

# Cultural Development Network

Cultures  
Communities  
Councils

## **First meeting of the Working Group on Culture, United Cities for Local Government, Barcelona, October 2006**

### **Report to CDN Board, February 2007**

*'Agenda 21 for Culture is an undertaking by cities and local governments for cultural development, a tool for enhancing the role of culture in local development and a process that stresses the importance of cities in promoting cultural diversity'.*

***United Cities and Local Governments - Working Group on Culture***  
**[www.agenda21culture.net](http://www.agenda21culture.net)   [www.cities-localgovernments.org](http://www.cities-localgovernments.org)**

Cultural Development Network representatives Sue Beal, Chair, Kim Dunphy, Manager and Jon Hawkes, guest speaker, attended this meeting held in Barcelona, Spain in October 2006. We had been invited by conference organisers to contribute an Australian perspective to the meeting and felt it an ideal opportunity to improve our understanding of the Agenda 21 movement before we began to promote the concept in Australia. We also used the opportunity to investigate possible speakers for our arts and local government conference in 2007.

The two day meeting was held in the Picasso Museum, a stunning newly renovated facility in the lively old barrio area of Barcelona. Most of the meeting was devoted to serious business, including information sharing about the role of cultures in councils and organisations represented, councils' take-up of Agenda 21 and issues arising from that. Business associated with adoption of corporate identity for Agenda 21 and new directions for dissemination and implementation of the Agenda were discussed. A study 'Local Policies for Cultural Diversity' commissioned by UNESCO was presented, with chapters focussing on Canadian and US context, (by Nancy Duxbury), Latin America and Europe (by Annamari Laaksonen) and Australia and UK (by Colin Mercer).



*Sue Beal (right front) and delegates Agenda 21 for Culture meeting,  
Picasso Museum, Barcelona, October 2006*

The meeting also included visits to cultural facilities and projects, beyond the usual (and very significant!) tourist attractions in Barcelona; the redevelopment site of the historic Born Market, being turned into a cultural-archaeological centre, Ateneu Popular de Nou Barris, a former asphalt factory now functioning as a lively cultural centre in one of the more disadvantaged areas of the city, and Can Fabra, a former textile factory, now venue for one of Barcelona's most significant libraries. Amazingly, this facility stays open until the early hours of the morning to cater for students!

The meeting proved to be a wonderful opportunity to put Australia on the cultural development map in Europe and to meet colleagues from arts and cultures areas of local government from all over Europe, the UK and Canada. The excellent hospitality meeting organisers showed us and other delegates contributed to a very enjoyable and stimulating experience. We came back inspired to spread the word about Agenda 21 and unite with our world-wide community of cultural activists to ensure that governments consider culture as a fundamental pillar of public policy.



**Cities, local governments and organisations represented at the meeting:**

Aide aux Musiques Innovatrices – AMI (Fr), International Association of Educating Cities - AICE (Int), Aubagne (Fr), Ajuntament de Barcelona (Es), Diputació de Barcelona (Es), Bilbao (Es), Bogotá (Co), Buenos Aires (Ar), UCLG – World Secretariat (Int), CGLU – Commission on Social Inclusion (Int), Consejo Nacional de la Cultura y las Artes (Chile), Córdoba (Es), Council of Europe (Int), Creative City Network of Canada (Ca), Cultural Development Network – Victoria (Au), EFAH - European Forum for the Arts and the Heritage (Int), European Cultural Foundation, (Int), FEMP - Federación Española de Municipios y Provincias (Es), Genova (It), Lille (Fr), London (Uk), Lyon (Fr), Metropolis (Int), Ministério da Cultura – Funarte - Brazil (Br), Ministerio, de Cultura - España (Es), Montréal (Ca), Porto Alegre (Br), Reading (Uk), les Rencontres (Int), Rete Italiana Agenda 21 Locali (It), Provincia di Roma (It), Sevilla (Es), Stockholm (Sw), Territoires et Cinema (Fr), UNESCO - Social and Human Sciences Sector (Int), Zaragoza (Es) / Interlocal network (Int).

## **United Cities and Local Governments**

**UCLG** is the largest association of local governments in the world. Founded in May 2004, UCLG acts as the united voice and world advocate of democratic local self-government. It adopted Agenda 21 for culture as a reference document for its cultural programmes in October 2004 and constituted its Working Group on Culture in June 2005.

### **Agenda 21 for Culture**

Agenda 21 for Culture **is** the first document with a worldwide mission that advocates establishing the groundwork of an undertaking by cities and local governments for cultural development. UCLG's Working Group on Culture, constituted in Beijing on 9 June 2005, is the meeting point for cities and local governments that place culture at the heart of their development processes. Today, 168 cities, local governments and organisations from all over the world are linked to Agenda 21 for culture.

The 2005-2007 programme of the Working Group on Culture aims 'to promote the role of culture as a central dimension of local policies through the dissemination and implementation of the Agenda 21 for culture' with the following four sub-objectives:

- (1) To develop the political framework of cities and local governments,
- (2) To guide the development and implementation of services to cities,
- (3) To develop institutional partnerships in culture, and
- (4) To promote research and development in culture.

**The Working Group** is chaired by Ferran Mascarell, President of the Commission for Culture, Education and Social Welfare of Barcelona City Council and co-ordinated by Jordi Pascual. It enjoys the vice-presidencies of the cities of Buenos Aires and Stockholm. The Working Group on Culture includes cities and local governments from the world over.

## **'Interaccio' (*Interaction: Community cultural policies*) conference CERC: Cultural Studies and Resource Centre, Barcelona, October 2006**

This three day conference was the third in a series of bi-annual conference hosted by the district council of Barcelona focussing on issues relevant to local government and culture. Jon Hawkes was the major keynote presenter to a capacity audience of 600, mostly local government arts and cultural staff, cultural policy academics and students, artists and artswokers from around the world. His speech, '*Creative Democracy*', proposed that new governance paradigms and views of what constitutes a healthy and sustainable society would be more effective if cultural vitality were included as one of the basic requirements, main conceptual tenets and overriding evaluation streams.



This presentation was very well received, inspiring a lively and interactive discussion. Other keynote presenters included Franco Bianchini and Jude Bloomfield, from De Montfort University, UK, speaking on 'Diversity and the Community', Enrique Gil Calvo from Complutense University, Madrid, discussing 'Public Space and the community' and George Yudice from New York University on 'Conflicts of proximity' (community conflicts).



*Carles Martí i Grau, Manager, Institute de Cultura, Barcelona City Council and Jon Hawkes, Australia*

Concurrent case-study sessions with speakers from around the world were held on topics including 'Local policies for proximity' (community), 'Community spaces', 'Memory creation and proximity (community)', 'Challenging the public space' and 'Social networks and proximity'. Sue Beal, Chair of CDN made a presentation on the 'Cultural Development Network' in the 'Social Networks' session along with Pilar Mairal who described the Spain-wide network of cultural facilities, *Fundacio Kaleidos* and Irene Kunst from Amsterdam who described *Netweerk Broedplaatsen*, a network of 'Art-Factories', mostly artist run spaces in revitalised industrial buildings.



A highlight of the conference for me was the address by Antanas Mockus, the inspiring Mayor of Bogota, whose previous profession is that of philosopher. Perhaps one of a very few such combinations in all the world! Mockus described an inspiring array of creative initiatives to challenges for the local government he leads, including parking and traffic infringements, water shortages and graffiti. The success he had achieved for previously intractable problems were significant. His positive, humorous and deeply intellectual approach was inspiring, particularly given his role as an elected representative of local government.

The session on 'Community Spaces' chaired expertly by Jude Bloomfield was also very inspiring. Two unique, creative and long-term community and artist-led initiatives for use of community spaces were described by sophisticated speakers, Fabrizia Stoppa from Cittadellarte-Fondazione Pistoletto, Biela, Italy and Hans Joseph Becher from UFA Fabrik, Berlin, Germany.



*Photo: Jon Hawkes, researcher and Sue Beal, Chair, (Cultural Development Network) with Esteve Carames (Institut de Cultura, Barcelona) and Soraya Martines, (Councillor, City of Montreal).*

It was exciting to be part of this huge international event, experiencing European culture first-hand, in the beautifully designed, fitted out and resourced CERC in the high arts precinct of Barcelona city. The conference was simultaneously translated into an astonishing array of languages including English, French, Spanish, Catalan, Portuguese. Being part of a session

where the speaker moved easily from her native Swedish to her language of presentation, English, to French to address a fellow panellist and Portuguese to respond to the MC was very humbling, particularly for Australians who consider ourselves so multi-cultural! The timetabling was a culturally challenging experience too, with the day's programming including serious sessions from 9.30 am right through to 8 pm in the evening and lunch between 2 and 4. In all, a wonderfully invigorating and enriching professional experience.

**Kim Dunphy, Manager**