

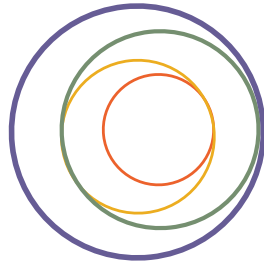
not a toolkit!

Fair Collaboration in Cultural Relations A ReflAction

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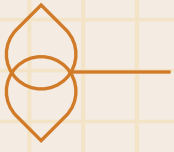
Design Partner



Project Management



WAYS OF DOING- FAIR EVALUATION



WHAT DOES THIS REFER TO?

The arts and culture sector is constantly requested to prove measurable outcomes to demonstrate its wider, sustainable and long-term effects on economy and/or society and to provide a clear account of value and worth to those who fund and support arts and culture. The same applies to the cultural relations arena.

The methodological question - how do you evaluate cultural relations - is an ongoing discussion in the field. That's why talking about evaluation in cultural relations has focused so far on methods, approaches and ways to capture impact. The work of the Goethe Institut through the **Culture Counts project** and jointly with the British Council on the **Cultural Value project** highlight those challenges and propose different tools for capturing the impacts of cultural relations.

But who attributes this value? What kind of evidence gathering is needed to articulate and demonstrate this value? Is this evidence gathering process accessible to all? How culturally sensitive to the context are evaluators? For whom does a specific project/intervention create value? How is all this documented, communicated and evaluated in a fair way? What are the ethical implications of designing, conducting and communicating evaluation of cultural relations actions and projects? These are questions still to be addressed.

Another challenge is that availability and access to evaluation of cultural relations actions and programmes is scarce. This paucity of documentation on evaluation can be explained if we consider that reporting evaluation findings is primarily undertaken for accountability reasons and is considered internal information. However, if we consider that evaluation is also about learning, we would need to extract lessons learnt and share them with the wider community of practice.

One thing is sure: the evaluation of cultural relations initiatives is complex. Cultural relations processes are long-term, which is deep, subjective, and difficult to quantify and assess. Therefore, it should be examined within the discussion around cultural value since this influences the decisions regarding the frameworks of cultural valorisation and the methodologies for evaluation, in their nature, application and validity. In this quest, the central question between the intrinsic and instrumental contribution of culture is still influential in the discussion.

When we talk about fairness in the evaluation of cultural relations, we need to think about **decolonising** our practises and ensuring all voices are heard and documented. Fair evaluation in cultural relations means impartial, transparent, ethical and inclusive evaluation - from conceptualising evaluation, to commissioning evaluation, to designing an evaluation framework and implementing it and finally in communicating its findings.

An entry point to consider fairness in evaluation of cultural relations is by revising ethics frameworks in the evaluation practice, primarily in relation to how the diverse values and principles are considered in the process of evaluation. In the cultural relations field, the fairness and ethical questions in evaluation should refer to the culturally driven choices and the moral values that underpin evaluation; and how we establish an agreed practice with our partners and relevant stakeholders that takes into consideration the culturally and institutionally defined context.

HOW DO WE USE THIS TEXT?

-----> The text reminds all stakeholders why conceptualising and implementing evaluation in a fair way gives justice to all those involved in cultural relations programmes and actions. We need to keep this in mind when designing a project or programme and funding schemes. Considering fairness in the evaluation practice allows us to reflect on the impact we want to make and how we will document it. Also on how the evaluation findings will help us improve. Assessing fairness in our practice can also be a useful exercise for organisations and project managers in the field of cultural relations. The organisational fairness assessment and the project management *reflAction* elements can contribute in this direction.

Developing the capacity to evaluate projects and actions through the lenses of fairness and enabling practitioners and beneficiaries to contribute to this process can only benefit the EUNIC institutions and the different project managers to document the impact of their programmes and assess the success of their policies and supporting mechanisms in an inclusive and ethical way.

Think about organising a session with the team and partners on how to plan the evaluation of a specific project/action.

WHAT KEY/OPEN QUESTIONS DO WE STILL NEED TO ASK?

- ? How do we choose which projects will be evaluated?
 - ? How do we select the expert/team that will do the evaluation?
- ? What are the skills we are looking for in the evaluator expert(s)? How important is cultural sensitivity and sociocultural knowledge of the context?
 - ? If we are the funders, are we the only ones setting the rules? How are we engaging our counterparts in decision-making around evaluation?
- ? How have we taken into consideration evaluation ethics?
 - ? How do we use the evaluation process and results? Is it shared with the partners and do we discuss it?
- ? How is the resulting learning incorporated into our practice?
 - ? Have we thought about assessing the fairness of our practice?

WHAT KEY/OPEN QUESTIONS DO WE STILL NEED TO ASK?

FROM EUNIC PARTNERS

How and when are we consulted regarding the evaluation of the project?

Have we been involved in the selection of the evaluator(s)?

Is our own perspective reflected? If there has been a conflict, have we documented it in an ethical way?

Does the evaluation give justice to our involvement in the project/action?

Have we discussed the results with the evaluator(s) and those in charge of the project? Have we integrated the learning?

FROM EUNIC BENEFICIARIES

Has everyone been given the space and time to inform the evaluation?

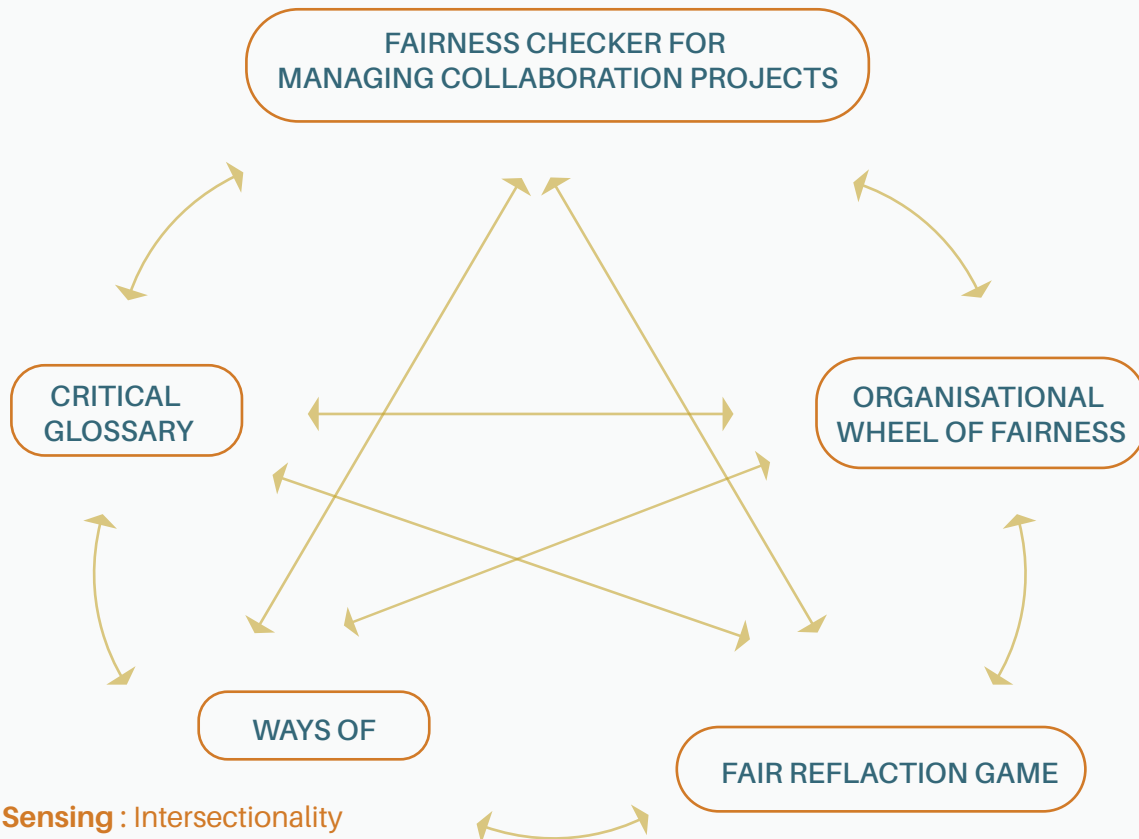
Were the methods used to gather data appropriate and accessible to all?

Have the evaluation findings been shared and discussed with the beneficiaries?

RESOURCES FOR FURTHER READING

- British Council and Goethe Institut (2018). ***Cultural Relations in Societies in Transition : a literature review***
- Bonito Eduardo, Paciv Katarina, Zerhouni Claire Malika (2021). ***Evaluation- actors, values and metrics*** as part of the ReShape project
- Dagna Gmitriwicz and Marie Le Sourd for the European Network of Cultural Centers (2017). ***The Evaluation Journey: A Toolkit for Cultural Operators***
- Goethe Institut (2016). ***Culture works - Using Evaluation to Shape Sustainable Foreign Relations***
- Magkou Matina (2017). ***Value and Evaluation in International Cultural Cooperation: Focus on the EuroArab region*** (unpublished PhD thesis)
- Thomas Ian (2020). ***Building an Impact Evaluation Toolbox based on an Arts and Soft Power Ecosystem.*** Figueroa Press- University of Southern California

Each component of the *Not a Toolkit! Fair Collaboration in Cultural Relations - A ReflAction* is connected to all other components. After finishing your reflAction journey in this section continue journaling in the next part.



Sensing : Intersectionality

Thinking : Decolonisation & Racism

Doing : Fair Evaluation

Connecting : ReflAction

Sensing : Injustice

Thinking : Climate Emergency