

BARCELONA'S CULTURAL RIGHTS PLAN: "WE MAKE CULTURE"



AGENDA 2030 - SDGs



CULTURE 21: ACTIONS - COMMITMENTS

1. CULTURAL RIGHTS
2. HERITAGE, DIVERSITY AND CREATIVITY
6. CULTURE, EQUITY AND SOCIAL INCLUSION
9. GOVERNANCE OF CULTURE

**INSTITUTIONAL, CROSS-SECTORIAL, GOVERNANCE,
PARTICIPATION, CITIZENSHIP, PLANNING, STRATEGY,
EQUITY, COMMON GOODS, CULTURAL RIGHTS**

1. Barcelona and culture

With an area of 100 km² and a population of 1.6 million inhabitants, Barcelona is one of the densest cities in Europe. Culture is one of Barcelona's main assets. It is a city that cannot be understood without recognizing the role that cultural expressions play in its current institutional, economic, and social form. Moreover, culture in Barcelona has historically been associated with the struggle for freedom, democracy, and defence of the Catalan language, which have been reflected at all levels of civil society.

Barcelona has a significant network of public cultural facilities and the city council devotes 50% of its cultural budget to contributions and aid for cultural organizations and projects. However, it is also a city of cultural inequalities, as highlighted by a 2020 survey on Barcelona's participation and cultural needs. Therefore initiatives like the present one outlined here are very important for civic life.



BARCELONA HAS A SIGNIFICANT NETWORK OF PUBLIC CULTURAL FACILITIES, BUT IT IS ALSO A CITY OF CULTURAL INEQUALITIES.

2. Project goals and implementation

2.1. Main goal and specific objectives

The Barcelona Cultural Rights Plan helps to establish a set of priorities in the city's cultural policies from a cultural rights perspective. The plan incorporates an ambitious framework for political reflection and a series of innovative, binding, and operational government measures and actions. The importance of this project lies in the fact that it positions cultural rights as the central axis of municipal cultural policy, creating a place from which the various action plans for the coming years are developed.

2.2. Project development

The plan is divided into 9 government measures that specify specific actions, timetables, and budgets:

1. Culture in neighbourhoods and community action: the right to cultural practices and new hubs.
2. Grassroots culture and cultural sectors: the right to cultural creation, experimentation, research, and production.
3. Popular cultures: the right to popular and traditional practices as spaces for participation and social cohesion.
4. Culture and education: the right to cultural participation and to lifelong practical and arts education.
5. Feminist culture: the right to a culture that is diverse and equitable.
6. Culture and public space: the right to cultural access and cultural participation in the street
7. Digital culture and rights: tools and policies for people's access to knowledge, transparency, and digital innovation.
8. Museums of the city: innovation, education, and the right to participate in Barcelona's cultural heritage.
9. Barcelona Libraries (2030 Master Plan). The right to read, access information and knowledge, and to promote new creative practices.

The city council invested a budget of 68.7 million Euros in setting up the various activities planned until 2023.

The Cultural Rights Plan is the result of a long and intensive process of active listening that intricately involved the city's different cultural spheres. Additionally, all the actions included in this plan were developed in collaboration with different municipal bodies and areas. Work was coordinated between the city's 10 districts, each of which has their own political and management structures.



THE BARCELONA CULTURAL RIGHTS PLAN HELPS TO ESTABLISH A SET OF PRIORITIES IN THE CITY'S CULTURAL POLICIES FROM A CULTURAL RIGHTS PERSPECTIVE.

3. Impacts

3.1. Direct impacts

The plan represents a turning point in the way we understand not only cultural policy, but also municipal policy in general. At the political level its impact is immediate in the way it places culture at the top of the municipal policy agenda. It is also a significant change in the way cultural policy actions are viewed. Until now, such actions were focused on promoting cultural sectors, but within this new paradigm, cultural rights and citizenship become the focus of actions.



3.2. Assessment

Both the initial plan and each subsequent government measure help to establish a specific proposal for assessment and follow-up. Overall, evaluation was proposed at the following three stages:

- Political: monitoring the development and implementation of the measures.
- Process: follow-up on the schedule, budget, communication, concrete actions, etc.
- Result: after each of the measures is carried out, they are followed by a process of evaluation, creation, and monitoring for specific indicators, highlighting the extent to which the planned objectives were achieved and outlining the long-term impacts of the proposed policies.

Finally, part of the initial diagnosis comes from the survey conducted in 2019 on Barcelona's cultural needs and participation. The survey was repeated in 2022 as a survey on the Barcelona Cultural Rights project, and aimed to be a tool for evaluating cultural public policies.

THE PLAN PLACES CULTURAL RIGHTS AT THE CORE OF MUNICIPAL CULTURAL POLICY WHILE ALSO ESTABLISHING A SERIES OF INNOVATIVE, BINDING, AND OPERATIONAL MEASURES AND ACTIONS.

3.3. Key factors

The most important factor for the plan's success is the firm political will of the current municipal government to promote real change in the way of understanding and carrying out cultural policy in Barcelona by placing culture at the centre of citizen rights and policies.

Another significant factor was the COVID-19 pandemic, which underlined the importance of culture during lockdowns. The pandemic also revealed the precariousness of the sector and the difficulties of access and participation by disadvantaged sectors of society.

A third factor for the plan's success is its cross-cutting nature. It extends beyond the traditional discourse within different sectors and broadens its scope to include different perspectives and viewpoints: gender, sustainability, languages, cultures, and diversity, among others.

The fourth factor would be the participation of the city's already existing cultural fabric to develop and implement the actions of these public policies. Without this participation, the connection between the actions and reality would not be possible.

3.4. Continuity

After launching the Cultural Rights Plan, the City Council of Barcelona intends to further deepen its involvement in cultural policies action under this framework. For this reason, the "CULTUROPOLIS International Cultural Rights Days" was held in Barcelona in November 2022.



**WITHIN THIS NEW PARADIGM, CULTURAL RIGHTS AND
CITIZENSHIP BECOME THE FOCUS OF ACTIONS.**

4. Further information

Barcelona was a candidate for the fifth UCLG Mexico City – Culture 21 International Award (February - June 2022). The jury for the award drew up its final report in September of 2022, and requested that the UCLG Committee on Culture promote this project as one of the good practices implemented under Agenda 21 for culture.

This article was written by Daniel Granados, Delegate for Cultural Rights, Barcelona City Council, Jaume Muñoz, Head of International Relations (ICUB), Montserrat Tort, Head of the Technical Department (ICUB), Barcelona, Catalonia, Spain.

Contact: dgranados@bcn.cat ; jmunozj@bcn.cat ; mtort@bcn.cat

Website: www.barcelona.cat/aqui-es-fa-cultura/es