Cultural indicators and
Agenda 21 for culture

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Working Group on Culture of UCLG

culture 21
Agenda 21 for culture

1. Introduction

In article 49, the Agenda 21 for culture states its recommendation to « Fulfil, before 2006, a proposal for a system of cultural indicators that support the deployment of this Agenda 21 for culture, including methods to facilitate monitoring and comparability ». In its Programme for 2005-2007, the members of United Cities and Local Governments' Working Group on Culture committed themselves to the development of this proposal.

2. Cultural Indicators

The work to be carried out on local cultural indicators is a fragmented field and lacks consensus. However, its development is essential in order to ensure that culture is consolidated as one of the pillars of development. During the last few years, interest in cultural indicators has grown, and several reports on this subject have been written and published.

On an international level, the report carried out in 2004 by the International Federation of Arts Councils and Culture Agencies - IFACCA **(www.ifacca.org**) is of great importance; its two main conclusions refer to analytical and coordination issues:[1]

- With reference to analytical issues, the report states that "Cultural indicators, as with other social indicators, are still largely under development, particularly in their relevance to policymaking and program delivery. There are therefore reasons to be wary of cultural indicator frameworks that have been developed to date. Common analytical problems include": "Confusion about what indicators are and how they should be", "Lack of quality data", "Frameworks are unwieldy", and "Policy objectives are vague".
- With reference to coordination issues, the report states that "[t]here appears to be little contact between agencies that are currently developing cultural indicators. Two key problems that might be mitigated by better sharing and coordination are": "Multiplicity of work" and "Differences in approach".

Also on a global scale, it is important to highlight the work carried out on the project « Eurocult 21 »,[2] in the Eurocities Culture Forum, the European network of large cities. This project analysed quantitative and qualitative information relative to the cultural policies of various European cities during 2002-2005.

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[1] International Federation of Arts Councils and Culture Agencies (IFACCA); 2005; *Statistical Indicators for Arts Policy*, IFACCA, D'Art Report number 18, Sydney, **http://www.ifacca.org/ifacca2/en/organisation/page09_BrowseDart.asp.**

[2] The three publications of Eurocult21 may be downloaded from the website **www.eurocult21.org.**

The research and development of local cultural indicators is an urgent task which must find its place in the international networks of cities. The role that the United Cities and Local Governments' Working Group on Culture can play is important, not the least by connecting existing initiatives, cooperating with national proposals and promoting the relevance of certain subjects which associate culture with the city, and which are not always visible to the national or international organisations which deal with cultural indicators.

3. Proposal of a framework

Taking into account the current fragmented situation in the field of cultural indicators, and also the need to advance with caution and consensus, this document does not propose a list of local cultural indicators. More years of work will probably be needed in order to achieve a solid proposal on this subject.

This document does, however, suggest a framework to explain local cultural policies. This framework may help cities and local governments to clarify the conceptual bases of cultural policies, and become a first step from which to progress towards local cultural indicators. It could also be considered a framework of qualitative indicators on cultural policies and a framework for cities and local governments to "self-evaluate" local cultural policies.

The proposal of a framework is divided in two parts; the first is dedicated to the explanation of local cultural policies (annex 1), and the second to the explanation of a project or case study (annex 2).

UCLG's Working Group on Culture invites those cities and local governments wishing to answer this framework to contact agenda21cultura@bcn.cat or info@cities-localgovernments.org.

Annex 1

EXPLANATION OF A LOCAL CULTURAL POLICY

The explanation of local cultural policies can be made from very different prisms. It is always difficult to balance the need to classify a series of initiatives / strategies and not lose a sense of a whole (in this case, the local cultural policy). The following paragraphs are based on Agenda 21 for culture and aim to help cities and local governments to clarify the conceptual bases of cultural policies. It could also be considered a framework of qualitative indicators on cultural policies and a framework for cities and local governments to "self-evaluate" local cultural policies.

Basic information on the local government

1. Description of municipality: location, population and other contextual information.
2. Description of municipality: organisational structure and budget (%) for culture.

Cultural infrastructure and cultural practices

3. Definition of culture and cultural diversity / identity
4. Diversity of cultural supply. Cultural facilities and events
5. Audiences and users
6. Policies, programmes and projects to promote citizen participation in culture

Culture and social inclusion

7. Policies, programmes and projects on culture and education
8. Policies, programmes and projects on culture and equality of opportunities
9. Policies, programmes and projects on gender equality
10. Policies, programmes and projects to promote the role of civil society in cultural life

Culture, territory and public areas

11. Policies, programmes and projects on culture and urban planning / urban regeneration

12. Use of public spaces for cultural projects
13. Territorial balance of the cultural supply in the city

Culture and economy

14. Policies, programmes and projects which associate culture, creative industries and economic development
15. Information and analysis of cultural employment
16. Diversity of economic and financial instruments in support of culture
17. Policies, programmes and projects on culture, local media and information and communication technologies (ICT)

Governance of cultural policies

18. Recognition and implementation of cultural rights at a local level
19. Adoption of Agenda 21 for culture
20. Municipal department(s) with responsibilities in culture
21. Competencies in culture of local government, derived from national or regional legislation. Other fields covered by the cultural administration
22. Existence of a formulated local cultural strategy. Mission and objectives
23. Existence of participative structures, such as a culture council
24. Evaluation of cultural policies. Use of statistics and cultural indicators
25. Current cultural policy debate issues
26. Presence of culture in local plans / local development strategies
27. Participation of local government in the definition of provincial / state / country cultural policies
28. Participation of local government in international networks and international cultural cooperation projects

Annex 2

EXPLANATION OF A CASE STUDY

A case study is a project or programme which a city selects as an example of its cultural policy. A case study may be a project run by the public administration, a private agent or an NGO. To facilitate the elaboration of the case study, the following structure is recommended:

1. Title of the project
2. Context : Baseline situation, problems to be addressed, foreseen difficulties
3. Content : Actions implemented.
4. Management : Direction, leadership, partnerships, time-scale, resources, budget.
5. Sustainability. Evaluation of the project. Conditions to be adapted by other cities.
6. More information : document, book, website.
7. Contact person

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