



**BELO HORIZONTE**  
CIDADE-PILOTO • CULTURA 21

Pilot City for Agenda 21 for culture,  
United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG)

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# **BELO HORIZONTE: PILOT CITY FOR THE NEW AGENDA FOR CULTURE**

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In 2014 Belo Horizonte, capital of the state of Minas Gerais in Brazil, took part in the 2014 ["Pilot-cities"](#) program of the Agenda 21 of the culture. The visit to the city between the 20th and 24th of October showed, on the one hand, the most important aspects of the city's cultural strategy that link it to the promotion of the sustainable development. On the other hand, it fostered debate among private, public, and civil society actors on the development of a ["new Agenda 21 for culture"](#).

Firstly, with regards to the city's contributions in terms of cultural policies and sustainable development, the implementation of significant cultural infrastructure should be noted. This is true at a larger, municipal level as well as for various decentralized [regions that comprise the city](#). Alongside the promotion of cultural activities in public spaces, this serves to fortify the core cultural pillar of urban development. Equally important are cultural education initiatives, such as the ["Cultural Arena"](#) program. In 2014, it was deserving of the UCLG International Award – Mexico City – Culture 21. Another important cultural initiative is the international dimension of cultural actions such as participation with UCLG, and volunteer programs, among others, as well as certain aspects of governance over cultural policy. For example, this may include civic participation implemented by different municipal councils, and through the development of participatory budgets. Among these and other initiatives, collaboration with the private sector is also vital.

Presenting the first draft of the "new Agenda 21 for culture" proposal in various [meetings and seminars](#) served to detect items of particular interest for the city's population and cultural actors, thus contributing to extending the Agenda's development process. Specifically, this increases the attention paid to the following issues:

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The necessary **balance between cultural transversality in sets of urban policies, and the establishing of a specifically cultural pillar** of sustainable development, translated into concrete cultural policies, equipped with the appropriate resources. Among the many issues this must address are: policies supporting the arts, the protection of copyrights and related rights, the balance between supporting local cultural actors and appealing to outside ones, and the promotion of the international mobility of artists and cultural professionals.

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The need to focus on the **link between access to culture, and transportation and urban policies** is especially important in large metropolitan areas. Attention must be paid to the capacity of those who live in the outskirts to access cultural activities that, by nature, take place in the city centre, or occasionally the other way around. In addition, there must be a focus on connecting public transportation networks to allow easy access to cultural infrastructure, and facilitate visibility through appropriate signage.

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**The role of the universities and other knowledge centres** in analysing the city's cultural dynamics and evaluating cultural policies. In a broader sense, it is important **to integrate cultural action into the understanding that cities are knowledge spaces** that favour the full development of people and communities. Furthermore, they comprise a base for territories that are conducive to learning and innovation.

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The **recognition of the many intrinsically diverse and personal aspects of collective cultural practices**. This is intricately linked to artistic education, access to heritage, or to aesthetic appreciation. From these stem many other issues pertaining to personal wellbeing, acknowledgement among people of their individuality, and a sense of belonging. All of these are essential for the enjoyment and continuance of cultural practices.

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It is important to include **participatory maps and records for certain elements of tangible and intangible heritage that are meaningful to communities**. This is something that must be considered in conjunction with urban policies, especially those that intervene in public spaces. Among others, this includes urban development reforms, or the appropriation of spaces for private use.

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Favouring evaluation and mutual learning involves **establishing mechanisms for exchange between cities, which includes a dimension for cultural sustainability**.

Contributions to this initiative gathered in Belo Horizonte have been integrated into the development of the new Agenda 21 for culture. It will be approved at the UCLG Culture Summit in Bilbao, organized by City Council between the 18th and 20th of March, 2015.