

UNESCO Creative Cities Network

2010 Shenzhen International Conference Communiqué

Cities are increasingly playing a vital role in harnessing creativity for economic and socio-cultural development.

UNESCO's Creative Cities Network is a global platform launched in 2004 that currently connects 27 cities that share experiences, ideas and best practices to promote international cooperation for the sustainable development of cities.

In particular the Creative Cities Network promotes the importance of creative industries in contributing to a city's social fabric and cultural diversity, and in enhancing the quality of life, strengthening a sense of community and helping define a shared identity.

The network includes 7 domains: Design, Film, Literature, Gastronomy, Media Arts, Music, Crafts and Folk Art.

The network's first conference in Santa Fe in 2008, 'Creative Tourism: A Global Conversation', considered the role of creative tourism and city branding in the social and economic development of cities.

The second conference in Shenzhen 2010, with the theme 'New Technology, New Media, and Creative City Synergy' has considered the particular role and impact of new media and digital technologies on cities and their creative industries. The conference highlighted three opportunities:

- the transformation of content for creative economies
- increasing connections between communities; and
- improved interaction between network members.

Member cities shared their achievements to highlight the fundamental role of creative practitioners and organisations in their domains. The conference also highlighted the potential of new media and digital technologies to be applied

across domains and creative industries, as well as in other social sectors, including health, education, science and environment.

Cities also affirmed the critical role of digital technologies and new media in reaching and developing new audiences, as well as increasing and enhancing cooperation and collaboration within the network.

A relevant example of these developments is the joint force of cultural and technological businesses in Shenzhen, created through the merger of Shenzhen Press Group and Shenzhen Creative Culture Centre, and the utilization of new media as a platform to promote creative culture.

The conference provided a timely opportunity for the network to consider these issues in light of presentations by international and local experts, and discussions among delegates.

As a result members agreed the following:

Transforming content

- The network endorses the importance of research and development by individuals, organisations and enterprises in developing innovative digital content for the creative and other industries.
- The network advocates the use of new interactive media and open access technologies to enable and encourage the active, creative participation of individuals and communities, where people are not just engaged as passive audiences but as co-creators of new digital content.

Community connections

- The network encourages the use of new media and digital technologies to increase member cities' international profile and brand in order to reach and develop new audiences and markets for creative industries.
- The network encourages the use of interactive media and technology to establish community places and spaces in order to link communities locally and globally.

Network interaction

- The network is committed to utilizing digital technologies and new media to increase and improve timely communication between network members, and promote the network's activities and share expertise between cities, between different creative industries, and between creative practitioners.
- The network will place a priority on working collaboratively with UNESCO to develop a joint digital platform to enhance communication and interaction, and acknowledges the offer of Shenzhen in this regard.

Conclusion

Member cities applauded the organisation and support of this conference by Shenzhen. The conference was a great step forward in addressing the challenges of the digital environment, presenting unique opportunities for collaboration, and confirming the increasing importance of creative industries in a sustainable future.