

COMPREHENSIVE STRATEGY FOR THE INTEGRATION OF ARTS AND CULTURE INTO ACADIAN SOCIETY IN NEW BRUNSWICK



AGENDA 2030 - SDGs



CULTURE 21 ACTIONS - COMMITMENTS

- 6. CULTURE, EQUALITY, AND SOCIAL INCLUSION
- 9. GOVERNANCE OF CULTURE

INSTITUTIONALIZATION, COOPERATION, SUPPORT,
GOVERNANCE, PARTICIPATION, SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT, STRATEGY, CULTURAL POLICY

1. Context

The Acadian people are descendants of Canada's first French settlers. They arrived as a result of mass deportation between 1755 and 1763, and were spread between New England, Louisiana, France, Quebec, and more. Today these communities in Canada are primarily rural and have an aging population. However, some of these areas have become vibrant hubs where arts and culture are managed and appreciated. Others, often smaller in size, have no real decision-making power and their financial capacity is limited.

New Brunswick Acadia faces difficult socio-economic conditions, whose low wages have led to an exodus of part of the French-speaking rural population. New Brunswick has one of the lowest literacy rates in the country. The transmission of language and the adoption of French-speaking culture by the province's youth was becoming increasingly difficult.

2. Acadia and culture

The Comprehensive Strategy for the Integration of Arts and Culture into Acadian Society in New Brunswick was the result of the 2004 Acadian Society National Convention, in which 600 delegates unanimously recognized the fundamental role of the arts, culture, and heritage in the evolution and sustainable development of their society.

Launched in 2004 with the states-general, the approach brings together all sectors of civil society, as well as the various levels of government, to work to develop a comprehensive strategy. In the end, 54 recommendations were unanimously adopted in 2007 by the 1,000 people who took part in the work.

The states-general have led to a consensus on a cultural program and a new definition for Acadian identity, which is based on language and territory, but also on commitment to a collective project on inclusion and openness.

Implemented by the Acadian Association of Professional Artists of New Brunswick (AAAPNB), the Strategy views culture as a pillar of sustainable development. It has drawn a road map that guides Acadian society in its efforts to incorporate arts, culture, and heritage to contribute to the region's full development. To this end, it mobilizes and engages all stakeholders in all sectors, political bodies, and government partners.



THE AIM IS TO PLACE ARTS, CULTURE, AND HERITAGE AT THE HEART OF DEVELOPMENT TO STRENGTHEN THE CULTURAL IDENTITY OF CITIZENS, IMPROVE THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS OF ARTISTS, AND PROMOTE THE IMPORTANCE OF CULTURAL DIVERSITY.

The Strategy puts culture at the heart of the citizen and the citizen at the heart of the culture. The Culture 21: Actions guide also served as a basis for reflection on renewing the strategy in 2018, primarily with respect to the region's cultural planning approach:

- Supporting the cultural rights of a linguistic minority that is experiencing difficulties with cultural transmission and vitality;
- Working committee on the status of the artist that considers the diversity and challenges of creation;
- Creating close links with the education system and recognizing the fundamental role of arts and culture in successful education and identity-building;



- Using arts and culture as a means of mobilization to promote ecological actions;
- Sub-strategy on cultural enterprises and industries, and actions to enhance the economic impacts of the cultural sector, and culture in general, on the economic strength of communities;
- Supporting municipalities in cultural mediation actions aimed at mental health and social inclusion;
- Strategy on regional cultural management, with a program to support municipalities;
- Actions to ensure a future for local community media (radios, newspapers, etc.);
- Cross-cutting, horizontal approach with decompartmentalized governance between spheres, and coordinated by the civil society organization, AAAPNB.

3. Project goals and implementation

3.1. Main and specific objectives

Putting arts, culture, and heritage at the heart of Acadia's sustainable development in order to strengthen the cultural identity of its citizens, engage local governments and territories in concrete ways to take charge of their development, improve the socio-economic status of professional artists, and promote appreciation of cultural diversity.

3.2. Project development

Main actions developed

The Comprehensive Strategy for the Integration of Arts and Culture into Acadian Society is the result of a long, gradual process of societal change. It is divided into five sectoral strategies: It is divided into five sectoral strategies:

- Development of professional artists ;
- Development of arts, cultural, and heritage organizations;
- Business and cultural development;
- Integration of arts and culture in education;
- Community development through regional cultural planning



The AAPNB was mandated to implement the Strategy after it was launched in 2009. There are 52 municipalities, 30 of which are actively involved, 6 provincial departments, a federal department, and about 100 agencies involved in the Strategy's implementation, including:

- Recognition of arts and culture as a driver for development;
- Renewing the Cultural Policy;
- 200% increase in the budget allocated to culture;
- Adoption of the provincial literacy policy;
- Creating permanent multi-sector consultation boards;

With respect to education:

- Language and cultural planning policy;
- A tenfold increase in the number of artists in schools;
- Developing tools for arts education;
- A funding program for cultural initiatives in school environments

At the municipal level:

- More than 11 municipalities have cultural policies in place;
- A guide to cultural policy development for municipalities;
- Provincial forum on cultural mediation;
- Creating training tools for municipalities;
- Inclusion of cultural mediation in the full municipalization project;

With respect to the status of artists and the cultural sector

- The Prime Minister's working group on the status of the artist;
- Resource centre and training program for artists;
- Provincial touring program;
- Sharing practices and tools developed among the cultural communities of New Brunswick and the participation of other communities in the AAPNB consultation boards;

Support the structuring of local actions

The support and training project was created as a result of a few municipalities specifically including arts, culture, and heritage in their strategic planning. It did not take into account the role of this sector in the development of other municipal sectors. In recent years, the AAPNB has carried out this project with 11 Acadian communities and has supported elected officials, municipal administrators, and cultural stakeholders in drafting plans. With the help of qualified resources, the AAPNB has developed training workshops and a mentoring service for municipalities. The AAPNB has also partnered with the Arts and the City network to provide municipalities with cultural clinics (collaborative work days) to analyze how culture can be a solution to social, economic, cultural, and environmental issues.



4. Impact

4.1. Direct Impact

- This project raised awareness among elected officials on the importance of integrating arts, culture, and heritage into municipal planning and recognizing them as a primary service.
- More than 11 municipalities have adopted a cultural policy and have deployed cultural development officers.
- Municipal administrators are noticing much more collaboration between municipalities.
- This approach has brought elected officials closer to the cultural world. It has also established expertise for organizing activities.
- The municipalities that are currently involved are now incorporating culture into their financial planning. Some have even doubled the budget dedicated to culture.

4.2. Evaluation

Balance sheets as well as the quantitative and qualitative evaluation of actions have helped the region establish priorities, redevelop sector strategies based on experience, and update their action plans. This showed the tremendous impact that the Strategy has had on New Brunswick's society.

4.3. Key factors

The key factors that made the process successful are:

- The cross-cutting participation of all sectors of society;
- The background of the approach. The participants and partners were able to openly propose ideas, which helped start a genuine dialogue;
- The structure of the approach and its cooperation with a civil society organization, independent from the administrative levels, with a capacity for mobilizing and influencing change.



4.4. Continuity

Since the 2004 Acadian National Convention, the states general in 2007, the launch of the Comprehensive Strategy in 2009, and 18>23 Trajectory, the renewal of the Comprehensive Strategy in 2018, the AAPNB and its partners, have all continued to work to make culture an essential tool for development. With a new road map, they will continue to implement the program to benefit the overall development of the Acadian people.

5. Further information

Acadia was a candidate for the fourth UCLG Mexico City – Culture 21 International Award (November 2019-May 2020). The jury for the award drew up its final report in June of 2020, and requested that the UCLG Committee on Culture promote this project as one of the good practices implemented under Agenda 21 for culture.

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