

MICRO-NEIGHBOURHOOD WORKSHOPS IN NEIGHBOURHOODS OF COQUIMBO



TRAINING **PARTICIPATION** ACCESS
EMPOWERMENT **CAPACITY-BUILDING**
SOCIAL INCLUSION **INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT**
LONGLIFE-LEARNING **BASIC SERVICES**

1. Context

Coquimbo is a port city that covers 1,429.3 square kilometres and is home to 202,287 inhabitants. This project began in the Sindempart area and took hold in the well-known Parte Alta area. It involved the active participation of leaders from 20 regional organisations in high social risk areas, stigmatised for drug use and violence. The project was successful in returning confidence to the area's residents to be able to work together to tackle a number of social issues, with a clear focus on culture and arts.

In part, the aim is to avoid a culture of welfare dependency by empowering residents with the tools and information about local cultural offerings, as well as the ability to share their ambitions, input, and visions for what they would like in their neighbourhoods. As a result, this series of micro-neighbourhood debate workshops on culture is consistent with community development policies. It helps to empower all of society while also giving it more power in decision-making on cultural goals. The dialogue also develops greater cultural mobility through a community that is more knowledgeable about their cultural life and local creativity that seeks wider recognition. It is vital to carry out this project in order to provide the community with quality spaces that allow them to express themselves.

HELD IN THE NEIGHBOURHOODS OF COQUIMBO, THE PROJECT WILL BRING TOGETHER GRASSROOTS ORGANISATIONS AND OFFICIALS FOR A SERIES OF 6 DEBATE WORKSHOPS ON THE ACCESS TO CULTURE, ART, AND CULTURE AS A DRIVER OF SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION.

2. Coquimbo and Culture

The municipality of Coquimbo has based its action platform on a cultural policy called "Culture for Social Inclusion". The policy promotes access to culture, attracting new audiences, empowering artists and local managers. Furthermore, it acts in cooperation with the community from a perspective that views art and culture as drivers of social transformation. Since 2015, the city has had a Municipal Culture Plan. This was created as the result of a public call for tender launched by the National Arts and Culture Council. This Municipal Culture Plan was developed alongside artists, managers, and grassroots organisations. Its aim is to facilitate increased public access and participation in art and culture by promoting the decentralisation of artistic and cultural activities across the country. The plan is also focused on strengthening municipal cultural management and citizen participation. There is a notable lack of communities' access to culture, and their ability to attract new audiences. Programmes such as the Micro-neighbourhood Workshops are advantageous because they help to create permanent policies that seek to safeguard and pursue increased cultural democracy in communities.

The programme is directly linked to the commitments of Agenda 21 for culture, especially sections 28, 29, and 35. They are listed below:

- 28. To implement actions geared towards the decentralisation of policies and resources in the cultural sector, thereby lending legitimacy to the creative originality of peripheral communities, favouring vulnerable social sectors, and defending the principle of the right to culture and knowledge for all citizens, free from discrimination. This aim must not overlook core responsibilities, particularly those relating to the provision of necessary funds required by any such decentralisation project.
- 29. To promote coordination among cultural policies implemented by local governments that may share the same region, through a dialogue that emphasises unique identities and their contributions to the community, as well as the efficiency of available public services.
- 35. To invite creators and artists to commit to cities and regions while identifying problems and conflicts in society, improving coexistence and quality of life, expanding the creative and critical capacities of all citizens, and especially, cooperating to help solve the challenges cities face.

With ongoing activity and support for agreements and decisions, the city is part of the Ibero-American Network of Cities for Culture and of the Unity for Culture group of the Mercocities Network in South America. Therefore, as a member of these two important international cultural cooperation networks, the city should subsequently implement Agenda 21 for culture, with an emphasis on Culture 21 actions.



3. Objectives and Project Implementation

1.1. Primary Objective

Held in the neighbourhoods of Coquimbo, the project will bring together grassroots organisations and officials for a series of 6 debate workshops on the access to culture, art, and culture as a driver of social transformation. Their objective is to establish an understanding of local identity to be able to coordinate joint planning among all stakeholders.

1.2. Specific Objectives

- The programme is about mobilising organised civil society to use critical thinking and the appropriate tools to focus their aspirations on the arts and culture sector.
- To strive to generate greater cultural mobility for the region's functional organizations.
- To bring neighbourhood leaders into joint projects with local creators and the Department of Culture.

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1.3. Development of the Project

The Micro-neighbourhood Workshops project involved collaboration between 20 neighbourhood councils from the well-known Parte Alta area where this work was carried out. These groups formed the main counterpart of the programme. At the start of the pilot project, difficulties arose due to low attendance by leaders. However, the neighbourhood councils from the Parte Alta area have attained a greater degree of commitment, responsibility, and care through the project, and have therefore called on authorities to ensure the programme's continuity. It should be highlighted that the Regional



Government of Coquimbo financed the project in 2014 and 2015 through its allocated culture funds. Additionally, a significant boost was provided by the Foreign Cultural Production department, which carried out the project over those two years under the Department of Culture. Undoubtedly, collaboration among all of these actors, as well as the commitments made by regional leaders and residents made it possible to undertake this large social partnership for cultural development.

The Parte Alta population of 70,000 residents benefitted directly from this initiative.

4. Impacts

1.1. Direct Impacts

Impact on the Local Government

The programme has instilled the local municipal government with the belief in the importance of supporting lasting, participatory democracy initiatives.

Impact on Culture and on Local Cultural Actors

The project has increased reliability on cultural initiatives and processes that promote the local municipal government.

Impacts on the Territory and Population

It has helped create more and better initiatives. These have been carried out in neighbourhoods by regional stakeholders alongside artists and cultural managers in order to improve residents' quality of life through arts and culture.

1.2. Cross-cutting Impacts

In the economic sector, new career fields for local artists and cultural managers emerged. In the social sphere, there is a greater understanding of the area's cultural realities by regional leaders.

1.3. Evaluation and Continuity

The project is ongoing and changing, as it adapts to the rhythm of regional managers, as well as their decisions and aspirations for the neighbourhoods. The result has been a unifying project. The City of Coquimbo will continue the project through municipal funding.

UNDOUBTEDLY, COLLABORATION AMONG ALL OF THESE ACTORS, AS WELL AS THE COMMITMENTS MADE BY REGIONAL LEADERS AND RESIDENTS MADE IT POSSIBLE TO UNDERTAKE THIS LARGE SOCIAL PARTNERSHIP FOR CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT.

5. Further Information

The City of Coquimbo was a candidate for the second "UCLG Mexico City – Culture 21 International Award" (January – May of 2016). The jury for the award drew up its final report in June of 2016, and requested that the Committee on Culture promote this project as one of the good practices to be implemented through Agenda 21 for culture.

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