



Introduction to intellectual property for cultural actors



Kagnalegn women from the Saloum Delta participating in a workshop on copyright. © UNESCO

BACKGROUND

The concept of copyright is enshrined in the Constitution of Senegal, although many cultural actors were unaware of this. This problem was compounded by language barriers and the extensive practice of informal work. Some workers were thus in a subordinate position to their employers, and this situation had culturally become increasingly fraught and entrenched over the years.

A training workshop was held by Senegal's Copyright Office in partnership with UNESCO to teach cultural actors about their rights so that they could improve their position on the market. All of the sector's actors, including authors, performers, authorities, managers, distribution centres and community radio stations, participated. Women were strongly encouraged to participate in the workshop.

PROCESS

Emphasis was laid in the training workshops on a participatory approach based on case studies in order to provide real-life examples. Audiovisual aids, training handbooks and radio programmes were translated into traditional languages by professional translators, which helped to overcome most of the major difficulties linked to the language barrier.

Everything was done to make it easy for women, considered to be bearers of a rich cultural and artistic heritage, to participate. Their accounts contributed a great deal to the discussion and they were given the opportunity to speak publicly about their lives, their concerns and their experiences.

Cultural actors' accounts of their practices before and after the training workshops was analysed in order to measure the impact and their assimilation of the basic concepts of intellectual property.

Outcomes

The talent and commitment of the participants were very beneficial. Participants noted a better understanding of copyright and related-rights issues. Moreover, a contract has been designed to regulate relations between cultural actors and employers. After the workshop, participants called on Senegal's Copyright Office to be strongly involved in the protection of their works.

As a result of the JP, copyright management has improved, workers' contracts are fairer and better paid, the marketing of cultural goods and products has increased, and more national opportunities have been created for cultural actors, owing to greater awareness and sensitivity among the general population.

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