Urban Agenda for the EU

Street Invasion, Atomisation and Cultural Reactivation

Action 2

November 2021

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Street Invasion, Atomisation and Cultural Reactivation

1) Who we Are

Action Leader(s)

Municipality of Murcia (ES)

Action Group Members

Canary Islands, Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport (ES)

Municipality of Genoa (IT)

Other bodies involved

Murcia University

EUROCITIES Digital Forum – Digital Citizenship WG

2)Background context

The starting point: What is/are the common problem(s) identified that the Action aims to tackle? Why is the Action important and relevant?

Both as a general tendency is the last decade and due to the COVID pandemic, cities have disengagement of citizens and their (local) culture consumption detrimented by mass consumption of (online) alternatives. This situation highlighted the vulnerability of the Creative, Cultural and Cultural Heritage Sector, and its well-known sensitivity to periods of economic contracting, especially where restrictions on physical gatherings are in effect.

At a time when Europe is facing a profound transformation of our way of life, our shared cultural heritage and values constitute a much-needed anchor and compass. Not only for the traditional problems, like the flawed design of public actions and spaces, lacking in green elements, not contributing to urban resilience, negatively affecting social interaction and dialogue on local and European identity. This includes the lack of funding and funding models to address these problems on any level.

Added we find the challenge of unburdening city centres and aid in the digitalisation of culture and cultural heritage consumption, re-establish long lost peri-rural connections and traditional CCH linked to identity, traditions and history, priorities on national and European level.

Action is required to palliate the detrimental effects on the culture and Cultural Heritage sector and (local) culture production, by re-thinking culture consumption, and how it engages citizens to tackle this "new normality", enhancing the quality of life of European citizens as far as culture and cultural heritage are concerned.

3) Objectives

What were the purpose and objective of the Action?

A new cultural (governance) model with atomised Culture Actions, promoting fragmented cultural consumption by citizens, underlining the conjoined fundamental values of European society, supported by a micro-financing scheme, as well as structured public cultural procurement to reactivate local culture production.

By changing the conception of the public space and non-culture related itineraries and redefining their roles, functions and designs, creating "well-designed" public spaces that contribute to a healthy urban microclimate for culture consumers, focussed on urban resilience, enhancing the local and European identity, and promoting social interaction.

Procurement with a special emphasis on digitalisation, remote cultural offers and new culture opportunities focussing on experience and added value, allowing artists and creatives to prepare projects, boosting the cultural network and production in all its fields (amateur, professional, national and international, in all culture sectors).

Involving and incentivising peri-urban areas for culture consumption, heritage and traditions, combined with the local and European identity, in a way that it will not only unburden the city centre, but it will allow for a new approach towards cultural sectors and their business models, generating a spill over effect to neighbouring municipalities.

4) Results and main outcomes

What were the main milestones? Which outputs and results did the Action produce? What makes the Action particularly meaningful and useful?

The conceptualisation of a "new" cultural model based on these objectives was the first step in moving forward, creating cultural districts and itineraries that combine existing items with public spaces that are not traditionally perceived as culture environments.

These cultural districts are interconnected areas that create positive synergies for optimising human resources and infrastructures, facilitating the coordination of projects and specific programming, as well as strategic pilots and actions that engage peri-urban areas, unburdening the city centre.

The atomisation of culture and engaging citizens by interceding in their daily itineraries, initiatives such as "mirror rooms" or atomised "pop up" public performances or interventions invading the streets and providing the public with a reflection of what is being developed and shown in the different cultural spaces of the city, which in turn takes a firm step towards exhibition innovation and cultural diffusion.

The Cultural Reactivation aspect of this action focuses on the professional cultural sector, consisting in structured cultural hiring and procurement through municipal spending in times of crisis, in this case prompted by the context of COVID-19 and its subsequent lockdown, putting special focus on remote cultural offers and digitalisation. The aim is to allow artists and creatives to prepare projects, even when confined or limited in movement due to the pandemic or any other cause of similar effects, boosting the cultural network and production, whilst recognising and supporting this fundamental sector in difficult and trying times.

In accordance with the "reactive" nature of this action and its key objective being to palliate the detrimental effects on the local cultural sector, the scheme is envisaged for rapid implementation. It is in the interest of both the municipality and cultural sector workers that cultural activities resume, albeit in a digital format, engaging citizens and incentivising culture consumption in a safe way. Given the constant implementation of digital technology and its increasing presence in our daily lives, culture must have a voice in this open dialogue, providing and developing keys for understanding, embracing and shaping these profound changes that are already underway, addressing their potential and their integration within the city and the urban environment.

The Action has generated tools and methods for implementation, a new cultural model, cultural planning models, artistic participatory processes, a flexible and accessible micro-funding programme; ways to reflect and deliberate collectively on stories and story-telling regarding

history, places, artistic works, symbols and the cultural environment; methods for enabling a dialogue between existing tangible and intangible heritage symbols and new creations; tools for creating cultural heritage and for promoting urban resilience; etc. which will enable any city to redesign their cultural model and use the toolset, to deal with local challenges.

Distinctive milestones include the creation of terms/conditions for the basis of public procurement of "cultural reactives", the first "call" for proposals spanning 9 cultural areas/disciplines (ranging from scenic productions and audio-visual productions, to photography and exhibitions) and over 700.000€ in allocated budget, the launch of the oculto.tv platform for visualising local audio-visual culture productions, as well as being a repository for the cultural reactives that in such doubles as a good practice catalogue. As well as the elaboration of the performance and monitoring/evaluation indicators, the online diffusion and dissemination meeting of the action for implementation in March 2021, and the second "call" for proposals comprising 8 cultural areas/disciplines and over 600.000€ in accepted projects, totalling 138 funded cultural reactives and 52 street invasion actions in the span of the action.

Breaking down the action to the core concepts, we have found, through all the pilots and activities launched adhering to the philosophy of "street invasion" that transferring culture consumption to the public domain changes the perception from itinerary to cultural space, leading to wider engagement and reaching more citizens through these actions. Of those street invasion activities that are linked to "bigger" culture offerings, positive synergies have been detected in interest and assistance form citizens in their role as culture consumers.

The component of atomised culture consumption in line with the creation of itineraries, has protected the programmes activities from cancellation or postponement when there have been spikes in COVID-19 cases, as well as generating synergies with heritage components present in the municipality.

The efforts made through public procurement to incentivise local culture production have positively impacted the culture sector and related sectors in their resisting the negative spiral brought about by COVID-19. Consequently, the ooculto.tv platform that hosts digitalised parts of culture for audio-visual consumption.

Launched on the 18th of February 2021, the platform has 508 registered users (registration is optional), and to date (March 2022) has received 80.194 visits from 67 counties, totalling over 500.000 views of the >750 available elements.

The Action is a method to successfully reconquering public spaces and cultural heritage, promoting the fragmented cultural consumption by citizens through singular atomised cultural

Actions in the public space, underlining the conjoined fundamental values of European society, and the local identity in a European context.

Supported by a working/proven structured cultural hiring/procurement procedure using municipal spending in times of crisis, with a special focus on digitalisation and remote cultural offers, new culture opportunities focussing on experience and added value(s),

In the pilots this has led to improving standards for enhancing the quality as well as incentivising culture consumption involving peri-urban areas, heritage, traditions and identity, in a way that in the long-run will not only unburden the city centre, but it will allow for a new approach on business models. Activating cultural production in and for municipalities with a spill over effect to neighbouring municipalities as a value adding non substitutive way to experience culture, fomenting the diversification of culture-consumption, creating new routes connecting to different aspects of culture and cultural heritage.

5)Observations/Remarks/Recommendations

Which recommendations (local/national/EU-level) does the Action deliver [please differentiate the different levels]? What were the important lessons learned and strategies identified to overcome the problem(s) tackled? What could be some next steps and follow-up activities (if applicable)?

The action has revealed that a "New" Cultural Model, centred around citizens and public spaces, based i.a. on the pillars of this action, Street Invasion, Atomisation and Cultural Reactivation, can successfully be implemented by cities using the outlined philosophy, methods and tools produced in the action. And we believe this to apply both to the local and regional context.

The action has further confirmed that:

- Culture and Cultural Heritage is vital to the local, national and European identity of citizens.
- Public Spending towards local culture production can help this fragile sector (and those who depend on it) weather economical ¨crisis¨ (access, consumption, restrictions), e.g. the crisis provoked by COVID-19.
- The different collectives of (local) culture producers are important partners to help shape the city/region's culture offer and image strategy as well as support a cultural tourism approach.
- Street invasion can be used as an effective means of citizen engagement, for example in creating awareness of the wider cultural offer, or to aid in the reconceptualization of public spaces.
- There is a lack of cultural interchange and exchange at the regional, national and European level for cities/regions to share and promote their local culture production to aid in reinforcing the image and portrayal of their identity.
- Relying in excess on global culture providers, specifically streaming services, is detrimental to physical culture consumption and jeopardises the local, national and European identity in favour of homogenous culture production of corporate interest that shapes worldviews.

Recommendations on Local and Regional Level

- Implementation of the action will provide a layer of stability to the local culture sector, that is more vulnerable than for example national or international production, as well as reinforce local economy, employment and identity.
- Culture Atomisation not only covers a wider area when implementing projects, reaching more citizens on their daily itineraries, it also benefits COVID-19 prevention by avoiding agglomerations, mitigating spread on one hand, and not depriving citizens that due to the pandemic shy from social gatherings in fear of the virus.

- Rethinking the cultural model in terms of public procurement in times of crisis guarantees the public cultural offer when combined with a digitalisation strategy and platform.
- Street invasion is a powerful tool to either boost culture consumption of the static culture offering, to engage citizens in their daily itineraries immersing them in culture, and to open the mind of citizens and for them to re-examine public spaces, their design and resilience.
- Support and funding as well as aid in procuring European funding the implementation of Street Invasion, Atomisation and Cultural Reactivation, or subclusters, as long as they are in line with the local/regional culture model.
- Recognition of culture as a public good, and local culture production as a vulnerable sector as it is more prone to deteriment in times of economic resession, and key infrastructure for social cohesion.

Recommendations on National and European Level

- There is a necessity to improve the accessibility of European culture production at the local/regional level.
- The need to address the need for support and promotion of local culture production, its consumption and the backing of citizen engagement in this field.
- To encourage and support, also through funding, initiatives in cities/regions that are focused on street invasion linking production to cultural heritage and both local and European identity.
- Programmes to support skill and capacity building programs in this field, as well as international exchange of professionals and technicians.

Outputs

- A comprehensible action implementation explanation
- FAQ and core-concept note
- Roadmap for local implementation
- A checklist for local support
- Indicator set (KPIs)
- Instructions/Manual for Street Invasion and Culture Atomisation
- The legal bases for Cultural Reactives (already applied) in Spanish
- The legal bases for Cultural Reactives (for adaptation) in English
- Good Practice Catalogue of Actions and Activities
- Online repository of audio-visual materials of action implementation
- Testimonies of coordinators and participants in Cultural Reactives

Additionally

- A Video of action three Street Invasion, Atomisation and Cultural Reactivation
- The OCULTO.TV audio-visual platform
- A Video of the OCULTO.TV platform

Acknowledgements

Germany

Federal Ministry of the Interior, Building and Community

Italy

National Governmental Agency for the Territorial Cohesion

Ministry for Culture (MIC)

Official members

- Cyprus - Ministry of Interior
- France - Ministry of Culture
- Spain - Ministry of Development and Public Works
- Greece – Ministry of Culture & Sports
- Regional Development Agency of the Ljubljana Urban Region (SI)
- Intermunicipal Community of the Coimbra Region (PT)
- Kazanlak Municipality (BG)
- Flanders Heritage, Flemish Region (BE)
- Dutch Federation of Cultural Heritage Cities (NL)
- Katowice City Hall (PL)
- Alba Iulia Municipality (RO)
- Municipality of Nagykanizsa (HU)
- Marshal's Office of the Silesian Voivodeship (PL)
- City of Berlin (DE)
- Canary Island, Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport (ES)
- Bordeaux Metropole (FR)
- City of Espoo (FI)
- Jurmala City Council (LV)
- Úbeda City Council (ES)
- City of Florence (IT)
- European Commission (DGs REGIO, EAC, RTD, DEVCO, AGRI, CLIMA, JRC, SG, EASME)
- European Committee of the Regions
- European Investment Bank
- ICLEI Local Governments for Sustainability
- Joint Programming Initiative on Cultural Heritage
- Eurocities
- URBACT