

Culture 21 Plus

5 June 2024

Culture 21 Plus is the new guide that the UCLG Culture Committee is shaping as the frame and toolkit for local cultural policy-making in the next years. It will be approved in 2025 and the webinars organised on 5 June 2024 are part of the co-creation process that involves cities and local governments worldwide. Culture 21 Plus will be based on the experiences of cities and regions drawn from the implementation of Culture 21 Actions since 2015, and will also consider the changes that have taken place in local and global contexts.

The initial proposal of Culture 21 Plus comprises a series of 6 blocks, 30 areas and 200 concrete actions that explore the connections between culture, cultural rights and other fields of local action, in order to position culture as a driver of citizenship and sustainable development of a territory. The tool allows two possible uses: (1) to carry out a self-assessment of the state of play of the cultural policies of a territory; (2) to design local cultural strategies based on cultural rights and sustainability.

Until the official adoption and publication of the Culture 21 Plus in 2025, and with the aim of building this new guide in a very participatory manner, tests of the guide are being carried out in interested cities to gather their contributions, suggestions and observations, and improve the draft on the basis of local knowledge and experience. Jinju, Mexico City, Lisbon, Elefsina, Esch-sur-Alzette and Puebla already organised a test.

On 5 June 2024, the UCLG Culture Committee offered three one-hour webinars for cities interested in learning how to organise a Culture 21 Plus test. The webinars were held in English, French and Spanish. Their aim was to:

- | Get familiarised with structure and contents of Culture 21 Plus.
- | Understand the possible uses of Culture 21 Plus in your city.
- | Explore successful examples of tests in other cities.
- | Connect these examples to the local challenges and the next milestones in the cultural strategy of your city.
- | Know in detail how to organise a successful Culture 21 Plus test, online or on-site.

THE WEBINARS

ENGLISH

Serhan Ada, Professor at the Istanbul Bilgi University, highlighted the value of interactions between participants from different spheres of government (central and local governments), NGOs and independent artists, and described the Culture 21 Plus as an opportunity to further expand this. He also expressed his belief that the time has come for cities of all sizes (small and medium-sized cities, and even cosmopolitan cities) to enter the cultural policy game, especially after the experience of COVID-19. **Clymene Christoforou**, Director of D6 and one of the experts of the Pilot Cities programme in Europe, underlined the importance of bringing together in the same room actors from all over the city who might not otherwise sit together (e.g. someone from urban planning, someone who owns a shop, an artist, or the elderly) to have a conversation about their understanding of culture in their city. She also said that Culture 21 Plus is a very good starting point for cultural policy, but also to provide a snapshot of the city's current situation in cultural policy, as well as a deeper dive for cities to think whether they are doing enough on the different topics covered in the workshops. Sharing the experience of Elefsina with the Culture 21 Plus test (March 2024), **Angeliki Lampiri**, Eleusis 2023 European Capital of Culture, explained that this process enabled the city to assess how it has changed in terms of local policies by using the frame and the methodology proposed by UCLG, it has empowered the creation of a group of "cultural mediators" and has provided the space to bring together diverse groups from the local community, experts and cultural actors.



FRENCH

Valeria Marcolin, Co-director of Culture et Développement, commented on the advances of Culture 21 Plus compared to Culture 21 Actions, arguing that while the latter was already a very important tool for cities and territories, Culture 21 Plus connects even more with international agendas and offers the opportunity to work on thematic issues, while also being useful for all kinds of local contexts, regardless of the size or population of the city, its economic status or how developed it is in terms of cultural policies. In her turn, **Christelle Blouët**, Director of the Réseau Culture 21 France, stressed the importance of having new approach that includes the transversality of cultural rights in public policies, articulating them with other important global issues, such as the ecological transition and climate agendas, as well as further expanding the connection between cultural issues and social policies, or those related to housing, food and care, among others. **Anne-Laure Damiani**, Project manager of the Culture Department, shared [Esch-sur-Alzette](#)'s experience with the Culture 21 Plus test (May 2024), which gathered architects, urban planners, artists, cultural institutions and other urban actors. The test was focused on concrete measures to relate the arts, culture and the ecological transition with some insights on mobility and governance.



SPANISH

Jorge Melguizo, former Secretary for culture of Medellín, and one of the most influential leaders in cultural policies, shared two key points for Culture 21 Plus, based on the Latin American experience: the need to improve policies and actions to institutionally strengthen cultural spaces in municipal, sub-regional and national governments (i.e. focusing on cities, departments, provinces, districts, etc.) and to further promote and strengthen regional constructions, shared projects between cities in the region, as well as between Latin America and other continents. **Begoña Guzmán**, UN Etxea, stressed that Culture 21 Plus offers the opportunity to generate processes of consultation, research, dialogue and bringing the parties together, as well as to meet and exchange with each other, collaborate and highlight the value of what we are doing. She also highlighted that the document attempts to respond to many of the questions we have on the table in terms of cultural policies, firmly positioning culture as a fundamental element in the policies and measures that help us to collaboratively build our territories. Sharing the experience of Mexico City with the Culture 21 Plus (September 2023), **Jainité Rueda**, Head of Analysis at the Department for Culture of Mexico City, claimed that these spaces allow to develop better proposals, policies and projects, and emphasised the importance of inviting other municipal sectors to the conversation. Mexico City had representatives from the three levels of government, many sectors of the local government (economy, environment, education, social development, etc.), civil society organisations and the University, and it was possible to identify areas of opportunity to implement cross-cutting cultural policies and to raise awareness among other sectors of the importance of investing in culture, achieving a cross-sectoral view of the city's challenges.



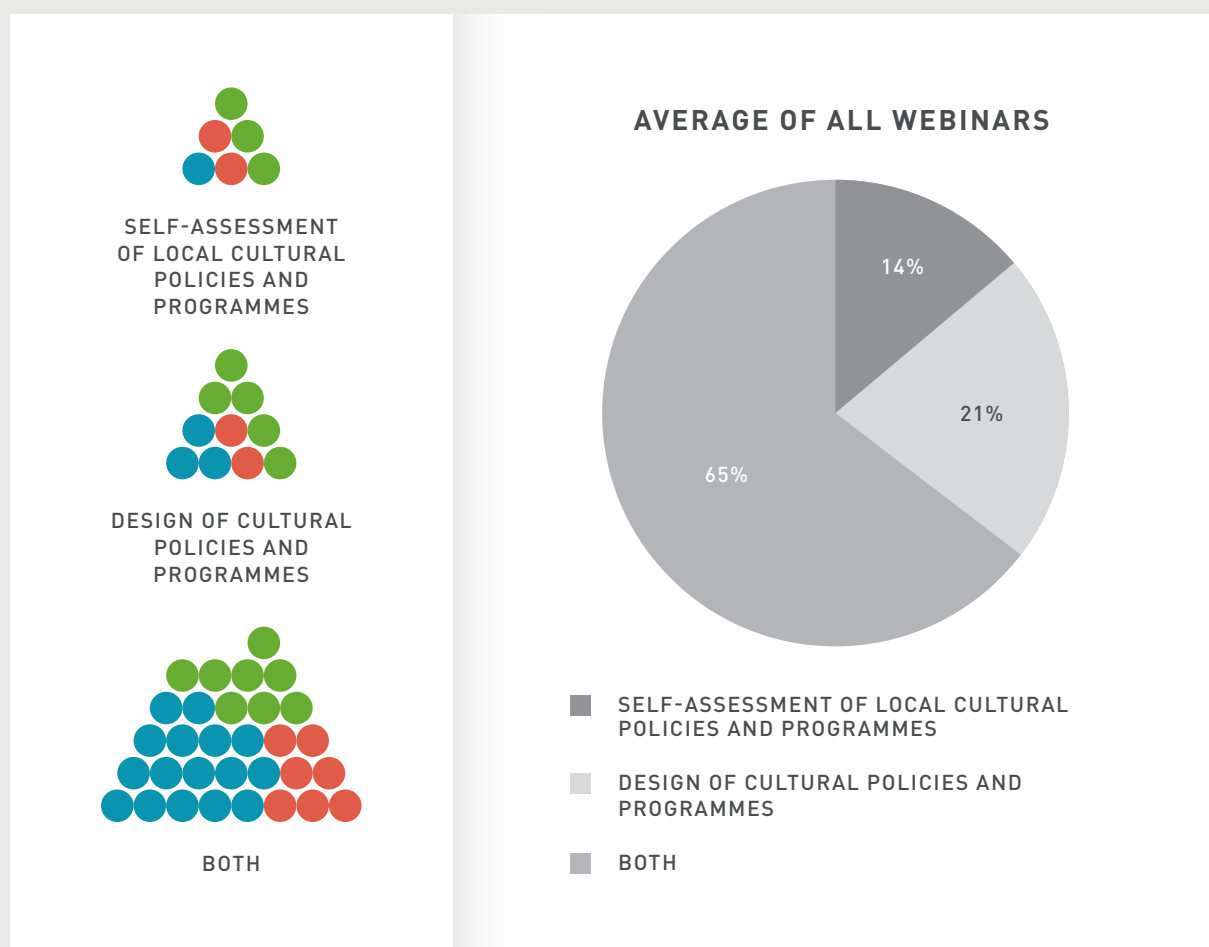
INTERACTIVE MOMENT: MENTIMETER

The second segment of all three webinars started with an interactive exercise through Mentimeter, a digital platform to engage with the voices of all participants. The attendees were asked to answer these three questions:

- i) the uses of Culture 21 Plus
- ii) the priorities within Culture 21 Plus
- iii) the main cultural challenges of the participants' cities

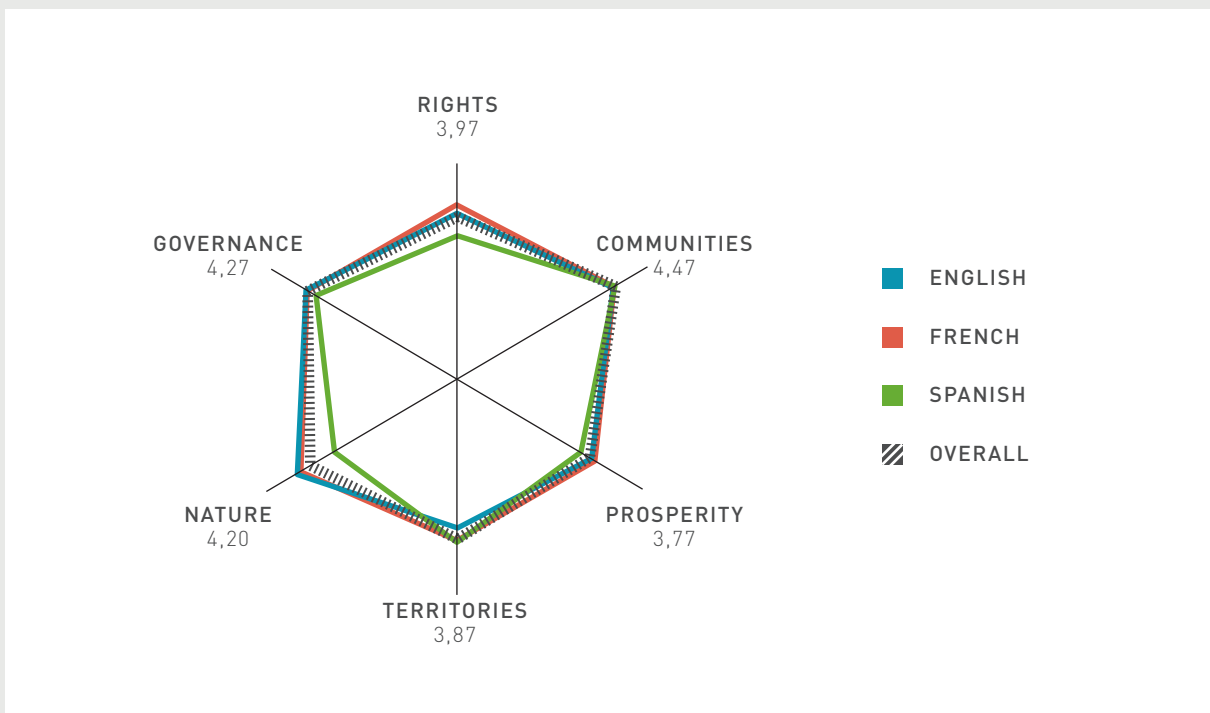
Following the collection of responses to each question, brief comments were made by the UCLG Culture Committee. The **blue** colored items refer to the answers given in English, the **red** color refers to French and the **green** color to Spanish.

QUESTION 1 WHAT USE OF CULTURE 21 PLUS IS MORE LIKELY TO BE SUITABLE FOR YOUR CITY?



Following the explanation of the two uses of Culture 21 Plus in the first part of the webinar, the first Mentimeter question revealed that the majority of the participants of the three webinars believed that “**Both**” uses would be their preferred option for their city. This answer dominated with a significant 65% of responses, thus highlighting its versatility as a tool for cities and territories. With 21% of the responses, some participants indicated their preference to use it for the “**Design of cultural policies and programmes**”, for the planning and creation of new cultural strategies for their city. Finally, 14% of the participants indicated a preference for using the tool to evaluate and reflect on existing cultural initiatives, using it for the “**Self-assessment of local cultural policies and programmes**”.

QUESTION 2 **WHICH BLOCKS OF CULTURE 21 PLUS WOULD BE A PRIORITY FOR YOUR CITY?**



This figure compares the answers given by the participants of all three webinars on the prioritisation between the six axes of Culture 21 Plus: Rights, Governance, Nature, Territories, and Communities. The graph shows that there is no major difference in which axis they would prioritise and the “average” line closely mirrors the results of each webinar, suggesting a consistent overall approach. However, the chart shows that “**Communities**” and “**Governance**” score 4.47 and 4.27 respectively, and “**Nature**” scores 4.20, while “**Rights**”, “**Territories**” and “**Prosperity**”, scoring 3.97, 3.87 and 3.77 respectively.

UNLEASHING THE POWER OF CULTURE WITH CULTURE 21 PLUS

WHAT IS CULTURE 21 PLUS?

Culture 21 Plus is the new guide for culture and sustainable development that the UCLG Culture Committee is shaping as the frame and toolkit for local cultural policy-making in the next years. It builds on the solid foundation of the previous Culture 21 Actions, and it is being co-created by cities from all over the world. It will be approved by UCLG in 2025.

HOW CAN CULTURE 21 PLUS BE USEFUL FOR MY CITY?

Culture 21 Plus is a dual-purpose tool that will allow your city to (1) conduct a self-assessment of the current state of your cultural policies, and (2) design local cultural strategies based on cultural rights and sustainability. It is very useful to improve cultural policies of cities and territories.

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE CULTURE 21 PLUS AND CULTURE 21 ACTIONS?

Culture 21 Plus is a global framework that has been updated with new themes relevant for today's cities and territories worldwide. It is also a bidirectional co-creation process, allowing cities to provide their inputs and insights while also using it to self-assess and enhance the design of their own local policies. Moreover, the Culture 21 Plus has 200 actions, doubling the 100 that had Culture 21 Actions.

WHAT IS A PILOT TEST OF CULTURE 21 PLUS?

The pilot test is unique opportunity to shape the future of cultural policies in your city. It is a one or two-days workshop facilitated by UCLG, where diverse stakeholders from very different areas and backgrounds come together to identify city challenges, assess the current situation of the city, prioritise key areas, and take part in the design of local cultural strategies for the future.

WHAT ARE THE MAIN AREAS COVERED BY CULTURE 21 PLUS?

Culture 21 Plus covers 200 actions, grouped in 30 key areas. These are also grouped in 6 blocks: rights, communities, prosperity, territories, nature and governance. It is the most comprehensive approach to culture in sustainable development.

CAN WE FOCUS ON SPECIFIC AREAS OF INTEREST IN THE WORKSHOP?

Absolutely! An exercise of prioritisation is also part of the workshop, ensuring your key areas of interest are addressed. If your municipality is keen on a specific topic, we can tailor the workshop to focus or dive deeper on this issue.

WHO CAN PARTICIPATE IN THE PILOT TEST OF CULTURE 21 PLUS? HOW CAN MY CITY GET INVOLVED?

Any interested cities and territories that belong to UCLG (or its sections!) can participate in the pilot test. To contribute to the development of this tool and be a pioneer city in its use, simply contact the UCLG Committee on Culture at culture@uclg.org.

YOUR CITY'S CULTURAL FUTURE STARTS HERE!

CONTACT

Please do not hesitate to contact the Secretariat of the UCLG Culture Committee should you need any additional information.

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