

Cultural indicators

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.

These notes have been elaborated by Mariona Peraire and Joana Valent (Ramon Llull University, Barcelona) and Jordi Pascual (UCLG Culture committee coordinator).



“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.” **Christelle Blouët**, cultural manager, [Report 3: Agenda 21 for culture in France. State of affairs and outlook](#) (2008).

“Development has itself been defined far too exclusively by tangibles, such as dams, factories, houses, food and water, although these are undeniably vital goods. **What we may call intangible development (which includes such issues as empowerment, participation, transparency, stakeholding and accountability)** has only recently entered the discourse of development.” **UNESCO**, [Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity](#) (2001), accompanying document.

“**Culture seen purely in terms of figures is nothing more than a metro passageway**, where the best equipment or plan is that which gets the highest number of people through a given point in the shortest time possible.” **Jordi Martí**, Councillor for culture, Barcelona City Council President of UCLG’s Committee on culture and **Carles Giner**, Executive Secretary, Barcelona Culture Council, in [“If the Agenda 21 for culture is the answer, what was the question?”](#), *Report 5: Cities, cultures and developments. A report that marks the fifth anniversary of Agenda 21 for culture* (2009).

“If what we measure is only audiences and rankings (for sales, visitors, seats filled, tickets sold, miles of queues, etc.) then we do not need to worry about **excellence**.” **Jordi Martí**, Councillor for culture, Barcelona City Council President of UCLG’s Committee on culture and **Carles Giner**, Executive Secretary, Barcelona Culture Council, in [“If the Agenda 21 for culture is the answer, what was the question?”](#), *Report 5: Cities, cultures and developments. A report that marks the fifth anniversary of Agenda 21 for culture* (2009).

“The **lack of consideration** of the cultural dimension of development is hindering the possibility of achieving sustainable development, peace and wellbeing.” UCLG Declaration, [Culture: Fourth Pillar of Sustainable Development](#) (2010).

“The quantitative criteria of sustainable development often seem cold and technical compared to the **criteria of art and artistic practice**, which need to be more sensitive. Actors of culture and sustainable development have to fight against this prior absence of language and common methods for working together.” **Catherine Cullen**, Councilor for culture, Lille City Council, and vice-president of the Committee on culture of United Cities and Local Governments – UCLG, in [“The City of Lille and the Agenda 21 for culture”](#), *Report 5: Cities, cultures and developments. A report that marks the fifth anniversary of Agenda 21 for culture* (2009).

“**The main things in sustainable development are the expertise of knowledge and the expertise of experience**. We will have to work on notions of indicators that count differently, that do not quantify everything and, especially, that make sense to everyone.” **Hélène Combe**, quoted by Christelle Blouët in [Report 3: Agenda 21 for culture in France. State of affairs and outlook](#) (2008).

“A person, in the hands of the tyranny of **cultural statistics**, is a visitor, the spectre of someone who at a particular time has been to a place. At most we know if they are a man or a woman, a local or a visitor, a schoolchild or a retiree. We know nothing, however, about the impact of the work on their life, about their feelings, about how they interacted with the thing they “have visited”, about whether on coming out they were or were not the same person as the one who went in.” **Jordi Martí**, Councillor for culture, Barcelona City Council President of UCLG’s Committee on culture and **Carles Giner**, Executive Secretary, Barcelona Culture Council, in [“If the Agenda 21 for culture is the answer, what was the question?”](#), *Report 5: Cities, cultures and developments. A report that marks the fifth anniversary of Agenda 21 for culture* (2009).

“The quantitative indicators imposed tend to empty the policies of their meaning. The **Agenda 21 for culture and the Committee on culture can make a major contribution to the definition of the framework of the assessment**, as profitable for local cultural policies as for national ones, however little the agents in the sector may want to look current reality in the face and embark on this road with true determination, aware of the urgency of such an undertaking.” **Hélène Combe**, quoted by Christelle Blouët in [Report 3: Agenda 21 for culture in France. State of affairs and outlook](#) (2008).

“In a medium-term perspective and to monitor results efforts in the area of culture and development, including notably the implementation of the 2005 UNESCO Convention, **the (Sustainable) Human Development Indicator should be developed further**, elaborating its Cultural Diversity dimension or coupling it with a *Cultural Diversity Indicator*.” **Christine Merkel**, Head of the Division for Culture and Memory of the World of the German, Commission for UNESCO, Coordinator of the German Coalition for Cultural Diversity and Vice-Chair of the Council of Europe Culture Committee, in [“Urban vitality and cultural ecology. The Agenda 21 for culture: the years ahead”](#), *Report 5: Cities, cultures and developments. A report that marks the fifth anniversary of Agenda 21 for culture* (2009).

“The Agenda 21 recommends to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to **deepen its analysis of culture and development and incorporate cultural indicators** into the calculation of the human development index (HDI).” [Agenda 21 for culture](#).



“In Lille, we have been carrying out a quantitative evaluation of our culture policy for some time now (covering aspects such as figures on use, fulfilment of specifications). We analyse the variety of the cultural programme and the cultural targets, the opportunities for inhabitants to take part in the drafting of the culture policy, and the presence of artists in the city, etc. Moreover, we believe that the quality of a culture policy is expressed through a **permanent exchange between culture and the other areas of public action**.” **Catherine Cullen**, Councillor for culture, Lille City Council, and vice-president of the Committee on culture of United Cities and Local Governments – UCLG, in [“The City of Lille and the Agenda 21 for culture”](#), *Report 5: Cities, cultures and developments. A report that marks the fifth anniversary of Agenda 21 for culture* (2009).

“**Buenos Aires proposes the preparation of a Cultural Mapping that contributes to the development of local cultural policies in Buenos Aires**, providing new qualitative and quantitative indicators. The following stages are proposed: 1) identification of cultural infrastructure, 2) identification of cultural actors, 3) analysis of the information, 4) creation and dissemination of a digital map of free access for the inhabitants of the city, and 5) publishing, archiving and dissemination of the cultural information obtained.” **Web Agenda 21 for culture**, [Our fund for culture local governance: “Cultural mapping of the city of Buenos Aires”](#).

“National, international and local cultural policy and creative industry observatories should be **organized and encourage to develop meaningful indicators and case-studies** to monitor results of local (and other) cultural policies and to accompany the implementation of the 2005 UNESCO Convention on the Diversity of Cultural Expressions. **Christine Merkel**, Head of the Division for Culture and Memory of the World of the German, Commission for UNESCO, Coordinator of the German Coalition for Cultural Diversity and Vice-Chair of the Council of Europe Culture Committee, in **“Urban vitality and cultural ecology. The Agenda 21 for culture: the years ahead”**, *Report 5: Cities, cultures and developments. A report that marks the fifth anniversary of Agenda 21 for culture* (2009).

“The **research for local cultural indicators** is an urgent task that needs to find space in the agenda of international networks of cities in order to, at least, connect existing initiatives, avoid duplication of work, understand frameworks in other countries and contribute to refining policy objectives.” **Jordi Pascual**, in **“Executive Summary”**, *Report 1: Local policies for cultural diversity* (2006).

“The research and the development of local cultural indicators is a urgent task which should be met in cities international networks. The Committee on Culture of Cities and Local Governments should at least play ensure **the connection of existing initiatives, the cooperation with national authorities, and the promotion of relevant issues which link culture to cities** and which are not always visible by national or international organizations who deal with cultural indicators.” **UCLG**, **Cultural indicators and Agenda 21 for culture** (2006).

“This document proposes a reference framework to explicit local cultural policies. This framework can help cities and local governments to **clarify the conceptual foundations of cultural policies, and provide a first basis for progress towards local cultural indicators.**”

"Basic information on local government / Cultural infrastructure and cultural practices / Culture and social inclusion / Culture, territory and public space / Culture and Economy / Cultural policies governance. " **UCLG**, **Cultural indicators and Agenda 21 for culture** (2006).

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