

SEGOU, CREATIVE CITY



AGENDA 2030 - SDGs



CULTURE 21: ACTIONS - COMMITMENTS

1. CULTURAL RIGHTS
2. HERITAGE, DIVERSITY AND CREATIVITY
5. CULTURE AND ECONOMY
6. CULTURE, EQUITY AND SOCIAL INCLUSION

HERITAGE, PROMOTION, SUPPORT,
INSTITUTIONAL, YOUTH, DEVELOPMENT,
ECONOMIC, EMPLOYMENT, TRAINING, CAPACITY



1. Segou and culture

Located on the banks of the Niger River, Ségou is the capital of the ancient Bambara Kingdom. With 185,566 inhabitants (Bambara, Bozo, Malinké, Sarakolés, Peuhls, Somono, Minianka, Dogon, Mossi, Sonrhaï, and Samogo) and three main religions (Islam, 80%; Christianity, 10%; and Animism, 10%), Ségou is a beacon for cultural excellence. The cultural and creative sector, which is crucial to the economy and to citizens' well-being, was significantly affected by the security crisis that the country has been experiencing for several years, in addition to the COVID-19 pandemic. The closure of heritage sites, museums, theatres, cinemas, and other cultural facilities has slowed the activities of artists, creative industries, and cultural tourism.

The city has had a cultural policy since 2017 and key policy documents (2016-2020 Economic, Social, and Cultural Development Program; 2011 Regional Economic Development Strategy), but due to the crisis, it recently launched "Ségou: Creative City" to increase the consistency of cultural actions and synergies between actors while promoting the structuring of local industries. The program is aligned with Agenda 21 for culture and the SDGs of the United Nations 2030 Agenda's, including SDG 1 (No poverty); 15 (Life on land); 8 (Decent work and economic growth); 10 (Reduced inequalities), and 4 (Quality education).

**THE GOAL OF THE CULTURAL POLICY IS TO MAKE ART AND CULTURE
THE PILLARS OF SUSTAINABLE HUMAN DEVELOPMENT.**



2. Project goals and implementation

2.1. Main goal and specific objectives

The goal is to make art and culture the pillars of sustainable human development by setting up a sustainable cultural development program (PDCD).

Specific Objectives:

- Valuing and promoting cultural identities and artistic creation;
- Supporting the cultural professions and improving their working conditions;
- Ensuring the vitality of cultural industries and citizen participation in cultural life;
- Strengthening artistic and cultural education, training, and awareness;
- Promoting local cultural tourism in a sustainable way through schools and universities.

2.2. Project development

Launched in 2015, the project is an initiative by the Festival on the Niger Foundation and African creative city partners in collaboration with the Ségou City Council. The overall aim is to provide the city with a sustainable cultural development program and policy. Following a broad consultation, local authorities, civil society, and cultural actors chose to focus on five areas (music, design and fashion, visual arts, heritage and gastronomy), centred on 4 components:

1. An information system and regional marketing ;
2. Professionalization of the sector;
3. Identification and valuing of local cultural identities;
4. Access for all.



Seven projects were selected and implemented as part of the 2019 - 2023 sustainable cultural development program:

- PASIMS - Information System and Regional Marketing Support System (Pillar 1).
- Professionalization and capacity building of cultural actors (Pillar 2).
- Valuation and promotion of woven loincloth and cotton from Mali (Pillar 3).
- Valuation of the tangible heritage (Pillar 3).
- Promotion of gastronomy (Pillar 3).
- Promotion of contemporary art and music (Pillar 3).
- Art and education project (Pillar 4).

Through these projects, the program targets not only cultural actors and artists but also youth, women, communities, civil society, and local populations. Several actions have been undertaken, including information seminars, analysis and documentation, recruitment of a project coordinator, organization of workshops and cultural mapping, cultural promotion and outreach for activities, as well as the development of cultural policies, the design of learning and exchange programs among equals, and training and capacity building among local actors.

“SÉGOU: CREATIVE CITY” AIMS TO INCREASE THE CONSISTENCY OF CULTURAL ACTIONS AND SYNERGIES BETWEEN ACTORS WHILE PROMOTING THE STRUCTURING OF LOCAL INDUSTRIES.



3. Impacts

3.1. Direct impacts

On local government:

- Inclusion of culture in the economic, social, and cultural development program;
- Structuring and consistency for actions and synergy between cultural actors;
- Establishing a sustainable cultural development program;
- Capacity building for local elected officials;
- Change of mentality for the elected officials around culture;
- Public access to quality cultural products;
- Strengthening citizenship, especially among youth.

On cultural actors:

- Improving the quality of cultural expressions;
- Contribution to the democratization of culture;
- Synergy between cultural actors and creative collaborations between artists;
- Capacity building for artists and cultural actors.

On the city and its population:

- Increased self-esteem;
- Valuing and promoting cultural identities;
- Strengthening the local economy and decent jobs;
- Better education for youth;
- Strengthening the city's brand image;
- Infrastructure development.



3.2. Assessment

The program is managed by a committee that meets quarterly and is made up of representatives of the Ségou City Council, the regional cultural directorate, the cultural mission, the Festival on the Niger Foundation, and the Kôrè Cultural Centre. The monitoring and evaluation method allows the city to identify challenges and successes in the implementation of the project, and to establish concrete recommendations and proposals for the future.

THE PROGRAM TARGETS NOT ONLY CULTURAL ACTORS AND ARTISTS BUT ALSO YOUTH, WOMEN, COMMUNITIES, CIVIL SOCIETY, AND LOCAL POPULATIONS.

3.3. Key factors

- Ségou' Art - Festival on the Niger ;
- Cultural identities and local historical and cultural potential;
- Local political will;
- Capacity building and professionalization of local actors;
- Quality infrastructure;
- Awareness of culture for local development by populations and elected officials;
- Collaboration between cultural actors, CSOs, and communities.

3.4. Continuity

The involvement and commitment of cultural actors with the city council and civil society throughout the project implementation process is a factor for sustainability and helps ensure financial stability for the project. The technical and financial support of the Festival on the Niger Foundation, its programs, and its partners as well. The project is led by cultural experts who play a key role in the implementation, quality, relevance, and sustainability of the project.

4. Further information

Ségou was a candidate for the fifth UCLG Mexico City – Culture 21 International Award (February - June 2022). The jury for the award drew up its final report in September of 2022, 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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