



culture 21

UCLG Committee

PEER-LEARNING

LISBOA

CUENCA · IZMIR · GABROVO ·
MÉRIDA · RIJEKA · SWANSEA ·
TERRASSA

DECEMBER 2018



ACTIVITY

Peer-learning.

DATE

5-9 September 2017.

PLACE

Lisbon, Portugal

PEOPLE INVOLVED

PILOT CITIES

Andrea Malquin, International Projects Coordinator, Culture Secretariat, City of Cuenca

Aysel Özkan, Assistant Secretary General, City of Izmir

Gökçe Suvvari, Pilot Cities focal point / Project Manager, Izmir Mediterranean Academy, Izmir

Yonka Agalova, Pilot Cities focal point / Director, Tourism Office, Gabrovo City Council

Felipe Ahumada, Director for Culture, Mérida

Victor Hugo Poveda Lozano, Coordinator, Community Policies, Mérida

Irena Kregar Segota, Development and Strategic Partnerships Director, Rijeka 2020

Christopher Mellor, Strategy Manager, Arts, Culture and Creative Economy, City of Swansea

Pietat Hernández, Director for Culture, Terrassa

PILOT CITIES EXPERTS

Serhan Ada, Lecturer, Bilgi University, Istanbul / Expert, Agenda 21 for culture

Catherine Cullen, Special Advisor, UCLG Committee on Culture

/ Expert, Agenda 21 for culture

Antoine Guibert, Consultant / Expert, Agenda 21 for culture

LISBON PILOT CITY TEAM

Catarina Vaz Pinto, Deputy Mayor for Culture, Lisbon

Alexandra Sabino, Advisor to the Deputy Mayor for Culture, Lisbon

UCLG

Jordi Baltà, Advisor, Culture in Sustainable Cities, UCLG Committee on Culture

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CONTEXT

The **Pilot Cities Europe programme** is an initiative of the Committee on Culture of United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) and Culture Action Europe, which aims to foster peer-learning and capacity-building on culture and local sustainable development among European cities. Alongside self-assessment, policy innovation and participatory governance activities implemented in each city, peer-learning activities enabling bilateral and multilateral exchanges are organised on a regular basis.

In this context, a peer-learning visit to Lisbon was organised in September 2017. Aims of the visit included to present activities conducted within **Lisbon's work programme as a Pilot City**, as well as broader developments in the city's cultural policies and programmes. Furthermore, as with other peer-learning activities, the visit enabled an exchange of views and experiences with other participating cities in both Europe and Latin America, including Izmir, Gabrovo, Rijeka, Swansea, Terrassa, Cuenca and Mérida.

More specifically, aims of the visit included the following:

- To present and discuss the **general context of cultural policies in Lisbon**, and how they relate to local sustainable development.

- To introduce activities conducted by Lisbon in the context of its **work programme as a Pilot City**.

- To become familiar with **key cultural agents and projects in Lisbon** and explore possible networking opportunities.

In addition to the participating cities, the visit also involved several of the experts involved in the Pilot Cities programme, who facilitated the learning process, as well as a representative of UCLG.

This report summarises the activities conducted. For further information, please visit the page of **Lisbon as a Pilot City**.



INTRODUCTION

BY ALEXANDRA SABINO
CITY OF LISBON

The fact that several cities in the Pilot Cities programme are interested in visiting Lisbon as a peer-learning activity is both a reason to feel proud and a responsibility.

The visit was organised in order to show examples of good-practices, of municipal and private initiative, as well as ongoing experiences and problems that we face in the cultural area; projects that we hope can be a source of ideas to the other cities. As a Pilot City we also felt it was important to present some of our pilot measures, particularly to share our experience in the process of the Strategies for Culture in Lisbon.

We took into account the characteristics and worries transmitted by some of the visiting cities, namely related with social inclusion, culture and economy and relation with the city's cultural agents. The fact that we had previously conducted our peer-learning visit to Buenos Aires (November 2016) helped in the conception of the program.

We prepared 4 days filled with activities between visits and meetings. The idea in designing the programme was to make every moment in Lisbon an experience of the cultural dynamic of the city, whether in the opening of an exhibition, in a meal, a visit to a neighbourhood or just walk from one point to the other. Another detail taken into account was the importance to accompany every visit with a conversation with the person in charge of the project.

The visits were planned in a way to include a diversity of sceneries and neighbourhoods of the city: from the historical center, to Parque das Nações, Belém or Marvila. We suggested also one free day so that the representatives of the cities could experience the city on their own.

We hope that the visiting cities can profit from this activity and ourselves will receive inputs to improve our work.

Alexandra Sabino

Advisor to the Deputy Mayor for Culture, Lisbon.



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The visit provided participants with an opportunity to become familiar with the city of Lisbon and cultural policy developments there. In the following pages, relevant information is summarised, addressing the general context of Lisbon and its participation in the Pilot Cities programme first, and then some more specific activities presented during the visit.

THE CONTEXT OF LOCAL CULTURAL POLICY IN LISBON

Catarina Vaz Pinto, the Deputy Mayor for Culture of the City of Lisbon, offered the Pilot Cities delegation an excellent introduction to recent cultural policy developments in the city, providing the framework within which Lisbon's participation in the Pilot Cities programme operates. The following aspects should be particularly stressed:

- Contemporary cultural developments in Portugal are affected by the legacy of the **dictatorship** which ruled the country between the 1930s and the Revolution of 1974. In the absence of a cultural policy similar to that of other European countries, over that period some private actors, including the **Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation**, played an important role in facilitating access to international culture.
- Following this, the country, the city of Lisbon and the cultural scene experienced a **progressive opening in the 1980s and 1990s**, with a set of milestones including Lisbon's year as the European Capital of Culture (1994), Portugal's participation as 'guest of honour' in the Frankfurt Book Fair (1997), the Lisbon World Exposition Expo'98, and the awarding of the Nobel Literature Prize to José Saramago (1998).
- Over this period, **local governments** also played an important role at domestic level in fostering access and participation in culture, although with different degrees of involvement throughout the country.
- As Lisbon's Deputy Mayor for Culture since 2009, Catarina Vaz Pinto can distinguish two periods. Between 2009 and 2014, Portugal was very **seriously affected by the financial crisis**, facing great difficulties. There were no funds to take part in international activities, and support from the European Investment Bank was essential in order to conduct some investments. **Since 2015, there have been more resources**, enhancing the capacity to implement policies and programmes.
- Lisbon aims to be a **place where to think, create and share culture**. The city is also strongly committed to the principles of the Agenda 21 for culture. Further to strengthening public policies in culture and their relation with other areas of sustainable development, the City Council aims to foster the sustainability of a diverse cultural ecosystem – in this respect, almost one third of public cultural resources in the city are transferred to private actors.
- Two major structures regroup local organisations in Lisbon's public cultural sector: the **Department for Culture** is in charge of policy and strategy, and manages

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archives, libraries and heritage; whereas the **public company EGEAC** manages museums, theatres and festivals, among others.

- Among the recent major cultural projects implemented, she highlighted several of the pilot measures included in the **Pilot Cities' work programme**, including the adoption of a new **Cultural Strategy**; the setting-up of the specialised resource centre **Loja Lisboa Cultura** to facilitate professional development for artists and cultural professionals; and the '**A Square in Each Neighbourhood**' project, which fosters cultural uses of public space. She also referred to Lisbon's holding of the title of **Iberoamerican Capital of Culture in 2017**, which had enabled new collaborations and the presentation of a diverse range of cultural expressions, and had also involved some activities connected to Pilot Cities.

Several of the activities presented by Catarina Vaz Pinto would be further explored in the course of the visit.

LISBON'S NEW CULTURAL STRATEGY

In 2017, Lisbon adopted a **new local Cultural Strategy**, following a participatory process which was facilitated by the **Dinâmia team** at the University Institute of Lisbon, and which also took advantage of the **self-assessment exercise** conducted in March 2016 in the context of the Pilot Cities programme. On 7 September, participants in the peer-learning visit met some of the members of the coordination team involved in the elaboration of the Cultural Strategy.

Among the first steps conducted in the process was a review of the previous cultural strategy, adopted in 2009, which also involved an analysis of the **substantial changes which Lisbon has experienced** in recent years. Elements from the Agenda 21 for culture and Culture 21 Actions have also helped to understand that **a wide range of departments of local government are relevant** to cultural development, thus broadening the number of stakeholders that need to be involved in planning and implementation.

The Cultural Strategy also analyses the **metropolitan dimension of culture** and how to improve collaboration at metropolitan level. There has traditionally been a lack of metropolitan policies, although some initiatives, such as **Artemrede**, contribute to facilitating some collaboration among local governments.

The document resulting from the process includes an extensive analysis as well as a set of possible thematic areas and measures. On this basis, the local government will set its priorities, as well as the specific implementation mechanisms, policies and programmes.

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POLO CULTURAL GAIVOTAS | BOAVISTA

The new Cultural Strategy was presented in the premises of **Polo Cultural Gaivotas | Boavista**, a centre for artistic creation managed by the City of Lisbon and open to the arts community. With the mission of becoming a resource centre for cultural activity, creation and development, the Polo opened in early 2016 and contains three spaces: a 'school' (space for rehearsal, training activities, working spaces, public events in collaboration with the local community), residences (providing low-rent accommodation to artists), and the Loja Lisboa Cultura (an information point and specialised training centre).

Loja Lisboa Cultura is one of the pilot measures launched in the context of the Pilot Cities work programme. With a mandate that covers, among others, the facilitation of information, advice and training in areas such as authors' rights and international mobility, agreements have been signed with relevant public authorities (e.g. tax, social security, etc.) to facilitate the provision of specialised information. Some focus groups were organised before the information point was set up, in order to identify specific needs. The Loja is also recognised as Portugal's **Mobility InfoPoint** within the network initiated by On The Move.

MARVILA: THE NEW LIBRARY AND OTHER PROJECTS

The library of the Marvila neighbourhood is one of the most recent additions to **Lisbon's library network**, which currently includes 18 libraries. As with other libraries in the network, it was designed to suit the relevant local community, through a **consultation process**. Set in one of Lisbon's most disadvantaged neighbourhoods, the library **operates as a community centre** which, since its opening in November 2016, has issued over 500 new library cards and receives an average of over 10,000 monthly visits.

The library places particular emphasis on the **connections between culture, education and social and economic development**. In this context, a project of **emergent and familiar literacy**, including for teenage parents and their children, has been conducted, this being one of the pilot measures of the Pilot Cities programme in Lisbon, in response to a series of existing challenges (high illiteracy rate, school dropout rate and teenage parenthood rate) and the recognition of the library as a place for lifelong learning.

The project has contributed to the learning of Portuguese among migrant communities as well as improvements in children's relationships among them and with adults, the acquisition of reading habits and an increase in concentration, among others. An evaluation has been conducted, which has also helped to identify some difficulties and challenges, including the ability to reach out to parents with low academic qualifications. Following its piloting in Marvila, the project has been transferred to other local libraries across Lisbon.

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In addition to visiting the premises of the new library and discussing its activities, the Pilot Cities delegation visited other locations in Marvila, including the walls which had hosted the **second edition of the Urban Art Festival** held earlier in 2017. Organised by the **Urban Art Gallery** and held in the context of Lisbon Iberoamerican Capital of Culture, this edition invited artists from across Iberoamerica in several buildings of Marvila. Interventions were only possible if all resident neighbours agreed.

Holding the Urban Art Festival in Marvila had contributed to increasing visits to the area. The **involvement of a local artist** was also instrumental in ensuring the respect of local crews, and **community participation** had contributed to subsequent preservation of the works made. The Festival is one of several initiatives undertaken by the Urban Art Gallery, a public project which promotes wall painting in other parts of the city.

Before leaving the area of Marvila, another visit was conducted to **Galeria Underdogs**, a private gallery specialising in urban art and which is also connected to a broader cultural platform. This is one of several initiatives contributing to the regeneration of some neighbourhoods in the Eastern part of Lisbon. It also collaborates with the Urban Art Gallery, among others by suggesting urban artists that can be involved in the painting of walls across the city.

OTHER CULTURAL PROJECTS

In the course of the visit, several other public and private projects were presented and discussed. Among them, the following initiatives should be mentioned:

- **Festival Todos** is an annual event promoted by the Lisbon City Council and a non-profit association (Academia de Produtores Culturais). Held each year in September, it takes place in one specific neighbourhood for three consecutive editions, with the aim of fostering local development and an intercultural approach, and then moves to another location. The festival combines music, performing arts, photography and graffiti and has a particular engagement with public space and local communities. **Orquestra Todos**, an ensemble gathering Lisbon-born and migrant musicians and fostering intercultural encounters, has emerged in this context and has also contributed to the visibility of the festival.
- **Museum of Lisbon: Santo António** is one of several branches of the city museum, devoted to the figure of Saint Anthony, who was born in the area. Given the widespread interest and reputation in his legacy, the Museum fosters educational and participatory activities. Among them is, since 2015, an **annual presentation of 'thrones'** is launched, with designs done by individuals and groups (associations, businesses, groups of neighbours, etc.) and presented across the city, reviving a tradition from the 18th century. The initiative has become a very popular activity, embraced by people of all origins and beliefs.

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- The exhibition **Lojas com História (Historic Shops)**, the opening of which was attended by participants in the visit on 7 September, is part of a broader initiative of the City of Lisbon and is traditional trade sector to recognise and preserve the city's own businesses, particularly those which have contributed to the historic and cultural heritage of the city. The overall project, involving several departments of the City Council, has included regulatory measures, economic support, documentary research and awareness-raising activities.
- The **Municipal Theatre Maria Matos** was a venue specialising in contemporary, innovative theatre, which in recent years made an effort to broaden its audiences by addressing contemporary themes (e.g. climate change, gender), fostering collaboration with social organisations and neighbours and diversifying activities (e.g. talks, conferences, activities in public space). In this respect, the Theatre has also conducted activities outside its premises, in other Lisbon neighbourhoods.
- The area of **Coruchéus** hosts since the 1970s a building of **artist workspaces**, which were initially managed privately but later integrated municipal structures. In addition to the approximately 50 workspaces that make up Ateliers dos Coruchéus, the building hosts an exhibition space which fosters new perspectives on the municipal art collection. In the context of the Iberoamerican Capital of Culture year, three Latin American artists resident in Lisbon developed specific research projects in the artist workspaces, leading to public presentations. The Ateliers are located next to one of the city's newest **neighbourhood libraries**, sited in an old building, and which has also contributed to reviving the local area.
- **Largo Residências** is a bottom-up, local development initiative based in Bairro do Intendente, which sees arts practice as a key element in fostering urban regeneration with a community purpose. The project includes a hostel which generates income to support social development initiatives, cultural activities and artist residencies. The progressive gentrification of the area has however become a threat for the project's sustainability.
- **LXFactory** is a complex of companies, shops, restaurants and exhibition spaces based in a former industrial area.
- Among the other initiatives met during the visit was also the **Portuguese Refugee Council**, UNHCR's implementation partner in Portugal, which for over 12 years has developed a **theatre project involving refugees and asylum-seekers**. Emerging initially from the Portuguese language learning sessions, the project has become very well established and has been presented in several venues. More recently, a visual arts project for children and young people has also been established.

In the morning of 8 September, an informal breakfast with cultural professionals and organisations also provided an excellent opportunity to discuss issues of common interest and become more familiar with the local cultural landscape.



CONTACT

For further information, please contact:



Lisbon City Council

Alexandra Sabino, Councillor on Culture: alexandra.sabino@cm-lisboa.pt

Web: www.cm-lisboa.pt

Tw: [@CamaraLisboa](https://twitter.com/CamaraLisboa)



United Cities and Local Governements (UCLG) - Comittee on Culture

Email: info@agenda21culture.net

Web: www.agenda21culture.net

Tw: [@agenda21culture](https://twitter.com/agenda21culture)





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