

**PART 1: BASIC DATA**

<b>Title of the experience:</b> <i>Cultural Environment</i>		
<b>Name of the city/region:</b> Kazan City		
<b>Country:</b> Russian Federation		
<b>Institution presenting the candidacy:</b> Kazan City Hall		
<b>Start date of the experience:</b> June, 2020		
<b>End date of the experience:</b> ongoing		
<b>Type of candidacy</b>	New experience	
	Innovation on an existing experience	+
<b>Type of experience</b> (you may choose more than one)	Participatory budgeting	
	Urban planning	
	Council	
	Workshop/meeting for diagnosis, monitoring, etc.	
	Audience/forum	
	Poll/referendum	
	Citizen jury	
	E-government/open government	
	Citizen initiative	
	Other (specify): Social practice	+
	<b>Objective of the experience</b> (you may choose more than one)	To achieve higher levels of equality in terms of participation and to incorporate 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		
<b>Territorial area</b>	All the territory	+
	District	
	Neighbourhood	
<b>Thematic area</b>	Governance	
	Education	+

	Transport	
	Urban management	
	Health	+
	Security	
	Environment and/or urban agriculture	
	New social movements and associationism	+
	Culture	+
	Housing	
	Job creation	
	Decentralization	
	Local development	
	Training/learning	+
	Economy and/or finances	
	Legal regulations	
	Social inclusion	+
	All	
	Other	

## PART 2: DESCRIPTION OF THE EXPERIENCE

### Objectives

#### Main objective of the innovative experience:

*To empower non-organised citizens through increasing the number of leisure activities, raise of cultural and aesthetic level.*

Cultural transmission is the process when a culture is passed onto next generation through education and learning process. And due to this process continuity of culture can become possible. There is a huge but rapid development of a new information and telecommunication technologies nowadays and a new world requires an adaptation and raising an interest and concern of an adult people. Adult people have to go through a peculiar and complicate way of enculturation which is similar to an adopting a foreign culture. The unemployment rate in most regions of the Russian Federation at the beginning of 2021 increased to 5.9% in the country, which is 1.3 points higher than a year earlier. Here, it is important to mention that 87% of unemployed population in the Republic of Tatarstan is a 30+ people including early retirement age. So there has been a need to form and engrain a positive attitude towards the informatization, the acquisition of skills in mastering ICT methods and techniques, self-education, research and social activity. One of the positive outcomes of the project is to reduce the number of unemployed working age population who currently seeks for a job offer. Therefore, our goal is an active inclusion of individuals in various forms of social interaction. This will lead to the development of information and communication technologies (ICT) and also will satisfy both employers’ and job seekers needs.

**How have you achieved this objective?**

Since December 2020, the Cultural Environment project has resumed online on Instagram, VKontakte, YouTube, Zoom platforms. Each resident can join online classes on the official site “cultsredakzn.ru”.

The "Cultural Environment" aims to plan, deliver and evaluate inclusive leisure activities, to integrate residents in city cultural life and raise computer literacy skills. In our practice culture is used as a tool for social integration because art shouldn't be designed only for a small group of people. It is important to present art, events, exhibitions or master classes in order to raise an interest and willingness to participate.

Also, the tasks of the project include:

- Upgrading the intellectual potential of residents through the cultural and moral development
- Enhancing the role of culture in society and raise a creative development of children and youth
- Introduction of innovative educational and upbringing technologies into the educational process associated with the cultural and aesthetic education of the younger generation;

When implementing a project, we work with people and for people. With a help of our training and online sessions we aim to support people and to encourage them to level up their lives. One of the outcomes we could reach was a huge increase of computer literacy level along with ensuring a variety of leisure activities for elderly citizens during the lockdown period. Users of the platform now can easily stay in touch, support each other due to online courses they took via Zoom video conferencing system.

**To what extent has this objective been achieved?**

We have achieved our main objective, to empower non-organized citizens, to diversify leisure activities and increase a level of cultural and aesthetic development at children and youth. The project "Cultural Environment" was awarded a special mention of the XIII International Competition of Urban Practices "The City Where You Want to Live". 98 thousand people took part in more than 400 events online. During the summertime more than 13 thousand of Kazan residents became active participants. Project is designed to engage residents into a cultural life of people, to ensure a high-quality leisure and maintain a high vitality of participants. Online classes combine a large number of different areas and sports activities. Online events have been held in order to maximize the potential of participants and to make sure that interested residents will continue to develop skills. As mentioned earlier, holding master classes on computer literacy helps to increase their level of knowledge on information technologies. This results a successful adaptation and integration into an information society and bridge a social inclusion gap.

**Dimensions of the experience****Which is the most innovative aspect of the experience?**

This is the first time for Kazan City when such practice has been implemented. It is united by following features:

- Access and participation of an adult population to a cultural life of the city
- Education
- Solidarity and mutual help
- Technology, innovation, creativity
- Involvement and accessibility of all social groups to online sessions

For the first time, classes cover 10 different areas of creative and sports activities. At the same time, it should be noted that the project was quickly shifted into online without loss of quality. It was immediate response in order to combat the pandemic (Covid-19) challenges.

Prior to pandemic in 2018 there are different “Cultural Environment” events were held in different city sites such as theaters, concerts, workshops, master classes, art exhibitions.

#### **To what extent is the procedure transferable?**

Before the pandemic occurred in Russia the Cultural Environment project was implemented offline. There were multiple different events organized with an eye both to entertain and teach residents of Kazan. This includes dance master classes, film screenings, fine arts classes, sports activities, music performances and many more. There was a significant grow of project visitors after the Cultural Environment shifted online. We could reach a progress with the help of special promotional campaign.

“Cultural Environment” is fully scalable to other cities. City of Kazan is ready to share an organizational and technological experience once it is required. This practice can be reapplied not only in big metropolitan areas but in smaller cities or districts as well who is down to strengthen a culture level.

#### **Why do you consider that the experience is feasible?**

In March 2020, a self-isolation regime for citizens of all ages has been introduced almost everywhere, under which it was not recommended to leave home for no good reason (except for going to a pharmacy, a grocery store, emergency visit of a doctor). Rather soon it became clear this would create natural difficulties for citizens. Restrictions greatly influenced physical and mental health of the residents of the city. After a couple of quarantine weeks there are daily calls started to come from residents with requests to allow people to go outside, for walks, and re-open access to cultural events and outdoor activities. There is a collaborative decision making to organize and develop the virtual leisure activities for citizens, which would be safe in given circumstances. Venues for performances, centers for online lectures or virtual tours of museums were found in a short period of time. The community centre got in touch with teachers, professors, artists and singers who expressed the willingness to support the project.

#### **How has the experience been coordinated with other actors and processes?**

Subordinate institutions of the Kazan City Hall along with city residents have shown themselves as pioneers of the movement. Music schools, national library, community centres provided a project with teaching staff, curators, volunteers who invited both famous and young independent artists to perform online.

Management of community centres provided cleaned and disinfected studios for musicians and bloggers for virtual concerts and livestreams. Active residents of the city who used the platform voice their preferences and what they want to see next.

#### **What has been the level of co-responsibility?**

There are different Houses of Culture, volunteer movements along with city residents who have been equally involved in “Cultural Environment” implementation.

The subordinate institutions of the Department of Culture were proactive engine that is responsible for organization of events. Children's music schools, community centres, the national library system of Kazan City and few other institutions gladly took part in the project and provided teaching staff, curators, volunteers and students to perform at concerts and invite famous guests.



And city residents themselves are the active voice of the program. They are the crucial link of the “Cultural Environment” as only they decide what is to be shown next. Also users of the platform assess the classes and shows and can rate each event or leave critical comments on it.

#### **Which evaluation and accountability mechanisms were used?**

There is a high quality product of collaboration between the all genuinely concerned sides of the practice released. This collaboration includes music schools, community centres, the national library system of Kazan and other institutions, with volunteers, non-profit organizations to participate in online events and contribute in the field of promoting moral and aesthetic education, cultural leisure and self-development courses. Team of the project used VK (VKontakte), Instagram, Google platforms for an active promotional campaign. There are public ratings for online lectures and classes, music and art performances based on online-voting system is also on the site which help to keep responsible parties more competitive. Based on the above project managers can reschedule upcoming cultural events in order to satisfy residents’ needs. Therefore, monitored both by cultural managing organizations and residents the “Cultural Environment” has achieved a better quality of service provided.

#### **Summary of the experience**

Since 2017 Cultural Environment project has been implemented in Kazan City. As part of the project first events were held in Park “Krylia Sovetov” and “Derbyshki” where local folk dance groups presented modern choreography. Later on there are street cinemas and open art exhibitions were held in different city sites. During 2018 our project developed as on historical sites of Kazan we hosted an open air festival which included theatrical performances, concerts of classical and folk music along with exhibitions both of modern and contemporary art. As part of outdoor city events there were plenty of other festivals for residents which included activities as songs, dance, fun street games, colourful theatre performances, master classes and excursions. All hosted activities were free to attend.

Since the start of the pandemic in 2020 we redeveloped the concept of our project. “Cultural Environment” project has resumed work online on Instagram, VKontakte, YouTube, Zoom platforms. As the Kazan City and Russian Federation adjusts to the new reality of life under self-quarantine in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic, a number of cultural and educational institutions, volunteers along with artists and independent musical institutions started to take virtual shows and gigs, give master classes and lectures to spread and share some art joy during these trying times. We decided to satisfy all residents’ needs and organized plenty of different activities to make sure that each resident of the city can relax, learn or study from the safety of his couch. There is an official site of project where visitors can find a guide with all upcoming livestreams, online lectures and classes or virtual museum tours. All events are free to attend. Moreover, there is a video archive where all events are collected and can be rewatched any time. Pandemic gave a new birth to our project as now the audience of Cultural Environment has multiplied. Residents of the city started genuinely like to immerse in culture online. In a recent future we hope to extend the scope of CE and invite international artists, teachers and lecturers in order to deliver more complete and diversified product in culture, entertainment, education or linguistics.

The project "Cultural Environment Online" was awarded a special mention of the XIII International Competition of Urban Practices "The City Where You Want to Live". 98 thousand people already took a part in more than 400 virtual events.