CONCEPT NOTE

SDG Local Solutions

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TOPIC

This webinar, organized by UNDP SDG Local Action, aims to explore how urban art not only makes our cities more beautiful, but also supports creative industries, and generates inclusive and sustainable urban development. The session will analyze local experiences and emerging practices in cities that want to integrate public art into urban planning and local governance.

As cities around the world face growing urbanization pressures, inequalities, and socio-spatial fragmentation, local governments are turning to creative approaches to foster inclusive public spaces and strengthen community bonds. Urban art—from large-scale murals and graffiti to sculpture parks, street performances, and participatory installations—offers a powerful tool for cities to reclaim neglected spaces, encourage citizen participation, and promote cultural narratives that reflect the diversity of urban populations.

Public art not only enhances the aesthetic quality of cities, but also stimulates local economies by driving tourism, supporting creative entrepreneurs, and creating employment opportunities within the cultural industries sector. Creative placemaking initiatives have positive impacts on local economies, community wellbeing, and urban attractiveness. In this sense, local governments play a critical role in ensuring the sustainability of cultural sectors through supportive policies, funding mechanisms, and recognition of artists as key contributors to urban vitality.

Inclusive urban art initiatives can address broader urban challenges, such as social exclusion, gentrification, and public safety concerns. Programs like the “Urban Art Accelerator” in Pepines, the Dominican Republic, have shown how participatory art projects can strengthen social cohesion and community resilience, particularly in vulnerable urban areas. Similarly, projects such as "City Repair" in Portland, USA empower residents to collaboratively redesign their neighborhoods, transforming intersections into vibrant spaces that reflect local identity and foster interaction.

Other cities are incorporating urban art into broader regeneration and development strategies. In Bristol, UK, the city’s internationally recognized street art scene, led by artists like Banksy, has become a driver of cultural tourism and city branding. In Nairobi, Kenya, the Matatu Project has engaged local artists to decorate minibuses, blending transportation and artistic expression while generating income for creative workers. Meanwhile, Melbourne, Australia has developed legal street art lanes that attract tourists, support emerging artists, and form part of the city’s global cultural appeal.

However, successful integration of public art requires cross-sector collaboration, transparent governance frameworks, and careful urban planning. Therefore, embedding creative industries within urban policy demands clear institutional support, local participation, and alignment with broader development objectives such as Agenda 2030. For local governments, the ability to design participatory, inclusive, and sustainable public art programs becomes a key tool for advancing multiple policy objectives simultaneously.

By sharing experiences from different cities, this webinar seeks to identify practical solutions, governance models, and partnership approaches that can unlock the full potential of urban art for inclusive and sustainable city development.

CASE STUDIES

Philadelphia, United States

The **Mural Arts Philadelphia** program, with over 4,000 murals, is one of the world’s most comprehensive public art initiatives. It engages local communities, supports at-risk youth through art education, and contributes to neighborhood revitalization and tourism.

Pepines, Dominican Republic

The **Urban Art Accelerator** project focuses on inclusive urban regeneration through participatory public art, empowering vulnerable communities and promoting social cohesion in Santo Domingo.

Portland, United States

The **City Repair project** allows communities to transform intersections into art-filled community hubs, while large-scale installations such as Inversion: Plus Minus, the Stratum Project, the Woodstock Mural, and the People's Bike Library integrate public art into urban infrastructure, mobility, and identity, funded through municipal programs.

Nairobi, Kenya

The **Matatu Project** engages local artists to decorate public minibuses, blending transportation, cultural identity, and economic opportunity for creative workers, while reshaping public perceptions of informal transit systems.

Lisbon, Portugal

The **GAU (Urban Art Gallery)** project coordinates legal street art interventions, supports emerging artists, and preserves urban art heritage while integrating it into city branding and cultural tourism strategies.

Medellín, Colombia

The **city** has integrated street art and murals as part of its broader urban regeneration strategy, particularly in areas like Comuna 13. Public art serves as a vehicle for social transformation, local pride, and alternative narratives following decades of conflict.

SPEAKERS

Clement Sijenyi

Director for arts, culture, and tourism in Nairobi City County. Clement Rapudo Sijenyi is a music producer and co-founder of Calif Records in Nairobi, Kenya. He is the founder of Ngomma VAS, a Multi Channel Network that distributes local music to various media houses in Kenya and abroad.

Melisa Tarragó

External advisor of the Municipality of Cordoba, Argentina. Melisa has spent nearly six years steering Córdoba's urban-art renaissance, orchestrating, coordinating and delivering more than 260,000 m² of colour across the city—revitalising plazas, parks, bridges and walkways while curating three flagship festivals and live-art experiences for major tourism and cultural events. Currently serving as Executive Director at "La que te pinte," she champions Córdoba's innovative muralism model on the global stage, working shoulder-to-shoulder with hundreds of local artists. Guided by an inquisitive, solutions-driven mindset and an unwavering passion for colour, Melisa continues to build bridges through art and proudly promotes Córdoba's identity as the Urban Art Capital of the world, advancing sustainable creative development along the way.

MODERATOR

Jordi Pascual

Jordi Pascual coordinates the Committee on Culture of the United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG). The Committee's work centers on Culture 21 Actions, a toolkit focused on cultural rights in sustainable cities. It organizes a global award, a biennial Summit, manages a unique database of good practices, and promotes various learning and capacity-building programs for cities. As coordinator, he participates in the #culture2030goal campaign, advocating for cultural factors in the UN Agenda 2030 and Sustainable Development Goals, including the establishment of a Culture Goal. Jordi Pascual has a PhD in cultural rights and sustainable development (University of Girona) and teaches cultural rights and globalization (Open University of Catalonia).

WHAT QUESTIONS DO WE WANT TO ADDRESS IN THIS WEBINAR?

- How can urban art contribute to inclusive and sustainable urban development?
- What governance frameworks and policies are needed to promote public art initiatives?
- How can local governments engage communities, artists, and youth in urban art programs?
- What financing mechanisms can support creative industries and public art sustainability?
- How does urban art contribute to social cohesion, safety, and community identity?

AGENDA

5 min	Presentation of the initiative: "Local solutions for local SDG action", translation, recording, use of chat, etc. Introduction of the moderator by Diana Lopez Caramazana, Advisor, cities and local governments, UNDP.
10 min	Moderator's introduction to the session by Jordi Pascual, UCLG.
15 min	First experience, followed by a question from the second experience.
15 min	Second experience, followed by a question from first experience
12 min	Questions and answers from the audience.
3 min	Closing and conclusions by the moderator.

Organized by UNDP in the framework of its work with cities and local governments, this series of webinars generate a conversation between cities to highlight local solutions to implement Agenda 2030. The lessons learnt will be shared globally through UNDP's SDG Local Action networks, webpage https://sdglocalaction.org/ and YouTube channel https://www.youtube.com/@sdglocalaction8192