



# Culture and Sustainability in Rio+20

Rio de Janeiro, June 19, 2012

# Challenge

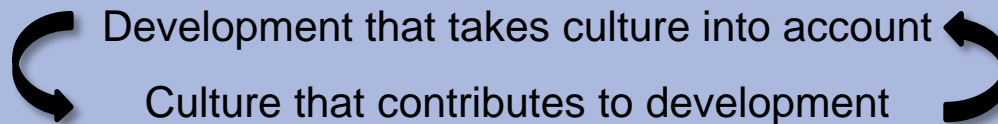
## Culture and sustainable development

Two very broad concepts

- Culture (anthropological, social, creative economy, etc.)
- Development (social, economic, glocal, etc.)

What is key : SUSTAINABLE. The new factor in the equation

A relationship between culture and development that is no longer conflictual



# Challenge

Environmental groups have succeeded to position the issue on top of the agenda

- Tangible threats
- Universally accepted concepts and methodology
- Measurable evidences
- Targets and performance indicators

For the cultural lobby, the risks and benefits are intangible

- Spiritual health of indigenous peoples
- Social inclusion through cultural participation and intercultural dialogue
- Healing in post-conflict recovery
- Personal and collective wellness
- Self-identity influenced by virtual communities

## Way forward


Advocating for a mention of culture as the 4<sup>th</sup> pillar of sustainable development in the Rio+20 declaration (60 pages long) may not be enough to bring action and change

May not be enough to change perceptions

For example:

- Human-rights are widely understood. No need to refer to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights for citizens to recognize abuses and uphold their rights. The media also plays a monitoring role. Same with biodiversity and the environment.
- Can we find stories, images, abuses and injustices to demonstrate the need for culture to be recognized as an integral component of sustainable development?

HOW TO GET OTHERS TO BECOME AS CONCERNED AS WE ARE?



Development that takes culture into account  
Culture that contributes to development

- Refine the narrative
- Develop common concepts and methodology
- Measurable evidence
- Targets and performance indicators

**IS THIS REALISTIC?**



## A common cause

Article 21 of the UNESCO Convention on the diversity of cultural expressions calls for Parties to promote the Convention in other international forums : taking culture out of culture

Agenda 21 for Culture, promoted by UCLG (United Cities and Local Governments), pursues the same goal: culture as a transversal component of urban planning and development

In the context of the UNESCO Convention, Parties and civil society groups understand “other international forums” to mean:

- trade forums (WTO, bilateral and regional Free-trade agreements) where market liberalization threatens the diversity of cultural expressions
- With little reference or connections to sustainable development forums

However, environmental and cultural groups share a common cause:

- Diversity as an indication of the Earth’s and humankind’s well being
- Diversity as a fundamental democratic principle

Let us talk to define how we can work together



## Common concepts

What is culture and development? Many levels:

### Eco-friendly

- Reducing the carbon footprint of artistic and cultural activities
- Using traditional methods, such as natural dyes, or recycled materials
- Bringing cultural activities to audiences (in neighborhoods) to reduce transit

### Taxpayer-friendly

- To become self-sustainable over time
- Audience development through arts education
- Events programming to generate revenues from tourism

### Human-rights-friendly

- Inclusion by recognizing new forms of expressions (youth, immigrants, disabled)
- Broad participation through free events (museum days, culture days)

## Common concepts (continued)

### Community-friendly

- Culture part of the everyday life (on the street, in hospitals, the workplace, in urban design)
- A public space for cultural happenings (Montreal's Quartier des spectacles)
- Free events as part of the offering of all major festivals

### Creative industries-friendly

- Shared risk and benefits
- An important lobby / opinion leader
- A very visible outcome of a culture and development policy

### Social economy-friendly

- Informal sector (handicrafts)
- Women and local communities
- Tangible and intangible traditional cultural expressions

*How does a public space for cultural events contribute to sustainable development? By fostering a sense of community, of shared experience, that will lead citizens to take pride in their city and its resources, in their property and its environment.*



***Praça Cantão, Santa Marta favela, Rio de Janeiro***





## Tools for policymakers

How can culture and development become sustainable:

- 1) An “ecosystem” of self-reinforcing policies involving each sector of government
- 2) Decentralization and devolution of power
- 3) A governance model to include civil society
- 4) A digital strategy to harness the potential of technology
- 5) Breeding creativity
- 6) Citizen engagement through participation



## Tools for policymakers

### 1) Policies that form an ecosystem where each sector of government plays a role

- The department of Arts and Culture does not have the jurisdiction or the policy tools to foster development in the arts sector and the cultural industries on its own
- The various measures form a self-reinforcing system that will outlast the current minister and latest public opinion trend
- When the system is open and transparent, civil society groups and other stakeholders are on the watch to ensure it remains conducive to development

#### Policy measures:

- ❑ Ownership rules
- ❑ Content quotas
- ❑ Grants and subsidies
- ❑ Governance and institutional capacity
- ❑ Taxation
- ❑ Professional training and education
- ❑ Digital strategy
- ❑ Copyright
- ❑ etc.



## Tools for policymakers

### 2) Decentralization and devolution of power

- Also called “subsidiarity” in the European Union
- Based on the notion that the diversity of cultural expressions is the mere reflection of the diversity of people, their environment, their needs
- That this complexity can better be understood and addressed in proximity, as it constantly evolves and requires policy and financial priorities to be frequently reviewed (especially if the policy is aimed at remaining “inclusive” of all cultural expressions)
- Moving from a model of “official culture” - serving the interest of the national state and the ruling elite - to serving the people through grass-roots expressions to which they can identify
- Brazil is a model. Morocco and Burkina Faso are also applying administrative reforms to decentralize in recognition of the intrinsic diversity of expressions
- Engaging regions and cities in playing a role, and giving them the needed human and financial resources



## Tools for policymakers (continued)

### 3) A governance model that includes civil society

- The UNESCO Convention on the diversity of cultural expressions recognizes the important role of civil society. It is a frame of reference that serves as a standard-setting instrument.
- An engaged civil society is a guarantee of continuity, as ministers and civil servants rarely last
- Bridging the gap between decision makers and audiences, and ensuring that changing realities and needs are explained and understood by the bureaucracy
- Bringing legitimacy to policies and priorities and allowing decision makers to benefit from the positive relationship between the creative community and the people (for example, the City of London targeted the cultural community as a priority group of its sustainable development strategy even though its environmental impact was much less than other economic sectors)
- Successful policies are not only the result of good planning but also of good execution. Ensuring support from the main stakeholders is key.
- After all, there cannot be a diversity of cultural expressions without committed artists
- Civil society groups cooperate with various international networks and can translate this expertise into the national context.



## Tools for policymakers (continued)

### 4) A digital strategy to harness the potential of technology

- Youth are self-educating in mass communications
- New cultural expressions are being produced and accessed at a very low cost
- New modes of production and accessibility, with a broad outreach
- Control mechanisms to harness these new expressions have proven futile over time
- Showing leadership by addressing the main challenges to traditional national cultural expressions
- Being proactive in not letting the most advanced countries and companies flood the market
- Getting to better understand the power and influence of virtual communities
- Tapping into new markets, creative resources, points of view, forms of expression
- Forcing a review of existing funding schemes for arts and culture
- Engaging with the next generation, already mobilized in favour of sustainable development



## Tools for policymakers (continued)

### 5) Breeding creativity

- Societies that encourage creativity breed innovation
- They nurture risk-taking and expressions of individual freedom
- The capacity to create is the best way to adapt to changing realities and challenges
- Needs are best addressed by the stakeholders themselves
- Successful creativity results in a shared sense of experience and accomplishment
- It gives citizens the feeling of taking part in the design of their own identity / destiny
- Creativity is a form of individual and collective “intelligence”. It defines a collective personality (i.e. creative cities)
- Creativity attracts creative, dynamic, entrepreneurial individuals
- Creativity stimulates creativity. It has the potential to become self- sustainable
- It gives citizens a sense that their country, region, city or neighborhood has something unique to offer



## Tools for policymakers (continued)

### 6) Citizen engagement through participation

- The ultimate goal: audience development to sustain a diversity of cultural expressions, both existing and emerging
- The more people take part in expressions of culture, the more diversity and sustainability there is likely to be. Personal energy and commitment are renewable resources.
- Requires a shift from supply-side to demand-side policies. Ways to simulate cultural participation and demand:
  - Arts education and practice at an early age develops a taste for the arts and culture, and for a diversity of aesthetics Various studies have documented that as many as 70% of adults who experienced formal or non-formal arts education have attended a benchmark event
  - Festivals in the City of Montreal offer free-of-charge events in public spaces. As audience tastes develop over time so do ticket sales for the acts offered solely in concert halls.
  - During the 15<sup>th</sup> edition of the province of Quebec's Journées de la culture (Culture days) more than 2,500 free activities were offered during the three-day event by 2,456 artists, craftsmen, organizations and cultural workers, collaborators and volunteers. Some 200,000 citizens took part in the activities.




## A last thought

*“As the General Secretary of the International Federation of Coalitions for Cultural Diversity, I’ve come to realize that my most meaningful contribution is to motivate people to take action and to let them decide for themselves, in their own context and with their own creativity, how best to proceed. There can never be enough resources to replace the lasting effect of a personal commitment.”*

*Charles Vallerand*





The International Federation of Coalitions for Cultural Diversity brings together forty-three national coalitions on all continents. It is recognized by the UNESCO as an official partner with consultative status and is represented on the NGO-UNESCO Liaison Committee.

This presentation is available to members of the IFCCD and organizations or individuals interested in presenting the position of civil society on the implementation of the UNESCO *Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions* .

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