

# SUPPORTING RESILIENCE AND RELAUNCHING POST-COVID-19 CULTURAL ACTIVITIES IN THE CITY OF DAKAR (2020 - 2022)



## AGENDA 2030 - SDGs



## CULTURE 21: ACTIONS - COMMITMENTS

- 5. CULTURE AND ECONOMY
- 8. CULTURE, INFORMATION AND KNOWLEDGE

RESILIENCE, DEVELOPMENT, ECONOMIC,  
SUSTAINABLE, REGENERATION, SUPPORT,  
EMPLOYMENT, INSTITUTIONAL, DIGITAL

# 1. Dakar and culture

Dakar is the capital of Senegal, and is a place that brings together modernity and tradition. It is full of museums, historical monuments, and a number of natural and cultural sites, including Gorée, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The city is a hub of cultural life in Africa, hosting internationally recognized events. As the gateway to Senegal, Dakar has established itself as a tourism city, with a notable level of dynamic business tourism supported by renowned hotel facilities, as well as its numerous events related to music, visual arts, fashion, cinema, literature, and artisan crafts. Off the coast of the city lies the island of Gorée, a World Heritage Site, which offers a significant look into human history. Dakar has developed a culture and tourism policy that is often used as an example at the regional (WAEMU, ECOWAS), continental (in Africa), and international levels.

The cultural impact of COVID-19 in Dakar was reflected in the closure of cultural venues during the different waves of the pandemic. The artistic and cultural community was severely impacted, leading to great insecurity for culture sector workers. The city's Department of Culture and Tourism (DCT) has strongly encouraged the artistic community to use digital dissemination strategies to maintain the relationship between cultural activities and the public. The municipal government has understood the need to develop a policy for revitalization, with measures and strategies to mitigate the impacts of the pandemic on the artistic and cultural community.

The city's local cultural public policy is in line with Agenda 21 for culture and adheres to global frameworks, in particular the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the United Nations 2030 Agenda, as well as the African Union's Agenda 2063, insofar as Dakar aims to foster access to culture for all local populations, to protect and promote a diversity of cultural expressions (UNESCO 2005 Convention), and a better overall level of cultural diversity in the current context of globalization.



**THE PROJECT AIMS TO STRENGTHEN THE RESILIENCE OF DAKAR'S ARTS AND CULTURE COMMUNITY IN THE WAKE OF COVID-19.**

## 2. Project goals and implementation

### 2.1. Main goal and specific objectives

The project aims to strengthen the resilience of Dakar's arts and culture community in the wake of COVID-19, and to project strategies for the recovery of post-pandemic cultural activities.

Specific Objectives:

- Identify priority actions that would strengthen the resilience of the arts and culture community in the context of the health crisis.
- To prevent the blocking factors and negative impacts of the pandemic on the cultural sector in Dakar in order to initiate the progressive revival of cultural activities.
- To offer technical, pedagogical, and financial support for reviving and resuming cultural activities at the local level.
- Advocate for a return to normal life through a paradigm shift to help populations deprived of access to culture during the pandemic.
- Learn from the pandemic to rethink arts and cultural practices based on solid digital strategies.



## 2.2. Project development

### Beneficiary population

Artistic and cultural community.

### Main actions

Preventive closure of cultural venues, support for resilience, targeting of the most impacted cultural sub-sectors, financial support to build resilience and initiate the revival of cultural activities, support for resuming cultural activities post COVID-19.

### Associated entities

Mayor's office, DCT, Senegalese cultural press, artistic and cultural community.

### Other associated governments

19 communes in Dakar where the sociocultural centres are located.

### Obstacles encountered

Travel restrictions, compliance with COVID-19 health measures and protocols, emergency and stress management for cultural actors.

**THE PROJECT INCORPORATES DIGITAL STRATEGIES TO  
RETHINK ARTS AND CULTURE PRACTICES.**

## 3. Impacts

### 3.1. Direct impacts

The implementation of the project prevented the collapse of the cultural sector, increased the purchasing power of cultural actors, and revitalized artistic and cultural creativity. It has served as a case study for the city, which has displayed a true willingness and proactive capacity to revive its ailing cultural sector. The project incorporates digital strategies to rethink arts and culture practices.

### 3.2. Assessment

The evaluation goals of the project were entrusted to the DCT as directed by city hall. Concrete actions have been taken around resilience against the negative impacts and effects of the pandemic. Further actions have been taken to support the re-launch of cultural activities post-COVID-19. To evaluate the projects, the DCT relied on the activity and financial reports of the cultural actors, in person visits, and exchanges with project leaders.



**THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROJECT PREVENTED THE COLLAPSE OF THE CULTURAL SECTOR, INCREASED THE PURCHASING POWER OF CULTURAL ACTORS, AND REVITALIZED ARTISTIC AND CULTURAL CREATIVITY.**

### 3.3. Key factors

- The city's ability to listen to the needs of the sector and its proactive approach towards the artistic and cultural community.
- Technical, pedagogical, and financial support for the artistic and cultural community.
- DCT's skills in project design and management.
- The political will of the town hall to make the capital a global cultural metropolis.

### 3.4. Continuity

A mid-term evaluation of the project highlighted certain trends, including the development and promotion of digital technology in the approaches taken by various artistic and cultural projects. Similarly, the digitization of certain applications or cultural projects has become increasingly necessary. These digital challenges (production, promotion, dissemination, mediation, preservation of digitalized cultural products) as well as Dakar's membership in the Creative Cities Network (UNESCO) focused on media arts, have highlighted a vast number of projects related to digital arts. The organizational, technical, and financial dimension of the project will also be reviewed to better promote cultural and creative industries throughout the capital.

## 4. Further information

Dakar was a candidate for the fifth UCLG Mexico City – Culture 21 International Award (February - June 2022). The jury for the award drew up its final report in September of 2022, and requested that the UCLG Committee on Culture promote this project as one of the good practices implemented under Agenda 21 for culture.

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