

UCCN Membership Monitoring Report Exercise

February 2023

Evaluation Form

Context

Member cities are requested to submit their Membership Monitoring Reports to UNESCO every four years, starting from the year of Designation. Each report will subsequently be submitted to the member cities by creative field for its evaluation. The assessment process for each report will be undertaken within each cluster with its preferred working method collectively determined, to enhance participation and optimize the process. A short-consolidated evaluation for each report using this Evaluation Form should then be submitted back to the Secretariat following this process.

The Membership Monitoring Report concerned covers the period	2019-2022
Submitting City	Heidelberg
	Literature
Evaluating City/Cities	Consolidated

General Participation

1. The extent to which the city participated in the Network's activities:

Poor

Fair

Good

Very good

Excellent

Main observation: [Max. 200 words]

Heidelberg is very active within the network. The list of contributions to the program's global management is extremely extensive and both locally and internationally Heidelberg cooperates with other Cities of Literature. On a rather large scale, we would like to add. It is in every sense of the word an *active* member of the network and rather easy to approach. It has shown great commitment to the Network by participating in conferences, collaborating with fellow member cities in various projects, and by organizing literary festivals, events and residencies.

Did the city participate in one or more editions of the UCCN Annual Conference over the past four years? (NB: The XIV Annual Conference has been postponed to a later date due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In this regard, the latest edition of the Annual Conference was organized in Fabriano, 2019)

Yes

No

If yes, kindly mention the year(s) below.

2019, 2021, 2022

2. Did the city host or apply to host an edition of the UCCN Annual Conference, or sub-cluster meeting(s)?

Yes

No

If yes, kindly provide the name and the year of each event.

3. Did the city host any international conferences or meetings on specific issues salient to the Creative Cities with a large participation of members of the Network?

Yes

No

If yes, kindly provide the name and the year of the event(s) and global observation: [Max. 300 words]

Heidelberg Literature Days 2019, 2022 and Literaturherbst Heidelberg. Future Literacy Lab 2022.

During their festival Heidelberg City of literature has promoted several writers from different Cities of Literature. The Future Literacy Lab involved collaboration with three different Creative Cities. According to the report Heidelberg City of Literature regularly invites authors from other

member cities to their festivals, providing literary professionals with networking opportunities, as well as chances to promote their work. Many of Heidelberg's collaborations with other cities featured relevant themes, such as climate change, freedom of speech, and supporting the entrepreneurs of creative fields through the financial hardships of the pandemic.

4. Other observation: [Max. 200 words]

Heidelberg City of Literature states that the Covid 19 pandemic affected operations significantly. Despite this, the city has shown its ability to adapt to changing circumstances.

Heidelberg has not hosted conferences during the evaluation period, but has shown keen interest and involvement in the work of the UCCN Network. When possible, it has given lectures, moderated events, and promoted the Network's objectives and authors from other member cities.

Implementation of the Network's Objectives

(based on the current reporting period)

5. The initiatives led by the city were mainly: *(Multiple responses possible)*

Local

National

International

6. In regard to quality and quantity, to what extent did the city led initiatives contribute to the Network's objectives?

Poor

Fair

Good

Very good

Excellent

7. In regard to quality and quantity, to what extent did inter-city or joint city initiatives contribute to the Network's objectives?

Poor

Fair

Good

Very good

Excellent

8. List the city's comparative strengths particularly in the framework of its creative field:
[Max.200 words]

Heidelberg City of Literature shows great commitment to its literary community. Stakeholder groups are involved in planning and execution of projects. Heidelberg also maintains active correspondence with fellow member cities. The city has organised festivals and smaller events, and taken part in projects organised by other member cities. Heidelberg has shown that it is determined to develop the city through the means of culture, and sees literature as a tool for positive change. Heidelberg's report lists projects aimed towards digitalizing historical literature, literary tours, projects that promote literary translation, and festivals. Together these bring welfare to literary professionals and the whole community, from young to old. It has invested meaningful amounts of resources to further goals.

The city shows a forward-thinking attitude and great awareness of its community's current needs – and remarkable determination to maintain an active relationship with the UCCN and

organisations from other fields of culture. According to the report, it has also chosen a flexible attitude towards sudden changes. In times of crisis, such as the pandemic or Russia's war on Ukraine, it changed plans to provide support to those affected by it.

Heidelberg City of Literature is powerfully connected to other literary institutions within the city of Heidelberg, both organizational and financial. This creates an extremely coherent picture: literature is used in a strong and effective way to contribute to UNESCO's goals.

9. List the city's comparative weakness particularly in the framework of its creative field:
[Max.200 words]

In general, this report gives very positive impression. However, even though the report mentions close collaboration with Germany's other UCCN member cities, world heritage cities etc, there were relatively few national projects. Yet the mid-term plan for the following four years shows intent to develop this part of their operations.

Section VI, initiatives undertaken in response to and for the recovery from Covid-19 presents many great projects. While it is inspiring to see how much Heidelberg has done to support their creative community. But it seems many of these projects were aimed towards artist, and it's unclear how many authors were involved in projects such as Coronline and Solo Fantastico.

By turning a literary prize into a writer residency for a Ukrainian author, Heidelberg has shown invaluable support to the victims of war. Yet the whole creative community of Ukraine has faced two consecutive crises that affected its very livelihood. We wonder if the money could have been put fully into commissions, bibliotherapy sessions or workshops for refugees, or to some other uses that could've brought financial security to a wider group, giving Ukrainians tools to help themselves. However, we see the value of this residency, and commend Heidelberg's decision.

10. Amongst the various policies/projects/initiatives undertaken by the city, elaborate on one of the best or the most notable that the city has undertaken in the creative field during the reporting period: [Max. 200 words]

Words in Resistance. Voices of Ukrainian Authors in Times of War. In this project initiated by Heidelberg and UCCN Member Cities Lviv and Odessa invited authors to write short texts that described their situations, and expressed their thoughts and feelings on the current situation. These were translated into English by Ukrainian translators from Lviv and Odessa, and into German by Ukrainian translators residing in Heidelberg: These texts were published online.

The fee rewarded to involved authors gave them much needed financial support, a platform to process the hardships they face, and a valuable opportunity to practice their craft under difficult conditions. This project also relates to the themes of freedom of speech and promoting peace through culture.

Regarding the programme line Cultural Education & Participation.

The "Shared Reading®" program of the Kulturhaus Karlstorbahnhof continued to receive organizational and annual financial support of €10,000. In terms of size and strategic structure, the project has long been a pilot for Germany and has developed into an important regional center with charisma not only in the region. More than 40 trained reading leaders are currently supervised by the center for the region, and Shared Reading groups are held at around 30 locations in Heidelberg.

11. Other observation: [Max. 200 words]

During this reporting period, Heidelberg has put into action many great projects. It has promoted literature and translation locally and internationally, while also engaging in plenty of interdisciplinary projects.

The city has shown great effort to collaborate with its fellow Cities of Literature and UCCN as a whole. The report paints a picture of a city deeply committed to promote creativity, literature, and culture as a tool for sustainable development. The amount of resources it has invested to develop City of Literature-related programs strengthen this impression.

Challenges are acknowledged, such as the insecurity brought on by the pandemic. However, the report shows a commitment to adapting and promoting the goals of the Network now and in future.

Another example of the city's effort to make literature more visible:

In 2021, the Cultural Office of the UNESCO City of Literature Heidelberg, together with the Office for Economic Development and Science and the City Marketing Association Pro Heidelberg, launched the campaign "Seitensprüche. Wishes and words to discover in the side streets". This was a literary tour on Advent weekends with texts by Heidelberg authors, which took participants to the owner-managed boutiques in the side streets of the historic Old Town and was also rewarded with a gift in the form of a purchase voucher. Due to its great success, the campaign was repeated Advent 2022.

Proposed Four-Year Action Plan

(based on the new four-year action plan that the city submitted with the current report)

12. To what extent is the general quality of the activities planned in the next action plan?

Poor Fair Good Very good Excellent

13. To what extent are the planned activities relevant to the Network's objectives?

Poor Fair Good Very good Excellent

14. To what extent are the planned activities coherent with the city's cultural and creative capital as well as its previous four-year action plan (activities undertaken in the past four years)?

Poor Fair Good Very good Excellent

15. Other observation (*This section may highlight how the city's proposed initiatives will contribute to the UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*) [Max. 200 words]

Heidelberg's proposed initiatives will bring more visibility to the city and the other UNESCO sites in the region (including Geoparks and World Heritage Sites). Some projects will showcase local bookshops and authors, contributing to the UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development's goals 11 and 12.

Heidelberg proposes two initiatives that will, if executed successfully, strengthen young people's access to literary education, contributing to the goal 4, Quality Education.

The city's international initiatives will contribute to goal 17, Partnership for the goals in a fine way by bringing together Cities of Literature from different corners of the world. As nature and is one of the key themes for one of these projects, this ties into the goal 13 in a fine way.

Quality of the Report

16. Is the report well-structured and written?

Poor Fair Good Very good Excellent

17. Does the report meet the prescribed guidelines?

Poor Fair Good Very good Excellent

18. Is the report of an adequate length?

Short

Adequate

Long

19. Other observation: [Max. 200 words]

The report is well-written and easy to read. The length meets the guidelines and offers plenty of information while remaining concise.

The proposed plan includes activities for the mid-term period of two years. These are carefully selected, and should they come to fruition, these projects will serve the literary professionals and wider population, including citizens of Heidelberg and the whole region.

However, the proposed plan does not cover projects planned for the 2025-2027 period, and the reporting city does not offer further details about their tenth anniversary program. We would have liked to see more details.

Heidelberg proposes collaborations with three specific member cities. While these projects are carefully planned and very impactful, it would have been interesting to see a wider selection of involved cities – especially from such a well-connected city as Heidelberg. However, this does not necessarily mean that they limit their efforts to these three. These might be the key projects, and the full plan may include a variety of other collaborations with many other cities.

Response to COVID-19

20. Are there specific policies/projects/initiatives undertaken by the city in response to the COVID-19 pandemic?

Yes

No

21. If yes, amongst the various policies/projects/initiatives undertaken by the city, elaborate on one of the best or the most notable that the city has undertaken: [Max. 200 words]

Hiedelberg Literature Days 2020 – turning a traditional on-site event into digital event that allowed the literary community to come together and celebrate literature despite the challenges of pandemic. Later on Heidelberg has organized this festival in somewhat hybrid form.

The work of an author and translator is oftentimes solitary, and opportunities for promoting their work, attending events and networking with other professionals form a meaningful part of creatives livelihood. Therefore it's important, and very commendable that Heidelberg chose to adapt rather than cancel the event. Hybrid form might give more people opportunity to attend the festival in future – especially for those who find it hard to attend physical events. We have no doubt that combining traditional festival format and digital technology will serve Heidelberg well.

Heidelberg did a lot in response to Covid. We counted more than 10 initiatives in this report. But the one that stuck out is both large and small: providing a sense of hope.

Under the hashtag #prinziphoffnung, a text message by a Heidelberg author on the topic of "Principle of Hope" was presented on social media on each of 15 days between the first weekend of Advent in 2020 and the end of January 2021. The title of the campaign refers to the main work "The Principle of Hope" by philosopher Ernst Bloch (1885-1977), which he wrote in American exile from 1938 to 1947. From all the texts sent in, 15 were drawn by lot for

the #prinzphoffnung action. The texts were first posted on Facebook and Instagram, shared from Heidelberg and sent out into the world.

22. In regard to quality and quantity, to what extent did these policies/projects/initiatives contribute to the city's general response to the challenges brought by the pandemic?

Poor

Fair

Good

Very good

Excellent

23. Other observation: [Max. 200 words]

Heidelberg has put into action many a great initiatives. It has adapted to the hardships brought on by Covid 19 pandemic remarkably well. In the report it is acknowledged that the pandemic has affected not only literary professionals, but also the whole creative sector. It has actively sought out ways to support the creative community. Projects such as Solo Fantastico and Coronline, Blickwechsel! and Heidelberg Assembly of Artists have done a great service by providing opportunities for earning some income, and bringing creatives together in a time of isolation and uncertainty.

Overall Evaluation

Poor

Fair

Good

Very good

Excellent

Comments and recommendations: [Max. 800 words]

Through the period of the past four years, Heidelberg City of Literature has been a very active member of the UCCN. It has promoted the values of UNESCO, and executed several initiatives that have brought tangible benefit not only to the creative community, but to creatives in the other member cities. Heidelberg's active correspondence with other member cities and literary organisations, as well as with UNESCO is very inspiring.

The report is concise and easy to read, and gives a good idea of Heidelberg's achievements and plans for the future. When it comes to number of staff and budget, it seems to have enough resources to execute the proposed plan. The report shows a forward-thinking attitude, and deep connection to the city's creative community. During this four-year period, it has provided oppportunities to translators, authors, entrepreneurs and creatives in other fields. We are pleased to see how Heidelberg has promoted literary translation, a very important field that doesn't always get the recognition it deserves. Digitalisation of historical manuscripts is another great project that provides a growing community with an easy access to it. Heidelberg has also responded to crises of the pandemic and Russia's war on Ukraine in a commendable way, and organised fascinating interdisciplinary projects.

The city discusses challenges in a relatively open manner, which brings credibility to the report. The proposed action plan is well thought-out, and these proposed initiatives bring benefit to the whole community, from professionals to organisations, from young to old. These plans, if put into action successfully, will also promote the goals of the Network and Agenda 2030.

It is impressive how Heidelberg has managed to strengthen itself both organizationally and financially in a period of Covid and increased international tensions and major challenges when it comes to our environment. It is a city that is open to the challenges that reality poses to us and that actually explores the world itself.

The high degree of organization of the literary institutions, the budgets at their disposal and the great creativity deployed within their policies are a great source of inspiration.