Design and application of a system of evaluation indicators for municipal cultural policies

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Abstract
The publication of Agenda 21 for Culture in 2004, gave rise to significant growth in the area of evaluating public cultural policies. Despite these efforts, however, many challenges still remain on the long road to consolidating municipal cultural policies. We put forward a system of evaluation indicators aimed at managers and policy makers interested in evaluating local cultural policies within the paradigm of empowerment. This article provides an overview of the development of such a system of evaluation indicators. It begins with a review of the existing literature of indicator-based evaluation experience, in particular in the cultural sector. This was the basis of our own design which was validated by experts and tested in a case study. The article concludes with some reflections on evaluating local cultural policies.

Keywords
Cultural policy, evaluation, indicators, local policy, empowerment

New initiatives to evaluate public policies should take into account existing policy and evaluation models and paradigms and use these as a starting point. Such public policy models are based on a theory of social change (Meny and Thoening, 1992). In order to observe these policies and deduce their individual purpose, we need to analyse their aims, the subjects affected and the actors trusted with application of the relevant measures. In the specific case of cultural policies, we can find certain common links between these policy trends, particularly in the continued presence of cultural policies over different historical periods, even though the models may have different names.

The precursor of these models is ‘State or private patronage’, based on the direct link between creative artists or ‘producers’ and the authorities. However the first explicitly cultural policy model is...
‘Democratisation of Culture or Enlightenment.’ This model is committed to education and culture as elements for developing democracy. It has as its principal objective making cultural assets (culture as art and heritage) available to the population as a whole through cultural diffusion. The second model, Cultural Democracy or Empowerment, is characterised by a commitment to a citizenry active in cultural creation. The most recent model, which we label ‘Economic Impact and Entertainment’ (and can also be variously described in terms of ‘Social, economic and cultural efficiency’, or ‘Cultural management’) presents culture in clearly instrumental and pragmatic terms. It denotes the strategic importance of culture primarily in the economic, and to a lesser extent the political and social, domains. It emphasises the profitability and efficiency of culture in the light of social and territorial needs. With regard to what we have called the ‘Economic Impact and Entertainment’ model, Eurocult 21 (Urban Cultural Profile Exchange Project in the 21st Century based on the premises of Agenda 21 for Culture, which examines the role of cultural policy in 12 European cities) for example, addresses a different direction it calls Entertainment, linked to commercialising the market and people’s need for leisure and recreation. This trend prioritises entertainment over enlightenment in different cultural facilities and programmes to respond to the expectations of an audience continuously looking for more instantaneous experiences, star performances, shows and entertainment.

These models should be regarded as tools for analysis rather than precise models of cultural policies. Many authors agree (Bianchini 1995; Matarasso and Landry, 1999; López de Aguileta, 2000; Caride and Meira, 2000; Robinson, 2005) that there are numerous programmes and initiatives in existence that correspond to the different models and that boundaries are not always clear: many overlap.

The purpose of this article is to present a design for a system of evaluation indicators aimed at managers, politicians and policy makers interested in evaluating local cultural policies mainly from an empowerment perspective – although with some points of convergence with other models (for example, enlightenment). This model focuses on enabling citizens and giving autonomy to groups and communities, and encourages policies that give access to culture and which stimulate lifelong creative and educational processes. We therefore propose the promotion of policy instruments that enable citizens to become protagonists rather than spectators, creators rather than consumers and facilitators rather than receptors. Such participative policies for enriching leisure time are seen as a counterbalance to the current development of ‘Economic Impact and Entertainment’ policies. This requires evaluation processes that involve the citizens themselves (in particular participative evaluation processes). We believe that a design for a system of evaluation indicators which is aimed at cultural policies, based on the empowerment paradigm, may also serve to complement such measures by contributing rigour, a systematic approach and raised awareness of a host of different processes and decisions.

The first two sections of the article focus on reviewing how cultural policies are evaluated using indicators. The following section presents the main challenges currently facing this type of policy. Section four presents the evaluation aims we propose, followed by the methodological process and the final indicator design. In the final section we present some conclusions regarding the indicator design and the importance of evaluating sectoral policies at a local level.

The evaluation of municipal cultural policies: an international overview

Before indicators featured in the cultural sphere, the first appearance of social indicators dates back to the use of statistical indicators for improving public health and social conditions. This was developed by social reformers in Belgium, France, the UK and the US from 1830 onwards. It was not until the beginning of the 20th century, however, that the collection of indicators and statistical data would be explicitly linked to political debate, although this has always been one of the points of conflict in
the history of indicators, as highlighted by Cobb and Rixford (1998). In 1910, the Russell Sage Foundation in the US began development of what have come to be known as community indicators, using similar processes to those which have been newly employed since 1990. The 1960s witnessed the appearance of a deductive and analytical approach in the field of social indicators, the result of successful management of the political economy. In 1966, Bauer saw that the application of indicators to the social system would represent a reliable basis on which to establish priorities for programmes, help to establish clear objectives and policies, and simplify the task of evaluation (Kingsley, 1999). What would ultimately give a boost to the social indicator movement was the publication of Social Indicators in 1966 (Bauer, 1966). Its authors proposed the development of a system of social indicators for guiding political decision-making. At the same time, this new trend had its opponents, such as Sheldon and Freeman (1970), who believed that social indicators could not follow the same steps as the economic model, social objectives being more ambiguous, social problems less clear than economic ones, and theoretical economic bases clearer than those used in social analyses.

The 1970s and 1980s witnessed an abundance of studies and descriptive approaches based on indicators in the social field. Numerous international organisations and countries compiled annual statistics reports focusing on social conditions. In the United States, however, interest in indicators was on the wane, particularly from the 1980s onwards. According to Kingsley (1999) and Cobb and Rixford (1998) this lack of interest could be attributed to the expectations that had been projected onto the indicators systems, the cost of data collection, the limited practical use of indicators in political practice, the lack of a social theoretical framework comparable with the economic model, and the lack of a standardised measuring tool in the social field comparable with the use of currency in economics. Despite this, the social indicators movement inspired the development of environmental indicators, providing a new framework for the use of indicators at the beginning of the 1990s.

Cultural indicators are a more recent development, probably due to the fact that cultural policy was not of interest to governments until well into the second half of the 20th century, but also because of the methodological difficulties that had to be overcome (Carrasco, 1999) - including the failure to define the term “culture”. This lack of a definition was a cause for concern and controversy for different congresses, meetings and projects throughout the 1970s and 1980s, along with the lack of a single theoretical model. This latter was an added difficulty when it came to producing a system of indicators, and in defining the areas of culture in all its heterogeneity (Bonet, 2004).

One of the first reports that referenced cultural indicators was the first World Culture Report compiled by UNESCO in 1998 (UNESCO, 1998). The report provided evidence of a lack of basic cultural indicators for UNESCO Member States, particularly in the poorer countries. It is only after the mid-1990s that studies and research began on local cultural indicators.

From the end of the 1990s onwards, the US and Canada incorporated cultural indicators into their community indicators systems, which were based on models for quality of life, sustainability and community health. It was also from the second half of the 1990s onwards and during the first half of the following decade that projects began to appear on local indicators focusing exclusively on cultural aspects, as is the case with Silicon Valley (Walesh & Henton, 2001). This can be considered a reference work for community culture indicators in the US and Canada. Also in the US, we find Arts and Culture Indicators in Community Building Project, (Kingsley, 1999) by the Urban Institute and the National Neighborhood Indicators Partnership, a project aimed at proposing indicators for the cultural development of communities and contributing tools for creating policies, local planning and constructing communities. Work carried out in Canada in 2007 by Creative City Network’s Centre of Expertise on Culture and Communities in collaboration with Simon Fraser University (Duxbury, 2007) identified methodological frameworks and guidelines for developing cultural indicators at a local level.

In Australia, Hawkes (2001), and his publication The Fourth Pillar of Sustainability: Culture’s essential role in public planning, serves as an important reference-point in perceiving culture as a
dimension of human development to be taken into account in all public action. Hawkes himself proposes an interesting array of indicators. From the mid-1990s until the middle of the following decade different studies were carried out in the UK receiving the backing of the British government’s Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and Arts Council England. (For example, Arts Council England’s *Local Performance Indicators for the Arts* (2003), or *Museums, Libraries and Archives Council of London* (2005)). Other initiatives by Comedia came up with designs for cultural indicators and studies on the social impact of arts and culture. These include Matarasso’s design for cultural indicators (1999); the study conducted by Landry, Greene, Matarasso and Bianchini (1996) on the importance of cultural activity in the urban renovation process; and Landry and Bainchini’s study *Creative City* (1994), in which they propose indicators to be used as a creativity index for improving the health of cities in economic, social, environmental and cultural terms. The British literature on indicators also includes some studies and research work on towns or regions that make use of cultural indicators for local development. Among the local cultural indicator studies conducted in other countries, Eurocult 21 (Urban Cultural Profile Exchange Project in the 21st Century) (Robinson, 2005), which, based on the premises of Agenda 21 for Culture, examines the role of cultural policy in 12 European cities and provides recommendations for the future. The document establishes a comparative conceptual framework for analysing and facilitating research into urban cultural policies that make culture the focus of their governance. It also suggests ideas for developing a system of municipal indicators to further the implementation of Agenda 21 for Culture. In addition to the above, *Ciudades y Gobiernos Locales Unidos - Grup de Treball en Cultura* (2006) is currently carrying out the project *Indicadores culturales y Agenda 21 de la cultura*, which includes a framework for interpreting local cultural policies.

The evaluation of municipal cultural policies in Spain

In Spain the inflection point occurred in 2004 with the approval of Agenda 21 for Culture. One such case is that of Carrasco (1999), who conducted a factorial analysis of sociocultural indicators in the Valencian Community. This research is interesting from a quantitative viewpoint due to the type of indicators it employs and its analysis of each municipality studied. It focuses on factors associated with the consumption and diffusion of culture, but is less concerned with qualitative aspects. A second contribution worth mentioning is the work carried out by the Spanish Federation of Municipalities and Provinces (2007) which, with the co-operation of the Ministry for Culture and within the framework of Agenda 21 for Culture, proposed a self-evaluation system for local cultural policies. The design contemplated quantitative and qualitative indicators that can be fully or partially used by different municipalities for understanding and improving their cultural policies.

Current challenges in the evaluation of municipal cultural policies by means of indicators

An analysis of the above proposals reveals weaknesses in the existing evaluation of municipal cultural policies. Cultural indicators systems may address aspects of culture, but they go into very little depth when it comes to the more educational and social aspects. Most of them focus on the diffusion of culture, such as those designed by Carrasco or Eurocult 21 (Robinson, 2005). The availability of data and the decision to use comparative methods have helped to produce quantitative indicators that do not always allow for the perception of fine distinctions in local policies. More work is needed and international proposals cannot always be adapted to the possibilities and characteristics of Spanish municipalities and their responsibilities. Finally as most existing
proposals focus on large municipalities and cities they are design not always appropriate for the needs and characteristics of small and medium-sized municipalities.

As highlighted by the International Federation of Arts Councils and Culture Agencies (IFACCA) (2005), there are still challenges to be met with regard to cultural policy indicators:

- There is no broad consensus on cultural indicators.
- It would appear to be difficult to draw generalised conclusions on the basis of case studies due to the difficulty of comparison.
- There is a certain mistrust with regard to the quality of current cultural indicators and cultural statistics, and in particular their suitability for programmes and policies. The most common problems with regard to analysing these indicators are: confusion surrounding what indicators actually are and how they are to be used, a lack of qualitative data, frameworks that are difficult to manage, the aims of policies are imprecise which makes it difficult to develop indicators.
- There is little contact and coordination between the researchers and institutions that produce indicators. We therefore find work being duplicated and differing focuses. Although each country has different cultural priorities, common or generic aspects do exist that could be worked on more quickly if there were more coordination.

The incorporation of cultural indicators or groups of cultural indicators in different studies and projects and the speeding up of this process since the approval of Agenda 21 for Culture should both strengthen the rationale for these policies and contribute to the collection of more empirical data. This should also lead to the consolidation of theoretical frameworks in this area, which, although in existence, is often difficult to apply (IFACCA, 2005).

To this end we present a process for constructing evaluation indicators framed within cultural empowerment policies. That is, the criteria and aims for evaluating these policies were derived by adopting an empowerment paradigm, which has led to special attention being paid to the social and community aspects of cultural policy promoted by the municipal government.

The evaluation of cultural policies serves both to raise awareness of these policies and encourage systematisation. Even though this design starts form an empowerment paradigm we anticipate that it will be more generally useful in systematising data collection and as a guide to local cultural policies for both politicians and municipal managers. This approach is intended to suit the needs and characteristics of small- and medium-sized towns, for which existing designs are not always appropriate.

The system of evaluation indicators presented here is intended as adaptable to diverse contexts even though it has only been successfully applied in one town to date. We are convinced that as it is applied in other towns its structure will be improved, and with this its effectiveness.

**An outline summary of the objectives of cultural empowerment policies**

We have taken as our starting point the models and paradigms of cultural policies, and more precisely the paradigm of empowerment. What we have applied, then, is ideological value-based model that:

- focuses on enabling citizens and giving autonomy to groups and communities,
- encourages policies that provide access to culture, and
- stimulates lifelong creative and educational processes.
This is intended to guide and evaluate cultural actions taken in municipalities. Framed within this paradigm, the cultural policies we shall study encompass any services, programmes, projects or activities included within various different policy areas which have as a common objective the fostering and development of the most social dimension of culture, i.e. all those which operate in the fields of participation, social inclusion and the creation of identity, and in the processes of forming, creating, mobilizing and promoting the culture of each community. From within this framework and on the basis of bibliographical research, we identified seven specific objectives to cover the full range of activities and aspects that should be included in any municipal cultural empowerment policy. These are described in Table 1, together with associated activities.

Towards the construction of a system of evaluation indicators

Within the framework outlined above we conducted research in 3 phases:

- the initial design of indicators and the design of instruments for their construction and implementation;
- expert validation of the design of indicators and their empirical application; and by way of conclusion,
- the final drafting of the design.

### Table 1. Evaluation objectives of cultural empowerment policies adopted by municipal councils

1. **To analyse the scope and characteristics of the facilities and interaction between the municipal services available.**
   
   Facilities and infrastructures are essential tools for community development in that they are communal spaces which permit both the provision of the socio-cultural activities on offer in an area and the subsequent contact and interaction with them. For this reason it is important to take into account the following basic aspects: the diversity of the existing facilities and/or services; the means available for providing activities in terms of both technical aspects and infrastructures; the presence of specialized technical and professional staff; and the degree of coordination between services.

2. **To examine the cultural activities on offer and the resources that enable local entities to foster and promote these activities.**
   
   Cultural activities contribute both to personal and community development and to the creation of a sense of identity through the participation and independent management of the groups involved. In this respect, cultural policies need to take into account the following aspects: diversity in terms of both those organizing activities and of the variety and different ways of organizing the socio-cultural activities concerned, the financial resources available, the quality of the activities on offer, and the coordination and networking required to make the efforts involved coherent and profitable.

3. **To analyse the assistance provided and policies that give access to the municipal cultural activities on offer.**
   
   Cultural policies should not be exclusive, but rather must cater to and provide opportunities for the full range of local residents’ cultural requirements and interests. In order to ensure this, councils may employ strategies such as the following: diversifying the activities on offer; promoting initiatives involving local social networks; introducing cost-reduction policies benefiting a wide range of groups decentralizing and ensuring fair distribution of facilities; monitoring local residents’ opinions with regard to their requirements and interests.

4. **To identify whether programmes are proposed from a subjective viewpoint and not simply in terms of the objective requirements of the cultural sector concerned.**
   
   Transversal contacts and networking can encourage the proposal of programmes, projects and activities from a more universal viewpoint that is more enriching for local citizens. To this end, councils may (Continued)
foster transversal contacts and networking in the following ways: by encouraging political and specialist leadership; by fostering systematic and methodical approaches; by employing clear evaluative procedures; and by taking into consideration the cultural and/or educational aspect.

5. To analyse the support given to local creative talent and the municipal backing provided to foster local citizens’ creativity.

Creative expression contributes to innovation, to social and cultural change, and also to the forging of a community spirit. The following approaches are therefore required: encouraging local creative talent; offering aid for creative activity; making creative forms of expression accessible to local citizens; and taking innovation into account as a criterion for assistance in cultural projects.

6. To examine municipal support for the diversity of cultures and origins present in the municipal area in terms of the use, creation and expression of cultural activities.

In a multi-cultural society, development and change in any municipal unit are dependent on a willingness to listen and to engage in dialogue between the various cultural groups living in the area. With this in mind, cultural policies will be subject to the following requirements: fostering programmes of educational adaptation and cultural promotion; diversifying the cultural activities on offer; developing multi-cultural programmes; encouraging citizens’ initiatives originating from collectives representing cultural minorities; and introducing access programmes for groups threatened by poverty or social exclusion.

7. To analyse municipal support in promoting the creation of associations and citizen participation.

Participation is an indispensable prerequisite of the capacity for autonomous organization and individual and collective involvement in community projects. Cultural policies should encourage it in the following ways: by fostering the creation of associations; by providing resources to citizens to promote their participation (facilities, financial resources, technical support, etc.); and by encouraging processes of institutional participation.

Let us now examine these phases at greater length. Parameters were established for defining how each objective would be evaluated. This led us to establish relevant indicators and specify instruments for each. These instruments were intended to define the criteria for understanding and interpreting each indicator, in its own terms and within the overall system proposed. Two types of instrument were designed: one for quantitative, and the other for qualitative aspects.

In quantitative terms, we describe 13 fields to define the aspects that were most relevant for the application, understanding and interpretation of each indicator (see Box 1).

**Box 1. The 13 Fields**

1. Denomination: name of the indicator
2. Reference: numeric identifier of the indicator within the prepared design of indicators.
3. Specific objective: the objective of the group of indicators of which it forms part.
4. Precise objective: precise definition of the specific objective of the proposed indicators.
5. Formula: definition of the statistical formula on the basis of which the indicator will be defined.
6. Technical information: definition of the variables, of the concepts involved and the technical observations required for the collection of data from the indicator.
7. Structure: analysis of any interesting sub-component of the indicators.
8. Unit: unit of measurement of the indicator (percentage, index, etc.)
9. Regularity: regularity with which data must be obtained in order to measure the indicator (monthly, twice a year, annually, etc.)
10. Source of information: from where the data for constructing the indicator are to be collected.
11. Level: level of success in attaining or adapting to the indicator.
12. Interpretation: comparative information used to give meaning to the indicator.
13. Limitations: description of the limitations of the indicator when measuring its objective; description of what the indicator does not measure.
For qualitative purposes the parameters of analysis for each evaluation objective were defined, as follows:

- framework for the objective,
- indicators and level of success,
- score, and
- additional information.

Each indicators put forward to evaluate an objective, is broken down into 4 categories in accordance with its success in meeting criteria (based on the model proposed by Arts Council England, 2003). The 4 categories are:

- **Advanced**: The desired situation has been attained with regard to the indicator or objective that we proposed.
- **Established**: Action is being taken to attain the situation of the indicator and/or objective. Some aspects corresponding to the indicator and/or objective have been consolidated.
- **Emerging**: Certain elements corresponding to the indicator and/or objective have begun to be attained, but the process is only in its initial stages.
- **Absent**: The indicator or objective has not been attained.

**Validation of the indicator design**

Validation is conducted on the basis of two methodologies: validation by experts; and the application of the design to a case study.

Expert validation is intended to lend the proposal validity and reliability. This is consistent with research triangulation, whereby reliable and valid data can be obtained by using two or more independent observers or participants (Cohen & Manion, 2002). Expert validation was carried out in two stages. The first, considered a pilot test, was vital in designing the validation instrument. It had a dual objective: to check understanding of the material prepared for validation; and the actual validation of the indicators themselves. This was a two stage process: Initially 5 validators, all experts and/or professionals connected to the field of cultural activities and evaluation helped prepare material and fine-tune the indicators. A second stage then involved 14 validators from different parts of Spain, and in the case of 4 of these, we conducted prior interviews. Of the 14 referred to, 50% were academics linked to the study of cultural subjects, and 28.6% were academics linked to the field of public policy. Others were academics from the field of evaluation and professionals working in the cultural domain.

The validation process led to the conceptual clarification of certain indicators; simplification of others and the focussing of data collection.

The changes proposed by the expert validation process were included in a new design which was subjected to empirical testing through application in a particular municipal area. The methodological process employed was that of the case study. Within the diversity of types of case study⁶, and bearing in mind the classification made by Stake (1998), this point in the process constitutes an ‘instrumental’ case study, intended to gain general understanding of a subject on the basis of a selected specific case. The municipal area selected for the case study was a village of almost 4,000 inhabitants located in Spain. Its high level of social and cultural dynamism and its large number of cultural services in proportion to its demographic characteristics, together with the ease of access to relevant data for researchers, were key elements for this choice⁷.
The final indicator design for evaluating municipal cultural policies

The final indicator design for evaluating local cultural policies comprises a total of 58 indicators (see Table 2), organized around 7 evaluation objectives. The design includes basic and secondary; and quantitative and qualitative indicators. Basic indicators are those considered necessary for evaluating the objective to which they refer whilst secondary indicators (in italics in the table) are to conduct a more detailed evaluation of the objective and to contribute additional information that may be of interest for the analysis of cultural policies.

The result, then, is a design which is both selective and open. It can be enlarged or modified with a range of different indicators, and applied either fully or partially, so that objectives can be evaluated separately. Therefore, a municipal council may apply only the indicators of those objectives which it is interested in evaluating, although full application is recommended in view of the relational character that links the various different indicators together.

The instrument is intended for use by municipal managers and policy makers, since it is they who promote and/or implement municipal policies, have an in-depth knowledge of the municipal area and have all the necessary information at their fingertips. Although the responsibility for its application is assumed by managers and policy makers, the implementation process may be undertaken in a variety of ways and may involve differing levels of participation on the part of the public, which may include more or less informal mechanisms for participation by local citizens.

Table 2. List of Quantitative and Qualitative Indicators

| Quantitative Indicators | Qualitative Indicators |
|-------------------------|------------------------|
| **OBJECTIVE 1.** To analyse what municipal and socio-cultural facilities and services are available, their characteristics and the relationship established between them |
| 1.1 Surface area of public spaces reserved for socio-cultural activities per 1000 inhabitants. | 1.A Qualified staff at the facilities |
| 1.2 Availability of places for study and/or reading in municipal libraries or reading rooms per 1000 inhabitants | 1.B Stability of employment of facility staff |
| 1.3 Availability of public performance spaces per 1000 inhabitants | 1.C Number of facilities available with respect to socio-cultural needs |
| 1.D Planning of socio-cultural services and facilities | 1.E Technical resources available for doing activities at the socio-cultural facilities and services |
| 1.F Evaluation of municipal socio-cultural services and facilities | 1.G Coordination between officers in charge of socio-cultural services and facilities |
| 1.H Undertaking of joint socio-cultural projects | |
| **OBJECTIVE 2.** To study the municipal socio-cultural activities on offer or those receiving municipal support and the resources of local bodies invested in the organization and promotion of said activities |
| 2.1 Annual socio-cultural activities programmed directly by the municipal government per 1000 inhabitants. | 2.A Coordination of professionals and agents involved in designing and organizing socio-cultural activities. |
| - Performances | 2.B Planning documents written regarding activities organized directly by the local body |
| - Exhibitions | 2.C Evaluation of the socio-cultural activities on offer organized directly by the town council |
| - Cultural educational activities | 2.D Planning of activities receiving municipal support and organized by third parties |
| - Artistic educational activities | |
| - Civic-social activities | |
| - Leisure activities | |

(Continued)
Table 2. (Continued)

| Quantitative Indicators | Qualitative Indicators |
|-------------------------|------------------------|
| 2.2 Amount of annual municipal budget allocated to direct programming of socio-cultural activities by local government | 2.E Range of socio-cultural activities on offer |
| 2.3 Annual socio-cultural activities on offer receiving municipal government support but organized by third parties per 1000 inhabitants. - Performances - Exhibitions - Cultural educational activities - Artistic educational activities - Civic-social activities - Leisure activities | 2.F Evaluation of documents written regarding activities organized directly by the local body |
| 2.4 Amount of annual municipal budget allocated to support for socio-cultural activities by local government | 2.G Evaluation of activities receiving municipal support and organized by third parties |
| 2.5 Percentage of annual days municipal socio-cultural spaces and facilities are open | 2.H Advertising and diffusion of socio-cultural activities on offer |
| 2.6 Amount of annual municipal budget allocated to advertising socio-cultural activities | |
| 2.7 Number of joint projects between two or more facilities in one year in comparison with the total number of socio-cultural projects | |

OBJECTIVE 3. To analyse attendance at and access policies for municipal socio-cultural activities or those receiving municipal support

3.1 Annual attendance for socio-cultural activities per 1000 inhabitants at - Performances - Exhibitions - Cultural educational activities - Artistic educational activities - Civic-social activities - Leisure activities | 3.A Policy for access to municipal socio-cultural activities on offer |
| 3.2 Annual users of municipal libraries or reading rooms per 1000 inhabitants | 3.B Consulting citizens with regard to socio-cultural needs and demands |

OBJECTIVE 4. To detect whether municipal resources are designed and invested in programmes that work from the perspective of the subject and not only from the object or sector

4.1 Number of transversal plans and programmes provided for in current legislature by the local government | 4.A Transversality in the political programme of the government team |
| 4.2 Number of projects and activities undertaken with the involvement of 2 or more local government departments in comparison with the total number of socio-cultural projects and activities | 4.B Promotion of transversal plans and functional and political organizational charts |
| | 4.C Methodology used for networking |
| | 4.D Culture and/or education in transversal plans |
| | 4.E Leadership of transversal plans |
| | 4.F Regular review and adaptation of transversal plans and programmes |
Table 2. (Continued)

| Quantitative Indicators | Qualitative Indicators |
|-------------------------|------------------------|
| **OBJECTIVE 5.** To analyse the support awarded to local creators and a municipal commitment to promoting citizen creativity | |
| 5.A Importance of cultural creativity as another strategy in local creativity and identity | |
| 5.B Create innovation in heritage and historical records | |
| 5.C Resources for promoting creativity | |
| **OBJECTIVE 6.** To study municipal commitment to the diversity of the municipality in terms of its culture and citizens in the use, creation and expression of socio-cultural activities | |
| 6.1 Number of municipal annual socio-cultural activities aimed at different ages | 6.A Accessibility to the socio-cultural activities on offer and support in the creation and expression of groups or collectives at risk of poverty |
| 6.2 Number of municipal annual socio-cultural activities receiving the support of local government and organized by minority cultural groups | 6.B Intercultural environments and programmes |
| 6.3 Number of municipal socio-cultural activities aimed at cultural minorities | 6.C The inclusion of the disabled |
| **OBJECTIVE 7.** To analyse municipal support existing for the promotion of associations and citizen participation | |
| 7.1 Percentage and type of associations per 1000 inhabitants | 7.A The political programme promotes citizen participation on an institutional, community and individual level |
| 7.2 Population members of municipal associations per 1000 inhabitants | 7.B Promotion of community participation |
| 7.3 Percentage of associations that have carried out socio-cultural activities with municipal support in one year in comparison with the total number of associations | 7.C Institutional participation |
| 7.4 Percentage of annual socio-cultural activities on offer carried out by associations with municipal support | 7.D Individual participation |
| 7.5 Informal socio-cultural groups that have carried out socio-cultural activities in one year with municipal support per 1000 inhabitants | 7.E Coordination between associations and support from municipal manager |
| 7.6 Annual number of days that spaces run and owned by the municipality are used by citizens for socio-cultural activities. | |

Note: secondary indicators in italics

Conclusions

There is a significant heterogeneity in the evaluation of cultural policies by means of indicators, both in terms of theoretical reference frameworks, and objectives and criteria for data collection. There is little systemisation in data collection and a lack of evaluation instruments, which makes it difficult to apply existing indicators systems. This heterogeneity leads to dispersion, difficulties in making comparisons, the duplication of efforts, and little rigour.
In view of the experiences analysed here, we would also like to highlight the added difficulty in finding evaluation instruments adapted to the realities and needs of small- and medium-sized municipalities. Although the objectives we formulate for cultural policies may be the same in both small and large municipalities, the organisation of these policies will probably differ according to the size of the municipality. The tendency for small- and medium-sized municipalities is to organise themselves into departments that draw together policies from different sectors: culture, education, youth, sport, festivals, etc. These departments tend to have a single politician (e.g. councillor) overseeing them and, at best, another non-specialised manager with general duties for implementation. This differs from the resources and staffing of larger town councils, which have more differentiated areas, specialised personnel and a diversity of policies, and that this must require at least minimally different methodologies, intervention strategies and evaluation systems. Research, designing instruments, redefining methodologies, creating new paradigms, innovation, etc., have all traditionally been promoted in urban environments, either because they have more resources for training and research, or there is a higher concentration of managers, thereby multiplying the possibilities of reflexivity and action.

The system of evaluation indicators we propose adds rigour to the implementation of local cultural policies, which are very often intangible and difficult to operationalise. It may also prove to be a valuable learning tool for raising awareness of a town’s cultural needs and the type of policy instruments that could be employed to meet these needs. Thus this learning is aimed at transforming and improving current practices.

The instrument we have developed can be applied regularly and over the long term, and in some cases may include processes for citizen participation (evaluation of qualitative items, interpretation of quantitative data, etc.). It is not an instrument to be used merely to take a snapshot at a specific point in time. Given that all public actions provoke an alteration social aspects of the status quo with regard to, we must remain very aware of the evolution and contextual changes occurring with the application of policies. As with any system of indicators, we recommend it be applied alongside other evaluation methodologies, which in our view would have to be more participative in nature, such as action research or participative evaluation processes. Bearing in mind that the theoretical background on which the design is based is that of empowerment, and therefore, a commitment to an active citizenry. It is important to apply this indicator system alongside methodologies that incorporate the citizen as an active agent in the process of evaluating public policies, helping to adapt these policies to local realities. We are convinced that these evaluative models and strategies can complement one another and contribute more rigour, credibility and solidity to the domain of cultural policies.

Among its limitations, the evaluation system by means of indicators is aimed at political action by a public administration and does not therefore evaluate the entire cultural dynamics of the municipality. If this is required, other aspects should be taken into account, such as the community culture promoted within other sectors (private, tertiary education sector, informal networks), or other areas of culture such as heritage, cultural industries, as well as the cultural preferences of different cultural groups. The instrument is not intended to cover all aspects of culture.

Finally, we would like to highlight the importance of evaluating public policies, not only in a global sense, but also specifically by sector. Policy evaluation is justified by the pressure on administrations to determine the extent to which public intervention produces an improvement in individual or social well-being, how this is produced and how it could be achieved more effectively (Ballart, 1996). In short, to stimulate reflection on action and learning in order to adapt public policies to social needs. If we focus on cultural policies, we must take into account that these are instrumental policies, not ends in themselves, contributing to the development of other sectors.
(economic, health, education, etc.). They are policies that contribute to improving quality of life, affirming cultural identity and developing a local culture (De la Durantaye, 2002). In this respect, their evaluation is fundamental if we are to capture and envisage the effect of these policies on the development of the territory. It is essential, however, and particularly in Spain, to improve the evaluation system. For this to happen we need to address those factors that have led to evaluation systems being under-developed in Spain, such as the lack of an applied social research tradition, the lack of incentives for evaluation, and the strong bias in favour of some stakeholders rather than others (Viñas, 2009). It will also be important to get away from a prevailing culture of evaluation being used as a sanction, and to justify or endorse actions that have already been taken, or to eliminate programmes. Improving this sector will also require that we improve evaluation.

Notes

1. In this section we shall not be providing an exhaustive account of the historical evolution of these models or paradigms. For a more in-depth historical overview of cultural policies, consult the following: Bianchini (1993), Bouzada (1993), Bouzada (2004), Caride and Meida (2000), Robinson (2005), López de Aguileta (2000), Matarasso and Landry (1999) and Zallo (1995).
2. Bonet (2004) attributes this in part to the low level of cultural activity as a sector of economic activity.
3. In this respect, Duxbury (2003: 1) notes that “Three frameworks are currently used to conceptually frame cultural indicators development: sustainability, quality of life, and societal communications. At the local level, community sustainability and quality of life resonated most. These fields have developed a range of methodological frameworks (including process guidelines, indicator selection/development criteria, and critical issues), which are valuable to informing cultural indicator development”
4. For further information on cultural policies in the United Kingdom and work on indicators, see the study by Poirier (2003).
5. See (among others) López de Aguileta (2000), Pose (2006).
6. See Rodriguez, G.; Gil, J; García, E. (1996: 92-98), Stake, R.E (1998: 16-17), Vázquez, R. and Angulo, F. (2003:16-17), Bisquerra, R. (coord.) (2004: 314-316).
7. For Stake (1998), the first criterion for the selection of a case must be the highest possible degree of exploitability of what we learn, and in instrumental studies, using an unusual case can be illustrative of what goes unnoticed in typical cases.
8. See Planas (2009) for the development of indicators

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