



**UCLG – MEXICO CITY – CULTURE 21**

7th EDITION - INTERNATIONAL AWARD

CATEGORY

**“CITY / LOCAL OR REGIONAL GOVERNMENT”**

**SUMMARIES OF THE 59 CANDIDATES**



CIUDAD DE MÉXICO  
CAPITAL DE LA TRANSFORMACIÓN



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The objective of the **International Award UCLG – Mexico City – Culture 21** is to recognise leading cities and individuals that have distinguished themselves through their contribution to culture as a dimension of sustainable development. The initiative is consistent with the aim of United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) to represent and defend the interests of local governments on the world stage.

The 7th edition of the International Award UCLG - Mexico City - Culture 21 aims to innovative policies, programmes or projects, reward the performance of local and regional governments and promote the replicability of cultural practices in favour of people, the government and our planet, paying special attention to the following two axes:

#### **A. Cultural Rights and Care**

#### **B. Cultural Policies and Gender Equality**

In the category “City / Local or Regional Government”, this edition (2025-2026) has received 59 submissions from cities and local governments from all regions of the world. Following the Rules of the Award, this document reproduces the abstract of each one of the 59 submissions.



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### AKYURT, ANKARA, TURKEY

From Early Childhood to Cultural Maturity: the Baby Library

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The Akyurt Municipality Baby Library has been serving babies, children, and their families aged 0–6 since October 2021. The project was implemented at the local level to ensure the early, equal, inclusive, and accessible participation of the 0–6 age group in cultural life. It is believed that the first encounter with culture can take place at the earliest stage of life; culture is regarded not merely as an area to be learned, but as a fundamental right experienced from birth onward. In this context, the facility operates as an infrastructure initiative supported by cultural activities. At the Baby Library, children are grouped according to the age ranges of 0–2, 2–4, 4–6, and 0–6. Taking into account the developmental, emotional, and cultural needs of children, a variety of activities are organized, including Values Education, Handicrafts, Modern and Traditional Dance Activities, Sports, and

Reading Activities, Cultural Storytelling, Brain Games, as well as children’s drama activities. These activities are supported through active family participation. Through these activities, the facility has evolved into more than only a library; it has become a public learning space grounded in social and cultural rights, promoting early childhood culture, fostering reading habits, and strengthening family–child interaction. This public service has become a highly appreciated space thanks to its central location, free access, innovative and culture-based approach, and its safe and inclusive environment that welcomes disadvantaged groups, including individuals with disabilities. The project encourages children to participate in cultural life from an early age. It emphasizes that cultural rights do not belong solely to adults, but that culture is a fundamental value to be acquired during early childhood.

### AMADORA, PORTUGAL

Zambujal 360

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Zambujal 360 created the first public housing neighbourhood intended to become an ambassador of the UN Sustainable Development Goals. The initiative materialized through the development of an open-air urban art gallery composed of 17 large-scale murals, each representing one of the 17 SDGs.

With a holistic and long-term vision, it aims

to transform Zambujal into both a space for learning about the SDGs and a platform for community empowerment, training, and social development inspired by their principles. Through this approach, the project demonstrates the importance of integrating culture and artistic practices into sustainable development processes, highlighting culture



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as a transversal force capable of connecting people, institutions, and shared values.

It also illustrates how local initiatives can address contemporary challenges while contributing to broader global transformation. By translating the SDGs into visual narratives rooted in everyday life, the murals make complex global goals accessible and meaningful for residents and visitors alike.

Urban art serves as the project's central tool for promoting dialogue, awareness and participation. Main areas of intervention include education through art, health awareness and

the strengthening of local commerce, fostering a more resilient and inclusive community environment.

The project was created by two locally rooted associations with long-standing experience working collaboratively with the community. Zambujal 360 was developed together with residents, local organizations, schools and businesses. The neighbourhood itself—its people, stories and cultural diversity—became the primary source of inspiration for the artists, ensuring that each mural reflects the lived experiences and aspirations of the community.

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## BALIKESIR METROPOLITAN MUNICIPALITY, TURKEY

### The Mod10 Youth Orchestra

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The “Mod10 Gençlik Orkestrası” (Mod10 Youth Orchestra) project is a comprehensive local government initiative implemented by the Department of Culture, Arts, and Social Affairs of Balıkesir Metropolitan Municipality. The project aims to support the cultural, social, and personal development of children and young people through music. Drawing on the long-recognized educational role of music, it seeks to nurture talents aged 8–18 as confident, disciplined, and socially responsible individuals.

The program also offers young participants a creative and socially engaging alternative to the negative impacts of excessive digital technology use, which has become widespread among youth. Informed by research emphasizing the positive relationship between

musical education and cognitive development, the project promotes a polyphonic orchestra culture by integrating a diverse performance structure that includes drums, bass guitar, electric and acoustic guitars, keyboards, string and wind instruments, as well as instruments used in traditional Turkish music.

Supported by conservatory-level training programs, participants develop their musical competencies and perform at least ten concerts annually, presenting a broad repertoire of popular and distinguished works.

Beyond being a music education initiative, Mod10 functions as a dynamic cultural platform where young people can step away from the pressures of school life, build healthy



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peer relationships, and explore their creative potential. Within this environment, participants discover their individual talents while acquiring

professional artistic discipline, gradually becoming active cultural representatives of the city.

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## BARRANQUILLA, COLOMBIA

### Barranquilla Open-Air Museum

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The Barranquilla Open-Air Museum is a culture-based urban regeneration initiative that transforms public spaces into venues for artistic creation, collective memory and public participation. The project is being carried out in iconic areas of the city, particularly in Barrio Abajo and the alleyways of the El Prado neighbourhood—areas of significant heritage and cultural value that were experiencing the deterioration of public spaces and a loss of visibility of their cultural narratives.

The initiative emerged as a participatory cultural urbanism strategy aimed at revitalising the urban environment through artistic interventions on façades and walls in public spaces, integrated with community participation and cultural curation processes. Through a methodology that includes a social analysis of the area, empathy maps, community consultation and a curatorial committee, the project identifies local histories, traditions and memories, which are then translated into murals and public artworks.

Since its launch, the Open-Air Museum has enabled the recovery of over 5,900 m<sup>2</sup> of public space, the creation of nearly 90 murals and the involvement of more than 50 artists, consolidating a cultural corridor that strengthens the area's identity and promotes new social and cultural dynamics.

The project directly benefits local communities, artists, cultural managers and visitors, promoting processes of community ownership, strengthening the creative ecosystem and boosting cultural tourism through guided tours and the training of community guides.

Furthermore, the initiative aligns with the principles of culture as a driver of sustainable development promoted by the UCLG frame Culture 21, contributing to urban regeneration, cultural inclusion, the creative economy and the exercise of cultural rights, in line with the SDGs, particularly SDGs 11, 8, 4, 10 and 17.

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#### BEIT-JANN, ISRAEL

##### Kan Zaman – Community Culture as a Driver of Social Resilience and Sustain

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The Beit Jann Local Council has developed an innovative cultural policy that places culture at the center of community resilience and sustainable local development. At the heart of this policy stands the Kan Zaman Cultural Festival, now celebrating its 14th edition, alongside a year-round cultural ecosystem that connects heritage, creativity, and civic participation.

Beit Jann is a Druze mountain community with a rich cultural heritage, located within the diverse social mosaic of the State of Israel. Through cultural initiatives, artistic platforms, and community programs, the municipality has transformed culture into a strategic tool for strengthening social cohesion, preserving local traditions, empowering youth and women, and encouraging cultural participation across generations.

The festival and its accompanying cultural activities promote traditional crafts, local cuisine, music, poetry, and storytelling while creating economic opportunities for local artists, entrepreneurs, and especially women who present handmade products and traditional culinary initiatives that often evolve into small businesses.

By integrating heritage, creativity, and community engagement, the Beit Jann model demonstrates how culture can function as a practical municipal policy that strengthens identity, promotes gender inclusion, stimulates local economy, and contributes to resilient and sustainable communities.

#### BISHKEK, KYRGYZ REPUBLIC

##### Zhashtyk Arena: Youth, and Culture as Pillars of Sustainable Bishkek

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Zhashtyk Arena is a flagship municipal project positioning youth empowerment, social inclusion, and cultural vitality at the core of sustainable urban development in Bishkek.

Reconstructed according to international standards, the 15.342 m<sup>2</sup> multifunctional arena (5.000 seats) operates as more than a sports venue — it is an inclusive civic platform

advancing equal access to sport, culture, and public life.

Aligned with the Culture 21 framework, the project recognizes culture as the fourth pillar of sustainable development by integrating sports infrastructure with community programming, intercultural dialogue, and youth participation.



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Zhashtyk Arena contributes directly to:

- SDG 11 – Sustainable Cities and Communities (inclusive, accessible public infrastructure);
- SDG 4 – Quality Education (youth development through sports and cultural engagement);
- SDG 5 – Gender Equality (expanded participation opportunities for women and girls);

- SDG 17 – Partnerships for the Goals (international competitions and cross-city cooperation).

By transforming infrastructure into a driver of opportunity, cohesion, and civic identity, Zhashtyk Arena demonstrates how municipal investment can strengthen human capital, foster inclusion, and position Bishkek as a city where youth and culture shape a shared sustainable future.

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## BOGOTÁ, COLOMBIA

### Living Neighbourhoods: cultural co-creation labs in Bogotá

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“Barrios Vivos” (Living Neighbourhoods) is a cultural innovation strategy that places the neighbourhood at the heart of Bogotá’s local action. Through laboratories for cultural opportunity and cultural transformation, it brings together diverse citizens and stakeholders from the neighbourhood scene with the aim of expanding, strengthening and diversifying cultural life through a community-based and local approach.

Barrios Vivos is a commitment driven by a conviction: neighbourhoods in Bogotá are spaces with an overwhelming cultural energy, sustained and renewed daily by everyday life. They are an asset and must continuously be the protagonists of city life. For this reason, in Bogotá we have decided to shape public policy from within each of these areas, recognising that transformation begins at the local level.

Its aim is to bring citizens together, set up working groups, identify everyday cultural potential, learn about the neighbourhood’s cultural life and, using a co-creation methodology, promote cultural, recreational and sporting opportunities that stimulate social, economic and creative development in neighbourhood settings, through creative, innovative and collaborative actions that strengthen community cooperation and neighbourhood life in the city.

Between 2024 and 2025, we have reached over 12,000 people through 167 workshops across Bogotá’s 20 districts, covering more than 181 neighbourhoods. The results demonstrate our capacity for social innovation: Librocopa brought together football and literature in the Kennedy district; the largest cake in Latin America celebrated identity and Usme’s



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birthday; the Puente Aranda Carnival celebrated tradition; the largest recycled nativity scene in Bogotá filled the public space in Bosa with pride; and “La Vuelta a Usaca en 80 Sabores del Maíz” positioned food heritage as a cultural focal point in the district of Usaquén.

Barrios Vivos bridges territorial divides, strengthens local cultural economies, fosters participatory governance and builds capacity by recognising what unites us and connects us within local collective agendas.

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### CAGUAS AUTONOMOUS MUNICIPALITY, PUERTO RICO

#### Concrete Sculpture Biennial

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The Concrete Sculpture Biennial is an innovative cultural public policy initiative that integrates public art, environmental regeneration, citizen participation and sustainable urban development. It emerged as part of the project to restore the banks of the Cagüitas River, known as ‘Honour the River’, with the aim of transforming a deteriorated space into a cultural corridor for the community.

From its inception, it was conceived as a cultural intervention in the public space to promote contemporary sculptural creation, strengthen urban identity and foster artistic and environmental education. The project has developed an Open-Air Sculpture Museum that integrates art, landscape and community, becoming a regional benchmark for how public art can contribute to social and territorial transformation.

Over the course of several editions (2003, 2005, 2007 and 2010), sixteen monumental sculptures have been installed, establishing one of the largest contemporary sculpture parks in Puerto Rico.

The sculptures are produced directly at the site where they will remain installed, allowing the public to observe the creative process. This approach turns the Biennial into an open and participatory cultural platform that promotes workshops, guided tours and educational activities. The integration of art and nature generates a cultural experience that connects the river landscape with artistic creation, transforming the space into a meeting point for education, recreation and cultural tourism. Among its main contributions are the creation of opportunities for sculptors, the revitalisation of an urban ecosystem, the democratisation of access to contemporary art, the strengthening of cultural heritage and the promotion of community participation. Furthermore, the project has fostered partnerships between the public and private sectors and has included social integration initiatives involving people undergoing rehabilitation within the penitentiary system.



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### CANARY ISLANDS GOVERNMENT, SPAIN

#### The Cultural Dimension in the Canary Islands 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda

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The Canary Islands 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda (ACDS 2030) is the resulting document, approved in 2021, of the participatory process of contextualising (or localising) the UN 2030 Agenda in the Canary Islands, and sets out the archipelago's specific targets for achieving the 17 SDGs.

The Canary Islands, on their own initiative, added a Cultural Dimension to the Canary Islands Sustainable Development Agenda, recognising from the outset the importance of this dimension for the development of our community. This cultural dimension, which could be termed SDG 18, comprises a series of specific Canary Islands targets – 22 in total – and the indicators for monitoring them.

Initially, given the absence of culture in the UN's 2030 Agenda, and therefore of precedents, this became a pioneering endeavour, a challenge and a great responsibility. Throughout 2022 and 2023, a review was carried out of these Canarian

cultural targets and their indicators, involving the Canarian Institute of Cultural Development, the Canarian Institute of Statistics, the Spanish Sustainable Development Network, external consultants and the Presidency of the Canary Islands Government, resulting in a definitive consensus on targets and indicators for the Culture Dimension within the Sustainable Development Framework in the Canary Islands through its regional agenda: ACDS2030.

Given that many services within the public administration are currently focused on cultural policies and, when attempting to align with the UN's 2030 Agenda, encounter a gap in their remit, it is important that they are able to create their own cultural targets and indicators. In this regard, sharing the Canary Islands' experience serves as a reference for other administrations to see what has been achieved, and to use this as a basis for developing their own targets and indicators.

### CARTAGENA DE INDIAS, COLOMBIA

#### System for Artistic and Cultural Education (SIFAC)

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Cartagena de Indias is an internationally renowned city for its cultural richness, ethnic diversity and historical heritage. However, certain sections of the population, particularly children and young people from vulnerable socio-economic backgrounds, face structural

barriers to accessing arts education and participating fully in the city's cultural life.

With the aim of guaranteeing cultural rights and strengthening culture as a key dimension of local sustainable development, the Mayor's



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Office of Cartagena, through the Cartagena Institute of Heritage and Culture (IPCC), designed and implemented the District System for Artistic and Cultural Education (SIFAC).

SIFAC is part of the District's public cultural policy and seeks to democratise access to arts education, strengthen cultural citizenship and promote creativity as a tool for social inclusion. The system coordinates arts education programmes aimed at different stages of the life cycle, from pregnancy to adolescence, integrating educational processes, psychosocial support and a focus on the Afro-Caribbean cultural traditions that underpin identity.

Through this system, the District promotes training programmes in music, dance, theatre, visual arts, audiovisual creation and creative

writing, implemented in state educational institutions and cultural venues. These programmes strengthen participants' creative capacities, foster socio-emotional skills and encourage the recognition and appreciation of the city's cultural diversity.

Furthermore, the system promotes cultural exchange through artistic performances, school exhibitions and community events that showcase students' creative processes and strengthen their participation in cultural life.

In this way, SIFAC has been established as a structural strategy to strengthen cultural democracy in Cartagena, broaden access to arts education and position culture as a driving force for human development, social cohesion and sustainable development.

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## COLOGNE, GERMANY

### The Cultural Participation Framework

The City of Cologne's Cultural Participation funding programme represents a paradigm shift in cultural policy. It combines structural funding, artistic innovation and inclusive cultural policy into a coordinated set of measures with model character for other cities. This approach – so far unique in Germany – strengthens inclusive cultural practice both in artistic production and in cultural reception.

In 2022, the City of Cologne adopted the programme, which had been developed jointly with representatives of the independent arts

sector, cultural institutions and civil society organisations. It responds to key challenges in contemporary cultural policy: access to artistic education, production and reception remains unevenly distributed, and artists with disabilities continue to be underrepresented in cultural institutions. The programme therefore aims to strengthen cultural participation as a cultural right and to embed inclusion permanently within municipal cultural policy.

The programme deliberately combines several funding instruments. By linking project



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and institutional funding with qualification programmes, advisory structures and new communication formats, a municipal infrastructure for inclusive cultural practice is gradually emerging. This infrastructure connects measures for physical and sensory accessibility with artistic innovation in the spirit of “Aesthetics of Access”.

As a result, a new cultural policy framework has developed in Cologne that strengthens

inclusive artistic production, opens new training pathways and improves the visibility of accessible cultural programmes.

Cologne thus understands cultural participation as a central task for the future of municipal cultural policy and as a contribution to inclusive and democratic urban development.

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## CONCEPCIÓN, CHILE

### DeclarAction: Practices for Cultural Rights and Sustainable Development

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“DeclarAcción” (DeclarAction, in Spanish) was an initiative implemented by the Municipality of Concepción to implement the Charter of Cultural Rights by identifying, systematising and promoting specific cultural practices that contribute to sustainable development in the region. It originated from an institutional learning process: rights frameworks, when expressed primarily in legal language, tend to be inaccessible and make it difficult for citizens to understand and take ownership of them. In response to this, DeclarAcción worked from the everyday life of neighbourhoods, connecting community interests and experiences with cultural rights and translating them into tools for public use.

The initiative was implemented through South-South collaboration with Quilmes (Argentina) and Niterói (Brazil), cities that have cultural rights charters, by means of methodological

co-design, parallel surveys and the comparison of findings. It was structured around three components: (1) an internal assessment with teams linked to culture in the three cities; (2) an external assessment via the open digital survey “Tu Voz Cuenta – DeclarAcción” (Your Voice Counts – DeclarAcción), aimed at individuals and organisations and incorporating an open-ended question focused on specific cultural practices; and (3) international coordination and dissemination to share results and strengthen transferability.

To process the volume of information, DeclarAcción incorporated generative artificial intelligence as technical support for data cleansing, grouping and synthesis tasks, always subject to review and final decision by the human team and with procedures documented in annexes. This integration drew on regional insights and references regarding



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cultural knowledge management, including approaches promoted from Bogotá by the Directorate of Cultural Knowledge Observatory and Management of the Secretariat of Culture, Recreation and Sport. The findings were

organised using an operational framework comprising eight areas associated with sustainability (democracy, technology, the environment, diversity, identity/memory/heritage, education, cooperation and economy).

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### CUENCA, ECUADOR

Voices of Equality: Women, Culture and Knowledge that are Transforming Cuenca

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In many cities around the world, cultural life still reflects historical inequalities that have limited the visibility and recognition of women in spaces of cultural creation, representation and transmission. Although they have played a fundamental role in artistic production and the transmission of knowledge, their presence remains limited in museums, cultural circuits and institutional narratives.

In response to this challenge, Cuenca City Council launched “Voces de Igualdad” (Voices of Equality), a cultural policy initiative aimed at expanding women’s participation in the city’s cultural life, raising the profile of their artistic output and recognising female knowledge as part of living cultural heritage.

Since 2024, the initiative has promoted various cultural activities, including the exhibition “Mujeres que dejan Huella” (Women Who Leave Their Mark), the prominent participation of women at the Cuenca International Book Fair, and the 6th Meeting of “Arte Mujeres Ecuador” – AME (Ecuador Women’s Art Encounter), whose exhibition at the Municipal Museum of Modern Art attracted 8845 visitors.

Furthermore, the city’s museums and cultural venues hosted exhibitions by women artists such as “Lo roto y lo Completo” (The Broken and the Whole), “Hilos de la Memoria” (Threads of Memory), “Monstrorum Matris” and “Soliloquio: Academia y género en Cuenca (1890–1950)” (Academy and Gender in Cuenca). These are helping to expand the presence of women in cultural circles and to re-examine local art history from a gender perspective.

As part of its ongoing programme, the National Conference “Parteras y Sanadoras: Guardianas de los Saberes” (Midwives and Healers: Guardians of Knowledge) will take place in 2026, with the aim of recognising the role of women as bearers of ancestral knowledge linked to the care of life and the transmission of wisdom.

In this way, Voces de Igualdad is establishing itself as an evolving cultural process that promotes women’s cultural participation, strengthens the recognition of their knowledge and positions culture as a tool for promoting equality, cultural diversity and cultural rights, in line with the principles of sustainable development set out in the 2030 Agenda.



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### CUNDINAMARCA, COLOMBIA

#### Initiatives that Transform

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In Cundinamarca, we believe that conflicts should not be hidden or eliminated, but rather transformed into opportunities to strengthen coexistence, the social fabric and build citizenship. Inspired by peace approaches that recognise that violence can manifest itself in direct, structural or cultural ways, we understand that many inequalities, exclusions and invisible barriers limit people's full development and affect community life.

"Iniciativas que Transforman" (Initiatives that Transform) is a commitment that recognises the value of communities as key players in peacebuilding and the cultural development of their territories. The strategy supports and raises the profile of community projects that

promote dialogue, participation, memory, identity and local cultural expressions, strengthening the social fabric and creating spaces where differences become drivers of encounter and cooperation.

Each initiative represents a creative response to the realities of the regions: actions that promote inclusion, citizen participation and the recognition of cultural diversity as a fundamental element for peaceful coexistence. In this way, cultural rights become a tool for redressing inequalities, rebuilding trust between communities and strengthening the social fabric, generating real impacts in the regions.

### DUBAI, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

#### Dubai Integrated Waste Strategy 2041

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Dubai is committed to strengthening culture as a fundamental pillar of sustainable urban development, and our project—the Dubai Integrated Waste Strategy 2041—reflects this vision by linking environmental stewardship, community participation, and cultural transformation.

Dubai Integrated Waste Strategy 2041 provides a comprehensive roadmap to transform the city's waste management system through waste reduction, circular economy development,

modern infrastructure, and a transition from landfill dependency toward recovery, recycling, and energy conversion. Beyond environmental outcomes, the strategy supports a cultural shift that promotes responsible consumption, public awareness, and shared stewardship of the urban environment.

This approach aligns with Dubai Municipality's broader efforts to integrate culture, heritage, and public life into the development of the city. Initiatives such as the partnership with the



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Dubai Culture and Arts Authority to transform Dubai into an open-air global art gallery, the community-focused Hewi Dubai Initiative inspired by the traditional Emirati fareej, and the revitalization of historic areas such as the Deira Souks reflect our commitment to cultural sustainability and inclusive urban development.

Dubai Municipality has also implemented several initiatives to harmonize the exterior appearance of waste containers with their

surroundings and the aesthetic character of the city. Moving away from the conventional design of waste bins, the Municipality introduced gold-colored containers in the heritage Gold Souk area of Old Dubai. Furthermore, it deployed containers featuring vibrant floral designs and cheerful colors to complement Dubai's parks and green spaces. These initiatives have achieved significant success and widespread acclaim.

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## GANGWON PROVINCE, REPUBLIC OF KOREA

Gangwon Cultural Care Policy for Cultural Rights

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Gangwon Province is implementing an inclusive cultural policy grounded in cultural rights to ensure that all residents—regardless of geographic location or social conditions—can participate in cultural life and sustain creative activities. The policy particularly focuses on culturally vulnerable groups, including persons with disabilities and residents of rural, mountainous, and coastal communities where cultural infrastructure is limited. Through an integrated Cultural Care Policy framework, the province systematically supports cultural access, participation, creative activities, and arts education.

The initiative is implemented through four key programs:

- Creative Activity Support Program for Artists with Disabilities

- Arts Introduction Academy for Persons with Disabilities
- Cultural Access Support Program for Persons with Disabilities
- Outreach Cultural Activities Program for Underserved Communities

This policy expands the scope of cultural policy beyond the provision of cultural programs by positioning culture as a domain of social care and a means of guaranteeing cultural rights. By enhancing access to and participation in culture, Gangwon Province enhances cultural diversity and social inclusion, ensuring that all members of the community—including those traditionally excluded from cultural life—can actively engage in and contribute to the region's cultural vitality.



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### GOYANG, REPUBLIC OF KOREA

From Idle Public Assets to a Visual Arts Commons: Haeum and Saedeul, Goyang

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Goyang went beyond the reuse of obsolete public facilities by transforming them into visual arts creation hubs, establishing a city-level visual arts ecosystem that connects artists, citizens, and the local community. This initiative was not merely about physical regeneration, but a policy-driven effort integrating cultural policy, urban regeneration, artist support, and civic cultural participation.

Haeum, created through the renovation of a former exhibition hall, functions as a citizen-accessible creative space. Through exhibitions, open studios, workshops, and educational programmes, citizens are encouraged not only to view completed artworks but also to experience artists' creative processes and ways of thinking through direct interaction. In this way, art expands from passive observation to participation and shared understanding.

By contrast, Saedeul is a research-based creative space regenerated from a former

military barrack while preserving the site's historical and spatial identity. Resident artists research and archive the area's environment, memories, resources, and communities, and develop these findings into artistic projects. Here, art functions as a tool for interpreting place and documenting local narratives.

Although functionally distinct, the two spaces operate in a complementary manner, forming a dual structure: Haeum as a hub for artistic engagement and public participation, and Saedeul as a hub for artistic production and research. This approach goes beyond the provision of creative space and reflects a shift in local governance, with the administration moving from organising cultural events to designing and operating a sustainable arts ecosystem.

### GUADALAJARA, MÉXICO

Cultural Rights Strategy

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The Cultural Rights Strategy of Guadalajara is a comprehensive public policy that seeks to recognise, protect and guarantee the full exercise of the cultural rights of all residents and visitors to the city, viewing culture as a human right and the city as a living cultural ecosystem.

The strategy emerged in response to a historical trajectory of cultural management focused primarily on events, artistic disciplines and infrastructure, without a cross-cutting, regulatory or long-term approach. Against this backdrop, Guadalajara decided to move towards a structural cultural policy, aligned



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with international frameworks on human rights and sustainable development, and with UCLG's Agenda 21 for Culture.

As a starting point, the city fully implemented the Culture 21 Plus methodology, becoming the first city in the world to formally carry out the whole process with the support of UCLG. This assessment and forward-looking exercise made possible to identify gaps, inequalities and opportunities, and to lay the foundations for a profound institutional transformation.

The Cultural Rights Strategy coordinates a cross-sectoral and participatory process involving multiple areas of the municipal government, cultural communities, civil society, and national and international experts.

Its aim is to translate the principles of culture as a right into concrete instruments of public policy, planning and regulation.

Among its main outcomes are the development of the Sectoral Programme on Cultural Rights, the creation of the first Municipal Regulations on Cultural Rights, a regulatory improvement package for independent cultural spaces, cultural corridors and cultural governance, as well as the City Charter for Cultural Rights. Taken together, the strategy positions Guadalajara as a city committed to cultural democracy, territorial justice and the sustainability of the cultural ecosystem, with a long-term vision that transcends administrations.

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## GUIMARÃES, PORTUGAL

### District C: Creative Hub for Zero-Carbon Policies/Actions

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District C operates as a collaborative social experiment focused on neighbourhood development through culture, knowledge and creativity, functioning as a living laboratory for testing and refining zero-carbon policies. The pilot is structured around a Citizens' Pact for carbon neutrality and a Creative Hub addressing energy transition, sustainable mobility, circular economy, waste management and land use. By engaging universities, cultural and artistic organisations, businesses and civic stakeholders, the initiative integrates governance, public policy, financing mechanisms and behavioural change,

challenging entrenched cultural patterns at both individual and institutional levels.

The project aligns with the green agenda, digital transformation and social inclusion and European Green Capital 2026 framework, promoting the transition of the local economic fabric through creativity and innovation. It strengthens competitiveness and supports qualified employment, particularly by fostering cultural and creative industries and knowledge-intensive clusters, generating positive spill-over effects on traditional sectors.

Guimarães advances with District C by placing



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citizens at the centre of decision-making and transformation processes. Flagship initiatives include the PAYT (Pay-As-You-Throw), RRRICLO, the Biowaste Management Plan 2030, the Citizens' Pact, Guimarães Marca,

Set.Up Guimarães, Bairro C, Guimarães C Visível, Green Week, Festival Vai-m' à Banda, Missão Guimarães 2030 and the Landscape Laboratory.

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## HERZLIYA, ISRAEL

"Mathaf bil-Arabi" - 'Museum' in Arabic

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The "Mathaf bil-Arabi" ('Museum' in Arabic) initiative is a pioneering holistic and strategic program dedicated to integrating art education and promoting cultural literacy among Arab society in Israel. The project is founded upon the premise that cultural institutions, particularly museums of contemporary art, bear an active responsibility to create safe platforms for multi-vocal discourse and to promote spaces for shared living. Through comprehensive linguistic accessibility and the provision of a rich pedagogical framework,

the project endeavors to dismantle cultural and linguistic barriers, thereby transforming the museum into a shared, inclusive, and welcoming space for diverse audiences—including students, teaching staff, families, and university students. Concurrently, the initiative generates an internal organizational transformation within the museum itself, adopting an integral multicultural identity that is reflected in its content, staff, and operational ethos.

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## HIDALGO STATE, MÉXICO

Living Fabric. Cultural Decentralisation for Transformation

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Hidalgo: Living Fabric ("Tejido Vivo") is the systemic response of the administration of Governor Julio Menchaca Salazar and the Secretary of Culture, Neyda Naranjo, to a region with significant gaps in cultural access. According to INEGI (2020), the state has a population of 3,082,841, of whom children and adolescents account for 31.1% (958,875

people). Whilst the capital is home to 80,169 children and adolescents, the remaining 91.6% reside in municipalities where geographical dispersion has historically limited access to cultural education services.

By 2024, this model of cultural management will be consolidated as a network-based policy that links the professionalisation of cultural



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agents with a scheme of territorial social remuneration. Under the coordination of CECULTAH, the strategy utilises 12 Regional Cultural Centres as territorial hubs for cultural coordination, strengthening artistic training and expanding access to cultural services in regions with historical gaps such as the Sierra Alta, the Mining Region, the Mezquital Valley and the Pulquera Plateau.

The policy addresses complex contexts such as marginalisation and language barriers in the Otomí-Tepohua and Huasteca regions, as well as migration processes that have affected community cohesion in the Mezquital Valley.

Aligned with Agenda 21 for Culture and SDGs 4, 5, 10 and 16, the initiative comprises three components: Regional Cultural Centres, Ruta Colibrí (the Hummingbird Route) — a programme focused on municipalities with limited cultural infrastructure— and Project 84, a travelling initiative that brings artistic training programmes to all 84 municipalities in the state.

Hidalgo: Tejido Vivo thus constitutes a territorial cultural policy aimed at strengthening social cohesion, expanding the exercise of cultural rights and reducing gaps in access to cultural life in rural and semi-urban contexts.

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## HORTA, AZORES, PORTUGAL

### Musical Season of the Teachers of the Regional Conservatory

22

The Musical Season is part of the cultural promotion strategy of the Municipality of Horta, within the “Horta Cultural” program, positioning itself as an initiative that values the arts, artistic education, and the cultural vitality of the municipality.

Created in 2023, the Musical Season has progressively established itself in the local cultural landscape, reaching its 4th edition in 2026. Its main objective is to recognize and promote the pedagogical and artistic work of the teachers of the Regional Conservatory of Horta, while providing the community with free access to high-quality concerts featuring diverse instrumental ensembles, musical styles, and historical periods.

The initiative contributes to the democratization of cultural access, audience development, and the strengthening of local identity. Concerts take place in cultural and heritage venues across the municipality, fostering closer connections between performers and audiences while enhancing existing spaces. It also encourages the sharing of artistic experiences, new interpretative approaches, and institutional collaboration, reinforcing the Conservatory’s role as an active agent in the cultural development of Faial Island.

The Musical Season aligns with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): SDG 1 — No Poverty, by ensuring free access to cultural activities; SDG 4 — Quality Education, by



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promoting artistic learning; SDG 5 — Gender Equality, through equitable participation; SDG 11 — Sustainable Cities and Communities, by strengthening cultural cohesion; and SDG 17 — Partnerships for the Goals, by fostering

collaboration between public and educational institutions. It thus reaffirms the Municipality of Horta's commitment to culture as a pillar of social and community development.

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### IZMIR METROPOLITAN MUNICIPALITY, TURKEY

#### Colorful Letters

23

Izmir Metropolitan Municipality operates 11 public libraries, including two mobile libraries, which function not only as spaces for borrowing books but also as inclusive social and cultural learning environments. Beyond conventional services, these libraries act as community hubs that respond to local needs by developing projects promoting learning, social inclusion, and cultural participation. The Colorful Letters Project introduces an innovative methodology to support children aged 7–11 experiencing reading and writing difficulties. Framed within a cultural rights and well-being perspective, the project understands literacy challenges not as individual deficits but as barriers linked to unequal access to cultural opportunities and public spaces. Through this approach, public libraries are redefined as inclusive community learning environments where culture, participation, and collaborative learning intersect. The Library

Directorate brings together children, families, and volunteer preservice teachers to create supportive learning spaces that strengthen both literacy development and social inclusion. The project follows a two-year modular structure (1+1). The first year focuses on pilot implementation, capacity building, and cooperation with local stakeholders, while the second year consolidates the model, refines

the methodology, and expands its local impact, ensuring sustainability and integration into local practice. By strengthening public libraries as community-based learning hubs, the Colorful Letters Project improves children's literacy skills while encouraging their active participation in cultural life and shared public spaces. The initiative offers an adaptable local model linking literacy, cultural rights, and community well-being.



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### LA FALDA, CÓRDOBA, ARGENTINA

#### Municipal Programme for Encouraging the Arts (PEA)

24

The Department of Culture and Education of the Municipality of La Falda develops programmes that foster direct links with local residents, with the aim of collectively nurturing the cultural practices of our community. It works on the ground to gather real-world data needed to design relevant public policies.

The Municipal Programme for Encouraging the Arts (PEA) was established in June 2021 to initiate and sustain dialogues that reveal the types of artistic and cultural practices taking place in our locality and to identify the needs of those involved, thereby providing input for the design and management of public policies aimed at strengthening these practices in particular, and local culture in general.

The programme carries out two key initiatives: the Forums for Artists and Cultural Institutions and the Grants for the Creation and Management of Artistic Projects.

It is through these Forums and public discussions with artists and members of cultural institutions that the various demands are analysed and actions designed to address them.

The Grants are a direct response to artists' need for funding to initiate, develop or complete their projects. Access to the grants is via a call for applications with a local and context-specific perspective, featuring juries that are able to understand and prioritise the ways in which projects are produced and carried out in and for our locality and region.

### LAMU, REPUBLIC OF KENYA

#### Culture as a Driver of Sustainable Development

25

Lamu County's initiative positions culture as a central driver of sustainable development, peace, and cultural rights, with the Annual Lamu Cultural Festival serving as its flagship platform. Anchored in the living Swahili heritage of Lamu Old Town, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, the project promotes the protection, transmission, and celebration of both tangible and intangible cultural heritage through community-led participation.

The programme brings together local communities, cultural practitioners, elders, youth groups, women artisans, and creative entrepreneurs to safeguard traditional knowledge, arts, maritime heritage, music, poetry, cuisine, and craftsmanship. By creating inclusive spaces for cultural expression and intercultural dialogue, the initiative strengthens social cohesion, shared identity, and peaceful coexistence within a historically marginalized



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and fragile coastal region.

Beyond cultural preservation, the project links heritage to sustainable local development by generating economic opportunities for youth and women, supporting creative industries, and promoting responsible cultural tourism that respects the integrity of the World Heritage Site. The festival attracts national and international visitors, fostering global cultural exchange while reinforcing local pride, stewardship, and ownership of heritage.

Implemented and coordinated by the County Government in partnership with communities and stakeholders, the initiative demonstrates how local cultural policies can advance cultural rights, inclusive governance, and sustainable livelihoods. By embedding culture into development planning, Lamu County offers a replicable model of how culture can contribute meaningfully to resilience, peacebuilding, and sustainable territorial development.

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## LISBON, PORTUGAL

### Living Lands Programme

26

The “Lotes ComVida” (Living Lands) Programme (LCVP) is a community intervention initiative promoted by the Lisbon City Council through Gebalis – the municipal company responsible for managing municipal housing – aimed at strengthening the collective organisation of residential buildings and the appropriation of common spaces. It brings together the managing entity, residents and partners through a collaborative management approach, reinforcing social cohesion, a sense of belonging and the cultural identity of each territory.

The LCVP is implemented in several municipal neighbourhoods in Lisbon and is structured through collaborative projects that combine

artistic practices, cultural mediation and community action. It values local knowledge and encourages the active participation of residents in building solutions to the challenges faced by each territory. By integrating culture, citizenship and social inclusion, the programme contributes to the promotion of cultural rights, the reduction of inequalities and the development of more sustainable, participatory and resilient communities.

The “Lotes ComVida” Programme is based on an intervention methodology structured around four complementary dimensions: diagnosis, action, communication and evaluation, enabling responses that are tailored to the specific characteristics of each territory.

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## LUDWIGSBURG, BADEN-WÜRTTEMBERG, GERMANY

### Memorial Day for Women who Suffer(ed) Gender-Based Violence

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Many stakeholders had to be convinced of the idea of a day of remembrance for women who were, are, and will be victims of gender-based violence.

The choice of date was also important: March 10 was chosen. The proximity to March 11, day of remembrance for victims of terrorist attacks worldwide established by the European Union in 2005, is intentional. Gender-based violence against women is already considered terrorism in other countries: in Canada, for example, an INCEL was convicted of terrorism in 2023 and sentenced to life imprisonment for murdering a woman.

A public crowdfunding made it possible to raise €12,000. This secured an interactive full-day program on International Women's Day 2025, which culminated in the evening with the announcement of the first Ludwigsburg Memorial Day for women who were, are, and will be victims of gender-based violence.

Ludwigsburg was able to secure Germany's largest victim advocacy group, WEISSER RING

e. V., as an external partner, as well as the municipal churches.

On the morning of March 10, 2025, flags in front of City Hall were adorned with black ribbons. The official memorial ceremony began with a trumpet solo of Lady Gaga's 'Till It Happens to You.' A short speech by the mayor, Dr. Matthias Knecht, was followed by the ringing of the cities' churches bells. The event concluded with a minute of silence.

The first Ludwigsburg memorial day for women who were, are, and will be victims of gender-based violence received an overwhelmingly positive response from the media and has since been institutionalized: Today, on March 10, 2026, we once again commemorated this day in a joint service, with a significantly larger audience than a year ago.

We are continuing our work on expanding this memorial day at the state and federal level.

## MARICÁ, RJ, BRAZIL

### Culture of Rights

28

The "Cultura de Direitos" (Culture of Rights) program is a municipal public policy implemented in the city of Maricá, Brazil, that promotes human rights, citizenship and community participation

through culture-based territorial actions. Since its implementation in 2018, the initiative has offered 472 cultural workshop groups reaching more than 9,500 participants, organized



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194 cultural presentations, conducted 9,126 household surveys reaching 20,943 residents, and registered over 60,000 social assistance interactions across 44 neighborhoods in the four districts of the municipality.

The program operates through Citizenship Hubs located in different territories of the city, functioning as community spaces where residents participate in cultural activities, access social support and engage with public services. Free workshops in areas such as music, audiovisual production, social media, graffiti and capoeira promote artistic expression, learning and community participation, especially among children, adolescents and families in situations of social vulnerability.

Cultural activities serve as an entry point for broader citizenship actions. Through social agents from the Neighborhood Defense Committee (CDB), the program combines cultural programming with territorial outreach, including household visits, listening processes and guidance on rights. These actions help residents access public services such as health, education and social assistance while strengthening relationships between communities and local government.

The program also generates territorial data through family mapping and community engagement, supporting evidence-based municipal planning and reinforcing culture as a tool for social inclusion and democratic participation.

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## MERSIN METROPOLITAN MUNICIPALITY, TURKEY

MEDEKA (Mersin Community Culture Platform)

29

Mersin is a city shaped by many civilizations, where ancient beliefs and deep-rooted traditions have enriched one another for centuries. This layered heritage has created one of the Mediterranean's most distinctive cultures of coexistence. The city's streets reflect a vibrant, multi-voiced character, turning Mersin into a shared stage where diverse cultural expressions can flourish. To preserve this human heritage and connect the city's culture of peace with contemporary cultural dynamics, the Mersin Metropolitan Municipality established the Mersin Community Culture Platform (MEDEKA). MEDEKA reimagines

the city not merely as a place to live, but as a cultural meeting ecosystem that carries Mersin's pluralistic spirit into the future through democratic cultural governance.

MEDEKA moves beyond the traditional municipal divide between "service provider" and "service recipient" by placing citizen participation at the center of decision-making. It positions culture—an essential pillar of sustainable development—as a driver of economic and social progress. Its work is carried out through 11 specialized committees covering literature, photography, gastronomy, city ambassadors,



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city history and memory, music and performing arts, visual arts, cinema, sports, tourism and archaeology, and academic research.

Beyond organizing cultural events, MEDEKA functions as a strategic structure guiding Mersin's cultural policy. Projects such as the Mersin Urban Memory Office and the

Mersin Film Office demonstrate its long-term impact. Through participatory governance and collaborative creativity, MEDEKA strengthens social cohesion, protects cultural heritage, and positions Mersin as an emerging cultural hub in the Mediterranean.

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## MUNICH, BAVARIA, GERMANY

#FemaleHeritage

30

Cities are vibrant, open spaces. With its literary archive, Monacensia forms part of Munich's collective memory and sees itself as a centre for remembrance. But memory is not neutral: it is shaped by people, events and social structures. With #FemaleHeritage, Monacensia critically questions its collection practices and presents the results transparently.

#FemaleHeritage broadens our view of society and helps us understand Munich as a space of diverse memories and writing cultures. The temporal and geographical independence of the writers builds bridges to other cities and countries, from past to present and into the future.

An analysis in 2020 showed that the Monacensia archive lacks many realities of life that characterise a diverse city like Munich. In particular, the perspectives of women in various literary professions are underrepresented.

These gaps in collective memory are also reflected in public perception.

Addressing these gaps became a guiding principle for Monacensia's archivists, curators, educators and librarians. To fill them quickly and from different perspectives, cataloguing was combined with the search for missing information, and networks and target groups were invited to participate.

A key prerequisite for #FemaleHeritage — and for opening Monacensia itself — is digital curation and networking beyond Munich. The project has triggered transformation within and beyond Monacensia, including new forms of knowledge and science communication.

All services and stays in the house and garden are free of charge seven days a week. Monacensia is a municipal institution.



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### **NAIROBI, REPUBLIC OF KENYA**

Culture, Public Space and Opportunity

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Nairobi City County is advancing a culture-led approach to people-centred city-making that positions the city itself as a platform for cultural expression, creativity and opportunity. Through cultural policy development, public space activation and support for the creative economy, the County is expanding access to culture while creating new pathways for youth participation and livelihoods.

Building on earlier work that mapped Nairobi's cultural assets, the County is now completing the development of a comprehensive cultural policy framework and is strengthening the governance of culture through stakeholder engagement, capacity-building for county officers and partnerships with creative practitioners and civil society organisations.

At the same time, Nairobi is activating public spaces as sites of culture and civic life. Initiatives such as the Governor's vision to make the city a "free stage" and the Dunga Road Renewal tactical urbanism project, implemented in partnership with The GoDown Arts Centre, demonstrate how streets and neighbourhoods can become safer, more vibrant spaces for creativity, community interaction and local economic activity.

Together, these efforts illustrate how culture can function as a driver of sustainable urban development, strengthening social cohesion while supporting Nairobi's creative and cultural industries.

### **NANTES, FRANCE**

Nantes Patrimonia

32

Launched in 2014 by the City of Nantes, the Nantes Patrimonia project ([patrimonia.nantes.fr](http://patrimonia.nantes.fr)) is at the heart of a bold political ambition: to place citizens at the centre of the creation of our collective history. This collaborative digital platform embodies our commitment to valuing citizens' contributions and making knowledge about our region's tangible and intangible heritage accessible. This approach is based on the principles of the Faro Convention, which recognises everyone's right to benefit from and enrich cultural heritage.

The creation of this project is the result of several years of development and ongoing dialogue with its future users. Through needs assessments and co-design workshops, we have ensured that this tool meets users' expectations in terms of usability and editorial content.

Since its official launch in May 2019, the platform has enabled users to discover the diversity of Nantes' heritage through various types of content:



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- Interactive maps and walking tours to explore the city at your own pace.
- A collection of over 1,200 in-depth articles, enriched with audio and video content.
- News articles bringing together initiatives from the City of Nantes and the municipalities within its metropolitan area, cultural institutions and the local associative network.

At the same time, we are developing new ways to showcase our heritage through virtual tours and ultra-high-definition imagery, making the

experience more engaging and interactive.

The strength of Nantes Patrimonia lies in its collaborative nature. We champion an open model of knowledge creation, where professional expertise is combined with the memories of local residents. Since its inception, the platform has also played an educational role. Consequently, its content is used by some teachers to prepare their history lessons, and on our website, we showcase educational projects on local history (the Holocaust, the Atlantic slave trade and slavery, workers' history, etc.) carried out in the classroom.

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## NITERÓI, BRAZIL

### BROTAÍ Programme – Community Culture Network

33

The Brotai Programme is a public policy on community culture run by Niterói City Council, aimed at providing free cultural workshops, training initiatives and integration activities across the city, with a focus on areas of greatest socio-economic vulnerability. It is guided by the principles of diversity, autonomy, social empowerment, citizenship and the promotion of cultural rights, with an emphasis on reducing social, ethnic-racial and gender inequalities. It forms part of the strategy to strengthen culture as an instrument for social transformation, job and income generation, and the promotion of the creative economy in peripheral areas. The Programme is an initiative of the Niterói City Council, implemented through the Niterói Municipal Secretariat for Culture. It is

carried out in partnership with a civil society organisation selected through a public call for proposals. The Programme operates within the municipality of Niterói, with decentralised activities across the city's five administrative macro-regions. The initiative prioritises areas with the highest levels of social vulnerability, seeking to expand access to culture in places where there has historically been limited provision of public cultural policies.

The Programme operates through:

1. Free cultural workshops: covering various disciplines (music, dance, visual arts, audiovisual arts, crafts, popular culture, amongst others);



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### 2. Educational workshops on cultural training:

- Continuous: more in-depth pedagogical training;
- Cross-cutting: topics such as citizenship, the fight against racism, cultural rights, and the creative economy;

### 3. Strategic integration meetings: spaces for coordination between different areas, exchange of experiences, and strengthening of the network;

### 4. Local mobilisation: mobilisers work directly within the local areas, promoting community coordination, student enrolment and support for activities;

### 5. Hiring workshop leaders and mobilisers from the local area: valuing and recognising local cultural practitioners and generating income locally.

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## NORTH MINAHASA, NORTH SULAWESI PROVINCE, INDONESIA

### The Preservation of Tonsea Minahasa Indigenous Culture

34

The Government of North Minahasa Regency has implemented a comprehensive policy initiative to safeguard and revitalize the living cultural heritage of the Tonsea Minahasa indigenous community through Local Regulation No. 3 of 2024 on the Empowerment of Indigenous Institutions and the Preservation of Tonsea Customs. This regulation establishes a formal governance framework that recognizes indigenous institutions as strategic partners in cultural preservation, social cohesion, and community development. The initiative responds to the challenges posed by rapid socio-economic transformation, tourism development, and globalization. Through this policy, the local government integrates cultural preservation into governance and development planning while strengthening the role of customary leaders, cultural practitioners, and community organizations.

The programme promotes community-based cultural preservation through cultural education, public festivals, intergenerational knowledge transfer, and the revitalization of traditional arts. Particular attention is given to the preservation and promotion of Kolintang traditional music, an iconic musical heritage of Minahasa, as well as the Tumatenden dance, a traditional narrative dance that reflects the origin story and cultural identity of the Minahasa people. Cultural activities are supported through training programmes, community performances, and their integration into cultural tourism initiatives. In addition, the Tonsea language has been incorporated into the local school curriculum as a local content subject, enabling students to learn and practice their indigenous language within formal education. This educational approach ensures that younger generations maintain a strong connection to their cultural roots.



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### NUEVO LEÓN, MEXICO

#### Cultural Spheres

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“Esferas Culturales” (Cultural Spheres) is an innovative community cultural intervention programme promoted by the Nuevo León Secretariat of Culture, designed to foster human and social development through artistic mediation. Based on its own methodology, this programme is structured around three pillars: play, as an educational tool that stimulates imagination and creativity; art, as a means of expression and social transformation; and community life, as the foundation for strengthening civic coexistence in neighbourhoods and public spaces.

This methodology served as the basis for the architectural design, which created an accessible and inclusive infrastructure that facilitates social interaction, guarantees free access 24 hours a day, and encourages the community to take ownership of the space.

This programme was a response to the socio-demographic context of the outskirts of the state capital, Monterrey, dominated by rapid population growth in industrial municipalities,

which creates a breeding ground for major social problems such as domestic violence, teenage pregnancy, school dropout rates and drug addiction, amongst others. Furthermore, these areas suffer from inadequate public infrastructure and housing developments that lead to overcrowding and a poor quality of family life.

There are currently three centres in the municipalities of Galeana, García and El Carmen. Covering an area of approximately 2200 m<sup>2</sup>, each of these facilities houses a library with over four thousand titles, a space for multidisciplinary activities, a recording studio and music room, a theatre with a capacity for 280 people, areas for physical expression and open-air spaces for community events.

Esferas Culturales broke with the paradigms of traditional cultural centres and welfare-based community practices, opting instead for an innovative programme that places people and communities at the centre.

### OFAQIM, ISRAEL

#### Follow the Events of October 7: Culture and Art as a Basis for Resilience and Rehabilitation

36

In the events of October 7, Ofaqim experienced a severe tragedy that left a scar on all of our hearts. Terrorists infiltrated the city, sowed destruction, fear, and pain, and resulted in the heartbreaking loss of 48 beloved residents. We

lost brothers, sisters, friends, and loved ones.

Hearts were broken, homes were destroyed, but our spirits were not broken.



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Out of the horror, out of the loss, the tremendous power of man and community was revealed. It was precisely in those difficult hours that stories of heroism were born - residents who protected their families, who saved neighbors, who kept their cool in the face of danger. Residents, police officers, and soldiers who went out to fight for their homes even at the cost of their lives.

Alongside these, a tremendous wave of volunteerism, mutual support, and a community embrace grew that enveloped the residents, the wounded, the bereaved families, and everyone who was affected.

Thousands of volunteers, young and old, volunteered to help rebuild the city and care for the injured. We saw exciting community

initiatives to strengthen resilience and to restore life and a blessed routine to our city.

All of this proves that the value of mutual support is deeply embedded in Ofaqim's DNA from that time until today.

And in the days that followed, Ofaqim stood out with its steadfast spirit: educational institutions resumed operations, businesses resumed their activities, neighbors supported neighbors, and all of us, shoulder to shoulder, returned to building and being built.

It was precisely from the destruction that we chose life. We chose to continue, to build, to grow, and most importantly - not to give up hope.

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## OLOT, CATALONIA, SPAIN

### Sismògraf Festival

Sismògraf (Seismograph) is the festival that detects the movement of the body and the planet, is conceived as a festival of the arts that presents the body as a medium for performance (dance, circus, performance art...) and of artistic projects based on an ecofeminist ethic. These concepts take shape in a programme that is both site-specific and socially conscious. Situated within a local setting (we are a small town in the heart of a natural park with over 40 dormant volcanoes and a unique landscape) which serves as a stage or backdrop for the performances, or as working material for educational or community-based artistic projects, and positioning our

small project within the wider world, building networks with other festivals and artistic communities at local, national and international levels. Conscious because it proposes, through art, ways to live better on the planet, and through the practice and management of the festival, sustainable ways to build an artistic project, economically, socially and environmentally. A festival that seeks to listen to the world and reinvent itself to keep pace with it, learning, with each edition, to ask better questions, even if no answers appear. A festival that strives to be inclusive and accessible and to contribute, through art, to a culture of peace.



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### **OULU, FINLAND**

Equal Oulu2026 - Fostering Diversity and Participation

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The Equal Oulu2026 project aimed to strengthen municipalities' and cultural organizations' ability to provide equitable cultural services while promoting cultural rights, diversity, and inclusion. A central goal was ensuring that the Oulu2026 European Capital of Culture programme reflected the community's full diversity.

A key focus was increasing knowledge of equality and non-discrimination among municipal employees and cultural actors. Over 2,000 participants from about 200 associations, schools, and art organizations attended 90 training sessions covering topics such as diversity, accessibility, safer spaces, anti-racism, plain language communication, autism-friendly services, and cultural appropriation. Many organizations applied these lessons by developing equality plans, improving communication, enhancing accessibility, and adopting safer space principles.

The project also aimed to strengthen cultural participation among underrepresented groups before Oulu's European Capital of Culture year. Inclusion workshops and open calls built trust, reinforced community connections, and challenged discriminatory structures. Events on culturally diverse living heritage and the "We Are Culture" open call encouraged minority participation.

In total, more than 2,600 people joined 126 inclusion events, and over 6,500 were reached through 86 public events. The project's outcomes are now being integrated into the Oulu Cultural Foundation's equality plan. The networks, collaboration models, and practices developed are expected to have long-term effects on equality, accessibility, and socially sustainable cultural development. We created the guide to help other institutions promote equality and diversity.

### **PARDES HANNA-KARKUR, ISRAEL**

ResidentCities - Participatory cultural mapping and planning project

39

ResidentCities – Cultural Mapping and Planning Project, Pardes Hanna–Karkur (PHK), Israel, is an integrative participatory cultural initiative designed to shape everyday urban life and future development amid rapid growth and densification, environmental change, social crises, and rising geopolitical tensions.

Centered on the concepts of home, hospitality, and sustainable inhabitation of the city, the project strengthens the local cultural ecosystem while advancing democratic governance and long-term transformation in urban policy and planning.



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ResidentCities develops physical and digital infrastructures and applies a tested cultural methodology that empowers residents to explore and co-create their city across domestic, public, and digital spaces. The initiative fosters structures of care—networks of support, collaboration, cultural production, and knowledge exchange that reinforce social cohesion, community well-being, and urban resilience. Grounded in Article 27 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, affirming the right to participate in cultural life, the project understands culture as intrinsic to care and civic participation, through four interconnected

pillars: Participatory Cultural Mapping of local values and geospatial presence, Artistic Hosting—a network of home-based artist residencies, a Policy Hub, and a culture-driven urban participatory planning. Deep cultural data generated in these processes informs evidence-based municipal decision-making and strengthens cross-departmental collaboration. Developed through collaboration among researchers, planners, artists, residents, and the municipality, ResidentCities operates as a pilot in a culturally vibrant village-scale city and demonstrates a transferable and scalable model for culture-led development.

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### PARSHURAM, NEPAL

From Education to Empowerment: Cultural Policy Advancing Gender Equality

40

Parshuram Municipality's initiative is a gender transformative cultural policy that uses education as a catalyst to advance cultural rights, social justice, and inclusive local development. Rooted in a rural context where entrenched cultural norms have historically limited girls' access to education and public life, the municipality institutionalised the Daughter and Daughter-in-Law Scholarship Programme alongside complementary education and livelihood support measures.

The initiative reframes girls' education from a private family matter into a collective cultural responsibility and a public policy priority. By recognising daughters and daughters-in-law as equal rights holders and future leaders, the programme challenges discriminatory social

norms, strengthens cultural democracy, and expands women's participation in cultural, social, and economic life.

Beyond improving access to education, the policy contributes to community care by reducing economic pressure on families, fostering intergenerational solidarity, and reinforcing dignity, wellbeing, and social cohesion. Linked with youth skills development, local livelihood pathways, and entrepreneurship support, the initiative connects cultural transformation with inclusive prosperity and reduced out migration.

Implemented through participatory local governance and partnerships with schools, families, and community actors, the programme



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demonstrates how local governments can translate cultural rights into sustainable, place based development. Parshuram Municipality's experience shows that investing in girls'

education is not only an educational intervention, but a long-term cultural strategy to transform gender relations, strengthen communities, and build a more just and sustainable future.

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### PICHINCHA, ECUADOR

#### Pichincha Urban Art Festival

41

The Pichincha Urban Art Festival is one of the most significant public policy initiatives implemented by the Prefecture of Pichincha in Ecuador. It was launched in 2022 as an initiative serving two specific purposes. Firstly, to promote urban visual art through the participation of national and international artists with experience and expertise in graffiti and muralism; and secondly, to develop creative proposals centred on the prevention and elimination of violence against women, thereby fostering dialogue and reflection through art that supports the struggle of many women in Ecuador and around the world, and is shared with all the communities living within the Prefecture of Pichincha. The project is developed through three main areas of action:

**Training:** workshops are organised and held in various locations across the Prefecture of Pichincha, where children and young people are taught innovative urban art techniques so

that they can express their ideas on a wall.

**Artistic creation:** an annual call for entries is issued to receive proposals from urban artists across the country (provincial focus, national reach) on the theme of preventing and eliminating violence against women. Between 10 and 20 proposals are selected, which also include the participation of invited international artists.

**Dialogue with other arts:** a special festival programme is organised to foster dialogue with musical and cinematic expressions and cultural initiatives.

The Festival has run for three editions (2022, 2023, 2024) with a dissemination and circulation phase in 2025, and a fourth edition is planned for 2026. Its partners include Neural Industrias Creativas and the Detonarte International Festival.

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### PUEBLA, MEXICO

#### Cultural Nodes: Territorial Cultural System for Cultural Democracy

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The “NODOS Culturales” (Cultural Nodes) Network in the Municipality of Puebla is a public cultural policy promoted by the Municipal Institute of Art and Culture of Puebla (IMACP) which aims to ensure equitable access to cultural rights through a territorial strategy of cultural decentralisation.

The programme coordinates a network of community arts and culture spaces located across different areas of the municipality, particularly in auxiliary councils and areas with limited access to cultural infrastructure. Through these spaces, participatory cultural processes are developed, including art workshops, cultural mediation, creative training and community cultural activities aimed at children, young people and local communities.

The NODOS model is based on collaborative cultural governance that connects the municipal government with artists, cultural collectives, educational institutions, civil society organisations and communities. Each NODO functions as a cultural meeting point within its territory, strengthening citizen participation,

the social fabric and local cultural life.

The initiative incorporates participatory cultural mapping processes that enable the identification of cultural agents, territorial needs and opportunities for community cultural development. This information guides the expansion of the network and facilitates decision-making in municipal cultural policy.

Unlike models based solely on the construction of new cultural infrastructure, NODOS proposes a distributed cultural network that links existing spaces through public-social and community cooperation. This approach enables broader access to culture, strengthens local cultural ecosystems and builds a replicable model of territorial cultural policy.

With this strategy, the municipality of Puebla seeks to consolidate a territorial cultural system that promotes cultural democracy, citizen participation and sustainable cultural development, in line with the principles of Agenda 21 for Culture.

### RAMALLAH, PALESTINE

#### Living Heritage for a Resilient Future

43

The initiative is a citywide, long-term municipal policy led by the City of Ramallah to safeguard and activate cultural heritage as a living urban resource. It reflects the City’s strategic

commitment to cultural heritage as a core element of identity, memory, belonging and social cohesion. In the Palestinian context of ongoing occupation, cultural heritage holds



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heightened significance as it affirms the Palestinian narrative and resists appropriation and erasure. Rooted in the broader Levantine tradition and shaped by successive civilizations, Ramallah's heritage connects past, present and future, forming a shared collective identity for Palestinians in the city and diaspora. As a city shaped by displacement and migration, Ramallah recognizes cultural heritage as a vital asset for social cohesion, inclusivity, wellbeing and sustainable development.

Implemented and coordinated by the City of Ramallah in partnership with local communities, cultural practitioners, educational institutions and national stakeholders, the initiative includes integrated interventions. These include applying local protection legislations

to preserve and revitalize historic buildings and sites; advocating for national heritage laws; delivering inclusive annual awareness programs for children and youth; preserving the city's archives, documenting folk songs and oral histories and presenting Ramallah's inclusive narrative through the city museum.

The initiative targets city residents while engaging the Ramallites in diaspora as they're part of collective memory. The initiative aims to safeguard Ramallah's cultural heritage by preserving, revitalizing, documenting and making it accessible as a living and inclusive heritage, ensuring continuity of collective memory and citizens' right to cultural heritage across generations.

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### RECIFE, PERNAMBUCO, BRAZIL

Free Play: Recife for Women's Right to a Carnival without Violence

44

Recognized as one of the largest street parties in the world, Recife Carnival mobilizes millions of people and transforms the city's public spaces into territories of celebration, culture, and popular participation. It is one of the most significant expressions of Brazilian cultural heritage, marked by the democratic occupation of the streets. In 2026, the festival reached the largest audience in its history, gathering 3.7 million revelers over six days.

However, its magnitude also exposes structural inequalities, making the festive period a time of vulnerability for women exposed to harassment and gender-based violence.

Data from the Pernambuco Social Defense Secretariat recorded 436 police reports during Recife Carnival in 2020, 385 in 2021, 465 in 2022, 378 in 2023, 338 in 2024, and 240 in 2025. Despite fluctuations, recent years show a downward trend, indicating progress in prevention strategies and access to protection.

In response, since 2001 the City Hall has structured an institutional policy to protect and support women during the festival, coordinating prevention, assistance, and specialized services. Over 25 years, this policy has consolidated intersectoral action between departments and strengthened the municipal



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network to combat violence against women. At the same time, the carnival political bloco *Nem Com Uma Flor!* ('Not Even With a Flower!') has become a lasting cultural strategy for social mobilization.

In 2026, the policy was expanded, integrating prevention, care, and guidance services in a single space and reinforcing women's right to occupy public spaces with freedom, dignity, and safety.

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### RECONQUISTA, PROVINCE OF SANTA FE, ARGENTINA

45

Students' Olympics: a model of cultural participation

The "Estudiantina Olímpica" (Students' Olympics) of Reconquista is the most popular public policy initiative for young people in the province of Santa Fe. It is a programme that invites the educational community from secondary schools of all types and day centres for people with disabilities to take part in competitions and events across various cultural, sporting and educational disciplines. The first edition took place in 1992 and has been held annually for over 30 years. It attracts a crowd of over 30000 people to the murgas parade: the EO's signature closing event.

In the most recent edition, in 2025, more than 6000 students from 39 institutions in Reconquista and the wider region took part.

They may participate competitively or non-competitively, a decision left to each institution. The *Estudiantina Olímpica* (EO) begins with the Olympic torch relay and concludes with the murgas parade and closing ceremony. These are two highly significant events in the lives of the region's students. The Olympic flame

travels to each of the participating educational institutions, and as it passes through them, delegates join in, culminating in all the institutions coming together to reach the finish line.

More than just an event, the EO serves as a mechanism for building cultural citizenship and regional integration. For a month, young people come together, create, share knowledge and strengthen community bonds.

Year after year, the municipal staff organising the EO hold assemblies with student delegates from each institution—who are representing their peers—to make decisions regarding that year's event in a democratic manner, with the full participation of the student body.

Its long-term sustainability, the territorial scale achieved and the institutionalisation of intergenerational dialogue make the *Estudiantina* a replicable example of good municipal practice in the areas of cultural rights and youth participation.



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### REHOVOT, ISRAEL

#### Kedem District - Net-Zero Energy Urban Development

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Kedem District is a new urban development in Rehovot planned as a Net-Zero Energy neighbourhood designed to reduce emissions at their source and strengthen long-term energy resilience. As a new district planned from the ground up, Kedem is not intended to be a neighbourhood that simply consumes energy, it is being designed as a neighbourhood that knows how to save energy, produce it locally, store it, and manage it intelligently.

The district applies an integrated energy strategy combining high-efficiency building standards, renewable energy production, hybrid energy systems, distributed storage, smart energy management, and efficient public infrastructure. Buildings will incorporate

energy-efficient materials and systems with low environmental impact, while local renewable energy production will be maximized through solar installations on buildings, parking areas, and public facilities. Locally generated energy will support essential building operations and shared systems, with surplus energy supplied to the grid when available. Distributed storage systems will improve energy independence and support functional continuity during emergencies. Public infrastructure will include smart lighting systems, efficient thermal systems, electric mobility infrastructure, and a pneumatic waste collection system designed to reduce transportation needs and improve operational efficiency.

### RENNES MÉTROPOLE (IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE CITY OF RENNES), FRANCE

#### Museum Prescriptions

47

In December 2023, the Culture Department of Rennes Métropole officially launched a pilot scheme for the “Prescriptions muséales” (Museum Prescriptions) project, drawing inspiration from the Quebec model. The legitimacy of this approach is notably underpinned by the WHO report (2019): ‘What is the evidence on the role of the arts in improving health and well-being? A scoping review’. The report brings together quantitative and qualitative data to analyse

people’s experiences, perceptions and needs with the aim of improving their health and well-being. Over 900 publications are cited in this report, which provides evidence that artistic and cultural activity is a non-invasive, low-risk treatment option, complementary to biochemical and pharmaceutical treatments. This is why, as part of its cultural policy, Rennes Métropole is establishing a partnership with exhibition venues located in its city centre (Rennes) to offer cultural visits on prescription.



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The principle: a healthcare professional (or team) prescribes a cultural visit to a patient as part of their care pathway.

The objective: to work on people's psychosocial environment as a lever for recovery, to encourage empowerment, and to promote the cultural practice of visiting exhibitions for its positive impact on well-being (a visit that invites contemplation and encourages living in the present moment through the sensations generated by engaging with the artworks).

How it works: Rennes Métropole provides the

healthcare partner with a quota of numbered prescriptions. Each healthcare partner has an 'establishment code' to avoid stigmatisation. The prescription given to the patient is accompanied by an information booklet on the six partner cultural venues. The patient visits the venue of their choice free of charge with a person of their choice (or a family unit for paediatrics). They may choose to visit independently or to benefit from a guided and adapted tour. The prescription may be renewed at the patient's request.

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## ROSARIO, ARGENTINA

City Pages: Approaches to literature with vulnerable children

48

"Hojas de Ciudad" (City Pages) is an initiative of the Municipality of Rosario as part of the "Plan Cuidar" (Care Plan), which aims to improve well-being in neighbourhoods with high levels of social vulnerability by coordinating public and private efforts and resources. This project, led by the Secretariat for Culture and Education through the "Rosario Lee" (Rosario Reads) Reading Plan and supported by the Secretariat for Human Development and Habitat, aims to promote literacy, reading comprehension and cultural production among children aged 9 to 12.

Participants interact with local authors and illustrators in a creative process where they

collectively read, rewrite, illustrate and edit their stories, resulting in the creation of handmade fanzines. This experience not only highlights the community impact of creativity but also proposes a replicable and sustainable model for implementation in other contexts, strengthening the social fabric and promoting cultural rights.

Furthermore, Hojas de Ciudad includes a publication documenting the project's first edition, presented at the Rosario International Book Fair in 2025.



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### SALVADOR, BRAZIL

#### Movimento Salvador Capital Afro

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The Salvador Capital Afro Movement is a strategic public policy led by the Municipal Secretariat of Culture and Tourism of Salvador (SECULT). It is linked to the National Tourism Development Program in Salvador (PRODETUR Salvador) and financed by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), positioning Salvador as the world's leading Afro-diasporic capital.

The movement stems from the Afrotourism Development Plan, developed through a participatory process involving more than 650 representatives from the Afro-creative economy. It connects culture, tourism, and the Black creative economy as a strategy for inclusive, sustainable, and anti-racist development. With an investment of approximately R\$17 million, the initiative builds an integrated ecosystem that strengthens Afro-entrepreneurship, expands market opportunities, promotes technical training, and increases the city's international visibility.

The program is structured around five complementary pillars: AfroBiz (economic development), AfroEstima (education and empowerment), the Salvador Afro Capital Festival (cultural and social), the Baianas de Acarajé Census (tourism and heritage), and Rolê Afro (tourism route development and international promotion). Together, these actions promote the productive inclusion of the Black population in tourism and the creative economy, generating income, supporting professional qualification, fostering business internationalization, and valuing Afro-Brazilian cultural heritage.

By integrating public policy, cultural identity, and economic development through an Afro-centered and historically reparative approach, the movement represents an innovative model in Brazil and strengthens Salvador's position as a global reference in Afrotourism and the Black creative economy.

### ŞANLIURFA METROPOLITAN MUNICIPALITY, TURKEY

#### Cultural Heritage, Women's Empowerment and the Care Economy Model

50

The "Hamarat Eller" (Skillful Hands) initiative implemented by Şanlıurfa Metropolitan Municipality has transformed the historic Kızılkoyun and Kale Eteği areas from merely restored archaeological sites into vibrant spaces where culture is sustained women participate in production, and the local economy is strengthened

Şanlıurfa, one of the world's oldest continuously inhabited cities with a history of nearly 12,000 years, contains rock settlements, caves and traditional structures that had long remained inactive and socially vulnerable. Following restoration works carried out by the municipality these areas were revitalized and reintegrated into urban life through the "Hamarat Eller" model



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Within nearly 30 Women's Support Centers operating under the municipality, women receive vocational training and produce a variety of goods during and after their training. The Hamarat Eller Bazaar located on the Balıkgöl Tourism Plateau provides a marketplace where these products are offered to both domestic and international visitors. Women contribute to the local economy through production in traditional Şanlıurfa cuisine handicrafts cultural goods and gastronomy tourism

As a result, cultural heritage has not only been preserved but transformed into a living social and economic ecosystem. The model currently

provides income opportunities for hundreds of women, contributes to the revitalization of historical areas as safe public spaces, and supports the local economy through cultural tourism.

The Hamarat Eller initiative represents an innovative local governance approach that uses cultural heritage as a tool for social inclusion, women's empowerment and sustainable development, ensuring that Şanlıurfa's 12,000-year heritage continues as a source of livelihood and dignity for its women.

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## SÃO PAULO, BRAZIL

### VAI Program (Valorization of Cultural Initiatives)

51

In summary, the VAI Program (Valorization of Cultural Initiatives), created in 2003 through Law 13,540, has as its main objective the financial support for artistic and cultural activities, primarily those developed by low-income youth from regions lacking resources and cultural facilities in the city of São Paulo. At the time of its implementation, the goal was to recognize young people as producers of actions relevant to society, across a wide variety of artistic and cultural expressions, based on the understanding that it is the responsibility of the public sector to promote and encourage such

practices, especially in the city's peripheral areas. Moreover, in the logic of culture as a fundamental right, the VAI Program seeks to enable the recognition and civic participation of youth in the implementation and evaluation of this public policy. Over the course of 23 years, VAI has supported numerous projects and communities, strengthened existing groups, and fostered the formation of new cultural groups in the city. Through financial incentives and public sector oversight, VAI has become an important public tool for social and cultural inclusion.

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### SEOUL, REPUBLIC OF KOREA

#### The Seoul Outdoor Library: Expanding Cultural Rights and Urban Care

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The Seoul Outdoor Library is an innovative urban cultural platform that transforms central public spaces into cultural infrastructure that safeguards citizens' cultural rights while responding to the climate crisis—without constructing new library buildings. Initiated by the Seoul Metropolitan Library in 2022, the project was developed to address declining cultural participation after COVID-19 and growing social isolation in an increasingly digital society.

Major public spaces including Seoul Plaza, Gwanghwamun Square, and Cheonggyecheon Stream have been transformed into open reading environments where citizens can freely access books, cultural programs, and performances. The spaces operate without membership registration or borrowing procedures, and all programs are free, removing barriers to cultural participation and enabling culture to be enjoyed by everyone in public space.

The Seoul Outdoor Library functions as a collaborative cultural platform involving embassies, artists, local producers,

municipal departments, and citizens. Through programmes that combine reading, cultural exchange, and community participation, the initiative connects online and offline reading communities and strengthens social solidarity in the city.

Since its launch, the project has operated 481 outdoor programs and 937 days of indoor activities (as of January 2026), attracting more than 8 million cumulative visitors. Through modular infrastructure and partnerships, central urban spaces have been transformed into shared cultural commons embedded in everyday life.

The initiative has received international recognition, including the IFLA Green Library Award (2023) and the IFLA Marketing Award (2024), and has been featured by the OECD Observatory of Public Sector Innovation (OPSI).

### STRASBOURG, FRANCE

#### A Culture Goal to “Read Our World”

53

A Culture Goal to Read Our World stems from the synergy between local public policies and the transformative power offered by reading

and access to books, and, beyond that, access to cultural rights. This innovative approach aims to forge a new path in a world facing



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multiple crises.

The City and the Eurométropole de Strasbourg (EMS) made a firm commitment to systematically localise the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) from 2019 onwards in the assessment of their policies – including the budget. From the outset, the addition of a Culture Goal was deemed highly appropriate, as culture accounts for around 20% of the City's annual budget and plays a significant role in ecological, social and democratic transformations.

UNESCO's designation of Strasbourg as World Book Capital 2024 has helped to create a genuine local momentum, uniting the ecosystem of local cultural actors and highlighting the vital impact of culture: using books and reading to address the challenges of change and create

new narratives for the future. Books and reading are powerful levers for social justice and empowerment, forming strong bridges between citizens of all cultural backgrounds, at the intersection of the fight against climate change and the affirmation of cultural rights. The outcome of this event-filled year, deemed highly positive, revealed a capacity for initiative and action on the part of everyone, fostered the development of local expertise and forged a community of action.

The results are already visible in many areas. Integrating culture into the SDGs is not a global challenge to be solved: it is a methodological contribution to “saving humanity and the planet”.

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### TEL AVIV-YAFO, ISRAEL

#### Devek - Cultivating young audiences in Culture

54

DEVEK is a municipal cultural policy led by the City of Tel Aviv-Yafo to reconnect major publicly funded cultural institutions with young audiences aged 18–35. Responding to perceptions of institutional culture as outdated and inaccessible, DEVEK introduced a structural shift in how institutions communicate, programme, and welcome young people. Through a municipal matching-fund model and

hands-on strategic support across marketing, content, and production, institutions adopted new platforms, formats, and audience-centred practices. Launched as a pilot with 10 institutions in 2022, the programme expanded to 18 and was integrated into the municipal budget in 2024, marking its transition from pilot to long-term public policy.

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### TERRASSA, CATALONIA, SPAIN

#### Accessible, Inclusive and Sustainable Library

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The Terrassa Public Library Network (“bct xarxa”) comprises six libraries: one central urban and regional library and five district libraries spread across the city. Its mission is to guarantee democratic access to culture, reading, information and knowledge for all citizens, promoting the exercise of cultural rights on an equal footing.

The 2022–2025 Strategic Library Plan prioritised strengthening the inclusive role of public libraries, with a particular focus on people with intellectual disabilities, under the motto ‘accessible, inclusive and sustainable’. Based on this approach, a line of work was launched centred on collaboration with social organisations, educational institutions and municipal services to promote the cultural and social inclusion of people with disabilities.

This work received international recognition in 2024 when the project was selected for

The Europe Challenge (Eurocities) for its contribution to social integration and the promotion of autonomy and well-being among people with intellectual disabilities.

Currently, more than 50 inclusive activities are being run across the city’s six libraries, in collaboration with 20 local partners, including municipal services, educational centres, associations and social organisations.

The results have demonstrated the potential of the public library as a community space for inclusion, cultural participation and knowledge generation. For this reason, the new Strategic Plan 2026–2029, La “bct xarxa” (bct network): community, knowledge and future, consolidates this approach as a structural way of working, integrating inclusion, accessibility and cultural rights into the day-to-day running of the library network.

### TOLUCA, MEXICO

#### Collective Living Culture: Transformation in Toluca

56

This is a public policy implemented by Toluca City Council through the Department of Education, Culture and Tourism which, by organising multidisciplinary cultural festivals, promotes cultural experiences of learning, appreciation and interaction with various artistic disciplines. These encourage public participation and

learning, as well as the recognition of local artists and creators.

By setting up temporary venues in central and peripheral public spaces across the city, free cultural promotion activities are offered that attract diverse audiences. In turn, this initiative



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promotes not only talent but also the economic dignity of artistic work through the sale of food, crafts and artistic works. Because art is not only to be admired, but also sustained.

Toluca, the capital of the State of Mexico, is an industrial municipality with a predominantly working-class population, whose income is typically spent on basic necessities (food, transport and services); it is therefore imperative to provide workers and their families with free access to a range of recreational activities to revitalise the municipality's cultural life and encourage the use of public spaces as venues for social interaction and learning.

This policy views access to culture as a right and a common good that must benefit the

entire population and historically excluded areas, with a view to strengthening a sense of identity, recognising the municipality's cultural wealth, developing creative skills, and serving as a mechanism to reduce economic, social, educational and gender inequalities.

It is a policy that guarantees the active participation of women in planning and implementation; furthermore, it benefits girls, female citizens, female creators, female artists and local craftswomen. It promotes female leadership, whilst establishing networks and spaces for artistic professionalisation, generating economic impact and strengthening their autonomy within the local cultural ecosystem.

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## TRABZON METROPOLITAN MUNICIPALITY, TURKEY

### Accessible Transport for All

57

The Accessible Transport for All Project has been implemented by Trabzon Metropolitan Municipality since 2021 as a permanent local public service ensuring the equal and independent participation of persons with disabilities in urban, social, and cultural life. It was developed in response to Trabzon's mountainous geography and dispersed settlement pattern, which restrict access to conventional public transport.

Accessible vehicles were introduced not as standalone investments but as operational components of an institutionalised public service model. In response to increasing

demand, service capacity has expanded and the project is currently operated with two accessible vehicles. The service is coordinated through the municipal ALO 153 TIKOM, runs on a reservation basis, and is available 24/7 with professional drivers and assistants.

Between 2021 and February 2026, 18,795 beneficiaries used the Accessible Taxi service. Transport support enabled 3,538 persons with disabilities to reach public institutions and healthcare services, while 15,257 students accessed educational, social, cultural, and sporting activities. The project therefore ensures participation in public spaces and



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cultural life beyond basic service access.

By framing mobility as a rights-based access mechanism rather than a technical transport solution, the project illustrates how local

governments can secure inclusive urban participation and provide sustainable, long-term support for disadvantaged groups.

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### YAKUTSK, RUSSIAN FEDERATION

“We are Children of the North”: International Ice and Snow Sculpture Contest

58

The city of Yakutsk is the largest city in the permafrost zone, where ice and cold have become not only a means of survival but also a source of inspiration. The ice and snow sculpture competition, held since 2018, brings together the most gifted children’s teams from Yakutsk, the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia), and various regions of Russia. In 2026, it will be held for the first time with the status of International.

In two categories — “ice” and “snow” — teams of three (a team leader and two art class

students aged 13–17) create unique works of art. The theme for the 2026 ice sculptures is ‘Children of the Whole World are Friends,’ dedicated to the Year of Unity of the Peoples of Russia; snow sculptures are created on a free theme.

The project preserves and develops the traditions of northern art, transforming public spaces into accessible cultural venues, increasing the city’s tourist appeal, and strengthening intercultural dialogue through children’s creativity.

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### YERBA BUENA, ARGENTINA

Living Identity

59

Yerba Buena “Identidad Viva” (Living Identity) is a model of local cultural management that uses participatory urban art as a tool to strengthen local identity, revitalise public spaces and promote citizen participation.

Since 2019, Yerba Buena has been promoting the creation of artistic murals in various neighbourhoods across the city through

participatory processes involving local artists, educational institutions and residents. Each project aims to depict stories, landscapes and symbols of the area, transforming public spaces into venues for cultural expression and community gathering.

Through this initiative, the municipality promotes democratic access to culture, fosters the



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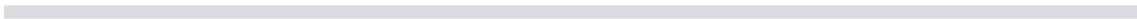
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development of local artists and strengthens the community's sense of belonging. The works created have been incorporated into cultural and tourist circuits, broadening the project's cultural impact.

In 2023, the initiative was formally institutionalised as part of the Integral Programme for Identity and Sense of Belonging, consolidating a municipal strategy aimed at strengthening the bond between citizens, culture and the local area.

To date, more than a dozen interventions have been carried out in public spaces, educational institutions, squares and neighbourhoods, creating an urban art circuit that forms part of the city's cultural and tourist agenda.

Yerba Buena Identidad Viva is currently expanding and aims to establish an open-air museum that integrates culture, nature and community in the so-called "Garden City" of north-western Argentina.





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