



SOFIA URBACT LOCAL GROUP & SOFIA MUNICIPALITY INTEGRATED ACTION PLAN

SOFIA GROWS WITH CULTURE

YOUTH, EDUCATION AND CULTURE - SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT ON A LOCAL LEVEL

Sofia Municipality is part of a network for active cooperation and exchange of experience between eight European capitals (Amsterdam, London, Lisbon, Dublin, Riga, Vilnius, Tallinn, Sofia), which was established within the European project "Access to Culture for All Citizens" ", Funded by the URBACT III program of the European Union in the period 2019 - 2022. The aim of this project is to create concrete action plans in support of the Cities' Strategies in the field of culture, addressing the challenge of expanding citizens' access to culture. Partner cities are united around the fact that culture does not reach all citizens equally and that we need to work for better understanding and greater involvement. The reasons for this are different. Finding solutions that will really help to overcome them, setting goals, objectives and measures has been the subject of our participation over the past two years. This document is the result of the work of our team through the URBACT methodology for developing strategic plans through the participation of all stakeholders and developing cultural policies based on real challenges and needs, as well as through data collection, analysis and risk forecasting. An exceptional benefit in this process is the communication with other European capitals, sharing experiences and good practices.

Sofia has chosen to focus its work on creating a mechanism for better interaction between the culture and education sectors and expanding children's and students' access to culture and the arts. We believe that culture can contribute both to the learning process and to improve the lives of children and students, to contribute to a better understanding of differences between people, to improve the "climate" in the school environment, to create empathy, to develop creativity and to form young people as active, educated and concerned citizens. The inclusion of children and students in the cultural life of the city, the development of skills, habits and understanding in the field of art will support the development of an educated, demanding and supportive future audience. Knowledge of the city's cultural heritage is the basis for establishing the cultural identity and connection with the city, attitude and care for its "cultural treasures".

In the process of work on the action plan, the Cultural Department of Sofia Municipality works in constant communication and discussion with a group of stakeholders, which consists of representatives of cultural organizations, school directors and teachers, students, cultural

institutes - museums, libraries, galleries, theaters, etc., the Ministry of Education and Science, the Ministry of Culture, other structures of Sofia Municipality (Sports and Youth Activities Directorate, the municipal enterprise SofiaPlan), journalists and “cultural ambassadors”, representatives of the Creative Council of Sofia Municipality and the Commission on education, culture, science and cultural diversity at Sofia City Council. We believe that our unification in our common understandings and values, as well as the common vision of the path we have to follow in achieving the goals, is the only guarantee of success, sustainability and scale. We believe that the representatives of schools, cultural institutes, organizations and public institutions express the will and position of the field they represent and will work to achieve them in the future, as we worked in our stakeholder group.

We believe that sharing experiences (good or bad) with other European capitals gives us not only energy and inspiration, but also concrete ideas and tried and tested solutions.

We have tried to be as specific as possible in our proposals, clear and open in the risks and the necessary deadlines and sources of funding.

We believe that every child has the right to access culture and art and our goal is to guarantee it. We believe that this plan should be supported and realized because

- **Because everyone has at least one child around, who would be happy if the plan succeeds**
- **Because we must not fail to notice any talented child**
- **Because artists in the city need a new and supportive audience**
- **Because our city to develop economically**
- **Because culture and art contribute to the social well-being and understanding of the other**
- **Because art turns children into creative personalities and good decision makers in the future**

1. CITY BACKGROUND

Sofia is the capital of Bulgaria and the biggest political, administrative, cultural and educational center in the country with a current population of 1.8 million inhabitants. The 13th largest city in the European Union, one of the oldest cities in Europe with around 1400 cultural monuments, including one UNESCO World Heritage Site, Sofia has been part of the UNESCO Creative Cities of Film Network since 2004.

The city is the national center for culture, art, education, creative clusters and business. Most of the countries' universities, museums, galleries, art schools, NGOs, cultural institutions and business companies are located in Sofia. In total, more than 1000 enterprises in the creative and cultural sector in Sofia play an important role in the local economy.

Sofia Municipality is one of the biggest public donors for arts and culture on a national level. The municipal cultural policy is guided by the Strategy for cultural development 2012-2023, which states access to culture as one of its top priorities. In 2007, Sofia launched its own funding programmes to achieve a balance between public and private cultural organizations, to enhance the independent sector development and to compensate for the slow national cultural policy reform. There are 11 municipal cultural institutions: theaters, cultural community centers, a fine art gallery, a city library and a museum.

Our main goal is to establish Sofia as a creative city, where everyone - regardless of gender, age, ethnic origin or social status - has access to a large variety of cultural products and services and the opportunity to develop her/his potential through active participation in creative activities.

2. THE CHALLENGE – FOCUS AND OBJECTIVES

Cities play a pivotal role as drivers of innovation, economic growth and increasing living standards for all. Local authorities become increasingly important when it comes to creating prosperous and safe societies. The strength of cities lies within the diversity of their population. The greater the diversity of social, economic and ethnic backgrounds, religion and lifestyle, the better the conditions for innovation. At the very same time, integration, radicalization and political polarization, often caused by incomprehension between different population groups, are considered major societal problems of our time. In this regard, culture has a great contribution for facilitating greater understanding of individuals and their lives, increasing empathy towards others and developing an appreciation of the diversity of human experience and cultures.

Sofia focuses its efforts on a precise target group: students aged 11 to 14. We consider on one hand that this group has been often neglected and there is the least culture offer for it, and, on the other hand, we believe that it is important to work with youngsters because this is the age when the attitude towards arts and culture is formed.

Challenges for Sofia:

- 1. students have restricted access to culture and arts (in and out of school)**
 - a. students have restricted opportunities for manifesting their talents and creativity
 - b. cultural organizations do not sufficiently realize the need to create a young audience thus museums, galleries and other cultural institutions rarely have programs for students, have a small team and limited resources in this regard
 - c. to a large extent, children from ethnic minorities (Roma minority mainly) have very little or none at all access to culture¹
 - d. the opportunities that arts in the digital environment provide have not been probed into¹

- 2. students have little interest in arts and culture**
 - a. to a large extent arts and culture are not integrated into the curricula
 - b. students don't know the history of their city, its cultural heritage, monuments, museums and galleries, contemporary art

- 3. there is poor communication between stakeholders, no network and a sense of common cause**
 - a. cultural organizations find it difficult to promote their activities and projects (events) aimed at student audiences and have difficulties in communicating with schools

- 4. public institutions do not allocate sufficient funds to support programs and tools for the inclusion of art and culture in the lives of students**
 - a. there are no special municipal funding programs to support access to culture for disabled children

- 5. public institutions do not have sufficient data and analysis of the consumption of culture, nor the needs and desires of students, thus they lack evidence base policies**

¹ Bigger challenges which we would like to tackle through the angle of access to culture for students 14-18 years

Apart from the bigger challenges marked above with a footnote that we would like to tackle through the angle of students' access to culture, we would like as well to add the imbalance between arts and culture offer/consumption concentrated in the city center and too little in the periphery.

Objectives for Sofia:

The overall objective of our plan is to increase the participation of 11-14 year-old students into cultural life and arouse their interest and understanding of arts and culture. To do this we determined the following specific objectives answering to the challenges above:

1. Enlarge the offer of cultural activities for 11-14-year-old students
2. Improve school curricula to integrated arts and culture as learning tool in different subjects
3. Strengthen cooperation of cultural stakeholders to benefit cultural participation of 11-14-year-old students
4. Increase the availability of funding for projects and activities that are specially tailored for the above mentioned age group.
5. Strengthen the availability and use of data on cultural participation of 11-14-year-old students

3. KEY STRATEGIES AND STAKEHOLDERS

To try to answer our challenge, we have identified the following relevant policies and initiatives:

1. Strategy for the Development of the Cultural Sector

The vision for the development of culture of Sofia Municipality is formulated in the strategic document "Sofia - creative city 2013 - 2023". The strategy focuses on the ways in which cultural activities in synergy with education, environmental protection, economic and social development could affect substantial change in our city. Access to culture is one of the five key objectives of the strategy. Sofia aims at becoming a creative city where every citizen - irrespective of gender, age, ethnic origin or social status - would have access to diverse cultural products and services and is able to develop their potential through active participation in creative activities, including in virtual space. The present integrated action plan is useful as per the development of the strategy for the next programming period - 2023 - 2033.

2. Vision for Sofia 2050 /Long Term strategy for the development of Sofia and the suburban areas until 2050/

"Vision for Sofia" is an initiative of Sofia Municipality to create a shared and long-term strategy for the development of the capital and suburban areas until 2050. The project has the ambition to propose concrete steps, measures and goals for future sustainable development of the city. "Vision for Sofia" will serve as a basis for all future strategies for the development of the city until 2050. Our integrated action plan is in complete synergy with one of the main priorities of Vision for Sofia - culture and identity and its long-term goals : education of the future; a developed cultural center; an authentic and multilayered city.

3. Sofia Municipality Education strategy 2016-2023 / Sofia Municipality Youth Strategy (2017 – 2027)

Our integrated action plan refers as well to both the municipal education and youth strategies. Sofia Municipality Youth Strategy formulates the vision for the development of policies for young people, aimed at establishing Sofia as a city of young, active and innovative people. It lays down the guidelines for the implementation of youth policy at the municipal level and the implementation of a targeted integrated approach in its implementation, in accordance with national and other municipal strategic documents. According to the municipal Education strategy, the priority for the development of the city is the creation of favorable conditions for school and university education, non-formal education, professional, social and personal realization of young people, their participation in socio-economic life, their involvement in local government.

4. Sofia Municipality Cultural Events Calendar

Sofia Municipality Calendar of cultural events is the second financial instrument, through which strategically important and significant events are supported - festivals, competitions, awards in the field of culture, as well as initiatives of the municipal districts, summer program, celebrations, anniversaries and a number of partnership events. Since 2020 started for the first time a new program "Outside" for support of temporary art installations in an urban environment. Special emphasis in the selection criterion is put on projects which incorporate activities for elderly people, youth as well as on educational activities in general. Our integrated action plan will incorporate as well analysis of the municipal financing instruments as to improve their capacity to enhance access to culture for students.

5. Sofia Municipality Programme “Culture”

Sofia Municipality Programme “Culture” provides financial support on a competitive basis for realization of cultural projects in 11 areas (Theater, Music and dance, Visual Arts, Literature, Intangible Cultural Heritage, Historical Heritage and Socialization of Immoveable Cultural Heritage values, Co-productions, Mobility, Active audiences, Cinema and Sofia - creative city of cinema (under the auspices of UNESCO).

6. Sofia Municipality Programme “Europe”

Programme “Europe” is a platform for interaction between civil society and local authorities. It has developed as an innovative program for civic participation in local policies and as a tool for implementing European good practices in local government and the public sector. This is a program of Sofia Municipality for project financing of civic ideas and initiatives.

“Europe” program is implemented each year according to priority areas, which are proposed by the Program Council and approved by the Sofia Municipal Council. The first priority area remains unchanged over the years and reflects the essence of the Program related to the creation, implementation and promotion of good European practices related to improving the quality of life in the capital and enhancing the benefits of Bulgaria's membership in the European Union. The second and third priority areas are changing because they reflect current European trends and local policies that are being worked on during the year.

7. Sofia Municipality Youth Program "Sofia - a city of youth and active people"

The Sofia Municipality Youth Programme was developed in 2020 as a result of cooperation and dialogue with the civil sector. It is based on conclusions from the Municipal Program for Development of Physical Education and Sports / 2016 - 2020 / and research and analysis within the long-term project "Vision for Sofia" 2050 and the volunteer initiative "Youth World". The programme defines the main directions and activities of the youth policy on city level via 3 main subprograms and priorities for funding: I. “Youth for Sofia - leadership, volunteering, activity” - for youth activity, encouraging student and youth forms of self-organization and self-government; youth initiatives and non-formal education and for Volunteering, cooperation and intercultural dialogue; II. “My city – domain of youth initiatives” - for organizing emblematic

youth events and forums in Sofia, and support of activities for students and university students during the holiday period; III. "Shared spaces, tolerance and support" - for activities related to the prevention of social exclusion of disadvantaged young people, marginalized groups and young people with special educational needs through formal and non-formal education, and prevention of risky behavior, health and civic education. "

8. National Programme for Contemporary Learning Environment (modules "Libraries as learning environment" and "Cultural institutions as learning environment")

The module "Libraries as an educational environment" was introduced for the first time in 2020 and was developed pursuant to an Agreement between the Ministry of Education and Science and the Ministry of Culture for cooperation and implementation of initiatives, programs and projects between public libraries in the country and the institutions in the school education system as the goal is: creation / enrichment of the library fund of the school library, conducting initiatives in school libraries / "reading corner", conducting joint initiatives with public libraries, all of which lead to the creation of interest and love of books, developing reading habits and lifelong learning skills, forming an attitude towards culture in general.

The module "Cultural institutions as an educational environment" supports compulsory, elective and optional classes in school subjects for grades from primary and lower secondary stage of primary education and the first stage of secondary education in museums and galleries; virtual tours and video lessons; a competition for the best lesson in the cultural institution; attending theater performances (or presenting them at schools) related to specific educational content; attending concerts (or presenting them at schools) related to specific educational content; meetings with actors and musicians on topics related to specific educational content; museum School activities.

9. Creative Europe Program

Creative Europe is a European Union program that supports the cultural, creative and audiovisual sectors to support projects aimed at reaching new audiences, promoting the exchange of skills and knowledge, and strengthening the capacity of cultural and creative organizations. With its three sub-programs - "Culture", "MEDIA" and the cross-sectoral direction, "Creative Europe" aims at strengthening artistic and cultural cooperation at European level; promoting the

competitiveness, innovation and sustainability of the European audiovisual sector, promoting cross-sectoral innovation and joint action, including support for media literacy, an independent and pluralistic news media environment.

10. ArtSofia communication platform

Sofia Municipality Cultural Department actively supports and promotes the events that are realized with the support of Sofia Municipality through its communication channels artsofia.bg (<http://artsofia.bg/bg>), its facebook pages "ArtSofia" (<https://www.facebook.com/ArtSofia.bg>) and "Capital of Culture" (<https://www.facebook.com/direkcia.kultura>). The page for culture <http://artsofia.bg/bg> publishes up-to-date information about cultural events and festivals in Sofia, about funding programs and competitions, interviews with artists, comments on what is happening in the field of culture. Access to culture is directly related to efficient and well-targeted communication and our integrated action plan will revolve around this subject too.

11. Plans and programs developed by transnational project initiatives (AGORA Project, ComUnityLab, Stay tuned, etc.)

In order to reach the best results in an inclusive way, we have identified the following key stakeholder groups that are involved in the process:

1. Young People aged 11 - 14
2. Schools
3. Cultural Organizations
4. Museums / Galleries
5. Public bodies (Sofia Municipality, Sofia City Council, Ministry of culture, Ministry of education)
6. Information and Social Media (Influencers, vloggers, national tv channels, journalists)

4. EVIDENCE BASE (QUAL AND QUANT DATA, SSA, ULG WORK)

- Findings from the three surveys – with school directors, students and cultural organizations about access to culture.

For the purposes of the Integrated action plan, the project team from Sofia Municipality developed, conducted and summarized three surveys among the main stakeholders - students, cultural organizations and schools in October – November 2020 in Sofia. The results of these studies were presented, discussed and analyzed within the ULG group. The studies give a clear idea of the main attitudes, challenges, barriers to access to culture that the stakeholders and the target group face. The studies make it possible to plan measures based on monitoring and data.

Here below are some summarized results of the survey among 1643 students with a number of questions. The biggest respondents are aged 12 years - 22.3%, followed by: 14-year-olds - 19.5%, 13-year-olds - 18.4%, 11-year-olds - 11.8%, 15-year-olds - 11.3%, 16-year-olds - 10.4%, 17-year-olds - 3.7%, 10-year-olds - 1.5% and 18-year-olds - 1%.

To the open question “What does culture mean to you?”, students define culture in the first place as upbringing, behavior, attitude (31%), customs, traditions, history, language (24%), education, development (21%). Arts and cultural institutions rank fourth (20%). Respondents say they like cinema the most, followed by music, computer games and animation. The lowest score was given to circus, dance and street art.

“Attending cultural events”: 49.1% of students answered that they attend cultural events every few months, 23.6% - once a month, 22.8% - do not attend cultural events; 4.5% - every week, 68% attend cultural events with their family, 33.5% with friends, 16% with class, 5% alone, 14.9% - do not attend cultural events. As a reason for not attending cultural events - 51.9% of students said lack of time, 21.2% lack of interest, 11.5% remoteness from cultural institutions, and 7.7% said - have no one to attend and do not have the means to do so.

36.9% are informed about cultural events on the Internet, 23.2% are mentioned by family, 12.2% by traditional media, 8.5% by advertisements, 5.3% by friends and 6.9% by other sources . “Source of information about culture”: The main sources from which students receive information about cultural events are Google, Facebook, Instagram. 56% of surveyed students would take part in the creation of an information bulletin dedicated to cultural events, which is aimed at students. Most often young people see their participation in taking pictures (26.4%), followed by the answer "with something else" (24.5%), with creating a design (20.1%), with computer skills (17.3%) and last is the commitment to write texts (11.7%).

„Culture and art in school“: Quite a large percent - 71.2% of students said they do not do art at school. Of those who do so, most indicate that they participate during extracurricular activities and the most frequently mentioned arts are dances (including folk dances), music, and fine arts. Again, a small percentage - 35% - are children who say that they do art outside of school, and most of them say that they do it on their own and not in school or studio.

To the question: "If you have not had the opportunity so far, would you participate in creative workshops, workshops and other art initiatives?" – 55.5 % positive and 44.5 % negative votes. There is a much larger number of students who think that it is a good idea to move part of the lessons from school to a cultural institution (museum, theater, gallery, music hall, laboratory). Only 8.5% do not think this is a good thing to do. 69.6% of respondents said they would take time off from their vacations to do art they like.

To the question: "If you could, would you become an actor, writer, artist, dancer or other artist? If so, what creative profession would you choose?" (1505 students answered, 319 – negatively). Among the respondents, it is positive that the creation of content for YouTube and TikTok is considered by the participants in the survey as a creative profession. Otherwise, students said that they would be involved in writing, music, visual arts, cinema. There are those who point to the circus arts as a dream job.

- **Quotes from interviews with stakeholders** - We asked certain representatives of the different sectors in our working group - students, teachers, representatives of the creative sector, institutions, museums, galleries to have the opinions and the thoughts of real people with real experience:

Vessela Gertcheva, Muzeiko - children's museum

How does your work contribute to building bridges between culture and education?

„Through its programs for school groups, the Children's Science Center Muzeiko connects topics that are taught in the curriculum for grades 1 to 4 with art, cultural heritage and music. Our work is based on an interdisciplinary approach that we find effective in arousing children's interest in science and discovery.“

How would you determine the results of your work from the symbiosis between the two?

„Muzeiko Children's Science Center builds its interactive exhibitions and additional programs on connecting elements from various sciences, literature, arts, music, games and more. Globally, this approach encourages children and young people to take an interest in science and knowledge and increases the number of those who choose a scientific career in the future. Children's Science Center Muzeiko has conducted qualitative and quantitative research only since 2015. In this sense, there is still no long-term monitoring of the development of the children who visit us. The place of children's research centers as one of the stimuli in the future development of children in scientific careers is shown by global research (research of the Association of Children's Museums).“

Please give us your personal point of view, dictated by your experience, why working with the principles of convergence, synthesis, integration is important and inspiring for you?

„Intensive work with children clearly shows that the strict separation of disciplines and areas of knowledge is not only ineffective, but also artificial and incomprehensible to children. All modern teaching methods are based on the integration of different topics, project and problem-based work. It is important for us at Muzeiko that we know and apply the modern pedagogical tendencies, the effectiveness of which has been studied and proven. This gives us confidence and stability that we are in the right direction.“

Todor Petev - professional experience in the field of art history, pedagogy and museology, one of the co-founders of the Foundation "My Museum", dedicated to supporting and deploying socializing and educational potential of museums and places of cultural heritage in Bulgaria.

How would you define the results of your work based on the symbiosis between culture and education?

„Everything is a process and it is difficult to unambiguously determine and fix in time the final result. Longer work and observations are required to identify sustainable results. Of course, there are specific parameters such as building new knowledge, consolidating old ones, and building attitudes towards culture that can be taken into account in a timely manner.

In this sense, one of the results is the creation of an effective methodology that can be adapted and applied for different age groups and for different types of cultural heritage in Bulgarian

conditions. We also have results in this regard. It is on the agenda how what we have achieved can be adapted and applied on a larger scale. Training of teachers, museum specialists? Providing easily adaptable models of classes, lessons, worksheets and other tools oriented to different types of heritage? Introducing sustainable organizational models of interaction between education and culture in specific institutions? Influence on the ways in which this interaction is formulated in educational programs?“

Please give us your personal point of view, dictated by your experience, why working with the principles of convergence, synthesis, integration is important and inspiring for you?

„Recognizing, connecting, experiencing and making sense of cultural heritage - in all its forms - builds deep connections between the individual and the community. Rediscovering relevant and meaningful forms of communication with heritage (especially those applicable to younger people) is an incredibly stimulating intellectual challenge and satisfying effort for me. Maybe it is motivated by my understanding of what social environment I would like to live in.“

Svetoslav Nikolov, journaliste, Program Director and Host of Jazz FM Radio

How does your work contribute to building bridges between culture and education?

„Jazz FM is working on several models for the presence of culture in education - directly at school and outside the classroom. We started a series of meetings of students with artists who are studied in music textbooks. The first one was with the author of "Frog Frog" Krassimir Miletkov - with 18.5 million views on YouTube, it is the most popular children's song by a living author. In three consecutive weeks, all second-graders from 144 SU "Narodni buditeli" heard his songs and stories, asked questions, sang with the composer. A similar meeting is forthcoming on the basis of the Jazz Velingrad Jazz Festival, which the Municipality of Velingrad will hold for the first time on July 15 and 16, 2022. In the art gallery we organize a meeting of students and teachers with vocalist Mimi Nikolova studied in music textbooks. perform his emblematic songs, present his work and answer questions. This initiative has grown into a project to create a video series "Names from the music textbook". In it we will present the musicians and poets through conversations with them about their works, their creation and the message they send to children. They will talk about their time at school, about the path to excellence, about their interests in art. The culture will be part of another educational module of "Jazz Velingrad" - with children from the Youth Formation at CPLR-ODK Velingrad will work prominent musicians from the capital and then all will appear on the festival stage for a concert in the town square. By getting

acquainted with samples of the musical heritage under the mentorship of bright artists, children will improve their skills as learning instrumentalists. The children will be introduced to the art of music during another festival that we are co-organizing - "Great Kite and Jazz Fest" in Sinemorets. On August 20 and 21, vocalists and instrumentalists will introduce them to the basics of music in practical classes, using classical examples of cultural heritage as examples. In the Regional Historical Museum - Sofia, a stage is to be created, which through music will connect teachers and students, as well as modern times with tradition, around the piano of the famous Sofia musician Dimitar Simeonov. We have started work on presenting the achievements of students in national secondary and higher schools by studying jazz - so their work in the classrooms of production for evaluation by teachers will become works of art that will be broadcast on the radio. We are the creators and partners of "Bansko Jazz Academy", which this year will be held for the first time during the "Bansko Jazz Festival" and which will train students from high schools and music schools. They will participate in master classes of the stars of the main stage and will practically get to know how the artist is built."

How would you define the results of your work based on the symbiosis between culture and education?

„The introduction of culture in education makes learning much more than mechanical accumulation of knowledge - a deep knowledge of the world, creates an emotional connection with the material studied, it becomes the basis for personal development, through inspiration and personal example opens a direct path to achievement for each child and young man. The forms we use lead to a complete knowledge of the context, presuppose insight into the matter and its understanding, form the personality and charge with the desire to create cultural products.“

Please give us your personal point of view, dictated by your experience, why working with the principles of convergence, synthesis, integration is important and inspiring for you?

„The presence of culture in education creates a connection with tradition and each learner enters the role of its successor. This ensures continuity in the culture, stabilizes its basis, and provides a basis for development. Culture in education inspires - it models the perspective of education as a whole and helps to build personalities. For us as a music medium, it is very important to ensure the future of the genre we are promoting and developing. And this in a sustainable way - for both artists and audiences - can only happen through the presence of culture in education.“

Ralitsa Filipova - editor, journalist, author of several television projects for teenagers, lecturer at the New Bulgarian University, Department of Media and Communications

How does your work contribute to building bridges between culture and education?

„As a professor at NBU, Department of Media and Communication, I regularly include various works of art in my lectures, often we watch feature films and documentaries together and they watch topics that we analyze. I recommend books that we discuss.“

Please give us your personal point of view, dictated by your experience, why working with the principles of convergence, synthesis, integration is important and inspiring for you?

„This is a two-way process. On the one hand, looking for suitable books, movies, and pictures I get rich, and on the other hand I inspire my students. Teaching is much more attractive, interesting and definitely leaves deeper traces in students. This brings me satisfaction, and to them pleasure.“

- **Good practices from peer cities from ACCESS Network** - we asked our ACCESS partner cities to share some good practices from their cities and their experience about cultural and educational initiatives, communication platforms, funding programs, activities of cultural institutions and organizations, projects and ideas that we can implement and share in our IAP.

AMSTERDAM

<https://www.amsterdam.nl/en/policy/policy-culture-arts/cultural-education/>

Amsterdam is a world leader in its commitment to and support for cultural education. Given that this has been the case for many years, the experience and sophistication of the cultural institutions and artists in creating and delivering such opportunities is considerable.

In order to ensure a good fit between the lessons offered and schools' needs, the City consulted an external advisor – Paul Collard from the team of Creativity Culture and Education Foundation, Great Britain (who are experts in the field of creative learning, with decades of experience delivering pioneering programmes, workshops and seminars around the world

<https://www.creativitycultureeducation.org/>). These recommendations led to the creation of Amsterdam's current policy on arts and cultural education and includes the following goals:

- Give schools more control
- Better alignment between supply (cultural institutions) and demand (schools).
- More room for personal development
- 'less but deeper' and more room for children's own input.
- Simplify the funding process

<https://mocca.amsterdam/>

Mocca advises schools and cultural institutions in the design and implementation of polyphonic and inclusive cultural education. Mocca provides deepening, training and knowledge sharing in cultural education with the Mocca Academy and provides the substantive and practical implementation of the Basic Package Art and Cultural Education. In addition, Mocca annually transports more than 55,000 students and 10,000 parents and supervisors to stages and museums via the Cultuurbus Amsterdam.

<https://mocca.amsterdam/cultuurbus/>

Mocca facilitates transportation between schools and cultural institutions by coordinating the Cultuurbus en -boot, a free service that brings elementary school children to museums, theaters, concert halls and exhibitions throughout Amsterdam. By applying for funding through Mocca, schools in Amsterdam can introduce long-term cultural programmes and learning trajectories. The funding falls within the confines of the CmK (Quality in Cultural Education), which in turn is part of the Fonds voor Cultuurparticipatie (Fund for Cultural Participation).

Mocca is commissioned and funded by the municipality of Amsterdam and the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science. In addition, Mocca is supported by the Cultural Participation Fund for its tasks in the context of the Basic Package Art and Cultural Education.

The covenant of the Standard Package for Art and Cultural Education in primary and special education is considered to be unique to Amsterdam's cultural life. It is a joint long-term investment (10 years) by the central municipality, the city districts and almost every school board.

It is designed to invest in good quality cultural education; its goal is to provide up to three hours of cultural education per week at every school.

LONDON

1. The Cultural Learning Alliance champions a right to arts and culture for every child.

<https://www.culturallearningalliance.org.uk/>

The Alliance **ADVOCATES** for equality of access to arts and culture for every child, **DEMONSTRATES** why cultural learning is so important, **UNITES** the education, youth and cultural sectors delivering arts and cultural learning. They **do this through** policy analysis and evidence gathering, dissemination of advocacy materials, including briefing papers, evidence and statistics, lobbying and advocacy, building strategic relationships across arts, culture, education and policy, and supporting our members. They act as a backbone organization for the arts and cultural education sector, and provide the analysis, evidence, and arguments that Alliance members and their wider sectors can use.

6586 people and 3363 organizations have signed up so far in the Alliance.

The Cultural Learning Alliance is funded by the following organizations: Paul Hamlyn Foundation, the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, and the Clore Duffield Foundation.

2. National Saturday Club

<https://saturday-club.org/start-a-club/>

The National Saturday Club provides the framework for the programme, joins up all the institutions involved and provides resources, support and guidance across the network nationwide. Universities, colleges, museums, and galleries can all run Saturday Clubs.

It is a powerful network of shared knowledge and best practice sharing. The network brings institutions together with schools, cultural organizations, industry and the local community. With a particular focus on reaching young people from disadvantaged backgrounds and underrepresented communities, the programme initiates a local ecology of support for young people.

Working together, this network of institutions, tutors, student assistants and professionals has created a national exchange of ideas and demonstrates time and again the value of supporting young people at this important stage in their lives.

3. Art Council

<https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/children-and-young-people/working-partnership?fbclid=IwAR1nIYoCfgyCof57OwiZfHq152JzMZMQxxgA6G8sTnLWRJfnB8TTxcQM2yY>

The Art Council works with the Department for Education, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, cultural organizations and artists, schools, cultural partners, broadcasters, local authorities, Higher and Further Education institutions and other partners.

Since 2012, the Department for Education and the Arts Council have invested £589 million in a range of music and cultural education programmes. The largest investment has been made by the Department for Education for Music Education Hubs (£545 million over eight financial years).

It invests public funds in a National Portfolio of 829 arts organizations and museums, with the vast majority of them committed to work with children and young people and also funds a network of 10 Bridge organizations to connect the cultural sector and the education sector so that children & young people can have access to great arts and cultural opportunities.

Local Cultural Education Partnerships (LCEPs) support children and young people to fulfill their creative potential and access high-quality cultural experiences where they live, where they go to school, and where they spend their free time. Partners come together from across sectors, responding to local needs and interests, to drive a more joined-up cultural education offer, share resources, and improve the visibility of cultural education in their local area.

DUBLIN

Dublin's first Historian-in-Residence for Children

<https://www.dublincitycouncilculturecompany.ie/what-we-do/programmes/creative-residency-childrens-historian-in-residence>

The residency is part of our Creative Residencies programme and is in partnership with Dublin City Libraries. The project seeks to provide space, opportunity and resources to help children uncover the stories of our city and its people, bringing the past to life by finding new and creative ways to engage and connect through history.

Through collaboration with children, schools, youth groups and community clubs this residency allows children to explore local and social history, and will aim to empower the children in their own personal journey of discovery through stories and history. This residency aims to create history clubs and programmes made by children to further local curiosity about history, develop new skills amongst the collaborators and have lots of fun discovering new stories from the city along the way. Aimed at 9 -12 year olds and looking for young collaborators to work together with the Historian-in-Residence for Children to create workshops, projects and activities for others.

LISBON

“Urban Art Gallery” of Lisbon”

<https://obs.agenda21culture.net/en/good-practices/urban-art-gallery-lisbon>

Arts in school in Portuguese

<https://www.pna.gov.pt/objetivos>

Create an online platform (PNA portal) to: gather information; to map and publicise the cultural offer in the areas of Art-Education and Art-Community in the national territory; connecting institutions and encouraging the circulation of artistic projects and make teaching resources available.

Raise awareness of the value of cultural heritage as a factor of cohesion and belonging, and of the arts as promoters of the integral formation of citizens.

Promote recognition of the value of cultural differences and dialogue between cultures; as well as the importance of diversity of voices, territories and resources.

PORTO



OnStage - Building inclusion through arts education: Valongo engages the community and shares progress

<https://urbact.eu/building-inclusion-through-arts-education-valongo-engages-community-and-shares-progress>

An arts school which works with vulnerable youngsters under an innovative approach. This school works with vulnerable youngsters, with low qualifications levels and in risk of social exclusion. The school gives the youngsters a new training opportunity and targets their potential, working with arts and craft and performing arts.

VILNIUS

Christopher Festival

[Christopher Festival | Go Vilnius](#)

GENOA

Be the ambassador of our city /based on Genoa experience/ <https://urbact.eu/working-erasmus-students-ad-city-ambassadors>

Working with young people and involve them as city ambassadors in 3 activities:

- a competition reserved to young foreigners student who followed the Italian lessons offered for free by University of Genoa (in these weeks we will start publishing the best tales on our tourist blog www.genovamorethanthisblog.it)

- an Instagram Challenge, using the hashtag #ErasmusGenova2016

- a **Treasure Hunt**, as volunteers, welcome and give supports to the Erasmus coming to their town; to be more precise, it was a Selfie Treasure Hunt, where the kids, in teams, were asked to shoot as many selfies as possible in a serie of more than 100 locations of art, culture and entertainment in the old town (you can see the pictures here. The reward for the "winners" has been a physical, real experience (something "analogic", after all those digital moments!): a Pesto Class, to let them learn how to prepare pesto in the traditional way, with the marble mortar. This choice allowed us to offer them (and to share on social media) one very important thing,

according to recent and consolidated tourism marketing trends: not a standard tourist product (as a ticket for a museum or a booklet) but an experience, something personal and memorable.

TALLINN

Cultural research at the Kopli pilot area in Tallinn

<https://urbact.eu/cultural-research-kopli-pilot-area-tallinn>

Two cultural pop-up days, hosted a joint cooking event with traditional area recipes of Kopli and a youth street-art event using stencil-technique to a public wall in North-Tallinn. Our main goal with these events was to get in touch with residents to interview them about their needs and preferences for local cultural events and services.

ON BOARD visits Tallinn

<https://urbact.eu/board-visits-tallinn>

How can everybody contribute to extend learning beyond school walls and hours, fulfilling the 360° Education approach: everybody educates everywhere and at any time in the city

All these stakeholders have an influence on children and young at different educational moments of their lives. Some contribute to develop specific skills but, in general terms they help promote the values of citizenship and co-responsibility; they strengthen children's personal abilities, communication skills and creativity. All this has an impact on their personal wellbeing and at the same time creates better job opportunities.

Klaipeda in Lithuania

<https://urbact.eu/playful-activities-better-educational-programmes-cities>

Involving schools and cultural/academic sectors for promoting a new way to co-design and stimulate educational innovation in cities should be at the top priorities of the political urban agenda.

Active Breaks and Playful activities for boosting learning in Klaipeda

“Children are spending a lot of time in sedentary activities.” To foster the objective to promote the physical activities in schools for bodily and mental health purposes, the Klaipeda City Public

Health Bureau has established a collaboration with Public Health Specialists. These experts are uncharged to share with schools' staff health principles and embed in school programmes the importance of physical activity for young people. They are committed to provide several playful activities to students, also in collaboration with children and young people, such as the "active breaks", the competitions of "the most active class" and the "healthiest school", Hikes, counting daily steps and "Physical Active weeks".

Education, Culture and Play: invisible bricks to design cities

Play is one of the fundamental bricks of our society which helps children grow, elderly people in maintaining an active lifestyle, families in fostering better relationships between parents and children.

But it is not enough, Play could also re-shape city public spaces and support urban planning activity in designing better cities for children, families, girls, youth and for all.

5. THE ACTION TABLE OF OUR INTEGRATED ACTION PLAN IS IN AN ADDITIONAL FILE. IT INCLUDES ALL THE NECESSARY STEPS, ACTIONS AND TIME FRAME.

SOFIA MUNICIPALITY TEAM

Miroslav Borshosh - *Deputy Mayor on Culture, Education, Sport and Youth*

Biliana Genova - *Head of Culture Department*

Doncho Hristev - *Chief expert , Sofia City Council*

Mariya Goncheva - *Head of Youth activities*

Mariya Tomova - *Chief expert Culture Department*

Milena Ananieva - *Senior expert Culture Department*

And our former colleagues

Todor Chobanov, Irena Dimitrova, Marina Evgenieva, Nora Karalambeva

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Sofia City Council

URBACT LOCAL GROUP:

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Simeon Kolev - Sofia City Council

Elianka Mihaylova - Ministry of Culture

Evgenia Kostadinova, Elena Tarnichkova - Ministry of Education

Vanya Kastreva - Regional inspectorate of education

Mariana Tafrova - Center for Art, Culture and Education - Sofia

Trayan Trayanov - Teach for Bulgaria

Ralitsa Assenova - CinEd (Europe Cinema Education for Youth - Bulgaria)

Petya Angelova - Fortissimo

Aneliya Ivanova - Bulgarian Book Association, Aniventure Comic Con

Kalina Wagenstein, Milena Stratieva - Art Office Foundation

Vesela Gercheva - Children Museum Muzeiko

Todor Petev - My Museum Foundation, Sofia University

Diyan Stamatov - Sofia Youth Council

Miglena Gerasimova - Sofiaplan

Snejina Petrova, Ralitsa Filipova - New Bulgarian University

Svetoslav Nikolov - bTV Radio Group



Diana Andreeva - *Psychologist / Pedagogist*

Desislava Pancheva - *Creative Europe Desk*

Desislava Gavrilova, Iskra Djanabetska, Zornitza Hrisotova - *"GUTENBERG 3.0" FOUNDATION*

Adelina Fileva - *Sofia City Art Gallery*

Veneta Handjiiska - *Regional Historical Museum of Sofia*

Veselin Dimov - *Toplocentrala Center for Contemporary Art*

Miryana Malamin - *Marya's world Foundation*

Dragomir Dimitrov - *Serdika Gallery, Women`s Market*

Yasen Geshev - *Urban Creatures*

Lachezar Boyadjiev - *contemporary artist and curator*

Diana Andreeva - *Observatory for Cultural Economics and a lecturer at the University of National and World Economy*

Neli Stoeva - *Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski*

Tomislav Rashkov - *Free Sofia Tour*

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We would like to thank all of them who worked together with us and shared our belief in this Integrated Action Plan. Because our focus is on children - our most precious wealth, because it relies on optimism, because it is based on data, analysis and teamwork, because it is creative,



because it is long-lasting, because it will bring satisfaction to people who will realize it, because it will help our growth as human beings and because it is achievable. The motto of our city is "Ever Growing, Never Aging". "Sofia grows with culture" is the title of our action plan, because strategically it is aimed at adolescents, as they are the future of this city and will carry cultural traditions over time. But also because we believe that the city will grow economically, socially, anyway, through culture.