



Culture and demographic change

Recommendations for cities, cultural institutions and practitioners



These recommendations have been prepared by the EURO CITIES working group on young people and culture. The aim of the working group is to exchange experiences between city administrations and cultural institutions on promoting or enabling change processes in cultural institutions about the diverse demographic changes that cities are currently facing: some cities see growing numbers of young families and senior citizens, others lose inhabitants, and many cities welcome newcomers who need to integrate. The aim is to strengthen the strategic planning and development of local cultural institutions.

The recommendations have been developed to respond to the following challenges:

- Changing populations in cities - what will future audiences and cultural players look like? City populations vary greatly between European cities, some see growing numbers of young families and senior citizens while others have declining populations. A far more diverse population needs to be integrated than in the past, and intercultural dialogue remains key in cities' cultural strategies.
- Every citizen has the right to culture - how do/will cities and cultural institutions meet the needs and expectations of changing populations? What new cultural offers have to be developed?
- How can intercultural projects of cultural institutions be turned into permanent and successful programmes? How can municipalities help institutions face such challenges?

Recommendations to city administrations: creating the right framework for change

General requirements

- a political decision and strategy at municipal level to place diversity as a common base for all municipal policies.
- city administrations should adopt a holistic approach in their city strategy.

Change of attitude

- foster a change of attitude towards multi-sectoral and multi-professional perspectives: synergies of knowledge, perspective and insight are required. All sectors and approaches must work together.



Structural change

- a systematic approach is an important part of the process: diversity becomes part of all policies and processes, reporting systems and target agreements.
- Municipalities and policy makers need to:
 - secure permanent funding for policies and projects, reliability is necessary for successful change management in institutions
 - be open for cross-sectional cooperation with the social, educational, youth and cultural city administrations

Recommendations to cultural institutions

Cultural institutions need to consider the growing demographic diversity as an opportunity to shape and foster social coexistence and cohesion. By doing so, they ensure their social relevance and secure their own future as cultural institutions.

Institutions must change their mind-sets. They need to:

- understand individual processes as part of a global development
- understand that it is a long-term change process
- understand that the issue is a cross-sectional task based on a cooperation with the social, educational, youth and integrational areas of expertise
- establish an inclusive access
- evaluate and learn through action

Actions to be taken by cities and cultural institutions

New programmes and offers

Institutions and city administrations need knowledge and professional support to stimulate changes of attitude and practises, and to develop new programmes and offers including:

- intergenerational projects, cooperation and co-creation
- continuous and permanent projects
- institutions do not have to develop new and/or different programmes, they could start running their regular programmes differently, for instance by
 - using a language that is easy to understand for everybody so there are no language barriers
 - simplifying and avoiding requirements for specialised knowledge
 - being open to special needs
 - cooperating with other sectors (education, youth) to develop joint projects

Furthermore, institutions may start on a small scale by checking the relevance of their programmes of activities and scaling up if necessary, for instance by

- using and learning from cultural institutions with a low-threshold service, e.g. libraries
- exchanging experiences

Know your audience

For projects to be successful, conscious development of the relationship with the audience is required. This includes:

- knowledge of needs and of the local context - for whom do we work?
- feedback & open mindedness
- identification of common target groups or passions and needs
- evaluations and surveys

Support and train your staff members

For institutions to meet the demographic challenge, a focus on staff is also vital. This includes the following:

- working with external experts who can help the development of activities as well as establishing a climate that is open to change
- supporting staff with education and training
- adding diversity to the staff involved in the activities to better reflect the diversity of the population.

Question and adapt the formats of your events

Cultural institutions should question their existing formats critically:

- do they meet the needs of a more diverse audience?
- what adjustments should be made (for example in terms of time structure, access requirements, etc.)?

Consider your public relations

Public relations are an important part of the public image, in addition to the design of rooms including associated restaurants, bars, open spaces. This shapes the public perception of an institution and helps to reduce or increase access thresholds.