

CULTURE IN MOTION

Diasporas preserving and reimagining culture



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WHAT YOU'LL FIND INSIDE

Why diaspora matters for culture

What hats diasporas wear across cultures

How it unfolds in practice

What we carry forward

Why diaspora matters for culture

Culture is a driver of development, and it never stands still. It travels, transforms and returns constantly. Traditions—language, food, music, literature, history—are carried across continents and kept alive through everyday practice. Holding on to cultural identity can offer anchoring and continuity in a moving world.

Today, culture is being reshaped in real time. Media, AI and digital platforms affect who tells the story and who gets to hear it. At the same time, **migration is changing how we understand belonging**. While citizenship may remain fixed in legal terms, the idea of “home” is becoming increasingly fluid and nuanced.

DID YOU KNOW?

According to [UNESCO](#), the cultural and creative sector is a major driver of global development. It generates over 48 million jobs and 3.1% of global GDP. At the same time, the lack of intercultural dialogue contributes to more than 80% of conflicts worldwide. These figures highlight a clear reality: **cultural diversity** is central to peace, social cohesion, and sustainable development, and must be placed at the core of policy, cooperation, and cross-sector action.



Living between cultural systems, migrant communities and diasporas sit at the centre of this shift. Diasporas play a vital role in both preserving and reimagining culture.

They bring **intercultural understanding and diversity** to the table, using their experience and networks to offer **new perspectives on “home.”**

With the global rise of Afrobeats, the spread of fusion cuisines and local festivals finding new global audiences online, new cultures emerge where worlds meet.

However, this process is not without tension. The negotiation between adaptation and preservation runs through diaspora experiences. It often raises concerns about assimilation pressures, dual identities, perceived exclusion and generational divides.

Younger diaspora members may question traditional customs. A richer, more layered cultural landscape requires openness. It means protecting heritage without freezing it and allowing it to evolve without erasing its roots.

This zine follows those journeys—how culture is transmitted and remade - and the **many roles diasporas play in keeping it in motion.**



Reimagining

Preserving



“ While narratives about people on the move often raise concerns about multiculturalism, it is essential to view it as an opportunity [...]. Diaspora members are key stakeholders in promoting positive narratives through tangible actions, fostering diversity and creating synergies between the cultures of their countries of origin and residence ”

Florencio Venté, friend of EUDiF, Co-director, Migration Youth and Children Platform, 2025.

What hats diasporas wear across cultures

The memorykeeper



Collects and shares stories, builds oral archives, digitises memory, keeps it moving across generations.

The ambassador



Bridges places, people, networks and rituals, moves traditions across borders, opens exchange between artists, institutions, homelands.

The innovator



Remixes heritage, co-creates new forms, turns culture into hybrid futures, powered by new tools and tech.

The community anchor



Creates spaces for people to gather — centres, associations, exhibitions — where identity is held, shared, and made visible

The cross cultural expert



Passes on skills, knowledge, practice, trains, supports, uplifts— helping keep heritage alive, relevant, and evolving.

How it unfolds in practice

At EUDiF, we pilot festivals in local cultural spaces, test digital tools for virtual tourism and offer training to heritage custodians, among many other activities. We also explore cuisines from around the world together and ask next-gen diaspora how they see belonging and culture.

Through diaspora perspectives, cultures come into focus differently revealing the beauty of their countries through their eyes, and showing how cultural legacies persist through migration and transformation. The ways diaspora keep culture alive—turning heritage into living practice—can be seen in the following galleries and actions.

01

Diaspora preserving and activating cultural memory

02

Making heritage spaces for diaspora

03

Diaspora enacting cultural diplomacy

04

Diaspora co-authoring cultural expressions

Four ways it comes alive

01 Diaspora preserving and activating cultural memory

Diaspora communities play an important role in this continuity. They may help preserve, activate, and reimagine cultural memory across distance.

Senegal

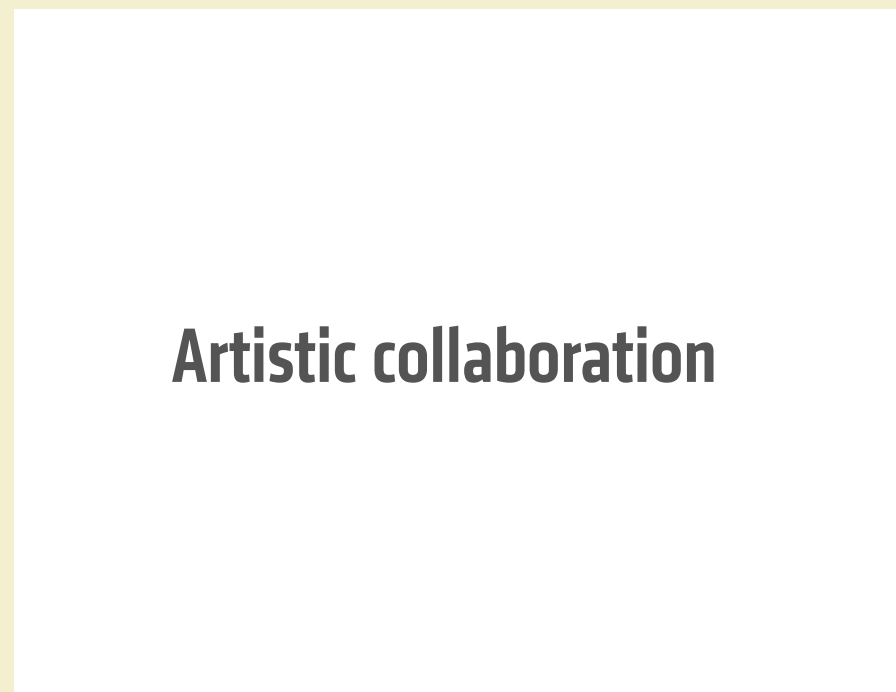


We have seen it in action in Senegal. EUDiF partners with Brussels-based diaspora organisation Mandji, to reactivate the archive of the 1966 World Festival of Black Arts. This is done through: digitisation, artistic collaboration, and training of a small group of young people in archive management.

In the long term, this work supports the promotion of African heritage and the economic inclusion of young people, while strengthening connections between artists on the continent and across the diaspora.



Digitisation



Artistic collaboration



Youth archive training

“ We, as part of the diaspora, with all the difficulties we encounter abroad and with our children growing up, it’s very important that they have access to this because they’re caught between two worlds and may feel a bit lost... It’s a place where you can be brought back to your roots. ”

-Nicole Lettue, Project Coordinator, MANDji



In action



The 1966 World Festival of Black Arts was a landmark Pan-African cultural event initiated by President Léopold Sédar Senghor, bringing together singers, photographers, writers and musicians from across Africa and the diaspora.



In Dakar, for the World Festival of Black Arts' 60th anniversary in 2026, the project culminated in a collective musical and audiovisual performance, alongside an exhibition and training.



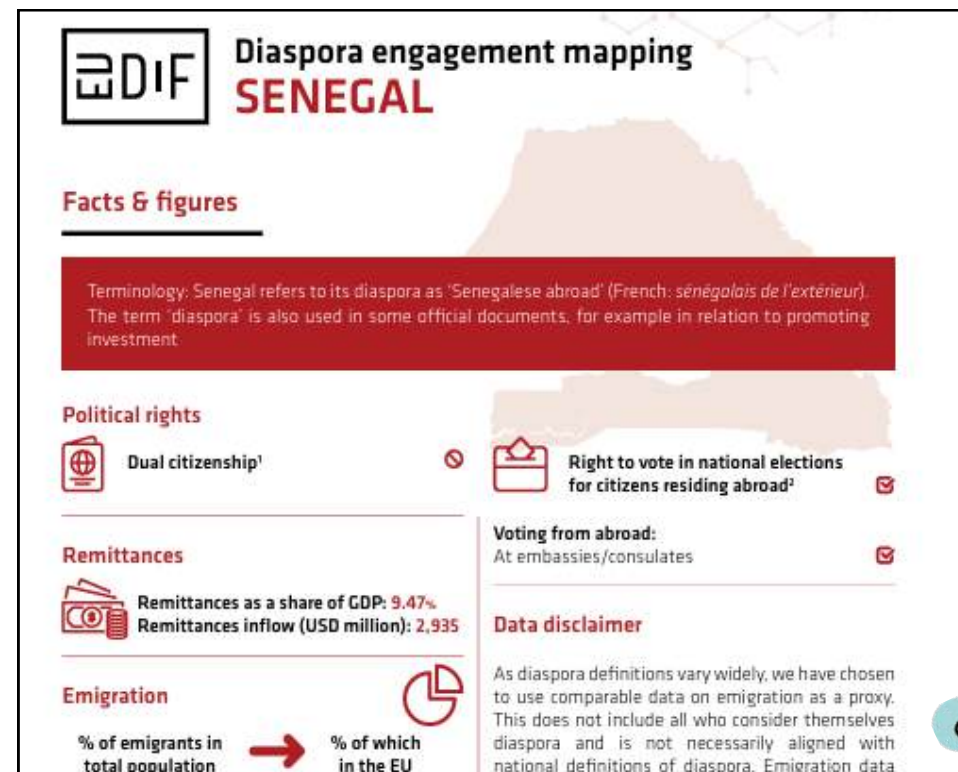
The activities and trainings encouraged citizens to reconnect with and embrace their cultural memory and African heritage.

“ The training was very helpful. Well, I’ve taken a few courses in digital technology, but I’d never thought about the field of archiving. I can say that the training really helped me because I’d already used most of the software, but I didn’t have the right equipment. Thanks to the training, we learned how to use it. We also saw professionals doing the work. So that allowed us to gain new knowledge. ”

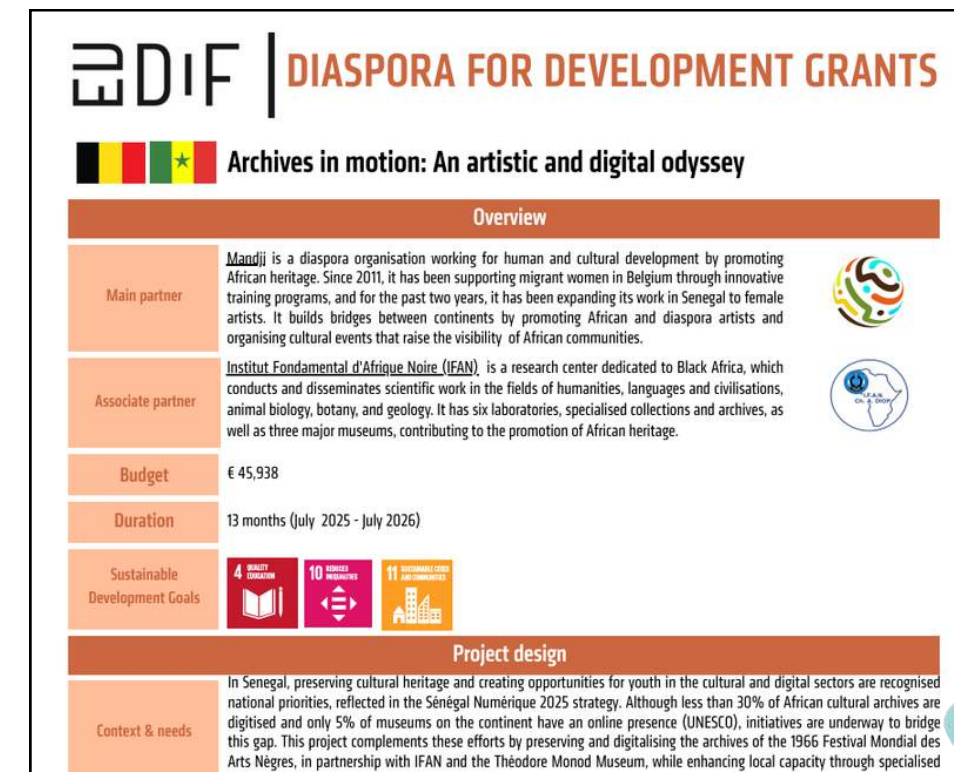
Mouride, one of the youths who received the training on archive digitisation training



Learn more



Country factsheet: Senegal



Infosheet: Archives in motion: An artistic and digital odyssey

02 Making heritage spaces for diaspora

Diaspora communities can be important contributors to informing and consulting on how cultural legacy is represented, interpreted and shared.

Morocco

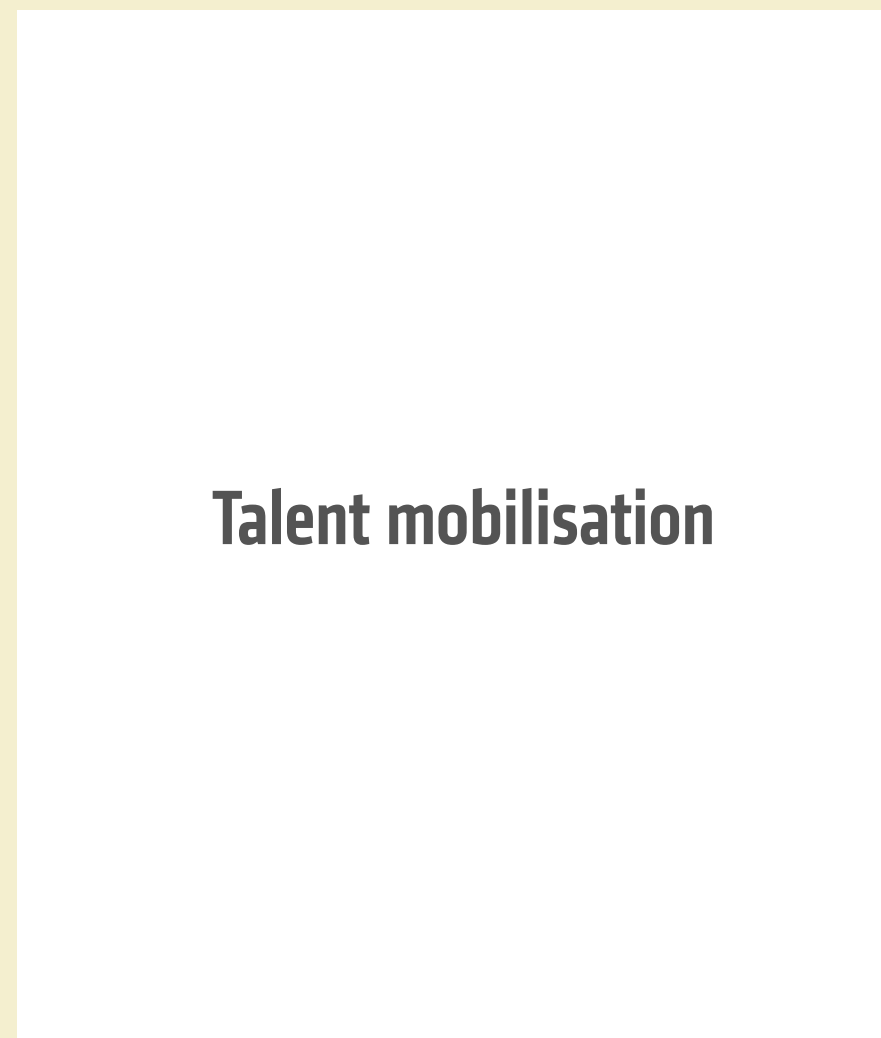


Our engagement with Morocco offers a strong example in this regard. Morocco is a country that plays a leading role in diaspora matters.

EUDiF supports the Conseil de la Communauté Marocaine à l'Étranger (CCME), a consultative and strategic body working on diaspora issues, mobility and migration trends.



Heritage preservation



Talent mobilisation



In action



The action helps CCME to strategize on **heritage preservation**, memory and diaspora talent mobilisation, through research and assessments. One of its activities is exploring of the virtual museum model.



In 2026, the project will carry out a **feasibility study** exploring the technical, financial, and organisational viability of an interactive and immersive virtual museum dedicated to Moroccan migration.



The virtual format offers an immersive digital space and new ways to experience heritage and memory. Through **storytelling, technology and interactive design**, it connects global audiences with Moroccan migration histories and diaspora stories.

CCME as an enabler of cultural spaces

CCME also creates spaces for cultural exchange, dialogue and community gathering, while promoting the contributions of Moroccans living abroad.

At the heart of this vision is a strong belief: culture is one of essential ways diaspora communities contribute to both Morocco and their countries of residence.

Literature, in particular, has become a powerful space for connection, expression, and transmission. For the 17th consecutive year, CCME is participating in the Salon International de l'Édition et du Livre (SIEL), organised by the Ministry of Youth, Culture and Communication.

The event celebrates the richness and diversity that Moroccans abroad bring to cultural life in Morocco and beyond. EUDiF was honoured to join CCME at the 2026 edition of SIEL in Rabat and witness this vibrant cultural exchange firsthand.

DID YOU KNOW?

Virtual museums are among the most innovative formats for cultural preservation. They make it possible to gather stories, memories, archives, sounds, photographs and personal testimonies from communities dispersed around the world. Unlike traditional museums tied to a single location, digital spaces can remain accessible to diaspora communities wherever they are, creating a living and evolving archive of mobility, identity and belonging.



“One area where the contribution of Moroccans abroad is clearly essential is culture. Their dynamism in this field contributes to the enrichment of both the cultures of their host countries and Moroccan culture.”

Driss El Yazami, President of the CCME



Learn more

ADIF | Diaspora engagement mapping MOROCCO

Facts & figures

Terminology: The Kingdom of Morocco refers to its diaspora as 'Moroccans [living] abroad' (MLA or 'MRE' (French, *Marocains résidant à l'étranger*, Arabic المقيمين بالخارج *al-magħāribat al-muqīyīmoun bi-l-kharīj*), although in some internal documents it also refers to the Moroccan diaspora, and 'Moroccans of the world' (Marocains du monde).

Political rights

- Dual citizenship^{1,2} ✓
- Right to vote in national elections for citizens residing abroad³ ✓
- Voting from abroad⁴ ✗

Remittances

- Remittances as a share of GDP: 8.33%
- Remittances inflow (USD million): 11,755

Emigration

% of emigrants in total population → % of which in the EU

Data disclaimer

As diaspora definitions vary widely, we have chosen to use comparable data on emigration as a proxy. This does not include all who consider themselves diaspora and is not necessarily aligned with national definitions of diaspora. Emigration data comes from UNDESA (2024) and remittances from

KINGDOM OF MOROCCO

Country factsheet: Morocco

ADIF | CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT LAB

Enhancing Morocco's capacity to engage global talent through digital tools, heritage, & institutional learning.

Overview

Main partner Conseil de la communauté marocaine à l'étranger (CCME) is an independent consultative body responsible for evaluating the government's public policies for Moroccans abroad ("marocains du monde" - MdM); defending the rights of Moroccan communities abroad within the framework of international law and the laws of the countries of residence; strengthening the links, particularly cultural, between Morocco and its diaspora and reinforcing their contribution to the development of Morocco.

Duration 18 months

Sustainable Development Goals 8 GROWTH AND ECONOMIC QUALITY, 16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS

Project design

Context & needs Morocco is a global leader in diaspora engagement and continues to expand its innovation in this field. Following the announcement by King Mohamed VI in November 2024 of new measures to strengthen the national approach, including institutional restructuring, the Conseil de la Communauté Marocaine à l'Étranger (CCME) has been positioned as the strategic coordinating body. This project aims to support CCME in advancing its leadership role by reviewing and strategising on priority themes such as heritage, memory, and talent mobilisation, whilst also developing staff skills.

Info sheet: Talent mobilisation, migration heritage preservation and institutional development in Morocco

03 Diaspora enacting cultural diplomacy

When diaspora connect countries and networks, new spaces open up. Spaces for exchanges, reflection and working together. This strengthens cultural initiatives, supports tolerance and promotes cultural diversity and dialogue.

Nigeria



Our work in Nigeria offers a clear example of this in practice. Nigerians across the world share their culture and ideas, return home, and reconnect with their roots—acting as true ambassadors of their people and traditions.

Nigeria’s rich heritage goes beyond physical artefacts, encompassing customs, indigenous practices, architectural diversity and more than 365 festivals celebrated each year.

EUDiF worked with a multi-stakeholder consortium to do justice to this diversity. Partners included the Lagos State Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Art, the National Commission for Museums and Monuments, 50 local custodians from eight Lagos Kingdoms and local heritage consultants.

This project focused on preservation of both the intangible and tangible cultural legacy of the Ikorodu Kingdom. Ikorodu is a cultural landscape often underrepresented in the state’s tourism scene.



Festivals and promotion



Local cultural custodians



Intangible cultural legacy

In action



In 2025, the project introduced a new **Heritage Conservation Management Framework (HCMF)**. This is designed as a scalable model that other communities can adapt and build on.

The framework also supports efforts to include Ikorodu's intangible patrimony on the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage List, as a shared objective led by Nigerian institutions.

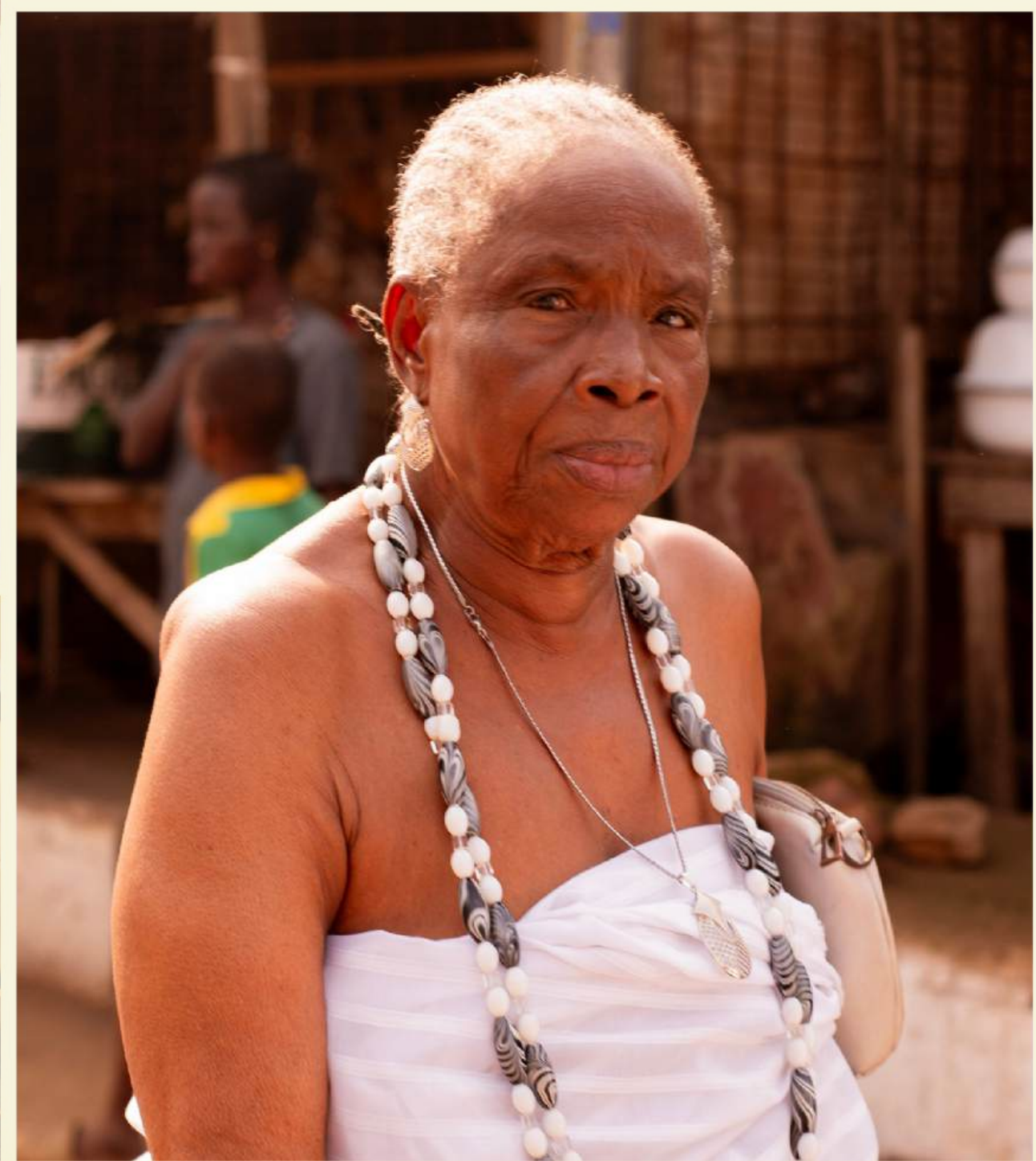


Local custodians were also equipped with **digital skills** to help make it more accessible, visible and future-facing. Diaspora experts connected local stakeholders with German counterparts for peer learning around festivals and cultural promotion.



The project also piloted a **cultural exhibition** in Ikorodu, bringing key rituals and the kingdoms' heritage into public view while testing digital tools to expand visibility and reach.

Through dance, songs, rituals, storytelling, and new digital tools tested in our project, custodians, diaspora, institutions came together —passing the baton to **younger generations**.



“ A museum is not a profit-making venture but a legacy for future generations. Our goal is to ensure heritage sustainability while encouraging both local and international tourists to return for our festivals ”

Toke Benson-Awoyinka, Honourable Commissioner for Tourism, Arts and Culture, Nigeria



Learn more

EDIF | CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT LAB

Boosting heritage conservation in Ikorodu Kingdom, Lagos

Overview	
Main partner	The <u>Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture (MTAC)</u> of the Lagos State cultivates a sustainable tourism industry that serves both domestic and international visitors while fostering a welcoming and enjoyable environment. It oversees the management and preservation of heritage assets and supervises tourism activities on a state level.
Associate partner	The <u>National Commission for Museums and Monuments (NCMM)</u> is an agency of the Federal Government of Nigeria that preserves, promotes, and develops Nigeria's cultural heritage. It manages national museums, artifacts, and historical sites, by offering exhibitions, research, site tours, and educational programs.
Duration	9 months
Sustainable Development Goals	
Project design	
Objective	To strengthen capacities of heritage institutions in Lagos for sustainable heritage festival development through diaspora collaboration.
Needs	Despite national policies and initiatives, Nigeria continues to face challenges in fully harnessing its heritage tourism potential. Issues such as infrastructure deficits, security concerns, and unsuccessful marketing strategies have hindered heritage preservation and tourism growth. Addressing these challenges requires increased investment in infrastructure, improved safety measures, and strategic marketing to showcase Nigeria's rich cultural assets on a global stage.

Info sheet: Boosting sustainable heritage tourism preservation in Ikorodu, Nigeria



Heritage preservation in Nigeria – why a multilevel approach is key



World Tourism Day: celebrating diaspora contributions to a sustainable transformation

04 Diaspora co-authoring cultural expressions

Diaspora can be co-creators of culture, bringing new ideas inspired by the countries where they live. They can reinterpret heritage and reshape narratives, building new forms artistic collaboration.

Moldova & Sierra Leone



In Moldova and Sierra Leone, EUDiF supported diaspora enthusiasts in working with local authorities and museums. Together, they tested new ways of preserving and promoting intangible cultural patrimony and heritage tourism. They experimented with storytelling techniques. As well, they explored new approaches to heritage management and reimagined how culture can be experienced.



Storytelling and narrative innovation



Modernisation of heritage tourism sites

In action



In **Moldova**, the diaspora co-created and **piloted the Festival of Legends** in 2023. The first edition took place at the Țipova–Saharna landscape reserve, one of the oldest natural monuments in Moldova and Eastern Europe.



Diaspora experts shared knowledge and conducted trainings on the **open-air museum model**. The approach was inspired by European practices (such as Sweden) where diaspora communities live.



Drawing on Swedish know-how, the National Museum of History sees strong potential for the Țipova–Saharna touristic route. It could reinvigorate the area and **attract national and international tourists**, including, of course, the diaspora.



In **Sierra Leone**, the diaspora developed the concept of a **Roots Festival** in 2022. It offered immersive cultural experiences rooted in music, dance, and shared memory. This way, they also helped the Freetown City Council boost and modernise its tourism sector.



Diaspora communities and the local council co-created the concept of **Walking tours** (incl. with digital tools), weaving stories through Freetown's heritage sites and layered histories

Diaspora actors trained Council's staff in sustainable tourism practices and collaborative methods for developing

In action

DID YOU KNOW?

The tourism and creative industries expand by up to 20-25% in nations that actively encourage cultural interchange, enhancing their standing internationally (according to UNESCO)

Learn more



Freetown local heritage tourism as a connection to diaspora



Rethinking tourism in Moldova



Learning by doing: Heritage tourism in the digital era

What we carry forward

Recognition matters as much as funding

Create space for diaspora to exchange, contribute and act as cultural ambassadors. With the right support, they can bridge communities and activate networks with energy and commitment.

Young diasporas need space to question, reinterpret and participate

Youth bring fluid perspectives and global mindsets. They challenge existing paradigms and rethink what is not working. Culture is also the sector that employs and provides opportunities for the largest number of young people under the age of 30.

Digital tools can expand access, but relationships keep culture alive

Diaspora are often at the forefront of using new technologies to preserve and promote culture. But meaningful cultural exchange still depends on trust, collaboration, and community connections.

Support culture beyond one-off events

Invest in the tools, skills and long-term thinking that allow cultural initiatives to grow, travel and continue beyond a single festival, exhibition or celebration. Diaspora can play a key role in shaping and sustaining these efforts.

Make room for hybrid identities and evolving traditions

Protecting heritage also means allowing it to adapt, evolve and stay relevant. Diaspora can contribute to shaping new forms of culture as they reinterpret it across contexts.

Practice cultural diversity through everyday connections

Culture lives in daily life and grows through curiosity — not just big events. Ask questions, share diaspora stories, support diaspora artists and local businesses. Create space for conversation. Small everyday actions can build stronger connections and keep cultural diversity visible and alive.

Join the UNESCO campaign "[Do One Thing for Cultural Diversity](#)" and "[EU Diversity Month](#)" movement to take part in global action.

Living cultural exchange at EUDiF

At EUDiF, cultural diversity is part of how we work. Our multinational team, youth diaspora joining the program, and close engagement with diaspora communities around the world constantly remind us how rich, diverse, and creative cultural exchange can be.

We create spaces where people can express their identities, share stories from home, and connect through music, language, and art. And very often, through food.

Cooking classes and shared meals have become some of our favourite moments as a team. Through a dish, we learn about a country, a ritual, a memory, or a way of life. Because food speaks a language everyone understands.



“ When I see someone from the diaspora wearing their culture with pride, I ask for the story. For me, it’s this blouse—the ie. A hand-embroidered blouse from Moldova, recognised as intangible cultural heritage and part of our identity. I wear it on special festivals, and on regular days too. This one is a tribute to the cross-stitch work of an 86-year-old Moldovan woman. She told me the motif carries an old legend: that it can ward off bad luck. No matter where I am, it always brings me home. ”

Diana Hincu, Senior Project Manager EUDiF



Diaspora youth share stories on food within the scope of culture, heritage and identity



Nicole on ingredients in diaspora community-building




Jessica on reconnecting with Malaysia through its cuisine



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