

# The art of peace

The value of culture in post-conflict recovery

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# Foreword

In my experience as a refugee and peacebuilder, conflict resolution needs to take account of the impact of violence on communities as well as on the main political actors. The signing of peace agreements may lead to an end to violence, but does not translate directly into lasting peace and security. This requires interventions which are locally rooted and owned, and which go beyond the high-level agreements of political deals. Mistrust and division need to be replaced with peaceful coexistence between individuals and groups. Creative and artistic programmes can contribute to this goal, by enhancing social cohesion, tolerance, diversity and resilience.

Artists usually stand on the front line of peacebuilding during times of conflict. In Syria, filmmakers and citizen journalists have become storytellers and civil society activists. Artists have produced films which challenge divisive and extremist narratives and give voice to the most vulnerable. I have seen and heard many examples of the positive power of arts and culture during the Syrian crisis. 'Cinema is a basic need during this conflict', a displaced Syrian artist told me at a training workshop supported by the British Council in Turkey. And in Lebanon, where over a million Syrians have sought refuge, I have seen the impact the arts have on young people affected by conflict. Participants in another British Council-backed programme described to me how the activities increased their confidence and self-esteem, helped them make sense of the war and overcome psychological problems.

This new research from the British Council and the University of the West of Scotland is a valuable contribution to our understanding of the role of the arts in supporting global peace. It highlights the importance of placing local actors at the heart of programmes, from design to implementation. This resonates with my own work, where projects based around grassroots actors and local culture are more acceptable to the community and make a more effective contribution to peace. Local ownership is particularly important in the highly politicised context of civil wars, to avoid the risk of projects being compromised through co-option by state or non-state actors involved in the conflict.

Another important finding of the research is the role of cultural identity in repairing the damage that conflict does to the social fabric. The report highlights how music has been a source of unity during Colombia's difficult transition to peace, and how theatre has been part of Rwanda's efforts to build a new relationship and shared national identity between the different sides.

This report provides an impetus for cultural relations organisations to reassess the role that culture can play in development and peacebuilding. It is also an opportunity to help increase recognition of the role that the arts can play as a part of international efforts to build a true and durable peace in fragile and conflict-affected countries.



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# Executive summary

This report explores the academic evidence for the role that the arts and culture can play in mitigating conflict and building peace. Based on new research commissioned by the British Council from the University of the West of Scotland, it finds emerging evidence for the role that arts and cultural programmes can play as part of a spectrum of interventions linking culture, security and development.

In particular, the research highlights the contribution that arts and cultural programmes can make to post-conflict communities, through therapy, reconciliation and civil society strengthening. Rwanda is a notable example, where cultural programmes drawing on shared cultural heritage have been central to the government's efforts to create a unified Rwandan identity and heal ethnic divisions following the 1994 genocide.

However, the research also cautions that the ability of the arts to transform conflict in and of themselves must not be overstated, and that they can, like other interventions, also exacerbate conflict. Managing programmes in conflict-affected sensitive ways and integrating them as part of a wider range of measures is therefore vital.

The researchers reviewed a number of programmes in Colombia, Syria and Rwanda. They demonstrated how arts and cultural programmes can be adapted to local contexts and used to engage communities in their own cultural language. Very few aimed explicitly to improve security and stability, but instead saw the principal outcomes as having subsidiary benefit for peace and security, for example by improving community cohesion and resilience. The review identified the following key benefits of arts and cultural programmes to security and stability: community engagement; skills for employment; inclusive development; therapeutic interventions; social cohesion; and voice and agency. It also identified a number of key risks and challenges for arts and cultural programmes in fragile and conflict-affected contexts, some of which also apply to other areas of intervention: unrealistic expectations; evaluating impact; top-down approaches; lack of conflict sensitivity; and scale.

Their findings suggest that programmes have the greatest chance of success when they are locally led and based on understanding of local cultural traditions. Due to the small scale of many programmes, the quality of impact evaluation is mixed and much more work is required to develop a strong evidence base. However, what exists indicates that further research to maximise the contribution of culture to peacebuilding initiatives is warranted.

The British Council has drawn the following key recommendations from the research for itself and other international cultural organisations seeking to maximise the security and stability outcomes of their programmes:

- Further research should be commissioned to understand the role of culture in promoting inclusive development and resilience in conflict-affected areas.
- This research should be used to devise new theories of change which use arts and culture to support security and stability outcomes.
- Cultural programmes should focus on tangible and realistic goals, in areas such as confidence building, skills training, self-expression, intergroup understanding and tolerance.
- Organisations should build on existing measures to ensure that programmes are designed and implemented in a conflict-sensitive manner, understanding the particular role that culture plays in local conflict dynamics, and adapting its Do No Harm policies accordingly.
- NGOs should seek opportunities to test innovative and creative approaches in partnership with each other, or where appropriate with governments and international donors.

The British Council has adopted the recommendations and is working to implement them.







# Introduction

The international community is working to develop innovative approaches to global security and stability. The UN's 'Sustaining Peace' agenda calls for greater focus on the prevention of conflict, and a greater role for civil society organisations in peacebuilding after conflict. For its part, the UK has been leading efforts to tackle the drivers of conflict, devoting half of its annual aid spend to fragile states.

The arts and culture merit exploring in the search for new solutions to addressing protracted conflict and fragility. One reason why many conflicts are so hard to solve is that they are often driven by issues of identity and culture as much as by competition over resources or social and economic grievances. The UN–World Bank report *Pathways for Peace* highlights how some of the greatest risks of violence today stem from perceived inequalities between different groups. Shared identities, history and narratives of humiliation and frustration are often key in mobilising a particular group to violence, against either the state or another social or ethnic group. Conflict, fragility and development are closely interlinked, and conflict remains a key barrier to achieving the UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The UN's Sustainable Development Goals progress report 2018<sup>1</sup> highlighted the role that improving living conditions, reducing inequality and strengthening the capacities of communities can play in building resilience to conflict.

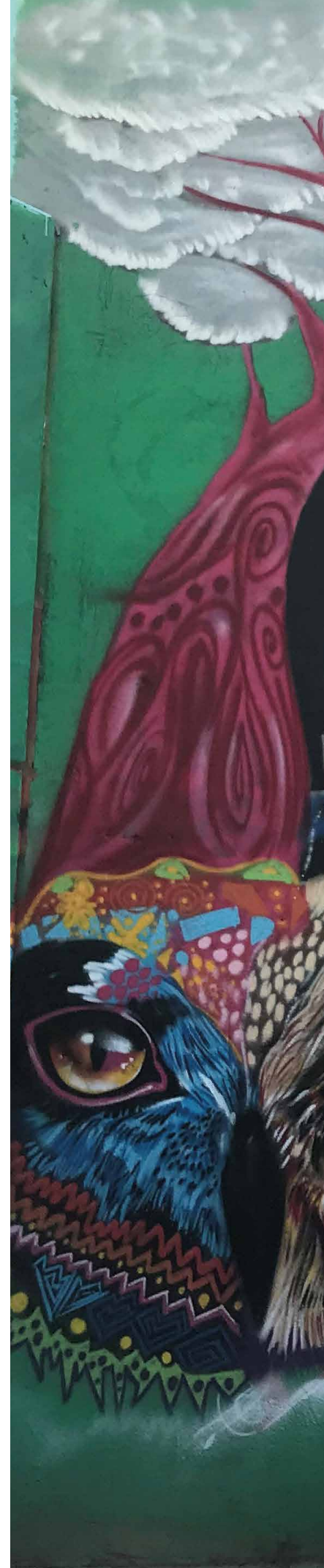
With its many years of practice in cultural relations around the world, the British Council understands the ability of the arts and culture to engage people, reflect on the world around us and change lives. In an effort to contribute to our understanding of this area, the British Council has commissioned new research looking at the evidence for the contribution of the arts to security and stability for countries in states of fragility, conflict and transition.

The following paper summarises the key findings of *A Review of the Contribution of Arts & Culture to Global Security & Stability*<sup>2</sup> by the University of the West of Scotland, commissioned by the British Council. The research comprised a review of academic literature; three country case studies exploring interventions for conflict resolution and peacebuilding in Colombia, Syria and Rwanda; and interviews with stakeholders in the case-study countries, the British Council and UK government. It also analyses the implications for those in the cultural relations field, policymakers engaged in foreign policy, international development and peacebuilding.

1. <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2018>

2. [https://www.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/uws\\_global\\_arts\\_peace\\_and\\_security\\_0319.pdf](https://www.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/uws_global_arts_peace_and_security_0319.pdf)

Wall mural created by the Casa Kolacho cultural centre, Medellin, Colombia.







Sentido de Vida



# Context

The arts and culture are widely acknowledged for their use as propaganda in inter-state conflict, most notably in the Cold War between the USA and the USSR. However, their value as a means to advance peace and security has traditionally been considered in both academic and policy circles as limited.<sup>3</sup> Cultural relations practitioners recognise that arts and cultural programmes do not have the sole power to resolve conflict or prevent violence in and of themselves.

Yet their experience working in areas of conflict and fragility reveals significant evidence of the power of the arts and culture to increase the resilience of communities and provide a platform for dialogue at times of crisis. Former staff reflected on some notable examples from the British Council's own history at a seminar on the role of arts programmes in conflict in London in 2016. Their observations suggested that arts programmes have a particular impact at times of conflict. During the Siege of Sarajevo in 1994, the showcasing of films from the Edinburgh Film Festival provided a morale boost to Sarajevo's artistic community, giving them a sense that the outside world had not forgotten them. In 2003, after the US-led invasion of Iraq, the reopening of Kirkuk Museum for an evening helped defuse community tensions and remind them of their shared cultural heritage. And in 2013, Syrian artists fleeing the country's civil war gained a lifeline to continue their work and maintain connections in the diaspora thanks to a British Council grants and skills training programme.

The research carried out by the University of the West of Scotland and summarised below aims to understand the evidence base for the role of the arts and culture in building peace, with a view to supporting the British Council and other international cultural relations practitioners to explore how cultural programmes can have increased benefit for security and stability in fragile and conflict-affected contexts.

**From Sarajevo to Kirkuk, arts programmes have a special impact in times of conflict**

3. Grincheva (2010); Schneider (2009).
4. Cohen (2005); García (2014); Zelizer (2003).
5. Breed (2006, 2008); British Council (2012); Cohen (2005); Chu (2010); García (2014); Grant (2017); Kafewo (2007); Naidu-Silverman (2015); Preis and Stanca Mustea (2013); Samson (2000).
6. Chu (2010); Breed (2006); Rueda (2014).
7. British Council (2012); Cohen (2005); García (2014); Naidu-Silverman (2015); Shank and Schirch (2008); Sithamparanathan (2003).
8. Aubrey et al. (2016a, 2016b); European Commission (2015); Kafewo (2007); Sandoval (2016: 205).
9. Aubrey et al. (2016a, 2016b); Breed (2006); Chu (2010); Kafewo (2007); Robertson (2010); Sithamparanathan (2003); Paluck (2009).
10. McHenry (2011).
11. García (2014: 41).
12. Sandoval (2016: 204).
13. Fenercioglu (2016).
14. Ojokwu (2016); Ibekwe (2013).
15. García (2014: 19).
16. Shank and Schirch (2008: 4).
17. Bergh and Sloboda (2010).
18. Bergh and Sloboda (2010); McCoy (2009); Gourevitch (2010); Grant (2017).
19. McCoy (2009); Gourevitch (2010); Grant (2017).

# Findings

## What the academic evidence says

The University of the West of Scotland's literature review provided an overview of the academic evidence base and suggested a number of key findings. The research base on the contribution of culture to conflict resolution and post-conflict recovery is small,<sup>4</sup> but growing.<sup>5</sup>

The academic evidence base has a particular focus on the therapeutic use of the arts in post-conflict contexts<sup>6</sup> and its role in reconciliation and strengthening civil society.<sup>7</sup> The literature examining the upstream and preventative potential of culture is smaller.<sup>8</sup> However, the benefits of culture for neutralising the attraction of – for example – violent extremism or inter-ethnic enmity – is recognised.<sup>9</sup>

The review found that arts have a particular ability to engage people in a way that resonates with their local society. Arts interventions have broad appeal and can be applied flexibly, so they are 'well placed to engage... [people] through the development of a stronger sense of place, increasing individual confidence, and facilitating understanding'.<sup>10</sup>

Numerous examples of the role of the arts in post-conflict reconciliation were highlighted in the review. Music and storytelling based on shared cultural experience were shown to enable people to communicate across ethnic or religious lines, thereby encouraging reconciliation. Rwanda is a notable example, where cultural programmes drawing on shared cultural heritage have been central to the government's efforts to create a unified Rwandan identity and heal ethnic divisions exacerbated by the conflict. Another example cited was a case study on Colombians using music to recover after conflict.<sup>11</sup>

There is a growing body of literature suggesting culture can benefit conflict resolution and prevention. In Uganda the use of song to suggest that former combatants should not be stigmatised was credited with contributing to the end of decades of conflict.<sup>12</sup> In Turkey, youth music initiatives based on the Venezuelan 'El Sistema' system have contributed to crime prevention by engaging at-risk youth in music.<sup>13</sup> In Nigeria, studies have discussed the powerful potential of music to dissipate inter-ethnic conflict, and transmit positive messages of good citizenship and civic responsibility.<sup>14</sup>

The arts have long provided a platform for expressing opposition, challenging the status quo and resisting oppression peacefully. In apartheid-era South Africa, music and dance provided a voice for the black population when all other avenues of political expression were closed to them.<sup>15</sup> In Mexico, public murals have long been used as a non-violent means of protest.<sup>16</sup>

However, the ability of the arts to transform conflict in and of themselves must not be overstated.<sup>17</sup> Indeed, they can even be exploited to pursue violent and exclusionary agendas.<sup>18</sup> Several authors show how music was exploited in the Rwandan genocide.<sup>19</sup>

In summary, the academic evidence demonstrates the particular value of cultural programmes in supporting reconciliation and recovery in post-conflict contexts, while also stressing the potential for negative effects under certain conditions.

## Lessons and examples from the field

The use of arts and culture to address issues of conflict is wide-ranging. Programmes can be found at all stages of the conflict cycle, from prevention to post-conflict recovery. They range from the large to smaller-scale. They can be state-led, international, initiated by cultural relations organisations; or bottom-up, led by communities and NGOs. This variety reflects the strength of the arts as a medium that can engage a broad range of people in their own cultural language, and which can be adapted flexibly to local contexts.

The review looked at a wide variety of cultural projects in different fragile and conflict-affected contexts. The researchers produced case studies of cultural programmes carried out in three countries at various stages of conflict and peace: Colombia, Syria and Rwanda. Very few of the programmes reviewed aimed explicitly to improve security and stability, but instead saw the principal outcomes as having subsidiary benefit, for example by improving community cohesion and resilience.



## Colombia

Colombia is ending a five-decade internal conflict that has left more than a quarter of a million people dead and seven million displaced. The signing of the peace accord in 2016 marks the end of the armed conflict; however, the process of building a stable and enduring peace is in its early stages. Alongside the Colombian government's recent decision to invest in the 'economía naranja' – the orange economy of the creative industries – a wide range of cultural and art initiatives are being carried out to help rebuild social relations and resilience. They offer a more neutral ground for mutual understanding than explicit peacebuilding activities, because they bring people from different groups together around a shared interest and goal, rather than around issues related to the conflict.

### Youth music

Based on the model of Venezuela's National Youth Orchestras, Colombia's National Batuta Foundation seeks to provide space for coexistence for young people affected by conflict and poverty. Over the last 17 years it has provided quality musical education with a focus on collective practice. Its Music for Reconciliation programme reaches 18,000 young people, using music to help to rebuild social relations and reintegrate victims of war. The programme has helped create a sense of mutual understanding among participants from different walks of life, contributing to reconciliation. Participants report that the experience builds their resilience and reduces their vulnerability to violence: they feel protected against the risks of their social contexts (recruitment by guerrilla groups, links to criminal groups, and drug addiction, among others); they expand their social networks and improve the quality of interaction with their family.<sup>20</sup>

### Arts and crafts

The Sensory Expedition is an arts-and-crafts programme launched by the Ministry of Culture, which helps communities come to terms with the past and gain practical skills for the future. It operates in Montes de María, a poor, multi-ethnic area which has suffered high rates of violence and forced displacement. The programme engages the community in music and training in local arts-and-crafts traditions to value intangible cultural heritage, promote community reconciliation and increase incomes. In its first year, the project has reached 2,100 people and is being extended to other municipalities. The programme has not yet undergone an annual impact assessment, but the findings of the first year indicate that the programmes have helped communities address issues around identity and that the arts have acted as a non-threatening path for dialogue.

## Syria

Syria's seven-year civil war has caused massive destruction to infrastructure, cultural heritage and the social fabric. The sectarianisation of the conflict has damaged traditional values of co-existence between Syria's majority and minority communities, and disrupted the sense of a common Syrian culture and identity. Organisations working in the arts and culture have primarily focused on safeguarding cultural heritage or supporting artistic production. However, a number of cultural projects have been used to foster trust between different communities, and help them build a stronger sense of belonging.

### Art therapy

The number of street children in Syrian cities has risen significantly since the start of the conflict in 2011. Without support, they are vulnerable to exploitation by criminal gangs and as child labourers; they also risk involvement in stealing, prostitution and drug dealing. Saiyar is an arts charity, which has reached over 2,000 children since 2015. It aims to give street children the skills to improve their lives and reduce their vulnerability. Art therapy helps improve well-being and social skills, and helps them deal with pressures and traumatic experiences, while exhibiting and selling their work builds their communication skills and bolsters self-worth.

### Theatre

Staged in 2015, *The Prophecy* used major events in Syrian history to reflect upon the current conflict and encourage feelings of hope, tolerance and understanding among Syrians. By demonstrating how Syria's civilisation has survived previous periods of turmoil, it aimed to help audiences imagine a better future after the conflict. The performance was staged in a range of settings around Syria in a bid to attract a varied audience and bring Syrians together around a sense of a common past. While no formal evaluation was carried out, the director suggested that the play increased empathy and a sense of shared identity among audience members.

20. Interview with Executive Director, the National Batuta Foundation, quoted in McPherson et al. (2018).

## Rwanda

Rwanda has a long history of identity- and ethnicity-based conflict, culminating in the 1994 genocide. An estimated 800,000–1,000,000 people, mainly from the Tutsi minority, were killed in systematic massacres over a three-month period. In subsequent decades significant effort has been invested in reconciliatory activities, in particular drawing upon aspects of shared cultural heritage and national identity, with specific initiatives in areas of civic education and memorialisation. The conflict has not re-erupted. An extensive research study in 2012 noted the importance of the government's cultural education activities, saying that they had helped the next generation 'abandon old ethnocentric views and to embrace a proud national identity and a commitment to carrying forward the government's agenda of unity, reconciliation and development'.<sup>21</sup>

### Cultural education

*Itorero* is a government-led citizenship and cultural education programme launched in 2007, centred on national and community service programmes for those aged 18–35. Drawing on Rwanda's cultural history, the initiative is based on the 17th century institution of *Itorero*, a cultural and civic 'school' for Rwandans. The tradition is part of a shared cultural heritage between Tutsis and Hutus, and has been recognised by scholars. Papers reviewed for this study have noted that it has 'changed the minds' of Rwandans by teaching them about the government's vision of unity and 'national reconciliation',<sup>22</sup> and has fostered 'Rwandanness' rather than divisive ethnic affiliations, while also promoting integrity, hard work and self-reliance.<sup>23</sup>

### Film and theatre

*Never Again Rwanda* works with those affected by the genocide and seeks to encourage 'creative, active and critical thinking' citizens through films, discussion and group work. Sessions are facilitated by a trusted member of the community who understands the sensitivities of the local context. Activities include storytelling, group theatre, poetry and drama, and draw upon Rwandan culture and values. Its learning approach aims to influence young people's 'understanding of critical thinking, values, rights, democratic principles and responsibilities'. Those working on the programme reported that it had some impact on participants' recovery from trauma.<sup>24</sup>

### Remembrance and ceremonies

The arts play a central role in *Kwibuka*, the annual commemoration of the 1994 genocide. A key focus is the Flame of Remembrance, which tours around the country each year in a similar way to the Olympic flame, with communities marking its arrival with their own ceremonies, including community performances of theatre, music and poetry.<sup>25</sup> The events are designed to focus on remembrance, reconciliation and rebuilding. Commentators have observed that the commemoration provides a 'framework for conflict resolution' that is an example for other countries.<sup>26</sup> However, some scholars have cautioned against top-down approaches to remembrance.

21. Bentrovato (2015).

22. Melvin (2013: 116).

23. Nzahabwanayo et al. (2017).

24. Executive Director of *Never Again Rwanda*, quoted in McPherson et al. (2018).

25. Kazibwe (2017).

26. Journeys Discovering Africa (2014).

## What can culture deliver?

As with other types of intervention, cultural programmes do not provide any simple solutions to the complex issues of conflict and peace. An arts exhibition or community theatre project will never have the power to stop violence directly. However, the literature and programmes under review demonstrate that arts programmes, if designed and managed well and sustained over the long term, can make an important contribution to conflict prevention and recovery at a local level.

Furthermore, arts as a process and an approach can have significant impact on individuals, communities and society at large and contribute to an enabling environment for peace. In 'hotspot' areas where violence is exacerbated by ethnic tensions or socioeconomic marginalisation, cultural programmes can help defuse tensions, promote reconciliation, offer alternative pathways and equip communities with the skills, resilience and networks they need for post-conflict recovery.

The review has identified the following key benefits of arts and cultural programmes to security and stability:

- **Community engagement:** artistic and cultural activities can engage a wide audience in a way that resonates with their cultural background. They are an effective forum for community collaboration and for engaging marginalised communities.
- **Skills for employment:** training in the creative industries can provide marginalised young people with a way out of unemployment and hope for a better future, providing an alternative to that offered by violent groups, while creating economic benefit for the wider community.
- **Inclusive development:** policy work can provide impact at scale by working with government to integrate cultural policies into regional and national-level development strategies.
- **Therapeutic interventions** can provide significant benefits during and after conflict, helping communities to survive a difficult time and process the trauma of conflict and displacement.
- **Social cohesion:** cultural activities based on a shared common heritage can build a sense of community and provide a platform for dialogue and moderate narratives. Storytelling provides a way for divided communities to address stereotypes.

- **Voice and agency:** in areas where traditional protest is difficult, the arts can provide an alternative outlet for expression. They can help give voice to marginalised communities and provide them with a sense of agency.

The broad range of benefits demonstrated by the review highlights the flexibility of artistic and cultural approaches, and their special potential to bring about changes in social attitudes, behaviour and well-being, and to promote inclusive growth. The quality of impact evaluation is mixed and requires much more work to develop a strong evidence base, but what exists indicates that further research to maximise the contribution of culture to peacebuilding initiatives is warranted. The review also calls for consideration to be given to the potential for increased impact when arts and cultural programming are combined with other types of intervention, in particular sport.

## Practical challenges

As with any type of intervention, running cultural programmes in fragile and conflict-affected countries is a challenging process. The usual problems are magnified in conflict zones, where physical safety is threatened and normal governance has broken down. The 'Do No Harm' principle is critical for any kind of intervention in a fragile context, to mitigate the risk of inadvertently exacerbating conflict. This is particularly the case where a project seeks to bring different groups together, and to broach difficult issues around identity, culture and conflict.

In the context of cultural programming, the research identified a number of key risks and challenges, some of which also apply to other areas of intervention:

- **Unrealistic expectations:** interpretation of the meaning of the arts is highly individual, and based on life experience. Achieving a specific change in attitude or behaviour cannot be guaranteed.<sup>27</sup>
- **Evaluating impact:** the limited evidence base of 'what works' has an impact on future programme development. These limitations are partly the result of a lack of experience and funds for evaluation in small-scale programmes – managers know their programmes have impact, but do not have the skills to demonstrate it. There is also a particular difficulty with measuring the kinds of intangible outcomes sought by many cultural programmes.

27. McPherson et al. (2018); Donaldson and Hörtner (2019).



- **Top-down approaches:** NGOs need support from the state, but also need space to act independently of it. This is particularly true in the sphere of culture, which can be used to reflect on a conflict from a critical, non-political point of view. Likewise, foreign partners can risk partnerships in a country becoming a one-way exchange, where pre-existing templates are applied without due concern for local conditions, and where local partners do not feel that their own expertise is valued.
- **Lack of conflict sensitivity:** programmes that are implemented without an understanding of the conflict dynamics in the local area are unlikely to provide security and stability benefits, and may actually risk exacerbating tensions.

- **Scale:** many artistic and cultural projects are small-scale and work at the community level, responding to specific local conditions, meaning they are not easily transferable to other contexts.

The review indicates that well-targeted programmes can achieve valuable outcomes. It finds that chances of success are likely to be maximised when programmes are locally designed and led, harnessing local cultural traditions and enabling artists and communities creatively to identify and solve the issues themselves. Conflict sensitivity must also be integrated into the programme at the design stage, by conducting a conflict analysis of the programme's likely impact.



# Conclusions and recommendations

The arts and culture can play an important role in supporting the international community's efforts to stabilise societies experiencing or recovering from conflict. Their power to speak to people on an emotional and intellectual level using their own cultural traditions means they have a unique ability to engage divided communities. While they alone cannot address deep-seated issues of conflict, they can work as part of a spectrum of interventions linking security and development. The emerging evidence indicates that well-designed programmes can provide significant well-being benefits and promote shared identities in a way that can aid recovery efforts. However, further investment into evaluation and evidence is needed to provide a clearer understanding of how to harness the full potential of the arts for conflict prevention and recovery.

## Recommendations

This report provides a number of recommendations to organisations like the British Council, and to cultural organisations and peacebuilding NGOs. Based on the commissioned research, these recommendations aim to increase the ability of the UK and the international community to harness the arts to benefit global security and stability. The British Council has adopted the recommendations below, and is working to implement them.

### To the British Council

- Programme staff from across the organisation would benefit from training that enables them to value the role of arts and culture in conflict and their potential for supporting post-conflict recovery.
- New theories of change should be devised that use arts and culture to support security and stability outcomes.
- To underpin its new theories of change, the British Council should commission further research to understand the role of culture in promoting inclusive development and resilience in conflict-affected and fragile environments. A recent review<sup>1</sup> of British Council programmes' contribution to SDG 16 on peace, justice and strong institutions is a step forward in this respect.

- The British Council should build on its existing measures to ensure that programmes are designed and implemented in a conflict-sensitive manner, understanding the particular role that culture plays in local conflict dynamics, and adapting its 'Do No Harm' policies accordingly.
- The mapping of arts and cultural programmes with security and stability outcomes undertaken in a recent review<sup>2</sup> should be extended, and should be used to learn lessons, identify best practices, and inform the development of future strategies and programmes.
- Further consideration should be given to designing programmes that build resilience through a combination of the arts and sports programming.

### To cultural organisations and peacebuilding NGOs

- NGOs should further examine the role of the arts and culture in conflict prevention, and test innovative and creative approaches in partnership with each other, or where appropriate with governments and international donors.
- NGOs should share knowledge and evidence of what works, including with regard to the up-scaling of smaller projects and the transfer of projects to new contexts.
- Programmes should focus on small steps, in areas such as confidence-building, skills training, self-expression, intergroup understanding and tolerance.
- Programmes should be designed around local culture and cultural norms and delivered by local NGOs or other non-state groups.
- Cultural programmes should be cross-cutting and focus on addressing social gaps, i.e. poor access to education and other social pathways; providing pathways to social enfranchisement; and reducing the space available to extremist groups by offering alternative cultural and educational opportunities.
- Programmes that seek to promote intergroup understanding and defuse tensions should be based on shared culture and common values.
- Developing the skills of local people and NGOs is important for project sustainability.

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