



UCLG – MEXICO CITY – CULTURE 21
4th EDITION - INTERNATIONAL AWARD

MEDELLÍN



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MEDELLÍN NETWORK OF ARTS AND CULTURAL PRACTICES

The “Network of Arts and Cultural Practices” began in 1996 in Medellín, a city affected at that time by an armed conflict. The city has undergone major cultural and regional transformations thanks to public policies, public-private investment, and citizen participation. Today, Medellín thinks and builds together with artistic and cultural entities of the city and works to guarantee the cultural rights of children and young people in all the communes and townships.

Following the guidelines of the world organisation of United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), with the manual Culture 21 Actions, the “Network of Arts and Cultural Practices” seeks the recognition of cultural rights. The project includes an inter-agency and interdisciplinary aspect and brings together public and private initiatives. The “Network of Arts and Cultural Practices” is in line with different Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), including no poverty, good health and well-being, quality education, gender equality, decent work and

economic growth, reduced inequalities, sustainable cities and communities, peace, justice and strong institutions, and partnerships for the goals.

The overall objective of the Network is to bring together different organisations and groups to work alongside the municipal administration and jointly assess policies on arts and culture practices for children, adolescents, and youth. It guarantees the cultural rights by providing them with the adequate opportunities for expression, exchange, learning, and experimentation with different artistic, aesthetic, and cultural forms.

The project is structured into 5 networks: The Dance Network, the Network of Music Schools, the Performing Arts Creation Network, the Fine and Visual Arts Network, and the Audiovisual Creation Network. Each of these is designed and built with different organisations and artistic and cultural groups from throughout Medellín. The list



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can change from year to year depending on the demands and needs of a particular project.

With an annual investment of 9,630 million COP, this project supports more than 7,000 people. In 2020, 24 organisations were part of the “Network of Arts and Cultural Practices”:

- **Dance Network:** Dances of Afro-descendant origin, Traditional and Folk, Popular and Ballroom, Urban Dances, dance and creative laboratories. 37 laboratories.
- **Performing Arts Creation Network:** social and experimental circus, contemporary theatre, mixed stage techniques, mime, Pierrot and carnival pantomime, working methodologies for ethnic populations, social and political performance, contemporary dramaturgy, street theatre, experimental theatre, postdramatic theatre, and social dramaturgy. 51 laboratories.
- **Fine and Visual Arts Network:** laboratory in artistic and digital artistic interactive actions and language for experimental exploration. 24 laboratories.
- **Network of Music Schools:** the University of Antioquia is developing, in partnership with the municipal government, the technical, pedagogical, and regional proposals for the 11 groups and the 27 music schools.
- **Network of Audiovisual Creation:** experimental audiovisual and fiction creation. 18 laboratories.

The project functions through different components:

- **Interinstitutional:** responsible for the relationship between partnered organisations, for initiatives related to knowledge sharing, and for the ways that each entity carries out processes, methodologies, impacts and promotion of the Network.
- **Administrative:** management of resources and human talent to ensure that the project is sustainable from a logistical and organisational perspective. This includes making sure that budgets are met and spending is monitored.
- **Interdisciplinary training:** identifies the training spaces for collective creation. This process begins when participants formulate ideas, which then move on to the conceptual and practical phases. This eventually leads to creative composition exercises.
- **Research:** transforms knowledge and collective learning into concrete training and management methodologies, and makes it easier to uncover opportunities to strengthen the project and its social impact.
- **Promotion:** creation as a skilled, professional process of staging, production viewed as a process which encompasses set design, circulation understood as actions and events that involve sharing creative products, and creating greater visibility.



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- **Communications:** cross-cutting part of the Network, fundamental element of the promotion, visibility, and decentralisation of the project.

The objective of the project is not only to train artists, in the technical or professional senses. Its results are more visible in aspects of citizenship, coexistence, and social values. The importance of the project lies in local actors to strengthen, transform and support, as well as in the continuity of such processes both at the community and regional level.

The project is an organic structure that weaves together learning communities through interinstitutional and interdisciplinary approaches. As such, funding is the main obstacle to the project's implementation to expand into more neighbourhoods and areas throughout the communes and townships, impact more people, involve more organisations, improve infrastructure, and develop skills and to create platforms for decentralisation, communication, and research.

On the other hand, the Training Networks have generated spaces for participants to actively listen and engage in dialogue through artistic, aesthetic, and sensory experiences that tackle the challenges of their daily lives. The Network is a commitment to the transformative capacity of artistic practices, making them a powerful tool in the lives of the children and youth involved in the project. Moreover, the project has been present in 16 communes and 5 townships,

and has promoted an association with other municipal plans and programmes (such as the Good Beginning programme, Non-Violence Secretariat, or the Secretariat of Civic Culture alongside other entities and corporations within the arts sector of the city); has strengthened the city's cultural sector and reinforced experience and knowledge of different organisations thanks to an interinstitutional model; has guaranteed the cultural rights of children and youth in regions where cultural life is limited; has strengthened the arts sector and its qualification, with active training for arts educators who are part of the Network; as well as enhanced knowledge management and creation through research boards and standardisation of experience.

