

PRESS RELEASE

For 15th July 2024

UNESCO CITIES OF LITERATURE ATTEND XVI UNESCO CREATIVE CITIES NETWORK MEETING IN BRAGA, PORTUGAL 1-5th JULY 2024

Last week 35 UNESCO Creative Cities of Literature attended a meeting for the UNESCO Creative Cities to share ideas, best practices and celebrate the importance of creativity in sustainable urban development across the network.

Focal points, City Mayors and high-level representatives of the UCCN were invited to participate in UNESCO's Annual Meeting in Braga, Portugal, a UNESCO Creative City of Media Arts, to celebrate 20 years of the UNESCO Creative Cities Network.

During the conference Cities of Literature Mayors co-signed the Braga Manifesto: A Culture Goal for Sustainable Development. This pivotal text outlines local-level commitment from Creative Cities implementing the MONDIACULT 2022 Declaration and solidifies a shared vision of integrating culture as a standalone goal in the post-2030 Sustainable Development agenda.

Participants at the conference took part in roundtable discussions, panels and presentations on cultural topics such as Artificial Intelligence, youth voice, inclusivity and sustainability. Cities enjoyed hearing from recently welcomed UNESCO Creative Cities to the network, updates from the UNESCO Secretariat, and local officials in Braga on the work they're doing in their city. Cities of Literature presented many joint projects to conference delegates including work by Angoulême and Nanjing, Story Valley from Edinburgh, Ljubljana, Leeuwarden and Nottingham, as well as work on International Days such as World Poetry Day, International Mother Language Day and International Youth Day.

Paulo Rangel, Portugal Minister of Foreign Affairs said in his speech to the delegates, "The future of humanity is in cities, not because of their population numbers, but because of the values, innovation and creativity they hold. And cities are more inclusive than states."

Delegates enjoyed visits to nearby Portuguese cities Barcelos City of Craft and Folk Art, Amarante City of Music and Santa Maria da Feira City of Gastronomy to experience the wealth of cultural activity they bring to the Creative Cities Network.

Cities of Literature had a strong involvement in the creative programme of the conference, as well as shaping the cultural policy at an international level. Each City of Literature donated a children's book to a mobile children's library that travelled around Braga during the week of the conference giving readings and performances of the books to young people in the local community.

Young writers at home in Cities of Literature also engaged with the conference creative programme via the Letters to the Future project, sharing their own hopes and wishes with international cultural leaders. A literary performance by Susana Oliveira and Diana Sá was built at the Nogueira da Silva Museum with more contributions from Cities of Literature approaching language as a vehicle to understand the past in order to consciously build the future. Old communication devices such as typewriters invited participants to express themselves through literature in booths and the writing was displayed for others to experience.

A sound installation created by Portuguese sound artist Pedro Augusto featured a collection of readings by international authors in their original languages, contributed by many of the Creative Cities of Literature. The continuous broadcast was installed in the garden of Nogueira da Silva Museum, challenging visitors to discover the several listening points and experience the cultural and linguistic richness emanating from the Creative Cities Network, in a direct dialogue with the natural beauty of the space.

This year's conference theme of 'Bringing Youth To The Table' was further reflected in the Cities of Literature subnetwork report given by our cluster on the involvement of young people in so many of our projects, each reinterpreting literature as a vital artform for their self-expression and wellbeing.

The next UNESCO Creative Cities Network meeting will take place in Autumn 2025 in Creative City of Design, Querétaro, Mexico.

To find out more about the events mentioned above and the Cities of Literature network please visit <https://www.citiesoflit.com/> and follow the #CreativeCities hashtag on social media.

ENDS

Additional Information

Contact for more information, interviews and images:

Jo Flynn - Partnerships & Communications Manager in Manchester UNESCO City of Literature
jo.flynn@manchestercityofliterature.com
manchestercityofliterature.com

Please find images and video to accompany the release here: <https://uccnbraga24.com/media/>

UNESCO Creative Cities of Literature Network Lead

Hannah Trevarthen, Director, Nottingham UNESCO City of Literature: hannah@nottmcityoflit.org

UNESCO Cities of Literature

UNESCO's City of Literature programme is part of a wider Creative Cities Network which was launched in 2004 and is currently made up of more than 350 UNESCO Creative Cities globally. Members are drawn from more than 100 countries and cover seven creative fields: Crafts & Folk Art, Design, Film, Gastronomy, **Literature**, Music, and Media Arts. The Network was born out of UNESCO's Global Alliance for Cultural Diversity initiative, which was created in 2002. For more information on the UCCN please visit: <https://en.unesco.org/creative-cities/home> and for more information on the 53 Cities of Literature please visit <https://www.citiesoflit.com/>