

Culture as Care

Participation, Health and
Collective Well-Being in
European Cities

*Policy Proposals on
Culture for the People*

Culture as Care. Participation, Health and Collective Well-Being in European Cities

*A Culture Next Policy Report on Culture for the People
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CONTENTS

CONTEXT AND RATIONALE **ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.**

CULTURE NEXT RECOMMENDATIONS **ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.**

KEY TAKEAWAYS

CULTURE AS CARE IN EUROPEAN CITIES

ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.

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ALIGNMENT WITH EUROPEAN AND INTERNATIONAL POLICY FRAMEWORKS **ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.**

WHERE CULTURE NEXT EXTENDS OR CHALLENGES EXISTING APPROACHES **ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.**

RECOMMENDATIONS

ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.

FOR EUROPEAN POLICY CREATORS AND DECISION MAKERS

ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.

FOR NATIONAL GOVERNMENTS

ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.

FOR EUROPEAN CITIES (INCLUDING CULTURE NEXT MEMBERS)

ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.

DEFINED.

FOR VARIOUS CULTURAL NETWORKS AND PLATFORMS

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FOR CULTURAL OPERATORS

ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.

FOR CULTURE NEXT AND ITS POLICY AND ADVOCACY TASK FORCE

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DEFINED.

AN INSPIRATION FOR OTHER ACTORS AT GLOBAL LEVEL

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Context and Rationale

Culture Next is a European network supporting European Capital of Culture (ECoC) candidate and ECoC cities, awarded or not, to implement culture-led local development programmes and policies, building on the partnerships, processes, and capacities mobilised through the ECoC journey.

Culture as Care focuses on cultural participation as both (a) a democratic cornerstone and (b) a driver of well-being and social cohesion. The theme responds to a persistent gap: while cultural participation contributes to civic engagement, belonging and resilience, many people - especially young people - face structural barriers (socioeconomic inequality, geographic exclusion, underrepresentation in decision-making), alongside a major "soft barrier": relevance. Cultural programming and infrastructure often reflect traditional definitions of culture that do not resonate with young people's evolving identities, practices and lived realities; as a result, culture is frequently perceived as "not for me" or "irrelevant". This limits participation and weakens culture's potential to empower, connect, and include. A shift is therefore needed—from designing participation for young people to enabling participation by young people, recognising youth not only as audiences but also as co-creators, curators and decision-makers.

At the same time, European urban areas are facing a multidimensional well-being challenge, with rising mental health pressures, social fragmentation and inequalities. Culture has a distinct role in addressing these challenges: arts engagement supports resilience and connectedness, reduces isolation and strengthens intergenerational solidarity. For cities, the challenge is to move beyond isolated projects and embed culture systematically into strategies for collective care and well-being, through awareness-building, cross-sector partnerships (culture, health, education, social), and evidence frameworks that help communicate impact.

While this report and policy paper focuses on youth participation and well-being, Culture Next recognises that culture for the people also encompasses other pressing societal challenges that were not the primary focus of the two conferences. These include demographic ageing, the inclusion of vulnerable and forcibly displaced communities, the need to counter polarisation and manipulation in public discourse, the protection of freedom of expression, and the role of culture in trauma recovery and peacebuilding. These dimensions remain integral to Culture Next’s broader policy agenda.

Cities are uniquely positioned as laboratories for policy innovation: they can pilot participatory governance, cultural mapping, and co-creation methods that respond flexibly to local needs. Culture Next’s network format strengthens this by enabling translocal experimentation, knowledge exchange, mobility and collective advocacy.

Culture Next’s position

Culture Next understands culture as a fundamental public good and a core component of social infrastructure, essential to democratic participation, collective well-being and social cohesion in European urban areas. In a context marked by rising mental health challenges, social fragmentation, inequalities in access, and declining trust in institutions, culture must be recognised not only for its intrinsic value, but also for its capacity to create conditions of care, belonging and agency.

From the perspective of Culture Next, **participation is the central mechanism through which culture becomes care.** Cultural participation, when meaningfully designed and equitably supported, enables people to connect with others, express themselves, feel recognised, and exercise agency in shaping their environments. Participation is therefore not an auxiliary dimension of cultural policy, but a structural condition for culture’s contribution to health, well-being and democratic life.

Culture Next’s position is informed by the lived experience of European cities engaged in European Capital of Culture processes, both awarded and non-awarded. These cities demonstrate that culture-led development is most

impactful when it moves beyond consumption-based models and embraces co-creation, shared ownership and participatory governance.

In this sense, Culture Next advocates for a shift that has practical implications for cultural planning, delivery and evaluation across ECoC processes and beyond:

- from culture for people to culture with people,
- from audiences and visitors to participants, co-creators and contributors,
- from isolated cultural projects to embedded cultural ecosystems of care.

This shift requires greater conceptual clarity and consistency in how cultural roles—such as audience, participant, volunteer or co-creator—are defined, applied and evaluated in cultural strategies, programmes and bid commitments.

A key dimension of this position concerns youth participation. Young people across Europe face disproportionate barriers to cultural participation, driven by economic precarity, spatial inequality, and persistent underrepresentation in cultural decision-making. At the same time, young people are active cultural creators in informal, community-based and digital contexts. Culture Next argues that cultural policy must recognise youth not primarily as future audiences, but as present cultural agents, whose perspectives are essential to relevance, innovation and long-term sustainability. Enabling youth agency in culture is not only a matter of inclusion, but a prerequisite for resilient cultural ecosystems.

Culture Next positions culture as **a form of preventive, regenerative and relational care**, understood not as one-directional support or dependency, but as a reciprocal and interdependent process. Engagement in arts and cultural practices contributes to physical, mental and social well-being by creating spaces of mutual recognition, shared experience and collective responsibility.

This understanding of care is particularly relevant in intergenerational contexts, where cultural participation enables exchange, solidarity and co-presence across age groups, rather than separating care into provider–recipient roles. These effects are particularly visible when cultural participation is embedded in everyday life (schools, neighbourhoods, public spaces, workplaces) and when cultural spaces are reimagined as infrastructures of care, accessible, welcoming and responsive to diverse needs.

Crucially, **Culture Next rejects the framing of culture as a substitute for social or health policy. Instead, it promotes cross-sector collaboration**, where culture works alongside health, education and social services in integrated approaches to well-being. This requires new governance models, shared investment frameworks and evaluation tools that can articulate culture's contribution without reducing it to instrumental metrics.

Finally, Culture Next asserts that cities are pivotal actors in advancing this agenda. As the level of governance closest to citizens, local and regional authorities are uniquely positioned to experiment with participatory models, build cross-sector alliances and translate local practice into policy innovation. Through its network, Culture Next facilitates translocal learning, mobility and advocacy, ensuring that local experiences inform European policy debates and contribute to a shared vision of culture as care.

Culture Next also acknowledges that culture for the people should not be conceived in an exclusively anthropocentric way. Cultural practices and policies increasingly intersect with environmental awareness, biodiversity and the health of the biosphere, shaping how communities relate to non-human life and shared ecosystems. From this perspective, care extends beyond human well-being to include the conditions that sustain life and interdependence more broadly.

In this sense, **Culture as Care is not a thematic niche, but a strategic orientation for cultural policy**: one that places participation, health and collective well-being at the heart of how culture is planned, governed and valued in European cities.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Key takeaways

Culture as Care in European Cities

The following key takeaways synthesise the main insights emerging from the Culture Next conferences on youth participation and on culture, health and well-being, as well as from the Thematic Working Group on the relationship of culture and nature. According to these:

1. **Cultural participation is a condition for well-being, not a supplementary benefit.** Cultural participation contributes to mental and social well-being by fostering connection, expression, belonging and agency. These effects are most evident when participation is regular, accessible and embedded in everyday life. Culture should therefore be recognised as a **preventive and enabling factor** for well-being, rather than as a marginal or symbolic complement to health and social policies.
2. **Participation must be meaningful to generate care.** Access alone does not guarantee participation. Participation generates well-being only when people perceive cultural offers as relevant to their lives and identities. This requires a shift from audience-centred models toward **co-creation, shared ownership and participatory governance**, particularly in relation to young people.
3. **Youth are cultural agents, not future beneficiaries.** Young people are already shaping cultural life through informal, community-based and digital practices, yet remain underrepresented in formal cultural institutions and decision-making. Enabling youth agency in culture (through paid roles, co-curation, and shared governance) is essential for relevance, equity and long-term sustainability of cultural ecosystems. Instead of forcing youth to fit into existing administrative constraints, create a dedicated support policy tailored to youth and their informal engagements.
4. **Cultural spaces can function as infrastructures of care.** Libraries, museums, theatres and cultural centres can operate as **everyday**

spaces of care, offering safety, belonging, cross-generational interaction and opportunities for expression. I would nuance this. Cultural spaces need not be designed by health specialists; we do need arts spaces to remain arts spaces. Arts spaces intrinsically have a role in social cohesion and well-being. Beyond that intrinsic role, the potential is to add new functions to cultural spaces.

5. Culture's contribution to well-being is relational and collective.

Well-being effects emerge not only from individual cultural experiences, but from **collective processes**: shared rituals, group participation, community storytelling and intergenerational exchange. Cultural policy should therefore prioritise relational and community-based formats alongside individual access.

6. Cross-sector collaboration is essential, but culture must retain autonomy.

Sustainable culture-and-well-being strategies require collaboration between culture, health, education and social sectors. However, culture should not be reduced to a delivery mechanism for health outcomes. Its value lies precisely in its openness, symbolic power and capacity to generate meaning beyond instrumental goals.

7. Local and regional authorities are strategic enablers of culture as care.

Local and regional authorities are uniquely positioned to build bridges between cultural, health, education and social actors, creating the conditions for collaboration that no single sector can achieve alone. Through local governance, proximity to communities and the ability to connect diverse stakeholders, they can enable, support and institutionalise participatory and cross-sector approaches to culture and well-being. In this sense, municipalities act as laboratories for developing integrated strategies of care, inclusion and community resilience.

8. Evidence and narratives must evolve together.

While evidence frameworks are essential for policy legitimacy, culture's impact on well-being cannot be captured by metrics alone. Quantitative indicators must be complemented by **qualitative narratives**, lived experiences and local knowledge that communicate why culture matters for people's lives.

9. Environmental transition requires cultural imagination and emotional engagement.

Sustainability challenges cannot be

addressed through technical measures and policy regulation alone. People are more likely to engage with environmental transition when it is connected to everyday experiences, local identities and emotionally meaningful narratives. Artistic practices, storytelling and participatory cultural experiences therefore play an important role in translating ecological challenges into forms that citizens can relate to, imagine themselves within, and collectively act upon.

10. **Reconnecting people with their living environments strengthens both ecological and social resilience.** Cultural participation can deepen people's relationship with nature and public space by fostering attentiveness, care and sensory engagement with the living environment. Place-based and participatory cultural practices—such as walks, storytelling, listening exercises and community encounters with local ecosystems—can strengthen belonging, ecological awareness and collective responsibility, while also contributing to mental well-being and social cohesion.

Alignment with European and International Policy Frameworks

Culture Next's position on culture as care builds on and reinforces existing European and international policy frameworks related to cultural participation, health, social cohesion and urban development, while translating these strategic orientations into concrete, city-level practice, extended further by cultural exchanges and shared learning.

1. **Where Culture Next reinforces existing directions.** Culture Next's position aligns strongly with several European and international policy orientations, while grounding them in city-level practice.
2. **Culture as a preventive approach on mental health.** Culture Next reinforces the growing consensus—reflected in EU Council conclusions, OMC processes and WHO guidance—that participation in cultural activities strengthens protective factors for mental health, reduces loneliness and supports resilience. Culture Next contributes concrete city-based evidence showing how cultural participation can

operate as **preventive care**, especially when embedded in everyday settings.

3. **Cross-sector collaboration as a foundation for care.** Culture Next aligns with growing calls to strengthen collaboration across policy and practice domains by demonstrating practical governance models at the local level. Through partnerships linking culture with health, education, youth, social care and environmental actors, member cities show how cultural participation can contribute to broader objectives related to well-being, inclusion, sustainability and community resilience. The network's contribution lies in demonstrating how such cross-sector approaches can be designed, governed and sustained in practice, not only why they are desirable.
4. **Access, inclusion and social cohesion.** Culture Next supports the emphasis placed by European institutions on access to culture as a driver of social inclusion and cohesion. It reinforces the understanding of culture as a means to combat isolation, exclusion and inequality, particularly in relation to young people and other underrepresented groups.
5. **Cities as engines of policy innovation.** Culture Next's work strongly aligns with EU recognition of cities as key actors in policy experimentation and implementation. By connecting ECoC candidate and legacy cities, the network amplifies local innovation into transnational learning and European-level advocacy.
6. **Cross-sector collaboration between culture and health.** Culture Next aligns with calls to strengthen collaboration between cultural and health sectors by demonstrating practical governance models at city level: joint programmes, partnerships with social services, and cultural spaces working alongside health and education actors. The network's contribution lies in showing how such collaboration can be implemented locally, not only why it is desirable.
7. **Access, inclusion and social cohesion.** Culture Next supports the emphasis placed by European institutions on access to culture as a driver of social inclusion and cohesion. It reinforces the understanding of culture to combat isolation, exclusion and inequality, particularly in relation to young people and other underrepresented groups.

8. **Cities as engines of policy innovation.** Culture Next's work strongly aligns with EU recognition of cities as key actors in policy experimentation and implementation. By connecting ECoC candidate and legacy cities, the network amplifies local innovation into transnational learning and European-level advocacy.

Where Culture Next Extends or Challenges Existing Approaches

At the same time, drawing on the practical experience of its member cities, Culture Next identifies key areas where prevailing policy approaches can be extended, nuanced or challenged to better reflect the realities of participation, agency and collective well-being on the ground. While aligned with many policy frameworks, Culture Next also **extends and challenges prevailing assumptions**, based on the lived experience of cities.

1. **From access to agency.** Many policy documents prioritise *access to culture*. Culture Next argues that access is a fundamental precondition for participation, while emphasising that access alone does not guarantee agency or inclusion. Without agency, especially for young people, access risks reproducing existing hierarchies. Culture Next therefore challenges policymakers to move from access-based indicators toward **agency-based participation**, including co-decision and co-creation.
2. **Against over-instrumentalisation of culture.** Culture Next cautions against framing culture solely as a tool to achieve health or social outcomes. While recognising its contribution to well-being, the network challenges overly instrumental approaches that risk undermining artistic freedom, cultural diversity and intrinsic value. Culture's strength lies in its openness and ambiguity, which should be protected even within cross-sector strategies.
3. **Beyond individualised well-being.** Policy frameworks often focus on individual mental health outcomes. Culture Next extends this perspective by emphasising **collective and relational well-being**, rooted in shared experiences, community processes and social bonds. This requires policies that value group participation and community-based cultural work besides individual engagement.

4. **Rethinking measurement and impact.** Culture Next aligns with current policy recognition of the need for mixed evaluation approaches, while highlighting persistent gaps in their practical application. In many contexts, evaluation still relies predominantly on quantitative indicators. Culture Next calls for more systematic integration of qualitative evidence, narratives and local knowledge into impact assessment practices.
5. **Youth as present actors, not future audiences.** While many strategies refer to investing in youth for the future, Culture Next insists on recognising young people as present cultural actors. This challenges policies that confine youth participation to consultative or symbolic roles and calls instead for structural inclusion in governance, funding and programme design. It also requires cultural systems to evolve in response to young people's realities, rather than expecting young people to adapt to existing institutional models.
6. **Caring for cultural workers as a condition for culture as care.** Policy discussions on culture and care often overlook the working conditions of cultural workers themselves. Drawing on the experience of its member cities, Culture Next stresses that culture as care cannot be sustained without addressing the structural precarity of the cultural sector, including fair working conditions, adequate remuneration and access to social protection. In contexts where cultural workers collaborate closely with health, social care or conflict-related settings, greater attention must also be paid to their mental well-being, safety and access to support mechanisms.

Recommendations

Advancing Culture as Care in European Cities

The following recommendations translate the key takeaways of this policy paper into **actionable directions** for different stakeholder groups involved in shaping cultural participation, health and collective well-being. They reflect the shared responsibility of European institutions, national governments, local and regional authorities, cultural networks, cultural operators and Culture Next itself in embedding culture as care through policy, governance and practice.

For European policy creators and decision makers

At European level, the priority is to create enabling frameworks that recognise cultural participation as a cross-cutting public good and support cities in integrating culture into well-being, youth and social cohesion agendas.

1. **Embed cultural participation within cross-sector EU strategies**, including mental health, youth, social inclusion and urban development, recognising culture as a preventive and enabling factor for well-being rather than a standalone cultural domain.
2. **Promote participatory and agency-based approaches** by encouraging funding criteria and policy guidance that value co-creation, shared governance and youth leadership in cultural initiatives.
3. **Support cities as policy laboratories** by strengthening EU instruments that facilitate peer learning, experimentation and transnational exchange between cities working on culture, health and participation.
4. **Advance integrated evidence frameworks** that allow cultural participation to be articulated in relation to broader public goals (health, inclusion, quality of life), while safeguarding qualitative and narrative dimensions of impact.
5. **Ensure policy coherence across EU programmes** (Creative Europe, Erasmus+, ESF+, Horizon Europe) so that cultural participation and well-being are addressed in complementary rather than fragmented ways.
6. **Recognise and support non-metropolitan, and small+medium-sized urban areas**, which often demonstrate strong innovation in culture-as-care approaches but face structural disadvantages in visibility and resources.
7. **Recognise culture as an enabling dimension of environmental transition**, integrating artistic, participatory and narrative-based approaches into European sustainability and climate frameworks alongside technological and economic measures.
8. **Support interdisciplinary experimentation connecting culture, science, ecology and civic participation**, particularly through funding schemes

that encourage local innovation and transnational exchange around sustainability challenges of sustainability and care.

For national governments

At national level, the challenge is to translate European orientations into coherent frameworks that enable local and regional authorities to act, while reducing structural barriers to participation and cross-sector collaboration.

1. **Integrate culture into national well-being and mental health strategies**, explicitly recognising cultural participation as a preventive and supportive factor alongside health and social services.
2. **Create funding mechanisms that encourage cross-sector collaboration**, allowing cultural, health, education and social actors to design and implement joint initiatives without administrative fragmentation and hassle.
3. **Strengthen equitable access to culture** by addressing structural barriers related to affordability, mobility, rural and peri-urban access, and by supporting informal and community-based cultural practices.
4. **Support youth agency in cultural policy**, including through paid participation structures, capacity-building programmes and formal recognition of youth-led cultural work.
5. **Invest in capacity-building for local and regional authorities and cultural operators**, enabling them to design participatory, inclusive and care-oriented cultural ecosystems.
6. **Align cultural policy evaluation frameworks** with broader social objectives, avoiding narrow output-based metrics and enabling learning-oriented evaluation.
7. **Encourage cooperation between cultural, environmental and educational sectors**, enabling long-term programmes that connect ecological awareness with cultural participation and local community engagement.

8. **Support cultural approaches that strengthen ecological literacy and environmental imagination**, particularly through initiatives involving public space, heritage, storytelling and community-based participation.
9. **Promote proportionate evaluation frameworks, balancing quantitative indicators with qualitative evidence** while avoiding reporting requirements that place disproportionate burdens on smaller cultural, community-based and youth-led organisations.

For Local and Regional Authorities (including Culture Next members)

Local and regional authorities are at the forefront of implementing culture as care; their role is to embed participation, agency and well-being into everyday governance, spaces and practices.

1. **Adopt participation-by-design principles**, ensuring that citizens (and particularly young people) are involved from agenda-setting to evaluation, not only in consultation phases.
2. **Enable youth as co-creators and decision-makers**, through youth councils, co-curation roles, paid advisory positions and shared governance mechanisms within cultural institutions.
3. **Reimagine cultural spaces as infrastructures of care**, making libraries, museums, theatres and cultural centres accessible, welcoming and responsive to diverse needs and life situations.
4. **Develop city or regional Culture, Health and Well-Being strategies**, and use them to build durable cross-sector collaboration between culture, health, education and social services, supported by shared objectives, coordinated governance and, where possible, joint or aligned budgets.
5. **Fund and support every day and local cultural practices**, including informal, temporary and community-led initiatives that foster belonging and social connection.

6. **Invest in peer learning and exchange**, using networks such as Culture Next to test, refine and scale participatory and well-being-oriented approaches and set up other collaboration practices through community programmes such as Creative Europe, Erasmus+, Interreg, etc.
7. **Communicate cultural impact through stories and data**, combining evidence with lived experiences to build political and public support.
8. **Integrate culture into local sustainability and climate-transition strategies**, recognising cultural participation as a tool for strengthening ecological awareness, behavioural change and civic ownership of environmental policies.
9. **Develop participatory and place-based cultural formats that reconnect citizens with local natural environments**, including artistic interventions, sensory experiences, community storytelling and nature-based public programming.

For various cultural networks and platforms

Cultural networks play a key role in amplifying local practice, shaping narratives and influencing policy agendas at national and European levels.

1. **Translate city-level practice into policy-relevant knowledge**, curating case studies, frameworks and tools that can be adopted by policymakers and practitioners.
2. **Advocate for participation and agency as quality standards**, promoting co-creation and shared governance as core principles of cultural policy and practice.
3. **Facilitate cross-sector dialogue**, bringing together cultural, health, youth and social actors across borders to build shared understanding and alliances.
4. **Support collective learning and experimentation**, enabling members to test new approaches to culture, care and well-being in safe, collaborative environments.

5. **Strengthen the voice of cities and practitioners** in European policy debates, ensuring that local realities inform strategic decisions.
6. **Facilitate exchange on culture and sustainability practices** between local and regional authorities and cultural actors, documenting methodologies that combine ecological transition, participation and artistic experimentation.
7. **Advocate for stronger recognition of cultural approaches within environmental and urban policy debates**, highlighting the role of storytelling, imagination and collective experience in sustainability transitions.
8. **Facilitate exchange on culture and sustainability practices between local and regional authorities and cultural actors**, documenting methodologies that combine ecological transition, participation and artistic experimentation.
9. **Advocate for stronger recognition of cultural approaches within environmental and urban policy debates**, highlighting the role of storytelling, imagination and collective experience in sustainability transitions.

For cultural operators

Cultural operators are the frontline actors in making culture a lived experience of care, relevance and belonging for diverse communities.

1. **Design programmes with communities, not only for them**, prioritising co-creation, responsiveness and long-term relationships over short-term audience growth.
2. **Lower participation thresholds**, addressing barriers related to cost, time, language, stigma and perceived relevance.
3. **Work across sectors**, partnering with schools, health providers, social organisations and community groups to embed culture in everyday life.

4. **Create safe and inclusive spaces**, where different generations, identities and experiences can meet, express themselves and build trust.
5. **Value process as much as output**, recognising that well-being and care often emerge through ongoing participation rather than final products.
6. **Document and communicate impact**, using both qualitative narratives and simple indicators to demonstrate cultural value to funders and partners.
7. **Contribute to public awareness of arts engagement as a health-supportive behaviour** by integrating well-being narratives into communication, programming and partnerships, and by working with local health, education and community organisations to reach broader audiences.
8. **Develop artistic and participatory formats that make environmental challenges tangible and emotionally accessible**, using storytelling, sensory engagement and co-creation to strengthen public connection to sustainability issues.
9. **Collaborate with environmental organisations, researchers and local communities to create interdisciplinary projects** that connect ecological responsibility with cultural participation and everyday life.
10. **Hand over responsibility as well as participation, enabling communities and younger generations** to initiate, design and lead cultural activities with appropriate professional support and access to networks.

For Culture Next's leadership and policy experts

As a network of European cities, Culture Next has a strategic responsibility to consolidate learning, amplify voices and drive policy change. In the short to medium term (12–24 months), Culture Next will prioritise actions that strengthen youth participation practices, culture–health policy integration at city level, and public awareness of culture as a contributor to well-being. These priorities will guide the network's conferences, policy outputs, peer-learning formats and

advocacy efforts, complementing the broader set of recommendations outlined below.

1. **Consolidate outcomes of conferences and thematic working groups** into clear, accessible policy messages tailored to different audiences (EU institutions, national ministries, local and regional authorities).
2. **Develop practical toolkits** for member cities on youth participation, culture–health collaboration and participatory governance.
3. **Strengthen advocacy alliances** with European and international networks working on culture, health, youth and urban development.
4. **Support member cities in piloting and documenting innovation**, turning local experiments into transferable policy models.
5. **Maintain the connected-actions approach**, ensuring continuous feedback loops between practice, learning, policy development and advocacy.
6. **Position Culture Next as a reference platform** for culture as care in European urban areas, contributing proactively to future policy debates and frameworks.
7. **Position arts and cultural participation as a health-supportive behaviour** within Culture Next’s advocacy work, contributing to public and policy awareness while safeguarding the autonomy and intrinsic value of cultural practice.
8. **Position culture and participation as essential dimensions of sustainability transition** within European cultural advocacy, strengthening connections between ecological responsibility, wellbeing and democratic engagement.
9. **Support member cities in testing and documenting participatory cultural methodologies** related to climate transition, nature connection and environmental imagination, turning local experimentation into transferable European practices.

An inspiration for other actors at global level

The experience of Culture Next offers concrete reference points for local and regional authorities, cultural networks and international organisations worldwide that are seeking to strengthen participation, health and collective well-being through culture, while working within complex and resource-constrained governance environments.

1. **Treat culture as part of local social infrastructure**, by explicitly linking cultural participation to objectives such as social connection, mental well-being and civic engagement within urban and regional strategies, while continuing to develop and implement dedicated cultural sector strategies and plans.
2. **Anchor cultural policy in city-level practice**, where local and regional authorities and local cultural actors are close enough to communities to identify needs, test participatory approaches and adjust them over time.
3. **Move beyond access-focused participation models** and introduce mechanisms that allow people—particularly young people—to influence programming priorities, resource allocation and the use of cultural spaces.
4. **Integrate cultural participation into everyday settings**, such as schools, neighbourhood centres, libraries, public spaces and workplaces, making engagement regular and familiar rather than exceptional.
5. **Develop collaboration frameworks between culture and health**, including shared programmes, referral pathways or co-hosted activities, while maintaining clear boundaries that protect artistic autonomy.
6. **Use cultural spaces as multifunctional community assets**, where artistic activity can coexist with learning, social support, intergenerational exchange and informal care practices.
7. **Support collective cultural practices**, such as group participation, community-based projects and local rituals, which strengthen social bonds and generate well-being at community level.

8. **Document outcomes in ways that speak to decision-makers**, combining simple indicators (participation frequency, diversity of participants) with qualitative accounts of lived experience and local change.
9. **Invest in peer learning between cities and regions**, using networks and exchanges to share concrete tools, governance models and lessons learned, rather than replicating programmes wholesale.
10. **Allow cultural policies to evolve incrementally**, recognising that participation and care-oriented approaches require time, trust and long-term institutional learning and awareness-raising rather than short-term project cycles.
11. **Recognise that sustainability transitions require cultural and social transformation** in addition to technological innovation and therefore invest in participatory cultural practices that strengthen collective imagination and public engagement.
12. **Encourage locally grounded cultural approaches to ecology**, where communities can connect environmental challenges to everyday experiences, local identities and shared narratives rather than only abstract global frameworks.