

Local policies and diversity

For the 10th anniversary of the Agenda 21 for culture, several thematic notes have been written.

Each note capitalizes our knowledge, quoting drafts we have produced during 10 years, and other basic documents.

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“Cultural diversity is the main heritage of humanity. It is the product of thousands of years of history, the fruit of the collective contribution of all peoples through their languages, imaginations, technologies, practices and creations. Culture takes on different forms, responding to dynamic models of relationship between societies and territories.” [Agenda 21 for culture, Article 1.](#)

“Cultural diversity, **as necessary for humankind as biodiversity is for nature.** Diversity of cultural expressions brings wealth. (...) Diversity is a **constitutive element of culture.** It challenges many of the official discourses on culture and of cultural policies, in particular those based on homogeneity and/or democratic deficits. Diversity provides a new set of

conceptual paths to describe current local policies, and probably articulate new ones." [Agenda 21 for culture](#).

"At an international level, the importance of cultural diversity was recognised in 2001 in the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, but the decisive step was the adoption in 2005 of the [Convention on the Protection and the Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions](#), which came into force in 2007. The Convention marked a turning point in terms of the recognition of cultural diversity." [Web Agenda 21 for culture: Local policies and cultural diversity](#).

"**Cultural Diversity** may be defined as a principle for organizing sustainable cultural plurality, both within and across societies. Cultural diversity is therefore more than an open-ended menu of differences or variations. It is a mechanism for organizing the most productive dialogue between meaningful pasts and desirable futures. (...) Cultural diversity is a mechanism that assures that creativity, dignity and tolerance will be partners rather than victims in the design of models for sustainable development. In other words, maximizing cultural diversity is the key to making culture a renewable resource in the effort to make development sustainable." UNESCO, [Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity](#) (2001), accompanying document.



Article 1 – Cultural diversity: the common heritage of humanity

"Culture takes diverse forms across time and space. This diversity is embodied in the uniqueness and plurality of the identities of the groups and societies making up humankind. As a source of exchange, innovation and creativity, cultural diversity is as necessary for humankind as biodiversity is for nature. In this sense, it is the common heritage of humanity and should be recognized and affirmed for the benefit of present and future generations."

Article 2 – From cultural diversité to cultural pluralism

"(...) Cultural pluralism gives policy expression to the reality of cultural diversity. Indissociable from a democratic framework, cultural pluralism is conducive to cultural exchange and to the flourishing of creative capacities that sustain public life."

Article 3 – Cultural diversity as a factor in development

"Cultural diversity widens the range of options open to everyone; it is one of the roots of

development, understood not simply in terms of economic growth, but also as a means to achieve a more satisfactory intellectual, emotional, moral and spiritual existence.”

Article 4 – Human rights as guarantees for cultural diversity

“The defense of cultural diversity is an ethical imperative, inseparable from respect for human dignity.” UNESCO, [Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity](#), 2001.

“The current situation also provides sufficient evidence that cultural diversity in the world is in danger due to a **globalization that standardizes and excludes.**” [Agenda 21 for culture, Article 2.](#)

“**Cities and local spaces** are a privileged setting for cultural invention which is in constant evolution, and provide the **environment for creative diversity**, where encounters amongst everything that is different and distinct (origins, visions, ages, genders, ethnic groups and social classes) are what makes full human development possible. Dialogue between identity and diversity, individual and group, is a vital tool for guaranteeing both a planetary cultural citizenship as well as the survival of linguistic diversity and the development of cultures.” [Agenda 21 for culture, Article 7.](#)



“Proper economic assessment of the creation and distribution of cultural goods – amateur or professional, craft or industrial, individual or collective – becomes, in the contemporary world, a decisive factor in emancipation, a guarantee of diversity and, therefore, an attainment of the **democratic right** of peoples to affirm their identities in the relations between cultures.” [Agenda 21 for culture, Article 12.](#)

“UNDP’s Human Development Report 2004 *Cultural Liberty in Today’s Diverse World* has recently made a strong call to “recognize differences, champion diversity and promote cultural freedoms, so that all people can choose to speak their language, practice their religion, and participate in shaping their culture so that all people can choose to be who they are”. Cultural diversity is a new and difficult concept but many cities and local governments have already taken it into account, with diverse meanings.” Jordi Pascual, in [“Executive Summary”](#), *Report 1: Local policies for cultural diversity* (2006).

“Cities are including cultural diversity considerations in their local policies, while diversity has **manifold meanings**: contents, actors or ethnic.

- a) Related to "**sizes**" (cities have searched for a balance in the sizes of cultural agents, from small to large) and "sub-sectors" (from heritage to contemporary creation).
- b) With the involvement of a diversity of actors (public, NGO, private) in the local cultural system.

- c) Understood in **anthropological or ethnic terms**, is changing the way cities support culture, with more attention paid to the presence of "minorities" in the cultural ecosystem of the city." **Jordi Pascual**, in ["Executive Summary"](#), *Report 1: Local policies for cultural diversity* (2006).

"The concepts of a **"local cultural ecosystem"** or **"cultural ecology"** facilitate the understanding and allow the implementation of cultural diversity considerations into policies. (...) Analysing diversity in a historical perspective, all cities have undergone (and are undergoing) **intercultural / hybridisation** processes. Cities are the places where persons from different origins meet, interact and create new cultural expressions." **Jordi Pascual**, in ["Executive Summary"](#), *Report 1: Local policies for cultural diversity. Executive Summary* (2006).

"Interculturalism is about explicitly recognising the value of diversity while doing everything possible to increase **interaction, mixing and hybridisation** between cultural communities." **Irena Guidikova**, Head of Division, Directorate of Culture and Cultural and Natural Heritage, Council of Europe, in ["Who is afraid of diversity?"](#), *Report 5: Cities, cultures and developments. A report that marks the fifth anniversary of Agenda 21 for culture* (2009).

"Because of the city's fame – particularly due to the strong diaspora very much alive in big international metropolises – Essaouira retained a special interest as a **rare example of cultural diversity that had coexisted in a time of tolerance and peace**. This interest was transformed into the desire to preserve the heritage common to every culture that had helped to forge the Souirie identity." **Asma Chaabi**, Mayor of Essaouira, in ["The Agenda 21 for culture and Essaouira"](#), *Report 5: Cities, cultures and developments. A report that marks the fifth anniversary of Agenda 21 for culture* (2009).

"In an increasingly diverse society, education in cultural diversity and fostering **intercultural competencies** become priorities, not only for the department for culture, but also for the educational authorities. Furthermore, the growing importance of cultural diversity has increased the need to link cultural policies to social policies: departments for social inclusion are including culture as a dimension in their programmes, and do not take for granted existing differences in knowledge, language and values of the population.

(...) Diversity has reinforced the use of public spaces for cultural activities. The concept of **"public space"**, somehow neglected in the late XXth century, is again important, although its "cultural" management is more difficult than ever. (...) Leisure management, creative industries and cultural tourism are sectors of exceptional growth. Cultural content is at the centre of the knowledge society. The concept of **"productive diversity"** is extremely appealing. "Cultural diversity – of people, of skills and practices, of products, of markets and tastes – is good for innovation and building the capacity for sustainability in a creative knowledge economy" states Colin Mercer.

(...) Cultural diversity can be a vital stimulus to cultural entrepreneurship, opening up new cultural and creative markets", states Kevin Robbins. (...) Cultural diversity deserves a strong policy architecture, in which all citizens can participate in the elaboration of deliberative cultural policies." **Jordi Pascual**, in ["Executive Summary"](#), *Report 1: Local policies for cultural diversity. Executive Summary* (2006).

"Managing diversity also means rethinking the programmes of our cultural institutions, bringing **'governance' to life, thinking about the next generation.**" **Bettina Heinrich**, Head of Department for Fundamental Cultural Policy Issues, Senate Chancellery of the Governing Mayor of Berlin (2007-2009), in ["Changing Cities and the New Role for Urban](#)

[Cultural Policy – Perspective from Germany](#)”, Report 5: Cities, cultures and developments. A report that marks the fifth anniversary of Agenda 21 for culture (2009).

“Governance is a collaboration between the local government and the citizens, with a **“relational” approach that allows citizens to participate in cultural life**, and in deliberative cultural policies; between a leading municipal department for culture that bases its work on the intrinsic values of culture and co-operates with those departments/agencies (education, social inclusion, economic development...) that include cultural considerations in their work; between the several tiers of government (international organizations, national governments, local governments) in **long-term accountable** programmes.” [Web Agenda 21 for culture: Local policies and cultural diversity](#).

“Diversity is the one true thing we all have in common. Celebrate it every day”. **Anonymous**, quoted by Irena Guidikova, in [“Who is afraid of diversity?”](#), Report 5: Cities, cultures and developments. A report that marks the fifth anniversary of Agenda 21 for culture (2009).

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