

#HLPF2018
#LISTEN2CITIES
#CULTURE21ACTIONS



SDG 11.4
CULTURE AND HERITAGE
FOR MORE SUSTAINABLE,
INCLUSIVE AND OPEN CITIES
AND SOCIETIES

 **culture 21**
UCLG Committee

 **UCLG**
United Cities
and Local Governments

· **DISCLAIMER**

· Since 2017, UCLG has been given the mandate by the
· Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments
· (GTF) to report every year to the High Level Political
· Forum of the United Nations (UN-HLPF) on the
· assessment of the Sustainable Development Goals
· (SDGs).

· This report has been elaborated by UCLG Committee
· on Culture with the aim to inform the 2nd report of
· Local and Regional Governments to the HLPF 2018,
· entitled "*Towards the Localization of the SDGs*", on
· the state of cultural aspects regarding the SDGs, and
· more specifically on the assessment of Target 11.4:
· "Strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the
· world's cultural and natural heritage".

· This report has been elaborated by Jordi Baltà,
· expert of the Agenda 21 for Culture.



11.4

CULTURE AND HERITAGE FOR MORE SUSTAINABLE, INCLUSIVE AND OPEN CITIES AND SOCIETIES

SDG 11.4 addresses the need for bigger efforts to protect the world's cultural and natural heritage. This is one of the most explicit references to cultural aspects in the 2030 Agenda, alongside those presented in SDGs 4.7, 8.3 and 8.9. However small, the 2030 Agenda still amounts to a step forward in the extent to which cultural aspects are considered and included in sustainable development agendas. When the MDGs were adopted in 2000, for instance, no explicit references to cultural aspects were included: only in their subsequent implementation was the cultural dimension effectively explored and included (UNESCO, 2012).

This minor step ahead is consistent with the progressive recognition of the importance of cultural aspects, including heritage in sustainable development, as well as the specific implications that these can have at the local level.¹ Cultural rights specifically are often exercised at the local level:² accordingly, local governments have a very significant role in the design and implementation of cultural policies. Since the adoption of the Agenda 21 for culture in 2004 (UCLG, 2014), UCLG has advocated for the strengthening of local cultural policies and participatory governance frameworks connected to sustainable development. The 3rd UCLG World Congress, held in Mexico City in 2010, adopted a Policy Statement entitled "Culture: Fourth Pillar of Sustainable Development". This initiative was followed by the adoption of the *Culture 21: Actions* toolkit in 2015, allowing cities across the world to share a common framework for the operationalization of culture in the way they approach sustainable development,

innovating, evaluating and exchanging their policies and programmes.

Evidence collected by UCLG over the years suggests that cultural aspects will play a pivotal role for the 2030 Agenda to be successful, even in areas where the connection between the cultural dimension and the SDGs is often only implicit. In 2018, the UCLG Committee on Culture is presenting two specific outputs to highlight this commitment – the document *Culture in the SDGs: A Guide for Local Action*, and the Agenda 21 for culture Good Practice database (see box).

CULTURAL AND HERITAGE POLICIES IN SUPPORT OF INTEGRATED AND INCLUSIVE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES

Countless cities and territories have set up and promoted policies to safeguard and enhance cultural heritage and other areas of culture. What follows is a quick overview of some initiatives illustrating this commitment.

Protecting tangible and intangible cultural heritage can, for one, become a driver of bottom-up policy coherence, led by local and regional governments and involving increased participation of citizens and civil society. Several cities, such as **Regensburg** (Germany), have adopted World Heritage management plans³ and have been successful in involving local citizens and integrating cultural heritage in policy areas such as urban planning, economic development and tourism. Other cities, including those mentioned below, have increased their efforts towards the integration of heritage protection in other areas of policymaking.

¹ Duxbury, N.; Hosagrahar, J.; and Pascual, J. (2016), "Why must culture be at the heart of sustainable development?", article, Barcelona: UCLG.

² Martinell, A. (2014), "Cultural life, local life", article, Barcelona: UCLG / Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments

³ For more information, please see: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/globalstrategy/>.

In context of urbanisation, which puts pressure on heritage assets, it is important for cities to protect cultural heritage and place culture as a key aspect in the renovation or historic centres and in inclusive urban planning. Cities like **Cuenca** (Ecuador) have been acknowledging and promoting cultural assets and rights, leading to effective policies of inclusive urban planning and urban regeneration. The cultural dimension of sustainable development is now acknowledged in other policy areas supporting local sustainable development. Citizen involvement is particularly important to ensure that heritage also retains its contemporary relevance.

The cultural dimension can also be mainstreamed into a long-term vision of local sustainable development. The **Shire of Yarra Ranges** (Australia), for instance, was able to reconcile urban attractiveness with inclusiveness and thus foster positive effects on poverty reduction (SDG 1) and decent employment (SDG 8). Local governments mobilized local social and economic stakeholders to shift tourism policies towards decent economic opportunities for local artists and creative businesses. Under local leadership, Yarra Ranges attracted funding from state and federal governments to improve cultural facilities while protecting its cultural and natural heritage, promoting adequate employability mechanisms and dynamic understanding of citizens' needs.

The example of **Pekalongan** (Indonesia), which recognizes itself as the 'City of Batik', is also a compelling story of how local governments can foster women's social and economic empowerment through cultural policies. In 2011, the city decided to invest in the economic potential of its cultural heritage, the Batik sector, a sector in which 60% of the workers are women. This strategic decision contributed to promote decent work, empower women and, through them, improve the well-



CIVIL SOCIETY ENGAGEMENT IN CULTURE AND THE SDGs

Several international civil society networks have actively campaigned for the acknowledgement that culture is a significant component of sustainable development, providing evidence of this in their own work. In the field of heritage, the work of the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) is notable. Through its research, capacity-building and advocacy efforts, ICOMOS has developed a range of tools and recommendations to contribute to the implementation of Target 11.4. Similarly, the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) has put forward tools and recommendations to help libraries implement the 2030 Agenda. ICOMOS, IFLA and UCLG were among members of 'The Future We Want Includes Culture' campaign, which advocated stronger inclusion of culture in the 2030 Agenda.

ILLUSTRATING THE LINKS BETWEEN CULTURE AND THE SDGs

The UCLG report '*Culture in the Sustainable Development Goals: A Guide for Local Action*' (2018) identifies connections between cultural aspects and all the SDGs. These are illustrated with examples from cities across the world. They emphasize the importance of decentralization, localization and participatory governance, and highlight participation in cultural life, cultural liberties, heritage and diversity as fundamental values in their own right as well as enabling factors for other areas of sustainable development. The UCLG report draws on over 130 examples of culture and sustainable development collected by the UCLG Committee on Culture. These are accessible via the Agenda 21 for Culture Good Practice Database (<http://obs.agenda21culture.net>). Examples are indexed by the 17 SDGs, the nine thematic commitments of Culture 21 Actions, and a set of keywords.



being of their households. It also improved municipal finances, generating even more capacity for public authorities.

In UCLG's Bogotá Commitment (2016), local and regional governments acknowledged culture as a vital element of citizenship and co-existence. They recognize cultural diversity as a prerequisite for innovation, co-responsibility and peaceful resolution of internal and external conflicts. Post-conflict cities, such as **Medellín** (Colombia), explored the connections between cultural heritage, social inclusion and cohesion goals. Several other local governments have implemented local cultural policies that were instrumental for gender equality and the recognition of vulnerable groups and their cultural rights (e.g., Afro-Colombian indigenous communities or internally-displaced people, among others).

To achieve these goals, awareness-raising measures on diversity and inclusion, the promotion of intercultural and intergenerational dialogue and the integration of cultural aspects in educational and lifelong learning strategies, are fundamental. Cities such as **Gabrovo** (Bulgaria) have adopted policies fostering knowledge transfer from local rural communities to urban areas, including the *Welcome to the Village* project, which enabled children to learn from older persons living in rural areas. Likewise, the city of **Jeonju** (South Korea) has included the appreciation of traditional culture in education and lifelong-learning programmes, helping both children and adults understand the importance of traditional buildings, intangible heritage and other cultural dimensions of housing.

Local governments are determined to be laboratories for testing effective and appropriate solutions to global problems, acknowledge their positive impacts and share the lessons they learn. In 2016, the city of **Timbuktu** (Mali) was the recipient of the second edition of the *International Award UCLG – Mexico City – Culture 21*, acknowledging its leading role and the contribution of the cultural dimension in the achievement of sustainable development objectives. Timbuktu presented the outstanding, lasting results of its strategy of socio-economic and urban fabric reinvigoration in the city, strongly needed after its occupation in 2012 and 2013. The initiative strengthened local cultural heritage, defended citizens' freedom to maintain their cultural practices, and the promotion of culture as a strategy for resilience and sustainable cohabitation.

Finally, there is a clear relation between cultural protection and the preservation of ecosystems on land and under water (SDGs 14 and 15). Traditional knowledge connected to the preservation of natural resources has been acknowledged by some local governments and deserves further attention. The Seed Swap Festival in **Seferihisar** (Turkey) and the **Ha Long** Ecomuseum (Vietnam), for instance, are unique cultural experiences that promote land and water preservation. The former allows local producers to maintain traditional, low-cost agricultural practices, while also raising awareness about the need to preserve sustainable food production and consumption. The province of **Jeju** (South Korea) has committed to preserve the custom of *haenyeo* (women divers) as an eco-friendly sustainable fishing practice, rooted in traditional knowledge. Through preservation and promotion of such heritage, Jeju has also uplifted women's status in the community.

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