

POLIS AND THE PEOPLE

Looking into the future of urban cultural policies



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The importance of cultural policies at a local level is increasingly recognised as key in shaping sustainable change in our societies. However, there is still a long road ahead for a coherent and comprehensive European strategy to emerge in this domain.

In “Polis and the people: Looking into the future of urban cultural policies”, Culture Action Europe (CAE) explores the current status of cultural policy at local level and the challenges that lie ahead. Supporting this reflection, CAE has brought together a diverse coalition of players working in the field of culture and the arts at local level; including artists, scholars and urbanists, networks acting at a European and global level, cities, cultural centres and foundations. The texts included in this publication take stock of local cultural policy development, reflect on what we have learnt and where we are, before describing possible avenues forward when considering culture from a local perspective. Cultural, civic and political advancement will only come to be if a diverse coalition of citizens, organisations and institutions work together at different levels. Through mirroring this process, CAE aspires to drive necessary change. As such, we summarise below the main points of convergence across contributions, distilling key concepts and proposals with cross-cutting support that could accompany the development of better cultural policies in the future.

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INTRODUCTION

Rosa Pérez Monclús, Culture Action Europe

It is in cities that citizenship finds its origins. The defining characteristic of cities is diversity. No city is equal and no size fits all. Large cities are increasingly composed by an archipelago of different cultural identities, and often present greater economic, cultural and social resilience than some middle and small size cities. Hence, different strategic approaches are needed. Particularly when we take in consideration the fact that it is at a local level that citizens experience the convergence of the main challenges of our time: e.g. globalisation, rapid urbanisation or depopulation, demographic changes and migration. In face of these global changes some cities are reflecting on how to develop civic pride, how local identities should evolve or be preserved and what is the best way to welcome and integrate newcomers. These processes make great demands on the cultural competencies of citizens, as they need to negotiate a multiplicity of identities, including a European identity.

Cities and citizens are not passive actors. Their rich social fabric turns them into diverse and vibrant spaces, creative and destructive, and hence, holding both responsibility and the potential to offer solutions to global challenges. Across all contributors the following themes emerge as an avenue forward to overcome these challenges:

NETWORKS ENABLE LEARNING, DISTRIBUTE ACTION AND PROMOTE A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

Cities' differences endow them with varying capacities when facing local and global challenges. Some small cities and regions face a decreasing demographic trend, while larger cities are under the pressure of increasing urbanisation. The diversity of local scenarios and their inherent dynamism allows them to test and produce adapted solutions. When articulated in networks, knowledge exchange can flow and proposals can be readjusted to local realities elsewhere.

Networks reflect the complexity of global processes and have enabled cities to move from a local to a global agenda. Organised in networks, cities have asked for culture to be included as the 4th pillar of sustainability, complementing the economic, social and

environmental dimensions within the Sustainable Development Goals. Although a dedicated pillar has not yet been achieved, the UN Habitat III offers greater scope to culture. As such, there is progress - but it is deemed insufficient. The suggested way forward is to redouble efforts in promoting culture as a fundamental human right, as well as a (self)critical and collective effort to better demonstrate the value of culture. Nevertheless, the contribution of culture to sustainability is now better understood. Its local impact is demonstrated by UNESCO's Global Report on Culture for Sustainable Urban Development, summarising more than 100 cases collected globally and exemplifying the key contribution of culture in promoting innovation, reconciliation in post-conflict areas, intercultural dialogue, as well as social, economic and environmental development.

CULTURE WITHIN NEW GOVERNANCE AND STRATEGIES

Cultural ecosystems have shown an impressive resilience during times of economic hardship. Local authorities have understood the potential of culture by including culture and the creative industries in local development strategies. Innovation, branding, tourism and social inclusion are often the key principles guiding strategic decisions. Yet, these strategies often lack an integrated and sustainable long-term approach. Culture can certainly attract tourists but also displace residents as a result. This transversal approach guides Timisoara in their European Capital of Culture strategy, summarised in their contribution. Notably, Timisoara's strategy exemplifies another growing trend, the will to build on the local in order to connect with the regional and international level, where cities are increasingly becoming relevant players.

In a context where the legitimacy of the political architecture is under stress, cities are thinking about new approaches to governance. This new vision includes co-created cities where urban planning and the cultural offer and infrastructure cannot be limited to top-down approaches. Local authorities are only at the beginning of building new capacities and structures that integrate culture in a transversal way. New partnerships are needed to move towards a more ethical, holistic approach that places culture within education, health, wellbeing and social inclusion. For this, a strong political will is needed. Leadership must be open to build cooperative strategies between local and regional bodies, citizens, local actors from the public and private spheres and support capacity building measures involving stakeholders and experts.

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION AS A PROCESS AND AS A GOAL

A profound change in how administrations operate might be seen as a challenge. Yet, a wealth of experiences already exist and only need to be scaled up and replicated. The examples included in this publication offer a small sample of possible future paths. Fun Palaces shows how multidisciplinary cultural events created by and for local communities enable everyone to engage with culture. A range of good practices based on the principle of co-creation and the commons have been collected and analysed by the European Cultural Foundation. The experience of BOZAR shows that a cultural centre can become a hub where excellence, critical reflection and participation coexist. Cultural centres and open cultural spaces are an organic part of urban ecosystems. To stay relevant for citizens, they will increasingly need to transform into welcoming spaces where audiences can listen, but also meet, exchange and participate. As such, local cultural policies should aim to move from strategies built around imposing infrastructure to developing socio-structures that are inclusive and welcoming to all the inhabitants of the city.

Cities are greater than the sum of their parts. New generations are more educated and digitally savvy. Hyper-diversity is increasingly seen as the norm, rather than the exception. As such, local cultural strategies will need to take a proactive approach to broaden and include a diversity of audiences from all social and cultural fields. It's not enough to predicate inclusion; it also urgently needs to be practiced.

CULTURE: URBAN FUTURE

UNESCO

Culture: Urban Future is the first UNESCO Global Report to explore the role of culture for sustainable urban development. It is intended as a policy framework document to support national and local decision-makers in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development - in particular Sustainable Development Goal 11, which includes one target on culture - as well as the New Urban Agenda. These groundbreaking frameworks come at a time when humanity is faced with a number of daunting challenges that increasingly affect cities, such as the financial and refugee crises, climate change, poverty and inequality.

Culture: Urban Future examines the contribution of culture to urban sustainability from two analytical angles: 1) a global survey conducted with nine regional partners across the world and 2) key thematic insights, presenting a global picture of urban heritage safeguarding, conservation and management, as well as the cultural and creative industries as resources for sustainable urban development.

“People-centred cities are culture-centred spaces, quality urban environments are shaped by culture, and sustainable cities need integrated policy-making that builds on culture”

The results of the regional studies are presented in the first part of the Report, outlining practical cases that illustrate challenges and good practices in the area of urban conservation and regeneration in all regions of the world. The second part of the Report features twelve thematic perspective, inspired by the 2015 Hangzhou Outcomes, which focus on the role of culture in promoting a people-centred approach to sustainable urban development, ensuring a quality urban environment for all and fostering integrated policymaking.

Over one hundred case studies support these reflections, illustrating more concretely the contribution of culture, as a unique resource for urban regeneration and innovation, as well as social, economic and environmental development. The case of Shanghai, a UNESCO Creative City of Design since 2010, is put forward in the Report as an example

of the positive impact of investing in the creative industries. On the other hand, cities in conflict and post-conflict areas such as Samarra, Iraq, demonstrate how the reconstruction and rehabilitation of historic and cultural buildings in war-torn cities can be essential for recovering social cohesion and enhancing intercultural dialogue.

UNESCO's city networks have also contributed to establishing and reinforcing cooperation between cities for sustainable development. Through an interdisciplinary approach that builds on the mandate of UNESCO in the fields of education, the sciences, culture and communication, the Organization has scaled up its commitment to responding effectively to new development challenges and accelerating its efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

UNESCO's city networks, including the UNESCO Creative Cities Network, the International Coalition of Inclusive and Sustainable Cities, Man and the Biosphere and Sustainable Cities, and the UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities are thus presented in the third part of the Report, consisting of a set of Dossiers on UNESCO's partnerships and a comprehensive Atlas.

Building on the findings of this global research and thematic reflection, the report concludes with a set of strategic recommendations, rooted in culture, which highlight three essential prerequisites to ensure that the cities of tomorrow are safe, inclusive, resilient and sustainable: people-centred cities are culture-centred spaces, quality urban environments are shaped by culture, and sustainable cities need integrated policy-making that builds on culture.



URBAN POSTCARDS FROM HABITAT III

Jordi Pascual, Agenda21 for Culture

On 20 October 2016, the UN Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III) adopted the New Urban Agenda, a document which is expected to provide guidance on the development of urban policies around the world for the next 20 years.



- In the “declaration” or foreword, it contains several interesting mentions of cultural development (par 4), cultural diversity (par 10), and cultural expressions (par 13).
- There are several positive phrases in the implementation plan. Firstly, some sentences related to cultural services, for inclusion and mutual understanding (par 26, 34, and 37). Secondly, there is recognition of the contribution by heritage and cultural industries to economic development (par 45 and 60). Thirdly, some interesting sentences are devoted to the role of natural and cultural heritage as key elements in integrated urban policies (par 38). Fourthly, in what is surely the most concrete mention, it calls for the due consideration of heritage and culture in urban planning and design (par 97, 124, and 125). Finally, it engages indigenous peoples and local communities in the promotion and dissemination of knowledge of tangible and intangible cultural heritage and protection of traditional expressions and languages, including through the use of new technologies and techniques (par 125).



THE NEW URBAN AGENDA REMAINS A WEAK DOCUMENT BECAUSE:

- There is no chapter dedicated to cultural issues.
- Culture is not recognised as the fourth pillar of sustainable development.
- There is no mention of creativity, the arts, rituality, critical knowledge, nor the relationship between culture, access and the internet. Today, all of these issues are fundamental parts of urban life.
- Some transversal elements of urban policies, such as the relationship between culture and education, or between culture and tourism, are also missing.

As coordinator of the Agenda 21 for culture in United Cities – UCLG, I have had the chance to intervene in the international advocacy on the place of culture in sustainable development. In 2010-12 we tried to influence the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) which took place in Rio de Janeiro, with very limited impact; this was summarised in the report Rio+20 and culture. Advocating for Culture as a Pillar of Sustainability.

In the period 2013-2015, we advocated for cultural issues to be included in the United Nations' 2030 Agenda and in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). We took part in a global coalition, called "The Future We Want Includes Culture", also known as the #culture2015goal, formed by cultural networks of nations, cities, and various parts of civil society. We published four documents that included: (a) how there could be a "Goal" dedicated to culture in the SDGs; (b) what the "Targets" linked to culture in the SDGs could be; (c) which "Indicators" would be the most appropriate, (d) a conclusive document. These four documents can be downloaded from this page on our website. The title of the final document of this campaign was " Culture in the SDG Outcome

Document: Progress made but important steps remain ahead". It shows that we are not too satisfied with the results achieved.

In 2014-2016 we focused on the New Urban Agenda to be explicit and effective in the issues dealing with the role of culture in sustainable cities. We were present at the three Habitat III preparatory committees, drafted [this position paper](#) (with several of the #culture2015goal coalition's networks) and were active in the "[Policy Unit](#)" dedicated to the "Urban Socio-Cultural Framework".

"There is progress, but the progress is too slow"

Is the Rio+20 document approved in 2012 better than the 1992 "Earth Summit" document? Yes, it is. Are the SDGs approved in 2015 more aware of some cultural issues than the MDGs, approved in 2000? Certainly they are. Is the New Urban Agenda approved in Quito more useful than the previous Habitat Agenda approved in Istanbul in 1996? Absolutely. There is progress, but the progress is too slow.

We (as a global cultural constituency) could have progressed more if:

We had convinced more voices to loudly say that the current triangular (economic, social and ecological) paradigm of sustainable development does not describe the reality we face and if we have been more to advocate for culture to be a stand-alone dimension of sustainable development. More information in this [report](#).

We were not afraid to "repoliticise" the role of culture in sustainable development and could insist that culture is a fundamental human right, resisted to the overwhelming instrumentalisation of culture for economic aims, if we openly discussed that culture is not a "good in and of itself" but an area of conflict, tension and struggle.

We were more critical to ourselves confronting severe limitations of cultural sectors which too often show a tendency towards elitism, facing internal quarrels that prevent them from speaking with one voice, fail to document their impact, have no specific policies on culture, access and internet and do not place the active participation of citizens at the centre of programmes and projects.

We will continue to work in the next years with the motto “Culture in Sustainable Cities”, using a very practical document “Culture 21 Actions” that details 9 commitments and 100 very concrete, viable, and transformative actions. This is a toolkit that is coherent with the SDGs and the New Urban Agenda, but it goes beyond these documents, providing coherence, clarity, capacity and agency to the role of culture in sustainable cities. Agenda21 for Culture will support solid local platforms for culture that include civil society, cultural institutions, local governments, and other actors. We will continue the advocacy for a strong global connectivity in the area of culture, that it brings civil society and cities together with UNESCO, other United Nations agencies, and national governments.

REPORTING FROM THE GLOBAL FRONT

Nicholas Anastasopoulos

WHERE WE ARE

We have already passed the tipping point in which more than half of the earth’s population lives in urban conditions. As urbanisation is a trend which will only intensify, and as climate change is becoming a threat to life itself, we have entered what is now known as the Anthropocene, a geological epoch identified by a term which recognises the unprecedented impact humans have on the surface of the earth and on its atmosphere. Alternatively this has euphemistically been called the “City of 7 Billion”¹. This means that we need to intensify our efforts and focus much of our research and resources towards a better understanding of the complex and often controversial nature of cities in order to seek answers to the most pressing questions of the urban condition. And while the urban condition may differ wildly from one city to the other, there are characteristics that allow us to look at the urban phenomenon as a whole. Represented in sheer numbers of population, activities, networks, functions, resource and waste management, goods and energy consumption, urban complexity becomes the

¹The name “City of 7 Billion” is coined from an exhibition that took place at Yale University in September 2015. See <http://architecture.yale.edu/school/events/city-7-billion>

horizontal common denominator for cities in the 21st century. More and more cities acquire a role, which bestows them with powers sometimes superseding those of national governments. And while cities seem to be the generators of many of the problems we face today, they also seem to hold answers to these challenges.

“As urbanisation is a trend which will only intensify, and as climate change is becoming a threat to life itself, we have entered what is now known as the Anthropocene”

WHAT WE’VE LEARNED - HABITAT III

This year Habitat III focused on the urban conditions of a rapidly urbanising planet². HIII has produced the New Urban Agenda, a roadmap towards devising strategies for the next twenty years. It is an attempt to address the complexity of problems related to humankind’s future and our role on the planet. The terms sustainability (and its derivatives), participation and equality are some of the key concepts being recognised as main goals for the cities in the 21st century. These main quests of sustainability, participation and equality require us to address systems of organisation, governance, self-sufficiency, and resilience. We therefore need to acknowledge the political dimension in the challenges that the world faces, which often go unnoticed or don’t sufficiently enter the sustainability debate. We know very well that decision-making and the future of the world today is defined by politics, as well as by the interests of multinationals.

It is now that these major critical questions need to be addressed, in parallel and not in isolation of the one from the other.

SOME IDEAS AND GUIDELINES FOR WHAT LIES AHEAD

Customarily in the context of representative democracies, decision-making at all levels gets degenerated as a process left in the hands of elected presidents, cabinet and party members and perhaps the instrument of an assembly. But alternative voices everywhere question the legitimacy and efficacy of this system. Especially after the controversial

² In 1976, 1996 and today –the years that HI, HII and HIII took place the urban population has risen from 37.9%, to 45.1% and 54.5% respectively.

recent elections in the US, and problematic developments in several countries in Europe, representative democracy feels outdated and failed. It is becoming increasingly clear that discussions about the future of our cities, the future of humanity and the planet are a political discussion and ultimately a discussion about governance.

Viewing the world and many apparent dead ends through the lenses of the Commons, (a term being used in order to describe a variety of elements which are collectively owned and managed, such as the natural commons, territorial commons, urban commons, knowledge commons, digital commons, cultural commons, patrimonial commons, global commons, etc.) makes more sense than ever. Some movements such as the movement for the commons and cooperative economy initiatives, as recently present at a high political level with the 1st European Commons Assembly³, are cause for optimism.

Commons may be viewed as a tool which many people think of as the means to bypass the public-private dilemma.



The UN Pavilion, Habitat 3, Quito, Ecuador. Photo by Nicholas Anastasopoulos

³ This historic Assembly took place on November 16 at the European Parliament. See <http://commonseurope.eu/>



NEW CULTURAL CHALLENGES FOR EUROPEAN CITIES

Julie Hervé, EUROCITIES

Many European cities already recognise the importance of culture and the creative industries for local development. Culture is integrated into their strategies in a range of areas, such as innovation, branding, tourism and social inclusion. But developing and implementing cultural strategies that make a real impact to economic development and social cohesion remains a challenge for cities. Several factors need to be in place to deliver the desired results, including: strong political will and leadership, a cooperation strategy between local and regional bodies, cooperation between various local actors from the public and private spheres, and capacity building measures involving stakeholders and experts.

There can be no 'one-size-fits-all' approach to culture-led local development. Instead, cities should build on their unique profiles and use culture as a means to differentiate their offering from others, in order to boost their competitive edge. By using their own local and regional resources smartly, cities can make the most of the added value of culture.

It is important that cities share their experiences. Networks such as [EUROCITIES](#), and initiatives like [Culture for Cities and Regions](#), provide a platform for sharing knowledge and practices.

Culture has a wider contribution to make to a number of other urban policies, such as economic development and social inclusion. The cultural and creative industries are important for driving the local economy and boosting employment, especially during tough times. Culture contributes to greater social inclusion, social innovation and intercultural dialogue. Ensuring that people have access to culture is an important tool for boosting social cohesion, and helps generate unique local identities.

There are new challenges emerging for cities all the time. They must adapt to different contexts and make the most of new opportunities. With a view to 2030, EURO CITIES has identified a number of areas which we think will affect cities and their cultural strategies over the coming decades.

THE DEMOGRAPHIC CHALLENGE

Over the next decade or so, many cities will experience changes in their populations. Some will see growing numbers of young families and older people, while others will shrink.

The arrival of many more newcomers to cities means that their populations will become increasingly diverse, and there will be a greater need for proactive integration measures. We will also observe that people are more highly educated, and that digital natives are the norm.

In response, cities will need to develop new cultural offers. For many, intercultural dialogue will be at the heart of their strategies as they endeavour to welcome newcomers into their societies.

NEW AUDIENCE EXPECTATIONS

The audiences of the future are likely to expect more flexibility and tailored cultural offerings. Local cultural actors will need to work more closely with their audiences to better design content that is interesting for them.

Co-creation will be an important part of this. Cities' cultural administrations can facilitate this process by acting as brokers to make local cultural organisations and different audience groups discuss how to work together. Some cities already organise regular local cultural fora that serve as platforms for local cultural actors, both institutions and audiences, to share views build a local cultural agenda together.

“There can be no ‘one-size-fits-all’ approach to culture-led local development”

A NEW APPROACH TO GOVERNANCE AND NETWORKING

Cross-sectoral projects involving culture should multiply over the coming years, addressing a broad range of areas such as health, wellbeing and social inclusion. Cultural organisations will join forces with others outside the cultural sector. Cities will foster new partnerships. Will we move away from a 'cross-sectoral' approach towards a more holistic one?

Throughout this transition, cities will play an important role in safeguarding the intrinsic value of culture.

RIDING THE DIGITAL WAVE

We already know that audience expectations will change in the coming years, but what role will digital technologies play in this? How will cultural organisations and city administrations responsible for culture need to adapt to this new digital context?

Cities will have an important role to play in ensuring everyone is included in the digital transition. They will need to address the potential of social and generational divides as cultural organisations increasingly work with new technologies. Equipping people with the right digital skills will be necessary.

FUTURE FIT LOCAL CULTURAL ADMINISTRATIONS

Public administrations are increasingly dealing with fewer resources to go around. Instead of providing financial resources, cities can broker new partnerships, or they might provide physical space for artists and cultural organisations. They may offer advice, such as assisting local cultural organisations with responding to calls for EU-funded promoters. And they can promote local cultural organisations' activities.

LEARNING FROM CULTURE FOR CITIES AND REGIONS

The Culture for Cities and Regions initiative (2015-2017) offers interesting insight into how culture contributes to local development. Funded by the EU's Creative Europe Programme, it aims to highlight successful cultural investments and promote knowledge transfer. This is done through 70 thematic case studies, 15 study visits and

coaching for selected cities and regions. EUROCITIES is leading the consortium responsible for this initiative.

We recognise that there is no one-size-fits-all approach to culture-led development, but cities nevertheless have plenty to share and plenty to learn. Their experiences and ideas, successful and unsuccessful, can feed into others' cultural development strategies. It is essential therefore that cities have a place to share and exchange expertise and good practices, which is why networks are so important. They provide a platform for exchange and debate, enabling cities to confront future cultural challenges together.

www.eurocities.eu

www.cultureforcitiesandregions.eu



CITIES, CITIZENS & CULTURE: THE KEY PILLARS OF EUROPEAN IDENTITY

Steve Austen, A soul for Europe

THE EUROPEAN CITY: A COMMON ORIENTATION FOR ITS CITIZENS

The ever-increasing national, regional and urban interdependencies in Europe, prompt us to think about the meaning of European citizenship and forms of citizenship education. The gradual expression of European citizenship, will inevitably lead to complex discussions. This complexity does not allow for hasty decisions and explains both, the attraction and the problematic acceptance of the concept of Europe. How will the future look like is partly up to us. This process makes the greatest demands on the cultural competencies of Europeans. For many the idea of European citizenship is new and one of the reasons why it is vigorously rejected by large groups of voters in almost every member state. Nevertheless, these defensive phenomena are part of an inevitable cultural process that marks the transition from exclusively national to more European solutions. In spite of the alleged scepticism about Europe, it is increasingly common for citizens to not take everything that their national governments consider to be in the national interest.

IT STARTS AT HOME

It is in cities where citizenship found its origin. It continues to be developed supported by citizens' initiatives in practically all fields of society; from pop-up restaurants, temporarily alternative spaces, informal interregional networks, social design modelling pilots, as well as a multitude of start-ups where informal local and international cooperation is practised. All these initiatives are influencing the renewal of our cities from bottom-up. The daily practises of all these forms of active citizenship should be seen as part of the process of giving form to entirely new concepts, from communication, to information, cooperation and participation with governments and citizens in all member states. This process requires of a continuous process of trial and error and 'Education Permanente'.

THE ROLE OF LOCAL CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS

Connecting the past with the present and provide the basis that ground forward thinking approaches, should be accompanied by European networks of local cultural institutions, museums, archives and small and larger study groups, among others. The advantage of local institutions and initiatives lies in their positioning. Acceptance of this role comes easier for these trusted “warehouses of the local identity”, rooted in the material and immaterial (history of ideas) heritage. These organisations should not only take the lead in the supporting upcoming citizenship initiatives in their neighbourhoods, but also join and connect one or more networks of local social entrepreneurs.

LOCAL PLAYERS AND EUROPEAN CITIZENS

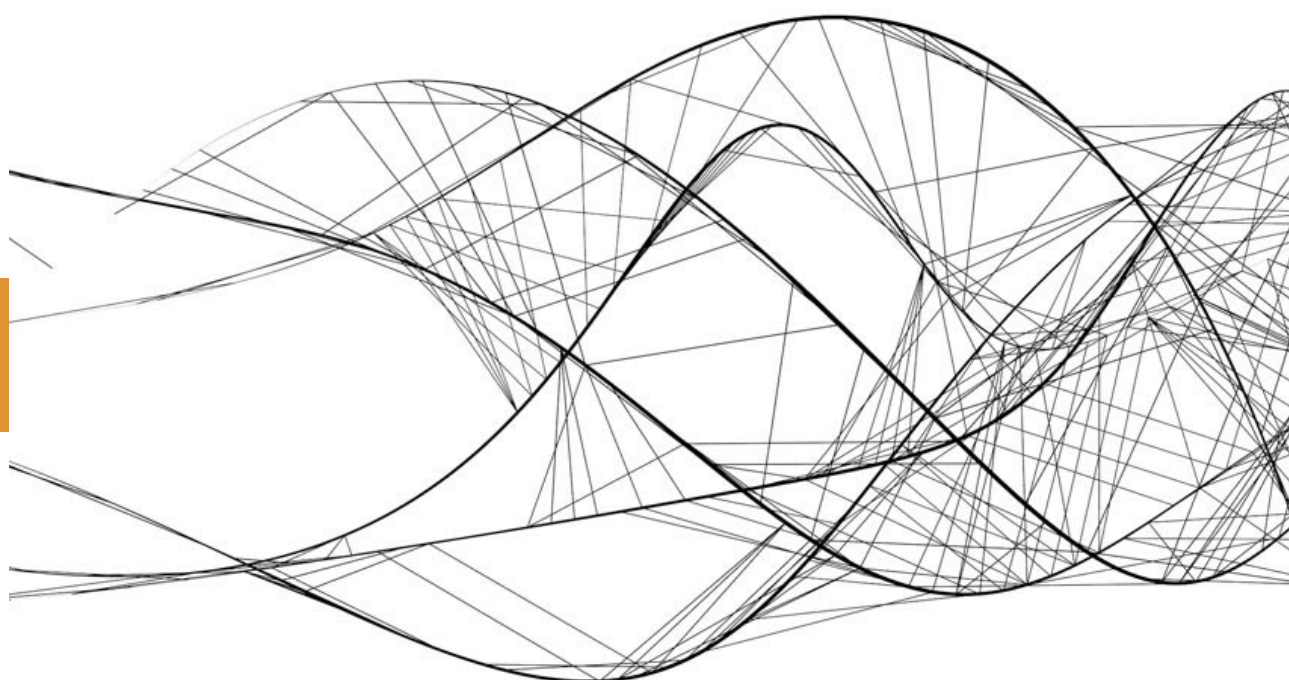
The above observations should be seen in the light of the repositioning of citizenship in a European context since the Lisbon Treaty. Particularly, when the growing unrest across European citizens is showing a tendency towards populist political initiatives, which so far, are not capable to give an answer to the need of identifying a “binding” idea between the (European) citizens. At the same time, traditional political parties are losing ground, and as such, civil society must take up the challenge to offer modes of identification, sharing and optimism in their communities and immediate surroundings. The local cultural scene could become a focal point; citizens and civil society can contribute to shape the changing identity of their communities. This will ask for an updating and upgrading of their traditional function.

“The growing unrest across European citizens is showing a tendency towards populist political initiatives, which so far, are not capable to give an answer to the need of identifying a “binding” idea between the (European) citizens. At the same time, traditional political parties are losing ground, and as such, civil society must take up the challenge to offer modes of identification, sharing and optimism in their communities and immediate surroundings”

The various associations, congregations and councils of Europe working in the cultural and artistic domain are already transforming their practices and institutions into platforms for all kind of creative best practices. They offer to its members an excellent possibility to open up its local networks for interested 'pioneers', and upscale these best practices by weaving a network of civic education ambassadors.

Ultimately, what we need is a greater focus on the role of citizens in line with the core business of the cultural sector, one that will support the Europe project, and institutions such as the European Parliament from a position that strives to build cohesion within local communities. In this regard, As ASfE (A Soul for Europe) stated in 2004: "The political unification process of Europe only will be successful if it is understood as a cultural process."

Cultural in this context means a civic process that should include the broader civil society. ASfE has promoted the necessity of bottom up activities, especially in the cities that were part of the ECOC project, yet this process of redefinition of the involvement of local authorities is only in its preliminary phase. The role of the city and the citizens in building Europe is not sufficiently recognised by local authorities. Cultural organisations therefore should focus on two aspects. Firstly, the role of the city and secondly, stimulating bottom up initiatives in all social and cultural fields. The activities under the latter point offer a potential to foster European citizenship and through international networks, local cultural actors can assist local authorities to discover and develop the role of culture within their cities.



CULTURE AND THE CITY: WHY IT MATTERS

Simona Neumann, CEO, Timișoara 2021 European Capital of Culture

Improving cultural life in Timișoara implies connecting culture with urban development, architecture, environment and education in the broader context of local and regional development, on the one hand and internationalisation, on the other. Cultural policies integrate culture with other areas of public life by recognising its role in the improvement of the quality of life in the city.

The relevant cultural policy documents in Timișoara connect the overall vision over the future of the city with the principles of sustainability, where culture plays a central role. Interculturality is recognised as a specific feature and culture is related to both welfare and increased quality of life, as well as to history, that needs to be capitalised for the benefit of the future of the community.

A series of projects and initiatives support the development of a common identity, building on the potential of the historical Euroregion of Banat, based on collaboration among people and organisations. In addition, culture represents an investment for the local economy aiming at attracting visitors and turn the city and region into a cultural hub with wide European and international opening, through the development of tourism based on heritage and cultural events which attract broad audience.

The Cultural Strategy of Timișoara for 2014 – 2024 emphasises the key role that cultural and creative industries and audience development processes play in strengthening the cultural capacity of the city and its connections to other parts of Europe, acknowledging the strong connections Timișoara has with other cities in the region and its strategic position in the heart of the cross-border region (Romania, Hungary and Serbia).

Within this framework, Timișoara 2021 becomes the platform that boosts the European urban lifestyle, working as an engine that generates relevance from audiences, widens policies and, at the same time, stimulates a more meaningful delivery.

By taking on the challenge of the European Capital of Culture title in 2021, Timișoara aims at becoming a city where cultural excellence instils self-confidence in our citizens, empowering them to make a difference through participation and engagement. We have proven in the past that we are able to initiate transformations at crucial moments. Our aim now is to re-establish the civic capacity to make changes and contribute to a revitalised Europe.

LEARNING FROM THE PAST, PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

Over time, Timișoara's cultural profile has faced a series of transformations. More than a century ago, the city was known as an enlightened place of innovative entrepreneurs, with a strong civic society shared by diverse cultures and religions.

This perception—of a city that is entrepreneurial, western-oriented, privileged and young in spirit remains. Even during communism Timișoara was hip, experimental and ingenious. The Phoenix rock band and the Sigma - the experimental artistic group, among others, are examples of this artistic and creative vitality. It was the only Romanian city where artists could perform in outdoor public spaces. In the '90s, the city became a living symbol of radical protest and civil rights advocacy.

Nowadays it is often regarded as easy going, bourgeois and individualistic. Experimentation and creativity can still be recognised, mainly in the IT&C and automotive industries. Although it has a growing, strong, creative human potential, Timișoara faces a significant migration of people from the cultural and creative industry sectors to other Romanian cities and to other countries, mainly because Timișoara lacks a well-defined international cultural profile and the instruments necessary to make the much-needed connection between the local and the international.

The city is still struggling with overall cultural coherence, lack of capacity (managers, journalists, and producers), developing an audience engagement strategy, professional innovation, and international co-productions.

Public cultural institutions often have a general program, trying to address all age groups and to increase access to culture in a wide variety of socio-economic categories. For example, the Banat Philharmonic has the same goal of increasing the access to culture by attracting categories for which classical music was inaccessible, organising events in unconventional spaces, districts and green spaces and facilitating access for seniors

through innovative partnerships. According to 'Access to culture and participation' Report of the sociological research, conducted in June 2016 by the West University of Timișoara, lack of time is considered by half of the citizens of Timișoara as the main obstacle to overcome when attending cultural events. As such, encouraging intelligence, creativity and coherence of cultural projects in order to appeal and motivate publics' priorities towards culturally authentic experiences should be seen as more important than emphasis on material resources, which are relevant but not decisive for cultural engagement. Equally, cultural education is mainly offered to children and youth who come from families with an average income and above, and it is concentrated in the city centre with limited outreach strategies to the districts or the periphery, which in the last years are becoming very diverse and offer high quality.

The misuse of available spaces and the neglected historical monuments and areas is another key challenge of the city. Abandoned industrial areas, old cinemas and factories have a great potential of being reconverted in cultural venues. Public spaces within neighbourhoods could potentially be used for cultural events. In terms of heritage, even though Timișoara has the largest number of historical buildings in Romania (14.500) only less than 10% of them have been restored. A law passed in June 2016, regarding the restoration of historical buildings with the support of municipalities, seems to take a step further towards a solution at a time where there is an acute need for new spaces. Local creative industries and independent artists lack working studios and places to host artistic events where synergies among cultural operators can be stimulated.

Public financing of the independent sector needs improvement both regarding the awarding procedures and the overall legal framework. Only 12%–15% of public art funding reach independent initiatives, which limits the development of cultural and creative industries and their sustainability.

Promising steps have already been taken to recognise the economic potential of culture as essential investment as the annual budget for the city has almost tripled during the past six years.

One major step was taken with the adoption of the long-term cultural strategy (2014–2024), making Timișoara the first city in Romania to have such public policy document, now under implementation. Moreover, public authorities encourage artistic interventions in public parks, streets and squares, bringing culture closer to citizens.

Timișoara 2021 project itself addresses all these challenges and needs, confirmed during the candidacy process. In the future Timișoara aims to brand itself as the meeting point of IT&C and culture. A step in this direction was made by including the Timișoara European Capital of Culture Association (TM2021 Association) in the Consultative Economic Council of the city, to align the city's economic strategy with TM2021 long term goals and vision and legacy.

FROM PLANNING TO PRACTICE

Building upon the previous analysis, Timișoara has developed an integrated strategy through culture and for culture in the following domains:

Integrated Development Strategy 2015–2020 for the Timișoara Growth Pole envisages development and urban regeneration through culture, the development of smart services and knowledge intensive business services (KIBS), and innovation and technological excellence centres.

Timișoara Municipality Youth Strategy 2014–2020 emphasises the need to nurture and stir cultural education and consumption, as well as to capitalize on youth volunteering potential.

Socio-Economic Development Strategy of the Timiș County 2015–2023 focuses on cultural infrastructure and accessibility, cultural education and human resources professionalisation, and international cultural cooperation and tourism exchanges in the DKMT region.

Romanian–Serbian Bega Canal Joint Tourism Development Strategy 2030 takes on sound and sustainable measures focused on the tourism, cultural and creative potential of the Bega Canal in the cross-border context.

The Cultural Strategy for 2014 – 2024 highlights Timișoara as a place where dynamic cultural life addresses the expectations of its citizens, where creative economy contributes to welfare, and where artistic creation embraces experimentation.

The strategic actions designed to implement this vision are based on four priority axes and one horizontal axis. The document advocates an array of key changes to be implemented in the upcoming years.

Regarding the cultural scene, it underlines the role of constructive interdependence, to be built between public cultural institutions (carrying the experience, infrastructure, and resources) and the independent scene (promoter of change, creativity and experimentation).

This action should be accompanied by three sets of activities focused on the strengthening the relationship with Europe; developing and building more connections with European and international scenes, strengthening local tourism through culture and building bridges between local and European narratives.

The development of the CCI sector is another priority. Based on Timișoara's profile, comprising domains such as computer games and software development, marketing, architecture, design, media products and crafts, the CCI can not only revive the cultural sector, but also develop new audiences. In order to achieve this, the need for fostering sustainable cultural education is put forward as part of the cultural strategy.

Increasing the number and quality of places opened for culture as well as enhancing the architectural heritage is also a key element of the strategic vision.

Finally, creating multi-annual funding opportunities for culture, collecting data annually and carrying out regular evaluations will underpin the continuous improvement of cultural governance in Timișoara.

The Cultural Strategy will be implemented up until 2024, in order to provide the framework and leave time to develop a sustainable legacy for Timișoara 2021.



CULTURE AND CITIES: FROM INFRASTRUCTURE TO SOCIOSTRUCTURE

Rosa Pérez Monclús, Culture Action Europe and Carla Schiavone, Municipality of Rome

Culture Action Europe (CAE) actively promotes the inclusion of culture as a pillar for sustainable development. Jointly with a wider coalition of civil society organisations, we advocated for the inclusion of culture in [Rio+20 and culture. Advocating for Culture as a Pillar of Sustainability](#), in [United Nations' 2030 Agenda and in the Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#) and recently for its inclusion in the New Urban Agenda. These advocacy efforts remain on-going and so is our learning process. This article is an attempt to analyse the main findings and to highlight some commonalities we found in different initiatives CAE implemented. By doing so we aim to explore and facilitate the development of new cultural policies for sustainable urban development.

HORIZONTAL APERTURES

Forward-looking cities often have an intuition of the transformative potential of culture however, lack new frameworks for overcoming traditional approaches. Cultural policies at city level tend to highlight grand cultural investments that are not available to the majority of European cities, nor adequate for a sustainable future. Together with our partners, UCLG and CEMR, Culture Action Europe has developed the Pilot Cities programme. Pilot Cities promotes the development of sustainable cities in cooperation with public, private and civil society actors. The programme goes beyond the exchange of good practices and enables effective evaluation, peer-learning and a critical dissemination of existing intelligence. The added value of Pilot Cities lays on the diversity of its participants, allowing them to confront common challenges and source solutions across Europe.

“Cultural policies at city level tend to highlight grand cultural investments that are not available to the majority of European cities, nor adequate for a sustainable future”

In the past two years, together with the civil society and local governments, CAE has explored new cultural policy making processes that place citizenship and democracy at the core.

Our project Kathréptis in Athens was motivated by the Greek socio-economic crisis and the sense that democratic participation and civil society needed to be strengthened to build a constructive path forward. The methodology was designed around the principles of collaborative problem solving and discovery-driven learning. This allowed heterogeneous people from different backgrounds to co-designing structural elements for present and future solutions.

Learning from this experience, CAE is currently running a collaborative process involving citizens, neighbours, cultural organisations and public and private stakeholders to co-define the future socio-cultural functions of Nuovo Cinema Aquila, in Rome. By actively engaging the community, the municipality of Rome aims at rebuilding trust as a basis for democratic participation. In parallel, CAE's Italian members independently run the CRE•ACTION campaign. In the framework of the campaign a new model of local sustainable development was developed leading to concrete proposals for those governing the city.

The above experiences have allowed us to define guiding principles that lead our advocacy efforts. Culture Action Europe believes that cultural policies at a city level should:

Use cultural spaces to enhance participation: Cultural premises should be considered as civic spaces; a natural meeting place for citizens of every income, age and background, whether or not they initially come to see the work inside. An open policy of engagement pays huge dividends, in revenues, and in providing democratic legitimacy for the city's choices. Cultural policy at urban scale should increasingly balance investments in infrastructure, with those dedicated to support creation and its circulation and to enhance citizens' participation in local cultural life. The next challenge for the cities is about moving between policies based on a "nodal public space" approach and a "micro-public spaces" one⁴.

⁴ URBAN APERTURE | POROSITY AS A NEW MODEL FOR HYBRID PUBLIC SPACES, from "URBAN HYBRIDIZATION in Contemporary Territories, Università Politecnico Milano

Use exchange, collaboration and new forms of partnerships to include peripheries at the core of society. Communities that are culturally isolated by definition will not feel included in the ambitions, identity and ethos of the wider city. Therefore, the cultural governance of cities needs to be re-imagined: reconverting and energising peripheral neighbourhoods with imagination and above all collaboration is pivotal. Investment in infrastructure is needed to encourage exchange and mobility. However, periphery should not be considered solely in a geographical sense, but mechanisms of exclusion need to be addressed and structural solutions explored.

Fund cultural processes, not only cultural infrastructure. Local governments often feel that renovating or putting up new buildings for cultural activity can solve problems of regeneration. Far less funds go to cultural work itself. The investment in the building is the start of the process, not the end.

Urban cultural policies also need to advance in the following specific challenges:

- **A safe public space:** Actual and perceived security is strongly related to participative and inclusive public space. Freely accessible and safe public space needs to be preserved and provided, allowing for the interaction of all citizens and thus forming the very basis of democratic debate, encounters and creative development.
- **Fund the cultural ecosystem.** Positive external effects generated by culture on the economic or social spheres should be reinvested in local cultural ecosystems. For example, the benefits generated by culture-based tourism or by the most commercially viable elements of the cultural and creative industries could contribute to preservation strategies and community development. Public-private-civic partnerships with a clear understanding of shared public interest in this field are necessary.

The challenges and the work ahead are fascinating and potentially transformative. In a crisis of perceived legitimacy of the European Union, with increasing reaffirmation of national identities, key values are questioned and viewed differently between European countries. In parallel, a fragmentation of the social fabric of our societies leads to a lack of participation and growing isolation. It is therefore vital for citizens to participate in a vibrant cultural life, as such experiences allow for the generation of social capital and enhance cohesion and well-being.

LET'S TALK ETHICS: CULTURAL PLANNING & PARTICIPATION IN LOCAL CULTURAL STRATEGIES

Raluca Iacob, CubicMetre - resources for culture, Romania

Cultural planning based on partnership principles and public participation are part of what we could call a “New Public Management and good-governance pack”. Increasingly, public administrations are being instructed to use this approach in order to be more efficient and virtuous in its mission to serve citizens. The mainstream narrative compels cities to develop cultural strategies; which should be based on research, involve cultural actors and done in consultation with the cultural sector, while clearly defining activities into projects or programs leading to greater efficiency and accountability. Yet, practice shows that we need to talk more about the uses of cultural planning tools and the ethics of public consultation. Equally, we must invest in generating data and think-tank capacities in order to achieve representation of certain cultural sub-sectors in policy-related debates.

Countries in Eastern Europe have lived in a state of permanent transition and need of reform for the past 30 years. It used to be a well-established norm that we needed to change the way institutions work, and develop the right tools and attitudes that would take us into a different institutional reality - liberal, democratic and merit-based. This would allow us to develop a lively independent arts sector and functional public cultural institutions.

The partnership principle, alongside transparency and public participation, is a significant part of this understanding, reflected in the way cultural planning and public consultations are carried out. However, this norm is shaking, partly because of lack of skills, partly because of insufficient political will to work towards such goals, and fuelled by a wave of nationalistic pride that equals the import of ideas and solutions to a lack of sovereignty. I lately observed two distinct developments:

- (1) disappointment on the promises of investing in cultural planning tools in order to positively influence the way public expenditure and investment is carried out;
- (2) cynicism towards public consultations in a context of precarity of cultural workers and lack of advocacy and think-tank capacities in the cultural sector.

Public consultation and structured dialogue play a clear and important role in decision-making. It is connected with the need for transparency and, thus, a tool for accountability; it is a way to listen to the voices of cultural actors and to get new information and perspective on the task at hand. It is a way to dream together and to create a sense of a shared-space of interests and concerns, which is an important base for the development of a community. Ultimately, it creates interest and, if done well, it can build mutual trust and healthy relationships between the different stakeholders of the cultural realm. Nevertheless, the use of the partnership-principle and public participation in concrete settings are rarely discussed as an ethics issue.

Is it ethical to use public consultation in order to collect data and insights that would otherwise be available only via a contractual relation with experts/specialists? What are the limits of what is acceptable to ask in a public consultation? For example, is it ethical to ask participants to collectively write a report or analysis, or to come up with project ideas that decision-maker will later use, without any concern related to their authorship? Is it acceptable to organise a public consultation without having any concrete ideas or plans to put forward to the participants, but only questions addressed to them? Should in-depth public consultations participation be recognised as a volunteer activity and be more regulated (contracts, principles, etc.) or should we just accept that it is an invitation and treat it on the principle of take it or leave-it? I am inclined towards the former approach, where recognition of the input provided should work together with a more serious discussion about the ethics of the process. Consultation can not only support, but also hinder accountability, by placing on the shoulders of the participants the burden of mapping the needs, solutions and, even the decision to be taken. In my experience, it works similarly to the uses and abuses of cultural planning, to which I would turn next.

“(Public consultation) is a way to listen to the voices of cultural actors and to get new information and perspective on the task at hand. It is a way to dream together and to create a sense of a shared-space of interests and concerns, which is an important base for the development of a community”

The way local-level strategies are thought out reflects the rigour of organisational strategies. When rigour is neglected it leads to a lack of a clear accountability in terms of results. The partnership-principle between local administration and cultural actors can be used to support the idea that the whole cultural sector must adhere to the local cultural strategy. But how can cultural institutions do so that while lacking the proper resources and what could be their incentive? Thinking about a local strategy the way we think about an organisational strategy eludes the intricate web of interests and responsibilities present in the cultural ecosystem. The inequities within the system, the differences in power, resources and formal responsibilities are blurred by the promise of a common vision and public-interest results. But it is my strong opinion that we should not be satisfied with that. Common projects and a collective mission should not mean that we all have the same level of responsibility towards the implementation of a local strategy. There should be clear-cut roles and more discussion about the ethics of public consultation and the uses of cultural planning without abusing the partnership-principle. Our advocacy and consultancy work with the public administration should reflect that.

FUN PALACES: WHERE EVERYONE IS AN ARTIST

Stella Duffy, Fun Palaces

I write this in the week that Donald Trump has been elected the next President of America. It is four months since Britain voted for Brexit. I write as someone brought up white working class, who is now being told that the white working class, the white poor, the white disaffected made these choices. I look at the statistics and I see this is partly true – but I also see that many wealthy people voted for Trump and for Brexit, some people of colour voted for Trump and for Brexit. The statistics show clearly that many in our UK cities did not vote for Brexit and many in US cities did not vote for Trump. There is a growing divide.

After three years of working on our exponentially-growing Fun Palaces campaign I see what we are doing as a step towards healing these divisions.

After 35 years in the arts as a writer and theatremaker, it is clear that the steps we have taken towards inclusion and diversity are too little, too late – our attempts at cultural inclusion are too often about audience development rather than welcoming new people into the arts as artists.

“(...) the steps we have taken towards inclusion and diversity are too little, too late – our attempts at cultural inclusion are too often about audience development rather than welcoming new people into the arts as artists”

Fun Palaces – multidisciplinary cultural events created by and for local communities – believes in everyone an artist (and everyone a scientist, but that’s for another blog) and that by enabling everyone to engage with culture as practitioners we can create a more inclusive, more engaged, more diverse society, with a more equal culture at its core.

For too long our cities have held up the arts as something to visit, housing culture in big shiny glass and concrete buildings, usually in the centre of the city. But why should people make a pilgrimage to the arts? Fun Palaces helps communities to create their own local arts and cultural events, led by and for those communities, whether they self-define as artists or not.

Further, we believe that not only can art and culture be made and shared from the most grassroots community level, but when it is, the impact on that community is deeper and more lasting. When everyone is an artist, everyone can create, everyone can reach out to others, everyone is heard.

The interest and enthusiasm for our campaign is phenomenal. We are just three years old, with a tiny staff of four, all part-time. In 2014 there were 138 Fun Palaces with 40,000 participants; in 2015 there were 142 Fun Palaces with 50,000 participants; and this year in 2016, there were 292 Fun Palaces created by 5000 local people, by and for their own communities, with 120,000 participants.

While Fun Palaces have predominantly been in the UK, they have also been made in Ireland, France, Germany, Iceland, Norway, Australia, New Zealand and Canada. Crucially in the UK this year, 85% were created outside London. Fun Palaces enables citizens to create by and for themselves, without always looking to the metropolitan core for answers. This means that people do not have to go to the centre to engage with art – they can create it themselves, in their suburbs, their inner city housing estates, their small towns and villages. We're very new, so it's hard to know exactly where this will lead, but we hope this wide creative community participation can contribute to creating a more truly engaging culture, genuinely for all.

The Fun Palaces Makers are clear about the value of local and community-led, grassroots activism in arts and culture:





Northfield Fun Palace, Birmingham:

“In an area of Birmingham regularly labelled as economically, culturally and educationally deprived, a Fun Palace says you can learn, you can have fun, you are welcome and you are worth celebrating”.

Greenwich Dance, London:

“Fun Palaces are an opportunity for the whole community to come together, with a variety of cultural activities suggested and presented by our neighbours and friends from the local community”.

More Music, Morecambe:

“The project provides us with an ideal context in which to work together and to engage with people who generally do not participate in cultural activity, and contributes to building a genuine sense of community”.

Longsight Library, Greater Manchester:

“A lot of people aren’t so likely to go into the centre of Manchester, but they will go to their local library to participate in culture. Fun Palaces has given us licence to work at a really grassroots level”.

Havering:

“Havering Fun Palace provided a fantastic platform for conversations, for learning and for fun; a wonderful reminder of the power of community and that when people work together amazing things can be achieved”.

BUILD THE CITY: FOR THE PEOPLE, WITH THE PEOPLE

Tsveta Andreeva, European Cultural Foundation

Including citizens and communities in decision-making creates wider support for implementing legislation, providing out-of-the-box solutions and strengthening democratic legitimacy. Culture contributes to this by engaging and inspiring people, challenging stereotypes and catalysing the social revitalisation of urban commons. This is essential for building more equitable and sustainable future for our diverse communities. In 2016, ECF engaged in a mapping exercise of best-practices that culminated in the publication of a Magazine compiling 26 civil-public partnerships based on principles of the commons. Based on the analysis of these cases we can now present evidence of how to build a city for the people, with the people.

LESSONS LEARNED THAT CAN BE IMPLEMENTED LOCALLY

- **Start by creating civil-public partnerships**

Civil-public partnerships have created a bigger impact and provided better solutions on housing, sustainable use of land, urban poverty and more, as civil initiatives have a wealth of experience tackling urban issues. *POGON & Ursus Social Museum*

- **Create community ownership through genuine participation**

To ensure fluid communication, discuss challenges openly and create solutions together, citizens and communities need to be involved from the start. A community needs to feel ownership of the solutions, offering strong participative input and output. *Pick your (City) Fruit, Têtes de L'Art*

- **Make culture a key asset in urban planning**

Art and cultural events help to raise awareness of reclaiming public space. *People's Park, Subtopia, Leeuwarden – Fryslân 2018*

- **Make sustainability core**

Sustainability is at the core of many participatory governance practices. *Mehr als Wohnen, INURDECO, Nicosia Pop-Up Festival*

- **Use open source strategies and varied tools**

It is important to help residents participate in building a strategy for their own cities, using online and offline participatory tools. *R-Urban, Liverpool Air Project, People's Park, INURDECO*

- **Launch collective hubs, a platform or citizen working groups**

The organisation of citizen working groups helps to make projects sustainable. Urban challenges such as climate change and housing prices can be managed at the level of individual communities. *Transition Towns, La Borda, Participatory Energy Transition*

- **Change mindsets – having a good story to tell makes a big difference**

Changing mindsets is perhaps the most challenging goal. *La Borda, Transition Towns Totnes, Pick your (City) Fruit.*

- **Evaluate and measure impact**

SynAthena for example included an evaluation mechanism for the activities with the highest impact that will support upgrading and modernising local governance. As a result, new civic practices are incorporated and regulations have been updated.

FROM PRACTICE TO POLICY: THE EU URBAN AGENDA

We recommend three areas of action:

Co-created cities are resilient cities: a new vision of good governance

Good urban governance and better regulation⁵ requires more than stakeholder consultations or impact assessments – it needs a new vision of governance. In the 21st century, good governance is synonymous with co-created cities where urban planning can no longer be top-down oriented. Bologna, Madrid, Athens, Ghent and Dortmund have already discovered that creating a new institutional and economic system based on the model of civil collaboration was the only way to maintain a good quality of life. They include a collaborative form of government whereby public administration governs together with citizens. The principles of civil collaboration and horizontal subsidiarity demand that all levels of government should enable collective action for the common good and find ways to share their powers and cooperate with citizens who are willing to exercise their constitutional rights. Basically governments need to trust their citizens – acting as an enabler.

“Co-created cities are resilient cities”

⁵ Better regulation is about designing EU policies and laws so that they achieve their objectives at minimum cost. http://ec.europa.eu/smart-regulation/index_en.htm

Social innovation as a basis for better EU funding

To ensure better access to and use of European funds, the practices in this publication offer some good examples of social innovation. By highlighting the role of civil society, social innovation deals with collaborative action, legitimacy and critical public sphere. The concept of social innovation can be seen as two-sided. From a market-oriented perspective, social entrepreneurs are the key drivers and managers of social innovation. From a socially-oriented side, civil society organisations are driven by public action and working for an economy based on solidarity⁶. In the 21st century, funding support should focus on the engagement of citizens and an inclusive, collaborative and circular economy. The genuine participation of citizens and communities in decision making, including budgeting, enhances the probability of success in running a city.

Better knowledge exchange: stimulating the sharing of urban commons practices

Scaling up and better knowledge exchange across Europe could be established in various different ways – for example, by developing a charter that includes clear principles and protocols to create and support a common network. This charter could also be used to create opportunities for new projects and emerging hubs in other cities. An online space could be fed by a network of users from across Europe, and could therefore be widely shared and easily exchanged.

Read the full [Build the City Magazine](#), European Cultural Foundation, Amsterdam 2016
Editors Marjolein Cremer & Nicola Mullenger



⁶ Klein J.L., Laville J.L., Moulaert F., L'innovation sociale, Eres éditions, 2014

REFLECTIONS ON THE FUTURE OF THE CITY

Anna Vondracek, Centre for Fine Arts, Brussels (BOZAR)

Like most of its peers, the Centre for Fine Arts Brussels (BOZAR) is deeply embedded in the history and urban fabric of its city. Together with other cultural institutions, civil society organisations, schools, universities and the local and regional political actors, we shape our urban reality and our perception of the city itself.

The constant question of “what kind of cultural programming do we need in our city?” goes hand in hand with the question “what city do we want to live in?” These questions have defined our activities in the past and will continue to guide our present considerations and future vision.

Cultural institutions are not merely passive platforms for presentation and exchange, but pro-active players that animate and advocate on behalf of the city which they serve. They are organic part of urban ecosystems relying on the inhabitants as audience members and participants. They contribute to urban development policies, public space planning, infrastructure management, education and social policies.

Issues related to urban development, common goods, public space and future visions for the city have always been ingrained in artistic and intellectual thoughts. BOZAR is contributing to the larger reflection about “urbanity” with different actions, manifesting an added value the cultural sector has to the overall debate.

“The constant question of “what kind of cultural programming do we need in our city?” goes hand in hand with the question “what city do we want to live in?””

Our exhibitions and multidisciplinary programming showcase the energy and dynamics generated in and through cities. Such as for instance the recent exhibition Dey your lane: LAGOS Variations depicting the individualistic and creative dynamics generated by one of the fastest growing cities in the world.

BOZAR actively contributes to various discussions about the future of cities. In 2015 we programmed a debate on “Shaping European Cities- How can policy makers and architects make cities more attractive?” In 2016 we invited Saskia Sassen as part of our Agora Urban Master Class with the Brussels Academy (a programme we aim to continue in the next years). Our another exhibition “A good city has industry”, reflected on a productive city of the future, in which a healthy and diverse economy can flourish.

BOZAR participates in innovative inclusive projects. in 2015 we brought “We-traders. Swapping crisis for the city” project, (initiated by the Goethe institute) to Brussels. This project examined how citizens of 7 European cities are responding to the ongoing economic crisis in different areas of urban life, be it economic, social or ecological. Since 2014 BOZAR has been facilitating social cohesion through music with Singing Cities/Singing Brussels which offers on-going singing activities to diverse groups of citizens from across the city. With the goal of fostering social inclusion and harmony, large variety of choirs meets on a weekly basis, coming together on several occasions throughout the year, culminating in an annual festival celebrating the voice, vocal music and Brussels, which takes place at BOZAR. In parallel the Cantania project invites children of elementary schools and their teachers to work together on one collaborative musical piece.

We advocate for culture on the political level highlighting its role and contribution to urban development. In 2014 we organised a day of roundtable debates with UN Habitat and the European Commission (DG DEVCO) on urbanisation in Africa entitled Visionary Urban Africa. Also we started to engage in the debate on urbanisation in Latin American cities, first through an event concurrent to the EU-LAC summit in June 2015, together with the EU-LAC foundation. And more recently through the LAIC-project: Culture and Arts supporting social cohesion in Latin American Cities that investigates the relationship between cities and culture as a key challenge for numerous decision-makers, artists and cultural operators across the globe. In order to highlight the power of images in shaping opinions and raising awareness, BOZAR also presented a small exhibition in Quito during the Habitat III Conference. Featuring work of Beat Streuli, we aimed at putting a human face on contemporary cities, highlighting the power of images in shaping opinions and raising awareness.

LAGOS VARIATIONS



Dey your lane: LAGOS Variations

culture
ACTION
europe

with the support of



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