

Cultural policies and sustainable development

For the 10th anniversary of the Agenda 21 for culture, several thematic notes have been written.

Each note capitalizes our knowledge, quoting drafts we have produced during 10 years, and other basic documents.

These notes have been elaborated by Mariona Peraire and Joana Valent (Ramon Llull University, Barcelona) and Jordi Pascual (UCLG Culture committee coordinator).



“A vision of sustainable development with three dimensions was developed in the second half of the 1980s, namely: economic growth, social inclusion and environmental balance. The Rio de Janeiro Earth Summit of 1992 confirmed the necessity to introduce ecologic thoughts to our societies development and consolidated these three pillars as the paradigm of sustainable development. But these three dimensions are not sufficient to reflect the entire reality of contemporary society. In those past years, searchers and institutions enlightened how culture **should be included in this development model.**” UCLG Declaration, [Culture: Fourth Pillar of Sustainable Development](#) (2010).

“The affirmation of cultures, and the policies which support their recognition and viability, are an **essential factor in the sustainable development of cities** and territories and its human, economic, political and social dimension. The central nature of public cultural policies is a

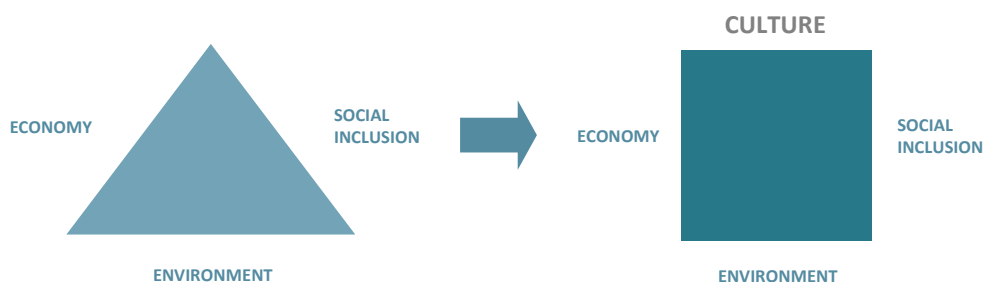
demand of societies in the contemporary world. The quality of local development depends on the interweaving of cultural and other public policies – social, economic, educational, environmental and urban planning.” [Agenda 21 for culture, Article 10](#).

“Parties shall endeavour to **integrate culture in their development policies** at all levels for the creation of conditions conducive to sustainable development and, within this framework, foster aspects relating to the protection and promotion of the diversity of cultural expressions.” [UNESCO, Convention on the protection and promotion of the diversity of cultural expressions](#) (2005), Article 13: "Inclusion of culture in sustainable development".

“Unless people can **participate meaningfully in the events and processes that shape their lives**, national human development paths will be neither desirable nor sustainable.” [UNDP, Human Development Report 2013](#)

"In 2001, the Australian researcher and activist Jon Hawkes proposed including a **fourth pillar in sustainability: culture**. His work *The Fourth Pillar of Sustainability. Culture's Essential Role in Public Planning* is considered a work of reference for local cultural policies.” [Web Agenda 21 for culture: Cultural policies and sustainable development](#).

“Understanding the **social function of cultural activity** is an essential first step; devising policies and programs informed by this knowledge is also essential. (...) A fundamental characteristic of sustainable local cultural activity is that it is initiated, designed, controlled, implemented, managed and owned by local communities.” **Jon Hawkes**, Resident Cultural Analyst for the Cultural Development Network (Victoria) and author of ‘*The Fourth Pillar of Sustainability: Culture's essential role in public planning*’, in [“Challenges for local cultural development \(abridged\)”](#), *Report 5: Cities, cultures and developments. A report that marks the fifth anniversary of Agenda 21 for culture* (2009).



“[Agenda 21 for culture](#), as a guiding document for public cultural policies, offers an opportunity for every city to create a long-term vision of culture as a pillar in their development”. UCLG, document [Advice on local implementation of the Agenda 21 for culture](#) (2006).

“The Agenda 21 addresses five essentials of **sustainable human development**, Culture and human rights, Culture and governance, Cultural sustainability and territory, Culture and social inclusion, and Culture and economy. If the interplay between those five dimensions is orchestrated in a thoughtful, intelligent and visionary way, this contributes substantially to the true wealth of nations and to the wellbeing of children, women and men.” **Christine M. Merkel**, Head of the Division for Culture and Memory of the World of the German Commission for UNESCO, Coordinator of the German Coalition for Cultural Diversity and Vice-Chair of the Council of Europe Culture Committee; in [“Urban vitality and cultural](#)

[ecology. The Agenda 21 for culture: the years ahead](#)”, *Report 5: Cities, cultures and developments. A report that marks the fifth anniversary of Agenda 21 for culture* (2009)

“Porto Alegre rapidly turned the principles and commitments of the Agenda 21 for culture into the core of its governance. The current local authorities have maintained them, to a great extent in questions concerning the **defense of the right to diversity, social inclusion and freedom of speech** in addition to support for the creation of a cultural economy geared towards sustainable development.” **Sergius Gonzaga**, Councillor for culture, Porto Alegre City Council, in [“Agenda 21 for culture and local solidarity governance”](#), *Report 5: Cities, cultures and developments. A report that marks the fifth anniversary of Agenda 21 for culture* (2009).

“Since 1996, a number of measures have been taken to introduce a planning process for the city’s **sustainable development**. In this respect, the rehabilitation and protection of Essaouira’s medina was the main concern for the local authorities.” **Asma Chaabi**, Mayor of Essaouira, in [“The Agenda 21 for culture and Essaouira”](#), *Report 5: Cities, cultures and developments. A report that marks the fifth anniversary of Agenda 21 for culture* (2009).

“The values of Agenda 21 for culture has been essential components of cultural management in Buenos Aires since the city achieved its political autonomy in 1996. (...) Management is founded on the need to **open up, share and exchange cultural experiences** in all their expressions with an active audience which observes, asks and gives its opinion in order to foster creative participation. (...) Everyone should be able to access and take part in cultural production in Buenos Aires. The mission would not be accomplished if it does not engage the variety of social strata and geographical origins.” **Hernán Lombardi**, Minister of Culture for Buenos Aires, in [“The core of cultural development. Agenda 21 for culture and cultural management in Buenos Aires”](#), *Report 5: Cities, cultures and developments. A report that marks the fifth anniversary of Agenda 21 for culture* (2009).

“Most of human beings have the capacities but do not have some of the essential tools, skills or capabilities to understand the world and to transform it so that it becomes really sustainable. These capabilities are literacy, creativity, critical knowledge, sense of place, empathy, trust, risk, respect, recognition... These capabilities can be understood as the **cultural component of sustainability**.” UCLG, [Report 6: Río+20 and culture. Advocating for culture as a pillar for sustainability](#) (2012).

“Participatory democracy is one of the decisive elements of the process of sustainable development. (...) Participatory democracy implies a **sharing of responsibilities**: a method that radically questions the bases of our traditions of public governance.” **Christelle Blouët**, cultural manager, [Report 3: Agenda 21 for culture in France. State of affairs and outlook](#) (2008).

“The implementation of cultural development projects that bring direction and prosperity to communities and are representative of their uniqueness also depends on a component that may seem difficult to obtain but which is nevertheless vital to the success of these projects: a method of governance based on **credible and constructive dynamics of exchange between the political authorities and civil society**. (...) Echoing many of the principles set down in the Agenda 21 for culture, Culture Montréal has pursued three main aims over the past seven years: the right to culture for all citizens, the prominent role of culture in the development of the city and the profile of Montreal as a cultural metropolis by its creativity, cultural diversity and national and international projection.” **Simon Brault**, President of

Culture Montreal, in [“The city we love”](#), *Report 5: Cities, cultures and developments. A report that marks the fifth anniversary of Agenda 21 for culture* (2009).

“The gap between development frameworks and cultural actors is still big. A critical mass of actors (in the UN System, at a national level, in the civil society) that explicitly advocate for the role of culture in sustainable development does not yet exist. But, the report says, Rio+20 was useful to better connect actors, to better align their strategies, and to agree on the new opportunities to continue the discussion: [the post-2015 Development Agenda of United Nations and Habitat III.](#)” UCLG, [Report 6: Río+20 and culture. Advocating for culture as a pillar for sustainability](#) (2012).



“Four international cultural networks (IFACCA, Agenda 21 for culture, FICDC and Culture Action Europe) have written a document in 2013 in order to sensitize, promote and call for the inclusion of an explicit [goal for culture in the Post-2015 Development Agenda](#). “As networks of governmental and non-governmental organizations and global cultural actors, we are fully engaged in the pursuit of sustainable cultural development at local, national and global levels and wish to contribute to the Post-2015 Development Agenda. We strongly believe that culture can aid the fight against poverty and strengthen communities. This is our work, this is our commitment.

(...) The [targets](#) will all be measurable. (...) Each target should specify the level of ambition of each country, by determining the speed with which a country pursues the goal on culture. That speed can be a function of many things: the priorities of the country, its initial starting point, the technical and organizational possibilities for improvement, and the level of resources and number of partners that can be brought to bear on the problem. We believe that a process of allowing countries to set their own targets, in a highly visible way, would create a “race to the top”, both internationally and within countries.

(...) [Transparency and accountability are central](#) to implementing a [goals](#) framework. We consider that the following items should provide for a starting point to develop further specific targets:

- a) Integrate culture within all development policies and programs.
- b) 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.

- c) Multiply by x% the number of culture, arts and creativity programs in education policies.
- d) Multiply by x% the number of citizens who are actively involved in cultural practice.
- e) Devote a minimum 1% of the overall public finances to cultural sector.
- f) Leverage culture for poverty reduction and inclusive economic development.
- g) Elaborate frameworks and action plans to identify, protect and sustainably use tangible and intangible heritage in all its forms and diversity.
- h) Build on culture to promote environmental sustainability.
- i) Elaborate and implement a national strategy on cultural diversity.
- j) Mobilize culture and mutual understanding to foster peace.”

UCLG and others, [Culture as a Goal in the Post-2015 Development Agenda](#) (2013)

“The **partnership strategy** should be set up for the projects following the Agenda 21 for culture principles to reach the level of stability. To achieve a sustainable development, the partnership and network are key elements, and each project must, above all, have an innovative context.” **Biljana Mickov**, researcher and cultural manager, in [“The Agenda 21 for culture in the town of Novi Sad”](#), *Report 5: Cities, cultures and developments. A report that marks the fifth anniversary of Agenda 21 for culture* (2009).

“**Our culture is precious. It emerges from our values, spirit and creativity.** It is forged in our interactions with the unique environment we share. It fosters community identity and pride; reflects our triumphs and challenges, and expresses our links to the past and our dreams for the future. Like air, it is an intangible – but essential – element in a sustainable future.” **Melva Hobson**, mayor of Quandamooka / Redland City, quoted in an article written by **Judy Spokes**, Senior Advisor, Cultural Services with the Redland City Council, and **Aunty Joan Hendriks** respected Elder and Founding Chair of the Quandamooka Forum, [“Agenda 21 for culture: an Australian response”](#), *Report 5: Cities, cultures and developments. A report that marks the fifth anniversary of Agenda 21 for culture* (2009).

“The evolution of the concept “**development**” can be summarized as follows. Today, **development means freedom, widening the choices, putting human beings** -children, men and women- at the centre of the future.” UCLG, [Report 6: Río+20 and culture. Advocating for culture as a pillar for sustainability](#) (2012).

“Sustainable development requires first and foremost a change in behavior; that is, a **cultural change in which the notions of heritage, wealth and resources are rethought as part of a more global vision of the well-being of individuals and our collective future.**” **Catherine Cullen**, Councilor for culture, Lille City Council, and vice-president of the Committee on culture of United Cities and Local Governments – UCLG, in [“The City of Lille and the Agenda 21 for culture”](#), *Report 5: Cities, cultures and developments. A report that marks the fifth anniversary of Agenda 21 for culture* (2009).

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