



culture 21
UCLG Committee

PEER-LEARNING VISIT **ELEFSINA** **DUBLIN**

REPORT

FEBRUARY 2024



2023 ΕΛΕΥΣΙΣ
EUROPEAN CAPITAL
of CULTURE
2023ELEUSIS.EU



DUBLIN CITY COUNCIL
CULTURE COMPANY
COMHLACHT CULTÚIR
CHOMHAIRLE CATHRACH
BHAILE ÁTHA CLIATH



ACTIVITY

Peer-learning visit

DATE

27 November 2023

PLACE

Dublin, Republic
of Ireland

PEOPLE INVOLVED

GLOBAL LEADING AND PILOT CITIES

Yannis Koukmas, Elefsina

Irene Giovanou, Elefsina

Maude Guy, Abitibi-Témiscamingue

Guillaume Traver, Abitibi-Témiscamingue

Ramona Lackzo-David, Timisoara

Nancy Kukovica, Trois Rivières

Marie-Pauline Michon, Trois Rivières

John Smithies, Culture Development
Network, Melbourne

Michel Vallée, Culture pour Tous, Quebec

Anastasia Vaillancourt, Culture pour Tous,
Quebec

LEADING AND PILOT CITIES EXPERTS

Clymene Christoforou, Expert of the UCLG
Committee on Culture

Antoine Guibert, Expert of the UCLG
Committee on Culture

PEER
LEARNING



**DUBLIN LEADING CITY TEAM - DUBLIN CITY
COUNCIL CULTURE COMPANY**

Tracy Geraghty, Director of Strategic Development
and Research

Iseult Dunne, Operations and Administration, CEO

Linda Devlin, Director of Creative Engagement

Laura Keogh, Head of Engagement

Catherine O'Donnell, Head of Creative Engagement

Danielle Breslin, Research and Development
Manager

Katalin Varnyu, Tea & Chats Engagement
Coordinator

Evan Musgrave, Creative Engagement Programme
Lead

UCLG & CAE

Agnès Ruiz, Officer, UCLG Committee on Culture

Marta Llobet, Learning and Advocacy Officer, UCLG
Committee on Culture

Kornelia Kiss, Operations Director, Culture Action
Europe

LOCAL ACTORS INVOLVED IN THE VISIT

Olivia Kavanagh, Visitor Experience Manager, 14
Henrietta Street

Sheila Robinson, Tour Guide, 14 Henrietta Street

PEER
LEARNING





CONTEXT

The **Leading Cities** and **Pilot Cities** programmes are initiatives of the Committee on Culture of United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), which aim to foster peer learning and capacity-building on culture and local sustainable development among cities worldwide. Alongside self-assessment, policy innovation and participatory governance, activities implemented in each city and peer learning activities enabling bilateral and multilateral exchanges are organised on a regular basis.

BACKGROUND

Within the **Elefsina Pilot City programme**, in cooperation with **Culture Action Europe** and in the context of the UCLG Culture Summit, a peer learning visit took place on 27 November 2023 in Dublin. This is one of the regular peer learning activities involving Pilot and Leading Cities that the programme has organised since 2015.

On this occasion, the activity focused on different aspects of cultural policies of Dublin, which hosted the **5th UCLG Culture Summit** from 28 November to 1 December 2023.

The event took the shape of an informal dialogue organised at the 14 Henrietta Street premises, and included a guided tour of the museum.

Specific aims of the session, aligned with the Summit, include the following:

- To present and discuss the general context of cultural policies in Dublin, Elefsina and participant cities and organisations, and how they relate to cultural rights and local sustainable development;
- To become familiar with key cultural agents and projects in Dublin, and to learn from their achievements;
- To address specific themes related to the **Culture 21 Actions** toolkit that have been developed by Dublin and Elefsina, such as implementing cultural strategies based in cultural rights, heritage, creativity and social inclusion, with programmes for people to create together and connect through culture;
- To provide an informal networking space for participating cities and other stakeholders to meet and exchange views, with opportunities to ask questions, discuss opportunities and challenges and share experiences.

Participants of the peer-learning visit were:

- Representatives and cultural stakeholders of the city of Dublin, namely members of the Dublin City Council Culture Company (DCCCC) Engagement and Creative Engagement teams;
- Delegates from the city of Elefsina and invited cities and regions;
- Partner organisations;
- UCLG and CAE representatives and experts.

PEER LEARNING. CONNECTING THROUGH CULTURE

On the morning of 27 December, delegates from Elefsina and visiting cities, partner organisations, UCLG and CAE representatives and experts joined members of the Dublin City Council Culture Company (DCCCC) Engagement and Creative Engagement teams at 14 Henrietta Street, to learn and discuss about policies and programmes run by the DCCCC, focusing on cultural participation, engagement and social inclusion. The meeting also included a guided tour of 14 Henrietta Street, a museum which is part of the DCCCC premises.

Delegates were welcomed by the team of the DCCCC. Linda Devlin, Director of Creative Engagement, welcomed all the participants and expressed the interest of the city of Dublin to learn about the approaches taken by other cities in terms of culture within a wider strategic policy around community engagement, as well as from their successes and challenges. The conversation continued as an opportunity to introduce the expectations and interests of each delegate and to offer a glimpse of the cultural policies of visiting cities.



CULTURAL POLICY FRAMEWORK IN DUBLIN. THE DUBLIN CITY COUNCIL CULTURE COMPANY

Linda Devlin started by delivering an overall presentation of the work carried out by the Dublin City Council Culture Company (DCCCC) to address participation and social inclusion through a cultural lens, “connecting through culture & conversation”. She explained that the DCCCC was created:

- To work in a developmental, experimental, responsive and participative manner with partnership at the core.
- To work on themes that are relevant, and sourced through engagement of people who work, live and visit Dublin.
- To work through co-creation and co-operation aiming at leaving a social impact.
- With an aim for quality through expertise, inclusion and participation.

The story of Dublin City Council Culture Company began back in 2015, when Dublin was preparing its bid to be considered for European Capital of Culture 2020. Dublin’s Culture Connects, an initiative of Dublin City Council, grew from this work and in 2016 it began to trial some of the ideas and values developed during the bid process. The DCCCC was established in March 2018, wholly owned by Dublin City Council. It was incorporated as a company limited by guarantee and with a Board of Directors.

The DCCCC work is distributed among four main actions: 1) listening - to learn about what’s important to the people of Dublin; 2) responding - programming responsively based on what is learnt; 3) keeping listening & responding - to make sure work stays relevant; 4) testing new methods, models and approaches to culture and society.





Linda Devlin explained that the team works with the aim of: achieving wider cultural participation in the City and together develop and expand cultural habits; bringing culture to places where it's not usually perceived to be, and demonstrating that culture and creativity can happen everywhere; connecting people to culture who usually don't see themselves as involved, while recognising that people are already doing 'culture' in their own way; opening up new ways for people to access cultural activity more easily and confidently.

"The DCCCC has developed an infrastructure aimed at putting people at the centre of work." **Linda Devlin**

Some of the activities organised by the DCCCC:

- a) Running cultural buildings
14 Henrietta Street, Richmond Barracks
- b) Developing and delivering cultural audience development programmes
Culture Club
- c) Making intelligence projects
Cultural Audit & Map / Culture Near You and Cultural Participation Impact Study
- d) Leading creative placemaking projects
The National Neighbourhood, Culture Connects and Creative Residency

After the overall presentation, Laura Keogh presented the “Listening” segment, in which she emphasized the necessity to learn what is important to the people of Dublin to ensure that their programmes and advocacy remain relevant and responsive. Also, understanding people’s experiences of the city, connecting and building relationships with individuals and communities to support and encourage their cultural participation, as well as sharing that knowledge with cultural partners and Dublin City Council to improve access to and participation in culture, was mentioned as vital.

“We explain who we are, our relationship with the City Council, our values... on the ground. It is a slowly built relationship. Community leaders engage informally.” **Laura Keogh**

Engagement programmes such as “Tea & Chats”, a programme of year-round conversations with the people of Dublin, and “Your Tenement Memories”, which invites the public to share their memories of tenement living as part of an oral history project, were presented to the delegates from visiting cities. Participants asked about the confidence in those projects, both from the city council and the citizens. Laura Keogh and members of the team highlighted the importance to develop slowly built relationships, taking time to explain their values and listening to needs and interests.

“We are not trying to sell what we do. We try to make people aware of what happens surrounding them.” **Katalin Varnyu**

In the “Responding” and “Testing new ideas” segments, Catherine O’Donnell briefed participants about initiatives such as 14 Henrietta Street, a DCC owned building which is operated as a social history museum in Dublin with a non-traditional model, including a cycle of continuous consultation and responsive programming. Culture Club, The National Neighbourhood, The Archive Within Us, Creative Residency and Creative Residency in Art & Sport were also presented as initiatives that seek to encourage people to connect with the cultural spaces of the city, to build creativity into everyday life, to co-create the city narrative intertwining personal histories, and to make artists, makers, and non-arts organisations work together in new ways, creating further opportunities and strengthening the city’s cultural impact.

“Dublin City is a connection of villages, with their own identities. Our work is about connecting them together, as experts in their own lives.” **Catherine O’Donnell**

This presentation was followed by a round of reflections and concluding remarks by all delegates of the visiting cities, experts, and local actors. Participants asked about the structure of the governance of culture in the city and the practicalities regarding the implementation of projects, including grants, funds, bidding processes, collaborations...

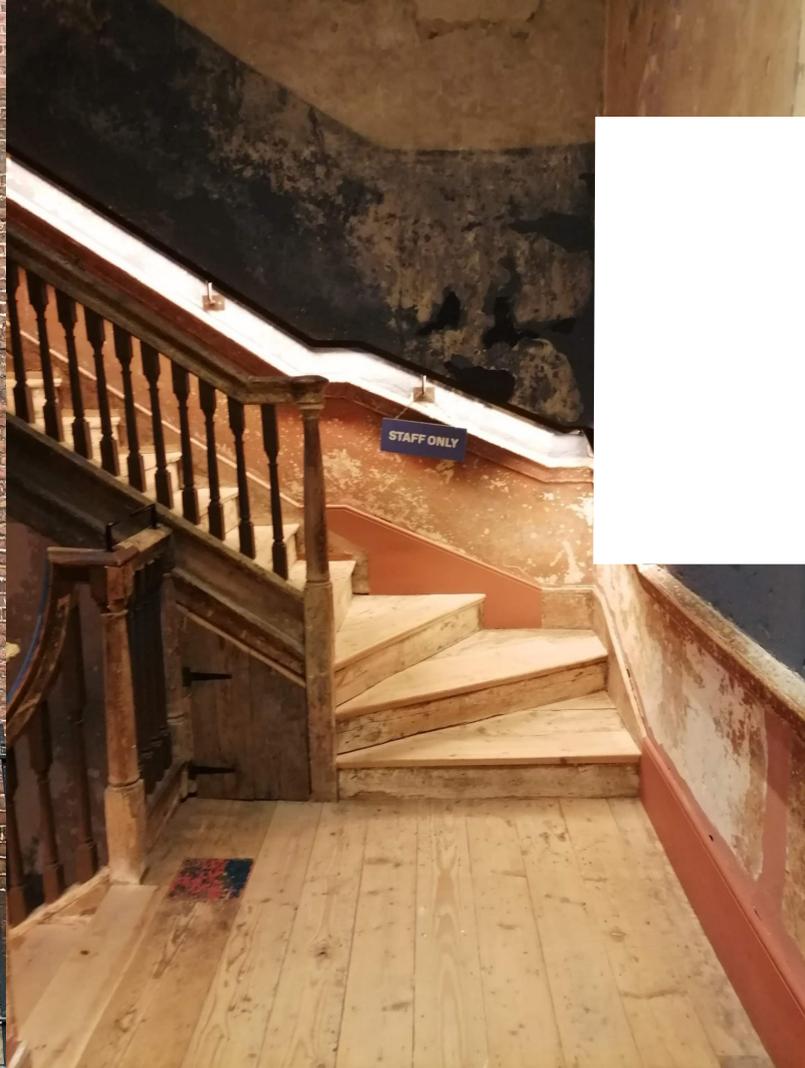
The impact of culture was also discussed, and participants became interested in the way of engaging neighbours and communities, and deepened the concepts of “cultural mediation”, “improbable meetings” – as used in Quebec – “distance” and “identities”, in relation to social inclusion, health and wellbeing.

At the end of the meeting, as UCLG and CAE representatives, expert Clymene Christoforou, Marta Llobet and Kornelia Kiss, thanked all the participants for taking part in the peer-learning exercise and highlighted some of the inputs raised, as well as the main takeaways. The group also by putted forward ideas for further discussion in the future.

14 HENRIETTA STREET. LIVING HISTORY OF DUBLIN

As a closing experience, participants enjoyed a guided tour of 14 Henrietta Street Museum, the most intact collection of early to mid-18th century houses in Ireland, which is owned and conserved by Dublin City Council, and run by Dublin City Council Culture Company. The tour connected the history of urban life over 300 years to the stories of Dubliners who lived there.







CONCLUSIONS

Cities over the world have begun deepening the social benefits of culture, such as social cohesion, wellbeing, peaceful coexistence... specially after the pandemic crisis. Dublin has shown a strong leadership in this regard, an outstanding work that the UCLG Culture Committee undoubtedly recognises and congratulates. During this peer-learning exercise, Dublin presented inspirational initiatives to all the visiting cities, connected them to local actors and stakeholders, and offered a highly enriching and remarkable human experience to all delegates and UCLG and CAE representatives.

The cultural policies of Dublin connect people to culture through accessibility, wellbeing and evidence, and put the people at the centre of cultural policy. They have been an inspiration for Elefsina and cities around the world from which to listen and learn. This activity also provided the space for cities to exchange, debate, discuss and expose new realities and approaches to cultural policy-making and cultural initiatives themselves.

The UCLG Culture Committee aims to carry out different peer-learning exercises hosted in other member cities in the future. These activities will focus on an issue, chosen from a wide and cross-sectional range of topics, that is in line and coherent with the needs of the hosts and the other participant cities, thus creating a space of international exchange and debate with culture at its heart.

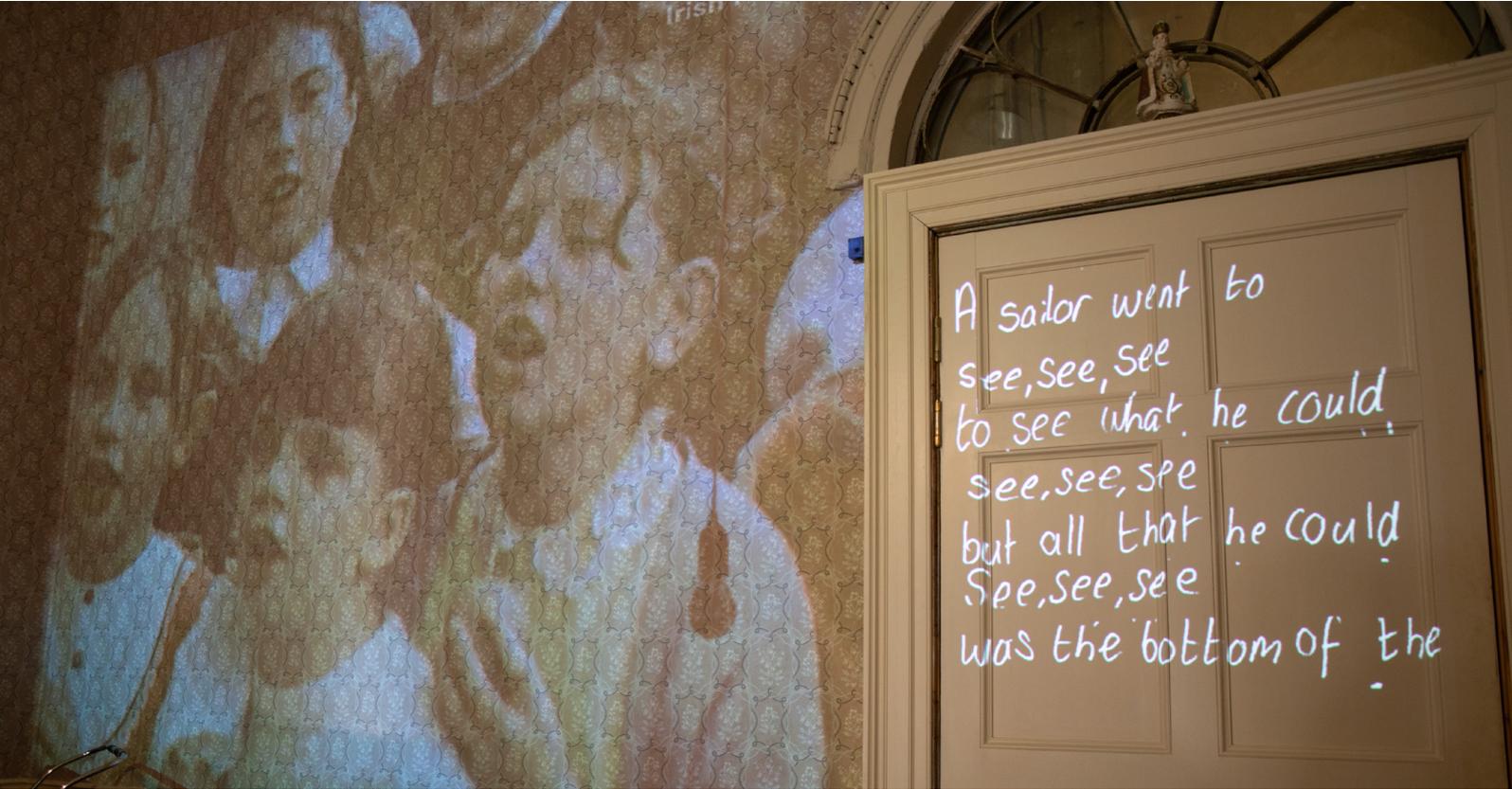
REFLECTIONS AND LESSONS LEARNT BY ELEFSINA

As the visit came to an end, delegates from the visiting city of Elefsina reflected on the conclusions they had extracted from the peer learning visit Elefsina-Dublin. Here are some insights:

First, I would like to thank the UCLG organization but mostly, Marta Llobet, Clymene Christoforou and Kornelia Kiss for giving me the opportunity to interact and learn from my peers from other localities across the world.

The initiative was very well organized from all aspects. The summit being the main meeting point at the global level of cities, local governments and organizations made it clearer to me how cities are committed to the effective implementation of policies and programs on culture and sustainability.

The visit to Henrietta Street venue and the facilitation of Dublin's City Council was indispensable. The opportunity to interact with UCLG peers and share experiences and good practices was of the utmost importance for me. The chance to share information with colleagues from the Canadian provinces was very interesting as there is a different cultural perspective from the one shared in the European continent. The local governments' cultural policies differ and it is interesting to see how other cities handle culture and how it impacts the daily lives of their citizens.



A sailor went to
see, see, see
to see what he could
see, see, see
but all that he could
see, see, see
was the bottom of the

My participation in the UCLG Summit in Dublin was an invaluable experience. It helped me understand better the goal and scope of the UCLG organization. Being a member of the Eleusis mediator committee with a somewhat restricted role in the decision making and planning of the cultural policy of the city, I did not have the global impact scene. The summit helped me see what other cities and local governments do and take back examples of good practices.

Some of the things that I would share with my colleagues in Eleusis and would like to activate here will be the “Coffee and Chats” program, a good practice of the Dublin City Council team’s “Tea and Chats” program. It gives the people of the community the means to communicate with each other and to shape their space with the help of the local government. The people of the community would feel that they matter and that they are part of the city they live in, as they would talk directly to local officials who can make things happen.

Dublin showed how cities can connect people of all demographics with culture and of putting people at the heart of cultural policy and supporting cultural inclusion and participation throughout a city. A good practice for us to follow.

Another focal point for me was the Sustainable Development Goals and how we can make policies to implement with a positive impact on people’s lives. I take back how Health, Well-Being and cultural rights will take their rightful places in policy making across all levels.

With that said, I am looking forward to the continuation of the program and to future gatherings.

– Irene Giovanou, Elefsina

THE “LEADING CITIES” PROGRAMME

The “Pilot Cities” programme in Europe is the short title for “Culture in Sustainable Cities. Learning with Culture 21 Actions” and is jointly devised by **UCLG’s Committee on Culture** and **Culture Action Europe**. It aims to provide opportunities for European cities to participate in a learning process, on the basis of the principles and actions included in Culture 21 Actions and on the experience and expertise of Culture Action Europe in representing and collecting the voices of the civil society cultural actors.

UNITED CITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS (UCLG)

United Cities and Local Governments — UCLG is the global network which represents and defends the interests of local governments on the world stage. Headquartered in Barcelona, the **mission** of UCLG is “to be the united voice and world advocate of democratic local self-government, promoting its values, objectives and interests, through cooperation between local governments, and within the wider international community”. Since its creation in May 2004 as an inheritor of the century-old International Municipal Movement, more than 240,000 towns, cities, regions and metropolises, and more than 175 local and regional government associations have joined this global network.

UCLG COMMITTEE ON CULTURE

UCLG **Committee on Culture** is a unique global platform of 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 the local implementation of Agenda 21 for Culture”, to foster and make more explicit the relation between local cultural policies and sustainable development. The network learns through exchanges, discussions and debates. This narrative is based on human rights, good governance, people-centred development and the co-creation of the city. Approved in 2004, the **Agenda 21 of Culture** is the founding document of UCLG Committee on Culture. It is also the first worldwide document that promotes policies and actions by cities and local governments for cultural development. Therefore, some people usually refer to the Committee on Culture as the “Agenda 21 for culture” network. The toolkit **Culture 21: Actions** updates and supplements the Agenda 21 for Culture and transforms it into concrete commitments and actions which promote self-assessment and innovation on the role of culture in sustainable cities.



ANNEX 1: AGENDA

TIME	PLACE	ACTIVITY
10.15	14 Henrietta Street	Meet up at 14 Henrietta Street . Registration and coffee/tea.
10.30	14 Henrietta Street	Welcome to the UCLG delegation of Elefsina and other invited cities by the DCCCC team - members of the Engagement and Creative Engagement team (the departments of “listening” and “making”) and neighbours. Round of introduction of delegates from Elefsina and invited cities, and questions that they wish to explore.
10.45	14 Henrietta Street	General outline of the programmes developed by the DCCCC team. LISTENING “ Tea & Chats ”. Presentation of the programme. Reflection on the value of listening to the thoughts and opinions of the people of the city, both for cultural programming but also for the City. Questions and answers.
11.05	14 Henrietta Street	RESPONDING Examples of some of DCCCC programmes which respond to what we learn from listening. This includes “ Culture Club ” and ‘The National Neighbourhood’. Reflection on new ways to introduce and encourage people to access cultural activity and expand cultural habits. How to build creativity into people’s everyday lives. Questions and answers.
11.25	14 Henrietta Street	TEST NEW IDEAS WITH PARTNERS “ Creative Residency ”. Presentation of the programme. Reflection on how partnerships can try out ideas, test new approaches and add to the cultural story of the city. Questions and answers.
11.35	14 Henrietta Street	Brief presentations of delegates from Elefsina and other participant cities, and dialogue.
12.10	14 Henrietta Street	Conclusion. Issues to take with us for further discussion at the Summit and for the future.
12.25	14 Henrietta Street	Tour of 14 Henrietta Street museum.
13.35	14 Henrietta Street	Lunch and closing of the activity.



CONTACTS

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