



# **culture 21**

Agenda 21 for culture  
Agenda 21 de la culture  
Agenda 21 de la cultura

**United Cities and Local Governments  
- Committee on culture**

## **Agenda 21 for culture**



**Ajuntament de Barcelona  
Institut de Cultura**



**United Cities and Local Governments  
Cités et Gouvernements Locaux Unis  
Ciudades y Gobiernos Locales Unidos**

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UNITED CITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS  
-COMMITTEE ON CULTURE

## Agenda 21 for culture



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The Agenda 21 for culture is the first document with worldwide mission that advocates establishing the groundwork of an undertaking by cities and local governments for cultural development.

The Agenda 21 for culture was agreed by cities and local governments from all over the world to enshrine their commitment to human rights, cultural diversity, sustainability, participatory democracy and creating conditions for peace. It was approved by the 4th Forum of Local Authorities for Social Inclusion of Porto Alegre, held in Barcelona on 8 May 2004 as part of the first Universal Forum of Cultures.

United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) adopted the Agenda 21 for culture as a reference document for its programmes on culture and assumed the role of coordinator of the process subsequent to its approval. UCLG's Committee on Culture is the meeting point for cities, local governments and networks that place culture at the heart of their development processes.

A growing number of cities and local governments the world over have adhered to the Agenda 21 for culture in their local councils. The process has raised the interest of international organisations, national governments and civil society.

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## How to adopt Agenda 21 for culture in your municipality

Around 300 cities, local governments and organisations from all over the world are linked to Agenda 21 for culture. A complete list is periodically updated on the website.

The formal adoption of Agenda 21 for culture by a local government is of major importance: it expresses the undertaking with the citizens so as to ensure that culture takes a key role in urban policies, and it shows a sign of solidarity and cooperation with the cities and local governments of the world.

A standard form for adoption of Agenda 21 for culture is found on the website. In order to ensure that adoptions are kept up-to-date, cities and local governments are kindly requested to send a copy of the resolution adopted in a plenary council meeting to:

- The World Secretariat of United Cities and Local Governments:  
**info@cities-localgovernments.org**
- The Secretariat of the Committee on culture:  
**agenda21cultura@bcn.cat**

Furthermore, it is advisable to send a copy of the resolution to:

- The Secretary General of the Association of Cities or Municipalities of your country
- The Ministry for Culture of your country

## How to implement Agenda 21 for culture in your municipality

Agenda 21 for culture provides an opportunity for every city to create a long-term vision of culture as a basic pillar in its development. The document “Advice on local implementation of Agenda 21 for culture” draws up general concepts and considerations, and suggests four specific tools:

- Local cultural strategy
- Charter of cultural rights and responsibilities
- Culture council
- Cultural impact assessment

You can download the full document “Advice on local implementation of Agenda 21 for culture” from the website.

## How to join UCLG’s Committee on Culture

Registration to UCLG’s Committee on Culture is possible through the form you may obtain from **info@cities-localgovernments.org**

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## The contents of Agenda 21 for culture

The Agenda 21 for culture has 67 articles, divided into three large sections.

The “principles” section (16 articles) describes the relationship between culture and human rights, diversity, sustainability, participatory democracy and peace. The “undertakings” (29 articles) concentrates on the scope of local government responsibilities, and gives a detailed description of the request for centrality of cultural policies. The section on “recommendations” (22 articles) advocates for the renewed importance of culture, and demands that this importance be recognised in the programmes, budgets and organisational charts of the various levels of government (local, national / State) and by international organisations.

The contents of Agenda 21 for culture can also be summarised thematically.

### **Culture and human rights**

- Culture and human development. Cultural diversity as “a means to achieve a more satisfactory intellectual, emotional, moral and spiritual existence.”
- Cultural rights are an integral part of human rights. “No one may invoke cultural diversity to infringe upon the human rights guaranteed by international law, nor to limit their scope.”
- Mechanisms, instruments and resources for guaranteeing freedom of speech
- Invitation to artists to commit themselves with the city, improving coexistence and quality of life, increasing the creative and critical capacity of all citizens

### **Culture and governance**

- New central role of culture in society. Legitimacy of cultural policies
- Quality of local development depends on the interweaving of cultural policies and other public policies
- Local governance: a joint responsibility of citizens, civil society and governments
- Improvement of assessment mechanisms in culture. System of cultural indicators
- Importance of networks and international cooperation
- Participation of local governments in national cultural policies and programmes

### **Culture, sustainability and territory**

- Cultural diversity, as necessary for humankind as biodiversity is for nature
- Diversity of cultural expressions brings wealth. Importance of a wide cultural ecosystem, with diversity of origins, actors and content
- Dialogue, coexistence and interculturality as basic principles for the dynamics of citizen relationships
- Public spaces as cultural spaces

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### **Culture and social inclusion**

- Access to culture at all stages of life
- Expressiveness as a basic dimension of human dignity and social inclusion without any prejudice to gender, origin, poverty or any other kind of discrimination
- Building audiences and encouraging cultural participation as vital elements of citizenship

### **Culture and economy**

- Recognition of the economic dimension of culture. Importance of culture as a factor in the creation of wealth and economic development
- Funding culture with various sources, such as subsidies, venture capital funds, micro-credits or tax incentives.
- Strategic role of the cultural industries and the local media for their contribution to local identity, creative continuity and job creation
- Relations between cultural facilities and the organisations of the knowledge economy
- Respect and guarantee rights of authors and artists and ensure their fair remuneration

The website <http://www.agenda21culture.net> hosts all the resources, including translations of the document into several languages, articles, publications, news and events.

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# AGENDA 21 FOR CULTURE

## An undertaking by cities and local governments for cultural development

We, cities and local governments of the world, committed to human rights, cultural diversity, sustainability, participatory democracy and the creation of the conditions for peace, assembled in Barcelona on 7 and 8 May 2004, at the IV Porto Alegre Forum of Local Authorities for Social Inclusion, in the framework of the Universal Forum of Cultures – Barcelona 2004, agree on this Agenda 21 for Culture as a guiding document for our public cultural policies and as a contribution to the cultural development of humanity.

### I. Principles

1. Cultural diversity is the main heritage of humanity. It is the product of thousands of years of history, the fruit of the collective contribution of all peoples through their languages, imaginations, technologies, practices and creations. Culture takes on different forms, responding to dynamic models of relationship between societies and territories. Cultural diversity is “a means to achieve a more satisfactory intellectual, emotional, moral and spiritual existence” (UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, article 3), and is one of the essential elements in the transformation of urban and social reality.
2. Clear political analogies exist between cultural and ecological questions, as both culture and the environment are common assets of all humanity. The current economic development models, which prey excessively on natural resources and common goods of humanity, are the cause of increasing concern for the environment. Rio de Janeiro 1992, Aalborg 1994, and Johannesburg 2002, have been the milestones in a process of answering one of the most important challenges facing humanity: environmental sustainability. The current situation also provides sufficient evidence that cultural diversity in the world is in danger due to a globalization that standardizes and excludes. UNESCO says: “A source of exchange, innovation and creativity, cultural diversity is as necessary for humankind as biodiversity is for nature” (UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, article 1).
3. Local governments recognize that cultural rights are an integral part of human rights, taking as their reference the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966) and the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity (2001). They recognize that the cultural freedom of individuals and communities is an essential condition for democracy. No one may invoke cultural diversity to infringe upon the human rights guaranteed by international law, nor to limit their scope.
4. Local governments are worldwide agents of prime importance as defenders and promoters of the advance of human rights. They also represent the citizens of the world and speak out in favour of international democratic systems and institutions. Local governments work together in networks, exchanging practices and experiences and coordinating their actions.
5. Cultural development relies on a host of social agents. The main principles of good governance include transparency of information and public participation in the conception of cultural policies, decision-making processes and the assessment of programmes and projects.

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6. The indispensable need to create the conditions for peace must go hand in hand with cultural development strategies. War, terrorism, oppression and discrimination are expressions of intolerance which must be condemned and eradicated.
  7. Cities and local spaces are a privileged setting for cultural invention which is in constant evolution, and provide the environment for creative diversity, where encounters amongst everything that is different and distinct (origins, visions, ages, genders, ethnic groups and social classes) are what makes full human development possible. Dialogue between identity and diversity, individual and group, is a vital tool for guaranteeing both a planetary cultural citizenship as well as the survival of linguistic diversity and the development of cultures.
  8. Coexistence in cities is a joint responsibility of citizens, civil society and local governments. Laws are fundamental, but cannot be the only way of regulating coexistence in cities. As the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (article 29) states: "Everyone has duties to the community in which alone the free and full development of his ...(/her)... personality is possible".
  9. Cultural heritage, tangible and intangible, testifies to human creativity and forms the bedrock underlying the identity of peoples. Cultural life contains both the wealth of being able to appreciate and treasure traditions of all peoples and an opportunity to enable the creation and innovation of endogenous cultural forms. These qualities preclude any imposition of rigid cultural models.
  10. The affirmation of cultures, and the policies which support their recognition and viability, are an essential factor in the sustainable development of cities and territories and its human, economic, political and social dimension. The central nature of public cultural policies is a demand of societies in the contemporary world. The quality of local development depends on the interweaving of cultural and other public policies – social, economic, educational, environmental and urban planning.
  11. Cultural policies must strike a balance between public and private interest, public functions and the institutionalization of culture. Excessive institutionalization or the excessive prevalence of the market as the sole distributor of cultural resources involves risks and hampers the dynamic development of cultural systems. The autonomous initiative of the citizens, individually or in social entities and movements, is the basis of cultural freedom.
  12. Proper economic assessment of the creation and distribution of cultural goods – amateur or professional, craft or industrial, individual or collective – becomes, in the contemporary world, a decisive factor in emancipation, a guarantee of diversity and, therefore, an attainment of the democratic right of peoples to affirm their identities in the relations between cultures. Cultural goods and services, as stated in the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity (article 8), "as vectors of identity, values and meaning, must not be treated as mere commodities or consumer goods". It is necessary to emphasize the importance of culture as a factor in the creation of wealth and economic development.
  13. Access to the cultural and symbolic universe at all stages of life, from childhood to old age, is a fundamental element in the shaping of sensitivity, expressiveness and coexistence and the construction of citizenship. The cultural identity of each individual is dynamic.
  14. The appropriation of information and its transformation into knowledge by the citizens is a cultural act. Therefore access without discrimination to expressive, technological and communication resources and the constitution of horizontal networks strengthens and nourishes the collective heritage of a knowledge-based society.

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15. Work is one of the principal spheres of human creativity. Its cultural dimension must be recognized and developed. The organization of work and the involvement of businesses in the city or territory must respect this dimension as one of the basic elements in human dignity and sustainable development.
  16. Public spaces are collective goods that belong to all citizens. No individual or group can be deprived of free use of them, providing they respect the rules adopted by each city.

## II. Undertakings

17. To establish policies that foster cultural diversity in order to guarantee a broad supply and to promote the presence of all cultures especially minority or unprotected cultures, in the media and to support co-productions and exchanges avoiding hegemonic positions.
18. To support and promote, through different means and instruments, the maintenance and expansion of cultural goods and services, ensuring universal access to them, increasing the creative capacity of all citizens, the wealth represented by linguistic diversity, promoting artistic quality, searching new forms of expression and the experimentation with new art languages, as well as the reformulation and the interaction between traditions, and the implementation of mechanisms of cultural management which detect new cultural movements and new artistic talent and encourage them to reach fulfillment. Local governments state their commitment to creating and increasing cultural audiences and encouraging cultural participation as a vital element of citizenship.
19. To implement the appropriate instruments to guarantee the democratic participation of citizens in the formulation, exercise and evaluation of public cultural policies.
20. To guarantee the public funding of culture by means of the necessary instruments. Notable among these are the direct funding of public programmes and services, support for private enterprise activities through subsidies, and newer models such as micro-credits, risk-capital funds, etc. It is also possible to consider establishing legal systems to facilitate tax incentives for companies investing in culture, providing these respect the public interest.
21. To open up spaces for dialogue between different spiritual and religious choices living side by side in the local area, and between these groups and the public authorities to ensure the right to free speech and harmonious coexistence.
22. To promote expression as a basic dimension of human dignity and social inclusion without prejudice by gender, age, ethnic origin, disability, poverty or any other kind of discrimination which hinders the full exercise of freedoms. The struggle against exclusion is a struggle for the dignity of all people.
23. To promote the continuity and the development of indigenous local cultures, which are bearers of a historic and interactive relation with the territory.
24. To guarantee the cultural expression and participation of people with cultures from immigration or originally rooted in other areas. At the same time, local governments undertake to provide the means for immigrants to have access to and participate in the culture of the host community. That reciprocal commitment is the foundation of coexistence and intercultural processes, which in fact, without that name, have contributed to creating the identity of each city.

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25. To promote the implementation of forms of “cultural impact assessment” as a mandatory consideration of the public or private initiatives that involve significant changes in the cultural life of cities.
  26. To consider cultural parameters in all urban and regional planning, establishing the laws, rules and regulations required to ensure protection of local cultural heritage and the legacy of previous generations.
  27. To promote the existence of the public spaces of the city and foster their use as cultural places for interaction and coexistence. To foster concern for the aesthetics of public spaces and collective amenities.
  28. To implement measures to decentralize cultural policies and resources, legitimating the creative originality of the so-called peripheries, favoring the vulnerable sectors of society and defending the principle of the right of all citizens to culture and knowledge without discrimination. That determination does not mean avoiding central responsibilities and, in particular, responsibility for funding any decentralization project.
  29. To particularly promote coordination between the cultural policies of local governments that share a territory, creating a dialogue that values the identity of each authority, their contribution to the whole and the efficiency of the services for citizens.
  30. To boost the strategic role of the cultural industries and the local media for their contribution to local identity, creative continuity and job creation.
  31. To promote the socialization of and access to the digital dimension of projects and the local or global cultural heritage. The information and communication technologies should be used as tools for bringing cultural knowledge within the reach of all citizens.
  32. To implement policies whose aim is the promote access to local public media and to develop these media in accordance with the interests of the community, following the principles of plurality, transparency and responsibility.
  33. To generate the mechanisms, instruments and resources for guaranteeing freedom of speech.
  34. To respect and guarantee the moral rights of authors and artists and ensure their fair remuneration.
  35. To invite creators and artists to commit themselves to the city and the territory by identifying the problems and conflicts of our society, improving coexistence and quality of life, increasing the creative and critical capacity of all citizens and, especially, cooperating to contribute to the resolution of the challenges faced by the cities.
  36. To establish policies and investments to encourage reading and the diffusion of books, as well as full access for all citizens to global and local literary production.
  37. To foster the public and collective character of culture, promoting the contact of all sectors of the city with all forms of expression that favour conviviality: live shows, films, festivals, etc.
  38. To generate coordination between cultural and education policies, encouraging the promotion of creativity and sensitivity and the relations between cultural expressions of the territory and the education system.
  39. To guarantee that people with disabilities can enjoy cultural goods and services, facilitating their access to cultural services and activities.
  40. To promote relations between the cultural facilities and other entities working with knowledge, such as universities, research centers and research companies.

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41. To promote programmes aimed at popularizing scientific and technical culture among all citizens, especially taking into account that the ethical, social, economic and political issues raised by possible applications of new scientific knowledge are of public interest.
  42. To establish legal instruments and implement actions to protect the cultural heritage by means of inventories, registers, catalogues and to promote and popularize heritage appreciation through activities such as exhibitions, museums or itineraries.
  43. To protect, valorize and popularize the local documentary heritage generated in the public local/regional sphere, on their own initiative or in association with public and private entities, providing incentives for the creation of municipal and regional systems for that purpose.
  44. To encourage the free exploration of cultural heritage by all citizens in all parts of the world. To promote, in relation with the professionals in the sector, forms of tourism that respect the cultures and customs of the localities and territories visited.
  45. To develop and implement policies that deepen multilateral processes based on the principle of reciprocity. International cultural cooperation is an indispensable tool for the constitution of a supportive human community which promotes the free circulation of artists and cultural operators, especially across the north-south frontier, as an essential contribution to dialogue between peoples to overcome the imbalances brought about by colonialism and for interregional integration.

### III. Recommendations

#### TO LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

46. All local governments are invited to submit this document for the approval of their legislative bodies and to carry out a wider debate with local society.
47. Ensure the central place of culture in local policies and promote the drafting of an Agenda 21 for culture in each city or territory, in close coordination with processes of public participation and strategic planning.
48. Make proposals for agreeing the mechanisms for cultural management with other institutional levels, always respecting the principle of subsidiarity.
49. Fulfill, before 2006, a proposal for a system of cultural indicators that support the deployment of this Agenda 21 for culture, including methods to facilitate monitoring and comparability.

#### TO STATE AND NATIONAL GOVERNMENTS

50. Establish instruments for public intervention in the cultural field, bearing in mind the increase in citizens' cultural needs, current deficiencies of cultural programmes and resources and the importance of devolving budgetary allocations. Moreover, it is necessary to work to allocate a minimum of 1% of the national budget for culture.
51. Establish mechanisms for consultation and agreement with local governments, directly or through their networks and federations, to make new legislation, rules and systems for funding in the cultural field.
52. Avoid trade agreements that constrain the free development of culture and the exchange of cultural goods and services on equal terms.

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53. Approve legal provisions to avoid the concentration of cultural and communication industries and to promote cooperation, particularly in the field of production, with local and regional representatives and agents.
  54. Guarantee appropriate mention of the origin of cultural goods exhibited in our territories and adopt measures to prevent illegal trafficking of goods belonging to the historic heritage of other peoples.
  55. Implement at state or national level international agreements on cultural diversity, especially the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, approved at the 31st General Conference, in November 2001, and the Plan of Action on Cultural Policies for Development agreed at the Intergovernmental Conference in Stockholm (1998).

#### TO INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

##### *ORGANIZATIONS OF CITIES*

56. To United Cities and Local Governments: adopt this Agenda 21 for Culture as a reference document for their cultural programmes and also assume their role as coordinators of the process after their adoption.
57. To continental networks of cities and local governments (especially the ones that promoted this Agenda 21 such as Interlocal, Eurocities, Sigma or Mercociudades): consider this document within their technical action and policy programmes.

##### *UNITED NATIONS PROGRAMMES AND AGENCIES*

59. To UNESCO: recognize this Agenda 21 for Culture as a reference document in its work preparing the international legal instrument or Convention on Cultural Diversity planned for 2005.
59. To UNESCO: recognize cities as the territories where the principles of cultural diversity are applied, especially those aspects related to coexistence, democracy and participation; and to establish the means for local governments to participate in its programmes.
60. To the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP): deepen its analysis of culture and development and incorporate cultural indicators into the calculation of the human development index (HDI).
61. To the Department of Economic and Social Affairs – Sustainable Development Section, which is responsible for the monitoring of Agenda 21: develop the cultural dimension of sustainability following the principles and commitments of this Agenda 21 for Culture.
62. To United Nations – HABITAT: consider this document as a basis for the establishing the importance of the cultural dimension of urban policies.
63. To the United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights: include the urban dimension in its analysis of the relations between cultural rights and other human rights.

##### *INTERGOVERNMENTAL AND SUPRANATIONAL ORGANISATIONS*

64. To the World Trade Organizations: exclude cultural goods and services from their negotiation rounds. The bases for exchanges of cultural goods and services must be established in a new international legal instrument such as the Convention on Cultural Diversity planned for 2005.
65. To the continental organizations (European Union, Mercosur, African Union, Association of Southeast Asian Nations): incorporate culture as a pillar of their construction. Respecting the national competences and subsidiarity, there is a need for a continental cultural policy based on the principles of the legitimacy of public intervention in culture, diversity, participation, democracy and networking.

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66. To the multilateral bodies established on principles of cultural affinity (for example, the Council of Europe, the League of Arab States, the Organization of Iberoamerican States, the International Francophone Organisation, the Commonwealth, the Community of Portuguese Language Countries, the Latin Union): promote dialogue and joint projects which lead to a greater understanding between civilizations and the generation of mutual knowledge and trust, the basis of peace.
67. To the International Network for Cultural Policies (states and ministers of culture) and the International Network for Cultural Diversity (artists' associations): consider the cities as fundamental territories of cultural diversity, to establish the mechanisms for the participation of local governments in their work and to include the principles set out in this Agenda 21 for culture in their plans of action.

Barcelona, 8 de mayo de 2004

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**Committee on culture – United Cities and Local Governments – UCLG**  
**Commission de culture – Cités et Gouvernements Locaux Unis – CGLU**  
**Comisión de cultura – Ciudades y Gobiernos Locales Unidos – CGLU**

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The Agenda 21 for culture is available in English, French, Spanish, Arabic, Bulgarian, Catalan, Galician, German, Italian, Japanese, Portuguese and Turkish. Committed to cultural and linguistic diversity, the Committee on culture encourages its translation into more languages.

L'Agenda 21 de la cultura est disponible en anglais, français, espagnol, allemand, arabe, bulgare, catalan, galicien, italien, japonais, portugais et turc. Engagé à la diversité culturelle et linguistique, la Commission de culture encourage sa traduction dans d'autres langues.

La Agenda 21 de la cultura está disponible en inglés, francés, español, alemán, árabe, búlgaro, catalán, gallego, italiano, japonés, portugués y turco. Comprometido con la diversidad cultural y lingüística, la Comisión de cultura anima a su traducción a otras lenguas.

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