

Creativity-driven change in Public Space- good practices from UNESCO Creative Cities of Literature

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The discussion on urban development in the past few years has been dominated by ideas of the creative city (Florida, 2005; Landry, 2006; Scott, 2006; Fonseca, 2009; Carta, 2007; Andersson, 2011; Ussai, 2016). Almost unquestioned, such creativity is supposed to be the answer for questions of many kinds. The idea of “creativity” has induced a dramatic shifts in global economic terms, helped in setting of the talent agenda and encouraged rebranding and repositioning of cities worldwide. As Charles Landrey said, everyone is now in the creativity game. Creativity has become a mantra of our age, endowed almost exclusively with positive virtues and present in all levels: local, national and international.

A simple search on the internet shows that numerous cities call themselves “creative city”, apart from the members of Unesc Creative Cities Network. We can only mention Creative Manchester, Bristol Creative City, Vancouver and its the Creative City Task Force, Creative Cities Initiative launched in 2001 by Partners for Liveable Communities in Washington, D.C. Osaka even set up a Graduate School for Creative Cities in 2003 and started a Japanese Creative Cities Network in 2005; Cape Town was appointed a Design Capital of the World in 2014 and since then has introduces design thinking and creativity in its administration. As we can see, there are no geographical limits for creativity.

Apart from above mentioned local, urban initiatives, there are national and regional plans such as National Ireland, Creative Scotland or The Hamdan Bin Rashid Al Maktoum Centre for Creativity in UAE that emphasize the importance of creativity in their agendas for development. Some regions, like Basque Country, based its Smart Specialization Strategy on Creative and Cultural Industries. All this local scale plans and actions have been developed within the framework of international organisms, such as UNESCO or the European Union, that support the importance of creativity and culture in sustainable development.

1. UNESCO Creative Cities Network

The origin of global creative and cultural strategies for development lies in the Declaration of Rio (1992) and the Agenda 21, presented by the United Nations, which shifted the concept of sustainable development to a local scale through interventions for economic growth, social inclusion and environmental assessment (the three ‘pillars’) (Ussai, 2016). Later on, UNESCO adopted the 2001 Declaration on Cultural Diversity and the 2003 Resolution on Culture and Development. Following this independent acions, UNESCO also established a collaboration with other networks, such as the United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) that elaborated an Agenda 21 for Culture, connecting culture and creativity to human rights, governance, sustainability, economy and social

inclusion. Together with other agents (*International Labour Organization (ILO), International Trade Centre (ITC), United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)*) UNESCO also elaborated Creative Industries Report in 2008 and 2013. Likewise, during Habitat III Conference in 2016, Culture Urban Future Report also was presented as an effort to highlight the role of culture in urban world.

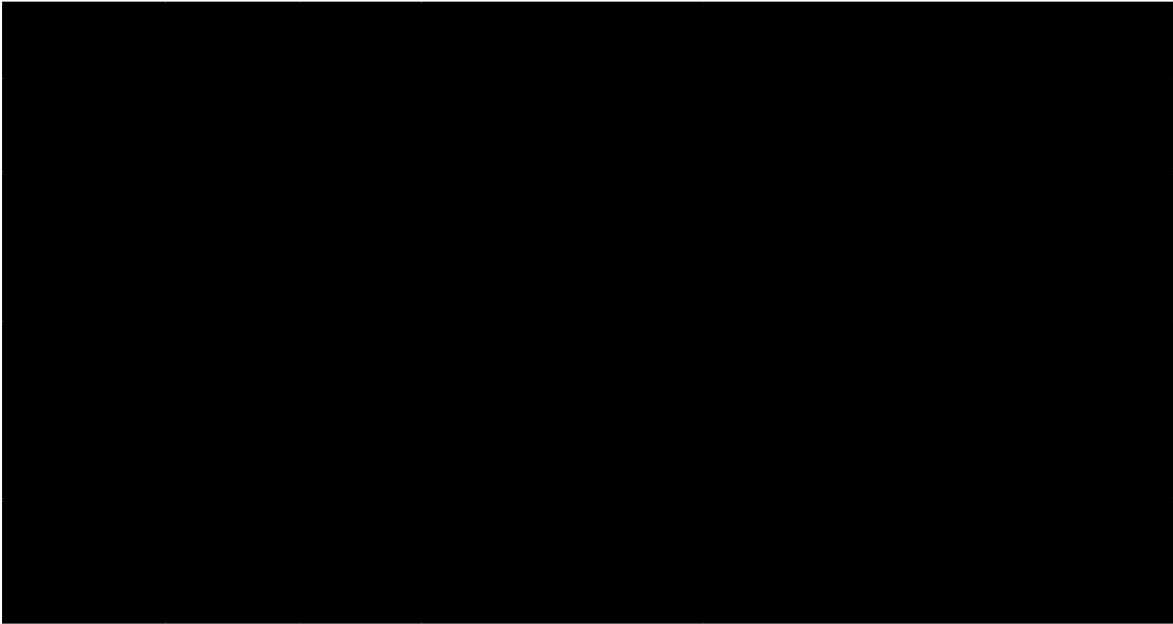


Figure 1- City Networks promoted by UNESCO

Over the years, UNESCO also has been working with cities closely by developing its networks (Figure 1) to foster collaboration among cities and local governments, through culture and innovation, science and technology, education, social inclusion, and mitigating environmental impacts (UNESCO, 2016).

The UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN), established in 2004, tries to connect cities that have recognised creativity as a strategic factor for sustainable development. This network, according to the mission statement, aims to facilitate the sharing of experience, knowledge and resources among the member cities, to promote the development of local creative industries and to foster worldwide cooperation for sustainable urban development (UNESCO, 2016). The main objective of the network is, therefore, to facilitate the development of cultural clusters around the world, to exchange know-how, experiences and best practices as a means of promoting local economic and social development through creative industries. In order to better target the development needs of specific subsectors within the cultural industries, the Creative Cities Network devised seven thematic networks and cities can choose one field on which to focus their efforts. Cities with established creative pedigrees in the fields of literature, cinema, music, folk art, design, media arts or gastronomy can apply to join the network. Cities are encouraged to consider their candidature in fields that have the greatest potential for economic and social development.

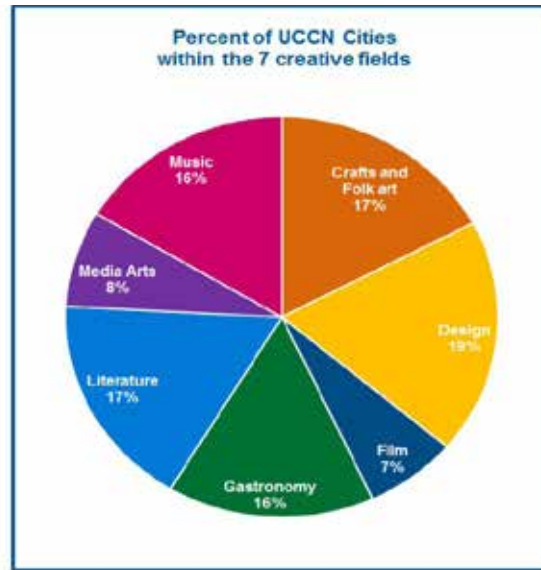


Figure 2- Percentage of UCCN cities within the seven creative fields (2016)

As of 2016, the UCCN consists of 116 member cities in 54 countries, located in all regions of the world. The UCCN comprises a large variety of cities in terms of size and population, geographical situation, levels of GDP and economic development, and covers seven creative fields: Crafts and Folk Art (16 cities), Design (26 cities), Film (8 cities), Gastronomy (13 cities), Literature (20 m cities), Media Arts (9 cities), and Music (19 cities). Europe is the leading region with 48 cities, followed by Asia with 35 and Latin America with 17 cities. This project seems to be very attractive to the cities from the whole world. At the moment, 5 Italian cities belong to the network: Rome as a city of ilm, Bologna as a city of music, Fabriano represents folk arts, Parma gastronomy and Turin is a city of design.

To apply for membership to the UCCN, cities can submit an application form through regular calls by UNESCO. Member cities are designated by the director-general of UNESCO in line with the programme's designation procedures, following consultations with two groups: UNESCO-designated independent experts and/or non-governmental organizations, as well as UCCN member cities organized by creative field. While the submission of an application is the decision of a city government, the national commissions of the respective Member States must also lend their support to the application.

By joining the UCCN, cities commit to count on creativity and cultural industries as bases of economic, social, cultural and environmental sustainability and to actively cooperate at the international level.

2. Creating sustainable cities - Good Practices from UCCN

This chapter is aiming to illustrate how creative cities can contribute to different dimension of sustainable development. Therefore, we are presenting three good practeces developed by Creative Cities of Literature. These cases serves as an inspiration how strategic projects can improve the use of public spaces, outgo limites of phisycal space and affect in a favourable manner social

cohesion and citizens wellbeing. We understand good practice as the example of an innovative approach, tested and evaluated by the organizers and which tends to be successful in other contexts (Abdoulaye, 2003).

Our election is based on the open-call for good practices presented by UNESCO, in September 2016, for the 10th Annual Meeting of the network. In total, 63 good practices were presented from 50 cities. Since purpose of this document is to bring to the public view few examples of creativity as indispensable element in sustainable urban development, we are presenting three cities of literature: Krakow, Ulyanovsk and Ljubljana. After identifying good practices online (<http://creativegastronomy.com/uccn2016/uccn-10th-annual-meeting/good-practice-exhibition/>) we have done the analysis of available documents and interviews with persons responsible for these projects. This chapter is a result of research with great support of Unesco Creative Cities.

2.1. KRAKOW- CzytajPL! (ReadPL!)

In its centuries-old history, the connection between Krakow and literature was and still is a significant element of urban development. The oldest bookstore in the world, a bookshop that has been continuously in operation at the same address since its opening around 1610, can be found in the main market square of this city. Furthermore, Krakow is the academic and intellectual centre on a Europe, the cradle of Polish language and literature with the first scriptoria (from 11th century), libraries and printing houses and a home for the oldest university in Poland, Jagiellonian University, founded in 1364. Krakow is hosting different festivals and cultural events every year, promoting readership and influencing attitudes towards reading and paying homage to well-known writers such as Joseph Conrad Korzeniowski, Adam Zagajewski, Henryk Sienkiewicz or Wisława Szymborska.

What highlights Krakow among other creative cities is its commitment to vulnerable groups of society. In 2011, Krakow joined the International Cities of Refuge Network (ICORN), an association of 40 cities providing persecuted writers with a safe haven to write and live. As a member of the UCCN, Cracow is also engaged in developing ties between literature and human rights, supporting young and emerging artists and writers through grants and scholarship programs and creating links between literature, new media and creative industries.

The project CzytajPL! (ReadPL!), organized by Krakow Festival Office and the e-book platform Woblink.com, was available to all citizens. The objective was to address low rates of reading in Poland by using new technologies. The first nationwide edition of ReadPL! took place in October 2015 during the Conrad Festival. More than 300 bus stops in Krakow, Gdańsk, Katowice, Poznań, Warszawa and Wrocław were turned into e-book libraries. To borrow a book, users had to download the Czytaj PL! mobile app, and then scan the QR code located beside the cover of the book they wished to borrow. The idea was that everyone could rent one of twelve new, best-selling books by leading Polish and international authors.

Its success is visible in the results: 20 000 borrowed e-books and their fragments, as well as over 500 titles in national and local media. Throughout October, several hundred thousand people saw the covers of the 12 bestselling titles presented in the Czytaj PL! campaign at over 300 bus stops in Krakow, Gdańsk, Katowice, Poznań, Wrocław and Warsaw. The most important, e-books

and mobile application were offered for free so those with less incomes could enjoy as well in this new reading experience.

Organizers foreground that the long-term goals include expanding into more cities, adding more light to public spaces areas in order to reach more public. More editions will be implemented thanks to a strong and intricate web partnerships between the private sector (publishers, media, online e-book vendor) and the public sector (municipalities, literary and cultural institutions).

Firstly, it is important to mention that this project fulfills four strategic priorities of the program, including creating linkages between literature, new media, creative industries and initiating and supporting the presence of literature in public spaces. Secondly, CzytajPL! campaign allowed citizens to encounter the best in literature directly in the urban spaces and offered readers an increasingly better reading experience. And finally, this is unique project among all good practices that addresses virtual urban space. Cracow is a big city with all problems for the city of its kind: mobility, connectivity, environmental problems, etc. and this project makes the city, if not geographically compact, at least close and free in virtual space.

2.2. Ulyanovsk- Нескучный сквер (Not-dull square)

The population of Ulyanovsk is over 600 thousand people representing over 100 different nationalities: Russian, Tatar, Chuvash and many others. The city is well-known for its two rivers – the Volga and the Sviyaga – which form a very special phenomenon because Sviyaga river is a tributary of the Volga but it flows in the opposite direction. The history of Ulyanovsk began in the middle of the 17th century where the first fortress at the top of the Volga was built to defend the Tsardom of Russia from nomads and it was called the fortress Simbirsk. Its current name is due to its most recognized citizen Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov, better known by the alias Lenin.

Ulyanovsk is also famous for many talented people born here: writer Ivan Goncharov, historian Nikolay Karamzin, artist Arkady Plastov, etc. In 2015, the same year that the city joined the UCCN, Ulyanovsk became the Most Reading Region in Russia.

Due to its literary tradition and potential of creative industries, local government has decided to make literature a central priority and driver of its sustainable urban development. The current Ulyanovsk Development Strategy of Cultural Policy reflects this idea and commits Ulyanovsk to publish more books written by local authors, to encourage young creative entrepreneurs, to support reading and writing in public spaces accessible to all its citizens.

Counting on all citizens, Ulyanovsk started a project of regeneration of an abandoned square Transformation of “Culturally empty spaces”- *НЕСКУЧНЫЙ СКВЕР* (Not-dull square). This project aims to make a creativity an essential components of urban development by using literature, reading and writing activities to revive abandoned public spaces and it is organized by Centralized Library System, the “Ulyanovsk – capital of culture” Foundation, the «Ulyanovsk – UNESCO City of literature» program office.

Even though Ulyanovsk is a beautiful city with a lot of parks and public spaces, many of them are abandoned, poor in activities and not attractive to the citizens. This project seeks for opportunities to bring a new life to such “forgotten places” which have high potential to become

“points of attraction” for the citizens. Culture, and especially literature, is a perfect resource for involving people into urban life. The city chose not to organize events by themselves but provided people with the opportunity to use their creativity and show it to the public. This becomes possible through partnerships involving the public and private sectors and the civil society because of different type of resources which can be of a great support for the successful implementation of the idea.

The first experience was connected to the launch of the project “Neskuchny Skrver” (Non-dull square) which occurred in an open-space for citizens to hold literary events (read their literary works out loud, perform bands, discuss books, etc.). The next “intervention” happened in 2015 when a creative open-space appeared in the yard of the Ulyanovsk House-Museum of the famous Russian writer Ivan Goncharov. The local ministry of culture is interested in using this experience in other museums because it not only helps to promote literature but it also attracts new visitors to the local cultural institutions. The key strength is connected to the involvement of the public into the initiative’s implementation.

But this feature produced some difficulties, such as overcoming the mistrust of the citizens as they were convinced that there were no opportunities to develop themselves in the creative sector. There are still spaces situated in the city-center, near cultural organizations and other places of interest, which are “culturally empty”. Within the program “Ulyanovsk - City of Literature” there are going to continue new public spaces transformed into “literary zones”. This year 5-10 zones will appear in the local parks (book exchange in refrigerators painted by young artists, spaces for literary events, etc.).

In the case of Ulyanovsk, the culture-led urban regeneration is not a new concept nor especially innovative one but, but in this case, the approach is outstanding. Normally, the renewal of public spaces is imagined to be performed by visual arts, graffiti or other permanent interventions. However, in Ulyanovsk they wanted to put all citizens in the center of the activity and let them show their creativity, so the chosen field was literature- the most convenient and popular one. The strong points of the project are: its long-term vision, in accordance with local cultural plan, the collaboration private-public-citizens and of course, users friendly approach that develops strong feeling of place belonging among citizens. In this case, creativity has been used not only for the urban regeneratin but for the empowerment of its citizens.

2.2. *Ljubljana Reads*

“In what way do books and reading nowadays signify the development of an individual and society?” was the principal question raised during 2010 in Ljubljana, UNESCO’s World Book Capital. The program offered that year comprised promotion of literature and authors, promotion of books and reading, improved access to books as well as connected authors, publishers, bookshops, libraries and schools. The program aimed to encourage reading culture in various target groups of population in the capital city, actively connecting all Slovenian towns and cities with those over the borders, and had a distinctive international dimension.

The title of UNESCO Creative City of Literature in 2015 thus was just the natural continuation of long-term national strategy. The main goals remain the same and the city nowadays offers

numerous events and hosts a large number of authors every year, including internationally renowned writers such as Mueller, Franzen, Kureishi, Houellebecq and Galloway.

Ljubljana has been committed to promote reading for all in the Ljubljana City Library 20 branches and in open public spaces (like public city parks and squares, open-air swimming pools etc.) and through diverse private initiatives, such as an open-air Library under the Treetops, Literary Walks through the city for tourists etc. Ljubljana is a member of the International Cities of Refugees Network (ICORN), supporting freedom of expression, as well as providing creative environments for writers. Besides, the city has young people in the scope of the strategy so it offers new employment opportunities for young creative entrepreneurs in the book industry and hosts young artist residency programs to strengthen the ties between Creative Cities of Literature. The City Reads (the project of the Ljubljana City Library- LCL), was organized in order to encourage reading among citizens and promote knowledge about the world literature. It's noteworthy that over a quarter of Ljubljana's population are members of the city's public library network.

Each year a different country or area of the world is selected in order to promote authors from all parts of the World, and multiculturalism. In recent years citizens had the opportunity to learn about how Neighbors write (novels by authors from the neighboring countries), City watches (literature in movies), European Stories, North American Novels and South American authors. Each year, on 3rd of December (birth date of the greatest Slovenian Poet Prešeren) the list of 60 chosen books is announced on the LCL home page and in public media. Readers have 6 months for reading at least 5 books from the list and send their impressions.

This project offers interaction of readers from different social environments and all parts of the city with surrounding areas. All the activities before the final event (presentations of novels, meetings with translators and other specialists, discussions) take place both in virtual and physical libraries. This gives an opportunity to readers to overcome physical barriers for socializing and for creative communication.

In June the final event is held in open space, in the historical city center of Ljubljana, which although once dominated by cars and buses, now is mostly dedicated to pedestrians and cyclists. There, Ljubljana City Library makes a literary and musical event for citizens and tourists, with a lot of stage reading of Slovenian literature, story- telling, good music and creative children groups. At this occasion, the best readers of the City Reads project are awarded and one of all registered readers gets a special award, a two-day weekend package donated by a hotel company from Lake Bohinj. The added value of this project is that many more readers beside those who have formally joined the project actually read the listed novels of the project (each year between 7 and 10 thousand loans of listed books have been registered). Another important value of this project lays in the effort this city made to be most friendly and livable for the citizens. In 2016 Ljubljana also won the title of the World Green Capital. The open-air LCL Day is one of the events that celebrate it.

Likewise other two cities, City Reads in Ljubljana has few characteristics that we can connect to new values of creative city. This project is well governed in public-private-civil society partnership. It also shows strong relation with the dimension of compactness because it has been developed in the real and the cyber space. Moreover, we usually, think about one dimension, in this case culture

and creativity, and we take no notice of the whole picture. Even though this project at first glance lays in promoting multiculturalism and social values, the fact that Ljubljana is a Greed Capital gives a new point of view and pays tribute to the environmental efforts that this city has made. Only in the combination of connectivity, green philosophy and creativity this project can be understood as the good practice for sustainable urban development.

3. Conclusion

This document aims to collect the experience of UCCN cities which have developed successful projects in order to achieve urban transformation, social inclusion, economic development and cultural prosperity through creativity. We are looking for the City 360° where the change has been driven by creativity.

Modern cities have lost this core function of offering a habitable neighbourhood where the sense of citizenry is cultivated. Creative and participatory planning should take into account human security, spatial integration and connectivity. As said before, creativity normally is not related to compactness. That is precisely why we insist on this multidimensional approach to creativity and on the redefinition of the “creative city” concept. The quantity, quality, accessibility and connectivity of public spaces are key components of urban regeneration. Cultural and artistic events are strong levers for the recovery of abandoned public spaces. Traditional practices can also encourage community-based management and maintenance of public spaces, while favoring fusion of real and cyber space. In the previous pages we have presented some examples of how creative cities could be compact cities as well.

As a mode of conclusion, we would like to emphasize that these work is important in order to foster the exchange of information, promote peer-to-peer learning and help local and regional authorities understand and make more of the positive impacts which investments in culture can have on economic development, social cohesion and urban regeneration.

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