

AGENDA 21 FOR CULTURE, TODAY AND TOMORROW: QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

August 2014

Introduction

In the process of updating Agenda 21 for culture, in March 2014 the Committee on culture of United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) launched an online consultation questionnaire. Available in English, French and Spanish, the questionnaire posed questions, among others, on the level of knowledge of Agenda 21 for culture and the activities of the UCLG Committee on culture, and the elements which would require revision, and in what way.

In almost five months, until 31 July 2014, **the questionnaire received 255 responses, of which 142 can be considered complete.**

This document offers a summary of the contributions received and includes an analysis of the responses received in the three language versions of the questionnaire. This analysis will be considered, together with the rest of ideas collected throughout 2013 and 2014 (through international meetings, local seminars within the framework of the program “Pilot Cities,” expert articles, comments on the first draft of the new Agenda 21 for culture, etc.), in light of the **preparation of the new Agenda 21 for culture, which will be presented in Bilbao in March 2015.**

The document is structured in different sections, in the order of the questions asked on the questionnaire. It includes charts to summarize the responses to the closed-ended questions.

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The Committee on culture of UCLG is extremely grateful to those who devoted time and knowledge to answer the questionnaire.

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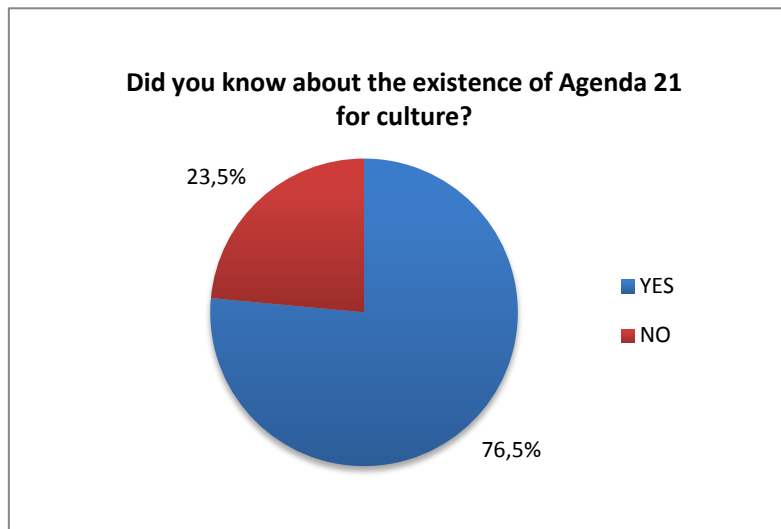
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1. The key message of Agenda 21 for culture

76.5% of the people who answered the questionnaire knew about the document Agenda 21 for culture (see chart 1).

Chart 1: Did you know about the existence of Agenda 21 for culture?

Answers are in percentages.



Next, the questionnaire requested respondents to mention at least **5 concepts associated with the relationship between culture and sustainable development in cities**, and explain why. The responses received offered a sensational range of topics and concepts, thus providing a rich context for designing the new Agenda 21 for culture. In sum, the contributions can be structured in the following outline:

a) **Areas of culture:**

- Tangible and intangible cultural heritage as an element which reveals the authentic history of places, articulates its link with people, honors its oral and visual history and contributes to the transmission of knowledge and valuing of territories.
- Artistic and creative development, which enables discovering universes, questioning situations, innovating and imagining a sustainable future.

b) **Values of culture:** elements which are intrinsic to the conception of culture, which are linked directly to the fulfillment of the person, such as:

- Cultural rights, which require full recognition as a constituent element of human rights.
- Culture as a factor for constructing identity and belonging to communities, which enables placing people at the center of development, celebrating one another and recognizing oneself.

- Culture as a space for the free expression of ideas, expressions, images and symbols.
 - Promoting access and active participation for all people in the different spaces of culture and different stages of life, preventing culture from being an area of segregation.
 - Encouragement through cultural practice of the logics of equality, cooperation and association, rather than competition.
 - Sensitivity toward diversity, through the recognition of what is different, support of new symbolic expressions and acceptance of and respect for differences, which can be the basis of exchanges;
 - Culture as a key element of the person, with a collective relevance.
- c) **Contributions of culture to other areas of development: the way culture, through the expressions, mechanisms and resources which shape it, can contribute value to other sectors:**
- Introduction of complexity and conscience to the human experience, which will serve to enrich it.
 - Culture as a space for conflict and political debate, which results in exchanges on a civil level.
 - Integration of culture in the urban project, through improvement of the physical environment, processes of regenerating cities, carrying out cultural actions in different spaces and facilities (schools, companies, hospitals, etc.) or reconverting old buildings for cultural uses.
 - Territorial cohesion through the common use of cultural resources and cooperation between administrations on the metropolitan, regional or transborder level.
 - Cultural or creative economy, which includes the contribution of cultural sectors to the creation of employment and wealth, its integration in strategies for fighting poverty and territorial valuing, and the promotion of social economy enterprises in the cultural sphere.
 - Participation in cultural life as a meeting place for different groups or segments of the population and integration of groups at risk of exclusion.
 - Cultural and creative development as a process of acquiring knowledge, abilities and aptitudes, within the dynamics of education and learning throughout life.
 - Reflection from a cultural standpoint on the sustainable management of natural resources, through the reduction of the ecological impact of cultural activities (materials used, use of recycled paper, waste generated by festivals and events, slow food, proximity channels, incorporation of renewable energies, etc.).
 - Participation in cultural life for learning about citizen participation and democracy.

It must be pointed out that, among the different contributions grouped together in this block, the reflections that predominate are those on the economic dimension of culture (recognizing its factor of contribution to wealth and employment as well as debating the risks of interpreting cultural aspects mainly as an economic resource), the ecological aspect (with numerous reflections mainly on the way the cultural sector could reduce its environmental impact), and the social dimension of culture.

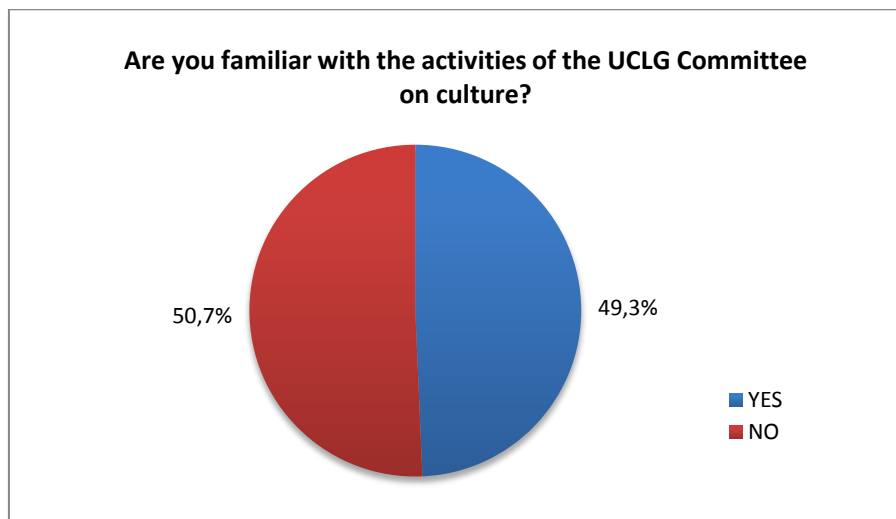
- d) **Ways of managing culture** to ensure its role in the logics of local sustainable development:
- Continuous consulting and participation in processes related to management and cultural politics.
 - Creation of a territorial environment which favors creativity and is pleasant, with cultural facilities for meeting and building citizenship (with frequent mention of the role of libraries in this regard).
 - Appropriateness of actions of education, awareness raising and training, on different levels, in line with the role of culture in sustainable development.
 - Necessary recognition of cultural practices of the civil society, far from approaches to culture of a top-down, controlling or over-institutionalized nature.
 - Promotion of cultural actions which unite the population (across generations, ethnic groups, etc.), favor inclusion, collective practices and coexistence, and enable experiencing collective imagination.
 - Need for cultural policies endowed with technical and economic resources, and for other support mechanisms which are appropriate for the needs of the sector.
 - Transversality, ensuring the permeability of management and cultural policies in regard to other areas of public and private action.
 - Governance of culture, defining models of decision-making, management and accountability in which the public, private and associative sectors come together and in which local administrations can assume their key role in regard to the cultural life in cities.
 - Assessment of impact, through indicators which enable better understanding of the results expected and achieved in activities and cultural projects.

2. The UCLG Committee on culture

Just under half of the people who responded to the questionnaire **(49.3%) were familiar with the activities of the UCLG Committee on culture** (see chart 2).

Chart 2: Are you familiar with the activities of the UCLG Committee on culture?

Answers are in percentages



2.1. Deficiencies of Agenda 21 for culture and weaknesses of the Committee on culture

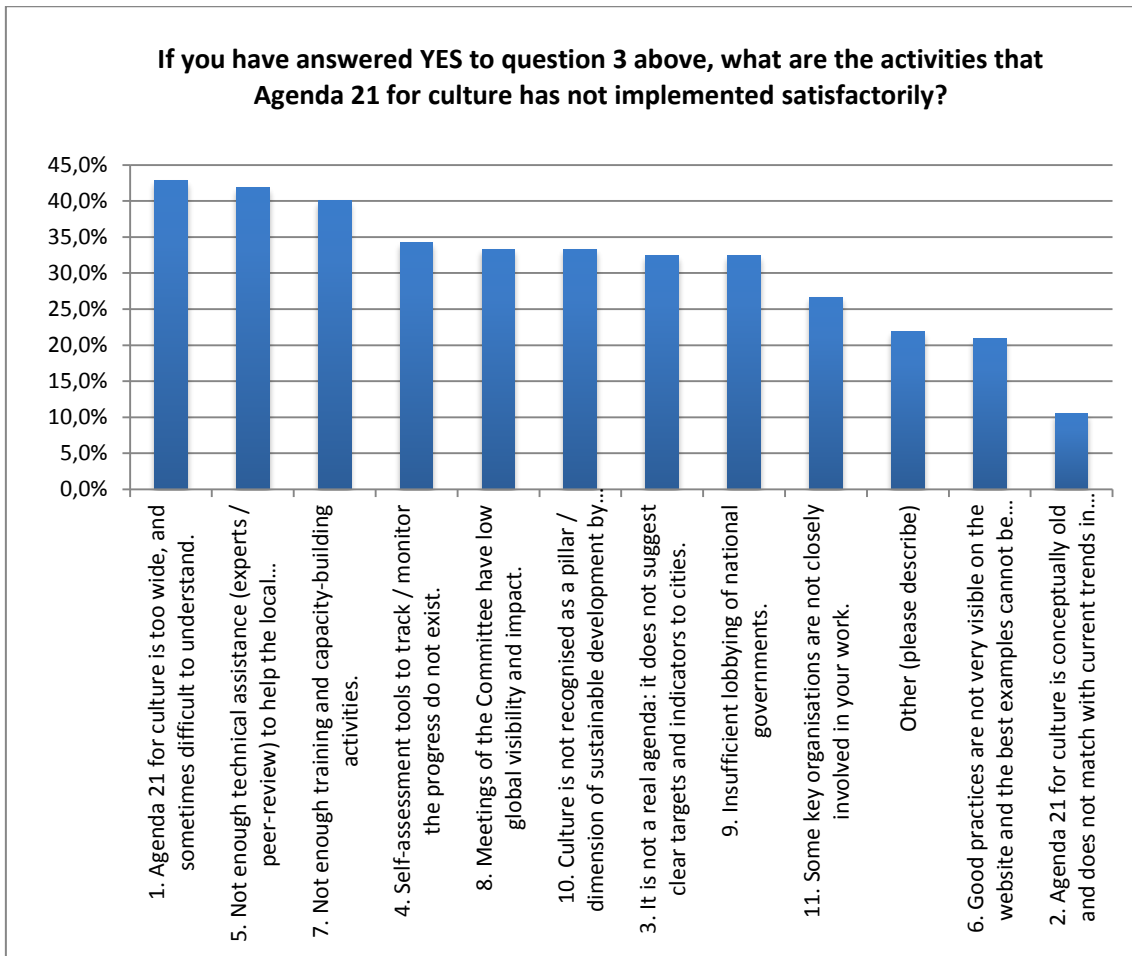
Those who were familiar with the activities of the Committee could indicate the following main weaknesses of Agenda 21 for culture or the activities which they considered the Committee had not implemented satisfactorily. Among these (see chart 3), the following opinions predominate:

- Agenda 21 for culture is too wide, and sometimes difficult to understand. (43%)
- Not enough technical assistance (experts / peer-review) to help the local implementation of Agenda 21 for culture. (42%)
- Not enough training and capacity-building activities. (40%)
- Self-assessment tools do not exist. (34%)
- Meetings of the Committee have low global visibility and impact. (33%)
- Culture is not recognised as a pillar / dimension of sustainable development by the United Nations. (33%)

Chart 3: What are the activities that Agenda 21 for culture has not implemented satisfactorily?¹

Answers are in percentages, according to the given statements. Multiple answers were permitted.

¹ The original wording of the question was introduced with the expression “If you answered YES to question 3 above...” as this question was indicated mainly for the people who had previously stated they were familiar with the activities of the UCLG Committee on culture.



It is noteworthy that several of these statements (the ones in regard to the lack of technical assistance) indicate the **need to provide support resources along with Agenda 21 for culture in order to facilitate its implementation**. Others have to do with the constitution of Agenda 21 for culture approved in 2004 (its conceptual broadness and complexity), factors of internal functioning of the Committee on culture (visibility of meetings) and external aspects (culture not being recognized as a dimension of development on a global level).

Furthermore, some of the statements suggested by the questionnaire were not supported as much: for example, the idea that Agenda 21 for culture is conceptually old and does not match with current trends in cultural policies (10%) and the low visibility of the good practices on the website and the difficulty to identify the best examples (21%).

Finally, the people who responded to the questionnaire could suggest other weaknesses detected: among others, the local governments' lack of recognition of civil society, the public authorities' lack of knowledge of Agenda 21 for culture, the need to improve communication and the appropriateness of establishing regional instances of coordination between the cities adhering to Agenda 21 for culture.

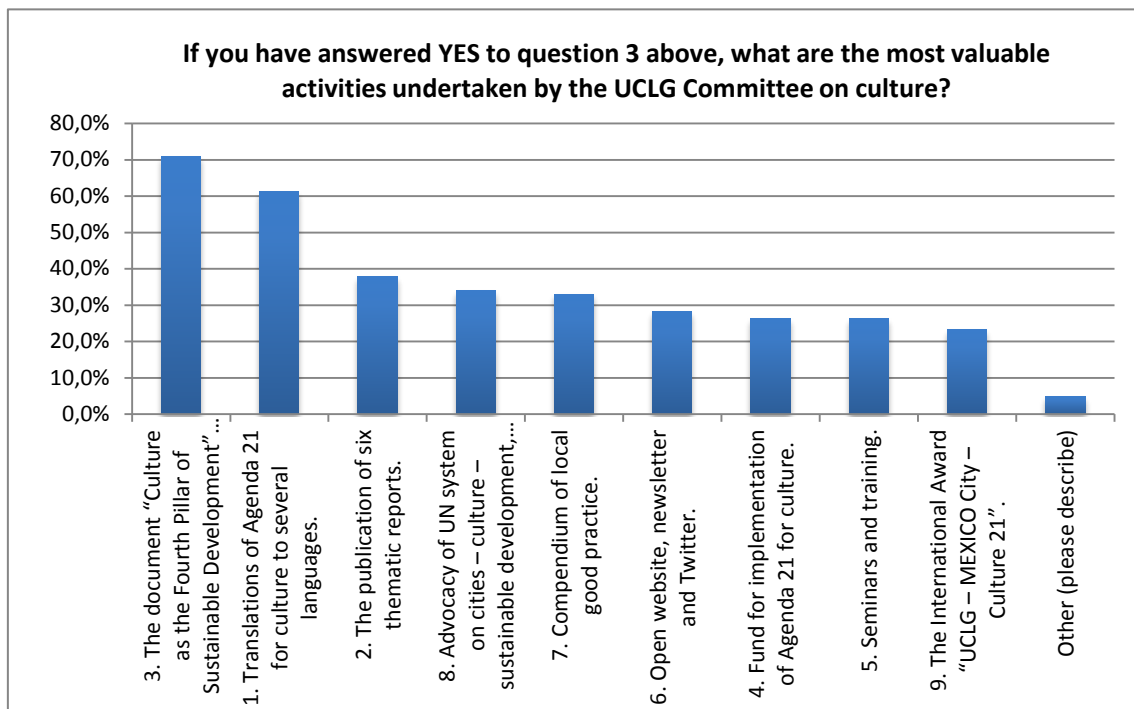
2.2. Most valuable activities undertaken by the UCLG Committee on culture

Likewise, those who had declared being familiar with the work of the Committee on culture could indicate the activities they considered more valuable. Among them (see chart 4), the following predominate:

- Document “Culture as the Fourth Pillar of Sustainable Development” (2010) (71%)
- Translations of Agenda 21 for culture to several languages (61%)
- Publication of six thematic reports (38%)
- Advocacy of UN system on cities – culture – sustainable development, especially, culture in Post-2015 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (34%)
- Compendium of local good practices (33%)

Chart 4: What are the most valuable activities undertaken by the UCLG Committee on culture?

Answers are in percentages, according to the given statements. Multiple answers were permitted.



Therefore, there is an **especially positive evaluation of the publications promoted by the Committee on culture** (the document on culture as the fourth pillar, the translations of Agenda 21 for culture, thematic reports), **as well as the advocacy work** carried out especially recently and some elements of the website (compendium of good practices).

In contrast, less value was given to the International Award “UCLG – Mexico City – Culture 21” (23%), which might be explained by the fact that the initiative had been launched just before the consultation, without the results being public at the moment; the fund for the implementation of Agenda 21 for culture (26%), launched only on one occasion, in 2010; and training activities and seminars (26%).

2.3. Most interesting contribution made by Agenda 21 for culture

Next, the questionnaire respondents could freely express their opinion on what they considered the most important contribution made by Agenda 21 for culture.

The answers which predominated were those which highlighted the contribution made to **raise awareness about the link between culture and sustainable development** on all levels, locally and internationally. These comments include references to the following aspects, among others:

- Statement of the transversality of culture and its close relationship with many other topics.
- Recognition of the values of culture itself: creativity, knowledge, diversity, etc.
- Encouragement of alternative models to economic globalization.
- View of interdependence of cultures, within the interdependence of human development.

Other answers point out other significant contributions made by Agenda 21 for culture, concerning aspects such as **key concepts and challenges for contemporary cultural policies; reflections from the standpoint of culture on participative democracy and social inclusion** and the role of civil society in shaping cities; as well as the **constitution of an international agenda concerning local cultural policies** (linking cities and territories of different countries and continents, with shared reflections and good practices, guaranteeing proximity and involvement as positive elements of UCLG as an international entity).

3. The world has changed

The following section of the questionnaire dealt with current trends concerning culture and development on a global and local level which affected the context of intervention of Agenda 21 for culture and which, in consequence, should be considered in its review process.

3.1. Global trends in culture and development

The question about current global trends in the relationship between culture and development which affected Agenda 21 for culture gave rise to a diverse and rich variety of responses, including external threats and internal strengths as new opportunities and aspects which may have positive as well as negative effects. The answers received can be summed up in the following points:

- **Digitalization and globalization of culture and communications.** These allow us to explore the democratizing and educating potential of the culture-technology combination, digitalize cultural assets and heritage and take advantage of the opportunities created by the changes in the management of work and personal time. They also force us to approach the digital divide and to ensure that all cultures can participate in the digital economy and creative industries.
- **Recognition of culture as a tool for creating values in society:** Culture as a medium for creating “viral” changes through emotionally rich experiences and personal examples; and culture as a place for creating new ways of solidarity on a local level which are in turn linked to global references. In this regard, it is also necessary to explore the relationship

between “online” culture (digital or virtual) and “offline” culture (analogical or in person) and how the former can serve to preserve and dynamize the latter.

- **Possible reduction of culture to market dynamics**, typical of a neoliberal perspective. Faced with this risk, it is necessary to prevent the perception of culture only in economic terms.
- **Recognition of “free” knowledge and culture** linked to the concept of “commons” and supported in effective places of cultural exchange, with non-privatized usage licenses. This should be based on new forms of regulating intellectual property and on new ways of participation and citizen governance.
- **Growing inequalities in urban areas**, which limit the disadvantaged sectors’ capacity of expression.
- **Growing link of culture with other sectors and social objectives**, which requires more transversal and interdisciplinary abilities of culture professionals. Among other things mentioned was the potential of interculturality as a factor of cultural and social development, the potential of culture to prepare for times of uncertainty and the role of culture in constructing peace.
- **New ways of financing and management**, especially through public-private partnerships.
- **Growing emergence of cultural entrepreneurship**, which leads to the encouragement of entrepreneurial abilities in all levels of education and training throughout life.
- **Reduction of support for culture in some international development programs** and scarce opportunities for international mobility of cultural agents in southern countries.
- **Appropriateness of being inspired by the most holistic models of culture** typical of southern countries, to respond to some of the challenges faced by the view of culture in northern countries.

3.2. Local trends in culture and development

The following question, which requested observations on local trends in the relationship between culture and sustainable development, provided some responses which were similar to those in the previous question, together with more specific ones, in the following summary:

- **Distance of the population with traditional cultural institutions** and need to provide these cultural institutions with new governance which is more transparent and open to the public.
- **Appearance of new spaces of creativity and new ways of relating to creative processes:** fab labs, making, etc. In regard to this, creativity is also recognized as an essential citizen competence, which demands opportunities for cultural and artistic learning for the whole population.
- **Recognition of the role of culture in creating comfortable, livable urbanism**, potentiating the role of public spaces.

- **Changes in culture financing models** (sponsoring, crowdfunding, patronage, etc.), with effects in regard to the type of expressions and activities which are able to receive support and the conditions for obtaining it.
- **Risk of culture becoming a luxury asset**, in the context of the economic crisis and the reduction of income and time available to several layers of the population. In relation to this, the need to bridge the digital divide is also indicated.
- **Difficulty for certain sectors to understand sustainable development** which goes beyond its environmental dimension and incorporates cultural aspects.
- **Need to constitute networks of collaboration** with organizations from other areas of civil society (for example, environmental or social sectors).
- **New ways of organizing the cultural sector**, some of which are similar to other subsectors, in what is called “social and solidarity economy” (cooperatives, etc.).

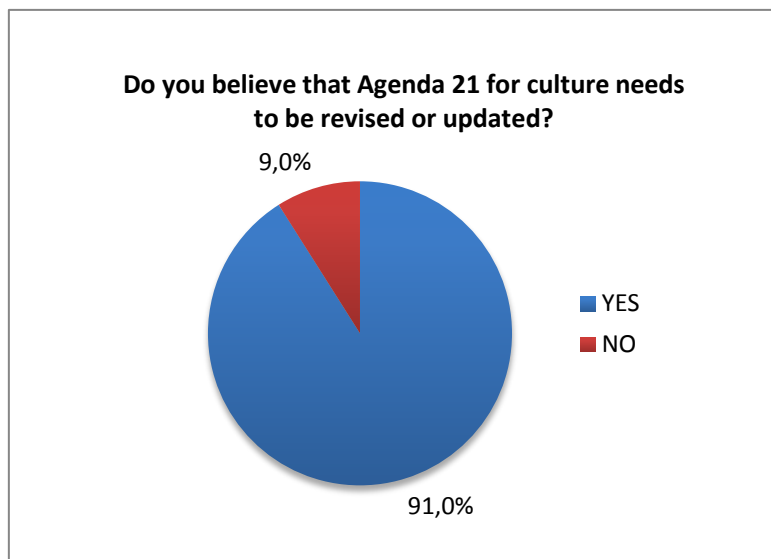
4. The need to update

4.1. Need to revise and update Agenda 21 for culture

The observation of trends described in the previous section gave way to a series of questions on the need to review Agenda 21 for culture and what orientation it should have. Firstly, **91% of the people asked considered it necessary to revise or update Agenda 21 for culture** (see chart 5).

Chart 5: Do you believe that Agenda 21 for culture needs to be revised or updated?

Answers in percentages.



The majority of responses gave this opinion based on the **need to regularly renew the tools, documents and language** of strategies and policies, as well as the challenges from the changes in

the past decade: **growing globalization, digitalization, economic crisis in many countries, new ways of cultural creation and production**, etc.

Other contributions referred to **instrumental aspects**: Agenda 21 for culture should update itself in order to become more well-known, illustrate its arguments with specific examples on how to put it into practice and search for better integration with local programs of sustainable development.

Finally, some answers suggested **putting more emphasis on certain aspects of the document approved in 2004**: for example, explaining the danger of instrumentalizing culture and considering it only a resource to serve other development objectives; or recognizing a greater role of civil society in strategies of culture and sustainable development.

Furthermore, **those who did not see the need to update Agenda 21 for culture considered that the text was still valid**, and that, in any event, rather than modifying the document, it would be good to increase its recognition and encourage its use by more local governments.

4.2. Possible names

The question concerning a possible new name for the revised Agenda 21 for culture received few answers.

Many opinions considered that the current name was still valid or only introduced small changes (“Agenda 21 for culture 2.0”; “Agenda 22 for culture”; “Culture XXI”; etc.) or a subheading (“Agenda 21 for culture: A tool for city development”; “Agenda 21 for culture: A new frontier for culture”; “Agenda 21 for culture: 2015-2035”).

In other cases, more emphasis was put on the relationship between culture and sustainable development: “Culture / Sustainable Human Development Agenda”; “Today we create the culture of tomorrow”; “Culture and sustainable development”; “Manifesto for the sustainable development of cultures”; “Viable and sustainable culture”; etc.

Lastly, there were some more general observations on the language: for some, it would be more convenient to go from the singular “culture” to the plural “cultures” or avoid terms such as “Agenda” and “21” which suggest transience and temporariness, opting for expressions such as “Declaration.”

5. The content

5.1. Main topics for Agenda 21 for culture

In order to guide the work of preparing the new Agenda 21 for culture and to avoid conditioning the answers, the following question was open-ended and requested main topics for the new document.

As on other occasions, the collection of responses received is broad and varied, and involves the restatement and specification of aspects which were already part of the document approved in 2004, as well as the incorporation of issues which were given less attention then. Next are the main topics proposed, which in some way shape the framework of principles and values in which the new Agenda 21 for culture operates.

a) **Maintenance or consolidation of aspects already included:**

- Sustainable development
- Accessibility of culture
- Citizen participation
- Horizontal effects of culture regarding other areas
- International cooperation between cities
- Cultural rights on a local level
- Cultural diversity
- Links between culture and education
- Social inclusion and fight against exclusion in cultural life
- Raising awareness on the values of culture in the fulfillment of people
- Impact of globalization on local cultures
- Mobility of artists and culture professionals
- Links between culture and economy: while some consider reinforcing the reflection on creative economy, others consider the risk of instrumentalization which may come from an approach of this type.

b) **New topics**, which on occasions may be considered new emphases on issues already included implicitly in the previous version or which require more intense exploration due to changes experienced in the local and global context:

- Construction of collective citizen competences and processes of co-construction of local culture, with a more active role of the population as a whole, and especially of younger generations.
- Need to improve data collection on the cultural sector and measurement of its impact in terms of development, and networking research processes carried out in different places.
- Culture as a politically relevant space, where ideas can be constructed and passed on.
- Culture as a resource in the fight against poverty.
- Greater attention to the digital dimension of culture.
- Reinforcement of the attention given to intangible heritage.

- Reflection on the environmental impact of institutions and agents of the cultural sector.

5.2. Priorities

Complementary to the previous questions, the questionnaire respondents could indicate their **degree of support of different activities which could shape the work program of the UCLG Committee on culture in 2014-2016**. Ultimately, this program should facilitate the implementation of policies and the shaping of a learning community to promote intelligence and networking, with more exchanges between cities.

Of the 13 suggested responses, the following were the ones which received the most support (see chart 6), in this order:

- Support and guidance to cities in the implementation of the new Agenda 21 for culture (89% of respondents considered this very or quite important)
- Establish a system of targets and indicators in culture, development, sustainability and governance (81%)
- Facilitate peer-review mechanisms and exchanges (79%)
- Provide frameworks for self-assessment of cities (78%)
- Research applied to key areas (76%)
- Organize thematic training and capacity-building seminars (75%)
- Advocacy and lobby to UN system on the relation cities – culture – sustainable development (74%)
- Lobby national governments (72%)
- Organize a highly visible annual meeting of all cities involved in Agenda 21 for culture (69%)
- Position the new Agenda 21 for culture as a “prestigious brand” to unite the cities which are really committed and lead debates (68%)
- Place more emphasis on the good practices available on the website (67%)

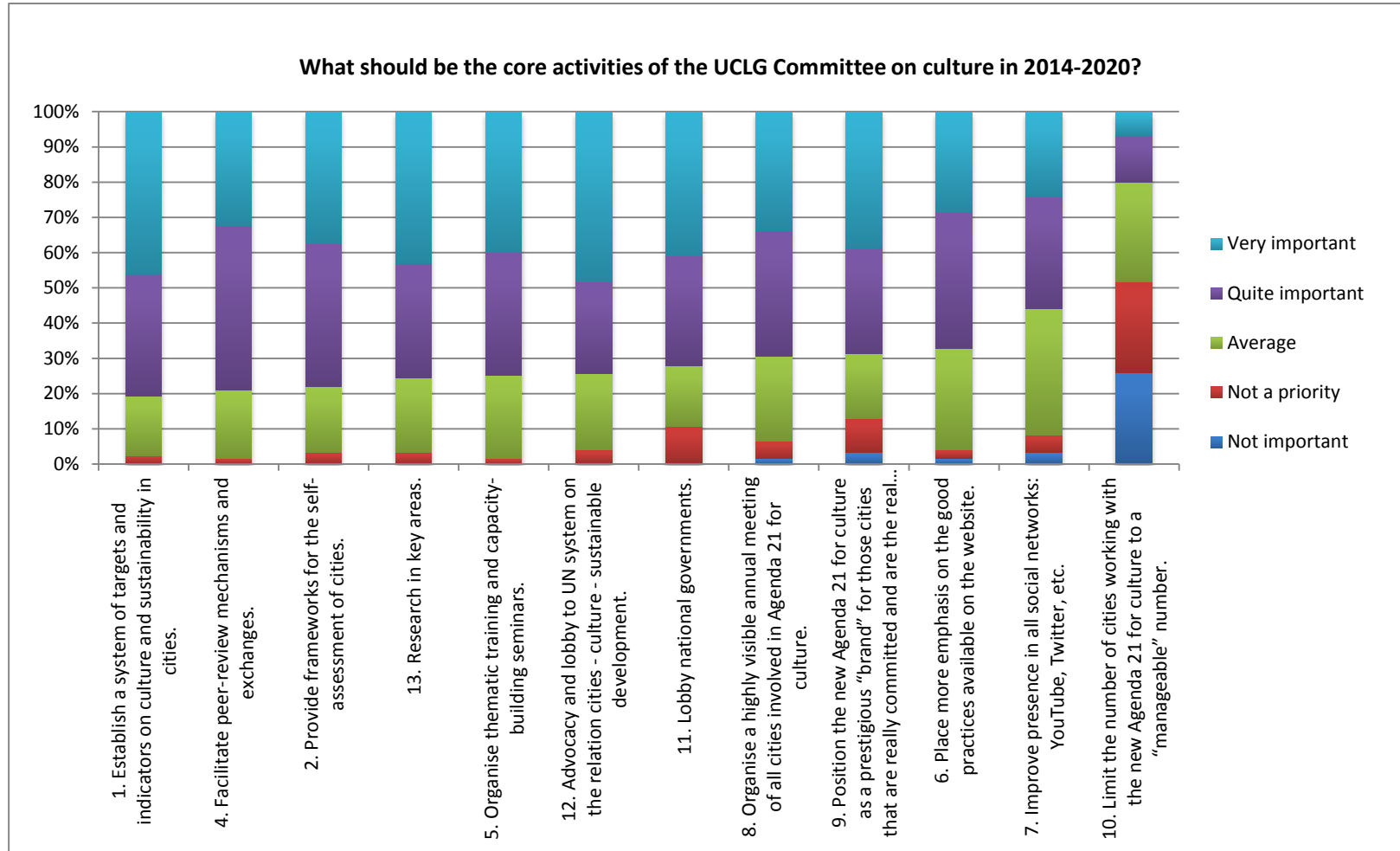
From the results obtained, once again there emerges a **generalized request for providing accompanying tools and training for the specific implementation** of Agenda 21 for culture and the **assessment of existing policies in this area and their impact**. There is also the perception that it is **necessary to continue raising awareness and pressuring national and international authorities** in regard to the relationship between culture and sustainable development and its translation into strategies, policies and resources.

In contrast, there was lesser consensus in the proposals regarding improved presence in social networks (56% considered this to be very or quite important), and especially, the idea of limiting the number of cities working with the new Agenda 21 for culture (20% considered this to be very or quite important, whereas 52% felt it was not important or not a priority).

Of the proposals freely suggested by those who responded to the questionnaire, there was the idea of offering a seal or certificate to cities which comply with certain standards concerning its cultural and sustainable development policies.

Chart 6: What should be the core activities of the UCLG Committee on culture in 2014-2016?

Answers are in percentages, according to the given statements, on a scale of five levels (very important – not important).



5.3. Collaboration

The last question of the questionnaire requested proposals in regard to the institutions and organizations which the UCLG Committee on culture should work with in the 2014-2016 period, in order to strengthen the new Agenda 21 for culture.

The responses obtained included a long, diverse list of names, which can be summed up in the following list:

- **International entities and agencies:** United Nations (in general) UNESCO (mentioned in a large number of responses), UNDP, UNICEF, OIT, UNCTAD, etc.
- **City networks**, of a global nature (such as Metropolis) or its equivalents, regionally (Eurocities, Les Rencontres, Mercociudades), nationally and provincially.
- **Local and regional administrations**, with numerous proposals of specific cities and local governments which could be interested in working with the new Agenda 21 for culture.
- **Departments of culture, art councils and development agencies** linked to national governments.
- **Regional entities**, such as the European Commission, the African Union, OEA and OEI.
- **Representative networks, associations and unions of the cultural sector:** IFLA, ICOMOS, IFACCA, World Cities Forum, Banlieues d'Europe, etc.
- **Other entities from civil society:** Amnesty International, Reporters Without Borders, local NGOs, etc.

6. Conclusions

The results of the questionnaire offer useful guidance for the preparation of the new Agenda 21 for culture. In particular, the following aspects can be highlighted to summarize the information:

- Most people who responded to the consultation **knew about Agenda 21 for culture**. From the contributions received, there emerges a **broad, complex view of the implications of the relationship between culture and sustainable development**: recognition of the space of culture, its interrelationships with numerous other dimensions, and contribution of guidance for models of policies and management in this area.
- Those who knew about the activities carried out by the UCLG Committee on culture **especially value the publication and translation of documents** (Agenda 21 for culture, as well as declarations and thematic reports) and the **advocacy** work.
- In general there is a consensus that **the main contribution of Agenda 21 for culture is raising awareness on the link between culture and sustainable development**, locally to internationally (transversality of culture, intrinsic values of culture, etc.).
- A large majority of people who responded **agree on the need to revise Agenda 21 for culture**, to update it, incorporate new challenges and give it a more practical orientation.

- There are various **global and local trends on which the new Agenda 21 for culture should reflect**: globalization, digitalization, effects of the market on culture, social inequalities, emergence of “free” knowledge and culture (commons), distance of the population from traditional cultural institutions, new spaces for creativity, etc.
- The new Agenda 21 for culture should be **based on values similar to those which inspired it in 2004, while emphasizing the importance** of aspects such as constructing collective citizen competences, measuring impact and the relevance of culture in political, social and environmental terms.
- In line with the main deficiencies detected in the previous period, the questionnaire respondents request that in the next two-year period the UCLG Committee on culture **reinforce the practical dimension of Agenda 21 for culture** (through resources including training, technical assistance and assessment) and **continue with advocacy work and raising awareness on culture and sustainable development**.

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