

# Chapter 6

## Creativity as a Driver for Action: A Case Study of the Municipality of Chania

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### ABSTRACT

*The chapter focuses on creativity, culture and sustainable regional development as creative economy contributes to Sustainable Development Goals. Therefore, the relation between creative economy and sustainable development is highlighted, as well as recent reports that focus on the quality of life in European level. Moreover, UNESCO Creative Cities Network is presented with emphasis on its aims. For the empirical analysis of the theoretical part the case study of Municipality of Chania is examined, as a city which has progressively realized that culture and innovation are key ingredients to pursue its own objectives. In 2023, the city participated in the process of becoming a UNESCO Creative City in the creative field of music. The city gained useful feedback from its participation, even though its candidacy was not selected. Furthermore, the city's policy makers included in their future planning the development of partnerships that promote creativity and cultural industries as well as culture's integration in urban strategies.*

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## INTRODUCTION

Creativity obtains progressively a strategic role in urban contexts and the cities' economy, as cultural clusters play a leading role in the development of innovation (Mommaas, 2004). De Propis (2010) notes that a creative cluster consists of a place that combines characteristics, such as: a community of creative people sharing the same interest in novelty in various subjects, a catalyzing place where people, ideas, talents and relationships can spark each other, an environment, offering diversity, freedom of expression and a network of interpersonal exchanges that support individuals' uniqueness.

On the other hand, creative economy constitutes “*a set of knowledge-based and more localized, economic activities with a development dimension and cross-cutting linkages at macro and micro levels to the overall economy*” (United Nations, 2020). Therefore, the cycles of production and distribution of creative goods / services, that focus on culture and generate revenues, constitute the cultural and creative industries (CCIs) (UNCTAD, 2008, 2010). At the heart of creative economy, CCIs include the following sectors: architecture, design, crafts, film, visual and performing arts, publishing, research & development, games & toys, fashion, music, software, advertising, TV, videogames and radio (Howkins, 2001, Avdikos, 2014).

The chapter focuses on creativity, culture and sustainable regional development as creative economy is related to sustainable development dimensions and contributes to Sustainable Development Goals. Therefore, chapter's first part presents the relation between creative economy and sustainable development, as well as recent reports that focus on the quality of life in European level. Moreover, UNESCO Creative Cities Network, which identifies creativity as a strategic factor for sustainable urban development, is presented with emphasis on its aims.

In the second part of the chapter the case of Municipality of Chania is examined, as a city which has progressively realized that culture and innovation are key ingredients to pursue its own objectives. In 2023, the city, under the guidance of Technical University of Crete, participated in the process of becoming a UNESCO Creative City in the creative field of music. The city was not selected; however, it gained useful feedback from the overall participation, in order to share best practices, develop partnerships that promote creativity and cultural industries, strengthen participation in cultural life and integrate culture in urban development plans.

A brief presentation of the city and its strong ties with the creative field of music is carried out, as well as the city's main and global development vision is presented. The expected impact of the designation is emphasized, while the role and the foundations of music in the city's history and development, as well as its cultural facilities with the entire ecosystem of music, are presented. The case study

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