

Culture in the Organization of American States

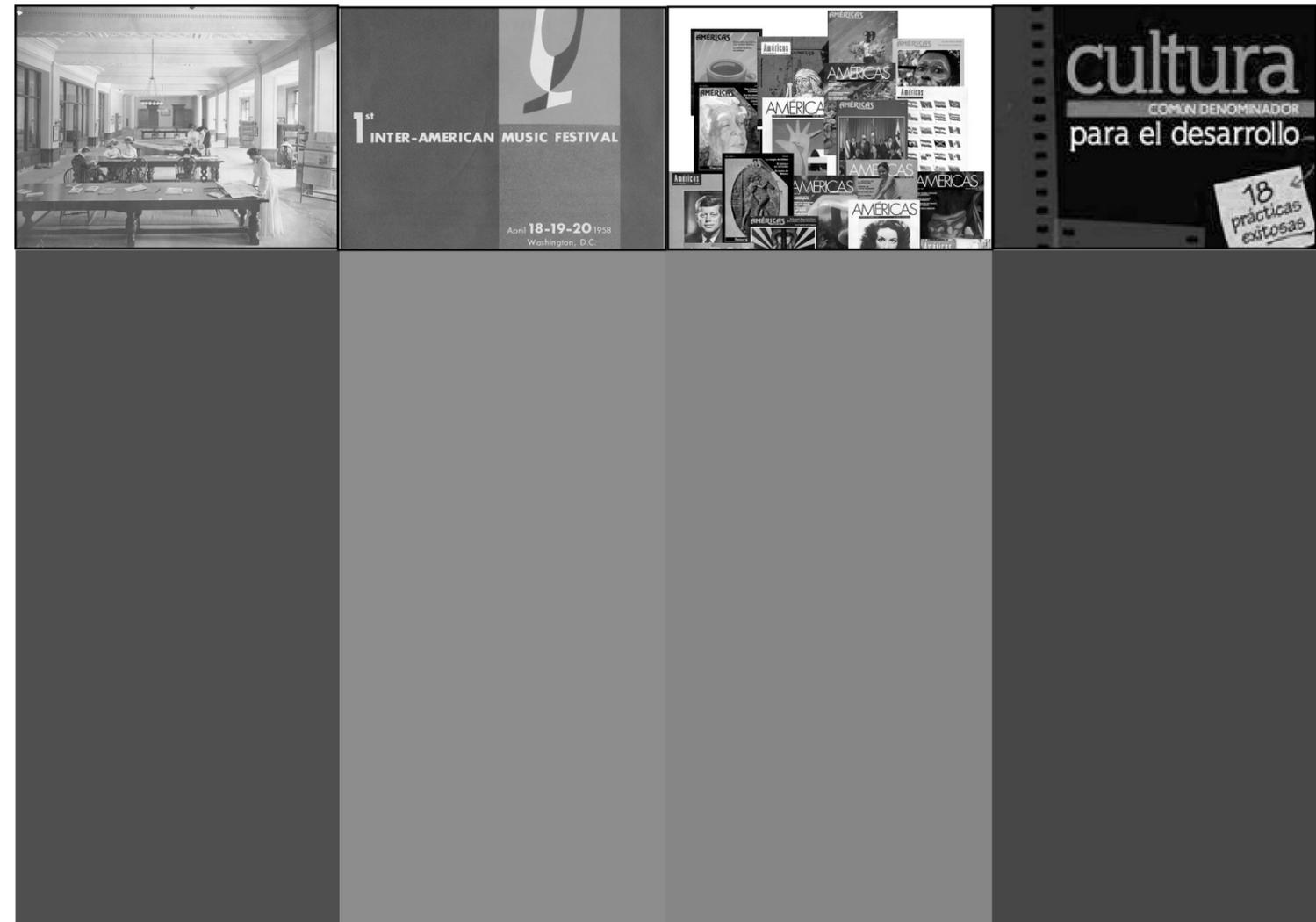
A Retrospective (1889-2013)



Organización de los Estados Americanos
Organização dos Estados Americanos
Organisation des États Américains
Organization of American States

Culture in the Organization of American States

A Retrospective (1889-2013)



CREDITS

Coordination: Office of Education and Culture/DDHEC, Executive Secretariat for Integral Development, Organization of American States

Editorial team: Lenore Yaffee García and Graciela Meza Mezgolits

Research and writing: Guillaume Lamontagne

Graphic design: Diana Valentina Pernet Plazas

Cover photo (from left to right): The reading room of the Columbus Memorial Library in 1911 (Today the Bolívar of the OAS Headquarters); Program of the First Inter-American Music Festival (1958); Frontpages of AMÉRICAS (1951-2012); y frontpage *Culture: common denominator for development* (2011).





INDEX

Introduction

page 7

1. First phase (1889-1947):

Cultural exchange as a factor of peace and prosperity

page 9

2. Second phase (1947-1967):

Fostering culture to strengthen democracy

page 14

3. Third phase (1967-1993):

Recognition of culture as an essential dimension of integral development

page 20

4. Fourth phase (1993-2013):

The search for balance between integration and the protection of cultural diversity

page 26

Conclusion

page 32



INTRODUCTION

Culture, a traditional pillar of Inter-American cooperation

In the second half of the 19th century, inter-American political and economic relations underwent a period of upheaval stemming from the development of armed conflicts and the reconfiguration of the global economic system. In that context, the U.S. Secretary of State, James G. Blaine, invited political leaders of the American nations to meet from 1889 to 1890 in Washington, D.C., at the first International Conference of American States. This event marked the inception of the foremost institution of the inter-American system, the Pan American Union (PAU)--the direct predecessor of the Organization of American States (OAS) and the oldest regional organization in the world. The Conference's aim was to identify possible means of cooperation to ensure peace and prosperity in the Hemisphere. From that point on, the International Conference of American States continued to be held periodically, culminating in 1948 with the foundation of the OAS. Today the OAS is the only political forum that includes all the states of the American Hemisphere.

In studying how inter-American relations took the form of institutions, one finds an abiding concern: *the need to foster cultural exchange*. From the First International Conference of American States onward, cultural matters have always been among the priorities of political leaders, making "*activities in the cultural area [...], those with the oldest tradition within the Inter-American system.*"¹ This can be understood only by recognizing that, in the process of inter-American integration, peaceful coexistence among peoples is based mainly on mutual understanding of cultural specifics. Consensus on this principle is clearly reflected in the OAS Charter. Since its first version, adopted in 1948, the Charter has stated that: "*The spiritual unity of the continent is based on respect for the cultural values of the American countries and requires their close cooperation for the high purposes of civilization.*" (Chapter II: Principles, Article 3)²

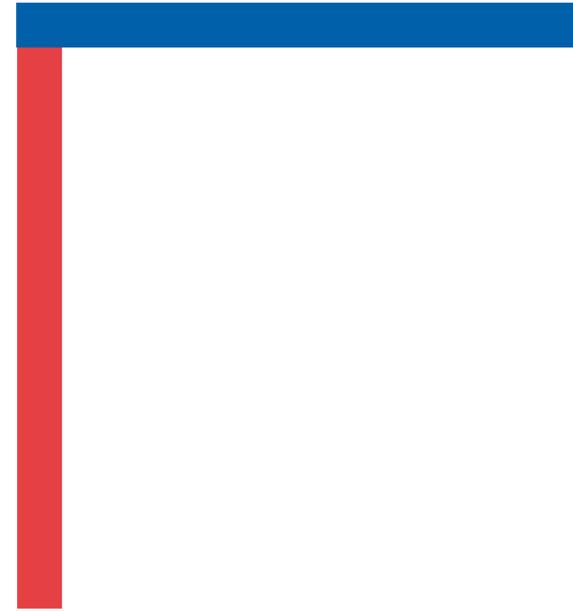
On the basis of that statement, this retrospective will explore the evolution of perspectives on culture and the lines of action, programs, and initiatives carried out in this area. The main objective is to highlight culture's historic role in the

¹ CIECC (1982) Regional Program for Cultural Development of the Organization of American States (OAS General Secretariat: Washington, D.C.), 14.

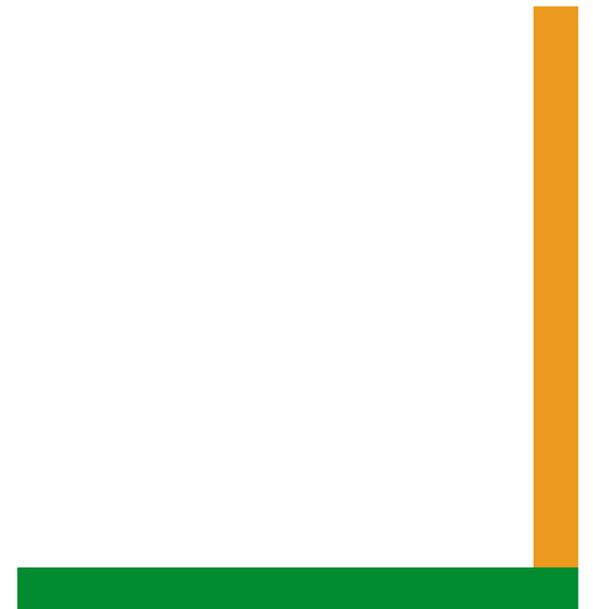
² Charter of the Organization of American States (1948).

Online: http://www.oimconosur.org/imagenes/documentos_pdf/275.pdf.

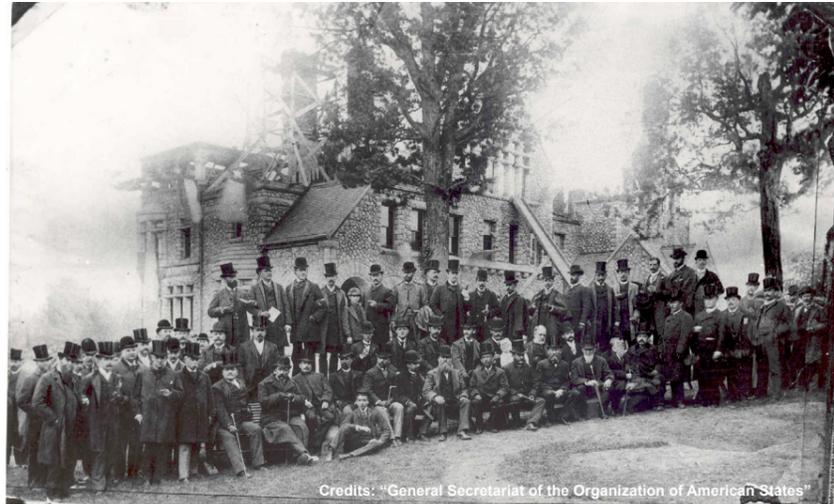
development of the inter-American system. Therefore, we will identify the main strategies used to make cultural exchange an instrument not only of mutual understanding but also of peace, democracy, and development. In addition to providing a chronology, we will list the institutional transformations, actions, and programs that best represent each period. The historical account is divided into four chapters, according to the prevailing principles that fostered cultural cooperation in each phase



First phase (1889-1947): Cultural exchange as a factor of peace and prosperity



**Overall context:
The first International Conferences of American States and
the beginning of cultural cooperation**



Credits: "General Secretariat of the Organization of American States"
*Delegates to the First International American Conference
during a visit in South Bend, Indiana (1889)*

At the First International Conference of American States, the main objective was to identify potential forms of cooperation to ensure peace and prosperity in the Hemisphere. The delegates expressed, for the first time, their intent to encourage cultural exchange among countries of the Hemisphere. They were responding to the need to improve mutual understanding among nations so as to develop commerce and prevent conflict. At the Conference, the delegates expressed their concern with better disseminating and protecting the Hemisphere's cultural expressions by adopting two legal instruments: the Convention for the Protection of Literary and Artistic Works and the Convention Relative to Exchange of Official, Scientific, Literary and Industrial Publications.^{1/} Over the course of the following Conferences, cultural cooperation agreements multiplied. At the Inter-American Conference for the Maintenance of Peace, held in Buenos Aires in 1936, five of the 11 conventions signed were on this topic, including the Convention for the Promotion of Inter-American Cultural Relations. Two years later, at the conclusion of the Eighth International Conference of American States, in Lima, Peru, a third of all the resolutions were related to the overall theme of "cultural cooperation," the term used at the time for all initiatives to promote cultural and academic relations.^{2/}

¹ "Conferencias Internacionales Americanas 1889 - 1936." Daniel Cosío Villegas Digital Library. Online: http://biblio2.colmex.mx/coinam/coinam_1889_1936/base2.htm 45.

² Pan American Union (1940). Contribution to the Intellectual Life of the Western Hemisphere 1890-1940. (Pan American Union: Washington, D.C.), 16.

**1) The Columbus Memorial Library:
A tool for mutual understanding**



Credits: "General Secretariat of the Organization of American States"
*The reading room of the Columbus Memorial Library in
1911 (Today the Bolívar of the OAS Headquarters)*

At the conclusion of the 1889-1890 International Conference of American States, it was decided to create a library to "[gather] all historical, geographical, and literary works, maps and official documents of all kinds" concerning the societies of the Americas.³ At their second meeting in Mexico (1902), the representatives of the Americas formally established the Columbus Memorial Library in Washington, D.C. From its inception, this permanent information center has offered citizens of the member states numerous documentary resources on the political, economic, and cultural affairs of the Hemisphere, thus promoting mutual understanding among the American nations. Today the Library holds the most important collection of documents on the inter-American system, including official archives, photographs, maps, books, and magazines.

**2) The Division of Intellectual Cooperation:
Meeting point of intellectual workers of the Americas**

*"Intellectual cooperation can bring to international relations a factor
often absent in other sectors: disinterested friendship."*

(Concha Romero James, Chief of the DIC, 1937)

In 1917, in keeping with a resolution of the Second Pan American Scientific Congress, the PAU created the Education Section to promote student and academic exchange in the Hemisphere. In pursuit of this mission, the Section worked to inform Latin American students of programs offered at institutions of higher learning in the United States, gathered data on educational systems of the member states, and connected universities that wished to hire foreign professors. One of the main results of the Section's work in this period was that over 50 institutions of technical and higher learning of the United States offered study scholarships to young Latin Americans.⁴

³ "Conferencias Internacionales Americanas 1889 - 1936." Daniel Cosío Villegas Digital Library. Online: http://biblio2.colmex.mx/coinam/coinam_1889_1936/base2.htm 45.

⁴ OCI (1941). Report of the Division of Intellectual Cooperation of the Pan American Union (Pan American Union:

In 1929, the Education Section became the Division of Intellectual Cooperation, in response to the need to redefine its initial educational focus to include other fields of intellectual endeavor, such as art, music, history, archeology, and literature. The role of the Division was, according to Concha Romero James, Chief of the Division, "to contribute in a practical way to closer ties among all persons and institutions concerned with cultural issues in the Americas."⁵ In the 1930s and 1940s, the Division conducted a series of activities of a mostly informational and editorial nature to promote regional studies and facilitate relations among intellectual workers. Among other achievements, the Division staff put together an impressive biographical archive containing over 4,000 files on prominent figures from all parts of the Hemisphere, including academics, visual artists, authors, and musicians. According to Romero James, this constituted "a veritable *Who's Who* of the cultural scene in the Hemisphere."⁶ In an era in which information was not widely circulated, these documentary holdings made it possible to answer the numerous questions that came in from researchers, students, or directors of cultural institutions regarding cultural expression in the Americas and allowed them to communicate with their peers.

The Division's work to disseminate the culture of the Americas also took the form of publications. These include the magazine *Panorama*, which began chronicling culture in the Hemisphere in 1935. It was widely circulated in academic circles and its articles were cited and reproduced in various countries of the Americas and Europe.⁷ Finally, in the field of visual arts, the Division acquired an important collection of photographic reproductions of works by Latin American artists. The dissemination of this collection spurred interest in Latin American artists and became a platform for their participation in exhibits in the United States.⁸

3) Establishment of the Music Division: Highlighting talent in the Americas

The first important initiative in the musical area was the organization in 1934 of the Official Concert Series. Presented at the headquarters of the Pan American Union, these programs highlighted the talent of young artists from all parts of the Hemisphere. Between 1934 and 1973, 633 concerts were given, with musicians from 38 countries.⁹ This Series became a lasting tradition that has continued, in various forms, to the present day.

Washington, D.C.), 1.

5 Concha Romero James (1937). *Cooperación intelectual en América 1933-1936* (Pan American Union: Washington, D.C.), 14.

6 Concha Romero James (1941), *The Pan American Union in the field of inter-American cultural relations* (Pan American Union: Washington, D.C.), 6.

7 OCI (1941). *Report of the Division of Intellectual Cooperation of the Pan American Union* (Pan American Union: Washington, D.C.), 16.

8 Concha Romero James (1937). *Cooperación intelectual en América 1933-1936* (Pan American Union: Washington, D.C.), 2.

9 Annick Sanjurjo de Casciero (1994). "Sixty Years of Music at the OAS." *Américas* magazine, September/October, 1994, 56.

Later, a resolution adopted at the Eighth International Conference of American States (1938), in Lima, instructed the PAU to consider establishing a center for the dissemination of works by composers of the Americas and foster cooperation among musical organizations. The Music Division was created in pursuance of this resolution and began to operate in 1941. It was the first Hemisphere-wide cooperation initiative in the field of music.¹⁰ Among other activities, the Music Division worked to improve the availability, in the U.S. market, of sheet music of Latin American works. A little over a year after its creation, the publishing arm of the Division released on the U.S. market around 150 Latin American musical compositions.¹¹ Many other initiatives complemented this initial effort at artistic cooperation, such as distributing informational publications, recording music, and organizing travel to build ties with the foremost Latin American musicians. The Division also acted as an intermediary among U.S. publishing houses and Latin American composers. But the Division's greatest achievement in this period was that, in response to its promotional efforts at musical education institutions, U.S. professors began to consider Latin American music as a valuable educational resource for their teaching activities.¹²

10 Music Division (1947). *Brief History of the Music Division of the Pan American Union* (Pan American Union: Washington, D.C.), 1-2.

11 Music Division (1947). *Brief History of the Music Division of the Pan American Union* (Pan American Union: Washington, D.C.), 7.

12 Music Division (1947). *Brief History of the Music Division of the Pan American Union* (Pan American Union: Washington, D.C.), 9.

**Second phase (1947-1967):
Fostering culture to
strengthen democracy**

**Overall context:
The establishment of the Organization of American States**



*The President of Colombia, Mr. Mariano Ospina Pérez,
inaugurating the IX CIA, (Bogota, Colombia 1948)*

The post-war years were a period of growing commitment to the inter-American system on the part of the American nations. The most important event clearly was the creation of the Organization of American States (OAS) in 1948—the culmination of half a century of deepening hemispheric relations. Cultural cooperation underwent significant revitalization and institutionalization within the Organization. While during the preceding era the role of the Division of Intellectual Cooperation was essential, though limited to mainly informational functions, in this era cultural cooperation initiatives “assumed the status of essential matters and became an ongoing, systematic activity” of the Organization.¹³ In fact, beginning with the second half of the 1940s, there was a rapid multiplication of cultural projects, together with the development of new institutions. Alongside this institutional transformation, cultural promotion was increasingly associated with the principles of democracy and human dignity.

¹³ Department of Cultural Affairs (1962). *La OEA y la Cultura: El Departamento de Asuntos Culturales* (Pan American Union: Washington, D.C.), 1.

1) Institutionalization of the cultural agenda: The establishment of the Department of Cultural Affairs

“Culture is not only, therefore, an end in itself but a means for the American System to reach and assert other goals and achievements at the political and spiritual level. The expansion of culture contributes effectively and definitively to root the ideas of democracy and human dignity.”

(Department of Cultural Affairs, 1962)

The first step in this institutionalization was the creation of the Department of Cultural Affairs in 1946.¹⁴ With the adoption in 1948 of the OAS Charter, the Department’s cultural mission was legally established. Article 3 of the Charter provides: “The spiritual unity of the continent is based on respect for the cultural values of the American countries and requires their close cooperation for the high purposes of civilization.”¹⁵ In pursuing its mission, the Department relied on various technical departments, including the Division of Philosophy and Letters, the Division of Visual Arts, the Division of Music, and the Columbus Memorial Library. When the Department was created, there was a simultaneous revamping of the concept of culture within the OAS. While cultural exchange thus far had been promoted mainly to foster friendly relations, now culture began to be seen as a factor in strengthening democracy and improving living conditions for the American peoples.

2) The Inter-American Cultural Council: An instrument for political dialogue to promote cultural cooperation

With the goal of promoting political dialogue on culture and monitoring the activities of the Department of Cultural Affairs, the nascent OAS established the Inter-American Cultural Council, which held its first meeting in 1951, in Mexico. Made up of representatives of the member states, the Council was charged with meeting periodically to “study and promote initiatives and plans of interest to culture in the context of Pan American cooperation.”¹⁶ The Department was one of the only three technical and political bodies—together with the Inter-American Economic and Social Council and the Inter-American Council of Jurists—established to support the work of the OAS Council.¹⁷ This shows the central role of cultural cooperation in maintaining peaceful relations in the Hemisphere and the commitment of the political leaders of the Americas to promoting it. At the International Conference of American States in Caracas in 1954, a Cultural Action Committee was established in pursuance of Article 76 of the OAS Charter. With headquarters in Mexico City, it was a permanent body of the Inter-American Cultural Council.

14 “Notas de la Unión Panamericana.” Bulletin of the Pan American Union, October 1947, 599.

15 Department of Cultural Affairs (1962). *La OEA y la Cultura: El Departamento de Asuntos Culturales* (Pan American Union: Washington, D.C.), 2.

16 Department of Cultural Affairs (1962). *La OEA y la Cultura: El Departamento de Asuntos Culturales* (Pan American Union: Washington, D.C.), 4.

17 Carlos Støetzer (1993). *The Organization of American States* (Praeger Publishers: Westport, CT), 61.

3) Division of Philosophy and Letters: Disseminating the best literature of the Americas

The mission of the Division of Philosophy and Letters of the Department of Cultural Affairs—“to foster inter-American relations in the specific areas of thought, the history of ideas, literature, bibliography, and theater”—gave rise to very diverse activities, such as the translation into English of books representative of Latin America, technical advisory services to governments, and the organization of congresses, meetings, and conferences.¹⁸ One of the Division’s most important jobs was to publish works of interest to the Hemisphere, such as the philosophy anthologies *Pensamiento de América*, the series *Escritores de América*, and the *Inter-American Review of Bibliography*.¹⁹ Founded in 1951 by Maury Austin Bromsen, a renowned U.S. bibliophile and Latin Americanist, the Review made a major impact on academics in the Americas, as the only bibliographical publication encompassing the Hemisphere’s entire literary panorama.²⁰ It remained in publication until the late 1990s. Another important publication was *El diccionario de Literatura Latinoamericana*, which closed a significant information gap in the area of Latin American literature.

4) Division of Visual Arts: Toward recognition of Latin American art

“For over a decade, the headquarters of the Pan American Union were the only place in the United States where, on a regular and systematic basis, were presented examples of the artistic production of the countries located south of the Rio Grande”

(Department of Cultural Affairs, 1962)

Led by the renowned Cuban critic José Gómez Sicre, the activities of the Division of Visual Arts had as their central purpose “to widen the artistic horizons of Latin American youth” in addition to bringing about recognition of Latin American artistic expression.²¹ ²² In pursuit of these objectives, the Division concentrated on presenting the work of emerging Latin American artists to the U.S. audience by organizing exhibits at OAS headquarters. From 1946 to 1960, the number of exhibits jumped from seven to 21 per year, for a total of 214 in that period.²³ In this context of great institutional vitality, the representative of Mexico to the OAS, Ambassador Luis Quintanilla, proposed to the OAS Council that one work from each exhibit be acquired, creating a Permanent Collection of artistic trends in the Hemisphere.²⁴ In 1957, an acquisitions fund

18 Department of Cultural Affairs (1962). *La OEA y la Cultura: El Departamento de Asuntos Culturales* (Pan American Union: Washington, D.C.), 13-16.

19 “Maury A. Bromsen: The Legacy of a Bookman.”

Online: http://www.brown.edu/Facilities/John_Carter_Brown_Library/bromsen/index.html.

20 “Maury A. Bromsen: The Legacy of a Bookman”

Online: http://www.brown.edu/Facilities/John_Carter_Brown_Library/bromsen/index.html.

21 Department of Cultural Affairs (1962). *La OEA y la Cultura: El Departamento de Asuntos Culturales* (Pan American Union: Washington, D.C.), 27.

22 Annick Sanjurjo, ed. (1997) *Foreword: Contemporary Latin American Artists: Exhibitions at the Organization of American States 1941-1964* (Scarecrow Press).

23 Division of Visual Arts (1961?). *La Unión Panamericana al servicio de las artes visuales en América*. (Pan American Union: Washington, D.C.).

24 OAS General Secretariat (1985). *Museum of Modern Art of Latin America: Selections from the Permanent Collection*.

was approved to build and present this collection. The Permanent Gallery of Latin American Art was launched in 1960 at OAS headquarters.

In addition to organizing exhibits, the Division fostered Latin American artistic expression by distributing numerous publications, such as *Art in Latin America Today* (a series of bibliographic monographs on artists of the Americas), *Guía de las Colecciones Públicas de Arte* (promoting art tourism), and *Highlights of Latin American Art* (emphasizing the most representative artistic expressions of the Latin American cultures). The Division also provided technical assistance, organized a card index of over 3,000 entries on artists, and administered a lending service from the Department's broad collection of films, reproductions, and art objects. Finally, the Division provided sales brokerage services to artists who needed them; between 1950 and 1960, 561 works of art were sold in connection with 115 exhibits.²⁵

5) Music Division: Emphasis on training musicians of the Americas



Program of the First Inter-American Music Festival, 1958

The Music Division added new activities to its program, such as the issuing newsletters and organizing Inter-American Music Festivals every three or four years from 1958 through the early 1980s. It also began the Musical Studies Scholarships Program and a series of activities to train music professors, given that “their relative scarcity in Latin America is the most pressing aspect of its musical issues.”²⁶ The most important institutional development in this period was the creation in 1956 of the Inter-American Music Council (CI-DEM). Made up of representatives of the national music commissions and councils of the OAS member states, its purpose was to energize cooperation initiatives in the field

of music. Among its most significant achievements was the establishment of five inter-American centers of teaching, information, and research that channeled technical cooperation activities: the *Inter-American Institute for Musical Research* (United States), the *Instituto Interamericano de Educación Musical* (Chile), the *Inter-American Center on Ethnomusicology and Folklore* (Venezuela), the *Instituto Interamericano de Experimentación y Estudios Musicales* (Brazil), and the *Centro Interamericano de Información y Documentación Musical* (Puerto Rico).

(OAS: Washington, D.C.), 9-10.

²⁵ Division of Visual Arts (1961?). *La Unión Panamericana al servicio de las artes visuales en América*. (Pan American Union: Washington, D.C.).

²⁶ Department of Cultural Affairs (1962). *La OEA y la Cultura: El Departamento de Asuntos Culturales* (Pan American Union: Washington, D.C.), 37.

6) Columbus Memorial Library: The Library Promotion Program

The Columbus Library was another essential tool for pursuing the Organization's cultural mission in this period. On the one hand, it served the traditional functions of a library, acquiring documents on the Americas and lending them to the public. On the other hand, it promoted the improvement and establishment of new libraries in the Hemisphere through its Library Promotion Program. The Program included technical assistance services and the publication of manuals on library organization and management.²⁷ These efforts to improve the accessibility and quality of libraries in the Americas is another specific example of the role of culture in building democracy and promoting the well-being of the American peoples.

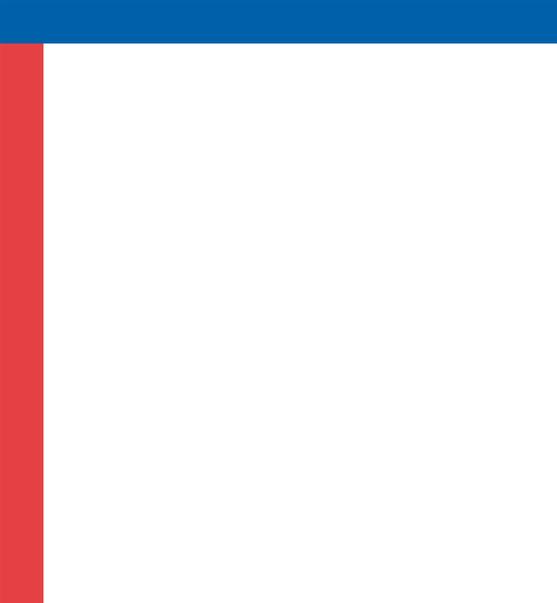
7) Foundation of *Américas* magazine: A window on the cultures of the Americas

Since 1893, the Pan American Union had published a monthly bulletin on its most important activities, which also served as a chronicle of major events in the political, economic, social, and cultural life of the member countries. Aware of the challenges of covering both of these topics in the same publication, the Secretariat decided to found an illustrated magazine entirely devoted to current events in the region. *Américas* magazine was created in 1949 “to foster non-official relations among the peoples of the Americas, report on the most interesting aspects of their development and progress, increase familiarity with the various facets of their culture, and, most importantly, present these ideas in a form acceptable to the public.”²⁸ Over its more than 60 years in existence, *Américas*, the most important publication of the OAS, was an indispensable factor of mutual understanding in the Hemisphere. It presented a positive view of the similarities and singularities of the American peoples. In the early years of the 21st century, *Américas* was published six times a year. Each issue was available in English and Spanish, with a printing of around 55,000 copies.²⁹ The magazine went out of circulation in 2012.

²⁷ Department of Cultural Affairs (1962). *La OEA y la Cultura: El Departamento de Asuntos Culturales* (Pan American Union: Washington, D.C.), 43-44.

²⁸ Permanent Council (2001). Report of the General Secretariat on the Three-Year Plan of Action for Strengthening the Financial Situation of *Américas* Magazine. OEA/Ser.G CP/doc.3507/01 (SG-OAS: Washington, D.C.), 1.

²⁹ Permanent Council (2001). Report of the General Secretariat on the Three-Year Plan of Action for Strengthening the Financial Situation of *Américas* Magazine. OEA/Ser.G CP/doc.3507/01 (SG-OAS: Washington, D.C.), 1.



Third phase (1967-1993): Recognition of culture as an essential dimension of integral development

Overall context: The Decade of Development

At the global level, the 1960s witnessed great sociopolitical changes brought about, among other reasons, by the escalation of the Cold War. The need to foster “development” became a central preoccupation on the political agenda of leaders of the Americas. This culminated with a United Nations declaration naming this period the “Decade of Development.” Simultaneously, the inter-American system underwent an intense period of institutional transformation. After years of deliberation over appropriate strategies for improving the functioning of the OAS, in 1967 the Buenos Aires Protocol of Amendment to the Charter was adopted. It established new deliberative bodies like the General Assembly. In the area of technical cooperation, the amended Charter called for the creation of two bodies: the *Inter-American Economic and Social Council (CIES)* and the *Inter-American Council for Education, Science, and Culture (CIECC)*, which came to replace the Inter-American Cultural Council when the Protocol took effect in 1970.

1) The Regional Cultural Development Program: Culture as an essential part of integral development

Over the course of the 1960s, the concept of development was broadened significantly to embrace not only economic growth but also the preservation and promotion of the various cultures. Influenced by this new concept, the Inter-American Cultural Council adopted the Maracay Resolution in 1968, the purpose of which was to emphasize “*the fundamental importance of all cultural expressions as symbols of national identity, what they signify, and how they influence the economic and social programs of peoples.*”³⁰ As a further step, the Cultural Council decided, at its meeting at Port of Spain (1969), to establish the Regional Cultural Development Program. In the following decade, the Program firmly established the principle that “*culture is an indivisible ensemble in which the sciences, arts, education, philosophy, and the most varied expressions form a harmonious whole*” and that, therefore, “*cultural development is an essential part of integral development.*”³¹ Supervised by the CIECC since the latter’s first meeting in 1970, the Program had as its main purpose “*recovering, preserving, consolidating, developing, and modernizing the various cultural expressions of the Americas. Harmonizing cultural progress with the demands of a society that experiences constant economic and social change.*”³² Although the CIECC continued its attention to the topics on which the OAS had worked in the past, a new emphasis was placed on building institutional capacity in the member states and on technical cooperation in cultural policymaking.

30 CIECC (1982). Regional Cultural Development Program of the Organization of American States (OAS General Secretariat: Washington, D.C.), 13.

31 CIECC (1982). Regional Cultural Development Program of the Organization of American States (OAS General Secretariat: Washington, D.C.).

32 CIECC (1982). Regional Cultural Development Program of the Organization of American States (OAS General Secretariat: Washington, D.C.), 3.

2) Cultural heritage: Preserving the material footprints of the American cultures

The Organization's interest in protecting cultural heritage arose in response to a request from the presidents of the member states at the Meeting of Heads of State in Punta del Este (1967), at which they had decided to include in "*inter-American cooperation the conservation and use of archeological, historical, and artistic monuments.*"³³ Consequently, in 1968, the Inter-American Cultural Council decided to adopt the Norms of Quito, the aim of which was to guide government policymaking on the preservation of monumental and artistic heritage in the OAS member states.³⁴ In pursuit of that mandate, in the 1970s, the OAS, in collaboration with cultural and academic institutions, created four inter-American centers devoted to technical training in the preservation of cultural heritage: the *Inter-American Center for the Restoration of Cultural Property* (Mexico), the *Museographic Training Center* (Mexico), and two *Inter-American Sub-regional Centers for the Restoration of Movable Property* (Panama and Peru). Along with over 60 technical assistance missions, the courses given at these centers trained hundreds of museographers, restorers, and archeology assistants, significantly alleviating the scarcity of personnel specializing in the preservation of cultural heritage in the Americas.³⁵

Finally, in 1976, the General Assembly adopted the Convention on the Protection of the Archeological, Historical, and Artistic Heritage of the American Nations (Convention of San Salvador). This instrument's objective was "*to identify, register, protect, and safeguard the property making up the cultural heritage of the American nations in order: (a) to prevent illegal exportation or importation of cultural property; and (b) to promote cooperation among the American states for mutual awareness and appreciation of their cultural property.*"³⁶

3) Archives: Protecting the national memory

Another initiative under the Regional Program was carried out in the field of national archive protection. Adopted in 1972 was the Charter of American Archives. It established "*the principles of archiving activities, their role in the integral context of each country, their importance as an indivisible part of the national heritage.*"³⁷ With the aim of promoting the Charter's application in the member states, that same year, the *Inter-American Center for Archives Development* was founded in Argentina and the *Regional Center/Workshop for the Restoration and Microfilming of Documents for the Caribbean and Central America* was established in the Dominican Republic. Their

33 OAS (1967). *Declaración de los Presidentes de América, Reunión de Jefes de Estado Americanos, Punta del Este*. Online: <http://www.summit-americas.org/declarat%20presidentes-1967-eng.htm>.

34 CIECC (1981). Basic Study of the FEMCIECC, (SG-OAS: Washington, D.C.), 137.

35 CIECC (1982). Regional Cultural Development Program of the Organization of American States (OAS General Secretariat: Washington, D.C.), 29-34.

36 Convention on the Protection of the Archeological, Historical, and Artistic Heritage of the American Nations (Convention of San Salvador). Online: <http://www.oas.org/juridico/english/treaties/c-16.html>.

37 CIECC (1982). Regional Cultural Development Program of the Organization of American States (OAS General Secretariat: Washington, D.C.), 42.

purpose was to train professional archivists of the Americas, with support from OAS scholarships.

4) Folklore and handicrafts: Promoting popular culture



Credits: "General Secretariat of the Organization of American States"
*Popular music concert in
the Hall of the Américas (1968)*

Another area in which the OAS undertook new initiatives in the 1970s was popular culture, recognized as an essential element of integral development. The commitment of leaders of the Americas in this cultural area was expressed in the adoption of the American Folklore Charter (1970) and the Inter-American Charter on Handicrafts and Folk Arts (1973), culminating with the declaration of 1982 as the Inter-American Year of Folk Art. Institutional capacity-building in the area of folklore and handicrafts preservation was promoted by the OAS with the establishment of three inter-American technical cooperation centers: the *Inter-American Center on Ethnomusicology and Folklore* (Venezuela), the *Inter-American Center for Handicrafts and Folk Arts* (Ecuador), and the *Regional Subcenter of Handicrafts and Folk Art* (Guatemala). These institutions conducted training programs and provided technical assistance that helped the member states strengthen their national infrastructure and improve their conservation and promotion of popular cultural expression.

5) Music: Music as an instrument of social change

As for music, access to musical activity continued to be promoted, with special attention to music education. The creation of the *Inter-American Instrumental Studies Center* in 1979, in Costa Rica, deserves emphasis here. Instructing around 300 people a year, the Center trained both young musicians and professors. In the late 1970s, the Department of Cultural Affairs began to produce the LP record series *Inter-American Musical Editions*, recording the classical and folkloric heritage of the Americas to "*contribute to the protection of the region's cultural identity.*"³⁸ Finally, in 1975 the OAS supported the establishment of the Venezuelan Youth Orchestra System, a project led by Maestro José Antonio Abreu, which now serves over 240,000 young people in 320 or-

38 General Secretariat (1978). Executive Order No. 78-6 *Asunto: Ediciones Interamericanas de Música*. <http://www.oas.org/legal/spanish/gensec/EX-OR-78-6.htm>.

chestras and choruses. The Venezuelan System was and continues to be a source of inspiration for orchestra initiatives serving at-risk youths throughout the Hemisphere.

6) Creation of the Art Museum of the Americas (1976)



The Secretary General who presided over the creation of the Museum, Mr. Alejandro Orfila, receives a donation of 50 pieces for the Permanent Collection by Cartón y Papel, S.A.

With the establishment of the acquisitions fund in 1957, the OAS Permanent Collection grew continuously. Space for conserving and exhibiting the works became ever more scarce. In response, the Secretary General at the time, Alejandro Orfila, backed the dream of the director of the Division of Visual Arts, José Gómez Sicre, of establishing a museum of Latin American art in the United States.³⁹

This proposal became a reality when the Venezuelan Ambassador, José María Machín, proposed to the Permanent Council that a museum be established in Washington, D.C.,

to mark the United States bicentennial. The necessary funding for the Museum were agreed upon and in 1976 the *Museum of Modern Art of Latin America* (now known as the *Art Museum of the Americas*) was established. The new institution was installed in the former Secretary General's residence behind the OAS Main Building. In subsequent years, the Museum collection continued to expand. Today the Museum has over 2,000 objects, including paintings, drawings, sculptures, installations, and photographs. In the same year in which the Museum was founded, the *Regional Graphic Arts Center* was founded in Costa Rica to foster artistic production in Central America.⁴⁰

7) Gabriela Mistral Inter-American Prize for Culture

In 1982, the CIECC began to award the annual Gabriela Mistral Inter-American Prize for Culture, founded in memory of the Chilean writer who won the Nobel Prize for Literature. The award was intended "*to recognize those who have contributed to the identification and enrichment of the culture of the Americas and of its cultural regions or individual expressions, either through expression of its values or through the assimilation and incorporation of universal cultural values.*"⁴¹ With this initiative, the OAS made a significant impact in terms of recognition of outstanding cultural expression in the Hemisphere. The first prizewinner was the illustrious Argentinean writer Ernesto Sábato, in 1984. The final award, in 2000, was given to Peruvian poet Antonio Cisneros.

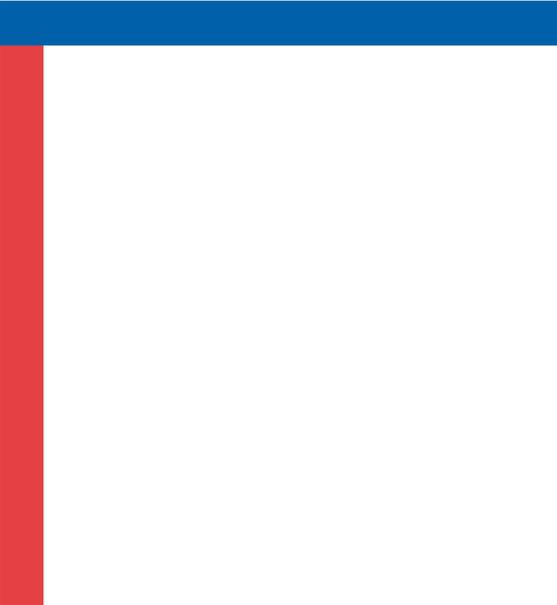
³⁹ *Museum of Modern Art of Latin America* (1977). Brochure (Pan American Union: Washington, D.C.), 2.

⁴⁰ CIECC (1982). Regional Cultural Development Program of the Organization of American States (OAS General Secretariat: Washington, D.C.), 47.

⁴¹ Peruvian poet Antonio Cisneros wins the Gabriela Mistral Inter-American Prize for Culture. Online: http://www.oas.org/OASpage/press2002/sp/a%C3%B1o2000/New_Folder/170.htm.

8) The Protocol of Cartagena: Enshrinement of the concept of integral development

In 1985, the member states adopted the Cartagena de Indias Protocol of Amendment to the OAS Charter—the culmination of decades of change in the approach to development and, in particular, the role of culture in that process. The Protocol enshrined the concept of integral development as indispensable to achieving peace and security in the Hemisphere. Articles 29 and 30 of the new Charter established that inter-American cooperation for integral development is the common and shared responsibility of the member states and that such cooperation should include culture, among other areas. Culture was thus formally deemed an essential dimension of the development of the American peoples.



Fourth phase (1993-2013): The search for balance between integration and the protection of cultural diversity

Overall context: The creation of the Inter-American Council for Integral Development

With the end of the Cold War, the globalization of economic relations, and the communications revolution, the inter-American system and its main institutions had to adapt. The OAS underwent deep institutional changes intended to energize the Organization and make it more efficient. The OAS Charter was amended twice, by the Protocol of Washington (1992) and the Protocol of Managua (1993). The latter merged the decision-making mechanisms in the area of multilateral cooperation, conducted up to that point by the two Inter-American Councils—CIECC and CIES—into a single body, the Inter-American Council for Integral Development (CIDI). As part of this new entity, the bodies responsible for fostering cultural cooperation were finally included fully in the multisectoral cooperation-for-development process. In succeeding years, CIDI's general operational guidelines were defined in successive Strategic Plans for Cooperation for Development and its mandates were implemented by the Executive Secretariat for Integral Development, largely thanks to financing through the Specific Multilateral Fund of the Inter-American Council for Integral Development (FEMCIDI). Since its establishment in 1997, *FEMCIDI has received voluntary contributions from member states and promoted national and multilateral cooperation projects*. From the year of its establishment through 2009, it financed 64 projects in the cultural area, for a total of a little over US\$3,600,000.⁴²

1) Renewal of the political commitment: Establishment of culture as a factor of integration and development

In the mid-1990s, the Heads of State of the Americas began regular meetings in the context of the presidential summits to discuss the opportunities afforded by regional integration and the region's shared economic, social, and environmental challenges. During the First Summit of the Americas, in Miami (1994), the Heads of State requested the OAS to strengthen its cultural activities to promote exchanges among the peoples of the Americas. This concern was firmly established in the principle of respect for cultural diversity as essential to development and achieving harmonious hemispheric integration. Consequently, in 1998, CIDI and the General Assembly approved, as a complement to the Strategic Plan for Partnership for Development, the Inter-American Program of Culture, "which recognizes that the region's greatest wealth is its people and their cultural manifestations"⁴³. The Program established the general framework for cultural policymaking within the OAS, identifying four priority areas: (1) *Cultural diversity*; (2) *dissemination and protection of cultural heritage*; (3) *training of human resources and encouragement of creativity*; and (4) *promotion of*

⁴² Internal FEMCIDI document.

⁴³ César Gaviria (2004). *The OAS 1994-2004. A Decade of Transformation*. (OAS: Washington, D.C.), 311.

cultural tourism. At the sixth regular meeting of CIDI, held in 2001, emphasis was placed on the important role of culture, recognizing it as one of the eight priority areas for action by this body for the 2002-2005 period and thus making it fundamental to the Strategic Plan for Partnership for Development.

Despite the great success of including culture in the various cooperation-for-development plans and programs, this process was not always funded for implementation of cultural development projects.

2) The forums for technical and policy dialogue: The Ministerial Meetings and the Inter-American Committee on Culture



Delegates of the Fifth Meeting of Ministers and High Authorities of Culture (Washington DC, 2011)

The Third Summit of the Americas, held in 2001 in Quebec City, Canada, called for the creation of a common forum for establishing Hemispheric priorities and plans of action and promoting interministerial dialogue in the field of culture. Consequently, since 2002, periodic Inter-American Meetings of Ministers of Culture and Highest Appropriate Authorities have been held in Colombia (2002), Mexico (2004), Canada (2006), and Barbados (2008), and at OAS headquarters (2011). At the first Meeting, the Ministers and High Authorities of Culture created the Inter-American Committee on Culture (CIC). Directly related to CIDI, this body serves as a permanent forum for technical and policy discussion and decision-making in the area of culture. The CIC is made up of one delegate from each member state. It is charged with following up on the mandates of the Summits of the Americas and the decisions of the Meetings of Ministers of Culture. Its functions include advancing better understanding of the different approaches to culture and cultural policy in the member states; advisory services in preparation for ministerial meetings; facilitating information-sharing and the discussion of good practices that further the recovery, preservation, and promotion of cultural diversity through horizontal cooperation mechanisms; examining ways to provide technical and financial assistance to member states that need it; and encouraging and promoting cultural activities and artistic expression in educational programs.⁴⁴

⁴⁴ Rules of Procedure of the CIC. Online: http://www.oas.org/udse/cic/espanol/fr_bien.html.

The CIC meets periodically to develop and adopt biennial work plans. In the versions of such plans from 2009 onward, two pillars were defined to guide Inter-American cooperation initiatives in the cultural area. The first concerns institutional capacity-building for creative enterprises so as to increase economic growth and promote development through culture. The second involves promoting social inclusiveness, using culture as a tool for youth participation and intercultural dialogue. The work of the CIC is supported within the Executive Secretariat for Integral Development (SEDI) by the Office of Education and Culture, which serves as its Technical Secretariat.

3) The Horizontal Cooperation Strategy: An innovative tool of Hemispheric cooperation for institutional capacity-building

In pursuit of its objectives, the CIC has focused on firming up a horizontal development cooperation strategy. Based on the principle of solidarity, this strategy seeks to promote non-hierarchical cooperation among countries with similar or dissimilar levels of development through skills transfer and the discussion of good practices and experiences. It therefore differs fundamentally from “vertical cooperation,” which is based on a donor-recipient relationship. It also implies that cooperation for development does not necessarily require the transfer of financial resources.⁴⁵

Under this strategy, the CIC has conducted a series of activities aimed at establishing an Inter-American Information Network to support stronger cultural policies in the member states. One of its main activities has been the workshops to discuss good practices, organized by and for representatives of the ministries of culture. The first of these workshops was held in Canada in 2003, under the theme “Cultural Diversity, Youth Employment, and Youth Exchanges.” In recent years, the skills transfer workshops have multiplied. Many meetings have been organized since 2003, following the idea of horizontal cooperation in such diverse areas as the preservation and protection of cultural heritage, cultural diversity, cultural information systems, and culture as an engine of growth. The last meeting was held in 2012, by the Government of Argentina, to create or strengthen capacity in the Caribbean countries in relation to cultural information systems.⁴⁶ Another event was the Ignite the Americas Youth Arts Policy Forum organized in 2008 by Canadian Heritage in collaboration with the OAS. It brought together young artists, community leaders, policymakers, and private-sector actors from 31 different countries to explore and develop effective strategies based on the power of the arts and culture to generate economic opportunities and build more inclusive societies. The event concluded with recommendations on cultural policymaking. Another achievement – under the communication strategy of the Inter-American Information Network – was the publication “Culture, common denominator for development” (2011), which presents 18 community development initiatives in member states that include cultural aspects.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ Adriana Vilela. 21st Century Teacher Education in the Americas: Horizontal Cooperation and the Inter-American Teacher Education Network (ITEN). Unpublished document.

⁴⁶ OAS hosts Seminar on Cultural Information Systems developed by Argentina. Online: <http://portal.oas.org/Portal/Topic/SEDI/Educaci%C3%B3nyCultura/Noticias/tabid/268/language/en-US/Default.aspx>.

⁴⁷ “Culture, common denominator for development. 18 successful practices”

Also noteworthy was the creation of a horizontal cooperation fund to finance technical cooperation missions in the cultural area among member states. The fund sought to promote bilateral and multilateral cooperation among ministries of culture and/or other institutions, following strategies based on art and culture as engines of economic development, social inclusion, and the consolidation of democratic values. In the first round (June to September 2010), 10 technical cooperation missions were held, involving 18 public and private institutions of 12 member states.

Finally, the OAS General Assembly declared 2011 the *Inter-American Year of Culture*, under the theme “*Our Cultures, Our Future*.” This was an opportunity to reinforce collective recognition of the value of culture in American societies and its impact on the well-being of their peoples.

4) Institutional restructuring process and the bodies responsible for culture in the OAS

In response to requests issued at the First Summit of the Americas and in the Protocol of Managua, the OAS reorganized the technical management of the cultural area, creating the Office of Cultural Affairs in 1997 to replace the Department of Cultural Affairs.⁴⁸ In 2001, this Office was integrated into the Social Development and Education Unit. This restructuring was deemed to reflect the new approach to culture as an essential part of integral development.

Today, the Office of Education and Culture (OEC) of the Department of Human Development, Education, and Culture (under SEDI) is the Technical Secretariat of the CIC and channels its cooperation activities, programs, and projects.

In addition to the OEC, the OAS promotes cultural development and culture-related activities through other bodies, such as the Columbus Library (under the Office of the Assistant Secretary General) and the Art Museum of the Americas (AMA) (under the Secretariat for External Relations). Since 2011, the work of the AMA has been based on the principle that arts transform individuals and communities. This, in turn, has provided a way to promote the fundamental values of the OAS, a forum for cultural expression, creativity, dialogue, and learning, emphasizing the topics of democracy, equitable development, human rights, justice, freedom of expression, and innovation. Through the plastic arts, the AMA presents a constructive vision of the future of the Americas through local and hemispheric cultural exchange. This is done with cutting-edge exhibits of artists whose creative expression combines aesthetics with contemporary social and political themes and through dialogue with the Museum’s Permanent Collection.

In addition, the OAS coordinated the Orchestras of the Americas for Social Inclusion (OASIS) program, which made music a component of social transformation. **Between 2009 and 2010, the Program established three training centers for young musicians in**

http://www.desarrolloycultura.net/sites/default/files/18_COMUN_english_baja%20resoluci%C3%B3n.pdf.

⁴⁸ General Secretariat (1997). Executive Order No. 97-3.

Online: <http://www.oas.org/legal/english/gensec/EX-OR-97-3.htm>.

Haiti, Jamaica, and Saint Lucia.⁴⁹ In recognition of the potential of culture to promote citizen security, OASIS is at this time supervised by the Secretariat for Multidimensional Security. The same Secretariat implements the POETA project of the Trust for the Americas, an initiative for reintegrating at-risk youth through a pilot orchestra and choral program with technology, vocational training, and entrepreneurship components.

Lastly, we should mention the Inter-American Program for Education in Democratic Values and Practices; the OAS Fellowships Program, which includes possibilities for training and study related to culture and the arts; the Program of Action on Indigenous Peoples in the Americas (Department of International Law of the Secretariat for Legal Affairs); and various initiatives in the areas of cultural tourism, intellectual property rights, and support to small creative enterprises (Department of Economics, Trade, and Tourism-SEDI).

5) Culture as a cross-cutting theme in the inter-American system

From the beginnings of the inter-American system, culture has been considered a cross-cutting matter that, beyond the value of artistic expression, is an essential factor in preserving the four pillars of the OAS: *democracy, human rights, security, and development*. This role of culture has been recognized in the two most important instruments of hemispheric cooperation adopted by the member states in the new millennium: the Inter-American Democratic Charter (2001) and the Social Charter of the Americas (2012).

In 2001, the OAS member states reaffirmed their strong commitment to democracy by signing the Inter-American Democratic Charter, which states: “*The peoples of the Americas have a right to democracy and their governments have an obligation to promote and defend it.*” (Article 1). This document called respect for and protection of cultures as essential elements in the proper functioning of this type of political system. More precisely, it says that respect for ethnic, cultural, and religious diversity in the Americas helps to strengthen democracy and citizen participation (Article 9) and that the promotion and observance of economic, social and cultural rights are consubstantial with integral development, economic growth with equity, and the consolidation of democracy in the states of the Hemisphere (Article 13).⁵⁰

In the context of the General Assembly session held in Cochabamba (Bolivia) in 2012, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Americas adopted the Social Charter of the Americas, whose Chapter IV, “Cultural development, diversity, and pluralism,” is entirely devoted to culture. It is based on the principle that “*cultural development is a key for social and economic development of peoples that fosters creativity and innovation as well as inclusion and social cohesion.*” (Chapter IV, Article 1).⁵¹

⁴⁹ “Orchestra Music Rocks! Music for social exchange in the Caribbean.”

Online: http://www.oas.org/en/americas/article.asp?df_sCodigo=5678.

⁵⁰ Inter-American Democratic Charter. Online: http://www.oas.org/charter/docs/resolution1_en_p4.htm

⁵¹ Social Charter of the Americas.

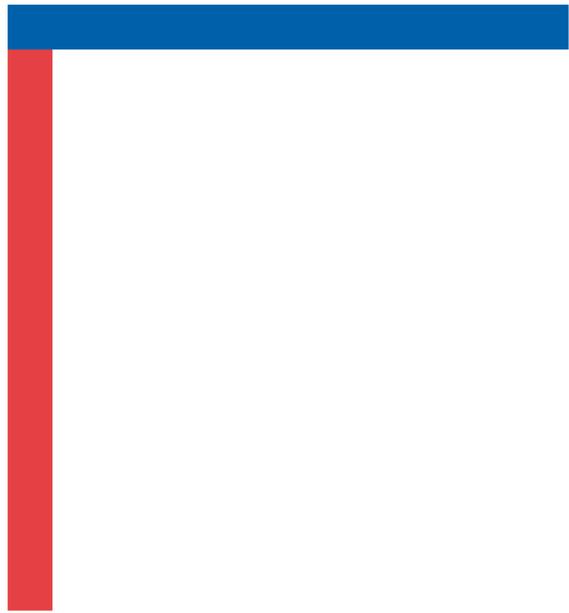
Online: http://scm.oas.org/doc_public/ENGLISH/HIST_12/AG05806E12.doc

Conclusion

Since the First International Conference of American States, in 1889, culture has been, for the inter-American system, a priority area for cooperation among nations of the Hemisphere. Starting with the concept of cultural exchange as an element of peace, such exchange was later recognized as an essential factor in strengthening democracy, security, and development while never losing sight of the intrinsic value of culture as an expression of the human being.

Throughout this transformation process, the institutions of the inter-American system have carried out initiatives with various perspectives. While in the first half of the 20th century the Pan American Union conducted activities of a primarily informational nature, since the establishment of the OAS, cultural cooperation has become deeply institutionalized. It has given rise to multifarious activities in areas such as folklore, handicrafts, visual arts, musical education, and literature. In the 1960s and the early 1970s, as the concept of integral development emerged, technical cooperation focused on institutional capacity-building and government policymaking. Finally, in the 1990s, during the effort to firm up a hemispheric economic integration initiative, people and their cultural manifestations were recognized as the region's primary source of wealth. This demonstrated a strong political commitment to protecting cultural diversity. In the same period, the OAS implemented a horizontal cooperation strategy that sought to make the bodies responsible for culture catalysts for collaboration.

Despite significant achievements within the inter-American system, great challenges remain in terms of the recognition of culture as an essential aspect of integral development, from conflict resolution to fighting poverty. Inter-American cooperation efforts must be intensified so that culture will be recognized as a factor in economic growth and social inclusion. In encouraging the achievement of this ideal, member states can benefit from experience gained by the OAS in over a century of existence.





**OUR CULTURES,
OUR FUTURE**



Organización de los Estados Americanos
Organização dos Estados Americanos
Organisation des États Américains
Organization of American States