

GOLD VI

**Case-Based Contribution
to Chapter 8: Prospering**
*GOLD VI Report on Pathways
to urban and territorial equality*

**The role of creative and tourism
economies in tackling/reproducing
urban and regional inequalities**

In partnership with:

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The role of creative and tourism economies in tackling/reproducing urban and regional inequalities

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ORGANISATION NAME

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CITIES/COUNTRIES IT COVERS

Lisbon, Portugal

CHAPTER

8: Prospering

SUMMARY

Prospering is based on the sustainability of the cultural ecosystem of a city/territory. The loss of heritage, memory, identity and knowledge that allows people to give meaning to a place, as well as to build individual and collective identity and sense of belonging, leads to imbalances that can accentuate inequalities within and between cities, affecting all dimensions of sustainable development. **Lisbon** (Portugal) is resolving this conflict creatively with an inclusive and rights-based approach, which can be inspiring for cities that are starting to plan or reorienting development strategies linked to culture and tourism. The city is implementing a strategy focused on improving the experience of visitors and the quality of life of inhabitants, as well as the sustainability of the city's cultural system, heavily hit by the COVID-19 pandemic. Measures emphasize the role of cultural actors and sectors in empowering plural and caring communities, boosting access and engagement, tackling inequalities and building the capacities to shape a new future in the shared city. Among those measures, "*Lojas com História*" stands out as a project that addresses the conservation and revitalization of urban spaces that significantly contribute to the cultural and economic development of Lisbon.

The contribution of culture to local prosperity has focused in the last years on the potential for cultural and creative industries, alongside tourism, to generate economic growth in urban space, being part of urban revitalisation and regeneration strategies designed to foster dynamism and competitiveness of cities. Culture feeds individual and collective aspirations; it allows to build the future of societies based on values, knowledge, diversity and creativity, being one of the main sources of attractiveness of a territory. Therefore, cultural policies and tourism are increasingly entwined in development strategies that are deepening the possibilities of culture not only as an emancipating agent and generator of wealth but also a driver for equity, social peace and well-being. These strategies help to reinforce the dialogue of the economic, social, environmental and cultural dimensions of sustainable development.

Cities are confronted with a wide range of opportunities and challenges stemming from these developments, including the capacity to tackle/reproduce inequalities within cities and between cities, and to build more caring societies. Many cities have experienced an increase in tourism flows and have called into question previous growth-oriented models of tourism which have proven to be unsustainable. Besides, with the breakout of the COVID-19 pandemic, and due to the mobility and physical distancing restrictions, the massive closure of museums and heritage sites and the general breakdown of the urban daily activity, many cities have seized the opportunity to seek alternatives. Overcrowding, pressure on public services and infrastructure, uneven access to participation in public space and income-generating activity and fair working conditions, as well as the increase of centre-periphery gaps are some

of the initial impacts of rapid urban tourism growth, affecting especially the most vulnerable, that can be reverted. Other impacts include the conscription of cultural facilities and narratives into the articulation of cities with global markets, which has increased the hollowing out of cultural meaning and the fragmentation of culture.

In 2018, in the context of the global increase in urban mobility, the UCLG Committee on Culture carried out a [report](#)¹ on the relationship between culture and tourism in Barcelona in the framework of the [Leading Cities](#)² programme, which included the identification of the main conceptual elements, illustrative cases, as well as conclusions and recommendations. This was followed by a [study](#)³ conducted by experts Greg Richards and Lénia Marques, entitled “Creating synergies between cultural policy and tourism for permanent and temporary citizens”, which included case studies of cities facing similar situations such as [Amsterdam](#) (Netherlands), [Copenhagen](#) (Denmark), [Lisbon](#) (Portugal), [Montreal](#) (Canada) and [Rome](#) (Italy). The learnings from those experiences can be very helpful not only for cities facing a rapid increase of tourism flows, but for other cities that are seeking to explore the potential of cultural and creative industries and tourism considering the multi-dimensional concept of “prosperity”, and how cultural rights, diversity, heritage and creativity can be boosted along with the necessary balance of the dimensions of sustainable development, especially in the context the COVID-19 pandemic.

The case of [Lisbon](#) is particularly relevant. [Lisbon](#), capital city of Portugal, is a culturally vibrant meeting point for tradition and modernity. The centre of Lisbon has several historical neighbourhoods with important elements of built herit-

1. https://www.agenda21culture.net/sites/default/files/files/cities/content/informe_2018_bcn-eng.pdf

2. <https://www.agenda21culture.net/our-cities/leading-cities>

3. https://www.agenda21culture.net/sites/default/files/files/cities/content/informe_2018_bcn_cultural_policy_and_tourism_-eng_1.pdf

age as well as intangible heritage related to tradition, popular culture and local lifestyles. As a result of the 2008 economic crisis, when the city started to be internationally perceived as an attractive low-cost destination, the rapid increase in tourism and inward investment led to transformation of the urban landscape. The city has one of the highest ratios of tourists to residents in Europe. The popularity of the city, and the influx of foreign capital encouraged by government policy has exacerbated the housing problem. Liberalisation of rental laws has also stimulated gentrification and led to the eviction of neighbours and the disappearance of centuries-old cultural businesses – shops that mainly sell goods and sometimes services – in the centre. The city faces a huge challenge: how to manage this highly complex situation, keeping what is unique to the city, improving the quality of life of citizens and, at the same time, becoming an open, dynamic and sustainable metropolis, as envisaged in the Vision 2027 for Lisbon.

The 'Lisbon Cultural Strategy' (2017) specifically mentions the 'explosion of city tourism and city use' as a major challenge. The municipal cultural offer is based on a series of venues, facilities and events managed by the City and oriented by particularly holistic and integrative cultural strategy, with special attention to issues related to tourism in the context of culture. At the same time, Lisbon Tourism is also active in adding cultural experiences to the city. Besides, a number of cultural spaces and activities are run by the public company EGEAC (*Empresa de Gestão de Equipamentos e Animação Cultural*). In the past there were no formal links between culture and tourism, but now EGEAC is represented on the Board of Lisbon Tourism, so there is closer contact that allows challenges to be faced more easily.



Thus, the cultural strategy includes some measures specifically aimed at promoting prosperity, strengthening the interlinkages of culture and sustainable tourism:

- The intensification of cultural and recreational outdoor practices and the tendency towards oversupply and "festivalisation", as a result of the rapid increase of tourism flows, are being dealt with using strategies on timing, location and decentralisation. This contributes to tackling the cultural supply divide between the centre and the periphery (that is, the lack of cultural infrastructure and offer in peripheral areas), among other issues, helping to connect with an increasingly fragmented population of citizens to avoid inequalities. A sound example is "*Lisboa na Rua*", a major festival that moves around the different neighbourhoods outside the centre, including areas with migrants. The festival is for residents, but also new residents and visitors.
- The potential divide between more local, community-based events and a more globalised commercial offer, which is usually promoted to tourists, is tackled with activities aimed at boosting cultural diversity, access and engagement, reinforcing the collective memory

Stickers on the website 'Lisbon Does Not Love Mass Tourism'
Source: "Creating synergies between cultural policy and tourism for permanent and temporary citizens" (2018)

of the city, emphasised as a means of “rooting and defending the right to the city for residents, transitory residents and tourists.” These measures target specific groups such as senior citizens and the younger generations, but also mobile populations. The consideration and involvement of all kinds of residents and visitors helps to avoid simplified ideas about the phenomena of transformation and revitalization (which can lead, among others, to promote strategies to dynamize cities through tourism that in some cases might lead to gentrification and the expulsion of neighbours from their communities). For instance, at the Monument to the Discoveries (where 92% of the visitors are tourists) the Municipality funded a basement exhibition on themes like racism and slavery, which also attracts local audiences.

- Cultural and creative resources are a crucial element in the city’s touristic appeal. The internationalization of Lisbon is partly generated by the success of Portuguese artists in international circuits and the growing attractiveness of the city with international artists, who also contribute to its visibility at the international level. A fund has been



created to use part of the revenues generated by the tourism tax to improve the experience of tourists and the quality of life of the people of Lisbon, as well as the sustainability of the city’s cultural system. Measures include financial and non-financial support for artists (housing, working spaces, logistics, promotion), improvements to the Ajuda National Palace and the Jewish Museum of Lisbon, as well as the “*Lojas com História*” (‘Historical Shops’) programme.

Protected shops in Lisbon in the framework of the programme “*Lojas com História*”
Source and credits: “*Lojas com História*”

‘*Lojas com História*’. Protecting cultural heritage as a source of local prosperity

The ‘*Lojas com História*’ (‘Historical Shops’) policy was launched in February 2015 in response to numerous closures of specialist stores and old local businesses. In 2017 the programme was recognized by URBACT as a good practice. Although it was developed before the COVID-19 breakout, it is a relevant case in the current context as it addresses the survival and revitalization of spaces that significantly contribute to sustain the cultural and economic sectors in the city. Essentially, the programme recognises the need to intervene in the property market in order to protect historic and cultural spaces from the pressures of globalisation and speculation. The shops are protected and their closure is prevented under several criteria defined by an extensive regulation. As an example, one of the main conditions is that the shops must have at least 25 years in business. The impact is most felt in the preservation of the material (facilities) and immaterial (the goods/service they sell) heritage.

'*Lojas com História*' seeks to preserve and conserve commercial establishments with cultural heritage or particular significance, by giving rent protection for 5-10 years. Landlords are mainly private. The law predicts that the rent can be updated, and this programme reverses that law for shops that are recognised as '*Lojas com História*'. This principle has also been extended to cultural associations. By July 2016, 64 businesses, from restaurants to pastry shops, had received the label, and 19 additional shops were recognized in March 2017. Today, more than 250 businesses have received the label. From these, 159 are restaurants and 105 are retail shops. With this initiative, the city of Lisbon can not only help and enhance traditional businesses and protect them from real estate speculation, but also conserve local cultural heritage, avoiding the homogenisation of the city centre.

'*Lojas com História*' is a good example of an intervention that helps to conserve spaces that are, at the same time, essential for local cultural life, identity, social cohesion and economic development, and which are also of interest for visitors and international citizens. The project enables the exercise of cultural rights and the participation in the co-creation of the city by residents and temporary citizens, celebrating diversity and embracing the shared building of the narrative and imageries of Lisbon based on a common heritage.

Protected shop in Lisbon in the framework of the programme "*Lojas com História*"
Source and credits: "*Lojas com História*"

This example can be potentially useful also for cities in developing countries with large informal economies and settlements, where tourism might be often more focused on nature. The preservation of identity and heritage, both cultural and natural, is key in the development of prospering pathways capable of addressing urban and territorial inequalities. It implies not only the conservation of urban spaces and the environment, but also business growth and its sustainable diversification through the reorientation of tourism activity, based on the collective discovery of the common cultural assets of communities and their sustainable development.

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AAVV, 2017, Lojas com História, Tinta da China

AAVV, 2020, Lojas com História, Tinta da China

PROSPERING

This paper has been produced as a Case-Based Contribution to the sixth Global Report on Local Democracy and Decentralization (GOLD VI): the flagship publication of the organized constituency of local and regional governments represented in United Cities and Local Governments. The GOLD VI report has been produced in partnership with the Development Planning Unit (University College London), through the programme Knowledge in Action for Urban Equality (KNOW). GOLD VI focuses on how local and regional governments can address the local manifestations of growing inequalities and contribute to create “Pathways to urban and territorial equality”. The GOLD VI report has been produced through a large-scale international co-production process, bringing together over a hundred representatives of local and regional governments, academics and civil society organizations. This paper is an outcome of this process and is part of the *Pathways to Equality Cases Repository*, which collects the over 60 Case-Based Contributions produced as part of the GOLD VI report.

In particular, the present paper has contributed to Chapter 8 on “Prospering”, which focuses on prosperity as a culturally specific and multi-dimensional concept, including income but not only. The chapter explores key drivers of urban inequality reflected in the scarcity of decent work and in social-spatial disparities in the location of different productive activities within cities. The chapter analyses how local and regional governments can increase decent work opportunities, and, drawing on the impacts of COVID-19, how they can mitigate the effects of future pandemics and of climate change on decent work, urban prosperity and inequality.

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