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Recalibrating the Compass | Rethinking Cultural Diplomacy in Times of Global Crisis



As part of the series *[“Recalibrating the Compass: What Future for Asia-Europe Cultural Relations?”](#)*, ASEF Culture will organise its last roundtable titled ***Recalibrating the Compass: Rethinking Cultural Diplomacy in Times of Global Crisis*** on 3 November 2022.

The previous roundtables in the series have presented contrasting evidence on the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the arts and culture sectors, which raises new challenges for cultural practitioners and arts organisations. This roundtable will examine **how Covid-19 has impacted cultural exchanges** and the **funding resources** and instruments facilitating them, particularly in the Asia-Europe context. It will also provide **reflections for the future**.

The **highlights** of Roundtable #5: Recalibrating the Compass | *Rethinking Cultural Diplomacy in Times of Global Crisis* will be available after the roundtable on culture360 social media channels. In addition, a comprehensive **report** of the roundtable will be published on culture360.

Key Highlights from the Roundtable

Overall question:

How can organisations involved in cultural relations and diplomacy best contribute towards:

- Supporting international cultural cooperation between Asia and Europe in this phase where interregional cooperation is in crisis and there is an increasing inward-looking tendency in many societies?
- Bridging the cultural divide between the Global South and the Global North?

- Contributing to rethinking forms of cultural exchange in the post-Covid context?

In designing policies and programmes for Asia Europe cultural collaborations what are the principles/ values that should underpin Asia-Europe cultural cooperation?

1. Cultural Diplomacy should be built on a cross-sector alliance of organisations and individuals that have a different understanding of what working in cultural relations should be. This diversity of representations will ensure that values of democracy like equity and transparency are embedded in designing cultural cooperation programmes.
2. Cultural Diplomacy should be reframed as a people-driven activity in the broader context of cultural relations. The reputation of cultural diplomacy as a purely government-led unilateral action can be addressed by designing programmes that are participatory, more inclusive and transparent, and are based on mutuality and respect for the other.

Keeping the principles in mind, what programmes should be prioritised? For whom? In what form?

1. To translate in concrete programmes values of inclusivity and diversity, intermediary institutions are key in bringing civil society voices and activities to policy makers.
2. This advocacy role is critical and organisations like ASEF need to play this role in strengthening regional narratives, especially from the Global South.
3. The climate crisis should be a cross cutting priority of any international cultural programme. The lens of climate justice should underlie all actions in the context of international cultural relations.
4. Storytelling and visual elements should be used in developing cultural programmes as they allow for unique stories to be shared, moving away from generic ideas towards unique narratives that people can related to.

Recalibrating the Compass: What Future for Asia-Europe Cultural Relations? aims to facilitate conversations on pressing themes for the arts and culture communities in Asia and Europe with a view to designing a new, more resilient, and participatory approach for the future. The series will culminate in a public webinar in early 2023, where findings and recommendations from the roundtables will be shared and discussed in an open forum.

Stay tuned for the report of Roundtable #5 and the launch of the public webinar.

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