

Cities of Literature: Initiatives, Impacts and Legacies

A report for the British Council

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With James Doeser and Lucy Hannah
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Cities of Literature

introduction

The last 20 years has seen huge growth in the association of creativity and the cultural sector with development and prosperity in cities – rooted in the belief that cultural life makes an urban environment attractive, brings innovation into all aspects of the city development and builds community cohesion.



In 2004 UNESCO set up its Creative City Network which has, at the time of writing, 180 designated cities from 73 countries, covering seven creative fields: Crafts & Folk Art, Design, Film, Gastronomy, Literature, Music, and Media Arts. The European Capital of Culture programme of year-long designations which started in 1985 in Athens has now spawned similar programmes including the UK City of Culture. There are cultural festivals in towns and cities across the world covering

every aspect of the sector and enticing visitors from half way across the world.

But do these cultural interventions do what their founders hope? Back in 1947 the Edinburgh International Festival was founded to “provide a platform for the flowering of the human spirit” in the wake of the Second World War. Today cultural designations are often given to encourage and transform – the UK City of Culture is clearly given to the cities who can demonstrate need and the belief that the designation will fuel regeneration. Like Bing Crosby and Danny Kaye rescuing their former commander from bankruptcy by putting on a show in the film *White Christmas*, culture is often seen as the solution to fundamental challenges for contemporary urban spaces.

The British Council, working across the globe to build lasting connections through culture, engages constantly

and very productively with these programmes and the thousands of people passionately committed to their success. We wanted to use our global reach to explore whether these ambitions are justified and whether we could identify any patterns that could help those who are planning to apply for a designation or set up a city-based festival. To contain the project we decided to focus on literature – in some ways the least flashy component of many of these city programmes but with a long history. The first UNESCO Creative City was Edinburgh (Edinburgh makes a good case for coming up with the idea in the first place); the World Book Capital programme has been going since 2001; most Cities of Culture programmes include strong literature programmes; the oldest literature festival in the UK – Cheltenham – was founded in 1949, and the recent growth in literature festivals worldwide has been little short of extraordinary.

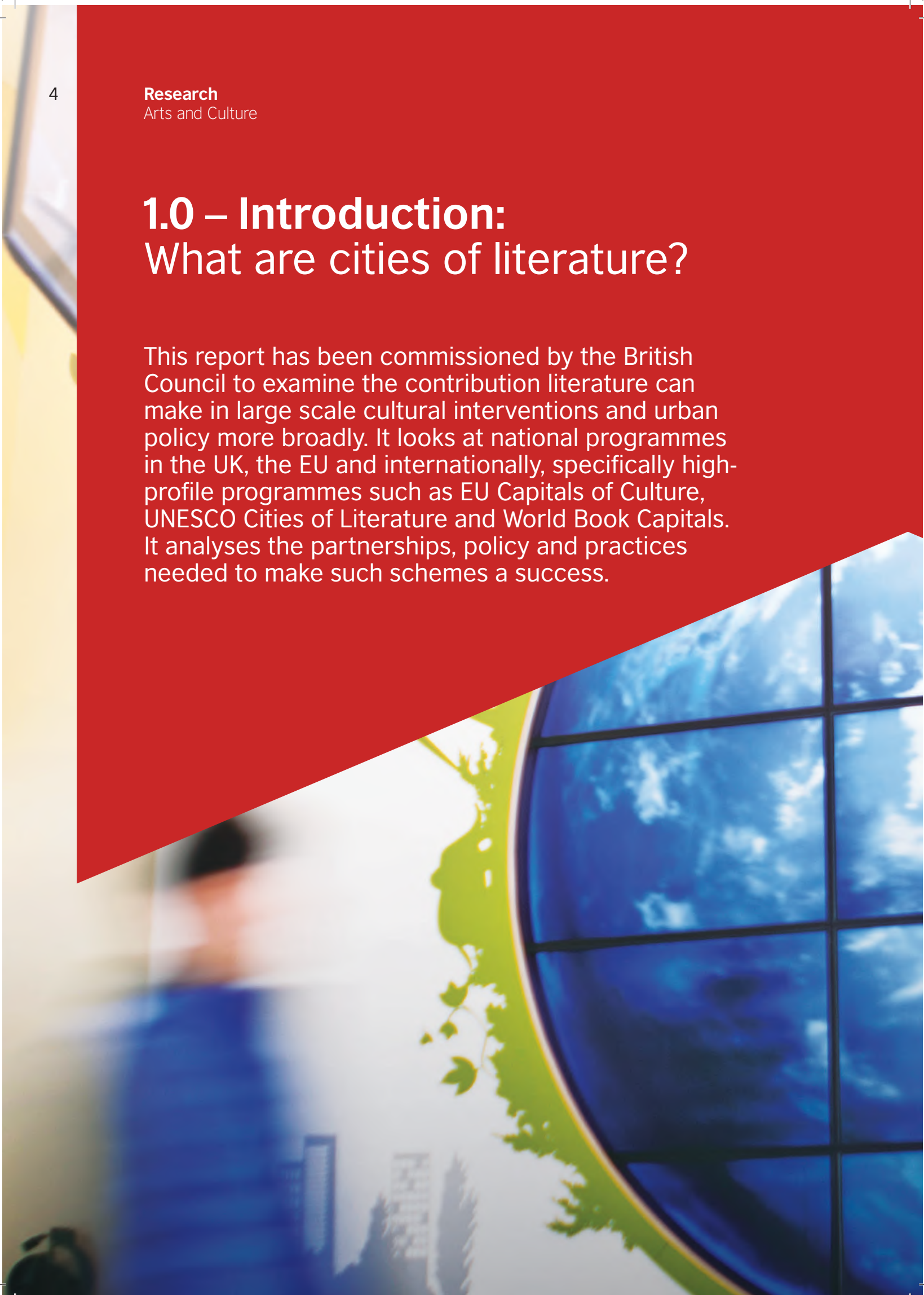
This is the first piece of research that looks across different types of major cultural city project and it is also unique in taking a global perspective with case studies from four continents. One of the first findings of the research was how patchy the evaluation of these cultural projects is, in fact most of it pertains to a couple of large-scale programmes, but the case studies demonstrate there is often lots of more informal, lively activity on the ground which this report explores. By taking a wide view it has been possible to see similarities and patterns that point to ways in which the benefits of the huge investment made in cultural interventions – social and economic – can be increased.

Cortina Butler

Director Literature, British Council

1.0 – Introduction: What are cities of literature?

This report has been commissioned by the British Council to examine the contribution literature can make in large scale cultural interventions and urban policy more broadly. It looks at national programmes in the UK, the EU and internationally, specifically high-profile programmes such as EU Capitals of Culture, UNESCO Cities of Literature and World Book Capitals. It analyses the partnerships, policy and practices needed to make such schemes a success.



Literature is not a highly visible art form. It is not spectacular and does not always lend itself to large scale city-wide interventions. Mostly, literature is a private encounter between a writer and a reader, or perhaps a storyteller or poet and an intimate audience. Unlike dance, circus, or art installations, it does not really have the capacity to decorate or cosmetically regenerate a neighbourhood. Rather, it plays out through the ideas, stories and voices that form cultural identity and cultural capital. The focus of activity and sector development for writing, reading, and publishing is often located at a national rather than city level.

However, there has been a huge growth globally in city-wide literature festivals, which are attracting large audiences. In developing distinctive cultural plans, city administrations have found inventive ways to try and materialise literature, in order to make it more visible: Buenos Aires chose to commission a huge 'Tower of Babel' sculpture, while Mons built a "literary garden". Amsterdam laid on large scale outdoor public opening and closing ceremonies for their year as World Book Capital, and while it was Capital of Culture, Krakow turned 300 bus stops into e-book libraries. Major pieces of infrastructure are another way cities have given literature a "bricks and mortar" presence: Melbourne and Norwich are now home to impressive Literature Houses which support writers and readers.



There is an important commercial side to the literature sector which is sometimes hidden from (or immune to) the types of public policies which are the focus of this report. In many large industrialised cities, the distribution channels and economic power of the commercial publishing industry dwarfs the impact made by public investment. One major exception to this is the many public library networks, which often comprise an essential piece of a city's ecosystem, but are not present in all countries. Another characteristic of literature is that many writers only reach a readership of a few thousand, while others have tremendous global reach (particularly when translated).

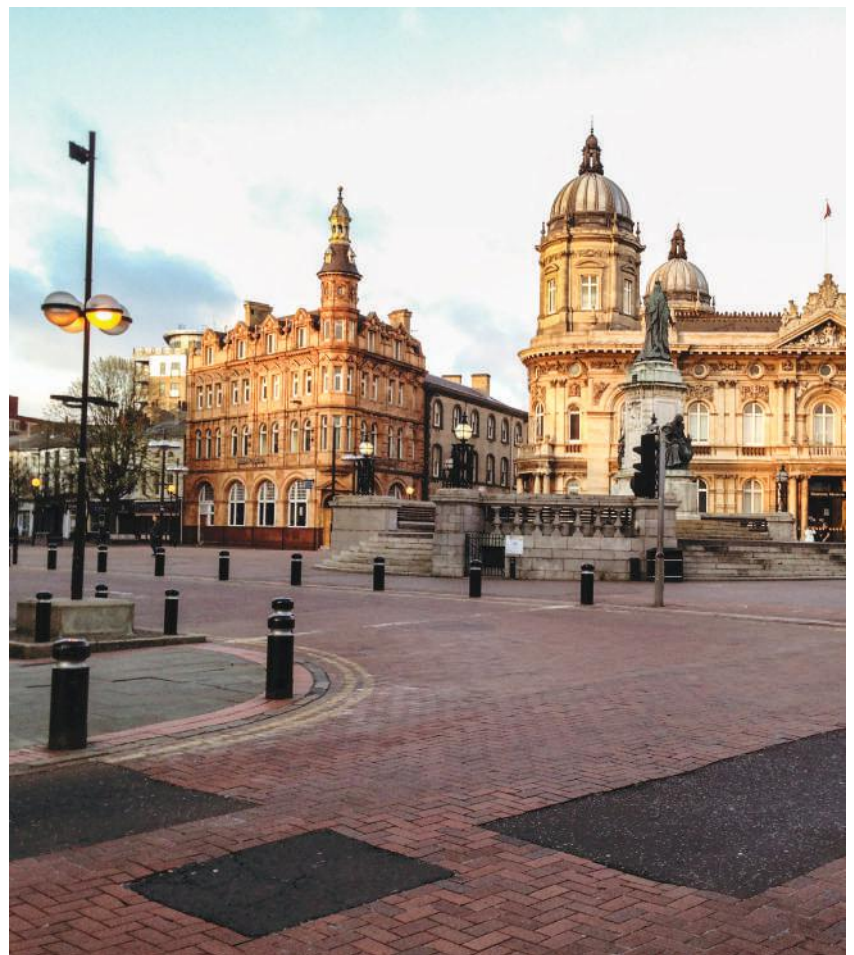
This research has examined all available evidence of impact of city-focused literature programmes, in terms of strengthened partnerships, national and international engagement, influence, social transformation and cohesion of place and communities, whether achieved through strategic or grass-roots cultural programming. The key research questions guiding this work are:

1. **What different models of city of culture programming exist**, taking into account different scales, funding sources and their social-cultural and economic objectives? **How can these models be clustered and better understood?**
2. **How have both the bid writing and submission process and the resulting city of culture programmes addressed key socio-political challenges** of a city or region, including participation and engagement with diverse communities and stakeholders?
3. **What are the requisites, challenges, and critical success factors in terms of partnership and policy** – internal, external and international – in order to address challenges of scaling up and creating international influence through cities of culture programmes? What are the pre-requisites in terms of resources and leadership to successfully achieve agreed objectives?
4. **What evidence is there of the short-term and long-term impact of these different 'cities of culture' models** on a) cultural and creative partners, b) the city itself? c) the residents, leaders and communities of the city?

In-scope types of city of literature initiatives were identified with colleagues at the British Council as comprising:

- Time-specific cities of culture designations with literature as a prominent component
- UNESCO Cities of Literature
- World Book Capitals
- Festival cities

The remainder of this section of the report explains a bit more about each of these phenomena.



Hull, The UK City of Culture 2017

¹The rationale and governance of the ECoC scheme is explained: https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/creative-europe/actions/capitals-culture_en

1.1 – European Capitals of Culture

The ECoC initiative is designed to:

- Highlight the richness and diversity of cultures in Europe
- Celebrate the cultural features that Europeans share
- Increase European citizens' sense of belonging to a common cultural area
- Foster the contribution of culture to the development of cities¹

There have been over 50 European cities designated as ECoCs since the mid-1980s and each has approached the title in a different way. It was not until Glasgow's designation in 1990 that the scheme became seen as a potential means to foster economic and social development, rather than simply showcase the cultural life of the city concerned. Since then the title has been used both by the European Commission and the host cities as something that builds the cultural capacity of the city while linking it more fully to the work of the EU, foregrounding the "European-ness" of the city in question. This is quite a change from the very early years of the scheme where it was more of a "coronation" of a well-established cultural centre of excellence, rather than a development exercise.

In all the ECoCs, literature (that is poetry, writing, reading, publishing, etc.) features very little in the proposals, programming, marketing or legacies of the host cities. Understandably, it is a difficult thing to quantify, but Garcia & Cox (2013) were able to use data from a 2004 review of the scheme to assemble this table that illustrates literature's relative prominence when compared with other art forms:

% of 1995–2003 ECoCs reporting artform prominence

Music	89%
Theatre	84%
Visual Arts	79%
Street parades/open-air events	42%
Interdisciplinary	16%
Architecture and/or design	26%
Heritage and history	32%
Literature	11%
Dance	11%
Performing Arts	11%
Conferences	5%
Audio-visual media	5%
Opera	5%

Source: Cox & Garcia 2013 & Palmer/Rae Associates 2004

This data mirrors levels of public investment for literature in a broader context – for example in England, Arts Council England Literature has a 7% share of money set aside for the National Portfolio Organisations (2018–22)². Literature may be a relatively low-prominence art form overall, but there are a handful of instances where literature has been a visible part of a city's programming within their Capital of Culture offer. It is those instances that feature most frequently in the body of this report.

Mons was one of the few ECoCs to foreground literature in their programme, although the number of literary events was relatively small when compared to other art forms: 23 for literature (music had 76). Part of the programme was built around "a literary garden within the grounds of la Maison Losseau featuring 42 events over five months including readings, concerts, as well as a bookshop and "literary bar"" (Ecorys 2016, 34).

The model of the ECoC has spawned many imitators, some multilateral (such as the Arab Capital of Culture or Iberico-American Capital of Culture); others are domestic (with individual nations making designations within their countries to showcase, highlight, develop or invest in the cultural life of their own cities). The governance and management of the individual schemes (some of which are ongoing, some have been and gone) differs hugely from place to place (Green 2017).

The UK City of Culture (Hull 2017³, Derry-Londonderry 2013 and Coventry for 2021) has gathered an increasing amount of interest, and the UK's exclusion from future ECoCs (the UK was scheduled to be a host nation in 2023) has likely further increased the attention for this domestic scheme. It seems as if literature is just as prominent in these other schemes as it is for ECoCs.



²<https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/how-we-invest-public-money/national-portfolio-2018-22>

³Unpublished research into the impact of Hull 2017 has been written for the BC. That unpublished work was read by the authors of this report but has not been referenced nor does it feature in

1.2 – UNESCO Cities of Literature

“The UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN) was created in 2004 to promote cooperation with and among cities that have identified creativity as a strategic factor for sustainable urban development. The 180 cities which currently make up this network work together towards a common objective: placing creativity and cultural industries at the heart of their development plans at the local level and cooperating actively at the international level.”⁴

Within the network there are currently 28 Cities of Literature (joining other cities designated in the UCCN for their associations with gastronomy, music, crafts, etc.), with more cities joining the group every year.⁵ The network began with English-speaking literary cities and has since greatly expanded to many languages and regions.

The proposals to UNESCO for nomination of a city “often combine the protection and dissemination of literary heritage on the one hand, and the promotion of literary activity, publishers or literary tourism industries on the other. There is therefore no one model of the creative city but rather several sub-models.”

(Mulero & Rius-Ulldemolins 2017, 3)

In the UCCN there are collaborations, an opportunity to replicate projects that have been successful elsewhere, to learn from other cities. The network is used as a way to offer international residencies to writers. There are World Poetry Day collaborations. There are two conferences each year – one for all Creative Cities and another specifically for Cities of Literature. These latter conferences often highlight the differing delivery models that cities deploy to fulfil their City of Literature commitments. They provide the means for aspiring applicant cities to benefit from meeting other cities already within the network, and potentially be mentored by them.

1.3 – World Book Capitals

For 12 months from 23 April (World Book and Copyright Day) UNESCO and the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) designate one city as UNESCO World Book Capital. The city is chosen through an application process and it undertakes to promote books and reading and to organise activities over the year.

“The programme brings together the local and national book industries and puts books and book culture into the public eye. It attracts sponsorship and extra funding for book related institutions. The programme raises awareness for literacy and reading issues, libraries and books shops and highlights the overall benefits of a lively book culture. The title is also used to promote tourism and draw national and international attention to the literary heritage of a city and nation.”⁶

In general, cities take very different approaches to their role as World Book Capitals, with some developing public programmes, and others using it to gather professionals from within the publishing sector.



⁴<https://en.unesco.org/creative-cities/home>

⁵<http://www.cityofliterature.com/international-cities-of-literature/>

⁶<https://www.internationalpublishers.org/policy-issues/literacy-reading/world-book-capital-cities>

1.4 – Major festivals

“Festivalisation” is an increasingly important phenomenon in relation to the development of cultural policy worldwide (Jordan 2016). It is a term that describes the ongoing growth in the experience economy, the increasing ease and low cost of international travel, cultural exposure in bite-sized chunks (which in some ways replicate the cultural experience of the internet). Major festivals in the UK have become important components of the ‘sales’ calendar for many publishers.

Beyond the commercial imperatives of selling books, the appeal of literary festivals lies in the opportunity to witness the author “in the flesh”, in the physical presence of their work, and for readers to feel like they have connected with the writer, with other readers, and some greater sense of their civilised selves (Meehan 2005; Johansen & Freeman 2012; Driscoll 2015).

Literature festivals vary hugely in their size, themes and cultural importance. One approach which features heavily in many studies on this topic (e.g. Frank 2017) is the franchise model begun by Hay-on-Wye in Wales and which now comprises seven “Hay” festivals around the world⁷. The Word Alliance is another network, which “brings together eight of the world’s leading literature festivals [including Jaipur, Edinburgh and Melbourne] for a strategic international partnership which supports and showcases the work of writers, facilitates the creation of international literature projects and provides opportunities to enhance each festival’s artistic programme.”⁸

Beyond the role that festivals play in developing writers and readers, they are frequently studied for their effects on tourism (both domestic and inbound) (E.g. BOP Consulting 2016). However, such research predominantly operates in something of a data vacuum.⁹ “Unfortunately, there remains no statistical data available on the scale or market size of literary tourism” (Hoppen et al 2014, 39).

1.5 – Case studies

This report is furnished with six case studies, which were chosen in order to supplement the published research on the impact and success factors associated with cities of literature initiatives. That research mostly tells the stories of literary cities in major developed economies with well-established literary infrastructures – the nature of such studies is outlined in Appendix 1. In the course of conducting this research, it became evident that those examples (Barcelona, Melbourne, etc.) are not reflective of wider contexts, especially those outside wealthy and well developed regions of the world. To address that gap in research, the case studies were chosen to broaden the relevance of this report and to counterbalance the strengths in our existing knowledge. As a point of reference we included a UK city amongst the case studies.

The six cities (Edinburgh, Port of Spain, Istanbul, Durban, Kolkata and Buenos Aires) represent cities in different parts of the world, operating under different cultural and policy conditions, but collectively addressing each of the categories identified above: one ECoC, two UNESCO Cities of Literature, one World Book Capital and two festival cities. The case studies are sequenced throughout the report to illustrate the most relevant impacts or success factors that they exhibit.

A full description of how the case study cities were identified, researched and presented can be found in Appendix 1 of this report.



Iowa

⁷<http://www.hayfestival.com/festivals.aspx>

⁸<http://www.wordalliance.org/>

⁹There is this (very expensive) Mintel report from 2011 which did not form part of this review due to its prohibitive cost <http://reports.mintel.com/display/550492/#>

2.0 – Impacts of being a city of literature

Before going into the specific impacts that are generated from cities of literature initiatives it is worth restating the impacts that have been associated with (if not definitely proven to result from) cities of culture schemes more generally. This has been extensively documented for the ECoC scheme but not at all for the other imitation schemes, nor for the cities designated within the UCCN.¹⁰

¹⁰<https://composite-indicators.jrc.ec.europa.eu/cultural-creative-cities-monitor/>

Garcia & Cox (2013) identify the following “areas of positive impact for which evidence is stronger”, which are reproduced here¹¹:

Cultural impacts:

- Improving the city’s cultural vibrancy
- Strengthening networks
- New collaborations
- Encouraging new work
- Raising the capacity and ambition of the cultural sector

Garcia and Cox think this particularly pertains to Glasgow 1990, Cork 2005, Stavanger 2008, Essen for the Ruhr 2010, Turku 2011, Tallinn 2011 and Guimarães 2012.

Image impacts:

- Overturning low (and, at times, even negative) profiles and perceptions
- Attracting media attention, particularly through digital and online means

Garcia and Cox think this particularly pertains to Glasgow 1990, Lille 2004, Liverpool 2008, Pécs 2010, Turku 2011, Maribor 2012 and Guimarães 2012.

Social impacts:

- Considerably improved local perceptions of the city (50% to 90% feeling that their city is a better place after having hosted the ECoC)
- Bigger and more diverse cultural audiences during ECoC year

Garcia and Cox think this particularly pertains to Helsinki 2000, Luxembourg GR 2007, Liverpool 2008, Essen for the Ruhr 2010, Guimarães 2012 and Maribor 2012.

Economic impacts:

- Boost to immediate to medium-term tourism
- Occasionally sustained growth in tourism visits and spending

Garcia and Cox think this particularly pertains to Glasgow 1990, Liverpool 2008 and Linz 2009.

¹¹Garcia & Cox describe the evaluations of all ECoCs in their study in great detail. One of their findings is that expected impacts are easier to describe than empirically evidenced outcomes. None of their findings are specific to literature as an art form.

As with much other research in this area, the stated or anticipated (or even claimed) impacts of city of literature-type interventions are not always justified by subsequent empirical data. This means that the ECoC scheme's claimed impacts are treated with some scepticism. Bullen puts it like this:

"City leaders need to provide more credible expectations about what a population and other actors in cities can hope to gain from a capital of culture programme, and to keep in mind that the European Capital of Culture is just one, and quite a small one at that, intervention in larger processes of urban transformation."
(Bullen 2010, 14–15)

Some city of literature events do attempt to account more scientifically for their impact, but quite often the impacts and outcomes they claim are circumstantial or speculative. For example, it is claimed that the 298 events of Amsterdam World Book Capital "reached a total of at least one million visitors/participants. The total budget including sponsored services and bartering was € 3.5million. The media value generated in the printed press as free publicity amounted to more than € 2.5 million. A survey among the partners indicated that the activities drew no less than 42% 'new' public: individuals that had never participated in similar activities." (Amsterdam 2009, 11). This is a fine account of what activity took place and its significance, but it is typical of reports from city of literature interventions in that it does not reveal very much about the ultimate difference that the events had on the people of Amsterdam.

This research project attempted to draw together all relevant data that spoke to the impact of city of literature-type initiatives, and so began with a literature review of previous studies. One of the gaps identified in that review related to the dearth of rigorous evidence which substantiated the claims made for the impacts and outcomes in such interventions. Although they necessarily have an anecdotal quality, one of the objectives of this report has been to articulate the perceived impacts of city of literature initiatives, and thereby go some way to addressing that evidence gap. In the following section of this report the case studies complement a synthesis of what evidence can be drawn from a wide range of published studies across the field of cultural and urban policy.

In order to segment the impacts according to the different types of beneficiaries of city of literature initiatives they have been divided into the following categories:

- Impacts on writers, editors and publishers (cultural and creative partners)
- Impacts on readers and audiences (residents and communities)
- Wider social impacts (the city itself)

2.1 – Impacts on writers, editors and publishers

Impact: benefits of being in a network

One of the powerful effects of participating in global networks of cities of literature is the catalytic effect that comes from participating in a community of practice, enjoying the accreditation of a designation like city of literature, and the expanded horizons and sharpened sensitivities that come from exposure to other cultures (Roberston & Yeoman 2014, 324). This network effect has also been seen to affect the number and type of connections that cultural organisations hold as a result of participating in city of culture type interventions (Lake et al 2016).

In literary culture and literature events more generally, the network effect is one which sees the transfer, amplification and transformation of ideas and knowledge (as Podestà and Richards explain with regards to the FL festival in Mantua, Italy):

"[Knowledge Based Festivals] are often linked together to share experiences and provide opportunities for authors to circulate internationally. In fact FL is part of an international network of festivals sharing the same aims, formed by the Hay Festival in Hay on Wye (UK) and of the Internationales Literaturfestival in Berlin (Germany). In the last decade, these three events have developed diverse projects aimed to promote and trigger the flow of knowledge and cross-pollination amongst diverse languages and countries by means of itinerant activities, a young writer's tournée, books and seminars."
(Podestà & Richards 2018, 10)



The benefits of being in contact with other cities who are facing similar challenges, or who would like to learn from each other, are clearly visible in the case studies for Edinburgh and Durban. The UNESCO Cities of Literature network has fostered collaborations, mentoring, shared programming, exchanges and other activities that can only be achieved through a co-ordinated network. It is unclear why so few cities from Africa and South America for example, apply to become a UNESCO City of Literature. It is possibly because UNESCO's brand is not strong in many places, or it is seen as an irrelevant or superfluous designation¹² (given that it does not bring cash investment, but does demand resources and collaboration to pull a bid together as well as to deliver the vision over several years). There may be domestic or regional political risks to participating in such schemes. Time-limited initiatives like ECoCs and World Book Capitals don't seem to engender the same level of connectedness between participant or alumni cities. This is likely to result from the fact that the ever-changing carousel of cities to whom these annual titles are awarded move on to different priorities once their moment in the spotlight ends. There is rarely any continuity of people, infrastructure or funding.

Impact: new partnerships and ideas

The momentary partnerships that are created in order to see through a successful bidding process and deliver on a city of literature event generate all sorts of impacts on the participants in that process. Sometimes those networks survive and are sustained through their ongoing commitment to the city of literature endeavour (e.g. Mulero & Rius-Ulldemolins 2017).

In its time as World Book Capital, Amsterdam highlights how a coalition of partners in the city (between publishers, booksellers, libraries, city administrators who collaborated on the bid) formed a crucible in which people could experiment and take risks which might not otherwise have happened, some of which worked and might yield more long-term partnerships beyond the World Book Capital itself (Amsterdam 2009, 47).

The literary garden and the 42 events that occurred there as part of Mons' ECoC programme had a demonstrable impact on artists and programmers in the city. Post-event evaluation survey revealed that: "two-thirds of respondents felt that the ECoC had been positive. Almost 60% reported that their projects did not exist compared to the baseline before 2015. This impact is experienced across all the sectors but is particularly relevant in the literature, books and reading sector (75%)" (Ecorys 2016, 52).

Another city to highlight literature in its programme was Wrocław in Poland, which was ECoC the year after Mons¹³:

"Literature: included 45 projects. Most notably, the programme was implemented in conjunction with the programme for the UNESCO World Book Capital 2016, which was hosted by Wrocław from April 2016 to April 2017. The projects included some new or expanded festivals (e.g. SILESIUS International Poetry Festival, Microfestival of New Polish Poetry, Festival of Literature for Children). The European Literature Night in Wrocław featured public readings at unusual venues across the city by well-known personalities of unpublished works by contemporary writers." (Fox & Rampton 2017, 71–84)

In the case study cities of Durban, Edinburgh and Buenos Aires, the process of applying for (and fulfilling) city of literature schemes has allowed interested parties (writers, publishers, etc.) to meet and connect in ways that they might not otherwise have been able to do, whilst simultaneously being put in front of local, national and international political decision-makers who might not have otherwise been so interested in their agendas. They were granted their moment in the spotlight.

Impact: increased resources for literature

There can be impacts from temporary or permanent designations for cities in terms of tangible and intangible improvements to the professional infrastructure, with funding and attention that comes with a momentary focus on literature. Incheon's designation as a World Book Capital in 2015 was a celebration of the city's historic archives and a revitalisation of the city's libraries network. The focus was mainly on the development of the professional apparatus of the city's literary and archival scene (Incheon Metropolitan City 2015). The city hosted many important conferences in a programme that was mostly sector-focused although increasing literacy of the city's population was also a priority.

The case studies in this report back up existing evaluations that sustained long-term investment in a city's literary infrastructure is clearly an important prerequisite to maximise the impacts from any specific, time-limited initiative (Bullen 2010; Evans 2010; Garcia & Cox 2013). This means investing in writers' development, libraries, scholarship, and commercial opportunities. It also means ensuring that policies are developed that support freedom of expression and a cultural curiosity that brings writers to a city and retains them as they develop their practice and audience. However, there is no hard evidence of what actual benefits a City of Literature brings to writers themselves – either economic or in terms of their profile or readership.

While nobody would dispute that Edinburgh is a literary city, with a long tradition of inspiring writers, of developing readers and being home to publishers, the city's designation as the first ever UNESCO City of Literature meant that attention was focussed on the literature sector in the city as never before.

¹²This was something that came through in some of the interviews for the case studies and is apparent from the pattern of designations through time (the growth has been exponential – see Appendix 2)

¹³Wrocław was actually ECoC in the same year in which it was a World Book Capital

Case Study: Edinburgh, United Kingdom (UNESCO City of Literature)

Edinburgh was the first ever UNESCO City of Literature, and it has played a crucial role in shaping UNESCO's approach to the scheme it began in the early 2000s. Edinburgh is the only UK case study city in this report. It is home to a vibrant and powerful publishing industry and world-renowned literary heritage.

Origin Story

In 2004, a small group of leaders from the literature sector in the city approached UNESCO to form a global network of creative cities. Edinburgh became the world's first UNESCO City of Literature. Edinburgh has been instrumental in establishing and developing the Creative Cities network, and the city continues to help guide UNESCO with the administration of the network.

The Edinburgh delegation to UNESCO were motivated by a frustration that there was little money and attention given to literature, despite widespread acknowledgement that Edinburgh is a literary city. This was seen as a great opportunity for literature in Edinburgh to become more organised and to push ahead on the international stage.

Scottish Enterprise and the Scottish Arts Council (as it was) conducted an audit of literature. This was followed by the publication of two volumes 'We cultivate literature on a little oatmeal...An introduction to Edinburgh as a World City of Literature' and 'Chapter and Verse: Edinburgh, a World City of Literature'¹⁴. The Edinburgh delegation was inspired by the notion of UNESCO World Heritage Sites, and devised a similar scheme for Cities of Literature. They developed the model on paper and took it to UNESCO.

The books were presented to UNESCO in a public ceremony (with music, poetry, whisky, shortbread, etc.) at a reception in Paris. With the UNESCO team assisting them, the team then worked to develop the concept for the network and designation. It was apparent that UNESCO wanted World Book Capitals to be assigned to places in need of economic development, so not really appropriate for Edinburgh. They also didn't want more than one in each category per country. It was then announced that Edinburgh was to be the first City of Literature. The City of Literature Trust was rapidly established to administer the promises laid out in the bid.

What would the designation criteria look like for subsequent Cities of Literature? As the initiators of this scheme Edinburgh worked with UNESCO to devise them. Since then the criteria have evolved.

"The network has changed in the intervening 14 years, in the early days indeed the criteria were essential, but they have evolved and changed as the designation process has changed."

The original criteria created with Edinburgh are still looked to by many aspirant cities of literature, but they are no longer the criteria used in the assessment process, as currently stated on the UNESCO website.

Aims and Objectives

The target audience for the designation was people in the city itself: to show that literature was important, that it should be an aspiration of all residents to fulfil Edinburgh's promise of a literary city, that it is something for everyone – especially children. It had an internal focus, although there were clear opportunities for Edinburgh on the international stage. The proponents of the bid wanted to make literature more visible in the city's tourism offer and to make connections through the Creative City Network with other cities.

The UNESCO Creative Cities Network aims to:

- Strengthen international cooperation between cities that have recognized creativity as a strategic factor of their sustainable development
- Stimulate and enhance initiatives led by member cities to make creativity an essential component of urban development, notably through partnerships involving the public and private sectors and civil society
- Strengthen the creation, production, distribution and dissemination of cultural activities, goods and services
- Develop hubs of creativity and innovation and broaden opportunities for creators and professionals in the cultural sector
- Improve access to and participation in cultural life as well as the enjoyment of cultural goods and services, notably for marginalized or vulnerable groups and individuals
- Fully integrate culture and creativity into local development strategies and plans

The Edinburgh UNESCO City of Literature Trust was formed with the aim of using creativity to promote an enlightened approach to literature in Edinburgh, and

¹⁴ISBN 0-9531 482-8-9 and ISBN 0-9531 482-9-7:

to share this across the globe. Current aims of the Edinburgh City of Literature Trust are:

1. Engage and work with all stakeholders to increase participation in, and impact of their work
2. Increase the visibility of books, words and ideas in Edinburgh to create an environment that invites participation through a range of opportunities and activity
3. Enable others to deliver on the ground impact to increase visibility and participation

Activities

The Edinburgh City of Literature Trust is a development agency for Edinburgh as a City of Literature, sharing Edinburgh's astonishing literary legacy with the world, telling the story of the city's history, and advocating for its thriving cultural scene. The Trust advocates literature as a civilising influence globally, and curates literary events listings. They have been strong advocates for public libraries in the city.

The work of the Trust currently includes Words on the Street (projecting literature on the sides of buildings and monuments, placing literature throughout the main railway station), Literary Salon (monthly meetings of around 50 local writers, poets, publishers, etc.) which is a hub and contact point, helping stimulate new work, initiatives and collaborations and improving people's access to the city's literary community. Emerging Writers (providing showcase and training opportunity for emerging writers from Edinburgh), Literary Tourism (co-ordinating efforts across the city to ensure recognition for City of Literature designation and supporting projects). The Trust's website is a great source of information about what is going on and is up-to-date. It is a useful resource for both writers and readers. It has also been an active member of the Creative Cities Network, collaborating via exchanges, showcases and sharing best practice.

In the absence of any other organisation the City of Literature team undertake a large amount of literature development in the city.

"It is the sort of thing that a city arts agency might do, but in the context of public sector cuts, neither the city nor the national arts development agencies are in a place to do that work at a local level"

In Edinburgh the Trust fills gaps in provision, and that is perceived as being useful and good for the literature scene in the city. However, there is some debate amongst arts leaders and local government within the city about whether that is what a UNESCO City of Literature designation is designed to address.

Impacts and Outcomes

The designation has been a recognition of excellence, and that recognition has given a boost to those in the sector. Interviewees spoke about how it "changed the game". It seemed to "validate all the work that was taking place in the city".

*"It felt like a reward.
It was massive"*

The Book Festival was strongly helped by the designation – especially in the early years. It gave Edinburgh extra weight, extra credibility, on the international stage. Interviewees explained that people can contribute to meetings in the city by saying "Given that Edinburgh is a UNESCO City of Literature..." which really lends instant credibility to advocates within the sector. The UNESCO designation branding is hugely important and impressive in international conversations.

The Edinburgh Book Festival has continued to use the UNESCO City of Literature logo in its marketing. Napier University has found the designation useful in how it markets itself.

"If you live in Edinburgh you perhaps don't realise that it's a UNESCO City of Literature, but it is now well known within that international network."



Figure 1: enLIGHTen ©City of Literature photographer Pavel Lesnik

The designation can be seen as a tool of literature development, and a way of preventing the city from becoming complacent. There is a temptation for cities to use a Creative City designation as a badge and a marketing trick, but Edinburgh seeks to do more than that.

A big impact of the designation was the establishment of the Trust and all the work that it has undertaken. The programmes and campaigns of the Trust are evaluated in a standard way (the amount of work produced, the number of people it reached) (Edinburgh 2017). The data gathered informs how the Trust talk about their impact to stakeholders in the city.

The impact of the City of Literature designation was immediate. Writers really liked it, especially emerging writers, who have been well served by its projects across the city. The Story Shop project was especially transformative: it is a collaboration with Edinburgh International Book Festival that gives emerging writers the means to play a full part in the festival – not just as audience members, but being granted backstage access, and reading one of their stories on stage. Previously the Book Festival might have felt a bit out of reach, impenetrable even, to local emerging writers. The Trust's Literary Salons for writers have proven to be popular for those that participate. The Trust is perceived to be a key bit of Edinburgh's literary infrastructure, and the Trust's team are out there, energetically making things happen.

“The amount of literature activity in the city compared with ten years ago is just enormous.”

One of the impacts of becoming a City of Literature is that it gives the city an identity it can exploit. Edinburgh has always been a literary city, especially within Scotland, and it has brought tourists to the city. The UNESCO designation formalised this reputation and made it more visible internationally for those who might instinctively only consider the city's festivals and heritage.

Ultimately, for interviewees contacted as part of this research, the UNESCO designation has highlighted, drawn attention to, and brought interest to literature in the city, but all of this continues to occur in subtle, complex and unmeasurable ways.

Success Factors

A major success factor for Edinburgh is their ability to collaborate, both within the city and internationally. The City of Literature Trust is effective at networking with libraries across the city. That might be the best way to get their work to people in all neighbourhoods of Edinburgh, since the city has a concentration of wealth and cultural activity in the city centre. The Creative Cities Network itself is a valuable asset; Edinburgh have played a big role in expanding it. In the early years a lot of effort was made in Edinburgh to build the network. This was perhaps a hard sell for local stakeholders, potentially diverting attention away from the city itself.

“The Trust was having to face inwards to the city as well as outwards to the international community.”

Despite their strong networking and programming abilities, the City of Literature Trust is performing the double roles of a visitor attraction service and a literature development agency. It is not clear whether this can be sustained. The recent loss of funding from Creative Scotland may indicate a lack of faith in its abilities, but instead the decision seems to have been informed by a need for a strategic direction that determines whether its focus is outward or inward facing (selling the city or improving it). A sharper and more targeted use of resources in the future will mean that the city can benefit yet further from the designation and the work of the Trust.



Edinburgh, UNESCO City of Literature

2.2 – Impacts on readers and audiences

In each of the case study cities, there is a good deal of attention given to the possible public benefits of participating in the various city of literature schemes that have been developed. Although the initial driving forces behind city designations or major festivals are often from the literature sector or local politicians (or a coalition of the two), their ultimate goal is frequently to create something that will have a positive impact for their constituents: readers, audiences, book buyers, school children, and others who comprise local communities.

Impact: greater investment in infrastructure

In Melbourne, its designation as a UNESCO City of Literature resulted in the establishment of the Wheeler Center (a centre for books, writing and ideas). In many ways, Melbourne's designation has focused efforts and been a point of co-ordination within the city whilst simultaneously linking it to other cities globally (Melbourne 2016, 6–9) "Arts Victoria, the Victorian State Government, and the State Library of Victoria are currently working on ways to incorporate the UNESCO title with other tourist activities, including through a literary trail" (Carson et al 2013, 43). Norwich in England has also been able to capitalise upon its UNESCO City of Literature designation to support the development of a National Centre for Writing (Norwich 2017).

In Iowa, the City Book Festival is a visible consequence of the City of Literature designation, with its aim to expand and deepen the connection between writers and readers in the city. Similar aims direct the audience development initiatives of the city's Children's Literature Festival, the Little Free Libraries, and work around the world-famous University of Iowa writer's programme (Iowa 2016, 7–11). As with Melbourne, involvement in the Network has meant more events that link together with other cities around the world.

With some exceptions, very little of this activity has been rigorously evaluated, and the impacts are largely claimed without empirical evidence. However, an interesting development is that Iowa has committed to establishing a survey of its literary sector in order to "use the information to its own projects and programs as it seeks to find the most efficient and effective way to direct resources" (Iowa 2016, 14). Edinburgh is also committing to conducting research on how it can better deliver its City of Literature programme to its audience and communities (Edinburgh 2017, 14–15) and Krakow is also committing to future evaluation of its City of Literature work (Krakow 2017).

Impact: changes in people's expectations of themselves and their cities

When it comes to the wider impacts of ECoCs, Žilič-Fišer and Erjavec use the example of Maribor in Slovenia to argue that "through the empowerment of local citizens by means of bottom-up initiatives in the effective planning and implementation of the ECoC year – propelled by reduced financial, health and social welfare of the majority of people, on the one hand, and the disclosure of the mayor's corrupt activities in local politics, on the other – these local citizens challenged the existing political, economic and social system, particularly the host city's regime" (Žilič-Fišer & Erjavec 2017, 582). They go on to describe how:

"participant observation and personal interviews showed that a large number of local citizens and their activity of participation could mainly be ascribed to empowerment. In a non-hierarchical manner, they debated issues directly affecting their lives in the city, which made them perceive that their voice did count. The interviewees also reported that ECoC was an important topic in everyday conversation with other people."

(Žilič-Fišer & Erjavec 2017, 590)

The most comprehensively researched cities of literature (Edinburgh, Barcelona, Melbourne, etc.) tend to be located in countries with established traditions of liberal democracy and a relatively high standard of transparency and good governance. By expanding into case study cities like Port of Spain, Durban and Istanbul, this research reveals that there can be a more antagonistic relationship between local political leaders (whether elected or appointed) and the literature sector, with civil society groups an important stakeholder group to consider. They serve to highlight the fact that city of literature initiatives can have a productively destabilising effect of local political equilibriums and provide opportunities for literary voices to be heard in ways which may otherwise never arise.

Many of the proposed initiatives in the case study cities in this report were designed to seek recognition or endorsement for their status as literary cities. Often unprompted, interviewees in those cities spoke about the intangible impacts of being awarded a city of literature designation (in whatever particular scheme), especially the way it acted as a validation, granting many in the city (not just the literature sector) an enhanced sense of pride and purpose. This is fairly typical and comes through in the way that political and cultural leaders in Norwich talk about the impact of their UNESCO designation:

“The importance of winning the UNESCO City of Literature award is recognised across local government, higher education, and business, as well as in the arts community. One stakeholder from the arts and cultural world, for example, identified ‘place making’, and enhancing Norwich’s profile nationally and internationally, as important beneficial factors.” (CBR 2014, 31)

In Port of Spain one of the main drivers for the Bocas Lit Fest is to highlight the cultural contribution of Caribbean writers to the regional and global culture. Specifically, it works to foster and propel writers from Trinidad and Tobago onto the global scene. Not only does this put this relatively small country “on the map” in literary terms (and highlights the contribution of Caribbean writers outside of Jamaica and Cuba) but it also emphasises to people in Trinidad that their country has a rich literary heritage which should be celebrated and developed.

The World Book Capital in Buenos Aires presented elements of its heritage internationally in Europe and interestingly spawned the Shakespeare festival – a celebration of a literary heritage from further afield reflecting the city’s appetite for international literature.

Impact: expanded audiences for literature

Being a city of literature in one form or another is clearly a way to co-ordinate efforts across a city to reach a large proportion of residents and visitors with a suite of activities. For example, in Amsterdam, “its Children’s Book Capital programme AWBC was able to reach deep into the city’s roots. An estimated 90% of all elementary school pupils participated in educational projects” (Amsterdam 2009, 31). Such a level of comprehensive coverage is unlikely to be achieved without a grand designation and the focusing effect that it has on disparate stakeholders in a city. A similar story is told in the Dublin UNESCO City of Literature Monitoring Report (Dublin 2017).

For a co-ordinated programme to reach a wide audience, there needs to be a strong infrastructure in place already. In Port of Spain in Trinidad, the Bocas Lit Fest essentially comprises the totality of infrastructure for emerging writers, for literacy and reading initiatives. They work especially hard to get their activities beyond a cultural elite in the city centre and into the wider country, into schools and youth groups and thereby reach many more people than a one-off festival could do, and certainly more than the otherwise non-existent infrastructure would be able to serve.



BOCAS Literature Festival, Port of Spain

Case Study: Port of Spain, Trinidad & Tobago (Major festival city)

The NGC Bocas Lit Fest is Trinidad and Tobago's premier annual literary festival: a lively celebration of books, writers, writing, and ideas, with a Caribbean focus and international scope. The festival brings together readers and writers from Trinidad and Tobago, the Caribbean, and the wider world to Port of Spain for a programme of readings, performances, workshops, discussions, film screenings, and more.

Origin Story

When it began in 2011, the festival was operating on a shoe-string budget, meeting in people's front rooms. There was little strategy in those early years. However, the festival's organisers were driven by three motives: to showcase the abundant talent and new writers they saw in Trinidad and Tobago, to connect them with publishers, to address the deficit in literary and publishing infrastructure in the Caribbean.

The festival began by establishing a prize – it was something tangible to take to a sponsor to ask for money, and the prize giving became a centrepiece for the festival. With this in place the first year of the festival was a “proof-of-concept” for the people of Trinidad and Tobago.

Aims and Objectives

- Celebrate the Caribbean's literary achievements in a festive atmosphere
- Foster interest in reading and writing
- Help demystify books and improve literacy
- Help sustain the book industry, which supports this
- Expand the idea of literature by including performance poetry and rapso
- Exploit and enhance Trinidad's presence on the world stage
- Administer annual prizes for Caribbean writers

Activities

Nowadays Bocas comprises an entire suite of activity on the islands of Trinidad and Tobago: there are six different prizes awarded each year; an annual poetry slam; workshops in the community; school sessions; reading groups in libraries; they are publishing new work; and undertaking representation of Trinidadian writers in overseas events (Bocas has been recommending writers for the Miami Book Fair). The festival also includes a full programme of activities for younger readers: the

NGC Children's Bocas Lit Fest. There is a month-long storytelling caravan around the country on Saturdays throughout the month of April, plus readings, creative writing workshops and performances by children's authors, alongside the main Festival.

The Lit Fest takes place at the National Library and the adjoining Old Fire Station in downtown Port of Spain. An entire city block in the heart of the capital is transformed into a vibrant Festival Village, including performance stages open to the street, booksellers' stalls with hundreds of titles on sale, and space to eat, drink, and relax. There are also satellite evening events at venues around the city. All readings, panels, and performances are free and open to the public.

Impacts and Outcomes

Without any state infrastructure Bocas has become a de facto development agency for the literature sector in Trinidad and Tobago. When they turn away writers or other interested people who ask for support with their projects, there is normally nowhere else for them to go.

The main festival gets literary events into unusual places in Port of Spain: like the Big Black Box performance space, as well as into bars and nightclubs. In a way, the Lit Fest gives venues a way to try out literary events that might not otherwise take place. For example, the opening night of the 2018 festival held readings in the capital's LGBT+ night club.

Data and evaluation is a challenge for Bocas. They track audience numbers, not just at the festival but for events throughout the year. Reaching 40–50,000 teens through their school and youth work makes for some impressive stats. This helps with fundraising and advocacy.

As sponsors of the Lit Fest, NGC does not formally evaluate the activities of the festival itself, nor have they done a study to calculate a return on investment from their sponsorship. They have estimated that the value of the branding of the festival is in the \$millions. Should a writer from the festival go on to win an international prize then the value to NGC is enormous.

Beyond attendance numbers at their own events, Bocas has very little data to work with, and no national statistics to benchmark themselves against or to use to track impact. For example, there are no national statistics on book sales, number of authors, number of readers (either for Trinidad and Tobago or the Caribbean more generally). This means Bocas cannot provide the government with statistics that evidence the economic value of literature, or quantify the impact of the Lit Fest on readers or writers. It is something that the festival is seeking regional support and collaborators to help overcome.

There are anecdotal data: book sales go up and there are high numbers of transactions during the festival (so the booksellers say). Additionally, there seem to be more Trinidadian writers being published, and the festival has helped engender a big interest in spoken word and poetry slams. The week of Bocas the independent Paper Based bookshop is incredibly busy.

The role of Bocas is very important for writers as it brings them together and into contact with one another. Many writers are based locally in Trinidad while others are out in the diaspora. It does not just invite big names to participate in the festival, it also provides a platform for writers who are connected to Port of Spain and Trinidad and Tobago more widely. One writer's life story (that of Barbara Jenkins) is intertwined with Bocas: she entered and was shortlisted for the Commonwealth Short Story Prize. This led to an emerging writers event in Bocas, with three to four writers presenting. People were coming and going from the event – one of those people was Jeremy Poynting from Peepal Tree Press, who published her story.

The Lit Fest also draws other important publishers interested in Caribbean writing: Akashic Books, Papillon Press. It is now developing its own publishing imprint: Peekash Press dedicated to publishing the work of emerging Caribbean writers living at home in the region. Begun in 2014 as a partnership between Peepal Tree Press in the UK and Akashic Books in the US.

Unlike other Caribbean Islands such as Jamaica and Barbados, Port of Spain seems to have a real cross-Caribbean focus. Other events in the region like Calabash often have a Jamaican or North American axis.

There are still pockets of Trinidad who are not aware of Bocas. The festival is doing what it can to reach them. The impact of Bocas has been detectable: more book clubs, more readers, more happening. Groups of poets are meeting like never before. Many local people are exposed to Caribbean writing for the first time when they are at Bocas. There is good coverage in the local media. Bocas has made Trinidad into an island of writers.

Success Factors

The Lit Fest treats their writers well, which was cited as a crucial success factor:

“Writers know they will be well looked after at Bocas: transport, accommodation, all that sort of stuff – which is not always the case at literature festivals elsewhere.”

This has also meant that writers are attending Bocas as non-performers, coming to see and be seen, to make connections, and to further their artistic practice.

Sponsorship from NGC is vital but does not cover all the costs of the festival. Bocas has to make the ask every time. From NGC's perspective, the benefits of sponsoring Bocas are that it gets their brand domestic and international exposure, it is associated with literature and improving literacy in the country, it is something distinctly Trinidadian (so NGC's association cements their reputation as being a crucial aspect in national cultural life), and it provides opportunities for their employees at all levels of the company to get involved in the Lit Fest as volunteers or participants. The National Gas Company's sponsorship makes a huge difference, and without it the festival would look very different. Their sponsorship means that most of the events are free to attend.

There is ad hoc support from the Culture Ministry. The Bocas team pitch to the ministry every year but there is no sustained financial support forthcoming. This may be because there's no literature sector expertise in the government. The school curriculum is tightly controlled by the Ministry of Education so in order to work with schools the festival is dependent on their support.

A crucial component in the success of Bocas is the people involved and the way they run the festival. Marina Salandy-Brown returned to Trinidad and Tobago after a career with the BBC and was driven to set up a literature festival in Port of Spain inspired by the models she had seen in the UK. Programme Director Nicholas Laughlin's judgement and connections have meant that Bocas has been artistically successful. Inviting significant reviewers and journalists has also further enhanced the reach of the festival: Claire Armitstead, Associate Arts Editor on the Guardian, has been an enthusiast since being invited.



BOCAS Literature Festival, Port of Spain

2.3 – Wider Social Impacts

Impact: increased tourism activity

By far and away the most frequently discussed impact of being a city of literature is its effects on tourism. When it comes to a UNESCO City of Literature designation, the benefits to a city in the form of increased prestige, tourism and economic activity are widely anticipated although predominantly only evidenced through anecdote rather than evaluation. One sceptical study stated clearly what city administrators expect to happen as a result of a city of literature designation:

“City administrators often think that it is a prestige or a symbol of quality for a city that is designated [a UNESCO City of Literature]. They think that they will increase their recognition of the title and they will provide international cooperation in this context. Another important statement is that the title will contribute to the development of the region in a significant way.”

(Yalcin & Turan 2017, 189)

Specific festivals such as the Noirwich crime writing festival in Norwich, England, (a collaboration between the city government, a local Business Improvement District, a regional development agency, and a local university) has proven to be a success directly resulting from the energy and activity of the UNESCO City of Literature team. The organisers claim:

“We have invested over £200,000 into the local economy in direct costs, services and promotion. In 2017 the media reach of Noirwich publicly was calculated at 3,185,264 people. Ongoing estimates suggest we have increased the number of cultural tourists to our festival from over a 45-minute drive-time year on year by 45% since we started, and had a net positive impact on the local economy in terms of direct additional tourism spend of over £250,000 over the course of the festival to date.”

(Norwich 2017, 7)

Initial reports from Edinburgh suggests that there is evidence for the positive impacts of City of Literature-sponsored events having an impact on tourism and economic activity:

“There was substantial social media engagement and press coverage and a footfall of 402,912 was recorded during the [Words on the Street event], in the two streets hosting the installations in March 2012, substantially outperforming both the previous month (by 37%) and subsequent month (by 28%). 93% of survey respondents said they enjoyed the campaign and 97% said it added value and interest to the city as a destination. 79% of respondents are now more aware of the Scottish Enlightenment and Edinburgh’s literary history, while more than half the respondents came into the city centre especially to see the projections.”

(Edinburgh 2017, 6)

Impact: more coherent city branding

City branding has been a major impact of UNESCO City of Literature designations. The Edinburgh Monitoring Report to UNESCO makes a great deal of the many events and initiatives that are designed to support literary tourism in the city (Edinburgh 2017). However, the degree to which these moves have an impact will depend on the coherence and coordination of policy in the city itself. In reference to the same Words on the Street event mentioned above, two scholars have observed that “to date, City of Literature logos and branding have not been particularly visible in the [Edinburgh] cityscape itself, with one major exception when excerpts of poetic lines about the city were displayed in the windows of two six-storey disused office building façades near the Scott Monument” (Kostanski & Guy Puzey 2014, 1218). The anticipation of the benefits of distinction and coherence that city branding may bring is replicated in other cities of literature:

“The key benefit to Norwich of the UNESCO City of Literature designation envisaged by stakeholders is that it provides a cultural ‘brand’ for the city, strengthening its external, cultural profile, stimulating tourism, and feeding through into wider economic and social success.”

(CBR 2014, 31)

Interviews to support the Edinburgh case study often touched upon the duality of their UNESCO City of Literature designation, and the work of the City of Literature Trust. For extra clarity and coherence, it was suggested that the badging or branding work of the Trust might be separated (at least conceptually) from the literature development work that they did to support writers and readers in the city.

Increased coherence doesn’t merely relate to branding. For example, the introductory sections of Krakow’s 2017 UNESCO monitoring report states that “the designation opened doors and the subsequent programme helped to systematise the slew of activity percolating in the city. Throughout the past four years, integration has taken place on many planes. [...] The City of Literature designation has immensely helped to catapult and integrate the city around its common mission” (Krakow 2017, 4–5). Dublin also describes the effect of its designation in similar terms: “the process of achieving international recognition as a

UNESCO City of Literature has served to bind together disparate groups and organisations with the common purpose of enhancing Dublin’s reputation as a pre-eminent city of literary and cultural diversity” (Dublin 2017, 4). Co-ordination is also a theme (although less explicitly articulated) in Reykjavik’s City of Literature monitoring report (Reykjavik 2017) and is reflected in the Buenos Aires case study in this report.

Conversely, generating a single vision in a city with divergent value systems can prove problematic, especially where cultural initiatives cannot be separated from the political sphere. In the case study cities of

Durban and Istanbul there were opposing views as to what a city brand for those places should look like, and hence the process of devising and fulfilling a cultural plan became a mechanism for airing political conflicts.

Impact: participation in global networks

City of literature designations and similar flashes of activity can help the city to be a magnet for other related international activity. The designation of World Book Capital provided Amsterdam with the means to attract other international literary events to the city during that year (The European and International Booksellers Federation and the World Blind Union both held their annual summits in the city), thereby bringing additional footfall, business activity and publicity to the city during the year of designation (Amsterdam 2009, 28). This was also true in Buenos Aires, which hosted more international writers, international professional conferences and also staged events abroad. By contrast, Incheon in South Korea used its World Book Capital designation to sell itself outside of the city, with delegates making speeches and presentations at book fairs around the world, using it as a way to showcase Incheon and Korean literature more widely than would otherwise be possible (Incheon Metropolitan City 2015, 90).

Even though all of the case study cities in this report can legitimately claim to be cities of literature, their pedigree is not necessarily universally understood or acknowledged. A UNESCO or EU designation not only suggests to the rest of the world that a city's status is confirmed, but also signals to sceptical politicians or public back home that it should be taken more seriously. Despite this, there are legitimate questions about whether UNESCO and other international agencies are privileging elite cultural forms and imposing models of arts development in countries who do not necessarily fit a wealthy or European model of governance and financing.

This is a complicated topic. A case in point is Kolkata, whose political leaders would like to re-apply for a UNESCO designation, but retain reservations about how best (and whether they need) to co-ordinate a hugely active and diverse creative community under such a banner.



Amsterdam, City of Literature

Case Study: Kolkata, India (Major festival city)

Kolkata (the third largest city in India) is widely regarded as the “City of Books” and the home of Bengali publishing. This case study outlines the impacts of five major literary festivals in the city: the International Kolkata Book Fair, the Apeejay Kolkata Literary Festival, the Kolkata Literature Festival, the Kolkata Literary Meet, and the Apeejay Bangla Sahitya Utsob.

Origin Story

The writer and poet, Rabindranath Tagore won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1913, which provided the momentum for writers in Kolkata to create their own intimate versions of European literary festivals. Regular salons were held in Bengali publishing houses throughout the early 20th century and the energy to discuss ideas and literary works has continued ever since. There remains a healthy interest in books in Kolkata and authors still play a prominent role in the city. The annual International Kolkata Book Fair is the world’s largest non-trade book fair. It began in 1976 and it now has 2.3 million visitors every year.

The original purpose of the Book Fair was to support Bengali publishing. Nowadays, people attend more as an annual pilgrimage to meet friends, eat together, and listen to music, rather than to buy books. However, the growth of international literary festivals has meant the Book Fair’s function has been revived, not least thanks to the literary festivals that have developed in the city. The first of these was the Apeejay Kolkata Literary Festival (AKLF).

In 2009, the owner of the Apeejay Surrendra Group, a well-established business conglomerate in the region, was looking for a way to mark the centenary year of the company whose many businesses include tea, shipping and hospitality. It wanted to give back something meaningful to the state.

Apeejay Surrendra’s only retail outlet, the Oxford Bookstore in Kolkata, provided it with the perfect platform.

“The Bookstore’s year round interaction with agents, publishers and distributors was the ace up its sleeve,”

With inspiration from the ZEE Jaipur Literary Festival and support from various international agencies, the AKLF launched in 2010. Held first in the Oxford Bookstore, it later gained access to Kolkata’s heritage sites.

“We wanted to leverage the plus points of the city, like St Paul’s Cathedral, the Indian Museum and the National Library.”

In 2010, the ZEE Jaipur Literary Festival also inspired a commercial company, Gameplan Sports to develop a proposal for a festival with more ambition, vision and scale. In 2012, the first Kolkata Literary Meet (KLM) took place as part of the Kolkata Book Fair. After two years, the KLM moved to the Victoria Memorial in the heart of the city and built a new home from which to develop its international profile under the slogan – “you’ve read the books now hear the writers.” Gameplan Sports used its marketing connections to secure funding from Tata Steel and other corporate sponsors, like Standard Chartered Bank, to grow the KLM. The company managed to convert some of their long standing sport partnerships into supporters for its literary festival. Tata Steel also has significant sport interests.

A literary festival within the Book Fair – the Kolkata Literature Festival (KLF) continued from 2014. There was a need for international and national authors at the Book Fair to have a single, organised platform from which to do their readings, rather than being confined to their publishers’ silos.

The newest literary festival in the city and the only one to be held in November rather than January, is the Apeejay Bangla Sahitya Utsob (ABSU). Started in 2015, it was conceptualised by the Oxford Bookstore in association with the Bengali publishing house, Patra Bharati. The idea was fuelled by a Bengali diaspora hungry for contemporary Bengali literature and the lack of any global Bengali literary festivals. It began inside the Oxford Bookstore and has since expanded onto its lawns in response to a growing audience.

Aims and Objectives

Kolkata Book Fair’s principal objective is to promote reading and to support Bengali publishers and booksellers. It is funded through a mix of public and private sources.

The AKLF aims to adhere to the spirit of the Oxford Bookstore’s tagline, “much more than a Bookstore.” It wants to be a space where people gather to enrich their minds and to enjoy a range of writing from across the world. Its programme includes a variety of cultural events, which includes music, art and photography, as well as literature.

The KLM’s objective was to create a literary festival on a larger scale to showcase well known international writers. It now aspires to become year-round, to promote writing in the vernacular (“a yawning and very regrettable gap” according to one interviewee) and to focus much more on translation.

The KLF's objective was to provide one single platform to draw together the many local and international authors who attend the Book Fair.

The ASBU is trying to promote the language, rather than the region, via an interactive platform for contemporary Bengali literature targeted primarily at 15–25 year olds.

“Take a 21 year old who lives in London whose parents are Bengali; if they get a platform where they can interact with others, maybe they will take more of an interest in the language.”

Activities

The Kolkata Book Fair brings together Bengali and international publishers for debates and symposiums about publishing. Books are also available for the public to buy.

The AKLF now also offers a Junior Literary Festival, poetry and music segments and translation seminars, in addition to its main schedule which includes a variety of arts practitioners speaking alongside international and local authors of fiction and non-fiction. As part of the Oxford Bookstore's year round activities, the festival promotes translation into a variety of Indian languages. It also encourages marginalised communities in the region. For example, local art in the form of Patichitra scroll painting. It attracted 8,000 visitors in 2018, with an increasing number of foreign tourists. The majority of keynote speeches and panel discussions at the AKLF are in English, with a few delivered in Bengali and Hindi. The AKLF programmes its most popular authors at the KLF, to take advantage of the crowds. The Book Fair also generates significant press coverage from which both literary festivals benefit.



Figure 2: The Apeejay Kolkata Literary Festival 2017

The KLF sees itself as a bridge between the writers and readers at the Book Fair. 12–15 countries are represented at the annual Fair, along with international literary agents, authors and publishers. Due to the huge footfall at the Fair, the festival can attract around 24,000 people and draw a crowd of 2,500 per session.

The KLM is perceived as being a more “popular” festival, with an emphasis on celebrity and international names. It offers a highly produced and largely English programme, (10 out of 70 sessions were delivered in Bengali in 2018) and it is the biggest of Kolkata's literary festivals with 45,000 visitors, many of them young. The organisers attribute this to the Victoria Memorial.

“We don't serve food or drink, but people seem to like the venue and the really popular writers on the programme.”

Its programme includes discussions about a range of literature, as well as short films and political debate. It started to live stream its events in 2018.

The ABSU has two dimensions. Firstly, there are sessions with Bengali authors and established best sellers who cater to an older audience (Patra Bharati curates this part of the programme). Secondly, there are sessions which range from contemporary writing, theatre, poetry and also script writing, film and movie adaptations, word games and graphic novels which appeal to a younger audience (curated by the Oxford Bookstore).

Impacts and Outcomes

It may seem an obvious point, but one impact on the city has been the boom in literary festivals: “one festival brings hope for another festival”. More collaboration (or even a merging of Kolkata's existing literary festivals) seems unlikely as each event is driven by different motivations, distinct personalities and a variety of supporters, who currently see no reason to join together under the same banner. Overall, they co-exist reasonably harmoniously and offer diversity rather than duplication, along with popular platforms for both international and local writers. Some say that the relaxed, informal exchange of ideas of the early salons has seeped into the current festival formats where the discussions are described as, “not as crisp” as at other international gatherings.

So far, there has been minimal formal monitoring and evaluation and the literary festivals' strategy has tended to be retrospective – dynamic personalities making their ideas work to survive. The methodology comes later when they work out what worked and what did not. The KLM aspires to a more rigorous evaluation process, an improved system of volunteers and an expansion into publishing anthologies. The AKLF has a system of “learning reports” which have helped to shape its direction.

“We’ve learned that, unlike Jaipur, you can’t present potential audiences with five concurrent events. Here that type of programming doesn’t work, one or two singular events work better.”

The current festivals’ impact can really only be gauged in terms of footfall – these numbers are small in the larger context of a city that once took pride in being the reading capital of the country. However, despite the depressed economy of Kolkata and stiff competition for funding – a celebrity culture is driving the festivals to chase the same big names and the same international funders – Kolkata’s literary festivals seem set to stay and growth is on the cards.

The KLM has specific collaborations with agencies like the British Council, but it secures its financial support from commercial organisations. Following the initial success of the KLM, Tata Steel has launched two other regional festivals in West Bengal, including one in Ranchi, whose programme is delivered mainly in Hindi.

An increasing number of people watch the sessions from the KLF, which are live streamed from the Book Fair. Collaborations have also been formed at the KLF between international literary agents and between the authors themselves, who attend the Book Fair. There have also been cases where digital projects have developed from authors meeting in person at the Book fair.

In 2017 the ABSU had a footfall of 8,000 15–25 year olds, with its Facebook and YouTube sessions viewed by Bangla language enthusiasts all over the world – the festival offers one of the few digital platforms for contemporary Bengali writers. If it continues to grow beyond its five-year gestation period, it feels its impact on the Bengali language and the city could be immense. As for the risks, some see this festival’s less conventional, more interactive, digital approach, “as a bit of a gimmick.”

Success Factors

As a non-political, not-for-profit festival, the AKLF sees itself very much as part of the larger cultural community in the city and further afield. It has built relationships with other international literary festivals, for example, the Edinburgh International Book Festival and the Sydney Writers’ Festival. It also has a close association with the ZEE Jaipur Literary Festival, with whom it delivers an annual literary prize.

The Apeejay Surrendra Group can support its festivals by utilising its network of longstanding business interests in the city and its ownership of the oldest and largest bookshop. Without this, the AKLF may well not have got off the ground.

“The AKLF will continue to evolve by delving into its existing legacy. The legacy of the AKLF is inextricably tied up with the year round activities of the Oxford Bookstore.”

Unlike the International Kolkata Book Fair and the AKLF, which have a strong interest in publishing, the KLM operates as a “knowledge based event” from within Gameplan Sports, with an in-house team of ten. With its parental support in the form of Tata Steel and experienced corporate fundraising skills, it only tends to compete with the other festivals over writers, rather than funding sources. Additional support for the KLM has come from The British Council and Alliance Française. But it is the festival’s strong corporate backing, combined with high profile festival venues such as the Victoria Memorial and an effective marketing campaign helped by its media partner, The Telegraph (Kolkata’s biggest English language daily newspaper) which have secured KLM the highest footfall. The Telegraph’s rival, The Times of India, promotes the more parochial AKLF, which relies heavily on the Apeejay Surrendra Group’s legacy in the city, along with partnerships with international development agencies, including the British Council and national governments, for example the French and Norwegians.

The KLF relies on the Book Fair being so huge and well recognised. It doesn’t have to fight for funding; it has one or two long associated sponsors and half its costs are covered by the Book Fair organisers.

With the exception of ABSU, which decided it didn’t want to “squeeze into an already crowded space,” the three annual literary festivals and the Book Fair all take place within the same four-week period from mid-January, mainly due to the weather and the density of national public holidays. They are also able to take advantage of the authors who attend the ZEE Jaipur Literary Festival and encourage the visiting authors to attend several festivals in one trip – the AKLF has postponed its 2019 festival by a week in order to take more advantage of this. However, “the overcrowding” is a problem because of the potential clashes around the scheduling of authors.

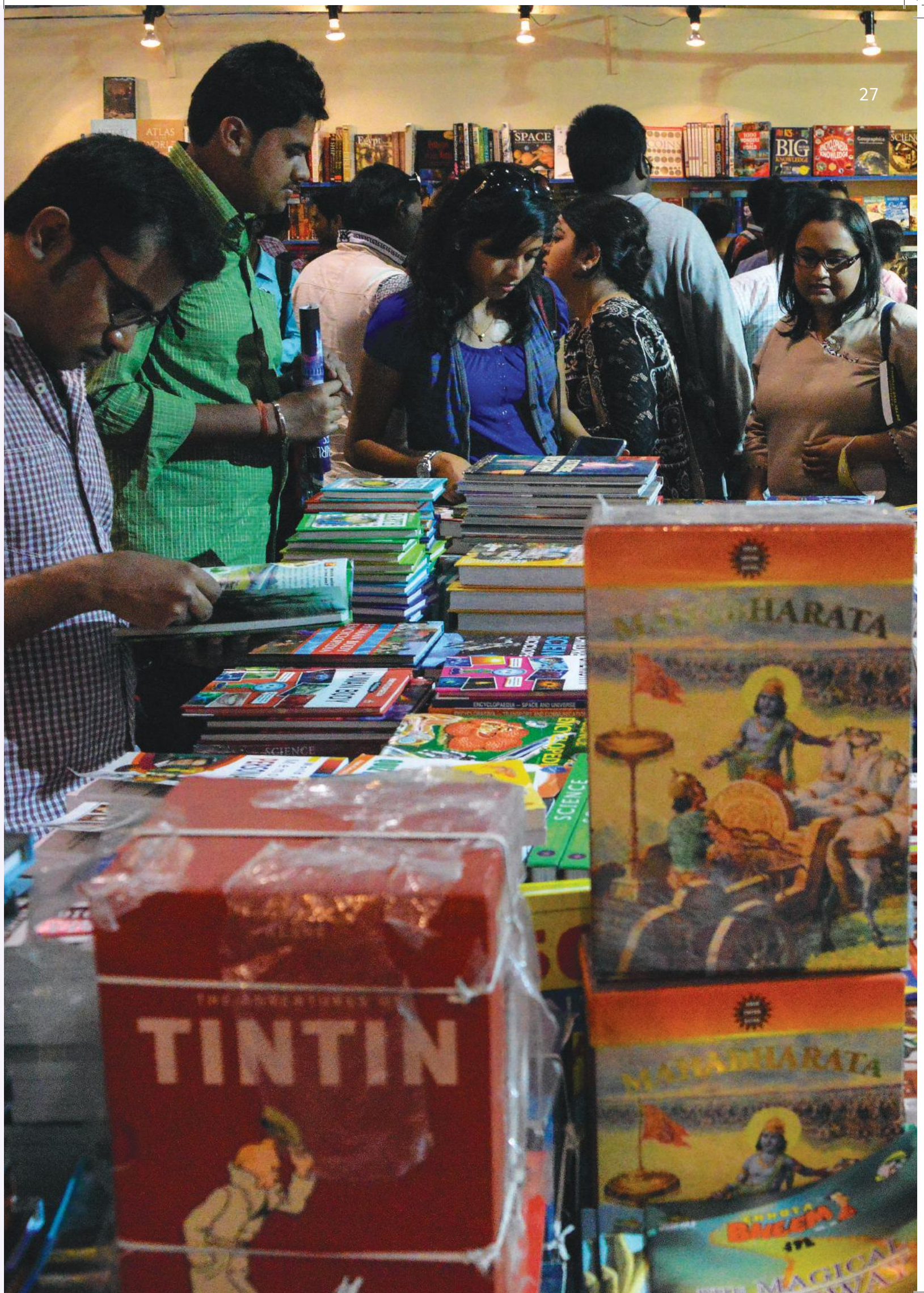
The ABSU, like the AKLF, takes advantage of its parent group's infrastructure. Its partnership with Patra Bhalaviti is significant in that it is a large Bengali publisher who's Managing Director is also Secretary of the Book Fair with direct access to many Bengali authors:

"it was a strategic decision because the Bengali authors aren't going to say no to the manager of the Kolkata Book Fair!"

In addition to the core support provided by the Apeejay Surrendra Group and the Oxford Bookstore, the ABSU struggles to raise funds because many of its contemporary Bengali authors lack celebrity status. Fund raising for an event in November is also a challenge because many corporate houses opt to support Durga Puja, the annual Hindu festival, which means ABSU may soon have to join the crowded schedule in January.

There is no codified cultural policy in West Bengal and most literary events are civic initiatives. However, the government is generally supportive of the existing literature events, in particular the Book Fair which it sees as a key attraction for international delegations and which it helps in terms of logistics and infrastructure. It also supports a film festival, a popular music festival, an Indian classical music festival, and an annual exhibition of visual art.

Looking to the future, the literary community is split between those who see a UNESCO designation for Kolkata as something which would unite its creative community and put a seal of legitimacy on its literary legacy. Others feel it is a city which doesn't need to buy into a City of Literature label – there is still a charismatic pride in Tagore and many streets are named after authors. They believe the growth of literary initiatives should carry on without the need for any official external approval. The West Bengal government believes a successful UNESCO City of Literature bid could promote international links and provides an opportunity to attract more resources for literature and marginalized languages generally. It is excited about the possibility of Kolkata being India's first UNESCO City of Literature, but it is aware of the potential pitfalls of such a process and cautions against any new bid which is driven by self-interest and with insufficient support from national government. Kolkata's 2008 UNESCO City of Literature application became tangled in political bureaucracy in Delhi and never made it to any official in Paris.



3.0 – Success factors

As in the previous section, the known “success factors” when it comes to the preparation, delivery and legacy of ECoCs, specifically, have been well documented by Garcia & Cox (2013). Their summary of success factors and recommendations is presented here, and they are likely to be applicable to other international city of culture schemes (including those dedicated to literature):



Overall recommendations:

- Encourage a clear vision from the outset, rather than detailed programming
- Distinguish the ECoC vision from a cultural and communications strategy
- Emphasise the Programme's cultural dimension
- Provide greater clarity in the definition of respective creative industry sectors
- Utilise a flexible but effective constellation of organisations to manage the ECoC process
- Balance the relationship between political support, accountability and independence
- Plan for post-ECoC transition to maximise legacy and sustainability
- Standardise data collection and formalise knowledge-transfer
- Open up local debate around the value of a European Dimension

These are accompanied by a handful of "success strategies" that are recommended by Garcia and Cox:

- A clear vision, set up from the start
- Distinctive programming that reflects the city's assets and history, and includes work that is innovative and/or internationally recognised
- A balance between event programming and relevant infrastructure development
- Clear lines of communication adapted to different constituencies
- Broad public engagement, using dedicated strategies and targeted community programming
- Strong governance and financing models
- A commitment to legacy planning (Garcia & Cox 2013, 67)

When it comes to city of literature initiatives, the relevant success factors identified throughout this research for any intervention have been arranged according to whether it relates to a bid or scheme's preparation, the delivery of a programme or intervention, or ensuring and maximising its legacy.



3.1 – Success factors in preparation stage

Before going through the individual factors, it is worth emphasising that not all cities will have the capacity or inclination to plan in an ordered way with an ultimate goal in mind. One of the overall findings from the case studies is that cities of literature can emerge from the organic and creative forces of writers, publishers and others in the sector. This occurs without predetermining goals, objectives or measures of success. Pre-existing resources, approaches and general conditions for arts development are very different in different parts of the world.

Factor: a clear vision

Having a clear vision may be an obvious factor to identify (and echoes Garcia and Cox), but cultural policy in cities can comprise so many different and dissonant things it seems important to restate this. Regarding literary tourism, it has been observed that:

“The need for destinations to have a clear vision for tourism is critical. Without clarity in and across the destination, as well as collective buy-in from destination stake-holders, the ability to respond quickly to sudden demand from literary tourists will be difficult to accommodate with consequent limited potential to integrate literary tourism fully into its wider tourism agenda.”

(Hoppen et al 2014, 45)

Incheon in South Korea had failed in two previous attempts to be designated World Book Capital before putting together a far more co-ordinated and coherent bid for 2015, and they ascribe their eventual success to that coherence (Incheon Metropolitan City 2015, 38).

Factor: take advantage of momentum

The successful preparation for a bid to one of the designating agencies might come from a long lead-up of work relating to a different or intermediary intervention, as was the case with Norwich:

“Out of the (unsuccessful) bid process for European Capital of Culture 2008 designation came the ‘cultural roundtable’, which brought together organisations in Norwich that had a strong understanding of the importance of culture and events, and out of which grew the economic aim of attracting business, growing the city, and stimulating tourism; as well as reaching out to those on lower incomes to ensure that they too have access to the arts and culture. Importantly, the impetus towards a sharper focus on culture gained during that first bid process was not allowed to lapse (as it did in some of the other contenders for the 2008 award), leading instead to a further bid to become UK City of Culture 2013 – a competition for which Norwich was short-listed. Norwich City Council was a key driver in all the bids, with the continuity in their roles of certain key participants in the process also an important factor.”

(CBR 2014, 31)

Vibrant literary cities like Kolkata, Edinburgh and Buenos Aires each demonstrate how a citywide focus on literature results from decades of sustained world-class activity in the fields of writing, reading or publishing. This can subsequently lead to developing a bid for a designation as a means of consolidating all of that effort.

Factor: a diverse coalition of stakeholders

The forging of a coalition of city stakeholders to unite around the process of bidding to these international designations is something that cities recognise must be done comprehensively and systematically for the process to work. This is the story from Melbourne in its application to become a UNESCO City of Literature:

“The support for the UNESCO bid was far-reaching, from the grass roots level through to the media and government officials, since reflected in substantial increases in funding for the city’s literary life. The Age and Herald Sun followed the bid from start to finish, and the bid was accompanied by very strong community interest. [...] One of the successes of Melbourne’s bid was its formalizing of the city’s dual obsessions with sports and the arts.”

(Carson et al 2013, 31)

The quality of the people involved (their energy, good faith and expertise) and the strength of the organisations (national and local) were also highlighted by those in Norwich while they bid for the UNESCO City of Literature designation:

“Many stakeholders interviewed referred, on numerous occasions, to the dynamism, vision, and enthusiasm of particular people in driving forward projects across the whole spectrum of the arts and culture renewal in Norwich – not only key players in arts organisations, but also at the city council, in the third sector, at the University of East Anglia (UEA) and at Norwich University of the Arts (NUA – including in its previous guise as the Norwich School of Art and Design). [...] Four key factors led to the success in securing that designation for Norwich, all of which revolve around the idea of connections. First, the city had a vibrant cultural ‘offer’ and a cultural milieu which provided the seedbed from which bids for the UNESCO and other city-designation awards could be launched. Second, city council leadership was a major element in promoting success, building on and fostering the initiative and enthusiasm within the city that came out of the first bid experience. Indeed, the council displayed foresight in its approach, drawing on its vision of Norwich as a culturally vibrant city. Third, through successive bids to different city awards, continuity and expertise developed and, in a reflection of the importance of human capital, committed people with vision were able to take forward Norwich’s cultural development. The fourth important element was effective partnership-working.”

(CBR 2014, 34)

The Barcelona UNESCO City of Literature bid was successful in garnering political support from all points along the spectrum. What began under a right-wing government continued under a left-wing one. The new government “considered that City of Literature project fits with its objectives of promoting participatory culture as a common good of the city.” (Mulero & Rius-Ulledemolins 2017, 4). Ultimately, “the underlying idea is to shape a project that would embrace the whole literary world (public and private actors, civil society) with a view to forging sound relations and seeking common aim, namely promoting Barcelona” (Mulero & Rius-Ulledemolins 2017, 6).

Coordination of Amsterdam’s various literary stakeholders was also important for their successful preparation and delivery of the World Book Capital application. The establishment of a Foundation and Project Bureau to run the year-long event provided a governance structure that was sympathetic to multiple stakeholders while providing clarity and leadership.

“Thanks to the involvement of representatives of every segment of the book industry and the fact that an independent foundation took responsibility for effectuation, broad support was created for the initiative. The large number of AWBC partners and the audience reached demonstrate this.”
(Amsterdam 2009, 45).

As World Book Capital in 2015, Incheon’s coalition of planning and delivery partners was similarly diverse, making a particular feature of the public-private coalition between business interests and local government (Incheon Metropolitan City 2015).

One of the challenges to making a coalition work effectively is maintaining interest and buy-in from partners whose attention is not on the specific outcomes of the city of literature initiative. Hoppen has observed that literary tourism needs “to involve and proactively engage with often national and international publishers, authors, media organisations and film makers to achieve what in their eyes will often be viewed as outcomes (i.e. tourism) of secondary interest to their core business” (Hoppen et al 2014, 46).

The experiences of the case study cities all highlight the need for effective partnerships to be in place, within the literature sector and beyond it to policy, politics, business, civil society and others.

From his perspective leading Iowa UNESCO City of Literature, John Kenyon has observed that

“The biggest challenge for cities which enter into the bid process is the notion of building a broad coalition – you need to have a unified writing community, you need to bring on board members of the civic government and the business community. In Durban some of the challenges they are facing post designation, have to do with having many different people who all see themselves as part of the literary culture – different languages, different heritage – uniting them into a cohesive writing community can be a huge hurdle.”¹⁵

The difficulties which the Durban bid team had to effectively link together disparate city stakeholders provides something of a cautionary tale, but one that now shows promise through a continued engagement between Durban and its mentor city.

¹⁵Interview with research team

Case Study: Durban, South Africa (UNESCO City of Literature November 2017)

Durban is a coastal city of three million people in eastern South Africa's KwaZulu-Natal province known for its African, Indian and colonial influences. From its status as Boer Republic to its Zulu heritage, KwaZulu-Natal has been home to a wide range of writers, including Alan Paton, Lewis Nkosi, and poet Mafika Gwala.

Origin Story

Durban's UNESCO City of Literature application initially came from two enthusiastic individuals, who gradually attracted a small group of creative practitioners to join their cause.

"We felt that if we enlightened the city government of Durban as to how much this designation can benefit the writers and the literary community, as well as the social empowerment it would bring, then the city would buy into the idea."

The individuals also had two external drivers supporting their application from the outset: the United States Consulate General in Durban, which wanted to broaden its provincial and municipal outreach and a mentorship from Iowa City (Designated a City of Literature in 2008). It also came at a moment when UNESCO was keen, and still is, to encourage more applications for UNESCO Cities of Literature from the "Global South".

It is generally agreed that Durban's diverse cultural scene has the potential to utilise a City of Literature designation. Its four main festivals are run by the Centre for Creative Arts based at KwaZulu-Natal University and include the Time of the Writer Festival, the Poetry Festival, the Durban International Film Festival and JOMBA! Contemporary Dance Experience. The city has many bookshops and a rich array of languages and heritage.

However, the once respected Centre for Creative Arts has lacked direction, stability and sufficient funding for the past five years. There are a handful of other festivals, but these are disparate and organisers chase the same audiences and funding sources. Many of the libraries are closing and social inequality is widespread. There is no codified cultural policy in the region and literature is not seen to be a priority.

Despite this backdrop of a highly politicised and fragmented creative sector, the interested individuals feared the minimal interest they had from the community and the backing they had from the U.S. Government might wane and they wanted to apply while that support was in place.

As a result, the application "did not capture the promise of Durban's vibrant, diverse community because that community was not engaged in the process of writing it." The proposal showed insufficient evidence of a detailed four-year programme, minimal public engagement activities and the few stakeholders named in the bid document were not involved in any technical or strategic discussion before submission. Rather than taking more time to build a broad coalition of support and representing their more detailed plans in the application, the bid was largely the work of one or two writers.

Aims and Objectives

The application bid's main theme was how Durban could address social deprivation using arts and culture. It also highlighted the benefits of an international network and cultural exchange for Durban's creative community.

One of the continuing challenges for the bid team was to secure the buy-in and engagement of the city government, which was concerned about the costs of such a designation. The bid team maintained that its aim was to "build on" the city's existing cultural activities. In addition, it would introduce one new project during the designation – a Children's Literary Festival. It also highlighted how Durban would benefit from becoming part of UNESCO's Creative Cities Network. This lack of engagement between the city government and the bid team meant the application was not endorsed by the Mayor's office until a few days before the submission deadline.

"We had a mad dash scramble to actually get the application in"

It is doubtful that the Mayor's office fully understood what a designation would actually entail.

Activities

Since the designation in November 2017, the city government decided to embrace the award and endorse it. However, this caused complaints that decisions were then being made at the government level without sufficient consultation with the creative community, who felt excluded, particularly those who were originally behind the bid. As of April 2018, the city government had yet to successfully convene a sufficiently diverse advisory board, devise an inclusive programme of publicity and activities, and to establish a municipal UNESCO City of Literature office or a coordinator.

Impacts and Outcomes

No events have yet taken place as a result of the designation so it's too early to identify any impacts resulting from that. Neither has there been any concerted effort to communicate the designation to stakeholders and the public in the city.

The small bid team of creative individuals expected it to be easier than it was to build consensus and have support coalesce around the designation.

In addition to problems over the broader responsibility and ownership of the initiative, there were also divisions within local government.

"It became a bun fight as to who was going to run the designation. First it was the Department of Foreign Relations, then the Department of Libraries. It finally fell to the Department of Parks and Recreation – the Department of Arts and Culture refused to come on board."

Success Factors

The bid team attribute their success to their commitment to address the many social problems in the city, for example homelessness, through arts and literature and its enthusiasm to be part of an international network.

The political realities of life in Durban present a fragile frame through which the city has to develop a clear vision for its literature designation. The city needs to engage the business community, NGOs, various levels of government and other potential collaborators. Time and patience are needed to ensure this is done correctly and it's generally agreed that in the case of Durban, short-term urgency to show progress must be avoided. A strong foundation is required before a structure of any size and endurance can be built. However, Durban has the continued support of its mentorship from Iowa and John Kenyon, Executive Director, of the Iowa City UNESCO City of Literature organisation remains positive:

"With institutional knowledge gained by an interaction with the other Cities of Literature, those at the governmental level charged with organising Durban's long-term management of its designation should be able to build a committed, representative governing body to represent all aspects of the literary community and leverage the designation for the benefit of all constituencies."



Durban, UNESCO City of Literature

3.2 – Success factors in delivery stage

Factor: maintain a coherent and distinct message

Cities are busy and bustling places. Holding a diverse coalition of stakeholders together means there are a lot of competing voices who want to be heard. Just as there is a great deal of noise in the bidding process, the same is true in the delivery phase. This is something that has perhaps proven to be a challenge in a major international city like Edinburgh:

“Apart from potential conflicts between nation and city branding, the City of Literature identity also has to sit alongside other identity projects. The city’s main marketing slogan, which is shown on road signs at the boundaries of the City of Edinburgh Council’s local authority area, is “Edinburgh Inspiring Capital”.” (Kostanski & Guy Puzey 2014, 1219)

In a sector like literature, where people’s commitment to making things happen can drive them to jump at any opportunity to collaborate, to distribute their work, to chase funding opportunities, there is the risk that original objectives get forgotten. In the Edinburgh case study there was a sense in which the initial aim of getting the City of Literature designation did not sufficiently instruct the team about what was required of them in the fulfilment of their obligations once the designation was secure. In Kolkata, the competing and overlapping literary festivals in the city are the result of individual interest pursuing their own agendas and taking advantage of their own opportunities. In both Edinburgh and Kolkata it has been difficult to maintain a single, strong, strategic message that unites all relevant and interested parties to support the city of literature schemes in those cities.

Kolkata has never called itself a City of Literature. In Buenos Aires the City Council took on the role of co-ordinating and presenting on a website a programme presented by many different partners – but as the World Book Capital was an intervention for one year only, the website was not sustained.

Communicating what is happening in a city of literature can be a difficult task without the right resources and partnerships in place. In Amsterdam, the city sought unity and coherence by engaging a professional marketing agency who were able to shower the city with flyers and billboards and other inventive means to let residents, workers and tourists know about what was happening (Amsterdam 2009, 37–39).

Factor: good governance

Podestà & Richards identified the management and governance attributes that made the Mantua literary festival successful in the transfer of knowledge within the festival and between the festival and others:

“The organisers [of the Mantua literary festival] describe their decision-making structure with keywords such as ‘flexibility’, ‘liquidity’, ‘mutual trust’, ‘reciprocity’ and in terms of a great readiness to accept inputs from others. They share the opinion that a flexible structure and informal way of interacting allows everyone, from writers to volunteers, to play an important role in the event and to feel part of the community. This structure reflects their will to remain economically independent from the local administration, and their desire to connect and educate different stakeholders.” (Podestà & Richards 2018, 9)

Flexibility is also important. Amsterdam’s World Book Capital programme remained relatively flexible until the last possible moment, which allowed the programming team to take advantage of any opportunities or partnerships that arose just before (or even during) the period in which activity was due to take place (Amsterdam 2009, 21). The open-minded and evidence-led approach of Limerick when developing its (unsuccessful) bid and to host the 2020 ECoC was an interesting model: they developed an “Intelligence Unit” to work up policy ideas (Kinsella et al 2017).

Ensuring good governance is a basic requirement for a successful city of literature intervention. So much of the successive Ecorys evaluations of the ECoCs in recent years are about the success or troubles resulting from the governance vehicles used to oversee the planning, funding, commissioning and delivery of ECoC programmes. The variability of governance styles comes through very strongly. In 2009 Linz and Vilnius took very different approaches to the management and governance of the ECoC with Linz leaving things in the hands of an independent body driven by artistic directors (Ecorys 2010).

The story of Istanbul’s time as ECoC (see page 43 of this report) is illustrative of the ways in which the local and state government does not always align with the interests of the literature sector, and how the opaque and seemingly arbitrary distribution of funding can work against building a shared vision of a city united to support its writers and readers.

Factor: an appealing programme

There is an age-old tension between excellence and reach when developing programmes of cultural activity. The recommendation from the research seems to say that neither is especially important in itself, but rather whether the programme is appropriate to the city and authentic to its culture. Simply importing what has been done elsewhere is not going to work. The many “book towns” to have copied the Hay-on-Wye model, only to have failed to sustain their endeavours, serves to show one size does not fit all (Frank 2017). Luckily, in Stavanger they were able to serve excellent culture to a mass audience – although this may reveal more about the city than the cultural programme:

“Our study indicates that the ‘major dilemma’ pointed out by Palmer et al. (2011) – ‘do you go for mass or elite audiences; quality or quantity?’ – can be fairly well resolved. Stavanger2008 has shown how broad segments of the population may be engaged in high quality cultural events. This is not to say that everything about Stavanger2008 was perfect, but other ECOCs may have something to learn from Stavanger as ECOC when it comes to participation from different social strata in the events. The biggest challenge for the ECOC event seems to be reaching out to groups who are not very interested in culture beforehand.” (Fitjat et al 2013, 79)

Matovic (2017) outlines three specific sets of programmes pursued by UNESCO Cities of Literature that she thinks have been especially effective in reaching audiences with a quality offer. They are represented here in detail¹⁶. The first relates to activity in Krakow, Poland: CzytajPL! (ReadPL!) turned more than 300 bus stops in Krakow, Gdańsk, Katowice, Poznań, Warszawa and Wrocław into e-book libraries allowing “citizens to encounter the best in literature directly in the urban spaces” (Matovic 2017, 515). The second account is of Ulyanovsk, Russia: НЕСКУЧНЫЙ СКВЕР (Not-dull square) regenerated abandoned city spaces “using literature, reading and writing activities” (Matovic 2017, 516). The final example is “The City Reads” project in Ljubljana, Slovenia:

“Each year a different country or area of the world is selected in order to promote authors from all parts of the World, and multiculturalism. [...] On 3rd of December (birth date of the greatest Slovenian Poet Prešeren) the list of 60 chosen books is announced on the LCL home page and in public media. Readers have 6 months for reading at least 5 books from the list and send their impressions. [...] In June the final event is held in open space, in the historical city center of Ljubljana. [...] There, Ljubljana City Library makes a literary and musical event for citizens and tourists, with a lot of stage reading of Slovenian literature, story-telling, good music and creative children groups.” (Matovic 2017, 516–518)

The fraught relationships between writers, publishers and the city administration in Istanbul as the ECoC was approaching, show that sustaining momentum around shared goals and values can be a challenge when deciding on an appropriate programme for a city of literature-type initiative.



¹⁶In some regards these studies reveal the limited scope of research that exists on the impacts/benefits of UNESCO Cities of Literature. Matovic's article is useful but largely descriptive, rather than analytical.

Case Study: Istanbul, Turkey (European Capital of Culture)

Istanbul European Capital of Culture 2010 was the first and only city outside Europe with the title. In the run up to 2010 Turkey was campaigning to join the European Union. The city itself is home to an ancient literary tradition, is conspicuously multicultural (bridging Europe and Asia) and has a distinct identity within Turkey. A great deal of political turmoil has occurred in the city since 2010.

Origin Story

The original idea to bid for ECoC was formed in 2001 by a group of people working in the cultural sector and in academia, who believed that culture could play a central role in EU integration. The arts community in Istanbul – led by many NGOs, most notably Istanbul Foundation for Culture and the Arts (Istanbul Kültür Sanat Vakfı), saw itself as internationalist in outlook and at the centre of many international artists' networks. Over the next four years the idea was developed into a full proposal, with Prime Minister Erdogan giving his approval in 2005. It was accepted by the EU in 2006.

Aims and Objectives

Originally the aspirations for the ECoC centred around developing audiences and building inclusive participation, particularly in neighbourhoods that had little access to culture. Many projects were proposed to bring culture to the suburbs of Istanbul; there was a great sense of energy and optimism. The objectives were to build and consolidate the arts infrastructure and develop a mixed economy to support culture using private, government and commercial funding. The vision included a proposal for a fuel tax which would both fund the ECoC and provide future investment for culture.

The ECoC application did not include explicit overall objectives for Istanbul 2010, but it did list four aims (Ecorys 2011):

- Generate transformative energy and build capacity
- Restore cultural and industrial heritage
- Address the urban and cultural dimensions of citizenship
- Function as a bridge connecting Europe to its East

There were various shifts from these original aims as the bid document was developed and then moved into delivery. Once the title was awarded the Istanbul 2010 Agency was formed to deliver the ECoC. Many of the people who initiated the bid formed part of an advisory group. However, membership of the advisory group underwent at least two substantial changes, as the aims and objectives shifted and central government assumed a leading role for delivery. There were several resignations from civil society members as a result, including the first director of the delivery agency in 2010.

After the resignation of the first Agency director (Nuri Colakoglu), central government in Ankara appointed a new Director from the Istanbul Chamber of Industry (Sekip Avdagic). At the same time the proposed funding mechanism changed. The idea of the fuel tax was withdrawn. Instead, central government announced it would be providing even more extensive resources.

“It seemed that the government finally got what it had wanted.”

This had the effect of skewing funding for the programme substantially towards public sources (95%) with the corresponding result of much more explicit government control. The total actual spend was 193m euros, including large scale renovation of heritage sites, which was the majority of the spend. 93m euros of allocated funding remained unspent (Ecorys 2011). This compares with 200m euros previous investment in artistic production through municipal centres in Istanbul (2008–2010) (Aksoy & Enil 2011).

“The arts community found itself excluded from the distribution of resources. 60% of resources went into restoration and marketing. That is not to say there were not several independent initiatives and projects, most notably in theatre and visual arts. They were generated through active networks and run on low resources; there was some good work.”

A tension developed between the original objectives – providing an inclusive programme in the outlying parts of the city and to develop the arts infrastructure for the longer term – to a local and central government focus on building incoming tourism to Istanbul in 2010. A target of increasing tourists from 7m to 10m was set (Aksoy & Enil 2011).

Activities

The programme was constructed around the four elements; Earth, Fire, Water and Air. There is no reliable archival record of the overall programme during 2010. Consensus of opinion amongst interviewees for this research is that there was no clear artistic vision for the ECoC and that activities were disparate. A majority of the programme was focussed in the centre of Istanbul, where 30% of the population live.

Evidence from the Ecorys evaluation, the Turkish Cultural Policy Summary Report and from interviews record a variety of activities including:

- A substantial capital renovation programme, mainly focused on heritage sites
- Opening and closing ceremonies in seven locations and some high-profile events that included international artists such as U2 and the Simon Bolivar Orchestra
- Dan Brown was commissioned to write a novel about Istanbul
- As part of a wider collaboration with the other ECoCs in 2010 an “EU library on wheels” was created and travelled in Turkey with 66 European writers from seven EU countries and 20 Turkish writers travelling to Europe (it reached 40,000 people at 226 cultural events in and around 31 Turkish cities)
- Funding was invested in the translation of several books¹⁷

EU funding in the form of the Melina Mercouri Prize (1.5m euros which is conventionally attached to the awarding of the ECoC title) was used to fund a suite of projects across different strands of the cultural programme:

- Theatre and Performing Arts: European Universities Theatre Festival
- Visual Arts: Lives and Works in Istanbul
- Cinema & Documentary & Animation: Essen-Pecs-Istanbul On Bike Film
- Literature: European Writers Parliament
- Music Opera: Arvo Pärt: Adam’s Lament World Premiere
- International Relations: “Cultural Policies in Turkey and Europe” Symposium 2009; New Approaches to Cultural Governance Symposium 2010
- Cultural Heritage and Museums: The Prince Islands Museum
- Urban Projects: Armenian Architects of Istanbul Exhibition; Hasköy Mayor Synagogue Restoration; Preparing a Management plan for Istanbul historical peninsula; European cultural heritage summit in Istanbul; Underground Revolution Exhibition, Brussels

Other programmes were delivered either by the Agency or by NGOs who had applied and been successful to an open scheme for applications. Interviewees cited the visual arts exhibition programme as the most successful in terms of reaching a broader audience. Performing arts was also strong, specifically a dance festival. Many NGOs ran their own programmes with very little additional funding. An example of this was the Istanbul Tanpınar Literature festival’s collaboration with Literature Across Frontiers which ran for several years.

There were elements of the programme that included attempts to develop more local cultural centres. However, one interviewee commented: “not a single cultural centre was opened.”

Impacts and Outcomes

Given the lack of clarity over aims and objectives from the onset, it is not possible to measure impacts and outcomes against original aspirations. At the time Istanbul was a city of 12m people and its questionable whether any programme with a limited duration of one year could have any lasting effect on the cultural infrastructure of a city that size. The large proportion of committed public funding (274m euros, 95% of the total budget) did not successfully leverage other investment. Many of the large scale infrastructural projects were not delivered, most significantly the Atatürk Cultural Centre (which is now demolished) and the National Library. However, there was significant renovation of some cultural heritage sites.

There is no evidence that tourism to Istanbul increased. According to figures from the Istanbul Province Directorate of Culture and Tourism, 2010 closed with no significant increase on 2008 and down on 2009 (Aksoy & Enil 2011).

There is no substantial evidence about impact on communities or readers. Impact on the general population was limited. “It is clear that raising participation in culture remains a challenge: 68% of residents responding to a survey reported that “only the central regions of the city benefited” from the ECoC and 60% reported that “activities were not addressed to ordinary people” (Ecorys 2011). This view was strongly supported by interviewees who consistently stated that cultural inclusion across minority communities was not on the government agenda, which was increasingly nationalist in its outlook. This was a clear shift from original aspirations.

The legacy of Istanbul 2010 lies mainly amongst the professionals, academics, policy makers, curators, producers and civil society players and their resilience, dexterity and determination.

¹⁷ It is not possible to find a record of these books or any measures of their global success

Success Factors

The success or failure of the Istanbul 2010 ECoC year was predominantly a result of the consequences of the state having such a strong hand in the distribution of funding and the creation of the cultural programme.

Investment in artistic development and production was limited. Though the Agency led funding system for artistic content was extremely bureaucratic and not artist friendly, the ECoC nevertheless galvanised many artists and arts organisations. People gained valuable experience at raising international funding through foundations and private donations and building international partnerships.

There is a robust literature sector in Istanbul, though it is not necessarily as a result of the ECoC and many interviewees felt the ECoC impact on literature was very limited. The programmers put in the place by the Agency were from outside the sector with limited understanding of literature, particularly international writers. However, established players used the occasion of the ECoC to build their activity. For example, the Tanpinar Literature festival put forward an ambitious proposal for a festival to be held at international level to welcome writers, publishers, critics, translators and journalists from different countries with the goal of creating a network. Despite lack of government funding it continues to be one of the major international literature festivals in the region and runs scholarships to welcome international participants. There are two successful book fairs; the 5th National Publishing Congress in December 2010 called for more effective co-operation between public institutions, civil society and professional associations to support the industry.

The European Writers Parliament provided a platform to discuss freedom of expression, which many writers considered an issue in Turkey. The climate has since worsened. Thirty publishing houses have been closed and many writers now live abroad (Akdeniz & Altıparmak 2018). Some notable writers are in prison.

Istanbul continues to have a lively academic input into cultural policy. The Istanbul 2010 Arts Management course that the ECC stimulated at Istanbul Bilgi University produced a generation of new arts managers and policy makers. At Bilgi University a UNESCO Chair of Cultural policy and Cultural Diplomacy was established in 2017. Cultural life is still dynamic. Interviewees stated that the book publishing sector that is based in Istanbul is getting larger year by year and the number of published fiction and non-fiction books is rising. But the bigger festivals could not survive changes in public policy since 2010 and the legacy for the cultural infrastructure is limited.



Istanbul Tanpinar Literature Festival



Istanbul Tanpinar Literature Festival

3.3 – Success factors in legacy stage

Overall, there is a great deal of scepticism about the long-term impacts of large-scale cultural city interventions. Speaking about Glasgow's time as ECoC, Garcia reflects many years after the event that research suggests "that it is the softer, less tangible cultural benefits that have been better sustained, while other widely acclaimed economic benefits such as job creation are questioned both by local creative groups and recent academic publications" (Garcia 2005, 861).

Factor: maximise the potential for spillover benefits

One way to think about impacts is in terms of spillovers. TFCC identify (2015) three types of spillovers which have been suggested by Podestà and Richards as being relevant to city and culture interventions:

- Knowledge spillovers: ideas, innovations and processes developed within cultural and creative industries which spill over into the wider economy;
- Industry spillovers: the vertical value chain and horizontal cross-sector benefits to the economy and society;
- Network spillovers: the knowledge that, from a high density of arts and/or creative industries in a specific location, overflows to the economy and society enhancing regional attractiveness.

(Podestà & Richards 2018, 5)

Knowledge spillovers are especially important to cultivate in the setting of literary festivals, they can subsequently enhance artistic, intellectual and philanthropic networks, as Podestà & Richards explain with regards to Mantua literary festival (FL) in Italy:

"After twenty years of activity, the majority of organisers, sponsors and opinion makers identified the creation of a climate of innovation within the region as the main festival outcome. This process occurs on two levels. On the first level, it creates the conditions within the city to facilitate intellectual consumption and production and therefore creating a new demand for knowledge; and on the second level, the development of the managerial strategy of FL and the consequent communication with diverse stakeholders acts as a model within the region for the development of complex cultural projects."

(Podestà & Richards 2018, 12)

Factor: develop a cohort of champions

Many of the initiatives that are cited in this report have an ephemeral quality: they occur for a year and then disappear. One way to ensure a longer-lasting legacy (other than major capital expenditure) is to have developed a cohort of volunteers:

"Young volunteers were revealed to be key nodes of FL as both festival makers and as literary knowledge sources (a large proportion are students). In 2016 there were 700 volunteers coming from all over Italy to fill roles ranging from box office staff, information provision, providing logistical support, to editorial staff. [...] Many volunteers indicated that they found a job in the city in local cultural institutions they encountered during the festival experience and thanks to skills that FL enabled them to develop."

(Podestà & Richards 2018, 9–11)

The activities of the City of Literature Trust that have supported writers in Edinburgh (literary salons, bursaries, showcases) have created an alumni network of beneficiaries who are highly supportive of the designation and its impact on the city. A similar picture emerges in Port of Spain, where domestic writers have been nurtured with funding, prizes and exposure which has helped cement support for the Bocas Lit Fest amongst the literary community in Trinidad and Tobago.

Factor: cement new coalitions

Once again, just as coalition-building is an important factor in the preparation of a bid and the delivery of a programme, so the maintenance of them is key to ensuring that the initiative has a viable legacy. The city of Barcelona has factored this into their thinking from the start, by ensuring that all players in the city's literary sector have a stake in the initiative:

"A key aspect of the project was that it sought to catalyse literary politics through the Barcelona's Contemporary Culture Center (CCCB). The CCCB has since developed its exhibitions on the relationship between writers and urban space. It also hosts a festival such as Kosmopolis and is quick to pick up on new literary phenomena and trends. One of the key projects for the UNESCO candidature is the positioning of the Kosmopolis festival as a meeting point for creators, the local public, and contemporary literary currents. Last, it is remarkable how the meeting of the Candidature Council has become a unique gathering that brings together those involved in publishing, bookselling, creation and reading promotion in a common project. The desire to join forces is reflected in the application file, which depicts a city in the vanguard in several fields (publishing, translation and education)."

(Mulero & Rius-Ulldemolins 2017, 6)

The effect of highlighting the city's literary ethos in a one-year initiative like a World Book Capital had left its trace in Buenos Aires, although given it is huge city with a substantial literary heritage, many interviewees contended that it merely gave a boost to what might have happened regardless.

Case Study: Buenos Aires, Argentina (World Book Capital)

Buenos Aires is very proud to be a literary city. When Lorca visited in 1933, he called Buenos Aires 'the capital of books'. Argentina's printing and publishing industries developed early, partly as a consequence of Franco's dictatorship in Spain during the 1950s, 60s and 70s pushing the literati across the Atlantic. Many books were published in Argentina that were censored by restrictions on freedom of expression in Spain. Today Argentina boasts almost 400 publishing houses (90% of them are small or medium size), a network of libraries (many of them community led), a book distribution agency and 1,200 bookshops (70% are independent, and 370 of them are in Buenos Aires). There are at least three book related events in the city every week. The people of Buenos Aires have an appetite for international literature and their knowledge is broad.

Origins

It seemed obvious to apply to UNESCO to become a World Book Capital. In 2009, Argentina was the Guest of Honour at Frankfurt Book fair. This had raised ambitions and applying to UNESCO seemed an obvious thing to do. The bid was prepared by the City of Buenos Aires, led by Hernan Lombardi (Minister of Culture) and supported by the Mayor, Mauricio Maori. The City worked in partnership with the professional and writers' organisations including the Fundacion del libro, the Argentine Booksellers Associations (CAL and CAPLA), the Publishers' Association (CAP), two writers associations (SEA and SADE) as well as the body responsible for promoting youth and children's literature. There was little doubt that Buenos Aires was in a strong position to win the bid and in 2010 it did!

Aims and Objectives

There were three main conceptual guidelines – the promotion of books, the promotion of reading and the promotion of the literary heritage. The year-round programme was constructed along these lines.

Operationally, the City created a project unit (Unidad de Proyectos Buenos Aires Capital Mundial de Libro) which sat under the Mayor and Minister of Culture, with Luciana Blasco as its Director. Delivery and funding of the programme was organised in three categories:

- Projects delivered and financed by the Ministry of Culture
- Projects delivered by civil society or private organisations through two funding tools – the Metropolitan Fund for the Arts and the Patronage system
- Projects delivered and financed by civil society and/or private organisations

People were more aware of the co-ordinating role played by the project unit rather than any substantial additional resource that was injected. The major aim appears to have been to enhance the status of Buenos Aires, nationally and internationally rather than targeting investment in creative industries, tourism or education.

Activities

The aim was to have 365 days of activity, enhancing what was already in place in Buenos Aires. Leading events such as the Night of the Bookstores, International Poetry Festival and Night of the Museums were given 'special edition' status to shine during the year. The World Book Capital acted as an umbrella to pull together and accentuate a host of activity that already happened in a lively bookish city, as well as adding something new. The city built a website which acted as a literary events diary for the year and worked as a dissemination tool. An electronic newsletter had 20,000 subscribers.

Over that period there were 85 events, 80% of which were free of charge and 75% were focused on the general public. Alongside numerous mini festivals and events there were some that were presented in non-conventional spaces to attract new audiences, such as the Tower of Babel, designed by artist Marta Minujin, a 25-metre tower made of 30,000 books in languages from all over the world. 115,000 books were given away on buses, subways, trams and at theatres. There was a Shakespeare tour of the city by bike as well as a poetry one. Community libraries in the suburbs held their own book events.

There were celebrations of historical authors (Borges, Lorca, Sabato) including internationally in Rome, Paris, Milan and Prague. Prizes were presented – a young readers' prize and the International Publishers' Association Freedom to Publish Prize. Books from other cultures were celebrated including a focus on France as well as one on Quebec. There was a children's programme and various theatrical and circus performances using books as a theme. Over 40 international writers appeared in the International Poetry Festival. A new Shakespeare festival was created and added to the collection of festivals run by the City. Leading south American authors were commissioned to write about the city. There were academic and professional conferences. 50,000 people attended the closing night.¹⁸

Alongside Buenos Aires major annual activities – the International Bookfair and Filba, Buenos Aires literature festival, presented their programmes.

Impact and outcomes

Buenos Aires has continued to grow as a city of literature and books but it is hard to say whether this is as a result of the World Book Capital or whether it is because it always had a lot of activity. In particular, a translation fund was set up by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (following on from Frankfurt) and this has

¹⁸ Yearbook Buenos Aires World Book Capital 2011. 23 April 2011 – 23 April 2012. Ciudad de Buenos Aires

been very important in supporting the translation of Argentinian Literature. In the long run, although slow and steady, this has had a major effect on exports, perhaps more so than the World Book Capital. The international attention on the City in 2011 was very important in raising ambition and creating a sense of pride. It heightened a view that Buenos Aires was an outstanding literary city with a huge amount going on and a really strong literary heritage.

The mainstays of activity have continued to grow – the Night of the Bookstores has grown from one street to a really huge event with hundreds of bookstores taking part. Filba, the Literature Festival, has grown considerably over the last ten years. Where once it hosted 10 international writers it now hosts 40 and has a strong relationship with Edinburgh Book Festival and a network of festivals world-wide. The International Bookfair has also grown considerably; it hosts a range of public programmes alongside the trade fair including international conventions for bloggers, booktubers and bookstagrammers. Public attendance in 2017 was 1.2 million people and over 104 artists and writers were welcomed. Most radio stations employ specialist literary reporters and there are at least 3 book programmes on Argentinian TV.

There was certainly an impact on how people felt about the city as a literary city, translators were given a voice and came to the forefront. Professionals really felt they belonged to a leading international bookish city. The publishing industry continued to grow with new independent publishers sprouting up. However, some people warned there are challenges on the horizon if the economy continues to be in recession.

Success factors

Although, at the beginning, the World Book Capital organisation often appeared to lack strategy and was sometimes chaotic, it did have charismatic and active leadership. The city of Buenos Aires was of a different political colour to the national government and perhaps this competition egged the city on. People learned to work together and the city has seen growth in the sector, in particular in translation and the major fair and festival. Writers and translators are valued and very much at the centre of activity. Public funding is committed to supporting and developing the artist. The Literature sector has learnt from this early collaboration and if the World Book Capital were to happen again next year they would be in a stronger position with respect to working effectively together. To some extent this is borne out by the number of partners that constitute the Fundacion del Libro – the organisation responsible for running the book fair.

“Buenos Aires City has a vibrant and strong literary system from writers to publishers, editors, librarians, booksellers, libraries and different associations, all of them were involved during the process and all of them, alongside with the reader’s community, literary translators, teachers and designers, made possible Buenos Aires World Book Capital 2011.”

Several people said often it is the small and regular investment which really makes an impact – such as the funding of translation or writers, or the partnerships with international institutes and organisations that support literary activity. The commercial economy in Argentina is not large enough for writers to manage without support. But without writers there is no industry:

“We have to support the creators, you have to invest in them, it is the best way of making the industry successful.”

Some people wanted to see an expansion of bookstores across Argentina, but this did not happen. Filba is developing its participative programme with a view to extending reading into new communities and is working with Edinburgh Book Festival to learn from their experience. Under Alberto Manguel, the National Library has commenced an education programme working with teachers to support them to inspire reading in their students.

Some challenges remain. Argentina is not a rich country and has no printing industry. Import and export of books is difficult and expensive due to taxation and internal distribution is a challenge. International collaboration continues to have its challenges given Argentina’s geographical position and the cost of travel to and from it. There is limited public funding. Politics are competitive regionally and nationally and often very difficult. The government changed two years ago; this did result in the appointment of high profile individuals at the National Library and the National Fund for the Arts, which has changed some policy with more emphasis on a broader readership and on developing artists.

4.0 – Conclusions

In concluding, there are three recurring themes that are worth drawing out.



Conclusions:

1. Invest in arts development first.
2. See literature as a slow burn first and foremost. Injecting investment through cultural programmes enhances existing activities and infrastructure and enables more collaboration between local government and arts sectors, rather than creating something completely new.
3. Relevant and aligned movements in cities, such as the New Urban Agenda of participatory governance with and led by citizens, has not fully permeated the largest cultural programmes and how they are implemented and designed. Participatory approaches become increasingly important internationally, with the social significance of literature being inclusive and not stratified.
4. Evaluation is key: looking at the specific outcomes for the literature sector as well as the populations, profile and infrastructure of the cities of culture in question, is just as important and can produce striking findings and results.



Firstly, where there are really successful major city interventions like ECoCs and UNESCO Cities of Literature, they tend to be the culmination of long-standing efforts to revitalise or co-ordinate the cultural scenes in cities. Evans has observed in relation to Liverpool (an oft-cited example of the transformative power of the ECoC scheme) which was a beneficiary of 20 years of investment in a handful of major events and projects prior to 2008:

“One mega-event alone is seldom enough to elevate or sustain regeneration investment to achieve competitive city or cultural city status and the social and economic benefits that are pursued. The hosting of Capital of Culture by Liverpool in 2008 can be traced back as far as 1984 when it hosted the Garden Festival as part of another competitive national programme.”

(Evans 2010, 5)

Another example is Krakow 2000, which was preceded by the 1997 Year of Poetry (Cogliandro 2001).

Secondly, the move towards a New Urban Agenda¹⁹ (as discussed at Habitat III and enshrined by many UN member states and NGOs) demands that citizens have a greater say in decision-making structures and are considered as more than mere recipients or an after-thought of public policy. This observation has been made in relation to cultural mega-events: Bullen’s work shows

“The current model of top-down decision-making (hoping for some kind of ‘trickle-down’ effect) is not working. [...] Too often, cultural identities are created to better able elites to manage populations or to respond to particular policy directions. It is important that the ever-changing understandings of culture and identity of ‘ordinary people’ are included in cultural and urban regeneration policy.”

(Bullen 2010, 14)

With the exception of Barcelona’s approach, it is striking that the language of the New Urban Agenda (which is so woven into contemporary discourse around cities in the 21st century) has not penetrated the cultural initiatives of UNESCO or the European Commission. It is likely that over time the cultural policy of the EU and UNESCO will be increasingly informed by the Agenda.

Beyond Europe, different political systems and low levels of available resources (and literacy) can provide a challenging environment for this agenda. Notions of “ordinary people” (as Bullen puts it) do not apply in the same way where the social stratification of some cultures in “the west” is not replicated, where “literature” does not attract elite connotations. In India (for example) there is a complex social and cultural hierarchy, but the place of literature as a marker of identity and distinction operates quite differently there compared with Europe and North America.

Finally, it is curious that existing research into cities of literature does not talk much about the literary impact of these events. That is, the novels, stories, poems, performances or traditions that result from all of this investment and effort. Perhaps they are even more difficult to measure than the economic or social impacts? But in particular in some places there are examples of increased investment in translation (Buenos Aires) and books and writers travelling internationally (Norwich, Istanbul), though data on translation into English is hard to source accurately. We note that some cities (notably Edinburgh and Bocas) are investigating ways to evaluate their impact better but there is no evaluation which is able to relate city of literature activity to growth in the commercial literature sector. There is at least one exception: in their reflective report, the city of Amsterdam is keen to highlight the literary works and published books that resulted from the activity that took place as part of their World Book Capital year (Amsterdam 2009, 45).



Barcelona

¹⁹<http://habitat3.org/the-new-urban-agenda/>

4.1 – Returning to the original research questions

i. What different models of city of culture programming exist, taking into account different scales, funding sources and their social-cultural and economic objectives? How can these models be clustered and better understood?

There are at least four different models of city programming (Cities/Capitals of Culture, UNESCO Cities of Literature, World Book Capitals, Major Festivals). Within this high-level grouping exist a wide variety of activities and literary events.

Maybe it makes sense to think of the various examples cited in this review as being either city interventions with “Literature as a component” or city interventions with “Literature as a driver”. Cities which have “Literature as a component” are celebrated in a formalised and titular manner such as a ‘city of culture’ or ‘capital of culture’ and make a place for literature – either as an element within a broad range of cultural activity, or as a momentary focus (say for an anniversary of a local author). Cities of culture in the “Literature as driver” category have built their event or status around literature specifically, and it is not a mere component of a broader cultural programme. Literary festivals are a great example of this and so are some of the UNESCO City of Literature programmes where there is a commitment to long term development of the “city of literature”.

The case studies (and existing literature) guard against making too many assumptions based upon models of city of culture approaches, given how unique the circumstances which face each and every individual city.

ii. How have both the bid writing and submission process and the resulting city of culture programmes addressed key socio-political challenges of a city or region, including participation and engagement with diverse communities and stakeholders?

The research suggests that radically different approaches are taken depending upon the normative political cultures and key individuals involved in each city. Barcelona has one way of doing business, Edinburgh quite another, Istanbul another still. Some have sought to incorporate a diversity of stakeholders in an open and generous way, others have sought to deliver programmes in a top-down paternalistic and elitist fashion. Taking all the case studies together (and reflecting on what is known from other published studies) it seems as if a good-faith commitment to engaging with a diverse group of stakeholders, when accompanied by the necessary competencies and structures identified in section 3 of this report, lead to a more impactful and beneficial cultural offer. Long-term investment and development of literature infrastructure

is a pre-requisite to achieving socio-political dividends from these types of interventions. This is clear from well-developed cities like Edinburgh, Iowa, Buenos Aires and Barcelona.

In the case of Istanbul, the national power-brokers in the government (and in Durban a small group of activists in the literary scene) sought to control the process by which an external agency designated the city as a literary exemplar. In both cases the bid writing and submission processes did not exemplify good transparent governance and likely exacerbated key local socio-political challenges.

For Port of Spain, the cultural focus of Bocas Lit Fest to encompass spoken word, slam and rapso, means that it is playing a key role in supporting literary forms which may otherwise be overlooked by outsiders. Although the festival has not been part of any formal bid to an international agency, it has allowed a diversity of voices to be heard, and the programme of the Lit Fest self-consciously makes room for contemporary political debate which will have been enriched by this injection of voices.

Having said all of this, there is a need to recognise that literature interventions (especially those undertaken for a limited amount of time) will struggle to overturn deep-rooted socio-political inequities and may even be counter-productive if artistic stakeholders and the public see a corruption of intrinsic cultural value by instrumental political forces. Academic studies have repeatedly shown that the evidence for long-term economic impacts from these types of intervention is thin on the ground (Garcia & Cox 2013).

iii. What are the requisites, challenges, and critical success factors in terms of partnership and policy – internal, external and international – in order to address challenges of scaling up and creating international influence through cities of culture programmes? What are the pre-requisites in terms of resources, and leadership to successfully achieve agreed objectives?

These have been identified in many instances. Whether in UNESCO Cities of Literature like Barcelona or Norwich, or the sweep through ECoCs by Garcia and Cox. The success factors revealed by this research are:

- a clear vision
- take advantage of momentum
- a diverse coalition of stakeholders
- maintain a coherent and distinct message
- good governance
- an appealing programme
- maximise the potential for spillover benefits
- develop a cohort of champions
- cement new coalitions

In every case it is clear that the most impactful initiatives come at the moment when there is a culmination of attention and investment in the cultural scene of a city.

It may seem a little counter-intuitive, but the energy that is apparent in individuals and coalitions of interested parties in the case study cities in this research, cannot be easily replicated although it can be easily stifled. Upon reflection, it seems that room for the unpredictable (and maybe a little less strategic) is essential to engender the conditions by which a vibrant literary scene emerges. Vibrant local organisations such as libraries, universities and bookshops (or local cultural centres) are important crucibles in which ideas circulate and writers and readers develop. Such infrastructure takes time to develop and is not universally enjoyed. The research also identified flexibility and local responsiveness as an ingredient of success. It is not necessarily appropriate to scale up and create international influence through cities of culture programmes, and agencies like UNESCO and British Council should be wary of exerting undue or adverse influence, whether intentional or otherwise.

Having said that, there are some fundamental preconditions that are necessary. One is the protection of freedom of expression and the absence of censorship and suppression. It is revealing that only one of the case study cities (Istanbul) is vulnerable to accusations of censorship, but that many others have thrived as a result of their historical association with free thinking and free expression, offering safe harbour to writers and publishers.

A substantial challenge in fulfilling the literary potential of every city is that it is rare to see the key stakeholders coalesce around a set of agreed objectives. Upon further reflection, it is unusual to see stated objectives at all, but rather to witness passionate and energetic people attempting to make things happen and programme stimulating work, with goals that seem unclear to evaluators and observers and may be invisible to those passionately pursuing the work themselves. If beneficial things are happening in cities as a result of this effort, maybe this is not a bad thing?

iv. What evidence is there of the short term and long-term impact of these different ‘cities of culture’ models on a) cultural and creative partners, b) the city itself? c) the residents, leaders and communities of the city?

Again, this varies enormously according to the places concerned, and one’s threshold for “evidence of impact”. The impacts revealed by this research are:

- benefits of being in a network
- new partnerships and ideas
- increased resources for literature
- greater investment in infrastructure
- changes in people’s expectations of themselves and their cities
- expanded audiences for literature
- increased tourism activity
- more coherent city branding
- participation in global networks

In the absence of robust and objective evaluations of city of literature initiatives, the case studies in this research sought to understand the perceived impacts of such interventions. In summary, these included impacts on writers and publishers (often catalytic in expanding markets and audiences), impacts on local communities (which varied hugely, but usually involved the injection of funding, tourists, and some enhancement to the public realm or public programming – if only temporarily), and finally wider social impacts in places concerned (where efforts may have been directed to mobilising local actors in city hall or putting a city “on the map”).

There is no evidence to demonstrate that in every instance, city of literature initiatives help forge a sense of identity, place and cohesion. But with the smart deployment of resources around a coherent set of shared and appropriate objectives, aligned to the success factors identified in this report, there is the potential for a variety of positive impacts, although they are likely to come from sustained investment and attention rather than a momentary intervention. This is clearly the case in cities like Edinburgh, Norwich and Barcelona.

Final thoughts

What is most exciting about this research is that every city constitutes a set of unfinished stories. We should recognise the potential for cities to respond differently to future initiatives that better accommodate contemporary concerns of urban communities (safety, good governance, climate change, inequality, smart use of technology, etc.). These are not literary or cultural motivations but there is the potential to use literature to galvanise efforts around tackling those shared issues. Assuming these global initiatives will not return to being “coronations” and retain their purpose as development exercises, then they will continue to confront the standard challenges of who they are designed to benefit and to whom they are truly accountable.

It is unclear whether or not designations awarded from UNESCO and agencies like the EU are the most effective way to have the desired positive impacts on urban communities around the world. There is an inherent contradiction in cities asserting their distinction by being awarded a standardised title.

“And if cities in Africa, Asia and South America are being encouraged to participate in them, then they must be reconfigured to modes that better suit such places, rather than mimic the structures and standards of the economically richer cities who were the architects of the schemes.”

There were many examples through the case studies that illustrated how important it is to invest strategically in writers, literature civil society organisations and emerging publishing industries. It is this slow burn ground work which probably realises a longer term benefit than anything a shorter term, larger scale, programme can achieve.

None of the data encountered while generating this report has indicated that literature is any different to other art forms – that it demands special dispensation or bespoke approaches, although it can be difficult to accommodate literature within schemes that tend to foreground large spectacle events and buildings.

Having said that most of the evaluation and measures of success developed relate to large scale cultural interventions. The core commercially focussed economic outcomes for literature are not often used as measures of success, and neither are patterns of reading or literacy – and the fact that these are often national and not local may be significant here. Equally there is little emphasis on literature outputs – such as books, translations etc.

So although there are clear shared impacts for city interventions that apply across art forms (which are well known and well documented), we may be missing a trick by not being clear enough about what specific outcomes and outputs we might require for literature.

Agencies like the British Council can help to embed such principles in their own work and disseminate them more widely in projects where they are a partner.



Appendix 1: Methodology

This report is built upon two-fold research process: a literature review and case studies derived from semi-structured interviews.





Literature review

The literature review was developed with a relatively simple online search and analysis rubric. Grey literature such as programme and project evaluations, policy documents and organisational reports, blogs, journalism and websites, along with academic articles and books were all considered to be in scope. Relevant material was found using an online search of compound terms including key words such as “city” “culture” “study” “literature”. Contacts within the British Council and the research team were also asked to contribute links or references to relevant studies. A full bibliography of material resulting from this online search can be found in Appendix 4. All of it was reviewed but not only the most relevant selections are referenced in the body of this report.

The purpose of beginning this research project with a literature review was to become familiar with what knowledge already exists, and to progress with an understanding of how the topic has been investigated before. Not all relevant activity in relation to cities and literature will have left a trace in a published book, report or article. Quite often there is a substantial time lag between an intervention or activity and its appearance in a research report or evaluation. Therefore, it is important to recognise that this is not a comprehensive account of all activity relating to cities and literature. Although this study has a global scope, and the research team has experience of working in a variety of international settings in multiple languages, for reasons of efficiency (in time and resources) this literature review has only drawn from studies published in English.

Strengths and weaknesses of the published evidence

This review rests on the pillars of some key studies into the impacts, legacies and relative successes of cities of literature initiatives. In recent years every one of the European Capitals of Culture (ECoCs) have been subject to a post-ex evaluation (e.g. Ecorys 2015) and from time to time the European Commission has asked researchers to take a holistic view of the ECoC programme in general and identify strengths and weaknesses, impacts and legacies. The most important of these is the 2012 study from Beatriz Garcia and Tamsin Cox, who developed substantial expertise while evaluating the impact of Liverpool’s experience of being ECoC in 2008. A second resource is Steven Green’s annotated gazetteer of Cities of Culture from around the world (Green 2017). A handful of designated cities have made an effort to document and reflect on their own experiences of being ECoCs and those reports are also instructive (e.g. Turku 2011).

Similar self-reflective reports have also been published by cities after being designated World Book Capitals (e.g. Amsterdam 2009). Additionally, the people involved in UNESCO Cities of Literature scheme have on occasions been forthcoming in their reflections on the process (e.g. CBR 2014). These can be candid and useful reports which reflect in some detail upon the processes, structures, lessons and outcomes of the development and delivery of the interventions themselves.

The UCCN (and especially UNESCO Cities of Literature) is a more recent phenomenon than the ECoC scheme. There is a fair amount of documentation produced by the UNESCO cities themselves, in the form of Monitoring Reports, the production of which is a condition of being within the Network. Unlike ECoCs there has not been a wholesale review or evaluation of UNESCO Cities of Literature (or the UCCN in general). Nonetheless, there have been specific studies which seek to evaluate the impact of becoming a UNESCO City of Literature and it has been possible to make some read-across between them (e.g. CBR 2014; Mulero & Rius-Ulldemolins 2017).

That said, there is a dearth of detailed and rigorous evaluation of the literature component within broader Cities of Culture events and even less in relation to the world’s major literary festivals, World Book Capitals and UNESCO Cities of Literature. This is a widespread complaint: ‘the lack of rigorous evaluation of social outcomes applies not only to ECoCs but to studies of major cultural festivals and events in general’ (Fitjar et al 2013, 65). And has been a long-standing concern with researcher in the field: “there is a real shortage of in-depth, empirically grounded analyses’ of issues related to ‘the social and cultural value of arts festivals” (Quinn 2005, 931).

To underline this point, one review of more than 50 studies in this area found they ‘mostly take the form of event evaluations carried out for organisers or funding bodies, which seem to function primarily as evidence of the positive economic value of the events’ and not an objective and critical appraisal of impact (Langen and Garcia 2009, 3f)

Beyond the familiar drive to advocate for (rather than objectively evaluate) the success of a major city intervention, there is also a sense in which many of these phenomena are relatively new. This means that the time lag identified earlier (that there may be good and effective activity which has not yet appeared in published evaluations or academic studies) may be a factor.

Overall, it seems as though literature, as an art form, is a relatively small component within broader “City of Culture” schemes, and this may also explain the dearth of studies specifically relating to it. This may be because reading and books are considered a private, solitary and rather low-key activity, and that “literature” is a phrase that connotes highbrow or elitist cultural habits. This came through in a few of the case study interviews.

Recently, there has been a commitment to measure longer term impacts from cultural mega-events like ECoCs. Signs of this commitment can be found in the Liverpool Impacts¹⁸ project and the Brugge The Decade After summit²¹. (However, the outputs from the Brugge summit do not exactly reveal a strong commitment to objective analytical rigour, and nothing at that summit revealed anything impactful regarding activity with a books or literature component.)

World Book Capitals, major literary festivals, domestic or regional Cities of Culture, and other activities have left a very faint trace in the research literature. Where meaningful evaluations and research has been produced, it has been accounted for in the bibliography (Appendix 4) and, where appropriate, the insight absorbed into this review. Before going on to document the various impacts and success factors that are identified by the published literature in this area, the next section of this report outlines the different cities of literature phenomenon that exist.

Case studies

In order to address the lack of published research into the impacts of cities of literature initiatives, the research included a set of six in-depth case studies.

Case studies are designed to be specific illustrations of broader phenomena that can be seen as equivalent or comparable. For this reason, the selection of case study cities was designed to include large and small cities, from different languages and continents. From rich countries and poor countries; from large cities and small cities, but it could not be exhaustive. The suite of case studies presented in this report also includes cities who have recently benefited from a city of literature initiative as well as those whose impacts have to be traced back many years.

Inevitably, some degree of convenience sampling was used to identify a realistic shortlist of cities that would be suitable for case studies: it can be expensive and time consuming to conduct research that requires live translation. Working in hazardous countries or those with poor communication links can also complicate and delay the research process. For this reason the six cities in this report were chosen partly on the basis that the research team could be confident that existing connections and networks would facilitate the research, and where necessary the British Council could assist in brokering any missing connections.

As much existing data about the case study cities was gathered and analysed before a series of semi-structured interviews were completed with a sample of stakeholders in each city.

The interviews lasted approximately 45 minutes and were conducted in English over telephone or Skype, with a very small number conducted via email correspondence (which are identified in the tables beneath).

Topic guide

The interviews with stakeholders in each city followed the general pattern of the following topic guide, modified in each instance to the appropriate setting in which the interviewee was based. The purpose of the interviews was not to gather a uniform and comparable set of answers to a stock of questions, but rather to paint an ever-more textured picture of how the city initiative began, what occurred as part of it, what impacts it was perceived to have made, and what the critical success factors were in making it work.

The topic guide went as follows:

Preamble: As you know, this is a research project sponsored by the British Council, and although its focus is on literature and cities, we are hoping to draw out general findings for the development of policy and partnerships in cities working in many different art forms and in many different circumstances. This interview should take no more than one hour and although we are taking notes the transcript will not be made public. Instead, this conversation is designed to build up a picture of X. Nothing you say will be attributed to you although your name will be listed in the report as one of the people we have spoken with. Many thanks for agreeing to speak with me.

First of all, I am interested in the genesis of X...

1. When did you first consider [applying to become X/ developing Y] – who had the idea, what were their ambitions, and did they have widespread support?
2. How long did you expect it to take to [achieve the title of X/set up the Y]? – did it take longer or shorter than expected?
3. Did you develop a strategy and objectives for the X? [it would be good to get hold of those and record them]

Next, I am interested in understanding the partnerships that were involved in X

4. Which individuals and agencies were important for the development of the X? What made them important?
5. Who were the main political, business and artistic/ literary champions of the X? Did they need convincing of the merits of the X?

²⁰ <http://iccliverpool.ac.uk/impacts18/>

²¹ Which also invited reflections from Gras, Lille and Copenhagen <http://www.bruggeplus.be/en/conference-the-decade-after>

6. Were there any unexpected or previously marginalised organisations or communities that became involved in the development of X?

I would like to ask about your impression of any immediate impacts that occurred from X

7. Was there any evaluation undertaken as part of X? [we should try and get any material from them]
8. What do you think were the impacts of [becoming X/establishing Y]? Tell me about those impacts in terms of: the local economy, impacts on audiences and readers, impacts on publishing and publishers, impacts on writers and the wider literature scene.

We think it's important not to just capture success stories, and so I want to ask about divergence from the original objectives and strategy, and what didn't work.

9. Upon reflection, to what extent do you think the programme of work supported under X [reflected/has continued to reflect] the original objectives? Where have there been instances of divergence? And do you think that has been a problem?
10. Reflecting on what you hoped to achieve, was there anything that you have done that hasn't worked or that you would advise others not to repeat?

In documenting case studies of this kind it's necessary to understand the scale and sort of resources required to deliver things like X.

11. Tell me a bit about the resources that were required to undertake X, in terms of money, people and political or artists effort. Who were/are the main sponsors of X?
12. Did the funders affect the content of the programme? If so, in what ways?
13. In your opinion has the impact of X been worth the expenditure of money and other resources?

Finally, moving onto the legacy of X/the future of Y...

14. Has there been any detectable legacy from X in your city?/What do you expect to be the future of Y in the context of ongoing activity in your city?
15. What are the risks and opportunities that you see ahead for X?

Many thanks for your time. Do you have any questions for me about the project? We are asking interviewees to suggest two further people connected to X to help understand more fully its story and impact. Is there anyone you think we should speak to?

Interviewees

In every case study city, a mixture of stakeholders were interviewed to gather as rich a picture as possible of the initiative. Interviewees were conducted with writers, publishers, booksellers, journalists, politicians, administrators, sponsors and others.

A complete list of interviewees for each case study is as follows:

Edinburgh

Name	Role
Jenny Brown	Director of Jenny Brown literary agency
Ali Bowden	Director, City of Literature Trust
Lisa Kapur	Arts Officer, Edinburgh City Council
Lynne Halfpenny	Director of Arts, Edinburgh City Council
Nick Barley	Director, Edinburgh International Book Festival
Jenny Niven	Director, Literature, Creative Scotland
Ever Dundas	Writer
Ron Butlin	Writer

Durban

Name	Job title/role
Darryl David	Festival Director
ZP Dala	Writer
John Kenyon	Director of Iowa UNESCO City of Literature Programme
Cheryl Johnson	Local film producer & festival coordinator.
Peter Rorvik	Former Director of Centre for Creative Arts Durban
Russel Hlongwane	Cultural Producer
Mikhail Peppas	Interim UNESCO advisory board (since disbanded).
Emma Durden	CEO, Twist Theatre
Sharlene Versfeld	Arts PR Consultant

Istanbul

Name	Job title/role
Esra Aysun	Director of CUMA and now Director Arts British Council
Mehmet Demirtas	Director, Istanbul Tanpınar Literature Festival and Kemal Agency
Görgün Taner	General Manager, Istanbul Foundation for Culture and the Arts
Serhan Ada	Professor of Arts Management, Istanbul Bigli University
Cem Erciyes	Cultural journalist

Port of Spain

Name	Job title/role
Nicholas Laughlin	Programme Director, Bocas Lit Fest
Joan Dayal	Bookseller, Paper Based Books
Barbara Jenkins	Writer
Lisa Burkett	Manager, Corporate Communications, National Gas Company
Jeremy Poynting	CEO, Peepal Tree Press

Kolkata

Name	Job title/role
Debanjan Chakrabarti	British Council
Maina Bhagat	Director, Apeejay Literary Festival and Director, Oxford Book Store
Malavika Banerjee	Director, Kolkata Literary Meet
Esha Chatterjee	Bee Books and Book Fair Literary Festival Director
Tridib Chatterjee	General Secretary of Publishers and Bookseller's Guild email only
Arunava Singha	Writer/translator.
Anjum Katyal	Apeejay Literary Festival
Naveen Kishore	CEO, Seagull Books
Prof Swapan Chakravorty	Kabiguru Rabindranath Tagore Distinguished Chair in the Humanities, Presidency University, Kolkata
Atri Bhattacharya	Home & Tourism Departments, Government of West Bengal
Swagat Sengupta	CEO, Oxford Bookstore

Buenos Aires

Name	Job title/role
Luciana Blasco	Director, Buenos Aires World Book Capital 2011
Alberto Manguel	Director of National Library of Buenos Aires and writer
Gabriella Adamo	Director of Filba
Flavia Pittella	Translator and Cultural Journalist
Oche Califa	Directore Institucional y Cultural, Fundacion El Libro
Carolina Biquard	President of the National Fund for the Arts

Appendix 2: Catalogue of Cities of Literature

Permanent designation cities of culture

Derry-Londonderry (2013)

Kingston Upon Hull (2017)

Coventry (2021)

European Capitals of Culture

Athens, Greece (1985)

Florence, Italy (1986) Amsterdam, Netherlands (1987)

Berlin, East/West Germany (1988)

Paris, France (1989) Glasgow, UK (1990)

Dublin, Ireland (1991) Madrid, Spain (1992) Antwerp, Belgium (1993) Lisbon, Portugal (1994) Luxembourg, Luxembourg (1995) Copenhagen, Denmark (1996) Thessaloniki, Greece (1997) Stockholm, Sweden (1998) Weimar, Germany (1999) Avignon, France (2000)

Bergen, Norway (2000) Bologna, Italy (2000) Brussels, Belgium (2000) Helsinki, Finland (2000)

Kraków, Poland (2000)

Prague, Czech Republic (2000) Reykjavík, Iceland (2000) Santiago de Compostela, Spain (2000)

Rotterdam, Netherlands (2001) Porto, Portugal (2001)

Bruges, Belgium (2002)

Salamanca, Spain (2002) Graz, Austria (2003) Genoa, Italy (2004)

Lille, France (2004) Cork, Ireland (2005)

Patras, Greece (2006) Sibiu, Romania (2007)

Luxembourg, Luxembourg (2007)

Liverpool, UK (2008) Stavanger, Norway (2008)

Vilnius, Lithuania (2009) Linz, Austria (2009) Essen, Germany (2010) Istanbul, Turkey (2010) Pécs, Hungary (2010) Turku, Finland (2011) Tallinn, Estonia (2011)

Guimarães, Portugal (2012) Maribor, Slovenia (2012)

Marseille, France (2013) Košice, Slovakia (2014)

Riga, Latvia (2014) Umeå, Sweden (2014) Mons, Belgium (2015) Plzeň, Czech Republic (2015) San Sebastián, Spain (2016) Wrocław, Poland (2016) Aarhus, Denmark (2017) Paphos, Cyprus (2017) Leeuwarden, Netherlands (2018)

Valletta, Malta (2018)

American Capitals of Culture

Mérida, Mexico (2000)

Iquique, Chile (2001)

Maceió, Brazil (2002)

Panama City, Panama (2003)

Curitiba, Brazil (2003)

Santiago, Chile (2004)

Guadalajara, Mexico (2005)

Cordoba, Argentina (2006)

Cuzco, Peru (2007)

Brasília, Brazil (2008)

Asunción, Paraguay (2009)

Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic (2010)

Quito, Ecuador (2011)

São Luís, Brazil (2012)

Barranquilla, Colombia (2013)

Colima, Mexico (2014)

Mayagüez, Puerto Rico (2015)

Valdivia, Chile (2016)

Mérida, Mexico (2017)

Arab Capitals of Culture

Cairo, Egypt (1996)

Tunis, Tunisia (1997)

Sharjah, United Arab Emirates (1998)

Beirut, Lebanon (1999)

Riyadh, Saudi Arabia (2000)

Kuwait City, Kuwait (2001)

Amman, Jordan (2002)

Rabat, Morocco (2003)

Sana'a, Yemen (2004)

Khartoum, Sudan (2005)

Muscat, Oman (2006)

Algiers, Algeria (2007)

Damascus, Syria (2008)

al-Quds, State of Palestine (2009)

Doha, Qatar (2010)

Sirte, Libya (2011)

Manama, Bahrain (2012)

Baghdad, Iraq (2013)

Tripoli, Libya (2014)

Constantine, Algeria (2015)

Sfax, Tunisia (2016)

Festival cities (examples)

Jaipur, India

<https://jaipurliteraturefestival.org/>

Hay Argentina

<https://www.hayfestival.com/cartagena>

Tokyo, Japan

<http://tokyolitfest.com/en/>

Paraty, Brazil

http://flip.org.br/?idioma_new=l

Sydney, Australia
<https://www.swf.org.au/>

Berlin, Germany
<http://www.literaturfestival.com/aktuelles-en>

Brooklyn, USA
<https://brooklynbookfestival.tumblr.com/>

IrraWaddy, Myanmar
<http://www.irrawaddylitfest.com/>

Miami Book Fair
<https://www.miamibookfair.com/>

Toronto International Festival of Authors, Canada
<http://ifoa.org/?q=ifoa>

Shanghai International Literary Festival, China
<http://www.m-restaurantgroup.com/community/m-literary-festival/>

Vancouver Writer's Fest, Canada
<http://writersfest.bc.ca/>

PEN World Voices Festival
<https://pen.org/world-voices-festival/>

Bocas, Trinidad & Tobago
<https://www.bocaslitfest.com/>

Kolkata Literary Meet, India
<http://kolkatalitmeet.in/2018/>

Dhaka Lit Fest, Bangladesh
<http://dhakalitfest.com/story.html>

Hargeysa Book Fair, Somaliland
<http://www.hargeysabookfair.com/hibf2017/>

Lahore Literary Festival,
 Pakistan (& beyond)
<http://www.lahorelitfest.com/>

Karachi & Islamabad Literary Festival, Pakistan
<http://www.karachiliteraturefestival.org/>

Georgetown Literary Festival, Malaysia
<http://www.georgetownlitfest.com/>

Hay on Wye, UK
<https://www.hayfestival.com>

Galle Literary Festival, Sri Lanka
<https://galleliteraryfestival.com/>

Storymoja Festival, Kenya
<http://storymojafestival.co.ke/>

World Book Capitals

Madrid, Spain (2001)

Alexandria, Egypt (2002)

New Delhi, India (2003)

Antwerp, Belgium (2004)

Montreal, Canada (2005)

Turin, Italy (2006)

Bogotá, Colombia (2007)

Amsterdam, Netherlands (2008)

Beirut, Lebanon (2009)

Ljubljana, Slovenia (2010)

Buenos Aires, Argentina (2011)

Yerevan, Armenia (2012)

Bangkok, Thailand (2013)

Port Harcourt, Nigeria (2014)

Incheon, South Korea (2015)

Wrocław, Poland (2016)

Conakry, Republic of Guinea (2017)

Athens, Greece (2018)

Sharjah, UAE (2019)

UNESCO Cities of Literature

Edinburgh, Scotland (2004)

Melbourne, Victoria, Australia (2008)

Iowa City, Iowa, United States (2008)

Dublin, Ireland (2010)

Reykjavík, Iceland (2011)

Norwich, England (2012)

Kraków, Poland (2013)

Heidelberg, Germany (2014)

Dunedin, New Zealand (2014)

Granada, Spain (2014)

Prague, Czech Republic (2014)

Baghdad, Iraq (2015)

Barcelona, Spain (2015)

Ljubljana, Slovenia (2015)

Lviv, Ukraine (2015)

Montevideo, Uruguay (2015)

Nottingham, England (2015)

Óbidos, Portugal (2015)

Tartu, Estonia (2015)

Ulyanovsk, Russia (2015)

Bucheon, South Korea (2017)

Durban, South Africa (2017)

Lillehammer, Norway (2017)

Manchester, England (2017)

Milan, Italy (2017)

Québec City, Canada (2017)

Seattle, United States (2017)

Utrecht, Netherlands (2017)

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