

Cultural and creative industries in the PURE project

Presented on behalf of the PURE project by Dr Muir Houston as part of a roundtable at the Joint Conference of the University Network of the European Capitals of Culture and Compostela Group of Universities held at the University of Pécs on 14-15 October 2010.

Dr Muir Houston, PASCAL Affiliate, University of Glasgow

We represent the PASCAL International Observatory (see <http://pascalobservatory.org>), an organisation with many regional and university members, and a strong panel of expert Associates from around the world.

PASCAL grew out of OECD's work in Regional Development from the late nineties, and was created at the International OECD Conference convened in Melbourne with the State of Victoria and RMIT University in 2002. Its work has expanded through Europe where it has a European base at the University of Glasgow, a US base at Northern Illinois University, an African base at the University of South Africa in Pretoria and an Australian administrative HQ at RMIT University, Melbourne.

PASCAL is involved in a number of international projects, and for the purpose of this presentation, I am making reference to the project entitled, the **PASCAL Universities Regional Engagement (PURE)** project, which is working with 17 regions around the world, many in the European domain, and including South Transdanubia in Hungary. There with the aid of Professor Balazs Nemeth of the University of Pécs, who runs the Central and Eastern European sub-node of Pascal, and his colleagues both at his own university and the University of Kaspovar, we have worked for some 2 years already (supported by the Ministry of Education in Hungary) on studying the regional contribution of universities in this region.

In summary our aim has been:

- to monitor and compare approaches to the innovation system and human capacity-building work of HEIs across all strands of balanced social development - cultural, civil society, health and welfare, environmental as well as economic
- to identify barriers and ways of overcoming them, where appropriate trying out approaches new to partnership and organization, successful in other regions
- to interrogate and use existing data more effectively and study the impact of HE partnership on regional development, with realistic tasks and targets for HE partnership-based regional development (metrics and impact evaluation) including 'soft' social, cultural, health and sustainability dimensions
- to offer tools to benchmark these activities
- to explore the impact on regions of global warming and other ecological questions such as transportation, waste management and disposal, and the contribution of HEIs where science and social science can be applied e.g. to the intelligent energy agenda
- to analyse and compare trends towards and away from greater devolution
- to compare different intermediary models for university engagement
- to exchange approaches to advocating engagement nationally and rolling out regional engagement elsewhere in their countries.

Clearly not all regions involve themselves in all activities, and PASCAL agrees with regions as to which one or more of the eight areas they wish to focus on. Thereafter PASCAL agrees a work plan with

regions. This includes two visits from an international review group assembled from its associates, and the teams both academics and regional planners.

Many review methodologies require regions to undertake a detailed status self-review, using a common general template, before there is any outside involvement from a review group. PURE differs in several ways from such approaches. It seeks to be tailored to the unique circumstances of change in each region. Rather than offering just evaluative and judgmental reviews, PURE seeks to bring to each region a consultative and developmental approach (hence the term for its review team of a Consultative Development Group (CDG)). There is an explicit focus from the outset on changing and improving the quality of partnership, and on beneficial outcomes in terms of regional development, which will also benefit the higher education (HE) sector.

Direct exchange with other regions sharing similar ambitions and challenges assists practical learning, and the adoption of good practice. CDGs reinforce the PURE networking approach, drawing members where possible from other participating regions, and 'twinning' regions so that 'reciprocal reviewers' between regions share common interests. This is what we term as 'peer reviewing'.

In the review process it is essential to be able to learn from past and present experience, and to be able to make best use of data available from all sources to inform regional governance and the management of productive partnership. In order to do so we work with regions via a dedicated Link Partner and local representative Regional Co-ordinating Group, and we use well-validated benchmarking tools within the HEI system and regions.

The central purpose of PURE is to improve what happens in the region, and to work for the continuation and sustainability of good practices. It is action-oriented.

This brings me to the issue of culture.

Cultural and creative industries are important to many regions, especially in the growing global knowledge economy. However, there are great variations in how prominent a role it takes in the various regions across the world and even within countries. The regions, which are already in a cluster that we have set up (Jamtland and Varmland in Sweden, Buskerud in Norway, Gaborone City in Botswana, Kent In England and Flanders In Belgium), all emphasise that culture and creativity are important to them.

For example, in Botswana culture and creative industries are very much present in different regional plans and goals. There is an awareness of the contribution culture and cultural institutions can make to regional development. There is an ambition to make the capital city, Gaborone a "city of arts and culture". In Glasgow, the Scottish Government has identified seven key sectors for the economic development and among them is cultural and creative industries . This is also an important factor for Kent as part of its regeneration strategy.

In other regions culture and creative industries has a more limited role. In some regions like Darling Downs in Australia or Illinois In the US, recognition of any potential of the role of universities in culture and creativity almost hardly exists at present.

Regions can have different ways of talking about culture and creative industries and this may be resulting in less activity being identified than is actually taking place and its role being under-valued in relation to its value to regions socially, educationally and economically. Within the wide area of cultural and creative industries, we have identified five sub-themes, which are important to several regions.

Heritage and cultural tourism

Tourism is of course something that falls into this broad cluster and that is an area, which is very important to Botswana, Jamtland, Buskerud, Devon and Cornwall (in the UK) and Kent. Preserving heritage, cultural tourism and presenting tourists with a scenic environment of high quality seem to be issues, which all these regions focus on. Thus, the preservation of cultural environments, and making cultural heritage into visitor attractions, are seen as important for regional development and growth. Another region in which cultural and historical heritage is important, as well as tourism, is Puglia in Italy. Since your own city of Pecs in South Transdanubia is the Cultural Capital of Europe during 2010, cultural tourism of course has been highlighted here, which has led to a qualitative development of infrastructure and cultural and tourism services. An important issue addressed in both Botswana and in Kent is the preservation of heritage sites in a growing city and thus an increased urbanisation.

Innovation and entrepreneurship

Innovation and entrepreneurship within tourism are also important features, which are mentioned in connection to all regions, which are already in the cluster, but also in some other reports from regions such as Puglia. The importance of establishing ways for people to turn their creative ideas into successful and sustainable businesses is emphasised. Here universities can and do play an immensely important part in providing knowledge and education for potential entrepreneurs. The universities in South Transdanubia seem to have developed strong partnerships in development and innovation with respect to C&C in general which could be useful in cultural development as well.

Art and design

In Helsinki Metropolitan Area there is a long tradition of arts, crafts and design, some of which have developed into world famous brands. In Flanders there is also a tradition of processing and manufacturing products, such as textiles and fashion and diamonds and the recent international The Columbus conference shows that within this pioneering region its regional university colleges are taking a lead in culture and creative industries. In Devon and Cornwall, fine art is an important development in the region's character, particularly in Cornwall which has historically been the location of artists of world repute such as Barbara Hepworth and which hosts a part of the Tate Gallery in St Ives.

Eco-tourism, crafts, food and drink

Another trait many regions have in common is eco-tourism or tourism focusing on crafts, food and drink. Here Jamtland and Flanders explicitly states that local food is important, but it is also mentioned in connection to other regions, for example South Transdanubia. These food industries can not only provide people with good food, but also play an important part as tourist attractions. Many food producers who work in a small scale also have a strong connection to eco-friendly production and sustainable development. On a general level Melbourne in Australia focuses on green jobs and the development and strengthening of skills for sustainable development. Thames Gateway wants to follow a possible connection between creativity and culture and the implementing aspirations to become an eco/environmental region. Essex is following the same direction. In Cornwall, the Eden Project is an eco-attraction of world renown, although initial observations indicate that connections with the university sector are not developed fully.

Ethnic groups and languages

Promoting the traditions, culture and languages of various ethnic groups is a prominent part of the work with culture in Botswana and Flanders. Working with a multicultural society is important to several other regions as well, but is mainly seen in connection to higher education and the labour market – that it is important to attract different ethnic groups to universities. There are, however, possibilities to work more directly with the cultural sector in order to create a socially inclusive society.

Conclusion

Cultural and creative industries are rarely the main focus of the activities of universities within the regions we have worked with PURE project, although we find pockets of excellent practice. This may well change in future. Few regions seem to regard this area as an important factor in regional development. Nevertheless, we have identified four issues that most of the regions have in common:

- 1) Preserving cultural environment and heritage sites in order make the region attractive for people to live in and for tourists to visit.
- 2) Help entrepreneurs develop tourist attractions within this field.
- 3) Connect culture and creativity to sustainable development.
- 4) Create social inclusion through the use of culture and creativity.

This means that there are many connections between the field of cultural and creative industries and other interest clusters for regions that we have identified in PURE, such as green skills or social inclusion.

I am grateful for the input of Anna Hansen, Henrik Zipsane and Christina Wistman, Jamtli Museum, Ostersund, Sweden, Mike Osborne, University of Glasgow and James Powell, University of Salford within this short presentation. We hope that many other universities and regions will wish to be involved in the work of Pascal and its PURE project.