

*The Cultural Relations of Negotiating Development:
Developing Inclusive and Creative Economies at the British Council*

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Executive Summary

British Council has historically presented international development efforts with a cultural relations approach. This approach builds trust and reciprocity with (and among) local partners. The Developing Inclusive and Creative Economies (DICE) program launched in 2018 is a bold entrant in this space. It refines our understanding of development through a deeper look at cultural relations as causal elements to improve human well-being.

DICE further breaks down its theory of change into a results chain starting from inputs and actors to outcomes and impacts in the short and long-run.

The most challenging debate in international development currently is the paternalism inherent in any external intervention. Paternalism is an infantilizing narrative, and directed from the Global North to the South in international development efforts. DICE presents international development through cultural relations as a way of building trust with participants, and overcoming problems of collective action. Like any development effort, DICE will have paternalistic connotations but its cultural relations approach is equally sincere in attempting to reduce power hierarchies.

DICE values creativity for assisting the poor and marginalized in finding a voice to connect with the global economy. It goes without saying that the payoffs for everyone in such ODA practices are enormous.

All development interventions at their core are narratives or stories about people's lives. DICE is a recent entrant to this space. However, its narrative shows that dramaturgically incomplete stories can be told with great effect about confidence, voice, creativity, collaboration, and results.

The breakdown of the three parts of DICE may be described as follows:

- The cultural relations approach adds to the on-going narrative about the role of culture of culture in development. It shifts the focus from a formulaic approach to development to an emphasis on processes. Both formulas and processes lead to outcomes, however cultural processes are far more attuned to the values, beliefs and practices of participants than formulas that operate a high-level of abstraction.
- DICE also showcases the creativity outputs of culture: its endeavors emphasize social entrepreneurship to the marginalized globally.
- As a model for development, DICE refines our understanding of the institutional context of development: it shows how development actors both adapt and negotiate development interventions.
- DICE operates with an ecological understanding of development, in that the relationships among parts are important to the overall desired change. However,

DICE also presents what Albert Hirschman (2014) called the trait-taking and trait-making aspects of development. Trait-taking refers to things that cannot be changed and trait-making to those that can be. Negotiations and trust among partners are key to trait-making.