

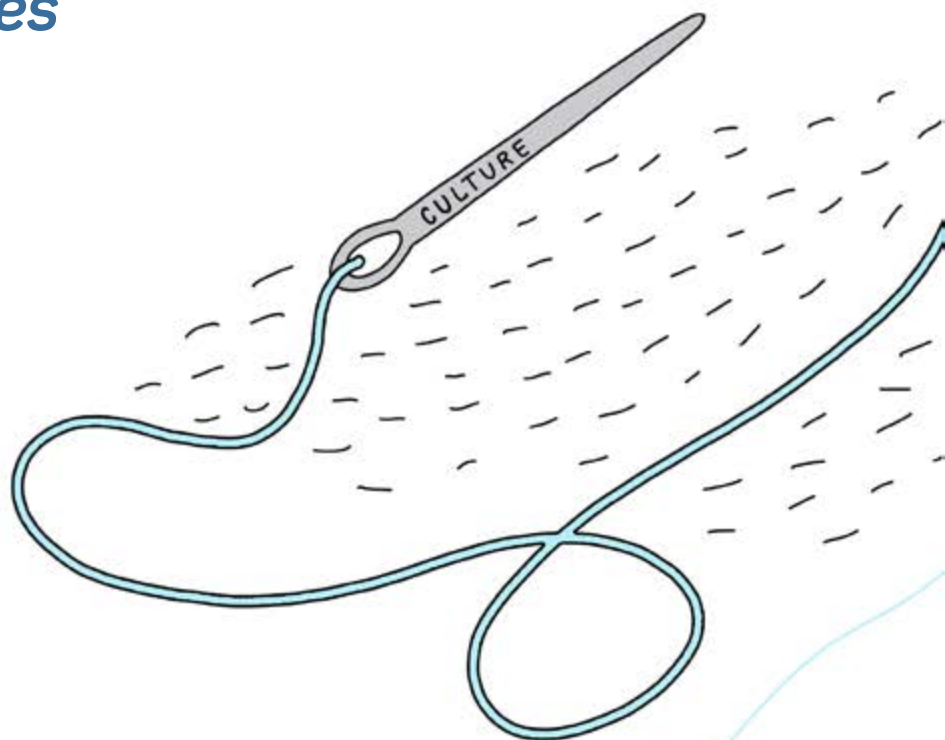
# Culture & Creativity

EU-Eastern Partnership Programme



## INFLUENCE OF CULTURE ON URBAN DEVELOPMENT

*Influence of culture  
on development of urban space  
and urban practices*



This Programme is funded  
by the European Union

# Introduction

Culture's role in regional and urban development has been deeply recognized, and needs no longer to be proven. Culture is integrated into cities' strategies on many different levels, such as innovation, branding, tourism, and social inclusion. Despite all of the contributions of culture and creative industries on cities' development, there are also more intangible aspects of the impacts that culture makes:

- reduction of inequalities
- fighting against poverty
- revitalisation of spaces
- restructuring of urban areas
- sustainable urban development
- building social cohesion
- creating a supportive environment for people to have sustainable and diverse lives in cities
- creating a number of various self-development possibilities
- capabilities for spending free time
- ability to reinforce the self-confidence of individuals and communities
- contribute to developing and enhancing cultural diversity
- generate unique local identities

During the last few decades, a number of European cities have emerged as creative hubs. From Bilbao to Berlin, Amsterdam to Helsinki, to Copenhagen and Barcelona, the cultural have been used as a vehicle for local growth and development. However, cities differ from one another and what has worked in one place cannot be directly "copy pasted" to another. The Bilbao effect is a unique success story and can be a great example of how culture-based investments have boosted a city's development and revitalised urban areas. Cities should make the most of the added value of culture by building on their unique assets, locality, and regional resources.

# CASE 1

## *Local Guides - The alternative walks around Gdansk*

### *Context*

Zaspa is the name of one of Gdansk's districts which is still one of the largest "plattenbau" settlements in Poland. Designed according to the principles of modernist urban planning, it was thought to become a self-sustained machine for living. The settlement was developed on the grounds of a former airfield, which gave architects unlimited spatial options. Unfortunately, due to unrealistic goals and the financial crisis of the 1980's, the settlement ended up as yet another concrete desert. Throughout the 80's and 90's, Zaspa struggled with social problems typical of such places. In attempt to address such problems, local activists introduced art into the material and social structure of the neighborhood. As the result of their action, and with the cooperation of the Gdansk School of Murals, the Monumental Art Festival was born in 1997. By 2011, the number of large scale murals, painted on the side of the district's buildings has grown to 18 paintings. They have all been created by many respected artists from all over the world. In the same year, in the frame of Gdansk's European Capital of Culture bid process, there was research conducted in the Zaspa district. As a result of the research findings, It turned out that inhabitants are connected and proud of big-scale murals that are painted on the side of highrise condominiums. The City Cultural Institute (CCI) decided to build a project based on those findings and launched the Alternative Walks initiative.

### *Facts & Figures*

- Because of the programme between 2011-2015, 136 inhabitants have been trained and started to work as Local Guides.
- In the years 2011- 2015 over 665 walks in 6 city districts have been conducted in a frame of the project.
- The overall number of people that took a part in the walks between 2011- 2015 is estimated at about 9710. This number includes city inhabitants as well as tourists, among which the alternative walks are getting more and more popular every year.
- Gdansk, due its rich history and cultural heritage sites, is very popular among tourists from all over the world. During last few years, the alternative walk around programme led by Local Guides have created a new perspective for tourists that are interested in Gdansk's contemporary history.
- Walks around city districts that are not typical tourist destinations gave a significant socio-economic development boost to its inhabitants and local cultural centers.

## The Challenge

CCI's idea was to bring into play already existing connections between inhabitants and paintings. In cooperation with the local culture centre "Plama" in 2011, a project titled "Local Guides" was started. The project, that later on developed into a programme, aimed at encouraging the inhabitants of the district to become guides. The big question was how to prepare people to the guiding role, especially if they never had acted as a one. CCI along with Plama - which as a local player was responsible for recruiting potential guides - decided that there was a need for a series of workshops and lectures in order to prepare people for the new role. More importantly, CCI has decided that the whole process should be completed by a final exam. Participation in lectures and workshops was free of charge and open to everyone who was interested to learn more about the history of the district. From March to June 2011, a series of meetings were conducted. They were designed to give a broad perspective, related to district history, urban planning, architecture, and some basics of art history. Participants had the chance to meet with the creators of the murals and learn about the history of the gallery, works' details, and gain information about the artists.

## Results and Impacts

Interest in the project among the inhabitants was beyond the expectation of the organisers. There was a significant difference between the number of workshops and lecture participants and those who have decided to take a final exam, organised by the CCI. Regardless of this difference, after the first edition of the project there were 30 local guides examined and ready to fulfill the new role! During the first edition of the programme, there were over 50 walks performed by the guides for about 500 visitors. Besides common knowledge gained during trainings, each local guide has enriched their sightseeing tour by creating their own unique route and by telling stories that arise from their individual backgrounds - which in most cases was related to the Zaspa district. The individual perspective of each guide is the added value of the programme and the reason for people taking a tour more than once accompanied by a different guide.

*This year, I've had more visitors than last year. I have seen people marvel at the new murals painted during the last edition of the Monumental Art Festival. They liked the magnitude, the creativity, and the message. Whenever I approach the mural by the Uruguayan collective Licuado, I meet the residents of the place, who remember the artist's determination and precision. Many people have fond memories of the joyful painters. I can see the residents of Zaspa have got used to our big groups walking around the neighborhood.*

*- Katarzyna Michałowska, a Local Guide for Zaspa*

The programme has become a great success. The number of applicants for local guides in the second call has grown twofold. In 2012 there were already 60 guides and 114 walks for 1117 visitors performed. The walks started to become more and more popular not only among the city's inhabitants but also among tourists. The programme got noticed and awarded by the prestigious international travel guide TripAdvisor. The media response to the growing interest of the programme was immediate. The big fuss has resulted in the interest of cultural centres and organisations from other city districts to be a part of the programme. In 2012, Biskupia Gorka district joined the common effort



of making the most from their locality. More guides have been trained. This time they were not recruited only among the residents. Everyone who shared a passion for the district's history could, after the proper training and examination, become a local guide.

*Biskupia Gorka is an amazing place thanks to its authentic structure dating back to the 19th and 20<sup>th</sup> century. This cosy district is located in the heart of Gdańsk, but it is completely cut from the city centre by the main artery. Biskupia Gorka consists of three streets – Biskupia, Na Stoku and Salvator; they all remained with narrow staircases, glamorous elevations in the tenement buildings, which preserved its historic style, as well as cobblestone decorating the streets. Old signs on the walls remind us of the pre-war times, when most of the citizens spoke German.*

*– Ryszard Kopittke, Local Guide, talks about Biskupia Gorka.*



In years following, more districts became a part of the programme. Already in 2015, there were six districts involved and almost 300 walks delivered for 4649 visitors.

Without a doubt, the biggest value of the Local Guides programme is its capacity to engage inhabitants to tell the stories of their districts in their own way and from a very subjective perspective. At the beginning there were concerns that even when you give proper training to people, they will never reach the level of a professional tour guide in such a short period of time. This could cause lack of interest or even disappointment from the visitor's side. Unexpectedly, this became a true value of the programme. Authenticity and passion for what they do was so strong that lack of interest in local tours has never become an issue or concern. Another thing that surprised organisers was the general interest and willingness to get involved in becoming a local guide, as well as to participate in trainings and tours. Every training delivered by CCI generated a ton of interest, and 90% of participants declare that they are not interested in becoming a guide but that they just want to learn more about their neighbourhood. The programme empowered and promoted active citizenship, gave various positive feelings to the people, such as pride for their districts, but also appreciation that their stories could be found so interesting to others – tourists in particular. Considering that none of the districts involved in the programme are typical tourist spots, this can be considered a great achievement.

# CASE 2

## NANTES - Art & Culture for the City

### Context

Nantes is a very dynamic city. The population of the metropolitan area grew by 100 000 over the last 20 years, ranking Greater Nantes as the sixth biggest French city with 600 000 residents. The same trend is forecast over the next 20 years, with up to 100 000 new residents. Nantes is the most dynamic metropolitan area in France in terms of job creation. It is also a youth-friendly city, considering 36% of the population is under 25<sup>1</sup>. Nantes is also a good example of culture being involved into the urban restoration process. Nantes successfully implemented policies using culture for local development and urban regeneration in formerly industrialised areas. In 1987, Nantes underwent a fate similar to Bilbao, which came across the same experience just a year earlier, becoming stuck in a nostalgic vision of a prosperous city whose economy was dependent on heavy industry that no longer existed. Years later, Nantes authorities, inspired by Bilbao's strategy of cultural-based post-industrial turnaround, decided to develop a strategy centred on the culture and later Culture and Creative Industries (CCI), sustainability, and social diversity. It is thanks to mayor Jean-Marc Ayrault's choice of a cultural policy founded on creative work and Jean Blaise, a live-theatre artistic director, that Nantes could build on such a foundation. While introducing new cultural initiatives to the inhabitants of Nantes, such as Festival des Allumés (from 1990 to 1995), renovation of the former L.U. biscuit factory which was later on transformed into cultural space Lieu Unique, they had two principal rules to be followed: all cultural events had to be free of charge and they should be placed outdoors or in public spaces.

***If you make people pay for culture, you will only ever reach a small percentage of the population.***

*- Jean Blaise, artistic director <sup>2</sup>*

### Facts & Figures

- At the service of Nantes' successful ecosystem are: a budget of 66 million euros, 600 city council employees, major municipal facilities and 220 subsidised cultural organisations. Beside this investment, the millions of spectators and users of these cultural facilities creates thousands of jobs and boosts the entire local economy.
- Voyage à Nantes spends €3m on the festival, but the economic returns are now put at more than €48.8m,
- In the summer of 2012 there were over 615 000 visitors (of which 15% were from neighbouring European countries)
- The Biennales Internationales du Spectacle, an absolute must, brings together close to 10 000 professionals to discuss and share experiences in the sphere of culture and the performing arts.

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1 Eurocities project "Culture for cities and regions" <http://www.cultureforcitiesandregions.eu/culture/home>

2 The Guardian "The resurrection of Nantes: how free public art brought the city back to life" <https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2016/jul/12/resurrection-nantes-france-how-free-public-art-brought-city-back-to-life>

- Every year, over 70 000 Nantes residents take part in the European Heritage Days
- In 2012, over 300 000 people visited the 'Machines de l'Île'
- In 2012, Nantes' La Folle Journée issued over 150 000 tickets

### Results and Impacts

In the wake of Lieu Unique, the city of Nantes invested in a policy of dynamic events. The goal was to transmute an industrial past into a cultural present. Today, the city offers multiple attractions bringing together memory-culture-imagination, with the major ones falling within the collective memory : the Royal de luxe company, the Machines de Nantes, Le Voyage à Nantes, La Folle Journée and the Quinzaine photographique<sup>3</sup>. Nantes constantly attracts increasing numbers of entrepreneurs and new arrivals, thereby creating a dynamic essential to the urban-planning projects based on three major paths that are interacting among themselves:

- The variety of cultural events woven into the urban fabric - The Voyage à Nantes (Journey to Nantes) is a framework for grouping the metropolis' tourist attractions and developing high-quality, environmentally friendly tourism and cultural services. Throughout the summer, Nantes is revealed by means of a city trail that mixes art and landscape, historic heritage and contemporary art, and incorporates countryside and maritime elements – and food. The Journey to Nantes grew out of the idea that bringing these elements together and mapping a coherent 8.5km itinerary would make the city even more attractive, not only for visitors but also for residents eager to get to know their environment better.
- Public art works in the city space - numerous permanent public art installations, an evidence of its identity, many created in the context of the Voyage à Nantes while others were public commissions. Le Voyage is not only a festival, it is a municipal body that controls the entirety of the event chain: conception, organization, public relations, mediation, advising, and the conservation of permanent works.

***Combining the management of cultural venues and tourism sites was a first for France, it means we can have one strategy, one branding identity and one offer that is at once rich and very organised.***

*- Jean Blaise, artistic director<sup>4</sup>*

- The Archi-Sculpture effect - the transformation of 15 hectares of industrial wasteland on the Ile de Nantes began in the 2000's with the goal of reviving this deserted zone. Through a strategy of seduction and targeted public relations, the urban redevelopment agency SAMOA in charge of this project, blending together culture, industrial heritage, creativity and economic development around three major axes: architectural innovation, a teaching centre and the creation of a creative cultural industries sector<sup>5</sup>. Quartier de la Création is today becoming one of the centres of the Nante's magnetism.

3 Observatoire l'art contemporain "Nantes: cultural audit of a creative city"  
[http://www.observatoire-art-contemporain.com/revue\\_decryptage/analyse\\_a\\_decoder.php?langue=fr&id=20120712](http://www.observatoire-art-contemporain.com/revue_decryptage/analyse_a_decoder.php?langue=fr&id=20120712)

4 The Guardian "The resurrection of Nantes: how free public art brought the city back to life"  
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## Summary

Over 54 per cent of the world's population lives in urban areas and it is expected to increase to 66 per cent by 2050<sup>6</sup>. Together with migration processes that we are facing at the moment, this will entail a huge demographic challenge - the newcomers will make cities' populations extremely diverse, and it is up to culture based initiatives to make the most out of this diversity for the city. Intercultural dialogue should be at the heart of this approach. Many cities, especially those with an industrial past, found culture and CCIs based strategies as the way to urban and regional restoration. As it was already argued, there are no simple "copy paste" solutions. Every long term, strategic approach needs tailor made solutions. Building on local and regional heritage, a good understanding of already existing assets, and strong leadership are the necessary factors in order to succeed.

## Recommendations

As it stressed in EUROCITIES findings, made in a frame of the programme Culture for Cities and Regions, there are a number of success factors for smart investments in culture, which cities who wish to follow that path should be aware of. The recommendations made by EUROCITIES are lessons learned from 15 study-visits and 70 case-studies of culture based initiatives and their influence on urban, social, and economic development of European cities:

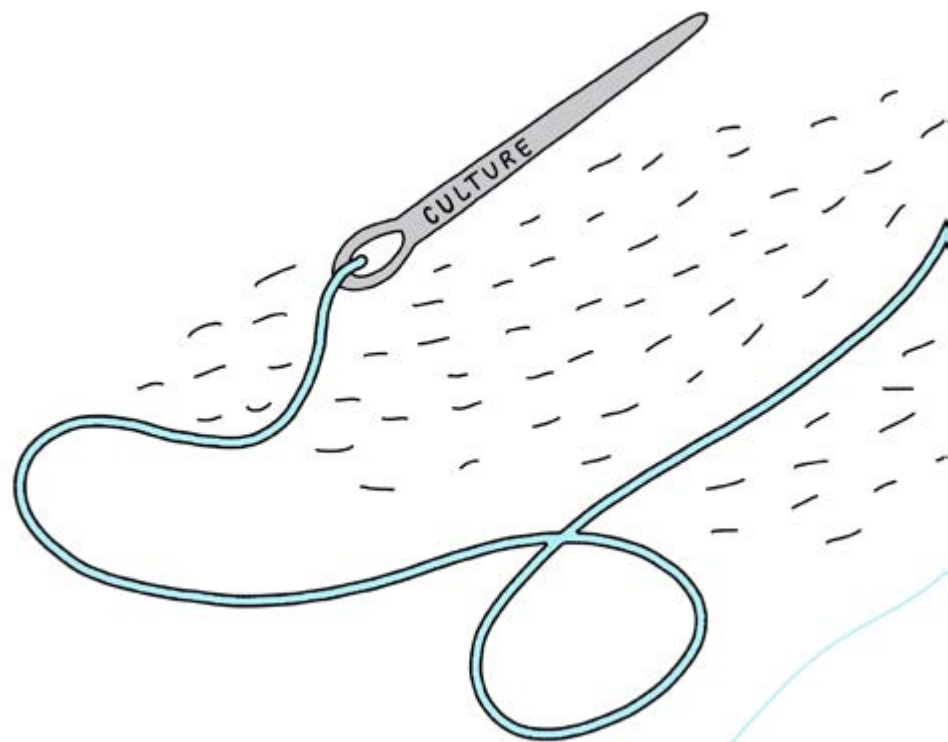
- **Bold and visionary political leadership is the necessity.** When it comes to developing and implementing culture based strategies. Having in mind that this is a long term process, short term wins are necessary in order to keep the overall dynamics. It is also important that this process is fulfilled together with local players - public, private cultural organizations, NGO's, citizens and creatives.
- **Inclusive by nature.** Culture can play important role in engaging hard-to-reach or vulnerable groups in society. Culture based projects can deal with different social problems, as it was presented in the Local guides project. They can rebuild a sense of identity, create jobs and make inhabitants proud of their neighborhood. Culture based projects are helping to build a sense of community and civic society.
- **Culture is the leverage for urban and regional development.** Cities and regions that took part in the EUROCITIES initiative have shown examples of temporary use of buildings, economic diversification, and regeneration through cultural heritage. Nantes has successfully managed to regenerate the 'island of Nantes'. The development model, based on a diverse range of uses has helped reduce the risk of gentrification and enabled a balanced mix of activities. The openness of the approach, the engagement of various stakeholders and the varied use of public space have all been instrumental in the success of this joint urban-cultural project.

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6 UN World Urbanisation Prospects  
<https://eso.un.org/unpd/wup/Publications/Files/WUP2014-Highlights.pdf>



- **Learning from others experience.** There are already a number of examples, case studies, and success stories of the cities and regions which decided to place culture in the heart of their development strategies. It is crucial to learn from their experience no matter if they succeed or failed in their attempts.
- **Evidence based approach.** While lobbying for culture based development strategies, evidence and impacts of culture for local and regional development is a must. It is also important to collect data and personal stories while implementing strategies, so they are going to be proof of the actions taken for policymakers.



# Additional Resources

## **The Monumental Art Collection**

<http://muralegdanskzaspa.pl/en/>

## **Gdansk School of Mural**

<http://muralegdanskzaspa.pl/gdansk-school-of-mural/>

## **EUROCITIES - Culture for Cities and Regions**

<http://www.cultureforcitiesandregions.eu/culture/home>

## **The Guardian “The resurrection of Nantes: how free public art brought the city back to life”**

<https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2016/jul/12/resurrection-nantes-france-how-free-public-art-brought-city-back-to-life>

## **Observatoire l'art contemporain “Nantes : audit culturel d'une ville créative”**

[http://www.observatoire-art-contemporain.com/revue\\_decryptage/analyse\\_a\\_decoder.php?langue=-fr&id=2012071](http://www.observatoire-art-contemporain.com/revue_decryptage/analyse_a_decoder.php?langue=-fr&id=2012071)