not a toolkit!

Fair Collaboration in Cultural Relations

A ReflAction

Elaborated by Cristina **Farinha**, Avril **Joffe**,
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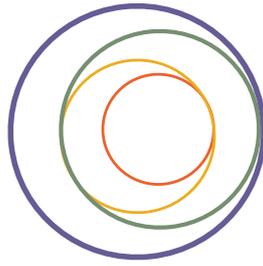
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For the development of the Fair ReflAction Game we built on the work created by Dorota Ogrodszka, Aniko Racz, Doreen Toutikian and Konrad Gadzina for the Gamified Workshop Toolkit, part of the RESHAPE project and licensed under the ***Creative Commons License Attribution- ShareAlike 4.0 International (CC BY- SA 4.0)***

EUNIC – *European Union National Institutes for Culture* – is the European network of organisations engaging in cultural relations. Together with partners, EUNIC brings to life cultural collaboration in more than 100 countries worldwide with a network of over 130 EUNIC clusters, drawing on the broad practitioner experience of its members from all EU Member States and associate countries.

EUNIC's mission is to build trust and understanding between people through culture. EUNIC advocates a prominent role of culture in international relations and is a strategic partner of the EU in the field of culture in external relations. EUNIC also strives to be a learning institution and to provide a platform for knowledge sharing and capacity building amongst its members and partners.

At the core of this commission for a EUNIC toolkit on fair collaboration was the question of what does fair collaboration in cultural relations look like for EUNIC members working with local partner organisations worldwide? In commissioning a toolkit we sought to expand and elaborate on the topic of fair collaboration, to raise awareness of related issues, but also to provide concrete tools and frameworks to support practitioners working in the field of cultural relations.

The commissioning of this toolkit was subject to an open tender. The winning consortium team made a strong impression, with an incredible range and depth of professional experience in the field, a strong design led approach and an ambition to really drive and catalyse change. In engaging with the materials produced you will feel and experience this, not least as in their hands the toolkit fast came to be known as a 'non-toolkit' for reasons that will become apparent! We thank the team for their work and energy on this complex but rewarding commission.

EUNIC's member organisations are diverse (ranging from independent cultural institutes to government ministries and development cooperation agencies) and this is an asset when dealing with cross-cutting topics such as fairness. The primary target audience of the toolkit are colleagues of the EUNIC member organisations. Together with the authors we hope that these materials provide opportunities for

reflection and action on an individual, organisational and societal level. The issues are complex and require serious engagement, and they are also issues which unite all EUNIC members and underpin all cultural relations activities regardless of geography or content topic. The initial lines of inquiry raised for this commission included (but were not limited to) equal partnerships in terms of ownership and implementation, fair remuneration, fair representation/inclusivity, language, environmental sustainability, financial sustainability, programme impact on local contexts and communities, and the sustainability of networks created.

This 'toolkit' naturally also forms part of a wider sector and societal movement. To our colleagues, partners and stakeholders in the wider cultural relations and cultural sectors, in commissioning this piece of work EUNIC wanted to learn from, be inspired by, and contribute to expanding the existing work on these topics by mobilising EUNIC's network of global cultural relations practitioners.

Culture is always at the forefront of societal developments, hopes, needs and urgencies. Through a collective commitment to the topic of fair collaboration we look forward to continuing to play an active part in evolving the responsibilities and accountability of cultural relations practice.

— *Andrew Manning*
EUNIC Director
December 2021

EUNIC
EU National Institutes
for Culture

◎ INTRODUCTION: CONTEXT SETTING

This is not a toolkit about fair collaboration in cultural relations!

We embrace the concerns and criticism of the cultural and creative sector and the academic community on the excessive simplifications that a toolkit approach might imply and endorse the limitations of a one-size-fits all model often reflecting a Western paradigm. We therefore challenge ourselves with the term "toolkit".

What we have produced is a tangible and palpable extension of our *Fair Collaboration in Cultural Relations*- *A provocation document*, inviting people to exchange with others ways of thinking, sensing, doing and imagining fairness in cultural relations.

We wish to contribute to placing values such as trust, empathy and equity at the heart of cultural relations by questioning existing practices and approaches, on the personal, organisational and systemic level.

We chose to do this recognising that cultural relations are woven in the complexity and uncertainty of our contemporary world. We have in mind the different policy frameworks and processes put in place by international organisations but also other multi-level players and stakeholders in the field. We are conscious of the various inequalities, power imbalances, information and digital divides that exist in cultural relations and especially within the North-South spectrum. We imagine a world where cultural relations and exchanges will be more equitable, just and fair and therefore more impactful.

The role of EUNIC and its members is pivotal in this field. This non-toolkit is primarily addressed to them - recognising that they operate on various levels, we hope it opens windows to revisit their practices and to work better and fairer with their peers. This non-toolkit is also addressed to cultural operators engaged in cultural relations that wish to challenge the way they work and collaborate with others. Finally, we wish it reaches decision-makers at higher levels that define to a large extent the system within which cultural relations are activated and can flourish.

◎ OUR APPROACH

Our approach has been design-led and user-led both during our research process and in developing the format of the outcomes. The approach and the process is described in **Towards This is Not a Toolkit – Fair Collaboration in Cultural Relations: A Design-led Approach.** Fair Collaboration in Cultural Relations- A ReflAction is nonlinear, digitally accessible with printable and downloadable components that are interlinked and interconnected, supported by a concept-driven design. Our own stand point is that of practitioners and researchers engaged in and/ or studying cultural relations in their various forms and formats and with a wide repertoire of experiences in different contexts and geographies. Embracing our own limitations, we tried to engage as many people as possible in our consultation processes. We did not want to be prescriptive; we don't intend to preach; or, comment on what's right or wrong. We wish to share ideas, questions and insights and to invite others to find ways of learning and improving our practices together: combining reflection and action into ReflAction.

ReflAction is not a new term, but we can give it a new meaning together. Asking and reflecting on questions together is a way to step into a space of vulnerability and openness and find common answers, imagine new ways to relate. Taking action together and holding each other accountable is what follows the reflection. Stepping into difficult conversations, open explorations and exciting collaborations give us the experience of what it means to be together. To reflect together is to understand ourselves and others better. To act together is coming towards real change. The key in international cultural relations is not to change others, but to be willing to be changed.

Our starting point then is through the narrative of dilemma (Greek: δίλημμα "double proposition"); to approach fair collaboration, understanding dilemma as "a situation in which a difficult choice has to be made between two different things you could do". This narrative helps us revisit our positionality, bias, influences, purpose, choices, impact and consequences when engaging in cultural relations processes.

Rather than a static set of tools, this non-toolkit should be considered as boundless, where further knowledge, insights and better practice can be steered. The work towards fair cultural relations will always be in progress unless we challenge the way systems work and combine efforts to fundamentally alter how we all participate in the cultural relations arena.

◎ FRAMEWORK FOR ANALYSIS

The global context is undeniably one of divides, many of which are consequences of systems that arise from paradigms that consciously or unconsciously tell who and what is valued more. Systems which don't reflect the cultural diversity of worldviews and are unfair. They are often rooted in the injustices of colonialism, wars, cultures of supremacy creating disparities in power, health and well-being. The divides in the current systems are amplified by the consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic, which lead to unprecedented challenges ahead of us. Many of these have been mapped in our **Provocation Paper.**

We want to look into fairness in cultural relations using a systems thinking method and approach the subject matter through its economic, ecological, cultural and social dimension, and the mainstreamed technological and geopolitical dimension connected to the SDGs from the UN Agenda 2030.

The idea of openness into new ways of thinking, doing, sensing and being, is an invitation to go on the journey of fair collaboration in cultural relations. The journey is one to walk as an individual with one's own bias and blindspots, hopes and wants, but also as a member of a collective, an organisation with its own perspectives and views, influenced by agendas of national governments who operate in this complex environment.

The links between the 'me/I' (micro), we (as organisation) and us (all living beings), are key in walking on a path towards more fair collaborations. The acknowledgement that there is fundamental unfairness and great imbalances in international cultural cooperation, asymmetries of power and resources is the starting point for a genuine dialogue. The journey towards more fair collaboration is one that supports the development of trust…the most important 'currency' in cultural relations.

Let us reflect on those dimensions, dilemmas, perspectives and show willingness to change our ways of thinking, seeing, sensing and being to create a vision for fair collaboration in the 21st century cultural relations. Step by step by learning and unlearning. Are you willing to change? Is your organisation willing to change?
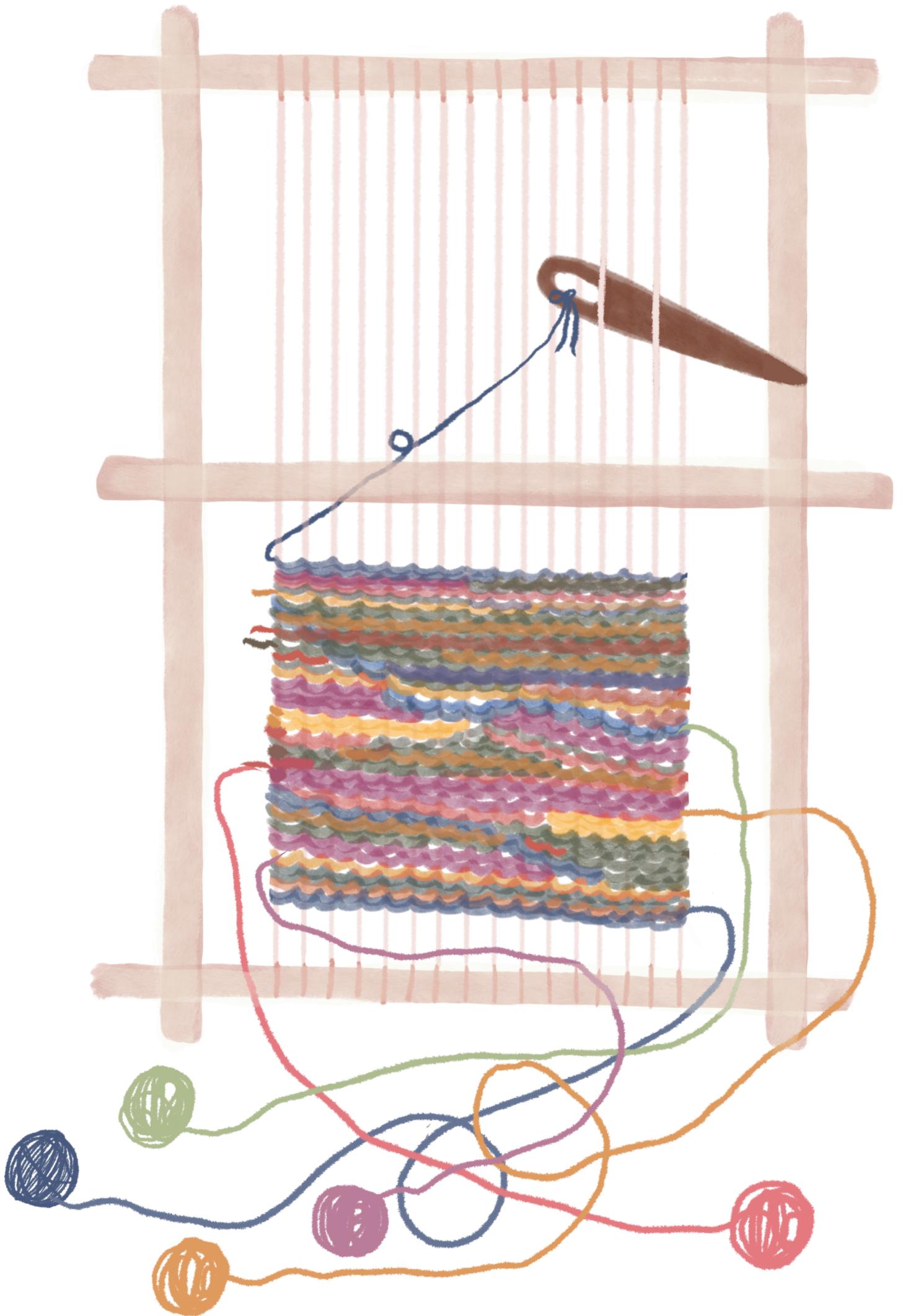
◎ COMPONENTS

Fair Collaboration in Cultural Relations- A ReflAction is structured around the following components:

The components form part of a visual, reflective journal to map one's own journey. The visual reflective journal is an overall inter-connector across all levels that helps in navigating through all the complexities in various paradigms and landscapes. The journal has canvases, frameworks and visual templates, graphic organisers that combine reading, thinking, reflecting, unpacking, and ideation for action. The journal mediates between the individual and the system, between philosophical and practical, personal and professional levels. It helps to track one's own trajectory on fairness in all processes and develop a systemic understanding. It will also help document narratives of change as identified by the users.
The components include:

Provocation Paper: Fair Collaboration in Cultural Relations- A provocation document invites people to think about the myriad of concerns and considerations in adopting a fair collaboration appraoch in cultural relations. It stands as an introductory text and frames much of what is now elaborated in all the other components where we invite people to consider, reflect on and exchange with others ways of thinking, sensing, connecting and doing fairness in cultural relations.

Ways of … : This set of short texts explores some of the concepts introduced in the Provocation Paper. It is an invitation to people to explore more deeply what these concepts really mean, how to think about them, and how they might impact on fairness in cultural relations. They are organised around ways of thinking, sensing, doing and connecting fairness in cultural relations. In short they:
- Expand on ideas from the provocation paper
- Provide more references
- Identify gaps, dilemmas, imbalances
- Open up conversations
- Extend the provocation with questions to consider/ to ask/ to
   explore together

The organisation into Ways of… highlights that these are not factual but are deeply embedded into our very psyche, our hearts, our minds, and our beliefs and values.

The Ways of … include texts on: Thinking (Decolonisation, Climate Emergency), Doing (Fair Evaluation), Sensing (Intersectionality, Injustice), Connecting (ReflAction).

Critical Glossary : The key ideas, concepts, content, context and constructs around 'FAIRNESS' are collated in a Critical Glossary as prompts rather than absolute statements. The purpose of this is to create a shared understanding (and common language) of certain concepts and ideas but also to extend that understanding in different contexts. The tone is not absolute and exhaustive but open-ended, suggestive and indicative.

Fair ReflAction on Values game : The Fair ReflAction game provides an opportunity to consider the key values underpinning fairness in collaboration. Inspired by the **Gamified Workshop Toolkit: Values of Solidarity** of the Re-shape project, the Fair ReflAction game allows the questioning of attitudes and reflection on dilemmas, which are derived from real scenarios experienced in the process of cultural relations projects that lead to unfairness.

Organisational Wheel of Fairness : This Wheel offers an opportunity to embed a profound process of organisational change through reflAction. It stimulates a strategic conversation on how to translate fairness based on values and on the context we operate in across all functions: from the finances and legal department, IT, strategy, planning and programming, communication, human resources and research & evaluation. It proposes to work on an action plan to improve policies and practices through a fairness perspective.

Fairness Checker for Managing Collaboration Projects : The practical Fairness Checker is organised around the project-management cycle, and raises questions for project managers, designers, organisations and partners for self- and group-reflection when embarking on pre-planning, preparation, implementation and evaluation of a collaboration project or programme.

◎ WHO WE ARE?

Katelijn Verstraete

"My intention to embark on this project stems from reflection on my 25 years practice in cultural relations. Many collaborations I was part of were set in complex international and intercultural contexts between Asia and Europe. They happened often too fast, with not enough room for reflection on privilege, positionality, power dynamics and not enough time to make collaborations truly mutually beneficial.

My fascination with other worldviews drove my interest to study sinology and engage in the arts. Via a detour in marketing management for a German multinational in China, I moved to the arts world to co-create an independent art space in Shanghai. I returned to Belgium to immerse myself in the arts sector in Europe when working at **KFDA** and **IETM**, understanding the power of cultural networks in Europe, the importance of mobility and building connections for IETM to Asia. Back in Asia (Singapore) in 2006, I experienced first hand the challenges in building more equal Asia-Europe cultural relations in **ASEF**. In my 8.5 years as Regional Director Arts for the **British Council** in East Asia where I managed the arts programme over 14 countries, I learned a lot about key values like equality, diversity and inclusion, but also about power dynamics in cultural relations. I left the British Council in March 2020 when very vibrant internal discussions were happening about decolonisation and anti-racism, which were open, often difficult but very important debates. Now as an independent cultural consultant based between Brussels and Singapore, I work on meaningful and pertinent projects, while simulatenously pursuing a degree at Melbourne University in programme evaluation."

Avril Joffe

"I'm an economic sociologist and currently the Post Graduate Coordinator of the **Cultural Policy and Management Department** at the School of Arts, University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, SA. I have been at Wits in this role for the past 8 years, previously I worked independently as a professional researcher & trainer with ILO, UNCTAD, governments in SA and across the African continent in fields from labour and skills development through to industry strategy. For the past 25 years I have worked in the intersection of academia and practice in realising a just and sustainable development in fields such as culture in urban life, culture and the cultural economy, fairness in international cultural cooperation and the rights and status of artists and cultural professionals. I am passionate about teaching and mentoring and continue to be inspired by our post graduate students to decolonise curricula and pedagogic practice. I'm an active member of

UNESCO's **Panel of Experts for Cultural Policy and Governance** - with an emerging speciality in small island states having conducted missions to Seychelles, Mauritius, Jamaica, and soon Granada, Cabo Verde and others. I'm also a member of the **International Advisory Council** for the UKs' NESTA's Creative Industries Policy and Evidence Council where I led a research programme on **informality in the cultural economy of the Global South**. My involvement in the **International Cultural Relations Research Alliance** (BC/IFA) has been a safe space to have robust debates about cultural relations. I am also a member of **CREATOURInternational**, a creative tourism advisory body. My creativity continues to be stimulated by my dance practice - I'm a second degree black belt Nia dance instructor and a Spanish dance enthusiast.

Sudebi Thakurata + D.epicentre

I am a narrative designer, creative facilitator, storyteller, writer, futurist, design educator and researcher. Through 16 years of my work across India, South and South-East Asia, UK, North America, and parts of Europe, I have been exploring socially, environmentally & culturally relevant issues to design inclusive, equitable, fair and regenerative possibilities. The inquiry driven, immersive, context-based, Pluriversal & transdisciplinary elements in my work deepened when I received a few fellowships after working at an anti-human trafficking organisation. I teach at **Srishti Manipal Institute of Art, Design & Technology** since 2010, and co-founded the transdisciplinary design-led systems innovation collective, D.epicentre, which is also the Design Partner for this project, under my creative direction.

My Masters from University of Northampton led me to explore the intersections of design, pedagogy and inclusion, something I extended into this project along with learnings from D.epicentre's work on inter-cultural collaborations, with University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Virginia Commonwealth University, Qatar, our work on dignity with Emily Carr and Thomas More University, my ongoing work on futures and foresight as the **Global Innovator of ITAC** and my work on **creative collaborations** from 3 years of facilitating and designing SEAD cultural leadership programme in S-E Asia and UK. I am fascinated about facilitating, fostering and engaging in various forms of creative collaborations, along with transformative and emergent forms of designing 'Futures': futures of people, places, perceptions, paradigms, processes and much more, and now the Future of Fairness. I am deeply interested in using non-traditional methods and creative approaches to decolonise research and find experiential perspectives and lived narratives, which I often publish and talk about.

We, at **D.epicentre** design experiences, engagement & environment, that allow people to think, have dialogue, make their thinking & interaction

visible & thus enable them to design their own solutions & narratives using different modes, media and forms. D.epicentre is a trans-disciplinary design-led systems innovation collective of narrative designers, strategic futurists and creative practitioners. Our work ranges from business/ service design to learning/ecosystem design, game and toolkit design to futures literacy, evaluation to instruction design, exhibition to publication design, creative facilitation to leadership, research to user-experience design, mentoring to socially-engaged arts initiatives.

Matina Magkou

I can't think of myself without being involved in cultural relations processes- it's something I have been doing for the last 20 years. The moment however I started questioning fairness in those collaborations was when I took the responsibility of evaluating a EuroArab cultural cooperation project. Was I knowledgeable enough of all realities? Did I have a specific (eurocentric) viewpoint on things? Was I fair to the project and its outcomes? This questioning also led to my PhD research on value and evaluation in cultural cooperation projects with a focus on the EuroArab region. After years in Greece, Spain, Belgium and Qatar working with and for cultural organisations and public institutions, I am currently based in France and employed as a post-doctoral researcher at **University of Côte d'Azur** investigating intermediary cultural spaces, digital transformation processes and the city. I continue working as a cultural manager and consultant because I enjoy it and I learn continuously. I am working with cultural networks and organisations evaluating projects, facilitating learning processes and managing complex projects. I am also an alumna of the Global Cultural Leadership Programme organised by the **Cultural Relations Platform.**

Finally, I am co-founder of **KOΛΛEKTIVA** for social innovation and culture that undertook the project management of this work. KOΛΛEKTIVA is non-profit organisation that works at the intersection of social innovation, culture and sustainable development to encourage positive transitions to more fair and viable futures.

Anna Steinkamp

It's all about cooperation - this has been my guiding principle when I started working in the field of international cultural cooperation - first for the **German Commission for UNESCO** and now as an independent consultant, based in Germany.

UNESCO provides a space for all nations sitting, exchanging and working together. This big challenge to work at eye-level has been a priority for me when managing collaboration projects in the field of cultural relations,

running international networks or advising cultural organisations in their strategic processes.
The permanent exchange with people from all world regions helped me to become more aware of my own biases and to better embrace diversity - especially through a transparent and empathic communication, including listening.

My Masters in Cultural studies and Public Policy provided the scientific and technical tool boxes for shaping governance processes, especially when it comes to networks, but also designing publicly funded projects for more lasting impact.

Since this year, I am part of the managing team of the German Association of the Independent Performing Arts.

Cristina Farinha

After I finished my Sociology degree, what got me into the cultural field was the realisation that a great deal of artists and cultural professionals missed an adequate social status. I did a Post-graduate in Labour Law, and engaged in a MA in search of mapping artists' social and working conditions in my country; followed by a PhD research on how international mobility could improve artist's work and what obstacles remained. Labour and mobility rights are directly linked with how I define fair relations and societies. As a cultural professional, I have been a freelancer for most of my career. I have been working from local and regional to international level in the conception, implementation and evaluation of diverse policies and programmes for various organisations, from the European Commission, to networks, cultural institutions and local authorities across Europe, the Caucasus, Middle East and Africa. I am interested in contributing to the strengthening of the role of culture and creativity in governance and development; the promotion of international cooperation and mobility; and the building of capacities within the cultural sector.

Each component of the *Not a Toolkit! Fair Collaboration in Cultural Relations: A ReflAction* is connected to all other components. After finishing your reflAction journey in this section continue journaling in the next part.

FAIRNESS CHECKER FOR
MANAGING COLLABORATION PROJECTS

CRITICAL
GLOSSARY

ORGANISATIONAL
WHEEL OF FAIRNESS

WAYS OF

FAIR REFLACTION GAME
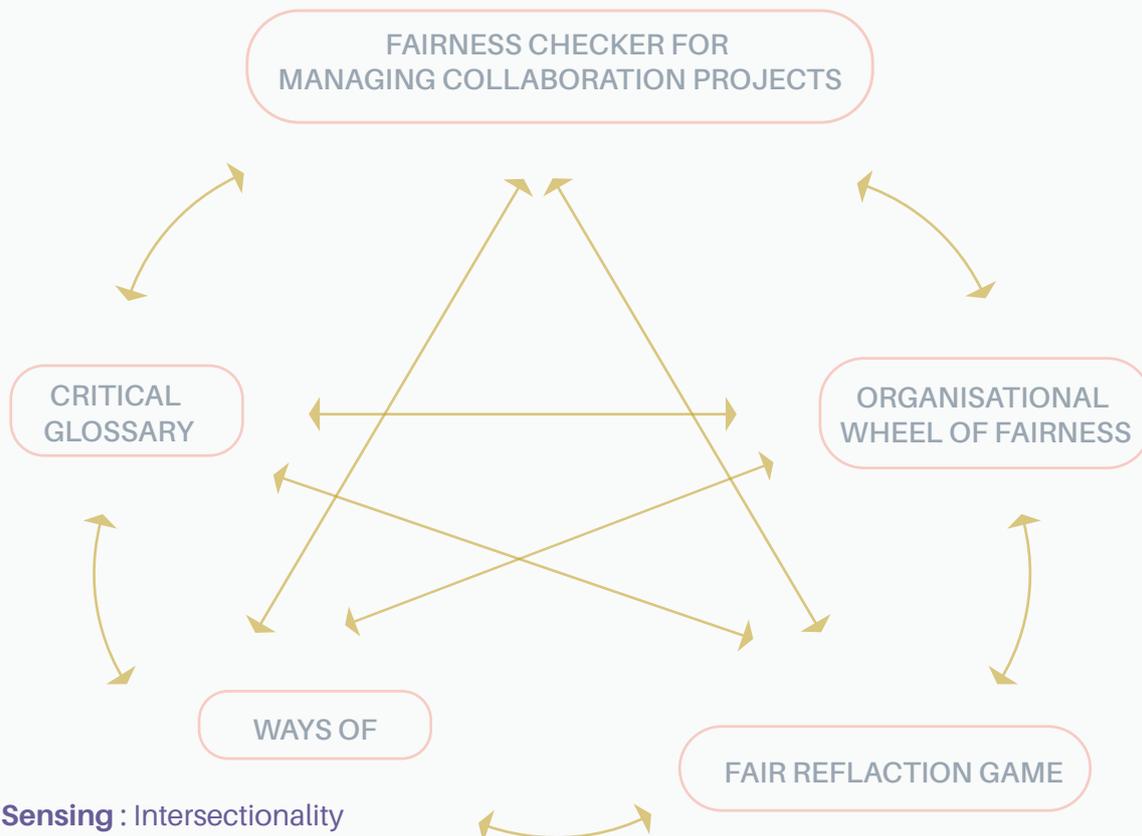
Sensing : Intersectionality

Thinking : Decolonisation & Racism

Doing : Fair Evaluation

Connecting : ReflAction

Sensing : Injustice

Thinking : Climate Emergency