International colloquium

Culture for the Future

Creativity, Innovation and Dialogue for Inclusive Development

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Working paper on cross-cutting topic – "Let the kids to do it differently". Cities, youth and creativity

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Executive Summary

Cultural policy, especially regarding youth and urban challenges, has long been an instrument of maintaining tradition and defining heritage as immutable. This inflexibility is prominent even where economic and governance reforms have already taken place, despite other significant advances in rights and responsibilities of *citizenship*.

Youth policy is a priority sector. By definition, young people are the inhabitants of the world we leave behind and the major transformative force for the future. We need to explore how to empower them to create structures which are aligned with their own aspirations and ways of collaborating. Youth are often the generators of both commercial and non-commercial innovation, in particular in cultural and creative industries. They are also the best equipped to manage the digital revolution, and all development policies should rely on its immense potential. Young culture operators, however, suffer particularly from the lack of suitable funding mechanisms, difficult access to market and limited mobility and need tailored financial support, guidance and capacity building to start their professional path.

Experiments in the cultural arena, in both "developed" and "developing" countries, can contribute greatly to generating flexible solutions, greater transparency, increased respect for human rights, intercultural awareness and effective, environmentally sustainable solutions.

In generating <u>all</u> public policy (including development funds), a useful tool would be a structure for making a *cultural impact analysis*, taking into account shifting demographics (age, migration, gender) and creating conditions for vibrant exchange between people.

Cities are the ideal platforms for such a social/cultural experimentation. They are a key driver of the cultural and creative economy as the space where artists meet and create, the marketplace for artistic productions, and the place where artistic talents can work in enterprises, multimedia, higher education. Within the current process of urbanisation worldwide, culture is an essential factor in addressing cities as creative and aggregating spaces essential for the development of social innovative clusters and the strengthening of social cohesion.

1. Context and background

The cultural factor proves itself increasingly to be a necessity, no longer a luxury. All future social/political strategies rooted in sustainability will need to be reinforced by a seismic shift of thinking, both individually and collectively. From passive consumer to pro-active citizen. This change can be facilitated by effective cultural action, including education and increased creative participation.

We must imagine a large-scale change in attitudes and traditions, moving towards cooperative, small-scale initiatives in functional networks or clusters. We face globally two immediate tendencies: **fragmentation** (nationalism, populism, fundamentalism) and **environmental threats** (climate change, oil dependency). These tendencies are inter-connected, on a global scale, as many peace and justice organizations confirm.

How can we increase the fluidity of "multiple" identities, where trans-national citizenship and local belonging co-exist, a kind of inter/local agreement?

Three interwoven threads are implied in this sub-topic: **Youth**, **Urbanism** and **Creativity**, all essential to societal development.

The Youth thread represents **hope**. It is rooted in an optimism for a future, no matter how damaged such a mission seems in contemporary society. Essential elements in any long-term cultural policy: to empower, to trust and to follow initiatives made by young people that affect their own future.

The Urban thread represents **place**. An increasingly nomadic lifestyle, climate-change motivated emigration, employment policies and social security systems all contribute to an increasing urbanization and mobility of our societies, both "developed" and "developing". Cities are a place of exchange and the right infrastructures – including cultural ones – can foster participation and inclusive citizenship

The Creativity thread represents **action**, based in concrete policies. Other measurements than purely economic should be taken into account. Often the results we strive for are essential, although not directly profitable. The most appropriate responses are found in a creative environment.

2. <u>Core challenges and opportunities</u>

One of the major challenges for humanity in the near future will be *our capacity to act cooperatively and across national borders*. This requires new forms of leadership and decision-making, at both the local and the trans-national levels.

2.1 Youth, a driving force for the future

Youth are inarguably the future everywhere. They will quite naturally "inherit the Earth", and are the major transformative force for the future. How can we include young people in true decision-making rather than simply training them in "how things work"?

There are at least three concrete ways for cultural empowerment of young people to take place:

1) Integrating culture and arts, including digital aspects, in education curricula
2) Direct, own experience with self-management (economic, creative, structural)
3) Engagement in political processes and/or conflicts, through organized resistance (squats, culture in public space, street arts, spontaneous festivals, hackathons)

Youth <u>and</u> Topic 1: *Culture and cultural industries: new opportunities for job creation and inclusiveness*

Youth are often the generators of both commercial and non-commercial innovation, simply because they tend to "disrespect" existing processes. But sometimes the recognition and appreciation for arts and cultural heritage are limited and are on the verge of not being transmitted to the next generation.

The cultural and creative industries, profitable or not, are generators of action, criticism and courage. Cultural policies that advocate for youth- and artist-led initiatives create conditions for new democratic formats, resilient entrepreneurs and community activism, all at the same time. Yet the precariousness of revenues in the cultural and creative industries can be a barrier for some young people and can reduce the diversity of the sector.

Youth and Topic 2: *The challenge of financing*

Young cultural entrepreneurs suffer particularly from the lack of suitable funding mechanisms to start their activities. This is due to adverse economic conditions, insufficient management capacities and weak professional track record preventing them to offer all the necessary guarantees to donors and investors. Public policies and private initiative should include funding - but also appropriate capacity building and accompanying measures - to support startup and early growth stages for emerging cultural enterprises.

But youth is also directly impacted by the public policies in the fields of culture and education. Culture is often delegated a small part of public resources and budgets. It has far too long been seen as something marginal, "icing on the cake". In most local and even national governments the percentage of the public budgets dedicated to culture is 1% or less.The budgets for education (schools, youth programs, universities) are often much bigger, a response to citizen awareness about the necessity of preparing future generations. It would naturally be beneficial to coordinate investments in cultural empowerment and in education. This would also greatly increase the flexibility of devising and financing new forms of learning (informal, non-formal).

Youth and Topic 3: A*ccess to markets and mobility of artists*

There are a number of obstacles that should be eliminated in order to ease the mobility and exchange between artists, young artists, and young people on a transnational basis.

Globally, the issues of visas and work permits that allow a free flow of cultural experiences must be addressed. Too often, important bridges between youth cultures from diverse countries are obstructed, due to the difficulties of crossing borders, especially between

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Europe and developing countries. Large-scale public investments, like Erasmus+ and Creative Europe at EU/DGEAC, stimulate mobility and a certain *intellectual nomadism*, especially as universities increasingly harmonize and share competences and experiences. This multiplies opportunities for people to become multi-lingual and intercultural– but also for tensions and need to be accompanied to ensure enriching experiences..

Global exploitation of talent and creative products from different parts of the world is an ongoing challenge and there is not enough dissemination across borders and linguistic groups. What kind of structures should be created (artist-led cooperatives, transnational networks, digital platforms) to return control and market access to the creative sectors? This requires a serious investment in empowerment of creative industries, owned and led by local organizations and companies. What can EU initiatives do to provide assistance and capacity building?

Youth <u>and</u> Topic 4: *Digital revolution: impact and opportunities*

Another major challenge is *re-negotiating our collective identity* in the face of digital exploitation. Our values are manipulated, simplified and distilled into algorithms. Until now the digital revolution has mostly been used to <u>increase</u> consumption. More channels, more platforms, more sub-circles, direct access. Is it true that "consumption of culture" is an accurate measurement of increased creativity?

Can we imagine new ways to develop and use digital tools for direct, participatory and inter-active encounters? What kinds of policy could generate and sustain such applications? How do we (in)form structures that encourage participation?

Youth are naturally equipped to manage the digital revolution. What kinds of cultural policy benchmarks could generate self-management and direct encounter with problems to be resolved? When are we facilitating new approaches and when are we getting in the way?

Examples:

SMart - freelancers cooperative, spread throughout Europe, initiated in Belgium

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https://smartbe.be/en/

Culture and Creative Sector Guarantee Facility

https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/creative-europe/cross-sector/guarantee-facility_en

2.2 Urban spaces, cityscapes, citizenship

Urban spaces and cities represent the setting in which young people live, create, innovate, exchange, criticize, disrupt. In cities different generations meet – and different cultures and languages as well.

The world is made up of neighbourhoods. The larger our overview, the more important our local environment becomes.

Some of the issues that are cross-cutting between cultural/creative industries and urban re-invention: public transport, communication access, education, health care, childcare, elderly care, integration.

Public Spaces and cultural spaces

Architectural innovation, cultural re-cycling of old buildings, co-design/citizen design and other approaches have put focus on public space in both historical neighbourhoods and newly constructed housing districts. The privatisation of public space, restriction of both passage and gathering, is a negative tendency and hampers exchange between diverse groups. The privatization of public space and economic/ethnic segregation in housing districts are trends which delegate a clear role to public policy and the capacity to produce creative hubs for citizens in their home/work environments.

Much youth co-creation takes place in public spaces and changes the urban landscape. Cultural action changed the cityscape drastically through squats, gentrification, subsequent housing prices and business environments. Are there constructive ways to encourage street arts and community design, both respecting and advancing heritage? What is the connection

between youth-driven activism and urban re-invention? Where are examples of bottom-up regeneration?

What cultural structures/spaces are needed?
- small/flexible/multiple/multifunctional?
- large/fully competent/few/uni- or multifunctional (contemporary institutions)?

Capitals of Culture.

Some of the most influential flagships of the EU are the European Capitals of Culture projects, presently two cities each year, with a non-EU third country added each three years. During the initiative's nearly 35 years history, it has evolved from a purely branding exercise to a serious approach to culture on a broad and local scale, with matching international dimensions. With greater or lesser success, over 60 European cities have taken the voyage of forming an urban cultural strategy, over a long period of time, with multiple interest groups. The idea of "cultural capitals" has spread to other continents, with other criteria. Mutual learning – including via twinning – from cultural capitals and creative cities in different countries can lead to innovation. But there is often a radical questioning of present cultural policy, a great involvement of young people and multiple voices finding expression from the community.

How can large-scale manifestations of this kind contribute to stimulating cultural participation and increased creativity? Other formats that might be more effective? Global co-production/exchange?

Examples:
Rijeka 2020 (Croatia)

https://rijeka2020.eu/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/ri2020-eng-web.pdf

Timisoara 2021 (Romania)

https://www.capitalaculturala2021.ro/Files/bidbook/Timisoara/BidbookTM2021_EN_digital-2.pdf

Matera 2019 (Italy)

https://www.matera-basilicata2019.it/en/matera-2019/bid-book.html

Citizens and cultural leadership

To meet the great challenges ahead, we need to cultivate <u>creative</u>, <u>adaptable</u> and <u>inventive</u> citizens. This requires a cultural/social policy of inclusion, combined with flexible management, great transparency and a high tolerance for criticism/controversy.

Can Arts/Culture contribute? Culture has always been a collective activity, requiring cooperation and shared narratives. Often the most important changes run counter to existing norms. This has been proven often in the power of creative industries, lifestyle initiatives and small scale start-ups, which begin by challenging the status quo. They can afford to do so because of the small and flexible scale of their enterprises.

What new cultural leadership structures are needed? How can they be tested?

Migration.

Migration to European cities as well as from the rural countryside to urban settings has transformed the cities into laboratories of intercultural exchange. Demographic changes affect different neighbourhoods, in different ways. The production chain adapts, shifting local needs are met, traditions change. Most European cities are experiencing second and even third generation migration. This has generated an intercultural context as never before, as more flexible definitions of *citizenship* are discovered. Cities become both repositories of cultural heritage and memory and a space for exchange.

Conflict resolution.

"Cultures do not dialogue with each other. They compete, clash, fight, interact and mutually influence each other." - Dr. Dragan Klaic (1951-2011)

Can Arts/Culture resolve conflict or stop violence? Probably not. But they have both a preventative and healing capacity, both of which must be parts of any urban political strategy.

Culture and Development

Whose culture? The greatest challenge is to generate self-management and regional, trans-national exchange between so called developing countries. European competence is useful. When does it become an obstacle?

How can cultural exchange be done with humility and mutual respect, without threatening values that are non-negotiable?

> *Example:*
> **SELAM** - initiative begun in Sweden, now spread to different African countries, including Ethiopia, Gambia, Tanzania and Zambia, often in cooperation with SIDA.
> http://selam.se/eng/projects

Capacity - Cultural Impact Analysis.

As societies develop economically and technologically, they also create formats for analysing the impact of their initiatives. No larger scale investments are made today without an *economic* or *environmental impact analysis* helping to set parameters. Can we imagine a similar approach to predict the impacts of cultural or other public policies on quality of life?

Intercultural competence.

Increased migration and economic globalization put great demands on the capacity of a society to absorb new impulses, be transformed and to sustain a sense of local belonging at the same time. What kind of initiatives increase and sensitise the intercultural competence of

a population? What role does multilingualism play in future cultural relations? What is cultural diplomacy?

Production/Co-production.
"The first world has the technology. The third world has the stories." Supposedly a quote from Jean Luc-Godard about the difficulties of making good film in an unjust world. But it implies a need for collaboration and co-production to cross the gaps and find fruitful

3. <u>Ideas and recommendations for the Future</u>

A few of the concrete mechanisms that can be defined and supported with progressive public policy:

Inclusive spaces. Multi-functional cultural spaces. In every neighbourhood. Intergenerational, interdisciplinary, intercultural.

Improved and increased **public space**, formed architecturally and culturally, providing opportunities for meaningful and live encounters between people.

Resource centres. Gathering production resources and information and making it available to a wider group of cultural participants (artist-led, community-initiated or amateur cultural activities). Technical and communication tools available for many. Also online platforms can serve this purpose.

Incubators/**StartUp Clusters**/Co-working spaces. There is a great need for <u>low-cost/no-cost</u> space, especially for young creators and innovators. A critical mass of potential users is reached in all urban centres. Such hubs can be self-managed or public structures but they must be complete with adequate technology and support, to guarantee a certain continuity without institutionalization.

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Dedicated funding for youth, supporting the development of their talents and cultural products and exchanges between youth of different cultures and countries. Foresee accompanying and capacity building measures for young cultural entrepreneurs.

Promote artistic and cultural exchange and cooperation between cities and local authorities in Europe and their counterparts in the world. A first group of interested cities or local authorities could be selected, in particular those that have a proven track record of turning culture and arts into a viable economic sector. Twinning could be a tool.

Strengthen the participation of cultural and creative actors in the governance of cities and adopt multi-actor and participatory processes.

Please add in annex a short bibliography with the main publications and weblinks.

1. *Dragan Klaic, THE MOBILITY OF IMAGINATION*

https://epdf.tips/mobility-of-imagination.html

2. *Bid Books for European Capitals of Culture:*

https://rijeka2020.eu/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/ri2020-eng-web.pdf

https://www.capitalaculturala2021.ro/Files/bidbook/Timisoara/BidbookTM2021_EN_digital-2.pdf

https://www.matera-basilicata2019.it/en/matera-2019/bid-book.html

3. *Can we measure culture in cities?*

https://economiststalkart.org/2019/05/07/can-we-measure-culture-in-cities/

Topic 1: *Culture and cultural industries: new opportunities for job creation and inclus*

Topic 2: *The challenge of financing*

Topic 3: *Access to markets and mobility of artists*

Topic 4: *Digital revolution: impact and opportunities*

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