

REPORT ON FAIR INTERNATIONAL CULTURAL COOPERATION #2 – CLIMATE CHANGE
Conventions and practical issues in funding international activities.

Introduction

On December 6th 2019, DutchCulture gathered a group of 40 international experts at Broedplaats Lely in Amsterdam to discuss values and practicalities of fair(er) international cultural cooperation. This closed meeting followed the first gathering about this topic that was inspired by the publication of the toolkit *Beyond Curiosity and Desire: Towards Fairer International Collaborations in the Arts* earlier in 2018 by IETM with On the Move and DutchCulture. The first gathering focused on funding, the second gathering evolved around climate change, more specifically about the questions whether and how international cultural cooperation can be organised in a way that is fair to the climate?

This report is a summary of the discussion on December 6th focused on climate change.

1. Mutual understanding

What conventions do we share when talking about fair international cultural cooperation in the scope of climate change?

1.1 We acknowledge we don't fully grasp all perspectives on (changing) climate change.

Without relativizing the urgency of climate change, we can observe there are different understandings of climate change all around the world. It's both an individual and a cultural issue. The climate is perceived differently and consequently thoughts about causes, solutions and the impact on one's immediate environment are immensely diverse. The fact climate change became an urgent theme in the western world does not mean the rest of the world shares the urgency or problem analysis. In fact, many non-western cultures incorporate ancient wisdoms of the interwovenness of nature and culture that could be beneficial.

Additionally, the recent focus on climate change by Western organisations has a direct effect on the funding and practices of international cultural practitioners, who might have other priorities like emancipation or inequality. It might not be feasible or even effective for these practitioners to start addressing climate change under international influences and guidelines formulated in a different context. We cannot fully understand what the consequences of our response to climate change needs to be just by ourselves. So to be fair; climate change issues need to be understood and addressed through open conversations about the perspectives, priorities and scenarios by all regions involved. No one is in the lead or is excused from changing one's paradigms.

1.2 We recognize the notion of justified international exchange needs to change.

If the arts wish to address climate change in a fair way, as propagated above, there is a need for travel. Many exchanges can be done digitally, but the effect of artworks and artistic collaborations depend for a significant part on physical interactions. When the carbon footprint of international exchange becomes a criteria, the kinds of arts and artists are deemed necessary for travel will change.

Fairness itself needs an ecological interpretation. We distinguish two approaches when talking about what fair means: it firstly means setting a principle and secondly it means having a common but differentiated responsibility. When addressing the former one could think of a carbon footprint criteria. However, this could very well enforce the dominant power structures, hence the need to formulate fair differentiated responsibilities. Equal ecological responsibilities in an otherwise unequal partnership will harm the potential of fair international exchange. It seems larger and better funded parties should be able to take a larger responsibility.

1.3 We understand the need to reinterpret the idea of what we exchange and in which direction

The aforementioned justified travel forces us to reinterpret what it is that's being transferred by cultural exchange and what is needed to do so effectively. Especially when traveling is part of the collaboration a right balance should be found between physical contact and virtual presence. Some modes of cultural exchange might be feasible digitally or with local minorities from the diaspora, eliminating the need for travel. Others might want to change mode of transport, extend the time spent abroad (slow travel) or incorporate foreign networks of knowledge and production (slow art), increasing the qualitative impact of travel.

However, the paradox remains: to initiate fair international cooperation, we need to involve a wide variety of people from abroad. In general, an intersectional approach to representation is needed to find the wholesome solutions. So in order to reinterpret the idea of what we exchange one has to rethink 'geo-cultural' practices. For example: shifting the Western intentions from cultural exporter to cultural importer might be an effective way to diversify the number of cultures that travel.

1.4 We accept the moral responsibility to change our own practice and share our learnings.

There is a moral dilemma between personal awareness and changing one's practice, that historically has been shaped by an environment that does not value climate change as such. The options for funding and (inter)governmental frameworks that normalize and incentivize climate considerations are limited. However, this should not excuse anyone from taking initiatives to change their own practice and address the issue among stakeholders, no matter your position in the field. This means priorities need to be adjusted and the measure of 'success' needs to change. Depending on the practice this might mean one needs to lobby for changes in policy.

As cultural organizations and artists we strive to work together yet we have different missions. The point of individual moral obligations raises ethical questions about the people and institutions we work with. We need personal values and collective norms to address issues. Like whether one could justify being funded by a climate polluter even if this allows for continued pro-climate practice. In order to do so we need to share our doubts, thoughts and learnings. This helps to navigate our practice through the challenges and helps others to change their practice as well. By doing so we create a global community and with educational frameworks in the process.

1.5 We accept the responsibility that comes with the influential status of the arts.

Then the question: will arts be the actor of change? We believe the arts can be a vanguard to public opinion and other sectors, it can be an actor of change. We feel the urgency of climate change gives the arts a certain responsibility to use its influence for sustainability purposes. Climate change issues addressed through the arts can be an emotional plea, parallel to the rational plea by science, changing the behavior of society. There could even be financial incentives linked to this.

Measured in effect, this would give the work of art ecological value (next to the intrinsic cultural value). There seems to be a slippery slope when art about sustainability is considered "good art". However, we are aware the contents of art never originate from a fully autonomous situation. The arts are always influenced and scrutinized by its stakeholders and serves either one ideology or another. It seems only fair to value the arts accordingly when it takes its responsibility in an issue as monumental as climate change. Just like we consider it fair to acknowledge the qualities of the arts outside of the dominant western discourse. We need new narratives for and by the arts.

2. Practical recommendations

What are the opportunities and challenges in your organisation, your funding systems, with partners and with audiences of a climate-oriented practice? i.e. which tools or mechanisms could we develop that aim for fairness and what are the best cases we can refer to?

2.1 Change your paradigm

- Employ a holistic view of the complexities that we are challenged with.
- Don't lose hope, talk to each other, climate anxiety is an actual thing.
- Be aware of the fear-of-fraud paradigm and look for ways to share resources based on trust, transparency and social control.
- The potential ecological impact should always be considered before deciding on a project.
- Use the discursive powers of the arts to rethink the dominant norms or frames of reference.
- Evoke a mindset change and create awareness through action.
- Adopt both top-down and bottom-up approaches.
- Use bottom-up to get sufficient support and ideas from the general population.
- Use top-down approaches to use the power to change by the elites and policy makers.
- Think outside the paradigm of production and in terms of making collaborative artworks.
- Make reciprocity a core value.
- Bring the humanities and ecology to the forefront of your frames of reference.

2.2 Incorporate fair and ecological thinking into you practice

- Implement a sustainable travel policy.
- Start measuring your carbon footprint (e.g. with tools provided by Julie's Bicycle).
- Set goals and guidelines to reduce your ecological impact.
- Be able to clearly justify this footprint in discussions with colleagues.
- Travel less and be sure you know why, if you do.
- Incorporate the use non-Western knowledge as another way of doing things.
- Rethink mobility in terms of time (e.g. encourage longer stays and consider issues arising from a lengthier engagement).
- Push for longer and more impactful projects.
- Consider proposing another type of work of reproducing the artwork in the destination site, when facing high carbon footprints.
- Think about how you accommodate travellers (e.g. develop a network to host people privately).
- Give/use local tips that support the local economy and the options to travel by train or to stay longer.
- Update the mission of your organization to incorporate fair and ecological practices.
- Promote walking art practices: a sustainable practice and methodology.

2.3 Embrace locality

- Find models of cooperation that are beneficial for the local community.
- Instead of focusing on fast growth, slow down the pace.
- Educate yourself, everything about the environment starts with ourselves.
- Produce art that is recyclable, create something that afterwards can just go into nature and be taken into the ecosystem e.g. reusable costumes or scenery.
- Regulate your own practice and processes.
- Use used products and make your own space eco-friendly.
- Inspire others to work in the same way.
- Know your own carbon footprint, waste produce and pollution.

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- Include your supply chain in your thinking so you don't shift the problem (geographically).
- Think about the potential of different ideas of community coming from rural places, compared to individualistic ways of living in cities.

2.4 Focus on ecologically fair collaborations

- Keep working inclusively, with a more diverse range of people, to get a holistic view.
- Use environmental means of travel as much as possible even if this costs more time.
- Discuss environmental issues and the ways of reporting at the start of the project.
- Compare carbon footprint with collaborators and discuss goals and tactics.
- Address the ecological fairness in financial and contractual negotiations.
- Think in terms of cooperation and collaboration instead of competition.
- Create multipliers: more focus on the process, instead of the outcome.
- Blend online and offline options in cooperations, formats and artworks.
- Be aware of the challenges of unequal power structures (e.g. visa limitations).
- Build on shared perspectives to bridge the gap between different missions.
- Don't get stuck in discussions.

2.5 Address the power of funders and those who are well funded.

- Weigh the moral implications of financial incentives and reporting regulations in grant applications.
- Use positive and easy accessible motivation via stories, tools, best cases and comparative analysis.
- Get funding for the learning process of mistakes, instead of output based funding only.
- Be aware bureaucracy, having to report on everything, is costly.
- Focus on alternative ways of showing the relevance and impact of projects, based on qualitative impact instead of quantitative and economic outcome.
- Consider the potential unequal tendencies of (indirectly) funding certain activities abroad and make criteria meet local context and urgency.

2.6 Don't forget systemic change is needed.

- Operate in an intersectional manner and get out of the art-bubble.
- Invest in a meaningful role within your local context whilst fostering international exchange.
- Be aware of new spaces that emerge, both physical and non-physical, where future narratives might grow.
- Involve your stakeholders by including communicative strategies (e.g. 'The climate was not hurt by creating this project').
- Think in terms of 'holistic' methodologies: people-oriented, local-oriented, resource networks that are not exceptionally for arts and culture.
- Use the force of the collective, e.g. by implementing a fair climate code or financing the development of toolkits.
- Rethink the production process in every aspect (e.g. as a scenario writer: don't include three scenes in three different parts of the world).
- Exchange with the scientific field both in form and the content.

2.7 Harness the power of education

- Include educational frameworks to magnify the impact of fair ecological practices and thinking.
- Give access to information, fairness means to share information.
- Build a common language and increase the importance of multilateral cooperation by using language that the global community can understand.

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- Share the insights, tools and standards of your search for more sustainable modes of operation with others.
- Facilitate discussions about justifications and approaches.
- Initiate general assemblies and platforms, where efforts and knowledge can be exchanged.
- Create a toolkit for collaborating in a fair way and an objective tool for tracking ecological impact.
- Be transparent about the way you measure your CO2 footprint and consecutive outcomes.
- Make the impact of climate change tangible and graspable (e.g. show the process of sludge in rivers).
- Take the pioneering position in your organisation as this has an impact and resonates beyond your scope.
- Be agents of change by reflecting on the system and flagging issues/voicing concerns.
- Take the responsibility to DO something, no matter how small the start is.
- Use larger supportive frameworks like the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals.
- Young ones are going to be the audiences for culture, and they will demand more.
- Capitalize on the cultural momentum that civil society
- Go out of your bubble and get informed by workshops on environmental topics in other sectors.

2.8 Honorable mentions

- Arts move Africa decentralizes the centres of power.
- British Arts Council's template for climate change.
- Casco's climate justice code.
- European Cultural Foundation with Step travel grants and Tandem projects.
- iPortunus: simple and fair applications that are fair and trust-based.
- On the Move.
- Prins Claus fonds and the attitude of listening.
- Stichting Doen let the international network itself become the selector of grantees.
- United Cities For Local Government.
- World Economic Forum with Global Shapers.

Next steps

Following the Fair meetings, EUNIC has decided with their members to develop a toolkit for fair international cultural cooperation, which proves how fruitful the exchanges have been. The next Fair international cultural cooperation gathering is on *friday 18 September 2020* and is about language

International cultural directors, artists, thinkers, scientists, critics, policymakers and funders with a focus on language issues and who are actively invested in the topic of fair international cultural cooperation, are called upon to [apply for the gathering on September 18](#).

When working abroad and collaborating internationally, cultural practitioners enter a space which is already characterized by cultural differences and structural power inequalities. One of these inequalities arise from the use of language. During the gathering in September 2020, we will be asking ourselves: *how might we arrange international cultural cooperation's in a manner that can be considered to be fair with respect to language?*

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Read more about the gathering and the Open Call [on our website](#). The Open Call is also available in [Arabic](#), [Hindi](#), [Mandarin](#) and [Spanish](#). In case you are interested please [apply via the online form](#). The gathering will take place in Amsterdam with options to join online. Please note that the deadline for applications is July 2nd.

List of participants

Name	Organisation	Role
Akane Euphemia Luiken	Dutch Foundation for Literature	Coordinator Travel Grants
Alexandre Domingues	Unesco Chair on Cultural Policies	Deputy Chairholder
Ana Ramos Barretto	Prince Claus Fund	Programme Assistant Grants & Collaborations
Andreas Wilhelm Köhn	Munich 2051 Climate Conference	Director
Anne Nigten	ISEA international	Board member
Antonia Blau	Goethe-Institut	Head of EU office
Asmaa Benachir	Au Grain de Sésame	Funder and Manager
Ayeta Wangusa	Culture and Development East Africa	Executive Director
Beatriz Salinas Marambio	The Valley of the Possible	Chair of Board
Bjorn Schrijen	Boekman Stichting	Researcher
Brechtje Smidt	Dutch Picture Industry	Managing Director
Chris Julien	De Waag	Research Director
Claire Rosslyn Wilson	Freelance	Cultural manager, poet, editor and researcher
Daniel Escorel	Associação Cultural Videobrasil	International Relations
Erik Uitenbogaard	Casco Art Institute	Head of Diverse Economies
Gegeen Togooch	Ministerie van OCW	Intern
Gitte Zschoch	EUNIC Global AISBL	Director
Gwendolenn Sharp	The Green Room	Founder and Coordinator
Hélène Doub	Institut français	Adjunct directeur
Herman Bashiron	University of Barcelona	Coordinator of Postgraduate Intern. Cult. Coop.
Mendolicchio		
Hiroko Tsuboi-Friedman	UNESCO	Member, Expert Facility UNESCO 2005 Convention
Irene Stracuzzi	independent	Designer
Jarl Yke Schulp	FIBER	Director and curator
Joana Ozorio de Almeida Meroz	Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam	Dr., Lecturer
Kamiel Damiaan Arents	International Film Festival Rotterdam	Coordinator Marketing & Communication
Lazaro Israel Rodriguez Oliva	UNESCO	Expert, coordinator
Lidi Brouwer	Independent	

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Mareile Zuber	The Green Culture Desk	Owner and project manager
Mariana Wongtschowski	Porticus	Programme Manager
Marianna Takou	Casco Art Institute	Producer
Matthea de Jong	Warming Up!	Project leader
Michał Leszek Szostek	Adam Mickiewicz Institute	Head of Knowledge Management
Mikko Fritze	Goethe-Institut Netherlands	Director
Nan van Houte	Independent	Cultural Entrepreneur
Philip Montnor	Mondriaan Fund	Grants officer International
Sana Ouchtati	More Europe	Director
Stephan Behrmann	German Ass. Ind. Performing Arts	Managing Director
Tanja Vranic	DAS Master Creative Producing	Teacher International Cultural Cooperation
Tessa Giller	Prince Claus Fund	Researcher
Tsveta H. Andreeva	European Cultural Foundation	Senior R&D Officer
Udo Rudolf Prinsen	Prinsen.Studio	Visual artist / Director
Ulrike Hahn	Erasmus University	Researcher
Ziad Erraiss	More Europe	Policy Officer

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