



THE SEVEN KEYS IN XI'AN

INTRODUCTION: THE UCLG COMMITTEE ON CULTURE AND THE SEVEN KEYS

United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) Committee on Culture is a unique global platform consisting of more than 830 cities and organizations to cooperate and to launch policies and programmes on the role of culture in sustainable development. Its mission 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 cultivate explicit relationship between local cultural policies and overall sustainable development.

On December 9th, 2021, the Xi'an Seven Keys Workshop took place successfully. On behalf of Xi'an Municipal People's Government, Xi'an Foreign Affairs Office convened the workshop, designed by the Committee on Culture of UCLG, and sought cultural integration through localization of SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals).

The workshop focused on identifying local development challenges and the interrelationship between the challenges and cultural assets, activities, and local policies, in light of the Guide for Local Action on Culture in the SDGs (UCLG, 2018). The Seven Keys present concrete commitments that made by local actors to localize SDGs through culture policy-making based on their specific conditions.

CONTEXT: THE CITY AND ITS MAIN CHALLENGES

Xi'an lies in the center of China. It is the capital city of Shaanxi province and the largest city in northwest of China, with a total area of 10,752 square kilometers and a population of 13 million. Xi'an, known as Chang'an in ancient times, was the cradle of Chinese civilization, serving as the starting point of the ancient Silk Road. With more than 3,100 years of continuous city history, Xi'an was the ancient capital for 13 dynasties over 1,100 years. It is endowed with many world-renowned heritage sites, particularly the Mausoleum of the First Qin Emperor, the Terracotta Warriors, the Chang'an City Relics of Han Dynasty, the Daming Palace, the Small Wild Goose Pagoda and the Great Wild Goose Pagoda of the Tang Dynasty, and the ancient Xi'an City Wall. Today, Xi'an is a modern city with comprehensive social and economic development, functioning as a center for scientific research and education, as well as a significant industrial hub in China. In 2020, Xi'an's GDP exceeded 1 trillion RMB (equivalent to \$148 billion). With its rich historical, cultural and natural resources, Xi'an is also one of the leading tourist destinations. In 2019, it welcomed 300 million tourists from home and abroad and earned 310 billion RMB (equivalent to \$46 billion) tourism revenue.

In February, 2021, Xi'an set up the 14th Five-Year Plan for development goals in the annual government report, in which achieving a total economic output of over 1.4 trillion RMB by 2025 and becoming one of the leading cities in terms of technological innovation and advanced manufacturing were highlighted. Xi'an also plans to constantly improve its ecological environment, ensure high-quality healthcare and well-being of the people, provide richer public cultural products, and enhance the soft power of urban culture with highly participatory and inclusive social governance. To conclude, Xi'an aims to become a national central city and a thriving world-class metropolis with well-preserved historical and cultural characteristics.

In the context of mentioned above, the Seven Keys Workshop was launched, as it plays a key role in the process. Organizers of the workshop invited 24 participants with diverse backgrounds, including specialists recommended by municipal government agencies, practitioners, entrepreneurs, young people, and international residents from culture, heritage protection, business, environmental protection, urban planning, and tourism fields (participants list is attached). By utilizing the "Seven Keys" methodology, the participants identified local challenges in economic development, scientific innovation, social justice, people's well-being, environmental management, local identity, cultural heritage, and the integration of culture and tourism, education, and globalization, which in fact echoed the goals listed in the government report. By appreciating SDGs and the key role culture played in SDGs localization, participants matched local challenges with SDGs and reflected on how to tackle challenges related to sustainable development of city by implementing culture strategy.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE WORKSHOP

In October 2020, the Xi'an Foreign Affairs Office and UCLG Committee on Culture agreed on a preliminary schedule for the Seven Keys Workshop after several online discussions. The Seven Keys Program Toolkit provided by UCLG Committee on Culture was translated into Chinese and thoroughly studied by appointed experts, during which the initial plan for the workshop was also developed. Due to the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, UCLG observers were unable to travel to China as facilitators. Consequently, the planned visit to cultural relics and museums was canceled, and the workshop was postponed. In September, 2021, Xi'an Municipal Government decided to hold the workshop as a side event of the 2021 Euro-asia Economic Forum on October 20th. At the preparatory meeting chaired by Xi'an Foreign Affairs Office, the list of facilitators and participants was finally decided. On October 6th and 13th, 2021, the facilitators in Xi'an received two online training sessions led by Mr. Jordi Pascual, Coordinator of UCLG Committee on Culture. On October 15th, the facilitators conducted an online training for the participants of the workshop session. However, due to the increasing risks of Covid-19 and sporadic cases, only an online launching ceremony of the workshop was held on October 20th and the workshop was postponed.

On December 9th, 2021, the Seven Keys Workshop was successfully implemented at the Xi'an International Conference Center at 2:00 pm CST (7:00am CET). It was supported by the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries, Xi'an Municipal Government, UCLG, and was co-sponsored by Xi'an Foreign Affairs Office, UCLG Committee on Culture, and UCLG ASPAC Secretariat. All participants dedicated themselves to a 7-hour intensive discussion about cultural policies and actions for achieving SDGs in Xi'an. Mr. Jordi Pascual, Dr. Bernadia Irawati Tjandradewi, Secretary-General of UCLG ASPAC Secretariat, and Liz Wilgas, Institutional Management Expert attended the workshop online. Qiang Sheng, Li Xiaoyan and Su Dean, the three officers at Xi'an Foreign Affairs Office attended the workshop in person. All participants shared their views at different phases of the workshop. Simultaneous interpretation in Chinese and English was provided throughout the workshop.

The main body of the Seven Keys Workshop consisted of three parts. The first part focused on local challenges and SDGs. The participants were invited to list main challenges of Xi'an's development based on their understanding and experience. After a presentation of the SDGs, facilitators then linked the SDGs with local challenges and identified how each SDG coincided with local challenges. The participants pointed out 22 main challenges, covering culture, technology, environment, economy, education, urban structure, internationalization, etc. (results are listed in Annex 1. The links between SDG and local challenges are shown in Figure 1 of Annex 3).

The second part was about 'Cultural Mapping' and 'Spotting the Gaps'. The participants were randomly divided into five groups to discuss local cultural elements and match them with the SDGs (refer to Annex 2 for discussion results). Each group identified the number of times an SDG coincided with these cultural elements to determine what goals were the

most relevant and applicable to the local cultural elements (refer to Figure 2 of Annex 3 for specific results). As for those less-mentioned goals, facilitators introduced examples of good practices from other cities in the UCLG OBS Database to explore potential opportunities to link cultural elements with SDGs more effectively.

The third part consisted of the key discussion on the Seven Keys and its final formation. The participants were divided into four groups studying social affairs, economic development, environment, and governance respectively. With the help of the handouts and good practices provided by UCLG, the participants analyzed the cultural policies and actions that Xi'an could take to promote the localization of the SDGs. Each group was requested to present four proposals. Through categorization and classification, all participants eventually reached a consensus on the final seven keys which meet all requirements. These are listed below.

THE SEVEN KEYS IN XI'AN

The participants proposed a series of cultural actions considered key to localise the SDGs, which were agreed by consensus and grouped into seven keys in the case of Xi'an:



PROMOTE CULTURE TO BENEFIT ALL AND ACHIEVE INTEGRATION, INCLUSIVENESS, AND COMMON PROSPERITY

- CULTURAL AND TOURISM INTEGRATION, URBAN-RURAL INTEGRATION, FINANCIAL BOOST AND INCENTIVES (INTEGRATION).
- CULTURALLY INCLUSIVE GROWTH (INCLUSIVENESS).
- CITY IMAGE-BUILDING AND COMMON PROSPERITY.

[SDGS 1, 2, 3, 4, 8, 9 AND 11]



PRACTICE THE CONCEPT OF HARMONY BETWEEN HUMAN AND THE EARTH BY STRENGTHENING NATURE AND ECOLOGICAL EDUCATION

- DEVELOP GREEN INDUSTRIES AND PROMOTE ENERGY CONSERVATION AND REDUCTION OF POLLUTION AND EMISSIONS.
- INTRODUCE NATURE/ECOLOGY EDUCATION TO SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES.
- ADVOCATE ECO-TOURISM AND ECOLOGICAL RESEARCH.

[SDGS 6, 7, 13, 14 AND 15]



INCREASE THE SUPPLY OF HIGH-QUALITY CULTURAL PRODUCTS

- CREATE AND ENHANCE XI'AN'S CULTURAL IDENTITY AND REFINE ITS CULTURAL SYMBOLS.
- DEVELOP AND INCUBATE INNOVATIVE CULTURAL PRODUCTS.
- ENHANCE PRODUCT PROMOTION AND GENERATE MORE MARKETING CHANNELS OF THESE CULTURAL PRODUCTS.
- CULTIVATE INNOVATIVE CULTURAL TALENTS.

[SDGS 4, 8, 9, 11 AND 12]



STRENGTHEN THE UNDERSTANDING AND EDUCATION OF THE INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE AND TRADITIONAL CULTURE

- INCREASE THE EDUCATIONAL FUNCTIONS OF MUSEUMS AND ENCOURAGE VARIOUS FORMS OF CULTURAL EDUCATION AND SOCIAL PRACTICE ACTIVITIES.
- INCORPORATE CULTURAL HERITAGE EDUCATION AND SOCIAL PRACTICE ACTIVITIES INTO THE CREDIT SYSTEM.
- PROMOTE A SYSTEMATIC, SCIENTIFIC AND EXPERIENTIAL RESEARCH CURRICULUM SYSTEM.
- PROTECT, PASS ON AND DEVELOP TIME-HONORED CULTURAL BRANDS.
- CULTIVATE TRADITIONAL CULTURAL INDUSTRIES AND VILLAGE CUSTOMS.

[SDGS 4, 8, 9 AND 11]



CREATE A LIVABLE AND PLEASANT URBAN ECOLOGICAL SPACE

- APPLY GREEN ECOLOGY AWARENESS AND TECH TO CULTURAL HERITAGE PARKS INCLUDING KUNMING LAKE WATER CULTURE PARK, DULINGYI RELICS PARK, HAN DYNASTY CHANG'AN CITY NATIONAL ARCHAEOLOGY RELICS PARK.
- BUILD THE XI'AN CITY WALL PARK WITH GREENWAYS AND SCENIC DRIVES.

[SDGS 6, 7, 13 AND 15]



PASS ON AND CARRY FORWARD LOCAL TRADITIONS, HISTORY AND CULTURE TO BUILD A WORLD-CLASS CITY WHERE THE INHABITANTS SUPPORT AND HELP EACH OTHER WITH PRIDE IN THEIR HERITAGE

- CLEARLY AND ACTIVELY PROMOTE THE CONCEPT AND FUNCTION OF "COMMUNITY" TO CITIZENS.
- ENCOURAGE CULTURAL DIVERSITY AND COMMUNICATION IN COMMUNITY LIFE, PROVIDE PUBLIC SPACE, AND ACTIVELY ORGANIZE CULTURAL ACTIVITIES IN COMMUNITY.
- ENDOW MORE CULTURAL CHARACTERISTICS THROUGHOUT THE ENTIRE URBAN AREA TO PROMOTE THE CITY'S UNIQUE IDENTITY.
- STRENGTHEN INTERNATIONAL CULTURAL EXCHANGES AND COOPERATION AND INTEGRATE "GOING OUT" WITH "BRINGING IN" POLICIES.

[SDGS 4, 8, 9, 11 AND 17]



STRENGTHEN THE CONSTRUCTION OF A CULTURAL GOVERNANCE SYSTEM

- INNOVATE FOR AN INTEGRATED MANAGEMENT SYSTEM.
- ENSURE THE SUPPORT TO STAKEHOLDERS.

[SDGS 3, 8, 9, 11 AND 16]



CREDITS

THE ORGANISERS

United Cities and Local Governments – UCLG: United Cities and Local Governments

– UCLG is the global network that represents and defends the interests of local governments on the world stage. Based in Barcelona, the mission of UCLG is “to be the united voice and global advocate of local democratic self-government, promoting its values, objectives and interests, through cooperation among local governments and within the wider international community”. Since its creation in May 2004, as the inheritor of the century-old international municipalist movement, more than 240,000 cities, regions and metropolises, and more than 175 local and regional government associations have joined this global network. In November 2019, Li Mingyuan, Mayor of Xi’an, was elected as the Co-president of UCLG.

UCLG Committee on Culture: The **UCLG Committee on Culture** is a unique global platform that brings together more than 830 cities, organisations and networks to cooperate and promote the role of “culture in sustainable cities”. The mission of the UCLG Committee on Culture is “to promote culture as the fourth pillar of sustainable development through the international dissemination and local implementation of Agenda 21 for Culture”.

Xi’an Municipal People’s Government: Xi’an Municipal People’s Government is an administrative agency of Xi’an City. It is the executive administration of the People’s Congress of Xi’an City and is responsible for the governance of the city. Xi’an is an international metropolis and a national central city. It has won titles such as National Sanitary City, National Garden City, China’s Best International Image City, the Happiest City in China, and National Civilized City. Xi’an consists of 11 districts, 2 counties, and 8 national and provincial key development zones.

The facilitators: **Mr. Shi Qi**, Director of Xi’an Center for International Friendship Cities; **Mrs. Wang Chenjia**, Dean of Cross-cultural Studies Institute, Northwest University; **Mr. Wang Youqun**, Dean of School of International Education, Xi’an University of Architecture and Technology.

ANNEX 1: LOCAL CHALLENGES

1. The city lacks robustness, and the structure needs to be optimized.
2. Insufficient transformation of cultural resources.
3. Restricted factor supply (capital).
4. Environmental constraints.
5. Urban organic renewal and development.
6. Environmental protection and the well-being of residents.
7. Excellent traditional culture and its inheritance.
8. The rationality of urban layout.
9. The integration of the concept of sustainable development with culture.
10. Industrial clusters are not growing.
11. The application of scientific results to productive forces is insufficient.
12. International cooperation needs to be strengthened.
13. Talent cultivation and retention (opportunities, vitality).
14. Cultural and tourism integration and innovation (different presentation of urban and rural areas).
15. Insufficient cultural consumption.
16. Lack of cultural brands.
17. People need to be more open-minded.
18. Contradictions between economic development and cultural protection.
19. Unbalanced distribution of education resources.
20. Care for the elderly in an aging society.
21. Value identification of cultural assets.
22. City's logo with unique features.

ANNEX 2: CULTURE MAPPING

1. Spatial layout and architectural features of the ancient city.
2. Lifestyle (dialects, clothing, food).
3. Intangible cultural heritage (local drama, traditional handicrafts, folklore, folk songs).
4. World Cultural Heritage.
5. Cultures of the Zhou, Qin, Han and Tang Dynasties.
6. Inclusive humanistic spirit in flourishing age.
7. The imperial examination system (political meritocracy/national governance system).
8. Traditional Chinese Medicine.
9. Cultural relics.
10. Ancient city texture.
11. Geographical symbols.
12. Guanzhong Plain.
13. Qinling Mountains Culture.
14. Yellow River Basin Culture.
15. Ecological civilization.
16. Religious culture.
17. Fashion.
18. Modern art.
19. Science and education resources.
20. The Red Culture (advanced culture with Chinese characteristics).
21. Culture aspects in technology.
22. Architecture/Urban Planning.

IDENTIFYING THE GAPS

LOCAL CHALLENGES AND LOCAL CULTURE IN THE LIGHT OF THE SDGs



ANNEX 3: OBSERVATION AND ANALYSIS

First of all, the proposed local challenges of the city covered a variety of aspects in science and technology, education, health and well-being, aging society, municipal governance, cultural and tourism integration, industrial development and internationalization, etc. The result illustrated that the SDG 9, 11, 4, 8, 3, and 12 were most closely connected with challenges (the number of frequency of the connection were 12, 12, 7, 7, 6, 5), while SDG 1, 5, 6, 7, 10, 13, 16, 17 were rarely associated, and SDG 2, 14, 15 were not related to any challenges at all. It was noted that the participants were mostly concerned about industrial innovation and infrastructure, sustainable cities and communities. Quality education, decent work and economic growth were also concerns. In comparison, the participants were relatively less concerned about the SDGs such as gender equality, clean energy, reduced inequalities, climate action, and life on land. These challenges were given less priorities and were therefore closely monitored by the participants in the following discussion.

Secondly, the cultural elements identified by the participants were rarely related to the existing heritage sites, museums or facilities. On the contrary, they proposed more cultural categories or concepts, such as the spatial layout and architectural features of the ancient city, and lifestyle (dialects, clothing, food), intangible cultural heritage (local drama, traditional handicrafts, folklore, folk songs), world cultural heritage, cultural relics, humanistic spirit, urban planning, etc. It can be seen that most participants believed that Xi'an is rich in both tangible and intangible culture, and more cultural elements could be added to this category. As the participants further understood the content of SDGs, they established links between cultural elements and SDGs and found the following SDGs most frequently associated with cultural elements. They were SDG 3 (health and well-being), 4 (education), 8 (decent work and economic growth), 9 (industry, innovation and infrastructure) and 11 (sustainable cities and communities).

In summary, the participants concentrated on the industrial and economic development, sustainable cities and communities, quality education, health and well-being. It is essential to prioritize the formation of corresponding cultural policies and actions for localizing SDGs. As for environmental protection and governance, and the utilization of clean energy, we believe it's necessary to increase the awareness and learn from the good practices of the global experience. In the meantime, in order to create more fairness and justice in society, especially for women, children, and people with disabilities, a more friendly environment for vulnerable groups to work and live requires the determination from the municipality to combat all forms of discrimination. Social governance and international cooperation are two important challenges en route to the future world-class cultural heritage city of Xi'an. For the purpose of gaining public recognition and support in the future, it is crucial for the municipality to formulate high-value cultural strategies and implement them.

ANNEX 4: LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

- BAI Kai**, Prof. and Head of Tourism Department, School of Geography and Tourism, Shaanxi Normal University.
- FENG Jian**, Deputy Director, ICOMOS International Conservation Center in Xi'an.
- HAN Jiawei**, Deputy General Manager, Xi'an Tourism Group Co., Ltd.
- HU Yingbing**, Chairman, Xi'an Haihetian Cultural and Creative Industry Development Co., Ltd.
- HUANG Yuguang**, Director, Atmospheric Research Institute, Xi'an Environmental Protection Science Academy.
- KANG Rong**, Prof. and Deputy Dean, School of Economics and Management, Northwest University.
- LI Dong**, Director, Xi'an Tongji Regional Planning Institute.
- LI Nan**, PhD. Student, School of Economics and Management, Northwest University.
- LIU Chunkai**, Deputy Chief Engineer, Xi'an Urban Planning, Design and Research Institute.
- MA Zhen**, Professor, School of Business, Xi'an University of Finance and Economics.
- PENG Tong**, Town Chief, Houzhenzi Town, Zhouzhi County, Xi'an.
- SHA Qinghua**, CEO, Xi'an Harmony World Investment Co., Ltd.
- SHAO Zhenyu**, Deputy Dean, Tourism Design and Research Institute, Xi'an Academy of Social Sciences.
- WANG Chen**, Founder & Chairman, Shuyuan Youth Hostel of Xi'an.
- WU Chun**, Deputy Director, Xi'an City Wall Management Committee.
- WU Haiyun**, International Curator, Cultural Heritage Promotion Center, Shaanxi History Museum.
- SHIDLER Adam** (USA), Lecturer, Xi'an University of Posts and Telecommunications.
- YANG Xiaojun**, Associate Professor, School of Public Policy and Administration, Xi'an Jiaotong University.
- YAO Xinyuan**, Chairman, Shaanxi Huaqing Palace Cultural Tourism Co., Ltd.
- YAREMCHUK Iryna** (Ukraine), Associate Professor, Xi'an International Studies University.
- HARTMANN Dirk Werner** (Germany), Associate Professor, Xi'an Fanyi University.
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SEVEN KEYS WORKSHOP



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