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AFRICAN AND EUROPEAN WOMEN IN ACTION

1011139352





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E-BOOK

WOMEN IN ACTION FOR HERITAGE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT



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1. Introduction

1.1. Overview of the AEWIA Project

The African and European Women in Action (AEWIA) project is a collaborative initiative funded by the European Union under project number 101139352. This groundbreaking project aims to promote and strengthen the role of young women as key agents in fostering intercultural dialogue and sustainable development. By enhancing the recognition, preservation, and utilization of intangible cultural heritage (ICH), AEWIA bridges the cultural divide between Europe and Africa, creating a shared platform for dialogue, empowerment, and progress.

The project is implemented through a series of training courses, international forums, and advocacy campaigns, involving young women, youth workers, and cultural leaders from six partner countries. These activities foster collaboration, capacity building, and the creation of tools such as Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) and an e-book on intangible heritage and women in diplomacy. By leveraging digital technologies and cultural heritage as resources, AEWIA seeks to inspire a new generation of women leaders to actively shape sustainable and inclusive societies.

Key Features of the AEWIA Project:

Focus on Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH): AEWIA emphasizes the preservation and promotion of ICH, which includes oral traditions, rituals, social practices, performing arts, and traditional craftsmanship. These elements form the core of cultural identity and play a vital role in fostering community pride and resilience.

Youth and Women Empowerment: Through advocacy and training, AEWIA equips young women with the skills, knowledge, and networks to become champions of cultural preservation and sustainable development.

Intercultural Dialogue: The project facilitates exchanges between Africa and Europe, creating opportunities for mutual learning and collaboration.

Digital Advocacy: AEWIA integrates digital tools and platforms to amplify women's voices and extend the reach of its advocacy efforts.

1.2. Objectives and Scope

The AEWIA project's overarching goal is to empower young women as pivotal actors in promoting sustainable development and intercultural dialogue through the preservation of intangible cultural heritage. It is built on the recognition that women are not only custodians of cultural heritage but also agents of change who can drive societal transformation.

General Objective

To promote and strengthen the role of young women in intercultural dialogue between Europe and Africa by enhancing intangible cultural heritage as a shared asset for sustainable development.

Specific Objectives

- Enhance the knowledge, skills, and abilities of youth workers to use intangible heritage as a tool for sustainable development and women's empowerment.
- Provide training on effective advocacy and digital networking.
- Promote the sharing of cultural knowledge, practices, and traditions related to women within diverse societies.
- Highlight the role of women in preserving cultural heritage across Africa and Europe.
- Utilize digital technologies to strengthen advocacy efforts and raise awareness about the importance of intangible cultural heritage.
- Train young women in using data collection and analysis tools for impactful communication.
- Foster inclusive and sustainable communities by integrating traditional practices into broader development goals.
- Address systemic barriers to women's participation in cultural, social, and economic activities.

Scope of the AEWIA Project

The scope of the AEWIA project extends across the following key areas:

- **Education and Training:** AEWIA delivers structured training courses and workshops to equip participants with theoretical and practical knowledge about cultural heritage, advocacy, and sustainable development.
- **Advocacy and Awareness:** By leveraging digital platforms and community networks, the project amplifies the role of women in cultural preservation and development.
- **Research and Knowledge Production:** Insights from case studies and training activities are documented in resources like the MOOC "Female Heritage Globe" and an e-book, serving as long-term tools for education and reflection.
- **Cross-Cultural Collaboration:** AEWIA's activities create a dynamic space for dialogue between European and African communities, fostering mutual understanding and respect.

2. Understanding Sustainable Development

2.1. What is Sustainable Development?

Sustainable development is the process of meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. This concept, popularized by the Brundtland Report (Our Common Future, 1987), highlights the balance between three interconnected pillars:

Environmental Protection: Ensuring the responsible use of natural resources and conserving biodiversity to combat climate change. This includes transitioning to renewable energy sources, protecting ecosystems, and implementing sustainable land management practices. The European Green Deal provides a framework for achieving these goals in Europe, emphasizing carbon neutrality by 2050.

Economic Growth: Encouraging innovation and economic practices that promote long-term stability rather than short-term gains. This involves fostering industries that align with

environmental sustainability, as outlined in UNESCO's culture-driven economic initiatives, which integrate heritage preservation into local economies.

Social Equity: Creating inclusive systems that ensure equal access to resources, education, and opportunities regardless of gender, geography, or socioeconomic status. The African Union's Agenda 2063 explicitly targets reducing inequality and empowering marginalized groups through initiatives that enhance healthcare, education, and employment opportunities.

Participants in AEWIA training sessions described sustainable development as "transformational growth" that prioritizes creativity, dignity, and equity while addressing challenges such as poverty, inequality, and environmental degradation. This comprehensive approach requires collaborative efforts across societies and nations to ensure progress for all.

2.2. Key Features of Sustainable Development

2.2.1. Inclusivity and Equity

Sustainable development must prioritize the inclusion of marginalized groups, particularly women, in all aspects of society. The European Commission's Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025 underscores that inclusivity is foundational to achieving equitable progress. AEWIA participants emphasized that true progress is only achievable when everyone has the ability to participate and thrive. As one participant noted, "Inclusivity and equity are non-negotiable for creating a truly sustainable society."

2.2.2. Long-Term Vision

A sustainable future requires balancing current needs with those of future generations. UNESCO's frameworks for heritage preservation emphasize this long-term perspective by advocating for intergenerational knowledge transfer and environmental stewardship. Addressing global challenges like climate change and resource depletion requires adopting renewable energy technologies and conservation strategies.

2.2.3. Environmental Stewardship

Preserving ecosystems and reducing human impact on the planet are central to sustainability. The African Union's Agenda 2063 outlines commitments to biodiversity conservation, sustainable land use, and transitioning to renewable energy. AEWIA participants underscored the importance of resource-efficient practices such as water conservation, waste reduction, and protecting indigenous flora and fauna.

2.2.4. Economic Empowerment

Sustainability aims to align economic growth with environmental and social considerations. Initiatives like supporting local businesses, fostering circular economies, and promoting green technologies were highlighted by participants. UNESCO's economic programs demonstrate how culture-driven economies can integrate heritage preservation with job creation and economic growth.

2.2.5. Social Inclusion

Equitable access to education, healthcare, and employment opportunities bridges systemic inequalities and uplifts marginalized groups. The European Union's inclusive education policies and the African Union's focus on empowering women and youth reflect this principle. AEWIA participants stressed the critical role of education and awareness in fostering systemic change.

2.3. The Interconnection Between Sustainable Development and International Cooperation

Sustainable development and international cooperation are deeply interconnected, forming the foundation for addressing global challenges such as poverty, climate change, and social inequality. Collaborative efforts across nations enable resource sharing, capacity building, and the pooling of expertise, ensuring equitable progress worldwide.

Why International Cooperation Matters

Global Problem-Solving: Challenges like pandemics and climate change require collective action. UNESCO's 2003 Convention on Intangible Cultural Heritage highlights the importance

of partnerships to safeguard global heritage, while frameworks like the Paris Agreement emphasize coordinated responses to environmental crises.

Promoting Peace and Security: Diplomatic initiatives, such as the African Union's Agenda 2063 and the United Nations' Agenda 2030, help reduce conflicts and foster stability. The European Union's conflict-resolution efforts underline the role of peace in sustainable growth.

Protecting Shared Resources: Transboundary resource management, such as the Nile Basin Initiative, showcases the importance of cooperation in ensuring the sustainability of vital resources. Collaboration between governments and civil society organizations is critical for equitable resource distribution.

Mutual Benefits of Cooperation and Development

Global Equity: International partnerships facilitate resource and knowledge sharing, ensuring marginalized communities are not left behind. AEWIA's focus on youth empowerment exemplifies this principle by promoting inclusive development.

Empowering Women and Youth: Projects like AEWIA highlight the transformative power of gender equality and youth empowerment in achieving sustainable development. European policies similarly prioritize gender inclusivity in leadership and decision-making.

Addressing Systemic Barriers: International collaboration helps tackle systemic inequalities, offering education, advocacy, and policy reform opportunities.

Participants in the AEWIA project emphasized that fostering global partnerships must respect cultural diversity while addressing systemic challenges. As one participant stated, "International cooperation is not just about dialogue; it's about building bridges and creating solutions that transcend borders."

3. Frameworks for Sustainable Development

3.1. United Nations' Agenda 2030.

The United Nations' Agenda 2030, adopted in 2015, is a universal framework comprising 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 targets. Its overarching aim is to eradicate poverty, protect the planet, and ensure peace and prosperity by 2030. The framework is built on four core principles:

- **Universality:** The SDGs apply to all countries, regardless of their level of development, emphasizing collective global responsibility.
- **Integration:** The goals are interconnected, recognizing that progress in one area often impacts others.
- **Inclusivity:** No one should be left behind, with particular attention to marginalized groups such as women, youth, and rural communities.
- **Partnership:** Collaborative efforts among governments, businesses, civil society, and individuals are critical to achieving the goals.

Agenda 2030 places significant emphasis on gender equality (SDG 5), recognizing it as both a standalone goal and a cross-cutting theme across other SDGs. Gender equality is framed as a fundamental human right and a driver of progress in health, education, economic growth, and social inclusion. UNESCO's programs align closely with Agenda 2030, focusing on cultural education, gender equity, and sustainable development.

- **Key European Contributions:** The European Green Deal and the European Commission's Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025 reinforce the principles of Agenda 2030 by promoting sustainable economic growth, environmental conservation, and social equity.
- **African Context:** Agenda 2030 is aligned with Africa's specific needs, including poverty reduction, climate resilience, and women's empowerment, as articulated in regional initiatives like the African Union's Agenda 2063.

3.2. African Union's Agenda 2063

Adopted in 2013, the African Union's Agenda 2063 is a strategic framework that envisions a prosperous, inclusive, and sustainable Africa. Rooted in the Pan-African ideals of self-reliance and resilience, Agenda 2063 outlines seven aspirations, including inclusive growth, political stability, and gender equality.

Key Features of Agenda 2063

- **Inclusive Economic Growth:** Agenda 2063 aims to eradicate poverty and achieve shared prosperity through inclusive economic transformation and sustainable development.

- **Gender Equality:** The framework emphasizes women's leadership in governance, innovation, and peace-building, recognizing their critical role in Africa's transformation.
- **Sustainability:** The agenda focuses on protecting Africa's environment, promoting renewable energy, and addressing climate change through community-driven initiatives.
- **Cultural Heritage:** Agenda 2063 aligns with UNESCO's efforts to safeguard Africa's intangible cultural heritage as a cornerstone of identity and resilience.

Alignment with Global Frameworks

Agenda 2063 complements the United Nations' Agenda 2030 by addressing Africa-specific challenges while contributing to global sustainable development. For instance, the African Women's Decade on Grassroots Approach to Gender Equality (2020-2030) aligns with SDG 5, emphasizing grassroots empowerment and inclusivity.

3.3. Women's Role in Agenda 2030 and Agenda 2063

Women play a pivotal role in both the United Nations' Agenda 2030 and the African Union's Agenda 2063. These frameworks recognize that empowering women is not just a moral imperative but a strategic necessity for achieving sustainable development.

Women in Agenda 2030

Gender equality (SDG 5) is central to Agenda 2030, with direct and indirect linkages to other goals, including:

- **SDG 4 (Quality Education):** Educated women are more likely to invest in their families and communities, creating a ripple effect of positive outcomes.
- **SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-Being):** Women's access to healthcare enables them to participate fully in social and economic life.
- **SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth):** Women's economic empowerment enhances household incomes and drives economic progress.

UNESCO's programs advocate for gender-responsive education and cultural initiatives, ensuring that women's voices are integral to decision-making processes.

Women in Agenda 2063

Agenda 2063 positions women as agents of change and leaders in Africa's development. Key areas include:

- **Leadership and Governance:** Women's representation in political and economic decision-making is emphasized to drive inclusive policies.
- **Economic Empowerment:** Women entrepreneurs play a significant role in Africa's formal and informal economies, contributing to sustainable growth.
- **Cultural Preservation:** Women are recognized as custodians of intangible cultural heritage, ensuring its transmission across generations.

Challenges and Opportunities

Both frameworks acknowledge the systemic barriers that hinder women's full participation, including poverty, discrimination, and lack of access to resources. Addressing these challenges requires:

- **Policy Alignment:** Ensuring national policies align with regional and global commitments.
- **Education and Awareness:** Promoting gender-responsive education to challenge stereotypes and empower women.
- **Partnerships:** Strengthening collaborations among governments, international organizations, and civil society to amplify women's voices.

4. Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) and Its Role in Development

4.1. Defining Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH)

Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) encompasses the practices, expressions, knowledge, and skills that communities, groups, and individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage. Unlike physical monuments or artifacts, ICH is living heritage, transmitted from generation to generation and continuously recreated to adapt to a community's environment, values, and

historical experiences. This living heritage provides communities with a sense of identity and continuity, promoting cultural diversity in a globalized world.

UNESCO defines ICH as "traditions or living expressions inherited from our ancestors and passed on to our descendants." It includes practices such as oral traditions, performing arts, rituals, festive events, and traditional ecological knowledge. These elements often reflect the collective memory and shared values of a community, contributing to their cultural distinctiveness and fostering social cohesion.

The African Union's Agenda 2063 acknowledges the role of ICH in preserving cultural identity while fostering economic empowerment through sustainable practices. Likewise, European cultural policies emphasize the integration of ICH into modern economic systems, particularly creative industries, to ensure its relevance in contemporary society.

ICH is particularly vital in post-conflict or post-disaster recovery, where cultural heritage can help restore community identity and resilience. Examples like the preservation of traditional healing practices in Rwanda after the genocide or the promotion of indigenous festivals in the Balkans illustrate its restorative power.

4.2. Domains of Intangible Cultural Heritage

UNESCO categorizes ICH into five broad domains that reflect the diverse expressions of living heritage. These domains underline the multifaceted nature of ICH and its deep connections to cultural identity, community well-being, and sustainable development.

Oral Traditions and Expressions:

Oral traditions include languages, storytelling, proverbs, and oral poetry, serving as vital means of transmitting cultural knowledge, ethics, and social norms. They often embody a community's historical experiences and wisdom.

Example: The Maasai storytelling traditions in Kenya and Tanzania pass on valuable lessons about community leadership and environmental stewardship.

Challenges: The globalization of languages and the dominance of major global languages threaten the survival of indigenous oral traditions.

Performing Arts:

This domain encompasses music, dance, and theatre, which often blend artistic expression with spiritual or social elements.

Example: The Gule Wamkulu dances in Malawi celebrate ancestral spirits and serve as a medium of social instruction.

Opportunities: Integrating performing arts into tourism initiatives can create income streams for communities while preserving cultural practices.

Social Practices, Rituals, and Festive Events:

These reflect shared values, beliefs, and customs that strengthen community ties.

Example: Morocco's Imilchil Marriage Festival celebrates Berber heritage and promotes social unity.

Impact: Rituals and festivals often support intergenerational knowledge transfer and community identity.

Knowledge and Practices Concerning Nature and the Universe:

These include traditional ecological knowledge systems, sustainable agricultural methods, and holistic medical practices.

Example: The Dogon people of Mali preserve astronomical knowledge that informs their agricultural cycles.

Relevance: Such knowledge contributes to biodiversity conservation and sustainable development.

Traditional Craftsmanship:

Focuses on skills and knowledge required to produce handmade objects, often deeply tied to cultural identity.

Example: Berber women in Morocco weave intricate carpets that carry symbolic narratives.

Economic Potential: Handicrafts often create employment opportunities and can become export commodities.

4.3. UNESCO's Role in Safeguarding ICH

UNESCO has been instrumental in promoting and safeguarding ICH globally through the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. This Convention provides an international legal framework and policy tools to ensure the viability of living heritage.

Key Initiatives by UNESCO:

Raising Awareness:

UNESCO works to highlight the significance of ICH as a source of cultural diversity and a contributor to sustainable development. Campaigns like "Living Heritage and Sustainable Development" emphasize the broader socio-economic impacts of ICH.

Capacity Building:

Through training programs and funding initiatives, UNESCO supports communities in documenting, preserving, and revitalizing their ICH.

Example: Training programs for cultural practitioners in West Africa to document oral histories.

International Collaboration:

UNESCO fosters partnerships among countries to promote knowledge exchange and safeguard heritage under threat. Initiatives like cross-border nominations for shared cultural practices strengthen regional ties.

Recognition through Lists:

The Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity celebrates elements such as the Mediterranean diet, the Ethiopian coffee ceremony, and traditional Chinese medicine.

4.4. Relevance of ICH to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Intangible Cultural Heritage plays a crucial role in advancing the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), creating pathways for inclusive growth and resilience.

Promoting Gender Equality (SDG 5):

Women are often the primary custodians of ICH, transmitting cultural knowledge and skills across generations. By empowering women, ICH initiatives contribute to broader gender equity goals.

Example: Women-led weaving cooperatives in Guatemala support financial independence and cultural preservation.

Ensuring Decent Work and Economic Growth (SDG 8):

Traditional crafts and cultural tourism provide economic opportunities for marginalized communities, fostering inclusive growth.

Example: Berber women's carpet weaving in Morocco generates significant income and supports local economies.

Building Sustainable Cities and Communities (SDG 11):

Integrating ICH into urban planning ensures that cultural heritage is preserved as cities modernize.

Example: Efforts to preserve traditional fishing techniques in coastal European towns.

Fostering Responsible Consumption and Production (SDG 12):

Many traditional practices prioritize sustainability, such as eco-friendly agricultural methods and resource-efficient craftsmanship.

Enhancing Quality Education (SDG 4):

Incorporating ICH into educational curricula fosters cultural awareness and creativity.

Example: School programs in Africa teaching indigenous music and storytelling.

5. Women as Custodians of Cultural Heritage

Women are central to the safeguarding and transmission of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH), as recognized by UNESCO and various cultural organizations worldwide. They play a pivotal role in preserving oral traditions, artistic expressions, rituals, and ceremonies, ensuring that these practices continue across generations. Their influence extends beyond the familial sphere, with women often serving as cultural educators and knowledge keepers within their communities.

In many cultures, women are the primary custodians of knowledge, passing down important traditions related to craftsmanship, culinary arts, performing arts, and rituals. They embody the continuity of cultural practices, while also adapting these traditions to changing societal

contexts. Women's role in preserving ICH reinforces the connection between cultural identity and social cohesion, enabling future generations to maintain a strong sense of community and heritage

5.1 Preservation and Transmission of ICH

Women's contribution to the preservation and transmission of Intangible Cultural Heritage is irreplaceable. In many African and Asian communities, women's expertise is key to the survival of oral traditions, song, dance, and craftsmanship (UNESCO, 2018). For instance, women artisans are essential in the production of traditional textiles, pottery, and jewellery, all of which carry historical significance and are often used in cultural ceremonies and daily life.

In Africa, women are instrumental in the practice of storytelling and oral histories, which play a crucial role in preserving the history, values, and traditions of communities (UNESCO, 2020). In Asia, women have been critical in passing down knowledge of traditional medicine, culinary techniques, and ritual practices (UNESCO, 2019). Crafts such as weaving and pottery are often passed down through generations of women, who teach their daughters the skills necessary for creating these objects, ensuring their survival for centuries.

Furthermore, the role of women has been expanded with the rise of digital media. Many women are utilizing technology to share their cultural knowledge on platforms such as YouTube and online forums, reaching a broader audience and securing the future of these traditions in an ever-evolving world.

5.2 Economic and Social Development Roles

In addition to their roles in cultural preservation, women significantly contribute to economic and social development through their participation in cultural industries. In many communities, women's involvement in crafts and agriculture directly impacts the local economy. For example, women's traditional work in handicrafts such as weaving, embroidery, and pottery often forms the backbone of local markets and cultural tourism (UNESCO, 2017).

Cultural tourism, driven by the global fascination with traditional practices, has allowed many women to showcase their craftsmanship to international markets, generating income and fostering local development (European Commission, 2020). Women's work in food production, such as traditional cooking and the preparation of culturally significant dishes, also plays a vital role in sustaining local economies while promoting cultural diversity through culinary tourism (African Union, 2021).

Moreover, women contribute to community development by engaging in education and social programs, where they often teach younger generations about traditional arts, crafts, and ceremonies. This helps create a sense of continuity and identity within communities while offering empowerment and social cohesion.

5.3. Challenges and Opportunities

Despite their significant roles, women face several challenges in their work as custodians of Intangible Cultural Heritage. One of the primary challenges is the undervaluation of women's contributions in cultural heritage. In many cultures, women's work in ICH is often invisible, particularly in rural areas where their labour is seen as part of their domestic duties and therefore not adequately recognized (African Union, 2021).

Furthermore, gender-based inequalities in access to resources and decision-making processes can hinder women's ability to participate fully in the preservation and transmission of ICH. In many cases, women are excluded from formal recognition of their contributions, and their cultural knowledge is not institutionalized in the same way as the work of their male counterparts (UNESCO, 2018).

However, these challenges also present significant opportunities for empowerment. UNESCO's Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage has created platforms for women to showcase their roles as cultural leaders, advocating for greater gender equality in heritage preservation (UNESCO, 2021). There is growing recognition of the need to amplify women's voices in cultural heritage policies, ensuring that they have a say in the governance of cultural preservation efforts.

Additionally, technology has opened new doors for women to share their cultural knowledge, particularly through online courses, virtual exhibitions, and digital storytelling, making their contributions more visible and accessible to a global audience. By embracing these technologies, women have an unprecedented opportunity to reach new audiences while empowering themselves economically and socially.

In conclusion, the role of women as custodians of Intangible Cultural Heritage is both vital and evolving. While challenges exist, there is a clear path toward ensuring greater recognition, visibility, and empowerment for women in preserving and transmitting cultural traditions. By leveraging policy reforms, technological advancements, and global platforms, women can continue to play a key role in cultural heritage preservation and socio-economic development.

6. Case Studies of Women and Intangible Heritage

Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) encompasses the living expressions, practices, and traditions that are passed down from generation to generation. These traditions often serve as an anchor for communities, connecting them to their past while shaping their cultural identity in the present. Women, as primary custodians of this heritage, play a central role in safeguarding, transmitting, and innovating cultural practices that are integral to their communities.

This section highlights diverse case studies that underscore the importance of women in preserving and advancing Intangible Cultural Heritage across the globe. From the Berber women of Morocco, who weave intricate tapestries of tradition through their crafts, to the Maya weavers in Guatemala, whose textile artistry continues to embody ancient rituals, each example reveals how women contribute to the richness and diversity of global cultural heritage.

In countries like India, Guatemala, and Nigeria, women are not only practitioners of traditional arts and crafts but also guardians of ancient knowledge in fields like medicine, agriculture, and storytelling. From the Ayurvedic medicine women of India to the storytellers of the Kamba community, women have continued to preserve these vital practices amidst changing global dynamics.

The following case studies explore these dynamic intersections of gender, culture, and heritage, offering insight into how women sustain traditional dietary cultures like Japan's Washoku, maintain indigenous dance forms like the Isikuti dances of the Maasai, and ensure the continuity of community practices, such as midwifery and pottery-making. These examples also highlight the resilience of women in preserving cultural identities, even in the face of modern challenges.

Through these narratives, we not only acknowledge the invaluable contributions of women to Intangible Cultural Heritage but also emphasize the need to continue supporting their roles in cultural preservation, as they serve as the living links between the past and the future of humanity's heritage.

6.1. Berber Communities of Morocco

The Berber (Amazigh) communities of Morocco are among the oldest cultural groups in North Africa, with a heritage that dates back thousands of years. Known for their vibrant oral traditions, the Amazigh people have preserved their culture through storytelling, music, poetry, and craft. These oral practices are not merely artistic expressions but vital repositories of history, values, and community identity.



The Impressive Traditional Craftsmanship of the Berber Women

NoSaDe. (n.d.). *The impressive traditional craftsmanship of the Berber women*. Retrieved January 31, 2025, from <https://nosade.com/the-impressive-traditional-craftsmanship-of-the-berber-women/>

One of the key elements of Berber cultural preservation is the "ahwach," a collective music and dance performance often accompanied by poetry. These performances serve as a living record of the community's experiences, narrating tales of love, struggle, and triumph. Equally significant are their linguistic traditions, with the Amazigh languages such as Tamazight, Tarifit, and Tashelhit serving as carriers of cultural memory. In 2011, Morocco recognized Amazigh as an official language, a major step in safeguarding their intangible heritage.

In addition to oral traditions, Berber crafts like carpet weaving and silver jewellery reflect intricate artistry and cultural symbolism. Berber women, in particular, are central to this heritage, passing their weaving techniques and symbolic patterns from generation to generation. Despite globalization, initiatives like the establishment of cultural festivals and museums ensure that Amazigh traditions remain alive. The International Festival of Amazigh Culture in Fez, for instance, celebrates and showcases the richness of Berber heritage to a global audience.

[Learn more](#)

6.2. Maya Weavers in Guatemala

In the highlands of Guatemala, the Maya weavers are revered as the custodians of a centuries-old textile tradition that blends artistry with cultural identity. Each woven piece—a huipil (blouse), cinta (headband), or corte (skirt)—is a testament to the weaver's skill and the spiritual connection to their ancestors.



Maya Weavers: The Genuine Article, Guatemalan National Geographic. (2024, April 16). *Maya weavers: The genuine article, Guatemalan. National Geographic.* Retrieved January 31, 2025, from https://www.nationalgeographic.com/travel/article/the_genuine_article_guatemalan

Maya textiles are laden with symbolic patterns, often depicting elements from nature, mythology, and community history. These intricate designs are woven using backstrap looms, a method that has been passed down through generations. Women, in particular, are the stewards of this craft, ensuring that the legacy continues despite external pressures like industrialization and cultural appropriation.

The weaving process itself is deeply meditative and spiritual. The act of creating a textile is seen as a form of storytelling—each thread narrating tales of the past, present, and hopes for the future. This heritage is further preserved through community cooperatives, which not only provide economic empowerment but also serve as spaces for intergenerational knowledge transfer.

Today, organizations and initiatives such as the Asociación Maya de Desarrollo weave the threads of tradition with modern advocacy, promoting fair trade and ensuring that the intellectual property rights of Maya designs are respected.

[Learn more](#)

6.3. Women in Ayurvedic Medicine, India

Ayurvedic medicine, a 5,000-year-old holistic healing system from India, is deeply rooted in the country's cultural and spiritual traditions. Women have historically been the guardians of Ayurvedic practices, passing down their knowledge of herbal medicine, dietary principles, and therapeutic techniques within families and communities.



Ayurveda: India's Ancient Tradition That Aligns Mind, Body, and Spirit

BBC. (2024, April 17). *Ayurveda: India's ancient tradition that aligns mind, body, and spirit.* BBC Travel. Retrieved January 31, 2025, from <https://www.bbc.com/travel/article/20240417-ayurveda-indias-ancient-tradition-that-aligns-mind-body-and-spirit>

In rural India, women often act as local healers, blending Ayurvedic principles with folk remedies to treat common ailments. These women, known as "Dhais" or traditional midwives, play a crucial role in maternal and child healthcare. Their expertise extends beyond physical healing to include mental well-being, fostering holistic health for individuals and communities.

Modern efforts to preserve and promote women's contributions to Ayurveda have gained momentum. Institutions like the All India Institute of Ayurveda and grassroots initiatives work to document traditional practices and integrate them with formal healthcare systems. Additionally, there is a growing recognition of the role these women play in sustainable healthcare, particularly in underserved regions.

[Learn more](#)

6.4. Japan's Washoku: Traditional Dietary Culture

Japan's Washoku, a UNESCO-recognized intangible cultural heritage, is a culinary tradition that embodies harmony with nature and a deep respect for seasonal ingredients. Rooted in principles of balance and sustainability, Washoku is not merely about eating but about fostering community bonds and appreciating the blessings of nature.



UNESCO. (n.d.). *Washoku: Traditional dietary cultures of the Japanese, notably for the celebration of New Year*. UNESCO. Retrieved January 31, 2025, from <https://ich.unesco.org/en/RL/washoku-traditional-dietary-cultures-of-the-japanese-notably-for-the-celebration-of-new-year-00869>

The traditional Japanese meal typically includes rice, miso soup, pickled vegetables, and seasonal fish or vegetables. The emphasis is on simplicity, natural flavours, and visual appeal, with each dish meticulously prepared to reflect the season. Washoku is also closely tied to celebrations and rituals, such as New Year's feasts, where specific dishes symbolize prosperity, health, and happiness.

In addition to its cultural significance, Washoku promotes healthy eating habits and environmental sustainability. Efforts to preserve Washoku include culinary education programs and initiatives that encourage younger generations to learn and adopt traditional cooking techniques.

[Learn more](#)

6.5. The Kamba Community and Storytelling Traditions

In Kenya, the Kamba community's storytelling traditions are a cornerstone of their cultural identity. Storytelling sessions, often held around a fire, bring together families and communities to share tales of bravery, wisdom, and morality. These oral narratives are not just entertainment but tools for teaching younger generations about the values and history of their people.



The Kamba People of Kenya

101 Last Tribes. (n.d.). The Kamba people of Kenya. Retrieved January 31, 2025, from <https://www.101lasttribes.com/tribes/kamba.html>

The stories, often accompanied by music and dance, serve to reinforce social norms and strengthen communal bonds. Elders, as the primary storytellers, play a pivotal role in ensuring that these traditions are passed down. However, as modern influences encroach on traditional practices, efforts are underway to document and preserve these stories, ensuring they remain a vital part of Kamba identity.

[Learn more](#)

6.6. Festa dei Gigli: A Celebration of Devotion and Tradition

The Gigli Festival held annually in Nola, Italy, is a vibrant and deeply cultural celebration that has been recognized as part of UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage. The festival, which

has been celebrated for centuries, revolves around the carrying of towering structures known as gigli (meaning "lilies" in Italian) in religious processions. These intricately designed wooden structures, often over 25 meters high, are carried through the streets by groups of men who display remarkable strength and coordination.



The Gigli of Nola: The Celebration of a Popular Festival (UNESCO Heritage)

Visit Naples. (n.d.). The Gigli of Nola: The celebration of a popular festival (UNESCO heritage). Retrieved January 31, 2025, from <https://www.visitnaples.eu/en/neapolitanity/discover-naples/the-gigli-of-nola-the-celebration-of-a-popular-festival-unesco-heritage->

The festival's origins are linked to a historical event in the town of Nola when the citizens, in gratitude to Saint Paulinus of Nola, began the tradition of carrying these magnificent gigli. Over time, the event evolved into a grand celebration, combining both religious and festive elements, and became an important expression of the town's communal and cultural identity.

The gigli themselves are works of art and craftsmanship, with each one representing a different district or community of Nola. They are crafted by skilled artisans who pass down their techniques through generations, and the decorations often include religious motifs, local symbols, and vibrant colors. The gigli procession is a spirited event, accompanied by traditional music, dances, and the enthusiastic participation of the local community.

In 2013, the Gigli Festival was inscribed as part of UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. This recognition not only honors the festival's rich history and cultural significance but also underscores the importance of preserving such traditions in the modern world. As part of this UNESCO recognition, the festival has gained international attention, attracting both visitors and researchers interested in the preservation of cultural practices and traditional craftsmanship

[Learn more](#)

6.7. African Cultural Diversity: A Catalyst for Development

Africa's immense cultural diversity is a source of pride and a powerful catalyst for socio-economic development. From oral traditions and performing arts to crafts and traditional knowledge systems, the continent's intangible heritage plays a vital role in shaping its identity and future.



United Nations News: World Heritage and Cultural Diversity

United Nations. (2021, May 18). World Heritage and cultural diversity. United Nations News. Retrieved January 31, 2025, from <https://news.un.org/en/story/2021/05/1092832>

UNESCO has been instrumental in safeguarding African cultural heritage, working with local communities to document and preserve traditions. Initiatives like the African World Heritage Fund support capacity-building efforts, ensuring that cultural resources contribute to sustainable development and poverty reduction.

By promoting cultural tourism and creative industries, Africa harnesses its heritage as a tool for economic growth and social cohesion. Festivals, such as the Lake of Stars Festival in Malawi, showcase the continent's vibrant arts and attract global audiences, further emphasizing the value of preserving these traditions for future generations.

[Learn more](#)

6.8. The Maasai and Isikuti Dances: Symbols of Strength and Heritage

The Maasai Adumu dance and the Isikuti dance of the Luhya people are two iconic Kenyan traditions that exemplify the power of cultural expression. The Adumu, often called the "jumping dance," is performed by Maasai warriors as a demonstration of strength, agility, and unity. In contrast, the Isikuti dance celebrates life's joyous moments, blending rhythmic drumming with vibrant movements that bring communities together.



Isikuti Dance of Isukha and Idakho Communities of Western Kenya

UNESCO. (n.d.). Isikuti dance of Isukha and Idakho communities of Western Kenya. UNESCO. Retrieved January 31, 2025, from <https://ich.unesco.org/en/USL/isukuti-dance-of-isukha-and-idakho-communities-of-western-kenya-00981>

These dances are more than performances; they are cultural rituals that strengthen identity and promote social cohesion. For the Maasai, the Adumu is often linked to rites of passage and communal solidarity. Meanwhile, the Isikuti dance is performed at weddings, funerals, and other significant events, serving as a living repository of Luhya heritage.

Efforts to preserve these dances include cultural festivals and educational initiatives that teach younger generations about their significance. By showcasing these traditions on national and international stages, Kenya highlights the importance of intangible cultural heritage in fostering unity and pride.

[Learn more](#)

6.9. Storytelling for Change: Celebrating Women's Contributions

Storytelling has long been a powerful medium for amplifying voices, challenging norms, and inspiring change. In many cultures, women have used storytelling as a means to convey their experiences, wisdom, and struggles, contributing significantly to societal transformation.

Projects such as "Storytelling for Change" provide platforms for women to share their narratives, celebrating their roles in socio-economic development. These stories often highlight themes of resilience, leadership, and the pursuit of equality, offering a counter-narrative to patriarchal stereotypes. For instance, initiatives in Africa and Asia use storytelling to address issues such as gender-based violence and economic marginalization, fostering awareness and advocacy.

Beyond its cultural significance, storytelling is also a tool for community building and education. By sharing their experiences, women connect with others, inspire action, and preserve the collective memory of their communities. As storytelling continues to evolve with modern platforms such as podcasts and digital media, its potential to drive change and celebrate women's contributions remains boundless.

[Learn more](#)

6.10. Intangible Cultural Heritage in Nigeria

Nigeria is a land of immense cultural wealth, with its intangible heritage reflecting the diversity and complexity of its over 250 ethnic groups. From the Yoruba "Oriki" praise poetry to the masquerade traditions of the Igbo and Tiv communities, Nigeria's intangible cultural heritage serves as a vital link to its past and a guide for its future.



Nigeria's Intangible Cultural Heritage

Nigeria-Del UNESCO. (n.d.). Nigeria's intangible cultural heritage. Retrieved January 31, 2025, from <https://nigeria-del-unesco.org/intangible-cultural-heritage/>

One notable example is the Egungun festival, a vibrant masquerade ceremony performed by the Yoruba to honor ancestors and seek their blessings. Similarly, the Tiv Kwagh-Hir theatre combines storytelling, music, and puppetry to address contemporary issues while preserving traditional values.

Nigeria faces challenges in preserving its heritage amidst modernization and urbanization. However, efforts by UNESCO and local organizations have focused on documenting traditions and engaging communities in cultural preservation. Programs such as the Nigerian Cultural Heritage Trust aim to create awareness and promote the country's rich cultural tapestry both locally and globally.

[Learn more](#)

6.11. Balafon and Kolintang: Cultural Practices Across Continents

The Balafon in West Africa and Kolintang in Southeast Asia are traditional instruments that transcend borders, uniting cultures through music. The Balafon, a wooden xylophone with resonators, is central to ceremonies in countries like Mali, Burkina Faso, and Côte d'Ivoire. In Indonesia, the Kolintang, a percussion instrument made from light, resonant wood, is used in both traditional and modern ensembles.



Cultural Practices and Expressions Linked to Balafon and Kolintang

UNESCO. (n.d.). *Cultural practices and expressions linked to balafon and kolintang in Mali, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, and Indonesia*. UNESCO. Retrieved January 31, 2025, from <https://ich.unesco.org/en/RL/cultural-practices-and-expressions-linked-to-balafon-and-kolintang-in-mali-burkina-faso-cote-d-ivoire-and-indonesia-02131>

These instruments symbolize the cultural exchanges and shared values of music as a universal language. Balafon music often narrates historical tales, celebrates communal milestones, and serves as a medium for spiritual connection. Meanwhile, Kolintang music represents Indonesia's rich cultural diversity and is frequently performed at cultural festivals and ceremonies.

Efforts to preserve these instruments include education programs that teach traditional music to younger generations and international collaborations to showcase their significance. UNESCO's recognition of both instruments emphasizes the need to celebrate and sustain these cross-continental cultural practices.

[Learn more](#)

6.12. Argungu International Fishing and Cultural Festival

The Argungu Festival in Kebbi State, Nigeria, is a vibrant celebration that blends cultural traditions with environmental awareness. Originating in the 1930s, the festival commemorates the end of hostilities between the Sokoto Caliphate and the Kebbi Kingdom. It has since evolved into a multi-day event featuring competitive fishing, music, dance, and traditional sports.



Argungu International Fishing and Cultural Festival

UNESCO. (n.d.). *Argungu international fishing and cultural festival*. UNESCO. Retrieved January 31, 2025, from <https://ich.unesco.org/en/RL/argungu-international-fishing-and-cultural-festival-00901>

The highlight of the festival is the fishing competition, where hundreds of fishermen, armed with nets and traditional tools, dive into the Mata Fadan River to catch the largest fish. The event underscores the importance of sustainable fishing practices and water conservation.

Beyond its environmental focus, the Argungu Festival promotes unity and cultural pride, attracting visitors from across Nigeria and beyond. The festival's inclusion in UNESCO's list of intangible cultural heritage reinforces its global significance and the need to preserve this unique tradition.

[Learn more](#)

6.13. Korean Costume: Tradition and Social Practices

The traditional Korean costume, or Hanbok, is a symbol of cultural identity and artistry in both North and South Korea. Characterized by vibrant colors, flowing lines, and intricate embroidery, the Hanbok is worn during festivals, weddings, and other significant events.



Korean Costume Tradition: Knowledge, Skills, and Practices

UNESCO. (n.d.). *Custom of Korean costume: Traditional knowledge, skills, and social practices in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea*. UNESCO. Retrieved January 31, 2025, from <https://ich.unesco.org/en/RL/custom-of-korean-costume-traditional-knowledge-skills-and-social-practices-in-the-democratic-people-s-republic-of-korea-02096>

Beyond its aesthetic appeal, the Hanbok reflects Korea's philosophical values, emphasizing harmony and simplicity. Each element of the attire—from the jeogori (jacket) to the chima (skirt)—carries symbolic meaning, representing virtues like modesty and dignity. The traditional dyeing and weaving techniques used in Hanbok production further highlight Korea's rich textile heritage.

Efforts to preserve the Hanbok include educational initiatives, fashion shows, and government support for traditional artisans. Modern adaptations of the Hanbok have also gained popularity, blending tradition with contemporary fashion trends while retaining its cultural essence.

[Learn more](#)

6.14. Artificial Intelligence and Intangible Cultural Heritage

The intersection of artificial intelligence (AI) and intangible cultural heritage offers exciting opportunities for preservation and promotion. AI technologies, such as machine learning and natural language processing, are being used to document endangered languages, digitize traditional music, and create virtual reality experiences of cultural sites.



The Impact of AI on Intangible Cultural Heritage

UNESCO. (2024, January 12). Exploring the impact of artificial intelligence and intangible cultural heritage. UNESCO. Retrieved January 31, 2025, from <https://ich.unesco.org/en/news/exploring-the-impact-of-artificial-intelligence-and-intangible-cultural-heritage-13536>

For example, AI-powered tools can analyze oral traditions and folklore, identifying patterns and themes that might otherwise be lost. Similarly, AI is helping to preserve traditional crafts

by simulating techniques and providing digital platforms for artisans to share their work globally.

However, the use of AI also raises ethical concerns, including issues of cultural appropriation and data ownership. Collaborative efforts between technologists, cultural experts, and local communities are essential to ensure that AI serves as a tool for empowerment rather than exploitation.

[Learn more](#)

6.15. Pottery Skills of the Women of Sejnane

In the small village of Sejnane in Tunisia, women artisans have perfected the art of creating pottery inspired by their natural surroundings. Using clay sourced from local riverbeds, these women craft bowls, plates, and decorative figurines, each piece reflecting the environment and cultural heritage of their community.



Pottery Skills of the Women of Sejnane

UNESCO. (n.d.). Pottery skills of the women of Sejnane. UNESCO. Retrieved January 31, 2025, from <https://ich.unesco.org/en/RL/pottery-skills-of-the-women-of-sejnane-01406>

The Sejnane pottery-making process is entirely manual, from shaping the clay to firing the pieces in open-air kilns. The motifs and designs often feature geometric patterns and animal figures, symbolizing fertility, nature, and daily life.

This tradition has been passed down through generations, with mothers teaching daughters the intricate skills required. Today, efforts to promote Sejnane pottery include international exhibitions and workshops that highlight its cultural significance. UNESCO's recognition of Sejnane pottery as an intangible cultural heritage underscores the importance of supporting these artisans in preserving their craft.

[Learn more](#)

6.16. Ijele Masquerade: A Living Nigerian Tradition

The Ijele Masquerade is one of the most iconic and elaborate traditional performances of the Igbo people of Nigeria. It is a significant part of the Igbo cultural heritage, celebrated during festivals, rites of passage, and important community events. Known for its impressive and towering costume, the Ijele Masquerade is more than just a performance; it is a powerful symbol of community, spirituality, and the rich cultural history of the Igbo.



Ijele Masquerade

UNESCO. (n.d.). *Ijele masquerade*. UNESCO. Retrieved January 31, 2025, from <https://ich.unesco.org/en/RL/ijele-masquerade-00194>

The Ijele Masquerade is often considered the “king of all masquerades” in Igbo land. It is deeply rooted in Igbo traditions and is thought to embody the spirits of ancestors. The

masquerade is believed to carry divine messages and blessings to the people during community gatherings, especially in moments of great importance such as harvest celebrations, weddings, or funerals. The presence of the Ijele is often associated with the protection of the community and the spirits of ancestors, making it a symbol of spiritual power.

The Ijele Masquerade also serves as a means of preserving and transmitting Igbo history and values. It is through these performances that younger generations learn about the cultural practices, social norms, and traditions of their ancestors. The Ijele is a living testament to the resilience and vibrancy of Igbo culture, which continues to thrive and evolve.

One of the most striking features of the Ijele Masquerade is its elaborate costume. The mask is typically large and intricate, designed to cover the entire body of the performer. The mask may reach up to 12 feet in height and is adorned with colorful feathers, beads, and other materials, making it a visually stunning spectacle. The mask's face is often decorated with symbols that carry deep cultural meanings, representing various deities, ancestors, and natural forces.

The performer inside the mask is usually hidden from view, creating an air of mystery and reverence. The Ijele costume is carried by a single person, but the costume is supported by several attendants who help manage its enormous size and weight. This grandeur highlights the importance of the Ijele, not only in terms of its cultural meaning but also as a symbol of prestige and power within the community.

The Ijele Masquerade is traditionally performed during special events, such as major festivals or ceremonial occasions, and is often accompanied by music and dance. Drummers and other musicians play a crucial role in the performance, with rhythms that guide the movements of the Ijele. The performance is highly choreographed, with the dancer moving in specific patterns and performing symbolic gestures to communicate messages to the community. The dancer also interacts with the crowd, sometimes performing rituals and actions meant to bring blessings, health, or good fortune to the onlookers.

The Ijele is not only a cultural artifact but also a form of storytelling. The performance is used to convey stories of the community's ancestors, myths, and the moral lessons that shape Igbo society. The stories told through the dance and movements of the Ijele connect the living with the spiritual world, reinforcing the Igbo people's deep respect for their ancestors and their beliefs in the interconnectedness of life, death, and the spiritual realm.

[Learn more](#)

6.17. Breakfast Culture in Malaysia

Malaysia's breakfast culture is a cherished aspect of its culinary and social traditions, now recognized as an Intangible Cultural Heritage by UNESCO. The traditional breakfast culture of Malaysia reflects the country's diversity, drawing influences from various ethnic communities, including the Malays, Chinese, Indians, and indigenous peoples. It embodies the fusion of culinary practices, ingredients, and customs that have evolved over centuries.



Cultural Celebrations in Malaysia

Bernama. (2024, January 30). Cultural celebrations in Malaysia. Bernama. Retrieved January 31, 2025, from <https://www.bernama.com/en/region/news.php?id=2371335>

In Malaysia, breakfast is not merely a meal; it is an important social experience that brings people together across cultural divides. Each ethnic group has its own traditional dishes that have become popular across the nation. Common breakfast items include nasi lemak (a dish of rice cooked in coconut milk served with sambal, egg, peanuts, and cucumber), roti canai (a type of Indian-influenced flatbread served with dhal or curry), and dim sum (bite-sized dishes traditionally served by the Chinese community).

The diversity of these dishes highlights Malaysia's multicultural society and the blending of flavors from various ethnic traditions. The meal typically consists of a variety of dishes that showcase a balance of sweet, savory, and spicy flavors, with different regions contributing their own local specialties.

Beyond the food itself, breakfast in Malaysia serves as a social event, often enjoyed in local eateries, kopitiam (coffee shops), or hawker stalls. These places have long been centers of community life, where people gather not just to enjoy food but to converse, share stories, and

engage with their neighbors. This cultural practice highlights the strong emphasis placed on community bonding and social cohesion.

The experience of having breakfast in Malaysia is characterized by shared meals, where dishes are commonly eaten communally. For example, in a typical Malay breakfast setting, a variety of dishes like nasi lemak, murtabak, and kuih (traditional snacks) are served on communal trays, allowing people to sample and enjoy different flavors together. The act of sharing food is seen as an expression of warmth and hospitality, integral to the Malaysian way of life.

In recognition of the importance of traditional breakfast culture in maintaining Malaysia's unique identity, the Malaysian government successfully lobbied for its inscription on the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage list. This recognition emphasizes the cultural significance of breakfast traditions, not only as a means of sustenance but also as a manifestation of the country's shared heritage. It underscores the role of food in expressing the values and customs that have been passed down through generations.

The UNESCO recognition also aims to protect and preserve these traditions, ensuring that future generations continue to appreciate and practice Malaysia's rich culinary history.

[Learn more](#)

6.18. Midwifery Knowledge: Traditional Practices in Healthcare

In many regions around the world, traditional midwives play a crucial role in ensuring safe childbirth, blending ancestral knowledge with modern medical practices to safeguard maternal and infant health. In Latin America and the Caribbean, these midwives are respected figures in their communities, carrying out their work based on a deep understanding of local traditions, medicinal plants, and healing practices passed down through generations.



Traditional Midwives: Saving Lives with Ancestral and Western Medicine

PAHO. (2024, January 18). *Traditional midwives: Saving lives with ancestral and western medicine*. Pan American Health Organization. Retrieved January 31, 2025, from <https://www.paho.org/en/stories/traditional-midwives-saving-lives-combining-knowledge-ancestral-and-western-medicines>

Traditional midwives are often the primary healthcare providers in rural and remote areas, where access to hospitals and formal healthcare services is limited. They bring ancient wisdom to their practice, using natural remedies and techniques that have been effective for centuries. This knowledge includes the use of medicinal herbs, healing rituals, and unique methods of assisting with labor and delivery.

However, their role is not limited to traditional practices alone. Increasingly, traditional midwives are incorporating elements of Western medicine into their care. This includes recognizing complications during pregnancy, utilizing modern tools like blood pressure monitors, and even collaborating with doctors and nurses when medical intervention is needed.

The combination of ancestral knowledge with Western medicine has proven to be highly effective. By respecting and integrating both approaches, traditional midwives can provide comprehensive care that meets the immediate needs of mothers while also being deeply rooted in their cultural context. This holistic approach is not only practical but also culturally sensitive, acknowledging and preserving traditional practices that are important to the community.

Moreover, this integration has led to improved maternal and infant health outcomes, with midwives gaining the trust of the communities they serve. The success of these midwives lies in their ability to adapt to changing medical needs while staying true to the customs that make their practices resonate with local people.

The recognition of traditional midwifery as an essential part of public health is vital for preserving this cultural heritage. Many countries in Latin America and the Caribbean have made efforts to formally train midwives, blending modern medical training with the

preservation of traditional knowledge. In some regions, traditional midwives work alongside healthcare professionals to provide the best of both worlds to families.

The United Nations, through organizations like PAHO (Pan American Health Organization), has supported initiatives to recognize and validate the role of traditional midwives. This includes advocating for the preservation of their knowledge and ensuring that midwives receive appropriate training that combines both traditional wisdom and modern medicine.

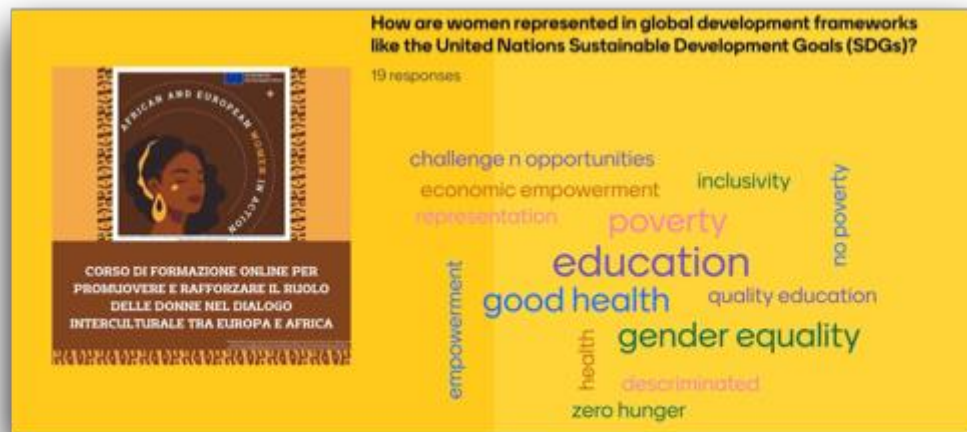
[Learn more](#)

7. Glossary

7. 1. Representation of Women in Global Development Frameworks (e.g., United Nations SDGs)

- **Representation:** The portrayal or inclusion of individuals or groups in discussions, frameworks, and decision-making processes.
- **Empowerment:** The process of enabling individuals, particularly women, to take control over their lives, choices, and opportunities.
- **Economic Empowerment:** The ability of women to participate fully in economic activities, improving their financial independence and decision-making power.
- **No Poverty:** A goal focused on eliminating poverty, ensuring access to basic needs, and improving living standards.
- **Health:** The state of well-being and access to healthcare services, including mental and physical health.
- **Education:** The access to and quality of education for all, particularly women and girls.
- **Good Health:** Ensuring access to health services, improving life expectancy, and reducing preventable diseases.
- **Inclusivity:** Ensuring all groups, especially marginalized ones, are included in social, political, and economic processes.
- **Gender Equality:** The principle of ensuring equal rights, opportunities, and treatment for all genders.
- **Challenges and Opportunities:** The difficulties faced by women in achieving equality and empowerment, as well as the potential avenues for progress.
- **Zero Hunger:** The goal of eradicating hunger and malnutrition globally.
- **Quality Education:** Ensuring that education systems provide opportunities that lead to sustainable development for all individuals.

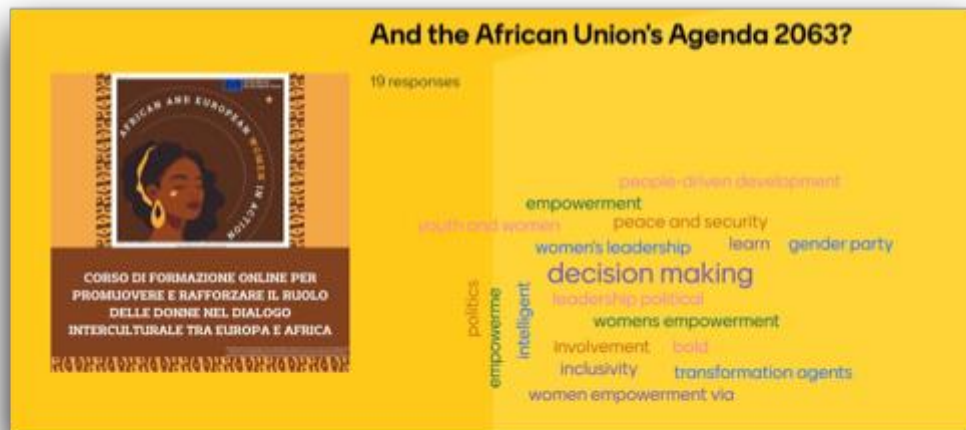
- **Discriminated:** The unfair treatment or bias against individuals based on gender, race, or other factors.



World cloud 1. by participants

7.2. The African Union's Agenda 2063

- **People-Driven Development:** A development approach that prioritizes the needs, aspirations, and input of people at all levels.
- **Transformation Agents:** Individuals or groups that drive change and development, particularly in areas such as gender and empowerment.
- **Youth and Women:** Focus on empowering youth and women as key drivers of development.
- **Decision Making:** The ability of individuals or groups to influence and participate in governance and policy decisions.
- **Gender Parity:** The goal of achieving equal representation and participation of men and women in all sectors.
- **Women Empowerment:** Strengthening women's capacity to make decisions, participate in economic activities, and improve their quality of life.
- **Politics:** The realm of governance, decision-making, and policy development in a society.



World cloud 2. by participants

7. 3. What is Sustainable Development?

- **Economic Growth:** The increase in the production and consumption of goods and services over time.
- **Looks into Future Needs:** A focus on addressing the needs of future generations without compromising the present.
- **Approach to Growth:** The method or strategy used to promote development that is sustainable in the long term.
- **Change:** The process of transformation in society, environments, or economies over time.
- **Education:** Providing knowledge, skills, and tools for individuals to thrive in a sustainable society.
- **Non-Compromising:** Ensuring that sustainability does not involve sacrificing essential principles, especially for future generations.
- **Biodiversity:** The variety of life forms on Earth, which should be protected to ensure ecological balance.
- **Physical Degradation:** The deterioration of physical environments, such as land or water, often due to human activities.
- **Equity:** Fairness in the distribution of resources, opportunities, and treatment.
- **Justice:** The pursuit of fairness, rights, and equality in societies.
- **Equality:** Ensuring that all people have equal opportunities regardless of gender, race, or socioeconomic status.
- **Inclusion:** Ensuring that all individuals are included in social, economic, and political processes.

- **Optimism:** A positive outlook for the future, essential for fostering sustainable development.
- **Human Pride:** A sense of dignity and respect for human achievement, especially in sustainability.
- **Action:** The steps taken to achieve sustainable development goals.
- **Gender Equality:** Equal rights and opportunities for all genders.
- **Confidence:** The belief in one's ability to participate in and contribute to sustainable development.
- **Independence:** The ability of individuals or communities to make autonomous decisions and thrive without undue dependence on others.
- **Better Life:** The aspiration for a higher quality of life through sustainable practices.
- **Economy:** The system of production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services.
- **Future:** The long-term perspective that considers the impact of actions on coming generations.
- **Patriarchal:** A societal structure where men hold primary power and influence in various sectors, such as politics and family.
- **Sustainability:** Practices and actions that preserve resources and environments for the long-term benefit of future generations.
- **Environment:** The natural world, which should be protected and nurtured for future sustainability.
- **Climate Change:** Long-term changes in temperature, weather patterns, and environmental conditions caused by human activities.
- **Transformation:** The significant change required in society, economics, and politics to achieve sustainability.
- **Growth:** The increase in a nation's or community's wealth, health, and well-being over time.



Word cloud 3. by the participants

7. 4. Why Are Sustainable Development and International Cooperation Important?

- **Global Cooperation:** Collaborative efforts among countries and regions to achieve common goals for the betterment of all.
- **National Development:** The progress and improvement of a country's social, economic, and environmental well-being.
- **Technological Exchange:** The sharing of technology, knowledge, and innovations to improve development outcomes globally.
- **Future Generations:** Ensuring that future populations have the resources and opportunities to live sustainable and prosperous lives.
- **Security:** The protection and stability of countries and societies to prevent conflict and promote sustainable growth.
- **Economic:** Pertaining to the wealth, production, and distribution of resources.
- **Global Solidarity:** Unity and mutual support among nations to face common challenges and promote collective progress.
- **Global Peace:** The condition of harmony between nations and groups, vital for sustainable development.
- **Accelerating Progress:** The process of speeding up development to address urgent global challenges.
- **Global Impact:** The effect of actions taken on a global scale, whether positive or negative, in relation to sustainability.
- **Sustainable Environment:** An environment that is managed and preserved to support the well-being of future generations.
- **Resource Conservation:** The careful management of natural resources to prevent depletion and maintain ecological balance.
- **Global Prosperity:** The overall well-being of people worldwide through economic growth and sustainable development.
- **Promote Development:** The act of fostering progress and growth in countries, regions, and communities.
- **Multilateral Cooperation:** Collaborative efforts involving multiple countries or organizations working together toward common goals.
- **Global Trade:** The exchange of goods, services, and resources between nations.
- **Promote Unity:** Encouraging cooperation and understanding among diverse groups and countries.
- **Development:** The process of improving the well-being of individuals and communities, often through economic and social changes.



Word cloud 4. by participants

7. 5. Symbols of Country/Community

- **Architecture:** The design and style of buildings that represent cultural identity.
- **Blue and Yellow:** Colors that may represent national flags or cultural significance.
- **Traditional Dances:** Cultural expressions through dance that hold historical and social importance.
- **Success:** The achievement of goals or milestones that are celebrated in the community.
- **History:** The past events, stories, and heritage that shape a community or nation's identity.
- **Flamingo:** A symbolic animal representing beauty or environmental significance in certain cultures.
- **Olive Oil:** A staple product that symbolizes cultural heritage, particularly in Mediterranean regions.
- **Spears:** Traditional weapons representing strength, history, and culture.
- **Sun:** A symbol of life, energy, and vitality.
- **Milk:** A vital and traditional food source, symbolizing nurturing and care.
- **Honey:** A natural product symbolizing sweetness, health, and local agriculture.
- **Hills:** Geographical features that can symbolize stability and natural beauty.
- **Rakija:** A traditional drink, often a symbol of hospitality and culture.
- **Rooster:** A cultural symbol of awakening, life, and heritage in some communities.
- **Landscapes:** The natural beauty and geography that define a country or community's visual identity.
- **Leadership:** The guiding force of a community, representing governance and authority.
- **Baklava:** A traditional pastry representing Middle Eastern or Balkan cultural heritage.
- **Sarma:** A food dish symbolic of Eastern European or Balkan cuisine.
- **Pizza:** A global symbol of Italian cuisine and culture.

- **Black:** A color that can symbolize power, identity, or cultural significance.
- **Spaghetti:** A traditional Italian food, representing Italian cuisine globally.
- **Jollof Rice:** A popular West African dish symbolizing culture and cuisine.
- **Cheese:** A versatile and culturally significant food found in many countries.
- **Vegetation:** The plants and natural growth of a region, important for environmental identity.
- **Mountains:** Natural features that represent strength, protection, and identity.

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