



SALZBURG
GLOBAL
SEMINAR
75th Anniversary

DEFINING CULTURAL DIPLOMACY AND RELATIONS

Cultural diplomacy has traditionally been defined as the government-led practice of leveraging the arts and culture within a nation's foreign policy for the pursuit of particular goals. This definition has important implications in that it reinforces the central role of the government as the leading actor in cultural diplomacy and existing national boundaries and borders.

However, the term is also used more broadly to discuss the ways in which artists from different countries and cultures engage with one another. These processes often involve not only individual artists, but collectives and associations, along with other non-state actors and civil society groups. This is often referred to as cultural relations.

While the terms are often used interchangeably, we recognize the important differences between cultural diplomacy (as part of foreign policy) and cultural relations or collaboration, while acknowledging the need for both forms of engagement to coexist and reinforce the goals of the other.

Currents of Change: Redefining Cultural Diplomacy for the Future we Need was held from July 4 to 8, 2022, by Salzburg Global Seminar and brought together over 60 artists, diplomats, policymakers, and academics, representing 30 countries. Together, they considered the potential for art as a force to improve the world and provide recommendations for reimagining the role that cultural diplomacy and relations can play in bringing us closer to the future we need. We, the participants of this seminar, call for new models of cultural diplomacy and relations.

Read more online: salzburgglobal.org/go/743

The Salzburg Statement on the Future of Cultural Diplomacy

CASE FOR ACTION

Given recent geopolitical conflicts, the rise and subsequent mistrust of globalization, contentiousness of borders, the climate crisis, and the global pandemic, there can be no more pressing time to assess, recalibrate and identify new approaches to address shared problems and challenges. The arts and culture can offer new imaginaries and hope when the unimaginable transpires. Cultural diplomacy and relations can be used as conduits for change and unifiers to connect peoples. However, we must move beyond a superficial instrumentalization of the arts and culture to pursue shared understandings and shape a better world.

RECOMMENDATIONS

For cultural diplomacy and cultural relations to be leveraged to their fullest potential and for cultural diplomacy to offer long-lasting impacts towards attaining the futures that we want to see, important changes are needed in the ways governments and artists think about and engage in these practices. To this end, the purpose and design of cultural diplomacy and relations should focus on:

Bridging Divides: Authentic connections require recognizing the different ways in which artists, cultural producers, and government and non-government officials view the world. It is thus necessary not only to talk across cultures, but across professions. While the worldviews of artists and officials may differ, both can use cultural diplomacy and relations to promote a more just and peaceful world. All stakeholders share responsibility in creating the necessary networks to ensure that multiple viewpoints and participants are engaged in the process.

Valuing Integrity: In the past, as well as in today's world, cultural diplomacy has been misused to achieve adverse, aggressive, or harmful foreign policies, and to advance disinformation and manipulation of public opinion. It is crucial that governments and independent agents refrain from practices that affect integrity of cultural diplomacy as a discipline and a profession.

Centering the Artist: Cultural diplomacy must serve the arts while responding to contemporary values of society, preserving cultural heritage, and engaging with contemporary art-making practices. For art to reach its potential as a tool for cultural diplomacy, we must not only look at the role of the art itself but also ensure that artists are centered within the conversation. To do so requires creating inclusive spaces in which artists can openly create without the fear of their art being misused. Centering artists can help the power of art flourish and expand cultural relations.

THE CONTENTION BETWEEN THE CULTURAL PRODUCER AND THE POLICYMAKER

There are two core challenges to the use of cultural diplomacy:

1. the difference between policymakers and cultural producers as users and creators of art and;
2. the potential of art being used for purposes not desired by cultural producers or even as misinformation to divide society.

For policymakers cultural diplomacy, and by extension art, may be seen as a means to an end—a tool for portraying the benefits of one side or another in an effort to convince others to pursue your preferred policy. This instrumental purpose behind art is less often at the heart of artistic creation. This can create tension between the two groups over the purpose of art. While governments and policymakers should work with cultural producers in cultural diplomatic activities, it is necessary that they do so in ways that are transparent in their purpose and objectives.

Art can be a unifier and bring people together however, those who wish to sow division can also use culture and the arts to drive a wedge between different groups of people. While this can take the form of misinformation and propaganda leveraged by governments, it can also result from how cultural products and art are interpreted by others. Protecting cultural production as a form of free expression while balancing the rights of artists and the role of the state is no easy task.

These areas highlight the contention and balance between artistic freedom and the role of government in cultural production and dissemination. While there may be tension between cultural producers and governments, the ability of culture to transcend boundaries and speak to the human condition makes cultural diplomacy a powerful tool and one that governments may abuse. It is the hope of participants that governments and artists find the proper balance to promote a more just and equitable world.

Being Self-Critical: In relations between artists and between governments, it is important that all parties recognize their own positionality and flaws. Critical self-reflection is central to all inter-cultural exchanges. Cultural diplomacy must be self-aware to be impactful. So, governments must allow for a space in which artists can express a critique of their own societies, if so desired. Being self-critical is only available within free and democratic societies where governments allow for free artistic expression.

Utilizing the Power of Democracy: Democratic governance and rule of law remain central to the international system and for promoting the wellbeing of society. Cultural diplomacy is an important tool for the promotion of democratic ideals and norms across borders and an area where democracies can collaborate to promote these objectives

Aiming to be Reciprocal: Because of the traditional power dynamics and resource imbalances between and among the nations of the Global North and South, there is often an anticipatory obedience of the Global South and other marginalized communities. However, cultural diplomacy and relations rely on collaboration and reciprocity between actors. As such, it is critical that these relationships promote inclusive debate, fairness, and empathy. It is also critical that both parties feel as though their voice has been heard and benefit as equally as possible.

Representing and Leveraging Diversity: We often focus on the international aspect of cultural relations in framing discussions around the power of cultural diplomacy, however, cultural relations at the domestic level are important as well. In the age of globalization, nations are becoming increasingly diverse. Rather than attempting to create a homogenous or singular culture, they should embrace their own diversity in their cultural diplomacy to foreground the similarities that they share with others across the globe and promote the values of pluralism. This may mean highlighting domestic diversity or embracing diaspora communities elsewhere.

Recognizing the Power of Technology: While technology can be used to polarize, it also has the power to bring together communities across borders—exposing individuals to cultures other than their own. Technology has immense potential to alter the conduct and reach of cultural diplomacy. Technology has the power to allow art to pressure governments as it transcends borders through the internet and individuals call for change across the globe.

CALL TO ACTION

For cultural diplomacy and relations to thrive we need not only to talk to one another, but to listen. We all benefit, regionally, nationally, and globally when the power dynamic is non-hierarchical. Cultural diplomacy for the future we need should also represent and champion people, communities, and voices that do not necessarily make it to mainstream cultural relations but that constitute the breadth and richness of our world.

Call to action continues overleaf

We call on **governments, policymakers and diplomats** to:

- Adopt cultural diplomacy as a strategic tool to influence geopolitical and geoeconomic objectives in a manner that recognizes and bridges the divide between officials and cultural producers.
- Recognize the diversity of their own population and actively highlight this diversity within their cultural diplomacy, to move from trying to present a homogenous “national culture” toward one that is more inclusive and representative of the array of lived experiences of their country.
- Avoid misuse of cultural diplomacy that aims to push an agenda, exercise cultural domination, mislead or misinform audiences, or instrumentalize culture to achieve policies that undermine peace, international cooperation, and integrity of intercultural dialogue.
- Situate the role of art, culture, and the artist in the process of cultural diplomacy especially when discussing difficult topics that need to bypass bureaucratic and political hurdles faced by other forms of diplomacy.
- Collaborate with cultural institutions and actors to develop systems of networked governance and open space for cultural exchange.
- Embrace democratic norms and ideals, promote rule of law, and use cultural diplomacy to emphasize the importance and power of democracy and collaborate with other democratic governments to promote these ideals and shared lessons, particularly when facing the challenge of authoritarianism.

We call on **artists, cultural producers and cultural institutions** to:

- Support and engage with others to multiply opportunities for artistic collaboration.
- Amplify the voices and stories of ethno-racial minorities, Indigenous peoples, and immigrant populations to represent the role they all play in “national culture.”
- Challenge conventional hierarchies and structural inequalities while making programming and funding choices.
- Use technology to engage with audiences across borders, reach new audiences and have a larger global impact.
- Facilitate the ability of artists to travel and have their art and voices heard and seek to make the right of movement equitable.
- Work with locally embedded cultural actors that assist in translating not only across languages, but between different cultural practices and value systems to ensure that cultural diplomacy and relations promote more inclusion and equity.
- Leverage their artistic expertise and ways of thinking to engage in positions outside of the arts. More artists in leadership positions—within government, business, service institutions, education, and healthcare—can generate new and unique ways of addressing the world’s most pressing challenges.

We call on **NGOs and civil society** to:

- Create communities of practice that challenge contemporary modes of thinking and recognize shared humanity and experiences across the globe.
- Encourage the development of communities of practice that go beyond North-South norms of cultural diplomacy to embrace and empower horizontal connections between other countries and actors.
- Develop mechanisms for forging more equitable relationships—both within funding structures as well as through capacity-building programs.

We call on **researchers and academics** to:

- Set themselves the goal of bridging the gaps between research, policy and practice.
- Identify successful models of collaborative cultural diplomacy and relations that have resulted in meaningful political and societal change.
- Employ interdisciplinary and decolonial approaches and methodologies to the study of cultural diplomacy to better understand the impact and implications of these practices.

We call on **all people** to:

- Listen—not just to hear, but to feel. All people must acknowledge that they interpret information through their own frame of reference, but that you best understand others when you transcend your own lens, to understand others through their own perspectives and frames of reference. To do this, one can increase their cultural awareness and take an interest in the diversity of the world’s cultures.

Together we can take action to ensure that our cultural diversity is neither a burden nor a boundary, but instead builds the foundations of inclusion and collectively build the future we need.