

DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE IN CAGUAS; SOUL OF NATION, CAGUAS



COMMUNITY CULTURAL HERITAGE **IDENTITY**
TRADITION SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT EDUCATION
KNOWLEDGE BASIC SERVICES

1. Context

The Municipality of Caguas has been recognised locally, nationally and internationally as a model of public administration. It operates effectively, efficiently and participatively, in commitment to its inhabitants' needs and well-being. Municipal Government in Puerto Rico has two powers: legislative power (the municipal legislature) and executive power as exercised by the Mayor elected by the people every four years. Caguas has a surface area of 58 miles, 142,733 inhabitants and a population density of 2,436 people per square mile. Caguas is the fifth most populous municipality in Puerto Rico. Since 1980, the population has increased by 21%. Its average annual income is \$33,676 and per capita income is \$11,878.

Municipal efforts are based on a strategic integrated municipal plan. As part of this effort of strategic planning, each one of the city's 11 neighbourhoods articulates its own local strategic plan, in which each community identifies its needs, priorities and base projects. As a result, at least 40% of the city's strategic targets are derived from the priorities articulated by the neighbourhoods in their own local strategic plans. In 1997, the city of Caguas, under the leadership of Mayor William Miranda Marín, began to explore new sustainable development alternatives. These efforts have contributed to a better quality of life for its residents, especially under the 13-year leadership of the former mayor, Miranda-

Marín (1940-2010). Since 2010, his son, the current mayor (elected in the general elections), the Hon. William Miranda Torres, has continued the work, focused on strengthening democratic education that will allow knowledge, technology and a new cultural life to be created.

In Caguas there has been on-target government work, nevertheless, the city has had blights, for example, the deterioration of the urban center, marginalization, neglected environments, relaxation spaces and passive recreation areas that were not being fully enjoyed. To transform a city is a complex and very serious subject, which implies that it must be understood beyond its buildings and streets. It forms the basis of a model of community self-management, recognising that the desired city cannot be had by maintaining straggling and marginalised communities. Contemplation of need ensures the transformation of a city, in addition to the hope of leaving a legacy for future generations. This initiative has developed a new way to govern, based on the principles and practice of self-management that provides an innovative way to manage public affairs.

THE PROJECT HAS INCREASED PRIDE IN CREOLE AND PUERTO RICAN IDENTITY, PROMOTING SPIRITUAL DECOLONISATION TO HARNESS INDIVIDUAL AND COLLECTIVE CREATIVE ENERGY LEADING NEW GENERATIONS OF PEOPLE TO A NEW EVOLUTIONARY STAGE THAT ENSURES WELL-BEING AND PROGRESS.

Mayor Miranda Marín's management began when the United States and industrialised countries started to question the depletion of the welfare state, of social assistance as the traditional way to manage public affairs. The need to transform the paternalistic way the government related to its citizens and to reinvent municipal management by adopting different strategies were two of the essential aspects that drove democratic governance. What follows are the pillars upon which this model of collaboration and community self-management is sustained: Shared leadership and strategic planning, effective management and account performance, municipal government as a manager of opportunities and sustainable economic development, intersector collaboration and alliances, regional collaboration, citizen participation and community self-management, pride in the Creole identity, relevant education and technology for the people and a new culture of citizen coexistence.

2. Caguas and culture

Management of the transformation of Caguas into a New Country is framed by a model of integrated development. Continuing with the strategic guidelines for the development of local cultural policies: Caguas is Creole Pride: the city's cultural identity, traditional knowledge, history and heritage are fundamental resources for sustainable development. The goal is to visualise a Creole city through the carrying out of activities and workshops in the community. The following two objectives lay the foundation for activities programs and at the same time sustain the pillars of the democratic model of governance, identified as identity and Creole pride and the new culture of citizen coexistence: #1 To promote the values of cultural heritage as generators of knowledge and citizen coexistence and #2: To support the organisation of the cultural sector by means of an articulated network of offers, products and services.

The reaffirmation of the value of culture, as well as cultural capital, were conceived of as an essential part of the vision of the city, framed in the commitment to diminish social inequality, the inequity in living conditions and the marginalisation of some sectors of the population with regard to access to sources of the knowledge and information. Culture is one of the pillars of democratic governance, like economic, social and community activities. The municipal organisational structure operates under the Department of Cultural Development that it has as its general goal to promote our culture and Creole identity through fine arts and to spread cultural presence throughout the Creole communities and bordering towns. In summary, the three novel elements that characterise cultural work are: To link the Creole identity with healthy social coexistence and collective achievements; to explore more deeply the reason for historical celebrations and cultural traits and traditions, with an educative axis; and to make an effort to reach all the city's social sectors, transcending the elitism that has predominated.



The democratic model of governance developed in the Autonomous Municipality of Caguas pertains to the CGLU Agenda 21 Culture Commission. ***The contribution of culture is facilitative to sustainable development, it promotes economic development.*** It is a transforming force that allows societies to improve, to transmit values. Culture plays an important role in human development to preserve identity and local and global diversity. In Caguas praise of identity and Creole pride have not been merely an emotional question that persists as a type of psychological gratification. It is identity conceived more as a social project. Identity is an essential element for enabling collaboration, solidarity, healthy coexistence and confidence among citizens to become involved in collective affairs and to abandon adverse or passive attitudes. They have operated as an antidote against paralysing partisan divisions, which have contributed to the development of collaborative potential among the residents of Caguas.

THE STRATEGIC GUIDELINES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF LOCAL CULTURAL POLICIES: CAGUAS IS CREOLE PRIDE. THE CITY'S CULTURAL IDENTITY, TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE, HISTORY AND HERITAGE ARE FUNDAMENTAL RESOURCES FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT.

Culture is a central theme in economic, social, community and cultural activities. Caguas is 100% committed to protecting its cultural legacy and promoting the access of all its citizens to a variety of cultural manifestations. The actions and initiatives that have been introduced are congruent with democratic governance. ***On these conceptual bases and set of interlinked strategic operations, the transformation of Caguas from a municipality to an inhabitable city has been made possible.*** In summary, to obtain that new social pact, it is necessary to develop a set of activities and coordinated actions in order to achieve pride in place of origin, as a cohesive element of will. To love and to value the city where one is born or lives, to lead its inhabitants to feel respect for public spaces, to appreciate and to extend historical and cultural heritage, to encourage a sense of belonging and identity, to improve coexistence, to strengthen self-esteem and to promote solidarity for the common good.

3. Objectives and project implementation

3.1. Principal and specific objectives

Objective: To direct efforts to transform the City of Caguas into an inhabitable city, which provides a legacy to future generations and passion for Creole pride, by way of the democratic governance model: A New Way to Govern, within the Caguas Municipal Administration. The management contribution of this model is in its focus on strategic planning that allows it to unify theory with economic and political thought. **The mission of Caguas is** "To provide the people with access to quality services in a creative and effective way through the optimal use of resources and the active participation of its citizens."

To promote the values of cultural heritage as generators of knowledge and citizen coexistence

- To create cultural maps to establish interaction between natural, urban and human surroundings and to measure the cultural work that is carried out. To develop: Diverse and varied activities, the "We recognise Our City" program, occupational programs and to promote the Creole scene on the Internet, in addition to therapeutic cultural programs.

To support the organisation of the cultural sector via an articulated network of offers, products and services. A creative community economic model will be adopted

– An emblematic action or prize that recognises outstanding citizens in artistic and cultural disciplines. To strengthen the cultural tourism plan. To combine the supply of incentives in order to develop community businesses in arts and culture. To develop a permanent sample book of the creative production of each community.

PUERTO RICO CONTINUES TO BE CONNECTED TO ITS CULTURAL ROOTS AS
EXPRESSED IN ALL AREAS OF ITS DAILY LIFE.

3.2. Action Items

The Municipal Department of Cultural Development addresses the development and promotion of cultural values that are defined as Puerto Rican. The Department is organised into two large programmatic areas that, together with the areas of Administration and Facilities Administration, comprise our organisational structure. These are: cultural promotion (fine arts workshops, artistic resources, programmed activities) and cultural heritage (promotion of the museums, historical archives and educational services). The table that follows contains the different activities that we promote to encourage culture as sustainable development. Strategic guidelines that complement the governance model in order to turn Caguas into an *inhabitable city for the good of all*.

1. Caguas is youth and healthy coexistence: committing ourselves to the *values of human development* postulated by the international community.
2. It is commitment to the principles of *environmental conservation* that prepare the city's sustainability.
3. It promotes a new *culture of entrepreneurship* with a global perspective, in a framework of competitiveness, sustainability and economic solidarity.
4. It is the City of the Future, *technology and sustainable production*: it will encourage the development of information technology, communications, agroecology, renewable energy, waste management and new methods of sustainable production processes.
5. It operates with a new *model of public management*: based on strategic planning, democratic governance, professionalisation, electronic government and accountability.

3.3. Stages

PERIOD	Activity
1995	Strategies in agreement with general recommendations; First program entitled "For the Good of All"; Dissemination of the plan. (prior to the election process).
1996	William Miranda Marín elected Mayor of Caguas
1997	First strategic planning document based on agreements contracted as part of the

	government program
1998	Territorial legislation plan. Certification provides Caguas with the ability to plan, design and develop the city of the future and sustainable development. 20/20 Study. Urban plan offers recommendations for the use of land in urban Caguas until the year 2040. It includes cultural elements, the arcades of the Creole City.
2001	Strategic plan 2001-2004: review of commitments, programs and initiatives.
2004	Strategic plan 2005-2008: Incorporation of specific considerations.
2007	A second-generation strategic plan is published, Caguas 2010-2020.

3.4. Obstacles

No socio-political process of the extent, depth and complexity of Caguas' is free of errors and difficulties. It is recognised that some areas must be developed even more in order for the model of democratic governance to meet the highest expectations.

3.5. Results

Strategies for the evaluation of the democratic governance model were carried out in conformity with the established design. After one decade (1997-2007), Caguas celebrated the successful implementation of the combination of select ingredients: solidarity and the active participation of the people; leadership, administrative capacity and the economic resources of the enterprise sector; wisdom, experience and advice from the academic sphere; and finally an intense management of an administration or government sensitive to the changes in the economic and global sphere. The "Ten Years of Municipal Administration in Caguas" commission was created. It was charged with organising and carrying out several activities of a social, cultural and educational nature, in addition to producing a book that allowed the wealth and complexity of Caguas' experiences during the years of the implementation of the new model of government to be documented and perpetuated for this and future generations. (Attached: Reviews of the book "Democratic Governance in Caguas.") The successful result demonstrates the support of the people in electing an administration that has promoted the democratic governance model in Caguas for five consecutive four-year terms (1996-2012).

THE MISSION OF CAGUAS IS "TO PROVIDE THE PEOPLE WITH ACCESS TO QUALITY SERVICES IN A CREATIVE AND EFFECTIVE WAY, THROUGH THE OPTIMAL USE OF RESOURCES AND THE ACTIVE PARTICIPATION OF ITS CITIZENS."

4. Impact

4.1. Impact on the government

Giving priority to the transformation of managerial processes and the establishment of more effective and efficient organisational structures, the city focuses on assigning resources and providing itself with comparable technological and managerial innovations comparable to private companies'. The results are characterised by greater productivity in public management, allowing economic and human resources to be relied upon to drive the change agenda.

4.2. Impacts on the city's culture and cultural agents

Supporting itself in historical events, the project has allowed Creole and Puerto Rican pride to be affirmed, promoting spiritual decolonisation to strengthen the individual and collective creative energy that leads new generations of people to a new evolutionary stage that ensures well-being and progress. The reaffirmation of the value of culture, as well as cultural capital, are conceived of as an essential part of the city's vision, diminishing social inequality and the marginalisation of the population with regard to access to sources of knowledge and information.

4.3. Impact on the city/territory and its population

Caguas “Our New Country” signifies what differentiates it in terms of democratic governance, economic development and community self-management. It is a type of model that announces a better destiny for all Puerto Rico. The Creole local identity and the Central Eastern Region have contributed to the New Country becoming the “Center... and Heart of Puerto Rico.” When it is governed with and for the people beyond party lines, the perception of government is beneficial for all, which is why Caguas has become a mirror and a living example for other municipalities including the Central Government.



4.4. Transverse impact

Puerto Rico maintains territorial status within the Constitution of the United States. It does not form part of the continental United States and has an independent government: the Free Associated State of Puerto Rico, or Commonwealth. This political reality brings up cultural imperialism, a process by which the dominant power tries to change ideals, customs, language and tradition. However, Puerto Rico remains connected to its cultural roots, which are expressed in all areas of their daily life. The culture of Puerto Rico is the result of the union of three main cultures: taína, Spanish and African. Caguas has become a pioneer in Puerto Rico, not just with regard to assuming responsibility for its economic development. In addition, it has maintained an important role in planning, stimulus and intervention in favor of sustainable cultural development, especially in municipal and regional planning. Citizens have their emblems: oak, the kingbird and the touch-me-not. In addition, each one of the districts has designed its own flag that distinguishes them as Creoles, strengthening the city's cultural identity, traditional knowledge, history and heritage.

4.5. Continuity

The second-generation plan proposes examining the facts of previous plans, analysing changes achieved, drawing up new challenges like multisectoral participation, government, universities, private companies and citizens. Caguas accepts the challenge of strengthening the work plan that is allowing human development to be achieved with good health, recreation, education, healthy coexistence and security, strengthening the cultural services that contribute to the creative community economic strategy. When reference is made to Caguas as a “New Country,” this means a well-defined territory in which the inhabitants collaborate towards new horizons beyond geographic limits.

5. Other information

The City of Caguas was a candidate in the first edition of the “UCLG International Award - Mexico City-Culture 21” (January-May 2014). The prize jury prepared its final report in June 2014 and asked the UCLG Committee on Culture to disseminate this project as an exemplary practice.

Request approved in September 2014.

Best practices published in October 2014.

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