



ICRRA annual conference

Monday 26 and Tuesday 27 September 2022, online

Culture In Security - International Cultural Relations as an Enabler of Peace through Engagement

“Since wars begin in the minds of men and women, it is in the minds of men and women that peace must be built.” (UNESCO Constitution)

With less than a decade to go to achieve the SDGs, we need to reflect on how to promote peaceful relations among countries and between communities. Cultural Relations should be at the heart of these reflections. How can the arts, heritage and the cultural sectors most effectively contribute to peace in an uncertain and conflicted world? What role do cultural engagements that occur between countries, communities, cultures, and peoples, outside the realms of official diplomacy and state-to-state channels – International Cultural Relations (ICR) – have to play?

To address these questions, ICRRA will connect policymakers and communities. Our event will clarify how ICR can contribute to peace (SDG 16) and its approach to building partnerships with communities and stakeholders in diverse global contexts, highlighting how this can re-energise SDG delivery (SDG 17).

ICRRA brings together a global network committed to bridging the community of researchers and practitioners of ICR and to the exchange of new knowledge and perspectives on the challenges of our time. It combines insight from academic research and from hands-on experience in multiple contexts, including the global south.

This will provide a platform for nuanced, inclusive and action-focused discussion linked directly to the MONDIACULT 2022 agenda. We will examine the pertinence of visions of a cooperative, multilateral, rules-based world, currently facing severe stress tests, not least with the Russian invasion of Ukraine. We'll ask if peace and security remain concomitant with each other, or whether that conceptual alliance needs untangling. We'll consider what new approaches need to be brought into play as nation-states and their histories unravel and new geopolitical regional focal points (such as the Asia-Pacific) emerge.

Drawing on case studies of ICR and peacebuilding across our network, we'll look at what works. We'll discuss the value of multilateral agreements and public-private partnerships and of the non-governmental sector in supporting civil society, and the danger presented by the shrinking space for cultural and artistic expression (both on and offline). Our case studies will highlight the value of emphasising mutuality and sensitivity to local needs as a way to build trust and understanding, and the role of intercultural fluency for disentangling and managing multi-layered conflicts and building resilience to information overload and information warfare.

Format:

- Two **keynote talks** to frame the event and explain what we mean by ICR, and its relationship to UNESCO and the SDGs, drawing on different academic perspectives
- **What Works?** A session featuring four case studies of ICR programmes and projects in practice, examining their contributions to SDG16 in different global contexts.
- Two **panel discussions** to address the key challenges and opportunities for ICR in relation to SDGs 16 & 17, featuring policymakers and senior figures from cultural and civil society organisations, as well as campaigners, students, artists & other participants of ICR initiatives.

Programme outline:

DAY ONE: September 26, 2022 (Monday)

- **Keynote presentation: Paul Cooke**, Director of the Centre for World Cinemas and Digital Cultures, University of Leeds (10:00 – 11:30 CEST)
45 minutes presentation followed by discussion

Moderator: Dr. **Venka Purushothaman**, Lasalle College of the Arts, Singapore

This session will introduce Changing the Story, a UK Research and Innovation Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF) programme, running in 12 countries, that has explored how arts and heritage-focused civil society organisations and INGOs have worked with young people to allow young people themselves to drive change. The aim of GCRF was to bring together researchers and other relevant stakeholders to create a new space of innovation in international development programming, and to support capacity building by generating projects rooted in equitable partnerships between the Global North and South.

The session will provide a flavour of the work undertaken through Changing the Story with partner organisations of different sizes in a range of countries with very different experiences of conflict and of social development post conflict. It will point to the ways in which the programme has evidenced the value of the arts and heritage in supporting inter-generational peacebuilding, and how young people can take a leadership role in this endeavour. It will address some of the structural challenges that have been faced in doing this work and where the programme's findings would suggest future action is needed if we are to have any chance of achieving the SDGs by 2030.

- **Keynote presentation: Karima Bennoune**, Lewis M. Simes Professor of Law, University of Michigan Law School, USA (14:00 – 15:30 CEST)
45 minutes presentation followed by discussion

Moderator: Prof. **Cesar Villanueva**, Universidad Iberoamericana Ciudad de México, Mexico

Cultural rights are at the heart of the contemporary debates, and the human dimension of security makes it possible to bring cultural policies back in, as a territory of contestation. In this session, the speaker suggests that humanity is facing a global cross-regional political crisis, marked by increasing polarization, a turn to extremes, questioning of equality, dignity, universality and diversity by some, closing of minds and borders, and a normalization of hatred. The keynote will question our broad notions of cultural rights and will ask If we are consistent with the values that lead to the protection of human rights, how can we then find the most productive means for working with all cultures to help us find solutions? How can we develop languages with which to speak to each other in all our diversities? How can we construct and preserve frameworks in which we can hear each other, and find creative ways to popularize notions of mutual respect and shared humanity?

- **Panel discussion 1: “Cultural relations in building peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development (SDG 16)”** (17:00 – 18:30 CEST)
Featuring panellists drawn from research, policy and practice as well participants of ICR initiatives

This panel brings together scholars and practitioners to address the central role played by culture in achieving peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development (SDG 16). Exploring the significance of the cultural sector and the value of international cultural relations as an approach, the conversation will consider how culture can provide a more holistic means to peace and security. Through discussion of research, policy, and practice, the panelists will also share their recommendations for how to progress towards realizing SDG 16, including achieving inclusive societies, access to justice and information, and strong institutions.

Moderator: Dr. **Sarah E.K. Smith**, University of Western Ontario, Canada

- Dr. **Hans J. Giessmann**, Director Emeritus, Berghof Foundation; Associate Professor, University of Hamburg, Germany
- Asia Justice and Rights (AJAR, Myanmar) with **Mariana Cifuentes**, Consultant, British Council
- **Maura Ajak**, Freelance Journalist, South Sudan

DAY TWO: September 27, 2022 (Tuesday)

- **“What Works?”** – A look at case studies of ICR programmes and projects centred on peace and security (14:00 – 16:00 CEST)

Short 15 mins presentations of case studies followed by discussion

The purpose of this session is to provide case studies of ICR programmes and projects centred on peace and security in practice from a range of sectors such education, theatre and cinema. The session will examine their contributions to SDG 16 in different global contexts and answer questions relating to how ICR might be employed to engage young people in conflict-affected settings, in tackling structural societal and ethnic conflicts, in raising international awareness or in building trust and understanding in communities.

Moderator: **Avril Joffe**, University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa

- *Heritage Emergency Response Initiative* - **Vasyl Rozhko**, Heritage Emergency Response Initiative, Ukraine
- *Who Tells the Story? A filmmaking laboratory to understand community representation* - **Nicolás Cuéllar**, Director, Historias en Kilometros, Colombia
- *Theatre - a thread binding heart to heart* - Dr. **Nirmala KC**, President, Pro Public, Nepal
- *Citizens' Charter* - **Ghada Rifai**, Co-Founder, Mobaderoon, Syria
- *Enabling University Peace Education (EUPE): supporting universities in conflict zones as key pillars of peacebuilding (Sudan and Ethiopia)*
 - **Hala Salih Mohammed Nur** (PhD), Regional Team Leader for EUPE in Regional Conflict/Post-conflict Setting, British Council Sudan, Sudan
 - Dr. **Lynne Heslop**, Senior Technical Adviser on EUPE project, UK

- **Panel discussion 2:** “Re-energising the Global Partnership for SDG16: The role of international cultural relations” (17:00 – 18:30 CEST)

Featuring four or five panellists drawn from research, policy and practice as well participants of ICR initiatives

This panel brings together voices, from practice, policy, and academia, to discuss how cultural relations contributes to the development of inclusive, multi-level partnerships and cooperation to realize the SDGs, in particular SDG 16 (peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development). It will highlight the relevance of the arts and cultural sector and international cultural relations in crafting approaches to peace and security based on partnerships and cooperation bringing different stakeholders together – governments, civil society, scientists, academia and the private sector - to achieve the SDGs and ensure no one gets left behind. We hope this discussion will provide actionable recommendations for UNESCO on how international cultural relations can more actively contribute to SDG16 and promote a more holistic understanding of peace and security.

Moderator: Dr. **Carla Figueira**, Goldsmiths, University of London, UK

- **Arundhati Ghosh**, Executive Director, India Foundation for the Arts, India
- Dr. **Nilanjana Premaratna**, Lecturer in International Politics, Newcastle University, UK
- **Erwin Maas**, Co-Executive Director Pan-African Creative Exchange (PACE), USA
- **Onur Eryüce**, Counsellor to the Mayor of Izmir Metropolitan Municipality; Secretary-General, Association of Social Democratic Municipalities (SODEM), Turkey

All sessions will be conducted online via Zoom. Recordings of all sessions will be shared with all conference delegates shortly after they conclude.