OECD Local Economic and Employment Development (LEED) Papers

The role of culture-led regeneration in place transformation

OECD

OECD Local Economic and Employment Development (LEED) Papers

The role of culture-led regeneration in place transformation

Culture-led regeneration has been a widely used strategy for place transformation for over five decades. This paper takes stock of what is known about culture-led regeneration, highlighting when and how it is most successfully applied and where there are evidence gaps. It explores four main forms of culture-led regeneration: large-scale physical cultural infrastructure, grassroots and community-based cultural infrastructure, cultural and creative districts, and cultural events and festivals. It is part of the broader Transforming Places project.

Keywords: Culture-led Regeneration, Place Transformation, Creative Districts, Cultural Infrastructure

ABOUT THE OECD

The OECD is a multi-disciplinary inter-governmental organisation with member countries which engages in its work an increasing number of non-members from all regions of the world. The Organisation's core mission today is to help governments work together towards a stronger, cleaner, fairer global economy. Through its network of specialised committees and working groups, the OECD provides a setting where governments compare policy experiences, seek answers to common problems, identify good practice, and co-ordinate domestic and international policies. More information available: www.oecd.org.

ABOUT OECD LOCAL ECONOMIC AND EMPLOYMENT DEVELOPMENT (LEED) PAPERS

The OECD Local Economic and Employment Development (LEED) Programme Papers present innovative ideas and practical examples on how to boost local development and job creation. A wide range of topics are addressed, such as employment and skills; entrepreneurship; the social economy and social innovation; culture; and local capacity building, among others. The series highlights in particular policies to support disadvantaged places and people, such as the low skilled, the unemployed, migrants, youth and seniors.

This work is published under the responsibility of the Secretary-General of the OECD. The opinions expressed and arguments employed herein do not necessarily reflect the official views of the Member countries of the OECD.

This paper was authorised for publication by Lamia Kamal-Chaoui, Director, Centre for Entrepreneurship, SMEs, Regions and Cities, OECD.

This document, as well as any statistical data and map included herein, are without prejudice to the status of or sovereignty over any territory, to the delimitation of international frontiers and boundaries and to the name of any territory, city or area.

The statistical data for Israel are supplied by and under the responsibility of the relevant Israeli authorities. The use of such data by the OECD is without prejudice to the status of the Golan Heights, East Jerusalem and Israeli settlements in the West Bank under the terms of international law.

Cover image: Abhishek Banik / Getty Images Plus

Acknowledgements

This paper was prepared by the OECD Centre for Entrepreneurship, SMEs, Regions and Cities (CFE) led by Lamia Kamal-Chaoui. It was conducted as part of the OECD's Local Employment and Economic Development (LEED) Programme. This work was funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) as part of the work by UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) to create opportunities and improve outcomes across the UK.

It is part of the OECD's Transforming Places project, which explores how communities can better navigate structural economic shifts. Persistent geographic disparities in employment, skills, and economic opportunity highlight the limitations of traditional approaches to place transformation. This project puts forward a more holistic approach that expands the policy tools considered, integrates economic and social outcomes, and emphasises the role of local "soft infrastructure" such as leadership, social capital, and place identity. The project aims to (1) take stock of what is known – and not – about the drivers of place transformation and the effectiveness of common policy responses; (2) develop new, data-driven insights on the dynamics of place transformation and the different pathways places can take to change; (3) showcase international examples of successful transformations, with a focus on transferrable learnings; and (4) empower decision-makers with the knowledge and tools needed to drive positive change.

The paper was drafted by Graeme Evans, Professor Emeritus, University of the Arts London, and Patrycja Kaszynska, Senior Research Fellow, University of the Arts London, and edited by Martha Bloom, Economist and Policy Analyst, OECD Centre for Entrepreneurship, SMEs, Regions and Cities (CFE), under the supervision of Ekaterina Travkina, Co-ordinator, Culture, Creative Sectors and Global Events, CFE. It was prepared under the supervision of Anna Rubin and Karen Maguire, Head of Division, Local Employment and Economic Development (LEED) Programme. It has has benefited from comments from Talia Melic, Policy Analyst, CFE and Jeffrey Finkle, former President and CEO of the International Economic Development Council. Contributions from the following are also gratefully acknowledged: Piotr Firych, Assistant Professor, Adam Mickiewicz University; Mathilde Gouteux, Doctorante, Aix-Marseille Université; Diana Marcela Rey Vásquez, Individual Specialist for the UNESCO Institute of Statistics and an Individual Specialist for the United Nations Development Program -Saudi Arabia; Mia Nakamura, Professor of Cultural Policy and Arts Management, Kyushu University; Jonathan Paquette, Professor, University of Ottawa, Susan Seifert, Director, Social Impact of the Arts Project, University of Pennsylvania; Jen Snowball, Professor, Rhodes University; Mark Stern, Professor of Social Policy and History, University of Pennsylvania. Katrina Baker, Communications Officer and Jack Waters, Publications Coordinator (OECD) prepared the report for publication.

Table of contents

BOXES

Executive summary

Realistic expectations and a holistic approach are essential for successful culture-led regeneration

Over the past 50 years, there have been various approaches to using culture as a catalyst for local development. This includes investment in large physical infrastructure (e.g. cultural flagships, industrial re-use and relocations), grassroots community infrastructure (e.g. libraries, community groups), cultural districts (e.g. creative enterprise zones, cultural and heritage quarters) and major events (e.g. Capitals of Culture, Biennales, Expos and trade fairs).

Each approach has strengths and weaknesses, but are most successful when used in combination. Long-term regeneration is incremental and often involves multiple approaches over time. This requires ongoing and long-term cultural planning rather than a focus on one type of cultural investment. Moreover, many successful examples are able to create the spatial separation and zoning of different elements protecting neighbourhood amenities, enterprises and everyday living whilst still undertaking large-scale physical redevelopment, including cultural flagship buildings.

Setting realistic goals and embedding cultural programmes within wider employment and skills strategies can be most beneficial for long-term transformation. Culture-led regeneration which prioritises short-term economic returns at the expense of long-term community development is unlikely to lead to meaningful transformation of a place. These efforts require careful planning and success often hinges on complementary investments in education, employment, and other sectors that amplify the impact of cultural initiatives.

Large-scale infrastructure investment benefits from aligning with audience and community needs

Cultural amenities can generate social and economic returns and are most successful when aligned with actual community needs. Cultural amenities have been linked to a range of economic and social benefits, as such amenities attract not only visitors, but also high-skilled workers and businesses. However, investment in large physical infrastructure can be costly and may not always respond to actual community needs. There are examples, for instance of cities, rejecting proposals for museum franchises in favour of more locally embedded facilities. Moreover, for many types of cultural infrastructure such as museums and performing arts centres, ongoing operating costs must also be considered. In many instances, repurposing existing sites, such as disused industrial buildings, can offer a more sustainable alternative to new build facilities and can draw on a place's heritage to develop a vision for future transformation.

Grassroots community cultural infrastructure is an integral part of thriving places

Smaller scale cultural facilities and community groups contribute to economic and social transformation. Grassroots community infrastructure includes both facility/space-based as well as group-based networks, and is characterised by open access, low-cost, spaces, with a sense of ownership by local people. Cultural centres and libraries for example, are increasingly used for broader development objectives, such as offering education and training, career support, and information services. The use of temporary spaces for cultural activities can be a useful way of reducing building vacancy and supporting grassroots groups. Grassroots cultural facilities, such as small music venues have also been found to support vibrant cultural ecosystems and generate economic benefits. However, community groups can lack access to technical resources, decision-making power and influence and so often require support. Tools such as participatory budgeting and "Percent for Art" can be effective ways of empowering cultural and community-led development.

Whether creative districts arise organically, or are instigated by government action, all require policy support

Promoting cultural districts is an increasingly popular mechanism of culture-led regeneration. There are broadly two types of cultural district, firstly more organic, incrementally developed mixed-use areas, arising from historic cultural production districts, and secondly, newly-developed districts with new-build facilities. In comparison to other models of culture-led regeneration, policy support for cultural districts typically involves more supporting measures (such as tax incentives or subsidised rents) as opposed to large capital investment. Other measures to support cultural districts include zoning for cultural use, planning controls to protect creative spaces, promoting mixed-use development, and implementing flexible licensing.

Cultural events can act as a catalyst for broader cultural and development policy

Events and festivals can be used to kick-start a regeneration programme or to punctuate a longer-term regeneration strategy. Cultural events include one-off or recuring festivals, as well as biennials, triennials, expositions and capital of culture programmes as well as trade fairs. Even unsuccessful event bids have been shown to spur culture-led regeneration efforts as bidding for competitive events such as capitals of culture can bring together local stakeholders and galvanise commitment to culture-led regeneration plans, even if the bid is ultimately unsuccessful. However, hosting a cultural event is unlikely to lead to place transformation unless the event is embedded in wider agendas and strategies, such as culture, tourism, education and social plans.

Placing local communities at the heart of regeneration efforts can mitigate risks

Buy-in from local communities is a critical success factor for culture-led regeneration. Effective initiatives typically start with a deep understanding of existing cultural assets — both tangible and intangible — and actively involve the local population through participatory governance. Without such buy-in, projects risk resistance or failure, especially when they are top-down and focused more on external branding than local benefit. Gaining a greater understanding of the cultural assets which can be drawn on in transformation projects can take different forms, from cultural mapping activities to understand local assets and needs, to deliberative governance (e.g., citizens assemblies, referenda) to ascertain community views.

Risk of gentrification has been a common criticism of culture-led regeneration, but is not an inevitable outcome. While culture led regeneration efforts may enhance a city's image and attract investment, they can also result in rising property prices and the displacement of the original residents and cultural actors. To combat this, policymakers can implement protections such as rent controls and ringfencing social housing as part of developments, as well as looking to protect and preserve cultural spaces for community use. Working with studio workspace organisations as part of regeneration partnerships and producing dedicated anti-displacement plans can also help in identifying and mitigating negative effects. Failing to recognise local, grassroots culture in favour of elite or high-art expressions can also lead to exclusion and missed opportunities to strengthen social cohesion through genuine cultural engagement.

1 Introduction: Place transformation and culture-led regeneration

This paper examines the role of culture in place transformation. Place transformation can be described as the process of reshaping a place's trajectory and identity in response to economic shifts to provide local residents with access to good jobs and the ability to enjoy a high quality of life (OECD, 2025[1]). It goes beyond merely revitalising areas after decline, emphasising also proactive management of change to prevent downturns in the first place. While "culture" in general terms (e.g. national culture, religious culture, ethnic culture, etc.) clearly shapes a place's transformation journey, this paper focuses on culture in a narrower sense, focusing on artistic or creative heritage and activities. The paper therefore looks at the role of policies to stimulate arts and culture as part of place transformation processes, typically termed "culture-led regeneration".

Broadly speaking, culture-led regeneration refers to using arts and culture as a catalyst for social and economic transformation (Evans and Shaw, 2003[2]). First emerging in the 1970s and 80s as a response to urban decline in the post-industrial city, culture-led regeneration can be seen as a catch-all term for a number of different policy initiatives which aim to revitalise places through investment in arts and cultural activities. Culture-led regeneration goes beyond a simple investment in cultural amenities but rather takes culture as the primary vehicle through which regeneration can occur. We can think of culture-led regeneration policies as broadly falling into four categories:

- **Large physical infrastructure** – this approach includes the building of new museums or art galleries and industrial re-use projects (such as transforming former factories into cultural centres). These types of projects typically include both public and private investment. Within this approach, a large investment in the cultural flagship is intended to stimulate wider investment in the area and to change a place's image and reputation.
- **Grassroots and community infrastructure** – this approach encompasses both investment in smaller scale cultural amenities (such as libraries, community arts centres, grassroots music venues, etc.) as well as the creation or support of community groups (such as arts classes, networking events, youth centres, etc.). Within this approach, attention is paid to supporting the community which already exists within a place to flourish, strengthening pride in place and other social outcomes.
- **Cultural districts** – this approach involves investment in new (or support to existing) cultural districts, quarters or zones, characterised by a desire to create/support a geographically concentrated cluster of cultural and creative activity. This type of approach generally includes some form of fiscal incentives for businesses in these areas (such as reduced business rates, subsidised rents or other forms of tax incentive), but may also be supplemented with direct investment in small or even larger cultural infrastructure within the area (such as building redevelopment, the creation of new workshops and studios, setting up "creative hubs" or co-working spaces).

- **Cultural events** – this approach is centred around leveraging a large-scale cultural event (such as a Capital of Culture) or regular festivals (such as Biennials) to raise the profile of a place and drive investment. Here, the event itself is typically seen as a catalyst for wider policy supports to cultural and creative sectors, as well as investment in ongoing programmes. Occasionally these are also combined with building developments.

It is important to note that these four approaches are not mutually exclusive. Indeed, while each of these models may be more or less suitable to a particular place at a particular time, many of the most successful culture-led regeneration strategies utilise more than one of these approaches. Moreover, there is evidence of places utilising these approaches sequentially, for example by investing in physical infrastructure which is later leveraged in hosting a large-scale cultural event. The rest of this paper examines each of these four models in more detail.

2 Large physical cultural infrastructure

This approach centres around building a new iconic venue or redeveloping existing sites. Perhaps the most well-known of this type of culture-led regeneration is investments in new iconic buildings such as the Guggenheim in Bilbao, Spain, or the Pompidou Centre in Paris, France. Projects can range from building venues such as art galleries, museums, theatres, or concerts halls, to art centre complexes, heritage centres, themed entertainment venues, and public art and installations. As well as single structures, some places invest in combinations of cultural buildings, or mixed-use developments. Just as common however is the conversion of former industrial buildings and sites in areas undergoing regeneration for arts and heritage use (see Box 2.1). Former dockland and maritime facilities are also prime locations for cultural re-use and redevelopment schemes such as the Golden Horn Cultural Valley in Istanbul, Türkiye (Gunay and Dokmeci, 2012[3]).

Museum brands are also increasingly used to develop regional outposts and franchises. For example, the Guggenheim, the V&A and the Louvre all have multiple sites within their respective home countries, as well as additional outposts internationally. These extensions serve as a strategy for reaching audiences further afield, as well as providing increased capacity for a museum's archived collections. Their regeneration potential lies in cultural and place brand recognition and association, and networking opportunities across the institutions involved. However, host city authorities need to weigh up these advantages with the costs required to fund their contribution to capital and operating costs, including any annual franchise and hire costs, and the opportunity cost of not developing local cultural programmes and facilities which could be more rooted in the local cultural ecosystem and might better support the local cultural economy. For example, Helsinki, Finland, reportedly rejected a proposal to for a new Guggenheim outpost in the city after five years of deliberation, which would have required a contribution of EUR 80 million for construction, plus annual franchise costs (Henley, 2016[4]). Instead, the city opted to invest in their own New Museum of Architecture and Design in the South Harbour district, merging the existing Design Museum and Museum of Finnish Architecture and respective collections, to open in 2030.

The transformative impact of redevelopment projects can be significant in revitalising spaces that residents have a strong association with. Investment in cultural infrastructure can also bring back to life derelict and unsafe sites, re-opening access and creating positive experiences, particularly in areas that have experienced structural economic and physical decline. This is especially pertinent for physical sites that historically played a foundational role in a place's economic and social life, and which stand as symbols of a past industrial identity – even many years after deindustrialisation. When such buildings are vacant or decaying, this can perpetuate local narratives of loss and decline, fuelling feelings of disillusionment and discontent, and hindering a shared vision for progress that locals can get behind (Görmar and Kinossian, 2022[5]). Physically regenerating such places can thus contribute to wider efforts to reimagine a place's identity and construct a more forward-looking, optimistic narrative (Görmar and Kinossian, 2022[5]). Drawing on the cultural heritage of a place in the regeneration of these sites can be particularly significant, as this tends to serve as a strong basis for identity formation when places reach back into their history

to define a vision for who they are and where they want to go (see Box 2.1). In one example, landmark nature parks featuring artworks created around the industrial landscape of the former mining region Ruhr Valley contributed to shaping a narrative of ecological transformation, reinventing the region as a "Green Metropolis" (Eiringhaus, 2022[6]). Maintaining elements within the landscape that pay tribute to the Ruhr Valley's collective industrial history also contributed to strengthening regional identity (Eiringhaus, 2022[6]).

Box 2.1. Re-use of derelict industrial buildings

Redeveloping un-used industrial spaces and turning them into cultural assets is a common mechanism of culture-led regeneration. While some disused industrial sites have been preserved and turned into museums or tourist attractions (which is important for heritage conservation), the re-use of old industrial space as part of transformation projects more typically means using these spaces for artistic production or dissemination, such as new cinemas, art galleries or artist studios.

The scale of industrial heritage as prospects for culture-led regeneration can range from the re-use of small factories, to multiple large sites and they can operate through different models, and for different purposes. For example:

- **Friche la Belle de Mai, Marseilles, France** – Converted from one of France's largest tobacco factories which closed in 1990, La Friche is a workspace artists and arts organisation as well as a cross-disciplinary arts venue. The site offers performance spaces, a community garden, a playground and athletic space, a restaurant, a bookstore, childcare facilities, exhibition spaces and a training centre, alongside workshop space for painters, sculptors, actors, photographers, dancers, and producers. Since 2007 the space has been governed by a "collective interest cooperative" – a private commercial company which operates as a cooperative meaning decision making occurs collectively.
- **The Cukrarna's Gallery, Ljubljana, Slovenia –** Originally a sugar factory built in 1828, the Cukrarna's Gallery is a publicly owned contemporary art gallery and multi-arts venue. Once the biggest sugar refinery in the Austro-Hungarian empire, the factory closed in 1858 and was subsequently used as an army barracks and slum housing, until it was eventually closed in the 1990s due to the building's poor condition. In 2008 the city of Ljubljana bought the building and conducted extensive renovations with the new gallery opening in 2021. The gallery is managed by the Museum and Galleries of Ljubljana, a public institution.
- **C-Mine in Genk, Belgium –** This former coal mine was bought by the City of Genk in 2001 who redeveloped the site for use as a multi-arts complex. All parts of the old mine have been re-purposed, including the former mine offices which house an incubator for young creatives, the former stables which have become commercial spaces. The showers and the lamp room where the miners came to collect their lamp and number before going underground have been transformed into a complex of cinemas, businesses and catering outlets. The Power Plant, the former compressor room and the ventilation rooms now house the visitor reception, a culture and design centre and a restaurant. The former engine rooms have been restored and two theatre rooms have been added to the buildings. The Baren Hall, once the mine's power plant, now serves as a function room for companies. The site also houses artist studios, arts education centres and gallery spaces.

- **The Hangar in Barcelona, Spain** – From the 1990s this city had lost much of industrial and workspace as a result of large-scale regeneration and despite developing new cultural exhibition spaces such as high-profile galleries and art museums, there was little support or space for local artistic production. A grassroots artist association, AAVC, found a disused textile factory in Poblenou district and occupied it for studio and resource centre use, and following refurbishment, re-opened in 1997. The Hangar widened its brief to include dance and multimedia via a theatre company collaboration, establishing a Medialab and developing post-production resources with training for artists in this emerging field. By the early 2000s the group gained foundation status and equity through donations from established artists, assets that now make up the Foundation's collection. The addition of an Interaction Lab providing technical training, a Lifelong Learning programme for visual artists, and work with local residents associations have led to further expansion to include a sound stage, laboratory/R&D space and artists residency programme, transforming this derelict space for cultural production and engagement.

Source: (La Friche, 2024[7]; Cukrarna, 2024[8]; C-Mine, 2024[9]; Hangar, 2025[10])

Research suggests that the number of cultural infrastructure projects has increased in the last decade, but the amount of investment in these projects has decreased (AEA, 2023[11])**.** According to estimates by AEA, the number of completed large-scale (costing USD 10 million or more) cultural infrastructure projects globally has increased by an average of 10% a year between 2016-2023. However, the total value of investment in these projects has decreased by an average of 6% annually. This reflects trends towards lower cost and smaller scale investments, with the average square footage of building projects also decreasing.

There is evidence of a link between cultural amenities and economic development, though not all investments in major cultural facilities spur growth. The typical argument for investment in large cultural infrastructure is that such amenities attract not only visitors, but also high-skilled workers who chose to locate in places with a thriving cultural scene (Florida, 2002[12]). This in turn boosts employment and business development. For example, a study of 706 industrial clusters in 160 cities in Korea found that cultural amenities were positively associated with employment growth and that cultural infrastructure was a more significant driver of employment growth than other amenities, including housing, nature, or transportation, in the long-term (Kim, Lee and Kim, 2024[13]). Similarly, in a longitudinal study of creative firms and workers in the Netherlands, shows cultural heritage acts as a significant pull factor for creative actors (Kourtit and Nijkamp, 2018[14]). Other studies have suggested that creative industries, knowledge economy, and tourism turnover are significantly and positively associated with higher cultural asset density (TBR, 2016[15]). While there are some instances of investments in major cultural infrastructure bringing little economic returns to the local area beyond a negligible increase in visitors, when conducted as part of wider culture-led regeneration strategies, investment in cultural amenities can form the backbone of successful transformations.

Box 2.2. The costs and return on investment of physical cultural infrastructure

The costs of investing in physical infrastructure can be high and could also incur ongoing operating coats. For example, in New York, US, the new Perelman Performing Arts Center cost USD 5 000 million to construct and building a new wing of the American Museum of Natural History cost USD 465 million (AEA, 2023[11]). Beyond the initial cost of construction, many cultural facilities will require ongoing financial support to remain open. For example, in the museums sector, it is typical for only 25% of operating costs to be funded from ticket and shop sales, with the remaining 75% relying on government funding (OECD, 2022[16]). However, not all investments in physical cultural infrastructure are on such a large scale. Investments in small scale infrastructure, such as local cinemas or libraries can have a substantial impact on local development (see section 3).

Evidence on return on investment for cultural infrastructure projects is mixed, often depending on the methods and timeframe used for analysis. For example, evidence from the UK (Ecorys, 2014[17]) shows that GBP 36 million invested in 10 heritage projects across the UK, enhanced local GVA by GBP 6.4 million and regional GVA by GBP 33.9 million. However, looking at similar investments in five historic visitor attractions but focusing only on the construction phase of the projects found that the GBP 23 million invested in the five sites supported 57 job years of work and 2 million in GVA at the local level, and 278 job years of work and GBP 11.2 million in GVA at the regional level.

Funding for large scale cultural infrastructure primarily comes from the not-for-profit and public sector, though there is growing interest from the private sector. Estimates suggest that the majority of large-scale investment in cultural infrastructure comes from the public sector (44% in 2023) or not-for-profit sector (37% in 2023) (AEA, 2023[11]). However, the number of commercial projects has grown over the past decade now accounting for 7% of total projects in 2023. Other private and public/private initiatives remain only a small minority (3% total).

Source: (AEA, 2023[11]; Ecorys, 2014[17]; OECD, 2022[16])

Perhaps unsurprisingly, there is plenty of evidence for an increase in cultural facilities leading to greater engagement with arts and culture for residents. For example, following the culture-led investment in NewcastleGateshead, UK and regeneration of its waterfront with new facilities – the Sage Arts Centre and the conversion of the Baltic Flour Mill to a contemporary art gallery and new Millennium Bridge – participation in arts activities rose significantly. Surveys of local and regional residents showed significant increases in attendance at galleries, theatres and concerts from before and after the new facilities opened in 2002 – 27% attending theatre/plays (vs 19% in 2001), 35% visiting galleries (vs. 15% in 2001) and 12% attending music (vs. 5% in 2001), and this increase continued a year later with 81% of NewcastleGateshead residents attending arts and cultural events compared with 79% in 2002 (Bailey, Miles and Stark, 2004[18]). 80% of those surveyed in the region said that if their local area lost its arts and cultural activities they would lose something of value – a higher proportion than in the country as a whole. Considering the well-established link between engagement in cultural activity and positive health and wellbeing (Fancourt, 2023[19]), the impact of interventions which increase cultural participation can have significant effects on local health and wellbeing outcomes.

The impact of large cultural infrastructure on the visitor economy is not limited to larger cities, but the impact may be different. Research suggests that investment in cultural infrastructure outside of traditional cultural capitals is rising. For example, in 2023, 73% of locations for large-scale cultural

infrastructure projects were outside of the most populous urban centres (AEA, 2023[11]). Lens in northern France hosts an outpost of the Louvre museum, built with the intention to revitalise the city which had experienced extensive industrial decline, as well as extending access to the museum's collection beyond Paris. The museum is now the second most visited museum outside of Paris, welcoming around 570 000 visitors a year (an average of 1 800 visitors a day) (Louvre-Lens, 2024[20]), in a city with a population of roughly 32 000 (INSEE, 2024[21]). Over 70% of visitors come from the local region (Hauts-de-France), and more than one in four (28%) come from the local metropolitan area. In contrast, 1.1 million out of the 1.3 million visitors to the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao, Spain, in 2023 came from outside of the Basque region (GMB, 2024[22]). While this difference mainly reflects Bilbao's well developed international tourism market, the comparison also serves to highlight that the profile and origins of museums users can vary, as strategies target different markets and cultural experiences. This in turn has implications for the types of benefit offered. For example, higher returns from tourism may be evident where overnight stays are more common and there is a critical mass of cultural and other attractions to encourage visitors. Whereas, cultural infrastructure which caters more towards a local audience may generate greater social benefits for the local community.

Integrating major cultural facilities with other investments such as housing, creative industries clusters and higher education, can produce mutual benefits. The regeneration of Salford Quays in Northwest England has been placed on the map by the new Lowry Arts Centre with the addition of other cultural venues such as the Imperial War Museum and the MediaCity quarter, and together with new housing, this has helped to attract television studios and other education and media organisations. The Lowry is an example of how place transformation coupled with arts and media institutions can boost local economies and add value to communities. Based on a 25 year review (Lichfields, 2024[23]) the Quays regeneration was estimated to contribute GBP 1.3 billion in GVA to the economy, 99% more than in 2001 and is now home to many creative, tech and media organisations from incubators, start-ups to established businesses.

Co-design and meaningful engagement with the local community is essential for project success. This entails engaging with different community groups from early in the project planning stage and continuing to work with local stakeholders throughout the development process. A key step in this process is mapping existing cultural infrastructure, identifying gaps in current provision and assessing potential future usage. For example, Dublin City Council, Ireland, conducted a cultural infrastructure mapping study in 2021 which built on extensive interviews and surveys with local cultural stakeholders as well as secondary data to provide an overview of the existing mix and profile of cultural infrastructure in the city; review the city's performance in relation to comparable international cities; and assess likely future cultural demand and trends (Turley, 2021[24]). The map is now available online in a digital format and is used to guide decision making (Dublin City Council Culture Company, 2025[25]).

User engagement in the physical design of new cultural facilities can improve both the quality of experience and better reflect the local context and environment. The practice of co-design can avoid costly mistakes in design and operation of facilities and help to nurture ownership and usage of the project. The Design Quality Indicator (a toolkit to measure, evaluate and improve the design quality of buildings) was rolled out for public building projects, including the Tate Modern Gallery situated in a poorer district in the south bank of the Thames, UK. The survey tool can be used at different stages of design by users, project and facilities managers – any potential users of the space. Quality is assessed by site and design charrettes through questions on functionality, build quality, and impact. This is important since without considering each element a space could be highly functional and a quality build, but to a user be soulless, lacking in character and integration, a not-unfamiliar outcome in many modern cultural buildings and public spaces (Evans, 2024[26]). Post-Occupation Evaluation (POE) studies e.g. for libraries (Lushington, 2002[27]) can also introduce a culture of feedback and can address ongoing issues to improve the visitor experience and reduce barriers to use.

3 Grassroots community cultural infrastructure

Grassroots community infrastructure includes both facility/space-based as well as group-based networks, and is characterised by open access, low-cost, spaces, with a sense of ownership by local people. Places where local communities can meet, organise and participate in cultural activities include those provided by local authorities, where expertise and specialised resources/skills are available, such as libraries, community arts centres, youth and community centres; and also spaces which may be used and accessed on an entirely self-organised basis, e.g. for meetings/gatherings, rehearsals, workshops etc. This includes so called "Adaptive Communal Spaces" (see Box 3.1). Local commercial venues can also provide useful spaces for cultural and community activity and exhibiting local artwork, such as cinemas, commercial galleries, bars, cafes and coffee houses.

Cultural centres are some of the most distributed and most accessible cultural spaces. Cultural centres can also provide accessible cultural spaces and development opportunities for local communities. These spaces provide access to arts and cultural services; produce and disseminate versatile cultural and art products (exhibitions, performances, concerts etc.); provide communities with diverse cultural participation opportunities (including amateur art activities); safeguard cultural heritage, local traditions and ethnic culture; collect and distribute information on culture and contribute to a range of other educational, recreational and social goals (Pfeifere, 2022[28]).

Libraries in particular can play an import role in development, through education, employment support and cultural engagement. Unlike other cultural facilities, libraries tend to maintain a fairly even spread of age group – and higher proportion of lower socio-economic group – usage (Evans, 2008[29]). Combining services within one locally-accepted space has proven to be effective in different contexts (Thomson, 2017[30]) and shown to support community residents in improving health and promoting local employment (Gordon, 2023[31]). Expanding traditional library services to include education and training, career support, information services, art galleries, dance and craft workshops can support the lifelong learning of community residents and are places for community residents to exchange, learn, relax, and entertain (Seki, 1999[32]). For example, the reinvention of libraries into grassroots multi-service community hubs has been promoted in poorer neighbourhoods in many parts of the world. Indeed, libraries have been found to encourage social inclusion and equity, foster civic engagement, create a bridge to resources and community involvement, and promote economic vitality within the community (Scott, 2011[33]; Klinenberg, 2018[34]).

Box 3.1. Adaptive Communal Spaces as sites of culture-led regeneration

Adaptive Communal Spaces (ACS) are public or semi-public spaces which are managed and shaped by local communities to meet evolving needs. ACS can be found in cities across the OECD and can take many different forms, from community gardens, to maker spaces to creative hubs. What sets ACS apart is their bottom-up governance structures, founded and maintained by self-organised community groups. These spaces operate as "third spaces" (i.e. neither work or home, but also different from general public spaces) and can be sites of significant cultural exchange. Consequently, these spaces have been shown to foster social cohesion, spur innovation and promote collaboration between informal citizen-led activities and formal institutions (such as local governments and universities).

ACS have been found to encompass at least one of the following objectives:

- **Real estate opportunities**: Some ACS emerge as a way to repurpose underutilised spaces, often through temporary leases to startups, cultural initiatives, or community organisations. This approach maximises the use of vacant properties while stimulating economic activity and urban dynamism.
- **Social and cultural initiatives**: ACS can also serve as instruments to achieve broader social and cultural policy goals, frequently initiated or supported by governments. These spaces may include emergency shelters, food distribution points, cultural hubs or community centres aimed at fostering social inclusion, creativity and resilience.
- **Urban transformation and grassroots initiatives**: Many ACS develop organically in response to local needs, often led by community groups or grassroots movements. Their flexibility enables experimentation and spontaneous urban interventions, contributing to the evolving character of neighbourhoods.

Source: (OECD, Forthcoming[35])

Networks such as membership clubs are also key to grassroots infrastructure, since this is where communities come together to share and organise. Common examples include book clubs, poetry societies, amateur drama, dance and theatre clubs, as well as local history groups organised at neighbourhood level. These groups are reliant on physical space to some degree, but do not necessarily require large physical infrastructure. Community groups can also help to sustain physical cultural spaces and, voluntary arts organisations can play a key role in creating demand for and supporting local venues and community facilities (Dodd, 2008[36]). For example, in Germany, a high level provision of theatres (and opera houses) at local and regional level, as well as high attendance rates across social divides, have been suggested to be due in part to the strong presence of theatre clubs organised through local associations (Evans, 2016[37]).

Community groups can also play a foundational role in cultural re-use of derelict spaces. There are many examples of communities self-organising, for instance to save historic sites or buildings, or to create community or cultural facilities in disused spaces. In Hanok Village, Jeonju, Korea, declining local population and deteriorating urban fabric led to residents coming together to develop a 10-year district plan to renovate over 700 traditional Hanok houses, with investment in urban design improvements and cultural tourism infrastructure (Hwang, 2014[38]). In the Balkans (specifically Albainia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo and North Macedonia), a Belgium-based not-for-profit organisation has supported community groups to identify appropriate buildings for cultural re-use and supported them in negotiating the legal

status of these buildings with local authorities (Gkitsa, 2024[39]). In the UK, government is supporting community-led projects to revitalise highstreets through culture and heritage, with 88% of the GPB 103 million funding for the programme awarded to local authorities and community groups to deliver initiatives locally (AMION and Historic England, 2025[40]). Anchor institutions (i.e. large cultural institutions such as national theatres, or large museums) can also support such grassroots action. For example, in Barcelona, Spain, the Museum of History worked in collaboration with residents of the Bon Pastor housing estate to save a group of workers housing and convert them to a living museum for the public.

Street art is another form of grassroots cultural infrastructure which is increasingly used as a means to generate vibrancy in a city and engage local communities. Street art has shown to be an important tool in the regeneration process bringing positive effects when involving active cooperation between the public and the private sectors (Cercleux, 2021[41]). For example, in Bogota, Colombia, the city mayor issued a decree to promote street art as a form of artistic and cultural expression, while at the same time defining surfaces that are off limits, including monuments and public buildings. City grants are available for selected artists with two, three and even seven-storey walls provided along the main thoroughfares as their canvases. Similarly, Lisbon, Portugal, has embraced street art, with the publicly funded Urban Art Gallery (GAU-Galeria de Arte Urbana) supporting legal graffiti walls across the city. The success of this initiative has seen a reduction in illegal graffiti and a flourishing of public artworks, with Lisbon now renowned for its murals which encourage tourism and have helped to develop local artist networks. In Bucharest, Romania, urban regeneration through street art is being developed in new spaces next to reinvented ones. In these areas, street art is supporting activities from hospitality, and cultural and creative sectors, improving economic and cultural development and the attractiveness of the Bucharest city centre. This phenomenon is not limited to larger cities and urban centres – in the town of Covilhã, Portugal, the two-week long WOOL Urban Art Festival brings together international graffiti artists and local artists to produce murals across the town, including references to the area's sheep-rearing roots and wool textile design and manufacturing.

Box 3.2. Use of temporary spaces for creative industries

The temporary or meanwhile use of buildings and space can be a successful policy to provide affordable workspace for artists and in particular cultural industry start-ups. Such constructive cultural use helps to animate these redundant areas and buildings, improve safety/surveillance and animation which benefits other residents, and demonstrates the potential for regeneration of the area. Temporary occupation can also transition into more permanent development as the case for cultural usage and a community is established.

Successful examples of this type of use include Paris, France and Berlin, Germany. In the Paris suburb of Aubervilliers, 250 artists opened their studios to the public for a program called POUSH, which began in 2020 in another redundant "meanwhile" building in Clichy, and which offers emerging artists subsidised studio space by making deals with real estate developers who are holding onto abandoned buildings. In return, POUSH cover utility costs and taxes, and is able to offer studio spaces to artists at a heavily reduced rate of EUR 10 to EUR 13 per m2/month (POUSH, 2024[42]). In Berlin, in cooperation with the Senate and other partners, the bbk berlin has also developed a special studio programme for the allocation of subsidised, rent-controlled and occupancy-bound studios and flats. The scheme is run by the Atelierbüro of the bbk, and studios are allocated by a selection panel appointed by the Senate to applicants that meet the criteria of professionalism and need.

Source: (POUSH, 2024[42])

Grassroots and smaller community venues have been shown to have an economic impact on local communities. Grassroots and community cultural venues can be foundational to supporting a thriving cultural and creative ecosystem, which can in turn drive economic returns. For example, a study of grassroots music venues in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, found that they play an important role within the musical ecosystem and generate positive externalities for the city, including both cultural and economic value (Zarur Guarisa, de Figueiredo and Machado, 2023[43]). Importantly, the study found that even those who do not attend grassroots music venues recognised and valued the positive externalities these venues present to the city, as well as the importance of their survival.

There is also strong evidence that participating in community cultural groups generates better and more sustainable benefits and wellbeing than more passive cultural consumption. A large-scale review of the impacts of cultural participation by the World Health Organisation (WHO) found substantial evidence of positive effects on health and wellbeing (Fancourt, 2019[44]). Cultural participation was found to have a wide range of health and wellbeing benefits including the prevention of ill-health, the promotion of healthy behaviours and the management and treatment of physical and mental illness. Moreover, a recent report co-funded by the European Commission finds that most effective type of interventions in terms of health and well-being seemed to rely on active participation, as opposed to more passive forms of cultural engagement. The report prioritises participatory arts projects which are locally embedded in place, as particularly effective in delivering positive community level outcomes (CultureForHealth, 2022[45]). Similarly, a recent systematic review of community infrastructure in place transformation found strong evidence that community hubs have a positive impact on social networks, on the determinants of health, and on individual empowerment and mental health and wellbeing (Bagnall et al., 2023[46]). A positive link between engagement in community cultural activities and health and wellbeing outcomes in older adults specifically has also been found in Australia (Davies et al., 2023[47]), Canada (Beauchet, 2020[48]), the US (Bone, 2023[49]) and Singapore (Ho et al., 2019[50]).

Grassroots community groups can drive transformation processes, but often lack access to technical resources, decision-making power and influence and so often require support. Grassroots community groups often lack resources to take a leadership role in place transformation. However, local knowledge and commitment to place can, to an extent, overcome this disadvantage and this has been facilitated over the years by a range of approaches and support mechanisms. The practice of community architecture, technical and planning aid, and professional-community collaborations such as Planning for Real and Design Charrettes (Condon, 2007[51]) are widely practiced in the Netherlands, Germany, Poland, US, and UK, and are supported by practical toolkits, have however helped to transform and empower community groups and developed an evidence base which communities are able to build on. In Australia, cultural resource initiatives have gone further in terms of community input and inclusion, allowing local areas and communities to write their own cultural histories and profiles, linked to facility maps and images. A GIS (Geographic Information System)-based cultural atlas in Western Sydney created a web resource allowing users to zoom in to images, video, audio, stories and links to documents and produce trails and tours, whilst in Queensland a locally generated web resource provides maps and links to culture in terms of places, people, events, tours and the history of an area (Evans, 2008[29]). This is also an example of how communities can co-construct local narratives about their places and ensure that the way a place's identity is presented externally reflects the place attachments and meanings held by local inhabitants.

Cultural mapping can help policy makers better understand existing community strengths and ongoing challenges. Cultural mapping, where local people are brought together to map cultural sites and actors, such as in the example from Australia above, is a flexible and accessible tool to articulate community perspectives, experience and aspirations and thereby to inform local agencies and other policymakers about the values, concerns and knowledge that people have of their locality (Duxbury, 2019[52]). Such mapping can inform local regeneration plans, so that physical sites that hold cultural or symbolic meaning for a community can be identified and preserved. This can help to prevent the sense of loss or exclusion that communities can feel if places of cultural significance are demolished in the

generation process (Manzo, 2023[53]; Shaw, 2015[54]). Cultural mapping can also help to define local culture, identifying gaps in provision, and helps making the case for investing in the community's cultural development (2010 Legacies Now and Creative City Network of Canada, 2007[55]). As such they have proven to be useful in culture-led regeneration efforts at various spatial scales – from individual sites, buildings, neighbourhoods, to local and sub-regional cultural asset mapping (Evans, 2015[56]).

Participatory budgeting is an increasingly popular policy response to the funding of grassroots community infrastructure. Participatory budgeting allows local people to decide how to allocate part of a public budget. The tradition began in Brazil where it has been used successfully since the late 1980s. It has since spread and over 300 municipalities have used participatory budgeting including in Canada, Chile, France, Spain, the UK, and the US. For example, New York, US, allocates a participatory budget to each local borough councillor to fund proposals for local initiatives and schemes, such as improvements to libraries and arts programmes. In 2022, a total of USD 5 million was awarded to 46 projects to address community needs as identified by residents (City of New York, 2025[57]). Project proposals go through a process of idea generation, project evaluation and city-wide voting (residents aged 11+ can vote). The scheme and citizen selection is promoted through local libraries.

In many countries, the inclusion of smaller scale cultural infrastructure and even some medium to large scale cultural facilities are a mandatory part of broader development projects. Planning mechanisms and policies have helped to prioritise and fund cultural and related community facilities as part of non-cultural regeneration and development schemes in some countries. Key mechanisms include Planning Gain or Community Benefit where developers contribute funding for facilities on or off the development site as part of planning conditions, in addition to infrastructure investment (e.g. transport, health amenities). This is in addition to specific polices for "Percent for Art" with 1% up to 3% of capital costs allocated to fund public art works such as in Finland, France, Germany, Ireland and the US (see Box 4.1 for example in Finland). In the UK, Community Infrastructure Levies (CIL) on new developments (over a certain size) are based on a schedule of rates based on area and can be used to fund community facilities. As well as capital contributions to cultural facilities, obligations can also be secured on lease terms, operation and community access to facilities. Zoning is another tool to preserve or ringfence land and areas for public cultural use which can also be enshrined in covenants or rights to protect future changes of use to protect venues such as cinemas or theatres.

4 Cultural districts

Cultural districts, also known as cultural quarters, hubs and zones, are concentrations of cultural and creative activity in a small area, often a single street or small neighbourhood. It has been well established that cultural and creative sector businesses and organisations tend to "cluster" in particular locations (Casadei et al., 2023[58]). This is due in large part to traditional Marshallian agglomeration effects – e.g. firms in the same or related sectors co-locate and benefit from supply chain links, tacit knowledge transfer, and economies of scale in areas such as labour, capital and resources. These agglomeration effects are especially important for cultural and creative sectors as cultural and creative businesses tend to work collaboratively in project based or temporary organisational structures meaning that the ready supply of talent is of upmost importance. Moreover, as idea generation is central to creative work, concentrations of creative businesses and workers spur cross-fertilisation of knowledge. While clustering refers to the tendency towards agglomeration in general, this section of the paper focuses on cultural districts – specific instances of creative clusters which are developed or supported by government policy. In comparison to other models of culture-led regeneration, policy support for cultural districts typically involves more supporting measures (such as tax incentives or subsidised rents) as opposed to large capital investment.

Leveraging cultural districts for place transformation can mean supporting the development of existing cultural districts, or creating new ones. There are broadly two types of cultural district, firstly more organic, incrementally developed mixed-use areas, arising from historic cultural production districts, and secondly, newly-developed districts with new-build facilities. The Global Cultural Districts Network (GCDN), for instance, identifies "bottom-up districts", driven by grassroots actors, and "top-down districts" in which policy drives cluster formation (GCDN, 2018[59]). Policy approaches therefore differ in these cases, with zoning, building conservation/preservation, heritage re-use and land-use controls required to protect pre-existing cultural districts, whilst new districts typically require some small capital investment, rent and employment subsidies and tax incentives for firms to locate and attract employees and private sector investment. In all types of cultural districts however, policies and practical effort are needed to support district networks and their governance, as well as business development, skills and training.

Cultural and creative districts can operate at a micro-scale of a few streets or a whole city. Examples of these scales include film post-production in a very small area of Soho, London, to geographically separate but inter-related clusters in New York's fashion system, linking garment manufacturing, fashion research and design institutes and retail and museum outlets making up a fashion industry ecosystem. Primarily formed of small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) the most successful cultural districts are formed of networks which support innovation and growth, place promotion and advocacy for the area. Districts can be sectoral, made up of businesses in a specific subsector such as museums, journalism, visual arts, jewellery, or design, or can be more general clusters of cultural and creative activity.

New districts are often closely identified with the promotion of new technologies and innovation, including in sectors such as film and videogames. Cities have invested substantially in large digital media city districts and variants in large-scale facilities, for example, Cité Multimedia Montreal, Canada, Barcelona@22, Spain, and Digital Media City Seoul, Korea. By their nature these developments are capital and property-intensive, requiring investment incentives for firms to locate and grow – and remain financially viable. These kind of new media developments are, however, not always well embedded in the local

cultural and creative ecosystem or existing cultural production districts. An example is the Orestad extension to Copenhagen, Denmark, where the "retro-fitting" of cultural activity more associated with older districts was sought by the developers (Evans, 2009[60]). Intervention was needed to attract artists and other creatives to settle and work there by allowing them to use selected premises without charge, in return for their contribution to the animation of the area through public performances and workshops.

Box 4.1. Arabianranta art and design district in Helsinki, Finland

An organically emerging cluster, supported by local government

Housing the world's largest ceramics factory in 1940, the area of Arabianranta has a long history of art and design. Following the success of the factory, the University of Art and Design moved to the district in the 1980s, expanding the number of young artists and designers in the area and generating a reputation for the district as an important cultural location. By the 1990's and early 2000's residential housing was being built, complimented with investment in galleries to continue to promote local artists. Most recently, the Metropolia University of Applied Sciences' Creative Campus was built in the district, which is home to home to 14 different cultural and creative degree programs. Alongside this, a new music centre was created for Metropolia and the Pop and Jazz Conservatory.

The local government have played a key role in the success of the cluster. Development of the district to a thriving creative hub did not happen by chance but was actively supported by the local government and represents one of the first large-scale public-private partnerships for redevelopment in Finland. The development of the district came about as a concerted effort to combat the economic recession which Finland was experiencing in the late 1980's and early 1990's. Here a coalition of the City of Helsinki, the Finnish government, the Metropolia university and property developers formed a governance company to redevelop the area based on harnessing and promoting the creative industries.

Support for culture is evident in all aspects of the area's redevelopment. For example, since 2000, the city has required all new developer to spend 1-2% of their budget on public art. This has resulted in the area being rich with public artworks and has given work and exposure to local artists and designers.

Source: (Arabia135, 2025[61]; Arabian Palvelu Oy, 2025[62]; van Tuijl, Carvalho and van Haaren, 2013[63])

Creative-Digital districts have often emerged and evolved from established cultural districts rather than newly-created tech zones. Creative-Digital describes a hybrid of arts, design and computer science to develop new products and services with a strong collaborative spirit. For example, Silicon Allee, Berlin, Germany, co-built a working, living and event campus for start-ups opening in 2017, with international and local technology companies in residence. Silicon Sentier in Paris, France, once a low-cost, multicultural textile and garment manufacturing district, also re-developed a former six-storey sweatshop into a tech start-up incubator and communal workspace in 2013, with business accelerator workshops, and events such as the Fashion Tech program during Paris Fashion Week. The area was attractive to start-ups from designer-makers to creative-digital firms, because of its proximity to fibre optic routes, retail/showcasing, and also because there were empty spaces when garment factories became vacant.

Cultural production districts tend to be located close to Central Business Districts (CBD), industrial, and fringe areas of cities which are also the subject of, or prospect for, regeneration and place transformation. Unlike science and technology parks, which are often located in out-of-town locations, cultural and creative districts are generally found in more central and post-industrial settings.

This includes traditional artist, craft and designer-maker studios, architecture, design and creative-digital firms. Increasingly, however, cultural firms co-locate with consumption and visitor-based activity (and vice versa), with mutual benefits from retail, hospitality and showcasing, e.g. Open Studios and festivals, and the availability of a range of amenities and innovation opportunities that together attract creative workers, visitors, customers and firms to an area.

Box 4.2. The Amsterdam Noord cultural district, Netherlands

The Amsterdam Noord cultural district is an example of a neglected area benefiting from redundant buildings and space, connectivity, and attracting major cultural venues. Both new-build and re-use of former industrial buildings have facilitated a creative zone combining workspaces for ICT and media firms, ranging from the A-Lab managed workspace, to Tolhuistuin, a unique multi-use arts and entertainment venue comprising a concert hall, theatre and gallery spaces; whilst nearby, several floors of the former Royal Dutch Shell building – a 100m-high, 22-storey landmark – has been converted for dance clubs and all-night events. The striking Eye Film Institute/Cinema building opened in 2012, relocated here from its former museum quarter site on the mainland and attracting now 12 million visitors a year. Along the waterfront, also connected by a free ferry, is MTV's Benelux HQ, as well as artists' workspaces in newly converted warehouses, including a 20 000m2 hangar hosting an Arts City of makeshift studios. This previously nondescript district now hosts thriving cultural hubs that have emerged from long-term urban regeneration projects, the largest being the NDSM Wharf. Once an immense shipyard, this area is now one of Amsterdam's most popular off-beat locations, home to artist's studios and creative-digital businesses, whilst still retaining its industrial, factory-like aesthetic.

Source: (Evans, 2024[26])

Smaller towns and cities, including rural areas, can capitalise on their cultural and natural heritage in the promotion of micro-scale cultural districts. Smaller microclusters of cultural and creative businesses have been found in rural, as well as city locations (Velez-Ospina, 2023[64]), and these clusters can be supported by district policies. Smaller districts often include clusters of speciality retail and cultural venues such as galleries and community hubs, as well as media arts and design SMEs, to develop both a tourism profile and local cultural economy, including attracting film location and artists. Initiatives can be very small such as in the former mining town of Newcastle, Wyoming, US, where a local retailer, who, in addition to selling their own wares, rents out space to other local entrepreneurs and artisans selling handmade quilts, jewellery and custom metalwork. This allows the vendors to stagger their hours, save costs on retail space, and maximise exposure to potential shoppers. The vendor is moving into a larger downtown storefront to accommodate growing demand for space (White, 2018[65]). Cultural heritage can also be drawn upon to promote tourism of rural location. For example, in the small riverside town of Rakaia, New Zealand, community-led heritage preservation and promotion activities activity entice highway travellers to stop, rest and spend while learning something about the history of the town (Perkins, 2023[66]).

Independent local cultural districts can also flourish in lesser-known areas of cities, often hosting smaller-scale forms of cultural production. In these cases, enterprises are dependent upon social networks and urban milieus in which they operate (Aage, 2008[67]). In some examples they are linked to independent designer-makers who are often graduates from local arts academies. For instance, in the case of Arnhem, in the Netherlands, essentially an urban regeneration project in the deprived working-class neighbourhood of Klarendal, the area had existing fashion roots via the Fashion Design department of the ArtEZ Institute of the Arts and successful fashion designer alumni, as well as regional headquarters of fashion retail and brands in the city. More than 50 jobs were created in the creative sector since 2005,

with a sample workshop that can organise small-scale production of up to 150 pieces; Arnhem Fashion Connection aiming at a closer co-operation between ArtEZ's fashion department and the vocational training institute RijnIJssel; as well as Fashion shows/Fashion Night events, and even a fashion and design hotel, Modez, with 20 rooms all decorated by fashion and product designers educated in Arnhem (Jacobs, 2014[68]). Elsewhere, in the world fashion city of Milan, Italy, the Ticenese fashion quarter, a picturesque canal-side district, has survived in the face of gentrification and wider city development where a long-established familial and trust-based system in the district has managed to adapt to both market and urban change. Here, much of the production and services are used by those who live and work in the area, while also supporting a visitor economy and engaging in exporting (Bovone, 2005[69]).

Box 4.3. Relocation of public cultural institutions to spur cluster development

Some places have experimented with re-locating high profile institutions to new premises to prompt development. For example, in 2011 the UK public broadcaster BBC Studios relocated a significant amount of its activity from London to Salford in North West England. Representing one of the biggest public-sector relocation projects in UK history, the move was intended to generate an anchor effect – where the high profile organisation spurs new start-ups in auxiliary services. One study of the move found it generated over 2 500 jobs in national and local operations and a further 1 400 in the wider media support sector, plus increased hotel and hospitality activity (Mould, 2014[70]). A more recent study found that each BBC job in Salford created on average 0.33 additional jobs in the creative industries in the area between 2012 and 2017 and that the spurred an increase in new, or relocated creative industries businesses. (Nathan et al., 2024[71]).

In Denmark, the national broadcaster also moved to a newly develop town outside the capital. The relocation to the new city extension at Ørestad of Copenhagen University's Humanities Faculty and a Media City anchored by the Danish Broadcasting Corporation and a new IT University saw 3 000 employees move from 10 separate but cramped sites in Copenhagen's CBD between 2005 and 2007 (Copenhagen, 2003[72]). These partners created Crossroads Copenhagen/ Ørestad Nord to provide an international network for culture, media and communication technology. Copenhagen's Media City also contains multi-media facilities and a 1 600-seat concert hall which opened in 2009 (Jotroff, 2009[73]). Undeveloped and reclaimed public land sales were used to finance the initial phases of development of Ørestad, which included fast rail links and road access (Knowles, 2012[74]).

Sources: (Mould, 2014[70]; Nathan et al., 2024[71]; Copenhagen, 2003[72]; Jotroff, 2009[73]; Knowles, 2012[74])

There is evidence of the economic impact of cultural districts, for example in the United States where cultural districts have been linked to increases in property values, employment and income. In a study of 99 cultural districts across the United States, research found that cultural districts (defined here as a well-recognised, mixed-use area of a city in which a high concentration of cultural facilities serves as the anchor or attraction, and are often centred near to large arts institutions) had multiple positive effects (Noonan, 2013[75]). For example, the study found growth in property values was 9.3% higher in district neighbourhoods than the rest of the county; income growth was 5.4% higher and employment growth 4.4% higher, whilst poverty rates declined by 2.3% more in cultural districts than other neighbourhoods, with evidence of more skilled residents moving in, and increased population (WhatWorks, 2016[76]). The effects of arts and cultural districts combined with the presence of art and design colleges also found that colleges were positively associated with higher levels of employment growth, with media-arts employment even higher in cities with art schools and research-intensive universities. Cities with cultural districts also saw

faster rates in media arts patenting, concluding that the more innovative cities in media arts (key to Games and AI development) appear to be those with an arts or cultural district (Breznitz, 2013[77]).

Investment in artists workspaces has also been shown to correlate with favourable economic outcomes. A study of the spillover effects of investment in artist live/work and mixed-use developments in Toronto also found that the cultural activity of an area is strongly associated with economic growth, retail sales increase, image improvement and investment (Jones et al., 2004[78]). Moreover, surveys results accompanying the study showed that local residents and businesses believed that artists and the new facilities were important drivers of growth (i.e. of new firms and profits) and change – including wellbeing. Other impacts included higher employment/income, lower unemployment and higher levels of education within the resident community, as well as new building development.

The social impact of cultural districts has also been recognised locally and globally (Crossick, 2019[79]). The Global Cultural District Network (GCDN) has developed guidance and a typology of social impacts which over twenty participating cultural districts have evidenced recognising the diversity of local contexts and objectives in each case. These impacts include equity and inclusion; urban vibrancy and the public realm; neighbourhood and community; targeted social interventions; cultural social impacts; and innovation impacts. Although each type is to be found in some of the cultural districts surveyed, it is the first two that are by far the most common and the last two that are the least visible. Consideration of this typology may help cultural districts and their stakeholders develop a more comprehensive approach to social impact measurement.

Workspace provision is key to cultural districts, and policies to support and retain production areas and the provision and protection of dedicated workspace and facilities for cultural activity is now widely recognised. Affordable artists studios in particular have too frequently fallen victim to regeneration and gentrification effects as first documented in Loft Living in 1980s New York (Zukin, 1982[80]). Targeted approaches to develop and support managed workspace provision is therefore a key strategy within cultural districts and in regeneration projects encompassing existing studio buildings, best delivered through dedicated cultural workspace and studio organisations.

Working with studio workspace organisations as part of regeneration partnerships can help protect workspace and kept it affordable. Creative industry workspace organisations have proven to be key intermediaries and operators of flexible workspaces for a range of production and creative-digital spaces. Artist studio developments and cultural industry workspaces can also incorporate live-work accommodation on-site or nearby, as well as a range of support services – technical (e.g. labs, prototyping), operational and enterprise support.

There are a number of policy tools which can help maintain cultural workspace provision to support cultural districts. These include:

- Zoning – designating cultural districts for cultural and related industries use, particularly to limit the overdevelopment of residential and commercial offices and mono-use areas
- Planning controls – limiting change of use and footprint size in order to protect large studios /workshops and to prevent break-up into smaller units
- Promoting mixed-use development – encouraging a mix of industrial, residential and amenity uses as part of developments at building, block and area scales
- Implementing flexible licencing – of temporal uses between day/evening and weekdays/weekends, e.g. shops, galleries, clubs, and extended licencing for events and festivals

Many countries have implemented special development zones dedicated to cultural and creative sectors. For example, in Colombia, the formation of creative districts, or “Orange Development Areas” (ADNs), was a core element of its 2017 national Orange Economy policy. National government offered support to local administrations in setting up ADNs for different creative industries sectors. For example,

in Cali, the municipal government recognised its rich cultural heritage in traditional Colombian dance, salsa and the performing arts. The municipality opened the La Licorera ADN for dance and choreography, a lever for the region's cultural attractiveness, and for the urban renewal of the neighbourhood (OECD, 2022[81]).

Creative Development Trusts have been established in several places to provide sustainable workspace provision for arts and cultural activity. In Australia, the recent establishment of a Creative Land Trust (CLT) has been designed to acquire and develop affordable workspace for Sydney's artists, makers, musicians and performers (WCCF, 2024[82]). The Trust model is increasingly being used by cities to address the need for more creative workspaces. CLTs draw inspiration from successful models such as San Francisco's Community Arts Stabilization Trust founded in 2013 which has secured long term affordable workspace for artists through innovative funding mechanisms and partnerships with philanthropists, investors, and government bodies. The basic principle behind the scheme is that a not-for-profit body is set up to buy and long-lease buildings which are then rented back to creatives at affordable rents.

5 Cultural events

Events and festivals can be used to kick-start a regeneration programme or to punctuate a longer-term regeneration strategy, and to celebrate and promote the cultural profile of a place. Place transformation through events and festivals can occur through hosts using existing cultural infrastructure to theme and market their cultural profile, with legacy seen in improved networks and organisation capacity. Alternatively, more substantial event strategies are often accompanied by major investment in cultural facilities as well as hospitality and transport infrastructure, and longer-term festival strategies that seek to maintain ongoing interest.

"Capital of culture" schemes are one way to generate a positive image of a city and to catalyse investment in cultural and community infrastructure. Capital of culture approaches have evolved considerably over the past 40 years. The initial focus of the European Capital of Culture was on increasing territorial attractiveness for visitors and on strengthening the sense of identity and pride. This approach has been gradually enriched with wider objectives linked to social inclusion, social capital and well-being, as well strengthening local cultural and creative ecosystems. This model has been widely emulated and adapted in the Americas, Middle East and South and East Asia[1] – and in national and regional city of culture competitions, such as in Korea, Italy and the UK. An advantage of capital of culture type programmes is the focus on a year-long programme of events, which offers scope to more deeply develop community projects and meaningful engagement with local audiences. Coupled with the high visibility given to capitals of culture, and their scope for place branding, capitals of culture can spearhead a longer-term culture-led transformation process, though the evidence is mixed on their direct economic impact (see Box 5.2).

Biennales and Triennales are an internationally recognised event that over 300 places now host every two or three years. These art events are held across the globe, with the original Venice Biennale attracting 500 000 visitors annually. Their flexible and cumulative nature provides scope for place transformation at different scales over time. Art festivals can be located in a single site or venue, distributed across a number of galleries and other venues, or held across several different locations such as the twelve islands of Setouchi, Japan (Box 5.1). Several longer-established events have outgrown their original venues, prompting the building of new cultural facilities. An example is a new "citizen-friendly" exhibition centre for the Gwangju Biennale, Korea, within the Jungwoe Park museum district in the city centre. This large-scale project will create a new home for Asia's oldest biennial of contemporary art. Elsewhere in Korea, the Cheongju Craft Biennale has been held since 2011 in a renovated tobacco processing plant occupying 100 000m2 of building space, a local art and culture cluster that includes a branch of the National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art.

Box 5.1. The Setouchi International Art Triennale, Japan

The Setouchi International Art Triennale is a contemporary art festival held every three years over twelve islands in the Seto Inland Sea and the coastal cities of Takamatsu and Tamano, Japan. Inaugurated in 2010, the Setouchi Triennale seeks to revitalise twelve remote islands with declining and ageing populations, by hosting an international art festival and to promote tourism, and secondly, to attract resident artists and others to the work in the island region. The Triennale lasts for eight months every three years. While several of the museum exhibitions and installations are permanent, many of the smaller islands offer temporary exhibitions and artist residencies, with 200 sculptures and installations scattered across a dozen islands in the region. The festival has helped promote the island as a tourist destination and supported the local economy. Visitor numbers have increased with each edition, and the islands are now well known as a destination for contemporary art.

The Triennale also seeks to engage the smaller and more remote islands. The festival originally included seven islands but has been extended to twelve. Moreover, small-scale community-engaged art fairs have begun to take place, such as the island village of Mitarai's *Shiosai* festival. Faced with the impacts of depopulation, ageing and socio-economic decline, the Shiosai festival is an example of a bottom-up approach to place transformation. This week-long community art fete has been held since 2017 to rejuvenate the village of 200 residents of whom 60% are over 65, and 33% aged 80+. The festival focuses on the local community and emphasises social engagement, co-creation, and co-development. The festival nurtures social connections with artists from neighbouring regions and partnerships with both local businesses and nearby universities. Evaluation of the impact of the festival have found that it has driven visitation to the area and has reinvigorated latent cultural heritage.

Sources: (OECD, 2014[83]; Qu and Cheer, 2020[84])

International Expositions (Expos) represent one of the largest scale cultural events, and have been responsible for creating significant opportunities for culture-led regeneration. Essentially comprising pavilions from participating countries with themes established by the host, Expos can form part of wider regeneration efforts at a city or even national level. For example, the 1998 Expo in Lisbon, Portugal, regenerated over 340 hectares of industrial waterside, were subsequently used for the successful Lisbon 2004 European Capital of Culture. Expos have also been used to develop new areas and extensions of a city, such as in Shanghai, China, in 2010 and Milan, Italy, in 2015. Maximising the potential for culture-led regeneration in these sites does however require cultural planning at an early stage in order to avoid the long periods of inactivity and vacant sites that can follow the Expo year.

Trade fairs are an undervalued event-type which can produce significant benefits to regeneration efforts and creative industries growth. Key international trade events can showcase cultural sectors, such as Design Fiera in Milan, Italy and contemporary art and book fairs e.g. Art Basel, TEFAF Maastricht and the Frankfurt Book Fair. Trade event sites and fringe venues themselves can form part of regeneration projects, and a strategy for locating all or part of these trade shows in regeneration areas can also link cultural districts with high profile events. This includes fashion shows/weeks which are increasingly held in heritage and redundant "meanwhile" spaces, and design festivals such as in Eindhoven, Netherlands; Stockholm, Sweden; and Vienna, Austria. Trade shows can also incorporate open studios, allowing small producers to promote their work and bring the public to workshop areas of a city which otherwise lack retail or other visitor attractions. Routes can be used to distribute visitors and widen coverage to include lesser-known parts of a city, for example Design Mai in Berlin, Germany.

Community festivals are an important aspect of culture-led regeneration, articulating cultural and community aspirations and attitudes towards the regeneration process. Community festivals can play a key role in engaging community interest and in subsequent collaborations, including shaping the future direction of the regeneration process itself. Examples include the Hackney WickEd festival held in the shadow of the major regeneration project of the Olympic Park in east London, UK. Here, this festival organised by local community members and resident artists, raised issues of gentrification, affordable workspace and environmental problems such as water pollution, at the same time promoting the work of arts and cultural groups in the neighbourhood through open studios, installations and workshops (Evans, 2024[26]). An increasingly popular festival concept is the Late Night/*Nuit Blanche* event, originating in Paris, France in the early 2000s and now taken up by cities worldwide, which opens up the city's cultural venues to a night-time audience and experience. Alongside developing the cultural vibrancy of a city in general, this type of event can also help promote more disadvantaged neighbourhoods. For example, Seville, Spain, is expanding its *Noche en Blanco* to neighbourhoods outside of the core city centre.

Small-scale events can also be part of specialisation strategies and the strengthening of local cultural capital. For example, the city of Den Bosch in the Netherlands set up a network of "Bosch Cities" and established the Bosch Research and Renovation Project, dedicated to analysing and restoring valuable medieval works using Dutch expertise. This strategy was so successful that the city gathered 17 of the 25 surviving Hieronymus Bosch paintings. The exhibition received national publicity and tickets sold out quickly, prompting the exhibition hours to be extended until it was open for 39 hours continuously on the last weekend receiving 420 000 visitors. The city is seeking to leverage the event by turning itself into a knowledge hub on medieval art. The Bosch programme attracted 1.4 million visits in total, showing that creativity, and effective storytelling can be effective in attracting people to small places (Richards, 2022[85]).

There is evidence that community events boost social relations and individual wellbeing. An international review of community infrastructure in place transformation found that community events boost social relations and individual wellbeing, as well as enhancing community cohesion – particularly a sense of belonging and pride through celebration of a shared identity, collective empowerment, civic participation and knowledge and cultural exchange (Bagnall et al., 2023[46]). There were however some instances of negative impacts, including potential loss of shared identity, gentrification, and physical or perceived exclusion of local residents from events, pointing to the importance of inclusion of community groups in the planning and delivery of local events.

Box 5.2. The long-term impact of European Capitals of Culture (ECoC)

A review of the first 30 years of the ECoC programme found evidence of the schemes impact on local communities, though less on local economies. The review considered cultural, image, social and economic impacts arising from hosting the ECoC. It found that:

- **There was a significant effect on the city's cultural vibrancy**. This includes a contribution to strengthening networks, opening up possibilities for new collaborations, encouraging new work to continue, and raising the capacity and ambition of the cultural sector.
- **Hosting an ECoC can turn around a negative public image of a place**, and enhance local and national perceptions. Many ECoC hosts have reported for example, that residents feel their city is a better place to live after the event. Profile raising at an international level is, however, more changeable and depends upon the strategic capacity of respective hosts.

- **Social impact of hosting ECoC can go beyond pride in place and extend to increased social cohesion**. Social impacts can also include greater engagement with arts and culture from local residents.
- **There is evidence of a positive impact on local tourism from hosting ECoCs**. Hosting an ECoC can have a considerable effect on immediate to medium-term tourism trends, which, in turn, can impact the city's economy. Investment in infrastructure and other programmes (such as training and skills) which can accompany an event like ECoC can also help boost economic growth.

More recent meta-analysis found limited evidence of long-term economic impacts. A more recent review of academic research on the long-term economic impact of hosting a ECoC found mixed results. For example, some studies showed significant positive impacts on GDP or tourism in the local area, whereas others found no significant impact or even a negative impact on the host economy. The study concluded there was also little evidence for long-term impact on employment or support to the creative industries. However, the authors maintain that hosting an ECoC can have other benefits, beyond long-term economic outcomes.

However, studies at the country level have shown substantial economic returns to hosting cities of culture. For example, an evaluation of the UK City of Culture programme showed that the GBP 103.1 million spend on the scheme to date had generated over GBP 1 billion of additional investment, with roughly 25% of that investment coming from the private sector. The evaluation also suggests that an additional 3 100 jobs were created within the tourism and hospitality sectors of the three host cities.

Source: (Garcia, 2014[86]; Nermond, Lee and O'Brien, 2021[87]; Scott, Neelands and Beer, 2025[88])

Even unsuccessful event bids have been shown to spur culture-led regeneration efforts. Bidding for competitive events such as capitals of culture can bring together local stakeholders and galvanise commitment to culture-led regeneration plans, even if the bid is ultimately unsuccessful. For example, Limerick, Ireland, was unsuccessful in its bid to become the 2020 European Capital of Culture. However, the bidding process prompted significant changes in the promotion and governance of art and culture in the city, for example through the establishment of a Strategic Policy Committee for culture and the arts (Ryan and McPherson, 2022[89]).

Events strategies need to build on and enhance existing cultural assets and heritage in order to achieve lasting impacts and regeneration objectives. Event-led transformation and placeshaping is not dependant on external status but on a strong, authentic theme and shared goals. This means it is important to recognise and celebrate existing strengths, rather than impose top-down themes and activities. An evaluation of co-creation activities in relation to the Birmingham Commonwealth Games found that successful co-creation projects had the following characteristics: i) a clearly defined and unique goal to drive interest and participation from the widest possible audience, ii) focused on a simple participatory activity which was developed through scale into a mass participation programme, and iii) created platforms for an active public reappraisal of local heritage by contemporary audiences and participants (Indigo-Ltd / Punch Records, 2023[90]).

In order to maintain the short-term benefits from events over the longer-term, investment in cultural infrastructure, networks and governance is required. Hosting a cultural event will not in itself, lead to place transformation unless the event is embedded in wider plans and strategies. While hosting a large cultural event can have immediate impacts in regard to a short-term boost to visitor flows and the economy, generating sustained transformational impacts from culture events entails a wider range of programmes

and initiatives. For example, a review of European Capital of Culture (see Box 5.2) found that most successful events were those which developed cross-sector agendas – typically across culture, tourism, education and social services, and those which maintained a sustained effort to maximise engagement (Garcia, 2014[86]). Indeed, often it is the cultural strategies implemented after an event which have the greatest impact on local communities and on supporting local cultural and creative ecosystems.

Box 5.3. Impact of hosting events on small and rural communities

Arts and cultural festivals offer smaller and lesser-known places a rare opportunity to develop a profile and catalyse their cultural communities. This can be through hosting a capital of culture event, a biennale, or other carnivals, festivals and community events. Examples of the impact on smaller places includes:

- **The town of Volterra, Italy** was unsuccessful in the national city of culture programme, but was awarded the first regional city of culture status in recognition of its path towards culture-led transformation in 2022. Over 500 events were held including celebrating traditional crafts and cultural heritage. In a survey, 75% of participants thought that the Volterra22 programme brought positive benefits to the area and 65% participated in events and activities.
- **In the rural Friesland region, Netherlands, the small city of Leeuwarden** hosted the Netherlands European Capital of Culture in 2018. Reviews of the event found that 68% of people from the region felt involved in the event, 10% served as volunteers, and cultural education projects reached 83% of elementary schools. 78% of events included cooperation between different generations, with crafts skills such as carpentry/furniture-making, set design and textiles at the centre of exchanges between older and younger people. Moreover, the economic impact of the event has been estimated as ranging from EUR 230 million to EUR 320 million.
- **In the small town of Omihachiman, Japan,** the Biwako Biennale has helped to regenerate the area. With an ageing population and 14% of houses empty in the old merchant district, the abandoned homes inspired the first Biennale in 2001, transforming them into art exhibitions where local volunteers tell stories about the history of the town and its homes. This grounding of the festival in the area's local identity helped to strengthen pride in place. The festival attracted commercial, retail, and restaurant businesses to the area – 66% of visitors were from outside region, from urban areas such as Osaka, Kyoto, and Tokyo. Most renovated the old merchant houses to preserve the original structure. These changes have occurred gradually over the years, which has prevented the neighbourhood from gentrifying. 93% of residents stated that the art festival makes the town more attractive. Some businesses in the historic district came from other cities or returned to the town as a result of the art festival, 76% of retailers in the district increased sales, and 80% of retailers were willing to support future festivals.

Source: (Fresa, 2023[91]; Eurocities, 2019[92]; Matthews, 2021[93])

6 Conclusions: What have we learned from 50 years of culture-led regeneration?

What is the evidence that culture-led regeneration works?

Findings from this paper suggest that under the right conditions, cultural-led regeneration initiatives can help transform places for the better, in an equitable and sustainable way. Cultural initiatives can have impacts in economic, social, environmental and cultural dimensions. In particular, over time, culture-led regeneration schemes have contributed to innovation, cluster and regional growth. Likewise, the presence of cultural community assets has an effect on a range of outcomes in deprived communities, supporting the claim that cultural infrastructure may strengthen existing social fabric and "revitalise" neighbourhoods.

However, while there are numerous case studies of culture-led regeneration projects, the evidence base on the role of culture in place transformation remains fragmented and primarily qualitative. There are a number of reasons for this. Firstly, it can be difficult to separate out the impact of different cultural initiatives amongst often complex drivers of transformation. Secondly, transformation processes are typically only observed over long time periods, which requires longitudinal research which can be costly and resource intensive. And thirdly, comparison between different projects is challenging, as differences in local context and goals of transformation efforts vary considerably. Consequently, some types of culture-led regeneration projects receive more attention – notably major events and large-scale cultural building projects where short-term impacts are more easily measurable.

Culture-led regeneration is necessarily place-based and therefore context specific, but some general trends for success can be observed. What determines successful or unsuccessful culture-led regeneration? More useful would be to ask, "what works for whom in which contexts"? Culture-led regeneration and place transformation comes in many forms with its success dependent on a number of different factors. Each case for culture-led regeneration will be underpinned by its unique local context and governance systems, and different objectives which carry different values to the multiple actors involved. However, some common lessons have emerged from this review of the evidence, which are elaborated below.

Promoting local buy-in through co-creation

Buy-in from local communities is a critical success factor for culture-led regeneration. While community buy-in is important for any regeneration process, for culture-led regeneration it is particularly crucial. This is because success requires supporting, nurturing and building on the cultural assets already in place, be they tangible assets – such as libraries, museums, etc, – or intangible – such as community groups, heritage activities, etc. Gaining a greater understanding of the cultural assets which can be drawn on in transformation projects can take different forms, from cultural mapping activities to understand local assets and needs, to deliberative governance (e.g., citizens assemblies, referenda) to ascertain community views.

Top-down approaches to regeneration, which exclude participation by residents, limits buy-in and creates resistance to such schemes. Measuring the impact of urban regeneration and cultural components firstly needs to consider the objectives of such investment and, in particular, who is expected to benefit and in what ways. Crucially, what matters is that local people have a stake in culture-led projects and support these developments, so that these projects fit within a local narrative that community members can see themselves in. This requires the capacity for projects to generate the commitment of residents through inclusive cultural participation, as opposed to instrumental top-down initiatives. For example, increasingly, place branding practitioners are recognising that if the local community considers the branding and marketing of a place to external audiences as inauthentic or out of touch with their lives, a brand loses its credibility – as well as its most compelling ambassadors (Braun, 2013[94]). However, when a place's brand is being developed around culture, engaging the community can help to unearth an authentic story that is more likely to generate economic benefits to locals and secure broad local buy-in (Kavaratzis, 2005[95]; Muñiz Martínez, 2016[96]). Without such an approach, high profile and high-cost regeneration schemes that target an external visitor economy and inward investment, seek to change a negative place association, or seek to position a place as a global arts and entertainment node, may not expect to create significant social or economic effects for incumbent communities or cultural industries. This is evident where economic impacts from international tourism are high, but other impacts are low or even negative – reiterating the importance of ensuring that the "culture" promoted to tourists through place branding includes grassroots culture and can add value to the local economy.

Culture-led regeneration is a multi-stakeholder process and works more effectively if delivered through co-creation and co-production. Successful projects are those which integrate community infrastructure and collaborations from the outset, rather than as a subsequent add-on. Inclusive governance and delivery structures promote take-up, participation and sustained success. Involvement of a range of local stakeholders can lead to cultural acceptance and to better outcomes, particularly when communities see themselves reflected in a place's changing face and identity. Yet the evidence shows that these forms of co-participation cannot be taken for granted – they need to be nurtured, supported and facilitated. In particular, there is a need to enable marginalised community groups to develop their capacity to engage, both in material and symbolic senses. Growing experience of co-creating local narratives with communities – stories that meaningfully connect a place's past to the present and expresses a shared vision for the future – can play a significant role in such a process.

Combating gentrification through investment in communities

Criticisms of urban regeneration have emerged as the process has become a standard response to post-industrial urban decline. Where culture forms part of the regeneration mix, there is no exception to such criticisms, particularly where cultural elements are used to brand a regeneration scheme or area, or to soften otherwise brutal or radical redevelopment. These criticisms are particularly apparent in relation to using iconic cultural buildings and mega-events for the purpose of "rebranding" cities. In instances where

iconic infrastructures have been fundamentally designed as prestige devices, such projects may succeed in boosting city images externally and attracting tourism, but have often disregarded the social and cultural needs of local communities. As noted earlier, rebranding efforts that contribute to inclusive place transformation are those that can capture the authentic story of a place and its culture, and ensure that local economic benefits generated are shared widely.

The main complaint levelled at culture-led regeneration is that of gentrification. Gentrification refers to the displacement over time of incumbent communities, businesses and affordable premises, and the influx of higher income residents, visitors and higher cost property and amenities. Many examples of "successful" culture-led regeneration have led to rising house prices and commercial rents, meaning that often the very people who made a place attractive in the first place (i.e. local artists and communities) are effectively priced-out of their local area. Combatting such outcomes requires active protection of arts organisations, particularly non-profit and publicly-funded ones, as well as protections for local residents. The provision of affordable and social housing is also an important part of combating gentrification, as is rent controls, those this mechanism is not without drawbacks (OECD, 2021[97]).

Planning policies can help protect local culture in the face of gentrification. Land-use and building controls can be used to promote cultural and mixed-use spaces, protect cultural assets and promote cultural production. For example, quotas for cultural community spaces, artists workshops or rehearsal spaces can be applied to new developments, and rent controls can be applied to certain areas, or for certain population groups (such as artists). Developing a specific anti-displacement plan can also help to mitigate the risks of gentrification to local residents.

A narrow understanding of what "counts" as culture can risk overlooking existing cultural assets. This is often seen with top-down approaches to planning in culture-led regeneration. The danger of taking an elitist or patronising view of culture is not just antagonising and potentially excluding to various social groups, but also ignores potentially valuable cultural assets which could form part of regeneration efforts.

Setting realistic goals and combining approaches

A strong learning point from the past concerns misplaced or conflicting objectives, over-optimistic expectations, and a misalignment of programme design to what can be realistically delivered. Regeneration strategies can encompass varying and even conflicting objectives. Cultural regeneration on the one hand can be concerned with community development and self-expression, whilst also being driven by economic aims. While these aims are not necessarily mutually exclusive, projects which prioritise short-term economic gain over long-term community development are unlikely to be successful in place transformation. Moreover, successful culture-led regeneration requires long-term commitment and significant policy investment, meaning policy makers should be realistic about what can be achieved.

Longer time-frames for project funding can enable networks to develop and can therefore enhance impact. Evidence shows that culture-led regeneration initiatives which have longer funding periods are more likely to generate positive change (Lee and Nott, 2021[98]). This is especially the case in areas with deep-rooted socio-economic challenges such as poverty and low cultural engagement, where time is needed to create and embed new cultural networks.

Combining approaches and investing in different aspects of culture-led regeneration overtime can lead to more sustainable transformation. Long-term regeneration is incremental and in the more successful examples multiple approaches are used over time – whether they start with cultural buildings, events, community, or cultural quarter strategies – all feature and build on one another. This requires creative cultural planning rather than a focus on one type of cultural investment. Moreover, many successful examples are able to create the spatial separation and zoning of different elements protecting

neighbourhood amenities, enterprises and everyday living whilst still undertaking large-scale physical redevelopment, including cultural flagship buildings.

Investment in complimentary infrastructure and policies are needed to support culture-led regeneration. In most cases, the building of a new cultural facility, or the hosting of a large event have had a limited impact on local employment and the long-term economic recovery of the area, unless accompanied by investment in associated infrastructure, sectors and skills. Where such plans are embedded in broader strategies, for example, supporting creative industries development, promoting tourism or up-skilling local residents, the cultural component of regeneration can anchor broader development plans and offer a compelling vision for local communities.

Focus on longitudinal and processes-based evaluation to strengthen the evidence base

The marked absence of longitudinal research in this field, and data to support it, suggests a need for greater effort and resources to develop robust impact and evaluation models. This includes meta-analysis and in-depth area-based studies. In most situations, measuring impacts and change effects from the cultural components of regeneration schemes requires not only a longitudinal approach and the generation of data supporting these impact effects, but also an understanding of the "theory of change" – how the effects are produced. Consequently, process evaluation should be given equal priority with outcome evaluation.

It is beneficial to take a more systemic approach to understanding culture-led regeneration. First and foremost, adopting a systemic outlook makes possible to see the trade-offs between different impact types, namely that different impact types can pull in opposing directions, e.g., more regional economic growth (economic) can weaken social cohesion (social) and lead to a destruction of green spaces (environmental). A more holistic understanding of the value of culture – when coupled with more inclusive, multi-stakeholder, participatory approaches to evidencing and evaluation – can be an important step to overcoming these challenges and demonstrating the need for culture in place transformation.

References

2010 Legacies Now and Creative City Network of Canada (2007), *CULTURAL MAPPING TOOLKIT: A Partnership between 2010 Legacies Now and Creative City Network of Canada*, https://www.saskculture.ca/content/grant_application_files/cultural_mapping_toolkit.pdf. [55]

Aage, T. (2008), "From Fashion to Design: Creative Networks in Industrial Districts", *Industry and Innovation, 15(5)*, pp. 475–491. [67]

AEA (2023), *2023 Cultural Infrastructure Index*, https://aeaconsulting.com/uploads/1600016/1719735154902/AEA_Consulting_2023_Cultural_Infrastructure_Index_WEB.pdf. [11]

AMION and Historic England (2025), *High Streets Heritage Action Zone Programme Evaluation Final Report*, https://historicengland.org.uk/content/docs/haz/hshaz-evaluation-report/. [40]

Arabia135 (2025), *The creative block history*, https://arabia135.fi/en/history/. [61]

Arabian Palvelu Oy (2025), *Art of Arabianranta*, https://arabianpalvelu.fi/en/art-of-arabianranta/. [62]

Bagnall, A. et al. (2023), *Systematic review of community infrastructure (place and space) to boost social relations and community wellbeing: Five year refresh*, What Works Centre for Wellbeing, Liverpool, https://whatworkswellbeing.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/Places-and-Spaces-Review-Refresh-31-Jan-2023-final-with-logos.pdf. [46]

Bailey, C., S. Miles and P. Stark (2004), "CULTURE-LED URBAN REGENERATION AND THE REVITALIsATION OF IDENTITIES IN NEWCASTLE, GATESHEAD AND THE NORTH EAST OF ENGLAND", *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, Vol. 10/1, pp. 47-65, https://doi.org/10.1080/1028663042000212328. [18]

Beauchet, O. (2020), "Effects of "Thursdays at the Museum" at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts on the mental and physical health of older community dwellers: the art-health randomized clinical trial protocol. ,", *Trials, 21, 709*. [48]

Bone, J. (2023), "Associations between participation in community arts groups and aspects of wellbeing in older adults in the United States: a propensity score matching analysis", *Aging & Mental Health, 27(6)*. [49]

Bovone, L. (2005), "Fashionable Quarters in the Postindustrial City: The Ticinese of Milan", *City and Community, 4(4)*, pp. 359–380. [69]

Braun, E. (2013), "My city–my brand: the different roles of residents in place branding", *Journal of place management and development*, Vol. 6/1, pp. 18-28, https://doi.org/10.1108/17538331311306087. [94]

Breznitz, S. (2013), "Arts districts, universities, and the rise of digital media.", *Journal of Technology Transfer, doi:10.1007/s10961- 013-9315-x*, pp. 1-22. [77]

Casadei, P. et al. (2023), "Mapping the state of the art of creative cluster research: a bibliometric and thematic analysis", *European Planning Studies*, Vol. 31/12, pp. 2531-2551, https://doi.org/10.1080/09654313.2022.2158722. [58]

Cercleux, A. (2021), "Street Art Participation in Increasing Investments in the City Center of Bucharest, a Paradox or Not?", *Sustainability*, p. 13697. [41]

City of New York (2025), *The people's money*, https://www.nyc.gov/site/civicengagement/our-programs/participatory-budgeting.page. [57]

C-Mine (2024), *Heritage & history*, https://c-mine.be/en/heritage-history. [9]

Colavitti, A. (2020), "Inside the system-wide cultural district: a new relational and organisational taxonomy of cultural districts based on the sector policies by Italian Regions (2000–2015)", *City Territory, Architecture, 7(4), doi.org/10.1186/s40410-020-0112-1*. [102]

Condon, P. (2007), *Design Charrettes for Sustainable Communities*, Island Press. [51]

Copenhagen, C. (2003), *Orestad*, City of Copenhagen. [72]

Crossick, G. (2019), *The Social Impact of Cultural Districts*, The Global Cultural Districts Network (GCDN), https://catalogus.boekman.nl/pub/P19-0667.pdf. [79]

Cukrarna (2024), *Past and present of Cukrarna*, https://cukrarna.art/en/about-us/. [8]

CultureForHealth (2022), *Culture's contribution to health and well-being. A report on evidence and policy recommendations for Europe*, https://www.cultureforhealth.eu/app/uploads/2023/02/Final_C4H_FullReport_small.pdf. [45]

Davies, C. et al. (2023), "The art of aging well: a study of the relationship between recreational arts engagement, general health and mental wellbeing in cohort of Australian older adults", *Frontiers in Public Health*, Vol. 11, https://doi.org/10.3389/fpubh.2023.1288760. [47]

De Propis, L. (2009), "De Propris, L. and Chapain, C. (2009), Drivers and Processes of Creative Industries in Cities and Regions, Creative Industries Journal", *Creative Industries Journal, 20, 2(1)*, pp. 9-18. [103]

Dodd, F. (2008), *Our Creative Talent – the voluntary and amateur arts in England*, DCMS <https://www.culturehive.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/Our-Creative-Talent-1.pdf>. [36]

Dublin City Council Culture Company (2025), *About Us*, https://www.dublincitycouncilculturecompany.ie/about/overview. [25]

Duxbury, N. (2019), *Artistic Approaches to Cultural Mapping*, Routledge. [52]

Ecorys (2014), *Local economic impacts from cultural sector*, https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a82252eed915d74e3401f8c/Local_economic_impacts_from_cultural_sector_investments.pdf. [17]

Eurocities (2019), *Leeuwarden-Friesland European Capital of Culture 2018 was a sustainable success on all counts*, https://eurocities.eu/latest/leeuwarden-friesland-european-capital-of-culture-2018-was-a-sustainable-success-on-all-counts/. [92]

Evans, G. (2024), *Cultural Spaces, Production and Consumption*, Routledge. [26]

Evans, G. (2016), "Participation and provision in arts & culture – bridging the divide", *Cultural Trends, 25(1)*, pp. 2-20. [37]

Evans, G. (2015), *Cultural Mapping and Planning for Sustainable Communities*, Routledge. [56]

Evans, G. (2009), *From cultural quarters to creative clusters–creative spaces in the new city economy*, Institute of Urban History. [60]

Evans, G. (2008), "Cultural mapping and sustainable communities: planning for the arts revisited., 17(2)", *Cultural Trends*, pp. 65–96. [29]

Evans, G. and P. Shaw (2003), *The contribution of culture to regeneration in the UK: a review of evidence*, London Metropolitan University. [2]

Fancourt, D. (2023), *The Impact of Arts and Cultural Engagement on Population Health*, UCL. [19]

Fancourt, D. (2019), *What is the evidence on the role of the arts in improving health and well-being? A scoping review.*, World Health Organization. [44]

Florida, R. (2002), *The rise of the creative class*, Basic Books. [12]

Fresa, A. (2023), *Rigenera Volterra Rigenera*, ICCU. [91]

Garcia, B. (2014), *EUROPEAN CAPITALS OF CULTURE: Success Strategies and Long-term effects*, European Parliament's Committee on Culture and Education. [86]

GCDN (2018), *Governance Models for Cultural Districts*, https://gcdn.net/wpcontent/uploads/2018/04/GCDN-Governance-Models-for-Cultural-Districts-2018.pdf. [59]

Gilmore, A. (2022), *Creative Improvement Districts*, https://www.culturecommons.uk/post/creativeimprovement-districts. [107]

Gkitsa, D. (2024), "Grassroots creativity in arts and culture: a comparative analysis of case studies from the Balkans", *Creative Industries Journal*, pp. 1–20. [39]

GMB (2024), *The Guggenheim Museum Bilbao has its best year in history*, Guggenheim Museum Bilbao (GMB). [22]

Gordon, J. (2023), *G. (2023). Libraries for living, and for living better: The value and impact of public libraries in the East England*, UEA. [31]

Görmar, F. and N. Kinossian (2022), "Industrial forever? Narratives, place identity, and the development path of the city of Zeitz, Germany", *Moravian Geographical Reports*, Vol. 30/4, pp. 270-287, https://doi.org/10.2478/mgr-2022-0018. [5]

Gunay, Z. and V. Dokmeci (2012), "Culture-led regeneration of Istanbul waterfront: Golden Horn Cultural Valley Project", *Cities*, Vol. 29/4, pp. 213-222, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cities.2011.08.010. [3]

Hangar (2025), *About Us*, https://hangar.org/en/category/sobre-nosaltres/. [10]

Henley, J. (2016), *Guggenheim Helsinki museum plans rejected by city councillors*, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/dec/01/guggenheim-helsinki-nixed-by-city-councillors. [4]

Ho, A. et al. (2019), "Arts for ageing well: a propensity score matching analysis of the effects of arts engagements on holistic well-being among older Asian adults above 50 years of age", *BMJ Open*, Vol. 9/11, p. e029555, https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjopen-2019-029555. [50]

Holliss, F. (2024), *Work Home Project*, https://www.workhomeproject.org. [106]

Hui, W. (2023), "Development Mode of Urban Grassroots Libraries under the Background of Lifelong Learning", *Journal of Landscape Research, 15(3)*, pp. 85–89. [100]

Hwang, K. (2014), "Finding Urban Identity through Culture-led Urban", *Journal of Urban Management, 3 (1-2)*, pp. 67-85. [38]

Indigo-Ltd / Punch Records (2023), *Birmingham Festival 2022 Co-Creation Case Study*, https://resources.cwg-qbr.pulselive.com/qbr-commonwealth-games/document/2023/01/16/1aa325d4-d827-450f-9120-a7c443229a03/2.Co-Creation-Case-Study.pdf. [90]

INSEE (2024), *Dossier complet Commune de Lens (62498) - Évolution et structure de la population en 2021*, https://www.insee.fr/fr/statistiques/2011101?geo=COM-62498. [21]

Jacobs, D. (2014), *Fashion District Arnhem: Creative Entrepreneurs Upgrading a Deprived Neighbourhood*, CELTH/NHTV. [68]

Jones, K. et al. (2004), *Ken G.(Ken George) Jones, & Ryerson University. Centre for the Study of CoSpillover Effects of Investments in Cultural Facilities*, https://csca.ryerson.ca/products/spillover-effects-of-investments-in-cultural-facilities?variant=8112153919607. [78]

Jotroff, N. (2009), *New Century City Developments creating extraordinary value, Third Global Workshop: November 9-11, 2009 Seoul, Korea*, MIT. [73]

Kavaratzis, M. (2005), "Place branding: A review of trends and conceptual models", *The marketing review*, Vol. 5/4, pp. 329-342, https://doi.org/10.1362/146934705775186854. [95]

Kim, D., J. Lee and S. Kim (2024), "The role of cultural amenities in cities for employment growth of industrial clusters: evidence from a panel VAR model", *International Journal of Urban Sciences*, pp. 1-24, https://doi.org/10.1080/12265934.2024.2382708. [13]

Klinenberg, E. (2018), *Palaces for the people: How social infrastructure can help fight inequality, polarization, and the decline of civic life*, Crown. [34]

Knowles, R. (2012), "Transit Oriented Development in Copenhagen, Denmark: from the Finger Plan to Ørestad", *Journal of Transport Geography, 22*, pp. 251-261. [74]

Kourtit, K. and P. Nijkamp (2018), "Creative actors and historical–cultural assets in urban regions", *Regional Studies*, Vol. 53/7, pp. 977-990, https://doi.org/10.1080/00343404.2018.1541077. [14]

La Friche (2024), *le projet*, https://www.lafriche.org/la-friche/le-projet/. [7]

Lee, B. and C. Nott (2021), *Meta-evaluation of Arts Council England-funded place-based programmes*, https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/meta-evaluation-place-based-programmes. [98]

Lichfields (2024), *Making Culture Count: An Economic and Social Impact of the Lowry*, Lichfields Ltd. [23]

Louvre-Lens (2024), *Rapport d'activité 2023*, https://www.louvrelens.fr/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/RA-2023-DEF-HD-Planche_compressed.pdf. [20]

Lushington, N. (2002), *Libraries Designed for Users*, Neal-Schuman. [27]

Manzo, L. (2023), "Using senses of place to help communities navigate place disruption and uncertainty", *Landscape Journal*, Vol. 42/1, pp. 37-52, https://doi.org/10.3368/lj.42.1.37. [53]

Marks, R., J. Craig and O. Garling (2024), *Private space, public good: working together to deliver social infrastructure.*, Bennett Institute for Public Policy and Power to Change. [99]

Markusen, A. (2010), *Creative Placemaking*, NEA. [104]

Matthews, A. (2021), *Art Biennales as a Third Place to Regenerate Cities*, https://thefield.asla.org/2021/03/30/art-biennales-as-a-third-place-to-regenerate-cities/. [93]

Mould, O. (2014), *Mediating the City: The Role of Planned Media Cities in the Geographies of Creative Industry Activity*, Ashgate. [70]

Muñiz Martínez, N. (2016), "Towards a network place branding through multiple stakeholders and based on cultural identities: The case of "The Coffee Cultural Landscape" in Colombia", *Journal of Place Management and Development*, Vol. 9/1, pp. 73-90, https://doi.org/10.1108/JPMD-11-2015-0052. [96]

Nathan, M. et al. (2024), *Multipliers from a Major Public Sector Relocation: The BBC Moves to Salford*, Institute of Labor Economics (IZA). [71]

Nermond, O., N. Lee and D. O'Brien (2021), *The European Capital of Culture: A review of the academic evidence*, Creative Industries Policy and Evidence Centre, London School of Economics and University of Edinburgh. [87]

Noonan, D. (2013), "How US Cultural Districts Shape Neighbourhoods", *Cultural Trends, 22(3-4)*, pp. 203-212. [75]

OECD (2025), *Unpacking place transformation*. [1]

OECD (2022), *Culture and the Creative Economy in Colombia: Leveraging the Orange Economy*, Local Economic and Employment Development (LEED), OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/184f1e07-en. [81]

OECD (2022), *The Culture Fix: Creative People, Places and Industries*, Local Economic and Employment Development (LEED), OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/991bb520-en. [16]

OECD (2021), *Building for a Better Tomorrow: Policies to Make Housing more Affordable*, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/5d9127d4-en. [97]

OECD (2014), "Contemporary art and tourism on Setouchi Islands, Japan", in *Tourism and the Creative Economy*, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264207875-10-en. [83]

OECD (Forthcoming), *Rethinking Space in Cities: Unlocking the potential of Adaptive Communal Space (ACS) to connect People, Places, Firms*. [35]

Perkins, H. (2023), "Community-led heritage", *Journal of Place Management and Development, 16(3)*, pp. 367-387. [66]

Pfeifere, D. (2022), "The Issues of Defining and Classifying Cultural Centres", *Economics and Culture*, Vol. 19/2, pp. 28-37, https://doi.org/10.2478/jec-2022-0013. [28]

POUSH (2024), *POUSH, a space for artists to create and exhibit*, https://poush.fr/en. [42]

Qu, M. and J. Cheer (2020), "Community art festivals and sustainable rural revitalisation", *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, Vol. 29/11-12, pp. 1756-1775, https://doi.org/10.1080/09669582.2020.1856858. [84]

Richards, G. (2022), "The role of the creative industries in placemaking", *hal-04489126*, pp. https://hal.science/hal-04489126/document. [85]

Ryan, A. and G. McPherson (2022), "Legacies of failure to win the city of culture: Liminality, civicism and change", *City, Culture and Society*, Vol. 31, p. 100488, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ccs.2022.100488. [89]

Scott, M., J. Neelands and H. Beer (2025), *Evidence Review: UK City of Culture Programme Paper One of Two – Proposed Theory of Change and Evidence of Impact*, https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/evidence-review-uk-city-of-culture-programme#:~:text=Details,and%20its%20value%20for%20money. [88]

Scott, R. (2011), "The Role of Public Libraries in Community Building", *Public Library Quarterly*, Vol. 30/3, pp. 191-227, https://doi.org/10.1080/01616846.2011.599283. [33]

Seki, N. (1999), "Strategy, development and outcome of community educational facilities in London: Idea stores in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets", *http://id.nii.ac.jp /1060/00007942*. [32]

Shaw, K. (2015), "Gentrification without displacement'and the consequent loss of place: The effects of class transition on low-income residents of secure housing in gentrifying areas.", *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, Vol. 39/2, pp. 323-341, https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-2427.12164. [54]

Stefan Berger, S. (ed.) (2022), *"Layers of New Green: Postindustrial Landscapes and Identity Formation in the Ruhr Valley, Germany."*, Springer International Publishing, https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-030-89631-7_13. [6]

TBR (2016), *ASE Place shaping Report - The role of culture, sport and heritage in place shaping*, Trends Business Research Ltd, NEF Consulting Ltd and Middlesex University, https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-role-of-culture-sport-and-heritage-in-place-shaping. [15]

TBR (2016), *Place branding and heritage*, Historic England. [105]

Thomson, L. (2017), *Libraries as community hubs: Case studies and learning*, Arts Council of England. [30]

Turley (2021), *Dublin City Cultural Infrastructure Study*, https://www.dublincity.ie/sites/default/files/2021-12/cultural-infrastructure-study.pdf. [24]

van Tuijl, E., L. Carvalho and J. van Haaren (2013), "Developing creative quarters in cities: policy lessons from 'Art and Design City' Arabianranta, Helsinki", *Urban Research & Practice*, Vol. 6/2, pp. 211-218, https://doi.org/10.1080/17535069.2013.808443. [63]

Velez-Ospina, J. (2023), "Determinants of rural creative microclustering: evidence from web-scraped data for England", *Journal contribution. https://hdl.handle.net/10779/uos.24271525.v1*. [64]

WCCF (2024), , https://worldcitiesculturefforum.com/2024/06/14/sydney-launches-cultural-strategy-with-plans-for-a-new-creative-land-trust-to-boost-affordable-artist-workspace/. [82]

WhatWorks (2016), *How to evaluate sport and culture: the effect of cultural districts (statistical approach)*, LSE, https://whatworksgrowth.org/resource-library/how-to-evaluate-sport-and-culture-the-effect-of-cultural-districts-statistical-approach/. [76]

White, H. (2018), *OPPORTUNITIES for TRANSFORMATIVE PLACEMAKING Newcastle, Wyoming*, Bass Center for Transformative Placemaking. [65]

Worpole, K. (2013), *Contemporary Library Architecture. A Planning and Design Guide*, Routledge. [101]

Zarur Guarisa, M., J. de Figueiredo and A. Machado (2023), "The show must go on: proposals to measure the economic value of Grassroots Music Venues", *Cultural Trends*, Vol. 33/3, pp. 291-308, https://doi.org/10.1080/09548963.2023.2193874. [43]

Zukin, S. (1982), *Loft Living: Culture and Capital in Urban Change*, Rutgers. [80]

Note

[1] E.g. ASEAN City of Culture, South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) capital of culture, the African Capitals of Culture, Capital of Arab Culture.

Sign up for our newsletter:

Follow us on:

@OECD_Local

oecd-local

Read our blogs:

oecdcogito.blog/

COGITO

Transforming Places

UK Research and Innovation