations are a wide network of civil society institutions, professional associations, organisations, funds and charities which operate at the pan-Commonwealth level.

from the implementation of the Commission's practical guidelines would help to shape future Commonwealth priorities.

9.6　Support research, identify good practice and assess the impact of current practice on the free movement and exchange of cultural practitioners, and the barriers that inhibit this, and support advocacy for the development of common standards in this regard.

9.7　Recognise and publicise the work of Commonwealth artists and cultural practitioners, and continue to offer direct support through award and prize schemes,[103] residency programmes, and through bringing Commonwealth cultural expression to a wider audience.

9.8　Make greater efforts to work with other partners across the globe to recognise and maximise culture's role in development. There already exists a significant body of work on different aspects of culture in development. For example, organisations such as the Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation, as well as a plethora of NGOs and philanthropic organisations such as Hivos, Prince Claus Fund, the Ford Foundation and freeDimensional, already do much work. Not only is there a danger in duplication, but the Commonwealth can also learn and share much with other partners.

9.9　Encourage those carrying out work on the different connections between culture and development illustrated in this report, including the above-mentioned organisations, to come together under a global umbrella movement, coalition or alliance, in order to realise synergies and maximise efforts to move culture up the political agenda. A holistic and inclusive interpretation of culture and development would need to be adopted here, which would play to the Commonwealth's strengths as a negotiator, facilitator and safe space for dialogue, by bridging gaps between developed and developing countries, between civil society and government, and between cultural and development sectors.

The road ahead

Putting Culture First is a preliminary step for the Commonwealth on a road which will, for those who would reiterate the intrinsic connections between culture and development, certainly be a difficult one. Numerous other critical causes will continue to compete with that of culture to be put first by governments, citizens and donors. Many, too, will be able to demonstrate an immediate need in ways that culture is not always able to. But these challenges and hurdles are nothing new. If real and concrete steps can be taken, backed up by genuine political commitment at all levels, then receptiveness will spread to the notion that in neglecting culture we are missing a crucial piece of the development jigsaw. Culture's potential to contribute to and indeed lead development has not yet been fully realised, and this failure is letting down people who live the daily experience of poverty and marginalisation.

Putting Culture First has outlined a number of ways in which culture is being linked to development across the Commonwealth, and calls for urgent action to support these fruitful connections. Much more needs to be done to pay proper tribute to the people and citizens of the Commonwealth who, day after day and often without acknowledgement, try to improve their societies through cultural expression, one step at a time. The time has now come for the Commonwealth to recognise and support the action its people are taking. By doing so, it can inspire many more to harness their creative efforts to make their world a better place.

103　The Commonwealth Writers' Prize, the Commonwealth Foundation's flagship prize, could continue to be expanded, through outreach and literacy work. See http://www.commonwealthfoundation.com/cwp.

Annex 1
Primary research material

Consultations

Culture in Development
14 March 2008
Location: London, United Kingdom
Participants: Civil Society Advisory Committee of the Commonwealth Foundation (Pan-Commonwealth)

Making Cultural Policy Work
19 May 2008
Location: Johannesburg, South Africa
Participants: Department of Arts and Culture, representatives of cultural CSOs (South Africa).

Cultural Livelihoods and Social Cohesion in the Caribbean
7 July 2008
Location: University of the West Indies, Trinidad and Tobago
Participants: International Federation of Coalitions for Cultural Diversity, representatives of cultural CSOs (Caribbean region).

Culture, Cultural Policy and Identity: the case of Barbados
9 July 2008
Location: St James, Barbados
Participants: National Cultural Foundation, representatives of cultural CSOs (Barbados).

Culture-based Methods for Effective HIV and AIDS Prevention: What role can distance learning play?
16 July 2008
Location: Fifth Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning, London, United Kingdom
Participants: Commonwealth Secretariat, representatives from government, civil society and academia (Pan-Commonwealth).

Making Culture Work for Development
14 August 2008
Location: Pacific CSO Forum 2008, Auckland, New Zealand
Participants: Representatives of development CSOs (Pacific region)

Culture and Development: a discussion
4 September 2008
Location: Commonwealth Diplomats' Induction Course, Farnham, United Kingdom
Participants: Commonwealth diplomats (Pan-Commonwealth).

Musicians' Unions in the Commonwealth: a Key to Cultural Diversity
4 October 2008
Location: International Federation of Musicians World Congress, Johannesburg, South Africa.
Participants: International Federation of Musicians (FIM), representatives of national musicians' unions (Pan-Commonwealth).

Full reports from these consultations can all be downloaded at http://www.commonwealthfoundation.com/culturediversity/Research.

Case studies

Perspective from Singapore: Performing arts and the role of cultural policy at the city level

The author, **Michelle Loh Wen Han**, is a part-time lecturer in Arts Policy at Lasalle College of the Arts, School of Integrated Studies, in Singapore, and has published several papers on different aspects of cultural policy. Michelle is currently also a PhD candidate at Goldsmiths University in the United Kingdom, researching Cultural Policy and Cultural Planning in Singapore.

Perspective from the Pacific: Market development, the role of festivals and traditional knowledge

The author, **Rhonda Griffiths**, a Norfolk Islander, previously worked as Cultural Adviser to Norfolk Island's Minister of Culture, and as Cultural Adviser for the Secretariat of the Pacific Community for six years. Rhonda currently works for the Norfolk Island Government Tourist Bureau, and is a Cultural Expert for the Secretariat of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States.

Perspective from Trinidad and Tobago: Carnival, steelbands and fostering cultural confidence

The author, **Kris Rampersad**, is a media, cultural and literary consultant in Trinidad and Tobago, where she was previously an editor and columnist of the Sunday Guardian. Kris is also the author of *Finding a Place*, in which she traces the emergence of literary consciousness amongst Indo-Trinidadians.

Perspective from South Africa: The vanguard of social transformation? Creators during and after apartheid

The author, **Mike van Graan**, is one of South Africa's most prolific playwrights and producers, and between 1993 and 1996 served as General Secretary of the National Arts Coalition, the country's largest arts and culture lobby. He subsequently became a Special Adviser to the Minister of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology after South Africa's first democratic elections. Mike currently works in Cape Town as the Executive Director of the Africa Centre.

These case studies can be downloaded in full at http://www.commonwealthfoundation.com/culturediversity/Research.

The information for spotlight sections in this report was provided by Emily Drani (Cross Cultural Foundation of Uganda), Ivan Duran (Stonetree Records) and Todd Lester (freeDimensional). The report was reviewed by Dr. Chanzo Greenidge.

Annex 2
Key findings from Commonwealth Foundation survey on culture and development

Between April and August 2008, the Commonwealth Foundation asked several hundred senior representatives of government, cultural CSOs, development CSOs and academia to answer a questionnaire on culture and development to, in order to gauge instinctive reactions to a number of fundamental questions about culture, cultural policy and development.

Of the 201 participants who responded, 47 per cent worked primarily in the cultural sector, and 29 per cent primarily in the development sector. Participants came almost equally from across the regions of the Commonwealth: Africa, Asia, Canada and Europe, Caribbean and Pacific, with a small number from outside the Commonwealth.

Key findings included:

1. There was a strong feeling that culture primarily could be understood in its anthropological sense, with 89.6 per cent of respondents agreeing most, when given three options, with the statement that 'culture is subconscious and everywhere around us; it's our cuisine, our language, and our everyday habits'.

2. Respondents valued the role of culture in affirming and negotiating identity, with 57.3 per cent of respondents agreeing most, when given three options, with the statement that 'culture matters because having your own forms of expression helps to establish and preserve your identity'.

3. Cultural policy, although important, wasn't considered absolutely necessary for the success of creative sectors, with 82.3 per cent of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statement that 'when cultural expressions – such as film, literature, arts – emerge, they tend to do so without necessarily being supported by government policies'.

4. There was a broad belief that cultural policy could, however, yield results. Out of five options, 50.3 per cent of respondents believed that the policies in their country were weak, but that they should be strengthened so that they could have the expected impact.

5. Respondents, despite the variety of their geographical origins, on the whole tended to consider that their country had a strong music sector compared with other creative sectors (see Figure 4 for comparison). Film, on the other hand, tended to be seen as a weak sector.

6. Respondents believed that cultural expression has a role to play in how society comes to terms with itself and its problems, with 78.9 per cent of respondents agreeing that 'creativity has the potential to transform the way in which society collectively thinks about and reflects upon itself'.

7. Respondents overwhelmingly called on the Commonwealth to engage with culture as a development option, with 86.4 per cent of respondents agreeing that 'the Commonwealth should make culture a bigger part of its development work'.

The results from the questionnaire can be downloaded in full at http://www.commonwealthfoundation.com/culturediversity/Research.

Annex 3
Executive summary of Sharing Strengths: Commonwealth and Francophone engagement with the UNESCO 2005 Convention

On 11 March 2008, over 30 delegates from Commonwealth governments, Commonwealth country delegations to UNESCO, the *Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie*, cultural coalitions, networks of cultural practitioners, civil society and youth organisations and the UK National Commission for UNESCO participated in a seminar hosted at Marlborough House by the Commonwealth Foundation, with support from the Québec Government Office in London.

The theme was one of 'sharing strengths', with a particular emphasis on an exchange of learning between countries of the Commonwealth and *La Francophonie*. This seminar was intended as an opportunity for leading experts on the 2005 UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions to exchange ideas, contribute thinking towards future actions, and identify areas of concern.

Three particular areas of interest had been identified prior to the seminar, and these acted as a framework for the discussions that followed. First, how can Commonwealth countries be encouraged to engage with the issues raised by the Convention? Secondly, how can civil society be meaningfully involved in the promotion and implementation of the Convention? Thirdly, how can mechanisms and measures be developed which enable the effective implementation of the Convention?

After presentations from five panellists and the round table discussion that followed, participants divided into three working groups to develop specific recommendations, before then presenting their findings to the group as a whole.

Eight key findings and recommendations emerged:

1. The Convention's ratification and implementation in the Commonwealth context depends significantly upon raising awareness and understanding.

2. To encourage ratification and implementation of the Convention, there should be a focus on mutual co-operation.

3. Enhancing civil society involvement, as outlined specifically in Articles 6, 7, 11, 12, 15 and 19 of the Convention, remains integral to the implementation and success of the Convention.

4. The International Fund for Cultural Diversity, outlined in Article 18 of the Convention, is an area for further advocacy.

5. Article 16, outlining a norm of preferential treatment for developing countries, should continue to be recognised as central to the spirit of the Convention.

6. The implications of the Convention go far beyond the cultural sphere.

7. The Commonwealth Foundation should work with partners to facilitate dialogue and awareness-raising of the Convention.

8. The Commonwealth and Francophone communities should identify opportunities for future co-operation.

The full report of the seminar can be downloaded at http://www.commonwealthfoundation.com/culturediversity/Research.

Using difference as
a source of strength