16th AWARD BEST PRACTICE IN CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

IOPD

Application Form

PART 1: BASIC DATA

Experience data (complete the information below in a clear and concise manner)

Title of the experience: Culture is Integral to a Resilient and Sustainable City	

Name of the city or region: Ramallah

Inhabitants of the city or territory: 76120

Country: Palestine

Institution presenting the candidacy (name of the municipality, department, government, institution leading the candidate experience): Ramallah Municipality

Website of the experience or institution: www.ramallah.ps

Profiles in social networks of the experience or the institution: https://www.facebook.com/R.Municipality

Start date of the experience:

End date of the experience (if operational, indicate "ongoing"):

Budget of the experience (indicate the budget of the experience or the resources mobilized for its development and implementation):

Type of candidacy (Mark with an X in the right column)	New experience	
	Innovation on an existing experience	
	Continuity of an experience	×
Type of experience (Mark with an X in the right column) (*you may choose more than one*)	Participatory budgeting	
	Participatory planning	×
	Standing council	
	Workshop/meeting for diagnosis, monitoring, etc.	
	Public Hearing/Forum	

	Poll/referendum		
	Assemblies / Citizen juries / Deliberation spaces		
	E-government/Open government/Digital platforms		
	Citizen initiative		
	Other (specify):		
Objective of the experience (Mark with an X in the right column) (*you may choose more than one*)	To achieve higher levels of equality in terms of participation		×
	Including diversity as a criterion for inclusion		×
	Community empowerment		×
	To empower non-organised citizens		×
	To increase citizen's rights in terms of political participation		×
	To connect different tools of participation within a participatory democracy "ecosystem"		
	To improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the mechanisms of participatory democracy		×
	To improve the quality of public decision-making through the mechanisms of participatory democracy		×
	To improve the evaluation and accountability of the mechanisms of participatory democracy		
	To improve any public policy through the active participation of the public		×
Territorial area (Mark with an X in the right column) (*you may choose more than one*)	All the territory	Local	×
		Regional	
	District		×

	Neighbourhood	
Thematic area (Mark with an X in the right column) (*you may choose more than one*)	Governance	
	Education	×
	Transport	
	Urban management	×
	Health	
	Security	
	Environment/Climate change and/or urban agriculture	
	Civic associations, grassroots and new social movements.	
	Culture	×
	Housing	
	Job creation	
	Decentralization	×
	Local development	
	Training/learning	
	Economy and/or finances	
	Legal regulations	
	Social inclusion	×
	All	
	Other (write the topic)	

Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) associated with the practice *Mark with an X in the right column (more than one option can be chosen)* *You can also add the specific target*	SDG 1 - No poverty	
	SDG 2 - Zero hunger	
	SDG 3 - Good health and well- being	×
	SDG 4 - Quality education	
	SDG 5 - Gender equality	×
	SDG 6 - Clean water and sanitation	
	SDG 7 - Affordable and clean energy	
	SDG 8 - Decent work and economic growth	
	SDG 9 - Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure	
	SDG 10 - Reduced inequality	
	SDG 11 - Sustainable cities and communities	×
	SDG 12 - Responsible consumption and production	
	SDG 13 - Climate action	
	SDG 14 - Life below water	
	SDG 15 - Life on land	
	SDG 16 - Peace, justice and strong institutions	
	SDG 17 - Partnership for the goals	

PART 2: DESCRIPTION OF THE EXPERIENCE

Application Form

Fill in the following fields clearly and concisely. You can add links if you consider it appropriate.

Context

In a maximum of 300 words, it presents the cultural, geographical, historical, institutional and socioeconomic context of the city, the territory in which the experience takes place.

Ramallah is a city about 14km north of the capital Jerusalem. Ramallah, like all other Palestinian cities, is struggling to rise from the applied policies on an everyday detail by Israeli militant occupation during the last 74 years. Since the Oslo Accords and the return the Palestinian leadership to the homeland, Ramallah's status as the most vibrant and internationally recognized city was acknowledged. Besides its historic character as a city of tourism and great cultural activities, Ramallah nowadays is a vital economic, political and cultural center in Palestine. It hosts most of the foreign representative offices to the Palestinian Authority in addition to the government and international organizations. Ramallah has also become the center for investment transactions.

Unlike other ancient Palestinian cities, the modern city of Ramallah is relatively young, established only a few hundred years ago. Whereas the ancient cities exhibited clear and defined urban features and characterized by long historical, social, and cultural traditions, Ramallah remained free to develop more spontaneously. This made Ramallah more hospitable and open to those who chooses her as a place of living and working and open to new ideas, especially as the overwhelming majority of the city's original inhabitants have emigrated from Palestine, allowing for a huge margin of internal Palestinian migration, thus resulting in a special social, cultural and religious fabric, presenting a special model of a diverse city in a politically unstable zone.

Ramallah appreciates this diversity of its citizens As expressed in its motto, "We Ramallah", everyone is part of the city. Diversity and culture are central to the future that Ramallah wants to build.

 Yet Ramallah still faces major challenges that range from rapid urbanization, to threat on cultural heritage, lack of financial resources, limited horizontal expansion (due to Israeli occupation) and many other threatens and obstacles

The last but not the least was the outbreak of Covid – 19.

Precedents

Explain the precedents and origins of the experience: if it is the innovation of an existing experience, what are its origins, if it is a new experience, what are the antecedents in participation in your city/municipality/region. You can also indicate if you have been inspired by experiences in other cities/countries. (maximum 300 words)

The city of Ramallah launched in Nov. 2017 [1](Resilient Ramallah 2050) strategy with a vision of the city: optimistic, sustainable, Inclusive, proud of our own culture and in control of our own destiny. The strategy specified in relevance to the city's strengths 3 strategic directions and 37 actions; where culture was in the heart of this strategy.

Beforehand, the city had identified its role and interventions due to its understanding to the local context of the cultural scene itself and due to the characteristics of the city and its social contexts as mentioned above. In short, [2]The Palestinian cultural policy model can be described as a non-systemized model predominantly oriented to the nonprofit sector. The model has limited grass roots orientation and works well in the central part of Palestine[3] and in major cities. At the national level, the administrative functions of culture are carried out by the Ministry of Culture which when it was established in 1994, there already was a large and vibrant civic cultural sector. Sadly and since its establishment, Ministry of Culture was unable to formulate a clear identity and role on its own as a major player in the Palestinian cultural scene. Even though in 2011, the central government launched the first "Strategic Plan for the Cultural Sector 2011-2013", the plan remained without tools of implementation and activation. Due to the above and in the year 2010, it became clear to the Ramallah Municipality that the stipulation and implementation of cultural policies and programs should not be limited to the relevant ministries and civil society institutions; it has to become an increasingly essential part of the tasks of local government institutions. Experience has shown that it is not possible to isolate cultural work from community activity, and that culture is an essential part of development work in general, and in the work of local government institutions in particular, especially because of the institutions' ability, unlike others, to communicate directly with the various segments of society, and be constantly aware of their needs, whether by virtue of their social position or the role assigned to them by the communities. In addition, unlike the public sector in Palestine which basically depends on donor funding, the Ramallah Municipality manages its program from the revenue generated directly through taxation thus allows for financial sustainability. Consequently, the Ramallah Municipality organized a special conference in 2010 on the Role of Local Governments in cultural and social development and also another conference in 2011 under the title of "Ramallah and its Cultural Development" Conference. Stakeholders from all of Palestine and relevant public sectors met to discuss how the role the Ramallah Municipality could potentially play in the shaping of cultural policy. These conferences were followed by a series of specialized meetings and sessions that worked on a coherent cultural policy for the city of Ramallah in partnership with all stakeholders operating in the scene. The project aimed to act as a tool to actualize (on a micro level in the city of Ramallah) the Strategic Plan for the Cultural Sector 2011-2013 launched by the government and lacked mechanism of implementation. The policy at that time had different elements among which are: assisting legislators in formulating the laws that aim at the preservation of tangible cultural heritage, presenting public spaces as a main venue of cultural and social, emphasizing the necessity of securing semi-public funding

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[1] https://www.ramallah.ps/userfiles/file/ir/Ramallah%20Resilience%20Strategy%202050.pdf

[2] https://culturalfoundation.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/CulturalPoliciesinAlgeria-Egypt-Jordan-Lebanon-Morocco-Palestine-Syria-Tunisia2010.pdf

[3] Jerusalem, Ramallah and Bethlehem

for art and culture in a country where most of the funding to this sector comes from the donor community, introducing the concept of wide and horizontal and grass roots partnerships, expose the general audience into different forms of art and culture, reutilization of educational tax (from solely schools construction to include also the support of educational and creativity projects), linking art and culture to income generating vocations and allowing for the needed training and possible absorption on the market system and the promotion of cultural diversity and social cohesion in the city of Ramallah that hosts populations from all over Palestine and also from Palestinian returnees.

These interventions at the city level were part of the discussions during 2015 and 2016 during the participatory process of creating "Resilient Ramallah 2050" strategy that was in support of 100 Resilient Cities network. Part of the actions of the strategy had a specific focus on cultural development, which opened the discussion to officially adapt a written cultural policy for the city late 2019. And In March 2022 - With the cooperation of UCLG, The city adapted an official participatory Cultural Policy "Culture is Integral to Resilient and Sustainable City".

Objectives of the experience

*What is the objective listed in Part 1 that you think is the most important, and indicate other outstanding objectives of the experience (*maximum 100 words*)*

The basic principle of this Cultural Policy is the affirmation of everyone's right to take part in cultural life. Believing that right be effective only on the ability of public, private and civil society stakeholders to work together, addressing imbalances and obstacles, developing proactive policies and programmes and generating an enabling environment for individual and collective creativity and cultural participation.

The main major goals of the policy are: A City that guarantees Freedom, Participation, Diversity and Creativity, A City that Protects and Strengthens Heritage, And Makes Culture Inclusive, A City that Fosters Cultural Learning and Appreciation, A City that Integrates Culture, the Environment and Public Spaces, A City that Promotes a Healthy Economic Environment for Culture, And Connects and Cooperates Internationally, A City with a Collaborative and Participatory Governance of Culture.

These goals have actions which will be reflected in projects at the city, where different roles of different stakeholders will take part in addition to the city in some parts.

Methodology

Describe the methodology of the experience: phases of the process, participation channels (maximum 300 words)

"Culture is Integral to Resilient and sustainable City "policy document has been elaborated through a consultation exercise with the UCLG, involving contributions from citizens, artists, cultural professionals, civil society organizations, businesses, national public institutions, international agencies, donors and local government representatives through workshops, individual meetings, focus groups and a survey to analyse the realities of cultural sector in the city of Ramallah. This spirit of dialogue and collaboration was central to the policy's long-term effectiveness and will be reflected in its governance and evaluation mechanisms. The Cultural Policy for Ramallah is for the city and its citizens as a whole rather than solely for the local government where ownership and commitment is shared.

Several international agendas provide inspiration for this Cultural Policy. [4]Agenda 21 for culture, The UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), establishes a set of global goals that can be best achieved through the strengthening of culture. This is particularly visible in areas like the fostering of education and learning that recognizes cultural diversity and culture's contribution to sustainable development (SDG target 4.7), the promotion of creativity and innovation (8.3) and of sustainable tourism that promotes local culture and products (8.9), the protection of cultural and natural heritage (11.4), the provision of universal access to green and public spaces (11.7), and the enhancement of public access to information (16.10). Beyond these, objectives and commitments included in the Cultural Policy can contribute to the achievement of many other SDG targets.

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[4] https://www.uclg.org/en/media/news/la-cultura-como-respuesta-los-retos-urbanos-globales

Innovation

Explain what you consider most innovative in the practice. (In a maximum of 150 words)

Municipalities in Palestine are not obliged by law to work in culture, but the city of Ramallah years ago started to consider culture as a major component of sustainable development, and this was the force to specify its role in culture and to concentrate on the concept of decentralization of cultural policy through observation, discussions and, workshops and conferences with the main stakeholders.

By adapting a written cultural policy and allocating funds for culture, the city became a leading model for other municipalities in Palestine, and the city confirms its commitment for the development of culture and highlighting it as a priority and a main service that should be provided to the city's citizens and actors.

In addition; the policy will be embedded in the city's strategic and short term plans, which guarantees the execution of its components in reality.

The process of creating the cultural policy was interrupted with the break of Corona Virus across the world, and for a few months the process stopped due to the uncertainty, fear, quarantine and until the city digested, absorbed and managed to deal with the new emergencies; and it went steady again to continue the work with stakeholders on the policy, embedding the new priorities that emerged due to Covid – 19 which affected the cultural organizations, centres, artists, etc.

The policy process didn't only involve the actors and creators of culture in producing the policy but also it identified roles of different public, private and civil society stakeholders to work together, addressing imbalances and obstacles, developing proactive policies and programmes and generating an enabling environment for individual and collective creativity and cultural participation.

Inclusion

Point out the importance of including as many groups and diverse populations as possible and how you have achieved it. (In a maximum of 150 words)

Ramallah's role in promoting sustainability and resilience derives from the acknowledgement that it is at the local level, in cities and towns, where many of today's key challenges need to be negotiated and addressed. This requires localizing global strategies and ensuring that local governments are provided with the suitable political competences and the necessary technical, financial and human skills to fulfil these goals. The importance of cultural aspects in building sustainable and resilient cities is recognized in the UN's New Urban Agenda, which highlights the commitment to promoting culture and respect for diversity and equality as key elements in the humanization of cities and sets engagements in areas like the promotion of

cultural infrastructures and sites, traditional knowledge and the arts. The New Urban Agenda also acknowledges that culture and cultural diversity provide an important contribution to the sustainable development of cities and citizens, empowering them to play an active and unique role in development initiatives.

The basic principle of this Cultural Policy is the affirmation of everyone's right to take part in cultural life.

As mentioned earlier one hundred and thirty eight participated in the workshops of creating the cultural policy which included:

Mayor, Three city councilors, three neighboring municipalities, local cultural managers, local artists from different domains, representatives of youth clubs in the city, Ramallah Youth City Council, women associations, representatives of elderly homes, rep. of disabled organizations, representatives from refugee camps, Ramallah schools, journalists, rep. from the private sector, rep. from the ministry of culture, environment, education and Tourism and antiquities, rep. from foreign cultural centers, academics, environmental activists, rep. form UN Habitat/ Ramallah Office, Rep. of UCLG, and the expert (Chrissie Tiller from the UK who worked with the Ramallah Municipality in 2018 on: Ramallah Resilient Strategy in Culture and Education).

The workshops were led by representatives from the local community to guarantee the subjectivity and openness during the discussions.

The participants either policy makers from different fields or representatives of civil society organizations or the independents artists and activists in culture and arts will be the facilitators to adapt and execute the values of the policy in their structures and will destruct the policy into their practices.

This holistic approach is to guarantee inclusion and representation of all citizens, classes and community groups in the city.

Communication

What has been the strategy and communication channels of the experience so that the population knows about it and gets involved. (In a **maximum of 150 words***)*

Internally, by discussing in the municipality level (City Council and executive team and the employees) the different components of the policy and the interconnections between the municipality departments for a unified understanding of the policy and the commitments that are required on different level.

Externally but on a local level, there was a coverage by TV interviews, social media and media coverage of the workshops.

In August 2022, a public announcement with the participation of all stakeholders will take place to launch the document and celebrate it.

Externally, on an international level, UCLG (United Cities and local governments) will publish it on their website. In addition to that a copy will be distributed to Ramallah's international networks, twin cities and offices of representative offices in Palestine.

Articulation with other actors

It explains how the experience was articulated with different actors and simultaneous or pre-existing processes. What roles did these participants assume? Explain the degree of success of this joint. (In a maximum of 150 words)

One hundred and thirty eight participated contributed in the workshops of creating the cultural policy as mentioned before representing different sectors, different needs and different perspectives due to their experiences and aims.

The results of the discussions in which reflected strengths, obstacles, opportunities and weaknesses were raised by the participants in the workshops, and needs were identified taking into consideration also the analysis of the cultural mapping of the city (Suggested actions were made by participants on different issues in the workshops). Roles were also identified by participants, possible cooperation between different actors were initiated, and the result was to adapt the cultural policy of the city as a working guide in different organizations with a common vision for the city and common belief of the right of all citizens to be part of cultural life.

The Governance of Culture is guaranteed through the participation process, creating the document and the steering committee from local community who will participate in evaluating and upgrading the policy.

Evaluation:

*What evaluation mechanisms have been implemented? Develop whether citizenship has participated in the evaluation of the practice (In a **maximum of 300 words**)*

Every four years the policy document will be reviewed by the city and stakeholders in reference to specific measures and priority activities identified to achieve strategic, long term, and short term goals.

The policy will have a steering committee from the city itself (Director of culture and Social Development director, the city director and representatives from different stakeholders who will also evaluate the progress of the actions on yearly basis and contribute to the evaluation of the policy every four years

Articulation with other actors

*It explains how the experience was articulated with different actors and simultaneous or pre-existing processes. What roles did these participants assume? Explain the degree of success of this joint. (In a **maximum of 150 words**)*

One hundred and thirty eight participated contributed in the thematic workshops of creating the cultural policy as mentioned before representing different sectors, different needs and different perspectives due to their experiences and aims.

The results of the discussions in which reflected strengths, obstacles, opportunities and weaknesses were raised and needs were identified taking into consideration also the analysis of the cultural mapping of the city (Suggested actions were made by participants on different issues in the workshops). Roles were also identified by participants, possible cooperation between different actors were initiated, and the result was to adapt the cultural policy of the city as a working guide in different organizations with a common vision for the city and common belief of the right of all citizens to be part of cultural life.

PART 3: EXPERIENCE SUMMARY

*A summary of the experience: origin, objectives, operation, results, monitoring and evaluation (Do not hesitate to repeat aspects that have already been written before, this summary is the one that will be shared on the digital platform for open evaluation and in the publication of the award). (In a **maximum of 500 words**)*

The city of Ramallah launched in Nov. 2017 [5](Resilient Ramallah 2050) strategy with a vision of the city: optimistic, sustainable, Inclusive, proud of our own culture and in

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[5] https://www.ramallah.ps/userfiles/file/ir/Ramallah%20Resilience%20Strategy%202050.pdf

control of our own destiny. The strategy specified in relevance to the city's analysis; 3 strategic directions reflected in 37 actions; where culture was in the heart of this strategy.

The (Resilient Ramallah 2050) strategy revealed the necessity of a cultural policy for the city as part of the strategic planning for Ramallah as a resilient city.

At that point, Ramallah Municipality did a survey to collect data and map the cultural scene in the city as a step before organizing (workshops, focus groups and meetings) with the main actors in the scene. The municipality also started to communicate with UCLG (United Cities and local Government) to cooperate as a consultant with the city on the policy, meanwhile the city started to contact local artists, cultural organizations, educational organizations, representatives from the civil society organizations, public bodies, cultural committee from the city council and the mayor to put things all together to share the process with them in advance.

As mentioned earlier in this application,[6]The Palestinian cultural policy model is a non-systemized model predominantly oriented to the nonprofit sector. The model has limited grass roots orientation and works well in the central part of Palestine[7] and in major cities. At the national level, the administrative functions of culture are carried out by the Ministry of Culture which doesn't fill the necessary and required needs of the cultural sector.

The Ramallah Municipality believed in the decentralization of cultural policy and in culture as a major pillar of development, where social development is connected to culture.

The municipality managed to identify strategic interventions in culture on a city level a process that started officially in 2010 in a conference organized on the Role of Local Governments in followed by another conference in 2011 under the title of "Ramallah and its Cultural Development". Stakeholders from all of Palestine and relevant public sectors met to discuss how the role the Ramallah Municipality could potentially play in the shaping of cultural policy. These conferences were followed by a series of specialized meetings and sessions that worked on a coherent cultural policy for the city of Ramallah in partnership with all stakeholders operating in the scene. The strategic interventions at that time had different elements among which are: assisting legislators in formulating the laws that aim at the preservation of tangible cultural heritage, presenting public spaces as a main venue of cultural and social events, emphasizing the necessity of securing semi-public funding for art and culture in a country where most of the funding to this sector comes from the donor community, introducing the concept of wide and horizontal and grass roots partnerships, expose the general audience into different forms of art and culture, reutilization of educational tax (from solely schools construction to include also the support of educational and creativity projects), linking art and culture to income generating vocations and allowing for the needed training and possible absorption on the market system and the promotion of

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https://culturalfoundation.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/CulturalPoliciesinAlgeria-Egypt-Jordan-Lebanon-Morocco-Palestine-Syria-Tunisia2010.pdf

[7] Jerusalem, Ramallah and Bethlehem

cultural diversity and social cohesion in the city of Ramallah that hosts populations from all over Palestine and also from Palestinian returnees.

These interventions at the city level were part of the discussions during 2015 and 2016 during the participatory process of creating "Resilient Ramallah 2050" strategy that was in support of 100 Resilient Cities network. Part of the actions of the strategy had a specific focus on cultural development, which opened the discussion to officially adapt a written cultural policy for the city late 2019. And In March 2022 - With the cooperation of UCLG, The city adapted an official participatory Cultural Policy "Culture is Integral to Resilient and Sustainable City".

The policy will be translated in priorities and actions through a dialogue with stakeholders, measures will be linked to the actions and the policy will be evaluated every 4 years with stakeholders. The policy also will have a steering committee from educational and cultural operators in the city reflecting different sectors and fields in culture.