

# CITIZEN CULTURE: A LOCAL COMMITMENT TO SUSTAINABLE REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT



## AGENDA 2030 - SDGs



## CULTURE 21 ACTIONS - COMMITMENTS

2. HERITAGE, DIVERSITY, AND CREATIVITY
6. CULTURE, EQUALITY, AND SOCIAL INCLUSION
9. GOVERNANCE OF CULTURE

PLANNING, STRATEGY, SUPPORT, INSTITUTIONAL,  
PARTICIPATION, INCLUSIVE, ACCESS, DEVELOPMENT, LOCAL,  
GOVERNANCE, CONSERVATION, CULTURAL, COOPERATION

# 1. Context

El Carmen de Viboral is located in the Eastern Antioquia subregion, and is home to 60,000 people.

The city has a diverse cultural, rural, and agricultural population, and has seen accelerated urban and industrial transformation due to the region's unique dynamics. Unfortunately, the municipality has faced issues of injustice, unemployment, and socio-economic inequality.

The 2005-2015 Cultural Development Plan contributed to cultural democratization, strengthening identity, diversity, artistic creation, and a sense of belonging. This demonstrated the importance of participation processes, spaces, and platforms as essential mechanisms for dialogue and synergies between different sectors, actors, and regional stakeholders.

**THE OBJECTIVE IS TO GARNER RECOGNITION FOR THE MUNICIPALITY AS A PLACE OF ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP THAT PRESERVES ITS HISTORICAL, ANTHROPOLOGICAL, AND ARTISTIC HERITAGE, CELEBRATES ITS NATURAL ENVIRONMENT AND RESOURCES, WITH A RURAL AREA THAT ENSURES SUSTAINABILITY FOR THE POPULATION. THIS GOAL IS BASED ON A COMPREHENSIVE HUMAN DEVELOPMENT MODEL THAT PROMOTES A GOOD QUALITY OF LIFE FOR ALL INHABITANTS.**

Under the current plan, culture is used as means to mobilize social change by establishing social and political practices for a governance model that is more integrative, participatory, and inclusive around debate and decision-making processes, reducing corruption and cronyism. It also aims to encompass social and cultural rights to solidify the role of local culture as a pillar and cross-cutting part of social, economic, environmental, and political development.

## 2. El Carmen de Viboral and Culture

Today there are a number of significant advances that have made culture into a main focus for territorial development.

The current challenge lies in creating the necessary conditions to make culture into the foundation for the region's different transformations. This is only possible if we make culture a by-product of social relations, where people become protagonists of change, and are collectively responsible for promoting a regional vision with a transformative, local, home-grown, human, and sustainable approach.

This program is supported by a broad political and regulatory framework. It aims to strengthen participation processes, spaces, and scenarios, which are essential mechanisms for establishing dialogue and synergies between different sectors, actors, and regional stakeholders for optimal governance and enjoyment of culture.

## 3. Project goals and implementation

### 3.1. Main and specific objectives

In 2027, El Carmen de Viboral will be recognized as a key municipality with an active citizenry that lives its culture, safeguards its identity and traditions, as well as ensures conservation of its historical, anthropological, and artistic heritage. It protects its natural resources, its lush green landscape, and rural lifestyle that ensures sustainability for the local population, based on a model of comprehensive human development that promotes good living habits to all its residents.



## 3.2. Project Development

### Main actions developed

The 2016-2026 Municipal Culture Plan focuses on the future we want as a community. A new image of the territory has been developed and created, making it possible to create harmony and support a territory in its solidarity, participation, reciprocity, and dialogue. The aim is to give everyone a better quality of life and re-establish bonds based on the practices, knowledge, and aptitudes of inhabitants, where efficiency, accumulation of profits, and personal interest are not prioritized without consideration for the wellbeing of people and nature.

This social project forms the basis for the cultural sphere, which has become a cross-cutting component of the dynamics and expressions of the entire territory and its inhabitants. The cultural planning exercise has sought to maintain the region's strategic approach, for which cultural identity both underpins and drives: the transformation throughout the territory, the connecting of different social actors with the capacity to initiate change, and the bringing together of public and private actors around shared projects.

**DURING ITS IMPLEMENTATION, THERE HAS BEEN A CLEAR NEED TO INCORPORATE DIFFERENT TYPES OF CRITICAL KNOWLEDGE THAT CONTRIBUTE TO UNDERSTANDING COMPLEX SOCIAL REALITIES, AS WELL AS TO CREATING A SOCIETY THAT IS CAPABLE OF RECOGNIZING THE REGION'S POTENTIAL.**

Each step brings the municipality closer to recognizing and valuing culture as a defining element of local, rural, and urban change. The city's focus in this area also ensures that inhabitants can exercise their rights, while facilitating a transition to equitable development that is in harmony with nature. These societal improvements must also generate cooperation, solidarity, associativity, democracy, and the community's use of resources, all in order to reinforce the fabric of trust networks and solve community issues.

Since 2016, the municipality of El Carmen de Viboral has avoided focusing its efforts solely on developing programs like dance, theatre, and music. Instead, they have tried to focus on traditions, creation, practices, aspirations, different perspectives, and awareness of the region's different groups. In short, they have focused on the way people live and inhabit a territory, from an individual and community perspective.



## 4. Impact

### 4.1. Direct Impact

#### Impact on local government

Residents of El Carmen de Viboral have shown broad social and community support for the Municipal Culture Plan. To date, it has been promoted by all municipal administrations and municipal councils, while there has also been a significant level of social mobilization around the cultural and regional commitment to quality of life.

#### Impact on culture and local cultural stakeholders

The plan has seen widespread acceptance by cultural stakeholders and social actors. However, more grassroots community adoption is needed. The initiative arose from the concerns, problems, opportunities, and the conditions of the base of the social system, and works through different non-interconnected stakeholders. Over time the city has gradually improved its connections and cultural structures in conjunction with citizenship.

#### Impact on the city/region and its population

The plan has made it possible to extend the city's cultural outreach to the local and regional population, showcasing its regional management at the institutional and social levels.

Significant achievements have been made:

Increase to the budget allocated to the Institute of Culture; events (international and national) that support the local economy (cultural tourism, local commerce, etc.); recognition for the policy implemented by the Institute of Culture; promotion of creative enterprises with support for the value chain (training, production, circulation, social adoption); collective defence of heritage and natural resources, and strategic planning for culture as an essential pillar of regional development.

**CULTURAL POLICIES ARE FUNDAMENTAL IN NURTURING A REGION'S MEANING AND IDENTITY. HOWEVER, SOCIAL INITIATIVES, WHICH THEMSELVES SUPPORT THE CULTURAL SPHERE, BECOME A CROSS-CUTTING PART OF THE DYNAMICS AND FORMS OF EXPRESSION FOR THE ENTIRE POPULATION OF A REGION.**

## 4.2. Evaluation

In addition to other systems used to measure the progress, achievements, and challenges of local proposals, a Monitoring and Evaluation System was proposed that would bring together the concepts, methods, techniques, and indicators that are needed for adjustments, changes, feedback, and updates, while also emphasizing the development of learning and the use of specialized, organizational, community, and regional knowledge.

Given the current lack of core indicators and cultural information at the local level, one of the main challenges is to perform a diagnosis to establish baseline information, and to develop studies that help build and strengthen a Monitoring and Evaluation Information System.

## 4.3. Key Factors

The Municipal Culture Plan details the experiences and lessons of the previous plan, while re-imagining the concept of culture as a driver for transformation and policy change.

It has been possible to use the Basic Land Management Plan in the social impact process by adopting qualitative, participatory diagnostic methodologies and techniques that are context-appropriate as well as consider various urban, rural, social, and political aspects.

A comprehensive index was made for all institutional partners, as well as social and community organizations, that form a Partner Network to participate, adopt, and establish sustainability.

## 4.4. Continuity

The plan has received local, regional, national, and international funding. A strategy has been created to promote creative ventures.

The plan brings together and strengthens partnerships with the institutions, entities, sectors, and cultural stakeholders that are part of the Municipal Council of Culture as a space for consultant participation, dialogue, management, and follow-up on the Culture Plan. It is also worth noting that the Institute has received a lot of support as a facilitator of cultural processes. The Institute aims to develop, create, and manage a project that will design, implement, and maintain the Culture Information System. It also has a Communications Centre and is in the process of creating a regional Cultural Observatory.

# 5. Further Information

El Carmen de Viboral was a candidate for the fourth UCLG Mexico City – Culture 21 International Award (November 2019 – May 2020). The jury for the award drew up its final report in June of 2020, and requested that the UCLG Committee on Culture promote this project as one of the good practices implemented under Agenda 21 for culture.

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