

# CABININ – ÇANAKKALE BIENNIAL INITIATIVE. CONTEMPORARY ART HABITAT FOR SUSTAINING CIVIL SOCIETY



## AGENDA 2030 - SDGs



## CULTURE 21 ACTIONS - COMMITMENTS

1. CULTURAL RIGHTS
2. HERITAGE, DIVERSITY AND CREATIVITY
5. CULTURE AND ECONOMY
6. CULTURE, EQUITY AND SOCIAL INCLUSION

SUSTAINABLE, INTERNATIONAL, PARTICIPATION,  
ARTS, MULTIACTOR, CULTURAL RIGHTS,  
DIVERSITY, SUPPORT, COVID, ECONOMIC



# 1. Çanakkale and culture

Çanakkale is a medium-sized western Anatolian city that connects the Aegean and Marmara seas on the east-west axis and the European and Asian continents on the north-south directions, and is a melting pot for Mediterranean, Balkan and Anatolian cultures. Çanakkale is a city of culture, tourism, and agriculture.

The Covid-19 pandemic crisis came at a moment when Çanakkale was experiencing the growing impact of the local government policy on instrumentalizing and weakening the civil society potential of the city, and limiting its cultural vision in shallow populist activities. CABININ became a natural center of gravity of the civil society in Çanakkale. CABININ is a Çanakkale-based non-profit civil society initiative and a platform of reflection and action for culture and arts formed by the synergy of members coming from different disciplines and various professional backgrounds.

Under the pandemic restrictions, CABININ organized open air art events such as film screenings. It also managed to realize physically the 7th edition of the biennial and combine it with multiple online tools and projects. This cultural vitality attracted the attention of the cultural scene in Turkey and inspired many regular events to find alternative ways of overcoming the pandemic crisis.

**THE MAIN PROJECT OF CABININ IS THE INTERNATIONAL ÇANAKKALE BIENNIAL WHICH AIMS TO PRODUCE, COLLABORATE IN AND SUPPORT MANY NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL CONTEMPORARY ART ACTIVITIES ON THE BASES OF SOLIDARITY, SOCIAL BENEFIT AND RESPONSIBILITY.**



## 2. Project goals and implementation

### 2.1. Main goal and specific objectives

The general aim of CABININ is to sustain the civil society heritage of Çanakkale via contemporary art and culture. It functions as a communication and collaboration platform for various civil society endeavors in manifold fields of culture: history, archaeology, architecture, ecology, gastronomy, cultural rights, disability and disadvantaged groups, immigration, social entrepreneurship, and cultural industry.

It always aims at bringing different sectors together around common values and needs: civil society organizations, private sector and local, regional and central public authorities are brought together to sustain, preserve, advance, interpret and transfer to the next generations the historical, cultural and natural values of Çanakkale.

Strongly believing in the transformative, democratizing and socializing potential of the arts, CABININ has built and sustained a healthy habitat for the interaction of the creative processes with the cultural life of Çanakkale while the local government policy gradually withdrew itself from the scene. It also aims at bringing the unique historical, natural and cultural values of Çanakkale to the attention of the international public, and building up international communication and collaboration networks to position the city on the Mediterranean cultural space.

**PROGRAMS TARGETING DIFFERENT SOCIAL GROUPS (DISABILITY, YOUTH, WOMEN, AND CHILDREN) SECURE THE ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT OF THESE GROUPS IN THE CULTURAL AND ARTISTIC ACTIVITIES.**



## 2.2. Project development

CABININ is one of the founding members of the Çanakkale City Council, and it is an active member that worked for the implementation of the Art and Culture Committee in 2015, which it presided over for the first two years.

CABININ has always been an active and prominent member of several actions and initiatives on Urban Development and City Conservation Plan, Architectural Heritage, Agenda 21 and the Foundation of City Council. The Çanakkale Biennial, in its 14 years of existence, managed to position the city in the realm of contemporary culture.

Experts, professionals and practitioners from various disciplines such as architecture, archaeology, social sciences, and tourism are active components of the decision-making processes, and their viewpoints are integrated in the conception and implementation of the cultural projects.

Since November 2013, CABININ also runs an art center named MAHAL, an old depot converted into a multi-functional art space for hosting regular activities of CABININ and the civil society.

# 3. Impacts

## 3.1. Direct impacts

**Cultural Impact:** In 2015, on the centenary of the Gallipoli Campaign in WW1, CABININ engaged in a research project and an extensive exhibition to call attention to the social impact of WW1 in Çanakkale.

In 2017, CABININ was the pioneer in The 2018 Year of Troy Initiative Group, which inspired a yearly thematic concept implemented by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism.

**Heritage Impact:** Through its activities CABININ brought the public attention to many heritage buildings, which one by one were restored in order to gain new cultural functions: Korfmann Library, The Ceramic Museum, The Jewish Depots transformed in cultural centers.



**THROUGH ITS SOCIAL PROGRAMS FOR CHILDREN, YOUTH, WOMEN AND PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES, CABININ BUILT A RELATIONAL ENVIRONMENT WHERE PEOPLE FROM DIFFERENT SOCIAL FRAGMENTS SHARED A COMMON CULTURAL ATMOSPHERE AROUND CONTEMPORARY ARTS.**

### **3.2. Assessment**

Since February 2022, meetings are held with disability groups, women and youth within the framework of the biennial social program. These meetings are focussed on the pandemic's effects on cultural and social life, and how to further Çanakkale's cultural potentials in post-pandemic era. These meetings also bring valuable insight and feedback about the past, present and future of CABININ as an initiative dedicated to contemporary art and culture. A report that reflects the outcomes of these meetings is published and shared with all the authorities, decision makers, institutions and civil society of Çanakkale.

### **3.3. Key factors**

One of the key factors of CABININ is participation, along with accessibility: The main strategy of CABININ is to make contemporary art expressions and cultural practices accessible to a larger populace. Participatory tools and practices implemented over the years are the backbone of this strategy.

Independence is another key point: Last decade in Turkey is marked with the politization and thus weakening of the civil society. CABININ has managed to create a safe social environment and public sphere, where people from different backgrounds and viewpoints can come together in a politically disengaged, inclusive and democratic platform.



### 3.4. Continuity

CABININ is a 16 years old civil society endeavour which has proven its continuity despite social, economic and global crisis it encountered over the years. This is due to its independent, participatory and inclusive standpoint. The City Council with its executive body and its various committees on culture, women, disability and youth, has been an integral part and booster of CABININ activities in periodic intervals. The City Council committees bring its organizational and in-kind support to CABININ activities.

On the other hand, CABININ functions with a pool of means that brings together financial and in-kind support from the public and private funds in order to secure the implementation and sustainability of its activities. The international network of contemporary art and culture it built also sustains and furthers its projects and activities.

## 4. Further information

Çanakkale 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 2022, and requested that the Committee on Culture promote this project as one of the good practices to be implemented through Agenda 21 for culture.

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