

CULTURE AND URBAN/ TERRITORIAL DEVELOPMENT

MORE SUSTAINABLE
CITIES FOR A MORE
SUSTAINABLE EUROPE



”There is no context, content
or process without culture.”
O’Connor (2013)

culture
ACTION
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The political platform
for Arts and Culture



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INTRODUCTION



On May 2013, the first International Congress, specifically focusing on the linkages between culture and sustainable development, organized by UNESCO since the Stockholm Conference in 1998 took place in Hangzhou (China). As a result of this event, delegates adopted a declaration entitled “Placing Culture at the Heart of Sustainable Development Policies” urging governments, civil society and the private sector to harness the power of culture in addressing the world's most pressing

developmental challenges such as environmental sustainability, poverty and social inclusion.

Those challenges are faced by local authorities and in particular cities. In cities and their neighbourhoods, people of Europe live and think, dream and despair, create and consume, partner and fight. What local authorities with their constituencies decide shapes the future of Europe. A sustainable Europe largely depends on daily decisions by local authorities.

What role culture can play in the urban and territorial development? How including culture as part of the local development strategy can be key to ensure sustainability at local level, but also at national and European levels?

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, REVITALISATION AND FIGHT AGAINST POVERTY

Culture's role in the attractiveness of a territory is no longer to be proven, so are the positive impacts of culture on jobs creation and its contribution to an economic development that reduces inequalities. But culture also has a role to play in terms of revitalisation of spaces and fight against poverty.

Most cities with an urban regeneration strategy have inaugurated new cultural facilities in order to serve their inhabitants, but also to upgrade their image and be recognized as areas with a good reputation ([read about the examples of Glasgow in Scotland and Bilbao in Spain here](#) and the city of Nantes in France [here](#). You can also have a look at the PACT's initiatives on urban development [here](#)). Cultural facilities attract quality, interest, added value, visitors and residents. But the place of culture in urban regeneration is not restricted to tangible elements: urban regeneration often starts recovering the memories of places, giving value to the heritage, understanding the history of the city. In the process of urban regeneration, culture provides specific assets and capabilities such as imagination, creativity, risk, empathy, trust or rituality that all processes of urban regeneration need.

An active cultural life also has a crucial role to play in the development of new transferable skills such as creativity, digital literacy, adaptation to change and new ways of working, especially relevant in times of crisis and the shift to knowledge-based economy. In this way, culture positively contributes to an increased flexible employability and to the reduction of unemployment among migrants and young people, thereby

enhancing social cohesion. (Have a look at projects based on culture to foster social inclusion and reduction of unemployment from the European Regional policy [here](#)).

CULTURAL DIVERSITY AND SOCIAL COHESION

Access and participation in artistic and cultural activities for socially excluded groups such as migrants, minorities, youth and elderly can help enhance their social capital, self-esteem, develop new transferable skills and competences and thereby improve the regional social cohesion. Through the synergies between culture and education in formal, informal and non-formal learning contexts, culture can be a tool for communication between people, for developing new behaviours and skills as well as enhancing intercultural dialogue. This can considerably increase social inclusion and contribute to cohesion within a region or across borders and regions.

Coexistence and cohesion are built in cities and local spaces. Laws are fundamental but

Culture has a value in enhancing the quality of life of each citizen, generating social capital, promoting spaces of conviviality, fostering intercultural processes, and creating (or re-creating) a peaceful civic pride.

J. Pascual (2006)

are not the only way of regulating coexistence. A rich cultural life both appreciates and treasures diverse traditions. Cities and neighbourhoods are a privileged setting for invention, in constant evolution.

They provide an environment for encounters with the different and the distinct: origin, vision, age, gender, ethnicity and class. Dialogue between identity and diversity is a vital tool for human development.

IDENTITY AND CITIZENSHIP: IMPACT ON LOCAL DEMOCRACY

Cities and local spaces are also the setting where the deep meaning of sustainable development is better understood. They provide the essential framework to interact with globalization without being overwhelmed: global models cannot be made closer to local realities unless there is a “door”, a local governance in which people and places are not threatened by globalization but, instead, invited and empowered to generate new meaning as well as new global citizenship without losing their identity.

There is a link between an increased role for culture in local development and active participatory democracy. In local debates and grassroots initiatives, culture appears more often as a key component.

ECOLOGY AND INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS AND STRATEGIES FOR MORE SUSTAINABLE TERRITORIES

Eventually, culture embraces the environmental dimension because cultural and natural diversity are inextricably linked and have evolved together, notably due to intrinsic link between cultural diversity and biodiversity. Moreover more responsible consumption, environmentally correct behaviors, sustainable management practices are results of the encounter between modernity and local and traditional knowledge. Culture explains identity with land and place, and raises awareness of ecological responsibility. (See the

example of the French cultural organization Dédale's project about urban territory and biodiversity [here](#)).

Culture provides indeed a capacity to think globally and to adopt long-term innovative visions, having therefore a key role to play in helping societies to adopt the sustainable development paradigm. In addition, the values that are key to cultural processes, such as diversity, creativity or critical thinking, are crucial to ensure the ecological shift both in policy-making and in the citizens' behaviours and mind set.

POLICY CONCLUSIONS/ RECOMMENDATIONS

- **For local authorities:** enhance cultural development strategies embracing the different aspect of the role of culture in local development.

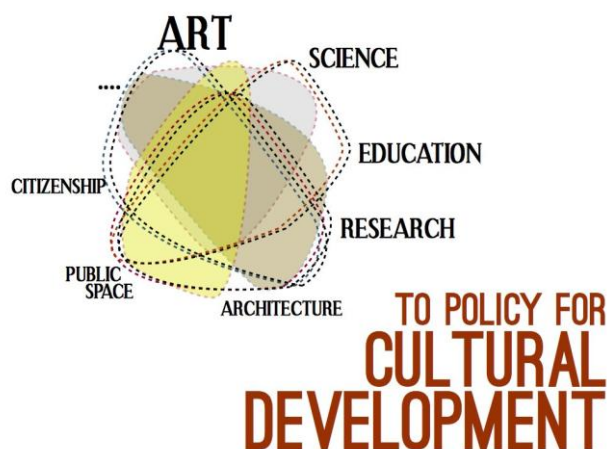
In the end cities and local spaces evolve in a functional relation to their cultural capacity, the construction of a living community. Culture affects economic attractiveness, social cohesion, the quality of public and private space, and the perception of security. The quality of local life depends on the weaving of cultural policy into other public policies – social, educational, environmental and urban re-invention.

That's why local authorities must elaborate **long-term development strategies that include a cultural dimension.**

This requests that the cultural dimension is **systematically integrated in the conception, measurement and actual practice of development policies and programs** such as education, communication, environment, economy, justice, commerce, rule of law, etc.

In this framework, local and national authorities must, among others, ensure equal **access to, and participation in, culture** to all, by elaborating specific policies and legal frameworks, especially for indigenous peoples, minorities, women and youth. They must leverage **culture for poverty reduction and inclusive economic development**, as well as ensure more synergies between **culture and education**.

FROM CULTURAL POLICY....

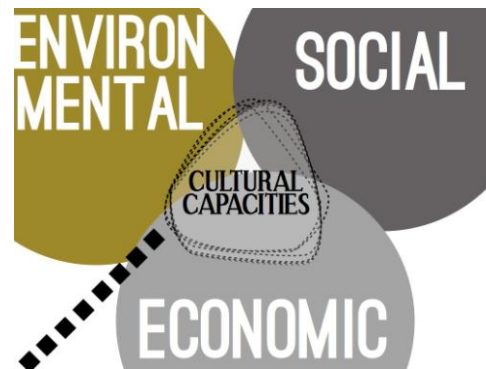


The more the strategy encompasses the multiple aspects related to the cultural impact of rather different policies, the more the sector and civil society have been considered as a relevant, proactive part of the strategy. In bottom-up processes, **culture often appears as a key component for sustainable development and a strategy for sustainable local development without cultural considerations appearing less coherent, less ambitious and less realistic.**

- **At all political levels:** taking into account that Culture is a key element of sustainable development.

Key values for development are creativity, heritage, knowledge and diversity. A holistic and integrated approach to development will only be achieved when these values are operationally included in development efforts.

Culture plays both an instrumental and constitutive role in development; it is both a means and an end. It contains an instrumental and transversal value, supporting and strengthening interventions in development areas but is also a development priority in its own right, the constitutive basis of our life and, thus, a desirable end in itself.



Indeed, **culture plays a role of catalyst** for the three pillars of sustainable development: culture drives, processes and translates the drawbacks and **benefits of ecological, economic and social development**. And at the same time, culture should also be seen as a new paradigm: a culture transition or “eco-cultural civilization” is needed to achieve more sustainability.

Therefore, **the cultural dimension should be systematically integrated, both as a driver and as an enabler, in definitions of sustainable development and well-being**, as well as in the conception, measurement and actual practice of development policies and programs such as education, communication, environment, economy, justice, commerce, rule of law, etc. This will require effective institutional coordination mechanisms at global and national levels, the development of comprehensive statistical frameworks with appropriate targets and indicators, the implementation of evidence-based analyses and capacity building at all levels.

The reality in Europe is not appropriately described as a crisis. Rather it must be seen as a transition, from one world order into another one. In Europe this could steer to a **new social agreement** that is either based on growing inequalities or on sustainability and the fulfillment of human rights for the current and future generations. The shape it will take **depends on the choices we make now**. Europe has all necessary assets, tangible and intangible, to build a cultural and sustainable future on its new demographic structure and its reduced global influence. Europe can count on the needed assets, tangible and intangible ones (democracy, rights, rule of law, freedom of expression, welfare/solidarity, education, environmental sensitivity, public spaces, etc.), and on a growing decentralized governance.

Building a new sustainable Europe is a cultural mission. Urban development is the frontline and local governments and major cities should ally with one another in this endeavor: their voices must count in the decision-making of a fully democratic Europe as much as citizens’ voice demanding for cultural strategies must be heard when shaping and managing our cities and lands.

FURTHER READING

- [The Hangzhou Declaration](#), UNESCO, 2013
- [Culture as a Goal in the Post-2015 Development Agenda](#), IFACCA, Culture Action Europe, Agenda 21 for culture and IFCCD, 2013.
- [Agenda 21 for Culture](#), United Cities and Local Governments - Committee on culture, 2004
- [Culture: Fourth Pillar of Sustainable Development](#), UCLG policy statement, 2010
- [Local policies for cultural diversity](#), Agenda 21 for culture report, 2006
- [Culture and sustainable development: examples of institutional innovation and proposal of a new cultural policy profile](#), Agenda 21 for Culture report, 2009
- [Culture & Urban Regeneration – conclusions and recommendations](#), URBACT document, 2006
- [Culture & Urban Regeneration – conclusions on the physical dimension](#), URBACT document, 2006

CAE INTERNAL CONTACTS AND RESOURCES

In CAE network, several members and close partners can provide an expertise in many of subjects touched upon, working on grass roots projects, delivering research and studies, producing policy recommendations, etc.....

We call on all members not mentioned below but which perceive themselves as potential contributors to make them known and join their forces in order to help us passing on the message that culture is a key element to sustainable urban and territorial development, a mission that also requires to build alliances beyond the cultural sector.

Banlieues d'Europe (FR)

Since 1992, Banlieues d'Europe brings together association officials, towns, experts and researchers, cultural workers and artists, who are familiar with questions of neighbourhood artistic performances aimed at people who are usually excluded.

<http://www.banlieues-europe.com/>

Clubture Network (HR)

Clubture is a non-profit participatory network that gathers independent cultural organizations from Croatia. Among its very diversified activities, Clubture Network have been active in fields such as urban culture, youth culture, interdisciplinary art and cultural projects, activist and socially engaged programs, etc.

<http://www.clubture.org/>

Dédale (FR)

Dedale is a European research and production agency dedicated to culture, technologies and innovation. Its field of activity covers artistic production, local development, events management, research, consulting for public authorities and European institutions. It develops an expertise especially in the field of Cultural policies, ICT and cultural heritage, European digital libraries, Innovative and creative learning, Tourism 2.0, New uses, Mobile technologies and Smart cities...

<http://www.dedale.info/en/>

Trans Europe Halles (SE)

Trans Europe Halles is a European network of independent cultural centres that brings together about 50 multidisciplinary cultural centres and 20 friends organisations all around Europe. As a network, TEH notably worked on issues like sustainability, revitalization of urban territories through culture or rethinking of the use of public spaces

<http://www.teh.net/>

Eurocities

EUROCITIES is the network of major European cities bringing together the local governments of over 130 of Europe's largest cities and 40 partner cities, that between them govern 130 million citizens across 35 countries. Through six thematic forums, a wide range of working groups, projects, activities and events, Eurocities offer its members a platform for sharing knowledge and exchanging ideas.

<http://www.eurocities.eu/>

United Cities and Local Governments - Agenda 21 for Culture

United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) adopted the Agenda 21 for culture as a reference document for its programmes on culture and assumed the role of coordinator of the process subsequent to its approval. UCLG's Working Group on Culture, constituted in Beijing on 9 June 2005, is the meeting point for cities, local governments and networks that place culture at the heart of their development processes. UCLG and its Committee on culture are locally, nationally and internationally well-known for its leadership in processes that relate culture and sustainable development. Sound and collaborative **research is the engine of these activities.**

<http://www.agenda21culture.net/>

European Expert Network on Culture – EENC

The European Expert Network on Culture (EENC) is a group of experts which was set up in 2010 to provide advice to the Directorate-General for Education and Culture of the European Commission in fields related to cultural policy. Through the provision of responses to specific questions, the production of studies and reports on a wide range of areas connected to the cultural sector and its policy implications at national, regional and European levels, the EENC aims to contribute to the improvement of cultural policy development in Europe.

<http://www.eenc.info/>

COST European cooperation in Science and technology - Individuals, Societies, Cultures and Health (ISCH) Action

COST is an intergovernmental framework for European Cooperation in Science and Technology, allowing the coordination of nationally-funded research on a European level. Through its "Action" on the thematic 'Individuals, Societies, Cultures and Health', the network has developed a research interest in the issue of culture and sustainable development.

http://www.cost.eu/domains_actions/isch

PACT

PACT stands for transnational policies and new schemes to allow experimentation in spatial design and land-use creative processes, city changes, based on the most advanced experiences collected throughout Europe, in cross-cutting fields such as Heritage, architecture, urban design, transition, new economies, arts, or agro-ecology. PACT's purpose is to gather figures of various fields and profiles, such as: political stakeholders, academics, artists, professionals, civil servants, citizens, critics, or authors; sharing the same concern about:

The urgency of innovative visions for dealing with contemporary urban challenges;
The urgency to give space to alternative models and experimentations in living environment;

The urgency of positioning Culture as a driver for spatial design and city changes.

<http://www.pact.eu.com>

World Cities Culture Forum

The World Cities Culture Forum is a major global initiative on culture and the future of cities. The forum is an initiative of the Mayor of London. It was founded in 2012 by London, New York, Shanghai, Paris, Tokyo, Sydney, Johannesburg, and Istanbul. By bringing together their cultural expertise and knowledge, the participating cities have created an effective research and policy forum to address the role that culture plays in their cities, and to strengthen their policy responses to the similar challenges they face.

In 2013, the Forum issued a report, which is at the core of the Forum research programme as a compendium of data and effective practice. Download the report [here](#).

<http://www.worldcitiescultureforum.com/>

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