



# Cultural Diplomacy.. When Culture Associates With Politics



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# Ghazal Alyazidi\*

States seek to build bridges of intercommunication and cooperation among their people by exploiting all available means. Some countries have been trying to achieve this for many years and have benefited from the positive results of this intercommunication, while others are still in its beginning phase and looking forward to achieve their goals and ambitions. Cultural diplomacy is considered one of those means. Where culture and arts contribute to the convergence of nations, because of their alleviated messages to contribute in the promotion of peace, coexistence and convergence, regardless of distances or language differences, as well as the strengthening of the values of tolerance, dialogue and cooperation.

Cultural diplomacy is a process of exchanging values, objectives, traditions and ideas in its diversity, with the aim of strengthening the understanding, cooperation and mutual dialogue among nations. In general, all countries need to build bridges of intercommunication and dissemination of the values of cooperation and the strengthening their convergence. This need increases for a country when there are many hostile campaigns against it, which leads to spreading the fallacies around it and distorting its reputation. This requires a quick action, and here comes the importance of cultural dialogue among nations.

Cultural diplomacy isn't a new practice in itself. It has been at work for many years. Examples of its practice include the exploratory and commercial trips among countries, as well as the travel of knowledge seeking students to satisfy their knowledge-based passion, which has had the greatest impact on the transfer of

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\* A writer in International Relations and International Organizations

knowledge and cultural exchange between countries since ancient times. This movement and cultural exchange can be classified as one of the means of disseminating cultural diplomacy in its oldest form, before this concept developed into what it is today.

It is important to note that the practice of cultural diplomacy is divided into two part: countries working hard to preserve their cultural and civilizational heritage from disappearance or change of identity and countries working to export their culture, some of their ideas and objectives and their political, economic and social values abroad. It is not unlikely to find some countries that have succeeded in combining the two objectives, and this depends on the foreign policy intended to be achieved for these countries. In addition to other supporting factors that it possesses, and the prevailing political situation.



\* A writer in International Relations and International Organizations

It is important to note that cultural diplomacy depends on three important points. First, the cultural aspect, which is the transfer of the heritage and the culture of a country outside its borders, and what it carries with, of pride and people's appreciation of their civilization and culture before the world, which contributes to the transfer of a positive image of the countries outside its surroundings and support their status and reputation internationally. Secondly, the economic aspect, which is one of the forms of mutual cooperation between countries, and this support casts its shadow on their relations with each other. Thirdly, the political dimension, which deals with political relations between countries and means of strengthening relations or resolving conflicts, if any.

On the other hand, the corridors of Saudi politics has been a witness of many Saudi diplomats who are known for their rich cultural knowledge and their practice of one of the types of arts. It helps to educate intellectuals and writers in leadership positions to enrich the culture of peace and dialogue. In addition to their revival and transfer of the heritage and culture of their country abroad and encourage cultural exchange. For example, Dr. Ghazi al-Gosaibi, may God have mercy on him, succeeded in holding many political positions with distinction, and at the same time was one of the most prominent poets and novelists on the Saudi cultural scene.

The list contains ambassadors and diplomats whose names are associated with culture and art, such as the poet, storyteller and playwright Hassan Abdullah Al-Qurashi, the poet and author Abdul Aziz Khoja, the poet and author, Mohammed Al-Fahad Al-Issa, the poet and the historian Khair Al-Din Al-Zarkali,

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\* A writer in International Relations and International Organizations

the poet Mohammed Hassan Faki, the poet Fuad Abdul Hamid Al-Khatib and others.

It should be noted that cultural differences does not lead to conflict and confrontation, and to achieve a peaceful approach of coexistence, as it only happens through dialogue. And this will not happen unless the role of cultural diplomacy is activated and enhanced, and through a strategy and methodology that sets out the objectives of cultural institutions and organization and people, that is in line with the implementation of the political objectives of the country, Where culture and arts have a significant role to break the barriers between nations and openness to other cultures.



Therefore, it is necessary for countries to set up centers that aims at practicing public diplomacy, and achieving their missions, which includes activating the role of cultural diplomacy and contributing to the activation of foreign policy through cooperation with organizations and bodies of friendly countries, to end up with a joint cooperation in related issues.

As a result, the Kingdom has made significant efforts to support international cultural bodies and organizations and to participate in the World Arabic Language Day (WALD), also known as the UN Arabic Language Day. Also, supporting and the funding of foreign universities that teach the Arabic language, and the establishing of a number of chairs in them to support Arabic language and Islamic studies. In addition to the allocation of a number of Saudi International Awards to support translations.

When talking about international efforts to support Saudi cultural diplomacy, it is crucial to mention the important role played by the cultural attachés. It participates in international book fairs and cultural seminars as part of its role in spreading and introducing the Saudi culture internationally. Some also hold a monthly cultural salon to achieve cultural and knowledge communication that aims at increasing convergence and dialogue between cultures and followers of other religions. In addition to the implementation and holding of cultural weeks that accompany official visits at the level of leaders. These practices illustrate the importance of culture as a crucial part of political and diplomatic work among nations, contribute the expansion of bridges of communication and cooperation between governments, and promote convergence and dialogue among people.

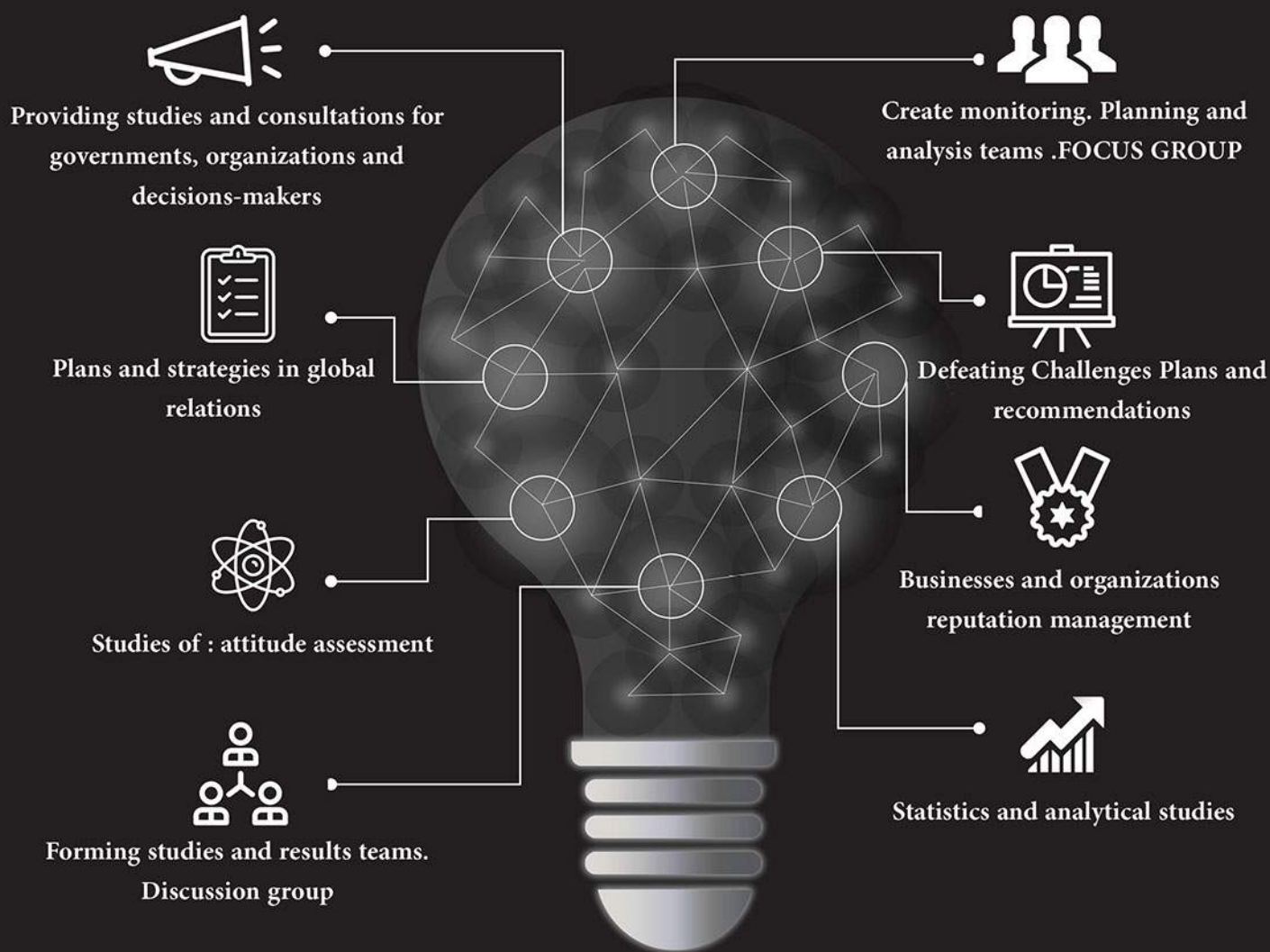
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In conclusion, culture and arts are an important means of communication between nations, so that they provide an atmosphere appropriate to clarify the real picture about us and allow us to understand the other side after becoming familiar with their culture, which creates a relationship of friendship and dialogue despite the differences and the distances. Therefore, supporting cultural diplomacy efforts to achieve its objectives has become a matter no less important than countries' other objectives. It requires support and full backing of government and civil institutions, as well as international cooperation with international bodies and organizations.



# What We Do



✉ [info@smtcenter.net](mailto:info@smtcenter.net)

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