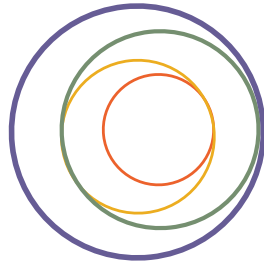# not a toolkit!

Fair Collaboration in Cultural Relations

A ReflAction

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KOΛΛEKTIVA
FOR SOCIAL INNOVATION & CULTURE

WAYS OF THINKING-
DECOLONISATION
AND RACISM

WHAT DOES THIS REFER TO?

DECOLONISATION

Decolonising international cultural relations needs to be guided by both the work to *decolonise international relations* as well as that to *decolonise diplomacy*. It requires that we acknowledge the historical, geographical and social situatedness of knowledge and continuing global imbalances in how knowledge is produced and consumed. Decolonisation is an activist concept that requires not only the understanding of alternative ways of producing and validating knowledge but the will and commitment to seek out these alternatives.

Decolonisation is used to speak about restorative justice through cultural, psychological and economic freedom. "International cultural relations needs to be concerned about the element of redress and acknowledge the colonial paths underlying these relations" (*EULAC focus research project*). *Walter Mignolo*, a leading decolonial theorist from Latin America, speaks about living in a change of epoch and transition when we need to question everything related to international cultural relations and cooperation - even the terms of the conversation.

Decolonisation is related to what he terms ways of knowing (and the regulators of knowing such as language) and ways of seeing. Mignolo encourages us to confront this question and open up the meaning and significance of these issues on our practices of international cultural relations. A fundamental question for international cultural relations is where are we all located in the international world of power: "where does coloniality touch you"? Another decolonial philosopher who presented a keynote at the ICRRA conference, *Nikita Dhawan*, spoke about global ethics and the imperative to save the planet. She asked: "How can we foster transnational solidarity without reinstating Euro-American supremacism and paternalism"? She argued that the deep asymmetries in our world cannot simply be articulated by global solidarity, and asked "in a world where state coercive powers are legitimate, can the state be used for progressive politics"? Her view was clear and referenced the holocaust and the stripping away of statehood arguing that bureaucracies and passports can save lives.

International cultural relations are still shaped by a colonial past and a legacy of imbalanced power relations. A recent *IETM Publication* on inclusive, fair and flexible arts funding made a recommendation that is closely linked to the decolonisation agenda in arts funding. It recommended the need to "restructure relations between funders and applicants/beneficiaries: to question and deconstruct relations of power; to investigate a more partner-like relationship with the funding beneficiaries".

Decolonisation then is about acknowledging inequality and injustice not only in relation to the past and our histories, but to current ways of knowing and doing. It means that in our practice of cultural relations we include the need for humility, recognition and public acknowledgement of one's positionality and deep respect for each other – having more 'ubuntu' in all that we do. It is also critical to ask pertinent questions such as "who gets to define what shape the processes of decolonisation, and what are the power dynamics involved in this"?

The African Union's Agenda 2063 seven aspirations speak directly to decolonising international cultural relations, recognising Africa as a strong united, resilient and influential global player and partner. Aspiration 5 speaks directly to entrenching respect for Africa's people: "An Africa with a strong cultural identity, common heritage, shared values and ethics: Pan-Africanism and the common history, destiny, identity, heritage, respect for religious diversity and consciousness of African people's and her diaspora's will be entrenched". It references the cultural renaissance of Pan Africanism "tapping Africa's rich heritage and culture to ensure that the creative arts are major contributors to Africa's growth and transformation; and restoring and preserving Africa's cultural heritage, including its languages".

More specifically, **Africa No Filter** and **Decolonising Aid Second Report** has developed practical suggestions for decolonising aid and the practice of funding. We have incorporated these ideas into the questions below. The texts highlight language that can be hurtful or revealing of ways of seeing that are deeply steeped in coloniality: some examples include capacity building – where a deficit model applies to those that need skills development; field experts – where local knowledge is only relevant to the field and EU experts frame the conversation and discourse; beneficiaries – where our partners will benefit from our programmes.

The report, **EU External Cultural Relations Platform: decolonising the praxis?** clarifies that the EU and therefore all its agencies, should start from the position that it is not a neutral actor, but rather, part of power relationships. This means it needs to create room for listening to others and to give agency to all in the decision making process.

RACISM AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

Racism and non-discrimination (white supremacy) have been made visible by decolonial thought and recently by #BlackLivesMatter (BLM). The BLM points to the *failure of multiculturalism* and makes urgent the work of decolonisation. The UN 2021 report of the special rapporteur in the field of Cultural Rights, Karima Bennoune concludes that there is, now more than ever, the need for generalised public awareness - raising campaigns to end discrimination, racism and xenophobia and suggests recommendations to this end:

▶ challenge absolutist and purist approaches to cultural identities

▶ ensure that cultural policies reflect and respect existing mixed cultural identities

▶ ensure the right of everyone to participate in cultural life on the basis of equality and in defining and redefining cultures (specifically for those facing pervasive or historic discrimination)

▶ guarantee freedom of expression about cultural mixing and mixed cultural identities

▶ make available to all a more comprehensive documentation and education of the diversity of cultural practices for a more transnational approach to history and a up-to-date critical thinking

▶ encourage the media to play a positive role in the promotion and understanding of human rights-respecting

Finally, it is clear that from a decolonisation perspective, and for our collective survival we need to practice global care as highlighted by *The Care Manifesto*: "We are all dependent on each other, and only by nurturing these interdependencies can we cultivate a world in which each and every one of us can not only live but thrive".

HOW DO WE USE THIS TEXT?

The text should be referenced regularly in the initial stages when doing strategy, planning and throughout the implementation of programmes/projects.

The text reminds all stakeholders why the idea of decolonising international cultural relations is important, necessary and urgent.

These questions can be answered by individual leaders and programme managers, the organisation itself or by the broader EUNIC network.

Suggestion: Host a mini-working session (2-3 hours) attached to staff meetings, project planning or conferences to share these questions among members to suggest possible responses that all then discuss. Each such session should tackle only a few questions to enable deep listening in the group and allow for a diversity of views to be heard. Any practical suggestions could be discussed for its inclusion in templates, KPI's, processes or guides. There are no right or wrong answers and there is no quick way to ensure restorative justice (social, racial or economic). The questioning should be ongoing and leaders (or champions) need to encourage participation and ensure space is given to what are likely to be uncomfortable discussions. Leaders and champions need to participate fully in these discussions. It might be useful to bring in a facilitator.

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

? Do we understand how the language we use (concepts, phrases) can be hurtful or harmful?

? Have we acknowledged our privilege in all its dimensions (whiteness, access, affluence, heteronormativity, geographic location)?

? Do we have knowledge about how issues of identity - class, gender, race, religion and language, intersect with processes of decolonisation in the cultural sphere?

? How can we ensure a greater diversity of voices in our deliberations?

? Were we given opportunities (resources, time) to network with others in our country/region?

? Are we informed about cultural priorities of countries and individuals that we target to work with?

? Will our projects, programmes or plans make a lasting substantive difference to those who need it most whether materially, psychologically, or on a deep sense of value of self and of community?

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

? How can we give agency to others in decision making?

? How could we involve a range of local actors more fruitfully in all stages of cultural relations and ensure we are not only speaking to the elites in society?

? How can we incorporate 'people and planet' into our programmes to ensure environmental concerns are addressed at all stages of our engagements?
(see also Ways of Doing: Climate Emergency and the Critical Glossary)

? How can we ensure that diverse cultural goods and services are equally valued?

? Have we adopted strategies to overcome language barriers such as working in multiple languages and/or accepting audio and video submissions/applications?

? Do we provide funds to 'unknown' and 'untested' partners?

? Have we found creative ways to do due diligence with our partners beyond financial statements, tax certificates, auditing reports and project management experience?

? Are we making full use of social media both to amplify our partner's work, but also to show progress and keep them publicly accountable for the funds we have provided?

? Do we put value into creating local networks and communities by connecting our partners to each other, networking them to opportunities, and upskilling them in ways that support their ability to sustain themselves?

? Have we developed a coordinated connection between internal and external EU policies to address issues such as migration, or diasporas and artists at risk?

? Have we ensured that the rights and status of the artists are secured?

? Have we ensured that our evaluations are honest, independent, transparent and lead to learnings and changes in our approach or behaviours?

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

? To what extent is the programme conception and deliberations a direct result of consultation with local participants?

? Are we sufficiently involved in all decision making from initial idea to implementation and monitoring and evaluation?

? Has there been an effort to incorporate local languages, symbols or other creative expressions in our work?

? Have we incorporated 'people and planet' into our programmes to ensure environmental concerns are addressed at all stages of our engagements?

? Have local cultural goods and services been equally valued with those from the Global North ?

? To what extent did the adjudication go beyond our financial statements, tax certificates, audit reports and project management experience?

? Is social media also about the projects showcasing our work and our organisation?

? Were the evaluators from our country/region? If not, do they demonstrate knowledge, understanding, expertise and previous working experience of the country/region?

RESOURCES FOR FURTHER READING

- ***The Challenges of Cultural Relations between the European Union and Latin America and the Caribbean*** by Luis Bonet and Hector Scargorodsky (eds) (2019).

  This book is one of the main contributions of EULAC Focus research project, financed by Horizon 2020 programme of the EU which is aimed at giving focus to the cultural, scientific and social dimension of the relations between the European Union and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States.
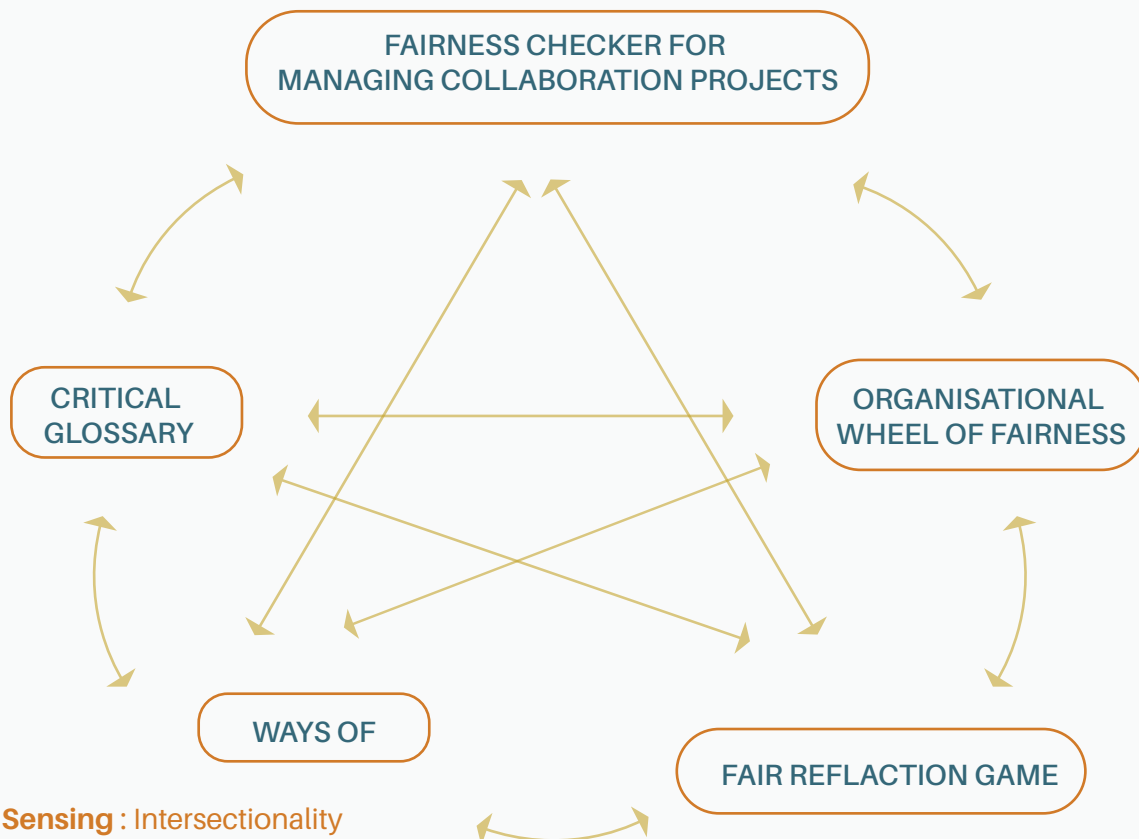
  Fair Culture – A Key to Sustainable Development *(2021)*
- by Veronique Guèvremont for UNESCO and the German Commission for UNESCO.

  This report draws on the principles of fair trade and the due diligence standard as well as two key cultural instruments, namely the 1980 Recommendation concerning the Status of the Artist and the 2005 UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions to develop a fair culture concept. The report suggests the adoption of a fair culture charter.

OTHER REFERENCES TO ENGAGE WITH

- *The Fairness Principle: How the Veil of Ignorance Helps Test Fairness* (Blog)

- *Framing Equality Toolkit* (Ilga-Europe)

- *Creative Equity Toolkit*

- Belfi, E. & Sandiford, N. (2021). *Decolonization Series Part 1: Exploring Decolonization.* In S. Brandauer and E. Hartman (Eds.). Interdependence: Global Solidarity and Local Actions. The Community-based Global Learning Collaborative.

- British Council's policy and strategy on *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion*

- *Decolonizing Community Engagement*

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.

FAIRNESS CHECKER FOR
MANAGING COLLABORATION PROJECTS

CRITICAL
GLOSSARY

ORGANISATIONAL
WHEEL OF FAIRNESS

WAYS OF

FAIR REFLACTION GAME

Sensing : Intersectionality
Thinking : Decolonisation & Racism
Doing : Fair Evaluation
Connecting : ReflAction
Sensing : Injustice
Thinking : Climate Emergency