

Developing a Cultural Policy Framework for Small Towns and Cities

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Abstract : It has long been known that the Cultural and Creative Industries (CCIs) have the potential to aid in physical, social and economic renewal and regeneration of towns and cities, hence their importance when dealing with regional development. The CCIs can act as a catalyst for activity and investment in an area because the 'consumption' of cultural activities will lead to the activities and use of other non-cultural activities, for example, hospitality development including restaurants and bars, as well as public transport. 'Consumption' of cultural activities also leads to employment creation, and diversification. However, CCIs tend to be clustered, especially around large cities. There is, moreover, a case for development of CCIs around smaller towns and cities, because they do not rely on high technology inputs, and long supply chains, and, their direct link to rural and isolated places makes them vital in regional development. However, there is currently little research on how to craft cultural policy for regions with smaller towns and cities. Using the Sarah Baartman District (SBDM) in South Africa as an example, this paper describes the process of developing cultural policy for a region that has potential, and existing, cultural clusters, but currently no one, coherent policy relating to CCI development. The SBDM was chosen as a case study because it has no large cities, but has some CCI clusters, and has identified them as potential drivers of local economic development. The process of developing cultural policy is discussed in stages: Identification of what resources are present; including human resources, soft and hard infrastructure; Identification of clusters; Analysis of CCI labour markets and ownership patterns; Opportunities and challenges from the point of view of CCIs and other key stakeholders; Alignment of regional policy aims with provincial and national policy objectives; and finally, design and implementation of a regional cultural policy.

Keywords : cultural and creative industries, economic impact, intrinsic value, regional development

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