

# CULTURE FOR ALL POLICIES



## AGENDA 2030 - SDGs



3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING  
4 QUALITY EDUCATION  
8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH  
10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES  
11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES

## CULTURE 21 ACTIONS - COMMITMENTS

5. CULTURE AND ECONOMY
6. CULTURE, EQUITY AND SOCIAL INCLUSION
7. CULTURE, URBAN PLANNING AND PUBLIC SPACES
8. CULTURE, INFORMATION AND KNOWLEDGE

**DEVELOPMENT, PUBLIC SPACE, KNOWLEDGE,  
ATTRACTIVENESS, INCLUSION, PROMOTION, COOPERATION,  
ACCESS, GROWTH, MULTIACTOR**



## 1. Xi'an and culture

As one of China's Central Cities, Xi'an is the capital of Shaanxi Province. It was the starting point of the ancient Silk Road and the capital of such splendid dynasties as the Han and Tang. The city's long history can be traced back to the Paleolithic era. Six World Heritage sites, including the Terracotta Warriors and Horses (246 BC) as well as the Big Wild Goose Pagoda (652 AD), have stayed well preserved, witnessing the city's evolution and vicissitudes. Rich in history and culture, Xi'an is not only one of the most popular tourist destinations, but also an "international metropolis with historical and cultural features". Xi'an is growing into an international metropolis with historical and cultural features, with culture anchored at the core of the development in a consistent endeavour to boost its cultural accessibility, dissemination and equity.

Along with its socio-economic development, the city's population size has grown from 3 million in the 1980s to 13 million today. The city's expansion brought big challenges to cultural accessibility, cultural equity and the supply of cultural resources. The public had inadequate access to cultural services, the cultural content offered in public spaces lacked variety and distinctive features, and the imbalance in cultural offerings among communities resulted in disparities in the enjoyment of cultural rights.

This project fits perfectly with Xi'an's prevailing urban positioning and was incorporated into the city's Five-year Development Plan to ensure its effective implementation.

## 2. Project goals and implementation

### 2.1. Main goal and specific objectives

Based on effective leadership, sustained financial input, extensive advocacy and in-depth collaboration with and among arts practitioners, the project was aimed at:

- (i) Enhancing cultural access by building urban neighbourhood libraries in various public spaces in the city.
- (ii) Promoting cultural dissemination by building small museums at major metro stations to showcase the city's history to citizens and tourists alike and highlight local cultural features.
- (iii) Achieving cultural equity by bringing local performing groups together to play and stage free performances to fully ensure the enjoyment of cultural rights by vulnerable groups.

**THIS PROJECT IS ALIGNED WITH XI'AN'S PREVAILING URBAN POSITIONING. IT WAS INCORPORATED INTO THE CITY'S FIVE-YEAR DEVELOPMENT PLAN TO ENSURE ITS EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION.**

### 2.2. Project development

From 2021 to 2023, over 50 urban neighbourhood libraries were built, each with a floor area of not less than 100 square metres, governed by the principle of balance. Priority was given to areas with distinctive cultural features, convenient transportation, concentrated population and well-supported municipal facilities. Each neighbourhood library was allotted no fewer than 2,000 books in hard copy which were updated in a timely fashion. Two new metro station museums were built at the Bell Tower Metro Station and Xianyang West Metro Station along with three cultural display spaces at the Administrative Center, NPU (Northwestern Polytechnical University) and Big Wild Goose Pagoda metro stations. An annual average of 1,500 performances were staged for the benefit of the people. No fewer than 10,000 cultural annual passes were issued throughout the year. With "à la carte" service, a large number of cultural shows (of which no less than 30% were local opera shows) that many people wanted to watch were delivered to villages.

Beneficiary groups of this project includes low-income citizens who rarely bought tickets for shows or performances, office workers who were usually too busy with their daily work to find the time to visit cultural centres and facilities, citizens who lived in areas far away from the city's central cultural areas, local citizens and tourists to Xi'an who used the metro as their main means of transportation, and vulnerable groups with insufficient enjoyment of cultural rights.

The main actions undertaken and strategies implemented were:

- » Drawing up a detailed and practicable plan to comply with the laws and regulations governing the use of public space, securing the project's budget through the city council, responding to any emergency that may arise during project implementation, establishing a project management structure and forming a project implementation team.
- » Persuading public space owners to participate in the project voluntarily and provide the necessary support.
- » Building urban neighbourhood libraries in various public spaces in the city, including the lobbies of government office buildings, first-floor hallways of large office buildings, waiting areas of train stations and airports, tourist service centres and community activity centres.



- » Building small museums at metro stations near cultural heritage sites to mainly exhibit collection items, replicas, display panels and some of the cultural heritage found during metro construction.
- » Liaising with theatres, concert halls, and other cultural performance institutions to work out plans and subsidy policies for free performances throughout the year, developing ticket-distribution plans, and organising art groups to perform in communities and inaccessible rural areas.
- » Summing up experience for replication.

The main phases of project implementation were:

- 1) Drawing up a plan and obtaining financial support for the project from the city council, establishing an effective leadership and organizational structure, and launching public campaigns.
- 2) Persuading public space owners, theatres, performing troupes, etc. whose resources were needed, to take part in the project.
- 3) Building urban neighbourhood libraries and metro station museums, and rolling out performances to the general public.
- 4) Summing up lessons learned from the project and sharing the experience.

The budget for this project totalled 100 million RMB. The overall goal and specific objectives initially set were achieved, with participating citizens benefiting from the project, the city's overall cultural image and the cultural quality of its citizens enhanced, and the cultural gap narrowed.

## 3. Impacts

### 3.1. Direct impacts

By enhancing the accessibility, dissemination and equity of culture, the project significantly increased the time and quality of cultural exposure for nearly one million Xi'an citizens. In particular, those who normally had less participation in cultural activities due to work, lesser financial means and transportation, among others, benefited a great deal from the project. To a certain extent, the project helped address the imbalance in some citizens' enjoyment of cultural rights, a phenomenon which had arisen in the course of urban development. Additionally, the cultural cultivation of citizens was improved through cultural experiences and education.

Meanwhile, urban arts practitioners gained increased visibility and market recognition through participation in the project. Through implementing the project, local governments forged close ties with private cultural entities, created new job opportunities and stimulated economic development in the region.



**THE PROJECT PROMOTES CULTURAL ACCESS THROUGH NEIGHBOURHOOD LIBRARIES, CULTURAL DISSEMINATION WITH SMALL MUSEUMS IN METRO STATIONS, AND CULTURAL EQUITY THROUGH FREE PERFORMANCES.**

### 3.2. Evaluation

The evaluation of the project came from several sources: the city government invited experts to form a project evaluation and acceptance team, with 100 percent of the neighbourhood libraries and metro station museums scoring a pass. With regard to the effect of project implementation, the municipal government's 12345 telephone service hotline received a 91% satisfaction rate. The audit performed by a third-party auditing company found the project's funds use efficiency up to standard.

### 3.3. Key factors

The government's long-standing interest and action in promoting sustainable development through culture is the key. Based on Xi'an's urban positioning as an international metropolis with historical and cultural characteristics, Xi'an government attached great importance to balanced social development, relying on the role of culture as the fourth pillar to promote sustainable development in multiple ways. After comprehensively assessing its cultural resource allocation, Xi'an launched the systematic project of "Culture for All" and invested ample resources to advance SDG 3, 4, 8, 10 and 11.

### 3.4. Continuity

This project is part and parcel of the city's cultural management endeavour which has resulted in a policy system that can be sustained and expanded over time by building strong links among the city council, oversight bodies, arts practitioners, and other stakeholders. The following experiences have been accumulated during the long-term implementation of the project: first, the government's understanding and full recognition of the important role of culture for sustainable development; second, the formulation of a detailed and practicable work plan and implementation plan and their continuous execution; third, the mobilization of a wide range of stakeholders and individuals to actively participate and form synergy; fourth, the comprehensive monitoring of the equity of the project's cultural services.



**BY ENHANCING THE ACCESSIBILITY, DISSEMINATION AND EQUITY OF CULTURE, THE PROJECT SIGNIFICANTLY INCREASED THE TIME AND QUALITY OF CULTURAL EXPOSURE FOR NEARLY ONE MILLION XI'AN CITIZENS.**

## 4. Further information

Xi'an was selected as a Special Mention for the sixth "UCLG – Mexico City – Culture 21 International Award" (November 2023 – March 2024). The jury for the award drew up its final report in June 2024, and requested that the Committee on Culture also promoted this project as one of the good practices to be implemented through Agenda 21 for culture.

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