

Circular Culture: British Council Fund Invests in Sustainable Festivals and Cultural Collaboration

The British organization opens call for selecting cultural and artistic festivals in Latam to receive funding for actions to reduce their environmental impact

SÃO PAULO, SÃO PAULO, BRAZIL, May 13, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Aiming at supporting the sustainable transformation of the cultural segment, facing the need to mitigate environmental impacts and incorporate eco-efficient solutions in cultural and artistic festivals (music, theatre, film, visual arts and other sectors), the British Council announces the open call for applications for Circular Culture 2024 program. The initiative, destined to managers of cultural events held in Latin America, focuses on an investment fund dedicated to promoting sustainable practices and strengthening cultural connections between the region and the UK.



People watching Afropunk performance in Brazil; festival was among the ones funded by the British Council's program Circular Culture

The initiative, open for applications until 31 May [at this link](#), offers financial grants from a global fund of £ 350,000 (around USD 432,300 at current exchange rates) to festivals in the Americas, covering Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, Jamaica, Mexico, Peru, Trinidad and Tobago and Venezuela.

The programme also upskills festival organisers through an exchange of best practices with UK experts, in order to increase their commitment to sustainable goals. The aim is to develop the capacity of festival leaders to raise their sustainability standards through culturally relevant interactions with the UK.

The announcement of the events selected to receive investment and training is scheduled for 20 June.

Since 2021, Cultura Circular has benefited more than 65 cultural festivals in over 30 different cities in Latin America. All this outreach has generated more than 1 million significant engagements, generating more than 150 million impacts to promote a message about the importance of sustainability applied to culture. In the 2023 edition alone, more than 1,000 projects were submitted in eight countries, of which 35 were selected to be granted an investment from the British Council.



People getting involved during Bahidora 2021 in Mexico; event was among the ones funded by the British Council's program Circular Culture

Environmental footprint

Maria Garcia Holley, Regional Arts Director for the Americas at the British Council, says that culture has a very important role to play in the fight against climate change – and cultural festivals must raise their standards to generate positive environmental and social impacts.

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While promoting remarkable experiences, festivals must also be aware of their impact on the environment. The festival industry must assume its role as an agent of change and be part of the solution”

Maria Garcia Holley, Regional Arts Director for the Americas

According to a study released by Harvard University, the average CO2 emissions caused by public transportation in the context of a large music festival with an attendance of 40,000 participants can be equivalent to 188 metric tons.

Some festival managers are aware of this context, but face difficulties in taking measures to mitigate the environmental impact. A British Council survey shows that 83% of festival managers worldwide see opportunities to act in an environmentally sustainable way, but only 52%

have a dedicated team to develop or coordinate environmental actions.

"While promoting remarkable experiences based on connecting people and celebrating common causes, festivals must also be aware of the impact they have on the environment. These are events that generate significant amounts of waste, including food, packaging and single-use items, and whose value chain also leaves ecological footprints, such as the large amount of CO2 released into the atmosphere due to audiences' displacement", says Maria Garcia, from the British Council. "The festival industry must assume its role as an agent of change and definitely become part of the solution", she stresses.

The programme

For the 2024 edition, the Circular Culture program model will be maintained in four phases. The first is the opening of applications. Next, the selected festivals will receive investment focused on promoting cultural exchange with the support of British experts. In the third phase, the managers of the selected events will receive training on sustainability. In the fourth and final phase, the festivals incorporate the knowledge acquired in the training programmes, putting into practice the activities that result from the connection between the UK and the Americas.



People watching Bitbang Festival in Argentina; this event was among the ones funded by the British Council's program Circular Culture

The aim of the training is to optimise the operation of the festivals to raise their level of sustainability. Within each participating country, the desired outcome is to increase stakeholder engagement around these cultural events, increasing their credibility and recognition in the market and improving their prospects of attracting investment.

This holistic approach aims to ensure the longevity of the festivals, through a replicable model that can be applied beyond these events and encompass various cultural sectors, such as street markets, bazaars, theatre and dance.

Present in Latin America since 2021, when it was launched in Mexico before expanding in the following years to countries such as Argentina, Brazil, Peru and Venezuela, Cultura Circular reinforces the British Council's commitment to recognising the importance of festivals in the dynamics of cities, in the promotion of contemporary artistic creation and in the expansion of best practices in sustainability.

The programme builds on the British organisation's track record of supporting the fight against climate change through the arts and initiatives such as the [Atlas de Política Cultural para el Desarrollo Sostenible](#) ("Atlas of Cultural Policies for Sustainable Development") and the report ["The Missing Pillar"](#) - Culture's Contribution to the UN Sustainable Development Goals".

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