

# CULTURE

for Cities and Regions

## Future creative cities

Why culture is a smart investment in cities

01 December 2017



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# INTRODUCTION

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Culture for Cities and Regions is an EU-funded project analysing how cities and regions invest in culture. The project ran for 30 months, with a view to:

- Identifying successful cases of cultural investment throughout the European Union (71 case studies).
- Sharing experiences and helping selected cities and regions to improve their cultural strategy through coaching and tailored advice.

The project is led by [EUROCITIES](#) (the European network of large cities, bringing together over 140 cities) and [KEA](#) (a consultancy and research centre specialised in culture and creative industries), the scientific coordinator of the project, in charge of the methodology and providing expert knowledge for the project. The consortium was completed by [ERRIN](#) (European Regions Research and Innovation Network), and gathered insights from eight experts in cultural policy<sup>1</sup>.

During this three-year initiative, we:

1. have produced a catalogue of [71 case studies](#) developing and expanding on the knowledge base of city-driven initiatives in the field of culture and creative industries
2. organised [15 thematic study visits](#) all around Europe
3. Provided expert [coaching](#) for 10 selected cities/regions

*“I was in Dundee in November 2015, but I’d like to give you feedback that my 26-year-old daughter both seriously and jokingly (but not sarcastically!) gave me. ‘Your trip to Dundee must have been the best invested money the EU have ever made if you consider how many times and on different topics you refer to something you learned or someone you met there.’ And she is actually right. It’s been an important experience and a very positive injection for me professionally and personally.” John Svensson, City of Lidingo*

This document aims to reflect, synthesise and connect the dots across the 150 cities and regions involved throughout the project. The approach of Culture for Cities and Regions focused on three main themes:

- **Cultural heritage as driver of economic growth and social inclusion**
- **Cultural and creative industries as a motor for urban regeneration and economic vitality**
- **Culture for social inclusion, social innovation and intercultural dialogue**

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<sup>1</sup> This team includes: Philippe Kern (KEA) - Head of Expert Team; Julie Hervé (Eurocities) - Lead Expert; Pau Rausell Köster (Econcult) - Lead expert; Arthur Le Gall (KEA); Tom Fleming (Tom Fleming Creative Consultancy); Peter Inkei (Budapest Observatory); Nils Scheffler (Urban Expert); and Marianna Kajantie (Lasipalatsi)

This report sets out a vision for the future of cultural and creative place-making at city and regional levels, stemming from this three-year experience and countless hours of discussions with staff from local and regional authorities, elected officials, cultural operators, artists, creative businesses, and experts in culture and creative industries.



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# CITIES AHEAD OF THE GAME: INNOVATION IN LOCAL CULTURAL POLICIES

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## The role of culture in our society

Culture is everywhere. It permeates all spaces and places of cities and regions, and even infiltrates our daily life. It reaches out well beyond museums, heritage sites or traditional cultural institutions. It can be found in technology hubs, in media clusters to nourish innovation, on city walls (graffiti and murals), local community centres and street festivals which trigger social interactions. It serves to create an aesthetic, an atmosphere and ultimately shapes the attractiveness of places.

## Why should we care more about culture?

Our experience shows that cultural initiatives have become one of the main agents for change in society. Cultural investment and cultural workers influence the attractiveness of places (cities and regions), the spirit and morale of people, as well as being the focus of policies, whether social cohesion, entrepreneurship, wellbeing, or investment. This influence is largely unknown because such initiatives are rarely branded as cultural. They are often piloted by development or economic agencies as part of innovation programmes, often in the social field or as part of urban regeneration. They are also the result of individual or collective initiatives emerging from local collaborative ecosystems independent of any public support, and are often inspired by cultural management processes. In addition, cultural stakeholders often are not aware of, or do not claim credit for such transformation because they are still relegated to the traditional edges of cultural policy - public subsidy for the arts.

## Cultural workers are movers and shakers

Artists, designers, cultural workers and industries are at the heart of this societal development as taste and mood influencers (music, fashion), as creative process managers (collaborative, networked), as communication agents or providers of attractive content to a range of service providers in the traditional or digital economy. They are key actors in social cohesion and can play an important role in addressing city issues such as migration, racism, and xenophobia.

## Acknowledging the role of culture in world transformation

Despite this, the analysis of world transformation rarely focuses on the cultural dimension today. It is rather focused on technology (digital networks, artificial intelligence, genetic manipulation, the Internet of things, etc.), climate change, population growth, or economic sustainability. This shows a tendency to attribute historical development mainly to economic, technological, business and demographic factors - as if ideas, creations, institutions and culture played little role in major global change.

Overall, culture and its agents (artists, creative professionals, cultural institutions) are given relatively little consideration in the context of global development. This is reflected in the way culture is considered at policy level. This is not new, but rather puzzling - considering the important role of culture and cultural operators in the shaping of today's and tomorrow's world.

Culture for Cities and Regions helped to identify local trends and initiatives addressing this, especially through participatory solutions and strong community involvement in policy-making.

Culture is also inspiring [major economic trends](#) (driven by aesthetic, design, and ethical considerations), and social unrest finds its roots in lack of intercultural understanding. Cultural resources are therefore a major influence when questioning today's challenges and 'wicked issues'.

## Setting out a vision for a new cultural policy

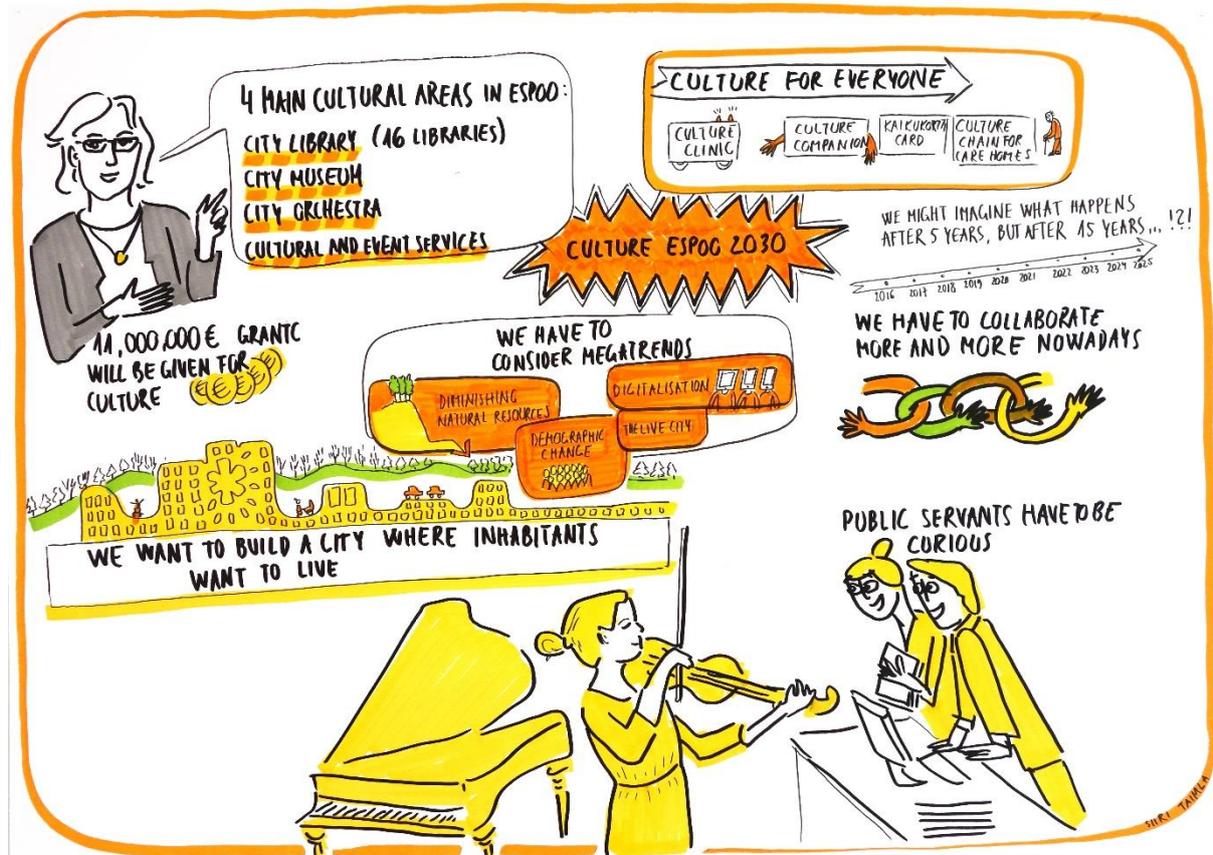
A review of cultural policy is required as the vision of the 21<sup>st</sup> century must be about successfully mainstreaming culture in other policy areas. This will promote:

- links between innovation and cultural policy, artists and creatives to encourage innovation across the city, and to encourage this by linking digital and tech hubs with cultural and creative hubs;
- use of heritage and memory to build self-awareness, self-worth, and social cohesion - this will build strong social values and help combat xenophobia, racism, anti-Semitism, gender discrimination and extreme nationalism;
- empowerment of people through artist and design-led education, living labs, and co-creation methodologies;
- capacity building to enable quality local cultural expression, audience development, and participation;
- intercultural dialogues and positive, proactive approaches to managing cultural integration;
- the fight against social inequality in urban and rural contexts, by stimulating cultural entrepreneurship and better management of local cultural resources to maximise participation and ownership from citizens.

Therefore, cultural policy is no longer only about the management of the arts, its survival in a consumerist society or its dependency on state patronage. Culture is more than ever a tool to address local and global challenges, to connect people, to innovate, to acquire knowledge or to generate intercultural dialogue and collaboration - ultimately leading to more peaceful and united societies.

*“My creative City of the future has culture as part of everyone's lives, has art and culture embedded in the city structure, and promotes art and culture as a way of consuming, instead of buying things” - Susanna Tommila, City of Espoo*

## Innovation in cultural policy-making: cities at the forefront



Culture for Cities and Regions provided strong evidence that this is taking place locally, with cities and regions making smart investments in culture to deliver greater social, economic and cultural impacts. We are looking at an emerging cultural policy revolution, driven by increased cultural investment and innovative policy-making at regional and city levels. This trend is often due to greater understanding of as well as increased evidence of the impact of cultural investment on urban regeneration and socio-economic objectives. The new cultural policies are aimed at augmenting or leading local development, and they focus on:

- *Creative Spaces:*
  - o occupying former industrial sites with new economic or social activities;
  - o making creative uses of heritage buildings that are difficult and costly to maintain;
  - o supporting cultural and creative entrepreneurship (incubators, living labs, creative hubs, maker spaces);
- *Attractiveness:*
  - o attracting creative talents, artists and maximising the potential for local crafts by making workspaces available at lower costs;
  - o attracting tourism or international investors (cultural events, an attractive suite of cultural infrastructure, and a reputation as a destination city/region);
- *Well-being and quality of life:*

- generating fun and entertainment (wellbeing and social cohesion) through festivals and cultural events;
- boosting the morale, confidence, and spirit of the local population by being a great place to live with a strong cultural offer and strong city / regional brand and identity;
- *Social cohesion:*
  - addressing social problems through artistic intervention with focus on enjoyment, self-expression, inter-community and inter-generational dialogue and skills development / training to prevent social exclusion, isolation and marginalisation);
- *Inspiring and driving territorial change:*
  - transforming the image or brand of a city from negative or industrial to creative and inspiring (many examples exist throughout Europe including Bilbao, Lille, Manchester, Belfast, Dortmund, Antwerp, Nantes, Rotterdam, Saint Etienne, Mons, Lyon, Strasbourg, Turin, and so on). Changing citizens' perceptions of urban spaces through artistic interventions to encourage ownership, civic pride, and urban regeneration.

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## MAIN LESSONS: WHAT 150 CITIES AND REGIONS ARE TELLING US

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Innovation in culture policy is largely taking place at local level. Throughout Culture for Cities and Regions we explored the main innovations across European Cities and regions in terms of cultural investment. This led to a set of observations and lessons to inform future policy-making.

### Cities build their uniqueness on cultural resources and assets

Every place has cultural resources. These resources make a place unique, in terms of attractiveness and of identity. Culture-driven territorial development is very much about understanding and managing these resources to make the most of them. One key finding of the project is that cities and regions generally have a very high level of understanding of what these resources are and how they can contribute to cultural, social and economic development at local level.

Local cultural resources include cultural institutions and organisations, tangible and intangible heritage, festivals and cultural events, CCIs as well as artists and creative professionals (such as designers, architects and communication professionals). They are key resources for a creative ecosystem as providers of:

- Creative people and ideas;
- Artistic traditions and know how on which to build distinctiveness;
- Creative management capacities and experience;
- Conviviality, knowledge, tradition and fun.

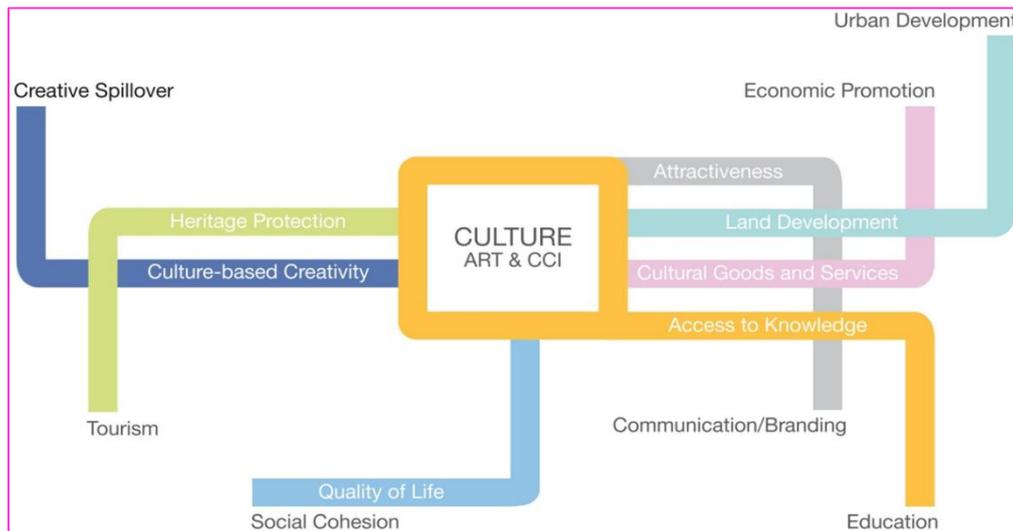


Figure 2 - Cultural resources in cities - Source: KEA (2013)

Cultural resources are an essential source of ‘authentic’ differentiation contributing to singularities, distinctiveness and attractiveness. Mobilising those cultural resources entails

much wider actions than traditional cultural policies to deliver on city objectives including *inter alia* quality of life and attractiveness, entrepreneurship, identity and dignity.

Cultural resources help to pursue a wide range of policies and deliver a wide range of impacts:



**Figure 3 - Cultural resources to reach wide-ranging impacts - Source: KEA (2013)**

Culture for Cities and Regions gave us multiple examples of cultural resource management and ways to make the most of dynamic cultural agents across European cities and regions.

### Managing cultural resources together to overcome challenges

Cultural heritage is a great resource of European territories, and the upcoming 2018 year of cultural heritage will certainly demonstrate this at a very large scale. However, heritage sites need to be developed with the involvement and trust of citizens. A good example is the archaeological park of Aquileia, in the [Friuli Venezia Giulia region](#), which certainly represents an extraordinary opportunity for economic and social development considering the historical value, the state of preservation, the size and uniqueness of the heritage site. However, poor involvement and interest of the community in developing the archaeological park, especially due to expropriation of land and buildings, led to cultural heritage being perceived as a constraint rather than an opportunity by the local population. This is where the peer-learning activities of Culture for Cities and Regions helped to reshape the strategic development of the project and develop locally-rooted narratives, and make best use of existing opportunities, such as the development and implementation of the Regional Smart Specialisation strategy as a way to integrate the cultural heritage site in an overall economic and social development policy.

Managing cultural resources is a far cry from a top-down process, and many participants in the Culture for Cities and Regions project brilliantly demonstrated that great involvement of stakeholders and even end-users can be achieved to deliver on city objectives.

Design thinking is very widely used in cities such as Aarhus and Helsinki, which took up a strongly user-driven perspective in managing and delivering culture policies - a culture of collaboration which is embedded both in the administration of the two cities, as well as in the management teams of cultural institutions.

## Cultural resources are not necessarily linked to heavy funding for culture

For example, [Belfast](#) has very limited funding for culture (GBP 1.8m for a city of 350,000 inhabitants). However, it is home to hundreds of festivals, the largest number of art venues and community arts organisations with very active cultural grassroots agents, and a vibrant musical sector. Perhaps more importantly, there is a thirst for peace amongst the population, as well as entertainment and social cohesion on which the culture sector can thrive - with Belfast becoming a hot destination with a unique proposition and story. Cultural activities, when they promote tolerance and mutual understanding, can be the fabric capable of keeping different communities together - the sense of place and the desire for reshaping a positive image for the city can also be a powerful driver for culture-led local development.



The city of [Bologna](#) kick started a programme in 2010 aimed at supporting culture and creative industries: **Incredibol**. The programme (set as a private/public partnership involving 23 participants) is an example of a low-cost strategy that contributes to urban regeneration as well as to entrepreneurship. Incredibol aims at encouraging creative entrepreneurship by making spaces available for free for a period of 4 years. Beneficiaries (creative and social entrepreneurs and artists) are winners of calls for tenders issued every year. The spaces are often renovated at the expense of the new tenants. They are made available to enable the pursuit of various activities (literary bars and shops; art galleries, artists' residence, video game companies, architects). 40 such spaces exist and contribute to changing the ecosystem of Bologna.

The success of the initiative has led to stronger political support. This has yet to translate into significant financial investment - the programme runs with the good will of three city employees and a yearly grant of €100,000, but the effects in terms of cultural heritage management, vibrancy and attractiveness of the city are tangible.

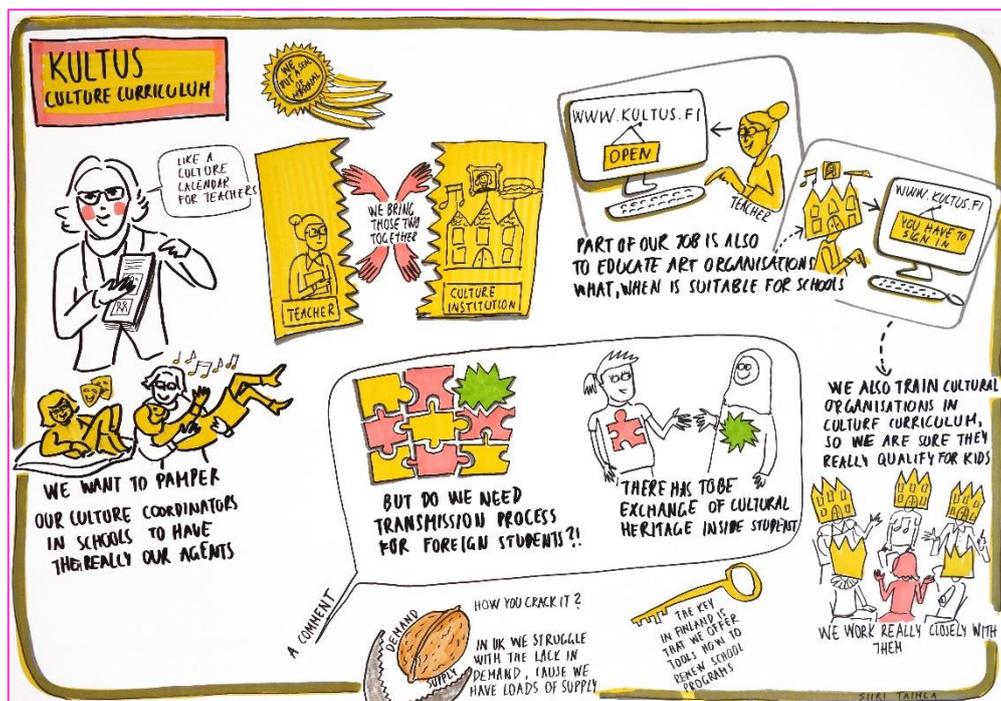
## Culture is everywhere - what does it mean for local policy making?

The broader role that cultural workers are championing at local level requires rethinking the relationship between the administration, policy makers and the cultural sector around trust and respect.

- Entrusting and working with these different organisations towards shared objectives means that some simple objectives, rules and guidelines should be commonly agreed to empower other organisations to take part in cities' and regions' policies and projects for culture and creativity.
- This also means working in partnership with the broader ecosystem of cities, and especially the universities and numerous associations in the city. These are key organisations which can provide precious resources in terms of skills, talented people, and engagement with the different communities across territories.

Cities currently welcome experimentation and risk taking. They need more support in order to:

- enable the setting up of creative hubs and creative incubators to stimulate collaboration between art, culture and creative businesses, social entrepreneurship and digital companies.
- Invite artists to occupy the public space and transform the perceptions of such places. Art can give places a new destination and new meanings to enable appropriation for



the good of the community.

Excellent examples of this approach can be found in [Espoo and Helsinki](#), where the cultural and education departments work hand-in-hand at city level to deliver cultural education activities together with local cultural institutions and stakeholders.

For this to work adequately, it requires trust between the different levels, between public administration, teachers, pupils and cultural organisations. This is crucial to building up successful and lasting cooperation between cultural and educational institutions.

Nevertheless, it takes time to bring people together and build up a partnership; a necessary base is the willingness to change, to improve and to have constructive conversations.

## Openness and flexibility - combining vision with flexible approaches

A key aspect of the project dealt with how cultural policy and the different cultural and creative spaces account for future developments and introduce some degree of flexibility to allow for different scenarios, emerging uses and new needs of the population.

At macro level (city cultural policy), it is embodied in a balance between steering and dialogue in the implementation of the vision for culture across the city. This is reflected in 1) A clear direction in terms of public policy objectives; 2) Trust towards cultural professionals, with no visible interference from foundations or policy-makers 3) Flexible policy tools, such as contracts between the city and cultural institutions, which have full independence as long as they work towards those key public policy objectives. An example would be the use of the artistic percentage (allocating 1%, and sometimes more, of real estate investment to cultural and creative sector (CCS) projects) as a way to leverage additional funding for culture and the arts from real estate developments.

The city of [Aarhus](#) is an excellent example of such shared vision, where flexibility and openness are also embedded at a more micro level, in so called 'third spaces'. In particular, the different cultural institutions in Aarhus show a lot of flexibility in adapting to unexpected changes (or simply making room for appealing new projects):

- Dokk1 (next generation library) with some spaces dedicated to new uses and unprogrammed events.
- Den Gamle By (open air museum), with the development of a joint project with people with a migrant background. Interestingly the idea was picked up due to a chance meeting and developed afterwards as an important part of an exhibition.
- The Moesgard museum has a multi-skilled team that works as an in-house laboratory and enable them to design, test and fast-prototype new experiences for its audiences.
- ARoS (modern art museum) is developing a whole floor of digital experiences to reach out to new audiences and break away from the idea of an elitist culture.

## Governance of cultural policies

It appeared clearly from the project that local authorities can play a key role in delivering cultural and creative activities, designing projects and launching new initiatives for CCIs.

Different types of governance models appeared to manage the combination between grassroots operators and decision-makers.

1. Leadership model, where local authorities drive the political agenda and trigger change in the city through ambitious policies and often large cultural investment. Examples include cities such as Angers, Nantes, or Barcelona.
2. Catalyst cities, which support partnership development and deliver the policies and programmes jointly (Wallonia, Loulé, Sofia, Hauts de France, Dortmund) and mediate links with leadership.
3. Crystalliser of initiatives, (Belfast, Aarhus, Helsinki) where grassroots initiatives are encouraged, picked up and sourced to inspire policies and shape a shared vision.

Cities and regions are gradually mixing proactive policies with activating creative communities and enabling them to take up more of a role in the city, especially through:

- Facilitating networking across cultural and creative industries (as well as other economic sectors) to enable the emergence of new ideas. The city may act as a broker between existing associations and creatives to enable meetings, sharing information on upcoming events and involve CCIs when possible. Working across departments in the city could help to identify additional networking opportunities or discussion platforms.  
A good example of networking facilitation by a city can be found in [Magdeburg](#), mixing CCIs, other businesses and elected officials.
- Supporting existing initiatives, be it in terms of communication or by making public space or buildings available to nurture the development of creative spaces.
- Small grants with an open call for proposals can be used to identify new project ideas and people/organisations willing to develop new approaches. Such calls should have clear objectives (in line with strategies for culture and creative industries), but should otherwise be flexible to allow for experimental ideas and projects.

## Cities become facilitators or ‘Villes des possibles’

*“My creative city of the future will involve citizens in both planning and producing. This means that the city is not only a producer of cultural services but also a platform for citizens and other actors to present their activities.”*  
Tuula Haavisto, City of Helsinki

Cities are where creativity takes action, where initiatives are born, grow and have the most cultural, social and economic impact. All of this does not happen out of the blue, however.

It requires individuals able to work across disciplines to bridge the gaps between different mindsets, ideas and networks, such as polymaths and “linking pins”<sup>2</sup> who are able to orchestrate a wide diversity of skills for innovative projects.

Cities where these initiatives thrive and are encouraged rather than put down could be called “villes des possibles” (Cities of the possible). These are cities where people undertake what was not even envisioned elsewhere, and where initiatives thrive. The main features of the “villes des possibles” are:

- Local authorities act as enablers, with creative people within the administration (‘Design thinking’ in city planning and management to foster innovation, and openness to initiatives, as in the example of Aarhus above. The appointment of a chief design officer in Helsinki is also an excellent example).
- Support is given to experimentation across disciplines and businesses to end the silo approach and enable cross-fertilisation between artistic, creative, technical and financial competences. It is about inter-clustering creative and technology or health parks to encourage spillover, such as the RDM Campus in Rotterdam, which brings together vocational education, research and creative businesses in an innovative space).
- Entrusting artistic intervention in urban regeneration and planning (as in Barcelona or Nantes, where artistic interventions triggered the development of a culture-driven urban regeneration strategy).
- Mainstreaming culture policy across other policy fields (economy, innovation, education, urban planning, and transport).
- Unleashing local initiatives and support polymaths/“linking pins” in their endeavours. There are a lot that cities can do beyond providing financial support, by entrusting the cultural sector and giving people the opportunity to act.

## Capacity-building for the cultural and creative sectors

Cultural workers are major engineers of change at city level, by:

- Contributing to quality of life;
- Generating cultural activities and social interaction;
- Attracting investment in revitalised areas;
- Encouraging entrepreneurship;
- Challenging non-ethical behaviours;
- Helping make sense of digital innovation and, in the future, of artificial intelligence.

The cultural and creative sectors are however neither adequately prepared nor equipped for this new role. They are not in a position to influence decision-making or be rewarded for

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<sup>2</sup> Wolfpack (2014) “Plans, probes and pops-up: creative crossovers in Rotterdam”. Report prepared for the city of Rotterdam. <http://ci010.nl/>

their contribution.

This is where the role of the city is instrumental to help the sector to develop its capacity to be heard and support networking and federating the cultural and creative sectors, for example through events (e.g. [Magdeburg Kreativ Salon](#)) or through cultural and creative spaces such as creative hubs (North Portugal and Wallonia both set up a network of such structures across the region), incubators, cultural centres or museums. Sometimes such creative spaces even grow over a whole district of a city (as in [Nantes](#) where the whole île de Nantes forms a creative district).

[Creative Dundee](#) is a great example of a network development at city level driven by the sector but encouraged at city level by opening discussion platforms and policy consultation channels for the sector.



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## LEARNING NEEDS - FUTURE CULTURE POLICY CHALLENGES FOR CITIES AND REGIONS

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Culture for Cities and Regions opened new perspectives for the development of culture policies. Designing such policies requires a set of conditions, capacities and local partnerships in place. The project enabled us to identify further areas of work, sourced from participants in the project.

These learning needs deal with a wide range of challenges and policy areas, which shows how far-reaching culture actually is across European local authorities. There is a high demand from cities and regions to further learn about:

### **New partnerships: cities working as facilitators**

Working with CCIs at local and regional level implies setting up the right partnerships in a meaningful way for both public authorities and their partners. Throughout the project we found out some actions proved especially challenging:

- Developing new partnerships, cross-sectoral work and strong stakeholders' relationships;
- Partnerships between culture and education, nourishing creativity and retaining talent;
- Improving connections between cultural organisations, including museums.

### **Culture as a tool for social inclusion**

*“My creative city of the future doesn't only bring culture to neighbourhoods, but helps local communities to bring the culture there by themselves. We saw both of these aspects developed well in Birmingham, where Tampere was inspired to use events to bring people together.” Jaakko Laurila, City of Tampere*

Social cohesion objectives and ensuring that culture is made accessible to the greatest number are becoming priorities. Cities and regions are clearly aware and working actively on this. Future peer-learning schemes would be helpful to:

- Foster social inclusion through culture, including newcomers (refugees);
- Attract new and more diverse audiences;
- Better work with local communities and residents, increasing participation, bringing culture outside city centres (including in 'difficult areas'), guiding people to culture.

### **Co-creation - reaching out to citizens**

Looking beyond the buzzword that 'co-creation' is becoming, cities and regions are the best

placed to deliver co-creation approaches. We are looking at 'Cities as a service' aiming to work for its citizens, with its citizens. It is a way to 1) make city policies more fitted to the actual needs of inhabitants; 2) prototype projects and test ideas with citizens, thus avoiding heavy expenses and tailoring policy delivery. This however implies:

- Developing ownership and participatory approaches to culture-led development: co-design of cultural agendas;
- Identifying the right tools and methodologies to involve citizens;
- Ensuring the right stakeholders are involved and stay involved - managing expectations and ensuring opinions are properly accounted for in policy-design.

## **Make the most of financial and non-financial resources**

Financial resources for culture have significantly slimmed down over the past few years at all levels. For many cities and regions, sustaining their cultural programming and overall policies implied looking at alternative sources of funding and rethinking the way they deliver cultural policies:

- Diversifying funding for culture, working with private stakeholders and developing relevant match-funding schemes, as in the example of Sofia, which doubles private funding for innovative cultural projects;
- Providing non-financial support to the cultural and creative sectors;
- Low budgets - smart actions such as the Incredibol! programme in Bologna, which inspired the KRACH programme in Chemnitz.

## **Creative uses for heritage and mixed spaces**

- New uses and temporary uses of buildings, economic diversification and regeneration through heritage;
- Third spaces as linking pins, connecting bottom-up initiatives with decision-makers;
- Importance of flexibility and openness in spaces to allow for the diversity of roles that cultural workers are taking on in city life today;
- Conversely cultural operators are taking up an increasingly important role in terms of social cohesion and economic development activities. Gradually, museums, libraries and cultural centres are turning into mixed spaces enabling meetings, experimentations and prototyping of projects and activities. This involves artists and cultural workers, but also connects with the wider socio-economic fabric of the city.

## **Evidence - measuring impacts**

- Evidence and demonstration: collecting impacts to inform policy making, and implementing evaluation methodologies;
- Cities mainly collect quantitative impacts, we should collect more personal stories

and experiences.

## Vision and political support

- Convincing politicians that investing in culture is smart;
- Mainstreaming culture across policy areas and setting a bold vision for culture;
- Designing long-term strategies while accommodating sufficient flexibility to adapt to changes and evolving demand.

## Creative Spillover

There is still little funding earmarked to tests and pilot projects to stimulate spillover effects of the cultural and creative sectors. This may be due to different factors to work on in the future:

- Targeted financial support towards CCIs is still low;
- Significant human resources are invested in a small number of major organisations and institutions or in managing existing demand for cultural development services;
- The involvement of the economic department in CCIs policies is not systematic, although more and more local authorities develop transversal working groups or task forces (e.g. in Helsinki-Espoo, in Chemnitz, Bologna or Dortmund). This can be due to the different levels of governance involved in CCI policies. For example, culture can be managed at city level, while economic policies would be designed and implemented at metropolitan or regional levels.

**In light of these needs, we identified possible themes for future peer-learning activities:**

- The cultural and creative spaces of the future:
  - New roles played by public libraries;
  - Roles of city museums and ‘museums beyond the walls’;
  - Role of third spaces in cities - how to embed flexibility into spaces in keeping with public policy objectives.
- A ‘culture for all’ perspective - how to develop the right partnerships between cities, cultural operators and citizens. ‘Culture on your doorstep’ by Birmingham and now in Brighton is a great example of how leading cultural organisations can take up responsibilities in the social field and step beyond their initial responsibilities and (physical) remit.

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## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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### Conclusion and next steps



The Culture for Cities and Regions initiative is a great example of the added value of EU funding. Such peer-learning processes are very difficult to implement without it - at least at such a scale - and it allows for the involvement of a high number of professionals working in the field of culture and creative industries at local level. Sustaining and strengthening this component of the initiative over the long run would certainly contribute to delivering greater social, economic and cultural impacts across Europe in a cost-effective way. Some very interesting examples took place already within Culture for Cities and Regions, with some participants transferring an initiative from study visits in their home city.

As the peer-learning activities have proven to be very successful, more peer-to-peer activities (such as study visits and coaching visits) should be organised and/or encouraged in future initiatives. Peer-learning activities facilitate the exchange of experience between cities and regions, and strengthen cooperation on cultural policies. This exchange also leads to long lasting relationships between cities and regions. Additional activities could include: training for cities and regions experts, i.e. capacity building workshops, development of shared practical tools (e.g. toolkits & guidelines with practical advice), and networking events for cities' and regions' politicians. The demand from local practitioners is already there and should be strengthened, as proven by the number of applications cities and regions sent to participate in Culture for Cities and Regions peer-learning activities.

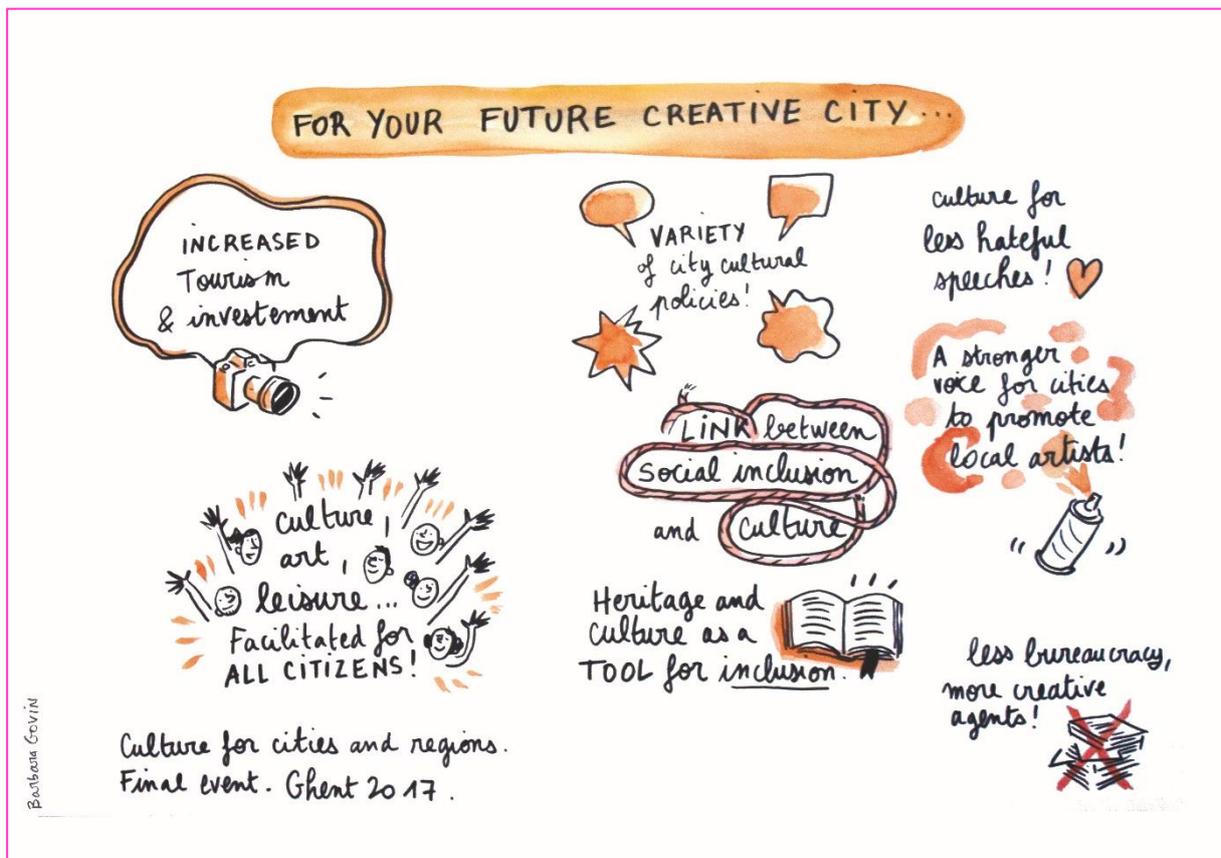
The tools developed during Culture for Cities and Regions (templates, coaching methodology, etc.) should continue to be used, promoted and updated. For instance, the Culture for Cities and Regions website could be updated and transformed into a general tool to update cities and regions about local and European cultural policy making.

## Recommendations: investing in culture locally now and for the future

After this three-year experience, and stemming from the sharing activities, we would like to make recommendations for the future to make cultural investment work in cities, with cities.

The general perception is still that investment in culture is inherently risky. Sometimes it may be from the citizens' point of view (the image of culture as spending for the elites), as well as from policy-makers.

The project demonstrated that culture investment is not more risky than other investment and has built ample evidence that it pays off.



This section outlines some guidance to make it work and support modern cultural policies. This involves mainstreaming culture in other policy areas and economic activities such as social cohesion and innovation:

- **Set out a bold vision for culture in your city**

Local authorities should be bold in entrusting the culture and creative sectors to champion initiatives across the city. This means 'letting go' of what used to be implemented by the city administration and moving to a partnership mindset, where the city acts as a trusted partner and facilitator.

It also means that cross-fertilisation experimentation is encouraged and innovative ideas are valued. It is about setting a vision for a city where all forms of creativity and innovation are mobilised to tackle today's and tomorrow's challenges, a "ville des possibles" which empowers cultural workers and creative initiatives.

- **Understand your cultural resources**

Cultural resources go far beyond the traditional understanding of tourism and art management and deliver on broader policy objectives.

Achieving this, however, requires breaking down boundaries to facilitate day to day work: the cultural and creative sector (CCS) is not 'owned' by any particular city service - flexibility should prevail to enable the right support at the right moment. Seamless cooperation between services based on openness, complementary skills and availability of resources should enable the city to work more easily with cultural and creative stakeholders - this also provides clearer communication channels and interlocutors for the CCS, thus facilitating federation of the sector locally.

- **Value your cultural workers**

The greater understanding of the value of arts and culture for our society can come at a price, and there is a threat of instrumentalising cultural workers to deliver on social cohesion objectives. Cultural workers are artists and creative talents, they are not social workers, and this should be clearly understood when designing policies and programmes. This also means that investing in culture should not come as a systematic trade-off for additional social and economic impacts.

- **Think in terms of innovation (R&D&I) for culture**

Investment in culture is still very small compared to investment in other sectors, and especially when compared to innovation programmes. Cities, regions and other authorities should open new avenues for funding and invest in experimentation. Shifting perspectives on culture investment is urgent as well as developing a clear vision of what R&D&I is for arts and culture.

Taking risks in cultural policies should thus involve cultural investment and funding for the CCS. Public funding should work as an incentive to research & innovation in arts and culture, and test new solutions, for example in mixing arts, science and digital innovation. Creative Wallonia engine is also an interesting example for creative business support, as it develops highly flexible and responsive financing for CCIs to match support with the actual development of the creative business.

- **Help cultural workers to get organised locally**

The cultural and creative sectors are delivering a broad range of impacts, yet their

involvement in the decision-making processes and consultation is still very low. Improving the representation of the sector should be a priority at local level to enable robust partnerships and trust between the sector and local authorities.

Creative SMEs are also not sufficiently represented in the decision process relevant to entrepreneurship or innovation policies and programmes. Cities should encourage the CCS to find new models of co-operation to overcome the smallness of most entities, by facilitating structuring of local networks and by building collective representation through sector associations when relevant.

- **Encourage accidental encounters for innovation in the CCS**

Today, interdisciplinary collaboration is instrumental in enabling innovative approaches and solutions. Local authorities should set up networking opportunities (matchmaking, training session, conferences, workshops, cultural cafés, etc.) that facilitate the exchange of information, knowledge and ideas between various actors, entities and disciplines by favouring an environment of sociability and conviviality. Dedicated places are also key for people to work on joint projects, collaborate and share equipment (co-working spaces, hubs, innovative cultural infrastructures and spaces, clusters, incubators, etc.);

Financial incentives can also be geared towards facilitating such encounters by:

- Reviewing public procurement documentation to integrate CCIs and smaller structures;
- Reviewing the ‘mandate’ of clusters to encourage inter-clustering - inter-clustering is promising between CCIs and ICT or health sectors for example;
- Making public subsidies dependent on minimum interaction efforts with urban or economic projects;
- Providing grants through calls for projects embodying interdisciplinary skills;
- Establishing innovation vouchers, namely small grants to encourage companies to access creative services (design, advertising, artistic intervention etc.).

- **Identify ‘linking pins’ or ‘creative mediators’**

‘Creative mediators’ are intermediaries, brokers between creative people and professionals from other disciplines, not necessarily related to CCIs. They are people able to work across disciplines with an open mind, people that bring their knowledge of a sector (often culture) into another area.

Creative mediators can be civil servants, social workers, entrepreneurs, associations, large or small companies, universities, artists, designers or politicians. From an employment perspective, they may be project managers, assisting the transformation of urban areas, the emergence of multidisciplinary spaces or the development of new business activities and services, or of innovation capacity. Importantly, disruptive connectors can also be found in city administration.

Their function is to trigger new processes and projects that facilitate fruitful interactions between disciplines, departments or people, thus enabling economic and social innovation. Disruptive Connectors play a key role in the process as they instil new ideas in organisations and provoke a disruptive influence on traditional and routine thinking.

- **Monitor and evaluate: document impacts of culture on the wider society and economy.**

The evaluation of culture policies is a way to justify cultural investment despite budget cuts and is especially useful for policy-makers as they need to allocate priorities and funding in a context of reduced public spending. Robust evaluation can also help in raising additional funding from third parties (private sponsors), and is fundamental to improving programmes and projects over the long run. Ideally, regular feedback should be built into the policies and programmes to ensure the right data is collected from the get-go, and complemented with punctual external evaluations.

The overarching objective should be to demonstrate long-term effects through improved policies and programmes.

## Local actions, better future - the legacy of Culture for Cities and Regions

Cities should be places of equal opportunities for all, of dialogue and co-creation with citizens, with a good quality of life and high standard of services. To deliver this, local and regional leaders are committed to continuing efforts to become more resource efficient, more resilient, more inclusive and to work with citizens to understand their needs and deliver innovative solutions to local challenges.

The number of applications we have received from cities to participate in the Culture for Cities and Regions initiative clearly shows that cities need European peer learning schemes. Such programmes allow cities to develop and grow and it is important that they continue to learn from each other in the future.

*“There is a need for us all to continue to work together in challenging times. We do not know what is around the corner but by learning, sharing and networking, under the umbrella of a long-term Culture for Cities and Regions programme, we can face issues head on and plan for a brighter cultural future.”*  
Ian Ward, City of Birmingham