

TALCA: THE CHALLENGE OF BUILDING STRONGER TIES TO AGENDA 21 FOR CULTURE.



GOVERNANCE CREATIVITY EXCHANGE LIFE-LONG
 STRATEGY **DEVELOPMENT** OF EXPERIENCES LEARNING
 INSTITUTIONAL MANAGEMENT INNOVATION **IDENTITY**

1. Context

Talca is the capital of Maule, Chile and the main service centre for the region. The city has existed there for 300 years. Talca has suffered a significant loss of material heritage due to a regular cycle of earthquakes which culminated in 2010. That year saw the decimation of historic neighbourhoods and therefore the added loss of communal heritage. The city has had to be regularly physically rebuilt. This involves an "implicit" need for symbolic reinvention. To be able to reinforce the role of culture as a pillar of a sustainable future, Talca has been assessed with the Agenda 21 for culture pilot-city program. This analyses the consequences, challenges, and opportunities of being a figurative and literal city "in motion".

Agenda 21 for culture (A21C) offers a platform for the advancement of these goals thanks to its holistic view of culture. It presents the opportunity to be a member of, and exchange ideas with, a prestigious international network, including the advantage of proposing a precise framework of actions. This context offers a platform for Talca's external dissemination, as well as applying necessary pressure at a local level to establish a common agenda among key actors.

The Role of the Culture in our City.

- Culture, as a human right and its potential in contributing to development, should be promoted by local governments through public policies.
- Culture should play an important role, not only in territorial and social development, but also in urban, economic, touristic, and environmental development.
- The city of Talca is currently undergoing a project of cultural management geared toward the development of policies inspired by the guiding principles of Agenda 21 for culture (A21C).
- One of its essential objectives will be to develop an efficient form of governance for the administration of the public resources aimed at culture.
- In this context, two things represent a starting point for the institutionalisation of culture in Talca:
 - First, the integration of the city as adherent to the principles and cultural practices of the A21C as promoted by the organization, United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG).
 - Second, the creation of a local authority on the culture of Talca, as a promotional entity for cultural activity. Its mission would be to contribute to the development, promotion, and widespread diffusion of the diverse cultural expression prevalent throughout the city.



2. Determining Environmental Factors

2.1. A rapidly developing process of social transformation due to:

- *Different migratory flows over the last twenty years*, which have created a symbiotic relationship between the region's traditional cultural expressions, and those of emerging urban cultures.
- *The strong emergence of the academic world* through artistic education in schools and collegiates. It is also due to the existence of universities whose presence is felt in cultural issues via their extension centres and higher level education in related disciplines.
- In turn, these processes have resulted in a *revitalization of the identity of the city of Talca*, accelerated in the wake of the destruction of the industrial and agricultural economic base. At the intersection between the region's rural traditions ("huasa" culture) and the capital's youth and urban culture, a renewed and energetic interest is reflected in the establishment of a new concept of identity.

COOPERATION AND CONNECTION WITH A21C IS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR EXCHANGING EXPERIENCES AND STRATEGIES THAT WOULD FACILITATE THE IMPROVEMENT OF TALCA'S CULTURAL MANAGEMENT.

2.2. Changes in the city's Cultural Management paradigms:

- The need to achieve balanced participation among traditional expressions of rural culture (with a markedly local character), and urban cultural expressions influenced by the phenomena of the globalisation, creates new challenges for city planners. Talca is working to achieve this equilibrium by way of:
 - A cultural programme that has incrementally abandoned its "elitist" and exacerbated "reduction of disciplinary arts", to instead become a practice of embracing all areas and

- ranges of city life while exploring the possibility of greater fusion or collaboration between sectors.
 - o Including new "cultural demands" linked to social, economic, virtual, technological, and environmental matters in cultural planning.
- To continue reinforcing a new paradigm, Talca is conscious of its need to equip cultural programmes with management tools that provide adequate and correct administration of resources while also being adaptable to these goals.



3. Our Objectives and Recommendations for the Advancement of A21C in Talca

3.1. A need for greater, active connections between diverse actors.

- Linkage with A21C creates a strategy that is in the best interests of Talca's development. This is for when our city initiates long-term, professional projects geared toward creating adequate institutionalism, and generating more effective cultural public policies.
- To this end, we believe that there should be a proper balance and correspondence among the theoretical-philosophical issues that supports our vision of culture and specific activities that enable their implementation.
- No effective cultural development strategy can be effected from the isolated projects of various municipal actors. As a result we believe that the incorporation of all public and private actors committed to a civic mission, is very relevant. This is achieved by creating participatory and inclusive business models.
- The former implies the development of cultural management models. On the one hand they must assure the inclusion of participatory methods which represent all communities present in local projects. On the other, they must facilitate the coexistence of both local and global approaches.
- In this way, applying management models, based on tools commonly used in the business environment, can be very efficient instruments in establishing an acceptable and efficient cultural planning process. This admits the possibility of driving cultural management with a clearer vision of the future, lending organisation, and affording more meaning to strategic decisions.

A21C OFFERS A FRAME OF REFERENCE FOR ESTABLISHING COLLECTIVE GOALS, AND PROPOSES THE MECHANISMS NECESSARY FOR IT TO BE A LONG-TERM SUSTAINABLE EXERCISE.

3.2. Future Projections and Recommendations

- The inclusion of Talca in the A21C pilot-city program seeks to establish an active relationship with other cities belonging to this ambitious and dedicated international network.
- Cooperation and connection with A21C is an opportunity for exchanging experiences and strategies that would facilitate the improvement of Talca's cultural management.

- In order to establish better channels of communication and cooperation with other cities, we ask that A21C that encourages authorities to facilitate the creation of urban "clusters" of culture.

Subsequently, we would like to introduce some initiatives that we believe may help compose an effective joint effort between Talca and A21C.

- Generating bilateral or multilateral cooperation mechanisms among A21C cities, that stimulate cultural exchanges and innovation. For example: *Partnership agreements in defined areas, with concrete objectives in terms of results, resources, and expected implementation times*
- Generating opportunities for the virtual exchange of information: Eg. *Databases with key projects, cultural actors, events, seminars, etc .*
- Stimulating the local, regional, national, and international cultural activities, among the Agenda 21 for culture cities. Eg. *Festivals, exhibitions, fairs, etc..*
- Continued exchanges of experts among cities.
- Permanent mechanisms for cultural advisory.
- Visibility of A21C through *branding* and communication strategies (as much written as audiovisual) that are easily accessible in different formats and through digital social networks: Eg. *Reports on respective cities, the promotion of A21C's fundamental principles, and examples of effective implementation in a format accessible to the general public.*

AGENDA 21 FOR CULTURE (A21C) OFFERS A PLATFORM FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF THESE GOALS THANKS TO ITS HOLISTIC VIEW OF CULTURE. IT PRESENTS THE OPPORTUNITY TO BE A MEMBER OF, AND EXCHANGE IDEAS WITH, A PRESTIGIOUS INTERNATIONAL NETWORK, INCLUDING THE ADVANTAGE OF PROPOSING A PRECISE FRAMEWORK OF ACTIONS.

The aforementioned will contribute to the improvement of conditions for Talca's external positioning. This is done so that the promotion of the city's tourism be strongly linked to a discussion on identity with maximum safeguards for local appropriation.

The massive events planned for 2015 (including the *Independence Festival* that will be broadcast on national television on an unprecedented scale, as well as the *FIFA U-17 World Cup*) offer an important opportunity for Talca to "share its story" with the rest of Chile, and of the world.

Until now, the Talca's position has oscillated between citizens' effects upon popular expressions ("Talca, Paris, London"), the historic aspirations that still generate academic debate such as Talca being the cradle of the Chilean independence, and having a fragmented attachment to various distinct aspects of the region (Talca the huasa city, Talca the university city, etc.). Undoubtedly, the fact that several possible narratives exist, and generates a strong attachment among specific groups, is an excellent starting point. Nevertheless, it is important that this does not become an exercise in style, nor that it be divisive.

Given Talca residents' present context, dominated by the reconstruction needed after the earthquake of 2010, Talca should not miss an opportunity to propose a **unifying communal identity project for everyone**. A21C offers a frame of reference for establishing collective goals, and proposes the mechanisms necessary for it to be a long-term sustainable exercise.

4. Further information

Written by Rafael Muñoz Conesa, Executive Secretary, Municipal Cultural Authority of Talca.

Contact: rmunozcanessa (at) activatalca.cl