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UCLG Committee

STATE OF THE ART AND NEW PERSPECTIVES ON CULTURAL MEDIATION IN BARCELONA

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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THE UCLG COMMITTEE ON CULTURE AND BARCELONA

United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) is the world association of cities with the largest number of members and the greatest capacity for influence compared to United Nations. It has its world headquarters in Barcelona. UCLG was created in 2004, as a result of the merger of three previously existing associations of cities and local governments. The city of Barcelona was the winner of the international competition to host the organisation's World Secretariat (currently located at Carrer d'Avinyó, 15).

UCLG has had an important cultural programme since 2004, based on Agenda 21 for culture (adopted in Barcelona in May 2004), the Declaration "Culture is the fourth pillar of sustainable development" (adopted in Mexico in November 2010) and the practical guide "Culture 21: Actions" (adopted in Bilbao in March 2015).

The UCLG Committee on culture is led by a Steering Committee or governance team, made up of the cities of Buenos Aires, Mexico City and Lisbon (co-presidents) and Barcelona, Bilbao, Bogotá, Brazzaville and Jeju (vice-presidents), according to the agreements on governance and funding that were reached at the meeting held in Paris on 6 December 2015, updated at the committee meeting held online in the framework of the UCLG World Council on 11 November 2020.

The UCLG Committee on Culture is surely the main contribution of cities to the global debate on cultural policies. It is a contribution that coincides with the values of Barcelona and Catalonia, which are based on: (1) the cultural rights of all people, (2) the protection and promotion of cultural diversity, (3) the importance of the relationship between culture, local territory and citizenship, (4) the importance of the balance between institutional actions and the actions of civil society in the field of culture, (5) the need for a dialogue between heritage and contemporaneity, with strong local roots, (6) the promotion of the creative continuity of the territories, (7) the importance of drafting and implementing sound cultural policies that respond to current challenges; (7) the role of culture as a fourth pillar of development, in constant interaction with the economic, social and environmental-territorial pillars.

The member cities of the UCLG Committee on culture use the document Culture 21: Actions, a practical handbook of 9 commitments and 100 actions, achievable and measurable, that make up the current framework for "culture in sustainable cities". Work is currently underway to update this manual: "**Culture 21 Plus**" will be adopted in 2025, after being tested in several cities around the world, as a new international framework for cultural rights in sustainable cities.



THIS DOCUMENT

INTRODUCTION

Cultural mediation is one of the elements that characterise Barcelona's cultural policies and the strategic orientation of its facilities, in dialogue with the needs and interests of the citizens. In recent years, Barcelona's municipal policies have developed the processes of cultural mediation from the perspective of cultural rights, as an area of intervention in the planning of the management and programming of the city's cultural and artistic centres, to ensure the consolidation of local democracy with the involvement of the territory and the communities.

The fulfilment of people's cultural rights involves making it possible for them to participate fully and freely in cultural life, through the skills that enable them to develop their human potential and contribute creatively to the communities of which they form part.¹ This responsibility can be articulated through specific cultural mediation policies and actions that reinforce the connection of cultural centres of reference with their immediate surroundings and also with the entire citizenry.

The report "State of the art and new perspectives on cultural mediation Barcelona" is a continuation of the work carried out in previous years in the framework of the UCLG Committee on Culture's **Barcelona City Leader** programme, which involves cities from all over the world with extensive experience in the implementation of Agenda 21 for culture and solid conceptual and practical experience in relation to the place of culture in sustainable cities. Some of these works include the analysis of the relationship between cultural policies and tourism (2018), the study of new perspectives in the field of intercultural policies (2019), advice on cultural rights (2020) and the relationship between cultural and scientific policies (2022).

This document presents a reflection on the state of cultural mediation in Barcelona, as a conceptual element highlighted in the deployment of the measures of the **Cultural Rights Plan** "Fem Cultura" approved in 2022 and promoted by the International Conference for Cultural Rights "**Culturopolis**", held from 16 to 19 November of the same year, and aligned with the principles and values of the "**Pact for the Future of Humanity**", adopted by UCLG at the World Congress in Daejeon (Republic of Korea) also in November 2022.

The reflection focuses on Measure #8 of the **Cultural Rights Plan**: "City Museums: innovation, education and the right to participate in Barcelona's cultural heritage", which includes a line of action, among others, based on "promoting the creation of mediation and community interrelation services within the structure of the facilities or in close relationship", seeking new ways of access for citizens, through actions to promote cultural creation and practices, and generating governance that fosters community and territorial articulation.

¹ See the Rome Charter

OBJECTIVE OF THE REPORT

The objectives of the report are: (a) to identify the basic data and the main conceptual elements that characterise cultural mediation in cultural, artistic and heritage centres in Barcelona, especially those belonging to the ICUB; (b) to identify cities that have designed cultural mediation policies in a structured way and, eventually, to identify programmes and projects in these cities that could be inspirational for Barcelona.

The report presents conclusions and recommendations aimed at achieving these objectives, in line with the general objectives of Measure #8 of the Cultural Rights Plan:

- Facilitate platforms that consolidate the exchange of views and encourage participation and collective creation, including research and cultural and artistic experimentation.
- Incorporate new models of creation and production in which the hybridisation of disciplines, agents and formats is effective.
- Improve access conditions and the social impact of museums and heritage in the city.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research methodology of this study is based on interviews with local and international actors on cases relevant to the research, and the analysis of contextual documentation on cultural mediation in Barcelona.



PREAMBLE ON CULTURAL MEDIATION AND MUSEUMS

This brief introduction to the concept of cultural, artistic and community mediation provides an initial reading framework that will subsequently underpin some of the recommendations with which this report concludes.

Cultural, artistic and community mediation is understood as a set of practices that, through the arts and culture, facilitate the creation of links between civil society, communities, cultural institutions and administrations. Cultural mediation is a practice that activates spaces for meeting and participation of the citizenry, from the plurality, diversity and heterogeneity of views. These links favour the exchange of learning and the joint construction of knowledge and cultural and artistic practices.

Cultural, artistic and community mediation practices should not be understood as a service that the cultural institution offers to its public, but rather as a transversal practice through which the museum establishes links with society, in its own specialised area and in its local context and other contexts such as education, health, etc.

A relational museum is a museum that complements its heritage dimension with interdependent links on an ecosystemic and more horizontal scale with other organisations, communities and citizens.

Cultural, artistic and community mediation is at once strategy, practice and methodology. This implies that in order to understand how it should be implemented, it is necessary to pay more attention to the “how” than to the “what”.

CULTURAL RIGHTS AND CULTURAL MEDIATION

The section on cultural rights of the report is divided into “Cultural Rights”, “Cultural, Artistic and Community Mediation and Museums” and “Key Elements”. The first part presents reference points and contexts in which cultural rights are being deployed, both internationally and in Barcelona. The second part includes the definition of “Cultural, Artistic and Community Mediation” and its use in this document, some milestones in the process of defining and deploying cultural mediation practices, as well as terminological controversies. These controversies show that the practices referred to in the different cultural mediation terms have emerged and evolved from different places, and reflect a process of change in which new ways of doing cultural mediation are developing.

KEY ELEMENTS

The section on **Key elements** of the report presents a set of ideas and considerations with a double objective: on the one hand, to establish a clear correlation between how cultural, artistic and community mediation is concretely understood in this document and the subsequent recommendations, and on the other hand, to provide a guideline for collective debate in future work processes, focused on heritage areas. The section is divided into three sections:

KEY IDEAS ON CULTURAL, ARTISTIC AND COMMUNITY MEDIATION

- It is a diverse practice
- It raises various scales of work
- There is a great multiplicity of work formats
- They are creative, experimental and innovation-generating practices.
- They are practices that produce knowledge and discourse

CRITERIA AND WAYS OF DOING CULTURAL, ARTISTIC AND COMMUNITY MEDIATION PRACTICES

- Participation, collaboration and co-creation
- Collective and community practices
- Interchange, cooperation and horizontal relations
- Learning, knowledge and a critical view of the situation
- Incorporating the diversity of views, perspectives and knowledge
- Creativity, artistic and cultural practices and other forms of knowledge and discourse

THE MUSEUM UNDER THE GAZE OF CULTURAL, ARTISTIC AND COMMUNITY MEDIATION

- Connections
- Singularisation
- Connecting with the present
- Working with collectives and communities
- To give visibility and relevance to the processes of cultural, artistic and community mediation.
- Mediators and work teams
- The proactive museum
- Co-creating is not co-ordinating



L'ECOSISTEMA BARCELONA. MEDIACIÓ CULTURAL, ARTÍSTICA I COMUNITÀRIA

In order to obtain an image of the extent to which cultural, artistic and educational mediation practices are implemented in heritage facilities, an ecosystemic perspective is considered, based on the idea that these practices arise from the interrelation between different agents and spaces of interaction and synergies.

BARCELONA ECOSYSTEM. ELEMENTS OF THE CULTURAL MEDIATION ECOSYSTEM IN THE CITY OF BARCELONA

In order to describe this ecosystem, we first consider a typology of agents, actions or functions that are classified according to the following sections:

- **Cultural and heritage facilities** that develop cultural mediation actions (educational, artistic and community).
- **Programmes** that promote opportunities for participation in the field of artistic, educational and community practices.
- **Non-heritage or non-artistic equipment or programmes** that are relevant because they introduce perspectives or transversalities that go beyond the heritage area.
- **Occasional events or actions** with the capacity to generate collaboration or coordination between agents and/or meeting places for the public.
- **Ecosystem articulations** that enable the promotion of proposals and the relationship between agents and citizenship.
- **Generation of knowledge and training.**
- **Support for creation and research in the field of cultural, artistic and community mediation**

DIMENSIONS AND CROSS-CUTTING AREAS OF INTEREST

This typological description is complemented by an approach to certain more transversal or qualitative elements of analysis that are in line with the objectives of Measure #8 of the Cultural Rights Plan and also with aspects that are relevant and significant in the deployment of cultural, artistic and community mediation practices. The aim is to illustrate with examples some of the ideas, ways of doing and methodologies related to cultural mediation in the city of Barcelona.

It should be borne in mind that this approach has its limitations given that, with the exception of the information from the interviews, the sources with which the work has been carried out come from publicly available information. The little qualitative documentation available or not updated does not help to go deeper into “how” the work processes are developed, which is what ultimately determines whether a practice responds to the quality criteria of cultural mediation practices.

The following aspects, dimensions and contexts of work are covered by the report: **cultural mediation**, the **educational sphere**, **artistic creation**, the **community** approach, citizen co-production in **criticism**, **experimentation** and generation of **new narratives and representations**, and the quality and dimension of citizen **participation**.

MODELS OF PRACTICES

This section presents a set of cultural, artistic and community mediation practices from beyond the Barcelona, Catalan, national and international contexts with the aim of presenting models of work that illustrate the diversity of approaches and the potential of working with communities, collectives, the creation of alliances and the heterogeneity in the ways of tackling contemporary issues and problems that can be carried out through cultural mediation.

The trio of proposals includes programmes, projects and activities that are not necessarily linked to museums, but which are significant cultural, artistic and community mediation practices. The projects are not presented according to categories, but rather in relation to items that can be useful to show the versatility and diversity of these practices and as a source of inspiration.

The models referenced are:

- El jardí interior - Project and participative artistic practice
- Play-hi! Una reflexió dels mainatges sobre joguets i gènere - Exhibition, education, gender perspective
- Orgull de museus - Museum, gender identity
- Fes! Culture - Migrated people, cultural rights
- AccióMigrant: Festival de cultures en resistència - Migrant people, cultural rights
- Jardí ambulat - Museum, participation and governance, a community perspective
- CONARTE. Educating and living. Mexico City - Interculturality, education, community perspective, diversity
- Culture pour Tous, Quebec – Cultural mediation, a state platform of management and production
- Dublin City Council Culture Company (DCCC). Connecting through culture & conversation - Platform of management and production at municipal level, cultural mediation
- Museums of the City Foundation. Quito - Museums, municipal management platform, community mediation
- TRACES. Transmitting Contentious Cultural Heritages with the Arts. Frankfurt - Museums, education, mediation, research, decolonialization



CONCLUSIONS

1. CULTURE, EDUCATION, COMMUNITY AND CULTURAL MEDIATION | ECOSYSTEM:

The quantity and quality of policies and initiatives developed in Barcelona could position the city as an international benchmark, a laboratory for experimentation, research and prototyping in cultural and educational practices, as well as cultural, artistic and community mediation.

2. DIFFERENT IMAGINARIES AND NOMENCLATURES ON CULTURAL, ARTISTIC AND COMMUNITY MEDIATION:

The concept of artistic and community cultural mediation is under constant revision, and in Barcelona, actions and policies have focused on its pedagogical and educational dimension, while those that have a proximity approach from a community perspective have not received as much attention. There is a tendency to consider that educational activity is an area of work that is different from cultural mediation, and that any interaction that a team establishes with the public is a form of cultural mediation.

3. CULTURE, EDUCATION AND PEDAGOGY IN CULTURE, PROXIMITY, COMMUNITY AND CULTURAL MEDIATION:

Historically, Barcelona's facilities and administrations have allocated resources to work on the culture and education binomial, a fact that has allowed the consolidation of these practices and the ecosystem that makes them possible. This has not been the case in relation to cultural, artistic and community mediation practices. An approach to those aspects that have made the development of this binomial possible allows a better understanding of what works and what recommendations are pertinent in cultural, artistic and community mediation.

4. ARTICULATION OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CULTURE AND EDUCATION:

It is impossible to understand the interrelation between cultural facilities and the educational community, as well as the consolidation and quality of these cultural and educational practices at city level, without mentioning the work carried out since 1991 by the "Consell d'Innovació Pedagògica" (Pedagogical Innovation Council). This network of entities has played a coordinating role, generating links between facilities, cultural agents and schools, helping to connect supply and demand, and promoting the pedagogical improvement of the initiatives promoted.

5. CULTURE AND EDUCATION: A CLEAR AND DEFINED IMPACT:

A clear relationship has been established between culture and education actions, and their impact on inequalities on a territorial scale and between population segments. The consensus on this correlation has facilitated the promotion of cultural public policies, such as a specific government measure, which has led to changes in the internal organisation of the City Council. Also, programmes and some cultural facilities have long been committed to a line of work based on the intersection between culture and education, with proven effectiveness.

6. CONSENSUS ON THE VALUES AND BENEFITS PROVIDED BY THE CULTURE-EDUCATION BINOMIAL:

There is a general consensus among the majority of professionals in the field of education and cultural institutions that educational projects promoted from the field of culture benefit students' learning skills and are a good strategy for them to get to know the city and its heritage. As far as museums are concerned, strategies with an educational, pedagogical and accessibility focus allow them to realise their vision of open, accessible facilities that are connected to the public and encourage participation and networking. On the other hand, when working from a perspective of proximity and working with communities and the social fabric, there is no clear and shared vision of how to ground practices.

7. FROM PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICE TO CULTURAL MEDIATION. A PARADIGM SHIFT:

Currently, a vision and practices are becoming normalised that entail a change in the way of conceiving the links between museum and school, and the objectives and impact of educational-cultural projects. There is more and more talk of "the school as a cultural centre", cultural rights as an axis of transversal work in the school, the community and social dimension of educational facilities, "open schools" connected to the neighbourhood and its social fabric.... This turn involves reinforcing the community dimension of any pedagogical practice and the need for networked work that fosters a complementarity between culture and education that goes beyond offering activities or pedagogical proposals that are adapted to the curriculum. In this framework of work, collaborative processes based on the creation of transversal synergies are important.

8. STANDARD AND REPLICABLE PROCESSES:

The ICUB's facilities and programmes have prioritised actions and activities aimed at schools and at working with specific segments of the population, which have allowed work to be carried out with the aim of facilitating universal access to the facilities, and to the dissemination and knowledge of the heritage, and have generated a process of standardisation of proposals and a culture of outsourcing educational services and programmes. These forms of management, coordination and production of cultural-

educational activities and projects are far removed from work models based on processes of cultural, artistic and community mediation. Processes that are often evaluated under the same criteria of efficiency and effectiveness.

9. CULTURAL, ARTISTIC AND COMMUNITY MEDIATION ACTIONS AND PROJECTS DO NOT HAVE A DIRECT OR IMMEDIATE RETURN ON THE EQUIPMENT:

Measuring the return and impact of cultural, artistic and community mediation practices on the equipment, the territory, the social fabric and the communities requires specific and more complex evaluation processes than those of educational practices, and it is not always clear what the “direct and tangible return” is for the equipment. The links, actions and projects promoted by a team, if they meet the criteria of cultural mediation work, have an ecosystemic impact. The evaluation of these impacts must consider how these actions strengthen the relationships and interactions of the contexts, between communities or between agents, how they generate new networks of collaboration and cooperation, whether they have a binding and cohesive effect, whether they generate a sense of collective and community autonomy and empowerment, and whether they facilitate the exchange of knowledge and the emergence of new knowledge.

10. HOW DO GOVERNMENT POLICIES AFFECT CULTURAL, COMMUNITY AND PROXIMITY MEDIATION PRACTICES:

Cultural mediation practices involve working in a network that involves different communities and agents. In order for a project to have an impact, it may be necessary to generate a wide range of complicities and alliances, involving different ICUB departments, types of facilities (museums, art centres, creation fairs, civic centres, libraries, etc.) and municipal departments (interculturality, social action, youth, etc.) in the same action. Working in a context from a logic of proximity and community perspective involves an intersectional view and cross-cutting work. Administrative logics make it difficult to manage this type of project, and this leads to a dilemma: either these work processes are outsourced or priority is given to designing cultural mediation actions and projects in accordance with the functioning of the Administration and cultural equipment. Instead of placing the communities and the territory at the centre, this generates an eccentric bias.

11. DIFFERENCES IN THE INVESTMENT OF RESOURCES IN WORKING WITH COMMUNITIES DEPENDING ON THE CONTEXT:

The challenges involved in working with schools differ considerably from those involved in working with the territory and communities. Working with the social fabric, with organisations, communities and collectives, requires a greater investment of time and adapting to the realities of a variety of agents. The links are more fragile and organic; in other words, we must have a greater presence in the contexts in which we wish to collaborate.

12. COORDINATING EDUCATIONAL PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES ‘VERSUS’ GETTING INVOLVED IN COMMUNITY PROCESSES:

Working with schools requires the team to coordinate and pedagogically adapt the contents and the production of materials or the monitoring of the activity that takes place in the classroom. These are tasks that can be outsourced or be carried out through a broader programme that facilitates the connection between the equipment and the educational centre(s). Collaborations that are developed from a community and proximity perspective cease to make sense if they are outsourced, and if they are taken on directly by the team they pose a challenge of adaptation and flexibility..

13. ARTISTIC PRACTICES AND METHODOLOGIES AS A STRATEGY TO ENCOURAGE CREATIVE AND CRITICAL PARTICIPATION POSE DIFFERENT CHALLENGES DEPENDING ON THE TYPE OF FACILITY:

Activities and projects based on artistic languages, cultural practices for entertainment or popular culture are a very efficient vehicle for promoting community participation that is creative, critical and with a citizen’s own vision. However, for artistic facilities, promoting a participatory initiative that meets these requirements may mean having to leave their comfort zone, while remaining within the framework of their disciplinary work. For those institutions whose main focus is the conservation and dissemination of heritage, history, science or technology, the challenge is much greater. For these teams, this means opening up to a transversal multidisciplinary and community-based approach that involves more risk, a certain degree of experimentation and having to generate their own working models.

14. HOW AND WITH WHAT OBJECTIVE CAN COMMUNITIES AND CITIZENS TAKE PART AND PARTICIPATE IN AN INSTITUTION:

Although the value of “citizen participation” is present in institutions and administrations and is a criterion that is taken into account when programming activities and projects in the local context, there has not been a shared and open reflection on the correlation that should be established between the deployment of cultural rights, citizen participation and the role of cultural facilities and programmes. In general, the strategies, activities and participatory projects that are promoted propose, for the most part, forms of participation that are not very collaborative and horizontal, with little capacity for real influence on the equipment or programme. There is a need for a space for collective and diverse work to deepen the understanding of how it is possible to participate in a cultural team and/or programme, the whys and wherefores, who has to participate, the scope and impact of this participation, and how to put it into practice.

15. PRESENCE AND REPRESENTATION OF DIVERSITY:

Municipal facilities and programmes, in general, do not have strategies or promote clear actions to enable the presence, participation and representation of non-hegemonic communities and collectives, which are often isolated, alienated or excluded from large cultural institutions. Museums and facilities usually address these issues by offering a service specifically designed to facilitate access to a specific community, programming activities focused on a specific community. Neither the cultural institutions nor the ICUB itself have a position, policies and actions that address this issue in a structural way. It is necessary to consider how a facility, from its uniqueness, can form part of a city strategy that aims to ensure that cultural policies are promoted and managed from a diverse perspective that includes all the cultural and vital realities that make up the city.

16. EDUCATION, MEDIATION, INTERNAL ORGANISATION AND EXPERTISE:

The challenges and the way of tackling them faced by the cultural facilities that work with the perspective of cultural mediation and interculturality are different for each of them. They depend on many different factors that mean that the development of a work strategy of proximity, participation, community and commitment to the context requires a cultural mediation proposal tailored on the basis of a process of knowledge of the territory and its social and cultural fabric. It surely implies a rethinking of the internal organisation, a redistribution or attraction of resources and a strategy of institutional learning and training in relation to cultural mediation practices.

17. ADDRESSING COMMON CHALLENGES FROM AN ECOSYSTEMIC PERSPECTIVE AND IN A SINGULAR WAY:

The deployment of Measure #8 of the Barcelona Cultural Rights Plan implies, on the part of the teams, adding to their ways of working a working perspective based on cultural, artistic and community mediation practices. The challenges involved in implementing these models of work, although they have to be chosen by the individual teams, should be part of a more ecosystemic process of change, at the municipal level, with a decisive injection of resources and a global articulation that takes advantage of the experiences already developed in this direction, such as, for example, the culture-education binomial. It is necessary to think of other forms of relationship between the teams and the professional fabric in order to stimulate research and innovation, making “outsourcing” and tenders a framework of cooperative and collaborative work that is more horizontal and less thought of as a service provision.



RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations are grouped into three main sections, and include objectives, concrete recommendations and inspirational references:

1. Common imaginary and terminology around the concept and practice of cultural, artistic and community mediation:
 - To disseminate and develop a common and shared vision among museum professionals and the ICUB;
2. Cultural ecosystem from the perspective of cultural, artistic and community mediation:
 - To develop strategies and actions to create an ecosystemic framework of work in the field of cultural mediation l;
3. The cultural, artistic and community mediation programme:
 - To set up a cultural, artistic and community mediation programme to create and maintain a living ecosystem.



ANNEXOS

The report includes Annex 1 “Local Interviews” and Annex 2 “International Interviews”, which list all the people interviewed in the framework of this study, and provide contextual data and information.



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