

WORLD

CITIES

CULTURE

REPORT

2022

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CITIES  
CULTURE  
REPORT**

**2022**



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:

Films under the stars (Domaine de Saint Cloud). Image © IDF / Laurin.

Air Balloon Circus, Culture Festival 2021  
© City of Stockholm / Albert Jalap.

Image courtesy and © City of Montréal.

Summer Streets, Al Fresco City.  
Image courtesy of City of Sydney  
© Adam Hollingworth.

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## CHAIR'S FOREWORD

Ten years ago, as part of the celebrations for the 2012 Olympics, the World Cities Culture Forum (WCCF) assembled in London for the first time, with a common belief in the power of culture to transform lives and places.

Our founding principle was that as global cities we can achieve much more by working together than by competing. By being generous with our ideas, jointly building the evidence and learning from one another, we can drive greener, fairer and more prosperous cities.

Our vision is to build a world where culture is at the heart of thriving cities. Ten years on, we are the leading global network of creative cities and civic leaders. We have made culture a golden thread, benefiting all aspects of city life.

In that time there has been a shift. Culture has moved from the niche to the mainstream. As civic leaders we are building innovative collaborations with our colleagues across all government departments. And the results are clear. Culture is now supporting communities, improving health and wellbeing, engaging young people, boosting jobs and the economy, giving our cities a distinctive identity and bringing in tourists.

We are a network – and also a movement.

At the World Cities Culture Forum these founding principles have never been needed more than over the last two years. The Covid-19 pandemic had a huge impact on communities, on our cities, on our sector and on us as individuals.

As our report shows, across our cities there was a 50% average drop in theatre and music performances between 2019-21, resulting in devastating impacts on employment and income for artists and creative workers.

But the last two years also saw remarkable resilience and responses from all our cities. From new funding models such as San Francisco's Guaranteed Income for Artists to new local engagement with Helsinki's Gift of Art, allowing citizens to 'gift' outdoor performances to friends and family on their doorstep, or Buenos Aires' #culturaencasa, which brought culture into people's homes.

The Covid-19 pandemic is far from over, and we must be prepared for more disruption. But more than this, we need to face some profound challenges. Whether it is tackling inequality and working conditions, poverty or the threat of climate change, the scale of these can feel over-whelming.

In response, we need a new era of collaboration and determination to transform our cities. As the report highlights, this means a mission-based approach. A rethinking of relationships across city government to support our people, our places and the planet.

Making this happen will take hard work, vision, inspiring leadership and perseverance. But none of us are alone in this. Over the last ten years the Forum has grown into a vital support network of more than 40 cities, bringing together the experience and leadership of our partners.

Today our cities have a total population of 245 million people. In 2019 we collectively attracted 217 million international visitors and together we care for 56 UNESCO World Heritage Sites.

Over the last decade we have awarded 11 Leadership Exchanges, involving 21 different cities thanks to Bloomberg Philanthropies and Google Arts and Culture. We have hosted eight global summits, raised standards in the collection and use of cultural data, produced four World Cities Culture Reports, hosted more than 30 Digital Dialogue conversations with city leaders on pressing topics, plus several sing-a-longs on coach rides.

Thanks to WCCF, policies have been replicated and fast tracked in our cities, for example addressing affordability of workspace, the protection of cultural assets and supporting the fight against climate change. We continue to make the case for culture in global panels and conferences. And this year the wonderful city of Helsinki will host our ninth international summit.

We should all feel proud of what we have achieved together and grateful to all of those who have worked so hard over the years to get us to where we are.

As we look to the next decade we will raise our ambition now as a newly established independent charity. Helping us expand our programme, our partnerships and our influence as we continue to transform our cities. By staying true to our principles, I am confident we will see culture driving sustainable, economically and socially flourishing cities that work for everyone.

We look forward to this journey together!

**Justine Simons, OBE**

Deputy Mayor for Culture and Creative Industries, Mayor of London's Office  
Founder and Chair, World Cities Culture Forum



## WORLD CITIES CULTURE FORUM: OUR VALUES

The World Cities Culture Forum is a global network of creative cities and civic leaders. Our vision is to build a world where culture is at the heart of thriving cities and sustainable communities. We believe in the power of culture to transform lives and places and we recognise that collaboration drives change at scale. This is why our city partners share their best ideas and design cultural policies that benefit all aspects of city life.

At the World Cities Culture Forum, we champion practical solutions through our Global Summit and partnerships with leading institutions. We grow civic leadership with our Leadership Exchange Programme and Digital Dialogue Masterclasses. And as a global thought leadership group, we make the case for culture with leading research, data and case studies.



Design District Hong Kong © 2020  
Hong Kong Design Centre.

## WORLD CITIES CULTURE REPORT: RESEARCH CONTEXT

The World Cities Culture Report 2022 is a unique research project, building on the ground-breaking 2015 and 2018 Reports and created with 40 partner cities, across six continents, over two years.

Against the backdrop of the Covid-19 crisis, we gathered leaders working in the urban realm to discuss the biggest challenges and opportunities facing our cities.

Over eight months, we invited every city in the World Cities Culture Forum network to nominate leaders to speak with us about the specific challenges of their city, how they were meeting the needs of their communities and what more was needed. We interviewed 40 City Leaders – from artists to Youth Council members, cultural advisors to museum directors, community leaders to 24 hour Commissioners.

We then worked with our partner cities to gather their case studies, profiles and over 70 data indicators. Where possible, we looked at 2019 and 2021 data sets to help us build a picture of the short-term impacts of Covid-19, as well as the wider story of culture in our cities.

To further develop our research, we hosted four roundtables, drawing additional insights from regions where the World Cities Culture Forum is deepening engagement. Working with our city and regional partners including Dubai Culture & Arts Authority, Africa No Filter, Marina Guo, Advisor of Global Partnerships, WCCF & Associate Director, BOP Consulting, Sete Artes and Organization of Ibero-American States for Education, Science and Culture (OEI), we gained additional perspectives about other cities. These discussions enriched and tested our arguments, providing points of difference experienced regionally. We have distilled these into the ‘Regional Perspectives’ section in the Report.

Bringing together this research gave us a global view on the state of culture in our cities. It gave us an insight on the major trends and challenges facing our world cities and also gave a vision for the future.

We are very grateful for the time, insights and reflections from all our contributors.



TOKYO MET SaLaD  
MUSIC FESTIVAL  
© TMSO.





# WORLD CITIES CULTURE REPORT

Looking back at 2015, our World Cities Culture Report highlighted 'culture as the golden thread', running across all aspects of urban policy. Three years later, our 2018 report found that cultural policy was increasingly 'opening out': recognising, redefining and supporting new forms of culture, in new spaces, for new audiences. In 2022, against the backdrop of Covid-19, we can see a further evolution of this argument. In response to the increasing need for cities to become sustainable and the complexity and scale of challenges we face, we argue that there needs to be a new era of mission-based policy, with culture at its heart.

## IN SUMMARY

- Covid-19 exposed and worsened existing inequalities, but the causes of these were deep-rooted and pre-dated the pandemic. Our cities face profound social and economic challenges, and also urgently need to transition to becoming environmentally sustainable.
- We cannot continue as is – change is needed now. A new approach is needed across people, place and the planet. This embraces how people relate to their city, how they are included, engaged and see a place for themselves. We must encompass the needs of the next generation; support more decentralised spatial design, resetting the relationship between live, work and play; and embed environmental actions in everything we do.
- To achieve this, we need a new way of thinking: a new era of mission-based urban policy. It means drawing on expertise, resources and ideas from a whole spectrum of perspectives to find the solutions to urgent and deep-rooted challenges.
- Within this, there is a specific role for culture. Culture is a means by which citizens can be engaged and mobilised to participate around issues. It is a way people identify with, and feel included in, their city and develop a greater sense of responsibility for the city they live in and connection to one another.
- Culture can support cross-cutting work, with creative thinking and practice helping to drive innovative solutions and encourage collaboration.
- Cultural programmes that are designed around, for and with young people, can cultivate lifelong interest in the arts, but are also a way to develop skills and to embed a shared set of community values.
- Cultural infrastructure is an important way to anchor neighbourhoods and build social cohesion, as well as provide cultural services and access locally.
- And finally, culture has a twofold role in addressing climate action: both reducing the environmental footprint of the sector, and in raising awareness around climate change and helping to change behaviours.
- This is a bold call to action – to rethink how we shape local government, decision-making and ways of working. Through culture, we can create a framework robust enough to respond to the next crisis.

## CALLS TO ACTION

### ↳ PEOPLE

- **Collaborate Across Teams**  
Cross-department and sector working is the only way to address the complex challenges we face.
- **Engage, Listen and Work with Young People**  
Help support the future citizens of your city.
- **Revive Relationships Between Government and People**  
There must be genuine inclusive engagement with the public as stakeholders within our cities.

### ↳ PLACE

- **Rethink the Shape of the City**  
Our future is urban, but it will look different. To create greater opportunities across neighbourhoods, new models are emerging. For example, polycentric and decentralised cities are creating space for, and recognising, the diversity of voices in our cities.

### ↳ PLANET

- **Embed Environmental Action Across Your Work**  
Social and economic equity will not happen without it.
- **Embrace Digital Tools and Best Practice**  
Across different parts of the culture sector there are tools to guide best practice and measure impact. Encourage your creative communities to use these.
- **Communicate Through Culture**  
Culture is a powerful tool to communicate and change behaviours – use it.



Highway Gallery. Image courtesy and © Louvre Abu Dhabi.



## 1

# COVID-19, OUR CITIES AND CULTURE

## Impact and Response

The Covid-19 pandemic exposed many of the social and economic problems that existed in our cities. It made inequality worse across all aspects of life: race, age and gender; living conditions; the social safety net – from job protection and sick pay to care and food security; healthcare provision; transportation; digital access for home-schooling or work; and access to outdoor space. And it impacted across local, regional and global scales.

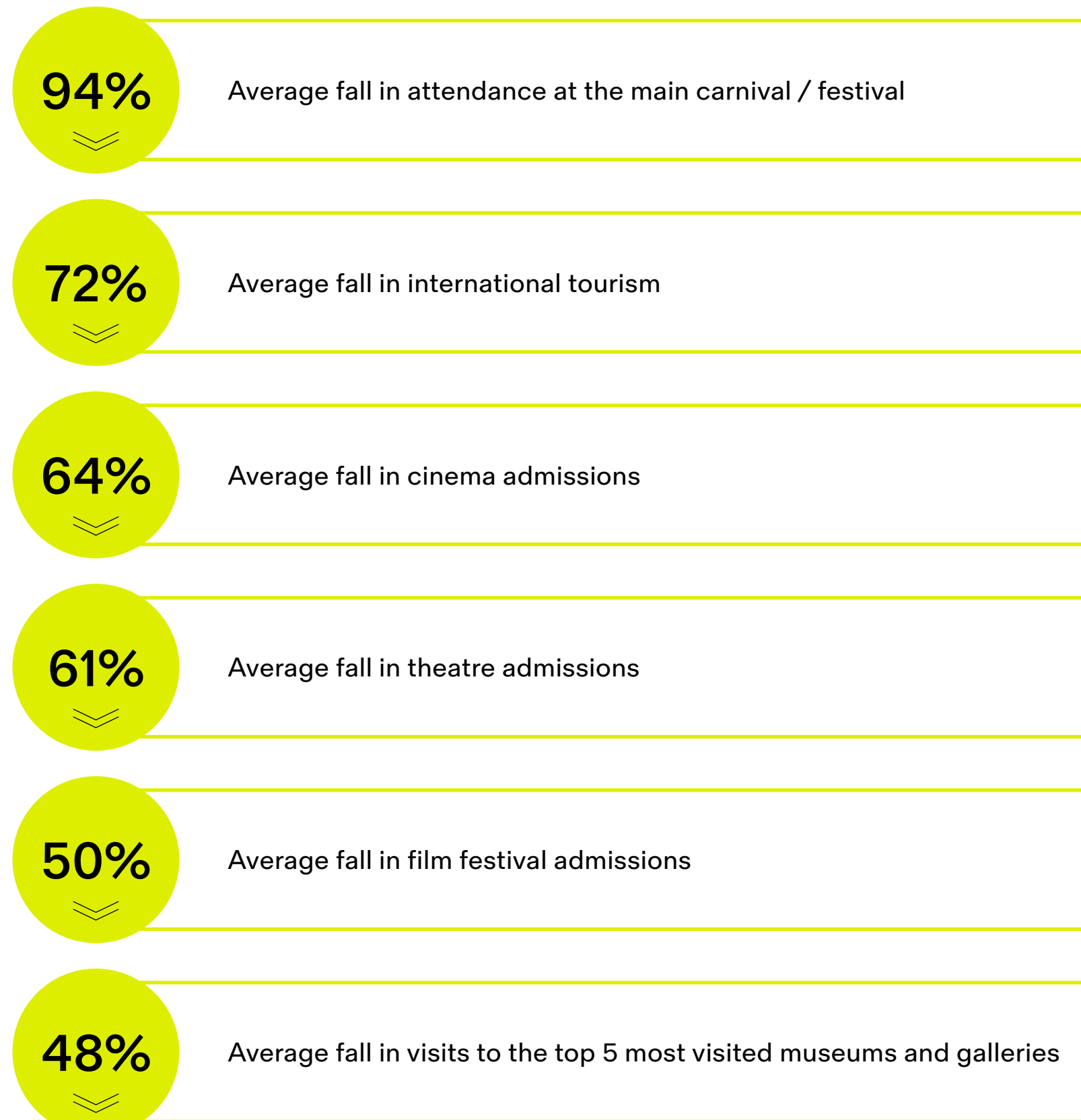
The pandemic revealed flaws in our governance, testing the flexibility and responsiveness of how services were delivered and to whom. Systems that are rooted in 20th century models of growth were unsuited to the challenges of the 21st century. It heightened the complex, interconnected challenges that we face daily – from the climate crisis to war and population displacement.

Covid-19 also exposed weakness in the culture sector. It showed how fragile working life is for artists and freelancers, the bedrock of the cultural ecosystem. Immediately we saw revenue losses, steep falls in employment, disruption of global productions and creative supply chains. UNESCO's report, 'Cultural and Creative industries in the face of COVID-19: an economic impact outlook'<sup>\*</sup>, estimated that the cultural and creative industries contracted by US \$750 billion in GVA in 2020, with a conservative estimate of 10 million jobs lost worldwide.

And our world cities experienced the impact firsthand. Collecting data on a global scale is a complex task at the best of times and has been made more difficult by the pandemic. However, we worked with our cities to collect data from both pre and post 2020. From the cities that responded we saw a clear pattern emerge across cultural participation, such as attendance at festivals; in output, from theatre productions to film releases; and in cultural infrastructure, such as the number of live music venues.

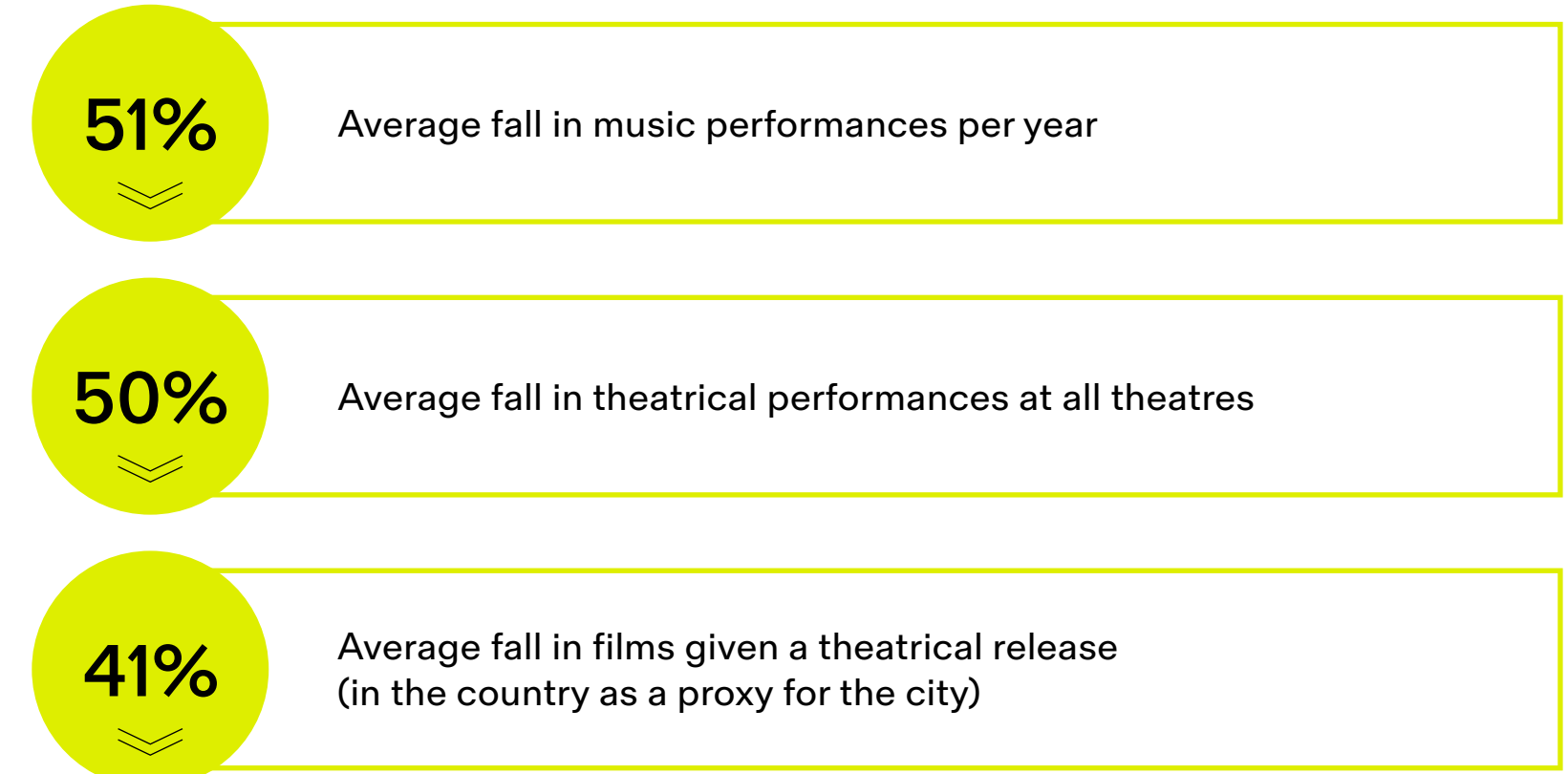
<sup>\*</sup> BOP Consulting, 'Cultural and Creative Industries In the Face of COVID-19: An Economic Impact Outlook' UNESCO, 2021, unesdoc.unesco.org

## IMPACTS OF COVID-19, 2019 TO 2021: WHAT HAPPENED TO PARTICIPATION IN CULTURE?

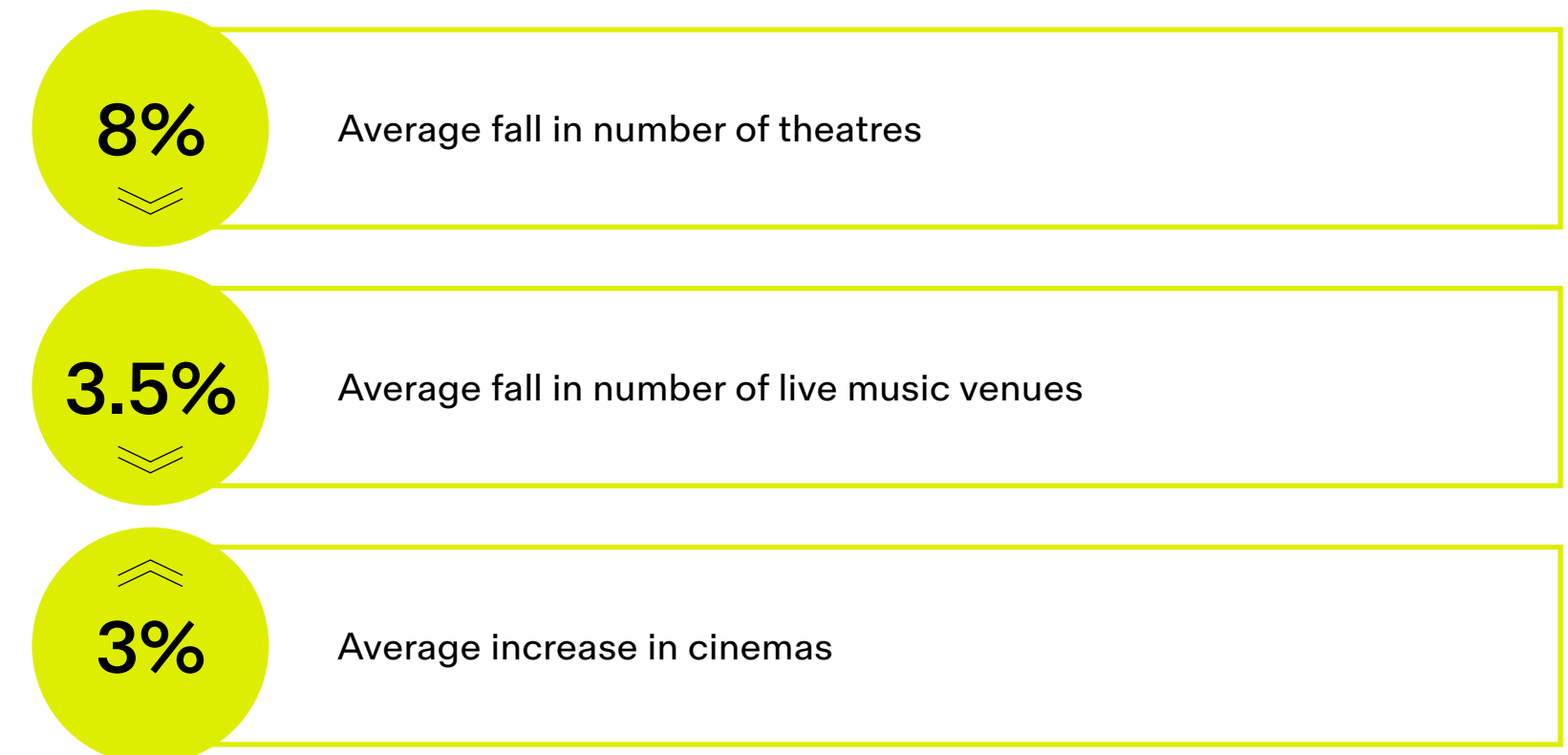


The above is taken from data returned by partner cities. Where 2019 data was not available, we used the next closest pre-pandemic year, and where 2021 data was not available, we used 2020 data. The number of cities returning data points for both pre and post pandemic years varies for each indicator, but sample size 'n'=7 or above. To note, these figures do not include digital audiences or output.

## HOW WAS CULTURAL OUTPUT AFFECTED?



## WHAT HAPPENED TO CULTURAL VENUES?





These figures show that people’s ability to participate in culture across our cities was hit hardest. Audiences were lost due to cancelled events, or they stayed at home. When events did take place, they often ran at reduced capacity due to social distancing measures. With venues and sites closed or operating under safety restrictions, output also suffered significant declines. The average fall in cultural infrastructure was modest, and in the case of cinemas we saw a small increase. But any losses to infrastructure are potentially more damaging in the long run. Re-opening facilities, or creating new ones, requires significant investment, so losses are harder to get back than falls in audiences.

## HOW DID CITIES RESPOND?

While the culture sector in our cities faced enormous disruption, there was also an unprecedented response from national and city governments, as well as from philanthropic organisations. Although the global picture varies by region and by degree, we saw many cities respond in radical ways. From forgiveness of rents and removal of delivery requirements, to new forms of funding, direct employment and advocacy. Cities used their powers and influence to support the cultural sector and creative workers in previously untested ways.

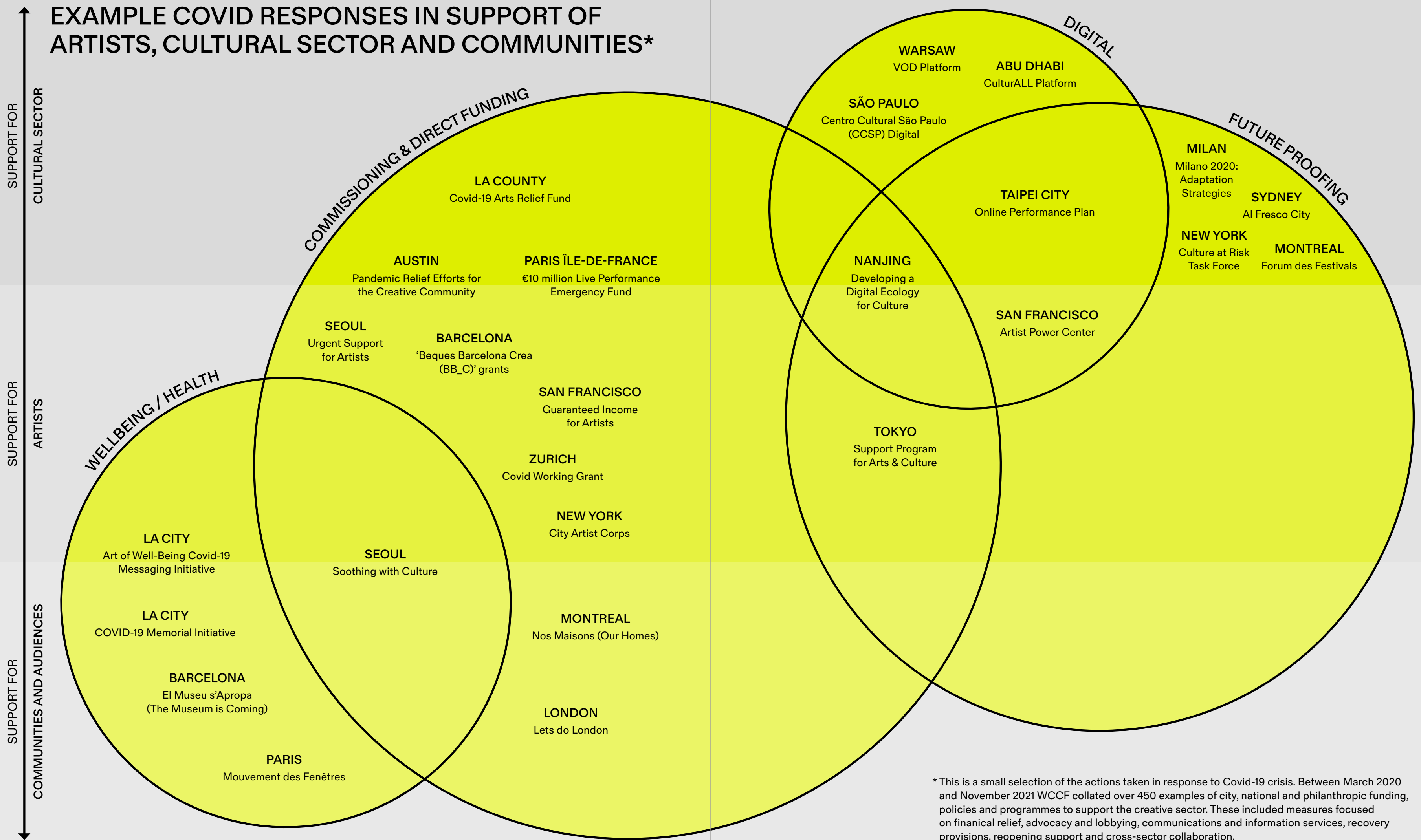


‘Be Well’ murals. Artist Luis Angulo.  
Image courtesy of City of Austin © Jay Ybarra.



Back to the Big Screen, Trafalgar Square,  
Skyfall. Image courtesy and © GLA.

# EXAMPLE COVID RESPONSES IN SUPPORT OF ARTISTS, CULTURAL SECTOR AND COMMUNITIES\*



\*This is a small selection of the actions taken in response to Covid-19 crisis. Between March 2020 and November 2021 WCCF collated over 450 examples of city, national and philanthropic funding, policies and programmes to support the creative sector. These included measures focused on financial relief, advocacy and lobbying, communications and information services, recovery provisions, reopening support and cross-sector collaboration.



## HOW DID OUR RELATIONSHIP TO CULTURE CHANGE?

People also turned to culture in new ways, revealing what the Forum has long known: culture is a crucial part of our cities' fabric. As our 2015 World Cities Culture Report argued, culture is the golden thread that runs across all aspects of urban planning and policy, and this was very much the case during the pandemic.

In the initial waves of lockdown, with travel limited to neighborhoods, or entirely restricted, people experienced culture at a hyper-local level. People discovered what was on their doorstep, such as Helsinki's Gift of Art, where the public could 'gift' an outdoor performance via a digital app to friends and family. It engaged audiences and supported creatives, while working within pandemic constraints. Buenos Aires' #culturaencasa brought culture directly into people's homes. These fulfilled a need to engage and bring people together through culture.

At the same time, the consumption of digital culture expanded to a hyper global level, with virtual visits to club nights through 'United We Stream', a DJ platform, or digital tours of global museums and online opera: the Met Opera in New York reported that it reached 21.2 million views from 152 countries through its 'Nightly Met Opera Streams'. As isolation increased during the lockdowns, culture often provided a vital connection point.

The pandemic was also an opportunity to address structural issues within the cultural ecosystem. Some of this work began pre-pandemic but took on greater urgency during the crisis. From new funding mechanisms to inspire greater creativity such as Kultur Labor Zürich (Culture Laboratory Zurich) or to correct bias as with Austin's Cultural Funding Review Process; to strengthening and supporting creative businesses and practitioners such as Amsterdam's ART-UP incubator, London's Night Time Enterprise Zone Pilot or Edinburgh's Creative Development Bursary; or supporting greater diversity within the sector as in Los Angeles City's Artist Workforce Empowerment Grant Program; and visions for the future of culture such as Nanjing's strategy around a digital ecology for culture.

While the impacts continue, what we see – from the scale and variety of response – is that people need culture. And that the role for culture cuts across entertainment and enjoyment to wellbeing and the vitality of our cities. It is interconnected throughout city life and shows the crucial role for City Halls within the cultural ecosystem.



DESCOLA. Image courtesy of City of Lisbon  
© José Frade.

## 2

WHAT HAVE  
WE LEARNTThe future of  
cities and the  
role of culture

Covid-19 challenged us to think differently about the future, because we need a different kind of future. A different way to support people, place and planet. In terms of people, what kind of governance do we need? What does the social contract between leaders and citizens look like? How can we create a future that serves the next generation? What does a genuinely equitable future look like? For place, how does a neighbourhood-focused city work? What are the relationships between where you live, work and play? For the planet, how can we decarbonize and achieve environmental sustainability? Underlying this is the bigger question of how can we achieve the transformation necessary to deliver a new future?



**My hope is that we have the courage to reimagine the kind of future we want together. That process must be wide open in order to make space for those voices that aren't usually heard.**

**Sue Agyakwa**

Bromley By Bow Centre, London



Fandango de Día de Muertos. Image courtesy of City of Austin © Melissa Villareal.



## WHERE ARE WE IN THE PANDEMIC JOURNEY?

In late 2022, we are at a point of divergence. What began as a synchronistic event, with places across the globe experiencing similar restrictions, lockdowns and health crises within a few months of each other, is now defined by regional differences. The pandemic is amplified by different government responses; new Covid-19 variants; vaccine uptake; and populations' tolerance for risk and loss. While we often hear the term 'post-covid', we are very much in a period of continued uncertainty.

## ARE CITIES STILL THE FUTURE?

Despite concerns that the pandemic would bring about 'the end of cities', between 2019 and 2021 we saw an average population increase of 3% across our cities. And while globally national governments set the framework for the Covid-19 response, city governments moved closer to citizens, serving the needs of their communities and providing much-valued support, especially through culture.



Beyoglu Culture Route. Image courtesy of Istanbul Directorate of Culture and Tourism.



**Cities are far closer to citizens than national governments. They have a critical role in translating policy ambitions into localised action that is culturally and geographically relevant.**

**Lucy Latham**

Senior Manager, Cities, States and Regions, Carbon Disclosure Project

Our cities, as sites of agglomerations – of people, of resource, of infrastructure – continue to be spaces of innovation. They are about shared experience across a large number of people, providing a place for inspiration and collaboration. However, the shape of many cities is changing, with urban areas no longer so dependent on their city centres as the focus for economic and cultural activity. Instead, we see polycentric models, such as those taking shape in Paris through their 15-minute city approach, Chengdu's Park City concept, or Amsterdam's 'doughnut economics' model, with a focus on decentralisation and localised supply chains.



**The major trends that drive agglomeration in cities are still present.**

**Jennifer Vey**

Senior Fellow and Director, The Bass Center for Transformative Placemaking, Brookings Institution



Helsinki Festival, Night of the Arts © Julia Kivelä & City of Helsinki.

## HOW MUST CITY LEADERS RESPOND?

There is an opportunity for city leadership. While our future will still be urban, it is clear we need to adapt. Covid-19 upended and tested our systems of governance and our understanding of equity within our cities. World cities are not sustainable economically, socially or environmentally. They need to change how they operate and for whom. Our structures (and infrastructures) are based on 20th century models of governance, but dealing with 21st century challenges. Governance, led by a top-down approach, will not solve the disconnect between our cities and the people they serve.



**All cities, irrespective of size or geography, are facing profound challenges around environmental and social issues.**

**Ricky Burdett**

Professor of Urban Studies, Director of London School of Economics Cities and Urban Age



**Covid-19 allowed us to consider new ways of defining value.**

**Chris Choa**

Founder OUTCOMIST and Senior Consultant, AECOM



Image courtesy of Taipei City.

## A MISSION-LED FUTURE

The scale of the challenges exposed a need for a radical re-orientation of governance, based on a mission-led approach to running world cities. An approach that means rethinking relationships across city governments' three spheres of impact: people, place, and planet. There is a need to address inequities within the city in a deep-rooted way. And our cities are trying. They are reassessing long held processes and assumptions to try and support more equitable outcomes.

We see this in projects and initiatives such as New York's Cultural Development Fund Reforms designed to foster greater equity and data-driven investment; in Melbourne's Warehouse Residency – working to address the gap in artistic development and residency opportunities designed for the needs of artists with disabilities; in Creative Well-being Tokyo, a major programme, including a conference, designed to widen access and create a best practice standard of 'culture for all'; through to Istanbul's Together Stronger Voices Choir I, addressing the need for inclusive and quality music education for children with disabilities; and in Lisbon's Meio no Meio – developing in-depth cultural engagement to improve opportunities and outcomes for citizens in peripheral neighbourhoods. Our city governments are reframing what they do in terms of meeting challenges rather than simply administering cities.



**Cities were thinking about equality pre-Covid-19, but they didn't even conceive of how that would play out and impact in a scenario like Covid-19. We need more drastic measures – our thinking about equality just doesn't cut it in this new world.**

**Emilia Saiz**

Secretary General, United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG)

At its heart, a mission-led policy looks at complex issues in the round. Instead of addressing problems within one department or a siloed approach, it means drawing in expertise, resources and ideas from a whole spectrum of perspectives to find the best and fairest solution to urgent and deep-rooted challenges.



Design District  
Hong Kong  
© 2021 Hong Kong  
Design Centre.





## 3

CULTURE IN  
WORLD CITIESA catalyst for  
transformation

Change is easier said than done. Although a mission-led policy offers a strong vision to make transformative improvements to cities, it does not mean it will be easy to deliver. An urgent and ambitious message can resonate with citizens, but it will require sophisticated and more complex ways of working and a clear agenda.

“

**One issue Covid-19 laid bare was that governments are hugely limited in serving citizens when they pursue a more traditional, siloed approach to delivering services.**

**Kate D. Levin**

Principal, Bloomberg Associates

“

**If we are going to solve difficult problems in the 21st century, it is going to be multidisciplinary. There is no single government ministry or department that can respond to these complex issues.**

**Bruce Katz**

Co-founder, New Localism Associates and Director, Nowak Metro Finance Lab,  
Lindy Institute for Urban Innovation at Drexel University



Image courtesy of Taipei City.



First, it will need a far greater emphasis on cross-cutting work, bringing people together collaboratively. Second, environmental action must be prioritised – there cannot be economic or social equity without addressing climate change. Cities have a responsibility to build-in climate action across every strand of work. Third, there must be a renewed relationship with the communities that city governments serve. A top-down approach, at the expense of engagement or inclusion, will weaken cities. A mission-led approach requires activation and co-creation with the public as stakeholders, rather than simply recipients. And finally, it must consider the impact on future generations.



**It's vital to forge long-standing relationships, so that people aren't motivated to come together only around episodic events or crisis moments. You need sustained and trust-building engagement between city governments and the people they serve.**

**Jennifer Vey**

Senior Fellow and Director, The Bass Center for Transformative Placemaking, Brookings Institution

These areas are not straightforward or simple to implement. So how can our cities put this into practice? We argue that there is a vital role for culture in driving this transformation. In many cases, culture is already working to address the most deep-seated and complex challenges facing cities.



Rankin Piccadilly Lights. Image courtesy and © GLA.

## CROSS-CUTTING COLLABORATION – IT ISN'T EASY, BUT IT'S WORTH IT

Working across departments and sectors requires a specific set of capabilities and skills. A striking instance of this is LA County's Creative Wellbeing programme, in which arts education and a creative wellbeing approach has become embedded in County systems, such as the foster care system, offering arts development and creative forms of expression for highly vulnerable young people.

The Creative Wellbeing programme is an illustration of what can be achieved by greater transversal working – in this case, bringing together the County's Department of Arts and Culture with their colleagues in the welfare and justice systems. Creative thinking, an approach that is rooted in arts and culture, alongside policy understanding and experience in delivery has led to a new solution to an entrenched and long-standing problem.

These features can also be found in Brasilia's Health Concerts. A partnership between the Secretariat of Culture and the Department of Health, has supported the District's official orchestra to perform in Brasilia's public hospitals, playing live music to patients, alleviating tension and contributing to the physical and emotional wellbeing of those awaiting, or recovering from treatment. Meanwhile Stockholm's Cultural Strategic Programme 2021, specifically encourages the City's planning, development and culture departments, as well as other partners, to cooperate and take joint responsibility for the provision of cultural infrastructure and to expand cultural access to underserved communities. In Dubai, the Culture & Arts Authority is part of the conversation around the Dubai 2040 Urban Master Plan – bringing culture and urban planning together. And in Hong Kong, the Arts-in-School Partnership Scheme fosters collaboration between arts organisations and schools – addressing two key issues: demand for art space, while nurturing students' interests in the arts.

## ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION – WE NEED TO SCALE UP

When it comes to environmental sustainability, these kinds of cross-cutting approaches are increasingly common, and starting to have a real impact. According to the WCCF 2021 survey, 62% of cities have undertaken cross-department initiatives between their culture and environment teams. The 2020 Taipei Biennial, which focused on global ecology and the impact of creative industries on carbon emissions, supported an innovative collaboration between Taipei Fine Arts Museum (organisers of the Biennial) and the City’s Geotechnical Engineering Office. By planting trees and improving the carbon absorption capacity of local forests they estimate they will reach net zero emissions before 2024.

In Milan, innovations around public-private partnerships with Fondazione Riccardo Catella has resulted in ‘The Trees Library’ a unique urban green space that supports regeneration while highlighting environmental sustainability. We also see our cities working to embed best practice within the cultural sector, such as Oslo with their Green Producers Tool, Warsaw’s Culture for Climate Collective, Stockholm’s Material Storehouse and Paris’s circular economy programme for cultural establishments.

And there is a further role for culture in climate action. One of the most distinctive qualities of arts and culture is its capacity to resonate, entertain and move – to bring over ‘hearts and minds’ in a way that facts and figures cannot. This is something that is especially recognised in environmental policy. It should be no surprise that some 60% of the Forum’s cities surveyed have commissioned artworks or creative projects using environmental sustainability as a theme.



**Arts and culture are unique in how they can shift narratives and make issues that can be polarising relevant to a broad variety of people. They can make challenges understandable and actions inspirational.**

**Lucy Latham**

Senior Manager, Cities, States and Regions, Carbon Disclosure Project

Making Space for Culture. Image courtesy of City of Sydney.



But much more needs to happen. When it comes to culture and the environment, relatively few cities have progressed from project delivery through to more strategic and long-term planning. Budgets are still ring fenced, and not enough funders include environmental impacts as part of their reporting requirements. Notable leadership and inspiration can be taken from Montreal’s Sustainability Index: they are systematically working with the cultural organisations they fund to embed sustainable practice in the long-term.

If city governments are to achieve the kind of change that is required, then a comprehensive cross-department approach will be needed. Cultural officers will have to work with environmental and energy colleagues to ensure that impacts are embedded not just in high-level policies but also in the setting of targets, investment decision making and evaluation processes.



## CULTURE, CITIZENS AND COMMON VALUES

But the power of culture to enable a mission-based policy goes beyond environmental issues, important as they are. Culture can enthuse and mobilise citizens to participate in a range of urgent concerns: helping make cities more sustainable, equitable and liveable. At a fundamental level, culture connects people to each other and to their city, to help see themselves as true citizens rather than simply inhabitants. Through festivals and cultural events, like Guangzhou's Summer in The City of Rams, museums and venues, historic buildings and public art programmes, like 'Seoul is Museum' which deepens citizen engagement with public art and their city, or projects like Diversity in Dublin, that capture and celebrate the city's changing demographics through portrait photography, people develop a greater sense of responsibility for the city they live in and for their fellow citizens. It is these values that underpin good city governance and democratic participation, and which mean, in a mission-based approach, that the public are partners and stakeholders, rather than passive recipients.

For city governments to implement the kind of transformative, mission-based policies that are so urgently needed, it will require a shared set of values. This in turn depends upon a shared appreciation of how a city's history has been shaped. Cultural heritage therefore has a distinct contribution to make to policy – whether it is through the city's architecture, public monuments and archaeological sites, or its museums and long-established institutions. The celebration, public use and protection of such heritage is a key challenge for city governments. In Abu Dhabi a collaboration between the Department of Culture and Tourism and the Education Ministry has resulted in a new education resource – designed to integrate cultural heritage into the school curriculum. This is bringing a sense of shared ownership, cultural identity and also responsibility among eleventh graders.

Within our Forum, there is an active conversation about how cities can reconcile themselves with historic injustices and a cultural legacy of under or unfair representation of certain communities. The challenge is how to create a shared sense of purpose and values across such contested histories. In Sydney, Yananurala | Walking on Country, which is part of the Eora Journey, is a cultural intervention to make the Aboriginal past and present visible across nine miles of the Sydney harbour foreshore. Committees and reviews such as the San Francisco Monuments and Memorials Advisory Committee, the Los Angeles City's Civic Memory Working Group, Toronto's Recognition Review and Renaming of Dundas Street and London's Commission for Diversity in the Public Realm are all important attempts to address this within the public realm, and from which shared learnings will emerge.



**We need to share experience with others to define reality, and cities allow the greatest number of people to have common realities. Without shared experience, we don't have civilisation.**

**Chris Choa**

Founder OUTCOMIST and Senior Consultant, AECOM



Health Concerts. Image courtesy and © City of Brasilia (Seccec-DF).

## YOUNG PEOPLE AND FUTURE CITIES

Finally, we see new ways that cities are engaging with children and young people through arts and culture. Not just so that they develop a lifetime of appreciation and enjoyment of culture, but as a means of building a relationship between citizens and the city. A brilliant example of this is Helsinki's Culture Kids. Every child born in Helsinki is invited to join and be paired with a cultural sponsor – one of the City's arts and cultural institutions. Whether it is a museum, gallery or orchestra, the child and its family are invited to access free events and activities. In this way, the next generation of citizens will grow up not just artistically educated, but with a strong connection to Helsinki and its culture, and a sense of belonging and stewardship for the city.

In São Paulo, PIAPI – the Artistic Initiative for the Early Childhood Program – focuses on very young children's cultural citizenship; Hamburg's Elbphilharmonie 'Sound Mobile' programme brings music directly to young children through workshops in different cultural venues across the city; in Barcelona their School in Residence programme asks, 'how can we build a space that brings culture and education together'; in Taipei City, their Art Education In-Depth Programme works to integrate the arts into children's education; while in Paris, 'L'Art pour grandir' brings culture to toddlers in nurseries as a way to develop curiosity and access to culture. In all these cases, the projects are seeking not just to provide cultural services for children and young people, but to help ensure that our cities of the future are places where all citizens can flourish.



Art to Grow, Théâtre Dunois, 2021 courtesy of City of Paris © Théâtre Dunois.

## WE MUST BE BOLD



**Covid-19 has allowed cities to test how far they could go to make the transformation they knew they had to do, but were not able to get the support or finance for. The question is now if those temporary measures will hold.**

**Emilia Saiz**

Secretary General, UCLG

Covid-19 allowed cities to experiment. In Milan we saw miles of bike lanes added, pushing public realm improvements and transport infrastructure. While in São Paulo we saw repurposed cultural infrastructure for immediate community and public health needs.

The crisis pushed the boundaries of what was possible. We have argued that cities can – and must – build on this moment of experimentation and opportunity through a mission-based approach. It requires action and boldness. The scale of the recovery efforts, ongoing cases and continued spread of infection all risk drawing our attention to immediate responses. And understandably so, but to only focus on immediate measures risks weakening a longer-term recovery and instead will bake-in structural fault lines in future policy.

A mission-based approach, with culture at its heart, builds-in the flexibility and responsiveness that will enable cities to respond to the next challenge. Ensuring our cities are sustainable, equitable and connected to all the people that call them home.



# REGIONAL PERSPECTIVES



As part of the research the World Cities Culture Forum hosted four round tables drawing additional insights from parts of Africa, China, the Middle East and South America where WCCF is deepening engagement.

## AFRICA

↳ A complex and diverse landscape of local models of governance, funding, and the strength of the private and cultural sectors produce varied responses to ideas around mission-based policies. One question is around the concept of ‘City Hall’ and where power sits within the context of different urban models in Africa. For a city like Lagos, the size and scale of growth means the State Government is the defining governance structure. Against backdrops of political change and inequality, the challenge remains to make a consistent argument for culture, and as such the need to gain buy-in around the value of culture as a driver of change is a more pressing focus.

Additional insights included:

- **New Digital Opportunities Bring Risks**  
Business tech developments in places like Lagos, Nairobi and Cairo, had a positive knock-on effect – supporting digital innovations in the cultural sector, including around paying artists, and the creation and consumption of arts on the continent. However, these new developments also risk creating new inequities, further excluding those with limited access to digital resources.
- **Measuring Informal Culture**  
To understand the cultural landscape in a city, there needs to be a way to capture or map informal cultural expression and consumption.
- **The Future is Young**  
Youth engagement is key. Different demographic growth patterns mean that, compared globally, cities in Africa skew towards the young. There must be policy and programmes to support their future.
- **A Role for the Private Sector**  
The private sector can act as a driver to push transversal work and affect change. However, it depends on its relative strength, operational freedoms and the regulatory environment.

*Thanks to participants from Johannesburg, Lagos and Tunisia.*

Playing in Abasto streets. Image courtesy and © Ministry of Culture of the City of Buenos Aires.

## CHINA

- ↳ As the country hit first by Covid-19, recovery efforts look to bring back previous levels of cultural output and support cultural practitioners. There is also a strong sense of the relationship between culture and economic development, as cities focus on recovery. A mission-based approach is reflected through a focus on a values and goals based vision for each city – though what this means can change from city to city, depending on priorities.

Additional insights included:

- **The Digital Story**  
Across the Forum's partner cities in China, advances in the cultural digital realm emerged during Covid-19. Whether it was user-generated cultural content in Chengdu; Shenzhen's digital innovations for the 16th Cultural Expo; Guangzhou's new technologies in the development of the cultural industries; or Shanghai's online cultural wellbeing as community culture and performances went digital, the intersection between culture and technology created new forms of expression, reaching new audiences, in new ways.
- **Heritage & Innovation**  
Heritage sites and intangible culture are significant parts of the cultural ecosystem; cities in China are integrating digital interpretations and experiences within heritage sites.
- **Networked Ways of Working**  
Responding to the Report's focus on transversal ways of working, there is also a need for both horizontal and vertical working practices, creating a networked approach.

*Thanks to participants from Chengdu, Guangzhou, Nanjing, Shanghai and Shenzhen.*

## MIDDLE EAST

- ↳ A varied picture emerged around the impact of Covid-19 on the cultural sector, reflective of the different funding models, structure of the creative ecosystem and relationships to local and national government. Across parts of the gulf region there is a strong future-led vision, with national and local strategies setting an agenda for the next ten or 20 years, shaping growth in the region and international relations. This provides a different interpretation of mission-based policy, but within a framework of setting strategic goals, involving collaboration and supporting the next generation.

Additional insights included:

- **Opportunities for Reassessment**  
In Dubai, Covid-19 was an opportunity to take a wholesale re-assessment of the cultural sector to support future development, providing a strong vision and ambition. While a convening group of cultural organisations across the UAE helped strengthen relationships, supporting a framework of how cities can become more interconnected within a region.
- **Hyper-localism & Tourism**  
While there was a shift to hyper-local experiences of culture during Covid-19, for cities with a strong focus on tourism this had significant economic impacts.
- **Cultural Ecosystems in Development**  
Strong Government and Foundation support enabled quick responses and assistance during the crisis, but where funding models were more disparate, or the sector less developed, there was a lack of institutional capacity to respond.
- **The Case for Culture**  
Within the region, culture has an important role to play in generating and shaping a sense of belonging, but there is still a need to advocate for the role of culture in the future.

*Thanks to participants from Dubai, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.*



## SOUTH AMERICA

- ↳ There is a crucial role for City Halls to bring vitality back to cities post-Covid. Cultural policy can act in service to the city mission, with enormous potential around the role of culture as a convener, creating a language to express commonalities, city values and work across sectors. But core social and economic problems remain. There is a need to balance pragmatic policies, while navigating political systems that don't necessarily recognise the value of culture, with ambition and vision to centre cultural policy as a driver of change and cohesion.

Additional insights included:

- **Digital Inclusion / Exclusion**  
The provision of culture digitally provided new forms of expression during Covid-19. And cities like Buenos Aires, Bogotá and São Paulo delivered cultural programmes in people's homes through new online platforms. However, it also created new types of exclusion in an already exclusionary landscape.
- **Time to Regain Cultural Agency**  
There is still a need to consolidate the value and recognition of culture at a political level. Covid-19 is an opportunity for culture to regain agency – a chance to advocate for culture.
- **Strength in Partnership**  
At a time when budgets will likely remain stagnant, working collaboratively with partners serves to gain influence and maximise resource and funding, strengthening culture's impact.
- **Building on Opportunities**  
In Brazil, new funding mechanisms under the Aldir Blanc Law in 2020 saw R\$3 billion funding distributed directly to cities and states. São Paulo State was able to use this to support new cultural projects, sustain cultural spaces and provide emergency income support for creative workers.

*Thanks to participants from Bogotá, Buenos Aires, Chile and São Paulo State.*



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:

Image © City of Chengdu.

Image courtesy and © Secretariat of Culture, Recreation and Sport, City of Bogotá.

Image courtesy and © Guangzhou Academy of Social Sciences.

Al Safa Library. Image courtesy and © Dubai Culture & Arts Authority.



# OUR CITIES IN ACTION

We have spotlighted projects and programmes from our cities – more details and the full breadth of inspirational and innovative case studies can be found on our website, [worldcitiescultureforum.com](http://worldcitiescultureforum.com).

'Memory Work' by Memory Work Collective.  
Image courtesy of City of Toronto  
© Jeremy Glenn.





# YOUNG PEOPLE



LISBON

## Descola

Cultural organisations collaborating to create better educational outreach for schools



TAIPEI CITY

## Art Education In-Depth Program

Working with cultural organisations to embed the arts in elementary school education

ABU DHABI

## Inclusion of World Heritage Sites in Curricula

Integrating cultural heritage into the curriculum of schools, through innovative modern educational tools

LEFT TO RIGHT:

World Heritage Sites in the Curriculum. Image courtesy and © Department of Culture and Tourism, Abu Dhabi.

DESCOLA. Image courtesy of City of Lisbon.

ISTANBUL

## Together Stronger Voices Choir I

Providing inclusive and quality music education for children with disabilities

HELSINKI

## Culture Kids

Bringing cultural institutions and families together through a city-wide cultural programme

SÃO PAULO

## Artistic Initiative for Early Childhood (PIAPI)

City-wide programme of cultural education for young children

BARCELONA

## School in Residence

Transformative partnership between a cultural institute and local school



LEFT TO RIGHT:

The Culture Kids © Maarit Hohteri & City of Helsinki.

School in Residence Programme. Image courtesy of City of Barcelona.



# PEOPLE AND ENGAGEMENT

DUBLIN

## Diversity in Dublin

Photography and engagement project to represent the diversity of the city



AMSTERDAM

## ACCESS - Culture for All

Creating a Europe-wide cultural policy network, to share ideas and small scale actions to create inclusive access



GUANGZHOU

## Summer in the City of Rams

A major cultural season to educate the public and grow tourism

LEFT TO RIGHT:

ACCESS - Culture for All. Image courtesy and © City of Amsterdam.

Diversity In Dublin, Tinu, 2021. Image courtesy of City of Dublin © Mandy O'Neill.



HAMBURG

## Elbphilharmonie Hamburg

World leading concert hall, making music accessible for all



SEOUL

## Seoul is Museum

A citizen led public art programme, nurturing a deep relationship between place, public art and people

MONTRÉAL

## Nos Maisons / Our Houses

Reducing social isolation through innovative cultural activity

TOKYO

## Creative Well-being Project

Increasing social inclusion and diversity through cultural programming

LEFT TO RIGHT:

Hongje Yuyeon. Seoul is Museum. Image courtesy and © Seoul Foundation for Arts and Culture.

Elbphilharmonie. Image courtesy and © Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg.



# STRENGTHENING THE CULTURE SECTOR

EDINBURGH

**Creative Development Bursary**  
Investing in creatives' professional development

MELBOURNE

**Activating creative spaces**  
Re-animating Melbourne's city centre through creative activation

AUSTIN

**Austin Economic Development Corporation and Cultural Trust**  
A new city-backed real estate programme to secure permanently affordable cultural space in Austin

SAN FRANCISCO

**Guaranteed Income Pilot for Artists**  
No-strings-attached cash payments to artists who have been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic



Creative Media Center of the Austin Film Society with artwork by Eric Ely. Image courtesy of City of Austin © Suzanne Cordeiro.



SHANGHAI

**Shanghai Jing'an Modern Drama Valley**  
A public cultural service platform for commercial and experimental theatre

SHENZHEN

**Shenzhen Design Week**  
City-wide festival to facilitate international cultural exchange and promote design thinking

LEFT TO RIGHT:

Kultur Labor Zürich. Image courtesy of City of Zurich © Joel Roth.

Gonketa, 'The Handshapes No 1', 2021. Image courtesy of City of Melbourne © Nicole Reed.

ZÜRICH

**Kultur Labor Zürich Culture Laboratory Zurich**  
Designing new 'future oriented' funding formats to support a diverse cultural scene

VIENNA

**Vienna Club Commission**  
Providing services and advocacy to Vienna's Club Culture





# RETHINKING THE CITY



## LAGOS

### John Randle Centre for Yoruba History and Culture

Regenerating Lagos with a major centre celebrating local history and culture



## BRASÍLIA

### Mala do Livro – Book Bag

Making micro-libraries available across city neighbourhoods with few cultural resources

LEFT TO RIGHT:

John Randle Centre for Yoruba History and Culture. Image © SI.SA.

Mala do Livro. Image courtesy and © City of Brasilia (Secec-DF).



## LONDON

### Night Time Enterprise Zone

Pilot programme to support local night time activity

LEFT TO RIGHT:

Bara, part of Yananurala. Image courtesy and © City of Sydney.

Walthamstow Night Time Enterprise Zone: Pilot Project. Image © Jenna Selby.

Image courtesy and © City of Toronto.



## SYDNEY

### Yananurala | Walking On Country

Harnessing Aboriginal knowledge for sustainability, place making and cultural identity



## TORONTO

### Recognition Review and Renaming of Dundas Street

Creating a more representative public realm



# CROSS-COLLABORATION



DUBAI

## 2040 Urban Master Plan

A comprehensive plan for sustainable urban development, working across departments

BUENOS AIRES

## Abasto Barrio Cultural

Development of a cultural neighbourhood through a bottom-up, collaborative approach



HONG KONG

## Arts-in-School Partnership Scheme

Skills, space and resource sharing between schools and arts organisations

LEFT TO RIGHT:

Community Party in Abasto. Image courtesy and © Ministry of Culture of the City of Buenos Aires.

Jackson Heights. Image courtesy of City of New York © Joe Buglewicz.

LOS ANGELES

## Creative Wellbeing

Integrating arts and mental health and wellbeing for at-risk youth and adults



NANJING

## Constructing new Studio Theatres

Developing the theatre culture of Nanjing by building and upgrading 100 theatre spaces



NEW YORK

## Culture at Risk Task Force

Creating a new City response team to defend New York's community cultural assets

LEFT TO RIGHT:

Teaching Artist from Homeboy Art Academy, an Arts for Healing & Justice Network Member Organization. Image courtesy of Los Angeles County Arts and Culture © Sylvanus Leone.

Theatre de la Feuille's Papa, at their partner school. Arts-in-School Partnership Scheme. Image courtesy and © Hong Kong Arts Development Council.



# ENVIRONMENT

MILAN

## BAM Biblioteca Alberi | The Trees Library

A public private partnership with a cultural body to manage a unique botanical garden



PARIS

## Circular Economy and the Cultural Sector

Developing and strengthening the circular economy across Paris' cultural sector



WARSAW

## Culture for Climate Collective

A grassroots initiative mobilising climate action

CHENGDU

## Park City

An ambitious plan to transform Chengdu into a park city, connecting citizens to culture and the natural environment



OSLO

## Green Producers Tool

A carbon and climate footprint calculator designed for the cultural sector

STOCKHOLM

## Material Storehouse

Creating a closed-loop system of materials and objects for Stockholm's cultural sector



LEFT TO RIGHT:

Green Producers Tool. Øyafestivalen. Image courtesy of City of Oslo © Tord Baklund.

Culture for Climate Collective. Image courtesy of City of Warsaw © Maurycy Stankiewicz.

LEFT TO RIGHT:

Material Storehouse © City of Stockholm / Fredrik Nyberg.

Green Producers Tool. Image courtesy of City of Oslo © Didrick Stenersen.



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