



IFACCA

International Federation
of Arts Councils
and Culture Agencies

Artists, Displacement and Belonging

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IFACCA Federación Internacional de Consejos de Artes y Agencias Culturales

Fédération Internationale des Conseils des Arts et des Agences Culturelles

Introduction

In October 2016, executive leaders from National Member institutions of the Federation participated in the 5th CEO Leadership Seminar in Malta, which ran alongside the 7th World Summit on Arts and Culture. During the seminar, members identified key issues common to their work that should be priority areas of knowledge development for the Federation. The role of public agencies in supporting displaced artists was one of these issues, informed in part by provocations issued by Oussama Rifahi – then Executive Director of the Arab Fund for Arts and Culture – during the opening panel session of the Summit.

During his session, Mr Rifahi urged delegates to reimagine their role in the refugee crisis, to consider displaced artists as agents of progress, and to welcome them as a revitalising and beneficent force. The following report responds directly to this challenge. It examines the current policy landscape and includes: examples of how public agencies support displaced artists to sustain their practice in their new home; stories from the field; and a series of recommendations designed to support our National Members in their policy work.

The report draws on current literature and the experiences of our members around the world, civil society actors and artists, gleaned through a series of interviews. It has been developed in close collaboration with members of the Federation and international colleagues to better understand the needs and aspirations of displaced artists. We have learned that although significant research exists on how arts and culture enhance social cohesion in communities that include displaced people, far less is known about the professional characteristics of these populations, including how many are practicing artists. We recognise the scale and complexity of global migration and displacement and this report is intended to profile diverse ideas, start discussions, facilitate collaborative learning, and inspire reflection. We hope it will serve as a first step to address a critical knowledge gap in the arts and culture ecosystem and lead to further exploration by the sector.

On behalf of the Federation, I would like to thank Kiley Arroyo, Head of Strategic Data and Knowledge who led the project, as the first piece aligned to our revised approach to thought leadership. I also thank Mary Ann DeVlieg, whose knowledge, expertise and commitment to safeguarding artists at risk has been invaluable. Special thanks also to Abid Hussain, Director of Diversity at Arts Council England for his counsel throughout the project, and his ongoing work and commitment to advancing equity. We are also grateful for contributions from Dian Ika Gesuri and Alma Salem, as well their inspiring in situ support of artists. The knowledge, expertise and time provided by all our contributors will no doubt enrich our shared understanding of this complex problem. And finally, I thank Meredith Okell, our Communications and Engagement Manager, for editing and proofing this report.

We dedicate this report to the world's 68.5 million displaced people. We hope it inspires you, as well as our global arts and culture community, to consider new ways in which we can support arts and cultural practitioners.

Magdalena Moreno Mujica
Executive Director, IFACCA

Executive Summary

Today there are more people migrating – by force or choice – than at any other time in recorded history. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) reports that 31 people are newly displaced every minute. Population experts predict that global migration will persist as a megatrend well beyond the middle of this century. Data does not currently exist to describe the individual attributes of displaced people, including their professional expertise. As such, we cannot say what percentage of displaced people are artists or creative professionals. However, anecdotal evidence suggests that some of them are and it is those individuals – whether they number many or few – who hold tremendous potential to build bridges between worlds.

Many see global migration as the most pressing issue of the 21st century, and one which requires cooperative solutions. Our investigation supports this claim. It also reveals the fundamental challenges inherent to processes, structures and dynamics that marginalise people and maintain inequality based on difference – referred to as othering¹ – which are intensified by mass displacement of diverse individuals and peoples' exposure to individuals with different values, worldviews, and identities. For some, the experience of difference stirs anxiety, tribalism and destructive cooperation that pit groups against each other. For others, the movement of people is an inevitable part of human experience that makes visible the extraordinary plurality of the world. For the latter, displaced people are an asset and offer opportunities for enrichment.

Amidst these forces, a more sophisticated understanding of the value and social purpose of arts and culture is emerging which recognises the unique ways in which artists contribute to social transformation. This understanding creates space for government agencies responsible for arts and culture to play a unique role to help address issues surrounding global migration, including displacement. Cultural leaders can demonstrate new ways of engaging with complex issues by modelling open attitudes toward difference and change, which are grounded in curiosity, creativity and care.

The arts and culture can provide a welcome space – both physical and ideological – for people with different perspectives on divisive issues to interact, engage in dialogue, negotiate difference, and foster mutual understanding. Through the respectful exchange of values, knowledge and experience, inclusive groups can develop bridging capital, establish trust and develop cooperative capabilities to realise cultures of belonging. In so doing, cultural leaders are integral at the vanguard of social change.

¹ Othering is 'a set of processes, structures, and dynamics that engender marginality and persistent inequality across any of the full range of human differences, from race and ethnicity to religion, gender, or ability' (Powell and Menendian, June 29, 2017)

Purpose of this Report

Increasingly diverse populations present an array of challenges for communities around the world. They also present transformative opportunities. The purpose of this report is to introduce to IFACCA Members the issues that artists face when they are displaced; the programmes that exist (or could exist) to help artists sustain their practice; and the potential benefits of doing so. This report delivers information pertinent to the mandates of National Members and explores how they may use their leadership role to address these issues.

Research Methods

This report draws on primary and secondary sources, as well a review of extant literature. The authors conducted structured interviews with government agencies responsible for arts and culture, their grantees and partners, and displaced artists. The authors also took care to integrate diverse voices from each of the regions in which IFACCA works, as well as an inclusive cross-section of perspectives that represent government actors working at the international, national and municipal levels.

Summary of Key Findings

Displaced artists are first and foremost artists. They have the same needs as any creative professional trying to sustain their practice. This includes the need for supportive policies that enable them to work and study, establish social networks, and receive financial support, training and artistic development. When these needs are met, displaced artists can contribute valuable expertise that can enrich the societies in which they live, fuel the evolution of art forms, and contribute to our understanding of complex issues.

Rifahi asserts that through ‘the universal language of culture, radicalisation, intolerance, and fear can be addressed in a profound and concerted effort to allow us to rally global citizens to responsible and constructive action’ (2016). Our evaluation affirms this position and demonstrates that arts and culture can cultivate the capabilities that communities need to manage complexity. Cultural strategies can shift the atmosphere in communities, facilitate interaction and dialogue between diverse people, and help to foster mutual understanding and openness to discovering new solutions to shared problems.

Artistic experiences can enable individuals to encounter the sublime, expanding their sense of self and possibility and reminding them of their universality. When we hear stories that fall outside our prior understanding, we are invited to remember that despite differences, we all share essential human experiences and common basic needs. Displaced artists can also deepen the variety of aesthetic values, cultural traditions, and artistic techniques available in any given place. As artists meet and share knowledge their methods cross-pollinate and new artistic horizons are discovered. It is through the open exchange of ideas and remixing of knowledge that disciplines evolve – from the arts, to the sciences, and even to the practices of public institutions.

We have learned that people who leave their countries of origin are motivated by a complex web of forces, including conflict, human rights abuses, lack of economic opportunity, environmental degradation, and various forms of social and ideological repression that prohibit free expression. This is no different for artists and cultural workers. Global displacement is a 21st century challenge. Its complexity requires an entirely different set of problem-solving muscles including the capacity to

ask new questions, to combine divergent perspectives, and to engage in collaborative experimentation. These capabilities are inherent to creative processes and cultural practices. This uniquely positions artists and the global arts and culture sector to play a vital leadership role in debates about how best to respond to issues surrounding displacement.

Despite the benefits of the work that displaced artists can generate, significant barriers prohibit many from sustaining their practice and realising that promise. The challenges that societies around the world face to better support displaced artists – and displaced people more broadly – are multifold.

First, we must transform the current narrative about migrants and displaced people from one that is based on fear, to one that is based on strengths and celebrates the benefits of pluralistic societies. We must move away from centuries' old debates about whether immigration is good or bad to ask new questions about the kinds of systems and strategies needed to change the effects of migration and make those effects beneficial to everyone involved. This can advance cultural citizenship and the notion that all people should be empowered to help craft a story that supports collective resilience.

Second, there is opportunity for governments around the world to manage diversity in more sophisticated ways that address the more difficult (and rewarding) aspects of pluralism, equity, and inclusion, to afford more equal status and respect. Arts and culture portfolios can lead in this effort. Many government agencies responsible for arts and culture have already stepped into this space to adopt new forms of inclusive governance. Many agencies consulted for this report have begun to recognise displaced people as experts, whose lived experiences can deepen an institution's understanding of the opportunities brought by migration. These critical capacities developed by ministries of culture and arts councils can be applied more broadly across other portfolios. Conversely, peer agencies that are responsible for employment, education, housing, and social services can work with cultural partners to mitigate many of the barriers faced by displaced artists trying to access resources in those areas. Transversal cooperation of this kind requires colleagues from different disciplines to work together in new ways to co-create integrated solutions.

We have learned that a diverse ecology of public agencies, civil society actors, and grassroots initiatives – particularly artist-led initiatives – are attempting to address the needs of displaced artists. Each of these actors has distinct strengths and limitations to the kind of support that they can provide with their agency. We found that the needs of displaced artists, and artists in general, can be addressed effectively by this system. However, these entities tend to work in isolation, limiting their collective impact. Actors in the global arts and culture sector can develop collaborative interventions that harness their respective unique resources by recognising displacement as a multidimensional issue that cannot be addressed by one entity alone. Frameworks such as the [United Nation's new voluntary Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration \(2018\)](#) provides a model that could be adopted and adapted to support more coordinated and comprehensive efforts.

This investigation affirms that a new approach is emerging in arts and cultural policy, one that recognises and promotes more pluralistic aesthetic values equitably. To realise the promise of this approach, public institutions can broaden the range of perspectives that inform their policy making, institutional decision making, and evaluation of different types of artistic work. This can be achieved by adopting what are referred to as transversal strategies. Institutions can work horizontally to diversify their staff and leadership to better mirror the societies they serve. Vertical governance practices can also be adopted to empower citizens to participate in shaping more responsive

cultural policies. Furthermore, the composition of peer-review panels can be expanded to include individuals whose aesthetic values and artistic expertise differs from dominant practices and institutional norms. Institutions may also apply these considerations when supporting individuals and organisations involved in the promotion of arts and culture – for example curators, programmers or publishers – who shape and respond to audiences, including those audiences with interests that vary from dominant practices. We have learned that mechanisms like these can accelerate the transformation of arts and cultural policy in ways that generate widespread societal benefit.

This work demonstrates the transformative potential of inclusive practices and reveals the challenges that accompany change processes. It has been said that relationships evolve at the speed of trust. The practices promoted in this piece invite individuals to work in new ways and with new partners. We have learned that it is powerfully productive for actors – whether from government, civil society or the community – to direct their investments toward strengthening the collaborative capabilities of all involved and engage over time.

Finally, this work encourages policy makers to embrace solutions from an intergenerational perspective, to balance immediate needs and political priorities with the lesser known aspirations of future generations. For this to happen, the horizon line must be drawn far enough into the future to provide space for transformative work to unfold.

In this historic moment, the global arts and culture community can make a positive difference for displaced artists. Cultural leaders can bridge two separate yet complementary movements – the needs of displaced peoples and the economic, social and cultural rights of artists – to make transformative change. To understand, embrace and resource the comprehensive needs of transition, is to increase the likelihood that today's changes become tomorrow's mainstream practices.

Opportunities for the Federation

Informed by our analysis, we have also identified a series of possible collaborative actions that Members may wish to consider, to continue dialogue and the exchange of knowledge and best practice with the support of the IFACCA Secretariat.

The Secretariat could:

- convene a Displacement Working Group to be led by National Members, which includes civil society actors and displaced artists with a view to co-design new solutions
- share templates based on experimental practices that have worked and provide information on the conditions in which they were delivered
- hold an inclusive policy making capacity development workshop
- conduct a feasibility study on the potential to develop a fund that provides financial support to displaced artists with co-investments from public, private and philanthropic sources.

The Secretariat will base any future activities on the needs identified by members in response to this report. If you are interested in leading, participating in or learning more about these potential activities, please contact us at: info@ifacca.org

Bright Spot: Strategic Collaboration

International Cities of Refuge Network, Swedish Cities of Refuge and Swedish Arts Council

The International Cities of Refuge Network (ICORN) is a decentralised independent organisation of over 70 cities and regions worldwide, which offers temporary relocation to persecuted writers and artists. ICORN cities provide housing, stipends and support for one or two years. Established in 2006 in Stavanger, Norway, ICORN was built on a previous initiative: Cities of Asylum, founded by the International Parliament of Writers in 1993. It was a response to numerous assassinations of intellectuals in Algeria and elsewhere. ICORN works closely with PEN International to verify the authenticity of persecution and the artistic credentials of candidates. The ICORN Secretariat provides ICORN cities with lists of artists they might host, while the host cities provide support resources for their chosen writer or artist, normally from the city council's budget. ICORN also acts as a connecting network, promoting and defending international solidarity for free artistic expression, including that of free speech and human rights actors.

The Swedish Arts Council's mandate from the Minister of Culture and Democracy for 2018 includes the general development of the cities of refuge system in Sweden, promoting the importance of culture and art for freedom of expression and democratisation, as well as encouraging synergies in areas of cultural and development policies. The Swedish Arts Council achieves this in collaboration with the municipalities and county councils who play important roles, alongside relevant authorities such as ICORN, Swedish PEN, and other organisations.

These collaborations have produced a very useful online handbook for Cities of Refuge. A national coordinator, funded by the Swedish Arts Council, coordinates the 25 Swedish ICORN cities and regions and organises their support meetings. The city synergies have helped the Swedish Immigration Department to accept verified persecuted writers and artists more easily. Forty-one writers and artists have been hosted since 2006, many of whom have faced prison, arrest, torture or other danger in their home countries. The programme creates conditions for dialogue with the Swedish arts community, colleagues and audiences, and gives guest artists the opportunity to continue their work in safety. The Swedish Arts Council can also provide cities with contributions for costs related to artists' public and professional development – for projects, translation, publication of works, or workshops or conference attendance fees. The Swedish Arts Council can only directly fund citizens, so providing the cities with extra funding is useful. ICORN guests may study free of charge at universities; they are not issued with work permits but can start their own businesses and be self-employed. Support to artists via the cities is valid until the end of the ICORN residency period. After this, the writer or artist may decide to move on, go home, or apply for permanent residency status.

As ICORN initially only hosted writers, ICORN city managers outside of Sweden are often based in municipal library departments and may be less familiar with other art forms. In Sweden they are normally in the culture department. They work in teams with other municipal departments and can exchange knowledge with the national network, thus offering more broad support to the guest writers and artists. With 12 years of experience, ICORN has saved many lives, but identifies post-residency support as a crucial challenge. Neither ICORN nor the cities can provide all the support needed, especially following relocation. This must be done in collaboration with other actors. ICORN recognises that the more national and international networks the ICORN guests belong to, the better their situation is after they have relocated.

In Sweden, a unique agreement between the migration office, the employment ministry and the Arts Council allows for ICORN artists to apply for permanent residency as freelance professionals. The required income threshold for them is set quite low, making it easier for them to start out.

Bright Spot: Adaptive Support Structures

Ettijahat – Independent Culture

Ettijahat is a flexible, adaptive organisation that runs a range of programmes that cover all artistic disciplines. It was established in Syria in 2011 to activate and render more positive the role of independent culture and arts in the process of cultural and social change in the country. Due to increased conflict, it moved its offices to Beirut in 2013. In a period of monumental cultural, political, and social change, Ettijahat's current mission is to stimulate growth of independent Syrian arts and culture, with artists and organisations from Syria and in the diaspora. Its programmes are firmly based in values and are underpinned by respect for freedoms, including freedom of expression and creation; respect for artists and audiences; decentralised, transparent cultural planning and execution; and collaborative practices.

Ettijahat funds and supports independent young artists and cultural researchers, and provides opportunities to produce, network, and develop skills, knowledge, and experience. It sees the arts as an essential element of Syria's development and supports artistic creation, production and diffusion, artistic and cultural management training, as well as cultural policy research. It addresses development and aims to improve living conditions through arts and culture, especially for marginalised groups. It is also instrumental in creating consensus and alliances and promoting Syrian arts and artists globally.

Ettijahat provides a counterpoint to the highly politicised governmental arts and culture system in Syria. It pays careful attention to transparency, representation and evaluation. It also listens closely to its staff, artists, and funding partners. Ettijahat has been able to consistently adapt its programmes, processes and systems to the needs of artists and arts organisations. For example, it may: extend deadlines or funding period limitations; amend criteria; extend or broaden funded activities; or offer increased mentor assistance to ensure its support is effective. In addition, Ettijahat frequently creates new programmes to address new and growing needs.

In 2017, Ettijahat supported 50 artists, 30 researchers, and 24 support providers in collaboration with 15 partners and donors. Because displaced artists often face barriers to continuing their work or finding support, Ettijahat focusses on partnership and collaboration to support artists from Syria, those both in the country and in exile. It keeps abreast of artists' needs and tendencies through its flexibility, organisational learning and constant consultation, and is able to adapt its programmes accordingly.

This approach demonstrates a deep commitment to learn from people with first-hand experience of displacement and to develop programmes that address artists' needs over time. When we spoke with the Executive Director of Ettijahat, Abdullah alKafri, he told us:

It's important to create programmes for the upcoming 10 years that take into consideration all the generations of practitioners' needs...[we are now] looking at new models of education to respond to the new needs of the young generation providing wide reach and access to all.

This approach also leverages skills that older generations can provide through mentoring. It may be useful to consider such flexible partnership programmes, which adapt swiftly to align with changing circumstances, when designing national strategies that respond to the needs of displaced artists.

Bright Spot: Creative Case for Diversity

The Creative Case for Diversity, Arts Council England

In 2011, Arts Council England (ACE) launched the Creative Case for Diversity, a strategy designed to help organisations and artists that receive funding to embrace a wider range of aesthetic influences, practices, and partners. The ACE leadership team viewed the strategy as a catalyst to reframe a stagnant and unproductive approach to diversity policy and practice that had become entrenched within a deficit model often imposed on arts organisations.

As part of the launch, ACE commissioned the journal Third Text to produce *Beyond Cultural Diversity – the Case for Creativity* (2011), a collection of commissioned essays and provocations from policy makers, artists, academics and institutions that critically examined the future of diversity policy and practice in England. The publication was a response to public criticism and the perception that well-intentioned diversity policies and initiatives were failing to achieve systemic and sustainable change.

In his essay for the journal, 'Breaking the Code: New Approaches to Diversity and Equality in the Arts', Hassan Mahamdallie (then Senior Strategy Officer, Diversity at ACE) argued for developing the creative case for diversity as a 'progressive force to renew the arts' that would place art and aesthetics at the centre. He identified three elements that required sustained work in the arts sector and policy making: equality; recognition of diverse artists past and present; and the construction and application of a new framework for understanding art that expands definitions of quality, privilege and selection. Mahamdallie recognised that a reset was necessary, otherwise 'structural barriers and antiquated and exclusive approaches would continue to keep diverse arts in the margins' (2011).

The Creative Case placed the onus directly on directors, curators, choreographers and programmers to consider and respond to the challenge of the stories, talent and voices that are missing from the commissioned, programmed and presented work. Three years after this new approach to diversity – driven by the arts and aesthetics – was articulated, it was translated into tangible and meaningful policy directives. These directives changed the ways in which publicly funded arts organisations reflect diversity in their work, as well as how they evaluate and demonstrate delivery.

Since 2015, ACE has required National Portfolio Organisations to demonstrate at the stage of application how their activities advance the Creative Case for Diversity. In 2017, ACE further announced that by 2021 organisations that receive larger sums of public funding will be required to meet minimum standards of delivery and performance, and that failure to meet these may affect future funding for the organisation.

The Creative Case has had a transformative impact by mandating that arts organisations reimagine the aesthetics of the work they present, the talent they nurture and collaborate with, and the diversity of stories and voices to which they provide a platform. Diversity is no longer optional. It is a requirement built into national portfolio funding criteria, as well as other strategic funding programmes.

The Creative Case also recognises the impact of diversity at a leadership level on work presented and has served as a catalyst to advance the work of ACE to diversify the workforce and leadership of the arts and culture sector. It has encouraged the Arts Council to push beyond legal compliance and address and respond to barriers of class, socioeconomic background and displacement.

The transition from aspiration to action has been supported by increased accountability. Since 2015, ACE has committed to publish equality and diversity data related to investment, as well as demographic profiles of the arts and culture workforce related to age, disability, ethnicity, gender and sexual orientation, with plans in place to publish more in-depth data on audience diversity in the future. This important work underpins Arts Council England's 2018 approach as it consults with its constituents and develops the strategy that will guide the next ten years of its policy making and implementation.

Bright spot: Cultural institutions as platforms for societal transformation

The Gabriela Mistral Centre of the Arts, Culture and People (GAM), Chile

The Gabriela Mistral Centre of the Arts, Culture and People (GAM) is a contemporary cultural centre in an historic building in the heart of Santiago, Chile. Named after the country's first Nobel-Prize winning poet, the space was built by Salvador Allende's socialist government as a platform for intercultural exchange, which hosted a United Nations Conference on Trade and Development in 1972. In 1973, the building was overtaken by the Pinochet dictatorship and became the central headquarters for the military junta; in 1989 with the return of democracy it became home to the Ministry of Defence; and in 2006 the government repurposed the building as a cultural centre for the public. In 2010, after significant redevelopment, GAM once again became a space for social and cultural transformation.

In our conversation with Pamela López, Director of Programmes and Audiences at GAM, she explained that this history

informs GAM's mission and commitment to addressing inequality, promoting diversity, and challenging institutional barriers to involving a wide range of audiences and artists...[it] provides a metaphor that leads us to think about exile and a period in Chile where Chilean artists were forced to leave the country.

GAM now hosts more than 1.5 million visitors each year and includes departments dedicated to research, education and mediation. Its work is informed by a strategy that prioritises inclusive audience engagement and it strives to increase the participation of people from groups that have historically had less access to culture. This includes people affected by displacement, who the organisation identified as a priority in response to the significant inward migration of people from Haiti, Colombia, Venezuela and Peru, which has changed the cultural identity of the country and at times challenged its social fabric.

However, Ms López sees the new context 'as an opportunity to stress the importance of collaboration and exchange, locally and internationally, within the arts sector and with other agents.' She explained that GAM provides all people with everyday opportunities to access and contribute to Chile's cultural life and development, regardless of their legal status. This includes a community residency programme that allows artists from other countries – including those affected by displacement – to collaborate with artists from Chile and contribute to public programming. The Centre also provides public space in which artists can meet and work, which enhances their visibility in the community and offers a platform for sharing stories and interacting with diverse audiences.

GAM promotes the idea that cultural change can lead to political change and Ms Lopez explained that its programmes are informed by themes and topics that can influence wider social discourse and support citizens to understand and navigate the world around them.

Through its work, GAM demonstrates how arts and cultural organisations can provide physical and ideological space for people with different views to interact, speak, negotiate difference and foster mutual understanding.