

THE POWER OF NETWORKED *CULTURAL ACTIONS* IN SHAPING *A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE*

*Exploring the essential role of international
cultural relations in climate action*

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THE POWER OF NETWORKED CULTURAL ACTION IN SHAPING A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

Michelle Sun, Climate Lead, EUNIC
Warren O'Donnell, Communications Manager, EUNIC

We have seen an increased recognition of culture's role in climate action over the past years, and yet it is still not where we would like it to be: at the heart of the global discussion on climate.

The climate crisis is also a cultural crisis. Several EUNIC members have, therefore, been very active on sustainability and climate action for some time now, often on a bilateral basis. It has become increasingly clear, however, that the climate crisis is a global challenge that requires collective effort. This is where EUNIC's work as a network really began.

Many fantastic culture-based climate initiatives exist already. At EUNIC, our mission is not only to be part of this existing movement but to support it and push it further. As European cultural institutes, we have a responsibility to address the global climate crisis, and as an international network with a global presence, we also have a unique power.

By working together as a collective, we are greater than the sum of our individual parts and we can make a meaningful and impactful contribution to the climate action movement.

"EUNIC's engagement with climate action has shown how powerful collective cultural work can be... Being part of this network encourages us to think beyond our own daily work and to see how culture can become an active driver of change."

Katarzyna Zalaszevska, Cultural Projects Coordinator, Polish Institute Bucharest

"The networked action of EUNIC has given me the feeling that I am not alone in the face of this tremendous global challenge and has given me structured guidelines on how to move forward... Culture has the power to bring communities together where people coming from diverse backgrounds find a common ground."

Kamilė Čelutkaitė, Head of Creative Europe Desk, Lithuanian Culture Institute

What is EUNIC?

The European Union National Institutes for Culture - is the European network of national-level organisations engaging in international cultural relations.

Together with our partners worldwide, we bring to life cultural collaboration in more than 100 countries through a network of over 140 clusters, drawing on the experience of our members from all EU Member States and associate countries.

EUNIC builds a collective international cultural relations approach amongst its members, to strengthen trust and understanding internationally through culture. EUNIC advocates for the role and recognition of culture as core component of international relations and is a strategic partner of the EU in this field. EUNIC is also a platform for knowledge sharing and capacity building amongst our members and partners.

The power of networked climate action

An important early milestone in EUNIC's climate journey was the Climate Culture(s) Creative Lab in Berlin, where emerging leaders from across the EUNIC network came together to explore structural and practical solutions for their organisations and for EUNIC as a whole.

The lab resulted in a declaration to the heads of EUNIC member organisations and a set of recommendations to guide our future practices.

Following the Berlin Lab, EUNIC commissioned a dedicated set of tools for cultural relations practitioners operating at both headquarters level and internationally, that we brought to life through online and in-person workshops and demonstrations.

“The Climate Culture(s) Creative Lab allowed me to see how issues of nature, climate and the environment can be meaningfully connected to our work as cultural practitioners... I brought this perspective back to our EUNIC Egypt cluster, where I initiated the idea of a sustainable festival... SABBART, a direct outcome of the Lab — showing how EUNIC exchanges can translate into collective and creative action at local level.”

Carolin Vonbank, Deputy Director, Austrian Cultural Forum Cairo

Translating commitment into concrete action

The Cluster Fund is EUNIC's internal funding programme supporting collaborative cultural relations activities worldwide. In recent years, the call for proposals has featured an optional focus on sustainability and climate action. This focus has resulted in a rich variety of EUNIC-supported projects addressing the climate crisis through the lens of different art forms, from diverse perspectives and in innovative formats.

Many EUNIC clusters have also made climate action a priority within their own strategies and have found creative ways to collaborate with local partners on this issue.

By taking action rooted in local contexts and addressing community needs, EUNIC clusters act as vital bridge between local realities and a collective global response. Through this cultural relations approach, we can practise mutual learning and fair, respectful collaboration rooted in and sensitive to local contexts.

The other side of the coin is the coordination and exchanges between EUNIC members' at headquarters level. This includes convening working groups and coordinating expert exchanges, such as the Knowledge Sharing Workshop on climate action we held in Paris, as well as coordinated efforts around major policy moments such as COP summits.

“I greatly appreciate the benefits of networked collaboration: mutual support, such as access to the Blue Zone at COP, setting topics in international cultural policy discussions, or sharing knowledge. Placing topics jointly is not only more efficient and effective but it also creates significantly greater impact. The sense of community provides strength, hope, courage, and resilience.”

Laura Zebisch, Sustainability Manager, Strategy Department, Goethe-Institut Headquarters

Bringing a range of voices into the international conversation

With the support of our members, EUNIC has engaged in several high-level policy fora, such as a thematic webinar on climate action led by UNESCO to inform a G20 summit. For the first time, this year EUNIC is facilitating a joint approach to COP30 in Belém, having joined the Group of Friends of Culture-Based Climate Action as an observer.

Through this form of networked action, we exchange knowledge and build capacity to strengthen our collective voice. By bringing together diverse perspectives and experiences from across our global network, we reinforce our position and call to action with concrete examples.

Herein lies one of EUNIC's greatest strengths – bridging the people-to-people connection on the ground with a strong, collective response at international level.

As a network, we act as a platform through which smaller voices can be amplified, while leveraging the platform of larger organisations. The network serves as a bridge between local implementation on one hand and global advocacy on the other, enabling a two-way dialogue between the two.

“EUNIC enables us to share, present and discuss our research findings with colleagues working around the globe, bringing in their perspectives, challenges and needs... The cooperation within EUNIC amplifies this knowledge and gives us the opportunity to reach other networks on the ground, but also within Europe.”

Sarah Widmaier, Scientific Coordinator Research Programme on Culture and Foreign Policy, ifa - Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen

Looking to the future

Much has already been done by climate actors to demonstrate why culture must be an integral part of climate solutions, with countless projects around the world showing how culture and climate intersect. Unfortunately, this is not yet reflected in international policy.

Across the following pages, we aim to demonstrate the interaction between international cultural relations and climate action, highlighting the power of networked collaboration and how, as a collective, we can advance climate action through culture.

As a network, and as individual member organisations, we have a collective responsibility to take action and find innovative solutions to the climate crisis through our work.

There is still a long way to go and we will continue to work with our members to develop a coordinated and meaningful approach to climate action, one that is sensitive to local needs and contexts, while providing a platform for exchange and mutual learning. By doing so, we hope to strengthen the recognition of culture as an essential part of the climate action puzzle.

“Our task has been to shape and act on the articulations formatted together on the role, responsibility and reach international cultural relations have as part of global climate action. We continue our journey, mainstreaming climate action in our wider programmes and strategic framework, and increasingly bringing concrete international cultural relations practices, learning and advocacy into key fora at the EU or UN level.”

Andrew Manning, Director, EUNIC

EUNIC'S RECENT CLIMATE JOURNEY

EUNIC workshop on the cultural dimension of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

EUNIC Knowledge Sharing Workshop organised together with British Council and ifa, aimed to discuss and further drive the role of culture in sustainable development, and to share examples of activities and best practices in this field.

April 2021



Creative Ireland by Culture Ireland. Photo: Mark Stedman.

EUNIC workshop on Monitoring and Evaluation linked to the UN's SDG framework

EUNIC Knowledge Sharing Workshop looked at how the UN's wider SDG framework and Culture|2030 indicators can complement and inform the monitoring and evaluation practices of EUNIC members.

Feb 2023



KSW on M&E. Photo: EUNIC.

EUNIC Climate Culture(s) Creative Lab

Climate action identified as the focus of network-wide action under the EUNIC Presidency of the Goethe-Institut. The resulting Climate Culture(s) Creative Lab in Berlin brought to life new connections and collaboration among EUNIC members on topics of climate and culture, and supported leadership across our global network in these areas.

June 2023



CCC Lab Berlin. Photo: EUNIC.

'Climate Action' set as an optional focus of the EUNIC Cluster Fund

Clusters were invited to submit project proposals that actively contribute to sustainability in different forms by addressing the UN's SDGs. Environmental sustainability was encouraged as a part of the design and implementation of the projects. The topic received more attention than any other previous optional focus.

July 2023



EUNIC Mongolia, Nomad Spirit International Art Programme. Photo: Twoshinjargal Lkhaasuren.

EUNIC Sustainability Toolkit launched

Directly addressing the needs and opportunities articulated in the Berlin Lab, EUNIC commissioned and launched a new sustainability toolkit - a package of resources to help cultural relations professionals engage with climate action. The toolkit launched to empower both individuals and organisations as they take meaningful steps toward sustainability goals.

Sept 2024



Toolkit in use at FP Meeting London. Photo: Marcus James-Pond.

'Sustainability' set as an optional focus of the EUNIC Cluster Fund

The Cluster Fund 2024 strongly encouraged project proposals that addressed sustainability in all its forms through cultural activities, such as addressing the UN's SDG framework, climate and environmental action, or projects with a sustainable impact on the local scene.

Oct 2024



EUNIC Namibia project. Photo: Adam Smaruj from StoryWorks.

EUNIC members and partners engage in climate policy debates, such as COP16 in Cali and G20 Summit in Rio

Through the lens of their projects, EUNIC members and partners contributed to influencing the development of climate policy by participating in strategic policy moments around the world such as COP in Colombia or the G20 Summit in Brazil.

Nov 2024



UN Biodiversity COP16 in Cali.
Photo: Camilo Monsalvo.

ClimArt Action: EUNIC Knowledge Sharing Workshop in Paris

An online webinar and two-day workshop in Paris brought together expert colleagues from EUNIC members actively working on topics of sustainability and climate change.

March 2025



ClimArt KSW in Paris. Photo: EUNIC.

EUNIC participates in a G20 thematic webinar on the 'Intersection of Culture and Climate Change' hosted by UNESCO

EUNIC contributed to the G20 meeting as a direct follow-up to the Knowledge Sharing Workshop on climate in Paris, strengthening the network's engagement in global policy dialogues and highlighting the role of cultural relations in climate and sustainability work.

April 2025



G20 thematic webinar. Image: EUNIC.

EUNIC intervenes at the OMC working group on the green transition of the cultural and creative sectors

EUNIC contributes to the European Commission's OMC working group on stimulating the green transition of the cultural and creative sectors.

May 2025



OMC working group.
Photo: EUNIC.

EUNIC becomes observer at the Group of Friends for Culture-Based Climate Action

EUNIC becomes an observer of the Group of Friends for Culture-based Climate Action (GFCBCA) - an informal international coalition, composed of states and international organisations, with the objective of integrating culture as a strategic axis in global climate change policies.

July 2025



GFCBCA at Mondiacult Barcelona.
Photo: EUNIC.

EUNIC facilitates for the first time a coordinated approach amongst its members active at COP30 in Brazil

EUNIC managed a series of meetings to coordinate, encourage and support its members in preparing a joint presence at COP30 in Belém.

Nov 2025



EUNIC Colombia, Cluster Fund project; La Comunidad De La Pala 2.0.
Photo: Harold Guyaux - Arquitectura Expandida.

CONNECTING ON AN EMOTIONAL LEVEL AND EXPRESSING THE URGENCY OF THE CLIMATE CRISIS

1.

While policy and research may activate the rational mind, the arts have a unique power to connect people to the reality of climate challenges on a deeply emotional level. By engaging communities through culture, art and creative expression, cultural relations initiatives can make the urgency of the climate crisis tangible and relatable on a human level.

Cultural relations initiatives do more than inform, educate and raise awareness. They create a space for emotional engagement, for reflection, discussion and a sense of shared responsibility, encouraging individuals and organisations to act while highlighting the human and societal dimensions of sustainability.

SustainARTability - Latvia

EUNIC Latvia, Nordic Council of Ministers Office, Art Academy of Latvia..

SustainARTability brought together art students from Latvia and other European countries for a ten-day residency programme. Participants collaborated to create works of art inspired by the challenges of sustainable living, while documenting their creative process.

The project explored the intersection of sustainability and activism. In a group exhibition titled No White Flags, students transformed the traditional symbol of surrender - the white flag - into artworks representing a refusal to give up on climate action.

The initiative aimed to engage audiences emotionally, raise awareness of climate issues, and stimulate public discussion. The project also included lectures and workshops led by mentors who provided participants with tools and insights on how art can promote sustainability and drive societal change.

“It’s like opening a window in spring and feeling the fresh air coming in. I believe this experience has shown the participants how similar we all are, and that sustainability is important for all of us... The opportunity to transform one’s first emotional reaction into a work of art leaves a lasting impact. It’s not a time for lies; one must be honest.”

Kristians Brekte, professor, artist and project mentor.



Photos: EUNIC Latvia, Didzis Grozds.

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07

OBSERVING, UNDERSTANDING, AND PROCESSING THE WORLD AROUND US



2.

Cultural relations projects create opportunities for people to explore, reflect on, and make sense of the world around them, especially as it is impacted by the climate crisis.

By engaging in creative practices, such as storytelling, film, theatre, or visual arts, individuals are given the tools to observe their surroundings, understand the impacts of environmental issues, and process these experiences in meaningful and creative ways.

A cultural relations approach nurtures critical thinking, empathy and awareness, helping communities connect global issues to local realities. By focusing on dialogue, reflection, and creative expression, cultural relations enable people to interpret and respond to climate challenges in ways that are both personal and collective, strengthening civic engagement and the capacity to act within their own communities.

See it, say it, film it! - climate change and ecology meet the arts - Bulgaria

EUNIC Sofia, Arte Urbana Collectif, Lovetch Regional Administration, Vidin Municipality, Troyan Municipality, European Parliament Liaison Office in Bulgaria, Regional Library of Vidin, Regional Library of Lovetch, Chitalishte Nauka in Troyan, Fondation Devetashko Plato.

The project engaged over 600 Bulgarian children, students, and adults through screenings, cinema debates, storytelling and film workshops, games, theatrical performances, and workshops for children. Participants explored environmental protection and climate change through the lens of audiovisual media.

Through this initiative, young participants were encouraged to reflect on their surroundings and creatively present ideas that resonate with their peers and the broader public.

“The goal of the project was to engage young people in a creative process, encouraging them to view their surroundings through a new lens and think about how they could improve their environment. Students reflected on their own communities to decide which story they wanted to tell and how they saw the world.”

EUNIC El Salvador, project participant, feedback survey.

The project promoted environmental education while encouraging young people from across Bulgaria to harness the power of audiovisual media as a tool for expressing their messages. The short films explored critical environmental protection and climate change, and expressed personal and creative perspectives on global issues.

Each screening was followed by a discussion with a film professional and a seminar, focusing on a specific environmental theme. This approach allowed the young participants to go deeper into these topics and connect them to their own communities and local reality.



[FIND OUT MORE](#)

ENGAGING UNDERREPRESENTED COMMUNITIES AND AMPLIFYING DIVERSE VOICES ON CLIMATE TOPICS

3.

Cultural relations facilitate engagement and dialogue with communities often underrepresented in climate conversations, while giving their perspectives a platform to be heard.

Unlike formal research or policy channels, cultural initiatives can reach youth groups, marginalised people, and those without formal education, providing accessible and inclusive ways to explore climate issues.

Through art, storytelling, and participatory activities, cultural relations projects create spaces where diverse voices are amplified, encouraging dialogue, mutual listening and collective action on sustainability.

Tajikistan Sayohati Sabz (Green Journey) - Tajikistan

Bactria Cultural Centre, Public Youth Environmental Organization 'Little Earth', 'Public Health and Human Rights' (PHHR), French Embassy in Tajikistan, Goethe-Institut Uzbekistan, Alliance Française Almaty, EU Delegation to Tajikistan

Sayohati Sabz (Green Journey) was an art project that spans geographical boundaries, taking remote communities and local and international art activists on a journey to explore humanity's shared vulnerability to climate change.

The project hosted an eco-art residency for young artists and activists from across Tajikistan. Participants, including visual and graphic artists, videographers, and photographers, exchanged knowledge with European and Central Asian artists and experts, expanding their understanding of eco-art and eco-activism.

"Because I am from Khujand I thought previously that make a trouble to me, but now I have appreciated that is a great opportunity to me. I can inform and tell to people of Khujand about art and ecology, share that knowledge what I have obtain in the eco-art school."

Mashhura Maqsudzoda - EcoArtCamp alumni from Khujand, Tajikistan)

Sayohati Sabz brought together communities most vulnerable to climate impacts with art activists passionate about sustainable change. By crossing cultural, social, and geographical boundaries, the project engaged marginalized communities who are often excluded from global climate discussions, giving them a platform to express their experiences and connect with broader networks of climate action.

[FIND OUT MORE](#)



Photos: Bactria Culture Centre.



ENGAGING UNDERREPRESENTED COMMUNITIES AND AMPLIFYING DIVERSE VOICES ON CLIMATE TOPICS

3.

Nomad Spirit: Raising Climate Awareness Through Art - Mongolia

EUNIC Cluster Mongolia: EU Delegation, Mongolian Contemporary Art Support Association, Nomadic Red Corner International Artist Residency, Deren Sum Administrative Unit, Global Nature Art Project Mongolia (GNAP).

The Nomad Spirit project brought together artists, residents, and schoolchildren to address climate change through contemporary art. The initiative took place in Deren Soum, Dundgovi Province, where ecological challenges like water scarcity and habitat loss are particularly urgent. Over 260 participants, including artists from Europe and Mongolia, collaborated in workshops, site-specific art installations and community exhibitions.

The initiative’s reach extended far beyond Deren Soum, engaging an estimated 600,000 people through media and social platforms. Hands-on workshops led by artists inspiring over 200 children to create art using sustainable materials. The programme culminated with the Nomad Spirit Public Art Day, showcasing more than 430 artworks of varying scales created by participating artists and local schoolchildren.

[FIND OUT MORE](#)



Photos: Chinbold Lkhagoasuren, Bayasgalan Davaa.

“The project reached the whole community, especially all kids of this small village... The project enabled schoolchildren to bring their voices and worries about environment and climate change through art.”

Artist from Mongolia



SHIFTING ATTITUDES ON ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES AND TRANSFORMING HOW WE LIVE



Photos: Nogoombaatar.

4.

Cultural relations can cultivate a deep sense of attachment to our surroundings and communities, shaping how we care for the environments we inhabit. By engaging people creatively and collaboratively, cultural initiatives help people recognise the value of their local spaces, build emotional connections and develop a sense of shared responsibility.

This approach goes beyond awareness-raising: it encourages reflection, empathy and commitment, helping communities rethink behaviours and the ways they interact with their environment.

Through cultural relations projects, people can experience their surroundings in new ways, strengthen communal bonds, and cultivate care for both local and wider ecological and social systems.

Nogoombaatar International Eco Art Festival - Mongolia

Arts Council of Mongolia, Mongolia State University of Arts and Culture, Nogoon Nuur community park, 976 Art Gallery, Goethe-Institut, Alliance Française, Embassy of the Czech Republic, EU Delegation.

The Nogoombaatar International Eco Art Festival in Mongolia aimed to address severe air pollution in a district of Ulaanbaatar heavily affected by coal burning. Its main objective was to raise awareness of the issues through workshops, art competitions, and public art events, engaging local community groups alongside Mongolian and European artists and experts.

The festival engaged children, youth, families and local communities through workshops, art competitions, and public art installations. European and Mongolian artists collaborated with residents to create murals, sculptures, and illustrations, transforming public spaces into an artistic neighborhood.

“I am extremely happy that the project has called people’s attention to the ecology of where they live.”

Participant, response to project survey.

Participatory activities encouraged reflection and dialogue on air pollution and environmental well-being, while online events extended reach to tens of thousands.

The festival helped to reinforce a sense of ownership and care for the local environment. The creation of an artistic neighborhood deeply affected residents’ attitude in a positive way. Many said that they were inspired by the result of the festival and decided to change their attitudes towards their living environment and now think of their community well-being more seriously.

[FIND OUT MORE](#)



SPARKING HOPE AND EMPOWERING PEOPLE TO TAKE CLIMATE ACTION



“It was extremely important for us to integrate the project and understand how a concrete action can take place based on the appreciation of our knowledge, creation, experience and performance in the ecosystem of games, education and culture in Brazil.”

Tainá Felix, consultant at Game e Arte

5.

Cultural relations bring people together and build community. Through cultural cooperation and relationship building, we realise that none of us face the climate crisis alone.

Cultural collaboration creates a sense of belonging and shared purpose, connecting artists, climate actors, institutions and local citizens to a shared cause. By linking different perspectives and practices, cultural relations work helps people work together on sustainability – pooling knowledge, resources and practical solutions.

This community-building dimension is essential for climate action: it strengthens trust, enables cross-border cooperation and builds networks of climate actors from the local to the global level.

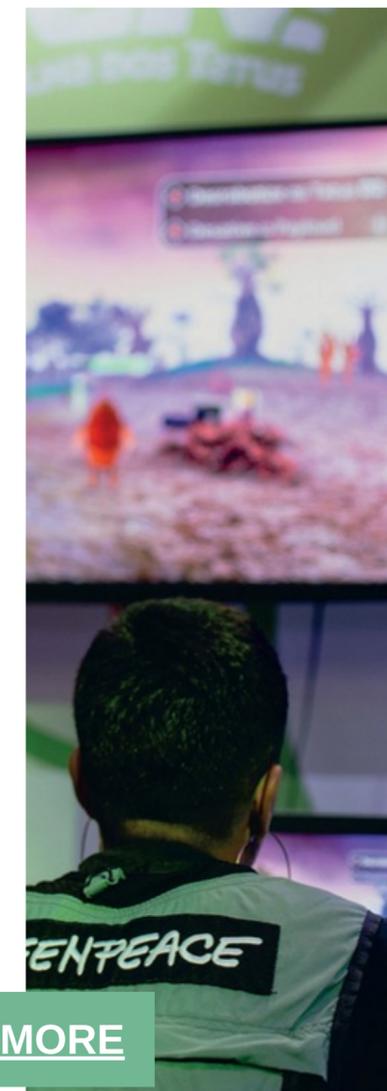
PoN! - A Ilha dos Tatus: Engaging Brazilian youth in climate action - Brazil

EUNIC clusters in Brasilia, Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo. Alliance Française, British Council, Consulate-General of Switzerland, Danish Cultural Institute, D. Macedo/University of Brasilia, Embassy of Belgium, Embassy of Denmark, Embassy of France, Embassy of Ireland, Embassy of Italy, Engajamundo, EU Delegation to Brazil, Frederik Lassen/PoN, Fridays For Future Brazil, Goethe-Institut, Goethe Zentrum, ILEX Games, Instituto Camões, Instituto Cervantes, Instituto Italiano di Cultura, Instituto Querô, Municipality of Santos, Municipality of Viborg, SPCINE, Tainá Félix/Game&Arte, The Animation Workshop.

The project connects Brazilian and European youth in the fight against climate change through a digital version of the game ‘Politics of Nature’. This mobile game “PoN! – A Ilha dos Tatus” was the result of a large collaboration involving Brazilian youth climate movements, game developers, EU cultural institutes, NGOs, students, municipalities and experts.

With the ‘Politics of Nature’ Mobile Game, its pedagogical toolkit and a programme of physical and hybrid socio-educational events, the project supported youth in expressing their full potential for local change through new partnerships.

This project began with the understanding that halting global warming requires transformation on a massive scale - and that Brazilian youth have this scale and the potential to make a significant impact. At the same time, it recognised that while young people hold this potential, they often lack the agency to act. The ‘Politics of Nature’ Mobile Game addresses these gaps by empowering youth to engage, become inspired, and connect with climate issues, ultimately motivating concrete action.



[FIND OUT MORE](#)

BUILDING COMMUNITY AND COLLABORATIVE APPROACHES TO THE CLIMATE CRISIS

6.

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Cartografías Líquidas - El Salvador

EUNIC El Salvador, Foro Cultural Salvadoreño Alemán, EU Delegation. Asociación para el Desarrollo de Santa Marta, Cabañas, Red de Investigadores de Medio ambiente REDIA, UNDP United Nations Development Programme (Laboratorio de Aceleración), Plataforma Global en El Salvador, Asociación Cooperativa La Canasta Campesina.

Through cartography and artistic residencies, *Cartografías Líquidas* aimed to strengthen and raise the profile of environmental organisations and initiatives in El Salvador. The project sought not only to make visible and share some of the most relevant ecological initiatives, but also to reach new audiences by generating fresh narratives using technological tools and collaborative artistic creations.

“The organisations involved during the artistic residencies were aware of each other’s work, but during the work process they were able to identify their common ground and needs, thus broadening their network.”

EUNIC El Salvador, project organiser

The project engaged directly with 36 environmental organisations, over 10 artists, and 6 local partner organisations. It encouraged the creation and strengthening of networks between El Salvador and Europe. Through artistic residencies, the project developed a mapping of environmental initiatives, which helped consolidate existing alliances and facilitated future collaborative action.



Photos: EUNIC El Salvador



[FIND OUT MORE](#)

BUILDING COMMUNITY AND COLLABORATIVE APPROACHES TO THE CLIMATE CRISIS

6.

The Route We Take - Sri Lanka's Creative Green Map

EUNIC Sri Lanka, Good Life X, EU Delegation

The Routes We Take maps local Sri Lankan creatives whose practices centre on circularity and regenerative models of working with people and the planet. The Green Map provides a comprehensive overview of creative industries in Sri Lanka contributing to ecological transition. As part of the process, ten standout creatives were selected for a public exhibition, which attracted hundreds of visitors and included live performances, interactive workshops and open studio tours throughout Colombo.

The project was more than a symbol of a collective commitment from a community of likeminded people tackling the challenges of environmental crises together - it was an opportunity for interaction between creatives, institutions and policy makers. The exhibitions and launch events offered a platform for diverse actors from Sri Lanka's creative sectors to come together, and the mapping exercise itself resulted in a practical resource that platforms their work both locally and on the global stage, and encouraged and supported future ecological solutions.



Photos: Good Life X – Colombo.

“With the creation of a Green Map of Sri Lanka, there is a starting point where a lot of things can develop from... to address ecological questions in the creative field and to connect all these initiatives in the whole country for future projects.”

Stefan Winkler, Director of Goethe-Institut Sri Lanka

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PLATFORMING LOCAL KNOWLEDGE AND TRADITIONAL SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES

7.

Cultural relations provide a way to engage with communities in a way that is sensitive, respectful and grounded in local realities. By working closely with local partners and communities on equal and fair terms, cultural relations projects create space for intercultural and intergenerational dialogue and knowledge exchange that values existing practices and expertise.

This approach allows communities to revive and preserve practices that might otherwise be overlooked, while creating opportunities to share these insights with broader audiences.

At its core, the cultural relations approach recognises that solutions to complex challenges like climate change are more effective when they are co-created, culturally informed and rooted in the experiences of the people affected.

sā Ladakh: - The Future of Immersive Land Art - India

EUNIC New Delhi: EU Delegation, Embassy of Germany, LAMO, Local Futures, Ladakh Women's Association, Diskovalley Bike Park, Crashpad, Black Sheep Media House, Mahabodi Residential School, Government School Likir, PAGIR Leh, Dolkhar Ladakh

sā Ladakh was founded with a passion and a respect for landscapes, communities and the environment, with the concept of sustainable transboundary engagement through regenerative land art at the centre. "The Future of Immersive Land Art" initiative sparked meaningful dialogue with the aim to work towards a more sustainable future. Held 3600 meters above sea level in the remote Himalayan desert, this project featured a lineup of site-specific art installations and sculptures, crafted from locally sourced, discarded, renewable, or reusable materials.

The breathtaking artworks were accompanied by a dynamic programme that demonstrated the region's deep commitment to sustainability.

A particular focus was placed on engaging people from all walks of life, particularly young adults and the next generation, as the future custodians of the land. Sā aimed to inspire cross-cultural and multi-generational dialogue and exchange, transmitting an appreciation and care for the natural world through 'regenerative art'. The events left behind a legacy of climate optimism, artistic innovation and sustainability and the project opened up space for dialogue and inspired future generations to take climate actions.



*Omaggio Performing Company
Black Sheep Media House*

"It isn't about denying what we can see with our own eyes or ignoring our grief for what we've lost. It's understanding that we know how to prevent things from getting worse and that we're making progress."

EUNIC New Delhi, project organiser



[FIND OUT MORE](#)

CREATING SPACE FOR THE MUTUAL LEARNING AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT REQUIRED FOR CLIMATE ACTION

8.

Cultural relations open up spaces where learning and skills development can thrive — essential components for effective climate action and sustainable practices.

By fostering collaboration across communities, sectors, and borders, cultural relations help address knowledge gaps, strengthen technical expertise, and empower people with the skills needed to act on complex challenges.

At its core, cultural relations work is more than exchanges or events, it is about a continuous process of mutual learning, capacity building and knowledge sharing. This approach is essential for achieving lasting impact - on people, the communities they belong to, and the environments and planet they inhabit.

The Restoration Toolbox - India

Alliance Francaise de Delhi, Institut français en Inde, Embassy of the Netherlands, Embassy of Austria, Embassy of Spain, Danish Cultural Institute, Goethe-Institut Mumbai, Jugaadopolis & Aishwarya Tipnis Architects, Toxics Link, OP Jindal Global University (Jindal School of Art & Architecture), Platoniq, Eutropian, and the EU Delegation to India and Bhutan.

The Restoration Toolbox, a collaborative initiative between Indo-European partners, aimed to create an accessible platform on heritage restoration for a wide range of users, including professionals, craftsmen, policymakers, students, and entrepreneurs. The project addressed critical gaps in technical and financial resources, professional knowledge, and the application of traditional skills, which had contributed to neglect and dereliction of urban heritage buildings in Indian cities.

The Restoration Toolbox combined workshops, hands-on training and digital resources to build skills in heritage restoration. Students, professionals, and local communities collaborated on practical techniques and co-created restoration solutions. 15 manuals and participatory sessions with universities, municipalities and NGOs supported knowledge sharing and helped connect communities, practitioners and institutions around heritage preservation.

“Heritage is everywhere - cities, villages and districts. However, people don’t know how to maintain and keep the heritage alive. They don’t know how to pass on the knowledge to the coming generations. The restoration toolbox is critical.”

Meghavi Desai, Executive Engineer, Surat Municipal Corporation



[FIND OUT MORE](#)

BRINGING LOCAL PERSPECTIVES INTO THE GLOBAL CLIMATE CONVERSATION

9.

Cultural relations offer a bridge between local experiences and perspectives and the international-level conversation on climate, ensuring that the voices, knowledge and innovative solutions of local actors are part of the global discussion.

By highlighting local practices, approaches, and context-specific insights, cultural initiatives play an important role in enriching policy dialogues and encouraging more inclusive, effective responses to environmental challenges.

This approach strengthens collaboration across regions, sectors, and disciplines, allowing policymakers, cultural actors, and communities to learn from one another and ensures that strategies are relevant both globally and locally.

Creatives for Climate Action Thailand (CCAT) - Thailand

EUNIC Thailand, Creative Migration, Creative Economy Agency, and partners.

Creatives for Climate Action - Thailand (CCAT) was a pioneering project that united European and Thai creative industry stakeholders to promote sustainability in Thailand's cultural sector. The project addressed both the ecological impact of cultural events and the power of culture to promote climate action.

The CCAT conference brought together a range of speakers, actors, and networks from Europe and Thailand, resulting in a toolkit on sustainable event management — a practical resource supporting the Thai festival and event industry's green transition.

“Climate action and culture are, essentially, a collective work. When we collaborate we are stronger, more creative and powerful... Our differences give us more understanding of the world, and our common challenges bring us together.”

Marta Pallarès, Primavera Sound / YOUROPE - The European Festival Association

Following the conference, the project had longer-term policy impact at both national and international levels. The CCAT founder and director was invited to the G20 Brazil 2024 International Seminar on Culture and Climate Change, participating in a panel on creating an environmentally responsible cultural sector. During the seminar, the director shared insights on developing practical tools for sustainability in cultural productions, bringing lessons from the Southeast Asian context into a global conversation and showcasing innovative solutions from the local cultural sector to mitigate and adapt to climate challenges.

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Photos: Kallol Datta.



IMAGINING POSSIBLE FUTURES AND ALTERNATIVE WAYS OF DOING

10.

Cultural relations bring people, creatives, artists and professionals together to imagine alternative futures and consider the kind of world and environment we want to live in. They provide a space to create new optimistic narratives about where we can head and to explore new approaches to sustainability.

Cultural projects can allow communities to reflect on current challenges while envisioning positive, feasible futures that inspire action today. They also open opportunities to experiment with new structures, processes and ways of doing that respond constructively to the climate crisis.

Solarpunk: Stories of Sand and Energy - Namibia

EUNIC Namibia, EU Delegation to Namibia, Club Italiano, Embassy of Germany, City of Lüderitz, Namibian University of Science and Technology

The project leverages the solarpunk genre - a visionary branch of speculative fiction - as a platform for creating positive visual narratives that imagine Namibia's future as a leader in sustainable development. Set against the backdrop of Namibia's exceptional solar and wind resources, the project uses futuristic, utopian architecture exhibits to explore how local cultures and landscapes can intersect with ideas of clean energy and ecological balance

"By grounding the vision in local culture and pride, the project aims to build ownership over Namibia's renewable energy potential and contribution to a broader conversation on positive futures in the context of global climate challenges."

EUNIC Namibia, project organiser

Through a creative exchange between European and Namibian visual artists and designers, the project set out to foster a dialogue on sustainability and community-focused solutions. The project presented a fictional yet inspiring vision of a green future for Namibia. This utopian narrative, though speculative, served as a powerful tool for shifting local perceptions of renewable energy from a distant goal to a tangible part of everyday life.

[FIND OUT MORE](#)



Adam Smaruj / StoryWorks



IMAGINING POSSIBLE FUTURES AND ALTERNATIVE WAYS OF DOING

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ZOÖP CONNECTIONS: New Networks for the Living - Netherlands

EUNIC Netherlands, The Zoönomie Foundation, De Ceuveel, Kunstfort Vijfhuizen, Stichting 't Gagel, Creative Coding Utrecht, Nieuwe Instituut.

Biodiversity loss, soil degradation, and societal polarisation on environmental issues in the Netherlands show that ecosystems of all kinds are degrading, with some on the point of collapse. Zoöp Connections recognised that climate action and innovative ecological governance are needed at scale to regenerate these systems. The project created opportunities for European practitioners—artists, ecologists, architects, anthropologists, designers, and community organisers—to engage with pioneering cultural organisations in the Netherlands.

Through the residencies, the project explored how we can form and nurture regenerative relations through cultural practice. Using the Zoöp model, project participants examined how principles of ecological regeneration and co-governance with non-human entities can highlight cultural organisations' role in this broader transformation. The residencies provided spaces for reflection and experimentation, each culminating with participants sharing their findings and proposing innovative solutions to environmental challenges.



Photos: Fabian Schäfer, Sophia Charap.

“Zoöp Connections is an invitation to reimagine how we relate to ecosystems and build regenerative partnerships that transcend cultural and species boundaries.”

EUNIC Netherlands, project organiser

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Published: November 2025



EUNIC

EU National Institutes
for Culture



Co-funded by
the European Union

The European Union National Institutes for Culture - is the European network of national-level organisations engaging in international cultural relations. Together with our partners worldwide, we bring to life cultural collaboration in more than 100 countries through a network of over 140 clusters, drawing on the experience of our members from all EU Member States and associate countries.

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