

FACTORIES OF ARTS AND JOBS IN MEXICO CITY - FAROS



participation sustainability
inclusion **human** empowerment
democracy **rights** public **peace**
culture community space

1. Context

The Factories of Arts and Jobs ("Fábricas de Artes y Oficios - FARO") in Mexico City comprise four cultural venues located on the outskirts of the capital; specifically in the *delegations* of Iztapalapa, Tláhuac, Milpa Alta and Gustavo A. Madero. The FARO are a model of public intervention promoted by the Federal District Government, which encourages creativity and the reconstitution of the social fabric. They are a response to the need to decentralise the cultural provision in the city based on the principle of equity, offering free arts and crafts workshops as well as a wide range of actions that favour the training of citizens and recognition of cultural diversity.

In the early 21st century, cultural policy in Mexico City was focused on the recovery of public spaces, squares, cultural centres, museums and disused government buildings; thus, a pilot programme began to set up a large school of arts and crafts, which also functioned as an arts centre, free and open to the people of the eastern area of the capital.

A cultural provision in marginalized areas with poor access to cultural goods and services through actions that favor prevention, inclusion, cohesion and the social and economic insertion of the population, based on processes of training and employment in arts and crafts that contribute to improving the quality of life under the principle of « learning by doing ».]

Through the Federal District Secretariat for Culture, the first FARO was created in 2000 as an cultural intervention initiative to combat problems of family violence, unemployment and drug addiction in the delegation of Iztapalapa, one of the most populated, poorest and conflictive areas in the city through training courses in arts and crafts disciplines.



2. Goals and challenges

One of the main difficulties was being able to establish a community intervention model around FARO, with the aim of responding to the needs of the community to contribute to the reconstruction of the social fabric.

The main objective of the project is to generate cultural provision in marginalized areas with poor access to cultural goods and services through actions that favor prevention, inclusion, cohesion and the social and economic insertion of the population, based on processes of training and employment in arts and crafts that contribute to improving the quality of life under the principle of "learning by doing".

In these initiatives, the feasibility and definition of quantitative and qualitative indicators should be guaranteed, taking into account the appropriate monitoring and verification of the results obtained in terms of the processes of informal training and the development of cultural and recreational actions undertaken inside and outside the cultural venue. _____]

3. The project

1.1. Characteristics

The main characteristics of the FARO are:

- a) Be spaces with a broad cultural provision and training in arts and crafts disciplines for the population located on the outskirts of Mexico City.
- b) Contribute to the production and development of cultural activities linked to the community.
- c) Influence the training of the public by offering quality events aimed at the different sectors of the population, especially adolescents and youths.
- d) Foster, encourage and support artistic creation in all its genres.
- e) Promote training spaces in arts and crafts for the development of people's skills and abilities.

The community must be included in collective decision-making, so their cultural rights are recognized.



1.2. Development

The FARO emerged out of the need to decentralise the cultural provision, which was basically located in the centre and south of the city.

After the creation of the first FARO in the eastern zone, in 2005 the Federal District Secretariat for Culture created three more FARO in the *delegations* of Tláhuac, Milpa Alta and Gustavo A. Madero with the aim of taking the cultural and informal education to the outskirts of this metropolis, with services adapted to the needs of each environment, thereby consolidating a development model from the cultural sphere that would awaken a sense of community identity and belonging.

1.3. Partnerships

The main members and allies of the project have been:

- **Mexico City Council:** Institutionalise the community cultural intervention model and provide the financial resources to develop its functions.

- **Federal District Secretariat for Culture:** Political, economic, educational and administrative support to establish actions of social impact and community linkage with the city's residents.
- **Promoters, managers and community related to the FARO:** Definition and development of mechanisms of cultural innovation and new forms of community participation to enable sustainable empowerment, use, and ownership of the venue (FARO).



4. **Mexico and FAROS: which impacts, which results?**

At first, this project came under political and cultural scrutiny, but it has proved to be one of the most successful cultural policy models in the country and in Latin America. It has received international recognition, such as the *Coming Up* given by the Boston Museum of Science, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and the Intel company, which was presented in the White House when the Club House Computer Center was created. Moreover, recognition was given by the Centro Cultural España for driving forward cultural exchanges through artistic residencies, to mention a few. Given the commitment and work of students and groups and the importance of promoting and encouraging their projects. The FARO have achieved a presence in cities such as Marseilles, Nagoya, Boston, Berlin, Bogotá, Barcelona, Quebec and others, as well as festivals in the country.

The success of the FARO Network is due to the work generated with the community based on innovative strategies that involve valuing cultural assets and recognising local practices; in this respect, emphasis should be placed on the promotion and development of processes aimed at the construction of citizenship, using art and culture to contribute to public policies on the prevention of antisocial behaviour.

5. **Recommendations**

In these initiatives, the feasibility and definition of quantitative and qualitative indicators should be guaranteed, taking into account the appropriate monitoring and verification of the results obtained in terms of the processes of informal training and the development of cultural and recreational actions undertaken inside and outside the cultural venue.

Moreover, a budget in keeping with the cultural provision and needs in the area where each FARO is located is indispensable, along with a staff of specialists in different disciplines who can implement training schemes and transmission of knowledge to the different users who benefit from the project.

Finally, the community must be included in collective decision-making, so their cultural rights are recognised.

6. Other information

Web: <http://farodeoriente.org/faro-oriente/>

Social networks : Facebook - Red de Fábricas de Artes y Oficios.- FAROS de la Ciudad de México

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