**Questionnaire by the Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights**

Response by the UCLG Committee on Culture

The COVID-19 pandemic is hitting the cultural life of communities around the world very severely. Libraries, memorials, community centres, museums and all cultural venues, have suffered several weeks of lockdown; some of them are still closed and some are getting ready to reopen with physical distancing measures. Performances, festivals, parades, carnivals and intangible heritage events have been cancelled, and there is still uncertainty on how these events will take place again. The online presence of cultural institutions and organisations has exponentially grown. Workers in the sectors, who are often in an already precarious situation (self-employed, freelancers) may be left for months without any income. The active involvement of all in the cultural life of the community is very damaged by COVID-19, and so is the welfare and the quality of our democracies.

In the context of the COVID-19 crisis, [United Cities and Local Governments - UCLG](https://www.uclg.org/en) is committed more than ever to raising public awareness and maintaining the functionality of basic public service provisions, while addressing health challenges with the development of new and adapted services to support sanitary measures. Special efforts are being made to foster solidarity and cooperation among territories, and to enhance measures put in place against discrimination, exclusion, and inequalities. In this sense, the protection and promotion of cultural rights, during the quarantine phase and beyond has remained one of the main concerns raised by UCLG and the [UCLG Committee on Culture](http://www.agenda21culture.net/). The following are some of the measures implemented over the course of the last months:

* The UCLG Presidency [Decalogue for the post COVID-19 era](https://www.uclg.org/sites/default/files/decalogue_for_the_post_covid-19_era.pdf) (which includes a full chapter on culture), launched on 21 April 2020
* The #culture2030goal campaign [Statement “Ensuring culture fulfills its potential in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic”](http://www.agenda21culture.net/advocacy/culture-2030-goal), launched on 20 April 2020
* The #BeyondTheOutBreak [Live Learning Experience on the cultural mobilisation](https://www.uclg.org/en/media/news/cultural-mobilization-covid-19-pandemic) ([Press Release](https://www.uclg.org/en/media/news/cultural-mobilization-covid-19-pandemic) and [Briefing](https://www.uclg.org/sites/default/files/eng_briefing_culture.pdf)), held on 22 April 2020.
* The [webpage CULTUREcovid19](http://www.agenda21culture.net/culturecovid19), opened on 23 March 2020 and updated and shared periodically by the UCLG Culture Committee with the tag #CultureCOVID-19.
* The [2020 Rome Charter](http://www.2020romecharter.org/) on the Right to Participate Fully and Freely in Cultural Life.
* The first part of our [report on the crisis](http://www.agenda21culture.net/documents/draft-report): “Culture, Cities and the COVID-19 Pandemic; Part One: Documenting the Initial Measures and Drafting Challenges Ahead”, on which the answers to this questionnaire are based. With this report, we wanted to pay tribute to the victims, register the facts and give arguments for the way out of the crisis to be based on cultural rights. Thus, our focus has been on initiatives and measures related to:
	+ Creating new possibilities to access heritage and knowledge
	+ Advocating to protect the cultural sectors and actors with economic measures
	+ Providing opportunities for more sustainable models of creation, production and consumption
	+ Rethinking the physical component of culture
	+ Protecting cultural rights
	+ Considering a broader framework of inequalities in society
	+ Multiplying the collaboration between cities and governments
	+ Exploring new ways to broaden cultural dialogues
	+ Consolidating culture as the fourth pillar of sustainable development

The UCLG Culture Committee is preparing as well:

* A series of webinars on culture and the localisation of the SDGs.
* The second part of our report on the crisis.

QUESTIONS

1. What have been the impacts on cultural rights and on cultural life of:
2. The pandemic
3. Measures taken to respond the pandemic

a) **The COVID-19 pandemic has affected cultural rights and the cultural life in cities extraordinarily, with implication for the existing inequalities to access, participation and contribution to culture, access to public spaces, and the financial sustainability and the flow of cultural goods and services.** The impact of the crisis on the values that constitute our societies are impossible to calculate at this stage.

This crisis has led to the mass closure of libraries, community centres, museums, galleries and cultural venues, and the cancellation of concerts, shows, festivals, exhibitions and many other cultural activities. Similarly, due to physical distancing and travel restrictions, cultural events and performances have been suspended and projects have been put on hold.

However, the crisis has generated hundreds of thousands of initiatives as well, from new and unplanned actions in public spaces to online events, recordings, collections and, of course, the emergence of totally new initiatives that have Covid-19 as the central topic. Some of these initiatives have been led by the cultural networks, organisations or institutions, while some other have created spontaneously by citizens. People have turned to culture to create meaning, to show solidarity and to understand the situation we are living through. There cannot be a better illustration of why culture needs to consolidate as the fourth pillar of sustainable development. (This narrative is at the heart of UCLG’s Culture Committee mission and understands “culture” in order of appearance in the global conversation on sustainable development; not in hierarchy.)

**The “need for culture” that has been experienced during the crisis is the perfect illustration of why culture must be consolidated as the fourth pillar of sustainable development.** Creativity is being put into play not only to keep up morale in these difficult moments, but also to create meaning and find appropriate and sustainable solutions to the crisis, enabling the awakening of collective imagination that has made it possible throughout history for cities to reinvent themselves in adversity.

b) Measures implemented by governments in order to control the pandemic have included lockdowns, physical distancing as well as renewed awareness of information. Some of these measures, in specific countries, have had an impact on fundamental freedoms and human rights.

**There has been a global call to cultural and creative sectors to join efforts, particularly in developing and strengthening digital resilience initiatives for cultural ecosystems, in order to guarantee access and participation in cultural life for the citizens**. Cities and local governments, with their workers, actors, institutions and networks, and in collaboration with national and international partners and civic society, have been making efforts to guarantee cultural rightsand maintain activities to ease people’s feeling of isolation and bring hope for a better future, and have contributed to promoting solidarity and fundraising to support the public health sector and workers.[[1]](#footnote-1)

Confinement measures due to the pandemic have interrupted living heritage practices and cultural expressions around the world, as well as religious celebrations, but many cities have reformulated some of their activities instead of postponing or cancelling them. The city of **Ramallah** celebrated the holy month of Ramadan and the related events were broadcast and streamed live for the citizens. Similar initiatives were undertaken in cities all around the world during the month. This Ramadan will never be forgotten: it has been an exceptional one because of the crisis.

While online and digital technology has witnessed huge progress as lockdowns have been imposed and can have positive effects, enabling the creation of new opportunities as a tool for inclusivity, its development demands a wider framework. **Local governments have started questioning** **what space digital culture will occupy in post confinement scenarios**, **and what the margin for coexistence with live culture experienced in urban spaces is,** **guaranteeing cultural rights as the principal premise** **in each case.** The call to physical distance is a real challenge for cities. Many cultural activities take place in public spaces, either in cultural facilities or in squares, streets and parks. Urban public spaces are more than flows. They are the places where communities are created, and people can develop their potential as human beings. Physical cultural spaces determine the way people create, exchange, experience, enjoy and communicate arts and culture in cities. Moreover, the reflection of how people gather in public space in the context of physical distancing is even more relevant in specific contexts such as relatively young African cities, where most cultural practices are gathering-based, as Siphelele Ngobese from South Africa Cities Network, highlighted at the thematic session on “[The cultural mobilisation in the COVID19 pandemic](https://www.uclg.org/en/issues/live-learning-experience-beyondtheoutbreak)” organised in the framework of the Live Learning Experience: Beyond the Immediate Response to the Outbreak by UCLG, UN Habitat and Metropolis on 22 April 2020. The “new normality” of cultural initiatives and institutions could strike a balance between an emphasis on the provision of digital content and, at the same time, the organisation of cultural events with physical distancing and social proximity. Besides, artists, cultural managers, historians and all the professionals of culture should be recognised and actively involved as key agents, reimagining and designing the public spaces of the future.

1. What **efforts** have been made **to guarantee the exercise of cultural rights**, in accordance with the requirements of public health? How has the message that cultural life must be enjoyed in ways that respect public health and medical expertise been communicated?

Cultural rights are an integral part of human rights. They are fundamental to citizens' freedoms. They provide the most suitable frame for the long-term public policies of cities and local governments. Cities and local governments are struggling to guarantee the cultural rights of all. Cities and local governments, with their workers, actors and institutions, are making tremendous efforts to maintain activities to ease people’s feeling of isolation.

The impossibility of participating in cultural life in many conventional ways during **the lockdown has multiplied the creation of new possibilities for access to heritage and knowledge, including access to digital library resources, virtual visits to museums and visual arts exhibitions, and the increase of concerts and theatre, dance and opera performances online**. Much of this cultural content is available through existing or specially dedicated platforms and communication tools designed by municipal, national or international institutions.[[2]](#footnote-2)

A large number of cities are using digital platforms to share information and cultural contents. **Mexico City** launched “[Capital Cultural en Nuestra Casa](http://www.capitalculturalennuestracasa.cdmx.gob.mx/)”, an initiative to share a wide range of digitalised cultural resources such as museum exhibitions, literature, cinema, and streaming events like theatre, opera and ballet performances, concerts, festivals and celebrations, and TV and radio programmes. The Autonomous City of **Buenos Aires** designed “[Cultura en Casa](https://www.buenosaires.gob.ar/culturaencasa)”, a platform with plenty of cultural content so citizens feel at the centre of the cultural community.

**Bogotá** launched “[Bogotá Creadora en Casa](https://www.bogotacreadoraencasa.gov.co/)”, an initiative thatshared strategies to promote the full exercise of citizenship and cultural rights, through the principle that “every citizen is a creator” and care for others is in itself one of the most valuable acts of creation that can be promoted in this context. The platform includes access to Bogotá’s music scene, literature, art, and city´s heritage.[[3]](#footnote-3) **Barcelona** implemented the initiative [#BarcelonaTAcompanya with the online cultural agenda](https://www.barcelona.cat/barcelonacultura/ca) of the city under the motto “Malgrat tot, no parem” (‘In spite of all, we keep on’). Similarly, **Rome** launched the initiative [#laculturaincasa](https://www.comune.roma.it/web/it/notizia.page?contentId=NWS553931), which includes access and digital resources of libraries, virtual tours of museums, the contest #FinestresuRoma, as well as live online music, theatre and opera performances. The city of **Bilbao** created the [initiative “Me quedo en casa” with a special agenda of cultural activities](http://bilbaokultura.eus/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/AGENDA-KULTURALA-Etxean-gelditzen-naiz-martxoak-27an.pdf).

Cities are also strengthening cultural rights in order to bring hope and promote well-being among people. In difficult times, arts, literature, music, dance, theatre and films carry the power to boost spirits and inspire creative solutions amid uncertainty, and also to convey scientific messages to preserve health. With this aim, **São Paulo** has implemented the initiative Solidarity City ([Cidade Solidária](http://www.agenda21culture.net/culture-sao-paulo-covid-19)) by the Culture Secretariat, with the engagement of famous Brazilian artists who recorded a video encouraging communities to engage with the initiative. In **Yopougon**, [YopCreaLab](https://www.facebook.com/Mairieyop/posts/2918732554885541) has organised workshops to empower people and train them to defend against the virus in a creative and innovative way. **Lisbon** recognises explicitly the labour of public workers with the audio-visual project [Heróis da Cidade](https://www.lisboa.pt/covid-19-medidas-e-informacoes/herois-da-cidade).

**Responses to the pandemic should aim to look at a broader framework of inequality and foster inclusion, leaving no-one and no place behind. Cities and local governments need to ensure that the crisis does not increase the already high levels of inequality at local and global level, which can particularly affect women and girls, minorities, older people, indigenous peoples and those with less access to basic public services and economic resources.** Lockdowns can aggravate burdens such as poverty, violence, discrimination and abuse of vulnerable groups. Guaranteeing equal access to cultural participation through programmes on heritage, creativity and diversity is key to ensuring that cities remain places of opportunity for all. Considering this, many cities, networks, organisations and actors are dedicating special efforts to supporting the most vulnerable, fostering solidarity among territories and putting measures in place against discrimination and exclusion. Specific programmes to support inhabitants who have fewer possibilities to access cultural life, either online or physically, are being implemented. Culture cannot be the heritage for just a few; culture must be part of the daily life of all.[[4]](#footnote-4)

1. What roles have culture and cultural rights played in responding to the pandemic?

a) At the individual and collective levels, including in building resilience and solidarity, and memorializing victims?

As the global crisis has increased the interdependence of all cities and governments, time and resources to enhance collaboration among local governments, communities, agents and cultural actors as a source of inspiration, relief, trust and hope for a better future is on the increase as the post-COVID-19 measures unfold. These initiatives must be acknowledged as true processes of innovation in which cities are learning and reviving fraternity between them to give new impulse to their local goals.

In many cities there is a trend for cultural institutions to reconnect with people, a will to empower the communities built on the “need for culture” shown during the worst days of the pandemic. The digital platform “[Ciudad (es) Cultura](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-YjViCiYXQg&feature=youtu.be)”, a joint initiative developed by **Mexico City**, the **Autonomous City of Buenos Aires**, **Bogotá** and **Barcelona**, with the support of UCLG Culture Committee, is one of the relevant cases of collaboration and co-ordination at local and international level in the context of the crisis. This kind of initiative proves that creativity and solidarity are the main drivers of the implementation of measures to share resources and knowledge with other cities.

Recognising that the involvement in cultural activities is a celebration of life and also a way to pay tribute to those that have left, and that the participation in cultural life is a fundamental component of society and a human right, cultural institutions like museums, archives and libraries have activated projects to collect oral, written, audio-visual and material [memory of the pandemic](http://www.agenda21culture.net/es/culture-barcelona-covid-19), inviting everyone to participate in the creation of the memory of the future. Our involvement in cultural activities is a celebration of life and also a way to pay tribute to those that have left. The participation in cultural life is a fundamental component of society. It is a human right. **Barcelona** and **Terrassa** are creating and gathering documents, images and videos, among others, that will allow the interpretation of the impact of the pandemic at different levels. **Mexico City** has launched the initiative “Bordando memorias desde el corazón” (‘Embroidering memories from the heart’), a [memorial space](http://bordandomemorias.cdmx.gob.mx/) in which to share experiences, testimonies, messages, advice and words of accompaniment from those who said goodbye to a loved one. The initiative will also promote the creation of a physical space in which a memorial to the victims of COVID-19 will be located in the future, allowing society to gather around their memory. These initiatives are part of cities’ cultural heritage and will constitute the [legacy](http://www.agenda21culture.net/es/culture-terrassa-covid-19) of this historical period for future generations. They can contribute to building more caring cities where empathy and solidarity are part of the “new normal”.

b) At the scientific level, to provide adequate information to inform public policy and ensure public awareness?

Libraries around the world, as providers of basic services, including democratic access to information and knowledge, are adapting services, ranging from minimal restrictions to full closure. The city of **Montevideo** has included [books in kits with basic products](https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/mundo/2020/04/montevideu-distribui-livros-dentro-de-cestas-basicas-para-enfrentar-isolamento.shtml) distributed to the most vulnerable households. In **São Paulo**, the Municipal Culture Secretariat opened registrations to the project [Online Library](http://www.agenda21culture.net/culture-sao-paulo-covid-19). The project will offer incentives actions during the period of restrictions due to COVID-19 to the culture and artistic sector, valuing and supporting especially low-income artists and residents in neighbourhoods with high vulnerability. **IFLA** - International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions - says that many libraries have developed [special programmes](https://www.ifla.org/covid-19) to bring books to all those who request them and to offer remote services or support to remote teaching. Libraries are also promoting media literacy to counter potential misinformation online. IFLA’s Library Services to Multicultural Populations Section is collaborating with the Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA) to support libraries communicating with their linguistically diverse communities, particularly in relation to library closures and accessing online information. In this sense, the NGO **Cultural Survival** provides information on COVID-19 in [indigenous languages](https://www.culturalsurvival.org/news/united-we-fight-pandemic-unidos-combatimos-la-pandemia) through radio materials translated into 16 languages. **JSTOR**, the [online library](https://twitter.com/JSTOR/status/1240306471168028674) of academic books and journals as well as primary sources, is now open.

The COVID-19 is severely exacerbating gender inequalities as well. Many initiatives are arising to raise awareness of gender equality and culture in the context of the crisis. The platform [#Cities4GlobalHealth](https://twitter.com/hashtag/Cities4GlobalHealth?src=hashtag_click) by **Metropolis** is collecting local government initiatives to put in place gender-violence responses to protect women worldwide and ensure their access to basic services. The **Gender and COVID-19 Group on Mendeley** is also a relevant initiative. It is a public group, free for anyone in the world to join, access and add to, which is collecting references - articles, preprints, news articles, blog posts, magazine articles, reports - related to [gender and COVID-19](https://www.mendeley.com/community/gender-and-covid-19/). The Group has gathered more than 500 resources which include reflections on the cultural dimension such as the unequal number of scientific studies available that approach the pandemic from a masculine and a feminine perspective.

c) In any other relevant manner?

Culture and cultural rights are a priority for many cities and local governments, and the COVID-19 crisis has enhanced their efforts to advocate for them at different levels. In the context of the crisis, discussion of the challenges and risks they face and of the international legal framework protecting and enabling their work must remain a priority.

With this aim, the city of **Rome** is leading the production of the [2020 Rome Charter](http://www.2020romecharter.org/) with UCLG Culture Committee and many other cities, organisations and cultural stakeholders. The Charter is a document that shows the strong commitment of Rome to developing a vision for the future centred on cultural rights, and it also constitutes a collective response of UCLG cities and associations to the COVID-19 crisis and planning for the future recovery. The first document of the 2020 Rome Charter was released on 29 May 2020, and the final document is expected to be presented at the end of September 2020.

1. What steps have been taken to **mitigate the impacts of the pandemic**, and of measures to counter the pandemic, on the cultural sector and on the human rights of those working in it (including artists, athletes, cultural heritage professionals, cultural workers, librarians, museum workers and scientists?)

a) How have the cultural sector and those working in it adapted to the pandemic?

The cultural ecosystem is one of the most severely affected. The COVID-19 pandemic has created an environment of extreme uncertainty and has provoked huge implications for the economic and financial sustainability of the cultural ecosystem. The specific vulnerability of cultural work had not been fully acknowledged before the crisis, and the current situation is exacerbating the precarious situations in which cultural workers (very often self-employed and freelancers) find themselves in. Besides, the COVID-19 pandemic is disrupting the cultural ecosystem and most cultural initiatives and organisations are been forced to restructure or cancel their programmes due to the principle of physical distancing.

The wide range of emergency measures implemented by local, regional and national governments with a direct economic impact as initial response to the crisis and with the view to ensure the survival of the cultural sector during the quarantine phase and beyond include: a) extraordinary measures and subsidies for the cultural sector; b) tax, rent and fee exemptions or reductions; c) specific measures for the work conditions of the arts sector; d) changes in cultural programming, and e) training and capacity building. Structured civil society has also launched multilevel collaboration requests demanding support from governments and international organisations.[[5]](#footnote-5)

From the first days of confinement, measures to monitor immediate response strategies, especially at local level, with attention to those which could mitigate risk and ensure the sustainability of the livelihoods of artists and cultural professionals emerged as well. Research and data collection on the economic impact of the crisis and its spill-over effects has proved crucial to finding adequate alternatives for the deconfinement period and beyond. It has made it possible to form an overall view and compare the strategies that governments, cultural networks, organisations and actors are adopting to support the cultural sector in different parts of the world.[[6]](#footnote-6)

b) How have these adaptations been received by the public and how have they been supported, included financially? Are there sectors of the population that may risk exclusion from such adaptations?

Many cities have allocated financial resources to provide access to digitalised cultural resources and allow cultural creation during the COVID-19 crisis was. The rapid increase in the use of virtual platforms raised concerns related to rights and inequalities. One of the key issues is the fair distribution of income, among artists, intermediaries like Google, Amazon or Facebook, or the broadband providers.

The thematic session on “[Digital Technologies and the COVID-19 Pandemic](https://www.uclg.org/sites/default/files/eng_briefing_technology_final_x.pdf)” organised in the framework of the [Live Learning Experience: Beyond the Immediate Response to the Outbreak](https://www.uclg.org/en/issues/live-learning-experience-beyondtheoutbreak) by **UCLG**, **UN Habitat** and **Metropolis** on 15 April 2020, highlighted that while technology has proved key to the response of COVID-19, ensuring citizens’ access to health services, culture, information and communication with competent authorities, local and regional governments are working to fight the digital divide as well and protecting citizens’ digital rights, including principles of privacy, freedom of expression and democracy.

The digital divide existed before the pandemic, and the crisis has made it even more acute, although this fact has not been visible in the media. Women, older people, migrants, displaced people and refugees, persons with disabilities, children, indigenous people and minorities are vulnerable groups of people that have suffered this divide.

c) What kind of measures will be necessary to rebuild the cultural sector going forward? How will inclusion be addressed?

**Universal Basic Income** is identified everywhere as one of the key measures in the recovery. This measure would support the most vulnerable population in all countries, including the people that develop professional careers and activities in the cultural sectors. The fact that this political and social initiative has the support of the cultural sector shows the way to connect it to broader democratic debate at a moment when it is often seen as elitist.

National governments should explore ways to **build stronger systems of protection for cultural workers**, in terms of fair remuneration, social security, and participatory governance, following the examples of the most advanced countries in this domain. National and local governments should include explicit support for arts and culture initiatives as core components of the post-Covid-19 recovery and the long-term planning as well.

The contribution of the current regime of intellectual property to the fight against inequalities should be analysed. New systems (perhaps adapting the voluntary pool of intellectual property rights that exists for many medical treatments to the characteristics of the cultural sector) that both support the fair remuneration of artists and creative and truly contribute to “Leave no one behind” needs to be explored.

Measures to rebuild the cultural sector are being discussed in parallel to the necessary change of the current urban model - which concentrate wealth and spread inequalities - though the lens of culture and innovation, and the incompatibility of current economic models with the fulfilment of human rights. The sphere of heritage and its relationship with tourism, is seeking alternative models based on sustainability. The pressure of tourism on some cultural sites and events, which has often severely damaged local cultural life and disempowered the communities, can be discussed now and a new balance with all actors concerned should be found.

The pandemic confirms the need to **understand the world in all its diversity**, more than ever. Policies and programs addressing inclusion should be implemented in parallel to an increased awareness of the protection and promotion of cultural diversity and the importance of cultural co-operation and solidarity. Moreover, the current cultural policies do not sufficiently consider the existing inequalities to access, participation and contribution to cultural life.

**Indigenous peoples**, as well as other vulnerable groups, should become central actors in the cultural policies of countries, cities and local governments. **Gender perspective** should be an unavoidable consideration in cultural policies beyond the outbreak, not only in terms of equity (the numbers of women and men currently involved in cultural practices, events and sites) but also in terms of narratives and content (currently dominated by a masculine vision of the world).

d) Has your government already envisaged / announced specific measures to support the culture sector during and after the pandemic? How will relevant constituencies participate in their development and implementation?

In the context of the pandemic, UCLG is strengthening efforts to advocate for the role of culture as a pillar of sustainable development at different levels. Despite the fact that during the crisis culture has become a strand of global solidarity, the potential of culture and cultural rights has yet to be fully acknowledged. The global debates about development, citizenship and democracy provide a marginal space to culture, human rights and cities. More concretely, the global frame for development, that is the UN 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), has very scarce references to the place of culture in sustainable development: there is no “Culture Goal” and very few targets explicitly refer to cultural actors, initiatives or programmes.

In this light, the [statement](http://www.agenda21culture.net/advocacy/culture-2030-goal) on culture and the COVID-19 pandemic “Ensuring culture fulfils its potential in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic”, officially launched on 21 May 2020 - the World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development - by the [#culture2030goal campaign](http://culture2030goal.net/) aims at promoting the place of culture within the UN 2030 Agenda framework. **The Culture 2030 Goal movement advocates for culture to be explicitly present in the expected reconfiguration of the UN 2030 Agenda due to the global crisis, and calls on UN agencies, governments and all other stakeholders to act, ensuring culture is at the heart of the UN Decade of Action for the Sustainable Development Goals** as a key element to achieve core priorities like climate ambition, gender equality and fighting inequalities.

The recently launched “[Seven Keys](http://www.agenda21culture.net/our-cities/seven-keys)” programme, based on the document "[Culture in the Sustainable Development Goals: A Guide for Local Action](http://www.agenda21culture.net/advocacy/culture-in-SDGs)", with specific guidance on the relation between culture and each one of the 17 SDGs, and the [“OBS” database of good practices](http://obs.agenda21culture.net/en/home-grid) on “Culture in Sustainable Cities”, with more than 220 examples of cities all around the world, aims to integrate the cultural dimension in the localisation of the Sustainable Development Goals in cities and local governments in an operational and innovative way, considering the context of the crisis.

1. Have scientific and medical experts been able to express themselves freely about the pandemic, its impacts and needed responses? What measures have been taken to address the denial of scientific information about the pandemic, and to ensure access to reliable scientific information to guide policymaking and personal choices?

Cities and local governments have disseminated public guidelines and scientific knowledge on the pandemic and have reinforced cooperation among public institutions, private sector, academia and citizens to deliver clear messages. Permanent dialogue with national and regional government has been kept open in order to put in place new measures in this regard as well. These initiatives have been accompanied by the exploration of new ways to broaden cultural dialogues in order to reinforce scientific evidences such as the one that correlates health and well-being with active participation in cultural life (as the research by the World Health Organisation – demonstrates). The campaign “[Open Your World](https://openyourworld.sa.gov.au/)” by the **South Australia Government**, which collates activities that the public can engage in to boost their health and well-being, including arts and culture, illustrates this idea. Science has also proved that culture is also part of the solution to climate change. Cities can help realise the power of art, culture and heritage to drive climate action and support just transitions by communities towards low carbon, climate resilient futures by shrinking the carbon footprint of our own cultural activities. In this regard, the **Climate Heritage Network** has proposed a bold vision of the immense potential of culture heritage to drive climate action and support transitions by communities towards low carbon, climate resilient futures. Those scientific evidences could become central axis of public policies all around the world, specially if there was a massive presence of cultural actors in primary and secondary education.

1. See answer to question 2 for more information. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. See more examples on p. 9 of the UCLG report “[Culture, Cities and the COVID-19 Pandemic; Part One: Documenting the Initial Measures and Drafting Challenges Ahead](http://www.agenda21culture.net/documents/draft-report)”. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. See chapter 4.2 of the UCLG report “[Culture, Cities and the COVID-19 Pandemic; Part One: Documenting the Initial Measures and Drafting Challenges Ahead](http://www.agenda21culture.net/documents/draft-report)” for more information. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. See chapter 2 “The economic and financial sustainability of the cultural sector” of the UCLG report “[Culture, Cities and the COVID-19 Pandemic; Part One: Documenting the Initial Measures and Drafting Challenges Ahead](http://www.agenda21culture.net/documents/draft-report)”. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. See chapter 3 “Monitoring, impact data and analysis” of the report mentioned above. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)