

UNESCO Creative Cities Network Monitoring Report

Tel Aviv-Yafo UNESCO City of Media Arts

November 30, 2018



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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Tel Aviv's User Interface

Founded a little over a century ago, Tel Aviv-Yafo is Israel's financial and cultural center. It is the heart of the country's thriving technology industry as well as the region's most important metropolis. A number of factors have contributed to turning Tel Aviv into a center of creativity and innovation, among them the city's liberal, open attitude as well as its physical layout, enjoyable surroundings and civic support mechanisms and policies.

Centrally located along Israel's Mediterranean coast, Tel Aviv enjoys a pleasant climate year-round. The city is compact and easily accessible; its relatively small center concentrates thousands of businesses, academic institutions, cultural organizations and recreational spots all within walking distance. Landmark buildings, tree-lined boulevards and white sand beaches provide an agreeable backdrop to the intense creative ecosystem of cultural production, creative output and technological innovation that define the city.

Tel Aviv is known for its openness, its embrace of the new and the different and for its absolute freedom of creativity and expression, which finds expression in continuous technological and artistic production. Tel Aviv is the site of an exceptionally high concentration of innovative thinking and experimentation across various disciplines, as evident in the workshops, galleries and studios spread throughout the city as well as in mainstream and fringe theaters and cinemas, restaurants featuring pioneering cuisine, lively art, craft and food markets and imaginative street art.

The city is highly diverse, with people of many different backgrounds and traditions and from across the world contributing to the complex urban fabric.

Tel Aviv's compact, accessible surroundings in which one's workplace, residence and local coffee shop are all accessible by bike or on foot allows for the unstructured interaction and spontaneous encounters that are critical to a city's vibrancy. Its relatively small center, in which everything is within easy reach, allows for both intimacy and dynamism.

Startup City

One consequence of the unique atmosphere prevailing in Tel Aviv has been the creation of a local and globally prominent technology industry which is engaged in the continuous production of new ideas and the generation of scientific and technical knowledge. This technology ecosystem generates many technology-focused events, with hundreds of 'meetups', conferences, 'hackathons', competitions and other Media Arts gatherings every year.

These events provide a platform for exchange of ideas, networking and collaboration. In turn, the 'startup ecosystem' attracts ever more talent and creative energy, and pulls in investors, companies and capital from Israel and abroad. Young, creative entrepreneurs, students and artists are drawn to the city for the commercial, educational and cultural opportunities it offers as well as for the opportunity to be surrounded by fellow members of the creative class. Entrepreneurs and creators in the field of digital innovation are particularly attracted to the opportunity the city offers to create and to share.

Foreign business and governmental delegations are also attracted to the city. Groups of investors, entrepreneurs, members of parliament, policy makers and advisors arrive on a daily basis to engage with the mechanism underlying Tel Aviv's success as a hub of innovation and creativity and to establish a variety of partnerships and other platforms for cooperation with the city.

Creative Expression

Tel Aviv's position as a center of innovation and entrepreneurship is not a result of direct policy or municipal intervention alone, but is instead the result of municipal facilitation through a variety of means.

The Municipality has founded co-working spaces for entrepreneurs, established a free citywide WiFi network and opened municipal and national databases to the public for the purpose of a competition to develop a mobile application. In this way it has facilitated the free flow of and access to information which are essential for innovation.

Impact

The increasing intensity of technology-based and entrepreneurial activity in Tel Aviv, along with the increase in its young and creative population, has left major imprints on the city and its surroundings, among them:

- Tel Aviv has become an open laboratory of ideas and a center for new initiatives in digital and artistic endeavors.
- The city has become the focus for large-scale, international technology events as well as more intimate gatherings around technology and culture.
- An atmosphere of vibrancy and creative impulse has taken root in the city, attracting entrepreneurs and artists from Israel and abroad.

Member of the Creative Cities Network

While Tel Aviv has been notably successful to date in creating a thriving startup ecosystem, it also has been developing initiatives which allow the city to effectively channel the resources generated by the technology and creative sectors to ensure that all segments of society benefit from the creation of a better, fairer and more sustainable future.

Tel Aviv has accumulated deep, wide-ranging experience in fostering entrepreneurship and creativity and we are in a position to share our ideas and experiences with cities that are working to develop their own kinds of creative ecosystems. Within these last four years we had various collaborations with other Creative Cities and participated in different panels and meetings to present and share our ideas and projects that improve the sustainability of the city. The progress we have made in creating an environment where creativity and innovation can flourish is due not only to organic processes but also to specific policies, mechanisms and strategies. We are trying to combine our efforts in this area with the accumulated experience of other Network members as well as the cities that plan to join the UCCN.

Tel Aviv is widely recognized as one of the most active innovation hubs in the world, a nexus of global technology and media creativity. The addition of Tel Aviv would offer the Network direct access to many advances in technology and new ideas for its application to civic, social and artistic objectives. In turn, in becoming a part of the Network, Tel Aviv could more effectively channel the resources and experience at its disposal toward heightened cooperation and collaboration with other cities, in furtherance of the Network's objectives.

2. GENERAL INFORMATION



2.1. Name of the city: Tel Aviv-Yafo

2.2. Country: Israel

2.3. Creative field of designation: Media Arts

2.4. Date of designation: 1/12/2014

2.5. Date of submission of the current report:
30/11/2018

2.6. Entity responsible for the report: City of Tel Aviv,
Spokesman Office, Media and Communication Department

2.7. Previous reports submitted and dates: -

2.8 Focal points of contact:

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3. CONTRIBUTION TO THE NETWORK'S GLOBAL MANAGEMENT

3.1. Number of UCCN annual meetings attended in the last four years (please note that a regular participation in these meetings is compulsory):

Kanazawa (Japan), May 2015

Östersund (Sweden), September 2016

Enghien-les-Bains, June 2017

Krakow, Katowice, June 2018

3.2 Hosting of a UCCN annual meeting and dates: -

3.3 Hosting of a working or coordination meeting addressed to one or more specific UCCN creative field representatives:

- Participation in the *PLACE! 2016 Conference* held by the city of Kosice, Slovakia (May 2016)
- Participation in a conference held by the Network of Creative Cities in Beijing, China (June 2016)
- Participating in the *Creativity and Media Arts Week*, initiated by Changsha, China, and presenting the activities of Tel Aviv-Yafo (April 2017)
- Presenting Tel Aviv Yafo at the International Forum in Guadalajara, Mexico (April 2017)
- Participation in the *Beijing Design Week* in Beijing, China, and presentation of “Smart Society Solutions: Culture as a Tool for Urban and Social Advancement” (September 2017)
- Participation in the *Media Arts Policy Forum* in Gwangju, Korea (Nov-Dec 2017)

- Participation in *Creativity and Media Arts Week*, initiated by Changsha, China, and presentation of Tel Aviv-Yafo activities (May 2018)

3.4 Hosting of an international conference or meeting on specific issues salient to the Creative Cities with a large participation of members of the Network:

- *DLD Innovation Festival Tel Aviv 2015*

As part of the Innovation Conference and Cities Summit we hosted a special session on Media Arts, with the participation of representatives of several creative cities: Linz, Austria; Enghien-les-Bains, France; Krakow, Poland (City of Literature)

- *DLD Innovation Festival Tel Aviv 2016*

Invited the cities of the network to participate in a special session on Media Arts as part of the Cities Summit, and hosted a variety of events at the Innovation Festival: panels, meetups, Innovation boulevard presentations and more.

- *The "Fresh Paint" Art Fair 2016*

Hosted the artist Fabrizio Murray from Dakar, Senegal as part of the international exhibition

- *DLD Innovation Festival Tel Aviv 2017*

Invited cities to participate in a special session of Media Arts as part of the Innovation Conference - which dealt with art and technology and their contribution to creating communities and urban space. The panel was attended by representatives of the following cities: Paris, Berlin, Vilnius

- Hosted Media Arts delegation from Linz, Austria (2017)

- Hosted a meeting with Jens Dreiser and discussed the possible cooperation between Israeli musicians and Hannover-based independence radio station

- Hosted a journalist from Poland (Mr. Maciek Jaźwiecki) to present the city before the annual meeting of the network in Kraków-Katowice in June 2018. (May 2018)

- Hosted a meeting with design students from FH Joanneum, Graz, Austria (City of Design) (November 2018)

- Hosted a meeting with Susanne Asche from Karlsruhe, Germany to encourage the city in joining the network of Creative Cities of Media Art (November 2018)

3.5 Financial and/or in-kind support provided to UNESCO's Secretariat in order to ensure the management, communication and visibility of the UCCN (type of contribution, estimated value, main objectives, and dates):

The City of Tel Aviv-Yafo does not provide any financial support but it does promote UCCN activities in digital media, official social networks and official website of Tel Aviv-Yafo Municipality.

3.6 Membership of the Steering Group and period: -

3.7 Participation in the evaluation of applications (number of applications evaluated per year):

Austin, Changsha - 2015

Braga, Changsha - 2018

4. MAJOR INITIATIVES IMPLEMENTED AT THE LOCAL LEVEL TO ACHIEVE THE OBJECTIVES OF THE UCCN

The Tel Aviv-Yafo Municipality has implemented a broad range of initiatives and projects based on successful international formats and on local initiatives to improve the urban experience.

The Municipality has built a citywide free WiFi network of 80 hotspots, including the beach, major boulevards, community gardens, Old Jaffa and other areas, which residents and visitors can use to access the internet without charge. A support hotline provides 24-hour-a-day technical support for users who encounter technical difficulties.

The Municipality has initiated a project to use social media channels to engage directly with residents and encourage public participation in political and decision-making processes. Public participation has traditionally taken place through meetings and discussions in which new plans are presented and discussed, issues are raised and debated and residents' concerns are addressed. Looking to best practices and innovative ideas from around the world, the Municipality has added a digital layer to the public participation process, using its website, online questionnaires, Facebook page, YouTube and Vimeo channels and Instagram and Twitter accounts to reach a broader audience, engage even more directly with residents and increase civic involvement.

The Municipality has implemented one of the most advanced Geographic Information System (GIS) mapping systems in existence and has made the system available to the public on its website. The system, which is based on interactive maps, displays more than 100 layers of information and is integrated with other programs such as Google Street View. The system is equally suitable for professional use (for example by architects and engineers) and for lay use (for example by residents who wish to locate a dog park, a bicycle docking station, a library or any other point of interest). The system's availability to the public is in accordance with the Municipality's policy of openness, transparency and accessibility of information.

As part of its 'digital revolution', the Tel Aviv-Yafo Municipality has initiated its DigiTel project to digitize all city services. DigiTel aims to transfer all municipal services – property tax payments, school registration, permit applications and other services – to a personalized, online format. The project, which testifies to the city's commitment to digital innovation and to the values of openness and partnership, aims to make municipal services more accessible and transparent and to create a platform for dialogue between the Municipality and residents.

The Municipality of Tel Aviv continues to build and open more and more community meeting spaces. The Library, Maze 9 and the Platform are co-working spaces for entrepreneurship and innovation for the city's young startup community. The Tel Aviv-Yafo Municipality encourages the establishment of places for entrepreneurs to meet, network and create where the traditional values of knowledge, education and curiosity meet with technological innovation and startup energy. Networking events, meetups, lectures and workshops can be held in such places since the space provides a setting for cross-fertilization, synergy, and collaborations which are vital to the creative process.

Hackathons, events in which groups of programmers, graphic designers, user interface designers and project managers collaborate over an intense period to design software, take place on a regular basis in Tel Aviv. Google Campus Tel Aviv hosts dozens of hackathons every year. Tel Aviv hackathons have produced mobile applications, security software, wearable technology and more.

Art and Culture Departments of the Municipality provide support and various discounts for independent artists, galleries and creative workspaces, such as:

- Placing gallery signs at discounted rates
- Reducing the arnona (land tax) for artist's work rooms in the field of painting, sculpture, photography and video art
- Fringe Theater support: subsidizing halls for fringe shows of the independent actors in the theater industry to expose their work to the audience
- Providing urban spaces such as libraries, public shelters and unused buildings for art creation
- Providing space and support for street artists by organizing city street events and street exhibitions as well as city concerts and performances
- Organizing street fairs and hand-made markets to support small businesses

5. MAJOR INITIATIVES IMPLEMENTED THROUGH INTER-CITY COOPERATION TO ACHIEVE THE OBJECTIVES OF THE UCCN

- Presenting an Israeli application “Books On Map” to the city of Krakow, Poland (City of Literature) to create a collaboration and display quotes about the city on the map
- Exhibiting “The Mix City” project of the Israeli artist Kutiman at the Design Week in Bologna, Italy (October 2016)
- Exchanging information with the cities of Adelaide, South Australia, and Beijing, China on creating a technological ecosystem and encouraging start-ups in the city
- Creating a closed Facebook group for city representatives from the UCCN Media Cities cluster (2017)
- Participation of Tel Aviv based media artist Liat Segal in Gwangju Media Art Festival (December 17)
- Presenting an interactive video work “Ursulimum” by the Tel Aviv artist Ran Slavin at the Data City Exhibition in the Arts Center
- Creating a video clip for the Annual UCCN Meeting 2018 in a collaborative project with the Creative Cities of Literature, Music and Crafts
- In December 2018 the representative of Tel Aviv will talk about Innovative cities at the CREATIVE INDUSTRIES Forum in Linz

6. PROPOSED ACTION PLAN FOR THE FORTHCOMING MID-TERM PERIOD OF FOUR YEARS:

1. DLD Innovation Festival (Yearly in Sep-Oct)



Description of Activities	Expected Outcome(s)	Key Theme and Connection to UCCN Mission Statement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Global gathering of innovators, urban leaders and entrepreneurs from around the world for exploring the most inspiring and innovative ideas, platforms and developments • Showcase of local and international innovation programmes, ideas, products and companies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building new connections between local and international startup companies, governmental structures, investors and artists • Providing space for media artists to showcase their works during creative city boulevard event 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharing knowledge and experience in technologies, innovation and digital art • Building professional network • Strengthening international relations and cooperation • Providing the space to broaden opportunities for creators and

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Innovation conference with a big variety of panels about technologies, digital products and media arts • Cities Summit • Creative city boulevard : special outdoor exhibitions of local startups and media artists • Urban happening: 25 meetups between local and international community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building partnerships and initiatives associating the public and private sectors, and civil society 	<p>professionals in the cultural and technological sector</p>
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2. White Night (Every last Thursday of June)



Description of Activities	Expected Outcome(s)	Key Theme and Connection to UCCN Mission Statement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Various cultural events outdoors and in cultural institution including movie screenings, theatre and music performances and fine arts • Cultural events • Special exhibitions and art performances • Light illumination on facades of White City buildings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting local culture and art creation • Commemoration of the White City's prestigious UNESCO World Heritage site status • Spreading out the culture, providing outdoor space for presenting art and showcasing the variety of art forms created in Tel Aviv 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exposing the variety of cultural initiation to general public • Enhancing the connection between culture, creativity and urban surrounding, outdoor space and human factor • Strengthening the creation, production, distribution, dissemination and absorption of cultural activities • Fully integrating culture and creativity into local development strategies and plans

3. Mix the City Project

Description of Activities	Expected Outcome(s)	Key Theme and Connection to UCCN Mission Statement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online platform that invites people all around the world to discover the sights and sounds of a different region and create their own mix • Users anywhere in the world can take part through a simple and intuitive audio-visual platform for mobiles, tablets and computers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharing experiences, knowledge and best practices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthening the creation, production, distribution and dissemination of cultural activities, goods and services • Sharing knowledge and experience in technologies, innovation and digital art • Strengthening international cooperation between cities that have recognized creativity as a strategic factor of their sustainable development

4. Night Light Festival (Every November/December, during the holiday of Hanukkah)



Description of Activities	Expected Outcome(s)	Key Theme and Connection to UCCN Mission Statement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Showcase of light installations and digital art works • Free public visits to galleries and workspaces of local artists • Media art and music collaborations • Communication and awareness raising activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting sustainability through art • Stimulating urban development • Strengthening neglected urban areas through cultural and artistic outdoor happening • Creating a dialogue between artists, residents and general public • Sharing an urban environment in the neglected neighbourhood, trying to overcome the local conflict through spreading art and culture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stimulating and enhancing individuals and local government for urban development • Strengthening the creation, production, distribution and dissemination of cultural activities and public services • Improving access to and participation in cultural life as well as the enjoyment of cultural events and services, notably for marginalized or vulnerable groups and individuals

5. Loving Art, Making Art (Annually)



Description of Activities	Expected Outcome(s)	Key Theme and Connection to UCCN Mission Statement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free public visits to city's galleries, museums, artist studios and general exhibition spaces • Various classes and activities covering a range of diverse themes offered by neighbourhood citizens and artists from different disciplines • Special fine arts and multimedia art exhibitions, installations, murals, workshops 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting local culture and art creation • Creating a more accessible cultural environment • Creating a conversation between artists and general public 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting local culture and art creation • Creating a more accessible cultural environment • Creating a conversation between artists and general public

6. Fresh Paint (Annually)



Description of Activities	Expected Outcome(s)	Key Theme and Connection to UCCN Mission Statement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International art shows, selected projects by galleries and art institutions, the up-coming independent artist's greenhouse, the video greenhouse, and a presentation of Israel finest product designers • Flagship social project through art • Fresh Paint Cultural Salon - a setting for talks, lectures, and meetings about art and culture. • Workshops for children 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building new connections between local and international artists • Sharing experiences, knowledge and best practices • Promoting local and international culture and art creation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building new connections between local and international artists • Sharing experiences, knowledge and best practices • Promoting local and international culture and art creation