

# CULTURAL FEASIBILITY IN DEVELOPMENT PLANNING



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The project Cultural Feasibility in Development Planning was undertaken by the Latin American Parliament (PARLATINO) in the late 1990s, in coordination with the UNESCO Regional Office for Culture in Latin America and the Caribbean. Its aim has been to assess the cultural impact of the policies, projects and strategies under implementation at all levels and in different fields of operation.

PARLATINO has over these years submitted the project to various forums and has published it in Spanish and Portuguese for dissemination purposes. One of its major achievements has been to incorporate cultural feasibility into the Planning Act that was recently amended by the Chamber of Deputies at the Mexican Congress. Both the Mexican legislation and the project itself highlight the need for specific indicators and methodologies to measure the impact of a given policy on the people, as well as the bearing of cultural policies on development.

The Latin American Parliament has set out the task of making a contribution to development and integration efforts underway in Latin American countries. In this regard, we believe that the integration of cultural feasibility into planning standards and public policies is vitally important. This is in line with UNESCO's concern over the establishment of the Culture for Development Indicator Suite so as to demonstrate empirically how culture contributes to growth and adapts to change.

## Background

Our Creative Diversity Report was launched in February 1998, at the headquarters of the Latin America Parliament in Sao Paulo (Brazil). The ceremony was attended by Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, former United Nations Secretary-General and Chairman of the World Commission on Culture and Development, and Lourdes Arizpe, UNESCO Assistant Director-General for Culture. The ceremony provided institutional support for the idea of promoting cultural feasibility studies under usual procedures and practices relative to development planning in all fields and at all levels.

At that time, the PARLATINO team and the UNESCO Regional Office for Culture in Latin America and the Caribbean had to face several challenges, including the preparation of a conceptual and methodological guide to conducting cultural plan, programme and project evaluation activities.

The early project versions in Spanish and Portuguese were published by the Latin America Parliament in 2001 (Sao Paulo, Brazil). A year later, the project was published



CULTURE/UNESCO/CTE/VEDEL RODRIGUEZ (MOJA)



CULTRIPUNESCO/CTV/DELE RODRIGUEZ (MOLA)

in Spanish by the UNESCO Regional Office for Culture in Latin America and the Caribbean, with support from the Honourable Chamber of Deputies at the Mexican Congress. The project has ever since been reviewed, updated and disseminated electronically.

The project *Cultural Feasibility in Development Planning: Cultural Evaluation Techniques, Methods and Concepts relative to Plans, Programmes and Projects* was internationally launched in Havana in July 2002. It was later presented at some of the most important forums and events, including the two editions of the World Cultural Forum, held in Brazil in 2004 and 2006.

#### The Project

The project *Cultural Feasibility in Development Planning* highlights the need to conduct cultural feasibility studies over major policies, strategies, plans, programmes and activities under development planning actions at different levels and domains. This calls for cultural impact evaluations of all human activities planned either generally or specifically by any social agent or stakeholder.

The idea is to incorporate cultural feasibility studies, which are indispensable, basic elements, into financial, economic, social, political and environmental studies, in keeping with planning theory and practice. A distinction should be made between “cultural evaluation of projects” and “evaluation of cultural projects.” The former seeks to identify the cultural impact of any type of project on all production and service sectors before the decision to implement it is made.

The idea is also to bridge a major gap in development planning theory and practice. On the one hand, there is

lack of institutional practices to develop cultural feasibility studies before policies, strategies, plans, projects and activities are formulated and implemented. On the other, there is no conceptual and methodological guide to conducting such studies.

In short, PARLATINO plans to make a contribution to development and integration efforts in Latin America and the Caribbean by building conceptual and methodological tools, indicators, means, and benchmarks to properly integrate culture into identification, formulation and implementation processes for major operational policies in all sectors, at all levels, and under specific projects.

PARLATINO would like to see cultural feasibility studies fully adopted as a common practice by agencies and entities involved in project planning, implementation and evaluation. The institutions that provide technical and financial support for the execution of plans, programmes and projects at all levels should ask their customers and beneficiaries to mainstream cultural evaluation into their studies and take it into account while considering applications.

The Latin America Parliament has developed a list of over 200 world institutions to which it will send the project for promotion and implementation purposes, hopefully to get feedback from them. It will carry out the actions necessary to boost the official and formal adoption of the project by Member States, specifically within their legal and institutional frameworks, just as Mexico has done.

#### Mexico's Efforts

On 26 September 2002, local legislators members of the PARLATINO Permanent Committee on Education, Culture, Science, Technology and Communication submitted a reform project to incorporate cultural evaluation into the Planning Act. This project was practically unanimously adopted on 24 April 2003 at the Senate of the Republic. After having followed due course, the Office of Government gave its blessing at the Honourable Chamber of Deputies on 18 March 2009.

The reform to the Planning Act was published at the Official Registry of the Union on 9 April 2012 (DOF 09-04-2012), formally adopting the cultural feasibility proposal and the cultural dimension of development in the country.

The idea now is to make further arrangements so that cultural feasibility studies can be regularly conducted by agencies and entities involved in project planning, implementation and evaluation. The institutions that provide technical and financial support for the execution of plans, programmes and projects at all levels should ask their customers and beneficiaries to mainstream cultural evaluation into their studies. PARLATINO will continue to gather pieces of cultural legislation to undertake the relevant legislative harmonization studies [C&D](#)

More information available at [www.parlatino.org](http://www.parlatino.org)

# THE PROJECT CULTURAL FEASIBILITY IN DEVELOPMENT PLANNING HIGHLIGHTS THE NEED TO CONDUCT CULTURAL FEASIBILITY STUDIES OVER MAJOR POLICIES, STRATEGIES, PLANS, PROGRAMMES AND ACTIVITIES UNDER DEVELOPMENT PLANNING ACTIONS AT DIFFERENT LEVELS AND DOMAINS