

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL of

# CRAFTS and FOLK ARTS

Volume 4 2023



---

Published Annually by the Jinju Culture and Tourism Foundation

**Publisher**

Kyoo-il JO

**Editor-in-Chief**

Byung Hoon JEONG /  
Masayuki SASAKI

**Managing Editor**

Jeong-hyeon YI

**Assistant Editor**

Yunhak SEONG

**Copy Editor**

Karen Y. CHOI

**Designed by**

Sopartners

**Printed by**

Hanrim

---

*Cover photo:*

Shinya Yamamura,  
“Small Octagonal Box  
Inlaid with Mother-of-  
Pearl,” exhibited at the  
2023 Jinju Traditional  
Crafts Biennale  
(cf. pp.185-189).

**Editorial Board:**

Sylvia AMANN (Director of inforelais)  
Cho-yeon BAK (Chinju National University of Education)  
Waralun BOONYASURAT (Chiang Mai University)  
Yong-ho HEO (Korea National University of Arts)  
Byung Hoon JEONG (Gyeongsang National University)  
Zayd MINTY (Director of Creative City South)  
Sun-OK Moon (Gyeongsang National University)  
Seongjin NAM (Jinju Culture Research Institute)  
Jordi PASCUAL (Open University of Catalonia)  
Darma PUTRA (Udayana University)  
Masayuki SASAKI (Kanazawa Seiryu University)  
Jong-hoon SHIN (Gyeongsang National University)  
Yongmin SHIN (Gyeongsang National University)  
Jeong Duk YI (Jeonbuk National University)  
Geunjong YOO (freelance photographer)

***International Journal of Crafts and Folk Arts***

Jinju Culture and Tourism Foundation  
30, Manggyeongnam-gil,  
Jinju-si, Gyeongsangnam-do, 52714  
Republic of Korea  
Tel: +82-55-795-3217  
Email: jinjuci2018@gmail.com  
Webzine: <http://ijcf.kr>  
Website: <https://creativecityjinju.kr>

Copyright © 2023 by the Jinju Culture and Tourism  
Foundation  
Published on December 31, 2023.

---

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL of  
**CRAFTS and FOLK ARTS**

Volume 4, 2023

---

**CONTENTS**

**Strengthening and Revitalizing  
the Local Cultural Ecosystem**

Byung Hoon JEONG 5 Editor's Remarks

**ARTICLES**

Keebom NAHM 7 Local Arts and Cultural Ecosystems: *Focusing on the Role of the UCCN Program*

Sylvia AMANN 21 European Perspectives on Cultural Ecosystems in Cities

Kyoung-woo KWON 33 "Our Experiment Will Never Stop": *The Common Seonbuk Artist Roundtable as an Experiment of Local Culture Governance*

Rossella TARANTINO 47 Creation of a Cultural Ecosystem: *The Experience of Matera—2019 European Capital of Culture*

Sang-hoon JANG 65 The Role of Regional National Museums in Revitalizing the Cultural Ecosystems

Marta LLOBET 81 Towards a New Global Policy Framework for Cultural Rights: *Culture 21 PLUS*

## **DISCUSSION**

- Jeong Duk YI/ 103 Strengthening and Revitalizing the Local  
Francis SOKOMBA/ Cultural Ecosystem  
Tara POOLE/  
Seongjin NAM

## **NEWS & ACTIVITIES**

- 131 Al-Ahsa (Saudi Arabia); Barcelos (Portugal);  
Bida (Nigeria); Biella (Italy);  
Gabrovo (Bulgaria); Gimhae (Korea);  
Hoi An (Vietnam); Kanazawa (Japan);  
Kütahya (Türkiye); Manises (Spain);  
Paducah (USA); Pasto (Colombia);  
Weifang (China)

## **REVIEWS**

- Witiya PITTUNGNAPOO 180 The 1st Symposium on Tribal Crafts and Folk  
Art  
  
Byung Hoon JEONG 185 2023 Jinju Traditional Crafts Biennale

## **INTERVIEW**

- Costanza FERRARINI 190 Roberta Redaelli, Ambassador of Silk Elegance  
and Excellence from Como at the Jinju Crafts  
and Folk Art Biennale

## **CULTURAL HERITAGE**

- Hiromi ONISHI 194 Tambasayama's Major Initiatives as a  
UNESCO Creative City

## **UCCN DOCUMENT**

- 199 UNESCO Creative Cities Network Meeting with  
the Coordination Group

## Editor's Remarks

Based on the cooperation and contributions of domestic and international Editorial Board members, we are pleased to publish the fourth volume of the *International Journal of Crafts and Folk Art* this year.

First of all, I would like to thank the Editorial Board members.

The theme of our journal this year is “Strengthening and Revitalizing the Local Cultural Ecosystem,” which was the theme of the Jinju UNESCO Creative Cities International Forum held on July 7, 2023.

The reason we chose this topic was because we wanted to analyze the cultural policies and cultural phenomena of creative cities from the perspective of the cultural ecosystem. In particular, we sought to shed light on how the local cultural ecosystem should be established to revitalize creative industries.

The papers published in this volume discuss the concept and application of the cultural ecosystem, the cultural ecosystems of Linz, Seongbuk-gu, and Matera, the role of local museums in revitalizing the cultural ecosystem, and UCLG’s “Culture 21 Plus.”

The discussion section of this issue also discusses the same topic, focusing on Jeonju and Jinju in Korea, Ballaret in Australia, and Bida in Nigeria. We would like to express our sincere thanks to all the authors and panels who contributed to this volume.

Seventeen cities contributed to the Creative Cities Activities and Heritage, Interview, and Reviews section. We express our thanks to the Focal Points and contributors in each city for their efforts. In my view, the fact that the number of participating cities has increased significantly compared to last

year means that this journal is establishing itself as the official medium of our sub-network.

We hope that this journal will continue to serve as a forum for sharing the knowledge, experiences and practices of UNESCO Creative Cities. We also hope that our journal will provide a theoretical and practical basis for creative city activities.

Finally, we would like to thank the UNESCO Creative Cities Network Secretariat and Jinju City for their continued moral and financial support in publishing this journal. We look forward to seeing everyone at next year's annual meeting in Braga, Portugal.

Byung Hoon JEONG  
Editor-in-Chief

## Local Arts and Cultural Ecosystems: Focusing on the Role of the UCCN Program\*

Keebom NAHM\*\*

### Abstract

*This paper discusses the concept of a cultural ecosystem with particular emphasis on its components and characteristics, including cultural creators, distributors, and the exchange of content with aesthetic and cultural value. It highlights the importance of a comprehensive and balanced approach to such ecosystem, especially in the context of local or regional ecosystems. The paper outlines the development trajectories of a local arts and cultural ecosystem and its relationship with creative city programs. It also explores the role of local arts and cultural leadership and governance systems. It emphasizes the importance of strengthening mutual relationships and enhancing the competitiveness of each ecosystem member. It also introduces the concept of place-based local cultural ecosystems, emphasizing the interconnectedness of arts and cultural creators within diverse communities. It discusses factors that influence cultural participation from the perspectives of both local residents and policymakers, including economic resources, institutional networks, and cultural infrastructure. Furthermore, the paper explores the utilization of the UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN) program to enhance cultural ecosystems. It discusses how UCCN can contribute to sustainable development, promote cooperation among cities, and enhance city branding. The paper concludes by emphasizing the importance of long-term action plans for sustainable communities with cultural abundance, while mentioning the Quintuple Helix theory, which highlights the interplay of various stakeholders in fostering culture-driven sustainable communities.*

**Keywords:** cultural ecosystem, place-based local cultural ecosystem, UCCN, sustainable communities

---

\* This paper was presented at the 8th Jinju UNESCO Creative Cities International Forum held in Jinju on July 7, 2023.

\*\* Keebom NAHM is Professor of Urban Sociology at the University of Seoul. He received his Ph.D. in Geography from the University of Saskatchewan. He has served as president of the Economic Geographical Society of Korea and the Korea Academic Society of Industrial Cluster. He is currently working for the Korean National Commission for UNESCO as a member of Advisory Council for UNESCO Creative Cities Network. His research interests focus on urban cultural policies, social innovation, and metropolitan regeneration. E-mail: nahm@uos.ac.kr.

## 1. Introduction

The concept of a cultural ecosystem involves the mechanisms that govern the components and characteristics of ecosystem functions (Spencer 1857). It also encompasses the exchange and utilization of content with aesthetic and cultural value among cultural creators, distributors, and participants. To understand cultural ecosystems, we must adopt a comprehensive, systematic, and balanced perspective that takes into account cultural institutions, intermediaries, and the unique attributes of local or regional cultural ecosystems. These attributes include the three key aspects of people, places and organizations:

- (1) **People:** Comprising cultural workers, supporters, and local participants;
- (2) **Places:** Representing the material foundations for cultural activities such as cultural sites and communities;
- (3) **Organizations:** Encompassing entities involved in cultural activities, such as arts and nonprofit organizations, cultural industries, public arts, and intermediaries.

This paper will explore the development trajectories of local arts and cultural ecosystems, the co-evolution process between local arts and cultural ecosystems and creative city programs, and finally, the leadership and governance systems in the realm of local arts and culture.

## 2. Definitions: “Ecosystem” and “Cultural Ecosystem”

### *2.1. Ecosystem*

According to Spencer’s definition of the ecosystem, the “law of organic progress is the law of all progress. Whether it be in the development of the earth, in the development of life upon its surface, in the development of society, of government, of manufactures, of commerce, of language, literature, science, art, this same evolution of the simple into the complex,



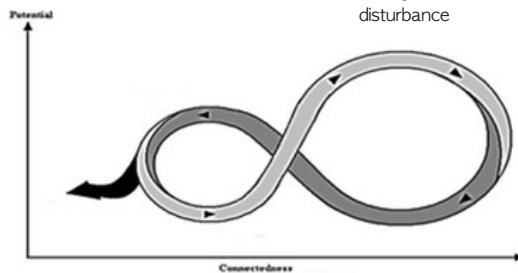
through successive differentiations, holds throughout” (Spencer 1857, 234). The general ecosystem has four phases of evolution, which include: 1) exploitation: the colonization of disturbed ecosystems where species capture easily accessible resources. It is the beginning of establishing order within a chaotic system; 2) conservation: stability, rigidity, strong interdependencies; 3) release: the opportunity that fuels the creative destruction phase; resulting from some external disturbance, the tightly knit connected structures of the ecosystem come undone and large amounts of stored capital and energy are released; and 4) reorganization: restructuring, highest uncertainty, a new order begins (Auerswald and Dani 2018).

#### 4. Reorganization

- Release of stored nutrients introduces novelty
- Phase characteristics: restructuring; highest uncertainty; new order

#### 2. Conservation

- ‘Climax’ or equilibrium phase
- Resource utilization shifts from growth to system maintenance
- Phase characteristics: stability; rigidity; strong-interdependencies; vulnerability to disturbance



#### 1. Exploitation

- High competition for resources
- New opportunities from increasing diversity
- Phase characteristics: pioneers; opportunity; innovation; uncertainty

#### 3. Release

- ‘Creative destruction’ phase
- System collapse releasing stored nutrients
- Phase characteristics: uncertainty; chaos; disturbance; de-stability

Figure 1. Cycles of Ecosystem

Source: Auerswald and Dani (2018).

## 2.2. Cultural Ecosystem

Cultural ecosystems mirror the components and characteristics of ecosystems, but focus on the exchange, utilization, and creation of content with aesthetic and cultural value. Cultural institutions and intermediaries play crucial roles in this context. Local arts and culture often develop through cooperative systems among consumers. The production, distribution, and consumption of culture, facilitated by digital technologies, differentiate cultural products from artistic ones. Cultural institutions within a region should possess ecological knowledge to understand and apply the principles of ecosystems, fostering sustainable human communities.

In order to secure a circulation structure of the cultural ecosystem, cultural producers should have a higher ratio than distributors and consumers in terms of quantity, but a smooth circulation structure is ensured when the total number of the participants is greater than the number of cultural producers. The mutuality must be secured while each stage has a round qualification and status. Independent and

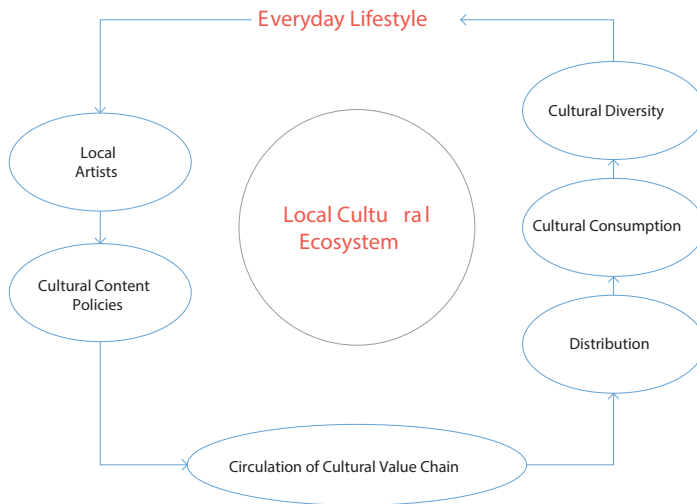


Figure 2. Conceptual Model of the Cultural Ecosystem  
 Source: Adapted from Chungbuk Research Institute (2012).

organic relationships must be formed, but it is difficult to secure organic characteristics in the sub-structures. An ecosystem within which individual organizations are born, grow, thrive, or pass away, and examine the contextual factors that constrain or sustain them (McGill, et al. 2014).

In an ecosystem, the most important thing is the establishment of a circulation structure. The circulation structure refers to the circular flow of energy, and the most crucial factor is the existence of the primary producers, which have the largest number, and their production activities provide the most significant driving force for energy circulation throughout the ecosystem. The strengthening of mutuality between each group within the ecosystem is also essential. Reciprocity can only be achieved on the basis of equality, and it is therefore necessary to ensure the equal status of primary, secondary and tertiary producers. Evolution and development can be achieved in a state where the harmonious equality of all populations is ensured, and it is not easy to ensure the beginning of development in a less competitive or non-competitive environment. To strengthen mutuality, the cultivation of each individual's inner competence becomes the most important issue. The ability of each entity can serve as the most important indicator of the competitiveness of the entire ecosystem, which is an indicator of the health of the ecosystem. It can be confirmed that the health of an ecosystem is not manifested through the abnormal growth of a specific population, but through the competitiveness of each member, and that the ecosystem can grow and develop together in such an environment (Ivanova and Zhang 2022).

### ***2.3. Place-based Local Cultural Ecosystem***

“An arts and cultural ecology encompasses the many networks of arts and cultural creators, producers, presenters, sponsors, participants, and supporting casts embedded in diverse communities. Forty years ago, scientists and policymakers realized that treating plants, animals, minerals, climate, and the universe as endlessly classifiable, separate phenomena did not help people understand or respond to environmental problems. So they created the integrated field of environmental ecology. In similar

fashion, arts producers, advocates, and policymakers are now beginning to strengthen the arts and culture sphere by cultivating view of its wholeness and interconnectedness” (Markusen, et al. 2011, 8).

There are two key perspectives for understanding cultural participation: local residents and policymakers. From the perspective of local residents, what matters most to cultural participation are: (1) individual economic resources—disposable income, a subjective assessment of economic situation (Can I afford it?); (2) resources of reference groups (Are my friends and relatives heavy users of culture?); and (3) tangible resources related to culture, i.e., the infrastructure of cultural institutions (Is there a place where I can enjoy some cultural atmosphere and content in my place of living?). On the other hand, from the perspective of policymakers, what matters most to cultural participation include: (1) the size of the budget devoted to culture (How much can be spent on culture-related projects?); (2) institutional networks resources (Have private and non-profit partners identified with whom we could collaborate in the implementation of arts and culture policy?); and (3) tangible resources related to culture, i.e., the infrastructure of cultural institutions (What cultural institutions could be kept in our cultural policy portfolio?)

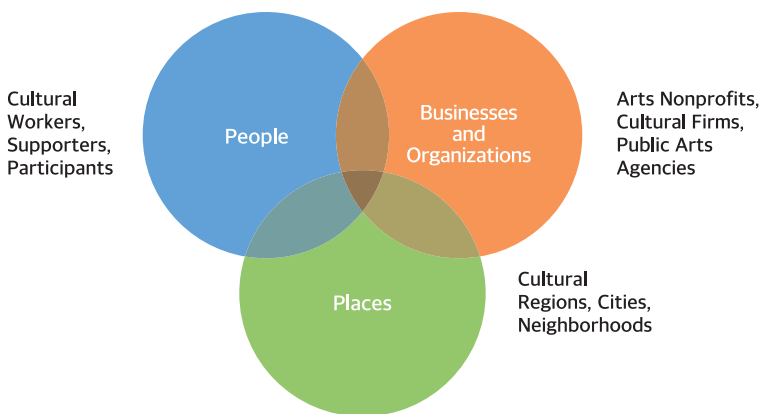


Figure 3. Place-based Local Cultural Ecosystem  
*Source:* Markusen, et al. (2011).

The criteria for place-based local cultural ecosystem can include: (1) possessing positive aesthetic properties; (2) being expressive of emotion; (3) being intellectually challenging (i.e. questioning received views and modes of thought); (4) being formally complex and coherent; (5) having a capacity to convey complex meanings; (6) exhibiting an individual point of view; (7) being an exercise of creative imagination (being original); (8) being an artifact or performance which is the product of a high degree of skill; (9) belonging to an established artistic form (music, painting, film, etc.); (10) being the product of an intention to make a work of art; and (11) art traditions and institutions.

### **3. Arts and Cultural Leadership and UCCN**

#### ***3.1. People for Public Spaces***

Arts and cultural leadership is “a suitable test ground for developing engagement and governance practices and routines in places. Relatively limited financial resources still encourage the inclusion of a wide set of stakeholders, whose participation means a more diverse range of interests, which in turn, require more complex and innovative engagement and negotiating processes” (Nemeth 2016). The way in which local cultural programs are managed is changing to a more bottom-up, flexible system of governance that empowers people to do things. Cities are well positioned to gather ideas and information that can help people to achieve their goals. The problem is being able to channel all these individual desires into a dynamic that allows the city as a whole to thrive. In designing a governance structure for programs and platforms, it is important to have a mandate that enables them to act, achieving legitimacy in terms of organization and being able to access resources. The organization of such a program should be transparent and compact. Partnership is vital for small organizations to achieve things, but it is not always possible to act together (McGill, et al. 2014; Mulligan and Smith 2011).

There are four phases of local cultural activities in public spaces:

- (1) **Mobilization:** Mobilize resources to achieve a cultural agenda. The municipality can act to identify and gather the resources. The direct involvement of municipal government can act as power-broker and ensure openness and equity is essential.
- (2) **Visibilization:** Much of the work occurs behind closed doors through meetings, discussions, and lobbying. In the formal cultural programs of branding and marketing, visibilization can include formal programs of branding and marketing, which are usually aimed at achieving media coverage and support from citizens and other stakeholder groups. Visibilization is not just a top-down process, but also a grassroots process that can involve all the actors using the city. Cultural programs visibilize through everyday practice and repetition.
- (3) **Sensibilization:** Making a programme visible is also just a first step in a long process. In order to maintain the momentum of a program, it needs to be understood and used by people on a regular basis. To reach wider audiences among the users of the city, the program concept needs to be made accessible to others. This can involve: 1) **Translation:** interpreting the often technical or academic language of project conception into everyday, accessible language. For example, an artist's perspective can be interpreted in terms of universal themes that were relevant for residents and visitors as well as the global media; 2) **Adaptation:** making the content of the program relevant and immediate for audiences and publics; 3) **Empathy:** even if the message of the programme is communicated via techniques of translation and adaptation, it will have limited effect unless people feel they are connected to it.
- (4) **Festivalization:** events serve a central function in processes of place-making because they provide the 'liquid urban culture' that can make things happen in cities. Events can make places because of their catalytic function within urban systems. However, not all events can change things. In fact, many more events are 'iterative', serving to reinforce the status quo rather than challenge it. Relatively few events can be seen as 'pulsar' events capable of acting as catalysts that physically or symbolically change places, although these are often the types of events that cities need (Richards and Duif 2018).

### ***3.2. Enhancing the Cultural Ecosystem through the Utilization of the UCCN Program***

From the business development perspective to the creative field awareness and lifelong learning process, from festivals to professional and artistic exchange programs, from sustainable urban development measures to international network, it is necessary to strengthen cooperation with and among cities that have recognized creativity as a strategic factor of sustainable development.

The OECD claims that the “17 SDGs will not be reached without proper engagement of and coordination with local and regional governments” (OECD 2020). All the 17 SDGs and many of the 169 targets relate directly to the responsibilities of local and regional governments (UCLG 2018), and each goal contains at least one target that is relevant for local governments. The SDGs have “convening potential” in that they offer a framework for dialogue between stakeholders with very different agendas, including cultural organizations and activists, private companies with commercial imperatives, and community groups and civil society organizations concerned with inequality and social justice. The adoption of SDGs has different meanings: For some, it signifies a focus on achieving “green growth,” while for others, it serves as a tool to address urban inequalities, providing a mechanism for city officials to connect with peers in other cities and share information.



Figure 4. Sustainable Development Goals

Source: United Nations (2017).

### 3.3. UCCN City Branding

Networks are also used to brand cities. This is especially true in the case of UNESCO, which carries a high degree of international prestige, thereby improving the image and competitive advantage of a member city. The benefits resulting from membership of the UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN) and the concomitant use of UNESCO's name and logo vary from an increased inflow of tourists and investment to a stronger sense of satisfaction and pride among city residents and businesses.



Becoming a member of the UCCN can provide many benefits, ranging from the designation as a “badge of honour” to opportunities to share experiences and knowledge with other UCCN cities. However, it also has some problematic aspects, such as the network’s rapid growth, many administrative duties, and a bureaucracy designed to deal with nation-states, all of which result in a deficit of actual creative networking. The UCCN provides a platform to promote the use of creativity as a key element in a city’s social and economic development. To join the network, cities must agree to strengthen the role of cultural activities, make cultural life accessible to everyone, and create opportunities for directly linking creativity, innovation and sustainable development.

Sharing knowledge, best practices and experiences is one of the main objectives of the UCCN. However, the city branding is also of great significance and brings several benefits for member cities. Membership in a prestigious network can help to create a distinctive brand identity for the city. One of the key elements for city branding is more frequent media coverage of the city at the local, national and international levels. In addition, residents perceive benefits from UCCN membership and the branding of their city, as they feel proud and satisfied to live in that city.

The 2020 Rome Charter emphasizes:

- (1) **DISCOVER cultural roots**, so that they can recognize their heritage, identity and place in the city, as well as understand the contexts of others;
- (2) **CREATE cultural expressions**, so that they can be part of and enrich the life of the city;
- (3) **SHARE cultures and creativity**, so that social and democratic life is deepened by the exchange;
- (4) **ENJOY the city’s cultural resources and spaces**, so that all can be inspired, educated and refreshed;
- (5) **PROTECT the city’s common cultural resources**, so that all can benefit from them, today and in years to come.

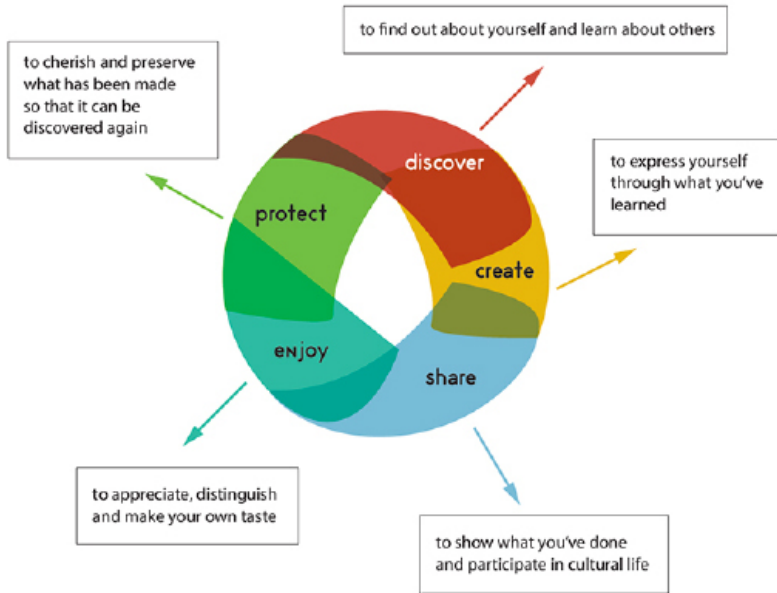


Figure 5. The 2020 Rome Charter  
 Source: [www.2020romecharter.org](http://www.2020romecharter.org).

## Conclusion

Through a city's UCCN designation, residents are reminded of their local culture and cultural traditions. Residents appear motivated to preserve their traditions in order to maintain their membership through various initiatives and projects that describe the ways in which UCCN membership can foster social capital. Active residents are also working to build partnerships and share knowledge. However, there is a lack of concrete ideas on the most effective approach to achieve this. Related to this issue are the coordination and transaction costs of network participation, which is a problem associated with most targeted networks. It is also important to recognize that through the UCCN, UNESCO can more easily encourage cities to develop strategies for using culture and creativity as a tool for sustainable development. Another related potential benefit is that the cities

designated as members of the UCCN also gain access to the UNESCO label, which is seen as very valuable by local residents. However, the emphasis on sustainability may in fact impede the ability of member cities to achieve the objectives outlined in their applications to join the UCCN. Along with the network's rapid growth, the increasing administrative duties can be a drawback in terms of the network's capacity to support the creative networking around branding that many cities are pursuing.

A sustainable community with cultural abundance needs to have long-term action plans for long-term impacts and outcomes. In the Quintuple Helix theory, the interplay among municipalities, industries, institutions, civil society, and the local (cultural) ecosystem plays a crucial role in fostering culture-led sustainable communities (Carayannis, et al. 2018). Civil society involvement, stakeholder participation, inclusive governance, sharing of the best practices, experiences, and knowledge through partnerships, culture-led social integration policies and ODA programs embody the zeitgeist of our times. The promotion of intermediary organizations and partnerships, as well as the branding of the UCCN cultural policies are also important. Therefore, it is necessary to enjoy the city's cultural resources and spaces, so that everyone can be inspired, educated and refreshed, while strengthening cooperation with and among cities that have recognized creativity as a strategic factor for sustainable development.

---

## REFERENCES

- Auerswald, Phil, and Lokesh Dani. 2018. "Economic Ecosystems." In *The New Oxford Handbook of Economic Geography*, edited by Gordon L. Clark, Maryann P. Feldman, Meric S. Gertler, and Dariusz Wojcik, 245–273. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Carayannis, Elias G., et al. 2018. "The ecosystem as helix: an exploratory

- theory-building study of regional co-opetitive entrepreneurial ecosystems as Quadruple/Quintuple Helix Innovation Models.” *R&D Management* 48.1: 148-162.
- Chungbuk Research Institute. 2012. *Munhwa saengtaegye-reul tonghan jiyek munhwa hwalseonghwa jeollyak* (Regional Cultural Activation Strategy through Cultural Ecosystem), Chungbuk Research Institute.
- Ivanova, Victoria, and Gary Zhexi Zhang, eds. 2022. *Future Art Ecosystems: Art x Decentralised Tech*. London: Serpentine.
- Markusen, Ann, et al. 2011. *California's Arts and Cultural Ecology*. California: The James Irvine Foundation.
- McGill, Larry, et al. 2014. *A Portrait of the Cultural Ecosystem*. Foundation Center.
- Mulligan, Martin, and Pia Smith. 2011. *Art, Governance and the Turn to Community: Putting Art at the Heart of Local Government*. Globalism Research Centre, RMIT University.
- Nemeth, Agnes. 2016. “European Capitals of Culture: Digging Deeper into the Governance of the Mega-Event.” *Territory, Politics, Governance* 4.1: 52-74.
- OECD. 2020. *A Territorial Approach to the Sustainable Development Goals: Synthesis Report*. OECD.
- Richards, Greg, and Lian Duif. 2018. *Small Cities with Big Dreams: Creative Placemaking and Branding Strategies*. New York: Routledge.
- Spencer, Herbert. 1857. *Progress: Its Law and Cause*. New York: J. Fitzgerald.
- UCLG. 2018. *How UCLG Contributes towards the SDGs: Fostering Accomplishment of the 2030 Agenda from the Bottom up*. [https://www.uclg.org/sites/default/files/uclg\\_y\\_los\\_sdg-web.pdf](https://www.uclg.org/sites/default/files/uclg_y_los_sdg-web.pdf).
- United Nations. 2017. *Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 6 July 2017, Work of the Statistical Commission pertaining to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. United Nations.

# European Perspectives on Cultural Ecosystems in Cities

Sylvia AMANN\*

## Abstract

*A city that aims to develop through culture first requires vision as a starting point. The city of Linz in Austria is an interesting case of a long-term transformation from a city with an industrial image to a cultural city hosting one of the world's most influential global digital arts festivals. Such a development needs a solid foundation. The cultural development plans of the city were built on a future vision made possible by the comprehensive involvement of stakeholders and a high-quality process.*

*The development process for a cultural city requires an understanding of a broader ecosystem involving individuals, organisations, and governance. These collaborative ecosystems also need the involvement of cross-sectoral partners from areas like tourism, green transformation, and urban development. Furthermore, research support including the generation of meaningful data plays an important role to demonstrate the social, economic, environmental, and urban impacts of development with culture. The city of Leeuwarden, the European Capital of Culture in 2018, is a good example.*

**Keywords:** culture for development, urban impacts, narratives, participation, ecosystems, transformation

---

\* Sylvia AMANN, Director of Inforelais, was member of the European Capital of Culture selection and monitoring panel from 2015 to 2020. She graduated from the Vienna University of Economics and Business Administration and completed her studies at the Sorbonne University in Paris and the Kings College in London. As chair of the EU expert group for creative industries development, she published on innovation and entrepreneurship in culture and the creative sectors including the thematic focus of cross-sectoral innovation. Furthermore, Sylvia initiated several activities for an enhanced international exchange of European Capitals of Culture in Asia and Africa, working with cities in South Korea and globally. E-mail: office@inforelais.org.

The application of ecosystemic approaches to culture requires a deep understanding of such systems and reflection on related interconnections. This implies reflection on a vision for the development of a city with culture, a strategy built on these long-term objectives, including reflection on the local ecosystem. The analysis of cultural, social, economic, environmental, and urban development questions is relevant in this context. The whole endeavour needs accompanying research including data collection and communication. An ecosystemic approach allows for integrated considerations of connected elements. This article highlights experiences and good practices from the European continent.

## **1. A Vision for the Development of a City with Culture**

A narrative addressing the decision-makers and the inhabitants is a very powerful instrument to tell the story of a city and to attract visitors. The narrative requires careful attention to get support from the inhabitants. This approach will generate positive effects on the readiness to co-implement related activities. Good narratives also have the potential to increase social cohesion in the city, both in culture and beyond. Another area of attention is the readability of the narrative for visitors who are not familiar with local history and stories. The city narrative needs to be an appealing story that triggers the interest and curiosity of (potential) visitors. However, a marketing approach will be too short-sighted. The narrative requires translation into real on-site experiences and concrete offers.

During the last decade, the city of Linz in Austria has invested considerable effort in shaping a new image, transforming the perception of an industrial site into a cultural and creative hotspot. The challenge was considerable given the geographic situation in proximity to cultural heritage hotspots in Vienna and Salzburg, both historic cities with a considerable cultural offering that attracts a large number of international visitors. Following these cultural city examples that are strongly anchored in heritage would not have been a viable option for the city of Linz due to

the limited perspectives of being competitive edge. The city of Linz has a rather small historic centre and does not have the potential for a full narrative based on the Austrian-Hungarian Empire. Such an approach would also have insufficiently reflected the perceptions of the population. An alternative narrative had to be found, built on the city's industrial heritage and technology reflecting the strong local steel industry and the already well-established Ars Electronica Festival, which was founded 1979.<sup>1</sup> With considerable investments in the cultural development of the city and the nomination of Linz as European Capital of Culture in 2009,<sup>2</sup> the city was perceived as a cultural hotspot. These efforts were further backed by the Ars Electronica which was already a global player.



Linz Tourism, Post Cards 2022-2023. © Sylvia Amann.

1. <https://ars.electronica.art/futurelab/en/our-journey/>.

2. [https://www.linz09.at/en/ueber\\_linz.html](https://www.linz09.at/en/ueber_linz.html).

Today, the city of Linz displays well-anchored cooperation between tourism and culture, which was strongly accelerated by common initiatives during the European Capital of Culture year. The Linz Tourism Board has invested in a new vision for participatory and engaging tourism. The related award-winning promotion videos build on the images of a city of workers and ordinary people.<sup>3</sup> Activities for guests (which is different from using the term “visitors”) encompass tourism-related offerings involving creative industries in the city and tourism packages covering the whole Danube area with a strong focus on storytelling. The storytellers are writers, researchers, philosophers, and influencers sharing their discoveries in Linz and in other cooperating cities and sites. This new tourism culture narrative also has a strong environmental dimension that furthers new ways of mobility and innovative tourism operators.

## **2. The Co-production of Answers from Culture to Areas of Opportunity and Challenges**

Future-oriented action of policymakers in cities first requires a vision. In the case of Linz, this is a clear understanding that culture provides a framework to overcome a rather negative former image. A vision alone does not lead to successful implementation. This requires a clear understanding of existing challenges and opportunities in the cultural and creative sectors. The city of Linz already opted in the late 1990s to invest in the Cultural Development Plan—a multiannual framework for the development of culture. The first related strategy was published in 2000 and is based on a participatory approach involving more than 600 stakeholders for a cross-sectoral definition of common objectives and aims. The current Cultural Development Plan<sup>4</sup> which was published in 2013 addresses four main areas of attention: Increase Equality of Opportunity,

---

3. <https://www.linztourismus.at/en/leisure/discover-linz/linz-inspires/planetlinz>.

4. <https://www.linz.at/english/culture/3895.php>.



Nurture Potential, Facilitate Access, and Open This City Up.<sup>5</sup>

The first priority, “Increase Equality of Opportunity,” focuses on a city culture policy which commits to the following objectives: “In the spirit of Linz’s overall political orientation as a socially just city, the principle that equal opportunities must be created at all levels also applies to the cultural sector. The city of Linz is therefore committed to equality for all individuals and groups in cultural policy and thus to equal opportunities and fair social participation for all. It is important to remove existing barriers to access and use, to establish gender equality at all levels and to view social diversity in ethnic and religious terms as normal. These aims constitute the indispensable preconditions for putting the concept of Culture for All into actual practice.”

The second priority is to “Nurture Potential”: “Cultural development and planning are the engine for cultural progress and the basis for dealing with socially relevant questions and artistic tendencies. In order to ensure this, the existing creative potential of a city must be promoted in the best possible way: on the one hand in the form of a commitment to support art and culture as a public task, which includes financial support for public cultural institutions and the independent art and culture scene, and on the other hand through ensuring an adequate infrastructure that makes cultural and artistic production possible. In addition, art and cultural creation in Linz focuses on interdisciplinary cutting-edge action.”

“Facilitate access” is the third priority highlighting the following commitments: “Participation and mediation are the prerequisites of Culture for All. In this sense, cultural education is a key concept for real participation of the broadest possible sections of the population in cultural events. One of the focal points of Linz’s cultural policy is therefore concerned with the target groups of children, adolescents and young adults, who have a right to art and culture regardless of their ethnic origin and social background. In this connection, the prime settings for providing access to arts and culture are public spaces, which are defined as not only physical urban space but

---

5. <https://www.linz.at/images/KEPneu.pdf>. The details of the priorities are translated from the German version of the culture development plan of the city of Linz.

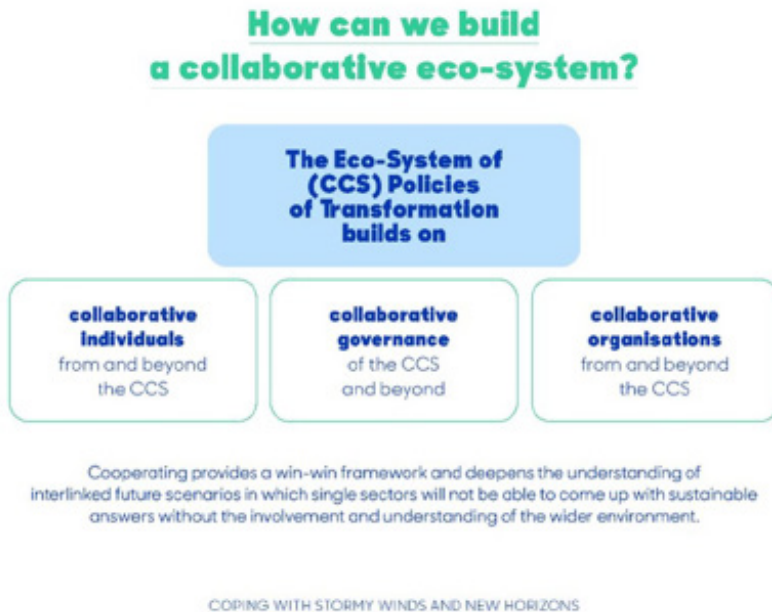
also as media space that enable people to intensively engage in discussions, encounters and criticism.”

With its fourth and final priority, the city aims to be more open: “Urbanity stands for openness, complexity, networking and densification. Linz, as the urban center of Upper Austria, has a special role and task in this sense. Not only as the administrative center of the state, but also as a cultural force field in a booming economic region. For the cultural city of Linz, this means further expanding participation in supra-regional and European networks, further promoting the internationalization of art and cultural creation and further optimizing the density of the city’s cultural offerings through cooperation between cultural providers. Reflecting on the past and dealing with the future in this city should be the basis for responding to an increasingly complex world with solutions and projects that consolidate Linz as an innovative, cosmopolitan and sustainable location. Because taking responsibility for one’s past, especially for the National Socialist legacy of the city of Linz, creates the conditions for a humane, democratic present and future.”

The cross-sectoral nature of culture is visible in these priorities, which equally address social and infrastructural questions as well as the important role of public space and the deeper understanding of urbanity. The cultural development plans in the city of Linz are also built strongly on wide participation, which also implies an understanding that a whole ecosystem of active participation is required to achieve positive change.

### **3. Understanding that All Can Be Actors of Positive Change and Impact**

Based on the experiences highlighted from the city of Linz and from a wide range of other European cities, a broad mobilisation of active forces in the urban ecosystem are required to generate frameworks on which positive development can be built. Such a setting is also a firewall against inertia if built on a common narrative and related goals. Who are the actors of change? The cultural ecosystem comprises three main types of partners,



Source: Sylvia Amann, *Creative FLIP* (2023).

governance, organisations, and individuals, based on the collaborative transformation policies approach published by the author in 2023.<sup>6</sup>

Individuals include artists and cultural employees as well as audiences, while organisations include cultural administrative bodies like cultural departments in cities. It equally encompasses the wide range of cultural institutions in cities like museums and theatres. Organisations are also companies like enterprises in the creative industries. The governance part of the ecosystem includes the decision-makers and the politicians in charge of designing the regulative frameworks for cultural action and providing the required budgetary means. As most of the challenges and opportunities cannot be addressed by the cultural sector alone, this ecosystem highlights

---

6. [https://creativeflip.creativehubs.net/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/CREATIVE\\_FLIP\\_Transformation\\_Policies\\_FINAL.pdf](https://creativeflip.creativehubs.net/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/CREATIVE_FLIP_Transformation_Policies_FINAL.pdf).

the need for collaboration with other sectors. For example, if a city aims to green the cultural sector, it relies on the green transformation readiness of other areas of the economy and society such as the availability of green transport options. Another example is the development of local cultural heritage which links to a wide range of interrelated international historic backgrounds. Related economic development options are most often linked to tourism which requires the cooperation of cultural stakeholders with tourism industry representatives.

The overall narrative and overarching objectives for a city's development with culture will define the range of stakeholders necessary to develop meaningful action plans. This means that a strong cultural tourism approach as one element of cross-sectoral cooperation should be built on a clear and related narrative as previously highlighted in this article with the example of Linz. This approach would also imply that the broad range of stakeholders involved in cultural development plans has endorsed that focus on cultural tourism. This anchor will build solid ground for a long-term commitment of all the stakeholders. And as a final step, it is necessary to work out a concrete short-term action plan with clear common follow-up implementation.

#### **4. The Availability of High-quality Research and Data to Support Decision-making and Communication**

The whole ecosystemic process should also be accompanied by high-quality data collection and management with academic support. This will allow for the gathering of facts and figures such as whether further budgets will be made available, which are relevant to the decision-making process. Meaningful data and research are also necessary to nurture the improvements of projects for development by culture. Furthermore, information is required to raise public understanding of the effects of cultural action in the city. Also, meaningful data will help journalists to report accurately on cultural development in cities.

The city of Leeuwarden was a European Capital of Culture in the

year 2018 and opted for comprehensive research and data collection in four different areas of consideration: social impact, economic impact, sustainability, and European dimension.<sup>7</sup>

Considerable social impact was reported from Leeuwarden-Friesland 2018 (LF2018): “Overall participation in LF2018 was massive: 5,3 million visitors in total, a record year for the number of tourists in the region. 68% of the people living in the region felt involved in the year. About 10% of the population served as volunteer. (...) 78% of LF2018 events included cooperation between different generations with a view to share knowledge. Traditional craftsmanship skills such as carpentry and furniture-making—but also set design and textile—were at the centre of exchanges between people over 65 and younger generations.”

Economic impact was seen in a wide range of areas: “Visitors spent around €119 million. Investments realised, originally estimated at €74m, turned out to be €104,5m. Research findings depict an economic impact ranging between €230m and €320m. This figure includes the spending by extra visitors and tourists, the extra turnover in the cultural sector, the capital expenditure elicited, and the derivative spending effects. Several initiatives contributed to the improvement of the tourism offer, especially experiential and cultural tourism. Projects such as the 11 Fountains formed a new cultural heritage that became a must-see in the region. The art project consists in 11 fountains in the 11 Frisian cities, designed by 11 artists from different countries.”

---

7. <https://eurocities.eu/latest/leeuwarden-friesland-european-capital-of-culture-2018-was-a-sustainable-success-on-all-counts/>. All details on the four impact areas are from this good practice description.



Jaume Plensa, “Love” fountain in Leeuwarden, 2018. Photographer: Sjaak Kempe-cc-by-2.0.<sup>8</sup>

Sustainability and positive impact on the ecology were at the core of LF2018’s endeavours: “The food served was locally produced for 80% of the main programme’s projects, renewable energy was used, and materials were reused. LF2018 brought about innovation, socio-economic change and sustainability. For instance, the regional initiative Innofest used festivals as living labs for innovation and helped start-ups to test their prototypes

---

8. [https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Love\\_fountain\\_Leeuwarden\\_11F.jpg](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Love_fountain_Leeuwarden_11F.jpg).

in festivals. (...) One outstanding example, praised for its communication effectiveness, was the *Elfwegentocht*: two weeks during which the whole Friesland province functioned without fossil fuels, culminating in the largest parade of this kind ever, including electric vehicles, cars and boats.”

The European dimension is transversal to the European Capital of Culture initiative: “In 2018, nearly 1600 international collaborations took place with artists, students and museums from 87 countries; 76% were with institutions from EU countries. Partnerships with foreign universities increased, consequently boosting the number of students and university employees participating in international exchange programmes. The number of international alliance partners of the WaterCampus, meeting point of the Dutch water technology sector, doubled. As a result, the international profile of Leeuwarden in the sector has improved. This is a concrete example of LF2018 spillover in other sectors, such as water.”

Based on these considerable achievements, the city of Leeuwarden and its partners considered follow-up actions, one of which was for the city to become a UNESCO Creative City of Literature.<sup>9</sup>

## **5. The Comprehension of the Need for a Process of Renewal**

The examples from European cities demonstrate the need for clear visions, participative development of plans, and related implementation accompanied by high-quality research and data availability. These experiences also show the need for understanding the long-term process of permanent transformation. The ecosystem requires adaptation to new challenges and new opportunities and a regular update of visions and plans.

---

9. <https://en.unesco.org/creative-cities/leeuwarden>.





## **“Our Experiment Will Never Stop”:** *The Common Seongbuk Artist Roundtable as an Experiment of Local Culture Governance*

Kyoung-woo KWON\*

### **Abstract**

*As an example of cultural governance in Seongbuk-gu, Seoul, the Common Seongbuk Artist Roundtable, an autonomous network of artists, was a new initiative and a starting point for participation, activity, and change through arts and culture in the local community. Launched in January 2014, the Roundtable is a best practice that tests the limits of public-private partnerships and collaboration in the field of arts and culture in Seongbuk-gu.*

*The Common Seongbuk Artist Roundtable is neither an interest group of local artists nor a partner group affiliated with a public arts and cultural institution of the Seongbuk Cultural Foundation that facilitates its own projects. Rather, it is a minimum apparatus to ensure a sustainable ecosystem, which was created by local arts and cultural practitioners and an experiment to graft the local arts and cultural ecosystem to the larger local community ecosystem.*

*One of the strengths of the Roundtable is that it encompasses various genres of arts and culture while serving as a meeting place for different local actors, including cultural planners, village activists, and resident artists. Through this process, people can accumulate common experiences, address common issues and agendas in the local community, and discover and expand shared values.*

**Keywords:** Common Seongbuk Artist Roundtable, Seongbuk-gu, Seongbuk Cultural Foundation, local culture governance, governance, network of artists.

---

\* Kyoung-woo KWON is the Director of Performing Arts Planning & Management at the Seongbuk Cultural Foundation. After studying cultural studies and theory, he teaches at the university level and works as a cultural critic. Since joining the Foundation, he has been involved in cultural movements in the local community. He also plans to continue his experiments in creating a sustainable cultural ecosystem based on the values of reciprocity, hospitality, and coexistence. He has written several books, including *Bad Society of Good People* (2016). E-mail: nomad70@daum.net.

## 1. What Are We Going to Do?

Held in Strasbourg on May 25, 2018, the European Conference of the United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) selected the Seoul's Seongbuk-gu district and France's Lyon as the co-winner of the Third International Award UCLG-Mexico City-Culture 21. Seongbuk-gu was praised by the jury as "a perfect example of cultural policy for a sustainable city" in which three entities—Seoul Seongbuk-gu, Seongbuk Cultural Foundation and the Common Seongbuk Artist Roundtable—jointly organized public-private participatory governance to implement cultural democracy and cultural governance. The award was not only a great honor for Seongbuk-gu at the local level, but also a huge encouragement for many artists, cultural planners, and community activists who are at the forefront of creating a sustainable city. Moreover, as this award was given by the UCLG, it resonated to no small extent with the arts and cultural community in Korea, influencing many discourses including those on cultural cities and creative cities.

Above all, the UCLG is not a state-centered network, but a global organization of local and regional governments around the world that works towards sustainable development by sharing information and policies on agendas such as local autonomy and decentralization, local finance, gender equality, culture, social integration, and human rights. In this respect, winning the award is especially meaningful as an innovative experiment of a small district, Seongbuk-gu, gaining international recognition for tackling challenges currently faced by cities around the world, including Europe and South America. It also reaffirms the common nature of our concerns and experiments as issues shared by all our contemporaries who plan cities and organize urban life.

Then, what does it mean for a city to make an experiment of a new city through governance at the level of local culture? Who is doing what through which actions? In order to answer these questions, it is necessary to examine a concrete and substantial case.

Most people aspire to do something to create change in the world. Whether big or small, such actions differ depending on situations like

influence, power, and politics. Therefore, we must think about what to do and how to do it to have a good impact on the world. In this process, it is difficult to create change by directly influencing reality. This is because the world around us is much larger than we think, and its internal system has a much more complicated structure. As a result, there is a huge gap between the idea of changing the world and the reality of doing so. One of the most practical and rational ways to change the world is to engage in democratic political activities such as voting. However, as we are witnessing all over the world, changes through political institutions have numerous limitations and flaws. We see politicians fail to play their proper role as representatives of their citizenry, and the state and local governments are at a loss for what to do. The gap between the ideal and reality is getting wider, while the people living in the gap are getting increasingly tired or left behind.

Changing the world requires real, concrete work. No matter how good the argument, there is nothing more important than the question of how to change the person sitting in front of me. In this sense, a local community has characteristics similar to a family. There are many people who are interested and active in big political issues at the national level but are surprisingly ignorant of or insensitive to the realities of their own neighborhoods. In this way, local communities are marginalized and it is often a small number of interest groups that lead local communities. If we are interested in changing or transforming the world, we should ask each other questions about our communities. It is in this context that the Common Seongbuk Artist Roundtable launched an experiment of local culture governance as a new initiative and a starting point for participation, action, and change through arts and culture in the local community.

## **2. The Common Seongbuk Artist Roundtable Model**

The Common Seongbuk Artist Roundtable is an exemplary case that tests the limits of public-private cooperation and collaboration in the field of arts and culture in Seongbuk-gu’s community. It is neither an interest group of local artists, nor a partner group affiliated with a public arts and

cultural institution of the Seongbuk Cultural Foundation to facilitate its own projects. Rather, it is a minimum apparatus to ensure a sustainable ecosystem, which was created by local arts and cultural practitioners and an experiment to graft the local arts and cultural ecosystem to the larger local community ecosystem.

The Roundtable was jointly proposed by many people who were concerned about the local arts and cultural ecosystem with the establishment of the Seongbuk Cultural Foundation in September, 2012. In short, it was a result of the combination of the Seongbuk-gu local government, the Seongbuk Cultural Foundation as the intermediary support organization, and the civil organization of arts and cultural practitioners. Since its first meeting in January, 2014, the Roundtable has held a general meeting every month and solidified its identity as a local community by organizing sports days and joint workshops every year.



The most significant feature of the Common Seongbuk Artist Roundtable is its autonomy. It is an open community which invites anyone to participate in its operation, regardless of their qualifications. Even though there are some difficulties in decision-making and discussion due to

its extremely open nature, the Roundtable has consistently maintained this stance for the past 10 years. The operating principles are outlined in the rules it established in 2015: “autonomous activities” (autonomy), “cultural democracy” (democracy), “friendship and cooperation” (solidarity), and “respect for differences through cultural diversity” (diversity). The election of members and co-chairs of the Steering Committee is based on voluntary participation and autonomy. The committee consists of 20 to 30 members who participate voluntarily each year. Committee members do not receive any special benefits or monetary compensation, but rather pay a monthly membership fee of 10,000 won and spare time for their roles in the committee. There are two co-chairs, one of whom is elected among committee members, while the other is selected by a random selection method known as “ladder climbing” (*sadari tagi*) among those nominated by others or by themselves. This method displays a high level of “trust” in the sense that it is a mechanism to strengthen and maintain democracy in community activities through checks and balances on the authority and power of the two chairs. Chairs serve a one-year term and are not eligible to serve again in following terms. As a result, the open and democratic ways of the Roundtable play an important role in building trust within and outside, as well as in the emergence of new actors.

This operating method of the Roundtable is tantamount to a model of direct democracy. The monthly general meeting is a time for participants to introduce themselves and new members. In this way, those who share and enjoy this time together each month eventually form a core group in the Roundtable. During the general meeting, members share their own activities with others, exchange ideas, and engage in discussions and debates. They also organize joint actions or performances depending on current social issues while also constructively criticizing and encouraging each other’s activities. One of the strengths of this network is that it encompasses various genres of arts and culture while serving as a meeting place for different local actors, including cultural planners, village activists, and resident artists. Through this process, people can accumulate common experiences, address common issues and agendas in the local community, and discover and expand shared values.



### 3. The Power of Governance

If the Common Seongbuk Artist Roundtable is the private sector, the Seongbuk Cultural Foundation can be categorized as the public sector. The Foundation is a local government-invested and funded institution established by Seongbuk-gu in September 2012. Its objective is to promote arts and culture in the Seongbuk-gu area and to ensure that arts and culture effectively permeate the lives of its residents. At present, about 100 local cultural foundations across the country play a minimal role in operating existing public facilities such as art centers or cultural performance halls on behalf of their local governments. Since it is difficult to operate existing facilities such as performance theaters, libraries, art museums, living culture spaces or sports facilities, it is almost impossible for them to envision further changes in the arts and culture of the local community. Arts and culture are arguably just one of the many areas of the local community ecosystem. However, arts and culture are not only about a specific field but are also closely connected to changing the condition of life. Although performances, exhibitions, and festivals do not help us in our daily lives, there is a big difference between having and not having this experience.

Realizing such limitations of local cultural foundations, the Seongbuk Cultural Foundation has been striving, from the early stage of its establishment, to build an active network with local arts and cultural practitioners. This is a part of its substantive and concrete work to create participation and change in the local cultural ecosystem beyond the simple expansion of a horizontal network. Building many culture-related facilities or pouring a huge budget into local festivals can hardly lead to vitalizing the local culture. Local culture can become sustainable and vital only when those who constitute the ecosystem participate in its creation. This means that local artists and residents should be the actual actors of local culture and that the local cultural ecosystem should be directly linked to the local ecosystem. As cultural foundations are public institutions, most of their budgets are funded by local governments, which means they are operated with tax money and their staff receive salaries. Therefore, depending on how these public platforms are utilized, the local cultural ecosystem can produce very different results. While cultural foundations have a degree of autonomy through their board of directors as nonprofit organizations, they are also subject to audit by local governments and local councils. Thus, it is crucial for cultural foundations to clearly define their identity and role.

In this context, the collaboration between the Seongbuk Cultural Foundation and the Common Seongbuk Artist Roundtable has had a different effect on the local community and local culture. In recent years, there have been several cases in which the public and private sectors work together on a project basis and then disband after the project is completed. In addition, there are few opportunities for activists and artists to have close relationships with each other. Nevertheless, the arts and cultural practitioners in Seongbuk-gu have continued their monthly meetings and relationships without exception, building a relationship of mutual trust that is hard to find these days. The Foundation provided spaces for Roundtable meetings and prepared basic materials for the meetings. This support was the minimum, but probably most important works that are needed to make up for the limitations of private actors who are irregular and fluid. In this process, the Foundation’s employees also participate in the Roundtable voluntarily or as part of their work. During meetings, participants

share their activities with others, exchange various ideas on the local community and culture, have discussions from different points of view, and constructively criticize and encourage each other's activities. These experiences are refreshing and create new relationships and networks that previously did not exist in the local community.

#### **4. Seongbuk's Experiment: Its Change and Outcome**

One of the strengths of the Common Seongbuk Artist Roundtable is that it encompasses various genres of arts and culture while serving as a meeting place for different local actors, including cultural planners, village activists, and resident artists. In this process, people can accumulate common experiences, address common issues and agendas in the local community, and discover and expand shared values. These activities can lead to more systematic activities for the sustainable change and development of the local community through sharing and cooperation that goes beyond individual ideas and activities. In this regard, it is noteworthy that the Roundtable has been able to continue its activities on a stable and sustainable basis especially after partnering with public institutions such as the Seongbuk Cultural Foundation. Such a relationship and structure allows for various experiments such as a new form of local festival, the "Art Village Making" project involving artists, youth, merchants and citizens, arts and culture education encompassing diverse generations and social strata, and a project to expand healthy communities in the area by organizing cooperatives in various fields.

In Korea, most local festivals are organized by commercial agencies through competitive bidding, leading to a proliferation of similar local festivals. However, when urban planners and artists work together to design and implement them, as in the case of the Roundtable, they can reduce the budget and imbibe the vitality of the local community in their content and atmosphere. Local artists, designers, and activists can collaborate to establish a festival secretariat to design and implement related projects, enabling broad participation of the local community in the process.



In addition, it is necessary to discover and connect various resources related to the festivals through the “Festival Academy” and the “Festival Cooperation Network” for a virtuous cycle of the festival ecosystem. In the case of Seongbuk-gu’s flagship festival, the Seongbuk Global Food Culture Festival Nurimasil, a cooperative was organized through the Roundtable, and in partnership with this cooperative, the festival served as a catalyst for shifting to a collaborative governance model.



The Common Seongbuk Artist Roundtable also offers a new model of joint management of public spaces. Public theaters and complex cultural spaces are usually either operated by public institutions or entrusted to the private sector. However, entrusting them to a cultural foundation poses its own problems since it is legally impossible to reassign them. In this situation, the Roundtable is conducting a new experiment through a “joint operation agreement” to facilitate active collaboration with the private sector. The Miarigogae Art Theatre has attracted attention in the performance world for actively involving artists in its planning and operation through joint operation with the Maeul-dameun Theatre Cooperative. In addition, a complex cultural space called Miindo (the

combination of the first letters of three Korean words: Miarigogae + people + road) was created in the abandoned space under the Miarigogae Overpass. This space has become a cradle for various cultural activities such as exhibitions and performances, woodworking workshops, playgrounds, and markets through joint operation with the Ridge-N-Village Cooperative. Also, as a novel experiment, an old multipurpose hall in the basement of the Seongbuk Information Library, the largest in Seongbuk-gu, was transformed into a black-box public theatre called the Cheonjangsan Mountain Fable Theatre, and a reading room on the fifth floor of the same library was changed into the Kkumjaram Children's Art Gallery. This change was carried out in collaboration with artists through a participatory budgeting. In short, a single library is transformed into a complex facility including a library, an art gallery, and a performance hall. This was made possible by the ideas and collaboration of local artists instead of a unilateral top-down process. It is a project that would not be possible without a deep understanding of and affection for the local area.

The collaborative governance of the Common Seongbuk Artist Roundtable and the Common Seongbuk Cultural Foundation has transformed the arts and cultural ecosystem of the Seongbuk-gu area to an unbelievable extent. As a result, the Roundtable was selected as a member of the "Seongbuk Hall of Fame" in 2017 in the field of arts and culture, which is very unusual at the local political level in Korea.

One of the most important features of the Common Seongbuk Artist Roundtable is the fact that local artists began to live in public rental housing within the local community. In 2017, 19 rental housing units were provided exclusively for local artists, allowing them to settle down at affordable housing costs. Now, with the additional provision of 138 units in 2019, more than 70 households of arts and cultural practitioners live in rental housing. This change in conditions has had a significant impact on these artists' activities. Since their workplaces and living spaces coincide, their interests in the area are bound to grow as well. As a result, the participation of artists in the resident autonomous council has given them the opportunity to meet with community members to discuss policies.

Artists are citizens (residents). The reason why this obvious fact is



repeated here is that local communities still do not recognize artists as such. Although a few of artists are now involved in the resident autonomous council, it has not been easy to get this far. This was possible because, over time and through accumulated experience, locals have begun to perceive artists as residents and to build trust with them. Until now in Korean society, local communities have been influenced by a select few rather than a diverse group of people. Even in Seoul, for example, the local community ecosystem is mostly composed of various occupational organizations or self-organized groups, often centered around community centers at the smallest level of *dong*. The administration of local governments is carried out in such a context, and thus there are few opportunities to find or discover the various actors within the community.

The activities of the Common Seongbuk Artist Roundtable do not move or stop at the individual level, but include the neighborhood, the smallest unit of community. By encountering the daily lives of local residents at traditional markets or small alleys that cannot be grouped even with the smallest administrative unit of *dong*, the Roundtable plays a role in making very substantial changes in their lives, far from a merely temporary effect of arts and culture. It is not a matter of efficiency measured in numbers or outcomes, but a feeling of “happiness” or “solidarity” that cannot be seen but can be felt. It is nothing less than the restoration of community.

A community is not a business or a project, but a repeated, tangible experience of daily life and a natural expression of people's lives.



## 5. Living as Neighborhood Friends

The Common Seongbuk Artist Roundtable is not a rigid organization, but rather a flexible platform. The composition and operation of the Roundtable are strictly oriented toward connectivity, sharing, solidarity, and expansion. Ultimately, the expansion of the Roundtable is made possible by its people. When artists' various life practices, such as their artistic activities, cultural engagement, and political expression, are connected to the local community, the experiment of the Roundtable can continue.

Locality is a space embodied in concreteness and diversity, where abstract values are revealed by actual people in a concrete place. This is an important fact, often referred to as a "policy case." The problem is that most policy cases remain on paper or as data, eventually disappearing. Why is it impossible for concrete local cases to last longer? The reason is

that we approach local culture by simply defining it as an area. As a result, the cases may be temporary successes or specific cases, but they cannot survive as sustainable cases. Locality is the final point where political, cultural, economic, educational, and social issues simultaneously manifest themselves. In this respect, an integrative and holistic approach to local culture is needed. This is possible only when we presuppose the whole process of life, not a separation of activity (work) and life. It does not matter what theories or positions are advocated, such as capitalism, neoliberalism, or communitarianism. The Common Seongbuk Artist Roundtable will continue its experiment for each person to live his or her own life from the perspective of cultural governance and village autonomy. It will envision a local community thriving cultural diversity that goes beyond differences in political views, ethnicity, gender, disability, generation, and so on. It is a matter of securing a space that is without competition and is safer than any other place, which can be achieved neither by individuals, nor by the state or company, but by the efforts of those who are connected to each other in the name of neighborhood friends. It is ultimately to better change the conditions of our life and further to create a new daily life.





# Creation of a Cultural Ecosystem: *The Experience of Matera—2019 European Capital of Culture*

Rossella TARANTINO\*

## Abstract

*This article focuses on the experience of Matera as a European Capital of Culture in 2019 in promoting a different model of cultural production based on horizontal and participative practice. The experience is interesting in consideration of the long-run process to create a cultural ecosystem ready to build a European Capital of Culture, the low rates of cultural participation in the region, and the challenges of the Matera 2019 program.*

*Can a city without big monuments and great cultural centers become a European Capital of Culture? Can a small city produce culture instead of importing it? How can the city build a cultural ecosystem? How can it mobilize the highest number of citizens including those with limited access in cultural production? How can the city widen the notion of “heritage” to include the people who take care of it? What is the meaning of open culture and collective intelligence? What are the impacts of co-creation and participative practices in terms of well-being and social empowerment?*

**Keywords:** ecosystem, European Capital of Culture, trust-building process, empowerment, collective intelligence, open culture, co-creation, participation, Faro Convention

---

\* Rossella TARANTINO is an economist specialized in the design, implementation and evaluation of public policies, with a focus on culture, urban regeneration and social innovation. She has been part of the Matera 2019 European Capital of Culture project since its inception in 2010, designing the bidding strategy and the process of re-imagining the city, guiding it through its eventful year and, as Director, coordinating the evaluation studies and drafting the legacy plan. She is currently a member of the Panel of European Capital of Culture.

## 1. Matera Designated as a European Capital of Culture for 2019

After a four-year bidding process that involved 21 Italian cities in a very challenging and fascinating competition, Matera was designated as a European Capital of Culture for 2019 on 17 October 2014. This title was particularly precious as Matera won in the year with the highest number of competing cities in history and was one of the smallest cities to gain this designation.



© Fondazione Matera-Basilicata (2019).

Matera is a city in the South of Italy, with a population of 60,000 inhabitants, located in a region (Basilicata) with a declining population of 550,000 scattered over 131 towns. It is one of the oldest cities in the world—probably the oldest city in Europe—with a history of nearly 10,000 years of uninterrupted human presence dating back to the Paleolithic age.



*Throughout history, Europe has been a hub of artistic development characterized by exceptional richness and great diversity with European cities playing a vital role in the formation and spread of culture. This is why in 1985, upon the initiative of Melina Mercouri, the European Union launched the European Capital of Culture action. Since then, more than 60 EU cities have been awarded this title. “The initiative aims to highlight this richness and diversity as well as common cultural aspects in Europe and to foster the contribution of culture to the long-term development of cities at economic, social and urban level.”<sup>1</sup>*

*This opportunity is a catalyst for cities to reflect on themselves through a large process of public involvement and to launch new cultural endeavors with vast European resonance.*

*Each year, two European Capitals of Culture from two different EU Member States<sup>2</sup> are given this title according to a specific calendar. They are designated on the basis of a two-round EU standard competition launched by the selected host Member State usually six years before the title year.*

*In the case of Matera for instance, the competition was launched by the Italian Ministry of Culture in 2012; a shortlist of six preselected cities was admitted to the second round in 2013 and in October 2014, Matera was selected as European Capital of Culture for 2019. The city candidatures were reviewed against a set of established criteria by a panel of independent experts in the field of culture or culture-based city development. Matera spent the four subsequent years preparing the programme delivered in 2019.*

- 
1. DECISION No 445/2014/EU OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 16 April 2014.
  2. Generally, every three years, a third ECoC is selected among EU candidate countries, potential candidates or members of the European Free Trade Association party to the Agreement on the European Economic Area (so-called EFTA/EEA countries).

Though a small ancient city, it has a compelling story of significant reversals over the last 60 years. In the 1950s it was declared the “Shame of Italy,” as it hosted almost 20,000 people in the “Sassi,” a large neighborhood of partly excavated rock with very poor living conditions. As a consequence, a massive forced exodus was organized with the population relocated to new social houses and the old quarter was abandoned for decades.

Yet, a new consciousness about the cultural and ecological value of the abandoned “town” emerged, thanks above all to a group of intellectuals. Thus, after more than 30 years, in 1986 a specific regeneration programme was financed, bringing back 3,000 people to live in the Sassi. This was an almost unique case where an abandoned town came back to life after evacuated people returned to inhabit it.

In 1993, Matera and the Sassi entered the “World Heritage List” and the vernacular architecture of the area was considered an example of a rock-cut settlement, adapted perfectly to its geomorphological setting and ecosystem while also exhibiting continuity over more than two millennia. Its heritage became a “world heritage” not because it was created by famous architects or artists, but as result of the collective and layered work of many “capomastro” (foremen) who over the centuries have been able to find a harmonious relationship with the natural environment.

A number of famous movie directors selected Matera and its landscape as an ideal set: the most prominent was Pasolini in the 1960s, who filmed *Gospel According to St. Matthew*, followed by a number of Italian and American directors such as Mel Gibson who chose Matera for *The Passion of the Christ* in 2003. Starting from 1990s, these films and the city’s designation as a UNESCO World Heritage Site have transformed Matera from an almost unknown city symbolizing poverty and shame into a reputed tourist attraction to visit.

Yet, when in 2009 a group of citizens proposed to start the candidature process for the title of European Capital of Culture (ECoC), most of the population expressed strong skepticism. Over the previous decades, the processes that positively changed the image and destiny of Matera were jumpstarted and managed by a few intellectuals and external events, but in

2009, the candidature process for the title of ECoC offered the opportunity to reimagine and rethink the city through a large process of citizen involvement.

## **2. “Can We Compete with Venice or Palermo?”**

General skepticism concerned two questions:

- Can a city without Brunelleschi, Biennale, or la Scala become a European Capital of Culture?
- Can a small city produce culture and become a European Capital of Culture?

The rest of this article focuses on how Matera faced these two questions and big challenges and contributed to a new ecosystem, in which all the organic parts of the city and of the region (institutions, cultural institutions and NGOs, social organizations, business, and especially citizens) were put together to build a new cultural proposal to Europe.

## **3. Can a City without Brunelleschi, Biennale or la Scala Become a European Capital of Culture?**

Matera had a compelling history as it was part of UNESCO heritage and attracted intellectuals to its symbolic story of resilience. Yet, it could not boast famous cultural institutions or internationally reputed festivals. When we started to initiate the bidding process for the title of ECoC, one of the challenges it decided to address was to give a primary role to the cultural producers working in the region, closely linked to the local communities by a rooted tradition of cultural care. The city prompted them to think bigger by building ties with international artists and cultural institutions. This investment would be the most fruitful in terms of social and cultural sustainability.

Most of these cultural producers had taken part in a project called

“*Visioni Urbane*” (“Urban Visions”) conducted for three years by the Regional Administration. The objective of this project (2007–2010) was to design a new cultural and creative policy through an intense dialogue with regional cultural organizations. The purpose of this dialogue was to balance the information asymmetry between policy-makers and grassroots cultural producers.

The project was unfolded into different steps:

- single interviews;
- mapping of the sector based on a viral method (“can you please suggest a cultural organization?” was the question put at the end of the interviews) and a wider understanding of culture (to include also bloggers, makers, and visual designers);
- shared analysis of the sector based on the results of the interviews and mapping;
- a conversation with various groups, which was developed through a blog and a number of workshops with internationally reputed experts;
- co-drafting the document and outlining the regional cultural and creative strategy.

This method aimed to create conversation on specific topics with all the participants and not on a “one-to-one basis.” The usage of a blog was ground-breaking as it guaranteed a transparent consultation process and prompted the participants to discuss concrete issues and to better get to know each other. The workshops with international experts on specific themes (i.e. technologies and arts, storytelling and new identity, cultural planning, creative centers, and fund-raising) were conceived as a “culture shocks” with the aim of going beyond the localist perspective and building alliances with international networks.

At the end of this process, a number of relevant results were achieved:

- **Community-building:** the process triggered an evolution that brought together several single producers, who were mostly unaware of the activities of other colleagues, to evolve into a cultural scene. At the

end of the process, most of them started to cooperate in co-producing performances or exhibitions, in distributing their products, and in organizing festivals;

- Thinking bigger: most of the producers started to work beyond the region and to have national partners and international partners;
- Revamp of abandoned and spoiled spaces and launch of a network of independent cultural centers;
- Implementation of a new cultural and creative policy to include an art-residential programme, calls for emerging producers, and calls for international projects.

At the end of process (2010), *Visioni Urbane* had built a **cultural ecosystem**, creating a breeding ground for *Matera 2019*: a region-wide cultural community was ready to take up the challenge of producing international-wide events for a European Capital of Culture. As a result, the cultural and creative community from Basilicata played a pivotal role in the programme of *Matera 2019* both in the bidding phase—giving insights in the design of the bid book and in citizen involvement strategy—and in the delivery of the events of the European Capital of Culture year.

Around forty percent of the *Matera 2019* cultural programme was implemented by *Matera's* cultural operators in partnership with artists from around the world. The capacity-building process started with *Visioni Urbane* continued during the bidding phase and most importantly during the preparation phase. Cultural producers had the opportunity to take part in a cycle of workshops and co-creating labs aimed at refining project ideas and upgrading their skills. Through a voucher called “Go and See,” cultural producers (project leaders) had the opportunity to travel within Europe to meet partners and artists and participate in events and programmes similar to those they had in mind. They partnered with 150 artists, bands, and collectives from Europe and the rest of the world. Most importantly, all of them produced international events by adopting the participatory or co-created method, i.e., by involving many citizens in the creation, production, and delivery phases.

*Matera Basilicata* Foundation after the year of Capital commissioned

an evaluation study<sup>3</sup> to investigate on the upgrade in basic and transversal skills among the producers who took part in the Matera 2019 programme. The highest upgraded skills were networking, managerial skills, and the ability to set up secure locations and inter-cultural competence and interpersonal communication. Before the COVID-19 pandemic broke out in the early months of 2020, each project leader had already distributed their products more three times, mostly beyond local and national borders.

#### **4. Can a Small City Produce Culture and Become a European Capital of Culture?**

In the process of the city's reimagination in its bid for the title of European Capital of Culture, it is extremely important to view the city under a different perspective and to identify its resources as well as critical issues. In this sense, Matera faced a question about its small to medium size. Admittedly, Matera shared the same destiny as all the small and medium cities that import culture, which is mostly produced by big cities and great cultural institutions. In this sense, it was a consumer of centralized culture that originated elsewhere.

Could a small city like Matera produce culture? And if so, how? Matera addressed the challenge faced by small cities on the margin of the cultural markets to produce culture by opting for a new model of production based on participatory and horizontal practices. Rather than a model that removes the barrier between creators and artists on one side and passive audiences on the other, it was quite the opposite, encouraging the increasing involvement of citizens in the creation or production process (**co-creation or participatory culture**).

In this sense, Matera adopted the **open culture** model which stemmed from the open-source movement, based on the principle of sharing, peering, and openness that could generate new forms of culture. It

---

3. PtsClas S.p.A. "In Matera we produce culture. Effects and impacts on the skills of the cultural and creative sectors" (2020).

promoted a cultural production model by placing emphasis on public participation and on the removal of all the barriers to cultural access. This shift in the cultural production pattern was facilitated by the growing democratization of the cultural creation processes enabled by digital technologies and the open licensing movement.



© Fondazione Matera-Basilicata (2019).

The cultural statement on which the Matera 2019 programme was based was as follows: As Matera had been created by the collective work of many “capomastro” (foremen) who over the centuries improved embedded knowledge, likewise culture can be created by leveraging cultural and artistic organizations to involve many citizens in the creation, production, and delivery process (by the collective intelligence process). This new mode of cultural production could also reduce the cultural divide as well as

prompt active social involvement.

This challenge implied hard work to mobilize the greatest possible number of people, with special attention to those who felt excluded or “unworthy” of culture by motivating them to reinvent themselves in new roles and take part in the great play of cultural production.

This was not an easy task for several reasons. As underlined before, despite the UNESCO label and the increasing number of tourists, Matera’s citizens were not yet aware of the symbolic history of their city and of the peculiar value of its heritage. They lacked trust in their potential capacity to transform the city and to shape their collective future. A lack of self-confidence was one of the major flaws of people living in the South of Italy. However, this skepticism was also nourished by other reasons such as doubts on a transparent process, weak regional cohesive identity, and the incapacity to get rid of Matera’s stigma as a “Capital of Shame.” In addition, the region had the lowest rates of cultural consumption since the population is scattered across a wide area.

Therefore, the strategy to design an ecosystem based on wide public involvement started with the creation of the Manifesto of Matera 2019 community. The emphasis was placed on the social and civic dimension of culture and on the active role that citizens can play in changing and rethinking the city as though they are the “software” of the city.

## **5. Citizens Are the Software of the City**

A city is not only made of streets, buildings and urban infrastructure—not even if it has been granted UNESCO World Heritage status. A city is all these things, plus the knowledge and the skills—embedded in its local community—enabling the maintenance, adaptation, development and improvement of such physical artefacts. Such knowledge is more fundamental than the physical infrastructure: given the knowledge, a city destroyed by a cataclysm can be rebuilt, preserving its identity even though the stone and the steel are no longer the same. But once the knowledge has withered, time will reduce buildings to rubble, fill the canals, cover the roads with jungle and forest,



and scatter the population. A city—any city—is software.

Therefore, the Sassi are not Matera. We are.

The time has come to update Matera's software, and that means stepping forth in full awareness of being citizens of Europe and Planet Earth. We need to look beyond the Gravina, over to Europe, the Mediterranean and the planet with new eyes. Learn as much as we can; share our best; to rethink ourselves, with no reservations or prejudices, but also without losing sight of who we are. If we are Matera, it is we that need to walk this path; it is we that must regenerate in completing it. Matera's bid as European Capital of Culture 2019 is an opportunity to do just that. It is a challenge the city has never faced before. It obliges us to answer interesting (sometimes uncomfortable) questions about our role, both in Italy and in Europe. It forces us to be innovate, and get rid of a lot of accumulated ballast (Margherita Sani et. al. 2015, 63-64).

The Manifesto was launched through a cooperative platform where all Matera's citizens could contribute to the bidding process by launching new ideas or projects fulfilling two criteria: first, they should have based, developed, and implemented through cross-collaboration and second, they should realize these ideas. In this sense, this call for ideas was a call to action, empowering all the people to take part but also prompting them to look for cooperation.

It was a way to invert all the stereotypes and common attitudes like, "it is up to the government or the mayor to do it" or "I have a magnificent idea but no one allows me to act on it." Many projects emerged from this platform as a result of cross-collaboration among geographically dispersed people (including diaspora) and between citizens and institutions.

The platform unveiled and involved many young people, even those from small villages in the region or studying elsewhere, who felt that the "door was really open" and that the bidding process was transparent and safe. At the same time, a number of different initiatives were conducted to involve people of different ages, capacities, experiences, origins, and professions.

## 6. Faro Convention and Heritage Communities

As underlined in the Manifesto, the programme of Matera 2019 was designed in close relationship with the Faro Convention<sup>4</sup> which emphasized a wider perception of heritage and its relationship to communities and society. In line with the Faro Convention, one of Matera 2019's objectives was to kick-start "heritage communities" by guiding people to know and appreciate their heritage and then learn to take care of it.

In this sense, an example is provided by the Museum of Matera, which brought together art conservators and eighteenth-century paintings in the social houses of Matera. The inhabitants of these social houses, who had never before entered a museum, started to learn how to restore a painting and were very proud to open their houses to their neighbors to share these paintings and their restoration techniques. This and other initiatives radically changed the perception of the museum over the years. At the beginning of the candidature path, it was considered just a beautiful palace in a pleasant square; over the years, it came to be the house of Matera's citizens, where they could listen to classical or rock concerts played by young bands, to take part in light design workshops, to take part in co-creation labs on contemporary dance, or to attend the great exhibitions of the year of the Capital.

This participatory process continued after winning the title. In this way, the people of Matera and the region learned that culture is not a decoration or something that belongs to very few people, but a long process that must be built and invented together every day. In this process, the alliance with grassroots organizations (such as parishes, schools, LGBT+

---

4. The Council of Europe Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society, better known as the Faro Convention, is a multilateral Council of Europe treaty. The Convention "encourages to recognize that objects and places are not, in themselves, what is important about cultural heritage. They are important because of the meanings and uses that people attach to them and the values they represent." The Convention was adopted by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on 13 October 2005, and opened for signature to member States in Faro (Portugal) on 27 October of the same year. It entered into force on 1 June 2011. To date, 20 member States of the Council of Europe have ratified the Convention and 7 have signed it.

NGOs, migrants associations, disabled associations, mums association, scouts, etc.) was of paramount importance.

Likewise, the strategy for citizen involvement relies on the “invasion” of a range of places that were not considered “cultural spaces,” such as hospitals, prisons, call centers, schools, factories, crafts studios, peripheral commercial centers, remote villages, hard-to-reach places, and those with declining populations, to reach out to the people who live or work in these places and invite them to take part in cultural production. The aim was to encourage people with different stories, abilities, skills, origins, and ages to interact and mingle.

## **7. Co-creation, Participation and Well-being**

Co-creation and widespread participatory cultural production were the trademark of Matera 2019: 80 percent of the cultural programmes placed citizens at the heart of cultural production with a gradual breaking down of the barriers between artists and audiences.

Over 57,000 citizens took an active part in the events of Matera 2019, responding to the various “public calls” and open recruitment meetings held in the most disparate places in collaboration with civil society associations.

The productions and formats varied with gradual involvement of citizens in different phases of the production cycle:

- Co-creation: citizens were invited to participate in the creative process. Some co-wrote a libretto for a community opera<sup>5</sup> or mapped their “emotional city” and took part in the creation of the exhibition representing it;<sup>6</sup>
- Participation in the production phase: Migrants and citizens were engaged

---

5. “Silent city—a community opera—l’Albero,” <https://www.matera-basilicata2019.it/en/programme-2019/themes/ancient-future/1336-silent-city.html>.

6. “Atlas of the Emotions of the Cities—Teatro dei Sassi,” <https://www.atlantedelleemozioni.it/?lang=en>.

by Milo Rau in a contemporary version of the *Gospel According to St. Matthew* while dancers of every age and ability questioned the authority of “dancing well” in favour of the pure joy of performing;<sup>7</sup>

- Participation in the delivery phase: Five thousand citizens produced the lights to spark the opening ceremony of the Capital.

This participation left a “hunger for dreams” in some of the citizens from which “they don’t want to be woken.” At the end of 2019, a group of 50 people involved in these participatory activities called some artists back to Matera to co-write the Matera 2020 Citizens’ Manifesto: “We want to open the city to artists from all over the world to develop residencies and creative paths. The active participation of citizens in the creative practices and paths will make it a unique celebration and will lead to the development of a conscious community.”

In 2020, Matera Basilicata 2019 Foundation commissioned a research to a group coordinated by Pierluigi Sacco to analyze the impacts produced by this approach on the participants in terms of building or enhancement of skills, relationships, and well-being.<sup>8</sup> The results underlined that “Moreover, it is possible to observe how MCEC [Matera Capital of Culture] 2019, for the majority of questionnaire and interviews respondents, had positive effects in terms of **increased confidence (about 46.5%), improvement of their skills (about 60%), greater ability to collaborate (more than 80%), cooperate, and understand others.** The most interesting results that emerge from the analysis of the data collected seem to confirm the value and potential of the ECoC experience in generating empowerment, in investing in personal and collective abilities of citizens in creating value and meaning around the shared construction of commons, thanks to artistic interventions.” The study concludes: “MCEC 2019 fully represents a good practice in the context of the European Capitals of

---

7. “Jerome Bel—Arte Pollino,” <https://www.matera-basilicata2019.it/en/press/press-releases/project-pressreleases/2160-ka-art-in-scena-compagnia-compagnia-di-jerome-bel.html>.

8. Arteco, “Co-creating Matera” (2021).

Culture from the point of view of participatory practices, and this is even more significant in light of the cultural participation rates that are typical of the regions of Southern Italy: namely, among the lowest in the entire European Union. (. . .) The MCEC 2019 experience, according to what emerges from the results presented this report, confirms that culture is a key element for maintaining, generating or increasing the level of collective well-being, in close relationship with welfare and cognitive growth.”



© Fondazione Matera-Basilicata (2019).

---

## REFERENCES

- Alberto Cottica. 2010. *Wikicrazia*. Navarra Editore.
- Arteco S.a.S. (Team led by Professor Pierluigi Sacco, composed of Professor Giorgio Tavano Blessi, Professor Sabrina Pedrini and Ms Maria Tartari). “Co-creating Matera.” [https://www.matera-basilicata2019.it/images/valutazioni/ES\\_Co-creating\\_Matera\\_eng.pdf](https://www.matera-basilicata2019.it/images/valutazioni/ES_Co-creating_Matera_eng.pdf).
- Council of Europe Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society (Faro Convention). <https://rm.coe.int/1680083746>.
- DECISION No 445/2014/EU OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 16 April 2014 establishing a Union action for the European Capitals of Culture for the years 2020 to 2033 and repealing Decision No 1622/2006/EC. [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dec/2014/445\(1\)/2021-01-01](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dec/2014/445(1)/2021-01-01).
- Garcia, Beatriz, et al. 2013. *European Capitals of Culture: Success Strategies and Long-Term Effects*. [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/etudes/join/2013/513985/IPOL-CULT\\_ET\(2013\)513985\\_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/etudes/join/2013/513985/IPOL-CULT_ET(2013)513985_EN.pdf).
- Matera Basilicata 2019 Foundation. *Matera candidate city european capital culture 2019*. Matera 2019 final Bid Book. [https://www.matera-basilicata2019.it/images/2019/allegati/dossier\\_mt2019-candidacy\\_eng.pdf](https://www.matera-basilicata2019.it/images/2019/allegati/dossier_mt2019-candidacy_eng.pdf).
- . “The 2019 Experience and the Legacy of the European Capital of Culture.” The survey on the perception of Matera 2019. [file:///C:/Users/user/Downloads/Presentazione\\_indagine\\_cittadini\\_matera2019%20ENG\\_def.pdf](file:///C:/Users/user/Downloads/Presentazione_indagine_cittadini_matera2019%20ENG_def.pdf).
- . 2021. *Matera is a producer of culture—Monitoring report of Matera European Capital of Culture 2019*. 2nd edition. <https://www.matera-basilicata2019.it/en/report-2019/in-matera-we-produce-culture.html>.
- Matera 2019 Open Data Portal. <http://opendata.matera-basilicata2019.it/en/>. “Matera 2020 Citizens’ Manifesto.” [file:///C:/Users/user/Downloads/Manifesto\\_EN%20\(2\).pdf](file:///C:/Users/user/Downloads/Manifesto_EN%20(2).pdf).
- Palmer/Rae Associates. 2004. *European Cities and Capitals of Culture*. Study Prepared for the European Commission. Brussel.
- PtsClas S.p.A. (team led by Professor Lucio Argano, composed of Angela Tibaldi, Costanza Rapone and Desirée Campagna). “In Matera we

produce culture. Effects and impacts on the skills of the cultural and creative sectors.” [https://www.matera-basilicata2019.it/images/valutazioni/3b\\_ES\\_Matera2019\\_The\\_effects\\_on\\_the\\_local\\_skills\\_system\\_eng.pdf](https://www.matera-basilicata2019.it/images/valutazioni/3b_ES_Matera2019_The_effects_on_the_local_skills_system_eng.pdf).

Sani, Margherita, et. al. 2015. *Mapping of practices in the EU Member States on Participatory governance of cultural heritage to support the OMC working group under the same name* (Work Plan for Culture 2015-2018). EENC Short Analytical Report June 2015. <https://www.interarts.net/descargas/interarts2541.pdf>.





# The Role of Regional National Museums in Revitalizing the Cultural Ecosystems

Sang-hoon JANG\*

## Abstract

*Regional national museums need to identify and express the identity of local cultures that embody unique local color on the basis on the universality of life, and examine how the identity is connected to the lives and needs of local people today. To do this, museums should broaden the scope of their content, both temporally and spatially, to encompass the diverse interests of their audiences. National museums can work toward this goal of revitalizing local cultural ecosystems by continuously improving museum accessibility, enhancing the effectiveness of museum learning experiences, and increasing community engagement. Ultimately, regional national museums should strive to be places of communication where ideas and thoughts can be shared.*

**Keywords:** identity, accessibility, learning, forum, communication.

---

\* Sang-hoon JANG is the director of the Jinju National Museum. He received his Ph.D. in Museum Studies from the University of Leicester, United Kingdom. After joining the National Museum of Korea, he served as head of the Exhibition Division and head of the Children's Museum Division. He currently serves as the vice president of the Korean Research Association of Old Maps. He has authored many books, including the *I Found the Detailed Map of Korea at the Museum*, and also translated several books into Korean, including the *Metropolis: Mapping the City*. His latest book is *A Representation of Nationhood in the Museum* (2020).

## 1. Introduction

National museums can be seen as the epitome of national and local cultural infrastructures. However, regarding their specific contribution to the revitalization of local cultural ecosystems, there are a number of issues relating to the existing practices of national museums in Korea that merit closer examination. In other words, although the National Museum of Korea in Seoul, with its affiliated museums in 13 cities across the country, has played a significant role in expanding local cultural infrastructures, it is necessary to examine precisely what contributions it actually makes to the revitalization of local cultural ecosystems.

To this end, it is necessary to re-examine how the very definition of a museum's mission—the preservation, research, exhibition, and education of cultural heritage—can be linked to the task of the cultural development of local communities. In this context, it is noteworthy that the International Council of Museums (ICOM) has recently updated its definition of “the museum” to emphasize its responsibility to the societies and communities in which it is located. The point of this revision is that museums, rather than being satisfied with their current role of preserving local traditional culture, should go one step further and become more inclusive. Museums should actively begin to think about how they can be a driving force in the revitalization of local cultural ecosystems.

The mission of national museums is defined as the preservation, transmission and development of local cultural heritage. It is therefore necessary to begin by examining the meaning of “culture” and, more specifically, “traditional culture”; how should we understand this term today and how should it relate to contemporary life and culture?

Based on this, this paper will examine the role that national museums have played in their localities, and will then analyze their limitations. Furthermore, it will explain what, how, and why museums should do to revitalize local cultural ecosystems in the future. The key drivers behind this analysis are the needs and challenges of our society. The significance and value of traditional culture can only be further expanded if it can be proved that it is meaningful to our lives and can contribute to society's development.

## 2. The Activities and Limitations of Regional National Museums

The Museum and Art Gallery Support Act stipulates that the Minister of Culture, Sports and Tourism may establish regional museums and regional art galleries of the National Museum of Korea, the National Folk Museum of Korea, and the National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art to promote the balanced development of regional culture (Article 10, Paragraph 4). However, since its establishment in 1945, the National Museum of Korea has opened and operated 13 affiliated regional museums in local cities,<sup>1</sup> while the National Folk Museum of Korea and the National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art have made little progress.<sup>2</sup>



Figure 1. Jinju National Museum.

Source: <https://jinju.museum.go.kr/kor/>.

1. When it was founded in 1945, the National Museum of Korea already had two affiliated museums in Gyeongju and Buyeo. It incorporated two existing museums in Gaeseong and Gongju in 1946, and then opened a series of regional museums in Gwangju (1978), Jinju (1984), Cheongju (1987), Jeonju (1990), Daegu (1994), Gimhae (1998), Jeju (2001), Chuncheon (2002), Naju (2013), and Iksan (2015). Another is scheduled to open in Chungju in 2026.
2. In 2018 the National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art established a storage facility in Cheongju called the Art Storage and Conservation Center, and is using it as an affiliated museum. The National Folk Museum of Korea opened a storage facility in Paju, Gyeonggi-do Province in 2021. The fact that both of these are classed as storage facilities testifies to the difficulty of convincing relevant government authorities of the feasibility of opening affiliated museums in local areas.

Under these circumstances, the regional organizations of the National Museum of Korea have focused on preserving and transmitting the traditional culture of their regions. The museums in the ancient cities of Gyeongju, Buyeo, Gongju, Gimhae, Naju and Iksan are dedicated to the preservation and transmission of the ancient cultures of Silla, Baekje, Gaya, Mahan and so on, while the museums located in metropolitan cities or provincial capitals specialize in regional traditional culture or industrial characteristics, for example ceramic culture (Gwangju), Confucian literati-scholar culture (Jeonju), costume culture (Daegu), metal arts and crafts (Cheongju), island culture (Jeju) and sightseeing culture (Chuncheon). On the other hand, the Jinju National Museum, which is located at a crucial battlefield of the Siege of Jinju (1592-1593), has focused on the history of the Imjin War (1592-1598), but is now expanding its horizons to become a specialized museum of war and diplomacy history.

While it is encouraging that the National Museum of Korea, unlike other national museums, has played a key role by steadily expanding its regional organizations, it is also clear that there is a limit to this. Since its inception, the National Museum of Korea has grown as an institution centered on archaeology and art history in the tradition of the modern Western museum, with relatively little focus on other academic fields or cultural aspects of the modern and contemporary periods. In other words, there is less concern with history and folklore as academic fields or with the modern and contemporary periods in general.

Except for the National Museum of Korea, regional national museums have little interest in foreign cultures that are closely related to the universality of local culture, beyond the interest in local or Korean culture. Since these trends affect the overall functions of museums, including collection, research, exhibition, and education, they need to be balanced to some extent. Whereas Seoul has a specialized national museum infrastructure covering a wide range of academic fields and time periods, including the National Museum of Korea, the National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, the National Folk Museum, the National Museum of Korean Contemporary History, the National Hangeul Museum, and the War Memorial of Korea, non-Seoul regional museums, which lack sufficient



Figure 2. The News Letter of the Jinju National Museum.  
Source: <https://jinju.museum.go.kr/kor/>.

museum infrastructure, have to cover a much wider range of disciplines and time periods.

In this context, the role of regional national museums in the non-capital areas should be expanded. First of all, they need to further develop their own specialized content based on the concept of “local history and culture.” To achieve this, it is essential that they establish and explore their own cultural identities. If we go back to the starting point when the regional affiliates of the National Museum of Korea were forced to search for their own specialized projects, we can understand why they have so far failed to effectively reveal their own cultural identities. As a matter of fact, it was not easy to identify the regional characteristics of the central and southern parts of the Korean peninsula from the perspective of archaeology or the medieval and modern art culture.

However, it would have been much easier for regional museums to identify the cultural identity of the region and incorporate it into museum content if they had first expanded the scope of local culture from

prehistory to include modern times, and then examined the lives and societies of the local people who lived in that time and space in relation to the dynamics of the surrounding areas (or the central government). This could have been a means of overcoming the problem of selecting museum content only from the category of traditional culture, or the past.

In addition, when faced with the task of revitalizing local cultural ecosystems, it is easy to run into the limitations of regional national museums that focus solely on the traditional culture of their particular region's past. We should bear in mind the old sayings such as "retain the old and create the new" (法古創新) or "review the old and learn the new" (溫故知新). We cannot afford to overlook the meaning that the culture of the past can have for people living today. What kind of wishes, hopes, and expectations did the culture(s) of the past originate from? How are they the same or different from mine or ours, and why is that so? When museums apply these questions to their work, it is possible to find clues to the sustainable development and revitalization of local cultural ecosystems.

### **3. The Roles and Challenges of Regional National Museums in Local Cultural Ecosystems**

With the reopening of the National Museum of Korea after moving to the former Joseon General-Government Building in 1986, the museum began to develop museum education programs in earnest, recognizing the need for social education.<sup>3</sup> In addition to exhibition activities, it began to actively conduct programs to disseminate museum content to the public. As this initiative soon spread to regional national museums, programs for children, youth and adults began.<sup>4</sup> Various types of programs such as exhibitions, lectures, field trips, and hands-on activities based on traditional culture, began to be rolled out across the country. This trend has continued without

---

3. The Social Education Act was enacted in December 1982.

4. However, the Children's Museum School program at the Gyeongju National Museum began in 1954, shortly after the armistice of the Korean War, and continues to this day.

any change to this day.

Nevertheless, it is still questionable whether the regional national museums, which constitute the central cultural infrastructure of the region, actually function as key cultural centers. This is because there seems to be a clear limit to the task of going beyond the mere promotion of traditional culture of the past and expanding the meaning and value it can have in today's culture. Traditional culture once played an effective role in giving self-esteem to the community through national cultural discourses, especially in the heyday of nationalist ideologies. Although this function of traditional culture is still valid, it has limitations in revealing the colors and characteristics of localities, and its role is relatively weak at this level.

Finally, it is essential to identify and express the identity of local cultures that embody unique local color on the basis of the universality of life, and to seriously consider how it is connected to the lives and concerns of local people today. This requires paying more attention to them and their lives in order to seek better ways to recognize, express and create local cultures in the context of their wishes, desires and expectations. ICOM's new definition of museum, approved in August 2022, can be understood in this context: "A museum is a not-for-profit, permanent institution in the service of society that researches, collects, conserves, interprets and exhibits tangible and intangible heritage. Open to the public, accessible and inclusive, museums foster diversity and sustainability. They operate and communicate ethically, professionally and with the participation of communities, offering varied experiences for education, enjoyment, reflection and knowledge sharing."<sup>5</sup>

Korea's regional national museums have the potential to function as complex cultural centers that accommodate the diverse needs of people today through the medium of cultural heritage, i.e., the material evidence of humanity's cultural activities in the past and present. Therefore, it is necessary to expand the spatial and temporal scope of the content that museums deal with and to broaden their fields to encompass all aspects of life and society. Furthermore, museums must embrace the diverse interests

---

5. <https://icom.museum/en/resources/standards-guidelines/museum-definition/>.

of their visitors, regardless of age, gender, education, race, or disability. Based on these considerations, the next section of this paper will discuss in more detail three major tasks related to the role of regional national museums in revitalizing cultural ecosystems.

### ***3.1. Expansion of Accessibility***

The most important way in which museums can contribute to the revitalization of cultural ecosystems is to expand their accessibility. To do this, museums must ensure access to their collections and related information and recognize this accessibility as an issue. The notion of accessibility refers not only to access to the physical spaces of the museum, including exhibition halls and education rooms, but also to access to and use of all the tangible and intangible content that museums hold. Museums should make constant efforts to improve the accessibility of content information, and the progress in this area should be considered as a key indicator in any evaluation of a museum's performance.

To protect and promote cultural diversity, UNESCO recommends pursuing the concept of the "inclusive museum," which takes into consideration the diversity of museum visitors.<sup>6</sup> They argue that museums should ensure their accessibility through various modes of participation and delivery, whether they be in the material dimension (class, locale, family, and circumstances), the physical dimension (age, race, sex and sexuality, and physical and mental characteristics), or the symbolic dimension (language, culture, gender, family, affinity, and persona).

The language used by a museum is one of the key determinants of its accessibility. Museums in South Korea usually provide information in both Korean and English, but in light of Korea's rapid globalization and increasingly multiethnic society, museums located in areas with large numbers of foreign migrants should now go one step further. In order to enhance accessibility and embrace local migrants as potential future visitors, museums should cater to speakers of other languages

---

6. UNESCO, *The Inclusive Museum*, 2008.



whenever possible. It is also important to ensure that people with physical disabilities do not face physical barriers in accessing museums and related information.

A customer-friendly attitude is also essential. Museum users should be made to feel welcome and have access to the appropriate services and facilities that they want. The installation of effective and clear signage to guide visitors around the museum can be the starting point for creating such an impression.

Another key to creating a user-friendly museum is to provide accurate and timely information about all of its services: location, directions, opening hours, facilities and services, current exhibitions, future programs, collections, and so on. If there are artifacts with difficult accessibility, sufficient information should also be provided as to why this is the case and what alternatives are available.

### ***3.2. Provision of Effective and Connective Learning Experiences***

A museum's users can experience the museum's "learning services" through multiple channels, such as exhibitions, research and education. Therefore, museums must strive to utilize the various forms of display available to them to facilitate communication between audiences and collections. Displaying artifacts is not an end in itself, but a means of communicating with audiences. The various auxiliary tools that facilitate this communication, such as description cards, panels, pamphlets, audio guides, guided tours, information maps, and checklists, are indispensable to learning, the ultimate goal of museums.

Accordingly, museums should adopt the most effective and appropriate methods of displaying their exhibits and should properly place various communication tools. Museums that are too small to employ staff with the relevant knowledge or experience in this field must formalize procedures that enable them to consult and employ experts. In contrast, national museums with large staffs and facilities need to develop diverse approaches to interpreting their collections. They should disseminate these approaches to different museums to create a positive impact.

In order to support professional research activities museums should ensure access to their own collections, whether on display or in storage, and to related information about these collections. Accessibility can be improved through artifact access services, guided tours, school or group sessions, artifact catalogs, online collections, and so on. Other methods to achieve this goal include enhancing access to materials in storage, facilitating the loan of artifacts to other institutions, developing online resources, producing educational materials, and promoting special exhibitions.

In particular, regional national museums have a responsibility to the entire museum community in their region. Within their area(s) of expertise, they should be able to provide information and advice to regional museums at all levels, and have a curatorial staff with the necessary academic background and experience required to support their research if requested. This obligation should also extend to museums within the international academic community.

In order to effectively motivate their visitors and foster learning, museums need to provide learning and exploration experiences. This idea should be shared with the museum staff and be implemented by creating a user-friendly environment within the museum. Whether the learning style is visual, auditory, or tactile, it should be chosen based on connective learning experiences that are tailored to all levels of users, taking into account all relevant criteria, such as age and ability.

To promote learning experiences and increase their impact, it is essential to build effective partnerships. Museums are no longer cultural institutions that exist in isolation from civil society. They should make efforts to expand and promote learning experiences in cooperation with a range of partners, including local governments, schools, research institutes, non-governmental organizations for arts and culture, traditional culture preservation societies, religious institutions, charitable organizations, and adult learning centers. In particular, museums should encourage and support citizens to voluntarily engage in various cultural and artistic activities, including academic activities, literature, art, music, dance, theater, film, animation, and photography, by making wide use of

their exhibition halls, auditoriums, seminar rooms, libraries, and other facilities.<sup>7</sup>

It is crucial to remember that the content of museums should no longer be used only for learning and re-experiencing the past. Because the artifacts and traces we leave behind reflect the universality of life across time and space, museums can and should connect them to the interests of people living today. Moreover, these efforts should not be limited to museum administrators alone. It is essential that citizens become more involved in museum management and activities. For example, the special exhibition “A Short Record of Paintings: Establishing the Art History of Jinju” hosted by the Jinju National Museum in 2022 demonstrated effectively the cultural capacity of civil society in the Jinju area. This high-quality exhibition, organized by a civic cultural organization (Jinjumok Community for Culture), is a good example of the museum’s strong commitment to building partnerships with civil society.



Figure 3. Special Exhibition, “A Short Record of Paintings: Establishing the Art History of Jinju.”

Source: <https://jinju.museum.go.kr/kor/>.

---

7. In 2022 the Jinju National Museum hosted an exhibition entitled “A Short Record of Paintings: Establishing the Art History of Jinju,” organized by the Jinjumok Community for Culture (Jinjumok Munhwa Sarangbang). The museum also co-hosted the special exhibition “The Flow of Korean Polychrome Painting” with the Rhee Seund Ja Jinju Art Museum.

The children's museums within the national museums should provide a welcoming and stimulating space for children's artistic and cultural activities. Regional national museums should not only support the activities of arts and cultural organizations formed voluntarily by local people, but also provide a space for these organizations to interact with the general public. They should go a step further by promoting cultural and artistic programs that have been designed and run by the museums in collaboration with experts or professional interest groups.

### ***3.3. The Museum as a Forum***

What is the ultimate goal of communication that museums pursue? Museums should always guard against being satisfied with a one-way transfer of knowledge. Concrete efforts are needed to capture and reflect on how visitors think about and respond to the information provided to them. More specifically, museums need to collect and respond to the voices of their visitors in a sincere way through regular satisfaction surveys, monitoring, and advisory committees on exhibitions, education, and overall museum operations.

The object of communication is not limited to information alone. All museums assert and embody certain "values" through the exhibition and education of their collections. Value neutrality is often regarded as a key objective for museums, but in reality most museums often serve as advocates for the values of the era and society to which they belong. On the contrary, museums can also play a leading role in promoting and encouraging the values that society should pursue. They can be forums for discussion of and communication about the values that Korean society is struggling with in the global era, such as coexistence in a multiethnic society, diversity, the coexistence of the majority and the minority, the gap between the central and the local, and the balance and harmony between universality and particularity. If the modern museum was a kind of temple for admiring its exhibits, now the museum of the twenty-first century

should become a forum where thoughts and ideas meet and communicate.<sup>8</sup>

From this perspective, museums should consider how to encourage people who visit exhibitions and participate in educational programs to closely examine the artifacts on display and cultivate their own thoughts, how to fully enjoy the museum and its collections, and how to make the museum a place where people's ideas meet. Through a process of close observation and thought, museum visitors should be encouraged to discover for themselves the people who made the artifacts, the people who used them, and the different ways of thinking and living in the times to which they belonged. In the twenty-first century, museums can no longer be unilateral transmitters of knowledge, and moreover they must recognize that the knowledge they offer is no longer unquestionable.

In this context, the special exhibition "The Manchu Invasion of Joseon in 1636," organized by the Jinju National Museum in 2022, is noteworthy. This exhibition was about a lost war which lingers even today as a bitter memory in Korea, and has always been a difficult subject for public museums to deal with. The attempt to confront the Korean public with the history of Joseon's defeat and suffering at hands of China's Qing Dynasty had a significant resonance. This is because the agony over the country's fate in the rapidly changing international order of the seventeenth century has considerable parallels with Korea's contemporary situation. The Jinju National Museum was able to provide an opportunity for exhibition audiences to reflect on the harsh realities of the international order both then and now, and discuss how to respond to them.

---

8. Duncan Cameron, "The Museum, a Temple or the Forum," *Journal of World History* 4.1 (1974): 189-202.



Figure 4. Special Exhibition, “The Manchu Invasion of Joseon in 1636.”

Source: <https://jinju.museum.go.kr/kor/>.

Just as important as communication is its means and method. The most basic means of communication are speech and writing; museums should be proficient in both in order to prepare exhibitions and education in language that is easy for the general public to understand. In this age of globalization, foreign languages are becoming increasingly important as a means of communication. If museum content can be presented and interpreted in English or other major languages, the impact will be far greater.

With the recent developments in information and communication technology, the use of online media has gained popularity as a means of communication that can significantly widen the audience while shortening the distance to that same audience. Internet websites, blogs, and social media services are innovative media for sharing not only information and materials, but also every aspect of their activities with the public. However, the interest in online media is still relatively low compared to offline media.

Since 2020, the Jinju National Museum has been producing annual YouTube content on traditional weapons and war-related history with great success. By the end of August 2023, its YouTube channel had received a total of 8.05 million views, and the aforementioned “The Manchu Invasion of Joseon in 1636” exhibition had garnered 3.41 million views. These impressive figures show how effective it can be to disseminate content through the internet.



Figure 5. “The Age of Gunpowder in Joseon,” YouTube Content of the Jinju National Museum.

Source: <https://jinju.museum.go.kr/kor/>.

The advantages of disseminating online content can be quickly confirmed by the volume and form of communication that users are employing. There are limitations in conveying visitors’ reactions to the actual museum experience, other than the inactive channel “Visitor Voice.” By contrast, with online media such as YouTube we can monitor users’ reactions in real time and observe how they are using such tools. It is clear that YouTube is being used not only to evaluate and criticize museum content, but also as a forum for user discussion. This suggests that social media has the potential to become an even more useful space

for communication between museums and the general public in the future.

It is more important than ever to make effective use of online media. It should be noted that the success or failure of their use depends on the effort made to develop, create, update and disseminate diverse customized content.

#### **4. Conclusion**

The study of past lives and societies, as well as the study of lives and societies in other regions, is important because the people and their societies belonging to different times and spaces have a universality, and thus their lives are connected to ours. Accordingly, the artifacts they left behind are also connected to us today, and this is why museums collect and display artifacts. In particular, the efforts and passions of people who lived in the same space may have had direct and indirect influences on our lives today, and for this reason we are eager to remember their lives and what they left behind.

Museums, which collect material evidence of the meaningful and valuable experiences of human societies in different times and spaces, have accumulated traces of many forms of cultural activity. Their achievements in accumulating material evidence of various experiences, including food, clothing, shelter, language, customs, religion, ideology and beliefs, academic activities, literature, art, science and technology, will contribute to the creation of a new culture based on understanding the diversity of life and society.

After all, it is life in a variety of colors that museums focus on. And it is the life in society. When numerous lives shine with their own patterns and colors, and in harmony with other lives in different patterns and colors, that is culture. The *raison d'être* of a museum is to be able to praise and celebrate these different lives as they are, while remembering the cultures and lives of different times and spaces.



# Towards a New Global Policy Framework for Cultural Rights: *Culture 21 PLUS*

Marta LLOBET\*

## Abstract

*In the context of the efforts of United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) in the implementation of a new social contract that meets the needs and aspirations of cities and regions worldwide, “The UCLG Pact for the Future of Humanity: for the People, for the Planet, for the Governments,” the UCLG Culture Committee is developing a new rights-based global framework for culturally vibrant and equitable sustainable cities, “Culture 21 PLUS,” as a renovation of “Culture 21: Actions,” the guide to implement Agenda 21 for Culture. This article presents the draft Culture 21 PLUS, a document to be published in 2025, which builds on research informed by UCLG and UCLG Culture Committee policy documents and resources, as well as contributions of UCLG members, consultation mechanisms, and partners on the latest elements of the international debate on culture, cultural rights and sustainable development, and provides insights on the ongoing drafting process. Elaborating on the interlinkages between current public policy-making and local cultural practices and their innovative approaches to local and global challenges, and providing the essential pathways for transformative cultural narratives in sustainable cities and territories, this article also shows further opportunities for testing the guide in cities and for enriching learning and capacity-building programmes on culture and sustainable development.*

**Keywords:** cultural rights, cultural policies, sustainable development agendas, local and regional governments, global challenges, Culture Goal

---

\* Marta LLOBET works as a Learning and Advocacy Officer of the UCLG Culture Committee, strengthening the advocacy role of the Committee at local and global levels to promote and make visible the relationship between rights-based cultural policies and sustainable development. Currently, she is focusing on research in the fields of urban planning with a gender approach, interculturalism and sustainable tourism, with a particular interest in the inclusion of a Culture Goal in the Post 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

## 1. Introduction

United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) is a global platform of cities which represents, defends, and amplifies the voices of local and regional governments at the international level. An unequivocal commitment to sustainable development and cultural rights is reflected in numerous UCLG documents. In 2004, UCLG adopted the founding document of the UCLG Culture Committee, the Agenda 21 for Culture. This is a declaration with 67 articles that prove the relationship between local cultural policies and human rights, governance, sustainable development, participatory democracy, and peace.

Over the years, the UCLG Culture Committee has reinforced its commitment to strengthen cultural rights in local and regional policies and decision-making and promote their acknowledgement as fundamental elements of peaceful, diverse, and flourishing cities and territories. Significant steps towards this goal include: Culture 21: Actions (2015), the Culture in the Sustainable Development Goals guide (2018), the observatory of good practices “OBS,” the UCLG Culture Summit, the UCLG–Mexico City–Culture 21 International Award, the Rome Charter (2020), and the Seven Keys programme. These provide resources to operationalize innovative cultural policies based on human rights that place cultural rights at the core of the global conversation on sustainable development.

As a step forward in the development of transformative cultural policies based on cultural rights, and with the commitment to uphold the “UCLG Pact for the Future of Humanity: for the People, for the Planet, for the Governments” (hereafter referred to as “UCLG Pact”), the UCLG Culture Committee has started shaping a roadmap for local cultural policy-making in the next few years. As a new rights-based global frame for culturally vibrant and equitable sustainable cities to be published in 2025, the new “Culture 21 PLUS” contributes to this endeavour. Culture 21 PLUS stems from the work and efforts of cities such as Jinju, a Leading City of the UCLG Culture Committee that committed to mainstreaming cultural rights in its local policies, and will have an influence on local cultural policies in the world’s cities in the coming years. The first-ever workshop to test

Culture 21 PLUS was held in Jinju on July 6, 2023, marking the launch of the Jinju Leading City programme of the UCLG Culture Committee. To date, other tests have been held in Mexico City (on September 8, 2023) and Lisbon (on November 13, 2023).

## **2. A Rights-based Approach to Cultural Policies: The UCLG Culture Committee's Founding Documents and Learning Programmes**

In the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the 1966 International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the right to take part in cultural life was recognized as a human right, leading to several implications on cultural policies. In the last decade, the successive UN Special Rapporteurs in the field of cultural rights have unfolded the specific connotations of a human rights-based approach to cultural policies. Farida Shaheed stressed the right of individuals and groups, the majority and minority, citizens and migrants, of access to, identification, interpretation, development, and enjoyment of cultural heritage connected the design and implementation of preservation/safeguard policies and programmes (Shaheed, 2011). Karima Bennoune emphasized the impact of the destruction of cultural heritage on the right to take part in cultural life (Bennoune, 2016) and Alexandra Xanthaki addressed the role of cultural resources and cultural rights in the pursuit of a more sustainable development as well as the crucial contribution of cultural awareness to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to implement the 2030 UN Agenda (Xanthaki, 2022).

Since the adoption in 2004 of the foundational document of the UCLG Culture Committee, Agenda 21 for Culture, a solid narrative has been developed at local and global levels, affirming cultural rights as inherent of sustainable development. This narrative has gained a vital importance over the years, consolidating culture as the fourth pillar of sustainable development and placing it at the heart of local action and global development agendas. Innovative approaches have also been

promoted, such as a new concept of “circular culture” presented in the final declaration of the 4th UCLG Culture Summit in Izmir, which can be explained as “Harmony with nature, Harmony with the past, Harmony with each other and, last but not least, Harmony with change” (UCLG 2021b). The Leading Cities, Pilot Cities and Culture 21 LAB programmes are some of the operational driving forces behind this process. They are geared toward increasing knowledge, connectivity, and the operational capacity of cities that work on the relationship between citizenship, culture, and sustainable development. Such programmes are based on the international guide, Culture 21: Actions (UCLG Culture Committee 2015). From October 2013 to November 2014, debates, discussions, and dissemination of Culture 21: Actions took place in cities worldwide with local debates on its contents and implementation organised by Pilot Cities.

The adoption of Culture 21: Actions during the first-ever UCLG Culture Summit, held in Bilbao in 2015, has allowed active cities to further develop the exercise of public policy-making and local cultural practice. Cities and regions have designed innovative and effective cultural policies, programmes, and actions in the context of crisis that address local challenges and the needs of inhabitants, paying particular attention to disadvantaged and structurally discriminated groups and ensuring the right to participate in cultural life as a vital condition for democracy and sustainable development (Barbieri 2021). Culture 21: Actions provides a detailed and concrete framework supported by “9 Commitments and 100 Actions” that are both achievable and measurable. It systematically addresses the relation between culture and sustainable development in cities and allows self-evaluation and peer-learning.

The “Seven Keys” learning and capacity-building programme, based on the document *Culture in the Sustainable Development Goals: A Guide for Local Action*, published by UCLG in 2018, has also contributed to strengthening the role of culture and cultural rights in sustainable development agendas, namely the 2030 UN Agenda and the 17 SDGs, by making explicit the cultural perspective in the localisation of these goals. The Culture 21 PLUS builds on all these acquis and resources to shape a new global policy framework for cultural rights for cities worldwide.

### **3. Culture 21 PLUS: Towards a New Rights-based Global Frame for Culturally Vibrant and Equitable Sustainable Cities**

In the same way that Culture 21: Actions came about in 2013 when cities asked for a guide that could operationalize the Agenda 21 for Culture, cities are now calling for deeper understanding of global challenges and their connection to local policies. Local and regional governments are asking for a renewed guide to broaden the interlinkages of sustainable, equitable, and vibrant cultural ecosystems with cultural rights and issues such as inequalities, health, gender, and climate change. With this commitment, the process of elaboration of Culture 21 PLUS has started in 2023, based on the experiences drawn from the implementation of Culture 21: Actions. Culture 21 PLUS will use local knowledge and the specific experiences of territories by carrying out pioneer tests in the cities of Jinju, Mexico City and Lisbon, just as Culture 21: Actions did 10 years ago with almost 30 cities around the world such as Belo Horizonte, Bogotá, Brussels, Buenos Aires, Concepción, Dakar, Gabrovo, Lyon, Milan, Montréal, Newcastle, Rabat, Talca, Tunis, Haikou, Santiago de Chile, and Vaudreuil-Dorion (UCLG Culture Committee 2018).

The objective of Culture 21 PLUS is two-fold: by examining Culture 21: Actions, it shapes the roadmap for local cultural policy-making in the coming years, thus renovating the learning and capacity-building programmes offered by UCLG to cities and Local and Regional Governments (LRGs) worldwide. It responds as well to the necessity of unfolding with care-based and rights-based concrete actions the current political mandate of the UCLG Pact, adopted in October 2022 at the UCLG World Congress in Daejeon.

To be published in 2025 by UCLG, Culture 21 PLUS will establish a new rights-based global frame that is coherently aligned with the Pact: “(. . .) incorporating the right to the city as universal citizenship with renewed sets of cultural rights such as the right to discover, create, share, enjoy and protect the local community’s cultural roots, expressions and resources as a building block of peace and wellbeing in all cities and regions” (UCLG 2022). LRGs must guarantee the capabilities of all citizens to participate

fully and freely in the cultural life of communities, as stated in the Rome Charter (UCLG 2020).

LRGs and other local stakeholders are particularly well-positioned to identify obstacles to exercising cultural rights and to build the necessary capacities to fulfil such rights. In this regard, the guide is informed by the efforts made by UCLG cities and regions to adapt their policies and programmes in order to keep their communities alive, hopeful, and creative, preventing inequalities and exclusion, and promoting culture and the free exercise of cultural rights as an important part of the caring system in the face of global events such as health and economic crises, complex emergencies, and pressures threatening the protection of cultural and natural heritage (UCLG 2020).

The initial draft is also fed by the latest developments in global cultural policies, including key milestones for the UCLG Culture Committee such as the reports on gender equality and climate resilient development, written in 2021 by the former UN Special Rapporteur in the field of Cultural Rights Farida Shaheed (Shaheed 2021), and the former coordinator of the Climate Heritage Network Andrew Potts (Potts 2021). The 5th edition of the International Award UCLG–Mexico City–Culture 21 (2021) was dedicated to innovative cultural rights and policies based on care and the achievements of the Culture2030Goal Campaign, which presented a proposal for a “Culture Goal” (Culture 2030 Goal Campaign 2022) at the international conference on cultural rights “Mondiacult+40” in Mexico City in September 2022.

The contents of Culture 21 PLUS also draw on the founding documents and learning programmes of the UCLG Culture Committee. A swift comparison with its preceding document, Culture 21: Actions, reveals some upgrades: (a) Culture 21 PLUS updates Culture 21: Actions and explores the interaction of culture with other policy areas for the achievement of sustainable development, including both positive and negative impacts; (b) Culture 21 PLUS not only allows for self-assessment of cultural policies, but also includes new methodologies for policy design at different levels that are still being explored; and (c) Culture 21 PLUS not only strengthens UCLG’s vision of culture as a pillar of sustainable development, but also

aligns with the UCLG Pact and reinforces the international advocacy work for a stand-alone Culture Goal, reflecting the learnings that the #Culture2030goal global campaign has developed through the last 10 years.

Whereas both guides are applicable all over the world and their values are based on the practical experiences of cities and local governments, Culture 21 PLUS further expands the notion of culture, raising awareness on the role of culture as part of the solution to the challenges of humanity and offering pathways to achieve the goals towards sustainable development while also putting care at the centre of local policies. Culture 21 PLUS stems from the knowledge and know-how of cities like Jinju City that have recently developed rights-based cultural policies, programmes, and activities. It is based on a wide range of experiences at the local level of cities and regions with different sizes and geopolitical contexts that nevertheless share similar problems and interests affected by globalisation, such as health crises, immigration, digitalisation, job creation, social cohesion, use of public space, and public services provision.

### **3.1. Challenges**

Cultural rights are a crucial element for an enhanced response to local and global challenges and crises, namely those related to diversity and inclusion, gender equality, and climate change, among others. The multi-dimensional rights-based perspective of Culture 21 PLUS,<sup>1</sup> including an intersectional and cross-cutting approach to policy areas, can rejuvenate the transformation of cities into territories of equal opportunities for the whole of society in its diversity and complexity.

Global debates recognize the importance of cultural diversity in shaping human identities as a key factor for social harmony and peace. To achieve local sustainable development, it is vital that local cultural policies deeply consider diversity, heritage, and creativity, as stated by Culture 21: Actions. Culture 21 PLUS addresses the integration of multicultural,

---

1. See section 3.2. “Pathways” for more information on UCLG Culture Committee innovative approaches in the interaction of culture with sustainable development.

intercultural, and intergenerational strategies, with attention to indigenous peoples, minorities, and migrant communities including the issue of the legacy of colonialism in urban planning, public art, museums, and socio-cultural programming, as well as in economic and governance structures, and reconsidering the hegemonic narrative which takes into account the views built on the margins of official discourses.

From a gender perspective, since the adoption of the 2030 UN Agenda and the SDGs and the 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, gender equality has progressed worldwide thanks to a multitude of efforts. Yet the COVID-19 crisis brought to surface the extent to which inequalities persist. In 2021, UCLG reiterated its championing of gender equality as a human right in *A Global Feminist Municipal Movement—The Transformative Commitment of Cities and Territories to Generation Equality* (UCLG 2021a). The UCLG Culture Committee is committed to strengthening women's leadership in cultural policies and decision-making and promoting the recognition of women's contributions to the cultural life and heritage of cities.

Culture 21 PLUS is aligned with this vision. Following the findings and recommendations of the report *Cultural Actions Supporting Gender Equality in Cities and Territories* commissioned by the UCLG Culture Committee and written by Farida Shaheed in 2021, it identifies a list of key actions to be considered first and foremost by cities and local governments in their policies relating to gender equality and culture. Special emphasis is put on planning cities from a gender approach, considering that city narratives and heritage—present in the names of streets, parks, buildings, monuments, statues, and public portraits as well as in stories and voices at public events such as concerts and festivals, and in local museums and cultural centres—reflect societal exclusions that must be addressed (Shaheed 2021).

UCLG committed as well to another major global challenge, climate action and the increased awareness of the impacts of climate change from a local perspective, through the principle of ecological transition in the UCLG Durban Political Declaration (2019) and the UCLG manifestos: “Ecology for the Future,” “The Future of Culture,” and “The Future of



Resilience”; the “Culture for Climate Agenda: Unleashing the Power of Culture as a Pillar of Climate Action,” elaborated by various civil society networks for the UCLG World Congress and Summit of Local and Regional Leaders in 2022;<sup>2</sup> and the commitments to transform the planet of the UCLG Pact.

The UCLG Culture Committee also moved towards engagement with climate action and its relation to culture in 2015, dedicating one of the nine commitments of Culture 21: Actions to “Culture and environment”, publishing the “Culture, Climate Change and Sustainable Development: Briefing” (2016), and commissioning the report *The Role of Culture in Climate Resilient Development*, written in 2021 by the former coordinator of the Climate Heritage Network, Andrew Potts. This report advances an understanding of the cultural enabling conditions of pathways towards climate-resilient futures and the potential of culture-based strategies to realise them. It draws on research and 33 summarised case studies, shares six policy areas for consideration by cities and local governments as well as relevant stakeholders in their local policies as entry points for further development: (1) Imagine New Futures; (2) Understand Climate Vulnerability; (3) Engage with Carbon; (4) Engage with Diverse Partners; (5) Seek out Synergies; Prepare for Trade-Offs; and (6) Pay Attention to Equity and Climate Justice (Potts 2021).

Grounded in the findings set out in this research and related documents, Culture 21 PLUS explores the often-forgotten cultural dimension of the ecological crisis and builds on the measures designed and implemented by local governments and civil society to help address the complex climate challenges that cities and regions are facing. It promotes

---

2. The Climate Heritage Network, Climate Chance, Global Alliance for the Rights of Nature, the International Indigenous Women’s Forum and MCR2030 formed the “Climate and Culture” Town Hall Track at the 2022 World Summit of Local and Regional Leaders and UCLG World Congress. The Town Hall Track was part of the structured dialogue between the local and regional governments constituency and internationally organized civil society. This dialogue was strengthened by the presence of 3 cross-cutting caucuses (youth, feminism and accessibility) and the contribution of UCLG UBUNTU Advisors.

a system of climate planning that can unlock the power of culture to drive climate mitigation, adaptation, planning for loss and damage, and action for climate empowerment. All those efforts focus on a necessary care-based perspective.

### **3.2. Pathways**

Culture 21 PLUS offers solid pathways that can boost a cultural transformation to further advance towards sustainable cities and territories. This transformation may help address actions, beliefs, traditions, rituals, and customs which can legitimize discrimination, marginalization, and violence, preventing the inclusion of all experiences, views, needs, and aspirations, and which also can curtail the potential of human development, including meaningful engagement in cultural life (UCLG Culture Committee 2023). Acknowledging that “Culture is the core of being human: it embodies our collective humanity, with all its fragilities and imperfections: creative geniuses, pursuit of knowledge, innovation and pleasure but also the flip side: prejudices and exclusionary behaviours” (Shaheed 2021), Culture 21 PLUS focuses not only on what helps building inclusive and dynamic cultural ecosystems, but also on what prevents them from thriving. This idea is developed in a new analysis elaborated by the Culture Committee on the interaction of cultural elements with the Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 UN Agenda.

The “Analysis of the interactions between culture and the SDGs” (UCLG Cultural Committee 2023) was included in the recently published report “A cultural boost in the achievement of the SDGs: How local and regional governments are promoting cultural heritage and sustainable cities and territories,” as one of the papers of the Global Taskforce (GTF) of Local and Regional Governments’ 7th annual report *Towards the Localization of the SDGs*. This annual report was presented on 16 July 2023 at the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) held in New York. In the culture paper, a series of short statements derived from a literature review of UCLG document illustrate real existing interactions among cultural policies, programmes, and actions, and the achievement

of each one of the 17 SDGs, using a seven-point ordinal scale from minus 3 (-3) to plus 3 (+3). This methodology, used by the International Council for Science in 2016 in *A Guide to SDG Interactions* (ICSU 2017, 23) allows a visual synthesis of the synergies in green and the trade-offs in red of cultural elements and the SDGs. In figure 1, statements are layered over each other at different heights, displaying colour grading according to their level of relevance.

As an example, the following are two of the 147 statements of the analysis. It shows the interaction of “Recognition of cultural diversity as a goal in cultural policies, and integration of intercultural dialogue and active participation to address migration, refugee and internal displacement” with SDG 10 at a score of plus 3 (+3); and the interaction of “Cultural narratives and practices that go against human rights and democratic processes and that legitimize the violation of the rights of women, girls and other people for their sexual orientation and gender identity” with SDG 5 at a score of minus 3 (-3).

This analysis provides a holistic overview of the role of culture in



Figure 1. Interaction of culture and the SDGs

sustainable development. Among positive interactions, it features culture and heritage as enablers and key conditions for sustainable development and the unique assets of cities and territories as well as the importance of cultural landscapes to strengthen the relationship between humans and nature and the relevance of cultural plans to revitalize neighbourhoods to promote decentralization. Among negative interactions, it includes the need for both the cultural sector and cultural policies to better address issues related to gentrification and the resulting loss of identity of urban areas, and the environmental impact of mobility for cultural purposes. The main conclusion lies in the consideration of cultural policies, practices, and actors as key for the achievement of all SDGs. Positive and negative interactions may be seen either as priority areas or as areas in which cultural elements need to be considered.

This research will continue until 2024, with the hypothesis that the best way to fully integrate culture into the 2030 UN Agenda for Sustainable Development is through the creation of a dedicated Culture Goal (SDG 18). This goal would enable the achievement of all SDGs, while providing coherence to policies and programmes and empowering all stakeholders with particular emphasis on the cultural sector.

Such is the vision promoted by the #Culture2030Goal campaign, which was formed by global cultural networks that advocate for the role of culture in sustainable development since 2013. The campaign called for culture to be included in what would become “Transforming Our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,” adopted by the UN General Assembly in September 2015. Through the years, the #Culture2030Goal campaign has produced a number of documents and organised high-level events to influence the global development agendas, including in-depth analyses of cultural elements in Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs) and Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs),<sup>3</sup> and the participation in

---

3. See the reports *Culture in the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda* (2019) and *Culture in the Localization of the SDGs: An Analysis of Voluntary Local Reviews* (2022), which show the growing presence of cultural elements in their implementation of the 2030 UN Agenda.

the Mondiacult+40 global conference, organized by UNESCO and the Government of Mexico in 2022. At this conference, the #Culture2030Goal campaign presented the document “A Culture Goal Is Essential for Our Common Future,” a zero draft of a dedicated goal to “ensure cultural sustainability for the wellbeing of all.” This draft includes 10 cultural rights-based targets (Culture 2030 Goal Campaign 2022).

In the last decade, LRGs have also put together a global vision that enhances the potential of cultural rights to meet the challenges of humankind, establishing a Culture Goal in the global development agenda that is indispensable for moving forward with care-based, democracy-based solutions. Since March 2013, UCLG’s role as facilitator of the Global Taskforce of LRGs includes promoting culture as part of LRGs inputs to the 2030 UN Agenda of Sustainable Development and the New Urban Agenda. In 2022, the Global Taskforce released a statement calling Mondiacult+40 to urge for a dedicated Culture Goal in post-2030 global development agendas. The final declaration of Mondiacult+40 featured a set of cultural rights that must be at the core of public policies, including the social and economic rights of artists, artistic freedom, the right of indigenous communities to safeguard and transmit ancestral knowledge, and the protection and promotion of cultural and natural heritage. The declaration also affirmed the need “to firmly anchor culture as a global public good, and to integrate it as a specific goal in its own right in the development agenda beyond 2030.” Global progress in this direction is positive, and more recently, in September 2023, the G20 Leaders Declaration mentioned the need of a standalone Culture Goal as well.

#### **4. Structure, Self-assessment and Policy Design Methodologies**

In terms of structure, Culture 21 PLUS comprises six blocks—Rights, Communities, Prosperity, Territories, Nature, and Governance—and 30 areas. Each area incorporates a list of 200 specific objectives that provide detailed guidance for the work of local governments. All categories are

distributed under the three key cornerstones of the UCLG Pact for the Future of Humanity: People (blocks 2 and 3), Planet (blocks 4 and 5) and Governments (blocks 1 and 6).

- Block 1: “Rights” addresses cultural rights and the vitality of artistic ecosystems, with the concept of common good and co-management mechanisms for public services in culture as some of the key elements;
- Block 2: “Communities” focuses mainly on social issues, such as inclusion, health, education, gender equality, and peace, considering traditional knowledge and vulnerable and fragile groups;
- Block 3: “Prosperity” looks into economy, decent work, tourism, and technology, incorporating concepts such as gentrification;
- Block 4: “Territories” is about urban and territorial planning, including cultural heritage, public art, architecture, and design as well as approaches like decolonial narratives in the analysis of public space;
- Block 5: “Nature” addresses environmental issues such as natural heritage and landscapes, biodiversity, climate change, and ecological transition as well as food and gastronomy as some of its main elements; and
- Block 6: “Governance” looks at the core of cultural policies and participation mechanisms, including communication to enhance effectiveness, transparency, and trust.

As mentioned in section 3, Culture 21 PLUS not only allows self-assessment of cultural policies as does Culture 21: Actions, but develops new methodologies for rights-based policy design at different levels according to the needs and interests of cities. Cities are invited to identify local challenges and work with either the six blocks and 30 areas or the 200 actions, reflecting on their connection to cultural policies and programmes and prioritising some of them in order to agree on concrete and feasible actions for a cultural strategy based on cultural rights and sustainable development. The 5th UCLG Culture Summit, held in Dublin from 28 November to 1 December 2023, allocated one session to introduce Culture 21 PLUS to members and partners, and to showcase the first results of the tests conducted in Jinju City, Mexico City and Lisbon.



Figure 2. Blocks and areas of Culture 21 PLUS

#### 4.1. Working with Culture 21 PLUS in Jinju City

The city of Jinju became a Pilot City of UCLG Culture Committee in 2019. During the course of this programme, Jinju, which was designed as a UNESCO Creative City of Crafts and Folk Art, conducted two self-assessment workshops that identified the strengths and weaknesses of its cultural policies in relation to sustainable development. This led to policy innovation in the form of specific measures: first, strengthening the local artistic ecosystem in the crafts field; second, encouraging the

participation of vulnerable social groups living in rural areas in cultural life; and third, fostering cultural and creative uses of public space (UCLG Culture Committee 2020b). Recommendations highlighted in the final conference organised on 28 June 2022 included the need to keep including marginalized groups in local cultural life, the internationalisation of the city's cultural assets, and the effective use of public space to promote cultural activities for all (UCLG Culture Committee 2022).

The success of Jinju's participation in the Pilot Cities Global programme allowed for its involvement in the Leading Cities programme, designed for cities with experience implementing cultural rights and sustainable development policies.<sup>4</sup> In this framework, and as an activity of a Leading City, Jinju was the first ever city in the world to organise a consultation workshop, on 6 July 2023, to analyse the first draft of Culture 21 PLUS and to identify the connections of local cultural policies with the six blocks and 30 areas of the document. The inputs provided by the participants to the questions: "What is the block with the highest relevance for Jinju?," "What are the areas with the highest relevance for Jinju," and "Which areas could be worth deepening in the framework of the Jinju Leading City programme?" will be reflected in the final version of the document and will nurture the ongoing consultation process and a longer-term plan for Jinju based on the collective reflections, experiences, and lessons learned.

The results of the workshop, held at the Jinju Culture and Tourism Foundation premises, show that "Prosperity" was chosen by participants as the most relevant block, followed by "Rights" and "Territories." Regarding the most meaningful areas of Culture 21 PLUS at present, participants chose "Decent work and socioeconomic conditions for artists and cultural workers" in first place, "Culture and citizen participation" in second place, and "Social cohesion, inclusion, poverty and inequalities" and "Culture and education" tied for third place. The area with most votes for improvement

---

4. See the webpage <https://www.agenda21culture.net/our-cities/jinju> for more information on Jinju's developments as a Pilot City and a Leading City of the UCLG Culture Committee.



in the framework of the Jinju Leading City programme was “System of cultural public management,” followed by “Culture and education,” “Cultural and creative industries, employment and livelihoods,” “Decent work and socio-economic conditions for artists and cultural workers,” “Culture and sustainable tourism,” and “Culture and climate change.”



Figures 3 and 4. Culture 21 PLUS workshop in Jinju, July 6, 2023

Participants also linked some local cultural policies and programmes to relevant areas, such as the Artists-in-Residence Programme, the Jinju Folk Art Dissemination Project, and the K-Entrepreneurship Centre. These results were presented on 7 July 2023, at the 8th Jinju UNESCO Creative Cities International Forum, entitled “Establishment and Vitalization of Cultural Ecosystems,” and the formal UCLG Leading City Opening.

## 5. Conclusions

Cultural rights are the key for sustainable cultural policies, thereby creating peaceful, diverse, inclusive, and thriving cities and territories. Establishing and sustaining a vital cultural ecosystem takes time, resources, resilience, willingness, and a sound rights-based local policy framework grounded on the experience of cities and regions around the world. By guaranteeing cultural rights, local and regional governments enable the capacities of people to discover, create, share, enjoy, and protect common cultural expressions and resources (UCLG 2020) and to imagine collectively and creatively a better future for humankind.

Culture 21 PLUS is a new global policy framework for cultural rights that builds on the acquis and experiences of UCLG cities that updates the UCLG Culture Committee guide Culture 21: Actions for better local sustainable cultural policies through concrete and measurable actions aimed at addressing the most urgent global challenges.

With commitment and determination, cities such as Jinju are shaping this new policy framework for cultural rights, Culture 21 PLUS, which is aligned with global development agendas and upholds the UCLG Pact. Cities from around the world are invited to test the guide and co-create a suitable framework ensuring cultural rights for all.

---

## REFERENCES

- Barbieri, Nicolás. 2021. The right to participate in urban cultural life: from inequalities to equity. GOLD VI Working Paper Series #06 (November 2021). Barcelona: United Cities and Local Governments. [https://gold.uclg.org/sites/default/files/gold\\_vi\\_working\\_paper\\_06.pdf](https://gold.uclg.org/sites/default/files/gold_vi_working_paper_06.pdf).
- Bennoune, Karima, UN Human Rights Council. 2016. “A/HRC/31/59: Report reviewing the Conceptual and Legal Framework of Cultural Rights.” Geneva. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/thematic-reports/ahrc3159-report-reviewing-conceptual-and-legal-framework-cultural-rights>.
- Climate Heritage Network, et al. 2022. *The Culture for Climate Agenda: Unleashing the Power of Culture as a Pillar of Climate Action*. UCLG World Congress and Summit of World Leaders. [https://decidim-uclg.s3.amazonaws.com/uploads/decidim/attachment/file/4298/TH\\_PP\\_Climate\\_Culture.pdf](https://decidim-uclg.s3.amazonaws.com/uploads/decidim/attachment/file/4298/TH_PP_Climate_Culture.pdf).
- Culture 2030 Goal Campaign. 2022. *A Culture Goal is Essential for Our Common Future*. [http://culture2030goal.net/sites/default/files/2023-02/culture2030goal\\_Culture%20Goal%20-%20ENG.pdf](http://culture2030goal.net/sites/default/files/2023-02/culture2030goal_Culture%20Goal%20-%20ENG.pdf).
- Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments. 2022. “Key Messages to the UNESCO Mondiacult 2022.” [https://www.global-taskforce.org/sites/default/files/2022-10/LAMG\\_gtf-MONDIACULT2022\\_-\\_en\\_1.pdf](https://www.global-taskforce.org/sites/default/files/2022-10/LAMG_gtf-MONDIACULT2022_-_en_1.pdf).
- International Council for Science. 2017. *A Guide to SDG Interactions: From Science to Implementation*. <https://council.science/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/SDGs-Guide-to-Interactions.pdf>.
- Potts, Andrew. 2021. *The Role of Culture in Climate Resilient Development*. UCLG Committee on Culture Reports, No. 10. [https://www.agenda21culture.net/sites/default/files/files/documents/en/report\\_10\\_-\\_culture\\_and\\_climate\\_resilient\\_development\\_-\\_en\\_2.pdf](https://www.agenda21culture.net/sites/default/files/files/documents/en/report_10_-_culture_and_climate_resilient_development_-_en_2.pdf).
- Shaheed, Farida, UN Human Rights Council. 2011. “A/ HRC/17/38/Add.2: Report of the Independent Expert in the Field of Cultural Rights, Farida Shaheed.” Geneva. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/statements/2011/08/statement-ms-farida-shaheed-independent-expert-field-cultural-rights->

human.

- . 2021. *Cultural Actions Supporting Gender Equality in Cities and Territories*. UCLG Committee on Culture Reports, No. 9. Barcelona. [https://www.agenda21culture.net/sites/default/files/files/documents/en/report\\_9\\_-\\_cultural\\_policies\\_and\\_gender\\_equality\\_-\\_en\\_1.pdf](https://www.agenda21culture.net/sites/default/files/files/documents/en/report_9_-_cultural_policies_and_gender_equality_-_en_1.pdf).
- UCLG (United Cities and Local Governments). 2020. *The 2020 Rome Charter*. [https://agenda21culture.net/sites/default/files/2020\\_rc\\_eng\\_0.pdf](https://agenda21culture.net/sites/default/files/2020_rc_eng_0.pdf).
- . 2021a. *A Global Feminist Municipal Movement: The Transformative Commitment of Cities and Territories to Generation Equality*. [https://www.uclg-cglu.org/sites/default/files/the\\_transformative\\_commitment\\_of\\_cities\\_and\\_territories\\_to\\_generation\\_equality.pdf](https://www.uclg-cglu.org/sites/default/files/the_transformative_commitment_of_cities_and_territories_to_generation_equality.pdf).
- . 2021b. *The Izmir Declaration: Culture Shapes the Future of Humanity*. UCLG Culture Summit, Izmir. [https://agenda21culture.net/sites/default/files/izmir2021\\_statement\\_en.pdf](https://agenda21culture.net/sites/default/files/izmir2021_statement_en.pdf).
- . 2022. *The Pact for the Future of Humanity: The Daejeon Political Declaration*. UCLG World Congress, Daejeon. [https://www.uclg.org/sites/default/files/uclgpactforthe\\_future.pdf](https://www.uclg.org/sites/default/files/uclgpactforthe_future.pdf).
- UCLG Culture Committee. 2015a. "Culture 21: Actions. Commitments on the role of culture in sustainable cities." [https://www.agenda21culture.net/sites/default/files/files/documents/multi/c21\\_015\\_en\\_2.pdf](https://www.agenda21culture.net/sites/default/files/files/documents/multi/c21_015_en_2.pdf).
- . 2015b. *UCLG Culture Summit. Culture and Sustainable Cities*. Bilbao 18-20 March 2015. Final Report. [https://agenda21culture.net/sites/default/files/files/pages/summit-pages/report\\_CultureSummit-CGLU-Bilbao\\_ENG-low.pdf](https://agenda21culture.net/sites/default/files/files/pages/summit-pages/report_CultureSummit-CGLU-Bilbao_ENG-low.pdf).
- . 2018. *Culture 21 Review 2014-2015*. [https://www.agenda21culture.net/sites/default/files/review\\_eng\\_web.pdf](https://www.agenda21culture.net/sites/default/files/review_eng_web.pdf).
- . 2020a. *Culture, Cities and the COVID-19 Pandemic. Part 1: Documenting the Initial Measures and Drafting Challenges Ahead*. UCLG Culture Committee Reports, No. 8. Barcelona. [https://www.agenda21culture.net/sites/default/files/files/documents/en/report\\_8\\_-\\_culture\\_cities\\_and\\_the\\_covid19\\_pandemic\\_-\\_en.pdf](https://www.agenda21culture.net/sites/default/files/files/documents/en/report_8_-_culture_cities_and_the_covid19_pandemic_-_en.pdf).
- . 2020b. "Jinju Pilot City. Work Programme." [https://www.agenda21culture.net/sites/default/files/files/cities/content/workprogramme\\_](https://www.agenda21culture.net/sites/default/files/files/cities/content/workprogramme_)

jinju-eng\_0.pdf.

———. 2022. “Jinju Pilot City. Final Report.” [https://www.agenda21culture.net/sites/default/files/files/cities/content/finalreport\\_jinju-eng.pdf](https://www.agenda21culture.net/sites/default/files/files/cities/content/finalreport_jinju-eng.pdf).

———. 2023. “A Cultural Boost in the Achievement of the SDGs: How local and regional governments are promoting cultural heritage and sustainable cities and territories.” [https://gold.uclg.org/sites/default/files/uploaded/hlpf\\_2023-p4.pdf](https://gold.uclg.org/sites/default/files/uploaded/hlpf_2023-p4.pdf). In *Towards the Localization of the SDGs*, by Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments. 7th Annual Report. Barcelona. [https://gold.uclg.org/sites/default/files/uploaded/hlpf\\_2023.pdf](https://gold.uclg.org/sites/default/files/uploaded/hlpf_2023.pdf).

Xanthaki, Alexandra. United Nations General Assembly. 2022. “A/77/290: Development and Cultural Rights: The Principles.” New York. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/thematic-reports/a77290-development-and-cultural-rights-principles>.





## Strengthening and Revitalizing the Local Cultural Ecosystem

### [ Discussants ]



**Jeong Duk YI**  
(Emeritus Professor,  
Jeonbuk National  
University)



**Francis SOKOMBA**  
(Focal Point of Bida;  
Niger State Tourism  
Corporation)



**Tara POOLE**  
(Focal Point of Ballarat;  
Leader of Creative City  
Unit)



**Seongjin NAM**  
(Researcher, Jinju  
Culture Research  
Institute)

## **1. The Need for a Limited Concept**

The concept of culture is a word that gets used in many different ways. As a result, there are often confusions when communicating about culture. This is also true for the concept of cultural ecosystem, as it uses the word culture. This is because when the meaning of culture changes, the meaning of cultural ecosystem also changes. In cultural anthropology or human geography that concerns culture, cultural ecosystem is a comprehensive systematic approach to cultural phenomena through which humans adapt and interact with natural and social ecology. In a broader sense, it is a way to understand culture through the system of interaction between natural environment and humans.

However, this discussion intends to use the meaning of cultural ecosystem in a different way from above. While there is still disagreement as to what exactly the cultural industry (creative industry) is and whether it should be considered an industry, as its attributes are very different from those of other industries (for example, most cultural or creative activities are not profit-driven), efforts are increasingly being made to promote a comprehensive understanding and sustainable development through an ecological perspective that goes beyond the consideration of individual elements, as the importance of the cultural industry (creative industry) has increased significantly over the years. This approach is not an ecological approach toward the entire culture—instead, it is an ecological approach toward the creative industries, and therefore, practical discussions are being focused on the creative industry ecosystem, despite the use of the term cultural ecosystem. As such, only when the meaning of the term is clearly defined can a more specific discussion continue. Also, since the discussion is in relation to UNESCO Creative Cities, the use of the limited concept will help us to more effectively find ways for the sustainable development of UNESCO Creative Cities.

In addition, the concept of the ecosystem is being used here not to understand the system of interaction with the natural environment, but to understand the complex system and the context of the creative industries. This approach aims to contribute to the sustainable development of



UNESCO Creative Cities. That is, while the existing approaches to cultural and creative industries are interested in the production and consumption of the creative products or the agglomeration of creative industries, the ecological approach aims to comprehensively connect the cultural environment and creative activities, the interaction of different stakeholders and institutions, and the system of production-distribution-consumption. Similar to the concept of culture, the concept of ecosystem can also be used in a wide variety. As a result, even if we limit the meaning of cultural ecosystem to the creative industry ecosystem, a wide variety of thoughts and contents may be presented, which in turn will make the focus of the discussion unclear. Therefore, a definition of the creative industry ecosystem needs to be discussed here to some extent in order to make the discussion more productive and concentrated.

## **2. Key Elements of the Creative Industry Ecosystem**

Since 2010, there has been increasing discussion on applying the concept of ecosystem to the creative industries, and the following tasks have emerged as being particularly important: 1) As the concept of culture is too broad and can be used in many different ways, there is a need to consider culture as art (creative activities and their products) to limit the scope of discussion; 2) therefore, artists (creation/production) who are related to art (creative industry), intermediaries (planning/distribution/marketing/commentary, etc.), enjoyers (consumption/purchase), and 3) the role of capital and distribution in the process of industrialization are important; 4) policies and support from the government, institutions, and organizations are important; and 5) the cultural foundations of the region concerned, including cultural tradition, creative organizations, creative facilities, creative talents, creative activities, creative expansion, creative education, enjoyment, industrialization (commercialization), play an important role. Certainly, there is a need to actively consider the external factors from an ecological perspective, as the external capital, external countries, and external creative activities are closely related to and interact with the tasks

described above. However, since the discussion of such external factors and their interactions requires a more complex framework, the present discussion will be limited to the internal factors.

The latter can be divided into the following factors: 1) creative talents (artist, intermediary, talent cultivation, activity system, activity space); 2) capital (planning, industrialization, marketing, distribution, profit); 3) support and facility (government, institution, organization, facility); 4) consumption and enjoyment (purchase, participation); and 5) local cultural background (cultural tradition, cultural activity, institution, network, governance). It is necessary to identify if and how these factors can interact with each other to achieve continuous synergy, as a reproductive system of sustained interaction. This requires active involvement of each participant.

In what direction should the interaction between these factors be stimulated in order to contribute to the development of local creative industry? To address this problem, the following questions can be asked: How will we cultivate creative talents, and how and where will we promote their creative activities that produce successful creative products?; How will we attract capital and make investments, or how will we as individual artists, craftsmen, and culinary producers design, create, and distribute the marketable creative products to secure profits?; What external capital (business) will we attract and what kind of relationship can we develop?; How will we stimulate local or visiting customers to consume and enjoy, thus revitalizing local creative activities, securing greater profits, and exploring pathways for expanded reproduction?; What, whom and how will local governments, institutions, and organizations support to revitalize creative activities and successfully commercialize products?; How can local production, consumption and enjoyment interact to further enhance the quality of creative products and make them marketable externally; In what ways are the local cultural traditions and social systems advantageous for the interaction with the local creative industries?; What type of local governance will contribute to the development of local creative industries?

There are certainly many problems with conceiving and presenting a unified ecosystem for discussion. This is because there are significant differences within the cultural industries (creative industries), as some

may be consumed through large-scale reproduction such as in films, while others may rely more on the craftsmanship of artists or chefs. In addition, megacities and small cities in rural areas show creative activities and creative industrialization in very different forms. Nevertheless, the more important factors are considered and selected here in order to focus the discussion in a somewhat unified framework. In particular, the perspectives of small and medium-sized cities with a locality will be considered more in this discussion, as they are mainly the members of the UNESCO Creative Cities Network, rather than megacities.

### **3. Specific Questions**

Based on these concerns, the discussion for this volume will focus on the perspectives of the local cultural ecosystem or creative industry ecosystem. The following are the list of questions to be discussed. We ask you to provide answers based on the experiences of the UNESCO Creative City to which you belong, or a creative city of your choice. You may also provide answers in a more general sense, and the readers can then apply them to their own cities in a more specific context.

*1. The topic for this year's discussion is "Strengthening and Revitalizing the Local Cultural Ecosystem." As the discussion is mainly about the UNESCO Creative Cities, we would be grateful if you could discuss the local cultural ecosystem, especially in relation to the local creative industry ecosystem. The concept of local cultural ecosystem is to understand the system between cultural sectors and various factors by analyzing the cultural ecosystem of a region as a whole, to establish the structure of its virtuous cycle, and to promote the sustainable development of a creative city. Do you think such perspective or approach can help to revitalize UNESCO Creative Cities? In what ways can it help?*

**Jeong Duk YI:** I think that the concept of local cultural ecosystems is an indispensable viewpoint for their harmonious development based on a comprehensive understanding of the conditions of each region. The elements of a natural ecosystem maintain or improve a balance by interacting and circulating through energy and materials. If some elements are excessive or insufficient, the balance of the entire ecosystem may be weakened or collapse completely. I think that the same is also true for the cultural ecosystem. It will move toward a developed balance if managed in such a way that people, money, and efforts interact; it will fail to do so or degenerate into a reduced balance if a problem occurs in some of its elements.

In the natural ecosystem, energy and materials evolve into a state of abundant balance through the interactions of the environment, producers, consumers, and decomposers. Similarly, in the local cultural ecosystem, people, money, and efforts can develop into a more abundant balance through the interactions of various institutions, organizations, producers, intermediaries, and consumers. Therefore, the local cultural ecosystem can be improved more systematically if we understand what key elements are involved (elements), what relationships between these elements presently exist and what is a more effective way to reconstruct them (relationships, systems, and patterns of elements), and how people, money, and efforts

could be improved (changes in key drivers).

The local culture can be broadly divided into three layers: everyday culture, which operates in daily life and relationships (meanings, rituals, leisure, play, everyday arts, everyday crafts, etc.); public culture, which is generally carried out by local communities and governments (local festivals, cultural centers, cultural complexes, museums, public support for culture and arts, cultural assets, etc.); and commercialized culture (films, cultural content, TV or OTT, advertising, commercial performances, commercial crafts, cultural products, cultural tourism, etc.). They are closely interrelated but work at different layers. More specifically, commercialized culture makes money through capital and technology and public culture enhances residents' sense of pride, attract tourists and raise a local identity, while everyday culture exists for residents' life, enjoyment, and relationships. Of course, while all three layers are interrelated, UNESCO Creative Cities emphasizes the utilization of the local culture for local development. Therefore, I think it is crucial to focus on local development through commercialization in a dignified manner.

In addition, introducing dynamic concepts of ecosystems, such as interrelationships, interactions, and virtuous cycles, will help to promote better synergistic development of elements and relationships. In the end, a more comprehensive and systematic approach will enhance the effects of interventions in local creative industries.

**Francis SOKOMBA:** Strengthening and revitalizing the local cultural ecosystem will help to create synergies among UNESCO Creative Cities. The ecosystem is an asset of the region on which the foundation of cultural goods and the fulcrum of the creative industry ecosystem rest. A good understanding of the local cultural ecosystem will stimulate creative activities that will add value to the network of producers, distributors, and consumers. Certainly, there is a need to transform the local cultural ecosystem, structuring it to maintain and adopt successful advanced regional practices that will promote and share experiences with other regions to develop or create new products, while strengthening productivity and achieving a balanced, eco-friendly environment.

Cultural knowledge is supreme and educative. Working together as a team will be the best strategy to successfully preserve the local cultural ecosystem. The local cultural ecosystem is dynamic and its exploration is unending with ongoing discoveries: Many practices have not been studied, while some are poorly documented and ineffectively analyzed.

Diversity and its value chain is a source of livelihood. Creative knowledge sharing with other regions will result in regional cooperation, leveraging the enrichment of knowledge to cut across various local cultures. This will help to attract new audiences to appreciate and research the potential and resources of the ecosystem, considering its availability, cost-effectiveness, and value to the unlimited creative industry ecosystem.

**Tara POOLE:** The designation of Ballarat as a UNESCO Creative City of Crafts and Folk Art complements the City of Ballarat's own Creative City Strategy—a strategy which was designed to deliver a more sustainable environment for creative practitioners to thrive within. The strategy underpins our work in measuring the sustainable practices of creative businesses and people, and in turn informs our city planning. The UNESCO Sustainable Development Goals have provided another overarching set of targets.

Ballarat is moving towards a new way of working, but it is at the beginning of this journey. The integration of creative practitioners and businesses into a broader economic picture is only just starting. The test is in helping the small micro-enterprises to survive and complementing this with structured support for larger creative businesses and organisations, alongside the attraction and securing of complementary services, to help build a healthy creative ecosystem.

Newer generations of Australians within Ballarat are interested in regenerating lost traditions, and renewing support for training and education of trades and skills. There is a greater acceptance of First Nations knowledge and a growing awareness of the rich wealth of information and education which has been lost. Communities are starting to respond to the challenge. Representative and advocacy groups are supporting new ways to relearn old skills, and then applying contemporary design to ensure

interest and popular appeal. But there is much ground to make up. These efforts are small and disparate.

An Australian Research Council-funded research project sought to identify where the craft skills required to sustain and grow future making are located across the national economy. The project found that in 2021 Australia's craft economy employed 116,538 people (1.1% of the total workforce) and generated AU\$19.2 billion in gross value added (1.0% of the total). The Australian craft economy has been in decline since 2006, while the overall economy has continued to grow. This rate of decline accelerated from 2011 to 2016, but has stabilised in the period from 2016 to 2021.

The difference experienced in Ballarat is that the creative sector (of which there are 28 different category groups) is the fastest growing sector of the Ballarat economy. Since 2016, the total number of jobs (full and part-time) in the sector has more than doubled, although the revenue made from these jobs has fallen.

*2. From the perspective of the local cultural ecosystem, what are the advantages and disadvantages of the local cultural ecosystem in your own region or city? What efforts can be made to overcome such disadvantages or shortcomings? In what ways can the perspective of a local cultural ecosystem help?*

**SOKOMBA:** The local cultural ecosystem is the identity, custom, and source of inspiration for the people. It provides income and sustains cultural practices that are primary sources of raw materials for the creators. These practices are available and easily transmitted through familiar media.

Some of the local cultural ecosystems have not been accepted as universal practices; they are practiced within a specific section of the community without being subjected to criticism. There appears to be a missing knowledge link among creators, distributors, and consumers on

the agreed product output. Many knowledge holders have been unable to develop a scientific approach to local cultural ecosystems for effective communication. Moreover, the quality assessment indicators for local cultural ecosystem generally lack a conscious conceptualization of the subject to be measured, which may lead to confusing results.

Technology is rapidly advancing civilization by adopting technological parameters to calibrate traditions developed from the rich heritage and practices of local wisdom. It is necessary to develop a methodology for assessing the local cultural ecosystem in order to integrate it into the framework in a more balanced way. This will help to discover new innovations and enhance understanding of its value chain perspectives.

YI: As Jeonju is designated as a UNESCO Creative City of Gastronomy, I will narrow my discussion to focus on the strengths and weaknesses of its local cultural ecosystem as it relates to food. In particular, I will try to explain people, money, and efforts in terms of a system of interactions between various institutions, organizations, producers, intermediaries, and consumers.

Considering such elements and systems of an ecosystem, let's talk about people first. Jeonju has long been most famous in Korea for its food. In other words, there are abundant and delicious foods with a high level of involvement by talented people. In addition, the local people have a high interest in and knowledge of food. However, when it comes to modern factors such as capital input, food modernization, and promotion, traditional foods are now being pushed by contemporary commercial restaurant chains due to a lack of capital and modernization efforts.

Seen from the interactive system of producers, intermediaries, and consumers, Jeonju's food still appeals to lovers of traditional Korean cuisine but less so to younger generations whose tastes are becoming more Westernized. Chefs, as producers, are generally older and lack the ability to reflect the preferences of the younger generation on their food. Jeonju City, as an intermediary, concentrates its efforts on discovering the values and recipes of traditional foods. The designation of local restaurants in Jeonju also focuses on traditional dishes like bibimbap, bean sprout soup



with rice, stone pot rice, and *hanjeongsik* (Korean full-course meal). Other intermediaries such as restaurant associations, chef associations, and the Citizens' Network for Jeonju UNESCO Creative City of Gastronomy also focus on traditional food. However, all of them fail to adequately reflect the changing tastes of consumers.

The concept of a local cultural ecosystem seems to contribute to a systematic understanding of how people, money, and efforts influence each other through a system of interactions among various institutions, organizations, producers, intermediaries, and consumers, and how they can facilitate the development of ecosystem as a whole. Thus, from the perspective of the local cultural ecosystem, Jeonju's food is well equipped with institutions, organizations, and producers related to traditional food and is deeply rooted in the lives of Jeonju's people through history and everyday practice. However, the biggest drawback is that other elements and systems do not properly reflect changes in consumer tastes. In short, Jeonju's food lacks the talented people, money, and effort to do so. Therefore, the concept of the local cultural ecosystem can be seen as effectively revealing the limitations of the whole local ecosystem and the directions of efforts for improvement.

*3. The topic of the keynote presentation at the 8th Jinju UNESCO Creative Cities International Forum on July 7, 2023 was "Local Arts and Cultural Ecosystem: Focusing on the Role of the UCCN Program." In this presentation, the organic relationship among cultural producers, distributors, and consumers was mentioned as an important element in establishing the ecosystem. Considering the efforts to revitalize the cultural ecosystem of your own region, please explain what are the strengths and weaknesses of these three factors.*

**Seongjin NAM:** Jinju is a city where intangible cultural heritage has been passed down in various forms such as music, song, dance, and

traditional crafts, including Nongak and Ogwangdae, which have been inscribed on UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity List. This has contributed to Jinju's identity as a traditional cultural city. The transmission system established over the years by the producers of arts and culture has served as a foundation for its position of a cultural city and as a channel for discovering potential talents.

However, despite the abundant productive base in arts and culture, there have been limitations in achieving sustainable engagement in this sector. This is mainly due to the lack of distributors or intermediaries specializing in the distribution of arts and culture, which has prevented the formation of an organic link between production and consumption. As a result, the development of an enthusiastic customer base that can provide continuous support and interest has not been possible.

Therefore, it is necessary to revitalize the cultural ecosystem by strengthening systematic planning and government support to ensure the artistic and cultural activities in daily lives and build a virtuous cycle of creation, distribution, and consumption.

**SOKOMBA:** The strengths of our cultural ecosystem lie in the availability of raw materials, ecological sustainability, and the maintenance of sound traditional practices. This way of life requires less effort because its practices are carried out through the indigenous mother tongue. There exist mutual benefits between the producers, distributors, and consumers. They work based on the utilitarian and commercial values of the production line. They usually work within the community space with a strong commitment to trust. Working with fewer ideas, they are often comfortable with the normal routine and enjoy a less competitive market. They are comfortable with a sense of home and spiritual experience related to the natural environment.

Producers, distributors, and consumers are less innovative due to a lack of knowledge sharing and an inability to adopt new ways of thinking when trying out new products. They are often influenced by a strongly biased belief system and a failure to document their works. The lack of educational support for the local cultural ecosystem hinders interaction.

They devote less time to aesthetic awareness and lack the capacity to invest in extensive research.

YI: I completely agree to the view that an organic relationship between producers, distributors, and consumers is crucial for the establishment of an ecosystem. As already mentioned, the producers in a creative city of gastronomy can be said to be chefs. As much as Jeonju is known as the city of Korea's best traditional cuisine, its commercialized restaurant dishes are famous throughout the country. Since Jeonju cuisine is rooted in history and everyday life (e.g. daily home meals and feast food), the level of its producers is very high. The problem is that the level of their efforts and attempts are not as high in responding to the changing tastes of younger generations. Due to the deep roots of Jeonju cuisine, there is a strong tendency to rely on existing traditions.

Therefore, I think that it is very important to find a way to harmonize the deep roots of Jeonju cuisine with the changing tastes of today's consumers. As the consumption of traditional foods is declining due to this fact, I believe that simply focusing on traditional foods alone will reduce the possibility of their future growth. It is necessary to set new directions and make efforts to repackage and modify traditional foods to meet modern tastes, to add traditionality to modern foods to satisfy traditional and modern tastes together, and to expand the market for traditional foods globally.

However, Jeonju City and food organizations, which have the most influence as intermediaries, do not seem to sufficiently consider these limitations and look for ways to make a breakthrough. In addition, there are few efforts by cuisine researchers and scholars, whose main concern is to discover and give meaning to traditional foods, to suggest new directions to overcome this situation. Due to their small size, Jeonju's food companies with capital face limitations in actively pursuing and exploring new directions from a global perspective. Only a small number of restaurants are trying to franchise their existing menus nationwide.

To summarize, in terms of Jeonju's food sector, producers and distributors of food culture are not keeping up with changing consumer

preferences, and intermediaries such as businesses, the city government, civil society organizations, and scholars provide little help to producers in adapting to consumer changes.

*4. From the perspective of the local cultural ecosystem, it is important for various parts and sectors to organically interact and develop with each other. In your city, how do local governments, organizations, artists, capitalists (businesses), and enjoyers interact with each other? Is there such an interconnected governance, platform, or mechanism? Also, what efforts do you think should be made to improve the future interaction in this direction?*

YI: As a matter of fact, since Jeonju is considered by its residents and its chefs to be Korea's best food city and is also known nationally as such, the collaboration and relationship between the city government, chef organizations, restaurant associations, and residents is established in a highly systematic way. Currently, 96 restaurants have been selected as "100-Year Restaurants" and are supported by the government. The Jeonju city government, residents, and experts have also voluntarily organized the Citizens' Network for Jeonju UNESCO Creative City of Gastronomy to ensure overall cooperation and coordination in the city. In addition, they are carrying out various initiatives such as the Jeonju food archives, Jeonju food genealogy, Jeonju food transmission education, cultivation of masters and prestigious families of Jeonju's local traditional food, training of Korean cuisine professionals, Jeonju Food Festival, and the promotion of the restaurant industry.

This cooperation system is mainly led by the city of Jeonju, meaning that it cannot function properly without the city. For example, even the Citizens' Network, which was established in 2010 to develop Jeonju as a Creative City of Gastronomy, is unable to function properly without the support of the city. This can be attributed to the fact that since many

civil society organizations and professional organizations, although large in number, have been operating under the direction and control of the government over the past 100 years in Korea, they are largely driven by the government's decisions rather than conducting independent activities of their own.

Accordingly, although there are several organizations and networks of civic groups, chefs, capital (businesses), and consumers, their vitality wanes as the government's interest in them diminishes. As a platform organized to connect and coordinate these organizations, the Citizens' Network has recently experienced a slowdown in activities with the decrease of the government's support. While the Jeonju Food Story ([jeonjufoodstory.or.kr](http://jeonjufoodstory.or.kr)) was created to consolidate and stimulate these connections online and provide basic relevant information, its function as a platform for interconnection and coordination is weak.

In order to better facilitate such interactions, close collaboration among the local government, the Citizens' Network, and the Jeonju Food Story is needed. This will lead to promoting professional creativity and activities of chefs and capital (businesses) and maintaining or even enhancing the vitality as the Creative City of Gastronomy by responding more actively to the changing preferences of consumers.

**SOKOMBA:** There is little stakeholder participation and interaction on the local cultural ecosystem, which affects the sustainability of heritage. The interactions are mainly on traditional platforms such as annual cultural festivals, town hall meetings, and individual displays at informal gatherings.

To speed up this development, a more contemporary mechanism should be put in place by the formation of deliberate policies, the development of a sustainability plan, the enactment of preservation and copyright laws, the distribution of incentive packages, and the establishment of a regulatory council to address the existing gaps. This will improve interaction through institutional support, workshop training, research materials, product exhibitions, exchange programs, competitions, excellence awards, and documentation. In addition, platforms for art

spaces should be included in city design and outstanding craft creators should be recognized as part of the city brand and monuments. These measures will improve interaction among creators, distributors, and consumers.

*5. The local cultural ecosystem includes many different networks involving creators, producers, presenters, supporters (government, organizations, cultural foundations, etc.), intermediaries, and participants in the field of arts and culture. While the existing analyses of local culture have been conducted primarily from the perspective of creators, producers, and presenters, the perspective of the local cultural ecosystem also considers supporters, intermediaries, and participants. Among the creators, producers, presenters, supporters, intermediaries, and participants, which group is most vulnerable or relatively weak in your city? What efforts can be made to strengthen this group? What efforts can be made to improve the interaction between creators, producers, presenters, supporters, intermediaries, and participants?*

**NAM:** In terms of producers and creators, Jinju has a workforce that is unmatched by any other city, allowing for a wide range of creative endeavors. This has established its status as a city of arts and culture. However, support and interest from consumers and participants are relatively low compared to other cities. This can be attributed to factors such as imbalances in private artistic activities and the supply chain due to budget allocations biased in favor of government-led events, and deficiencies in a cultural distribution system due to the absence of intermediaries.

Therefore, in a changing cultural environment, the voluntary solidarity of various actors shaping the ecosystem, the establishment of a private-led cooperation system, and cultural collaboration among citizens, artists, and administrators are of paramount importance. In addition, effective support

from the local government is needed to promote the arts and culture sector as a strategic industry and to create a stable and sustainable distribution ecosystem for arts and culture.

**SOKOMBA:** Creators are relatively weak in terms of new innovations, exposure, access to modern tools and equipment, technical education, financial support, productivity, raw materials, and grants.

They need institutional support to provide training to vulnerable groups within the local cultural ecosystem, enhancing their understanding of the virtuous cycle of products. Creators should study the work of others and apply new ideas to their own work. The use of advanced technology is essential to reduce production hours and facilitate the application of skills to the medium, using eco-friendly devices to achieve the best results.

Efforts should be made on capacity building, exchange programs, artist residency programs, and group and joint exhibitions to develop the arts through the intersection of different materials of the local cultural ecosystem. This process will enhance interaction to produce new products for the development of the city.

Another approach is to exchange materials between different local cultural ecosystems to enhance the export of skills and materials. This can promote skill and material interaction among creators of different local cultural ecosystem backgrounds.

To further encourage interaction, it is necessary to establish a craft competition as a part of a craft festival. This platform will deepen interactions within the creative city, with the aim of appreciating skills, creativity, aesthetics, and effective use of time and space in creating works within a specific time frame. Since diversity is endless, continuous collaboration within the local cultural ecosystem of creative cities will sustain interaction for the greater good of all.

**YI:** In the case of traditional foods, the key players are chefs (in the case of cooking, a chef is a creator, producer, and presenter), supporters, intermediaries, and consumers. As mentioned earlier, Jeonju already has high-level chefs who reflect its reputation as a food city. The system of

training and discovering chefs is well established. Jeonju's support is also systematically provided in various aspects of the food industry (traditional food discovery, human resource development, restaurant improvement, value enhancement, and globalization). Intermediaries (civic organizations, chef organizations, restaurant organizations and culinary commentators) are in place and collaborate effectively with each other.

In the case of food consumers, however, a big shift in their preferences has emerged in recent years. In particular, as the tastes of the younger generations are rapidly becoming Westernized in Korea, the interest in and consumption of traditional foods is rapidly decreasing. The biggest weakness of Jeonju as a UNESCO Creative City of Gastronomy lies in that its chefs, supporters, and intermediaries failed to adequately respond to this changing situation. In Jeonju, many efforts are being made to preserve, upgrade, and expand traditional food tastes through various events, book publications, and tastings. However, there is a limit to such efforts to turn back the huge tide of Westernized tastes. Rather, more creative and ambitious efforts are needed, especially on the part of chefs, to adapt to the changing tastes of consumers. In addition, Jeonju's support for these efforts must be further strengthened.

**POOLE:** It is critical for the City of Ballarat to have an in-depth understanding of its creative sector if we are to help it to thrive. In 2019 the City of Ballarat initiated a **Creative Sector Database** to identify and track the creative sector—from larger business through to small sole practitioner.

The database has become an essential tool to understand the needs and requirements of this complex sector. With 28 different sub-sectors identified, and upwards of 70 different creative services tracked, the Creative Sector Database is vital in helping understand the most vulnerable, the most successful and those who are most in need.

The Database has revealed to us that Ballarat is a city of creative micro-enterprises, sole traders and individual practitioners. And the number of those making income from their creative practice is climbing. In the last year alone, we've seen a **6 percent jump in self-employed professional**



**creative practitioners.**<sup>1</sup>

To complement the Creative Sector Database an annual survey, the **Creative Sector Survey**, was introduced to establish benchmarks. We have consistently sought information about the economic security of the sector, including measuring the percentage of creative practitioners who have more than one income stream.

Sixty-two percent of Ballarat's creative sector rely upon multiple streams of income to support their practice. This figure has remained consistent over the past year.

The biggest divide for creative practitioners is income levels along gender lines. In 2022, 45 percent of those who identified as women reported their household earning under \$50,000 per annum. For those who identified as men, less than 20 percent reported income under \$50,000. In 2023, creative women's income had increased, but 50 percent still reported their household earnings as under \$75,000, with 13 percent under \$25,000 per annum.

The annual nature of this Survey has enabled the Creative City team to structure educational programs and tailor activities to respond to the needs of specific groups. It has also helped us identify the need to attract complementary services and related services to the city. Additionally, the application of the Survey and the resulting robust data has allowed us to better communicate the accomplishments and value of the sector to the community.

---

1 . City of Ballarat, *Creative Sector Survey 2022 & 2023*.

*6. One important purpose of the UNESCO Creative Cities is to revitalize the economy. In your city, are there any implemented strategies, capital inputs, resident consumption, tourist consumption, or external sales to promote the revitalization of the creative industries? What elements are working well and why, and what elements are not working well and why? What kind of efforts are needed to comprehensively improve them?*

**POOLE:** Revitalisation of the creative economy is considered a core requirement for building the strength of Ballarat's overall economy.

Creative people who have been priced out of larger cities such as Melbourne are moving to the city. However, once they move their businesses to Ballarat they find that the overall value of their creative work has dropped.

Additionally, tourists and visitors seek creative experiences when they visit the city. But in recent years, the desire to pay a true market rate for these experiences has diminished.

Nevertheless, tourism remains one of the biggest influences on the arts and creative industries. The number of overnight cultural visitors of Ballarat jumped by over 10 percent between 2022 and 2023. In 2023, 27.5 percent of these visitors to Ballarat invested in cultural experiences, including arts, culture, heritage, and indigenous activities. This equated to \$109 million injected into the cultural economy. This figure is up from \$92 million in 2022.<sup>2</sup> For each dollar spent by a tourist in Greater Ballarat, it is estimated that \$0.10 is typically spent on arts and recreations services. This has increased by 20% since 2019.<sup>3</sup>

The City of Ballarat is attempting to directly support this rise in tourist demand for creative experiences. In 2022–2023, small trial programs supporting creative micro-enterprises to develop cultural tourism products were implemented.

The experiment revealed there is a gap between small micro-businesses

---

2. Tourism Research Australia, March 2023.

3. REMPLAN 2022 R2 and 2019 R2.

and robust creative businesses that can provide ongoing tourism products to meet the current level of increasing demand. With such demand currently outstripping supply, this presents the City of Ballarat with a real opportunity to attract complementary organisations and businesses to the city.

**NAM:** Jinju City has found it difficult to fully leverage its various cultural assets and develop them into a cultural industry. Therefore, since 2019, the city has been gradually formulating and implementing plans to support the development of cultural content and the diversification of its distribution channels as a key strategy. As a result, initiatives such as several convergence art performance productions, craft startup idea contests, and biennials have been implemented, providing artists, residents, and tourists with opportunities for business development, appreciation, and enjoyment. In addition, works by individual craftsmen have contributed to economic revitalization by providing opportunities for overseas sales.

However, the perceived level of industrial revitalization in the folk art scene is still low. The reason is that within the limited spatial scope of Jinju, the lack of budget and stage availability leads to the repetition of performances with the same format, leading to a sense of monotony. This has increased the self-doubt of folk artists, dampening their creative motivation and preventing progress toward industrialization. Cultural content requires a certain degree of novelty, so a continuous repetition of the same content may hinder its development. It is necessary to create a creative atmosphere and expand distribution channels to encourage the creation of high quality J(Jinju)-content and artworks.

**YI:** Jeonju attracts over 10 million tourists a year and is one of the most well-known cities in Korea for its food. As a result, tourists flock to Jeonju to explore its rich gastronomic offerings. The consumption of residents and tourists has led to a large number of restaurants in the city. Currently, approximately 20,000 people are employed in about 5,000 restaurants. Over the past decade, the number of restaurants in and around Jeonju Hanok Village, a tourist destination, has increased. However, the city has not

adequately responded to changing food preferences. To address these changes, creative innovations in traditional foods are essential.

While Jeonju has focused on discovering and improving traditional foods, it has not properly formulated a strategy for changing food preferences and effectively addressing them. The expansion of Jeonju's food beyond this region is also lacking. Despite increasing food sales to tourists through its image as a creative city of gastronomy, the reputation of Jeonju's food is gradually weakening compared to other cities.

The consumption of Jeonju's high-end traditional foods is currently limited mainly to locals, making it difficult to improve the image of Jeonju's traditional foods and promote them nationally or globally. Ironically, this is causing high-quality restaurants to close down. In addition, the small size of food establishments makes it difficult to engage in sophisticated or creative food development on their own. Due to a lack of capital, there is also a reluctance to actively expand restaurants by opening branches or franchises.

To overcome these problems, Jeonju's chefs must first actively and creatively develop or improve their food. Second, due to the limited capital of Jeonju's residents, they must attract outside investment and standardize recipes, as well as more actively develop franchises or branches. Third, considering the growing global reputation of K-food, more active efforts should be made to expand overseas. Fourth, Jeonju City must make more active efforts to support and coordinate these initiatives throughout the process. It is also necessary to create specialized restaurant districts to make it easier for tourists to find, and to develop various tourism programmes related to Jeonju cuisine.

*7. In order for the local cultural ecosystem to sustain itself in a healthy manner, it requires not only the involvement of artists and capital, but also the active engagement of various institutions and organizations, the active participation of local residents, the proactive creative education of youth for the future, and the steadfast support of the local government. Are such efforts being made in your city? If there is anything that needs to be improved, please specify what it is and how you would improve it.*

**POOLE:** Building robust ecosystems of creativity and craft in a contemporary Australian city is no easy task. Not only have the frequent waves of economic and social change since colonisation disrupted traditional knowledge and craft practices, but contemporary economics in a Western society have also undercut the ability of craft as a practice to survive.

Ballarat is applying a push-pull strategy to create an environment where craft can thrive. This includes a myriad of different strategies that need to work in harmony. This includes ensuring that future plans for the city incorporate arts and culture into new suburbs and developments. As the city grows and accommodates new people, it is important to ensure that there are provision standards for the building of cultural assets such as workshops, studios, galleries, rehearsal spaces and more for the next generations of city dwellers.

Ballarat is making it easier to reimagine older buildings for creative uses. As a city with heritage buildings that struggle to be activated due to planning and heritage constraints, this can often be complex. The heritage of the city defines a significant portion of its identity, and the challenge is to work with the limitation of heritage rather than against it. Craft practitioners occupy underutilised spaces, negotiated through non-traditional licensing arrangements rather than commercial leases.

The city continues to support micro-enterprises to establish themselves as viable entities. This includes structured business skills, networking, proactive promotion of collaboration, and the establishment of “export

ready” initiatives to help creative businesses expand beyond the regional city.

The city is about to embark upon a proactive program to attract creative industries that complement the mix of makers already in town. It is working unashamedly to attract medium and larger creative industries through incentives and other programs.

And finally, Ballarat celebrates the makers. This is a simple but necessary activity. To help makers and artisans to see themselves as part of something greater, to encourage their collaboration and support of one another, and to build civic and community pride. Centering the narrative of Ballarat as a Creative City of Crafts and Folk Art has been a rallying call which has built upon itself and shows no signs of slowing.

**YI:** Compared to other cities, Jeonju City has continuously been interested in the discovery, commercialization, promotion, and talent development related to its food. In addition, universities are actively conducting research on traditional foods and making efforts to train chefs. On the other hand, the activities of restaurant associations are limited only to partial improvements, and the creative efforts of the Citizens’ Network of Jeonju UNESCO Creative City of Gastronomy are gradually fading. Overall, there is a tendency to settle for the status quo rather than making creative new developments. Reliance on the stable demand from Jeonju’s residents and tourists has led to a lack of risk-taking efforts to creatively explore new opportunities. When the economic situation worsens or the number of tourists decreases, the number of restaurants also decreases. More creative chefs and entrepreneurs are needed to further activate Jeonju cuisine as a creative industry.

**NAM:** Various organizations have played a crucial role in building and maintaining the cultural ecosystem in the Jinju region. The Jinju Culture Research Center has proposed and presented activities, practical policies, and future directions to connect the local cultural ecosystem. The Samgwang Cultural Research Foundation and the Namseong Cultural Foundation have provided financial support for artists to facilitate their

creative activities and have collaborated extensively to promote the cultural rights of citizens. In addition, residents have actively participated in folk art dissemination projects and farmers' music competitions at the *eup*, *myeon*, and *dong* administrative unit levels, thus expanding the opportunities for all citizens to enjoy culture. The provision of art experience programs for children and elementary school students has contributed to the early discovery of creative talents.

Thanks to the support and sponsorship of the local government, local projects such as international exchange activities, the creation of a creative atmosphere, and the cultivation of creative talents have been carried out smoothly to a certain extent. Still, there is room for improvement in the establishment of a "platform" such as a "Creative City Design Center" so that these activities and education can be closely and organically implemented. It is also necessary to establish a cooperation system involving the public and private sectors, industry, and academia, along with stable support from the local government.

*8. Unlike industry, we cannot abandon culture just because it is not profitable. Profit-making will only be sustainable if the creative industries interact in harmony with non-profit, government-supported artistic activities, and the daily creative activities of the local residents. In your city, is there a harmonious balance between for-profit and non-profit creative activities? What efforts should be made to achieve this harmony?*

**NAM:** Profit-generating support activities include biennials, performance production projects, and contests for craft start-up ideas. Non-profit support activities include international initiatives such as the publication of an international journal and the organization of international seminars and forums, as well as local initiatives such as folk art dissemination projects to develop human resources and an art delivery project to enhance cultural enjoyment opportunities for vulnerable groups.

These two types of activities have been harmonized in a complementary relationship, building theoretical foundations by exploring the role of culture and cultural policies, and then applying them to nurture the next generation, promote cultural rights, and provide cultural practices to citizens and tourists. The two activities should be promoted with consistency and continuity in order to achieve harmony, permeate the lives of citizens, and create greater synergy.

In addition, we should endeavor to promote horizontal values such as harmony, cooperation, coexistence and balance in the community as a whole by ensuring that profit-making activities and value-based non-profit activities support and revitalize each other. In doing so, it is crucial to strive for the creation of social values and public good.

**YI:** Food must be able to generate profits in order to expand as a creative industry. Jeonju holds various food festivals and programs to maintain the reputation of its cuisine and promote it to the public. The city also strives to find new recipes from its residents, conduct various cooking classes, research and archive Jeonju's food, operate online food stories, and organize food festivals and competitions.

However, it is unclear how much these efforts contribute to creative profit-making activities. We believe that improving or maintaining the image of Jeonju cuisine can be helpful in generating continued interest. Jeonju must make it more apparent that its programmes and activities around food directly contribute to creative profit-seeking activities. To reiterate, it is necessary to encourage chefs and entrepreneurs to adopt a more entrepreneurial mindset and to creatively develop and sell food products.



*9. Local cultural heritage, tradition, and identity can both significantly influence and be influenced by the creative industries. How is your city's main creative industry linked to local cultural heritage, tradition, and identity? What are strengths and weaknesses of the creative industry? What efforts can your city make to ensure that the elements of the creative industry ecosystem positively influence each other?*

**POOLE:** Ballarat is a small city in the regions of Western Victoria, Australia. With a population of just over 120,000, it is a sizeable regional city by Australian standards. The city is at the gateway to the Goldfields region of Western Victoria and the centre of the gold rush which brought huge waves of new people.

But the same event left environmental degradation and devastation for the indigenous populations, the Wadawurrung people. In the space of a few short years, over 60,000 years of knowledge and environmental management were wiped out and rich cultural traditions lost.

In the mid-1800s, Ballarat was briefly one of the richest places on the planet, leaving the centre of the town with a legacy of colonial style buildings and lush European streetscapes. The wealth brought libraries and galleries, art schools and universities, artisans and makers. The colonisation of craft practice was complete, with new trades from pottery to ironmongery taking over.

Ballarat is a town that has consistently faced existential crises. The experience of colonisation and the gold rush, then a shift from mining to agriculture, and now to manufacturing, education, and healthcare has had massive impacts on the community. The city has developed into an outer commuter suburb to metropolitan Melbourne. The city is again going through yet another cultural shift with a new population influx. Today, this is coupled with environmental issues, climate change, and complex social constructs. Ballarat's creative sector has had to change remarkably to adapt.

Ballarat has strategically identified the importance of protecting and

reinforcing the cultural economy. The theory is to nurture old practices mixed with new ideas so that it might support a new form of engagement for the future. The idea of embedding the creative economy into the operation of the city is about embedding a way to in part future proof the city from economic and social shocks in the future.

YI: Jeonju has long been known as a representative food city in Korea. Its residents take pride in their food's nationwide fame. Therefore, the Jeonju Creative City of Gastronomy is closely related to the city's culinary intangible heritage, food tradition, and identity. Located near mountains, plains, and the sea, Jeonju has a history and identity deeply rooted in the use of fresh ingredients from these various regions to create excellent food. Therefore, citizens are interested not only in Jeonju's food itself but also in its industrialization. As a result, there is widespread agreement on the direction the city should take in developing its food. The significant advantage is that Jeonju City, local stakeholders, and citizens have a common commitment to sharing and improving its cuisine.

On the other hand, a weakness lies in the lack of an entrepreneurial mindset to develop creative foods that meet new tastes and actively expand sales. For a more active virtuous cycle, the creative and challenging entrepreneurial mindset of chefs, as well as the active support and participation of the city government and capital are needed to promote and sell newly improved cuisine both domestically and globally. While there is an abundance of talented chefs, a lack of entrepreneurial mindset and capital has resulted in the perpetuation of a stagnant cycle.

## Crafts and Traditional Industries in Al-Ahsa

The Al-Ahsa population is renowned for its proficiency in crafts and traditional industries, intricately linked to the economic activities and practical necessities of the people. These encompass a diverse range of sectors, including textile production, goldsmithing, the crafting of palm leaf products, wooden creations, blacksmithing, copper and silver work, ornamentation, pottery, and the restoration of clay buildings. Notably, some of these crafts are meticulously fashioned at home, with the active involvement and contribution of women.

The coffee pot, known as dallah, stands out as a prime example. Crafted from copper and used in the preparation of Arabic coffee, the dallah of Al-Ahsa is esteemed across the Gulf countries for its exquisite beauty, design, and overall appearance. Pottery, made from the local clay, addresses practical needs with the creation of household essentials such as air coolers and boilers.





In Al-Ahsa, the crafts and industries extend beyond mere utilitarian purposes, forming an integral part of the region's identity. Mount Al-Qarah, a significant location, has been developed and opened to visitors through a project initiated by the Saudi Commission for Tourism and Antiquities, showcasing the prominence of these traditional practices.

Palm leaf products play a vital role, with fibers and palm branches utilized in construction and agriculture. These materials also find application in crafting pillows and cushions for traditional Arab seating, as well as the unique four-pocket bag (marwa), resembling cones for transporting water pots.

The importance of palm in Al-Ahsa is further emphasized through various traditional industries, such as food mats, date products, gabions, hand fans, food covers, and hand-made airscrews. Al-Sumut, a leafless palm branch cut into sticks, serves as a versatile raw material, yielding essential products like cages for wet, milk, and manz (baby bed).

The craft of albushoot, or bisht, distinguishes Al-Ahsa in the Kingdom and Arab countries. Recognized for its quality and available in diverse sizes and colors, this finely crafted bisht experiences high demand, especially from royalty, ministers, and scholars.

Blacksmithing is another essential craft driven by the agricultural prosperity of Al-Ahsa. Families engaged in blacksmithing produce an array of tools, including pots, trays, sickles, and various accessories vital for multiple fields.

The craft of whistle involves the cleaning and polishing of metal utensils made from copper and silver, restoring them to a shiny, new-like condition. This meticulous process is particularly applied to revered items like the coffee pot (dallah).

Al-Saram, a craftsman farmer, plays a crucial role in harvesting wet grains from the palm tree. Meanwhile, the tradition of baking in Al-Ahsa is deeply rooted, with a reputation for the production of white and red Hasawi bread made from flour and dates. Additionally, regal bread, known as Tawa bread, is crafted on iron sheets, with some women in both cities and villages actively participating in this craft.



**Ibrahim ALSHUBAITH**  
(Focal Point of Al-Ahsa)

## Barcelos, PORTUGAL

### House of Creativity

As a UNESCO Creative City of Crafts and Folk Art since 2017, Barcelos has just over 116,000 inhabitants with a strong connection between local residents and the craftsmanship community that has continued to pave the way for a sustainable creative sector.

The city of Barcelos has always been a creative hub due to its strong links to handicrafts with special emphasis on traditional earthenware and the famous Galo de Barcelos (Barcelos Rooster), which has become a true icon of national tourism. These and other products such as woodwork, ironwork, and embroidery were recognized worldwide by the Barcelos weekly fair, an event that was and still is deeply linked large-scale sale of local handicrafts.



Therefore, the municipality continues to invest in the development of crafts and folk art as its differentiating characteristics as well as in the preservation of traditions as structuring elements of local society and their perpetuation for future generations.

Being a UNESCO Creative City adds merit to the crafts and folk arts tradition developed in the municipality and represents an opportunity for sustainable development. Today, some of the major challenges facing the municipality concern new job opportunities for young people in this field, the resurgence of handicrafts, the production of traditional items like ceramics, woodwork, embroidery, and ironwork, and other areas such as contemporary arts, creative industries, tourism, and commerce.

Today's reality is the reflection of a culture that over the centuries has led to a high degree of specialization, diversity, and creativity of work. This has, in turn, contributed to nurturing activities that became real work organizations and centers for the promotion of arts. There is a specific knowledge and culture of know-how in this territory, embodied particularly in three endemic and certified products (pottery, clay figurines, and Crivo embroidery).

In Barcelos, craftwork is a transversal activity and a true foundation of the territory and its people. It symbolizes a collective way of life that is fundamental in the transgenerational bases of families. It has contributed decisively to the formation of the local social and cultural identity with a focus on the production of clay and embroidery that has marked the course of many generations. From childhood people were driven to the arts and crafts, once as means of subsistence but today as true living heritage and the genesis of the local cultural identity.

As a Creative City of Crafts and Folk Art, Barcelos aspires to revitalize the craftsmanship sector. The House of Creativity is a new infrastructure owned by the Municipality of Barcelos. It is located at Rua Fernando Magalhães, nº 106 in the heart of the city and was recently opened on May 3, 2023. It aims to build bridges with the UNESCO Creative Cities Network in promoting a creative culture in Barcelos and to establish good cooperation between cities that recognize creativity as a prominent factor in the economic, social, cultural, and environmental aspects of urban

development.

The primary goal of this new space is to vitalize the various creative fields and raise awareness about today's importance of building a creative culture in the community. Municipal policies point to the importance of building dynamics with local stakeholders, other Portuguese creative cities, and other world UNESCO cities.

The mission of this space is to:

- Raise awareness in the community about the importance of diversity in cultural expressions, including the most traditional ones;
- Nurture creativity;
- Strengthen the role of creatives; and
- Promote exchange and interculturality.

The House of Creativity will also be:

- A space for creative experiments with traditional arts and crafts;
- A space for promoting and training the craft community; and
- A center for innovation in the digitalization of handicrafts.

It will also be a space to support and guide craft activity and encourage the emergence of new artists. Finally, this new structure for creativity aims, above all, to preserve and pass on knowledge to new generations so that the traditional arts survive extinction in an overly technical future, as experienced by handicrafts such as clay and embroidery as well as woodwork, ironwork, and wickerwork. But more than that, this space is already developing creativity in other fields, such as writing/literature, audiovisual, design, painting, and illustration, with courses designed for the community. At the same time, this space was designed to support existing artisans and bring them knowledge in areas, such as ICT tools, photography, taxes and accounting, and mastery of digital tools, in which they are less comfortable due to the nature of their main activities. This will allow them to adapt their businesses to today's reality in which digital is increasingly a business vehicle.



This is a space for the community and for fostering a culture of creativity in the community!



**Anabela GASPAR**  
(Museu de Olaria)

## Bida, NIGERIA

### The Wood Carvers of Bida

Found in the Shimini and Takoassa communities, Bida wood carvers are also known as “Egbas” or “Gbagba.” They have sustained these traditional practices for generations and are now adopting modern designs. The word Shimini means a skill learned and brought to the community for the benefit of all. In early years, there were no wood carvers in Bida. Shimini wood carvers were discovered during the reign of King Etsu Saba, a descendant of the Tsoede dynasty. He came across wood carvers when traveling to Lade village and later sent two people from Bida to Lade to learn this craft. After learning this skill, they returned from Lade as Shimini carvers in the year 1815 in Bida, later extending to Takoassa. As Egbas (wood carvers) they established carving settlements wherever they could find forests. They became specialized handmade carvers of items such as doors, seaters, musical instruments, canoes, chairs, and pistons, with each work carved using the most suitable wood for each craft.

### The Wooden Twelve-Legged Stool

The wooden twelve-legged stool has cultural significance in the Nupe tradition. The customized handmade stool is intended for nobility and title holders in Nupe society. One example is a stool named as “Esa Sagi,” which is a stool for a woman with high ritual authority. The stools are designed based on the title holder’s status, their roles in society, and at times, based on the choice of the carver. Esa Sagi is also called “Masharuwa” by carvers. It is used when delivering or executing judgement as well as during decision making. The more legs there are, the wider the stool. The stool height varies from 1 to 2 feet with a surface area of about 1 to

1.5 feet radius, depending on the shape of the stool. It was once believed that during the reign of Etsu Saba, the King would address slaves while seated on the twelve-legged stool (Masharuwa) of Sagi Nchiko (i.e. the High Ranking Sagi). The stool was designed with a provision of a cup holder which is referred to as the Masharuwa Sagiko (i.e. the stool of High Ranking Sagi), showing the dignity attached to the personality of these stools. Another Emir, Etsu Saidu, used the Masharuwa stool for bathing. Other Masharuwa are carved with between six to ten legs, for spiritual activities and therapeutic benefits.

To start carving, a suitable tree is first identified, chopped down by axe, and then cut into shape. The carving method is subtraction with the patterns formed in the mind and interpreted on the wood, while the wood is marked with Bina, which is a drawing tool made with guinea corn stick filled with ecingi. Ecingi is a small indigo plant used as a dye to sketch the forms on the wood. Carvers use an axe to chop off a large part of the wood, starting from the middle and spreading out to shape. Three sets of working tools are used, known as Kekeregi, an adze of various sizes used as a trimmer by reducing the thickness of the wood to final shape. In the case of the twelve-legged stool, the legs are inscribed on the wood by dividing the width of the wood into twelve equal parts using ecin (color). The carving is done in a clockwise direction, moving from the first to the last leg position in a circle. It is finished with a smaller adze while designs are marked on the stool according to the desired purpose. The stool is then



polished with shea butter oil to smooth and protect it against wood insect damage.

Some notable design elements on the stools include the traditional knowledge of Nupe motifs which are inscribed on the surface signifying the preservation of folk art and symbols. The design elements are:

- i. Wara – Loose, open, separate
- ii. Eshigwakpa – dog elbow
- iii. Epawa sayi akun gbara dakun - snake skin, unless the lizards colony is troubled
- iv. Māsaka - a loom, weaving frame, wristband, said to act as a charm when boxing
- v. Cikã - uncultivated forest, bush, desert
- vi. Egbàwà - an axe scratch, scrape, or mark wish
- vii. Dzamigbăn - bridle; bit to be weary; paralysis; lifeless; withered; faded and to unravel.

The twelve-legged Nupe traditional stools are used by high chiefs as chairs and are symbols of authority for a major decision making as well as for spiritual life. They are also used as prestige items only for market days or during important meetings. In the spiritual realm they are thrones for higher spiritual activities in the belief of occultism and healing by natural remedies.





**Francis SOKOMBA**  
(Focal Point of Bida)

## Biella, ITALY



### The Main Action Plans of Biella

Biella joined the UNESCO Creative Cities Network in the field of Crafts and Folk Art, at the end of 2019. “Arts and crafts” are an essential part of Biella’s traditional heritage, which is inextricably linked to the wool textile production. During the application process, Biella and its territory have become increasingly aware of the richness of its resources. Becoming a UNESCO Creative City has been a driver for the transformation of Biella from a district of clusters to a creative and cultural ecosystem, especially because it allows to find scenarios and unprecedented opportunities for growth and collaboration, starting from its own cultural field of reference.

The main action plans of Biella Creative City are: **Weave Memory**, to strengthen the creation, production, distribution and dissemination of cultural activities, goods and services: starting from the extraordinary Biella’s intangible and tangible heritage (i.e. archives of Made in Italy brands), the realization of a double “high-tech space/portal” in the city dedicated to information on wool and fashion design; **Weave Talent**, to develop hubs of creativity and innovation and broaden opportunities for creators and professionals in the cultural sector: scholarships for university students from network cities and courses dedicated to sustainable design; **Weave Territory**, to fully integrate culture and creativity into local development strategies and plans: recovery of the architectural heritage in urban settings (abandoned buildings in the city center), improved accessibility and valorization of human capital (advanced training courses in hospitality and territorial marketing); **Weave Relations**, Biella is going to provide Keetmanshoop, the leading center of the wool-producing region

of Namibia, with training (workshops in Biella for Namibian operators) and a mentorship for its future application in field of crafts and folk art; **Weave Future**, to organize a biennial forum dedicated to sustainability, urban development, textile production processes and the impact of the final products on health. Implementation of R&D oriented towards the UN SDGs; and **Weave Art&Enterprise**, to host worldwide creative talents and artists, participating in and conducting workshops, meetings and forums with businesses, stakeholders and students.

During 2023, the 39th World Federation of Master Tailors Congress was held in Biella, hosting global tailoring excellence with 270 worldwide master tailors. The event, held from July 31 to August 5, 2023, featured remarkable fashion parades in the historic city center, where the master tailors received prestigious awards (Golden Thimble, Golden Chalk and Golden Scissor). This international gathering, supported by institutional partners like Federmoda, Confartigianato, UIB, and the Piedmont Region, involved key local textile companies offering guided tours and exhibitions. Tailoring, as a pillar of the textile industry, fosters a vital connection between customers and textile culture. With the participation of high-level professionals from 34 countries, the Congress focused on sustainability and offered first-hand experiences of Biella's textile excellence.



The 2023 edition of the Biella Creative Cities Forum, with the theme “Values and Culture of Water and Environment,” is dedicated to sustainable creativity, a key concept that integrates three strong and relevant trends in the Biella district on a global scale in an innovative and distinctive way: Industry, crafts, local activities; Environment; and Alpine City (operational network with the Alpine Convention).

Two days of discussion on environment, soil protection, climate change, water culture and landscape design also meant dealing with the complexity of the “water” element, addressing the issue of sustainability in ecological-environmental, economic, and ethical terms.



The Forum was attended by representatives of industry, universities, associations, schools, and architects. Special guests included Nathalie Morelle (Permanent Secretariat of the Alpine Convention) and Georg Kaser (Professor of Climate and Cryosphere Research and Member of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change). A special mention goes to Giovanni Soldini, Ambassador for the Safeguard of the Oceans. As a member of the Alpine Cities Network, Biella had the honor of welcoming Reinhold Messner, a renowned mountaineer whose legacy is closely tied to sustainability and respect for the environment.

There was a significant participation from local businesses committed to green and sustainable production conversion, and they showcased the richness of creativity in Biella. The panel dedicated to Creative Cities was introduced by the Italian Ministry of Environment and Energy and



proved to be valuable and inspiring for the Creative Cities present: Carrara, Fabriano, Como, Pesaro, and Paducah. The recordings are now available on the YouTube channel of the city of Biella.

The Forum was accompanied by various surrounding initiatives, including a fashion show featuring a Dubai-based tailor, the launch of a school contest with awards scheduled for 2024, the exhibition of images of Keetmanshoop (Namibia), and other events throughout the city.



**Renato LAVARINI**  
(Focal Point of Biella)

## Gabrovo, BULGARIA

### International Festival of Humour and Satire



Gabrovo has the reputation of being the international Capital of Humour. The town created this unique image more than a century ago and has convincingly gained recognition over the years, particularly through culture and arts. The International Festival of Humour and Satire is the most emblematic event of Gabrovo, bringing together various kinds of arts and forms of expression. The Festival is a synthesis of music, dance, theater, vocal, visual and contemporary arts. Every year in May, the city showcases a colorful palette of events focused on humour—one of the most striking features of Gabrovo and its people, which determines the specifics of the events, forms its identity, and provides its added value, simply advertising the Gabrovo brand.

**“Words cannot describe it, the eyes must see it and the heart must feel it…….”**

The most notable event within the festival is the CARNIVAL. The creative interpretation of our town’s significant carnival tradition and the Carnival

movement, through meaningful upgrading and enrichment with new ideas and partnerships each year, provides a stable and strong relationship with artists and participants, while also attracting an audience open to experiments and novelties.

During the carnival procession—the most massive and attractive event, the audience outnumbered more than 30,000 spectators. This is more than a half of Gabrovo's total population. Participants range in age from 1 to 101, giving us the right to say that there is hardly any family in the town that does not take part in the parade, either as a participant or as a spectator. The organization of the Carnival involves all the schools and kindergartens in the city, community centers, the NGO sector, and other institutions. Nothing unites the town more than its most popular event.

The Carnival in Gabrovo has a strategic mission to promote and confirm the public image of the city as a place of fun and laughter, providing a unique opportunity for everyone to directly participate in the events, to express themselves, to look inside themselves, and to satire the social and political situation in which we all live at this particular moment. The Carnival message, aimed at the participants and spectators, is and has always been to live through it, becoming its co-creator.

On the one hand, this allows the entire community to participate in an ongoing process of self-identification and, on the other hand, it creates an interrelationship of “town-personality” that brings a sense of community. The Festival and the Carnival, in particular, enable everyone to reveal their character and their own position, while presenting the city and confirming its identity, a contemporary pattern that corresponds to the European values.

**Velimira Hristova**  
(Focal Point of Gabrovo)

**Welcome to Carnival Gabrovo – 18 May 2024**

Web - <https://carnival.gabrovo.bg/en/home/>

Social Media - <https://www.facebook.com/Carnival.Gabrovo/>

## Gimhae, KOREA

### Gimhae Promotes UNESCO Creative Assets through the *Gayageum*: World National Anthems and City Symbolic Songs Arranged into *Gayageum* Pieces as Gifts

Gimhae, which became a member of the UNESCO Creative Cities Network of Crafts and Folk Art in 2021, conducted a project in December 2023 to disseminate *gayageum* music, promoting the excellence of the city's crafts and folk art creative assets and expressing the desire for active network cooperation with other cities around the world.



The project aimed to spread the traditional culture and excellence of the *gayageum* through the *gayageum* music performed by Gimhae's representative creative asset, the Gimhae Municipal Gayageum Orchestra (director: Hwang Jeong-suk), and to create opportunities for active

international networking with UNESCO Creative Cities.

According to the *Samguk Sagi* (Historical Record of the Three Kingdoms), the oldest existing history book in Korea, the *gayageum*, also known as the *gayago*, was created by King Gasil of the Gaya Kingdom, an ancient kingdom of Gimhae. A unique traditional Korean stringed instrument, the *gayageum* is a representative creative asset of Gimhae, which is branded as the “Royal Capital of Gaya, Gimhae.”

The city established the Gimhae Municipal Gayageum Orchestra in 1998 to preserve the history and authenticity of the *gayageum*, to promote its succession and dissemination, and contribute to the development of arts and culture. Gimhae stands out among local governments by operating a *gayageum* orchestra composed exclusively of this instrument. The Municipal Gayageum Orchestra performs about 30 times a year, presenting traditional music imbued with the spirit of our ancestors and contemporary creative music, fulfilling its role as a cultural ambassador.



Since July 2023, the city has been reaching out to both domestic and international UNESCO Creative Cities as well as sister/friendship cities, sharing *gayageum* performance promotional videos, promotional materials of crafts and folk art creative assets, and information about the *gayageum* performance dissemination project.

Several cities sent musical scores from various genres, including national anthems and songs symbolizing cities, with the wish to have them performed by the *gayageum*. After careful consideration, a total of six cities were selected. The selected cities include Bida in Nigeria, a creative city of crafts and folk art, as well as Gimhae's sister cities of Biên Hòa in Vietnam, Wuxi in China, Lakewood in the USA, and Munakata in Japan, as well as the Embassy of India.

Gimhae City arranged and recorded these pieces on the *gayageum*, preserving the original feeling and intentions of the composers. In addition, to convey the meaning of this project, the city produced a video explaining the process, introducing creative assets, and expressing the hope for active network exchanges in various fields. This video, along with the *gayageum* pieces, shared with domestic and international creative cities.

Through this project, Gimhae expects its excellent creative assets to be shared and enjoyed by all creative cities.

Woo-in JANG  
(Focal Point of Gimhae)

## Hoi An, VIETNAM

### HOI AN—A CREATIVE CITY OF CRAFTS AND FOLK ART

Hoi An Ancient Town, located in Central Vietnam, was recognized by UNESCO as a World Cultural Heritage Site in 1999. In 2023, it became an official member of the UNESCO Creative Cities Network in the field of crafts and folk art.

Hoi An is a natural wonderland with rivers, lakes, beaches, islands, fields, and mangrove forests. Its geographical location is considered a “convergence of water” because of the confluence of rivers before they flow into the sea. This played a role in the city’s history as a bustling international trading port in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Trade and cultural acculturation with many different countries led to the establishment of residential communities that have preserved tangible and intangible heritages of history, architecture, culture, religious activities, and crafts. This has contributed to the distinct “Hoi An personality” of the people here.

Throughout the city’s development, the people of Hoi An have consistently displayed creativity in labor and production based on natural and social conditions. This has contributed to the formation of more than





50 crafts and craft villages, including crafts such as painting and bamboo craft, lantern-making, and garment-making, and villages like Kim Bong Carpentry Village, Thanh Ha Pottery Village, Tra Que Vegetable Village, and Cam Thanh Village. Meticulously crafted by the hands of talented and creative artisans and craftsmen, Hoi An's craft products have been transported by merchant ships to locations all over the world, serving the community's livelihoods and bring the city fame.

After many hours of hard work, the residents of Hoi An performed repartee





chants, Bai Choi songs, and folk songs to entertain, exchange, foster affection, and enrich their cultural and spiritual lives. The Bai Choi art in Hoi An has significantly contributed to UNESCO's recognition of the city as an Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

Crafts and folk art are the core of Hoi An's events and festivals with many large and small programs and activities throughout the year, such as the Hoi An Lantern Festival, the Hoi An Traditional Occupations' Beauty, the Beach Festival, the International Choir Competition, the International Cuisine Festival, and the International Silk and Brocade Festival. International cultural exchange festivals also feature craft demonstrations, craft product displays, and traditional art performances. They include the Hoi An-Japan Cultural Exchange in Hoi An and international cultural exchanges such as the Hoi An Lantern Festival in Germany (Wenigerode), France (Paris), Korea, Italy, Hungary, Japan. These events attract both locals and tourists. The residents of Hoi An also transform crafts and folk art into cultural products to enhance tourism activities and provide visitors with a variety of new experiences.

The city currently has 658 small businesses and 1,710 household businesses, with over 4,000 employees engaged in crafts and folk art. This fact attracts many creators, artists, artisans, and experts in many creative fields to work, settle, and contribute to the formation of talented and enthusiastic creative communities as well as unique and appealing creative spaces in Hoi An.



Becoming a member of the UNESCO Creative Cities Network is crucial for Hoi An to enhance its status and create a new image. It is more than just a title; it is a goal that requires efforts to implement initiatives, fulfill commitments, and provide values and benefits to the community. In addition to continuing activities to preserve and develop crafts and folk art, Hoi An will create conditions to promote creativity in other fields. The city aspires to connect and interact with members both inside and outside the Network, while also strengthening future activities to expand the Network.

**Hoi An Creative Team**

## Kanazawa, JAPAN

## The Utatsuyama Artist-in-Residence Program in Kanazawa

Ms. Siripohn Sansirikul is a dyeing artist who took part in the artist-in-residence program in Kanazawa in 2022. In her work for the Koyori Project, she visited Utatsuyama Kogei Kobo with the Thai minister and other delegates from the Lanna Culture and Crafts Association.

It was not long before she decided to apply for the artist-in-residence program which she found in a promotional leaflet. Chiangdao Blue is the dye studio she had established in Chiang Mai, Thailand. The studio's concept is "from seed to dye" and she did not hesitate to apply to the program to acquire different techniques from artisans in Japan.

Kanazawa became a member of the UNESCO Creative Cities Network in the field of crafts and folk art in 2009. Since then, an artist exchange program has been implemented to strengthen relations among UCCN members. Participants spent most of their time at Utatsuyama Kogei Kobo.

This facility is divided into five studios: ceramics, *urushi* (lacquer) work, dyeing, metalwork, and glass. Ms. Siripohn Sansirikul learned Japanese indigo dyeing at the dye studio of Utatsuyama Kogei Kobo. During her three-month stay, she visited other studios several times to learn batik and *kakishibu* dyeing in addition to indigo dyeing.

Fermentation is the key to natural dyeing including indigo and *kakishibu*. As Kanazawa is a "rainy city," the process depended on the temperature. There were some delays in the process due to the weather, but she completed her artworks before she left Japan in November 2022.

After returning to Chiangdao from Kanazawa, she has been working to grow the indigo plant "Hom" under the concept of "from seed to dye" as previously mentioned. She believes that providing workshops for children and the elderly will lead to sustainable creations.

As the focal point of Kanazawa, we are looking forward to seeing how she will adapt her experiences here to her studio in Thailand.



Yoko Kawa  
(Focal Point of Kanazawa)

# Kütahya, TÜRKİYE

## Kütahya from the Perspective of Creative Industries

Kütahya takes pride in being the inaugural city in Türkiye officially recognized by the UNESCO Secretariat in 2017 for its excellence in Crafts and Folk Arts, and steadfastly continues its engagement within the UNESCO network. The city’s cultural tapestry is woven with the threads of traditional crafts and arts, forming an integral part of Kütahya’s rich cultural heritage.

### City and Art Magazine: *Çivit*

The UNESCO Creative Cities Network has significantly enriched our city, elevating Kütahya’s profile on both national and international fronts. As a testament to our city’s standing within this esteemed network, we proudly present the bilingual magazine *Çivit*. This publication serves as a crowning achievement, dedicated to showcasing our local arts and crafts as well as the talented craftsmen behind these artistic endeavors.



## Manises Ceramics Festival 2023

Each July, Manises, renowned for its ceramics in Spain, becomes a global convergence point for artists, craftsmen, and organizational representatives. The invitation extended to Kütahya, the capital of Çini, was a significant acknowledgment leading to our municipality's active participation in the “Festa de la Ceramica” event this year. Following our virtual presence in 2021 due to the pandemic, a delegation from Kütahya physically attended this year's event.

As a UNESCO City of Crafts and Folk Art, Kütahya proudly showcased its tile and ceramic works, featuring the talents of local artists on the international stage. Our artists set up a stand, fostering meaningful intercultural exchanges within the vibrant atmosphere of the festival. Dr. Canan Güneş, representing our province from Dumlupınar University, secured the first prize in the wheel competition.

This active engagement allowed us to share knowledge and experiences with the artistic community in Manises, elevating the representation of our city to new heights on the international platform.





## UNESCO Creative City Kütahya in Gabrovo

The 18th “International Fair of Traditional Crafts,” which is an annual event held at the Etar Regional Ethnographic Open Air Museum in Gabrovo, Bulgaria, extended an invitation to our city to participate in this year’s edition from August 31 to September 4. A delegation from our municipality actively participated in the fair, with the primary objectives of fostering sister city relations, showcasing the intricate artistry of Kütahya’s silver processing on the international stage, and promoting our city within the UNESCO Creative Cities Network.

During the event, we introduced Kütahya’s local clothes, attracting great interest from the visitors. Sakin Yaman, a silver embroidery artist representing the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Türkiye, achieved notable success by securing the third prize in the artisan competition held during the fair. His specially designed work, “Art Talisman,” brought from Kütahya to Gabrovo, along with the piece crafted during the competition, is now permanently exhibited at the Etar Open Air Museum.

Furthermore, the exquisite silver jewelry set created by Ümmühan Oruç, the silver processing artist representing our city in Gabrovo, is also on permanent display at the Etar Open Air Museum. These artistic achievements not only enhance the global recognition of Kütahya's cultural heritage but also contribute to the lasting cultural exchange between our city and Gabrovo.





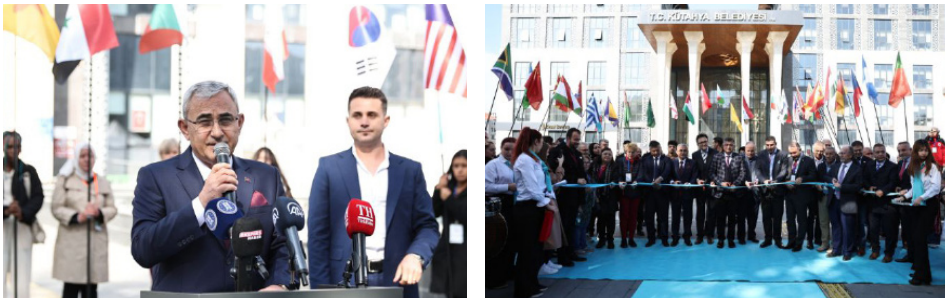
## The Unifying Power of Art

### *Kütahya Creative Cultural Industries Summit*

The “Creative Cultural Industries Summit,” meticulously hosted by Kütahya Municipality and expertly coordinated by the Directorate of Etude Project, unfolded in Kütahya from October 19 to 22, 2023. The grand opening ceremony featured the display of country flags representing participating cities and our sister cities, symbolizing the global collaboration embraced by the event. Following the ceremonious ribbon-cutting, an array of engaging activities, including closed meetings, panel sessions, a wheel-turning competition, Zeybek Art performances, Raku firing, gastronomy feasts, and a digital exhibition, enriched the event’s scope.

Our city played host to distinguished guests, including artists, artisans, and city representatives from over 40 cities spanning more than 20 countries worldwide. Additionally, esteemed artists, artisans, representatives, and mayors from 18 cities within Türkiye graced the event. Panel sessions featured seasoned speakers who shared insights and made presentations on the arts that form the bedrock of Kütahya’s creative cultural industries.

This summit served as a vibrant platform for international exchange, fostering collaboration and celebrating the diverse cultural expressions that constitute the foundation of Kütahya’s artistic heritage. As part of the event, art lovers were impressed by the unveiling of an exclusive collection of masterpieces by UNESCO Living Human Treasure tile artists Mehmet





Gürsoy and Hamza Üstünkaya along with exceptional contributions by tile artists İsmail Yiğit and İbrahim Kocaoğlu of Alopışalı.

The “Ceramic Walk,” a gift distribution procession generously sponsored by Keramika, Tulu Porcelain, Aydın Handicrafts, and Hermes Porcelain companies, commenced in front of the Kütahya Municipality building. The procession continued through Zafer Square, concluding at the municipality building. Leading the march was a dedicated team carrying the flags of participating countries and our sister cities, along with representatives of the protocol. The march unfolded as an extraordinary display with gifts distributed graciously to the citizens of Kütahya.



On the last day of the summit, participants entered the historical and artistic ambience of Germiyan Street, a haven where the cultural heritage of our city is meticulously preserved and where numerous artists and craftspeople live and work. The visit extended to the Tile Museum, providing an insightful journey through the narrative of tile art from its historical roots to the present day. A notable highlight was the visit to the Elhamra Tile Workshop, where the enduring wood furnaces, crafted by Ali Osman Kerkük and still in operation, offered a captivating glimpse into the city's rich history. This visit was seamlessly integrated into a curated cultural tour.

Cherished and handed down through generations, the traditional arts and crafts of Kütahya, including tiles, needlepoint, silver embroidery, carpet and rug weaving, embroidery, wood carving, cloth doll-making, and alaturka diamond processing, form the vibrant tapestry of the city's creative cultural industries.



**Hazal BABUR**

(Project Manager / Etude Project Management,  
Kütahya Municipality)

**Hümeyra TEMEL DÜVER**

(Project Manager / Etude Project Management,  
Kütahya Municipality)

## Manises, Creative City of Ceramics

Manises is a Mediterranean town located in the metropolitan area of Valencia (Spain). It is located on the right bank of the Turia River and belongs to the region of L'Horta Sud. Since November 8, 2021, Manises is part of the UNESCO Creative Cities Network in the field of crafts and folk art, for its historic ceramics, which date back to the fourteenth century. Currently, the city organizes numerous events throughout the year which revolve around the world of ceramics.

Among the international activities, the **Manises International Ceramics Biennial** stands out, one of the most important contemporary ceramics competitions in Europe, which will hold its 16th edition in the spring of 2024. It has a wide worldwide projection and artists from many countries have participated in the last editions.

This year the **Manises International Ceramics Film Festival** was created, which aims to provide an overview of current cinema whose theme focuses on ceramics from any point of view: as a material, as a





craft or industrial tradition, whether present or historical, as an artistic production or simply as a starting point to let the imagination fly. The next edition will be held in the spring of 2024, together with the Manises International Ceramics Biennial.

For more than ten years, the Ceramology Association has been carrying out regular archaeological excavations, which have boosted the **Archaeological Volunteer Camp** focused on young people and university students. The uninterrupted production of ceramics in Manises since the fourteenth century has led to the preservation of numerous archaeological relics of this activity. Most of the testimonies are located in the Obradors neighborhood. This is an archaeological area where ceramic evidence dating back more than seven centuries can be found. In the subsoil of this area of the municipality you can read the history of the most important medieval ceramic production center in Europe.

Manises also organizes festive and popular activities such as the **Ceramics Parade**, which has been held annually for more than a century. The parade travels through the main streets of the city in floats while giving the public ceramic objects made by local artisans.

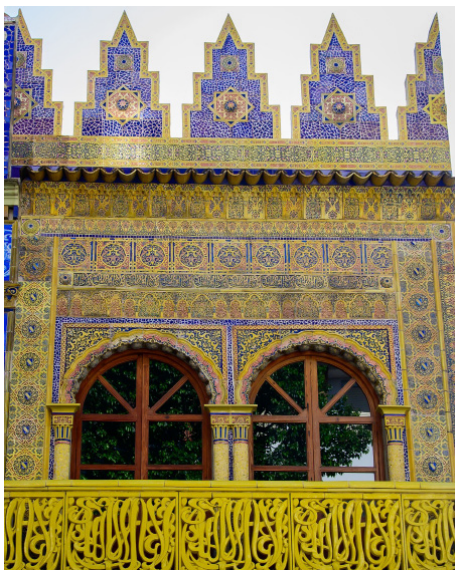
The **Ceramics Festival** has also been held since 1972. During these days, artisans and artists turn the city into an amazing ceramic scene and make demonstrations in the streets where visitors can participate by making clay pieces or buying those already exhibited. Since the city was nominated as a UNESCO Creative City, many other creative cities, such as

Barcelos (Portugal), Paducah (United States of America), Madaba (Jordan), and Kütahya (Türkiye), have participated with Manises, contributing to a global and international approach to the event.

Moreover, there are several ceramic exhibitions that can be visited in Manises every year. Currently, in commemoration of the second anniversary as a UNESCO Creative City, there are two exhibitions that can be visited until the end of January 2024.

On the one hand, the National Association of Ceramic Professionals (ANPEC) is exhibiting “**Joguets en ceràmica**” (Toys in ceramics). It is an interpretation of games, toys and emblematic characters through exclusive ceramic pieces.

On the other hand, the Manises locality has invited the creative city of Barcelos (Portugal) to exhibit a representation of its most characteristic ceramics: “**O mundo fantástico do Figurado de barro de Barcelos**” (The fantastic world of Barcelos clay figurines). This exhibition presents handcrafted figurines that reflect the oral traditions, the collective memory and the cultural heritage of the inhabitants of this Portuguese town.



Manises was the first city in Spain to receive the UNESCO Creative City designation in the field of crafts and folk art. And it continues to be **the only one**, even after the latest nominations. Positioning ceramic creativity as a driver of sustainable urban development, social inclusion and cultural influence becomes an essential objective for this Valencian municipality.

Alba GUZMAN and David RRIETO  
(Focal Points of Manises)





## Celebrating Ten Years as a UCCN Member

Paducah spent 2023 celebrating its 10-year anniversary as a member of the UNESCO Creative Cities Network. Over the past 12 months, Paducah has focused on acknowledging projects and partnerships as well as growing new collaborations within the Creative Cities of Crafts & Folk Art and the other clusters. One priority has been to spend more time promoting the UCCN to local residents. A marketing campaign was created using local print media, television, and social media to educate residents on the Creative Cities and Paducah's role within the UCCN. The Paducah Creative City team created an award-winning campaign called #MyPaducah, which encouraged residents to share photos of themselves enjoying the city. The Paducah Creative City team spoke to civic groups throughout the year. The ownership of Paducah Creative City by arts and culture groups was most evident during the month of July, when the Rotary Club of Paducah speakers all presented on their experiences with UCCN, and this Focal had nothing to do with planning the programming!

In April, Sandro Tiberi, master papermaker from Fabriano (Italy), Creative City of Crafts and Folk Art, visited Paducah as a contestant in Fantastic Fibers, hosted by the Yeiser Art Center. Sandro had a busy schedule visiting the American Quilter's Society QuiltWeek, speaking, visiting schools, attending receptions, and meeting artists. One aspect of the visit that was a first for Paducah was that Sandro stayed at the home of Mary Hammond, focal point of Paducah.

Fiber artist Susan Spencer spent time with Sandro explaining how she has grown her traditional paper pattern making company, Seamly Systems, into a software system that equips fashion designers with digital design tools. She was able to do this through SPROCKET Paducah, a digital economic development organization dedicated to nurturing tech-enabled

businesses, fostering collaboration, and providing essential resources for success. Susan also collaborated with engineering students at the University of Kentucky College of Engineering Paducah Campus to develop 3D software. Sandro Tiberi has been invited to jury the April 2024 Fantastic Fibers competition in Paducah.

Another highlight of the 10th anniversary celebration was a direct result of the 2022 Jinju World Folk Arts Biennale. The Wheelhouse Rousters, who perform traditional Southern American music, represented Paducah in the cultural performances. Many friendships were made with musicians and dancers from Sukhothai, Ouagadougou, Baguio City, Bida, and Ambon. A special friendship quickly formed between the musicians from Paducah and Ambon (Indonesia), Creative City of Music. The six musicians in Kaihulu and Ambon Focal Point Ronny Loppies traveled 10,000 miles each way to visit Paducah and participate in the Lower Town Arts & Music Festival. Lower Town is an arts district located in an area listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Kaihulu and the Wheelhouse Rousters collaborated on several performances, both scheduled and impromptu in restaurants, on television, and on the street. The visit was enriching to all. Ronny Loppies also stayed at the home of Paducah Focal Point Mary Hammond. This personal experience enhances the relationship and exchange of knowledge.

Another exchange occurred after Paducah was invited to participate in the 2022 Manises Ceramics Festival. Manises (Spain) is a Creative City of Crafts and Folk Art. Jamie Romero, a Manises ceramist and amateur chef visited Paducah. He worked with the Culinary Class at the West Kentucky Community & Technical College to prepare a traditional Spanish meal. He also visited the high school culinary class and the Paducah School of Art & Design. Jamie and local Ceramist Mitch Kimball invited the community to visit while they fired the plates, goblets, and serving dishes used during a special fundraising meal in collaboration with renowned Paducah Chef Sara Bradley of the Freight House restaurant. Sara had just participated in the Bravo television network's *Top Chef: World All Stars*.

Months later, a delegation of artists and businesspeople from Paducah traveled to Manises to participate in the 2023 Ceramics Festival. The group,

including Liz Hammonds from Paducah Creative City, also traveled to Fabriano to visit Sandro Tiberi to learn about traditional papermaking. This delegation built new relationships with creatives in Manises and Fabriano and returned to Paducah with inspiration to further the mission of the UCCN at home.



Mary HAMMOND  
(Focal Point of Paducah)

## Pasto, COLOMBIA

### Pasto, Creative City of the World

The cultural background of the South, recognized in the artistic tradition that identifies Pasto, positions the city once again in the national and international context by being designated in 2021 by UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) as a Creative City in the field of crafts and folk art.

Diverse craftsmanship transforms and combines natural resources. The handicrafts typical of this southern land are works that become unique pieces of great value. They involve a holistic process of elaboration, from the inspiration to the finished piece by combining not only the artisan's feelings but also the learning of ancestral techniques that allow the preservation of legacy.



## Creative Lines Crafts

- Wood fretwork
- Lutheria
- Technique in “Tamo” veneer
- Metalwork
- Jewelry
- Leatherwork
- Paper gluing (Carnival)
- Grass Varnish
- Leather embossing
- Cabinetmaking
- Ceramics
- Weaving
- Woodturning
- Wood carving
- Pottery
- Jewelry



## Popular Arts



### ***Carnival of Blacks and Whites of Pasto***

The Carnival of Blacks and Whites of Pasto is the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, where the imagination of artisans, artists, dancers, theater performers, sculptors, painters, managers, and entire families converge, making this popular festival a tangible manifestation of Pasto's creativity. It transcends the craft technique to transform the raw material Mopa-Mopa into wonderful unique works. This is a magical process in which artisans design and apply their technique to decorate wooden pieces with fine sheets of color.



### ***Strengthening the Centro Empresarial Escuela de Artes y Oficios as a Center for Creative Entrepreneurship***

Located in the heart of Pasto, the Centro Empresarial Escuela de Artes y Oficios seeks to consolidate its position as an epicenter of creative entrepreneurship. Despite the abundant craft and cultural richness that defines the municipality, it has faced increasing threats over time due to the lack of platforms that facilitate the transfer of knowledge to new generations.

Therefore, it is imperative to create these platforms as a vital tool for the preservation of our traditions.

Hence, it is important to promote training spaces as places for the transmission of knowledge and opportunities for entrepreneurship with a focus on business education.

Encouraging entrepreneurs to think creatively and develop unique solutions to current challenges is aligned with the action plan “Pasto Ciudad Creativa en Artesanía y Artes Populares 2021-2025,” in which the strengthening of the “Centro Empresarial Escuela de Artes y Oficios” is a cornerstone to transfer technical knowledge to new generations and provide them with entrepreneurial skills. Thus, the cultural wealth of the municipality becomes a sustainable source of income and transformation.

## **Creative Cultural Agenda**

The great variety of cultural and artistic manifestations make Pasto a city with a lively cultural offering that fuses traditions and knowledge in different manifestations and activates economic dynamics as an axis of local development.

The cultural events held in Pasto are as follows:

- Onomastic San Juan de Pasto–June 2023
- Carnival Square
- Carnival of Blacks and Whites of Pasto
- Onomastic San Juan de Pasto
- Holy Week
- International Theater Festival
- Peasant Music Festival
- International Film Festival of Pasto FICPA
- Galeras Rock
- Pasto Jazz World Music
- San Juan de Pasto Art Salon
- International Music Trios Competition

- International Comic Convention
- Mercartesano
- Cultural Heritage Week
- Artisan Carnival
- Art, Crafts and Design Fair

Pasto, a city of artisans, finds its strength in the innate talent of its artists, culture, managers and creators, whose value has made it possible to receive this designation.

It is and will be everyone's commitment to give it sustainability through good governance practices and cooperation among the actors that enhance creativity as raw material, heritage of our ancestors.

**Guisella Checa CORAL**  
(Focal Point of Pasto)



## Weifang, CHINA

### Weifang International Kite Festival



Known throughout the world for its kites, Weifang is proud of its profound kite culture and long history. According to historical records, more than 2,400 years ago, Lu Ban (魯班), the father of Chinese carpentry, made the first wooden kite and successfully flew it in the Lu Hill of Weifang. This marked the beginning of the local popularization of kites.



As one of the earliest comprehensive international-level events, the Weifang International Kite Festival was founded in April 1984, jointly sponsored by the State General Administration of Sport, the International Kite Federation, and Weifang City People's Government. Successfully held for 40 years, the kite festival begins on the third Saturday of every April.



On April 1, 1988, during the Fifth Weifang International Kite Festival, Weifang City was designated as the “World Kite Capital” by the kite associations of various countries. The International Kite Federation was established and located in Weifang with the approval of the State Council of China on April 1, 1989. The Federation started with 16 original members and today has 67 member states.

As a comprehensive and international event well-known at home and abroad, the Weifang International Kite Festival is not only a major political, economic, and cultural event but also a vital window to showcase the city's development achievements and foster the regional economy, international exchange, and cooperation. In keeping pace with the trend of development and innovation in recent years, the Festival has evolved into a cultural brand with distinctive characteristics and extensive influence in China.



Taking the lead in creating the activity model of “kite heading, platform building, business running,” the Weifang International Kite Festival has held a flying show with 10,000 kites, including the World Kite Championship, the National Sports Kite and the Luminous Kite Invitational Competition, and so on. As the most distinctive, representative, and influential event in Weifang, it is also a grand festival for its residents. With the festival’s rising fame, visitors from all over the world come to Weifang. The number of participants for the opening ceremony peaked at 200,000, including kite practitioners and fans from 71 countries and regions who traveled thousands of miles to participate in the Weifang International Kite Festival.

**Pingping TAN**  
(Weifang City of Crafts and  
Folk Art Promotion Office)

## The 1st Symposium on Tribal Crafts and Folk Art (February 4, 2023, Nan in Thailand)

The Symposium on Tribal Crafts and Folk Art is the first international event to be initiated by the city of Nan through joint collaboration by Designated Areas for Sustainable Tourism Administration (DASTA) Area 6 (Nan) and Area 4 (Sukhothai). This symposium was supported by the Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau (TCEB) to assist onsite speakers and participants by hiring a venue to enhance the mobility of representatives from the UCCN. The Faculty of Architecture, Art and Design of Naresuan University, led by Associate Professor Witiya Pittungnapoo, who is a co-focal point of the Sukhothai UCCN for Crafts and Folk Art and helped to connect the UCCN members, contributed to this international symposium.



This symposium is timely and was inspired by the MONDIACULT Declaration of 2022 to promote cultural diversity by encouraging Nan and Sukhothai creative cities to promote the tribal crafts and folk art. This effort allowed members of the UCCN from overseas and creative cities in Thailand to share their cultural identity and good practices in driving the city towards multicultural and inclusive societies for achieving sustainable development. Furthermore, one of the emerging concerns among UCCN members and its partners is the co-creation of new dialogue on tribal crafts and folk art to empower ethnic groups to express and exchange their crafts and cultural identities across multicultural societies. The number of participants were 30 onsite including those from the public and private sectors as well as artisans from many partners, 8 city representatives (onsite), and 6 online speakers from the UCCN.



The keynote speaker, Professor Byung Hoon Jeong, focal point of Jinju UCCN for Crafts and Folk Art, South Korea and deputy coordinator of the UCCN Crafts and Folk Art Sub-Network, represented Jinju’s rich experiences and best practices that contributed to its success as a creative

city with a leading role in Asia. Col. Nawin Prechapanitchayakul, managing director of DASTA Area 4 (Sukhothai) and Mr. Weerawit Chanthawarang, deputy managing director of DASTA Area 4 and focal point of Sukhothai UCCN for Crafts and Folk Art, presented Sukhothai's efforts to promote and preserve cultural heritage through more creative approaches. Dr. Witiya Pittungnapoo, co-focal point of Sukhothai UCCN for Crafts and Folk Art and associate professor at Naresuan University, shared insights on how a higher educational institution could work with the city to empower craftsmen and creative entrepreneurs to fulfill the UCCN's mission for achieving the sustainable development goals.

The Governor of Nan (Mr. Viboon Vaewbundit) and the Vice Governor



of Nan (Mr. Kritchphet Petcharaburanin) presented how Nan City prepared its application to the UCCN by integrating the UCCN's mission into its city strategic development and the five-year Nan UCCN action plan (2023-2027). As the managing director of DASTA Area 6 (Nan), Mrs. Suparada

Karndissayakul presented the city's initiatives as a year-round series of creative and cultural-based activities to ensure Nan's vision as a creative city of livable crafts and folk art for all. Dr. Somjin Chankarabi, managing director of DASTA Area 7 (Supanburi), shared good practices in the music sector through public and private partnership.

We would like to express great appreciation to all our honorable speakers (online) led by Mary Hammond, coordinator of UCCN Crafts and Folk Art Sub-Network, focal point of Paducah UCCN, and executive director of Paducah Convention & Visitors Bureau from the USA, who presented best practices and the factors of success from the city of Paducah. Professor Christopher Bailey, focal point of York UCCN for Media Arts from the UK, presented how science and technology have been integrated into the cultural heritage of York. Pingping Tan, co-focal point of Weifang UCCN for Crafts and Folk Art from China, shared a wonderful presentation on the international kite festival that made the sky lively and colourful. Ir. Ronny Loppies, focal point of Ambon UCCN for Music from Indonesia, inspired the audience with a presentation on musical phenomena for sustainable development. Finally, Miss Pham Thi Lan Anh, focal point of Hanoi UCCN



for Design and head of Heritage Management Office under the Hanoi Department of Culture and Sports, and Dr. Lu Thi Thanh Le, lecturer of Hanoi National University from Vietnam, shared how to re-design crafts to generate more income for local entrepreneurs to create decent work in a creative economy.

This international event also promoted tribal crafts and Iu-Mien culture (one of the 11 ethnicities in Nan) which was simultaneously celebrated during the 5th World Iu-Mien Cultural Festival hosted by Nan Province (February 3–5, 2023). Of particular note was the participation of approximately 100,000 ethnic Iu-Mien people from seven countries (USA, Canada, France, China, Vietnam, Laos, and Thailand) who expressed and exchanged their indigenous crafts and culture during this festival.

**Witiya PITTUNGNAPOO**  
(Co-focal Point of Sukhothai)





## 2023 Jinju Traditional Crafts Biennale

Jinju has worked to preserve and pass on its cultural assets in the field of crafts and folk art, but has neglected to industrialize and internationalize them. Therefore, after becoming the member of the UCCN, the city decided to organize international events in the field of crafts and folk art. These events include the “Jinju World Folk Arts Biennale” and the “Jinju Traditional Crafts Biennale,” which are held every two years.

The 1st Jinju Traditional Crafts Biennale, held from November 4 to 21, 2021, aimed to promote the development of cultural industry in Jinju, activate exchanges among cities in the UCCN Crafts and Folk Art Sub-Network, and foster a creative foundation for Jinju artists. The event included an exhibition of artists participating in the Jinju Artist-in-Residence programme, a roundtable of international artists participating in the Biennale, an international forum, and special lectures. There were 13 artists from 12 creative cities in 10 countries, including France, the United States, Italy, Thailand, Japan, South Africa, Bulgaria, Benin, Estonia, and Austria. In total, the event exhibited more than 200 works by 43 domestic and international artists with over 15,000 visitors in attendance.

The 2nd Jinju Traditional Craft Biennale was held for about 40 days from November 1 to December 10, 2023, under the theme of “Today’s Craft, Tomorrow’s Tradition” at the Vehicle Maintenance Depot of the Old Jinju Station.

The opening ceremony held on October 31st was attended by the Mayor of Jinju, domestic and foreign guests, organizing committee members, 10 foreign artists, 30 domestic artists, and 4 Focal Points from overseas creative cities.

Ten artists from ten UNESCO Creative Cities (Ballarat, Bida, Chiang Mai, Como, Gabrovo, Kanazawa, Kütahya, Ouagadougou, Paducha,



Tambasayama), and more than 30 local artists participated in the Biennale.

The exhibition was held in two places. First, the works of overseas creative city artists were displayed at the old Jinju Station, and the works of “Jinju Joinery in Design” and domestic artists were displayed at the Vehicle Maintenance Depot. The works of Jinju local artists were displayed in a separate exhibition space.

Prior to the main exhibition, the “Jinju Joinery in Design” section was pre-exhibited from September 23 to October 8 at the KCDF Gallery in Insa-dong, Seoul. This section explored the contemporary use of traditional crafts through collaboration between traditional craftsmen and designers.

The main event utilized the Jinju Station Vehicle Maintenance Depot (Registered Cultural Heritage No. 202), which was built around 1925, as the Biennale’s main exhibition hall to showcase examples of preserving and reusing traditional houses and heritage buildings while refraining from

building new ones that generate CO2. In particular, this year's biennale provided an opportunity to learn and share practices that raise awareness of environmental and ecological issues at an international level.





A total of 45,380 visitors attended this Biennale, three times more than the first Biennale. In addition, high-quality works by artists from overseas creative cities were exhibited and received favorable feedbacks from visitors.

The biennial events have contributed to cultural exchange among creative cities, helped realize the UCCN mission of cultural diversity, and provided opportunities for artists, especially from developing countries, to enter the international arena. For Jinju City, in particular, it has been an opportunity to revitalize the cultural industries based on crafts and folk arts.

**Byung Hoon JEONG**  
(Focal Point of Jinju)



Vehicle Maintenance Depot at Jinju Station

## Roberta Redaelli, Ambassador of Silk Elegance and Excellence from Como at the Jinju Crafts and Folk Art Biennale

*The renowned stylist Roberta Redaelli, President of Mestiere Sarti and Stilisti of Confartigianato Imprese Como, has been selected by the Selection Committee of Jinju to bring the elegance of silk and the excellence of Como to the Traditional Crafts Biennale in Jinju, South Korea. She represents the textile district of Como, a UNESCO Creative City. A standout in the international exhibition at the Jinju Biennale is one of her masterpieces showcasing Como's technology and creativity: a relief-printed silk organza duster, created using the innovative 3D printing technologies of CreO Creation Opportunity and the Experimental and Creative Center "Creazioni Digitali." The ensemble also features a sequin-printed mermaid-skin effect fabric skirt and a top with coordinated silk finishes. These works are inspired by Roberta Redaelli's collaboration with the artist Mechthild Ackermann.*

*The Jinju Biennale, established in 2019, aims to strengthen exchange among UNESCO Creative Cities. Thanks to the efforts of the Coordination Office dedicated to Como UNESCO Creative City at the Alessandro Volta Foundation, the Jinju Biennale provided a platform to solidify cultural ties between Como and Jinju.*

*All the artists/artisans selected by the Selection Committee of Jinju participated in the cultural exchange of the 2023 Biennale edition, bringing together cultures from around the world. The focus of this interview will be the connection between craftsmanship and art. "The art of doing" places people at the center, generating a series of actions and attitudes that transform and contribute to changing society, making it more economically sustainable. It is a continuous interweaving of skills and manual work, in which beauty and craftsmanship are two sides of the same coin.*



Q. Did you find the experience at the Jinju Biennale stimulating? How were the works of the selected artists/artisans presented?

“My time at the Jinju Biennale was an invigorating immersion into creativity. Uncovering artists from diverse corners of the globe and delving into the rich, distinct Korean culture was profoundly inspiring. The

selected artists/artisans' creations were displayed with meticulous care in a dedicated pavilion, commanding the utmost attention from the audience. The attention to detail was extraordinary and the fusion of tradition and contemporary minimalism created a uniquely captivating experience."

**Q. Do you consider it to have been a beneficial experience for your professional growth?**

"Absolutely. Engaging in such an international event is a continual catalyst for personal and professional development. Joining a network closely tied to UNESCO Creative Cities and the global realm of artistic craftsmanship significantly boosts the perceived value of my business, fortifying its foundations. Being the sole artist/artisan from Italy at the Jinju Biennale is a testament to the recognition yielded by the passion and dedication I invest in my daily work."

**Q. Did the selected artists/artisans engage in networking and initiate a dialogue with new entities?**

"Throughout the Biennale, there was a myriad of engaging exchanges among artists/artisans from various countries. We swapped contact details and ideas, paving the way for potential collaboration, particularly with countries experiencing a burgeoning textile sector. I also established meaningful connections with artists boasting unique and exceptional expressive languages."

**Q. The purpose of the Jinju Biennale is to convey how artisans should be regarded as artists in every respect. How important do you think it is in the current landscape for artisans to be considered artists? How can we enhance the role of the artisans more effectively?**

"The Jinju Biennale's mission is pivotal and I wholeheartedly support it. Artisans are often pigeonholed as mere contributors to manual production. Yet, many artisans are genuine artists, crafting unparalleled



works that demand a perfect fusion of talent and often endangered skills. It is imperative to allocate more space for these artists/artisans through dedicated events and promotional activities, unveiling the intricacies of their world and showcasing their invaluable know-how in a more impactful manner.”

**Q. What factors contributed to Como being designated a UNESCO Creative City of Crafts and Folk Art, and how does the city address themes like environmental sustainability and gender equality within the textile sector?**

“Como has been designated UNESCO Creative City of Crafts and Folk Art thanks to its experience in the textile sector, one of the most relevant expressions of “Made in Italy,” which constitutes an immense heritage of experiences and technical and artistic skills handed down through generations and improved thanks to a strong innovative spirit. The city pays special attention to the themes of the 2030 Agenda, particularly the environmental sustainability of the textile sector and gender equality, given the high number of women employed in the sector. Given the current situation, the textile industry must be seen as intangible infrastructure, a patrimony of knowledge that is invaluable for recovery.”

**Costanza FERRARINI**  
(Focal Point of Como)

## Tambasayama's Major Initiatives as a UNESCO Creative City

### Tamba Ware

Along with Seto, Tokoname, Shigaraki, Echizen, and Bizen, Tamba ware stands as one of Japan's Six Ancient Kilns, boasting a rich history spanning 850 years. These kilns represent enduring traditions that have persisted from medieval times to the present day. In recognition of their cultural significance, they were designated as a "Japan Heritage" by the Agency for Cultural Affairs of Japan in 2017, with Tamba ware rightfully included among them.



## Tamba Pottery Festival—40,000 Visitors

The Tamba Pottery Festival has been a cherished annual craft event in Tambasayama City since 1978. In 2021 and 2023, the “Tamba Ware Village Tour in Autumn” offered visitors a month-long tour of kilns and galleries throughout the month of October, garnering enthusiastic responses from many participants.

These events were held over two days at one designated location until 2019. However, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic,\* the event periods were extended to two to three weeks starting in 2021. By prolonging the event periods to stagger tourist visits and prevent infection, about 50 pottery studios were made accessible to the public. This change also naturally helped achieve the goal of facilitating deeper interaction between tourists and craftsmen. Additionally, tourists had the opportunity to take more time to select their favorite works, leading to an overall improvement in tourist satisfaction.



---

\* In 2020, the event was canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

## Tambasasayama Townscape

The castle town of Sasayama and the post town of Fukuzumi have earned recognition from the Agency for Cultural Affairs of Japan as one of the “Preservation Districts for Groups of Historic Buildings.” This region is one of ten locations across the nation designated as model landscape renovation projects. A significant milestone was achieved in 2021 with the completion of removing utility poles from Ote-dori and Kawaramachidori, two streets important to the townscape. Further enhancements included burying electrical wires underground, beautifying pavements, and renovating streetlights, all of which were thoughtfully designed to enhance the overall aesthetic of the district. As a result, many tourists visit the city every day.



## Tambasayama Historic Street Art Festival—18,000 Visitors

The Tambasayama Historic Street Art Festival is a biennale led by locals, held around Kawaramachi district, one of the “Preservation Districts for Groups of Historic Buildings.” The festival’s central theme centers on the concept of turning traditional *machiya* townhouses into art museums. Approximately 30 *machiya* have been creatively transformed into galleries, showcasing a blend of crafts and contemporary art. This event has not only

fostered a sense of civic pride but also facilitated cultural exchange and contributed to the promotion of tourism in the area. The festival venue includes cafes and hotels situated within renovated *machiya* and ordinary residences. The event attracted 46 exhibitors including artists, craftspeople, and architects from both within and outside the city.



## Tambasasayama Craft Village

Tambasasayama City has seen an increase in the number of craft artists immigrating to the city in recent years. The “Tambasasayama Craft Village” was established as a place for these artists to interact. In addition, the Craft Market and Open Factory Event was held in 2021, while Workshop-style Events were held in 2022 and 2023. Immigrants have established a new craft culture, and the town is being developed into a creative rural village known for its crafts and folk arts.

Many major initiatives were implemented through inter-city and international cooperation to achieve the objectives of the UCCN. Tambasasayama City participated in some partnerships and exchange programs as follows:

- International Capacity Enhancement Workshop for Artisans and Craftsmen with UNESCO Creative Cities Network (Ceramics), Chang Mai, 2022
- 2023 Jinju Traditional Crafts Biennale



**Hiromi ONISHI**  
(Tambasayama City of Crafts and Folk Art)

## UNESCO Creative Cities Network Meeting with the Coordination Group

6 October–2 p.m

### Opening Remarks

- Mr. Ottone R., Assistant Director-General for Culture of UNESCO, thanked the Coordinators and Deputy Coordinators for their presence as part of the continued dialogue between UNESCO and its Creative Cities, with a view to exploring ways to reinforce the efficiency and sustainability of the UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN).
- Mr. Ottone R. recalled that the 2024 Annual Conference will be held in Braga, Portugal, and that a save the date will be sent to the member cities in October 2023. He also expressed the shared disappointment at the unprecedented circumstances that prevented the hosting of the Annual Conference this year in Istanbul, Türkiye, while highlighting the persistent efforts made by the UNESCO Secretariat to organize the event.

The Assistant Director-General for Culture also informed participants that the approval by UNESCO's General Conference, at its 42nd session of the Organization's Programme and Budget 2024-2025 (42C/5), would imply a stronger link between the UCCN and the 2005 Convention on Diversity of Cultural Expressions, and a dedicated budget. He also explained that in the next biennium, UNESCO aims to further involve its field offices in the implementation of its programme by encouraging the development of capacity building activities to raise awareness on the Network's action.

## **UCCN Online Meeting (23 October)**

- It was explained that the Online Meeting on 23 October would provide an opportunity for member cities to exchange good practices and contribute to anchoring the Network in the implementation of the Organization's priorities and culture programme.
  
- He underlined that under the theme "Culture: the key to unlocking sustainable development," city representatives would be invited to take part in open exchange sessions, focusing on the main thematic priorities of the MONDIACULT 2022 Declaration.
  - The first theme, "Boosting the Economic Potential of Creative Cities and Unleashing Creativity in the Digital Era," will delve into the role of urban policies in promoting socio-economic development, but also into the opportunities and challenges raised by the digital transformation of the culture sector.
  - Under the theme "Forging People-centered Urban Policies and Promoting Learning through Creativity," the second panel will explore how Creative Cities can take action to guarantee the respect of their citizens' cultural rights, as well as foster synergies between culture and education.
  - The third panel, "Advancing the Role of Culture in Building Climate and Crisis Resilience and Recovery," will address Creative Cities' response to climate change, and will touch upon other crises, from the global pandemic to unplanned growth of urban areas, and emergency preparedness and recovery plans.

It was also clarified that during the Online Meeting, the sub-network reports would be presented by the Coordinators, each of which will have a 6-minute time slot to provide an overview of the past and ongoing activities, and in particular joint projects at sub-network level, and that Braga would also make a presentation of next year's Annual Conference.



## Holding of the Annual Conference

- Three Coordinators (Film, Gastronomy and Media Arts sub-networks) underlined the need to enhance communication around the holding of the Annual Conference, such as setting up a time schedule for meetings in advance, with a view to reducing the impact of cancellation at municipal level, notably in terms of cities' budget allocations and the Network's reputation. The development of a mechanism to reduce such risks, for instance a binding agreement the Host City would have to sign an agreement at least 3 or 4 months in advance to the holding of the Annual Conference, was proposed. In response, Mr. Ottone R. highlighted that such deadlines exist for other UNESCO programmes, such as the World Heritage Committee, for which the signing of an agreement 8 months in advance is normally required. However, he noted that in practice agreements are often signed only 1 or 2 months beforehand due to delays in internal procedures. In addition, further reflections should be held on possible actions and solutions in the event that the agreement is not respected.
  
- He further informed the participants that, as UNESCO is an intergovernmental Organization, the hosting agreement needs to be signed by the Host Country with the national authorities concerned. UNESCO will further ensure stronger national endorsements for future Host City applications and require additional proof of support. In case of force majeure, in the future, the possibility of hosting the event at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris could be envisaged. However, this potential solution will imply needs for funding, notably voluntary contributions from member cities.
  
- Mr. Ottone R. confirmed that UNESCO welcomes the convening of regular meetings with the sub-network Coordinators and Deputy Coordinators, and informed participants that 2 meetings will be organized prior to next year's Annual Conference. In addition, he underlined the need to collectively identify fund-raising mechanisms to ensure a more geographically balanced representation of Mayors from all Creative Cities, but also from the Global South. He also questioned to what extent member cities could assist the Secretariat and advocate their respective National Commissions to allocate a dedicated budget to the UCCN.

- Finally, Mr. Ottone R. highlighted the strong commitment of Braga as the Host City of the next Annual Conference, and its willingness to integrate MONDIACULT in the 2024 Annual Conference.

### **Host City Selection Process**

- On this subject, Mr. Ottone R. informed the participants that the UCCN Secretariat is finalizing the technical modalities regarding the online voting for the 2025 UCCN Host City and that the link to the voting platform would be shared at the earliest opportunity.

### **Revised Reporting Mechanism**

- Mr. Ottone R. informed the Coordination Group that the UCCN Membership Monitoring and Reporting Exercise has been further revised to respond to the concerns raised during the meeting of April last. Reassuring them that the newly designed online form is aimed at better assessing member cities' contribution to sustainable development, but also establishing stronger synergies between the UCCN and UNESCO's Culture Conventions and Recommendations with a view to developing a sector-wide platform for knowledge sharing and the design of sustainable cultural policies, as well as integrating cities' contributions in the upcoming Global Report on Cultural Policies in 2025.

### **IOS Evaluation**

- It was confirmed that the findings of the IOS evaluation of the Network are expected to be presented at the UNESCO Executive Board in April 2024 and at the 2024 UCCN Annual Conference highlighting that the proposed recommendations will provide an opportunity to strengthen the relevance, coherence, effectiveness and sustainability of the UCCN.

- Information was also shared on the policy paper: *The impact of the UNESCO Creative Cities Network at local, national and international level*, soon to be published, which aims at highlighting the driving power of cities in addressing global challenges through culture and creativity, as well as UNESCO's support of its Creative Cities by providing an international platform for exchange, peer-learning and collaboration.

## 2023 Call for Applications

- Mr. Ottone R. thanked the Coordination Group for their strong support in the evaluation process of the 2023 Call for Applications and informed them that the Secretariat is consolidating the evaluation results, as further elements and clarifications from some sub-networks were yet to be received.

## Coordination Group Participants

<b>Media Arts sub-network</b>	
Chris Bailey	York (Deputy coordinator)
<b>Music sub-network</b>	
Sandra Wall	Norrköping (Coordinator)
Jacob Wagner	Kansas City (Deputy coordinator)
<b>Gastronomy sub-network</b>	
Eduardo Seijo	Merida (Coordinator)
Colleen Swain	San Antonio (Deputy coordinator)
Arisa Larios	San Antonio (Deputy coordinator)
<b>Literature sub-network</b>	
John Kenyon	Iowa City (Coordinator)
<b>Film sub-network</b>	
Jordi Hernández	Terrassa (Coordinator)
Hyejee	Busan (Deputy Coordinator)
<b>Design sub-network</b>	
Cindy Lee	Wuhan (Coordinator)
<b>Crafts and Folk Art sub-network</b>	
Byung Hoon Jeong	Jinju (Deputy coordinator)

---

## ***International Journal of Crafts and Folk Arts*** **Submission Guidelines**

*The International Journal of Crafts and Folk Arts* invites submissions of academic papers, short articles, reviews and news related to crafts and folk arts. Manuscripts are accepted for review with the understanding that their content is original and that they have not been submitted elsewhere or previously published. Submitted manuscripts will be reviewed by two or three specialists in the relevant discipline. Rejected manuscripts will not be returned.

Manuscripts should range between 5,000 and 8,000 words in length, including footnotes, references, tables and figures. An abstract of no more than 150 words, 6 to 8 keywords and curriculum vitae must also be included in the submission. Manuscripts must be double-spaced with 12-point type. For detailed guidelines and instructions, please visit our website, <http://ijcf.kr>.

Manuscripts should use footnotes rather than endnotes. The Journal follows the *Chicago Manual of Style* (Chicago and London: Univ. of Chicago Press) in matters of punctuation, quotations, abbreviations, etc. It also uses the author-date system for references. All sources are cited in the text in parentheses by author's last name and year of publication, with page numbers as appropriate: (Kim 2012, 65). For more detailed guidelines, please consult the latest edition of the *Chicago Manual of Style*.

Manuscripts will be edited to conform to the *International Journal of Crafts and Folk Arts* style manual and minor changes may be made in the interest of clarity without consulting the authors.

For manuscript submission and further inquiries, please contact:

### ***International Journal of Crafts and Folk Arts***

Jinju Culture and Tourism Foundation  
30, Manggyeongnam-gil,  
Jinju-si, Gyeongsangnam-do, 52714  
Republic of Korea

Tel: + 82-55-795-3217

E-mail: [jinjuci2018@gmail.com](mailto:jinjuci2018@gmail.com).

Webzine: <http://ijcf.kr>.

# CONTENTS

Byung Hoon JEONG	5	Editor's Remarks
<b>ARTICLES</b>		
Keebom NAHM	7	Local Arts and Cultural Ecosystems: <i>Focusing on the Role of the UCCN Program</i>
Sylvia AMANN	21	European Perspectives on Cultural Ecosystems in Cities
Kyoung-woo KWON	33	"Our Experiment Will Never Stop": <i>The Common Seongbuk Artist Roundtable as an Experiment of Local Culture Governance</i>
Rossella TARANTINO	47	Creation of a Cultural Ecosystem: <i>The Experience of Matera-2019 European Capital of Culture</i>
Sang-hoon JANG	65	The Role of Regional National Museums in Revitalizing the Cultural Ecosystems
Marta LLOBET	81	Towards a New Global Policy Framework for Cultural Rights: <i>Culture 21 PLUS</i>
<b>DISCUSSION</b>		
Jeong Duk YI et. al.	103	Strengthening and Revitalizing the Local Cultural Ecosystem
<b>NEWS &amp; ACTIVITIES</b>		
131	Al-Ahsa (Saudi Arabia); Barcelos (Portugal); Bida (Nigeria); Biella (Italy); Gabrovo (Bulgaria); Gimhae (Korea); Hoi An (Vietnam); Kanazawa (Japan); Kütahya (Türkiye); Manises (Spain); Paducah (USA); Pasto (Colombia); Weifang (China)	
<b>REVIEWS</b>		
180	The 1st Symposium on Tribal Crafts and Folk Art	
185	2023 Jinju Traditional Crafts Biennale	
<b>INTERVIEW</b>		
190	Roberta Redaelli, Ambassador of Silk Elegance and Excellence from Como at the Jinju Crafts and Folk Art Biennale	
<b>CULTURAL HERITAGE</b>		
194	Tambasayama's Major Initiatives as a UNESCO Creative City	
<b>UCCN DOCUMENT</b>		
199	UNESCO Creative Cities Network Meeting with the Coordination Group	



9 772765 178003  
ISSN 2765-1789

