

Solidarity: UNESCO World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development

By Marsha Hall



The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) proclaimed May 21 as the World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development to address the inherent uniqueness of world cultures and push forward constructive dialogue in an inclusive manner as an essential factor in creating a more peaceful and humane society sustainably.

Popularly referred to as ‘Diversity Day’, it is a global occasion where everyone all around the world can promote cultural diversity and reflect on their role in supporting culture as an agent of social cohesion, and advance the four goals of the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions adopted on 20 October 2005:

- Support sustainable systems of governance for culture
- Achieve a balanced flow of cultural goods and services and increase the mobility of artists and cultural professionals
- Integrate culture in sustainable development frameworks
- Promote human rights and fundamental freedoms

The wonders of languages, the different ways of dressing, celebrations, foods, and even our physical features exist because we are diverse. So, our abilities to acknowledge each other's visible and invisible differences must be recognised to encourage meaningful participation and conversation through the diversity of our identities. One valuable lesson that can be learnt from the global health pandemic that up-ended the cultural sector is the need for significant development and increasing cultural awareness that channels support for local initiatives which have a regional and global impact.

Similar to other international organisations, standing at the intersection of cultures and community, the African Caribbean Institute of Jamaica/ Jamaica Memory Bank (ACIJ/JMB) acknowledges that culture is one of Jamaica's greatest wealth and that every voice deserves to be heard. The Institute's ability to implement intercultural activities ensures that the rich heritage of Jamaica, Africa, and the Caribbean is accessible and highlighted in its people and places for preservation, while sharing with everyone from all walks of life. Embedded in this, is ongoing research and dialogue with various groups as a bridge that can harness and cultivate an environment where persons feel comfortable enough to be themselves.

As we continue to celebrate cultural diversity in all its expressions and forms, let us challenge our beliefs, ideas, or prejudices to enable mutual understanding and foster respect for resilience through diversity in a world that we all share. There are so many similarities in our differences.

Website Source:

“World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development, May 21”

<https://www.un.org/en/observances/cultural-diversity-day>