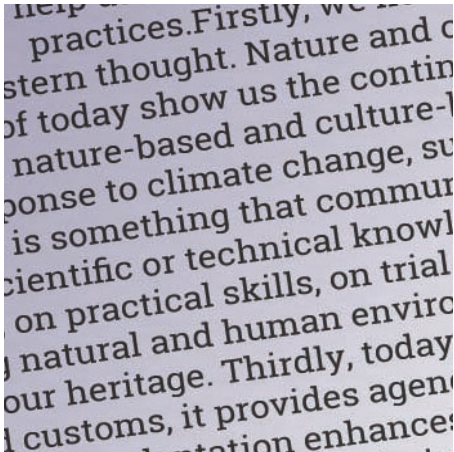


Statement by the Netherlands Commission for Unesco

on culture-based solutions to climate adaptation



From old waterways to knowledge that is passed on from generation to generation, culture and heritage provide us with an abundance of readily available solutions to today's climate problems facing our society. Not only does climate change force us to protect our heritage, our heritage can also protect us.

The Netherlands Commission for Unesco considers climate adaptation first and foremost to be a human process, requiring cultural resources and a change in mindset to succeed. It considers culture, heritage and historical knowledge as powerful assets for local climate adaptation strategies.

With the tagline 'changing minds, not the climate', Unesco puts the focus on a needed shift in mindset in its approach to facing the climate crisis. This forms the point of departure for the vision of the Netherlands Commission for Unesco on climate adaptation. Our vision is based on the conviction that climate adaptation is not just a matter of finding the best technical or management solutions; rather, it is a human and cultural challenge. Culture-based solutions such

as local and traditional forms of knowledge, building on experiences from the past, and the use of culture and heritage are of vital importance in order to create the necessary change in mindset and to make climate action more inclusive and socially acceptable. Our [background paper](#) 'Changing minds, not the climate: culture-based solutions to local climate adaptation' further illustrates our approach and vision.

The Commission has collected a number of practical examples from the Kingdom of the Netherlands, from which lessons can be drawn about the great potential of culture-based solutions to local climate action. These examples have been a vital source of inspiration towards shaping our vision. Conversely, these four examples demonstrate how our vision resonates in practice. They are presented in our [best practices paper](#).

There is a need to move away from a dualist worldview in which nature and culture are treated as separate domains: nature-based and culture-based solutions to climate adaptation go hand in hand. The human struggle with a changing climate and the fight against water or the lack of it is not just something that is happening in the present. The knowledge and experience that has been built up over centuries needs to be made more easily available for climate action: knowledge that is based on experience, on practical skills, trial and error. Knowledge that has been collected thanks to continuous adjustment to an ever-changing environment and climate. Knowledge that is stored in our traditions, our culture and heritage.

When climate adaptation is built on local traditions and customs it provides agency for community groups to be in the driver's seat of change, and as such, it helps to democratize climate action. Moreover, building on the identity of a community is a necessary ingredient for the acceptance of climate policy measures, and therefore their successful implementation. Taking a multidisciplinary approach and bringing culture and heritage into mainstream climate policymaking will enhance public support for such policies.

The Netherlands Commission for Unesco calls for a greater recognition of the power of employing culture, heritage and traditional knowledge in climate action. Today's climate solutions need to be based on yesterday's experiences, where the human factor is key.



Netherlands Commission for Unesco
Postbus 90520
2509 LM Den Haag
+31 (0)70 - 33 15 484
info@unesco.nl