

## THE ABC OF PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY



### AGENDA 2030 - SDGs



### CULTURE 21 ACTIONS - COMMITMENTS

1. CULTURAL RIGHTS
4. CULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT
9. GOVERNANCE OF CULTURE

DEVELOPMENT, SUSTAINABLE, ENVIRONMENT,  
CAPACITY, CROSS-CUTTING, GOVERNANCE, PARTICIPATION,  
CITIZENSHIP, INTERGENERATIONAL, NATURE



## 1. Baie-Mahault and culture

It is essential to present the geographical configuration of Baie-Mahault and its specific features in Guadeloupe in order to explain the municipality's major responsibility towards its citizens and thus set the context for the programme.

As the only commune with two seafronts, and as the natural meeting point between the Grande-Terre and Basse-Terre, the area has a remarkable natural heritage, particularly along the coast. The Grand cul-de-sac in the north is a real reservoir of biodiversity.

Baie-Mahault is a central town in Guadeloupe, making it an essential stopping-off point, not only because of its economic attractiveness (thousands of employees pass through here every day), but also because of the wide range of sporting activities on offer thanks to its many infrastructures. It also boasts a wealth of cultural attractions (entertainment, buildings, intangible heritage).

Its great cultural diversity is also linked to the contribution made by the different migrations and mobility of its populations. Finally, the commune covers all the major risks in the department: cyclonic, floods, seismic, landslides, volcanic, industrial, transport of hazardous material or tsunamis.

Joining the Agenda 21 for culture demonstrates a change that leads to participation in the learning process of the "Pilot Cities Programme", the "Seven Keys" and the territorialisation of the Sustainable Development Goals through cultural aspects. "The ABC of participatory democracy" makes visible the expression of stakeholders in Baie-Mahault's Strategic Programme for Sustainable Cultural Action.



**THIS INITIATIVE IS A CONCEPT DESIGNED TO RAISE AWARENESS, ACCULTURATE, CONTRIBUTE TO AND STRENGTHEN PEOPLE'S POWER TO ACT.**

## 2. Objectives and implementation of the project

### 2.1. Main goal and specific objectives

This initiative is a concept designed to raise awareness, acculturate, contribute to and strengthen people's power to act. The programme allows to:

- » Bring about a cognitive transformation through information and awareness-raising campaigns on the challenges of the ecological transition and sustainable development.
- » Create knowledge pools on current issues and challenges, make them available to local actors and create ambassadors for the ecological transition.
- » Create and maintain a permanent link between sustainable development issues and everyday life.
- » Spreading knowledge about the ecological transition and sustainable development, and linking it to Guadeloupe's cultural practices.



## 2.2. Development of the project


Social and intercultural mediation is led by a team of social mediators based in neighbourhood centres. Their role is to provide an active presence in the neighbourhood, to participate in or organise consultation between residents and institutions, to support community projects and to set up activities to encourage intercultural and intergenerational exchanges.

Over the last ten years or so, specific structures have been created:

- » Seniors' House, which welcomes retired people from all over the region, regardless of their origin, to create a genuine public service offering a range of physical and cultural activities to help them "age well" and break the isolation they feel. An interdepartmental and associative partnership has made possible the federation of all activities aimed at senior citizens. Seniors have spoken out and the city has implemented their grievances.
- » The Early Childhood Centre was set up at the request of families who wanted a specific structure in which the local authority would be involved. It acts as an intermediary between users and professionals (crèches, nursery assistants).
- » Later, following an analysis of the local area and at the request of families, the town council set up the Parenting Centre, which is open to anyone wishing to receive support in their role as parents.

The local authority also excels in "providing access to culture for as many people as possible", which contributes to the expression of the population's cultural rights and therefore to cultural democracy. This democratisation is illustrated by the fact that cultural activities are free of charge, with variable rates based on users' income, the Seniors Pass and many other cultural activities aimed at children from disadvantaged areas of the conurbation. Cultural activities to give them access to the arts and to tangible and intangible heritage, or to keep them busy during the summer holidays.

Participatory democracy is also expressed through mechanisms such as the Neighbourhood Councils, which are forums for information and participatory dialogue. The aim is to bring people together to hear their opinions. Residents take ownership of their neighbourhoods and do not allow decisions to be taken from the "top". They decide on local actions to improve their living environment. Meetings can be held at their request. There are no limits to the extent to which residents can challenge the local authority.

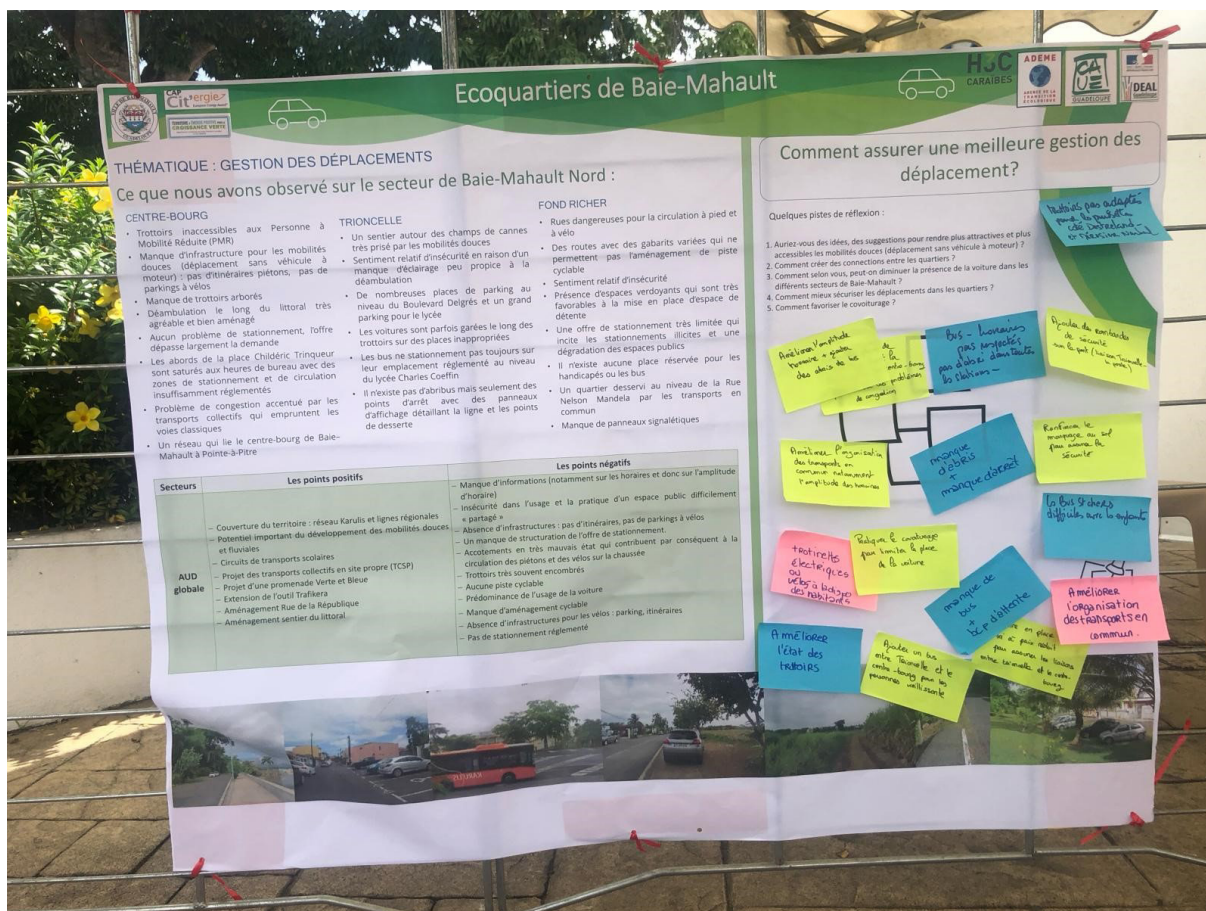


### **PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY IS ALSO EXPRESSED THROUGH NEIGHBOURHOOD COUNCILS, WHERE RESIDENTS DECIDE ON LOCAL ACTIONS TO IMPROVE THEIR LIVING ENVIRONMENT.**

In 2023, after months of social crisis and deprivation of citizen interaction, participatory workshops were organised. They raised awareness of the 17 SDGs and their possible application at local level. It was an opportunity for everyone to understand the relationship between culture, local challenges and sustainable development.

Two other tools :

- » A travelling exhibition was the basis for a consultation carried out as part of the "Local Town Planning" scheme. The consultation launched in 2009 enabled Baie-Mahault to pioneer this technique for drawing up urban planning documents.
- » As part of the Energy Performance Plan (PPE), around twenty public meetings were held to gather the views of citizens with a view to modernising the public lighting stock, thereby reducing light pollution and preserving the black screen to protect natural areas and endemic species.



### 3. Impacts

#### 3.1. Direct impacts

Giving people the chance to speak out helps them to flourish and reduces tensions, which in turn strengthens group cohesion.

Promoting access to cultural activities and heritage enhancement for children from disadvantaged neighbourhoods has helped to lift some of them out of their social condition. Some young people have been able to access national and international stages and showcase their artistic talents. This openness has also had a positive and cross-curricular effect on school subjects.

Another tangible impact was made on Citizenship Day, when the “Tree of words” brought together the area’s different communities. Associations and schoolchildren contributed to this intercultural and intergenerational meeting around themes that make sense for the area. Our “Tree of words” will enable all citizens wishing to participate in community life to meet in places like neighbourhood centres. It will also be available in digital format to broaden citizen participation. What’s more, the participatory workshop devoted to biodiversity and its sensitivity to cultural aspects has fostered respect for nature and the development of its potential.



**ACCESS TO CULTURAL ACTIVITIES HAS ENABLED DISADVANTAGED CHILDREN TO SHOWCASE THEIR ARTISTIC TALENTS ON NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL STAGES, WHILE ALSO IMPROVING THEIR PERFORMANCE AT SCHOOL.**

### **3.2. Evaluation**

We carry out “public surveys”, ex-post and/or in-itinere, to measure the results achieved in relation to the objectives, and the match between the objectives and the needs/problems it is supposed to solve. We set up participatory workshops and organise neighbourhood councils.

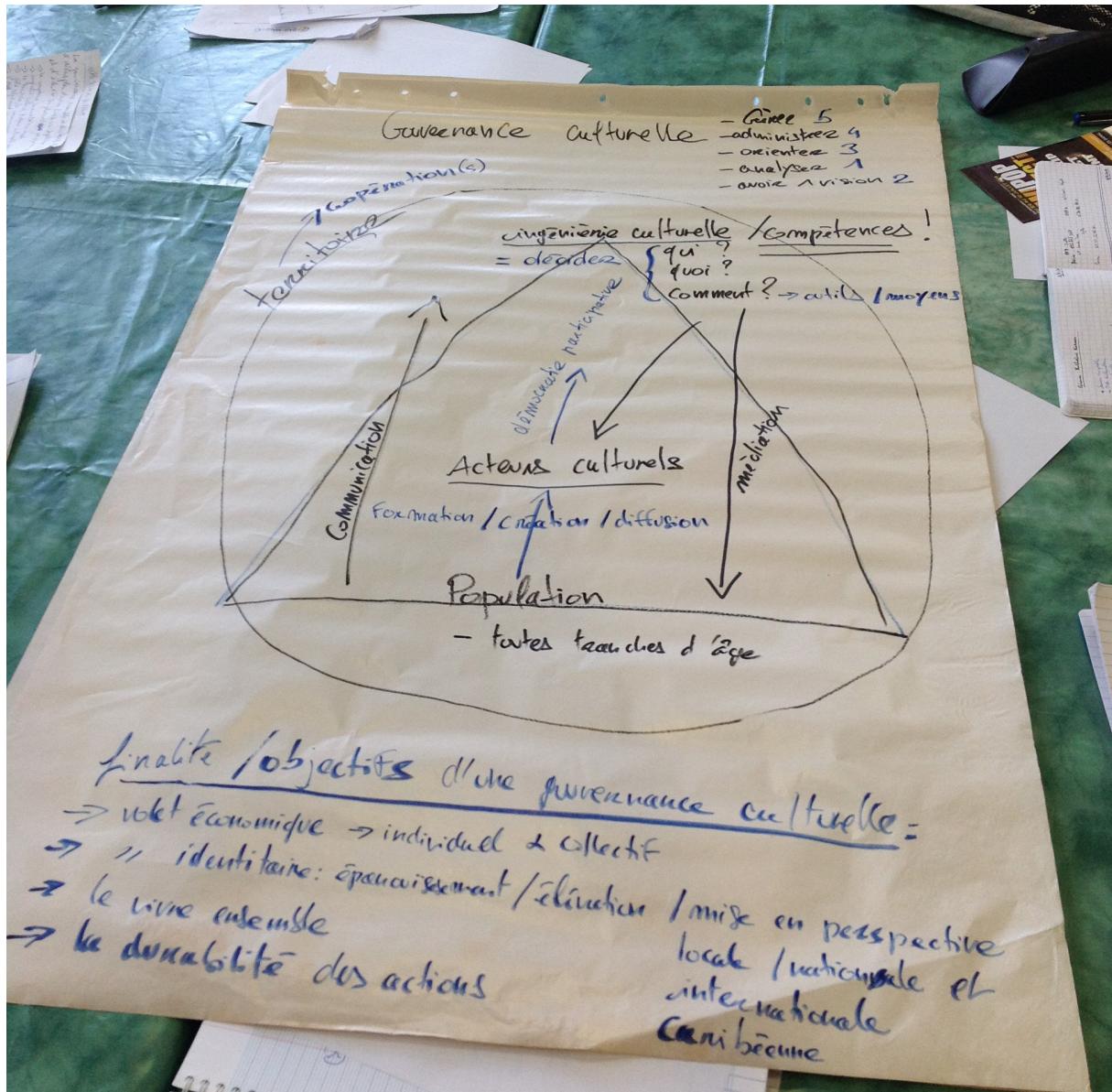
From these studies, we can highlight the participation rate and the representativeness rate of the public as indicators.

### **3.3. Key factors**

To facilitate people’s expression and access to culture, a coherent communication strategy has been implemented, as well as the collection and evaluation of their satisfaction and complaints. In addition, the mediation officers in the neighbourhood centres greatly facilitate the mobilisation of the population, similarly to the meetings of the neighbourhood councils. Training these agents in intercultural and intergenerational leadership techniques also contributes to the success of the programme.

Finally, the people involved are dynamic and play a full role in enriching the projects. Not only are they in a place of demand, but they are also making proposals.





### 3.4. Continuity

The programme aims to pursue:

- » Training for community workers in how to support local residents in formalising and setting up projects, and in drawing up participatory budgets. Neighbourhood centres are becoming living facilities and social centres are better organised.
- » New federative actions to bring together the different communities in the area and encourage different cultures to live together.
- » The extension of the "Bima Ville" application to other municipal services to broaden citizen interaction.
- » Eco-district certification for the Trioncelle, Fond-Richer and town centre areas to support the ecological transition and sustainable development.

## 4. Further information

Baie-Mahault was a candidate for the sixth UCLG – City of Mexico – 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 promote this project as one of the good practices to be implemented through Agenda 21 for culture.

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