Acknowledgements and outlooks from the studies and taskforces for the Forum d’Avignon 2010

Culture and economic performance:
What strategies for sustainable employment and urban development planning?

Study Ineum Consulting / Kurt Salmon for the Forum d’Avignon 2010

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The cultural sector is generating direct and indirect jobs supporting the economic attractiveness of territories (in the European Union, the cultural employment represents 3.1% of the workforce, 2.6% of the EU GDP and a turnover of 654 billion Euros). In the United States, the arts have a positive impact of $166 billion, every public dollar invested having a multiplier effect of 5 on the overall economic activity.

Culture promotes the sustainable development of employment: the cities playing the card of cultural and academic development have seen their unemployment rates decline more sharply than other cities over the past decade and are characterized by a low unemployment rate.

Beyond touristic and economic benefits, culture (cultural activities, firms and heritage) fosters social cohesion (symbolic) as well as the human and environmental capital.

The entire study is available on the website of the Forum d’Avignon.

Outlooks – Enhancing the cultural attractiveness of territories

➢ Understanding and measuring:
  – Call for the identification of territorial expenditure for culture and their economic benefits to better measure the contribution of culture to economic performance

➢ Developing strategies of specialization / « smart specialization »:
  – Establish an inventory of strengths and weaknesses in the field of culture for the territories in order to develop a strategy of specialization by sector (one or two per territory), to include cultural investments in the local scientific, social and economic base.
  – From “excellence” clusters developed locally, betting on diversification in other cultural sectors (only megacities have overall development strategies of all cultural sectors).
  – Promoting stronger a logic of development based on the promotion of heritage and local cultural specificities, using digital technologies and major events as boosting assets
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– Promoting local employment through partnerships:

- Encouraging the creation of clusters or « trans-sectoral » networks, places to exchange and build projects gathering creative people, public, industrial or financial key players, on territories benefiting from a strong cultural appeal

- Promoting the opening up of education and training for the professional integration of young graduates by developing entrepreneurial skills (curriculum coupling economics / art)

- Inspiring creativity in education and to partners from the professional world in a logic of open innovation / / Promoting creative jobs so that each university or training center can concretize a comprehensive and institutionalized partnership with one or several firms / administrations

– Promoting the sharing of skills, experiences, knowledge...:

- Promoting the sharing of cultural skills in expanded territories to enhance their attractiveness and allow cities with fewer than 500,000 residents not to be penalized by a threshold effect (cross-cultural clusters).

- Including cultural programs within European programs to promote an integrated approach of territories, so as not to limit the role of culture to the periphery of projects of development.