



**culture 21**

UCLG Committee

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# 8

## **Culture, Cities and the COVID-19 Pandemic**

Part 1: Documenting the Initial Measures  
and Drafting Challenges Ahead



**UCLG**

United Cities  
and Local Governments

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The report is available on-line at <http://www.agenda21culture.net>.

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# UCLG CULTURE COMMITTEE

**United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG)** is the world organisation created in 2004 which represents local and regional governments and defends their interests on the world stage. It currently represents 70% of the global population, and it is the association of cities with most members, and with the greatest capacity of influence before the United Nations. The World Secretariat of UCLG is based in Barcelona.

UCLG has an important cultural programme based on the Agenda 21 for Culture – approved in Barcelona in May 2004–, on the Declaration “Culture is the 4th pillar of Sustainable Development” –approved in Mexico City in November 2010–, and on the practical toolkit “Culture 21: Actions” –approved in Bilbao in March 2015.

The **UCLG Culture Committee** is a unique global platform of cities, local governments, associations, organisations and networks that cooperate and promote the role of Culture in Sustainable Cities. The mission of the UCLG Culture Committee is to promote culture as the fourth pillar of sustainable development through the international dissemination and the local implementation of Agenda 21 for culture, and to foster and make more explicit the relationship between local cultural policies and sustainable development. This narrative is based on human rights, good governance, people-centred development and the co-creation of the city.

Website: [www.agenda21culture.net](http://www.agenda21culture.net)  
Social media: [www.twitter.com/agenda21culture](https://www.twitter.com/agenda21culture)  
[www.facebook.com/agenda21culture](https://www.facebook.com/agenda21culture)

What we have done in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic:

- The UCLG Presidency **Decalogue for the post COVID-19** era (which includes a full chapter on culture), launched on 21 April 2020.
- The **2020 Rome Charter**, on the Right to Participate Fully and Freely in Cultural Life, released on 29 May 2020.
- The **#culture2030goal** campaign Statement “**Ensuring culture fulfills its potential in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic**”, launched on 20 April 2020.
- The **#BeyondTheOutBreak** Live Learning Experience on the cultural mobilisation (**Press Release** and **Briefing**), held on 22 April 2020.
- The webpage **CULTUREcovid19**, opened on 21 March 2020.
- The report you are reading.





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**To all the victims of the Covid-19 pandemic,  
In Memoriam**

The report is an attempt to document the initial initiatives, actions and measures initiated and implemented by cities and local governments in order to address the impact of the crisis in the cultural life of cities. The document also drafts some of the main challenges that are being considered to ensure culture is at the heart of the response to the Covid-19 crisis.

This document was uploaded as a draft on 18 May 2020. The document was open for comments, observations and suggestions until 1 June 2020. The final version was published on 8 June 2020.

This report has been written by the team of Secretariat of the UCLG Culture Committee, composed by Marta Llobet, Jordi Pascual, Sarah Vieux, Guillermo Revilla and Oriol Plana. The draft received comments, observations and suggestions from Amina Abu-Shahba, Serhan Ada, Sylvia Amann, Enrique Avogadro, Jordi Baltà, Mónica Barrios, Luca Bergamo, Esteve Caramés, Karin Fouledeau, Marlene Fautsch, Greta Galeazzi, Beatriz García, Laia Gargallo, Mercedes Giovinazzo, Antoine Guibert, Gaia Jungeblodt, Justyna Jochym, Marga Julià, Jeong-Ah Kang, Maria Kim, Iñaki López de Aguilera, Valeria Marcolin, Raquel Martínez-Gómez, François Matarasso, Luz Medina, Chris Mellor, Nicolás Montero, Luisa Montoreano, Inti Muñoz, Jaume Muñoz, Sun-kyong Park, Mariana Percovich, Sam Pollard, Andrew Potts, Jeff M. Poulin, Mieke Renders, Aina Roig, Clarisa Ruiz-Correal, Ayşegül Sabuktay, Dwayne Samarista, Céline Schall, Carla Schiavone, Christian Sénéchal, José Alfonso Suárez del Real, Catarina Vaz-Pinto, Fiona Winders, Andrés Zaratti and Najat Zarrouk. The draft was edited by Simon Mundy.

The Secretariat expresses gratitude to all those who have contributed to this report. The Secretariat takes all responsibility for the contents that appear in the final version of this report.

The UCLG Culture Committee expresses support, solidarity and respect to all the cultural initiatives that are devoting souls, time and resources to the crisis.

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# Culture, Cities and the COVID-19 Pandemic

## Part 1: Documenting the Initial Measures and Drafting Challenges Ahead

An initiative by the Committee on Culture of United Cities and Local Governments

### Context. The present condition of culture, cities and the COVID-19 pandemic

Humanity is facing an enormous challenge. The COVID-19 pandemic has spread worldwide having an impact on every dimension of our lives: public health, labour systems, social interaction, political debate, the use of public spaces, the economy, environment... and cultural life.

COVID-19 crisis has affected the cultural life in cities extraordinarily, with implications for the existing inequalities to access, participation and contribution to culture, access to public spaces, and the financial sustainability and the flow of cultural goods and services. The impact of the crisis on the values that constitute our societies are impossible to calculate at this stage.

This crisis has led to the mass closure of libraries, community centres, museums, galleries and cultural venues, and the cancellation of concerts, shows, festivals, exhibitions and many other cultural activities. Similarly, due to physical distancing and travel restrictions, cultural events and performances have been suspended and projects have been put on hold. The numbers speak for themselves: by 22 April 2020, 95% countries around the world had closed or partially closed their museums to the public, and 128 countries had entirely closed down all their cultural institutions.<sup>1</sup> By 20 May 2020, almost all museums around the world had reduced their activities because of the consequences of the pandemic, nearly one third of them had reduced staff, and more than one tenth may be forced to close permanently.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See UNESCO's **Culture & COVID-19: Impact & Response Tracker**.

<sup>2</sup> See ICOM's **report** "Museums, museum professionals and COVID-19" based on the analysis of 1,600 responses from museums and museum professionals, in 107 countries and across continents, collected between 7 April and 7 May 2020.

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## Cultural rights are equally important as other human rights and must remain at the core of the response to the crisis

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Karima Bennoune,  
UN Special Rapporteur on Cultural Rights

There has been a global call to cultural and creative sectors to join efforts, particularly in developing and strengthening digital resilience initiatives for cultural ecosystems, in order to guarantee access and participation in cultural life for the citizens. Some emergency measures have been implemented to support workers in the cultural sector, who are very often in an already precarious situation (self-employed, freelancers), and to maintain the sustainability of cultural initiatives at all levels. Cities and local governments, with their workers, actors, institutions and networks, and in collaboration with national and international partners and civic society, have been making efforts to guarantee cultural rights and maintain activities to ease people's feeling of isolation and bring hope for a better future, and have contributed to promoting solidarity and fundraising to support the public health sector and workers.

But... the crisis has generated hundreds of thousands of initiatives, from new and unplanned actions in public spaces to online events, recordings, collections and, of course, the emergence of totally new initiatives that have Covid-19 as the central topic. Some of these initiatives have been led by the cultural networks, organisations or institutions, while some other have created spontaneously by citizens. People have turned to culture to create meaning, to show solidarity and to understand the situation we are living through. There cannot be a better illustration of why culture needs to consolidate as the fourth pillar of sustainable development. (This narrative is at the heart of UCLG's Culture Committee mission, and understands "culture" in order of appearance in the global conversation on sustainable development; not in hierarchy.)

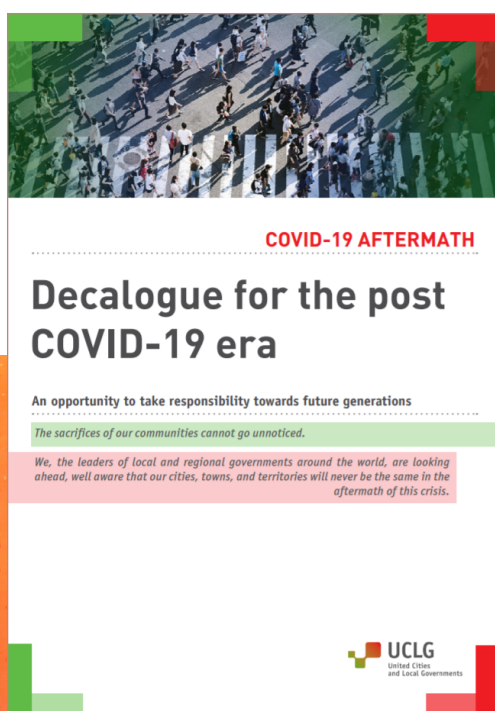
In the production of this report, our focus has been on initiatives and measures related to:

- Creating new possibilities to access heritage and knowledge
- Advocating to protect the cultural sectors and actors with economic measures
- Providing opportunities for more sustainable models of creation, production and consumption
- Rethinking the physical component of culture
- Protecting cultural rights
- Considering a broader framework of inequalities in society

- 
- Multiplying the collaboration between cities and governments
  - Exploring new ways to broaden cultural dialogues
  - Consolidating culture as the fourth pillar of sustainable development

This report is an attempt to document the actions and measures initiated and implemented by cities and local governments in order to address the impact of the crisis in cultural life, and to draft some of the main challenges that are being considered to ensure culture is at the heart of the response to the Covid-19 crisis. The report will be followed by a second document which will look at the deeper consequences of the pandemic and the opportunities for culture to be part of the solution to local and global challenges.

UCLG Decalogue for the COVID-19 aftermath



Decalogue for the  
COVID-19 aftermath



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**CULTURE AS AN ANTIDOTE**  
for the secondary effects

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# 1. New possibilities for access to heritage and knowledge

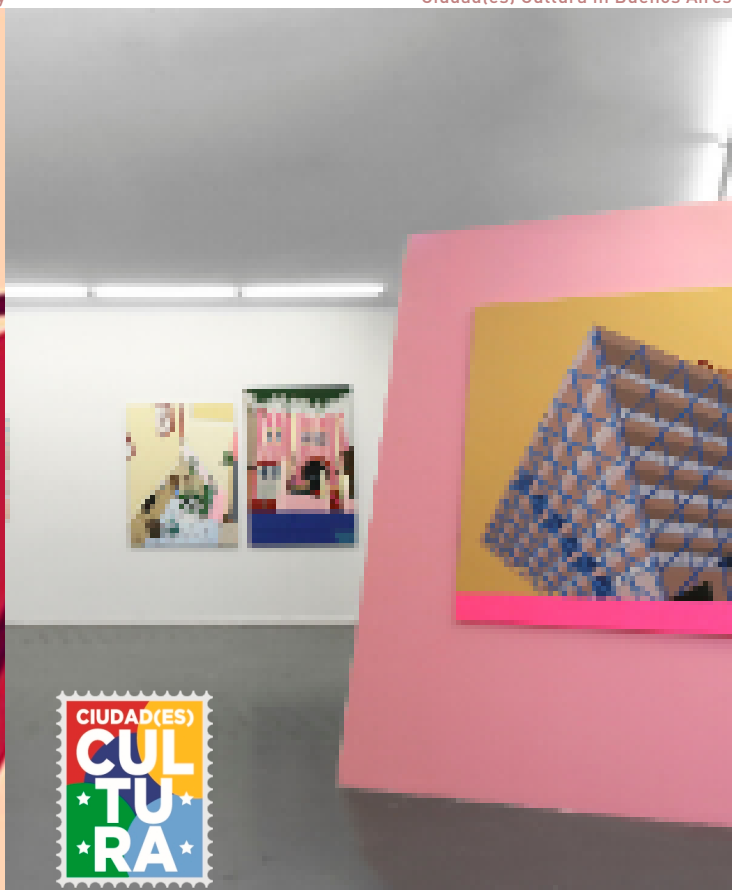
The current situation faced around the world, with the need for physical distance, implies a new understanding of cultural participation, a reinvention for the cultural sector and a greater opening to the digital world. The impossibility of participating in cultural life in many conventional ways during the lockdown has multiplied the creation of new possibilities for access to heritage and knowledge, including access to digital library resources, virtual visits to museums and visual arts exhibitions, and the increase of concerts and theatre, dance and opera performances online. Much of this cultural content is available through existing or specially dedicated platforms and communication tools designed by municipal, national or international institutions.

## 1.1. DIGITAL ACCESS TO CULTURAL RESOURCES

A large number of cities are using digital platforms to share information and cultural contents while helping to ease the isolation and the feeling of unease of citizens. **Mexico City** launched "**Capital Cultural en Nuestra Casa**", an initiative to share a wide range of digitalised cultural resources such as museum exhibitions, literature, cinema, and streaming events like theatre, opera and ballet performances, concerts, festivals and celebrations, and TV and radio programmes. The Autonomous City of **Buenos Aires** designed "**Cultura en Casa**", a platform with plenty of cultural content so citizens feel at the centre of the cultural community.

Ciudad(es) Cultura in Mexico City

Ciudad(es) Cultura in Buenos Aires



**Bogotá** launched “**Bogotá Creadora en Casa**”, an initiative that shared strategies to promote the full exercise of citizenship and cultural rights, through the principle that “every citizen is a creator” and care for others is in itself one of the most valuable acts of creation that can be promoted in this context. The platform includes access to Bogotá music scene, literature, art, and city’s heritage.<sup>3</sup> **Barcelona** implemented the initiative **#BarcelonaTacompanya** with the online cultural agenda of the city under the motto “Malgrat tot, no parem” (‘In spite of all, we keep on’).

Mexico City, Buenos Aires, Bogotá and Barcelona have come together to celebrate diversity and enrich culture through the creation of a digital content exchange platform “**Ciudad (es) Cultura**”. The initiative, designed to make art, culture and creation a broad bridge of solidarity and integration for Latin America, was carried out with the participation of UCLG Culture Committee.



Ciudad(es) Cultura in Bogotá



Ciudad(es) Cultura in Barcelona

Similarly, **Rome** launched the initiative **#laculturaincasa**, which includes access and digital resources of libraries, virtual tours of museums, the contest **#FinestresuRoma**, as well as live online music, theatre and opera performances. The city of **Bilbao** created the initiative “**Me quedo en casa**” with a special agenda of cultural activities. The city of **Malmö** has also gathered performances and exhibitions online – theatre, opera, concerts, exhibitions, conversations with authors, tips on art activities for children, among others. In **Paris**, 14 city museums and cultural entities are giving free online access to more than 320.000 items, virtual visits of recent exhibitions or special contents for audiences. **Izmir Metropolitan Municipality** presented a new initiative: **Home concerts**, to bring music to the daily life of citizens during the quarantine. **La Paz** initiated the dissemination and promotion of artistic initiatives in digital media and developed the **Municipal Cultural Agenda** Online “Time to Love and Help Each Other”, in recognition of the labour rights of workers in culture and the arts.

<sup>3</sup> See the video “Creamos otras formas de estar juntos” (‘We create other forms of being together’) launched by the city of Bogotá to encourage new ways to have fun and transform daily spaces at home to let art, culture and sport in.



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In **Dublin**, the Culture Company launched activities online, including dance, singing, painting and poetry-writing to virtual online classes, and planned to support **cultural connections**. Culture Clubs and talks programmes moved online, and **Our City Our Books** started collecting recommended reads and sharing book suggestions by people who live in Dublin. **Trois Rivières** launched the movement **#enmodevirtuel** to bring together all the offer under a single address, in order to ensure the continuity of its actions in the cultural milieu. **Terrassa** also reinforced the connection with citizens involving them in **actions in different cultural fields** (visual arts, literature, cultural recommendations). The Library Network, the Museum and the Archive of the city organised special activities and different cultural sectors helped to create an online cultural agenda. In general, a greater awareness has raised the importance of online communication and tools.

In **Swansea**, **Fusion** Co-ordinator and Fusion Volunteers teamed up with Swansea Music Hub to create a weekly podcast “**Come Together Cast**”, bringing together good news, initiatives, live music and accessible online content from across the cultural and well-being sector. With weekly film and book recommendations from the Swansea Library service and the local independent cinema, the podcast provides a way for local residents to find out more about what is happening across the city and how they can get involved. The initiative will continue post lockdown. Moreover, Swansea Museum has transferred some of their regular **history talks** into a format which can be shared online successfully, with the support of organisations and volunteers. With a similar approach, **South Australia Government** launched the “**Open Your World**” campaign, which collates activities that the public can engage in to boost their health and well-being, including arts and culture. The project is delivered by SA Health and numerous partners, including Arts SA. **This page** lists the arts and culture initiatives, which are constantly being updated.

Some cities – such as **Bologna**, **Lisbon** and **Lyon** – are participating in the **ROCK programme**, which is based on the promotion of cultural heritage and historic city centres, and have reflected on democratic access and communication as well. **Eindhoven** is working to enable online participation of cultural stakeholders in all kind of projects, and **Vilnius** is fostering a more constructive new work culture based on public e-services, public hearings on architecture and urban development, and educational and training programmes. **Athens** is using the large amount of cultural content which was previously absent from the digital sphere and that was suddenly accessible as an opportunity to connect with local communities.

Culture Clubs in Dublin



Come Together Cast in Swansea



Open Your World



ROCK programme



**Greater Dandenong** created an **online cultural agenda**, with exhibition tours, curator talks, storytelling, workshops and many other online arts experiences. The **Greater Amman Municipality** initiated **distance education** programmes and training courses (with the Zaha Cultural Centers) for children and coaches. **Ankara** (Sincan Municipality) provided the opportunity to watch **online theatre performances** to citizens. **São Paulo** worked to make all SPCine Play **content available** online and free of charge, as well as festivals and other activities online. The **City Museum of Novosibirsk** created the project “Museum Quarantine”, aimed at bringing the history of the city to the citizens’ homes, with 90% of the projects being offered on-line, and in **Bamberg**, the Franconian newspaper “Fränkischer Tag” set up a **digital stage** for local freelance artists to showcase readings, performances, photo series, comedy and video installations to a broad audience. The artists can describe how the COVID-19 pandemic affects their profession and provide information related to donations.

Academia, organisations and networks immediately reacted to the outbreak developing communication tools and providing digital contents to the citizens as well. The **KPY team at the Bilgi University of Istanbul** initiated a **compilation of online cultural resources**, including events, film, literature, museum archives and exhibition tours, historical places and learning programmes, which is being updated regularly.



Cultural Agenda, Greater Dandenong

Distance education, Amman

Sao Paulo's SPCine

City Museum, Novosibirsk

The rapid increase in the use of virtual platforms to provide access to digitalised cultural resources and allow cultural creation during the COVID-19 crisis was vital, yet it also raised concerns related to rights and inequalities. One of the key issues is the fair distribution of income, among artists, intermediaries like Google, Amazon or Facebook, or the broadband providers.

The thematic session on “**Digital Technologies and the COVID-19 Pandemic**” organised in the framework of the **Live Learning Experience: Beyond the Immediate Response to the Outbreak** by **UCLG, UN Habitat** and **Metropolis** on 15 April 2020, highlighted that while technology has proved key to the response of COVID-19, ensuring citizens’ access to health services, culture, information and communication with competent authorities, local and regional governments are working to fight the digital divide as well and protecting citizens’ digital rights, including principles of privacy, freedom of expression and democracy.

The digital divide existed before the pandemic, and the crisis has made it even more acute, although this fact has not been visible in the media.



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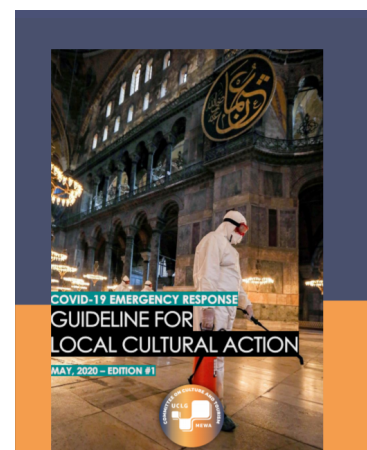
## 1.2. OPPORTUNITIES FOR MORE SUSTAINABLE MODELS OF CREATION, PRODUCTION AND CONSUMPTION

The pandemic is undoubtedly challenging the limits of societal and urban models that concentrate wealth and spread inequalities, and the incompatibility of current economic models with the fulfilment of human rights. To reverse this situation, some cities and local governments are encouraging the change of the current urban model through the lens of culture and innovation. There is a huge opportunity for new programmes that foster cultural proximity projects enabling access to culture, and with this view participatory projects that involve people and enable them to practice, co-create, participate, co-direct and co-curate must be reinforced. Local cultural sectors are demanding more flexible, more sustainable models of creation, production and consumption and bringing about change with appropriate measures.

As **Lucina Jiménez** states in her **article** “Culture in times of COVID-19: Nature claimed her kingdom”, “*the planet, suffering from global warming, shook humanity until it stopped the frenetic rhythm of millions of people. The global society designed for production and consumption suddenly had to work to stop doing so, to enter a period of slowness or inactivity.*” The redesign of the production, exhibition and enjoyment of arts and culture is already taking place as the economy acquires a less frenetic rhythm. The **Feminisms and Degrowth Alliance** points out that the crisis is not the **care-full social transformation** pursued by many, though. The transition to a new model of sustainability of life requires the recognition, regeneration and strengthening of ecological reproductive capacities and a radical transformation of markets and modes of exchange as modes of provisioning.

Different parts of the cultural sector have provided reflection on this matter. One of the relevant discussions at local and global level is taking place in the sphere of tourism; certain cultural activities, especially those related to heritage, tourism and crafts, have proved incompatible with the restrictions implemented due to COVID-19. The tourism industry should be encouraged to seek alternative cultural, environmental, social and economic models based on sustainability, with a more accurate analysis of the carrying capacity of sites, a better way to enjoy natural and cultural heritage sites together again, the digitalisation and, of course, the aim to empower local communities. Heritage assets and organisations are now in a vulnerable position and creativity is key to better cope with societal changes.

**UCLG MEWA**, which is using the tag #CulturalResilience to highlight initiatives regarding COVID-19 and the cultural landscape, presented the **report** “COVID-19 Emergency Response – Guideline for Local Cultural Action”, in English, Turkish and Arabic, to help provide a basis for local governments’ short or medium-term cultural response plans. The report highlights that there is no need to rush to reinstate the tourism flow; on the contrary, the period of closure should be an opportunity for the maintenance,



restoration and renovation of cultural venues, mostly neglected due to visitor influx, and to reflect on demand, now temporarily met with online tours and events. ICOMOS, the International Council of Monuments and Sites, encouraged everyone to celebrate the International Day for Monuments and Sites on 18 April remotely, **reviewing the traditional thinking on heritage** under the theme “Shared Cultures, Shared Heritage, Shared Responsibility”, which is also the overarching theme of the ICOMOS 20th General Assembly and Scientific Symposium (GA2020) that will take place in Sydney, Australia from 1-10 October 2020.

**ICCROM**, the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property, emphasised how **cultural #HeritageintimesofCOVID** is proving to be powerful in terms of resilience for communities, and shared tips and resources about the closure of heritage sites and institutions and other concerns. Currently,

ICCROM is preparing more insights into post-crisis recovery and the sustainable continuity of its initiatives. At European level, the **European Heritage Alliance** and **Europa Nostra** launched the **Europe Day Manifesto: Cultural heritage: a powerful catalyst for the future of Europe**. The Manifesto presents 7 interconnected ways to use the crisis to put culture at the heart of Europe’s revival, accelerating and further improving digital transformation; using traditional knowledge and skills to expand on mitigation and adaptation practices in order to help achieve the ambitious objectives of the European Green Deal; promoting more innovative and sustainable forms of tourism, generating higher quality experiences for visitors, and fostering global solidarity and cooperation, among others.



The **Foundation Romualdo Del Bianco** – International Institute Life Beyond Tourism – a **virtual platform** based in Florence for the mutual knowledge among cultures based on fundamental elements such as travel, youth, interculturality, cultural heritage, dialogue, knowledge, and respect based in Florence, launched: a) an **online course** to discuss heritage as a builder of peace, where the Foundation recognises special economic conditions of participation for UCLGA/ALGA affiliates; b) “**Art in our HeArt Web**” a project to promote virtual art galleries of artists, with virtual exhibitions and shops and free conditions until 30 June 2020, and c) “**Vo’ per Botteghe Web**” a project aimed at promoting online shops for artisans and crafts people.

### 1.3. THE PHYSICAL COMPONENT OF CULTURE

Confinement measures due to the pandemic have interrupted living heritage practices and cultural expressions around the world, as well as religious celebrations, but many cities have reformulated some of their activities instead of postponing or cancelling them. The city of **Ramallah** celebrated the holy month of Ramadan and the related

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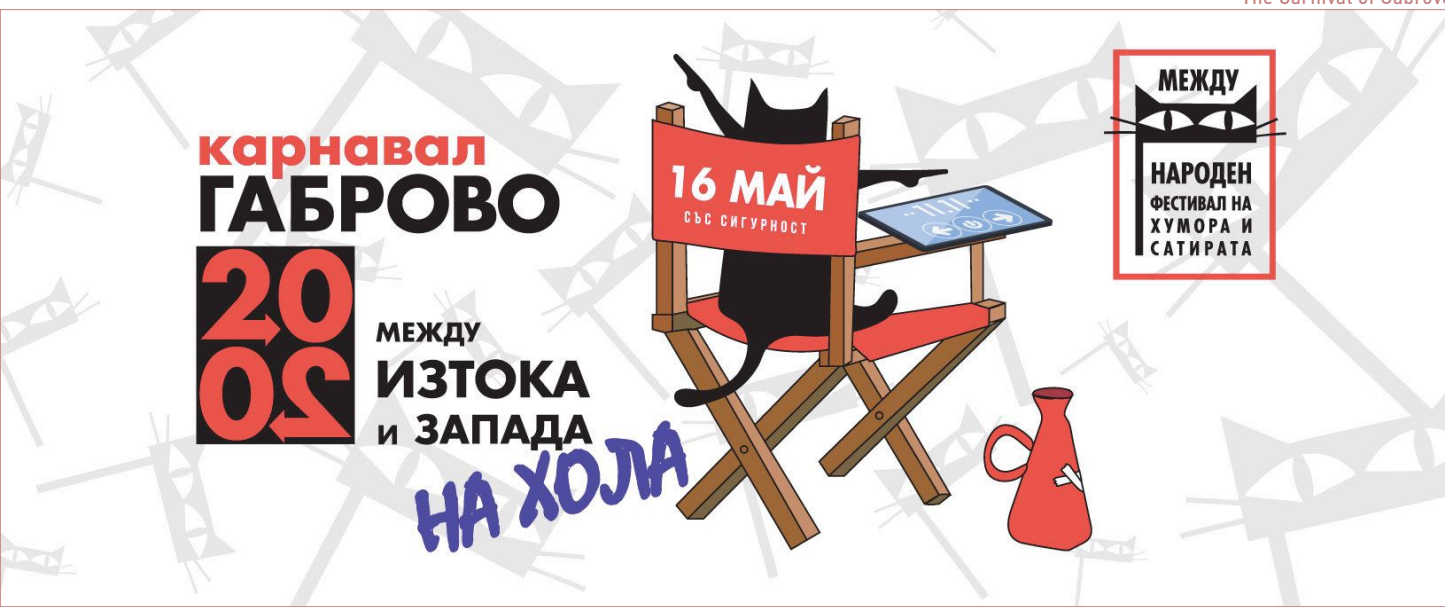
events were broadcast and streamed live for the citizens. Similar initiatives were undertaken in cities all around the world during the month. This Ramadan will never be forgotten: it has been an exceptional one because of the crisis.

**Aarhus** has turned a regular music concert into a **drive-thru event** at a newly constructed venue at the periphery of the city. The city of **Gabrovo** is preparing one of its main festivities, the **Carnival**, completely adapted to confinement and the virtual sphere, with new prizes adapted to the circumstances (awarding balconies, yards or windows as well as disguised families and carnival pets). **Bogotá**, with the strategy “Asómate a la Ventana” (‘Look Out the Window’) is taking moving libraries and literature, live workshops, dancing, music and movies to the most vulnerable neighbourhoods of the city. With the aim of reaching people who were in isolation, digitally excluded and those needing food parcels as well, different organisations from **Swansea** supported local cultural venues to create a physical **Culture Activity Pack** containing quizzes, arts activities, crosswords and seed packs, which went out to 300 homes across the city. The Conseil d’Arrondissement (Board of Directors) of Agdal-Ryad in the city of **Rabat** organised its annual Spring Festival for the first time online. The festival featured 65 webinars, 70.000 followers on social media, and the involvement of 19 NGOs, 9 partners, 4 private companies, and 53 experts from Morocco and from around the World, in an inclusive and participatory approach. **La Paz** is planning, in the long run, the generation of **alternative spaces** for cultural activities.

With the need to respect physical distancing, and the uncertainties about how to make use of public spaces, the implementation of progressive deconfinement measures must be carefully designed. In this respect, it is significant that one of the finalist teams of the **The Global Hack**, the biggest hackathon ever held organised from 7 to 10 April 2020 by the **UN SDG Action Campaign** in order to **co-create solutions** to the global health crisis and beyond, has designed a device to see how populated public spaces are and the best way to get to a location contacting with the least amount of people.

While online and digital technology has witnessed huge progress as lockdowns have been imposed and can have positive effects, enabling the creation of new opportunities as a tool for inclusivity, its development demands a wider framework.

The Carnival of Gabrovo



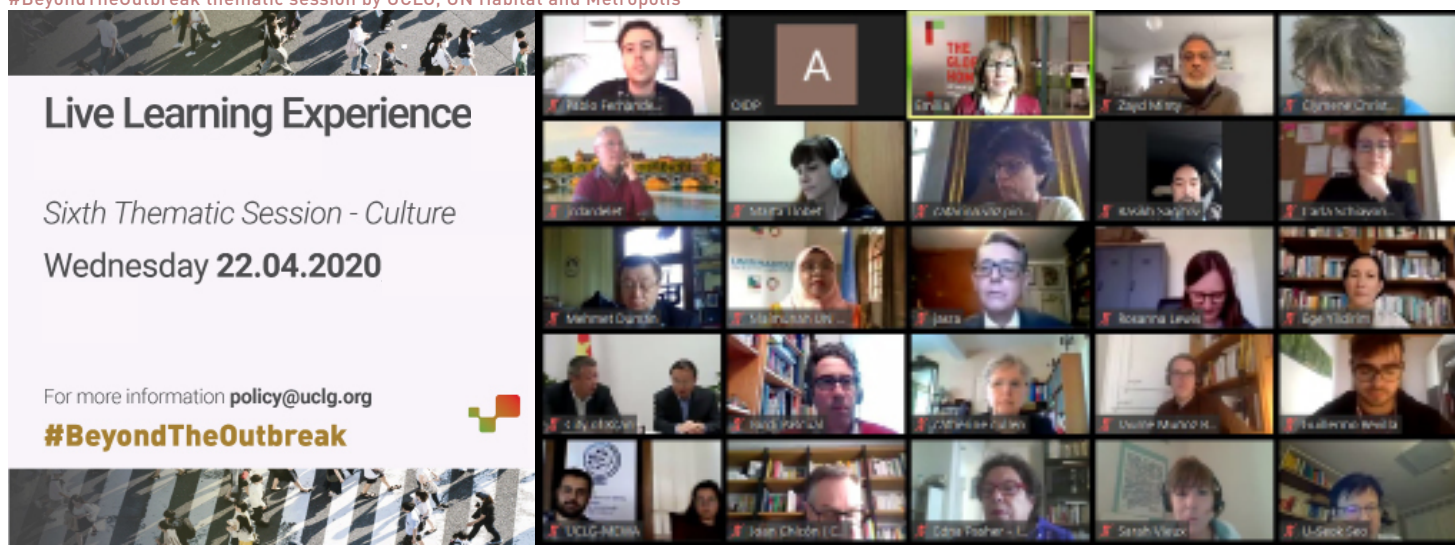
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People have turned to culture to create meaning, to show solidarity and to understand the situation we are living. There cannot be a better illustration of why culture needs to consolidate as the fourth pillar of sustainable development.

Local governments have started questioning what space digital culture will occupy in post confinement scenarios, and what the margin for coexistence with live culture experienced in urban spaces is, guaranteeing cultural rights as the principal premise in each case. The call to physical distance is a real challenge for cities. Many cultural activities take place in public spaces, either in cultural facilities or in squares, streets and parks. Moreover, the reflection of how people gather in public space in the context of physical distancing is even more relevant in specific contexts such as relatively young African cities, where most cultural practices are gathering-based, as Sipelele Ngobese from South Africa Cities Network, highlighted at the thematic session on “The cultural mobilisation in the COVID19 pandemic” organised in the framework of the **Live Learning Experience: Beyond the Immediate Response to the Outbreak** by UCLG, UN Habitat and Metropolis on 22 April 2020.

In these times of confinement and virtual gatherings, the call to physical distance is a real challenge for cities. Many cultural activities take place in public spaces, either in cultural facilities or in squares, streets and parks. Besides, whereas on-line and digital technology has witnessed a huge progress as the lockdowns were being imposed and can have positive effects, enabling the creation of new opportunities as a tool for inclusivity, its development demands a more ethical framework to tackle fundamental human rights. Thus, local governments have started questioning what space digital culture will occupy in the post confinement scenarios, and what is the margin for coexistence with live culture experienced in urban spaces, guaranteeing cultural rights as the principal premise in any case.

#BeyondTheOutbreak thematic session by UCLG, UN Habitat and Metropolis



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## The digital divide existed before the pandemic, and the crisis has made it even more acute, although this fact has not been visible in the media.

Indeed, as the lockdowns are slowly coming to an end and people gradually gain access to public spaces, to the spaces of culture, reflections on the nature that encounters should have in the post-COVID-19 era are on the rise. Culture and creative sectors are engaging in the global conversation on cities' resilience and the opportunity to reconquer physical public space, giving it new meaning, a new value and new uses. Sylvia Amann, Director of Inforelais and member of the European Capital of Culture selection and monitoring panel, comments on the involvement of European Capitals of Culture in this endeavour: *"The future of the cultural sector should not be concentrated on the digital. [...] We should concentrate some of our efforts on new cultural formats of encounter in which social distancing rules can be respected. The public space might play a crucial role in this sense – in urban and non-urban territories, also international mobility schemes for encounters with artists from all over the world when travel might become complex for broad audiences and so ensure cultural (access) rights and a broad view and debate on global challenges like climate change"*.

Urban public spaces are more than flows. They are the places where communities are created, and people can develop their potential as human beings. Physical cultural spaces determine the way people create, exchange, experience, enjoy and communicate arts and culture in cities. The Special Rapporteur on Cultural Rights, in her **report on Cultural Rights and Public Spaces**, affirmed "the responsibility of public authorities to create, protect, secure, develop and maintain open and inclusive public spaces for the exercise of all human rights and cultural rights in particular". The future should be virtual and real at the same time.

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## 2. The economic and financial sustainability of the cultural sector

Cultural economy is an important area of policy intervention related to the impact of the COVID-19 crisis. The cultural ecosystem is one of the most severely affected. The COVID-19 pandemic has created an environment of extreme uncertainty and has provoked huge implications for the economic and financial sustainability of the cultural ecosystem. The specific vulnerability of cultural work had not been fully acknowledged before the crisis, and the current situation is exacerbating the precarious situations in which cultural workers (very often self-employed and freelancers) find themselves in. Besides, the COVID-19 pandemic is disrupting the cultural ecosystem and most cultural initiatives and organisations are being forced to restructure or cancel their programmes due to the principle of physical distancing.

### 2.1. MEASURES IMPLEMENTED AT LOCAL LEVEL

Some of the concrete measures implemented by cities and local governments at economic level are the following:

- **Lisbon** has announced a set of extraordinary measures. These include the extended support system to agents and entities in the cultural sector through the municipal mechanism “Social Emergency Fund”, which includes €250,000 for urgent and immediate financial support for agents and entities and €1 million to reinforce the city’s cultural programme to agents not covered by other support systems. Other measures include the full exemption from the payment of rents of all social, cultural, sporting or recreational institutions installed in municipal spaces until 30th June, and the full payment for the contracts already signed by cultural entities.
- On 18 March 2020, **Barcelona** launched ten measures to support culture in the city, including a special subsidy of €1 million, with particular attention to the weakest structures linked to grassroots culture; advanced payments for companies and artists; a special investment of €1 million for the city’s libraries; the reorganisation of the calendar of large events and festivals to avoid cancellations, and the expansion of programmes to include as many cancelled productions as possible. On 15 May 2020 a **second package** of eleven measures was launched with an investment of an additional €1,670,000, including aid for the physical adaptation of cultural spaces in the post-Covid-19 scenario and a new Citizens’ Office of Culture.



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## Cultural rights are fundamental to citizens freedoms and development and are the most suitable frames for the long-term public policies of cities and local governments

- In **Rome**, immediate policy interventions aimed at guaranteeing the continuity of payment and funds disbursement to cultural agents for the next three years and simplification of existing procedures; reducing or temporarily abolishing some taxes directly related to cultural spaces, allocating new resources to distribute among local cultural operators in coordination with the 15 Rome sub-municipalities, and reorganising the data gathering system and analysis of cultural institutions at local, regional and national levels, including the most invisible and fragile workers not tracked in existing systems.
- **Malmö** monitored the impact of the pandemic. Amongst measures announced as a result, it was decided not to require repayment of grants for cultural activities that were cancelled or postponed. Premises hired from the Department of Culture are subject to a rent pause for 3 months, with repayment plans available as well. In addition, support for dialogue with private landlords is being offered. As foundation schools did not close in Sweden, some artists/companies are able to offer performances to school classes, but in the case that these have been cancelled the performers will be fully reimbursed.
- In **São Paulo**, some of the economic measures included the extension of the registration to PROMAC – Municipal Support for Cultural Projects (with a total investment of R\$30 million in tax incentives); the anticipation of the launch of notices that were scheduled for the months of April and June with a budget of R\$63,750,000; online cultural training budgets and artistic production budgets; the hiring of cultural freelancers without income to generate online content, the relocation of signed contracts related to the use of cultural facilities, and the support of low-income artists and residents through the project “Online Library”.
- **La Paz** planned actions in the short, medium and long term to help mitigate the economic emergency affecting the artistic and cultural sector. Those actions include: a) the establishment of a Funding Scheme for Cultural Actors; b) the development of two phases of the Grants Call for Culture and the Arts – FOCUART, and the rescheduling dates and release of payment for the use of municipal venues; c) the organisation and development of Forums for the Sustainability of Art Workers, and generation of alternative spaces for culture.

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- **Paris** considered guaranteeing a minimum pay level for artists and technicians whose performances were cancelled. The city is also paying broadcasting and creation aids previously signed, even if the initially scheduled number of performances is not reached. On May 18, the Mayor of Paris presented an endowment fund of €15 million to support the city's cultural entities in accordance with their needs. Paris also issued a questionnaire to learn about measures taken in the city's music and art schools, performing arts and museum and historical sites.
  - **Terrassa** is working to ensure the maintenance of existing lines of subsidies and to increase and speed up their payment. The city also implemented a package of aid for creation and production aimed at local professional or emergent creators from all fields; reprogrammed the activities scheduled for March/April/May in the fields of performing arts, music and visual arts, and expanded the days and shows of the summer cycle "Fem estiu" ('We Make Summer'). Besides, Terrassa is offering advice and continuous online support to cultural workers.
  - In **London**, the Mayor's Culture at Risk office is working to ensure those affected by the COVID-19 crisis get the support they need. A £2.3m emergency fund was launched to help some of London's most at risk creative and night-time businesses: grassroots music and LGBTQ+ venues, creative workspaces and independent cinemas. A list of resources for the cultural and creative sector, and night economy, including advice, guidance and support schemes, is also available and regularly updated.
  - The **Brussels** Government and the French and Flemish Community Commissions approved unprecedented measures for € 8.4 million. Measures were aimed at supporting the whole cultural and creative sectors (with a single regional sectoral bonus of €2,000), and in particular Brussels non-profit organisations and intermittent cultural workers (exceptional aid of up to € 1,500 from a € 5 million fund).
  - In **Krakow**, the "**Resistant Culture**" package has been put in place to strengthen and raise the pool for prizes and scholarships for creators and artists, and to enrich cultural activities and works created during the pandemic. In addition to financial and organisational support instruments, an important part of the programme is devoted to developing policies and programmes aimed at enabling the exchange of resources, knowledge and ideas with a strong commitment towards inclusion and accessibility, cultural education and natural environment.
  - **Berlin** built an emergency relief programme for freelancers and small businesses. Online grant and bridging loan applications were launched rapidly in partnership with the local bank Investitionsbank Berlin (IBB), offering €5,000 to freelancers and up to €15,000 to small businesses. €500 million



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were distributed during the first four days. Previously, Berlin's association of visual artists, bbk berlin, conducted an online survey that revealed that more than half of the city's artists anticipated losing at least 75 percent of their monthly income due to the lockdown.

- **Sydney** endorsed A\$3.5 million in three new funding initiatives to support cultural and creative organisations: a) The Cultural Sector Resilience Grant Programme for not-for-profits and sole traders; b) The Sector-Led Crisis Support Fund, that provides direct donations to online platforms which are raising funds to provide emergency relief and mental health support to local cultural workers in crisis, and c) The Creative Fellowships Fund for artists. The Small Business Grants Program, valued at \$ 2 million, was launched as well.
- In **Linz**, the funding guidelines for the cultural sector were adjusted. The cultural, sports and social associations received the city grants even if the planned events could not take place due to the extraordinary circumstances. Other measures included the raising of studio rental subsidies for visual artists and project-related work grants.
- As part of the city response, **Melbourne** initially committed A\$2 million in grants to artists and creatives to invest in new works, and digital presentation of works and performances. Due to the strength of applications and overwhelming response from the creative community, the city allocated additional funds – providing almost A\$2.5 million to local artists.
- In **Vienna**, until April 29, freelance artists and freelance scientists with their main residence in the city could apply for one-time work grants of up to €3,000. Annual funding for cultural organisations remained in place even for reduced or closed operations. The cultural department is working to ensure that the **funding system** is maintained and that grants can be paid out despite difficult conditions.
- **Hong Kong** Arts Development Council (HKADC) first launched the “Support Scheme for Arts & Cultural Sector” before Chinese New Year to strengthen support towards small and medium-sized arts organisations and arts practitioners whose activities were cancelled or impacted in 2019, with a budget of HK\$5m. In view of the continual worldwide risk of COVID-19, HKADC is extending the affected period of the Scheme for two more months.

This wide range of emergency measures with a direct economic impact as initial response to the crisis and with the view to ensure the survival of the cultural sector during the quarantine phase and beyond can also be classified in a more analytical way as follows:<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> See “**Ciutats i Covid-19. Plans de xoc per a la cultura**” (‘Cities and Covid-19. Emergency plans for culture’), a document elaborated by the Centre d’Estudis i Recursos Culturals (CERC) of Diputació de Barcelona (Barcelona Regional Government) that analyses measures implemented by some cities based on the cases provided by UCLG Culture Committee on the webpage “**The cultural mobilization of cities and local governments in the COVID-19 crisis**”.

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## The COVID-19 pandemic has created an environment of extreme uncertainty and has provoked huge implications on the economic and financial sustainability of the cultural ecosystem

### **EXTRAORDINARY MEASURES AND SUBSIDIES FOR THE CULTURAL SECTOR**

One of the most used formulas to alleviate the crisis is the endowment of extraordinary subsidies for culture. Calls have been opened for the whole of the cultural sector, including cultural organisations and companies (**La Paz, Hong Kong, Berlin, Paris, Brussels**) and others are specifically aimed at grassroots cultural organisations and individual professionals (**Austin, Boston, Cambridge -USA-, Denver, Detroit, New York, Hobart -Australia-, Melbourne, Sydney, Hong Kong, Bogotá, Berlin and Brussels**).

Some cities offer financial support for the maintenance of the structures of cultural organisations that have had their activity reduced or suspended due to Covid-19 (**Sydney, Hong Kong, Vienna, Lisbon**). In addition to these measures, some cities are maintaining support for activities that could not be carried out due to the health emergency and are paying out quick subsidies granted before the current situation (**Montréal, Linz, Vienna, Terrassa, Lisbon**), even though the organisations may not be able to comply in full with the agreements (**Linz, Vienna, Barcelona, Malmö, Seville**).

In order to guarantee and adapt the functioning of the regular funding system for the cultural sector, different strategies have been implemented. Some cities have offered support, dissemination and recruitment of cultural professionals to generate extra online content during the lockdown period (**La Paz, São Paulo, Vienna, Terrassa**). Others have advanced granted amounts (or part of them) for deferred programming in different sectors (**Rome, Barcelona**). A third group of measures entail extraordinary investment in stocks and resources of libraries (**Montevideo, Barcelona, Lisbon**) and public and visual art (**Lisbon**).

### **TAX, RENT AND FEE EXEMPTIONS OR REDUCTIONS**

Another package of measures is aimed at facilitating the payment of municipal taxes or fees of cultural organisations. Some cities have offered a deferral of the payment of municipal taxes to the citizens (**Montreal, Rome**); other cities have implemented a temporary exemption from rental payments for cultural organisations and practitioners using municipal spaces (**La Paz, Sydney, Linz, Lisbon, Malmö**). In other cases, measures involve the exemption of fees for specific cultural sectors such as audio-visual (**Barcelona**).

## CHANGES IN CULTURAL PROGRAMMING

Regarding measures related to necessary changes in cultural programming due to the principle of physical distancing, some cities have adapted previously contracted activities for online transmission (**São Paulo, Lisbon, Malmö**). Other measures include the rescheduling of cancelled events (**São Paulo, Barcelona, Terrassa, Lisbon**) as well as the reorganisation of the calendar of events to avoid cancellations, yet this last measure is affected by the uncertainty of the evolution of the pandemic (**La Paz, São Paulo, Barcelona, Terrassa**).

## TRAINING AND CAPACITY BUILDING

Finally, some cities have implemented training and capacity building programmes, focusing on advisory service to cultural actors and collectives in **São Paulo, Sydney, London, Lisbon, Seville** and **Terrassa**. In **London**, the Mayor's **Culture at Risk** office offers specific services such as providing sector-specific research, evidence and guidance; connecting individuals and organisations with expert support; providing capacity-building resources, and facilitating conversations with local authorities to cultural, creative industries and night time businesses to ensure those affected by the COVID-19 crisis get the support they need.

## 2.2. MULTILEVEL COLLABORATION REQUESTS

In order to prevent more negative impact on artists and cultural actors, which is already significant, some local governments have taken a stand in favour of advocating for financial support from federal and national governments. The need to create specific policy and budgetary frameworks that allow preventing crises is vital. Thus, many local, federal and national levels are collaborating to develop financial support mechanisms, including economic stimulus and aid packages, to be rapidly effective. Attention to community-based projects are also a priority to prevent the crisis from undermining the cultural fabric of cities even more. Many cultural organisations, actors and agents across the world have demanded support from governments to overcome the crisis.

Such is the case of **Bulawayo Cultural and Creative Representatives**, who have released a **Public Statement** to Bulawayo City Council, the National Arts Council of **Zimbabwe**, the Ministry of Youth Sports, Arts and Recreation and other stakeholders, which summarises their requests resulting from the meeting convened by Nhimbe Trust on the 16th of March 2020.

At European level, in order to cope with the consequences of COVID-19 on Creative Europe and the European cultural and creative sectors, **structured civil society** has taken action and written letters and manifestos to demand support.





**Culture Action Europe** wrote the **letter** “Remaining together in times of crisis” to European institutions, requesting measures to support the sustainability of the cultural ecosystems. CAE also wrote a **joint open letter** to Commissioner Mariya Gabriel and Members of the Directorate General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture (DG EAC) on 20 March 2020, on behalf of European cultural networks, platforms and cultural organisations. The letter urged them to consider flexibility measures related to eligibility periods, eligibility of costs, replacement of activities and additional funding in the framework of the Creative Europe programme, and called on the European Commission to earmark part of the €25 billion emergency package to Europe’s economy specifically for the cultural and creative sectors. This was followed by a **statement**

calling on Member States to sustain culture in the EU budget, doubling the budget of Creative Europe to €2,6 billion and making sure that the additional funds stemming from the Next Generation EU initiative reach cultural operators. On 4 May 2020, the **European Cultural Foundation** and Culture Action Europe also launched a **joint statement, “The Future of Culture and Creative sectors in post COVID-19 Europe”**, in order to urge the European Parliament, European Commission and Member States to recognise cultural and creative sectors as an integral part of the recovery plan for Europe.



Another initiative in this regard is the “**Rescue the Arts: Plea to national governments**”, launched by **IETM** – International network for contemporary performing arts and cosigned by **Circostrada**, the **European Theatre Convention (ETC)**, **IN SITU**, the **European Dancehouse Network (EDN)** and the **European Festivals Association (EFA)** in several languages. The call points out that the cultural sector, in particular the performing arts - characterised by a high number of freelance and self-employed professionals, part-time contracts, flexible jobs, combined with limited access to social benefits - was the first to suffer from the early wave of national measures taken in response to the outbreak of COVID-19, and probably they will be the last ones to be able to

resume their regular activities. In this light, it urged national governments to act and provide:

- Access to unemployment payments and social benefits
- Support to culture and the arts through the EU Coronavirus Response Investment Initiative (for EU member states and the UK)
- Emergency and hardship funds formed by directing finances from other budget lines specially dedicated to mitigating the consequences of the COVID-19 crisis

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- Flexibility in all existing funding schemes
  - Increased investment in culture and the arts in 2020 and beyond
  - Preservation of the internationalisation budgets
  - Far-reaching debates on the current nature of the status of the artist
  - The possibility of introducing a universal basic income
  - Integration of culture and the arts in economic and social regeneration and future-transformation strategies

### 2.3. MEASURES IMPLEMENTED AT NATIONAL LEVEL

In view of the need to implement effective emergency measures to alleviate the most severely affected sectors at national level and given the demand from local governments and civic society, many national governments have implemented economic measures addressed to the cultural sectors. The measures seem to have a positive correlation to the political will of the government, but also the strength of the national cultural system and the capacity of the national purse to invest further. The **Compendium of Cultural Policies and Trends** has **mobilised its experts** to monitor European countries' COVID-19 related developments within the cultural sector. The following are some illustrative cases of the response of national governments at European and global level.<sup>5</sup>

#### EXTRAORDINARY MEASURES AND SUBSIDIES FOR THE CULTURAL SECTOR

Some countries have invested considerable amounts in extraordinary subsidies for culture, especially in hardship funds to support cultural institutions and sectors: **Canada** established a CA\$500m COVID-19 Emergency Support Fund for cultural, heritage and sport organisations; In **Kenya**, the government created a fund of KES200m per month to give artists a minimum wage; In **China**, funds have also been announced at a regional level, including US\$56m by the Government of Guangdong Province; **Austria** launched a hardship fund of €2bn; **the Netherlands** provided a €300m package; **Arts Council England** made £160m of emergency funding available for organisations and individuals; **New Zealand** released US\$9.6m for artists and cultural associations; **Italy** provided €130m for the performing arts, cinema and the audio-visual sectors; **Sweden** allocated SEK819m (€78m) in crisis support to state cultural institutions, cultural associations and independent arts producers; **Spain** provided €38.2m for the structural expenditure of cultural organisations and companies, and **Germany** offered \$54bn aid package available for small businesses and self-employed workers. Other measures include an increase in existing funds, support to freelancers, funds for members of collecting societies in the field of music, and direct support to cinemas and independent bookstores.

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<sup>5</sup> See **Compendium of Cultural Policies and Trends** as well as UNESCO's **Culture & COVID-19: Impact & Response Tracker**.

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As for the measures implemented to guarantee and adapt the functioning of the regular funding system for the cultural sector, **Austria** has offered full payment of annual funds even if not all activities can take place, and has provided individual tailored solutions for artists and cultural institutions regarding events and projects funded by ministries affected by cancellations or postponements as well; **Arts Council England** has changed the funding requirements for individuals and organisations currently in receipt of funding; the **Republic of Korea** has announced a budget of US\$2.5m to give artists preferential access to loans; **Spain** has advanced funding totally or partially for audio-visual productions, being the 50% of the payment of granted support anticipated before the beginning of filming, in order to generate liquidity, and has devoted €20m to a special fund that would guarantee loans worth €780m.

### **TAX, RENT AND FEE EXEMPTIONS OR REDUCTIONS**

Regarding tax, rent and fee exemptions or reductions, measures include the deferral and reduction of taxes (social security contributions) in the cases of **Austria, Mexico, Ireland, Poland, Switzerland, France, Luxembourg, Malaysia, the Netherlands** and **Italy**; VAT reduction on e-books (up to 4%) and tax incentives for production companies of fiction, animation and documentary series to support local industry in **Spain**; tax incentives by means of income tax relief to finance cultural projects in **Austria** and a 5% deduction in **Spain**; loosening of tax obligations for cinemas and decrease of the rent for concert halls in the **Republic of Korea**.

### **WORK CONDITIONS OF THE ARTS SECTOR**

National governments have also designed specific measures for the work conditions of the arts sector. **Spain** has implemented changes in the conditions for artists and technicians applying for unemployment, accelerated access to unemployment programmes and the creation of special crisis benefits. Other countries like the **Netherlands** have temporarily reduced the work schedule, and in **Austria**, the work schedule can be reduced to 10% and employees remain in stable employment with nearly their full wages. **Support Act - Australia's** only charity delivering **crisis relief services** to artists, crew and music workers as a result of ill health, injury, a mental health problem, or some other crisis that impacts on their ability to work in music - received nearly A\$20m in government funding to support the wellbeing and mental health of artists and arts workers across art forms during the COVID19 pandemic through the Wellbeing Helpline, a free confidential service available 24/7, staffed by professional clinicians familiar with issues faced by people working in music and the arts.

### **CHANGES IN CULTURAL PROGRAMMING**

The online transmission of cultural activities is one of the notable measures implemented at national level. In **Italy**, state theatres and opera houses are shifting

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their programmes to free online channels and museums are offering their collections and exhibitions for free online as well. Due to the postponement and cancellation of cultural activities, this country has substituted reimbursement of tickets by vouchers of the same value to be used within one year. In the case of the audio-visual sector, the concept of “commercial release” has been redefined the way that films in streaming or on television are considered for released in **Spain**.

## TRAINING AND CAPACITY BUILDING

In South Australia, **Music SA** - a non-for-profit organisation committed to promoting, supporting and developing contemporary music - is offering Industry Development Phone Consultations for free with Music SA's expert staff to cities, organisations, businesses and artists. It has also developed a dedicated **COVID-19 resource guide** that is among the most thorough there. It includes guides for musicians on live streaming, using Twitch, accounting tips in times of COVID-19, online courses, etc.

## 2.4. MEASURES IMPLEMENTED AT INTERNATIONAL LEVEL

At global level, the **Culture & COVID-19: Impact & Response Tracker** launched by **UNESCO** on 14 April 2020 provides an overview of the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on the culture sector worldwide and on the responses initiated at the national, local and regional level. For the moment five issues have been published, highlighting emergency financial aid measures adopted in different countries, the closing of cultural institutions and archaeological and heritage sites, the cancellation of cultural events, the suspension of community cultural practices and the restriction or full cancellation of worldwide tourist destinations, among other actions. UNESCO also launched **ResiliArt**, a **global movement** with artists and cultural professionals to raise awareness about the effects of COVID-19 on their livelihoods, and opened webpages devoted to disseminating the **activities** undertaken by the **Creative Cities Network** (for instance, the **WeRculture campaign**), and monitoring the **World Heritage Sites closures**.

The recently published UNESCO report “**Freedom & Creativity. Defending art, defending diversity**” also provides an overview of the efforts that governments and civil society are making to maintain sustainable, free and diverse environments for the promotion of cultural life. Although the report was written before the crisis, in the chapter “Advancing the social and economic rights of artists”, it presents

UNESCO Impact & Response tracker



UNESCO World Heritage Sites Closures



UNESCO WeRculture campaign







measures related to social protection, fair remuneration and taxation of artistic and cultural work being implemented in states and regions, with the collaboration of cultural networks and actors. It also points to flaws in the status of artists and culture professionals; considerably weakened by the crisis. During this period, the digital environment has become crucial to access and disseminate cultural life. The report emphasises the relationship between digital technologies and the rights of artists and cultural workers, emphasising issues related to intellectual property and fair income distribution: *“Artists rely on the Internet and social media to share their work and to find new markets in order to survive economically. Artists are thus forced into a vulnerable position of having to balance exposure with retaining ownership of their work.”*

Besides of the need to support the culture sector in the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, debates on how culture can support society in the economic upturn are taking place at different levels as well, especially the need for the financial recovery to be environmentally sustainable. **Europa Nostra**, in co-operation with **ICOMOS**, and in partnership with the **Climate Heritage Network** and the **European Heritage Alliance**, have launched a project on the role of culture in the recovery and how can culture help build a green recovery with the **European Green Deal** (EGD) at its core, as stated by the **European Commission**. The “European Heritage Green Paper” is a policy analysis that spotlights the role cultural heritage can play in achieving the ambitions of many of the key elements of the EGD, which need to be at the heart of the COVID-19 recovery, including Clean Energy, Circular Economy, Sustainable and Smart Mobility, Building Renovation, Sustainable Food Systems. The “**European Heritage Green Paper**” will capitalise and build on the enormous pool of experience and expertise of the organisations, networks and actors involved, and it will also collect examples of relevant existing European projects and initiatives on the topic of climate and heritage.



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### 3. Monitoring, impact data and analysis

From the first days of confinement, measures emerged to monitor immediate response strategies, especially at local level, with attention to those which could mitigate risk and ensure the sustainability of the livelihoods of artists and cultural professionals. Research and data collection on the economic impact of the crisis and its spill-over effects has proved crucial to finding adequate alternatives for the deconfinement period and beyond. It has made it possible to form an overall view and compare the strategies that governments, cultural networks, organisations and actors are adopting to support the cultural sector in different parts of the world. It enables better planning for recovery and anticipates new paths for culture.

The city of **Rome** is working on the **reorganisation of data gathering systems** and analysis of cultural institutions and activating a local system to monitor the sector (including fragile workers not yet tracked by existing systems) and its long-term impact. At national and regional level, the city is contributing to data collection gathered to follow-up the evolution of the crisis closely. In **Malmö**, the Culture Department is constantly **monitoring impact** on the sector and is aware on the difficulty of building-up a “functioning, vital cultural life after such an extraordinary situation”.

Surveys are one of the methods used to track the organic responses to the crisis by cities, networks, organisations and think tanks in the field of cultural policies. **Paris** issued a **survey** to learn about measures taken in the city's music and art schools, performing arts, museums and historical sites, designed to provide information for the deconfinement period and beyond. **Minneapolis** prepared a brief **survey** to help understand how COVID-19 is impacting cultural organisations and populations. Responses are also helping to inform the Minneapolis Foundation's strategy for addressing the immediate and longer-term ripple effects of COVID-19. **Bogotá** also launched a survey to identify the most vulnerable artists in the ecosystem in order to assign subsidies both in cash and food supply. **Leeds** is collaborating with other cities, under the Leeds City Region designation, to develop a shared understanding of the impacts of Coronavirus (Covid-19) on the region's creative sector through the **COVID19 Impacts Survey**. The responses to this survey are being analysed and are seen as being vital to understanding the current and likely future position of cultural and creative industries across Leeds, and to planning initiatives to best support the sector in the coming year.

At global level, **UNESCO** launched an online **survey** to get a clearer idea of the scale of the impact and to identify good practices that draw on living heritage as a source of resilience. **UCLG Africa** and its flagship programme **#AfricanCapitalsCulture** launched a **survey** to help assess the impact of the crisis on the cultural, creative and tourism

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sectors. The **WCCF** collected evidences from members on the crucial importance of **sharing data and intelligence** for recovery and renewal. **ENCATC** – European Network on Cultural Management and Policy – is working to boost knowledge exchange even as the mobility of academics, researchers, cultural professionals and artists is heavily restricted. To this purpose, a **survey** has been launched jointly with the Réseau de coopération des acteurs du patrimoine culturel en Pays de la Loire. In its turn, the **IMC** – International Music Council – is exploring the impact of COVID-19 in the music sector. The European section of IMC has released a communiqué and a **survey** as well. The **ROCK opinion survey** tool was used to follow-up initiatives of participating cities in addressing the coronavirus crisis. One last example, at national level, is the **survey** to assess the impact of COVID-19 in the arts and culture sector in the Philippines elaborated by the **Nayong Pilipino Foundation**.

Some organisations and networks have reported the impacts of the crisis on specific cultural sectors. The **Local Government Association** (LGA) drew attention to the **rapid increase** in the number of residents using digital library resources and called for investment to enable libraries to increase their capacity in loaning more e-books and audiobooks. **NEMO**, the Network of European Museum Organisations, has published an initial report on the **severe impacts** of the corona crisis on museums all over Europe. The report includes data on weekly budget losses, strategies to cope with the situation internally and an overview of how museums increase their digital presence. The **Compendium of Cultural Policies and Trends** mobilised its authors to **monitor** COVID-19 related developments within the cultural sector at national level, and so did the **Cultural Policy Researchers Forum**, which is also analysing the **impacts** of the crisis.

At national and international level, the French **Observatoire des Politiques Culturelles** has issued a **newsletter** with news on COVID-19 distributed in three sections: “Observatoire de la crises”; “Dispositifs solidaires” and “Kit de survie Culturelle”, and provides free access to its review. **ENCATC** launched a **Creative #StayHome Pack**, with positive phenomena and innovative ideas from the cultural and educational community that are being generated due to the Covid-19 challenges. **“I Lost My Gig Australia”**, an initiative of the **Australian Festivals Association** (AFA) and the **Australian Music Industry Network** (AMIN), was established as a short-term quick response data capture project to quantify the immediate impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Australian cities’ live event and entertainment industries. The

OPC Newsletter



WCCF Collection



“I Lost My Gig Australia”



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latest tally is \$340 million of lost income from cancelled gigs. **Nhimbe Trust** created a **dedicated website**: The Cultural and Creative Industries Observatory for COVID-19. **On the Move** and **Circostrada** maintain an **impressive list of resources** on art, culture and cultural mobility. The International Federation of Coalitions for Cultural Diversity (**IFCCD**) has monitored the initial measures and released the report "**Support for the cultural sector is growing around the world... unevenly**". **Hyperallergic**, the international online publication that shares contemporary perspectives on art and culture, published a **Daily Report** on "How COVID-19 Is Impacting the Art World" up to April 30. **Creative Generation**, which connects and amplifies the work of individuals and organisations committed to cultivating the creative capacities of young people, launched the global movement **#KeepMakingArt**: A Campaign To Inspire Hope And Connection to spark joy, inspire action, and bring togetherness. **Arts Council England** created a webpage with the **latest advice**, guidance and emergency funding measures the Arts Council, government and several external organisations put in place to address the crisis, and **Arts Professional** has created a microsite to make these uncertain times more tolerable by sharing **news, ideas and resources**. **Creative Scotland** shared a **Resource Directory** on culture and COVID-19 with information on funding and resources available to those in the creative community.

Some organisations prepared specific events as well: The **Culture Funding Watch**, in partnership with the Rambourg Foundation, called for a **virtual conference on "Art Emergency Funding"** and published a report of the event, attended by 300 people from Africa, Asia, Europe, America and Australia. **OECD** organised the webinar "**COVID-19 and museums. Impact, innovations and planning for post-crisis**" and "**COVID-19 and cultural and creative sectors. Impact, policy responses and opportunities**".

UNESCO launched a global call to creatives to help spread public health messages in effective, accessible and shareable ways, and encouraged people to **share knowledge rather than the virus** using the tags #ShareCulture, #ShareHeritage, #ShareEducation, #ShareSciences, #ShareKnowledge and #ShareInformation in social media. A special **webpage** with an interactive map was launched to collect cultural initiatives from around the world as well. The **European Commission** asked **beneficiaries of the Creative Europe Programme** to showcase their art work using #CreativeEuropeAtHome. The platform **Creative FLIP**, operated by the **European Creative Hubs Network** and the **Goethe Institut**, was also created as "a platform by the cultural and creative sectors to the cultural and creative sectors" to share information and good practices between themselves. Creative FLIP gathers initiatives and information related to the cultural and creative sectors in the EU in response to the COVID-19 crisis.

Nhimbe Trust's Observatory

OECD Webinars

EU Commission Creative Platform

**COVID-19**  
Cultural & Creative Industries



**Webinars on  
Culture & COVID-19**



Artists & Creatives  
Community  
Covid-19  
Resource Platform

A platform by the  
cultural & creative sectors  
for the cultural & creative sectors

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The lockdown has multiplied the creation of new possibilities for access to heritage and knowledge, including access to digital library resources, virtual visits to museums and visual arts exhibitions, and the increase of concerts and theatre, dance and opera performances online.

In parallel to the launch of initiatives to share knowledge and cultural resources, cultural institutions like museums, archives and libraries have activated projects to collect oral, written, audio-visual and material **memory of the pandemic**, inviting everyone to participate in the creation of the memory of the future. **Barcelona** and **Terrassa** are creating and gathering documents, images and videos, among others, that will allow the interpretation of the impact of the pandemic at different levels. **Mexico City** has launched the initiative “**Bordando memorias desde el corazón**” (‘Embroidering memories from the heart’), a memorial space in which to share experiences, testimonies, messages, advice and words of accompaniment from those who said goodbye to a loved one. The initiative will also promote the creation of a physical space in which a memorial to the victims of COVID-19 will be located in the future, allowing society to gather around their memory. The State Library of **South Australia** has launched an online campaign to crowdsource material for a future collection that captures South Australia’s experience of COVID-19, including views of cities like **Adelaide**. “**Remember My Story – COVID-19**” offers an online collection point for users to upload and submit photos, videos, text and audio for inclusion in the State Library’s digital collection. These initiatives are part of cities’ cultural heritage and will constitute the **legacy** of this historical period for future generations.

Bordando memorias, Mexico City



Remember my Story, Adelaide



## 4. The protection and promotion of cultural rights

The protection and promotion of cultural rights, during the quarantine phase and beyond is one of the main concerns raised in the context of the COVID-19 crisis. Cities and cultural practitioners across the world have stressed the key role that access to culture and knowledge has over the effectiveness of local government responses addressing citizens' needs. Cultural rights are fundamental to citizens freedoms and development and are the most suitable frames for the long-term public policies of cities and local governments. Participation in cultural life, enjoying the freedom of artistic expression and creativity, developing individual and collective imagination, exchanging knowledge and cultural expressions while building communities, and expanding cultural resources, are the cultural rights of people. The full exercise of cultural rights is key to building social cohesion and regenerating community-based culture.

### 4.1. CULTURAL RIGHTS DURING THE PANDEMIC

The measures undertaken by governments in order to control the pandemic have included lockdowns, physical distancing as well as renewed awareness of information. Some of these measures, in specific countries, have had an impact on fundamental freedoms and human rights. In this difficult context, the United Nations **Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights (OHCHR)** has shared a guide, speeches, statements, op-eds and other materials about COVID-19 and its human rights dimensions, making clear that *"respect for human rights across the spectrum, including economic, social, cultural, and civil and political rights, will be fundamental to the success of the public health response and recovery from the pandemic."* The documents address the rights of women, older people, migrants, displaced people and refugees, persons with disabilities, children, indigenous people and minorities. Furthermore, the Special Procedures mandate holders of the Human Rights Council, including the Special Rapporteur on Cultural Rights, have prepared a joint questionnaire containing general and specific questions of relevance to their mandates. Government departments and public institutions, including regional and local governments, are encouraged to share existing reports and documentation on matters addressed in the questionnaire by June 2020.

The **Cultural Rights Defenders** report by **Karima Bennoune, UN Special Rapporteur on Cultural Rights**, is an excellent reference to frame future actions. The report highlights that, as an important constituency among human rights defenders, cultural rights defenders must be recognised, protected and supported. In the context of the COVID-19 crisis, discussion of the challenges and risks they face and





of the international legal framework protecting and enabling their work must remain a priority. The Special Rapporteur, in her **intervention** in the round table “Imagining the tomorrow”, at the thematic session on “The cultural mobilisation in the COVID19 pandemic” organised in the framework of the **Live Learning Experience: Beyond the Immediate Response to the Outbreak** by UCLG, UN Habitat and Metropolis on 22 April 2020, emphasised that cultural rights are equally important as other human rights and must remain at the core of the response to the crisis. She is currently setting out **Cultural rights and climate change**, aimed at addressing the threats posed by climate change to culture, heritage and the cultural rights guaranteed by international law, as well as the potential of culture to help avoid climate change and to adapt positively to the changes already taking place.

The city of **Rome** is leading the production of the **Rome Charter on Cultural Rights** with UCLG Culture Committee and many other cities, organisations and cultural stakeholders. The Charter is a document that shows the strong commitment of Rome to developing a vision for the future centred on cultural rights, and it also constitutes a collective response of UCLG cities and associations to the COVID-19 crisis and planning for the future recovery. As Luca Bergamo, Vice Mayor in charge of cultural development of Rome and Vice-president of the Committee on Culture of UCLG, explained on 29 May 2020, in his speech at the UCLG Executive Bureau: “COVID-19 has swept away the world we knew and revealed to many - previously unaware - several fragilities and injustices both of our societies and economies. The epidemic might be with us for a long time, and we will have to adapt to its presence. Its social and economic impact are vast and will last. (...) *Global actions are much needed. Thus, multilateralism shall be reinforced, and most importantly cities and local government shall play a much greater role in the global governance. (...) With the challenges it provokes, a crisis brings the responsibility to think beyond existing. If some good can come from COVID-19, it will be because we have been brave enough to imagine different, better, more sustainable ways of living together. Cultural participation is both necessary and instrumental to equity, justice and human dignity. In a word: it is essential to every city’s sustainable development.*” The first document of the 2020 Rome Charter was **released** on 29 May 2020, and the final document is expected to be presented at the end of September 2020.

The 2020 Rome Charter

**San Luis Potosí** is also implementing strategies and measures to favour the **exercise of cultural rights** in the face of the crisis. These actions include a) the emerging action plan “Resiliencies”, an initial package of components and budgets for the cultural sector; b) the COVID-19 Commission of the IberCultura Viva Network of the Ibero-American General Secretariat (SEGIB), and c) The Local Charter for Cultural Rights.

In order to guarantee cultural rights for all, the **Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (ISESCO)** launched its “Distance Culture” Programme, as part of its global initiative “**ISESCO Digital Home**”. Starting from the fact that the implementation and success of this initiative requires concerted efforts by all and the participation of the competent authorities, government representatives, local elected officials and civil society organisations, and in the framework of their strategic partnership, ISESCO held a webinar, with the Pan-African Organisation United Cities and Local Governments of Africa (**UCLG-Africa**) and its Academy (**ALGA**), to discuss “The role of cities and local elected officials in maintaining the sustainability of culture in time of the crisis of the COVID-19 Pandemic”. With the participation of local elected officials and various other stakeholders, shared successful experiences, plans and strategies, were explored to ensure the sustainability of the right to culture during this health crisis and beyond. The webinar was followed by more than 3.000 people on Facebook.

The **Centre for Applied Human Rights (CAHR)** of the University of York (UK), through a grant from the Open Society Foundations, has set up the fund “**Arctivists**” It will support collaborative endeavours between activists and artists across the world against repression during the crisis and the aftermath for human rights defenders, activism, and democracy in civic and political space. CAHR recognises the potential to provide innovative responses to the current Covid-19 emergency, whether in a reactive, therapeutic or imaginative form, providing grants for up to GB£3,000.

Alongside the protection and promotion of cultural rights, some cities are showing a bigger commitment to the idea of public service as an essential part of future society. Advocating for the value of culture to the public sphere is more important than ever in terms of building social cohesion and ensuring that all citizens can contribute freely to the aftermath with enhanced resources and capacity. Through the initiative **Loja Lisboa Cultura**, the city of **Lisbon** is gathering information on all actions that assist the cultural sector. Loja Lisboa Cultura offers a hotline and a specialised

ISESCO Digital Home

Arctivists, by CAHR



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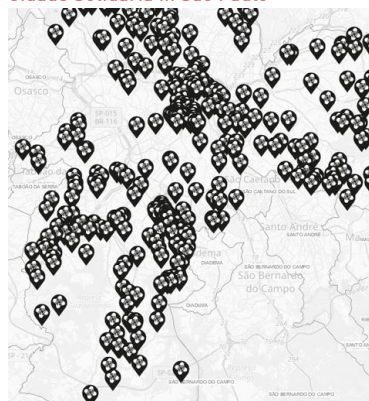
service that provides training and information, free of charge, and helps to clarify issues related to the activity of professionals and organisations in the cultural sector and the extraordinary measures implemented for the COVID-19 crisis. **Terrassa** is encouraging communication with citizens and cultural organisations and actors through social networks and offering **continuous advice** to all the groups and cultural associations in need.

Cities are also strengthening cultural rights to bring hope and promote well-being among people. In difficult times, arts, literature, music, dance, theatre and films carry the power to boost spirits and inspire creative solutions amid uncertainty. With this aim, **São Paulo** has implemented the initiative Solidarity City (**Cidade Solidária**) by the Culture Secretariat, with the engagement of famous Brazilian artists who recorded a video encouraging communities to engage with the initiative. The **Greater Amman Municipality** has launched the initiative **Colours of Soul and Hope**, broadcasting interactive materials created by Jordanian artists to raise citizens' spirits. In **Yopougon**, **YopCreaLab** has organised workshops to empower people and train them to defend against the virus in a creative and innovative way. **Galway** has shone a **light at Nimmo's Pier** to honour and bring hope to all those at the frontline, and **Lisbon** recognises explicitly the labour of public workers with the audio-visual project **Heróis da Cidade**.

## 4.2. THE CONSIDERATION OF A BROADER FRAMEWORK OF INEQUALITY

Responses to the pandemic should aim to look at a broader framework of inequality and foster inclusion, leaving no-one and no place behind. Cities and local governments need to ensure that the crisis does not increase the already high levels of inequality at local and global level, which can particularly affect women and girls, minorities, older people, indigenous peoples, people with disabilities and those with less access to basic public services and economic resources. Lockdowns can aggravate burdens such as poverty, violence, discrimination and abuse of vulnerable groups. Guaranteeing equal access to cultural participation through programmes on heritage, creativity and diversity is key to ensuring that cities remain places of opportunity for all. Considering this, many cities, networks, organisations and actors are dedicating special efforts to supporting the most vulnerable, fostering solidarity among territories and putting measures in place against discrimination and exclusion. Specific programmes to support inhabitants who have fewer possibilities to access cultural life, either online or physically, are being implemented. Culture cannot be the heritage for just a few; culture must be part of the daily life of all.

Cidade Solidaria in São Paulo



Colours of Soul and Hope in Amman



YopCreaLab workshop in Yopougon



Heróis da Cidade in Lisbon





**Cultural Policy in Conditions of Inequality**, an article written by **Mike van Graan** and commissioned by the UCLG Culture Committee, highlights the disparities that the pandemic is uncovering at a city level, particularly in **Cape Town**. At this time, when cities, countries and the world are divided by the “human-made pandemic of inequality”, the author states that “there cannot be one-size-fits-all ways of dealing with the coronavirus pandemic, just as there cannot be a one-size-fits-all cultural policy.” In this vein, and exposing the existing inequalities in another big city like **New York**, the manifesto of the **People’s Culture Plan** shares a list of urgent demands for arts and culture to the Department of Cultural Affairs (DCLA) and to all art institutions and organisations in the city, in the face of NYC’s state of emergency. The Plan defends the interests of vulnerable people and grassroots cultural communities, and focuses on issues such as displacement and housing, labour equity, equitable funding, and their connections with climate change, xenophobia and classism. As a positive measure, the city of Boston and the Massachusetts College of Art and Design have received a US\$1.2 million award from **Surdna Foundation** to **support artists of colour** who live or work in Boston amid the **#Covid19** crisis through the development of a new, three-year regranting programme titled **Radical Imagination for Racial Justice**.

**Universal Basic Income** is identified everywhere as one of the key measures in the recovery. This measure would support the most vulnerable population in all countries, including the people that develop professional careers and activities in the cultural sectors. The fact that this political and social initiative has the support of the cultural sector shows the way to connect it to broader democratic debate at a moment when it is often seen as elitist.

In the realm of writing, literature and research, libraries around the world, as providers of basic services, including democratic access to information and knowledge, are adapting services, ranging from minimal restrictions to full closure. The city of **Montevideo** has included **books in kits with basic products** distributed to the most vulnerable households. In **São Paulo**, the Municipal Culture Secretariat opened registrations to the project **Online Library**. The project will offer incentives actions during the period of restrictions due to COVID-19 to the culture and artistic sector, valuing and supporting especially low-income artists and residents in neighbourhoods with high vulnerability. **IFLA** - International Federation of Library Associations and

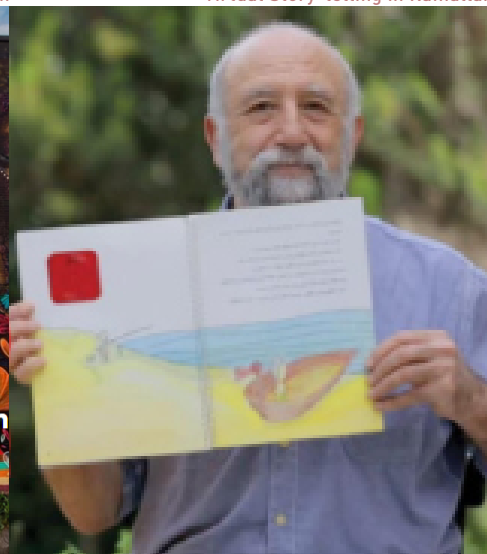
People’s Culture Plan in New York



Radical Imagination for Racial Justice in Boston



Virtual Story-telling in Ramallah



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Institutions - says that many libraries have developed **special programmes** to bring books to all those who request them and to offer remote services or support to remote teaching. Libraries are also promoting media literacy to counter potential misinformation online. IFLA's Library Services to Multicultural Populations Section is collaborating with the Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA) to support libraries communicating with their linguistically diverse communities, particularly in relation to library closures and accessing online information. In this sense, the NGO **Cultural Survival** provides information on COVID-19 in **indigenous languages** through radio materials translated into 16 languages. **JSTOR**, the **online library** of academic books and journals as well as primary sources, is now open.

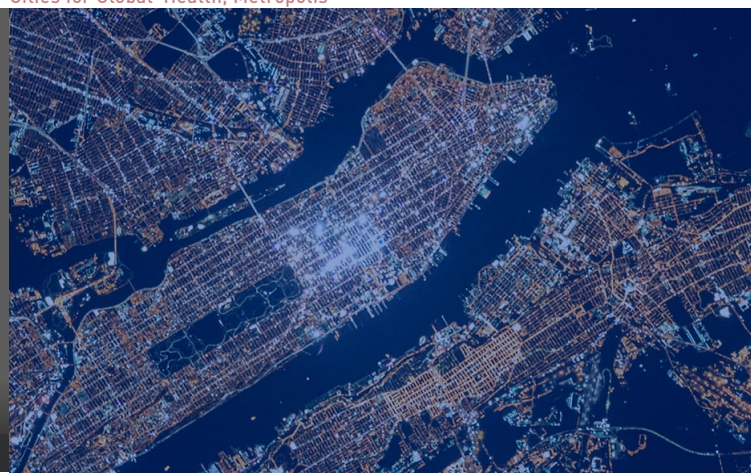
From the perspective of human rights, **ICORN**, the International Cities of Refuge Network, has published "**Digital diaries by writers and artists in exile during the pandemic. Forbidden voices in the time of crisis**", an initiative by the **Stavanger City of Refuge** and the **Kapittel** festival consisting of a digital diary with 11 writers who report from their everyday life during this time. Contributions are being published every Wednesday from 15 April until 16 September 2020.

The COVID-19 is severely exacerbating gender inequalities. Many initiatives are arising to raise awareness of gender equality and culture in the context of the crisis. The platform **#Cities4GlobalHealth** by **Metropolis** is collecting local government initiatives to put in place gender-violence responses to protect women worldwide and ensure their access to basic services. As another illustrative example, **7 Possible Actions. Women's rights and COVID-19**, published by the OHCHR, provides guidance on actions that can be taken to reduce the risk of women and girls being left behind as a result of the pandemic and the measures being implemented, and also outlines States' human rights obligations in addressing the impact of COVID-19 at the national level, including the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, the Maputo Protocol and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). The **Gender and COVID-19 Group on Mendeley** is also a relevant initiative. It is a public group, free for anyone in the world to join, access and add to, which is collecting references -articles, preprints, news articles, blog posts, magazine articles, reports- related to **gender and COVID-19**. The Group has gathered more than 500 resources which include reflections on the cultural dimension such as the unequal number of scientific studies available that approach the pandemic from a masculine and a feminine perspective.

Information in indigenous languages



Cities for Global Health, Metropolis



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## 5. Cooperation, solidarity and a new impulse for sustainable development

As the global crisis has increased the interdependence of all cities and governments, co-operation programmes have been bolstered during the quarantine period, and culture has positioned itself as a global strand of solidarity. The COVID-19 crisis is proving the need to multiply exponentially the collaboration of governments as it shows their interdependence. Creativity and technological possibilities have contributed to disseminate cultural contents, and joint measures among cities and local governments are being implemented to foster a more complete and cohesive action and avoid fragmentation. Co-operation with civil society is also a fundamental mechanism to enhance the effectiveness of local support measures for the cultural sector. Time and resources to enhance collaboration among local governments, communities, agents and cultural actors as a source of inspiration, relief, trust and hope for a better future is on the increase as the post-COVID-19 measures unfold. These initiatives must be acknowledged as true processes of innovation in which cities are learning and reviving fraternity between them to give new impulse to their local goals.

The digital platform “**Ciudad (es) Cultura**”, a joint initiative developed by **Mexico City**, the Autonomous City of **Buenos Aires**, **Barcelona** and **Bogotá**, with the support of UCLG Culture Committee, is one of the relevant cases of collaboration and coordination at local and international level in the context of the crisis. This kind of initiative proves that creativity and solidarity are the main drivers of the implementation of measures to share resources and knowledge with other cities. As another remarkable example, **Rome** has developed an **active co-ordination** and advocacy activity with other national cities, creating synergies in requesting economic-welfare support for the cultural sector. Permanent dialogue with national and regional government has been kept open in order to put in place new measures for the distribution of resources.

At global level, the **SDG Action Awards** opened the call for entries and created a new category on **global solidarity** to address the current pandemic and its devastating impact on people’s lives, acknowledging novel ideas to mobilise, inspire and connect communities. The **OWHC** - Organisation of World Heritage Cities recognised that city-to-city co-operation is crucial and undertook to share any useful information in its network in connection with the pandemic. With that purpose, the OWHC is collecting **good practices** implemented by cities to share learning experiences on how to contain

Ciudad(es) Cultura

SDG Action Awards





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the virus and manage the crisis. **IFACCA** – International Federation of Arts Councils and Cultural Authorities created a **webpage** with resources on the global crisis. In ACORNS 400, the Federation highlights the value of **collaboration, exchange and partnership** and provides information on achievements at global and national level.

At European level, the **European Commission** launched the initiative “Meet the neighbours of the neighbours during COVID-19 times” for youth from Europe, Africa and the Mediterranean. The initiative is opening a digital window for young people to get to know other cultures: the neighbours of their neighbours. Through the streaming platform **www.festivalscope.com** young people can access a selection of high-quality films.<sup>6</sup>

The **European Culture Foundation**, called for a **culture of solidarity**, including the creation of the **European Culture of Solidarity Fund**, and provided interesting **Quarantine Culture Tips**. **More Europe** opened a list of emergency funds and **initiatives** supporting the cultural sector in Europe and beyond. The Cultural and Creative Spaces project, led by **Trans Europe Halles**, launched the **Statement** “Culture and Cities in Times of Crisis”, calling on institutions to support the community initiatives of solidarity and shared their plans for restructuring based on promoting its core elements: culture, cultural spaces, social inclusion and participation.

**Les Arts et la Ville** network, which works with communities in Quebec and the Acadian and Canadian Francophonie, is inviting municipal and cultural sectors to form a community of practice: **Culture et Collectivités** (‘Culture and communities’). This initiative is allowing participants to think together, create, collaborate, help create resilient communities and discuss the future of culture in the context of COVID-19 crisis. Les Arts et la Ville also contributed to raising awareness on the importance of fostering solidarity through the newsletter **“Actifs, unis et positifs malgré tout!”** (‘Active, united and positive in spite of all!’). It includes useful resources such as **#billetsolidaire**, an initiative to encourage people not to request reimbursement for their tickets, resulting from the mobilisation of a small group of people working in the cultural and creative sectors in Quebec after the cancellation of cultural events in March. Other cultural organisations as the **DOEN Foundation**, **Hivos**, and the **Prince Claus Fund** published a **message of solidarity**: “The crucial role of arts and culture in a time of global crisis”, affirming their continuing support for artists and cultural organisations and stating that “culture must not be forgotten in the search for a pathway through this worldwide crisis”.

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<sup>6</sup> See the promo video of #MeetTheNeighbours [here](#). More information [here](#).

ECF Culture of Solidarity Fund



Solidarity message



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A message of solidarity was also sent from **Wuhan** by **Xi'An Jiaotong University**, which produced videos on solidarity in fighting COVID-19 in several languages: (**Love will Win Again**), Spanish (**El triunfo nos espera**), French (**On gagnera**), Italian (**Cantando Alla Finestra**), Russian (**Обязательно выдержим**), Japanese (**小さな祈り**), and Chinese (定能挺过去).

Joint opportunities to discuss the future of humanity must be seized to give a new impulse to sustainable development, stressing the importance of research, scientific evidence and critical thinking in our societies with a broader cultural lens. Cross-cutting approaches to the main challenges of societies are vital to strengthening democracy, equality and human rights. As the Wikipedia **page** on the “Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the arts and cultural heritage” reads, aside from the vast amounts of scientific research that has been published about the coronavirus, many creative works have been inspired by the pandemic, either in the field of literature, music, or visual art. Those works often related to therapeutic targets and have connected arts and culture with health care and well-being in a new way.

Evidence on the interconnection between culture and other key policy areas for sustainable development such as climate, environment, education, urban planning, economy and health is increasing at many levels.<sup>7</sup> Recently, the **World Health Organisation** (WHO) released its first report with scientific evidence on the **role played by the arts in health and wellbeing**. The WHO Regional office for Europe analysed over 900 global publications and 3,000 studies, with a view to informing public policies. The cultural contexts of health and well-being (CCH) project was established as a cross-cutting initiative within WHO that takes a systematic approach to understanding how culture affects perceptions, access to and experiences of health and well-being. With this project, WHO/Europe and European Member States recognise the importance of culture in shaping health and well-being throughout the life course.



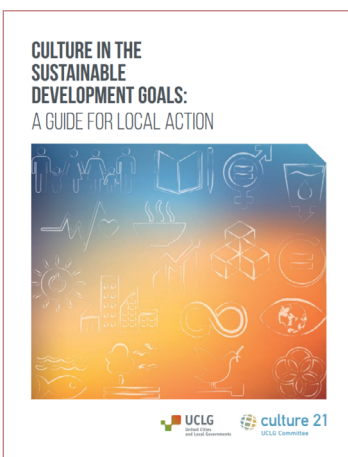
In April, **ArtPlace**'s research partners at the University of Florida Center for Arts in Medicine (CAM) released a “Call for Collaboration: Mobilising the Arts for Covid-19 Communication and Coping”. This **document** was addressed to **local public health agencies and organisations in the US** as part of an initiative to strengthen the work of the Creating Healthy Communities network in leading a conversation centered around the role that the arts sector is playing in the COVID-19 response. The initiative also seeks to consolidate the frameworks, resources, and opportunities for incorporating the arts into response and recovery efforts and to combine them with the evidence-based research that CAM already has underway.

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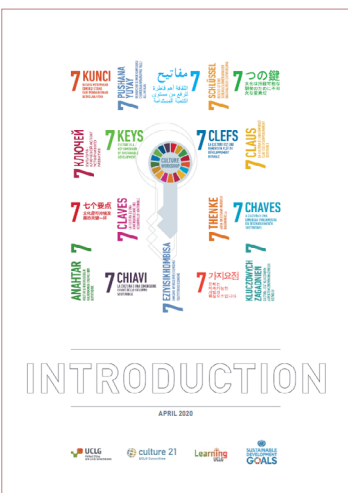
<sup>7</sup> See “Other relevant resources” at the end of this report for more.



Regarding climate change, the **Climate Heritage Network** has proposed a bold vision of the immense potential of culture heritage to drive climate action and support transitions by communities towards low carbon, climate resilient futures. The **roadmap** to realise this potential parallels the role proposed for culture in the pandemic response, especially in terms of: (1) the importance of listening to science, (2) the need to prioritise the most vulnerable among us, and (3) the capacity of society to initiate rapid and transformative change when it wants to.



During the crisis, culture has become a strand of global solidarity, but the potential of culture has yet to be fully acknowledged. In fact, the global debates about development, citizenship and democracy provide a marginal space to culture, human rights and cities. More concretely, the global frame for development, that is the UN 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), has very scarce references to the place of culture in sustainable development: there is no “Culture Goal” and very few targets explicitly refer to cultural actors, initiatives or programmes.



The SDGs do not explicitly empower the cultural systems of our cities, although there have been important efforts to raise awareness on the need to include a cultural component in the localisation of the SDGs, as (a) the document **“Culture in the Sustainable Development Goals: A Guide for Local Action”**, with specific guidance on the relation between culture and each one of the 17 SDGs, (b) the **“OBS” database of good practices on “Culture in Sustainable Cities”**, with more than 220 examples of cities all around the world, and the recently launched **“Seven Keys”** programme, that aims to integrate the cultural dimension in the localisation of the Sustainable Development Goals in cities and local governments.

# The Culture 2030 Goal movement advocates for culture to be explicitly present in the expected reconfiguration of the UN 2030 Agenda due to the global crisis, and calls on UN agencies, governments and all other stakeholders to act, ensuring culture is at the heart of the UN Decade of Action for the Sustainable Development Goals

In this light, the **statement** on culture and the COVID-19 pandemic “Ensuring culture fulfills its potential in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic”, officially launched on 21 May 2020 - the World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development - by the **#culture2030goal campaign** aims at promoting the place of culture within the UN 2030 Agenda framework. The Culture 2030 Goal movement advocates for culture to be explicitly present in the expected reconfiguration of the UN 2030 Agenda due to the global crisis, and calls on UN agencies, governments and all other stakeholders to act, ensuring culture is at the heart of the UN Decade of Action for the Sustainable Development Goals as a key element to achieve core priorities like climate ambition, gender equality and fighting inequalities.



#culture2030goal statement



## ENSURING CULTURE FULFILLS ITS POTENTIAL IN RESPONDING TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

#CULTURE2030GOAL #CULTUREcovid19





International Music Council  
brings together

Audience Development  
Community music development  
Music education  
Policy Development  
Music and media

Expressing our solidarity with every person in the global musical ecosystem in these challenging times ...  
#FiveMusicRights

Live Performances  
Musical creation  
Research and documentation  
Freedom of Expression

120 Members  
1000+ Artists  
100 000 000 People reached

**NE MO** Network of European Museum Organisations

**Initial report on the impacts of the covid-19 on museums in Europe**

**FORBIDDEN VOICES IN THE TIME OF CRISIS**

KAPITTEL  
Schweizer Ensemblefestival für Interdisziplinäre Musik

FRITT ORD

Solberget

ICORN  
INTERNATIONAL CITIES OF REFUGE NETWORK

**Creative #StayHome Pack**

ENCATC

**IFCCD**  
INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF COALITIONS FOR CULTURAL DIVERSITY

**Cultural Creative Spaces & Cities**

**TRANS EUROPE HALLES**

'Culture and Cities in Times of Crisis'

**#RescueTheArts**

**Rescue the Arts: Plea to national governments**

INETM International network for contemporary performing arts

**culture ACTION europe**

**Effect of Covid-19 on Creative Europe and the European CCS**

**ICOMOS**

**Monitoring of the situation**

**IFLA Headquarters and COVID-19**  
Decisions are made following the Dutch government announcements.

Headquarters Office closed from 16 March until further notice

IFLA continues to give strong support to the global library field

We encourage you to contact us online

Latest info at [ifla.org/covid-19](http://ifla.org/covid-19)

**IFACCA**  
International Federation of Arts Councils and Culture Agencies

News / Editorials / ACORNS 397: Global responses to COVID-19 in the arts and culture sector

**ACORNS 397: Global responses to COVID-19 in the arts and culture sector**

**EUROPA NOSTRA**

**European Heritage Green Paper Outline**



**Collection of good practices implemented by cities to contain the virus and manage the crisis**

**on the move**

**Coronavirus: Resources: Arts, Culture and Cultural Mobility**

**ICOM** international council of museums **REPORT**

**ORGANIZATION OF WORLD HERITAGE CITIES**

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## 6. Conclusions. The future of culture beyond the outbreak

The temporary closure of so many cultural institutions and the cancellation of cultural events has never been seen at local and global level before. As the German **Kulturpolitischen Gesellschaft** points out in the **Declaration** “Cultural policy must have a lasting effect - Ten points for a cultural policy after the corona pandemic”, this not only affects the people going to theatres and museums, to libraries and concerts, or the students at art schools; informal cultural practices and grass-roots cultural communities are also affected. Cultural spaces and activities are not just opportunities for art, education or leisure, but also for encounter, cohesion, exchange, diversity, creativity, transformation, enjoyment, well-being and freedom. Culture initiatives have the opportunity to conquer public space again, the space of people.

Yes; after long weeks of lockdowns, cities are preparing for deconfinement and are planning measures to revive cultural facilities and activities in public space progressively. Paris has designed a **4-step plan** to reopen cultural venues gradually: In phase 1, theatres, museums and major cultural venues adapted to the new health guidelines; In phase 2, by mid-June, museums open partially to small groups of people; In phase 3, by July, some parks and gardens will gradually reopen, one district after another, and offer opportunities to watch theatre, play music or listen to readings; and In phase 4, concerts, dance, movies, artistic installations, and performances in parks, gardens and small squares will be organised as part of the new festival “August, Month of Culture”. Thus, after the sowing will come the time of harvest and cities will reawaken, and when they do the arts and the cultural sector will provide a new impulse as agents of revival. As **Simon Mundy** recalls in his **article** “The great Shutdown. What Will the Arts Do to Bring Cities Back to Life?”, festivals have always been used to celebrate or commemorate moments of community significance. We will need to cry, to shout and to laugh again, and we will need to do it together. Yet, what will be the next phases? How are cities going to rebuild and maintain solid cultural infrastructures after the huge economic losses, the disappearance of cultural organisations and the uncertainty of the future? Which will be the new models of support, engagement, and access to arts and culture?

In the coming months, collaboration and solidarity in the cultural sphere among governments at all levels, organisations, networks, actors and citizens will remain crucial, and collective reflection upon the relationship between cultural rights, public space, democracy, well-being and safety will be more needed than ever as well. Cities and local governments have the opportunity to enhance public services and build a new proximity to citizens and cultural workers, to rethink the concept of cultural participation and audiences, and to foster more horizontal and equitable cultural policies. **The 2020 Rome Charter on Cultural Rights**,<sup>8</sup> a joint initiative by the city

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<sup>8</sup> See also this [website](#).

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“With the challenges it provokes, a crisis brings the responsibility to think beyond existing. If some good can come from COVID-19, it will be because we have been brave enough to imagine different, better, more sustainable ways of living together. Cultural participation is both necessary and instrumental to equity, justice and human dignity.”

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Luca Bergamo, Vice Mayor  
in charge of cultural development, Rome

of Rome and UCLG Culture Committee, being developed in conversation with more than 20 cities and 50 other contributors from all over the world, is one example that illustrates the collective response of local governments to the crisis. Stemming from a process of reflection on people’s participation in cultural life at local level, the Rome Charter invites people to move beyond established thinking – about culture, creative cities, inclusive urbanism, rights and duties to find a new direction in a renovated framework that includes all.

Now is the time to deepen the potential of culture as an antidote to the crisis and as a pillar of sustainable development. The pandemic allows us to broaden our view of cultural practices and rethink their implications for society and their role at the global agendas. In these days of confinement, culture has spread more strongly than the virus and has positioned as a world strand of solidarity. Art, music, audio-visual, literature, have helped raise awareness on the pandemic and disseminating scientific knowledge, advice from the health care system and adequate information. Cultural expressions, gastronomy, rituals, memories, traditions, sports, have alleviated the suffering of many and fostered optimism, and at the same time have contributed to rebuilding the relationship with cultural and natural heritage and a new sense of community.

The “need for culture” that has been experienced during the crisis is the perfect illustration of why culture must be consolidated as the fourth pillar of sustainable development. Creativity is being put into play not only to keep up morale in these

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“Respect for human rights across the spectrum, including economic, social, cultural, and civil and political rights, will be fundamental to the success of the public health response and recovery from the pandemic.”

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United Nations Office of  
the High Commissioner of  
Human Rights (OHCHR)

difficult moments, but also to create meaning and find appropriate and sustainable solutions to the crisis, enabling the awakening of collective imagination that has made it possible throughout history for cities to reinvent themselves in adversity. This intrinsic value of culture, which is evidently linked to social innovation, has to become a political priority. Some cities are already accompanying successfully their cultural sectors in the recovery; these cities are the ones with a greater awareness of the contribution of culture to societies. Cities and local governments must work thoroughly on post-confinement scenarios keeping in mind the long term, enhancing cultural co-operation at all levels with local assemblies and councils, cultural plans, policies and programmes to ensure that culture is at the heart of any local recovery process. Also, the example of these cities will become a very good contribution to the global conversation on development, and unchain the potential of culture as an unequivocal part of the solution to humanity’s challenges.

The immediate recovery, with the opening of venues, sites and events based on principles of low density, will imply physical distancing, the protection of workers and visitors, and increased hygiene and cleaning measures. Because of the need to reduce mobility to the minimum, this immediate recovery may lead to the “localisation” of the cultural productions and offer. This trend, if accompanied by policies and programmes to involve citizens (especially vulnerable groups) could lead to a renewed connection between cultural institutions and citizens, and therefore cultural empowerment of communities could happen. It would be highly positive if this trend does not lead to a decrease in international cultural co-operation and exchange. On the contrary, it is perfectly possible that a boost in local cultural participation in cultural life, or a focus on “locally-sourced” culture, goes hand-in-hand with an increased awareness of the

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protection and promotion of cultural diversity and the importance of co-operation and solidarity. Let's go even further: the first pandemic experienced at the same time by all citizens on Earth could unite as all in our fragility as human beings and in our determination to overcome together the challenges we have.

It is now the time for us to imagine the future and be bold; bolder than we have been in the past. If not now, when? We have a tremendous opportunity to imagine measures that connect culture to broader debates our societies are holding. Some of these measures may be based on these considerations:

- Our involvement in cultural activities is a celebration of life and also a way to pay tribute to those that have left. The participation in cultural life is a fundamental component of society. It is a human right.
- Cultural rights are an integral part of human rights. They are fundamental to citizens' freedoms. They provide the most suitable frame for the long-term public policies of cities and local governments.
- The current cultural policies do not sufficiently consider the existing inequalities to access, participation and contribution to cultural life,
- Indigenous peoples should become central actors in the cultural policies of countries, cities and local governments.
- It is possible for national governments to build stronger systems of protection for cultural workers, in terms of fair remuneration, social security, and participatory governance, following the examples of the most advanced countries in this domain.
- National and local governments should include explicit support for arts and culture initiatives as core components of the post-Covid-19 recovery and the long-term planning.
- Cultural institutions and organisations need specific support to adapt spaces, venues, events and programmes to the "new normality" based on physical distancing.
- In many cities there is a trend for cultural institutions to reconnect with people, a will to empower the communities built on the "need for culture" shown during the worst days of the pandemic.
- The pandemic confirms the need to understand the world in all its diversity, more than ever. There could be increased awareness of the protection and promotion of cultural diversity and the importance of cultural co-operation and solidarity.

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- The “new normality” of cultural initiatives and institutions could strike a balance between an emphasis on the provision of digital content and, at the same time, the organisation of cultural events with physical distancing and social proximity.
  - A massive presence of cultural actors in primary and secondary education is required while we deal with the tensions in education system (due to the need for physical distancing in classrooms, the limits to virtual education, and the need for children and youth to acquire cultural capacity).
  - The scientific evidence that correlates health and well-being with active participation in cultural life (as the research by the World Health Organisation demonstrates) could become central axis of public policies all around the world.
  - Gender perspective should be an unavoidable consideration in cultural policies, not only in terms of equity (the numbers of women and men currently involved in cultural practices, events and sites) but also in terms of narratives and content (currently dominated by a masculine vision of the world).
  - The pressure of tourism on some cultural sites and events, which has often severely damaged local cultural life and disempowered the communities, can be discussed and a new balance with all actors concerned should be found.
  - The contribution of the current regime of intellectual property to the fight against inequalities should be analysed. New systems (perhaps adapting the voluntary pool of intellectual property rights that exists for many medical treatments to the characteristics of the cultural sector) that both support the fair remuneration of artists and creative and truly contribute to “Leave no one behind” needs to be explored.
  - Artists, cultural managers, historians and all the professionals of culture should be recognised and actively involved as key agents, reimagining and designing the public spaces of the future.
  - Culture is part of the solution to climate change. We can help realise the power of art, culture and heritage to drive climate action and support just transitions by communities towards low carbon, climate resilient futures by shrinking the carbon footprint of our own cultural activities.
  - We can contribute to building more caring cities where empathy and solidarity are part of the “new normal”.

We would like to imagine that 2020 is the right time for a High-Level Political Forum to consider adding an SDG 18, fully devoted to culture, heritage and creativity to the Agenda 2030. This debate would be the best way to invite global cultural networks and

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cultural stakeholders to contribute seriously to the Agenda 2030. This decision would reflect the prominent place that culture has played in the crisis. This decision would reinforce the achievement of the whole Agenda 2030 and humanity would be closer to the dream of building fair, inclusive and creative societies that Leave No One and No Place Behind.

This is a decisive moment in which all these issues, already present on the tables of the cultural sector, must be brought to those that take key decisions on the future of our societies and our democracies. It is a decisive moment for cultural actors, initiatives and communities to speak loudly and to take risks that place us at the centre of society. Mutatis mutandis a suggestion raised in the **report “Culture in Rio+20: Advocating for Culture as a Pillar of Sustainability”**; are the cultural networks, actors and sectors strong enough to be recognised as key partners in the reconstruction? Certainly, if you are reading this report, you are part of the answer.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> This report will be followed by a second document which will deepen the consequences of the pandemic and the opportunities for culture to be part of the solution to global challenges.



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# Resources

The initiatives that feed this report stem from the compilation by the UCLG Culture Committee on the webpage "**The cultural mobilization of cities and local governments in the COVID-19 crisis**". This page was created to collect evidence of the cultural mobilisation of cities and local governments; it includes now more than 120 references and it is being updated regularly.

Other relevant resources:

- UCLG "**Decalogue for the post COVID-19 era**" (2020)
- UCLG Manifesto "**The Future of Culture**" (2019)
- The **#BeyondTheOutBreak Live Learning Experience on the cultural mobilisation** (**Press Release** and **Briefing**), held on 22 April 2020
- The Statement "**Ensuring Culture fulfils its potential in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic**", by the #culture2030goal campaign (2020)
- The report "**Culture in the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda**", by the #culture2030goal campaign (2019)
- The **2020 Rome Charter on Cultural Rights** (2020)
- The **OBS**, good practices on culture and sustainable development database of UCLG Culture Committee
- "**The Seven Keys**", a programme to integrate the cultural dimension in the localisation of the SDGs (UCLG, 2020)
- "**Culture in the Sustainable Development Goals: A Guide for Local Action**" (UCLG, 2018)
- The toolkit "**Culture 21: Actions**" with the 9 Commitments and the 100 Actions on "Culture in Sustainable Cities" (UCLG, 2015)

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