

# UNESCO CREATIVE CITIES: BUILD BACK BETTER FROM COVID-19



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# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN) Online Meeting “Build back better through culture and creativity” has been made possible thanks to the collective work led by Mr Ernesto Ottone R., Assistant Director-General for Culture of UNESCO as well as to the close cooperation with the city of Santos (Brazil) and its Mayor, Mr Rogério Santos.

The UNESCO Creative Cities Network would first like to thank all the participants for their strong involvement and the support given to this online event.

We also would like to express our gratitude to all Creative Cities around the world, for their close collaboration in the preparation of this event, as well as their essential contributions made during the discussions.

Finally, we would like to convey our thanks to the organization team, made of both the Secretariat of the UNESCO Creative Cities Network and the city of Santos team for their time and efforts, as well as the “Communication, Cities and Events” Unit of the UNESCO Culture Sector for its support.



# CONCEPT NOTE

Since its outbreak, the COVID-19 pandemic has had a substantial impact on all the aspects of human life across the entire globe. With high concentration of inhabitants, and as major hubs of economic, social, and cultural activities, cities have been on the frontline of the crisis and have been mobilized to provide swift responses to the multifaceted impact of the pandemic.

Beyond the most immediate, urgent measures undertaken to contain the spread of the virus and provide necessary medical services despite lockdown and other social distancing measures, cities have endeavored to maintain education, social cohesion, and the cultural life of their inhabitants.

Cultural and creative sectors have, in particular, been deeply affected: cultural events, festivals, musical and artistic performances have been cancelled or postponed, museums, theatre, cinema and libraries among others, have been temporarily closed. This has significantly jeopardized people's access to cultural and creative activities, as well as impacted the livelihoods of artists and professionals, thus affecting the entire cultural and creative economy.

In light of this, cities have demonstrated their inventiveness, their capacity for adaptation as well as their proactive strength to respond to the challenges which have emerged throughout this unprecedented situation, notably in regard to the cultural and creative sectors. This includes numerous and diverse actions and measures at the local level. Access to education and participation in cultural activities have been ensured by means of online communication; advancement of support measures for creative practitioners and workers, including financial assistance. Design and innovation have been further utilized to devise sustainable solutions to a wide range of urban challenges. Through the strategic placement of culture and creativity as major enablers for social cohesion and a unique source of resilience, local policymakers have also leveraged cultural capital to recreate a sense of community and solidarity among their residents.

Recognizing the essential role of cooperation and mutual learning in times of crisis, the UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN), along with its 246 member cities from over 80 countries, have taken action to further strengthen collaboration, and encourage the sharing and exchange of good practices amongst Creative Cities and beyond. The global call launched by the UCCN Secretariat in March 2020 resulted in a dedicated publication titled 'UNESCO Creative Cities' Response to COVID-19', which gathered culture and creativity enabled initiatives from more than 90 Creative Cities of 44 countries. One year later, a second call was launched with a special focus on activities related to post-pandemic recovery.





To contribute to this rising momentum, UNESCO, in collaboration with Santos (Brazil), the Host City of the XIV UCCN Annual Conference, will organize a two-day online meeting under the theme 'UNESCO Creative Cities: Build back better from COVID-19' on 6 and 7 July 2021. It will focus on the role of culture and creativity in urban recovery and sustainable development within the current global context and wider scope. The online meeting will offer Creative Cities a forum to exchange their good practices, lessons learnt, as well as discuss short and mid-term development visions and strategies.

Considering the pandemic not only as a crisis but also as an opportunity, the meeting will encourage Creative Cities and other stakeholders and actors, including Member States, to further nurture the power and potential of culture and creativity in achieving the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It will also strengthen the call for taking additional action towards building resilient, inclusive and people-centred cities in the long-term.

## SESSIONS

### DAY 1 (Tuesday 6 July)

#### Spotlight on Mayors

As part of the opening of the two respective days, Mayors of Creative Cities will share their visions on the contribution of culture and creativity for sustainable urban development, illustrated by concrete cases and initiatives implemented by cities to address the pandemic. In addition to enhancing inter-city cooperation and peer-learning, this special session will also aim to provide encouragement and inspiration to fellow Creative Cities in their own responses to and recovery from the pandemic.

#### Presentation by the UCCN Secretariat

The UCCN Secretariat will provide an update on some of the Network's activities as well as provide a brief summary on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on its work. In this regard, the Secretariat will showcase the efforts undertaken since the outbreak of the pandemic to further foster the exchange of good practices between cities and stimulate mutual learning, notably through its two Global Calls for culture and creativity enabled urban responses.

## **Creative Cities' responses to COVID-19: leveraging the power of culture and creativity**

Structured around a set of themes, this session will discuss how Creative Cities have been tapping into their cultural and creative assets, as well as devising innovative measures in response to the socio-economic and other resultant impacts of the pandemic. Built on selected cases from the first Global Call, the session will not only illustrate various ways in which culture and creativity have been utilized to respond to the pandemic, but also in diverse areas such as access and participation to cultural activities, support policies and measures, education and learning, and inter-city cooperation, amongst others.

### **DAY 2 (Wednesday 7 July)**

#### **Building cities back better through culture and creativity**

##### **Part I - Experiences and knowledge exchange: cases from Creative Cities**

With a forward-looking approach and a special focus on the recovery, this session will invite stakeholders to deepen the collective reflection on the role of culture and creativity in dealing with major urban challenges and opportunities in both short-term immediate responses as well as long-term recovery plans. Throughout the session, illustrative cases from different creative fields of the Network will be introduced, with the aim of inspiring cities worldwide to adapt, recover and innovate.

##### **Part II - Recovery of urban tourism: challenges and opportunities**

Being one of the sectors hardest hit by the pandemic, the travel and tourism landscape, especially in urban areas, has shifted dramatically. As cities and domestic tourism have been slowly reopening in some parts of the world, it is essential to initiate a coordinated and holistic recovery action at the international level to fulfill tourism's potential as an enabler of sustainable and inclusive recovery and growth for cities.

In this context and based on the lessons learnt from cases initiated by Creative Cities, this session will explore how to revitalize urban tourism and what structural transformation is needed to shape a more sustainable and resilient tourism through culture and creativity.

# SUMMARY REPORT

## DAY 1 (Tuesday 6 July)

### OPENING SESSION

#### **Ms Denise Bax, Chief of Unit - Communication, Cities & Events, UNESCO**

Ms Denise Bax, the Secretary of the UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN), welcomed all the participants and underlined that the current meeting lays emphasis on the importance of culture and creativity as a driving force for Creative Cities in their response to and recovery from the pandemic.

#### **Mr Ernesto Ottone R., Assistant Director-General for Culture of UNESCO**

The Assistant Director-General (ADG) for Culture, Mr Ernesto Ottone R., welcomed all the Creative Cities and recalled the importance of the local dimension in building back better after the pandemic. He emphasized that culture has the power to sustain and transform cities, to strengthen local communities and create a sense of identity. The pandemic has further highlighted the crucial role of culture in achieving resilience and collective well-being. As a part of UNESCO's global response, the Organization has been organizing several activities and initiatives. Regarding the UCCN, the ADG laid emphasis on the initiatives undertaken by Creative Cities that had highlighted the decisive role of international cooperation and mutual learning in times of crisis. Cities demonstrated their inventiveness and ability to adapt through a set of innovative measures ranging from financial support to development of digital tools and use of new technology. The publication 'UNESCO Creative Cities' Response to COVID-19' brings all these culture and creativity empowered undertakings into one space for further dissemination and experience sharing.

#### **Mr Rogerio Santos, Mayor of Santos (Brazil)**

The Mayor of Santos, Mr Rogerio Santos started his intervention by recognizing the importance of being a UNESCO Creative City, especially when the city encounters challenges related to social inequalities, including access to culture and education, amongst others. He underlined the importance of investing in the creative economy to address these challenges and by participating in the UCCN, the city of Santos unfolds its creative asset. During the COVID-19 pandemic, creativity has been a great ally for the city leading to the development of innovative solutions. The city has used technology and culture to support the continuity of people's lives and bring hope that everyone could go back to normality.

## Presentation by the UCCN Secretariat

### **Ms Denise Bax, Chief of Unit - Communication, Cities & Events, UNESCO**

Ms Bax provided a brief update on the Network's activities, especially those linked to COVID-19. This included the launch of the 2021 Call for Applications; production of capacity building materials in the form of tutorials to support candidate cities in improving capacities to better understand the Network and thus better prepare their applications; organization of the third UNESCO Creative Cities Beijing Summit in September 2020 under the theme "Creativity Empowers Cities, Technology creates the future", among many others. While, Ms Bax highlighted initiatives undertaken at both the cluster and national level, she also underlined the participation of the Secretariat in various international events. In response to the pandemic, the UCCN Secretariat launched the first Global Call in 2020 and a second one in 2021 to collect and disseminate culture and creativity leveraged responses undertaken by cities during the pandemic. Other activities where the UCCN engaged were in supporting the global campaign on LiBeirut, Abu Dhabi Culture Summit, Virtual Global Conference on Promoting the Rights and Inclusion of LGBTI+ Youth, the UNESCO World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development, amongst others.

## Spotlight on Mayors

### **Ms Ada Colau, Mayor of Barcelona (Spain)**

The Mayor of Barcelona discussed how the pandemic revealed pre-existing systemic challenges in the dominant economic model, such as growing injustice and inequalities. To deal with these challenges, it is important to innovate and to rely on culture as it has proven to be a democratic pillar as well as a fundamental right. During the pandemic, Barcelona has maintained its cultural agenda demonstrating that culture is safe and a source of resilience. Furthermore, the city recently presented and promoted a Cultural Rights Plan, to guarantee access to Culture to everyone, especially the most vulnerable.

### **Mr Dieudonné Bantsimba, Mayor of Brazzaville (Republic of Congo)**

Since 2012, Brazzaville established a cultural policy that supported the city to encounter the dual challenge of urban expansion and the satisfaction of a dynamic and creative youth. In addition to discussing about the established policy, Mayor Bantsimba further deliberated on how the city has utilized its cultural assets. In particular, the city used its music artists in the awareness raising campaigns on measures to fight against the pandemic as well as how the city integrates culture and creativity into its sustainable urban development plans that support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

### **Mr Zheng Jianxin, Mayor of Changsha (People's Republic of China)**

In recent years, Changsha has been committed to culture-driven urban development to boost industries and deliver substantial benefits to its inhabitants. Mayor Zheng discussed how the city has instituted a deep integration of media arts and traditional industries, leading to nurturing emerging creative industries as well as attracting young talent. He further mentioned how the city of Changsha has held three sessions of the International Youth Forum on Creativity and Heritage along the Silk Roads (IYF) that has contributed to global youth interaction, people-to-people exchange, innovation and entrepreneurship, amongst others. He also highlighted the resilience of culture during the pandemic despite the current global situation. Lastly, he underscored how the beginning of a new era of culture and creativity through technological innovation, internet interconnectivity and digital transformation, will contribute to sustainable urban development.

### **Ms Fatma Sahin, Mayor of Gaziantep (Turkey)**

The Mayor of Gaziantep, Ms Fatma Şahin underlined the role of creativity in sustainable development and especially regarding education, the digital world, and environment. She presented the 'Safe School Programme', an initiative that has enabled many children and youth to attend school online from rural areas with unreliable internet connection. To support the recovery of urban tourism post pandemic, the city has identified and developed an important network of caravan tourism. Finally, in regard to the environmental dimension, she mentioned how the city has undertaken preventive measures to ensure the sustainability of agricultural soils, via smart agriculture, smart food, renewable and sustainable energy.

### **Ms Valérie Plante, Mayor of Montréal (Canada)**

Culture, sustainable development, and diversity are among the priorities for the city of Montréal, a Creative City of Design to build an inclusive and sustainable city. As a UNESCO Creative City, Montréal utilized culture and creativity in their response to the pandemic. The city relied on designers, who have made it possible to quickly adapt public infrastructures and facilities to allow residents to continue using them as well as further promote creative and innovative practices for ecological transition. The Mayor emphasized on the city's strength to adapt various new initiatives such as the 'green shoots' programmes that take into account both the environment and culture.

### **Ms Virginia Raggi, Mayor of Rome (Italy)**

The Mayor of Rome, Ms Virginia Raggi reflected upon the importance of culture and creativity for the city and how it creates an enabling environment for sustainable development and human dignity. Rome continued to provide access to cultural and creative assets during the pandemic by offering online activities. Capitalizing on new technological innovations, the city provided access to its iconic monuments through websites and social networks with comments and inputs from art historians.

Other events included the Accademia di Santa Cecilia offering free online concerts and programmes, and the Cinema per Roma Foundation sharing films from previous editions of the Rome International Film Festival.

## MAIN SESSION

### Creative Cities' responses to COVID-19: leveraging the power of culture and creativity

#### **Ms Federica Forti, Councillor of Culture and Tourism of the Municipality of Carrara (Italy)**

Ms Forti, the representative from Carrara presented the project 'Studi Aperti: oltre il lockdown'. With the outbreak of the pandemic, the municipality of Carrara decided to utilize the potential of artists and artisans in keeping the local community united. Within the project, in December 2020, Carrara launched the 'Hands at Work' initiative to offer artists and artisans the opportunity to act as the cultural and social driving force of the community and contribute to the valorization of the local heritage. The city also intends to organize a creativity forum to be held in September that will focus on the rebirth of Italian historical city centres through arts and artisans. Building on the objectives of the Network, this initiative will be coordinated with other Italian Creative Cities such as Bologna, Fabriano, Rome and Milan.

For more information: <https://www.carrarastudiaperti.it/en/homepage>

#### **Ms Noura Al Noman, Chairperson of the Executive Office of her Highness Sheikha Jawaher bint Mohammed Al Qasimi, Sharjah (United Arab Emirates)**

Ms Noura al Noman shared with the participants the objectives of the Irthi Council, which is to preserve the city's heritage, produce quality crafts, ensure the transmission of the knowledge and know-how across generations, and empower women artisans. During the pandemic, the Council reorganized itself and switched to remote working using technology. The Council supported the craftswomen financially, developed centers that provided necessary materials and tools and sanitizing kits. The city also produced and broadcasted several videos and capacity-building materials on various traditional weaving techniques, as well as organized virtual exhibitions to support artists as well as local inhabitants.

For more information: <https://irthi.com/>

**Ms Asher Craig, Deputy Mayor, Bristol City Council; Ms Natalie Moore, Senior Film Office and Bristol City Focal Point (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)**

The city of Bristol launched “#shortitout”, a collective movie initiative during the pandemic. Ms Moore, spoke about how during the summer of 2020, filmmakers from all over the world were asked to respond creatively to the global lockdown with a short movie about their lockdown experience, reflecting the emotions of people and showing the power of movies and creativity to connect people in a moment of isolation. In addition, Ms Craig underlined how Bristol has used the power of films to connect communities and bring people together, showing stories of hope, identity and isolation. As a part of Bristol’s long-term recovery process, the city is currently exploring the potential of organizing a film festival in 2022, as being part of its commitment to rebuilding a sustainable creative sector.

For more information: <https://citiesoffilm.org/bristol/bristol-city-of-films-response-to-covid-19-leveraging-the-power-of-culture-and-creativity/>

**Mr Mark Roach, Director for Auckland UNESCO City of Music (New Zealand)**

Mr Mark Roach, the focal point of the city presented the initiative ‘MusicHelps’. Originally created in 2012 to help Kiwi musicians in need, the initiative gained further attention during the COVID-19 pandemic. By pivoting creative resources, towards MusicHelps, the initiative helped create a pan-industry group with the purpose of supporting local artists and music workers. By texting the word ‘MUSIC’, citizens could make a 3 USD donation, allowing micro-grants to be distributed to around 500 music professionals in need. With over 11, 000 donors, the fund also allowed to support 18 institutions in the country while encouraging the creators to further utilize their creative potential in spreading the message of hope and solace.

For more information: <https://musichelpslive.co.nz>

**Ms Colleen Swain, Director of the World Heritage Office, San Antonio (United States of America)**

Ms Swain shared the successful story of how San Antonio and the Local Tourism Office came together to launch the #Eatlocal campaign that promoted the initiatives undertaken by local restaurants to help the general public overcome the challenges caused by COVID-19. She emphasized how some of the restaurants were transformed into distribution centres, selling recipes and products for people to cook at home. New versions of food trucks and semi-prepared meals cooked in restaurants were sold in supermarkets to further support the restaurants owners. The municipality had set up a hashtag #Eatlocal and used social media and websites to further share these initiatives. The campaign allowed restaurants to discover new business models by

stimulating the development of their creative lines of product. Through this initiative, San Antonio has become stronger, more resilient and more sustainable, with the hope to rebound economically and to foster the growth of its local culinary community.

**For more information:**

<https://www.visitsanantonio.com/category/dining/alternative-options/>

**Mr John Kenyon, Executive Director, Iowa City UNESCO City of Literature (United States of America) Iowa City**

John Kenyon, the focal point of Iowa City, presented a community reading project that was born out of the observation that people would have time on their hands during the lockdown. Dr. Anna Barker, a professor at the University of Iowa, suggested uniting people around Giovanni Boccaccio's book, *The Decameron* which talks about the ways a group of young people wait out the 1348 Italian pandemic. As a part of the initiative, a schedule was created and shared, and attracted people from all around the globe. The initiative has continued with other classic books such as *Paradise Lost*, *Gilgamesh*, or *War and Peace*. As a result of the project, a worldwide community has emerged with almost 1000 people from five continents. The next reading project is aimed to read 'The Brothers Karamazov' by Dostoyevsky.

**For more information:** [www.iowacityofliterature.org/warandpeace](http://www.iowacityofliterature.org/warandpeace)

**Mr Henrik Holmskov, Focal Point, Viborg UNESCO Creative City (Denmark)**

The city of Viborg launched the '#Draw Hope' campaign to encourage children to send messages of hope to their peers affected by the pandemic. Mr Holmskov, the focal point of Viborg, underlined how the campaign initially intended to be local, thanks to the solidarity and support provided by Creative Cities across different world regions, became global and came to be known as #DrawWithDenmark. To further broaden the positive impact of the campaign, a selection of over 400 drawings were also projected onto the façade of the National Gallery in Copenhagen. Mr Holmskov also highlighted how Viborg has utilized creativity to generate positive changes and make the world come together.

**For more information:** <https://unesco.viborg.dk/in-english/>

**Ms Ana Eugenia Vazquez, Focal Point, Queretaro UNESCO Creative City (Mexico)**

Ms Ana Eugenia Vazquez during her presentation discussed how the city of Queretaro used the pandemic as an opportunity to question normality and trigger important conversations and projects. Through the 'Creative Cloister 2030' programme, encompassing live presentations, workshops, panels, culinary and design challenges, art competitions, concerts, creative speed dating, the city reflected upon the challenges the city faced in terms of social, economic and environmental during the pandemic.

Finally, she underlined the major role of civil society and its empowerment and presented it as a key to overcome the impacts of the current pandemic.

For more information: <https://www.queretarocreativo.mx/>

### **Mr Mark Wee, Executive director of DesignSingapore Council (Singapore)**

Mr Wee, the representative of the Creative City of Singapore, presented the 'Good Design Research' programme launched last year during the COVID. With a specific focus on the design community, the initiative aims to encourage experimentation and reinvention. Mr Wee showcased the importance of a strong network of local based design companies to further support the initiative, but also to boost their competitiveness through developing strategies and programmes to enhance the professional capabilities of local designers. As part of the outcomes, the programme has also built a platform of knowledge, exchange and network opportunities to foster collaboration during the COVID-19 pandemic. With the initiative having gained success and attention in and outside Singapore, the city aims to expand the project amongst interested Creative Cities.

For more information: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2cvXIM4dEdo>

### **Creative Cities of Media Arts**

To support creative communities, the City to City initiative, developed by the Creative Cities of Media Arts was presented as a sustainable solution to maintain continuity and provide support to the work of various artists from Creative Cities. Ten artists from nine different Creative Cities participated in this collaborative initiative that used media arts as a medium to display artistic pieces linked to the theme of Human Responsibility. An online gallery containing over 5 productions was developed and made available on social media platforms. Given the strong support gathered from the first edition, the project is foreseen to be implemented for a second time in 2021.

For more information: <https://www.bragamediaarts.com/en/city-city/>

## DAY 2 (Wednesday 7 July)

### **Ms Denise Bax, Chief of Unit - Communication, Events & Cities, UNESCO**

Ms Denise Bax presented the focus of Day 2, which shifted from immediate responses to the pandemic to how the cities were moving on to a forward-looking approach, putting emphasis on the ability of culture and creativity to provide solutions to major urban challenges and opportunities, especially for the city's recovery plans post COVID-19.

### **Spotlight on Mayors**

#### **Mr Dawood AlHajiri, Director General of Dubai Municipality (United Arab Emirates)**

Mr Dawood AlHajiri, the Director General of the city of Dubai, highlighted the importance of the individual as an essential core for cities that wish to strengthen their infrastructures through culture, creativity and innovation. Dubai's ability to attract creative and inspiring people in various fields is the product of smart planning that has employed technology and economic tools to service creativity and innovation. He also laid emphasis on the city's recently launched Creative Economy Strategy, which aims to promote creativity to build sustainable cities.

#### **Ms Joanne Anderson, Mayor of Liverpool (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)**

Creativity and culture have had a great contribution in the urban regeneration of Liverpool. Mayor Anderson shared how the creative industries were an essential sector that helped in supporting its inhabitants during the pandemic and how the sector adapted creative ways to continue its operations. She further discussed on how the city has helped support the national government by doing some test events to implementing creative measures in place. She concluded by saying that looking after the communities, social and economic health are the key focus for the city.

#### **Mr Grégory Doucet, Mayor of Lyon (France)**

Mr Grégory Doucet explained how the city of Lyon has adapted itself during both the pandemic and the climate emergency. Digital tools have enabled libraries, museums, festivals, and opera houses to maintain a link with the public while reinventing themselves. Similarly, thanks to hybrid and immersive formats, the city was able to allow festivals and theaters to be held in an innovative and immersive manner. In regard to the city's action to climate change, cultural ecosystems have been transformed by demonstrating resilience through greening, eco-renovation and the sharing of resources.

### **Ms Sally Cap, Lord Mayor of Melbourne (Australia)**

Mayor Cap underlined the important role of culture and art in building an urban identity, a sense of belonging but also in boosting the local economy. Keeping this in mind, the city has fostered culture related initiatives such as the Creative Laneways project, developed in partnership with the Victorian Government. It aims at revitalizing 40 of Melbourne's historic laneways thanks to the work of 80 artists through music, lighting, and creative installations. While the project boots the vibrancy and support to local businesses, it also aims to improve public amenities and safety.

### **Mr Ron Nirenberg, Mayor of San Antonio (United States of America)**

Mayor Ron Nirenberg highlighted the importance of culture and creativity in its recovery efforts from the pandemic. Being one of San Antonio's top five industries, the hospitality industry and especially the culinary community has demonstrated its resilience during the pandemic. The mayor emphasized on the collective efforts undertaken by the city with the creative sector to secure food access to first responders, unemployed, seniors, and vulnerable groups.

### **Mr Sakai Takaaki, TambaSasayama (Japan)**

Mayor Takaaki highlighted how culture and creativity has supported the urban regeneration projects in the city, such as the historical street of TambaSasayama, which usually hosts an important event "Dekansyo festival" dedicated to crafts and folk art. This summer, due to the pandemic, TambaSasayama will be holding the Dekansyo festival online, in which Creative Cities were invited to participate. In conclusion, the mayor also reassured the city's strong commitment to fostering creativity in the recovery from the pandemic.

## **Case Study from Santos**

### **Ms Selley Storino, Secretary of Tourism and Creative Economy, Santos (Brazil)**

The focal point of Creative City of Santos, Ms Selley Storino, presented how it has responded to the outbreak of the pandemic and how culture and creativity were leveraged by the city in its immediate and long-term responses. As part of minimizing the impact of the pandemic, the City of Santos has undertaken three main initiatives. Firstly, to ensure the mental and physical wellbeing of the city inhabitants, cultural activities were organized online around dance, handicrafts, gastronomy and photography. Secondly, the city also has developed a marketplace on social networks to give visibility to small and medium-sized creative entrepreneurs, and finally, creative economy fairs such as Capacita Santos, were organized that aimed to provide professional training and a financial grant to the most affected entrepreneurs. Ms Storino also presented the digital 'Cultural Factory', a project that provided support to the city's artists as well as cultural training in fields such as dance, music and audiovisual.

## MAIN SESSION

### Building cities back better through culture and creativity

#### PART I

#### Experiences and knowledge exchange: cases from Creative Cities

##### **Ms Sigrid Sommer, Head of Marketing at City of Potsdam and member of the Management Board of UNESCO Creative City of Film Potsdam (Germany)**

Ms Sommer highlighted how the film industry had intertwined with the city's history. As part of the city's response to the pandemic, Potsdam looked for responses to support the creative sector through providing financial support, organizing vaccination centers clubbed with film events, amongst others. Ms Sommer elaborated upon three main responses that were implemented during the pandemic. These included 'Thirty days of cinema' that allowed people to watch movies for free, online streaming platform offered by Potsdam Film Museum, and finally a cleaning-up of the city's world heritage sites by volunteers as part of its commitment in protecting these sites.

For more information : <https://en.potsdam.de/kategorie/potsdam-unesco-creative-city-film>

##### **Mr Aloysius C. Mapalo, Supervising Tourism Operations Officer, Baguio City (Philippines)**

The city of Baguio demonstrated the importance of art and crafts in its sustainable urban development policies. To make the city known for its Crafts and Folk Art and improve its outreach amongst other Creative Cities, Baguio City had launched the third edition of the 'Ibagiw Creative Festival' in a hybrid format, while respecting all sanitary measures put in place. As part of the city's response to the pandemic, the city continued to organize design, weaving and metal craft competitions in hybrid formats, while improving the quality of local crafts. Green activities were also organized such as the 'garden and creative crawl' tour, or an open and plein air crafts demonstration that featured plants as its theme.

For more information: <https://www.facebook.com/BaguioCreativeCity2020>

##### **Ms Alicia Despins, Municipal councillor for Québec City and responsible for culture, techno-culture and major cultural events (Canada)**

The city of Quebec has relied on the creativity of the cultural community to offer a bold summer programme focusing on revival and discovery.

With 460 proposals from local artists, artisans and cultural organizations, and over 1,000 activities throughout the city, this cultural programme has led to the development of various initiatives including the 'Quebec animée', 'Poetry on the roofs' and 'Rallye Vieux' projects, by involving artists, writers, publishing houses, booksellers, institutions and many others. Ms Despins concluded her presentation by highlighting how the city has also undertaken other literary projects including 'Oeuvre interactive Loop', 'BDthèque mobile' and the 'Bibliothèques en lumière'.

For more information: [https://www.ville.quebec.qc.ca/apropos/espace-presse/actualites/fiche\\_autres\\_actualites.aspx?id=22386](https://www.ville.quebec.qc.ca/apropos/espace-presse/actualites/fiche_autres_actualites.aspx?id=22386)

### **Mr Ryota Hattori, Manager of Local Team, Crypton Future Media, Sapporo (Japan)**

Mr Ryota Hattori, the representative of the city of Sapporo presented the initiative 'SYNCHRONICITY2020', which is aimed at developing an immersive outdoor experience by synchronizing music and virtual reality and enacted by an avatar named Hatsune Miku on their smartphones. Through this technology-enabled project, the city was able to bring together its inhabitants to celebrate its cultural assets in an immersive manner while adhering to the COVID-19 sanitary measures.

For more information: <https://piapro.net/synchronicity2020/>

### **Mr Yuri Suzuki, Sound Artist and Experience Designer, Pentagram, Hamamatsu (Japan)**

Mr Yuri Suzuki, an independent sound artist, presented the 2021 Hamamatsu Sound Design Festival. Given the sanitary measures imposed due to the pandemic, the current edition of the festival will be held in a hybrid format. By collaborating globally, the festival aims to provide music lovers and composers an opportunity to come together and have a global impact through an interactive online experience that allows everyone to produce their music and share it on social networks.

### **Mr Sebastien Hylebos, Project manager of Designregio Kortrijk (Belgium)**

The mayor of Kortrijk, Ms. Ruth Vandenberghe co-presented the DESIGN IN SHOPS project along with Mr Sebastien Hylebos. Born out of intercity collaboration, the project consisted of matching merchants with a designer to rearrange their shops, improve their visibility and their windows that are in line with COVID-19 sanitary measures. By undertaking this transformation, the city aims to make local businesses more resilient as well as attract people to come back to local stores after months of online shopping. A first-hand testimony of flower shop owners who benefited from the initiative provided a glimpse of the project's positive outcomes.

For more information: <http://designregio-kortrijk.be/en/organise/design-in-shops/>

### **Ms Cristiane Serpa, Belo Horizonte Economic Development Deputy Secretary (Brazil)**

As a part of Belo Horizonte's response and recovery measures to the pandemic, the city organized the Belo Horizonte's Creative Economy Hackathon. Ms Cristiane Serpa, the city representative presented how the hackathon focused upon bringing young entrepreneurs together to develop solutions to tackle the impact of the pandemic in three main creative areas: fashion furniture and design, gastronomy, and crafts. Through the Hackathon, the city also aimed to devise solutions for public security, business improvement, requalification and urban interventions.

For more information : <https://www.citiesforglobalhealth.org/initiative/creative-economy-theme-online-event-promoted-pbh-until-may-24th>

### **Mr Nicolas Montero, Secretary of Culture, Recreation and Sports, Bogotá (Colombia)**

Mr Nicolas Montero presented "Es Cultura Local", an initiative undertaken by the city of Bogota to encourage local territories to prioritize their investments in culture by providing economic incentives for creators as well as via the organization of training scenarios that improve entrepreneurial competences. Mr Montero underlined that the project not only puts a spotlight on creators, but also fosters their self-sustainability and resilience. As a part of the initiative over USD 5 million was provided to fund 299 projects related to culture and business skills improvement.

For more information: <https://www.culturarecreacionydeporte.gov.co/etiquetas/es-cultura-local>

### **Ms Ceren Ozgunduz, Project coordinator, Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality (Turkey)**

During the pandemic, Istanbul provided its inhabitants access to a wide array of cultural and creative assets through the project 'Istanbul is a stage' initiated in 2020. Ms Ozgunduz discussed how each day, the city streamed different cultural activities live on social media. In addition, the city also made provisions for live streaming these cultural activities in open spaces where inhabitants were able to park their car and watch movies and theaters, while respecting sanitary measures. Through the project, the city aims to transform large public spaces into an open-air stage where thousands of mini concerts and performances could be organized to ensure the access to culture activities for its inhabitants.

For more information: <https://istanbulbirsahne.com/> (in Turkish only)

## **PART II**

### **Recovery of urban tourism: challenges and opportunities**

#### **Mr Peter Debrine, Destination Advisor and Sustainable Tourism Expert**

Mr Peter Debrine gave a general presentation on the recovery of urban tourism highlighting both the numerous challenges but also the opportunities that are arising from the pandemic. Mr Debrine discussed how the COVID-19 has had a devastating impact on tourism. Cities have been hit even harder as tourists were inclining toward rural and less crowded spaces. Culture and innovation can give cities a second wind by inspiring travelers to discover local culture and by strengthening urban-rural connectivity. A community-based tourism should be encouraged through living heritage. He also underlined how the unbalanced repartition of Internet access has further widened the gap between connected people and marginalized ones (usually women or indigenous people), and how addressing the gap is important to build back the tourism industry.

#### **Mr Nuno Rodrigues, Tourism Crafts and Folk Art Coordinator, Barcelos (Portugal)**

Known for its crafts and creative community in the field of ceramics, the city of Barcelos tried to face the pandemic by working closely with its communities and creating synergies. Mr Rodrigues, discussed how the city developed a programme encompassing a variety of different events including creative workshops, fairs and forums to boost urban tourism. He further highlighted how the city has also set up a support system for small wine producers by promoting tourism to enhance the value of small workshops on the itineraries. It also allowed the municipality to foster safe, creative and sustainable tourism. The city nurtures the dynamism of the creative community by framing its offer in the new paradigms of tourist demand, investing in the natural creativity of the territory, and in partnerships with and intersections between the various creative areas of Barcelos.

For more information: <http://www.creativetourismnetwork.org/barcelos-covid-19-measures/>

#### **Ms Maria Helena de Senna Fernandes, Director of Macao SAR Government Tourism Office (People's Republic of China)**

Ms Maria Helena de Senna Fernandes shared the local campaign undertaken by the Macao SAR Government to revive the local businesses and economy. The city launched a free e-platform entitled 'Macao Ready Go' that provided locals with value-added coupons that acted as incentives to buy and consume locally. The second part of the campaign consisted of reigniting Macao tourism activities by providing local and community based affordable tours. The initiative also resulted in the creation of local employment opportunities.

For more information: <https://ready-go.staging.wizmacau.com/zh-hant/come-from>

### **Mr Duznel Zerquera, Focal Point, Trinidad Creative City (Cuba)**

Thanks to the urban tourism and with over 700,000 visitors per year, Trinidad had been able to develop its craft industry and tourism sector. However, due to the current pandemic, the city tourism has been paralyzed, resulting in huge economic setbacks. Mr Zerquera, the focal point of the city, presented the city's 'Women Weaving Their Future' project that aimed to provide capacity building support to young girls through sewing and weaving courses. Thanks to the project, their products were then presented online and exported internationally.

For more information: <http://www.conservadortrinidad.co.cu/?p=4774>

### **Ms Magda Antonioli, Vice-President of the European Travel Commission**

Ms Antonioli highlighted the role of urban tourism as a major carrier of economic growth in the fields of culture and creativity. She highlighted that in the post-COVID era, changes towards more conscious consumption and sustainable tourism will be necessary. As travelers are looking for more self-tailored experiences and opportunities, there will be a shift from tangible to intangible, from a value chain to a value network, from passive contemplation to an active experience of co-creation.

## **CONCLUSION**

### **Mr Ernesto Ottone R., Assistant-Director General for Culture of UNESCO**

The Assistant Director-General for Culture of UNESCO, Mr Ottone, underscored the untapped potential of culture and creativity to deliver social, economic, and environmental benefits for cities and communities at large. He further discussed how Creative Cities around the world have utilized the transformative potential of culture and have devised effective urban solutions for their inhabitants during the pandemic. The meeting also provided a forum for collective reflection on urban tourism, one of the most emblematic sectors affected by the pandemic. Building on the experience of the COVID-19 publication developed last year, Mr Ottone announced that the UCCN Secretariat will in the coming months launch a second publication dedicated to showcasing Creative Cities' responses and recovery actions to COVID-19. He also expressed his gratitude to all the Mayors, participants and Creative Cities around the world for their meaningful contributions and involvement.

### **Mr Rogério Santos, Mayor of Santos (Brazil)**

Speaking from a floating cultural facility in one of Santos' largest favelas, Mayor Rogério Santos hoped that the participants in the meeting enjoyed the virtual gathering. He also highlighted the city's commitment in placing culture at its heart of the recovery process. In conclusion, he welcomed all the Creative Cities to Santos for the XIV UCCN Annual Conference in 2022.

# Main Outcomes

**2 days**

**176 Creative Cities from 62 countries**

**13 Mayors**

**337 registered participants**

**More than 200 participants per day**

**23 culture-empowered responses and recovery measures presented**

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