



# culture 21

Agenda 21 for culture

# ACTIONS

## Culture 21: Actions

Commitments on the role of culture in sustainable cities

In Bilbao, at the first Culture Summit of the international organization United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), 18-20 March 2015, municipal and local government representatives from across the world, adopt “Culture 21: Actions”, with the following aims:

- » To highlight the interdependent relationship between citizenship, culture, and sustainable development.
- » To provide an international framework supported by commitments and actions that are both achievable and measurable.
- » To complement the Agenda 21 for culture adopted in 2004, making it more effective.
- » To harness the role of cities and local governments as authorities in the development and implementation of policies with, and for, citizens.
- » To contribute to the definition and importance of the essential role of culture in the United Nations Post-2015 Sustainable Development Agenda.

ACTIONS





# Introduction

At the dawn of this, the twenty-first century, we know that development can only be “sustainable” if culture is given a central role. Human development is defined by the expansion of the freedoms and capabilities of all, and this process is only sustainable when it respects the rights and freedoms of future generations. Human development can only be effective if we explicitly consider the integral value to the process of culture and cultural factors such as memory, creativity, diversity, and knowledge.

Global debates in the 21<sup>st</sup> century have recognized the importance of cultural diversity in shaping our world. Cultures forge dynamic and interactive relationships between people and their environments. By defining human rights as a starting point, today, all cultures want to be recognized as active participants in development, and to contribute, in their own unique way, to sustainability. Each and every culture distinctly enriches our world, and their interactions help us progress toward a more cooperative humanity of reciprocity and mutual respect and trust.

Sustainable development is lived out at local level and requires spaces and processes for citizen participation and decision-making. Local governments are the best-placed institutions to foster active democratic debate. They can create spaces and encourage processes where citizens can exercise their rights, learn, and become protagonists in shaping the future.

In order for us to understand and transform the world, we must incorporate a cultural dimension, or pillar, into our current frame of reference for sustainable development. This pillar must be as clear, effective, and dynamic as the environmental, economic, and social pillars set out in the policy declaration adopted by *United Cities and Local Governments* in 2010 in Mexico City.



# “CULTURE 21: ACTIONS”



- » **“Culture 21: Actions”** renews the commitments of *United Cities and Local Governments* to highlight the interdependent relationship between citizenship, culture, and sustainable development.
- » **“Culture 21: Actions”** supplements the Agenda 21 for Culture. Approved in 2004 by *United Cities and Local Governments*, “as a guiding document for our public cultural policies and as a contribution to the cultural development of humanity,” it continues to be an important reference text.
- » **“Culture 21: Actions”** reviews the important cultural transformations that have taken place over the last decade and argues that they must be reflected in current policies; it also identifies the key elements of the Agenda 21 for culture and transforms them into concrete commitments and actions. “Culture 21: Actions” aims to be an international guide that is applicable all over the world; a tool that promotes knowledge, facilitates the exchange of good practices, and strengthens a global network of effective and innovative cities and local governments.





# VALUES

These values are based on the real, practical experiences of cities and local governments, as well as contributions from international organizations, universities, and activists. They summarize the commitment and aspirations of local governments to integrate culture into sustainable development, both locally and globally.

## Culture, Rights and Citizenship

1. Culture is made up of the values, beliefs, languages, knowledge, art and wisdom, with which a person or people, individually or collectively, expresses both their humanity and the meaning they give to their life and its course.
2. Culture is a common good that broadens everyone's capacity to shape his or her own future. All individuals are vehicles of culture, as well as participants in its development. Culture itself is a process that allows us to understand, interpret, and transform reality.
3. Cultural rights are an integral part of human rights. No-one can appeal to cultural diversity to infringe upon, nor limit in scope, human rights guaranteed by international law. The cultural freedoms of individuals and communities are both the result of, and an essential condition for, real democracy.
4. Cultural rights guarantee that everyone can access the resources they need to freely pursue their process of cultural identification throughout their life, as well as to actively participate in, and reshape, existing cultures. Cultural citizenship implies rights, freedoms and responsibilities. Lifelong access to, and participation in, cultural and symbolic universes are essential factors for the development of the capacities of sensitivity, expression, choice, and critical thinking, which allow the construction of citizenship and peace in our societies.



5. Cultural democracy is an essential element of active citizenship, promoting participation and dialogue. Therefore, cultural democracy is one of the necessary conditions to prevent anyone from unjustly claiming the right to supplant or exterminate a culture by appealing to criteria of supremacy, excellence or universality. This does not rule out the possibility of disputes and tensions, and universal human rights must always be respected.

### Cultural Factors of Sustainable Development

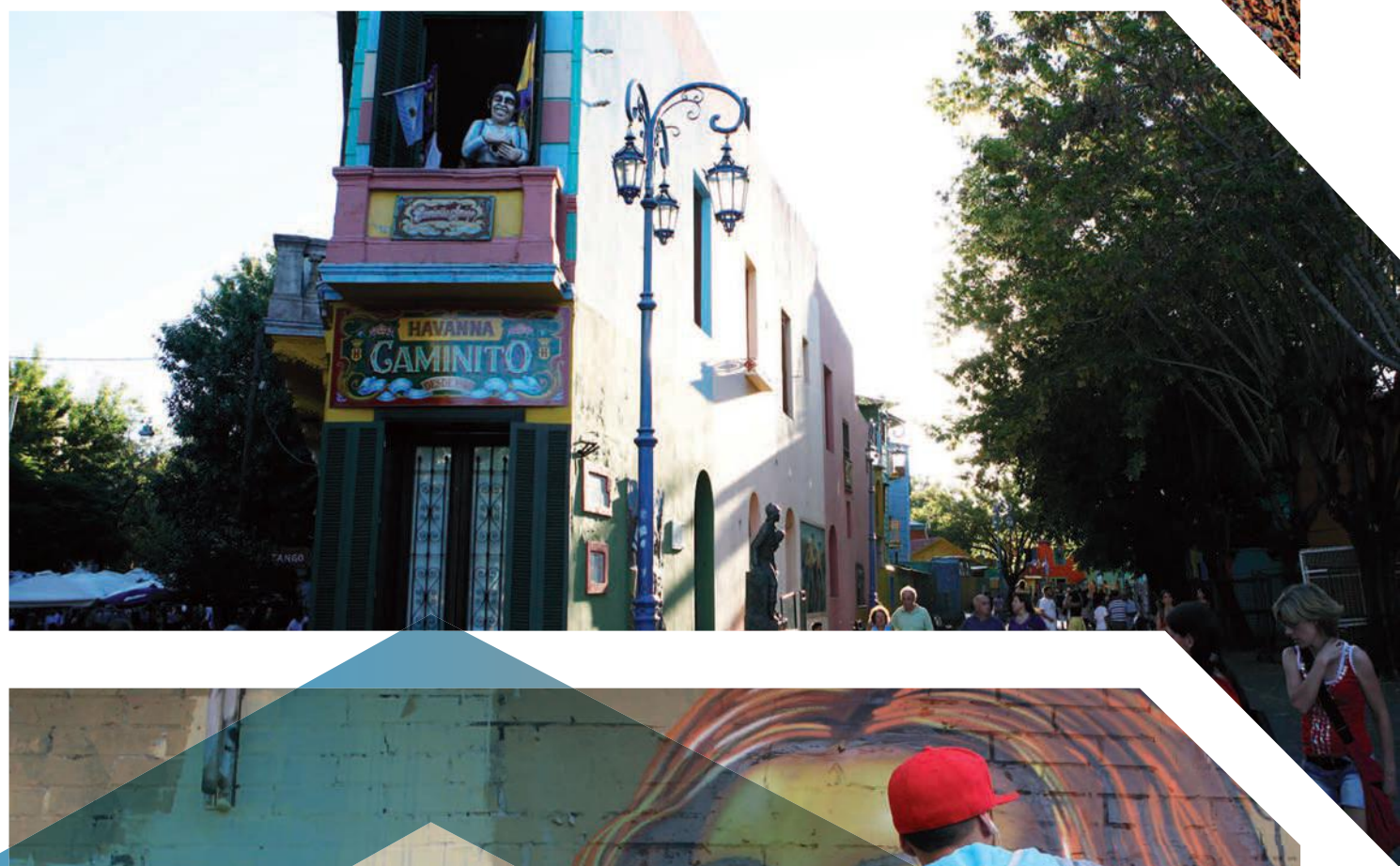
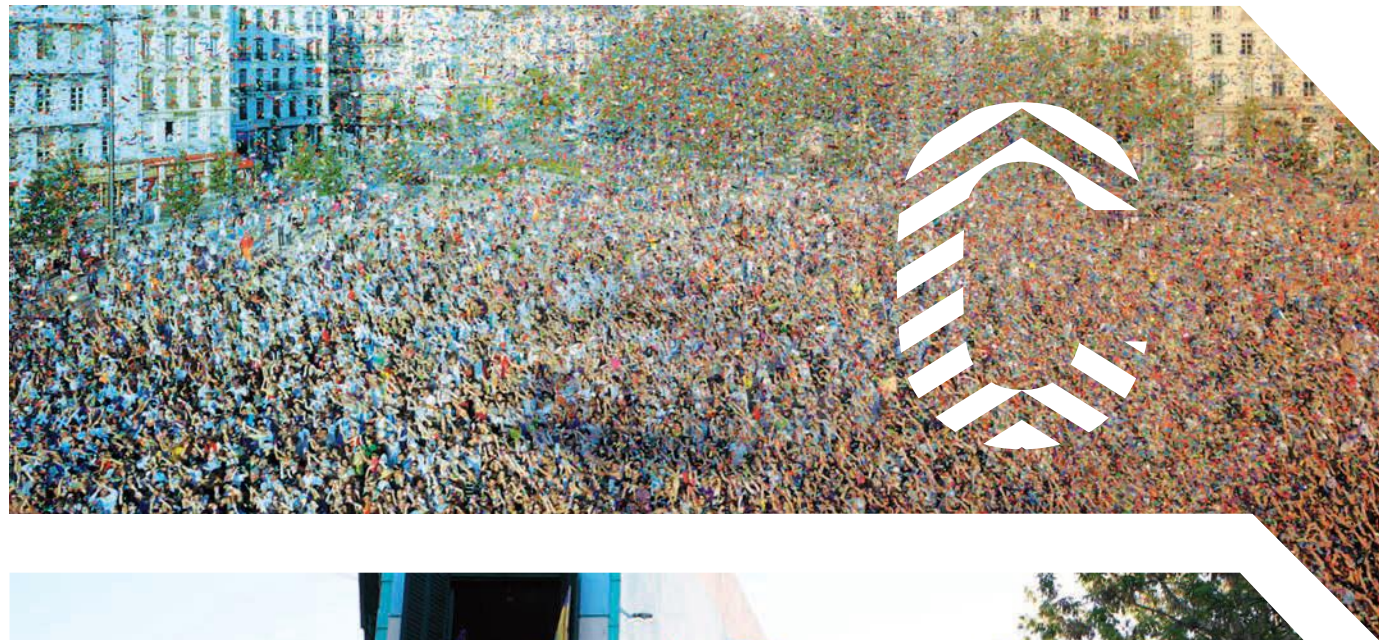
6. Sustainable development, or sustainability, requires the combination of a set of interconnected factors (cultural, environmental, social, and economic). The development of specific policies in each area is important, as well as a transversal and integrated approach across all four areas.
7. Cultural diversity is the main heritage of humanity. It is the product of thousands of years of history, and the fruit of collective contributions by all peoples through their languages, ideas, techniques, practices, and creations. Diversity should not be just about 'the other'; it has multiple dimensions and forms part of the unique identity of every individual. Cultural diversity allows identities and differences to be continuously redefined. It is an essential component of social harmony, citizenship, and the creation of a peaceful society.
8. Cultural heritage, in all its multiple forms, from memories to landscapes, is a testament to human creativity, and is a resource for the construction of the identities of people and communities. As something that is alive and constantly evolving, it should be integrated into life and society in dynamic ways.
9. Places and territories are social constructs; the fruit of the historical interaction of human groups in their appropriation and transformation of the natural landscape. They reflect the history, identity, and values of the populations that inhabit them. Cultural conceptions of place are essential for the quality of life of their inhabitants. Land-use and urban planning are therefore cultural acts, in that they acknowledge, invent, and harness natural and cultural resources, in line with a society's aspirations for the future.
10. Cultural goods and services are different from other goods and services, because they are bearers of meaning and identity. Artists, cultural organizations and cultural institutions play a central role in developing a sustainable city. The reduction of culture to its economic value may reduce or eliminate its contributions to the common good and, consequently, its transformative potential. The economic system mediates some of the values that condition life choices, values which can culture can be used to challenge. Twenty-first century economic models must allow for a more coherent link between public, private, and non-profit economies, and guarantee dignity and respect for individuals, social justice, and the environment.
11. The appropriation of information, and its transformation into shared knowledge, is a cultural act that is interdependent with the lifelong right to education and cultural participation.
12. Access to cultural services and active participation in cultural processes are essential to enable people who are marginalized, impoverished, or in otherwise disadvantaged situations to overcome their difficulties and actively participate in their own inclusion in society.
13. Quality online participation is essential for sustainable development. A good system of governance should guarantee transparency and the right of all citizens to receive, search for, and transmit reliable information.

14. Cultural development is based on the interaction and cooperation of the wide variety of actors who make up the cultural ecosystem (including public institutions, civil society organizations, and the private sector), in way that fosters innovation.
15. Cultural practices do not only take place in physical spaces, but also in virtual ones, which also form part of the public space. The public nature, and the opportunities offered by both, must be guaranteed.

### Specific Responsibilities of Local Governments

16. Local governments are on the front line in the defense and promotion of cultural rights as fundamental human rights. Local democracy is an essential basic condition of the participation of citizens in public decision-making. Local governments can also promote dialogue between citizens and their national governments and international institutions.
17. Local governments are applying multi-actor governance frameworks (governing in dialogue with civil society and the private sector), developing cross-cutting or horizontal forms of governance (that integrate the cultural dimension into public policy) and demanding multi-level or vertical governance frameworks (allowing them to coordinate and collaborate with other levels of government).
18. Local governments should promote the participation of everyone in the creation, implementation, and evaluation of public policies, including cultural policies, and aim to facilitate cultural democracy.
19. Local governments have the responsibility of guaranteeing spatial equity, both between the centers and peripheries of cities, and between cities and rural areas, paying special attention to indigenous communities.
20. Local governments are essential actors in international processes, ensuring that the voices of citizens are heard on the world stage. Local governments promote local diplomacy and participate in international cooperation in the area of culture, as an indispensable tool for creating human solidarity and exchange. They are especially well-placed to take into account and address the unique situations of less developed regions in their international cooperation work.
21. Local governments encourage democratic citizenship and a culture of peace by promoting non-violence and the peaceful resolution of their cities' internal and external conflicts. Local governments are laboratories for testing effective and appropriate, solutions to global problems.





# COMMITMENTS

The Agenda 21 for Culture, adopted in 2004, was the first international document to systematically address the importance of the relationship between culture, citizenship, and sustainability. Over the past ten years, many local governments (cities, metropolises, regions, provinces, departments, and counties), civil society organizations, national ministries and agencies, and international organizations, have aligned their policies and programs to the Agenda 21 for Culture. A complete list is available on the Agenda 21 for Culture website.

Many of the organizations connected with the Agenda 21 for culture have called for a practical guide to help facilitate its local implementation, international exchanges of experiences, and the establishment of a more visible and structured "community of practice." This is evidenced by the results of the survey that the *United Cities and Local Governments* Committee on Culture published in September of 2014 to assess the work carried out to date. These "Commitments" respond to this need, and aim to provide achievable and measurable international guidelines and standards.



As these contributions show, the current understanding of sustainability includes a wide range of cultural, ecological, social, and economic factors that are closely interconnected. Their interdependence must be recognized in the development, implementation, and evaluation of policies. Such policy-making cannot just be the privilege of public authorities; instead, it should be considered the result of common goals and partnerships in which all stakeholders play their part.

1. Cultural rights
2. Heritage, diversity, and creativity
3. Culture and education
4. Culture and environment
5. Culture and economy
6. Culture, equality, and social inclusion
7. Culture, urban planning, and public space
8. Culture, information, and knowledge
9. Governance of culture





# Cultural Rights

## Active citizenship and the full recognition of cultural rights

Human rights pertain to the freedom and dignity of every human being, and are the basis and guarantee of the coherence and legitimacy of policy-making. Cultural rights refer to the rights of all individuals to freedom of speech, access to heritage, values, and identities, and active participation in cultural life. They are the foundation and guarantee of the coherence and legitimacy of policies. Cultural rights are an integral element of human rights and guarantee access to the knowledge necessary to exercise other rights, freedoms, and responsibilities.

Cultural rights are incompatible with restrictive, one-dimensional accounts of culture or identity because such narratives may be simplifying, reductive, populist, inconsistent with historical analyses, or restrictive of freedoms. Fixed identity has ceased to be a predetermining factor in community life, but the construction of identity has become a key element of all shared projects. Identity has gone from being a starting point to a negotiable destination.

Thus, cultural rights guarantee the ability of everyone to identify with one or several cultural communities, and to adapt this choice throughout his or her life. The exercise of human rights (including, but not limited to, freedoms of speech, association, and participation in civic life) is also essential for the development of a sustainable city.

Local policies should help citizens to exercise their rights to determine freely their identity, develop and exercise their creative abilities, recognize and accept foreign cultural expressions, and to take part in collective decision-making on all facets of community life. Local policies should recognize citizens as the main actors in local cultural life.

All public policies should be constructed by balancing, in a reasonable and logical way, the recognition of citizens' rights, institutional responsibilities, and the provisions of public services in the spirit of co-responsibility. Local governments should aim to define basic cultural services as basic rights that are afforded to all citizens, especially the most vulnerable groups and individuals, with the purpose of guaranteeing the development of their cultural capacities (rights, freedoms, and responsibilities).

a. Local cultural policies are explicitly based on cultural rights.

b. The local government has adopted a guideline text on cultural rights, freedoms, and cultural responsibilities.

c. The local government adopts measures to facilitate citizen participation, either individually or as representatives of civil society groups, in setting priorities, decision-making, and in the evaluation of cultural policies.

d. There are minimum service standards to ensure basic cultural services (for example, a minimum number of libraries/books per inhabitant).

e. Detailed analyses of existing obstacles to citizens' access and participation in cultural life are undertaken.

f. There are policies and programs aimed at citizens' broader and more active involvement in cultural practices and cultural creation.

g. Cultural policies allow people to have access to, and transmit their own, cultural expressions, paying special attention to the most vulnerable groups and individuals.

h. Increasing the opportunities for women to participate in cultural life is one of the objectives of cultural policies, and measures are taken to eliminate gender discrimination.

i. Local civil society organizations working in human rights explicitly include cultural rights among their priorities.

## Actions

j. There are policies and programs to increase the number of active members of civil society organizations devoted to culture.

# Cultural Rights





# Heritage, Diversity and Creativity

Heritage, diversity, and creativity are the foundations of cultural life

Local cultural policies should take into account heritage, diversity, and creativity. Firstly, there is a tension between the traditional sociological conception of culture, generally limited to a repertoire of fine arts, and the “anthropological” one adopted by UNESCO in the 1980s, which understands culture as all expressive forms, values, beliefs, and practices present in human life. By being pragmatic and taking on the best of both of these definitions, today it is necessary to go a step further: local cultural policies must be situated at the crossroads between the symbolic and the expressive, between cutting-edge cultural expressions and the culture of everyday life. The works of contemporary artists as pertaining to community life, the importance of the symbolic dimensions of social and community practices, or the recognition of trades and traditional knowledge are some examples of this intersection.

Secondly, the dialogue between “tradition” and “modernity”, often compromised by a reactionary tendency to isolate and entrench traditions, could be improved if the exchange between them was more dynamic. Any tradition that is unable to interact with the present will become an irrelevant fossil. In the same way, cutting-edge culture that does not engage and evolve with the present will be rootless.

Thirdly, respecting and valuing diversity requires the integration of both multi-cultural strategies that recognize people with different cultural backgrounds who live together, and intercultural strategies that create bonds between them. Active participation in the creation and production of culture allows the creation and recreation of communities in which people can freely construct their individual selves. Special attention must be paid to the different realities of people of indigenous, minority, and migrant communities.

Finally, the pursuit of excellence is usually considered one of the explicit or implicit objectives of every cultural policy; as a result, some projects tend to prioritize the visibility of cultural excellence. While such projects are often poignant and effective, they have little or no social underpinnings. Alongside these, there are usually cultural projects that have little or no visibility, but which have undeniable social roots and are usually described as “local culture” or “culture of proximity”. Artists and cultural professionals play a key role in sustainability in that their work explores the boundaries of the known and creates new meanings. Creating conditions for building excellence emerges from a dialogue between proximity and visibility and is essential for sustainable cultural policies.

a. The local government has a department, area, or entity in its organization in charge of cultural policies and the cultural aspects of other public policies.

b. The local government has a dedicated culture budget that is in line with its cultural responsibilities, as well as national and international standards. It should be adequate to enable the sustainable development of local cultural life. A significant portion of the budget assigned to culture should be dedicated to research, development, and innovation in the cultural sector.

c. The local government supports the existence and accessibility of different facilities, spaces, and venues dedicated to training, creation, and production of culture, for example: residencies, incubator projects, art factories, laboratories, etc.

d. The local government promotes the celebration of cultural events with the aim of encouraging artistic creation and supporting contact between different social groups.

e. There are policies and programs that build excellence through close contact and interaction with citizens and their initiatives.

f. There are policies and programs that explicitly encourage the mutual recognition of the diversity of cultural expressions and intercultural projects.

g. There are policies and programs for the protection and promotion of linguistic diversity, specifically with regard to minority or minoritised languages.

h. There are policies that support the arts, with attention to different disciplines.

i. There are policies regarding the protection of cultural heritage in all its dimensions, both tangible and intangible.

## Actions

j. There are policies and programs dedicated to scientific culture, in partnership with local civil society organizations, private actors, cultural institutions, and training centers. These programs should be sensitive to interactions between scientific culture, art, local history, and everyday life.

k. Local cultural products have a significant and balanced presence within the city’s overall cultural activities.

l. There are international cultural cooperation programs related to local cultural life, and that are pay special attention to the protection and promotion of cultural diversity.

# Heritage, diversity, and creativity



# Culture and Education

Promote active citizenship through the construction of cultural capacities

Cultural development is understood as a process geared toward expanding opportunities for expression and access to knowledge. It is therefore closely linked with education and lifelong learning. Any transmission of knowledge or the development of knowledge through research, comparison, and experimentation, is a cultural act. In fact, lifelong education and training are an important cultural right. As learning spaces, cities provide an excellent environment for exploring the relationship between cultural resources and education. This relationship can take on different forms, such as improving access to, and participation in, culture within schools and formal and informal education centers, promoting artistic education, creative and technological abilities, as well as educational and cultural mediation activities designed by artists and cultural institutions.

The policies in this area should include formal and non-formal education and include learning opportunities for all age groups. They should also promote the connections between institutional knowledge and knowledge that emerges from daily life, thus contributing to social innovation. Only by valuing the diversity of knowledge can a place's cultural wealth be fully recognized. In addition to the traditional educational environments of schools and universities, civil society organizations fulfill an important role in the development of the diversity of knowledge and skills that allow people to think critically. It is essential to adopt diverse teaching methods and appropriately train educators in this diversity. Technological innovations also play an important role, allowing us to grasp educational challenges from a perspective that is coherent with cultural democracy. Training courses for students and specific capacity-building opportunities for professionals and networks in knowledge exchange should be linked to strategies of employment generation in the cultural sector.

Future planning for cities requires integrating all "new" citizens (boys, girls and young people) in cultural development. Children and youth are entitled to be treated as competent and engaged subjects, rather than as mere consumers. Education processes of today are both the result of culture and, at the same time, construct the culture of the future. In these processes, cities play a vital role in the recognition and capacity building of the people who make up the local educational community.

- a. Education and training strategies place appropriate value on local cultural resources.
- b. The local government has approved a local strategy linking educational policy with cultural policy.
- c. There is a local platform or network that brings together public, civic, and private actors in the field of culture, education, and lifelong learning.
- d. The cultural institutions that receive public support provide educational activities for formal and informal environments, and dedicate a significant part of their budget to them.

- e. There are processes for sharing information about access to cultural activities and opportunities for cultural education, such as through online portals, information centers, etc.
- f. The curricula of students in primary and secondary education include acquiring cultural skills and knowledge pertaining to intercultural dialogue and the recognition of the value of diversity, creativity, tangible and intangible heritage and digital tools.
- g. Schools and education centers, associations and businesses take part in cultural creation, distribution, and mediation activities, ranging from artist residencies to more comprehensive projects including creativity training.
- h. Artistic education such as music, visual arts, performing arts, and multimedia, among other disciplines, is provided in local schools at all levels, and is accessible to people regardless of age and social, economic, or cultural backgrounds.

## Actions

- i. Local training in cultural management and cultural policies is provided, which emphasizes a comprehensive approach to the cultural factors of human development.
- j. Cultural rights, as well as human rights in general, are covered in educational programs and training activities in the cultural sector.

# Culture and Education





# Culture and Environment

## Cultural factors as accelerators of environmental responsibility

Recognizing the importance of culture in sustainable development means exploring the connections between culture and the environment. Culture influences our understanding of the environment and our relationship with it on a deep level. Concern for the welfare of future generations is already explicitly environmental; it should also be cultural.

People modify the ecosystems around them through cultural practices, values, and visions of the world. Human activities depend on and use “natural” spaces and biological resources that could otherwise disappear, such as agricultural heritage. Spaces and resources are bearers of culture partly as reminders of history, practical knowledge, and identity (e.g. food heritage); contribute aesthetic values (e.g. urban or rural landscapes); and condition the capacity for resilience. The knowledge people have of their surrounding ecosystems is of immense value. For centuries, their practices have shaped urban and rural landscapes. This traditional knowledge should be recognized and used to better understand how cultures and ecosystems interact, and enter into dialogue with academic knowledge, particularly in the context of regional development projects that may impact the ecosystem. These forms of knowledge must be developed and shared in order to promote ecological thinking and the values of sustainable development. Nature and culture have evolved alongside one another and form a constantly evolving balance. Cultural diversity and biological diversity are therefore closely related.

Local governments play an essential role in ensuring that due consideration is given to climate change, as well as promoting individuals’ knowledge and capacities in dealing with this global challenge. Furthermore, local governments can promote access to the resources necessary to develop healthy, organic forms of food production. Another important area of concern is the environmental impact of infrastructure and cultural activities and events; responsibility for this concern must be accepted, shared and accounted for. Cultural actors also contribute to raise awareness of different environmental concerns and the promotion of more sustainable uses of natural resources.

- a. Cultural factors, including the knowledge, traditions and practices of all people and communities, are integrated into local environmental sustainability strategies.
- b. Local cultural policies explicitly recognize the connections between culture and environmental sustainability (e.g. concerns about climate change, resilience, risk-prevention, the sustainable use of resources, and awareness raising about the richness and fragility of ecosystems).
- c. There is a working group or task force to link the work of local government departments of culture and environment.

- d. History and culture are included in guidelines on the promotion of the production and consumption of local products.
- e. Gastronomy, based on local produce, is recognized as a constituent element of local culture.
- f. The local government takes steps to facilitate and promote citizen initiatives for the sustainable use of public spaces, especially those linked to new gardening practices, and other examples of socio-ecological innovation.
- g. The local government establishes programs to preserve and spread traditional knowledge and practices that contribute to the sustainable use of natural resources.
- h. The local government recognizes the cultural importance of natural spaces with specific programs.

## Actions

- i. Cultural organizations that receive public support evaluate their environmental impact and carry out ecological awareness-raising activities.
- j. There are platforms that link public and private civil society organizations that work in the areas of culture and the environment.

# Culture and Environment



# Culture and Economy

## Cultural responsibility is necessary for a sustainable economy

To be sustainable, an economy must give thought to the values on which it is based, and take into account the resources, cultural and otherwise, of the surrounding environment. Economies have the greatest legitimacy and dynamism when they are adapted to local resources.

Cultural activities play an important role in comprehensive and sustainable economic development. They allow the renewal and creation of economic activities, boost entrepreneurship and employability, make up an important part of the attractiveness of places, and contribute to the development of tourism. However, economic models that prioritize quick, short-term economic impact at the expense of longer-term sustainability have driven the abusive exploitation and undermining of local cultural resources, resulting in the loss of identification of inhabitants with their local area. A sustainable use of cultural resources is respectful of core values and should contribute equally to cultural and economic development. Economic models that aim to be sensitive to culture should consider implementing practices that rely on collaboration, cooperatives, trading, and donations.

All economic models are based on specific cultural values and choices. Effective links between public, market, and cooperative economies, and forms of reciprocity between them, are essential to achieving people-centered, ecologically balanced economic development. Cultural ecosystems cannot be treated as a mere footnote in the economy; on the contrary, they sustain it. Therefore, the interconnectedness of cultural ecosystems with, and between, other dimensions of sustainable development must always be taken into account.

In the cultural sphere, as in all areas of production, it is necessary to recognize artists and cultural professionals, ensure access to their works, promote corporate responsibility, and provide an adequate range of support mechanisms for cultural projects.

Given the direct positive effects generated by cultural activities, a sustainable cultural ecosystem must reinvest resources into local culture. While doing so, close attention should be paid to the cultural initiatives that are the weakest and have the lowest profile. Examples include artistic education centres, grassroots organizations, minority expressions of identity, and cultural mediation.

- a. Local economic development strategies take the cultural economy into account and work with its participants to ensure that it is a key economic sector of the city or region.
- b. Contributions by the public, civic, and private cultural sectors to the local economy, including their direct and indirect impact on the creation of wealth and employment, are analyzed regularly.
- c. Appropriate contractual and salary conditions for people working in the cultural sector, as well as the recognition of author's rights and neighboring rights, are guaranteed by law.
- d. There is information and training on author's rights, shared production models and new distribution systems.
- e. Employability programs cover cultural knowledge and skills.
- f. There are a variety of financing mechanisms for for-profit cultural projects, such as microcredits, venture capital, and sponsorship programs.
- g. The local government promotes public or mixed economic programs that increase donations to, or volunteering for, cultural projects.
- h. There are partnerships between people active in the cultural sector and businesses, such as through residencies or other systems of innovation and knowledge transfers.
- i. The value in maintaining traditional local trades and crafts (including the development of innovation, as required) is recognized.
- j. The local tourism model is sustainable, balanced across the region, connected to the local communities and interactive with the cultural ecosystems.
- k. Corporate social responsibility programs explicitly include projects in the area of culture and engage with the cultural values of the population and local culture.
- l. Local business organizations, such as the chamber of commerce, have specific cultural policies and programs.

## Actions

# Culture and Economy





# Culture, Equality and Social Inclusion

Culture contributes to new social bonds

Cultural and creative processes have a strong impact on people's welfare, health, and the self-esteem. They make it possible for individuals and communities to explore their histories and sense of identity, promote the development of new meaning in their lives, and given them greater freedom. Cultural processes are essential in preventing exclusion and "leaving no one behind".

Active participation in cultural life is one of the key aspects in social inclusion. It provides the motivation and possibility of increased civic participation, lends cultural visibility to minorities, fosters mutual recognition and cooperation between different generations and cultures, boosts employment, and improves a city or region's security and image. Culture is an important means for establishing new social spaces and for developing new collective meanings. It can also contribute to conflict resolution, the strengthening of the social fabric, and greater resilience in groups and communities.

Cultural factors can promote or obstruct access to, and participation in, public services such as health, education, social inclusion, and employment. Public service policy-makers and staff must actively seek to identify and tackle discrimination of all kinds in the provision of, and access to, public services, such as discrimination on the grounds of gender or ethnicity. Anti-discrimination policies and programs must seek links between cultural issues and all other areas of political action. These process usually require long-term dedication and open, participatory methodologies.

Although the goal is to increase opportunities for everyone to participate, and to promote common spaces that are recognised by all, attention must be paid to individual freedom of choice (including the right not to participate in cultural activities). This freedom is a new and necessary right of citizens, complementary to their right to be different.

- a. Local social policies in the areas of health, employment, welfare and social inclusion explicitly include culture as a dimension for combating all types of discrimination.
- b. There should be a regular analysis of the factors that determine the cultural vulnerability of certain individuals or groups, within the framework of processes that directly involve those groups and individuals.
- c. The relationship between personal welfare, health, and active cultural practices is analyzed regularly.
- d. There is capacity-building program for social service professionals and organizations that improves their ability to identify and tackle cultural factors that prevent people from accessing public services.

- e. The local government uses its cultural budget and public resources to actively promote the participation of women in cultural activities and organizations, particularly at the most high-profile and senior levels, and also to value, promote, and increase the visibility and status of cultural activities that are already carried out predominantly by women.
- f. Cultural institutions receiving public support carry out programmes that include disadvantaged groups and conduct them in neighborhoods with high levels of poverty and exclusion.
- g. Steps have been taken to ensure that cultural facilities and spaces are accessible to all, including people with disabilities.
- h. Local conflict resolution strategies take into account, and recognize the potential of, culture.
- i. There are programs to promote inter-generational cooperation.

## Actions

- j. There are cultural innovation programs for young people that promote social inclusion and knowledge of cultural codes, digital environments, and gender equality.
- k. There is a local platform or network of associations, cooperatives, and third sector organizations that carry out activities on the relationship between culture, equality, and social inclusion.
- l. Local civil society organisations carry out awareness-raising campaigns, such as the promotion of cultural diversity, intercultural dialogue, and anti-racism, with the support of public institutions and cultural organizations.

Culture,  
Equality  
and Social  
Inclusion



# Culture, Urban Planning and Public Spaces

## Planning cities and regions with cultural awareness and meaning

Places are the result of interaction between humans and their environment. In so far as it is marked by their human inhabitants and their vision of the world, a territory is a bearer of history and meaning and is, therefore, cultural. This cultural dimension is made up of the practices and customs of citizens: heritage, architecture, design, public art, landscapes, the shaping of the natural environment and the organization of space. Cultures are a powerful instrument for the construction of spaces in which citizens can understand themselves and each other and freely embark on their life projects. Culture allows us to reimagine the world.

Urban planning and public spaces are essential in the transition to sustainable cities and regions. Urban planning that does not explicitly consider cultural issues has negative impacts on the preservation of heritage. It also prevents the exercise of memory, creativity, and coexistence, promotes homogenization, and limits opportunities to access and participation in cultural life. Contemporary urban planning must evaluate cultural impacts, in the same way that it started to evaluate environmental impacts in the twentieth-century.

Other consequences of the relationship between culture, urban planning, and public spaces include: (a) the need for urban and regional development projects to adapt to their cultural context. One such example is the use, where possible, of local knowledge and traditional construction techniques that add personality and distinctiveness to the city, rather than using models from elsewhere; (b) the need to recognize the potential of cultural activities and suitably designed infrastructures to contribute to urban regeneration, and (c) the balance among large and small facilities, city centers and decentralized neighborhoods in resource distribution and cultural planning; and (d) the participation of a citizens from the earliest stages of urban and regional planning.

- a. Local urban planning or master plans explicitly recognize the importance of cultural issues and resources.
- b. There is a reference guide on “cultural impact assessments” is developed for everyday use in urban planning policies, and a training program to support its use.
- c. The local government keeps an inventory of the city or region’s natural and cultural heritage, both tangible and intangible, and has subsequently established mechanisms for its preservation and conservation according to international standards.
- d. The local government adopts measures to promote the role of culture in the renovation of historic centers and in neighborhood, district and regional development plans.

- e. New cultural infrastructures are planned as part of a broader cultural ecosystem, and their potential impact is taken into account.
- f. The local government explicitly considers the notion of ‘landscape’ in its policies, integrating both natural and cultural aspects of development.
- g. The local government recognizes public spaces like streets, squares, and other areas in the city, as key resources for cultural interaction and participation.
- h. There is a range of public spaces which, thanks to their symbolism, are considered public goods.
- i. There are programs to promote and manage the development and preservation of public art.
- j. There are architectural guidelines for the renovation of existing buildings, the planning of new buildings, and the use of traditional construction techniques.

## Actions

- k. Policies for urban transport and mobility consider citizens’ access to cultural life, paying special attention to people residing in the city outskirts, people with infants or children, and those with other particular obstacles to accessing culture.
- l. The local government develops policies and programs that promote people’s active participation in urban planning and regional development, such as in urban design, architecture, and public art

# Culture, Urban Planning and Public Spaces





# Culture, Information and Knowledge

## Technology and its contributions to plurality and citizenship-building

Increasing opportunities to access information and participate in knowledge generation is a cultural process that is part of the basic conditions of sustainable development. Historically, the free exchange of knowledge has ensured the cultural evolution of societies. The creations of every era are based on the knowledge and contributions of those that preceded them. Increased and widespread accessibility to data, quality information, and citizen participation in the creation, analysis, production, and distribution of information allows for more transparent resource allocation and better equips citizens to feel a sense of ownership of development. Moreover, in an increasingly technological world, innovation and connectivity have become a means for positive change in communities, allowing citizens to respond to local problems and to pursue their own aspirations.

Efforts should be made, particularly by public institutions, to ensure that the increased access to information made possible by digital technology does not result in an infringement of the right to privacy.

Organizations that work with information and knowledge, such as libraries, archives, museums, civil society organizations, and the media, can provide information on cultural rights and public services. This information plays an essential role in empowering individuals and communities. Such organizations can also bring people together and facilitate the exchange of knowledge, preserve and ensure ongoing access to cultural heritage, provide forums for public debate, and offer training in how to access, understand, and use information.

Moreover, urban policies should consider recent developments in the creation, production, access to, circulation, and exchange of information, as well as changes in the cultural and creative industries.. Such policies must consider how these phenomena can be adapted to relate to the context and capability of local people. Today, there is also a virtual public space, the internet, in which culture is created and experienced. All of these technological and social changes mean that it is vital to promote international connectivity, both online and in person.

- a. Legislation guarantees freedom of expression, including artistic expression, freedom of opinion, freedom of information, respect for cultural diversity and respect for privacy.
- b. Public and civil society mechanisms are in place to monitor these freedoms.
- c. There are policies that guarantee access to free and plural information, as well as measures to guarantee that information is harnessed to promote citizens' right to participate in cultural life.
- d. The local media reflects the plurality of opinions, gives equal space and profile to the voices of women, and represents local and international cultural diversity.

- e. There are systems that join up universities, governments and civil society to monitor, research and analyze cultural developments and their interaction with other areas of sustainable development.
- f. The obstacles to accessing and using information and communication technologies for cultural purposes are analyzed regularly.
- g. The relationship between grassroots cultural processes and social innovation is analyzed regularly.
- h. There are policies and programs focused on creation, production, and digital distribution that are centered on citizens and promote cultural democracy.
- i. Cultural institutions that receive public support participate in debates on information and knowledge and provide consistent support for valuing culture as a common good.

## Actions

- j. There are training or awareness-raising activities for cultural professionals on the cultural, social, and economic implications of existing and emerging forms of cultural access and reproduction, such as copyright, copyleft, and open source.
- k. There are policies and programs allowing people active in the cultural sector to participate in international cooperation networks.

# Culture, Information and Knowledge



# Governance of Culture

## Towards a balanced and shared governance of local cultural policies

Governance implies “good government” and “shared government”. It has three dimensions: (1) multi-actor governance, including the public and private sectors, and civil society, (2) transversal or horizontal governance, covering different areas of public policy, and (3) multi-level or vertical governance, between different levels of government.

The transversal integration of culture into local sustainable development strategies requires the recognition the shared nature of culture and its central place in the construction of public spaces in which people can explore, experience and learn. This is a shared responsibility of all participants in multi-actor governance. As well as local governments, it is necessary for civil society organizations, private organizations, and individuals to be recognized as key actors in public debates, in establishing priorities, in developing policies, and in managing and evaluating programs. Local governments must be able to take on different roles as leaders, financial supporters, facilitators and, sometimes, as just observers. They must also accept overall responsibility for creating an enabling environment for sustainable development and cultural participation. In doing so, local governments must identify obstacles to citizen cooperation, and promote shared methods and goals between different parties. Over-institutionalization risks unbalancing cultural ecosystems just as much as privatization.

Ensuring the right to participate in cultural life requires that the cultural dimensions of all policies are taken into account. The local governance of culture must include opportunities for citizens to participate in cultural mapping (that is, in identifying cultural resources and relationships), strategic planning of priorities and key actions, as well as their evaluation. Balanced governance encourages the establishment of participatory forums, either public (like local councils on culture), or independent (established and run by civil society).

Governance of culture should also be supported by coordination mechanisms across different departments with responsibilities in cultural areas, as well as multi-level governance frameworks that help facilitate coordination among local, regional (where applicable), and national governments.

- a. The local government implements a cultural policy based on the Agenda 21 for Culture and Culture 21: Actions, bringing together public, civic, and private initiatives for joint projects.
- b. The local government promotes cultural planning at neighborhood or district level.
- c. The local government creates public forums whose aims are to steer local cultural policy, such as local councils on culture that include public, private and civil society participation,
- d. Public projects generate permanent forums for the consultation, negotiation, and regulation of goals and methods, with the participation of all the parties involved, and that should be characterised by foresight and the dynamics of reflexivity.

- e. Cultural institutions that receive public support are transparent, accountable, and evaluate the public services they provide; citizens are represented on their boards.
- f. Programs and institutions in receipt of public support develop and practice gender equality.
- g. Policies or programs operate to support the participation of citizens in the management of cultural institutions, programs, and events.
- h. The local government recognizes and supports management practices that are representative of local culture, and develops specific and appropriate management practices for common goods.
- i. An independent civil society platform, or network of civil society organizations that includes citizens and cultural professionals from all sectors is established.

## Actions

- j. There are measures such as training programs in the field of culture to strengthen NGOs, trade associations, unions and other civil society organizations that contribute to cultural life.
- k. There are frameworks in place that assign responsibilities and foster collaboration for cultural policies between local, regional, and national governments.

# Governance of Culture





# HOW TO USE THIS DOCUMENT?

## Local Implementation

"Culture 21: Actions" is available to any local government that wishes to use it.

"Culture 21: Actions" aims to be a useful document for local governments as a whole, rather than for specialized cultural departments. Our aim was to create one practical and easy-to-use document that covers what we know about the relationship between citizenship, culture and sustainable development. This is an emerging field, which has yet to be completely consolidated, but it is necessary to respond to the challenges faced by twenty-first century societies. Local governments will play an essential role in this.

It is our hope that this document will help mayors and local government leaders to strengthen the cultural dimension of local development, as well as inspiring employees to consider the cultural dimension of sustainable development.

We also hope that it may prove useful to citizens involved in the areas of culture, citizenship, and sustainable development.

Local implementation of this document should take into account different levels of government and different distributions of responsibility between public institutions. We have attempted to outline some of the responsibilities for these actions. Many of them call on local governments, others are addressed to civil society organizations, and some relate to the private sector. Finally, we have made several general recommendations that apply to everyone involved in local policy-making. Specific guidelines were not included for these, because we understand that, in these cases, responsibilities may be shared among several stakeholders.

## Self-Assessment

The chapter dedicated to "Commitments" should make it possible for local governments to carry out self-assessments of their current policies and programs. The self-assessment is geared toward increasing knowledge, connectivity, and the operational capacity of those whose work focuses on the relationship between citizenship, culture, and sustainable development, whether they belong to the cultural sector or not. We hope that this self-assessment framework will be a useful resource for local debates.

We encourage local governments to lead the implementation of this framework in their cities through open, participatory and action-oriented processes. The self-assessment is based on the "Commitments" - the nine thematic sections and their corresponding actions. The self-assessment should enable participants to estimate the level of achievement of each action, award points and provide comments. Once completed, each local government can present issues encountered in a "star" chart (see below) that outlines their strengths and weaknesses for any given year. This will allow comparisons across time in a city, and the exchange of experiences and lessons learned between cities.





## POLICY SELF-ASSESSMENT: CITY 1 AND AVERAGE OBSERVATION



The *United Cities and Local Governments* (UCLG) Committee on Culture will provide partner cities with a complete working document, containing advice on how to carry out this self-assessment, including scoring, indicators and comments.

Given the original nature of this document, the UCLG Committee on Culture is open to criticism, suggestions or comments that emerge from its application, in order further its ongoing improvement.

### An International Collaboration Network

In line with the values and principles of UCLG, this document seeks to strengthen cooperation between cities. This includes development cooperation between local governments in different parts of the world.

The UCLG Committee on Culture will propose a collaboration network for cities that focuses on both local implementation and international exchange. They must both be closely related in order to have a positive impact, and to improve the relationship between culture, citizenship, institutions, civil society and sustainable development at a local level.

The collaboration network will enable technical assistance for self-assessments, peer learning exchanges, explanations of good practices, and the identification of cities that are leaders in a specific area.

"Culture 21: Actions" is geared toward promoting the exchange of experiences between local governments from around the world, as well as their close collaboration in an international "community of practice".

The UCLG Committee on Culture will organize a Culture Summit every two years to bring people together, foster exchange, update the agenda, and publicly report on the progress made through online collaboration.

### United Nations' Post-2015 Sustainable Development Agenda

In September 2015, the United Nations General Assembly will approve a universal development agenda based on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It will act as a benchmark for all countries to improve citizens' quality of life irrespective of their current reality or degree of development. The agenda will also promote a shared understanding of global development. The SDGs must therefore be universal, transformative, and ambitious. While we regret that the post-2015 SDGs will not have a stand-alone Goal on culture, it is possible for several SDG of the targets and indicators to include an explicit mention of cultural issues and processes. This would have a significant impact on the role of culture in globalization and on local cultural policies.

In close partnership with the SDG process, UN-Habitat is preparing a new framework to define policies and programs to ensure sustainable urbanization. This framework will be presented at the Habitat III conference in Quito in October of 2016.

We believe that the "Culture 21: Actions" contributes to a better understanding of the integral relationship between culture, citizenship, and sustainable development. We hope it will prove useful for everyone involved in the local transfer, or "localization", of the SDGs and results of Habitat III.

### National Governments

We believe that "Culture 21 Actions" will prove useful in the design of national development plans, national urban policy plans, and support programmes for local and regional governments. This planning must be developed in close cooperation with local governments, and culture must be integrated in order to guarantee an implementation that contributes to enhanced democracy and empowerment of people.



# THIS DOCUMENT

The Committee on Culture of the world association of United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) is the global platform of cities, organizations and networks to learn, to cooperate and to launch policies and programmes on the role of culture in sustainable development. In 2012-2015 the Committee on Culture is chaired by Lille-Metropole, co-chaired by Buenos Aires, Montreal and México and vice-chaired by Angers, Barcelona and Milano. The Committee on Culture of UCLG is open to the participation of cities from all continents on an equal basis.

"Culture 21 Actions" has been written by the Committee on Culture of UCLG between June 2013 and March 2015. The Committee has involved members, partners and experts from all continents in the process.

The elaboration of "Culture 21 Actions" was approved in June 2013 by UCLG's Executive Bureau held in Lyon; specific work begun already in June 2013, in Lille-Metropole, at the 10th meeting of the Committee on Culture of UCLG, and continued at the International Seminar "Cities, Culture and Future" (1st edition) held in Buenos Aires in September 2013 and at the UCLG World Congress held in October 2013 in Rabat.

A public online questionnaire was launched in March 2014, with questions addressing the Agenda 21 for culture, UCLG's Committee on Culture and the possible contents of "Culture 21: Actions", and its results published in July 2014.

Key messages by local leaders and expert articles were commissioned in November 2013 and published in June 2014.

From October 2013 to November 2014 debates, discussions and dissemination of "Culture 21: Actions" took place in Brussels (organised by the European research network "Investigating Cultural Sustainability"), Novi Sad (organised by the regional government of Vojvodina, Serbia), Santiago de Chile (6th World Summit on Arts and Culture, IFACCA), Dakar (organised by the City of Dakar), Alma (organised by the "Les Arts et la Ville" network), Lyon (organised by the City Council and the "European Lab"), Milan (organised by the City Council in the context of the Forum Città-Mondo), Hildesheim (organised by the International Conference on Cultural Policy Research – ICCPR), Montreal (organised by the City of Montreal), Newcastle (organised by European network Culture Action Europe), Bilbao (organised by the City Council), Mexico City (organised by the local government in the framework of the award ceremony of the "UCLG – Mexico City – Culture 21" international award), Tunis (organised by the Ministry for culture and the German Commission for UNESCO) and Haikou (at the UCLG World Council).

Also, from June to November 2014, the Pilot Cities of "Culture 21 Actions", namely, Belo Horizonte, Bogotá, Concepción, Gabrovo, Jeju, Mexico City, Talca and Vaudreuil-Dorion, organised local debates on the contents and the implementation of this document.

The final draft of "Culture 21 Actions" was elaborated in Buenos Aires, on 1-2 October 2014, at the public Seminar on "Cities, Culture and Future" (2nd edition) and at the 11th meeting of the UCLG Committee on Culture.

The final document "Culture 21 Actions" was approved by the Committee on Culture of UCLG on 19 March 2015 in Bilbao, in the framework of the "UCLG Culture Summit: Culture and Sustainable Cities".

The Committee on Culture of UCLG wishes to express a sincere gratitude to all those who have participated in this process.

# CONTACT

## Committee on Culture

### UCLG - United Cities and Local Governments

Carrer Avinyó, 15  
08002 Barcelona

Email [info@agenda21culture.net](mailto:info@agenda21culture.net)

Web [www.agenda21culture.net](http://www.agenda21culture.net)

Twitter [@agenda21culture](https://twitter.com/agenda21culture)

