

Creative Climate Cities Profile
CAPE TOWN



GEOGRAPHICAL AREA

2,456 sq. km



POPULATION

4,174,510¹



GDP

US \$29,189
PPP (million)

CITY STRATEGY LINKS

Environmental Strategy

Climate Change Policy

Arts, Culture & Creative Industries Policy

Welcome to Cape Town



Culture Fact

In 2017, Cape Town became a member of the UNESCO Creative Cities Network as a Design City¹.



Climate Fact

In 2000, the Western Cape was responsible for 26% of the value of South Africa's renewable energy industry, making it a notable centre of energy expertise. However Cape Town's projected climate change impacts include a drying trend from west to east, decrease in winter rainfall as well as a rise in the mean temperature².

Introduction

Cape Town, the second-most populous urban area in South Africa, is a coastal city rich in diversity: from the communities which inhabit it, its artistic and cultural life, to its awe-inspiring natural landscapes and biodiversity. Cape Town, and its surrounding habitats, are home to around 3,000 indigenous plant species³ and wildlife including cape fur seals, malachite kingfishers, humpback whales, orange-breasted sunbirds, jackass penguins, chacma baboons, hippos, cape clawless otters, and flamingos. Over the last decade Cape Town has flourished: its fast-growing technological development and burgeoning economy have restored its 16th century status as one of the most important cities on the continent of Africa.

Cape Town has also had global impact as a city back from the brink of environmental crisis: in January 2018, it was on track to be the first city in the world to run out of water, scheduled for 21st April or "Day zero."⁴ Remarkably Cape Town averted it, with residents more than halving their water use to just over 500m litres per day in early 2018, an extraordinary example of civic leadership and accomplished at record-breaking pace.

Environmental Ambition

Cape Town has a huge opportunity to lead the world in a transition toward sustainability, leapfrogging unsustainable development practices in the global North and promoting alternative perspectives on dealing with critical urban issues. Artists and creative practitioners across the city are already engaged with issues relevant to environmental sustainability – from aesthetics and materials, to activism and education – but would benefit from further support in connecting this work to a broader movement of change.

¹World Cities Culture Forum. <http://www.worldcitiescultureforum.com/cities/cape-town>

²City of Cape Town (2006) [Energy and Climate Change Strategy](#)

Promoting action on climate and the environment has often greater relevance and impact when connected to issues of social sustainability. 'Ubuntu' is an Nguni Bantu term meaning 'humanity' and has profound environmental implications; it speaks to human interconnectedness and the implications of our actions on the wider world⁵. For Cape Town, the context of "climate justice" will highlight the interdependence of social justice and environmental sustainability – two key policy imperatives within South Africa's agenda for sustainable development⁶.

Creative & Climate Action in Cape Town

1. Creative Programmes & Campaigns

Creative content and activities that engage audiences on themes of climate and the environment

- Borderlands Public Arts Project is an ongoing initiative started in 2017 that brings together people from segregated communities and fosters collective ownership of shared public spaces. Diverse, inter-generational groups join artistic experiences in the 'borderlands' between communities: the many nature areas that make Cape Town so unique, but also play a role in social segregation.

Workshops and camps bring youth into contact with the natural environment through experimental, participatory arts and inspire creative reflection on our ecological interdependence. The Project uses innovative strategies to get people talking, playing, creating, collaborating and learning about the complex ways in which social and environmental issues intersect.

- Cape Town's water crisis gripped headlines across the world with commentary often imbued with negativity, however one exhibition has shown how artists have used a disaster such as this to serve as both inspiration and education. **Baz-Art** decided to focus its theme around the topic and inspire artists to draw on the drought in their nine-day **International Public Art Festival** (2018) 'Nature doesn't need us, we need nature', supported by the City of Cape Town. The 2019 festival is titled 'Generation Next: Educate, Collaborate, Empower' representing a focus on the future and the responsibility of present and successive generations to create a better world for all.
- Designer Heath Nash began the Our Workshop initiative in 2013 to create a space which allowed people to come together in a co-creative environment to upcycle trash into designer goods. In 2017, the workshop moved to Guga S'thebe, Langa, where it has grown into an innovation hub for young, aspiring creatives. Nash plans to expand this model to establish maker-spaces in a variety of new locations.
- Cape Town Carnival 2018 was themed 'Mother City, Mother Nature', featuring close to 1,700 dancing, singing and instrument-playing performers and intricate floats.

³Cape Town Green Map. <http://www.capetowngreenmap.co.za/go-green/biodiversity-facts>

⁴National Geographic. <https://news.nationalgeographic.com/2018/02/cape-town-running-out-of-water-drought-taps-shutoff-other-cities/>

⁵Brief Meaning of African Word 'UBUNTU'. Ubuntu Women Institute USA. January 24, 2012.

⁶Towards a Regenerative Culture, 2018. The report was produced by researcher Sholeh Johnston in collaboration with the National Arts Council of South Africa and Vrystaat Arts Festival, and is an outcome of over four years partnership and exchange between these organisations and Julie's Bicycle.

2. Resources & Support

Investment, training and materials that support environmental knowledge and practical action

- Cape Town's '[Arts, Culture and Creative Industries Policy](#)' supports an integrated approach to arts, culture, heritage and creative industry development and seeks to evaluate the social, cultural, economic and environmental impacts of the sector so as to better allocate resources and support.
- The City of Cape Town is working with academia and other relevant research bodies to advance the collection and analysis of data to develop benchmarking indicators. Cape Town is currently participating in the FRACTAL (Future Resilience for African Cities and Lands) research programme, which is part of the broader Future Climate for Africa initiative. FRACTAL emphasises knowledge co-production and shared learning as innovative methods for bridging the gap between academia and local government.
- The [CDI](#) is a craft and design sector development agency which supports responsible creative enterprise and trade. It has several initiatives to improve the environmental sustainability of the craft and design sector, demonstrating that greater understanding will enable practitioners to recognise good design and appreciate their own environmental responsibilities.

3. Partnerships & Innovation

Diverse disciplines and communities sharing and co-developing ideas and resources that accelerate environmental action

- Cape Town was World Design Capital in 2014 with the successful bid "[Live Design. Transform Life](#)" which focussed on the role that design can play in social transformation in the city. Theme three was 'Today for Tomorrow: Sustainable solutions for people and planet.'
- In 2017, Cape Town became a member of the UNESCO Creative Cities Network as a Design City. It is the intention that the designation acts as a catalyst for achieving inclusive, urban, sustainable development.
- The [Ways of Knowing Urban Ecologies Project](#) engages multiple case studies in Cape Town and Stockholm to build a rich evidence base and increase public debate on the role of 'nature' as cultural discourse and material reality – 'In engaging community groups, civil servants and academics we bring in-depth case studies to inform and unsettle mainstream policy discourse to promote the reimagining of how just and sustainable forms of urbanisation might be made possible'.

Highlights

1

Creative Programmes & Campaigns

Baz-Art focused on Cape Town's drought for the 2018 International Public Art Festival 'Nature doesn't need us, we need nature'. The 2019 festival is titled 'Generation Next: Educate, Collaborate, Empower', inspiring present and future generations to create a better world for all.

2

Resources & Support

The CDI is a craft and design sector development agency which supports responsible creative enterprise and trade. It has several initiatives to improve the environmental sustainability of the sector, enabling practitioners to recognise good design alongside environmental responsibilities.

3

Partnerships & Innovation

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4

Policy & Strategy

The Arts, Culture and Creative Industries Policy is designed to apply to all of Cape Town's administration including Spatial Planning and Urban Design and Environmental Resource Management. A specific working group ensures integration and coordination of departmental programmes.

Spotlight

NATURE DOESN'T NEED US, WE NEED NATURE

The 2018 Cape Town **International Public Art Festival** (IPAF) 'Nature doesn't need us, we need nature' explicitly communicates just how reliant we are on our natural systems: "Nature has a way of 'getting rid' of those who cannot adapt to its way of being and surely the human race is at stake. It is time to mould our behaviour accordingly... IPAF believes that a change in the behaviour fundamentally starts in the mind. A small incremental change in the way we think spurs on an evidential change in our behaviour⁷.

4. Policy & Strategy

Guiding policy and strategy frameworks that drive climate and environmental action, investment and accountability

- Cape Town's Resilience Strategy (due to launch in 2019) is being adopted in the aftermath of the worst drought the city-region has confronted in recorded history. 'Resilient Cape Town' will offer a roadmap for a 21st Century metropolis, working across government, business, community organisations, academia and households to build Cape Town's collective resilience. There are five pillars that form the core of Resilient Cape Town – the second being 'Connected, climate-adaptive city'. The City's Arts and Culture Department will be working with partners on various initiatives to increase social cohesion, peer-support and resilience in times of shock and stress.
- The **Environmental Strategy** incorporates heritage management and recognises the unique role that Cape Town's natural and cultural heritage play in creating a sense of place and belonging in the city.
- The **Climate Change Policy** emphasises the need for innovation and creative thinking in addressing the challenge of climate change, recognising that "business as usual" needs to change in order for climate change to be effectively addressed. In developing a resilience strategy for Cape Town, linked to climate change adaptation, the City's preliminary assessment identified social cohesion as one of four key enabling areas for which cultural participation is critical.

⁷Cape Town International Public Art Festival. <http://ipafest.co.za/>

What Next?

⁸Towards a Regenerative Culture, 2018.

⁹Revised White Paper on Arts, Culture and Heritage, 2017.

A number of opportunities have been identified:

1. **Share good practice**

Research creative and cultural initiatives across the city which engage with environmental themes and practices, making them publicly available through an online resource. This will encourage new collaborations and good practice exchange and help build environmental knowledge, awareness and inspiration within the sector. Showcase activities particularly at the grassroots level to create greater visibility and support for this work.

2. **Connect social and environmental issues**

Connect the Department for Arts and Culture's social justice agenda (e.g. social inclusion) with environmental issues, developing projects and collaborations informed by sustainable development principles. Such projects will deliver co-benefits to citizens and stakeholders and successes will support the business case for further investment. The soon to be launched Resilience Strategy aims to bridge these issues and provide a strong foundation for developing projects which support the cultural community and wider society in addressing such challenges as: climate change, poverty, social segregation and ill health.

3. **Develop implementation plans**

Both the 'Cultural Heritage Strategy' and the 'Arts, Culture and Creative Industries Policy' explicitly reference environmental sustainability - these commitments need to be supported by implementation plans and targets, identifying partners and resource where required. Connect with key city stakeholders, businesses and public bodies such as the University of Cape Town to share ideas, resources and create joint initiatives.

4. **Build the business case**

Work with the Environmental Management Department to develop the business case for investing in cultural buildings and events to reduce their environmental impacts. This could include carbon and cost-saving projects such as building upgrades, low-carbon technologies and staff training, etc. This will additionally develop environmental knowledge within Cape Town's Arts and Culture Department.

5. **Align city policy with national commitments**

Align city policy and practice with the South Africa government's Arts and Culture White Paper which recognises the capacity of the arts to influence social and environmental change⁸. The White Paper commits the Department for Arts and Culture to work with local government to guide the 'spill-over effects of the cultural and creative industries and bridge their products with the rest of society and the economy', focussing on several specific areas, one of which being environmental sustainability⁹.

With special thanks to:

Renee Holleman, Professional Officer,
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ISIXEKO SASEKAPA
STAD KAAPSTAD

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CITIES

Julie's Bicycle
SUSTAINING CREATIVITY

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