



Cultural Diversity and  
COVID-19:  
The Road to Recovery

# ResiliArt

ResiliArt Debate in partnership with IFCCD and CISAC  
May 14 2020 (2-4pm, Paris time)  
[unesco.org/resiliart-debate](https://unesco.org/resiliart-debate)



# COVID-19 and the recovery of cultural and creative industries

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected every corner of the globe, plunging the global economy into a recession. The current health crisis is likely to cost the economy US \$1 trillion during 2020 (UNCTAD), while one estimate shows that five to 25 million jobs will be eradicated, wiping out US \$860 billion to US \$3.4 trillion in labour income (ILO).

The current health crisis has **enormous global ramifications for the creative sector**. The pandemic has impacted the entire creative value chain – creation, production, distribution and access – and considerably weakened the professional, social and economic status of artists and cultural professionals. Entrepreneurs and small- and medium-sized enterprises, which often lack the necessary resources to respond to an emergency of this magnitude, are especially vulnerable. Freelancers, part-timers and gig workers, who make up a large segment of the sector's labour force, are left with limited to no access to conventional social protection mechanisms.

**Still, art is resilient.** Many artists and cultural professionals have imagined innovative and creative solutions, often by using digital tools to continue their activity and to connect with the public. Music, songs and dance allow individuals to express themselves and maintain social ties amidst the travel restrictions and home confinement. This unprecedented emergency also demonstrated the central role culture plays in building resilience and social cohesion.

Lockdown exit strategies will allow for activities that are compatible with physical distancing measures to resume gradually. Artists, cultural professionals, cultural institutions serving the public, small and medium-sized enterprises, associations, organizations and governments must reflect on **the recovery of the creative sector in a context where the COVID-19 pandemic remains a major threat to human health**. Cultural activities that have been or may soon be resumed must therefore deal with constraints that will have significant social and financial impacts. Other activities will likely be able to restart only in the very long term, particularly those requiring international mobility. The situation therefore calls for a higher level of public support than usual, as well as a review of business models, in order to maintain diverse, sustainable and dynamic cultural ecosystems.

**The recovery of the cultural sector faces major challenges globally**, such as:

- Inequalities between countries are likely to be exacerbated by the crisis. Developing countries are calling for international cultural cooperation, already fragile and tenuous before the pandemic, to address the situation, in a context where efforts are mainly concentrated at the national level.
- Domestically, the situation threatens the weakest links in the cultural ecosystem. There is a significant risk of increased inequalities affecting women, indigenous peoples and persons belonging to minorities in particular.
- While the transition to the digital environment is accelerating, cultural policies are often not adapted to deal with rapid technological developments. Large multinational companies are monopolising markets without contributing to the cultural ecosystems in terms of funding, discoverability or copyright protection.
- The already significant digital divide between countries and regions could become even more pronounced at a time when the world is facing a pressing need for innovation. While the crisis precipitates the transition to the digital environment, the development of necessary systems and platforms requires scientific, technical and economic resources that are inequitably distributed.



## What is ResiliArt?

ResiliArt is a global movement launched by UNESCO and CISAC that consists of **a series of virtual debates with key industry professionals and artists**—both renown and emerging—that raises awareness of the far-reaching impact of the current containment measures on the cultural sector. It aims to support Member States in the development of policies and financial mechanisms that can help individuals and creative communities overcome the crisis.

UNESCO launched the ResiliArt movement to:

- Raise awareness about the impact of COVID-19 on the culture sector and the livelihoods of culture professionals
- Give visibility to artists and creators worldwide – established and emerging – and ensure their voices are heard at the policy level to address existing gaps and needs
- Contribute to decision-making processes of Member States during the development of policies and financial mechanisms aimed at empowering artists

The ResiliArt movement will **stimulate a high-level global discussion on the state of the creative sector, while sharing individual artists' experiences and voices of resilience**. Key issues and concerns emerging from this movement will be shared with UNESCO Member States and city decision-makers through the UNESCO Creative Cities Network to inform their decision-making processes and help them better support the creative sector in times of crisis and post-crisis.



# ResiliArt Debate

## in partnership with IFCCD and CISAC

During this ResiliArt debate, leaders from the creative sector will discuss the challenge of maintaining the connection between creators, cultural institutions and audiences. They will also address ways to relaunch collective creative projects with a view to protecting artists and cultural professionals. The discussions will tackle the ways in which States can help stimulate the creative sector, where the crisis has accentuated existing inequalities and further weakened cultural enterprises and access to diverse cultural expressions. They will also share recommendations to help policy-makers, private enterprises, organizations and public institutions develop appropriate policies and financial mechanisms to **support this recovery while strengthening the resilience of cultural ecosystems**

### Participants

The debate will be moderated by UNESCO Assistant Director-General for Culture, Ernesto Ottone. Participants, representing different geographical regions and artistic disciplines, will include:

- **Anitta**, Singer, songwriter and actress (Brazil)
- **Ferne Downey**, Actress and President of the International Federation of Actors (Canada)
- **Cheick Oumar Sissoko**, **Film director and** Secretary-General of the Pan-African Federation of Filmmakers (Mali)
- **Pascal Rogard**, Director General of the Society of Dramatic Authors and Composers (France)
- **Fouzia Saeed**, Director General of the National Arts Council of Pakistan (Pakistan)
- **Mohamed Saif Al-Afkham**, President of the International Theatre Institute (United Arab Emirates)
- **Jana Vozarova**, CEO of LITA, Society of authors (Slovakia)

### Themes

This ResiliArt debate will be structured around four key themes:

- 1) The constraints faced by cultural professionals, creators and artists in resuming their activities and the measures put in place to support them;
- 2) The adoption of measures and policies to support and promote the diversity of cultural expressions, particularly in the digital environment;
- 3) New international relations and modalities of cultural cooperation;
- 4) The sustainability of new forms of creation and cultural expressions.



All discussions will be anchored in the overarching concept of resilience in the creative sector and will contribute to a better understanding of the challenges facing the recovery of the cultural industries.

- What structural changes should be prioritized to support sustainable cultural ecosystems?
- How does this crisis redefine the role of various players in the cultural sector?
- How can international collaborations be rethought in a context of limited mobility?
- How can international cooperation and solidarity adapt in the face of the trend toward national isolation that has emerged during this period of crisis?
- What interesting and innovative artistic initiatives are emerging and what pitfalls should be avoided?
- What measures should be taken to support the return of cultural professionals, cultural enterprises and independent artists to their work in extremely fragile situations?

## **Format**

The debate will take place from 2pm to 4pm (Paris time) on May 14<sup>th</sup>. After two rounds of questions, the public will have the opportunity to ask questions to the panelists during a Q&A session.

The debate will take place on an existing online platform that allows unlimited number of audiences to follow the discussions as well as post questions using a chat function.

## **How to join the debate**

You can join this debate at <http://unesco.org/resiliart-debate>. The link will go live on May 14th 2020.



## Follow-up

While the physical threat posed by COVID-19 will subside, **the devastation brought to the entire culture value chain will linger for many months to come.** Therefore, it is imperative for the recovery of the industry that these conversations, data sharing, and efforts continue long after the pandemic ends.

UNESCO will empower its partners and stakeholders to organize their own **ResiliArt debates** and join the movement by sharing media assets and guidelines. Please refer to ResiliArt movement guides available at: **<http://unesco.org/resiliart-debate>** for further information about how to participate in the movement.

For any question or inquiries, please contact UNESCO: [resiliart@unesco.org](mailto:resiliart@unesco.org)

For information on CISAC: [communications@cisac.org](mailto:communications@cisac.org) or visit [www.cisac.org](http://www.cisac.org)

For more information on IFCCD, visit <https://ficdc.org/en/>

