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Cities lead the actions on the role of culture in sustainable development

STRATEGIES FOR PUTTING CULTURE ON THE 2030 AGENDA
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BACKGROUND

The significant contributions of the World Decade for Cultural Development (1988-1997) , the Intergovernmental Conference on Cultural Policies for Development held in Stockholm in 1998 , and other important events were insufficient in that they did not include specific culture goals in the Millennium Summit and the MDGs (2000). They also failed to mention the importance of incorporating culture into the development policy agenda.

From 2000-2015, significant progress was made in implementing active policies in the cultural sphere for development. This took place at local, national, and international levels of government and with defined results. Further progress was made in the conceptual and technical creation of a theoretical framework for different evaluation mechanisms that look at the impacts of culture on sustainable development.

The UN Resolution "Transforming our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development" does not consider culture in its SDGs, and very little in its overall mission, despite the success of the campaign "The Future We Want Includes Culture", which included support from professionals and organizations from more than 120 countries. It is difficult to comprehend the considerable goal of transforming our framework for life and coexistence at the local and international levels without taking into account the culture(s) that greatly affect our global problems. There are several interpretations of this that I have analyzed in previous works.

LINES OF ACTION

Based on these considerations and the fact that the 2030 Agenda has become a frame of reference of the international community, steps have been taken to respond to this new reality. Cultural actors and institutions, as well as other organizations from different fields, have reacted by seeking out strategies to incorporate the cultural sphere into the overall commitment of the SDGs. Analyzing different sources and publications we find that there are three main approaches in the effort to put culture in the 2030 Agenda.

>>> **THE UN RESOLUTION "TRANSFORMING OUR WORLD: THE 2030 AGENDA FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT" DOES NOT CONSIDER CULTURE IN ITS SDGS, AND VERY LITTLE IN ITS OVERALL MISSION, DESPITE THE SUCCESS OF THE CAMPAIGN "THE FUTURE WE WANT INCLUDES CULTURE", WHICH INCLUDED SUPPORT FROM PROFESSIONALS AND ORGANIZATIONS FROM MORE THAN 120 COUNTRIES.**

1. Some projects have looked at the different SDGs from a perspective of management or cultural policies, suggesting lines of work for various social actors. Different approaches can provide evidence and clear results from the cultural sector on how to establish accountability in sector reports. This kind of work also has a pedagogical aspect to it. It demonstrates the potential that culture has to reinforce the SDGs, as well as to raise awareness among actors to create more conscious interventions. This has been done by different international or national institutions, as well as in different areas of cultural policy, such as heritage, the arts, cultural industries, and more.

2. It is vital that we inspire reflections on sustainability based on the unique characteristics of culture. Given the current environmental reality, we must move toward a vision of

cultural sustainability. There is a clear need to establish sustainable practices in cultural institutions, and create a change of mentality in the management of culture.

3. The different areas of culture must be expanded based on the background, experience, and knowledge taken over years of assessment and analysis. Creating a broader frame of reference for the relationship between culture and development aids in drafting better policies and actions. In turn, this makes it easier to measure and asses their results and impacts.

These strategies have been guiding projects and efforts at different levels. Throughout this summit I have thought it appropriate to focus on presenting the various aspects of what we refer to as a "cultural approach to development".

AREAS OF FOCUS

According to assessment and analysis processes on the role of culture in development, we can see a set of factors and indications that help us better incorporate various components of culture into development.

1. Specific actions can have a profound effect on the development of the culture sector. These can be seen as the different elements of a society's cultural life that have a direct impact on the processes and impacts of development. The cultural sector itself is valuable to development, or at least offers conditions for development that can contribute to achieving different SDGs. The following are just some of the many possible types of actions:

   • To improve the cultural conditions of a community or general population, influencing well-being and quality of life.

   • To ensure the right to participate in cultural life at the local level.

   • To increase the level of participation in cultural life as a means of guaranteeing fundamental rights.

   • To increase the possibility of individual or group expression through the city's cultural services.

   • To facilitate access to cultural services and cultural consumption in accordance with socio-economic realities, and establish access channels for people or vulnerable groups lacking resources.

   • To strengthen cultural identities through greater recognition and facilitate their participation in cultural life.

   • To contribute to people's welfare and happiness by means of cultural life and the possibility of creative leisure.

   • To help craft a shared collective imagination through symbolic construction, which facilitates culture.

- To revive and maintain collective cultural memory as a tool of one's own identity, and to create knowledge transfer to new generations.
- To conserve cultural and natural heritage through a comprehensive approach.
- To identify and recognize cultural diversity and diverse cultural expressions as an exercise of respect and tolerance for the present reality.
- To manage regional balance between different realities such as rural-urban, central-suburban, etc.
- To help create visibility and an external image for a community, city, or other population, in such a way that it establishes a presence within the global dialogue.
- To attract visitors, other communities, exchange, tourists, and more to visit the local cultural life.
- To have a public financing system for the cultural sector that defends the general interest in the market.

2. We must identify and enhance the contributions of culture to development. Studies in recent years on culture as a social and economic sector have made it possible to have a broader and more comprehensive perspective of the contributions of culture to development. Some of these contributions have had direct impacts while others are more indirect:

- According to recent studies on the cultural sector, its value can also be seen in its contribution to GDP, as well as its ability to provide local and national data.
- Culture creates employment both directly within cultural structures as well as indirectly in other fields that cater to cultural life – Various types of employment and their local impact.
- Viewing culture as its own economic sector and fostering entrepreneurship related to cultural expressiveness and creativity.
- The impact of culture on other social and economic sectors of society The mainstreaming of culture in the fields of tourism, education, urban planning, housing, health, etc.
- Culture's contribution to processes of social cohesion, coexistence, and senses of belonging within a community, city, or country.
- Increased participation in cultural life under the conditions and processes of economic and productive development.
- Contribution to political participation and governance.
- The impact of cultural practices on the revival of public space and its effects on local safety.
- Favouring a sense of belonging and the construction of cultural citizenship have had a positive impact on the conditions and processes of development.
- Culture facilitates the use and enjoyment of public space by providing content and the ability to bring the population together.
- Access to cultural markets at the local, national, and international levels.
- Overall conservation of cultural heritage, including buildings, intangible heritage, and nature, as a means of generating socioeconomic activities.

3. We must promote the cultural sphere within development. In general, this refers to the importance of cultural forms in the creation of development processes and human development models within a given context. We must also accept that the cultural sphere is important because it proposes a form of development centred on concrete realities while avoiding imposing processes or acculturation with exogenous models:

- Dominant cultural values that are in line with tradition and current realities that can influence forms of development

- Understanding ways of life and worldviews in order to respect them and integrate them into development dynamics, striking a balance between tradition, memory, and current issues

- Establishing a place for cultural experience in relation to nature, the environment, and climate change

- Impact of development, innovation, and technology on the change of cultural forms and community values

- Population systems, types of housing, the relationship with nature and its adaptation to current needs

- Impact of migration, displacement, and mobility on cultural practices; Cultures in large conurbations

- Spiritual beliefs and respect for minorities

- Knowledge available to a community or society in accordance with their ancestral contributions to modern life

- A level of recognition and a guarantee for human rights and cultural rights in general with specific attention to minority cultures and vulnerable communities

- The influence and contribution of culture in different areas of development: education, health, environment, housing, urban planning, governance, justice, etc.

- Contributions of expressiveness and cultural creativity to processes of innovation and social change

- The mainstreaming of culture in other areas of local life (education, public space, business, health, etc.)

4. Culture and capacity building for development. Within the framework of sustainable human development with respect to capacity-building, it is important to consider the way culture has become an essential variable in the acquisition and expansion of human skills. Local cultural life is also a key factor in establishing individual and collective capacities, which impact on development processes:

- Cultural capacities must also be considered in sustainable human development.
- Relationship, interdependence, and complementarity between basic skills and cultural skills.
- Contributions of collective cultural skills to development dynamics.
- Cultural education as a means of developing broader skills.
- Cultural practices as a social asset to strengthening skills for development.
- The field of cultural practices which can expand social relationships as well as both collective and community participation.
- The contribution of available knowledge and the generation of experiential knowledge in capacity-building.
- The potential of culture to stimulate capacity-building for human development.
- Contributions of culture to a large number of learning processes and the acquisition of individual and collective skills.
- Culture as a space that promotes educational compensation and safeguards opportunities for learning.
- Culture helps create a climate that influences processes of social innovation.
- The importance of retaining individuals or groups whose creativity and talent are assets for development.

These four areas help us make sense of the broad relationships between culture and development, and makes it easier to appreciate the tangible and intangible parts of its impacts. The contribution of culture to sustainable development is very unique. This is because the latter is also an area that transcends standard notions of direct contributions and empirical value, which are traditionally more qualitative and require specific methodologies.

The problem of proving culture's contributions to development is reflected in the difficulty of substantiating actions and their effects, while working within a very general understanding of the field or system of culture. Outlining different areas with different characteristics allows us to present this relationship with more specific approaches. Given doubts and firmly entrenched positions about whether culture contributes to development, we must respond with concrete, structured evidence and methodologies that prove its obvious effects so that the impact of SDGs will not be squandered.

A third of the period since the 2015 Summit has passed, and there is now enough in the way of knowledge and methodologies to firmly move forward in implementing these goals and approaches within the "The Future We Want Includes Culture" campaign, with more defined projects.

" "... We must harness the transformative power of culture that we seek. Our world is a remarkable mosaic of diverse cultures on which our understanding of sustainable development is based, and this is evolving. We still have a lot to learn from cultures in the process of building the world we want. If we want to succeed, the new Agenda cannot continue to a domain exclusive to institutions and governments. People must play a leading role. Therefore, culture, in all its aspect, must be a crucial part of supporting the new Agenda""

Summary report by the UN Secretary-General on the 2030 Agenda

AREAS OF CULTURE IN DEVELOPMENT

CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT	HOW CULTURE CONTRIBUTES TO DEVELOPMENT	THE CULTURAL SIDE OF DEVELOPMENT	CREATING CAPACITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT
IMPROVE CULTURAL CONDITIONS	DIRECT AND INDIRECT IMPACTS ON DEVELOPMENT	CULTURAL VALUES	CULTURAL EDUCATION
INCREASE OPPORTUNITIES FOR EXPRESSION	CONTRIBUTION TO GDP AND BASIC INCOME	WAYS OF LIFE	CONTRIBUTION TO AVAILABLE KNOWLEDGE
RECOVERY OF COLLECTIVE MEMORY	JOB CREATION	AVAILABLE KNOWLEDGE	STRENGTHEN HUMAN POTENTIAL FOR DEVELOPMENT
PARTICIPATION IN CULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS	ADVOCACY IN OTHER AREAS OF SOCIETY	SPIRITUAL BELIEFS	PLACE VALUE ON SOCIAL ASSETS CONTRIBUTIONS OF CULTURAL CAPACITIES TO DEVELOPMENT DYNAMICS
BALANCED OFFER OF CULTURAL EVENTS THROUGHOUT THE REGION	CONTRIBUTION TO SOCIAL COHESION	CONTRIBUTIONS TO QUALITY OF LIFE	CULTURE AND SOCIAL INNOVATION PROCESSES
ACCESS TO CULTURAL GOODS AND SERVICES	CONTRIBUTION TO POLITICAL PARTICIPATION	CROSS-CUTTING EFFECTS OF CULTURE IN DIFFERENT AREAS OF THE DEVELOPMENT	RETENTION OF ASSETS AND TALENT
PROTECTION OF CULTURAL DIVERSITY	CONTRIBUTION OF THE CULTURE SECTOR	ANCESTRAL KNOWLEDGE	METHODOLOGIES FOR DEVELOPING CULTURAL CAPACITIES
PRESERVING CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE	INVOLVEMENT OF OTHER SECTORS SUCH AS TOURISM, EDUCATION, HOUSING, ETC.	CONTRIBUTIONS OF EXPRESSIVENESS AND CREATIVITY TO INNOVATION AND SOCIAL CHANGE	CRITICAL CAPACITY
INCREASE PARTICIPATION IN CULTURAL LIFE	IMPACT ON COMMUNITY WELFARE		
EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION OF CULTURAL REALITY			
CONTRIBUTION TO WELL-BEING AND HAPPINESS			

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