

THE UNESCO CREATIVE CITIES NETWORK

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

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WHAT IS THE UNESCO CREATIVE CITIES NETWORK?

The UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN) was created in 2004 to promote cooperation with and among cities that have identified creativity as a key factor in their sustainable development. The network currently includes 180 cities from 72 countries specialized in seven creative fields – Crafts and Folk Art, Design, Film, Gastronomy, Literature, Media Arts and Music. These Member Cities work towards a common objective: placing creativity and cultural industries at the heart of their development plans at the local level, while cooperating actively at the international level.

[2]

WHY CITIES AND CREATIVITY?

With more than 50% of the world's population now living in urban areas – a figure which is expected to climb to two-thirds by 2050 – cities are increasingly spaces where development challenges such as poverty, inequality and environmental degradation are the most apparent and acute. Yet cities are also engines of development, bringing together people of diverse backgrounds to exchange, innovate and create. They therefore represent fertile spaces for the crafting of development solutions. UNESCO believes that culture is essential to this process of urban renewal and innovation. The cultural and creative industries are among the fastest growing in the world, representing 30 million jobs and 3% of global GDP. Cultural activities foster social inclusion and dialogue among diverse communities, while tangible and intangible heritage are integral parts of a city's identity, creating a sense of belonging and cohesion. UNESCO's work to promote a culture-based model of sustainable urban development is rooted in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which highlights the role of culture as an enabler of development in Sustainable Development Goal 11, to "Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable."

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HOW DOES THE UNESCO CREATIVE CITIES NETWORK SUPPORT SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT?

- i. **Collaboration with other city networks.** To expand the Network's reach and impact, the UCCN plans to further collaborate with the International Coalition of Inclusive and Sustainable Cities and the Global Network of Learning Cities, as well as the Beijing International Center for Creativity and Sustainable Development.
- ii. **Peer learning and exchange.** The Network inspires urban innovation through initiatives such as the UCCN Best Practice Exhibition, a collection of 63 best practices from 50 member cities launched at the 2016 Annual Meeting. The UCCN pool of experts also works to build the capacity of Member Cities from the Global South by encouraging the sharing of best practices.
- iii. **Monitoring.** In line with the UCCN's mission to serve as a laboratory of ideas for sustainable urban development, Member Cities produce a Membership Monitoring Report every four years detailing their action plan for the implementation of the UCCN Mission Statement.
- iv. **Annual meetings.** Annual Meetings provide an opportunity for Member Cities to exchange information and formulate new inter-city partnerships, while determining the Network's strategy and priorities for the coming year. At its 2018 Annual Meeting in Krakow and Katowice, the UCCN launched the LAB.2030 initiative, a collection of case studies that spotlight how Creative Cities are integrating culture into their local policies for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda.
- v. **Publications.** In 2018, the UCCN published a booklet profiling each Creative City, while Member Cities also contributed 33 case studies and perspectives to the UNESCO Global Report Culture: Urban Future.

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KEY MESSAGES



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Together, Member Cities work towards a common objective: placing creativity and cultural industries at the heart of their development plans at the local level, while cooperating actively at the international level.



The UCCN represents an integral part of UNESCO's global strategy in the field of culture and sustainable development, and its Secretariat will further expand its role as an incubator of city connections. The goal is to go beyond simple membership, creating a platform for action and interaction.



Through the development of partnerships and the sharing of best practices, Member Cities work to strengthen the creation, production, distribution and dissemination of cultural goods and services; develop hubs of creativity and innovation; improve access to and participation in cultural life for marginalized groups; and fully integrate culture and creativity into sustainable development plans.



To apply for membership to the UCCN, cities can submit an application form during regular calls by UNESCO.