

FINAL REPORT LISBON

CATHERINE CULLEN
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culture 21
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Today, Lisbon is recognized as one of the most dynamic, attractive cities in Europe, and if its reputation largely rests on its tangible and intangible heritage, Lisbon is also a city of contemporary creativity, of multi-level exchanges between cultures and spaces, of innovation in cultural educational and participatory processes, and of experimentation in the creative economy. As a participant in the Pilot Cities Europe programme of the UCLG Committee on Culture and Culture Action Europe, Lisbon did remarkable work in its implementation of specific projects in the field of culture and sustainable development, and has become a Co-President of the UCLG Culture Committee. Since 2016, combining the work on a new, all embracing cultural strategy with its involvement in Agenda 21 for culture, the City has developed strong cultural policies for an ever more open, more transversal and more sustainable culture.

This report has been written by Catherine Cullen, the expert appointed by the UCLG Committee on Culture and Culture Action Europe to work with Lisbon as a Pilot City, following the completion of the work programme.

FINAL
REPORT





LISBON PILOT CITY WORK PROGRAMME AND ITS IMPLEMENTATION

As part of its engagement in the Pilot City programme, Lisbon held its first public meeting and stakeholder workshop in March 2016 on the self-assessment of its cultural practices, resulting in the **Lisbon 'radar' diagram** that highlighted Lisbon's particular strengths and weaknesses. A group emanating from the initial workshop then worked on the **design of a work programme** for the following 2 years, comprising several Pilot Measures. Based on the results of the self-evaluation workshop, the group chose as a priority to address issues concerning governance of culture, culture and education, culture and economy, and culture, environment, social cohesion and urban planning.

Once the pilot measures had been set up and were in their implementation phase, the City turned to the 3rd Activity in the general programme of Pilot Cities, the peer-learning visits, consisting in visiting a city chosen because of its relevant cultural practices, and hosting the visit of another city (or cities) for the same reason. The City of Lisbon chose to **visit Buenos Aires**, Co-President of the UCLG Culture Committee, to familiarize itself with the good practices for which Buenos Aires is known as an Agenda 21 for Culture leading city. In turn, it received in September 2017 the **visit of several other Pilot Cities from Europe and Latin America**: Cuenca, Gabrovo, Izmir, Mérida, Rijeka, Swansea and Terrassa.

Lastly, in March 2019, to mark the completion of its fourth Pilot Measure, a social inclusion initiative around an urban planning project – on the square Rossio de Palma – Lisbon organized a public event on the square both to inaugurate the new space and to give a public conclusion to its Pilot City programme.



DESCRIPTION OF PILOT MEASURES

A. CULTURE AND EDUCATION THE MARVILA LIBRARY, A 'CATALYST FOR CHANGE'

A major new cultural infrastructure inaugurated in 2016, the Marvila library is an ambitious, transformative project located on a divided territory with significant geographical and socio-economic barriers. The emergence of an emblematic local landmark intended both as a 'cultural home' for the surrounding communities and an innovative space for all the inhabitants of Lisbon, highlights the City's engagement in inclusion policies aimed at social territorial cohesion, participatory governance and lifelong learning. Besides a well thought out lending library, the building includes an auditorium, digital facilities, a café with a community kitchen, and houses several long-term projects. Firstly, a learning centre proposing the promotion of literacy and other artistic practices. Secondly, a social centre where members of the different communities have been working together on such topics as the improvement of street lightning, the establishment of a Human Library, community memory projects, etc. Thirdly, a cultural hub with a dynamic programme including an international Capoeira Festival, Hip Hop and Cinema, Street Art and a Graffiti Festival, regular exhibitions in photography, design, painting and a whole range of events on performance arts, often linked to the rest of the city's cultural activities. As an economic enabler, Marvila also has a local cultural cluster, a gaming festival (the *Bibliogamers*), digital tools for job research, lifelong learning activities and it currently houses the ambitious European project ROCK on new ways of accessing and experiencing environmentally sustainable Cultural Heritage projects via living labs and bottom-up participation.

PILOT MEASURE: THE 'EMERGENT AND FAMILY LITERACY' PROJECT

This specific Pilot Measure on social inclusion through reading skills was chosen because of the unusually high illiteracy rate in the surrounding communities and the relatively high proportion of teenage parents. It is an innovative social and cultural development programme in which the City and its appointed team have invested much thought, time, and substantial financial means to make a difference in the illiteracy rate of the local communities. Thus, a dedicated team (2 reading mediators, 1 socio-cultural mediator, 1 psychologist, 1 piano player, 1 musicologist and 1 sound and video technician) works with families of adolescent parents with children aged from 9 months to 36 months to help them acquire reading skills, accompanied by music, dance, and theatre activities through regular sessions with families. One of the aims of the programme is to empower the parents to make their own selection of their children's literature. Other activities in the programme include 'reading awareness activities' (actions focused on storytelling



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for babies and their families), family reading (a loan programme offering children's literature, distributed in 'theme bags'), a book club (meetings and activities for families with specialists from different areas of literature), and, under development, an on-line service providing proposals of activities, helping parents to explore books 'reading bridges'.

The positive results evaluated so far include an increase in the children's concentration and attention to storytelling, the acquisition of reading habits, library attendance skills, and an improvement in the relationship with other children and adults. However, after the first year of experimentation, the team also realized that some of the families found it difficult to engage in the sessions, mainly because they did not consider reading as important for them or their children. In line with Agenda 21 for Culture's engagement in social and cultural innovation, the team came up with a solution to continue the programme with the families most in need of it from a literacy point of view, and they began to directly work with the child minders of a local charity day care centre, who see the children almost every day. This methodological shift is already making a significant difference to the success of the project, and the team now have to see how they can generalize the work carried out with the test group.

B. CULTURE AND ECONOMY

PILOT MEASURE: LOJA LISBOA CULTURA, A CULTURAL ASSISTANCE OFFICE

The Loja Lisboa Cultura is an original proposal by the Lisbon municipality to support artists by assisting them in their administrative tasks and obligations. Loja Lisboa Cultura is a free service providing specialized training and information to professional artists and cultural organizations. It is conveniently situated next to the Polo Cultural Gaivotas Centre run by the Lisbon Municipality and open to the Lisbon arts community– a place for artists to create, rehearse and reside during a project, providing them with rehearsal and work spaces, a restaurant, artists' residencies, a summer public arts programme (the Lusco-Fusco), as well as the Gaivotas em Marvila programme - showcasing new work developed at the Polo Gaivotas and presented at the Marvila Library.

The office provides a series of informative articles on administrative procedures on the Lojas Gaivotas website, personalized advice and information by telephone or by email, and one-to-one appointments for each artist or professional team. The range of advice and support and services offered by the office includes information on legal and administrative matters; social security issues; intellectual property; the tax system; labour issues; funding opportunities; formal requests for licensing (street events, etc.);



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E.U. forms for artists working abroad (the office is part of the European network 'On the move', tackling administrative challenges that artists and cultural professionals can face when working across borders – visas, social security, taxation, customs etc.).

So far, the office has been a great success. Beginning in June 2017 with 190 requests in six months, it ended the year of 2018 with 1093 requests. The programme is being carefully monitored by the team as to the artists' needs, presence at the office, and feedback. One tangible benefit has been a steady increase in comprehension, dialogue and trust between the artists concerned and the municipality. Following this initial success, the Loja Lisboa Cultura office is thinking of offering new services such as the diversification of its training sessions and the development of its consultancy on economic viability.

The office also aims to work in partnership with a regional cultural network, Artemrede (16 cities working together in and around Lisbon representing a population of 1 360 000 in a territory of 3500 km²), thus furthering the networking capacities of the local cultural sector and implementing the transversal axis of Lisbon's cultural policy.

C. GOVERNANCE OF CULTURE

PILOT MEASURE: AN AMBITIOUS CULTURAL STRATEGY, AWARENESS RAISING, A NEW CULTURAL GOVERNANCE FORUM

While cultural governance was among Lisbon's weaker points on the Culture 21 Actions 'radar', one of its first priorities was to integrate Agenda 21 for culture in its new cultural strategy. Today, the **Lisbon cultural strategy** is an extensive document including policies, measures, actions and monitoring. The work on the cultural strategy had already begun when the initial workshop on Agenda 21 for culture took place in March 2016, so the two were able to interact and make sense together, reinforcing a strong cultural vision, innovative good practices and a sustainable attitude to Lisbon's cultural development over the next years.

The second major initiative the City undertook on cultural governance was to make sure the information and implementation of Agenda 21 for culture, Culture 21 Actions, and the Pilot Measures were well understood and adopted both in their principle and in their practical applications by all those responsible for culture in the City. The City thus organized a specific workshop for the members of the cultural department and those working in culture across the city, involving them first-hand in the process of Agenda 21 for culture and Culture 21 Actions.

Thirdly, the City went one step further and decided to share the Culture 21 Actions process with Lisbon's 24 Boroughs, represented within the city's political life in a deliberative body,



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the Municipal Assembly, composed of the Presidents of all the boroughs as well as by of a number of directly elected deputies. So that both the Boroughs' political representatives and those responsible for culture and related topics would be able to fully understand the principles and applications of Agenda 21 for culture and Culture 21 Actions, and decide together on the implementation of different policies, the workshop was adapted to the boroughs' situation. The meeting of different members of the boroughs with political or technical responsibilities in the area of Culture was seen by all the participants as an unprecedented and highly positive initiative. As a next step, the participants suggested creating an informal working group that could meet regularly to discuss the questions and issues of the cultural life of their boroughs, and find new ways of cooperation and coordination between the City's Department of Culture and the Borough Councils.

Lastly, in a bid to further its engagement in cultural governance, the City is exploring possible models to establish in the near future a Culture Forum involving the whole of the cultural sector (and beyond) in a significant public participatory process including focus groups and mini-forums, thereby formalizing its cultural governance strategy.

D. CULTURE, SOCIAL INCLUSION, AND URBAN PLANNING PILOT MEASURE: 'A SQUARE IN EACH NEIGHBOURHOOD'

This Pilot Measure addresses first of all an important objective in the Agenda 21 for culture process, which is a municipality's capacity to work in a more transversal way, breaking out of the traditional 'silo' system. In this case, the urban planning and cultural departments worked hand in hand for the first time on the pilot project of an ambitious policy to establish 'a square in each neighbourhood'.

While the Urban Planning Department was in the process of implementing the rehabilitation of a public space, the Culture Department wished to develop its participatory policies in the area of urban renewal and social inclusion. Thus, they decided to work together through the commissioning of artists to bring a cultural dimension to the use of public space that would express what a specific square means to the local population.

CASE: THE ROSSIO DE PALMA SQUARE

Set in a popular neighbourhood where a village-style square and its surrounding houses are framed by high, modern buildings, the urban renewal plan involves both municipal housing and private properties, mostly owned by older inhabitants. It is situated next to Lisbon's important Catholic University and a well-known Lisbon sports centre. The idea was both to revitalize the living area by enabling the regular presence of different



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generations (such as through new ideas on student and tourist accommodations), to soften the original rehabilitation plan of the square through artistic interventions, and to bring culture and cultural activities to the area through participatory projects and events focused on the shared memories and living experiences of its inhabitants.

The project as a whole was managed by both the urban planning and the cultural teams of the city, the participatory project was monitored by an anthropologist, Ana Catarino (who regularly held one-to-one meetings with the inhabitants), and implemented by a sociologist, Sofia Tempero (who, every Friday morning for several months, would stand in the Square and wait for the inhabitants to bring her their souvenirs - stories, photos, objects and other memories of the neighbourhood).

Some of these photographs were then worked on by an artist, Camilla Watson, a British photographer, and inserted in the stone slabs of the Square where the inhabitants can see them every time they walk on the square and around it. At the same time, a group of architects from Colectivo Warehouse engaged the inhabitants in a well thought out participatory project involving building wooden stools (to take out and sit in the square together) that they then turned upside down to build a bridge structure under which they attached some of the old neighbourhood photos so everyone could enjoy them. Meanwhile, the City's video archives team collected films and photographic archives of the area along with new interviews of the inhabitants for a documentary on the history of the neighbourhood and its people. Lastly, a bibliobus started coming regularly to the square and offering library services to the neighbourhood.

From September 2018 until late March 2019, a series of meetings with the inhabitants revolved around the question 'What do we want to do with our square?', while cultural events were programmed in the neighbourhood every two months: the film 'Ruth' at the football club, a festive event to collect more stories, a 'Fado' night in a neighbourhood restaurant; finally, in March 2019, the wooden sculpture with its photo installation, the documentary, the photos, and a public celebration on the square Rossio de Palma. Many of the former and almost all the present inhabitants of the square were there, and extremely proud that attention was being paid to them and the square through an artistic reinterpretation of their shared memories.

Such a project turned around both the aesthetics of the square and the lives of its occupants in a profound way, the result of a determined policy and a strong investment in time, human resources and means. It will be interesting to see the square and its surroundings evolve in the next months as the City continues monitoring its renewal.



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LISBON'S ENGAGEMENT IN CULTURE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: THE NEXT STEPS

The Pilot Measures and the Pilot City programme having been well planned and developed can now lead to renewed projects regarding the long-term continuation of the City's engagement in Agenda 21 for culture. Three priorities can be singled out: the increasing role of culture in Lisbon's economic development, a reinforced cultural governance mechanism for the city, its artists, and its cultural life, and the continuation of its proximity policies involving town planning, urban space, social inclusiveness and culture.

SUSTAINABLE LOCAL ECONOMY

One of the sectors with the greatest potential for future growth in the city of Lisbon is that of its Creative Economy sector at the crossroads of economic, socio-cultural, digital and technological innovations driven by the City and a growing number of public and private actors.

The City of Lisbon needs to prioritise its policies on the role of culture in its economic development. The economic boom Lisbon has experienced in recent years due to tourism is not without its drawbacks, the City is aware of this and has put in place certain measures (for example, those safeguarding the historic shops sector), but it is important to continue exploring other ways of involving culture in economic development. Lisbon has invested over the last years in developing and facilitating important creative industry venues, hubs and spaces, both privately owned and in the public domain, such as the LX Factory, Polo Cultural Gaivotas, Mouraria Crafts market, the space Carpintarias de São Lázaro, and many more. Seeking new, transversal partnerships with innovators across the digital, co-working, co-making world as well as encouraging co-working practices in the different City departments could become a symbol of Lisbon's capacity to invest in sustainable policy innovation in the years to come.

In line with the objectives Agenda 21 for culture, it is impossible not to mention one of the most successful initiatives on the role of culture in sustainable economic development, the **Lisbon Sardines contest**. This world-known event attracting thousands of inhabitants from Lisbon and the rest of Portugal, as well as large numbers of participants from all over the world, is an outstanding example of how culture, economic development and social inclusion can go hand in hand. The aim of the contest is to submit an image of a sardine (in any format) around the time of the St Anthony Lisbon Sardine Festival in June and convene a jury to choose the best ones. Anyone can participate, the winners receive prizes (up to 2000euros) and 'their' sardine is often chosen for the following years' emblems of Lisbon sold in the souvenir and tourist shops. Thus, the contest promotes



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access and inclusion and has received submissions from imprisoned inmates, shelters, retirement homes, schools and special needs institutions, and on average, the majority (58%) of submissions are from women. The project has also produced remarkable outputs from amateur and professional creators, awarding them with a high level of local, national and international visibility, and has had a significant economic impact on the city. One of the outstanding examples on culture and economy in the UCLG Culture 'best practices' list, it illustrates a city's capacity to bring together initiatives across the board around key Agenda 21 for culture notions: economic development, participation, equality, inclusivity, and creativity.

GOVERNANCE OF CULTURE

The fact that Lisbon has chosen to invest in networks both within the city (the Boroughs workshop experience) and outside (extending the Loja Gaivotas office artistic offer of advice and training to the wider Artemrede network), and to develop co-working, shared spaces and more participatory projects, are all part of Lisbon's inclusive vision of cultural governance. What was needed was an overall governance initiative, which could be realized under the heading of a Lisbon Forum for Culture.

PROXIMITY POLICIES

The project 'A square in each neighbourhood' will continue to develop and reinvent itself in other neighbourhoods where public space is planned to be rehabilitated and will no doubt continue to be creative and sustainable. The City of Lisbon is once again showing the way for new thinking in the field of planning and social inclusion with innovative ideas and examples. We are looking forward to the next examples of how to tackle the question of creativity in the public space, citizen participation and social inclusion.

The Pilot City of Lisbon was launched and carried out so efficiently that it will be disseminating its experience for a long time to come, while its outcomes and future developments are already outlined and Lisbon becomes a Leading City in the Agenda 21 for culture global network.



CONTACT

For further information, please contact:



City of Lisbon

Email: alexandra.sabino@cm-lisboa.pt

Web: www.cm-lisboa.pt

Tw: @CamaraLisboa



United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) – Committee on Culture

Email: info@agenda21culture.net

Web: www.agenda21culture.net

Tw: @agenda21culture





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