The Fourth Pillar of Sustainable Development

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What is Culture?

˝Culture is crucial for sustainable development

Culture is what makes us human

Culture is about our identities

Culture is about our history and our heritage

Culture is about peace

Culture brings about social inclusion and social cohesion.

That is why we believe today that culture should be at the heart of the global debate about sustainable development.˝

Irina Bokova

Director-General of UNESCO

Culture and sustainable development

- Sustainable development is most often defined through three pillars: the environment, society and economics, while the fourth pillar **culture** is usually forgotten

- Culture is part of society, which **unites** members of a social group, people, and at the same time differentiates them from members of other social groups. Culture is everywhere, permanent, belongs to everyone, and is not reserved for only one social class

Consequently, the definition of sustainable development must include the concept of culture

- Contemporary research shows that a strong cultural sector inspires **positive changes** in consumption and spending, strengthens moral mechanisms, promotes human rights awareness and encourages a positive and informed attitude toward the environment

Culture *in*, *for* and *as* Sustainable Development

- Agenda 21 for Culture (UCLG) launched in January 2016 policy paper examining three roles of culture in sustainable development:


1. **A supportive and self-promoting role ('culture in sustainable development')** - expands conventional sustainable development discourse by adding culture as a 4th pillar. Culture stands, linked but autonomous, alongside separate environmental, social, and economic considerations and imperatives of sustainability

Culture in sustainable development

Culture *in*, *for* and *as* Sustainable Development

2. **A role which offers culture as a more influential force that can operate beyond itself ('culture for sustainable development')** - this role moves culture into a framing, contextualising and **mediating** mode, that can **balance** all three of the pillars and guide sustainable development between economic, social, and environmental pressures and needs

3. **A role which sees culture as the necessary overall foundation and structure for achieving the aims of SD ('culture as sustainable development')** - by recognising that culture is at the **root** of all human decisions and actions, culture and sustainability become mutually **intertwined**, and the distinctions between the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainability begin to fade

Culture for sustainable development

Culture as sustainable development
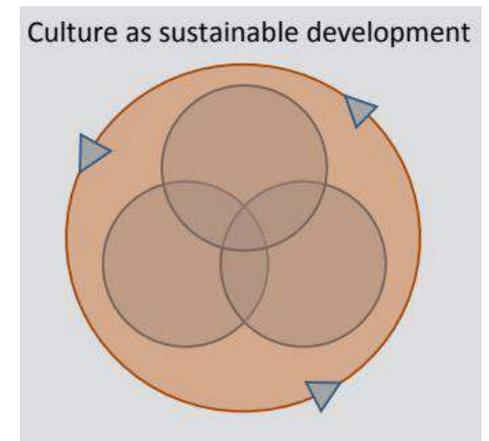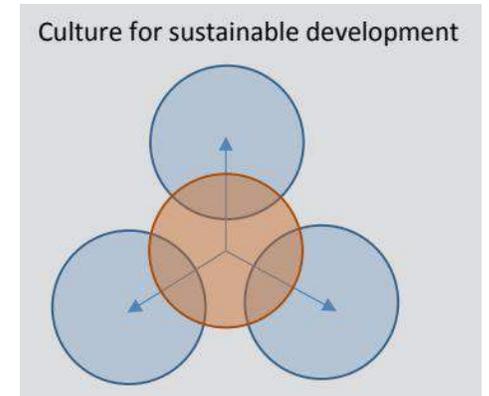
Culture drives sustainable development

Cultural heritage, cultural and creative industries, sustainable cultural tourism, and cultural infrastructure can serve as strategic tools for **revenue generation**

Cultural and creative industries represent one of the most rapidly **expanding sec**tors in the global economy in developing countries given their often-rich cultural heritage and substantial **labour force**

Culture-led development also includes a range of **non-monetized benefits**, such as greater **social inclusiveness** and rootedness, resilience, **innovation**, **creativity** and **entrepreneurship** for individuals and communities, and the **use of local resources, skills, and knowledge**

Investment in culture and creativity has proven an excellent means for **revitalize the economy** of cities. Today, many cities use cultural heritage and cultural events and institutions to improve their image, stimulate urban development, and attract visitors as well as investments

Culture enables sustainable development

Culture has a **transformative** power on existing development approaches, helping to broaden the terms of the current development debate and to make development much more relevant to the needs of people

Development interventions that are responsive to the cultural context and advance a human-centred approach to development are most likely to **yield sustainable, inclusive and equitable outcomes**
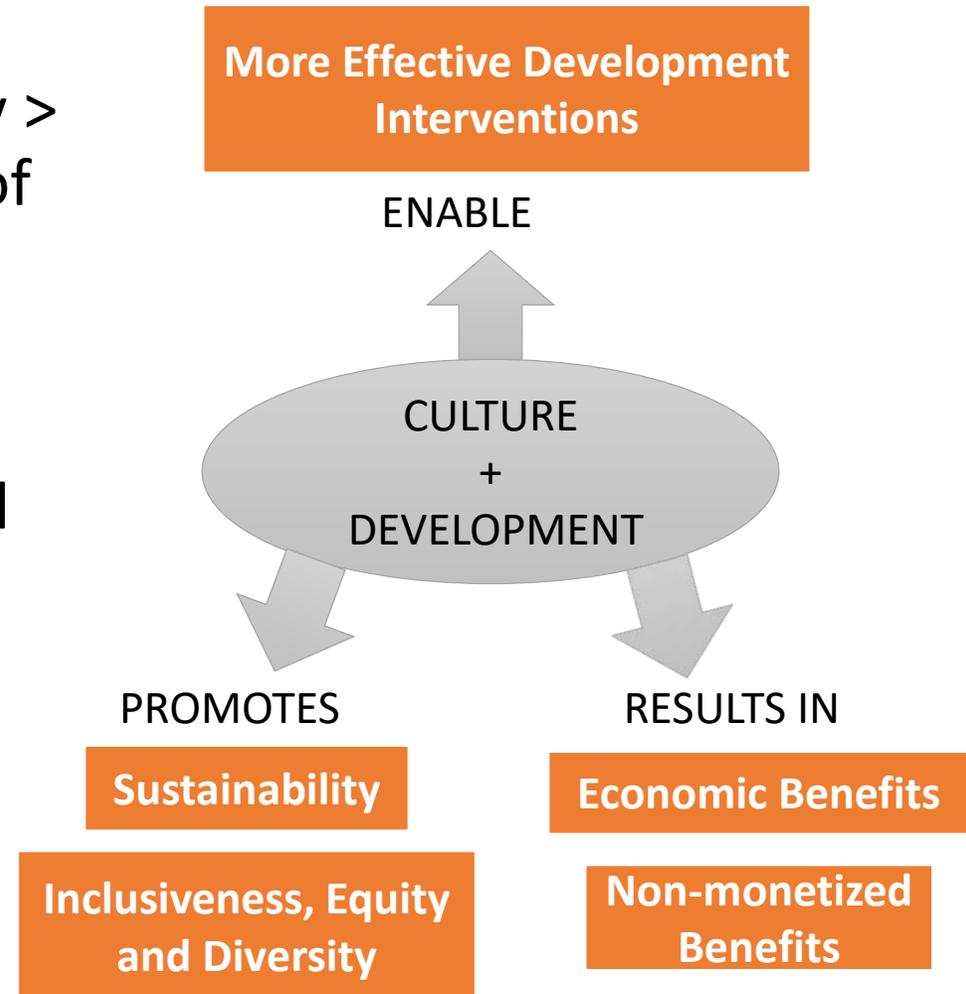
Acknowledging and promoting respect for cultural diversity within a human right based approach can facilitate intercultural **dialogue**, **prevent** conflicts and **protect** the **rights** of marginalized groups, within and between nations, thus creating optimal conditions for achieving development goals

Culture, understood this way, makes development more sustainable

How is culture connected with other pillars of sustainable development?

- **Culture and economy** – e.g. creative economy > cultural activities such as dance or music are of growing **importance** to the economy of many countries and gave employment to a large number of people

- **Culture and environment** - artists and cultural workers can be catalysts of **change** in society and encourage discussion of environmental issues such as climate change

- **Culture and society** - an **integral** part of every society

More Effective Development Interventions

ENABLE

CULTURE + DEVELOPMENT

PROMOTES

RESULTS IN

Sustainability

Inclusiveness, Equity and Diversity

Economic Benefits

Non-monetized Benefits

Culture in Sustainable Development Goals

Although none of the 17 SDGs focuses exclusively on culture, the resulting Agenda includes several explicit references to cultural aspects, for example:

- Target 4.7 refers to the aim to ensuring that all learners acquire the **knowledge and skills** needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for global citizenship and the appreciation of **cultural diversity** and of **culture's contribution** to sustainable development

Culture in Sustainable Development Goals

- **Target 8.3** addresses the promotion of development-oriented policies that support productive activities as well as, among others, **creativity** and **innovation**

- **Targets 8.9** and 12.b refer to the need to devise and implement policies to promote sustainable tourism, including through **local culture** and products

- **Target 11.4** highlights the need to strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the **world's cultural and natural heritage**

A Hope for Europe!
Culture, Cities and New Narratives
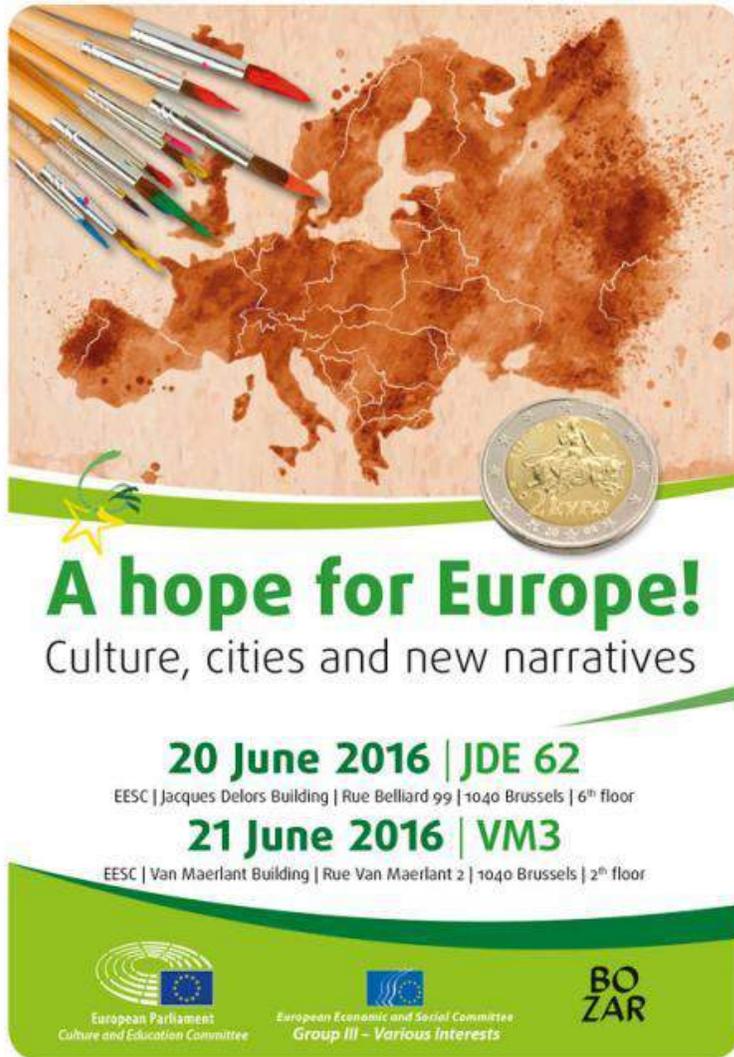
- On 20-21 June 2016, European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) organised a conference which brought together approximately 180 persons (EESC members, European civil society, cultural organisations, foundations, etc.), to explore how, why and when Culture matters today in Europe

- The conference explored four themes:

  1. Culture as a vehicle for **economic** growth

  2. Culture as an instrument for **reconverting cities and territories**

  3. Culture as a tool for **integration and inclusiveness**

  4. Reshaping **European identity** within Europe and beyond

Culture as a vehicle for economic growth

- Culture has a big impact on **driving development**, **cohesion** and **identity**, but this remains marginal in many political and policy developments in Europe

- There is a risk of culture being understood exclusively as a tool for the achievement of other objectives, rather than an **intrinsic aspect of quality of life** in cities and a key component of freedoms and rights

- Culture should be systematically **integrated** as an important element **in cohesion strategies and policy**, **employment** measures, **urban development** strategies etc.

- While the potential of the arts and culture for economic growth is certainly non-negligible, its potential to **promote sustainable development** and the growth of our societies and citizens in their **human** and **creative dimension** is at least as, if not far more, important

Culture as an instrument for reconverting cities and territories

- The place of culture in reconverting cities has been the subject of significant attention over the past few decades, with particular emphasis on cities which **integrated culture** in **long-term developme**nt strategies enabling a transition from traditional industries to a knowledge-based economy

- The breadth of these processes means that, in practice, **urban regeneration needs to combine economic, social and cultural processes**, rather than seeing culture as an instrument for reconverting cities

Culture as a tool for integration and inclusiveness

- Fostering inclusive societies and cities is both a question of providing **adequate infrastructure** (e.g. sustainable mobility), as well as a matter of **sociocultural environment** and mind-set, and of active **policies for equality**

- Among the challenges cities face, few are greater than finding the right tools to foster inclusion. In many ways social cohesion is not quite enough. It is one thing for groups to mesh with the general social ambiance of the city. It is another for all the **individuals** in a city to **feel included** in its life, whether at work or leisure

- Cultural tools are clearly useful in speeding up the process of individual integration, e.g. the arts can **bring people together** and help them **participate** in a mixed **community life** in ways which give them the chance to build bridges out of their immediate surroundings

Culture as a pillar of European Identity within Europe and beyond

The question of European identity and the role played by culture in its conceptualisation have been approached from different perspectives, e.g. **how cities and regions contribute to European identities and narratives**?

- The position of **cities** is of particular relevance as they are able to circumvent centralised hubs dominated by scale and international visibility or to **create more dynamic initiatives** compared to those originated top-down from central governments
- Although geographic position and economic scale, **cities** have encountered within the European context and elsewhere, ways to **co-operate** and become visible actors at regional level and through transnational engagements, based on specific niche areas or heritage, supported by **specialised networks** or through **mobility programmes**

EESC Recommendations

1. Recognise **cultural rights** as fundamental to human development
2. Acknowledge **culture** as necessary for **sustainable development**
3. **Include new players** in the democratic governance of culture
4. Support **exchange between cultures** to foster social and economic development
5. Empower **cities' decisions on culture** to shape our future

- recommendations are directed to cultural operators and political decision-makers on local, national and European levels alike