

GUIDELINES

Promoting culture in the peripheries March 2016

A Peer-to-Peer addressing the issue of promoting culture in the peripheries was organised over two days on 10 & 11 September 2015, in Tunis, Tunisia.

Presentations and discussions revolved around two main issues relative to the theme of promoting culture in the peripheries:

1. The role of cities as potential key players in the culture sector; and
2. Promotion of cross-border and/or interregional cooperation within the Mediterranean region

On the first day, participants conducted a review of the situation in their respective countries with regard to the promotion of culture in the peripheries in national/local development planning, the role of cities within this development and their relations with central governments, access to funding and modalities of this funding, implementing mechanisms and involvement of local communities, etc.

The participants confirmed that cities represent an interesting potential in terms of promoting cultural development and fostering a cultural life that could affect the attractiveness and image of cities. Discussions touched on related concerns such as inclusiveness and social cohesion, tourism development, cultural heritage, and current trends in the promotion of cities.

On the second day, the participants discussed the issue of cross-border cooperation and the role of public spaces in promoting regional exchanges. They assessed the pros and cons of promoting cross-border and/or interregional cooperation and the barriers that countries and societies of the region face that counter the promotion of 'neighbourhood' politics.

Based on these considerations, the participants made non/exhaustive recommendations, with the purpose to provide the requisites for urban/regional planning with a cultural component, the promotion of the role of cities as important repositories of culture, and the promotion of cross-border cooperation (CBC). The following guidelines are generic based on these recommendations.



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1. On the issue of promoting culture in the peripheries and promoting cities as potential key players

1.1 Definitions and preliminary considerations

- 1.1.1 Culture is a product of people's beliefs, traditions, and creativity. It is intimately connected to the concept of citizenship and the definition of citizens' roles within a community. "Culture is what counts as culture for those who participate in it"¹.
- 1.1.2 Culture is an avenue where human actions encourages cultural diversity and citizens' participation.
- 1.1.3 Culture is not just about projects and staging performances; it is a fundamental component of a holistic dimension that looks to the well-being of a community both socially and economically. In practice, cultural work is linked to a broad understanding of development (even if seldom framed as such), and can provide a space for individuals and communities to express their images of desirable development.
- 1.1.4 The term 'Peripheries' is used to refer to cities/regions far from the 'centre', i.e. far from capitals and prominent cities, or to remote and/or disadvantaged neighbourhoods.
- 1.1.5 Reference is made to Agenda 21 for culture (2004), a charter for local cultural policies concerned with sustainable development².

1.2 The role of national authorities in promoting the culture sector

- 1.2.1 National authorities should recognise the value of culture and ultimately ensure that the official discourse on culture, its value and its role for the development of societies and nations, translates into a real cultural project and is promoted as a national priority.
- 1.2.2 The development of coherent and long-term support measures for the sector such as legislation, to regulate the sector at national and local levels, and adequate policies, funding, etc.
- 1.2.3 The development of adequate institutional frameworks (e.g. a measure of decentralisation of competences in the field of culture, a lighter bureaucracy, competent and skilled civil servants at both national and regional levels, and transparent policies).
- 1.2.4 The development of sectoral planning and the definition of objectives for cultural development at both national and local levels, including in remote areas and minor cities (the peripheries).
- 1.2.5 Looking into development models within and beyond the region and adapt existing international instruments through a context-specific approach.
- 1.2.6 Involving the civil society in policy-making and planning, as well as recognise their role in instances where their leadership and contribution are an asset. Such a bottom-up approach should ensure that citizens recognise in the

¹ As quoted in Stevenson, Deborah, Cities and Urban Culture, McGraw-Hill Education, 2003, p. 105.

² <http://agenda21culture.net/index.php/documents/agenda-21-for-culture>



cultural activity a response to their needs and rally their participation/contributions as cultural operators.

- 1.2.7 Creating incentives that not only encourage the involvement of the private sector in cultural development initiatives, but that also attract investments.

1.3 The role of cities/municipalities as potential key players in the culture sector

- 1.3.1 Local cultural development stems from a plural governance of culture including responsive public authorities, strong civil society organisations and spaces for frank dialogue and cooperation between them.
- 1.3.2 Cultural development at local level (in cities/governorates) is the remit of public institutions and civil society organisations in which both share the responsibility for the planning, implementation and dissemination.
- 1.3.3 Efforts should be made in the direction of including culture as a priority in party politics.
- 1.3.4 Cities are important repositories of local resources and their mobilisation is important inasmuch as their contributions to local cultural development contributes to national development processes.
- 1.3.5 Cities should implement locally embedded programmes that reflect their specificities and capitalise on their assets –cultural, economic, social, etc. These programmes should take into account the priorities of its citizens.
- 1.3.6 Cities should be inspired by the diverse experience observed in partner countries (Sousse and Sfax in Tunisia, Ramallah in Palestine, and the Greater Amman Municipality in Jordan), which constitute valuable models on which to build the development of culture in cities. They should also engage in international partnerships provided it is clear that models, methodologies, and projects cannot be imported but they can be used as an inspiration and adapted to fit the specific context of cities.
- 1.3.7 Cities should promote legislation that regulates cultural activities at city level because it should take into account their cultural and social specificity vis-à-vis the national level. This will also ensure that local cultural policies are part of a strategic vision and representative of local priority needs and not contingent on priorities defined by elected officials.
- 1.3.8 Cities should promote twinning with other cities (in the same country or in another country in the region or beyond) because it is invaluable for networking, cultural exchange and cultural development.
- 1.3.9 Cities, particularly those in remote areas, should develop properly equipped and properly managed spaces for the organisation of cultural activities.
- 1.3.10 Cities should make these spaces and cultural centres within their jurisdiction available for the use of citizens -this involves a redefinition of their role and their appropriation by citizens- and simplify the process of accessing existing spaces – permits, facilitation, etc.
- 1.3.11 Tourism is important for promoting the cultural role of cities and enhancing their cultural and tourism assets through dissemination and the development of local crafts.



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1.4 Mapping and diagnostic exercises

- 1.4.1 In each city/region, it is important to 'map' the culture sector as a prerequisite to the definition of policies and development planning for culture that are compatible with the context.
- 1.4.2 Methodologies and toolkits are available and can be adapted to local needs.
- 1.4.3 Mapping can be an incremental process: it is essential to start by mapping community/city/country assets and best practices and build policies and strategies based on these identified strengths.
- 1.4.4 Mapping should be conducted by civil society actors and should be backed by local authorities.

1.5 Policies and institutional support

- 1.5.1 While there are differences between one country and another in the role attributed to municipalities at the level of cultural policies, it is up to each municipality to fight for attributing a priority to culture.
- 1.5.2 Public institutions should provide the support necessary for civil society organisations to implement their projects- policies, permits, spaces, funding, etc.
- 1.5.3 Cultural activities are influenced by political processes, however, they can also be a driving force in policy debates and can ultimately influence decisions regarding state support to the sector. It is a fact that cities/regions that have dynamised their art and culture sector have shown interesting figures in terms of economic development, and have therefore been elemental in inducing a virtuous cycle.
- 1.5.4 Networking and partnerships are invaluable for enhancing cultural policies for cities.

1.6 Planning

- 1.6.1 Local authorities should include cultural planning as a component of their overall planning strategies.
- 1.6.2 Cultural development planning at local level should be integrated to national development planning and follow the vision and guidelines set by the central government.
- 1.6.3 Long range planning should be reflected by a long-term strategic plan and short range by an action plan.
- 1.6.4 A mapping of assets and resources is important for drawing a sound strategic development plan.
- 1.6.5 Community dialogue (with representatives of all segments) is essential in order to take into account the full needs of the community, and make the most of its assets and strengths.
- 1.6.6 A plan is not a rigid document: periodic evaluations and revisions are necessary to meet new challenges and turn them into opportunities.



1.7 Governance

- 1.7.1 The quality of governance is basic for the enhancement of cultural policies at city level: it implies the establishment of adequate policies, and a continuous monitoring of their proper implementation; allocation of budgets and efficient use/distribution of resources.
- 1.7.2 It includes the participation of citizens in decision-making for cultural issues and a higher level of involvement in the planning process.
- 1.7.3 It implies the reconciliation of the diverse (and sometimes conflicting) interests of all stakeholders, including those of the citizens, in the cultural development planning.
- 1.7.4 It promotes civic engagement whereby ordinary citizens and/or civil society organizations participate directly or indirectly in exacting accountability from public officials: that they are performing to their full potential, that they meet their stated objectives and respond to the needs of the community, and that they provide value for money in the provision of public services, etc.

1.8 Education and training

- 1.8.1 Education in artistic disciplines and cultural management and policies should be promoted, especially in the peripheries.
- 1.8.2 The education of youth (beginning with 10-14 years old) is a link in the chain and school systems should cater to develop their appreciation of 'culture' and cultural expressions.
- 1.8.3 Developing capacities among local authority institutions and providing periodic training for managers and city councils is a priority to achieve meaningful engagement.
- 1.8.4 Cooperation and collaboration through twinning and partnerships can be tapped to promote training that opens to new models for management and planning as well as artistic development.

1.9 Public awareness and citizen participation

- 1.9.1 Rallying public support is basic to the enhancement of cultural policies at city level; so are the development of tools to promote civil society participation.
- 1.9.2 Raising awareness amongst citizens about the value of culture as a right and as a vector for local development is a must: it goes beyond an intellectual exercise and goes into specific considerations. Citizens have to be aware but they also need to be involved and be able to wield pressure and influence cultural policies at city level.
- 1.9.3 Raising awareness about the implications, the responsibilities and commitments that come with cultural development through a continued flow of information, various forms of support, transparency about processes, and accountability.
- 1.9.4 Creating conditions for citizens' empowerment. It could take many forms, including the provision of a regulatory environment for the sector and for citizen participation; provision of a regulatory framework ensuring that public authorities open tenders and calls for public spaces to CSOs, with open-minded references; and open urban competition rules to the creative/cultural



sector to avoid excessive concentration and in order to guarantee cultural diversity and citizens' participation.

- 1.9.5 Dynamising voluntary associations could contribute tremendously to the development of the culture sector. Their meetings constitute a cultural event unto themselves. These could take different forms and would contribute substantially to dynamise the culture sector.
- 1.9.6 Or creating advisory committees that operate on the sector in general or on specialised sub-sectors. These committees should have a clear mandate, and operate democratically by rotating half of their members periodically and alternately in order to ensure continuity.

1.10 City branding & communication

- 1.10.1 It is essential that each city set a communication/branding strategy that addresses both the local community and the broader public outside that particular city. Such a strategy should contribute to promoting the value of culture among citizens, promoting the particularities/city image/unique value of the city among citizens first, and at regional and international levels, and attracting investments, tourism, and eventually contributing to boost the economy.
- 1.10.2 Building such a strategy should accompany the development policy of the city and take into consideration 'market needs' inside and outside the city. It should be elaborated in consultation with the local community, including the private sector, and should ensure that enough funds and human resource are allocated for its proper implementation.

2. On the issue of promoting cross-border cooperation (CBC) and enhancing public spaces for the promotion of culture

2.1. Preliminary considerations

- 2.1.1. Cross-border cooperation is an important component of cultural development and focuses on border/remote regions that suffer from being far from the centre and hence need specific strategies and instruments to integrate them into cultural partnership schemes.
- 2.1.2. There are examples of CBC in the region and beyond that deserve attention and that could be used as an inspiration for promoting CBC in partner countries.
- 2.1.3. CBC is mainly practised within funded EU and other donor and cooperation programmes (IF, GI, etc.) and within transnational associations, etc. It could be at bilateral level through Embassies, cultural institutions (Goethe, Institut français, British Council, etc.) or at regional level (CBC-MED, UNDP-United Nations Development Programme, etc.). Reference is made to the Programming of the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI) – 2014-2020.³

³ http://eeas.europa.eu/enp/pdf/financing-the-enp/regional_south_strategy_paper_2014_2020_and_multiannual_indicative_programme_2014_2017_en.pdf



- 2.1.4. CBC is important for the promotion of exchanges and creativity and for promoting diversity. It is linked to environments where democratic processes, human rights and freedom of expression are valued.
- 2.1.5. Reference is made to the Fribourg Declaration on Cultural Rights, which sheds light on issues including cultural cross-border cooperation and cultural participation in the public space⁴.

2.2. Policies and regulatory frameworks

- 2.2.1. Legislations and regulatory frameworks can contribute to encouraging CBC and benefiting from the impacts it might have an impact on the development of communities, particularly those in remote areas.
- 2.2.2. Central authorities should address the issue of visas, both north-south and south-south, in their foreign relations in order to increase mobility opportunities for artists.
- 2.2.3. CBC and cultural development should be addressed at regional planning level and adequate budgets should be allocated. Heavy centralisation constitutes a challenge to CBC.
- 2.2.4. CBC and regional planning to promote culture should be harnessed within national agendas.
- 2.2.5. Civil Society Organisations are the main actors in CBC projects, and adequate legislations and regulatory frameworks should formalise their role.
- 2.2.6. The provision of regulatory frameworks to encourage the mobilisation of the private sector – incentives, etc. - should be addressed as a priority.

2.3. Actors and programmes

- 2.3.1. Public authorities and civil society organisations are key actors for the development of culture. Trust, collaboration and a plural governance should be promoted at all times for successful implementation.
- 2.3.2. Cultural activities should aim for the promotion of exchanges of ideas and capacity development as their main objective; cultural diplomacy, which is the remit of embassies and cultural institutes, should be steered towards that same objective.
- 2.3.3. Cultural activities should be tailored to local needs and expectations and should not be hostage to various donor agendas. They often include 'peace' or 'democracy' labels and can often reflect a false reality, as is the case with 'people-to-people' programmes in Palestine.
- 2.3.4. Civil Society Organisations are the main actors in CBC projects, and they should be party to regional cultural development planning.
- 2.3.5. The contribution of regional established networks such as Al Mawred, Tamasi, and Arterial Network, particularly at policy and capacity development level but also for funding small productions, should be promoted and enhanced.
- 2.3.6. The business sector is a potentially important actor in culture development. It has to be mobilised effectively through awareness raising and the establishment of incentives to encourage its support.

⁴ <http://www.unifr.ch/iiedh/fr/divers/delcaration-fribourg>



2.4. Spaces

- 2.4.1. Spaces should be considered as strategic assets to mobilise practitioners and audiences.
- 2.4.2. The development of spaces in terms of infrastructures and the appointment of experienced personnel to manage them is an essential prerequisite to cultural development.
- 2.4.3. When dealing with spaces, whether 'closed' or public, there are legal, financial and managerial aspects that have to be taken into account and that should ensure their viability and sustainability.
- 2.4.4. Work/activities organised in public space embody a potential to transform images of cities and regions and to provide new "layers" to the benefit of citizens and tourists.

2.5. Opportunities and good practice

- 2.5.1. Inspiration should come from good practices that go beyond current programmes for welfare and humanitarian aid and that are currently proliferating in the region - the Festival for Contemporary Dance in Ramallah, Amman, and Beirut, exchanges in the Kef and Douz in Tunisia, Racines' promotion of its own experience in mapping in Tunisia and Algeria. There are also examples of cultural and alternative tourism projects developed within a CBC perspective: the methodologies and processes they adopted merit consideration and could be an inspiration to initiate cultural activities.
- 2.5.2. Cities are potentially important repositories of CBC – they operate at a local (smaller) scale, they promote diasporic exchanges, they are closer to the CSOs than ministries, they own spaces, etc.
- 2.5.3. Twinning between municipalities is an effective tool because they are more accessible to civil society organisations and because they are privy to local needs and specificities.
- 2.5.4. Diasporic communities are important target groups and the experience in Palestine in this regard is quite telling.

