![EUROCITIES logo]

# How to measure the value and social impact of culture?

A digest of inspiring examples and new approaches

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# Introduction

During the 2019 Eurocities Culture Forum in Leeds, our newly joined up Working Group met for the first time. We reviewed our previous groups' work and outputs, and we discussed common issues for cities with a focus on inclusivity, access and participation. We discussed how the group might explore these topics further and how we could seek proactive and innovative solutions to what is an ongoing challenge to cities across Europe.

The group agreed to prioritise the question of how to measure the cross-sectoral value and impact of culture, particularly the social impact, across a range of demographics. This would in turn help cities to advocate for greater investment in culture. As many cities admitted they lacked reliable or suitable data, knowledge or methodologies, there was a strong wish to gain more information and guidance on this topic.

In order to exchange knowledge and exchange experiences, we prepared a session which was supposed to take place in Gothenburg 18 – 20 March 2020. Due to Covid-19 this became two webinars in May and June 2020, which were attended by over 70 cities. The first session focused on theoretical perspectives on measuring the value and social impact of culture, and the second session focused more on practical methods and experiences of measuring.

Due to popular demand, we agreed to create this Digest for the benefit of all members, which collates presentations and experiences exchanged at the webinars. Various cities have kindly contributed their stories and approaches, which we are happy to share with you.

This is a huge and challenging topic, and this Digest gives only an impression of what was discussed, but there are many useful references included, and we hope that this Digest will trigger ideas that you can implement within your own cities.

We hope that this Digest is a help and a support to you in your daily work. We also hope we can continue the work and exchange experiences within the working group and within the wider Culture Forum context.

Leeds Corn Exchange — © Carl Milner Photography for Leeds City Council

# A report on the value and social effects of culture

Klas Grinell is Professor at the University of Gothenburg and part time working in the city of **Gothenburg** culture department. In an attempt to describe the complexity of measuring the value of culture in a society, he wrote a report entitled "the value and social effects of culture".

"The value and social effects of culture is an investigative review of current knowledge which focus on different concepts and arguments for the value and social effects of culture. The underlying aim is to show why it is worth investing public funds in 'culture', and more specifically why and in what ways the activities of the cultural administration is important and valuable. The report collects research- and evidence-based arguments and findings on the foundational values and effects of cultural activities. It is also meant to be a resource for the communication of the activities of the cultural administration, for the continued development of indicators and key figures, as well as for other parts of cultural policy control and evaluation. The aim is to develop tools that can create better understanding for the values and social effects of culture, and to develop arguments and show evidence for the contributions of the cultural administration to the prioritized social aims of the City of Gothenburg.

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One conclusion is that many of the socially beneficial effects of culture appear outside of the field of cultural policy, and that they often become visible only over large timespans. This makes it difficult to provide evidence for the instrumental value of individual cultural activities. In order to clarify the value and social effects of culture, culture is therefore viewed as an ecology. Like in an ecology, different and sometimes contradictory aims and values coexist and interact to create the ecology. Something that can be seen as a consuming factor, might actually be an indispensable part of the ecological dynamics that creates effects that the same actor wants to gain from culture. Even if it is very difficult to map such relationships and connections it is not impossible.

The instrumental values of culture do not contradict or oppose the intrinsic value of culture. The report holds that man is a creature of culture, and a creator of culture. Culture can be seen a political tool to create health, well-being, equality and security, at the same time as these things can be seen as preconditions that makes it possible for people to live well and engage in culture. Culture is a political aim, rather than a tool.

The value of culture can be instrumental, intrinsic, individual as well as institutional. The word 'culture' can in turn have many different meanings. In order to clarify the different meanings of 'culture', the report presents the ontological, anthropological, esthetical and hermeneutical facets of the concept of culture. An alternative way is to make distinction between different kinds of cultural activities. The Swedish Cultural Collaboration Model distinguish between theatre, dance, music, museums, cultural heritage, libraries, image and form, archives, film, handicrafts. The report also discusses concepts like freedom of expression, arm's length distance, trust-based governance and relevance.

It is difficult to give a clear summary of the value and social effects of culture. Instead the report gives a collection of tools that can help different actors to clarify their expectations and demands. The report shows that a resilient cultural ecology is a prerequisite for an equal and sustainable city." ■



Allmän bastu (Public sauna) — © Peter Kvarnström

# "The Centre for Cultural Value is aiming to bring together the research and make it available in a way that is usable both for practitioners but also for policy makers"

Since she arrived at the University of **Leeds**, Sue worked to build and enhance the university's relationships with external creative sector partners and devise innovative approaches that facilitate cross sectoral working. Sue is now associate director to the recently launched Leeds Centre for Cultural Value. Interview.

**It might be a bit provocative but who is the evaluation of culture actually for and what does it have to do with cities?**

I suppose there are many audiences for the evaluation of culture, and there are different ways in which you might approach that: depending on who you are and what are the reasons for evaluation. In terms of the Centre for Cultural Value, one of the audiences is the artists and the cultural practitioners themselves, to enable them to improve practice, but also to have some really robust and compelling stories to tell about the value of their work, and the value of their work with the communities that they work with. Those compelling stories can be directed both at themselves, in terms of helping them develop their practice, but also at policy makers within cities, within localities, regions, and ultimately the government as well. The evaluation of culture is important in the policy context, and it has been problematic certainly within the UK that the quality of evaluation and of the research that's been carried out is not robust enough, the arguments that are made are not compelling enough, and the information is coming from disparate sources, which created a kind of push back from policy makers.

I think it very much responds to that difficulty of having robust research that will help to build the case for cultural value. The Centre came from a research enquiry set up in 2012, funded and led by the Arts & Humanities Research Council[1].

> **"There is a lot of concentration on the instrumental impact of culture but very little concentration on the individual and on the individual experience of people who are participating or making the work"**

**The Centre for Cultural Value is an outcome of the Cultural Value Project. Can you tell us more about this project? What was its main result?**

The Cultural Value Project[2] seeded different types of research. At the time there was a lot of concentration on the instrumental impact of culture but very little concentration on the individual and on the individual experience of people who are participating or making the work. Professor Geoffrey Crossick[3] came up with a great summary of this, saying that: "what emerged from the Cultural Value project was the imperative to reposition first-hand individual experience of arts and culture at the heart of enquiry into cultural value. Far too often the way people experience culture takes second place to its impact on phenomena such as the economy, cities or health. But there are two problems about displacing attention in this way. In the first place it leads to a neglect of such issues as reflectiveness, empathy and imagination that have as their starting point individual experience. And secondly it ignores the fact that some of the


Leeds Station and Athena Rising Mural — © Carl Milner Photography for VisitLeeds

most important contributions of arts and culture to other areas are actually embedded in that individual experience. So when we are evaluating our work perhaps we should not be concentrating on economic impact, but rather the capacity of the individual to be economically innovative and creative". I think this is quite a shift in our thinking: looking from the end point of the impact to actually exploring what is it specifically about engagement in the arts that has an impact and an effect on people.

**From the Cultural Value Project report, I read that we already know some of the effects of cultural engagement, and the knowledge of these effects have improved in the last years. It has been even more proved 'thanks' to the coronavirus crisis when culture has become an essential feature in our daily**

**lives and for our well-being. Do you think we still need to go further in the understanding of cultural value?**

Yes, and that was the reason to develop a Centre where this information and research could be brought together and assimilated. Because as you say there is a lot of research out there, but sometimes when you dig down, a lot of what we are hearing is based on a small number of pieces of research. That is absolutely what the Centre for Cultural Value is aiming to do: to bring together the research but then make it available in a way that is usable both for practitioners but also for policy makers. It's quite pragmatic in its approach.

**What is the most challenging when we talk about evaluation of culture and cultural value?**

One of the things about the Centre for Cultural Value is that we are looking very much at the social impacts rather than the economic impacts. But certainly, when we are looking at government policy, there is a valorisation of big data and quantitative methods. And we know we gain an understanding of the value of culture on individuals and on community through more qualitative approach. So what we are doing at the moment is putting together a research project specifically around that, to see how we can build interdisciplinary relationships between qualitative researchers and quantitative researchers, so that the qualitative work (stories, case studies, etc.), can actually form and inform the numbers. At the moment the lived experience is completely squeezed out of any of the number-crunching. And as well as building these interdisciplinary teams we want to bring the artists right into the centre of that process to tell those compelling stories to policy makers and decision makers.

**You are working with artists as a specific community. Is there any other specific sectors or target group you are collaborating with?**

We are also collaborating with our funders, especially our three funders for the Centre (Arts Council England, Arts Humanities Research Council, Paul Hamlyn Foundation). In terms of policy we are building a close and strong relationship with the digital, culture, sport department within the UK government (DCMS), where we will be sending researchers on placement. We also have a very broad range of affiliate partners, who tend to be membership organisations. By working with those organisations, we can communicate what we have learned to their members but also we can learn what's happening within the cultural sector, they can bring that intelligence to us as well.

**The Centre is quite new, so its impact on cities is still too early to say with any confidence. But can you talk about how you intend to make an impact and support policymakers and the cultural sector to make more effective use of research and evaluation in their daily job?**

I did have a chat with Cluny[4] to find out what he felt was the impact within the city of Leeds. And I think we have got a strong relationship between the university and the city. From Cluny's point of view, having the Centre located within Leeds has been a benefit in terms of the value it places on the city. But of course, that's mutually beneficial because Leeds invests in culture and has a strong support for it. The other thing that we will do is roundtable briefings for policy makers, using research digests as a kind of basis for those discussions. Policy making is not a one way street: it's about building that relationship with policy makers so they can inform us of the kind of information that's needed and the way in which we need to communicate it to them.

We have to build trust in the information that is coming from the Centre for Cultural Value, because policy makers will understand how that's being structured and how we are approaching the research as well.

# "When quick decisions had to be made about support for the sector, the government just simply didn't have the information available"

**What kind of resources are available at the moment for policy makers and city practitioners who care about the evaluation of cultural programmes and want to highlight the social value of culture?**

As you said, the Centre for Cultural Value is relatively new, we launch publicly in November 2020, so the resources are people at the moment. But we will be developing online resources such as an online programme where people can upload their own information, and that will be accessible to anybody. I think that's it in terms of the resources, obviously generally there are wider resources available but one of the things that has been hampering some of the responses to the COVID19 from the government's point of view, is that they don't have that resource yet. They don't have a true understanding of the shape of the cultural sector and they don't have a collective understanding of its value and its impacts. When quick decisions had to be made about support for the sector in response to COVID-19, they just simply didn't have the information available. This is something that we are working on with them at the moment, to see how we can provide that information as people come out of lockdown.


Carnival — © M Spadafora

# "Culture has been a solace"

**What would be your number one tip to a policy maker who has to articulate the value of culture now that the coronavirus crisis enters a recovery phase and government is prioritising what happens next for culture?**

It seems a little presumptuous of me from the UK to give any tips, to be honest! But I suppose one of the things that we have learned during the crisis is how much people have moved to culture, and how much culture has been a solace, it's been a way of connecting people, of filling time and being creative within these really difficult times. I'm going to say two things: to remember that other people are in the same situation, so we might actually learn a lot from the other cities and from the other countries. And the other thing is that the artists are part of the solution, so don't forget to talk to them and find out what is it that they need, because I think they will be very articulate about that, and have been hugely innovative in the way that they responded to the crisis. And we could talk at length about that digital acceleration and the kind of new normal that we are now looking at. ■

# Belfast, a city imagining: Evaluating the impact of culture in Belfast

## Context

In September 2019, Belfast City Council published its new 10-year cultural strategy, A City Imagining. Its 16 priorities are arranged under four themes:

1. A City Belonging focuses on supporting active citizenship and participation in cultural life.

2. A City Challenging focuses on diversity through use of public and cultural spaces.

3. A City Creating focuses on supporting innovation and creativity across the cultural sectors.

4. A City Exploring focuses on Belfast's relationship to the rest of the world both inward and outward including support for cultural tourism.
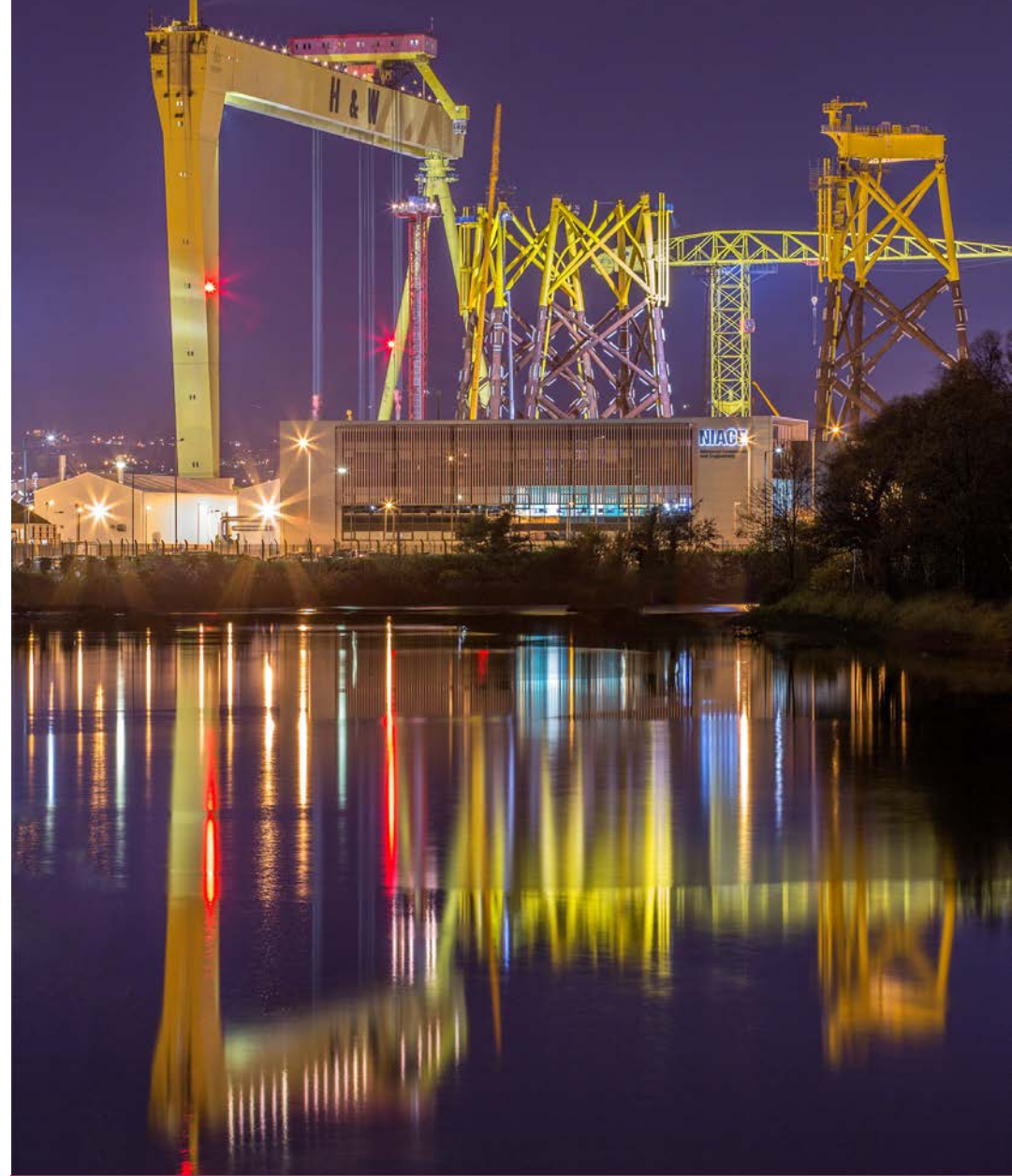
The new strategy also heralded the launch of new Cultural Multi-annual Grants (CMAG), funding arts and heritage organisations and cultural festivals and events.

In the UK and Ireland, the success of public funding has historically been measured by counting inputs (such as money spent) and outputs (such as audience numbers or "bums on seats"). The impact or difference it makes to the people taking part, the funded organisation or the public policy that was the reason for the funding in the first instance is seldom considered. Many grant recipients feel that this culture of monitoring is excessive, bureaucratic or arbitrary, based on lack of trust in the grantee and understanding of the value of what they do.

Since Belfast City Council first introduced multi-annual funding in 2005, the council has been investing more money in more trust-based strategic grants. With grants of between £10,000 and £250,000 per year for up to four years, CMAG is the council's largest strategic cultural grant fund to date.

Belfast City Council also became one of the first funders to shift towards outcomes-based evaluation under its previous cultural strategy, the Cultural Framework for Belfast 2010–20. It developed Art Affects, a framework to evidence the impact of the arts in Belfast, which identified 59 impacts (such as learning gained, community pride and health and wellbeing) arranged under five strands or levels (societal resources, community assets, individual capabilities equality and excellence). There was also a compendium of qualitative and quantitative tools to help arts organisations evidence those impacts and a portfolio of evidence to be gathered by Belfast City Council to measure population-level outcomes.

Funded organisations were asked to use Art Affects to identify the outcomes of their work and evaluate and report their impact. While clients generally welcomed this shift in communicating their value, there was mixed success in practice, with many continuing to report outputs. Belfast City Council also lacked resources to manage the complex new system.



However, in 2015, local government reform renewed focus on the impact of public policy, and both central and local government adopted Outcomes Based Accountability™ (OBATM) as the preferred methodology for measuring impact. Under the Belfast Agenda, Belfast's first community plan, for example, culture can contribute to a wide range of outcomes (such as "Everyone in Belfast fulfils their potential" or "Belfast is a vibrant, attractive, connected and environmentally sustainable city") and indicators (such as jobs, earnings, volunteering, self-efficacy, community pride and social capital).

# A new evaluation framework

In November 2019, Belfast City Council commissioned a bespoke monitoring and evaluation framework for CMAG. This needed to accommodate the diverse range of funded organisations and their different inputs, activities, outputs and beneficiaries; and a wide variety of cultural, social, economic and environmental outcomes at project-, organisational-, strategic-, civic- and population-level; while aggregating comparable data to tell a comprehensive and cohesive story of impact.

While Art Affects was method-neutral, the new CMAG evaluation framework was structured around OBA. This was not just so that CMAG can readily demonstrate its contribution to other overarching, OBA-based policies, such as the Belfast Agenda. OBA usefully combines established elements of grant monitoring (what they did and how well they did it) with impact evaluation (what difference it makes to the people, systems or processes the grant recipient interacts with). Many funders also have unrealistic expectations of what grant recipients can accomplish, and OBA usefully differentiates between what grant-givers and grant recipients are responsible for. Finally, the relationship between the different levels of accountability is based on "reasonable assumption", rather than causality, which reduces the burden of proof, particularly for often already over-stretched grant recipients.

Individual grant recipients, however, may use any (or no) method to evaluate their impact. This is because different organisations are at different stages of their evaluation practice, and many are balancing the different demands of a portfolio of funders. However, as a minimum, Belfast City Council's CMAG grant recipients must now produce an annual self-evaluation report that is outcomes-focused and:

- demonstrates their contribution to at least one of nine strategic A City Imagining outcomes ("People feel that culture belongs to them"; "People feel connected to the city"; "The cultural sector will be stronger"; and so on),

- balances quantitative and qualitative evidence from different sources so that findings stand up to some scrutiny, and

- considers what worked well, what worked less well and what they will do differently in the future

# Working together

It is not easy to measure the impact of culture. The evaluation framework will be introduced in phases based on a shared journey of discovery and development for both the council and its grant recipients. This means that in the first year at least, grant payments will not be linked to self-evaluation. In subsequent years, depending on successful roll-out in the previous year, payment may be linked to improved evaluation practice, the empirical quality of the evaluation or, ultimately, actual achievement of outcomes until outcomes-based performance is fully integrated in to both grant application and administration.

In the meantime, the council has developed guidance on self-evaluation, which was tested on a small sample of grant recipients. (Extensive design testing was not possible at this stage as applications for funding were being processed.) These clients welcomed the council's leadership in developing a new, more meaningful approach to evaluation. However, opinion diverged as to whether the method was appropriate: some organisations felt it lacked direction and was not ambitious enough, while others felt it was arduous and restrictive. This may correlate with the value of CMAG grants,

organisational capacity and current evaluation practice. It is intended that testing will continue in to autumn 2020.

Essential to the successful implementation of the evaluation framework will be the council's relationship managers, who will each have a portfolio of CMAG grant recipients to support through their journey. The process and guidance was tested on relationship managers and positively received. It is now recommended that each relationship manager benefits from a budget to support their clients' and their own training and development, including opportunities for group training where there are shared needs.

Belfast City Council also intends to work more closely with other key funders, such as the Arts Council of Northern Ireland and Tourism NI. It is recommended that the council and these agencies work with representatives from CMAG-funded organisations as part of a "data development group". The data development group will explore opportunities to streamline monitoring and evaluation across agencies and oversee pilot projects, including measuring quality using audience impact metrics and the economic impact of cultural tourism.

## Making a difference

A new outcomes-based evaluation framework must, of course, make a difference to the council, cultural practice and policy. All data reported to or collected by the council contributes to thematic and programmatic OBA report cards. This should be scrutinised by the council, the sector and other stakeholders, such as the Arts Council and Tourism NI, and published annually. There should also be formative and summative independent evaluations of CMAG and the evaluation framework. Lessons learned and recommendations should be used to amend policy and programmes, including future multi-annual grants.

## Learning

- Grant-makers should have reasonable expectations of what grantees can achieve. As well as impacts on people, funders should also consider the impact grant-making has on funded organisations, policy and practice.

- Most cultural organisations are keen to show the difference they make but feel that the effort they put in to monitoring and evaluation does not make a difference to policy or practice. Grant-makers also need to demonstrate a willingness to evaluate, to be held accountable and to change.

- There must be high levels of trust between grant-makers and grant recipients. It is natural that recipients and funders will want to frame their achievements as positively as possible. However, talking openly and honestly about problems supports a culture of reflective practice and evidence-based policymaking.

- Public policy has made cultural organisations demonstrate their impact by counting outputs. While the sector is vocal in stating that their value is more than a sum of their "bums on seats", many organisations still need time and support to unlearn this approach.

- Most cultural organisations have limited resources, and change requires time, effort and, often, money. Changes that are welcomed at policy level may not be welcomed in practice.

- Changing practice and culture takes time. It is more likely to be successful if the organisations that are required to make the change are involved in the development. However, it is extremely unlikely that everyone can be made happy all of the time. Funders should balance the experience and expertise of their clients with the need to show leadership and promote good evaluation practice. ■

# "Every presentation, every briefing, every speech that we write for senior politicians about the value of culture features heavily our culture impact data"

It has been a few years now that an impact survey has been implemented for cultural organisations in **Manchester**. Thorsten Mayer has been working for Manchester City Council since 2006 in a variety of role, including housing, urban regeneration and economic development, and is a member of the Culture Team since January 2017. He has followed the evolution of the cultural impact survey quite closely. Interview.

**Why did the city of Manchester decide to run a cultural impact survey? Did it respond to specific challenges in the city?**

We have run the survey since 2014 and have been on a bit of a journey with it. Initially we had external consultants working with us on the development of the survey, and particularly on the calculation of growth value added[1], which is one of the key stats we produce every year. The current version of the survey is an online process that we have run now for the third year, which is mandatory for our funded organisations. We have a portfolio of 39 organisations which are the staple of the survey which respond every year, even though we are sending this survey out to a hundred organisations. When we present the results and findings of the survey, we focus on those 39 organisations. But the survey itself is open to everybody and those 39 organisations are by no means the whole sector.

## "It as an advocacy tool for cultural organisations"

Why we do it? It is key information that we use all the time, so you can imagine every presentation, every briefing, every speech that we write for senior politicians about the value of culture features heavily our culture impact data. Our executive member for culture in the council is very keen on the widening access to culture and participation. Even in the current situation of the COVID crisis, where we have suspended all funding agreements and have actually said to organisations to use the money in any way they see fit to weather the storm, we still run this survey because the data it provides is so valuable. It always looks at the financial year past so the survey that we are running this year will look at the financial year 2019 which is only been affected by the COVID lockdown for two weeks (our financial years run from April to April) so when it comes to actually assessing the impact of the crisis next year, this benchmark will be critical to perceive what the lockdown has done to our cultural sector. It also feeds into various streams of governance: once a year around October, we present the findings to the politicians sitting on the overview group for communities and equalities to see how the take up of cultural activities and participation is across the city. Politicians are particularly interested in how their respective wards are varying in terms of cultural activity. It is fair to say in Manchester the political leadership very much values culture and its role in contributing to the economy hence we have a lot of attention on the survey. And lastly it is a collaborative process we are running with the cultural sector, so we see it as a sort of advocacy tool for cultural organisations, they can use the data for funding applications to illustrate their impact, we feedback every year and look at how organisations are faring compared to their peers and their art forms to give them a picture of their performance across a number of key indicators.

> ## "There is just a sort of level of trust between the council and organisations"

It has not occurred yet that a funded organisation hasn't responded to the survey. We have a system for our funding that every funded organisation has a named relationship



Commonwealth games — © Jan Chlebik

officer in the council, we regularly talk with them, there is a really close relationship between council and the funded sector. I think we would take a very dim view if an organisation would not play ball, even in the current situation where we lower the burden on organisations in terms of reporting to us during the lockdown, we would expect a sort of quid pro quo and organisations to come back to us with information when we request it. For instance, since the lockdown we have run two versions of an impact survey asking what the impact of the lockdown on organisations is, what scenario they are modelling in terms of redundancies and potential uncertainties, and what government support they are using and if they are not, why not. And I have to say the response rate was really encouraging, so I think there is just a sort of level of trust between the council and organisations. Plus they know we use the data to argue their case when it comes to funding with politicians so they are quite aware of that.

**The survey is compulsory for organizations funded by the council, but I guess it's important to also have data from other organisations that are not funded. How did you convince these organizations who are not funded by the city to take part in the survey?**

There is a benefit to be part of this ecology of organizations. There is a sort of incentive to be sort of part of the fold. They also may want to become funded organizations in the future. It is also a question of advocacy and building up the members, so it is about constant conversation and dropping the survey into every conversation you have!

**TIP NUMBER ONE:**

Have constant conversation with your cultural organisations. For instance, have a named relationship officer in the council for every funded organisation.

**How does the running of the survey work in practice? When do you start, who is involved, what is the role of each person?**

The survey is run essentially by the culture finance team, in collaboration with the research and intelligence unit in the council and the ICT team. The culture finance team has the burden of checking the survey responses for their validity: we need to see whether anything is way out year on year, we need to query some things with organisations if there is no explanation. It just takes quite a bit of time until the survey results match and are comparable year on year. We no longer use external consultants so the whole survey is now done in-house from its coproduction before sending out to its processing, data analysis and the presentation. Obviously cultural organisations get asked for a lot of data from all sorts of partners, the funding mix of the arts in the UK is very diverse and every funder has different requirements, so we try to make life as easy as possible for our organisations, especially smaller ones who might not have a dedicated data person working on their returns. For instance, we align our survey questions as well as the timing as much as we can with Arts Council England which is the major funder of cultural organisations in the UK.

**Is this part of the challenges you faced in the very beginning when the survey was launched? What were the solutions found to meet these challenges?**

Definitely. The Arts Council alignment has really helped. That is something that we tackled three years ago, so for the first few years of the survey there was a bit of a problem with a disconnect between Arts Council monetary requirement and ours, but we solved that especially trying to align the categories that we are asking. Simple things like age categories among participants for instance. Before we implemented the last version of the survey three years ago, there was a bit of co-design process with the sector as well: we got a working group of cultural organisations to look at it, test the survey and to give us detailed feedback as to how we could improve the functionality for them.

**TIP NUMBER TWO:**

Align the survey questions and timing with other major funders who may have similar requirements: send your survey out at the same time, ask similar questions, and align the categories.

## "The further you live away from the city centre, the least likely you are to engage in cultural activity of any sort"

## Since you launched the survey, did you notice any surprising or notable results?

You make assumptions, don't you? About certain areas, about coverage of arts organisations … in many respects, the data tells us what other data tells us: cultural engagement is very much along the lines of other indicators in the city, like employment, health outcomes, so areas which are deprived in some respects tend to be deprived in other respects. And what we are finding as a rule of thumb is that the further you live away from the city centre where there is a concentration of cultural organisations, the least likely you are to engage in cultural activity of any sort. There are many reasons for that: the cost of transport, the barriers that people feel … One of the ways we try to deal with that is to have organisations deliver activities in the areas rather than expect people to come into the city centre and consume cultural objects or take part in culture. However, there are weird little anomalies like an area in North Manchester which tends to be quite a cold spot in terms of cultural activities, which features really heavily in terms of engagement in classical music, which we call the "Moston miracle".

## Did these discoveries make you react, change or start different policies or practices?

We do feedback the results of the survey to the sector and discuss what needs to be done. For instance, there is a group of cultural leaders, chief executives and directors of multiple cultural organisations in Manchester, which have a subgroup working on cultural engagement, so our data informs their discussions. Some of the issues that we have been grappling with over the years are the diversity of audiences, the diversity of boards, etc. That's an interesting result that is fairly constant: you have a slightly female bias in the arts across all people categories, audiences, participants, volunteers and staff members, but interestingly when you get to board level that's reverse and you have a slight male bias, and that is something we are looking at. There is also school engagement where we have quite a stark variety in terms of schools that are engaged and schools which are not, so that's something we work on with individual schools to improve the picture. At the moment 78% of all Manchester's schools are engaged in cultural activity, and there should be some improvements, so we launched the Manchester Cultural Educational Partnership, which brings together arts organisations, schools and the council and youth organisations to work together to ensure that every school child has access to cultural provision. Because we know that through various changes in education policy in the UK, the take up of arts subjects has actually fallen and is continuing to fall.

## If cities were to do the same, what would be your feedback and advice for a possible transfer to another context? What are the mistakes you should not make? What would you do differently if you had to do it again?

My first piece of advice is to take your time and get it right in terms of the design, because you do want the result to be comparable year on year and you don't want to change the process too much between two years. If you are setting out, do spend time, speak to the sector, and come up with a format you are comfortable with. Places are very different in terms of their demographics, in terms of their concentration of cultural organisations, so one thing probably worth thinking about is the sample size. If you are asking the sector to come back to you with information, have a good conversation about what's possible and what is simply not feasible for that particular place. We have ended up throwing out quite a few questions over time because they were just not producing any meaningful data.

**TIP NUMBER THREE:**

To get it right, speak and co-design the process with the sector, look at the survey together and test it to improve it!

**Do you think you we could use a survey of this type to measure the impact of culture and cultural organizations in terms of environment footprint? How could we use these tools to move towards the zero-carbon culture in our cities?**

At the moment we do ask organisations what carbon footprint is and whether they are a member of a sustainability organisation: 30 out of 39 organizations are part of such organisations like Julie's Bicycle[2] or the Manchester Arts and Sustainability Team (MAST). I think this is something that's going to become more important. I'm actually working on a review to include environmental indicators that organisations have to meet when designing our next grant programme from 2022 onwards. It is a co-designed process with the sector. We are just in the process of convening a steering group, they may well advise us what else we should be asking in next year's survey in order to build up the baseline. Obviously we have a variety of organisations, it is quite a disparate picture so we need to come up with some system that reflects all of it. At the moment we are thinking of having a menu approach that could be tailored to an organisation and then be part of the grant agreement and funding agreement that we have with them. ■

2. Julie's Bicycle is a charity based in London that supports the creative community to act on climate change and environmental sustainability. https://juliesbicycle.com

© Jan Chlebik and marketing Manchester

# Leeuwarden European Capital of Culture measuring programme

By Jantine Verver, Policy Advisor Culture, City of Leeuwarden

Before ECoC 2018 Leeuwarden had small budgets for culture and city promotion and marginal or no cultural measurement at all. Becoming European Capital of Culture was a driver to start taking measuring seriously. It became a necessity, an important part of the bid book and an obvious post on the budget.

In 2009 we started making the bid, setting the goals. The main question was: what do we want to accomplish? And how do you translate that into KPI's (key performance indicators)? We researched how previous ECoC's did it. Eventually we came up with 32 KPI's divided into 6 categories: cultural access and participation, tourism, economy and education, cultural vibrancy and sustainability, image and perception and governance and delivery process.

The first measuring was the so called 0-measurement, to measure where we were standing at that point. That took place in 2015. After that, there have been two more measurements plus reports to explain them. The measuring goes on until years after the ECoC year 2018, to be able to measure the long term impact.

Because of the broadness of the KPI's, a lot of data from a lot of different sources is needed. The data source that is used, depends on the KPI. Data sources vary from macro-level secondary data to individual stories collected through primary research. Data collection in general: by data that is kept by several public agencies such as Central Data Collection Agency in Holland - CBS, NBTC-NIPO, etc. But we also collect data from partners (schools, universities, governments, cultural hubs, the tourism industry such as hotels and restaurants). Also, a-selective samples are taken among visitors and inhabitants by example through street surveys. We monitor the (social) media, by example to measure the impact on the image of Leeuwarden-Friesland (KPI 6, 8, 23-26). We count the amount of people in town, at festivals (KPI 4-5) using phone data/Wi-Fi spots and ticketing system.

The measurement is necessary to be able to prove that we achieved what we promised in our bid book to become ECoC (and account for received financing). With such an investment (€70 million) press, politics and citizens watch results closely. It definitely affects opinion and decision making (future cultural budgets). It was also necessary to be able to make adjustments during the process and argument that adjustments are needed (if so). If we saw that a KPI stayed behind or is not going to be met, we could change the programme substantiated. This gives you a thermometer on how things are going. Also it supplies PR and marketing for the events and projects. We have chosen to deliver 'glossy' reports after every measuring, in order to let stakeholders and inhabitants (potential visitors) know what the events are and contribute to and give them a stage.

This measuring program is the first measurement of this size of the impact of investments in culture. We have never done this before on this scale. It is a helpful tool to prove that culture is indeed a driver for social cohesion and a stronger economy and will support the discussion to keep/make budgets for culture substantial and existing. Also, it states the importance of measuring cultural value at a more structural basis and therefore invest in that.

Yet it is still early to be able to speak about results yet in the field of political decision making. We do notice a big interest for the research from the politics and the press. However, it is inevitable that the outcomes of the research will affect political decision making. If the results are good, the willingness to proceed with investing in culture and in city marketing will be bigger than if the results are disappointing.

**Tips and recommendations:**

⬡ Set your goals (KPI's) in time.

⬡ Make sure there is enough budget. Research costs time and money.

⬡ Start your data collection in time (you want to start before any effects are there).

⬡ Share the results, make sure your stakeholders know. ■

# Examples from members

## Ongoing initiatives
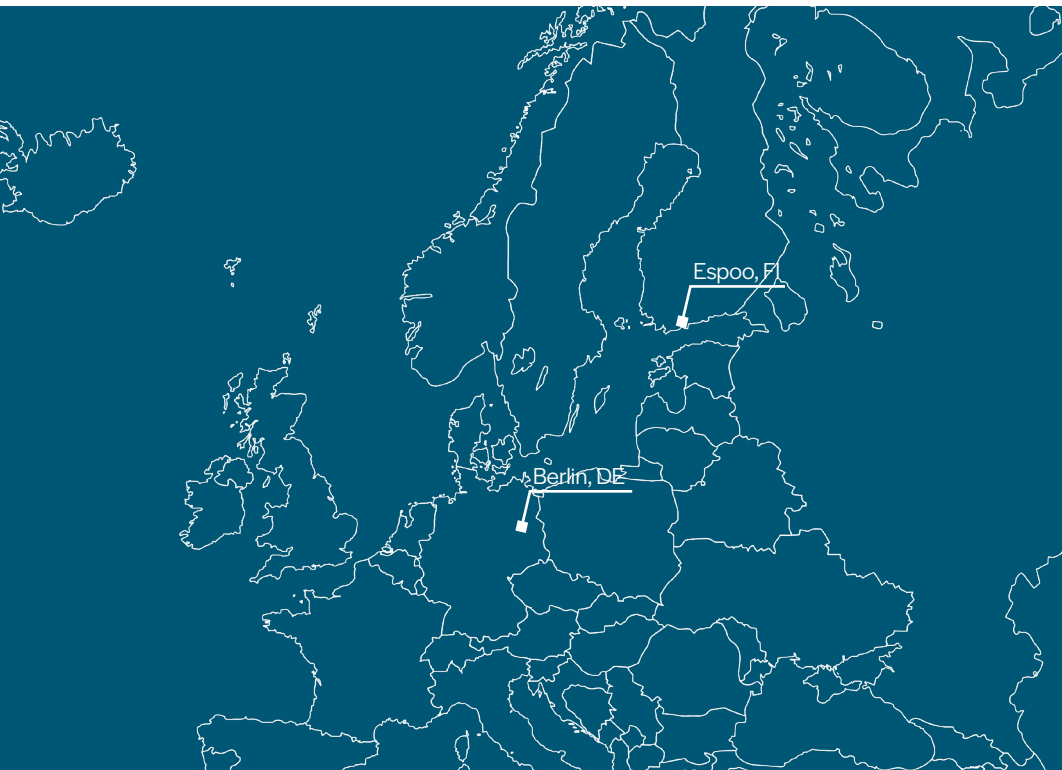
# EspooCult research project

The EspooCult research project 2018-2019 reviewed cultural activities and cultural policies in the city of Espoo, with a special focus on the role of culture in the city's development.

The conclusions of the study include suggestions on how to integrate culture more effectively into future city development and planning, and into residents' daily life. The research will result in a large knowledge base on Espoo's cultural services to support the development and strategy work of the city.

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The research report (approx. 300 pages) will be translated in English and released in autumn 2020.

The research was conducted by the Centre for Cultural Policy Research (Cupore) and it involved more than 10 distinguished researchers. The steering group included members e.g. from the City of Espoo (experts, policymakers), Cupore and universities.

An efficient team consisting of 7 members from the City of Espoo and Cupore carried out the project in practice. The directors of Espoo Culture Unit and Cupore made a deep commitment to the project. Finally, two experts handled project management and its productions as part of their daily work. The international partner of the EspooCult research project was KEA European Affairs. An essential part of the cultural service development work, the cooperation with KEA links the EspooCult research to the wider European framework. KEA provided two coaching sessions for the cultural operators in Espoo as well as written comments based on international comparison.

The budget of the research project was ca € 250,000.

## Challenges

The cultural services in Espoo are diverse and produced by a multitude of partners. In the analysis of the current situation, the priority was to map the entire field and evaluate these services in relation to the strategic goals of CultureEspoo. The expertise of the research institute and the active dialogue between Cupore and the city were elementary in setting off the project to a good start.

How to communicate cultural policy research? Cultural policy affects us all, but the issues involved are often complex. City of Espoo considered it important that the research results are communicated to multiple groups (cultural professionals, city servants, policymakers, residents) throughout the process. One of the solutions we found was a format called factsheet in which the results were summarized. A total of four factsheets were published during the research project.

In the city's own bulletin, which is mailed to every resident, we also published EspooCult comics with a link to more information on the EspooCult research project. The aim was to raise interest in cultural services, as development work is being done for and with residents, too.

## Results

The key findings include both pros and cons, strengths and things we need to do better. Among the strengths are, for instance, a high attendance rate in cultural activities among Espoo residents (compared to other cities) and a high appreciation towards the services. As a growing city, Espoo invests in culture. On the other hand, the city needs to improve its outreach to an increasingly diverse population and take the diversity of each of its five city districts better into account in the future cultural work. There are clear differences between the different population groups and communities. Regarding audiences there is also untapped potential outside of Espoo: Espoo offers high-quality services and is centrally located, and the city could therefore improve its attraction of audiences from elsewhere.

The EspooCult research highlights that the Espoo City Library as an institution that successfully strengthens democracy, inclusion and trust. Among other things, Espoo City Library promotes the equality of immigrants and helps those at risk of digital exclusion. Getting to know the library's award-winning, inclusive service culture can also benefit other cultural actors in Espoo.

Espoo is a high-achiever in city sustainability surveys and invests in cross-sectoral sustainable development. Also the culture unit performs well in its sustainability work, but the role of culture as a part of the city's sustainable development is not

recognized. Furthermore, the study shows that culture is not yet integrated into urban planning, although the attitude of city actors towards cooperation is positive.

Regarding measuring the value and impact of culture, the study suggests, for instance, that Espoo should create indicators for the planning and monitoring of cultural policies, create a broader conception of the economic impacts of culture (consistent mapping, data gathering) and link the monitoring of cultural policies to geographic information. These questions would be fruitful to collaborate on in a European context, as well as the cultural participation of culturally diverse groups.

These observations will be the starting points for the processing and implementation of research results. The implementation of the results will concern many different groups and the work is done using participatory methods.

## Recommendations

City of Espoo Cultural Unit warmly recommends basic research and objective evaluation of the cultural services to support the development of activities. If we would do this research again, we would perhaps invest even more in digital platforms and internal and external communication during the process. It is essential to make the process as transparent as possible for cultural professionals, public servants, partners, policymakers and residents. ■

# KulMon (KulturMonitoring)

The "KulturMonitoring (KulMon)" visitor research system was initiated by the Senate Department for Culture in Berlin and the Berlin Tourismus & Kongress GmbH (visitBerlin). The goal of KulMon is to generate continuous data about visitors for cultural institutions, cultural administration / politics and tourism marketing (visitor monitoring).

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KulMon was developed in collaboration with the Freie Universität of Berlin (Centre for Audience Development) and in cooperation with six cultural institutions in Berlin and the Institute for Museum Research Berlin in 2008/09. The project management has been based at visitBerlin since the start in 2008. More than 50 institutions, including museums, memorials, theatres, operas, concert halls and castles, has participated and over 300,000 visitors KulMon has been surveyed so far both in and outside of Berlin.

KulMon was initially funded as a model project using cultural marketing funds of the Senate Department for Economic Affairs, Technology and Women and funds from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) of the Senate Chancellery for Cultural Affairs. The Senate Department for Economic Affairs has been funding KulMon project sponsorship since 2012. In addition, the participating institutions cover the funding of KulMon. The project itself is not profit-oriented.

KulMon is developed further by the participating institutions, the Senate Department for Culture (today: Berlin Senate Department for Culture and Europe) and visitBerlin (funded by the Senate Department for Economy, Energy and

Business), and continuously developed by researchers in steering rounds. The content and methodological development of KulMon has been financed with funds from the Senate Department for Culture and Europe in Berlin since 2018.

In 2020 300,000 € and in 2021 approx. 600,000 € are available for the institutions participating in KulMon. The focus institutions were initially those who were institutionally supported by the Senate Department for Culture and Europe with an annual number of more than 20,000 visitors. The funds planned for 2020 were distributed according to a differentiated system.

KulMon surveys are carried out as personal surveys by an externally commissioned survey institute. It is designed as a long-term study with continuous surveys distributed over the years/seasons. The numbers of respondents are determined per institution and per year. The survey data are available in an online evaluation platform. KulMon offers the institutions comparison data. Institutions or groups of institutions can enable each other access to data to compare individual results (optional).

As a survey instrument, KulMon uses a modular questionnaire system. It includes standardized core questions which are obligatory for all participating institutions, containing questions which are relevant for cultural policy/administration, marketing and tourism. Additionally questions can be added from a pool of specific questions, which cover the individual needs of the institutions, e.g. communication, marketing, visitor motivation, etc.

The visitor research system is designed as a long-term study. KulMon's standard data enable the institutions to make time comparisons of their own surveys as well as benchmarking within the respective sector (e.g. theatres, museums, memorials etc.) and across sectors. Beyond the knowledge of their own data, KulMon offers a basis for exchange and networking of the participating institutions among each other.

The results are equally useful for the strategic work of cultural and leisure facilities, tourism marketing as well as cultural policy and administration.



Molecule Man bei Sonnenuntergang — © Nicole Woykos

From 2020 on, KulMon will be supported by the Institute for Research on Cultural Participation (www.iktf.berlin) within Berlin's Foundation for Cultural Education and Cultural Consulting in terms of content and scientific development.

## Challenges

The participation of the cultural institutions in KulMon has so far been voluntary. In practice over the past ten years, the group of participants has been changing. Because of that, statements about time series comparisons have been extremely difficult for some of the institutions. So far, the barriers to use have been primarily the costs and the lack of expertise in evaluating the data within the institutions. The result was that at least in Berlin the KulMon survey has become mandatory for already more than 40 publicly funded institutions since 2019. Parallel to that the Institute for Research on Cultural Participation (www.iktf.berlin) has started to support the institutions with data evaluation (e.g. optimizing the online evaluation platform, publications, workshops). Since the start of the system in 2008 the added value of the surveys has been recognized by the cultural institutions more and more, especially by their marketing and public relations departments. As a result the usage of the data for decision making has increased remarkably. This applies for single institutions and groups of institutions but also for the Senate Department for Culture. Since 2019 there is a major growth number of institutions using KulMon outside the Berlin-region to be seen (e.g. Düsseldorf see below).

## Results

One of the most important results: The provision of data for cultural institutions alone is not enough. Cultural institutions need help with what to do with the data. They need to be advised so that they can learn how to draw conclusions from the data for operations. That is why solutions have been developed over the years. Training and handouts for cultural institutions are offered and a user-friendly online

interface is being developed. External experts can support the implementation of results if necessary.

In the course of time it became clear: the demand from administration and cultural institutions for corresponding data and data-based work is increasing. The Corona crisis in particular shows how helpful good empirical data can be.

The results can be used equally for the strategic work of cultural and leisure facilities (especially tips for the development of new offers, placement / marketing strategies and their measurement of success), tourism marketing and cultural policy and management (development of participation strategies, their practical implementation and evaluation).

Since 2019, the Berlin Senate Department for Culture and Europe has enabled a biennial population survey, which is organized by the IKTF. This enables the KulMon-data to be compared with the total population. This means that long-term cultural-political consequences can be derived from the data.

## Lessons learned

- Continuous scientific support of the system is important for the quality of the whole project.

- Long-term public funding is needed. Especially small institutions with low financial budgets won't finance the surveys by themselves.

- Continuous support for cultural institutions is needed to enable them to use the data in their daily work

- Continuous optimization of KulMon through collective intelligence of the involved parties is a success factor. The system offers possibilities for networking and comparison with other institutions, also across divisions. Top-down management will not work. Participatory work is a crucial key.■

# Examples from members

## Initiatives to follow
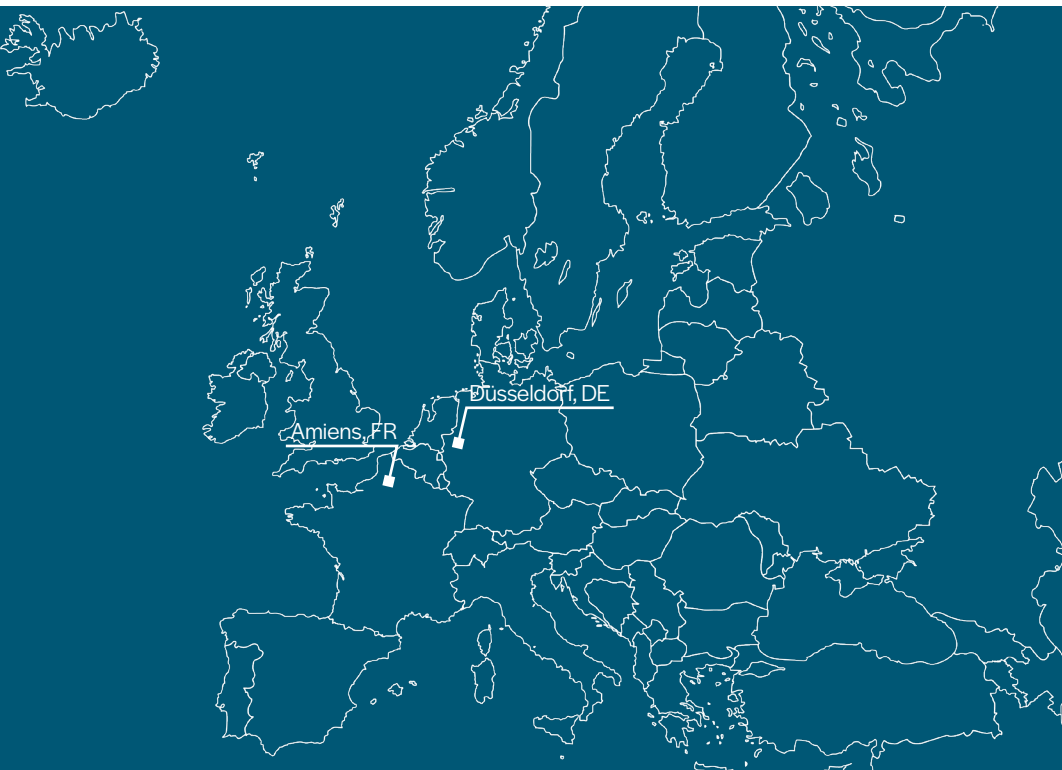
## Participatory and inclusive evaluation project of the metropolitan cultural and artistic policy

The community is currently undertaking public policy evaluation initiatives. Amiens's Culture and Heritage department wishes to ensure the regularity and continuity of the investigation by relying on an inclusive and participatory methodology. The challenge is to take up an evaluation that goes beyond the quantitative aspects, taking into account the point of view and expertise of the beneficiaries of the actions carried out by the Amiens's Culture and Heritage department. Likewise, it is a question of meeting the prerequisite of specific transparency to the evaluation of public policies. Cultural technicians, members of the public as well as a panel of inhabitants are involved in this project. ■

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# KulMon Düsseldorf - Cultural Monitoring, Visitor Research and Evaluation (to start in autumn 2020)

*** Due to the current COVID-19 pandemic the start of the initiative had to be postponed ***

From 2016-2017 the city of Düsseldorf conducted a participatory development process with cultural professionals, cultural politicians and representatives of the public cultural administration in order to develop goals and measures for a contemporary cultural policy framework. These policy objectives and measures were written down in a so-called „Cultural Development Plan (Kulturentwicklungsplan, short: KEP) – which serves as a strategic roadmap for local cultural policy.

Besides other recommendations for action, the KEP also addresses the question of a visitor development from a socio-political and cultural-political point of view. The City of Düsseldorf has no reliable data on the educational and social impact of culture. Evaluation methodologies are still unsatisfactory if existing at all. It is

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Link:

Cultural Development Plan for the City of Düsseldorf,

www.kep-duesseldorf.de
(currently only available in German)

therefore difficult to provide conclusive evidence about the impact and value of culture on people and society. For example there is no data showing what people actually value from their experience of arts and culture and how it affects their health and wellbeing.

One measure derived from the KEP is the development of a comprehensive visitor monitoring that is not only a visitor analysis in a strict sense, but which also serves as a relevant tool to measure the impact and value of culture on people and society.

Since 2020 Düsseldorf cooperates with "KulMon - Cultural Monitoring, Visitor Research and Evaluation" to generate visitor research data. It was developed in 2008/2009 by Berlin Tourismus Marketing GmbH (today: Berlin Tourismus Kongress GmbH - visitBerlin) and the Berlin Senate Department for Culture (today: Berlin Senate Department for Culture and Europe). It was developed by scientists* at Freie Universität Berlin (Center for Audience Development) with support from the Institute for Museum Research Berlin.

The first visitor survey with ten participating museums from Düsseldorf was supposed to take place in spring 2020 but had to be postponed due to the current COVID-19 pandemic.

KulMon originally started with six Berlin-based cultural institutions and has grown to a network of approximately 50 participating institutions in Germany. The survey is carried out by face-to-face interviews.

As a survey instrument, KulMon uses a modular questionnaire system. It includes standardized core questions which are obligatory for all participating institutions, containing questions which are relevant for cultural policy/administration, marketing and tourism. Additionally questions can be added from a pool of specific questions, which cover the individual needs of the institutions, e.g. communication, marketing, visitor motivation, etc.

The visitor research system is designed as a long-term study. KulMon's standard data enable the institutions to make time comparisons of their own surveys as well as benchmarking within the respective sector (e.g. theatres, museums, memorials etc.) and across sectors. Beyond the knowledge of their own data, KulMon offers a basis for exchange and networking of the participating institutions among each other.

The results are equally useful for the strategic work of cultural and leisure facilities, tourism marketing as well as cultural policy and administration.

To prepare Düsseldorf's participation with KulMon, a local working group of the ten participating institutions was created to coordinate and discuss the selection of questions for the questionnaire.

Budget: approx. EUR 45.000,-

## Results so far

The results of the survey will be analyzed and discussed internally (Düsseldorf) and within the KulMon Network.

The goal is to derive recommendations for actions from the results which will be discussed with the participating institutions as well as with local political stakeholders. ■

# Further information

For further information and questions on Eurocities, the WG Cultural Services & Culture for Inclusive Cities or the content of the digest, please contact:

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