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GUIDELINES FOR EVALUATING
THE CULTURAL NEEDS OF A GIVEN POPULATION

These guidelines have been prepared by Ms Clotilde Giry, a UNESCO consultant. The opinions expressed are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Organization.

GUIDELINES FOR EVALUATING THE CULTURAL
NEEDS OF A GIVEN POPULATION

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

The purpose of the attached questionnaire is to help to collect data concerning the population of an area circumscribed locally, regionally or nationally with a view to drawing up a list of cultural needs, reflecting not only general aspirations, practices and output but also structures and institutions, policies and material resources, and education and training.

For each of these themes, the questions are designed as far as possible to take equal account of present circumstances and future trends (perceived developments and those desired), and of the constraints specific to the environment in question and the perceived priorities for action.

The information obtained should enable UNESCO to draw up projects designed to cater for the needs expressed, to make provision, in collaboration with the institutions concerned, for their planning and funding, and to provide assistance for their implementation and follow-up.

LAYOUT OF THE DOCUMENT

Introduction

General needs expressed

Cultural practices and output productions

life-styles and value systems

performances/events

patterns of consumption of cultural goods

Structures, institutions and environment

basic texts and documents

political, administrative and institutional framework

cultural agents and institutions

Policies and resources

sectoral policies

support for artistic creativity (traditional and contemporary)

dissemination, media and cultural industries

Education and training

education and cultural action

training

INTRODUCTION

Brief outline of the geographical, economic, socio-political, historical and cultural situation of the target territory (statistics and concise chronology).

GENERAL NEEDS EXPRESSED

The aim at this initial stage is to ascertain the immediate, salient features of the cultural 'demand', features that will be analysed in greater depth at the later stages.

For the most part, the questions concerning this theme should be differentiated, if possible according to the target territory, age, sex, social and occupational category (in particular the degree of personal or professional involvement in the particular sphere), geographical location (rural/urban), cultural and religious background, and education.

How is the term 'culture' defined? What does it evoke, first and foremost? (life-styles and patterns of consumption, value systems, heritage, traditional activities, events and creative activities of a cultural nature - and which of these are given preference? etc.)

In regard to which of these aspects are cultural needs perceived from the outset to be strongest?

In what terms and in what order of priority are these needs generally expressed?

structures, institutions and environment

policies and resources

education and training

How are these needs ranked in relation to other types of aspiration (social, political, economic): more important, equally important, less important?

In addition, for each of the questions included under this head, and differentiated according to the criteria already mentioned:

What are the perceived trends? How are they perceived? (favourably or unfavourably, on the whole?). What appear to be the main agents thereof? (economic, social, political, religious?).

What are the desired trends? What factors are likely to promote such trends? What factors inhibit them? What deficiencies are most frequently cited? What are regarded as priority courses of action? What measures might be taken to alert public opinion?

What specific constraints are perceived a priori as being the most crucial in this sphere?

CULTURAL PRACTICES AND OUTPUT PRODUCTION

Life-styles and value systems

For the most part, the questions concerning this theme should be differentiated if possible according to the target territory, age, sex, social and occupational category (in particular the degree of personal or professional involvement in the particular sphere), geographical location (rural/urban), cultural and religious background, and education.

What are the predominant cultural features and modes of expression, both traditional and modern, as regards:

use of language or languages,

activities relating to production and trade,

housing and community life (festivities, ceremonies, social and religious rituals, private and public rituals),

exchanges and communications with other neighbouring or distant social or ethnic groups?

Clarify and illustrate in detail each of these themes.

Which of these aspects do you consider to be most strongly representative of the cultural identity of the populations concerned?

Performances/events

In the following spheres (and, for each of them, both traditional and modern, religious and secular):

drama

music/singing

plastic arts and crafts (pottery, calligraphy, clothing etc.)

dance

literature

cinema

What events/performances take place?

How regularly?

In what context? (institutional or other, central or local, in collaboration with other communities, and if so, which?). Give details.

What is their impact (rate of attendance, media coverage and other spin-off)?

Overall, what are the main events?

Patterns of consumption of cultural goods

For the most part, the questions concerning this theme should be differentiated if possible according to the target territory, age, sex, social and occupational

category (in particular the degree of personal or professional involvement in the particular sphere), geographical location (rural/urban), cultural and religious background, and education.

What are the predominant features of the consumption of cultural goods (institutional and public, industrial and commercial)?

What proportion does local production (to be defined) represent in such consumption? What proportion is represented by foreign production? (specify, quoting which of the spheres cited in particular).

In what terms is the demand primarily expressed? (institutional and public consumption, industrial and commercial consumption, local or non-local consumption).

In addition, for each of the questions included under this head, and differentiated according to the criteria already mentioned:

What are the perceived trends? How are they perceived? (favourably or unfavourably, on the whole?). What appear to be the main agents thereof? (economic, social, political, religious?).

What trends are considered desirable? What factors are likely to promote such trends? What factors inhibit them? What shortcomings are most frequently cited? What are regarded as priority courses of action? What measures might be taken to alert public opinion?

What specific constraints are perceived a priori as crucial in this sphere?

What are the major needs in terms of:

expertise, advice

financial assistance

technical assistance (in equipment and in human resources)

training

cultural action?

STRUCTURES, INSTITUTIONS AND ENVIRONMENT

The aim here is to map out the general background to the cultural life of the populations covered by the survey: for all the themes addressed below, care should be taken to list and to distinguish what corresponds on the one hand to official cultural resources and, on the other, to community or private initiatives and resources.

Basic texts and documents

What are the basic documents concerning the recognition of cultural rights? What are the main pieces of legislation and regulations concerning culture? What are the forward-planning documents of a technical nature (specifically cultural planning and programming)?

What are the global long-term objectives of the strategy of the authorities concerned in matters of culture? What are those of the community? What are the current and medium-term priorities?

Political, administrative and institutional framework

Which authorities have responsibility for cultural affairs? (Ministry, Council, Specialized office, Department - and attached to which Ministry? - other ...)?

What is the volume and relative scale of funding of cultural activities allocated to the territories (in comparison with other spheres and as a proportion of the national or federal budgets)?

What staff and what budgets are allocated to the target territory?

What relations (at what level and in what context?) are maintained with organizations responsible for international cultural co-operation? (UNESCO, UNDP, NGOs, etc.)

Cultural agents and institutions

What cultural institutions are established in the target territory? (museums, libraries, archives, theatres, orchestras, ballets, etc.)?

What is the role of associations, groups, trade union or professional organizations, political parties, traditional communities, religious movements, etc.? (What activities do they promote in the cultural sphere?)

How far does that sector of the population which does not belong to organizations take part in cultural life?

How big is the commercial and industrial private sector (national, non-national, as appropriate)?

Does private patronage play a role? (if so, give details).

In addition, for each of the questions included under this head, and differentiated according to the criteria already mentioned:

What are the perceived trends regarding each of the questions listed above? How are they perceived? (favourably or unfavourably, on the whole?). What appear to be the main factors thereof? (economic, social, political, religious?).

What trends are considered desirable? What factors are likely to promote such trends? What factors inhibit them? What are the deficiencies most frequently stressed? What are regarded as priority courses of action? What measures might be taken to alert public opinion?

What specific constraints are perceived a priori as crucial in this sphere?

What are the major needs in terms of:

expertise, advice

financial assistance

technical assistance (in equipment and in human resources)

training

cultural action?

POLICIES AND RESOURCES .

In the target territory and for all the themes covered below, the aim will be, as previously, to inventory and to distinguish on the one hand what relates to official cultural resources and, on the other, what corresponds to community or private initiatives and resources.

Sectoral policies

What activities are undertaken in order to safeguard the heritage (monuments, artefacts, other)?

What activities are undertaken by museums, archives, institutes of archaeology, centres for the study of cultures?

What problems may be posed by the collection, study, conservation, presentation and understanding of the heritage, for both specialists and the general public?

Support for artistic creativity (traditional and contemporary)

What is the economic situation of creative artists?

Are there any forms of protection for artistic and intellectual property (in particular for the work of little-known artists)?

Are new technologies used in creative work?

What is the status of non-occupational creative activity?

Dissemination, media and cultural industries

What are the conventional dissemination networks? (specialized facilities, cultural centres, multipurpose centres, libraries, mobile facilities, including those operating outside urban centres).

What radio and television broadcasting organizations operate on the territory? (structure, size, programmes and in particular educational programmes broadcast in local languages, both publicly and privately owned). Give details.

What does the written press consist of? (dailies, periodicals, specialized reviews).

What book, record, cassette and film industries are there (production and distribution)?

Do other types of media exist? Which? Give details.

For each of the questions included under this head, and differentiated according to the above-mentioned criteria:

What are the perceived trends regarding each of the preceding questions? How are they perceived? (favourably or unfavourably on the whole?). What

appear to be the main features of those trends? (economic, social, political, religious?)

What trends are considered desirable? What factors are likely to promote such trends? What factors inhibit them? What are the deficiencies most frequently cited? What are regarded as priority courses of action? What measures might be taken to alert public opinion?

What specific constraints are perceived a priori as crucial in this sphere?

What are the major needs in terms of:

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cultural action?

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Education and cultural action

Concerning the populations as a whole:

What cultural subjects are taught in schools (primary and secondary)?

type

scope and content of curricula (give details)

type of instruction

how related to other courses

Are there courses and activities outside school or university that are intended for schoolchildren? For the general public?

type

content

type of teaching and organized activities (socio-cultural and socio-educational activities? Give details)

type of activities organizers (local? professional? Give details)

Are there any experiments in organizing community activities and community development? Give details of the most significant.

Training

As regards officially appointed staff on the one hand and members of the community on the other, exercising responsibilities in the spheres of cultural action and development:

administrative officers in charge of cultural policies and affairs

specialists in cultural action and the teaching of cultural subjects
(group activities leaders, teachers)

scientists and research staff (working in museums, libraries, etc.)

artists and performers

cultural agents (communication, development)

What levels and categories of staff are employed?

in central agencies whose scope coincides exactly with the territory,
and/or at local level?

in cultural institutions?

involved in the management of cultural events?

other (give details)

What are the recruitment procedures?

How are needs evaluated?

What are the selection criteria?

Who takes the decisions regarding selection?

What are the main features of the training system? (specializations,
duration, content, teaching methods used, receptiveness to the outside
world).

How are these various categories of personnel ranked in terms of social
recognition, pay, career opportunities, status? (permanent employment or
otherwise, social benefits, professional associations and trade unions,
etc.)

In addition, for each of the questions included under this head, and
differentiated according to the criteria already mentioned:

What are the perceived trends regarding each of the questions listed above?
How are they perceived? (favourably or unfavourably, on the whole?). What
appear to be the main features of those trends? (economic, social,
political, religious?).

What trends are considered desirable? What factors are likely to promote
such trends? What factors inhibit them? What are the deficiencies most
frequently stressed? What are regarded as priority courses of action? What
measures might be taken to alert public opinion?

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What are the major needs in terms of:

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ANNEXES

All available statistics on the issues addressed

Organizational charts of the government departments and official and community bodies concerned (with addresses)

List of documents consulted