

## **UNESCO - CREATIVE CITY NETWORK**

### **Varanasi: The Creative City of Music**

Located in the heart of the Ganges valley, Varanasi, also known as Benares, is home to 1.4 million inhabitants and is considered one of the oldest continuously inhabited cities in the world. The renowned spiritual capital of India bears witness to a music heritage traced back to the Puranic literature, attributing the development of music to Shiva. Since being patronised by the tutelary head of the Maharajas of Kashi, the number of active music companies in music sector has significantly increased to 300. Such support has also invigorated and created new impetus for the Varanasi's 350-year-old festivals.,

The protection and promotion of Varanasi's music has been supported for centuries by the Guru- Shishya Parampara; a teacher-pupil traditional learning method, which became eroded over time. The city is committed to keep this tradition alive through the implementation of several grants schemes and educational trainings programmes. The flagship initiative is the on-going development of the Sangeet Sankul Music School, which focuses on the protection and promotion of musical traditions, as well as supporting the emergence of young talents.

#### **Added Value**

##### **As a Creative City of Music, Varanasi envisages**

Establishing the Sangeet Sankul Music School to protect and promote music traditions and knowledge, the Guru-Shishya Parampara method in particular; giving a new impulse to the 350-year-old city's festivals of Gulab Bari, Budwa Mangal and Ramlila by nurturing multidisciplinary approaches and learning from experiences of other Creative Cities; using music as a driver of intercultural dialogue and mutual understanding through the Jugalbandi Fusion Interactions, focusing on jam sessions with musicians from diverse backgrounds;and supporting exchange schemes for music students of Creative Cities of Music to learn Guru-Shishya Parampara and share their own knowledge and experiences.