



INTERNATIONAL
ASSOCIATION OF
**Educating
Cities**

EDUCATING CITIES AWARD FOR BEST PRACTICES IN INCLUSION AND THE DEMOCRATISATION OF CULTURE

EDUCATING CITIES FOR A BETTER WORLD

SPECIAL BULLETIN 2020

#31

Culture is the expression of human creativity and shapes the collective identity of peoples through a dynamic process of establishing relationships with the world. Its role in the development of individuals and communities is so important that cultural rights form an inseparable part of human rights.

Aware of this, Educating Cities make a significant contribution to the guarantee and promotion of the cultural rights of their inhabitants, as set out in the new Charter of Educating Cities. Through their policies, they put in place initiatives that aim to correct inequalities in the access to and enjoyment of cultural and educational opportunities; promote the arts as a path to social and educational inclusion; encourage creativity and cultural innovation as vehicles for personal and socio-economic development; and foster an active role for citizens in the planning and management of cultural activities. In turn, they invest efforts and resources in training professionals in the wide range of cultural expressions, and play a key role in the preservation and promotion of tangible and intangible cultural heritage as well as the protection of cultural diversity.

In order to showcase this work, the 2020 edition of the Educating Cities Award was organised under the theme "Inclusion and the democratisation of culture", receiving a total of **58 candidatures from 50 cities** (from 13 countries in four continents). An international jury selected the three winning experiences and the seven finalists, following a deliberative process in which they formally expressed the excellent quality of all the proposals received.



The three winning experiences of this third edition are:

Culture lives here: CATUL Network (Medellín, Colombia):

Articulation of the different cultural services and facilities and their protagonists with the aim of supporting local cultural dynamics and encouraging collaborative work.

Educational programme to promote the inclusion and valorisation of ethnic and cultural diversity (Santos, Brazil):

Anti-racist education to highlight the contributions of the African civilization and its diaspora, indigenous peoples and migrant and refugee communities to Brazilian society.

In the heart of my childhood (Torres Vedras, Portugal):

Fostering intergenerational relations to generate meeting spaces among children, young people and senior citizens from rural communities, through activities that link memory, life and art.

Both the award-winning initiatives and those of the finalists underscore the transformative power of the pairing of culture and education. We hope that their dissemination will encourage more local governments to strengthen the link between their cultural and educational policies, and to continue exploring their potential to create more inclusive and creative towns and cities that are proud of their diversity.



Medellín (Colombia)



Santos (Brazil)



Torres Vedras (Portugal)

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Medellín

CULTURE LIVES HERE: CATUL NETWORK



Medellín, capital of the department of Antioquia, Colombia, has 2,376,337 inhabitants and it is located in the Aburrá Valley. It has an extensive cultural system that includes museums, libraries, sports facilities and cultural centres. Moreover, the city's creative sector is made up of more than 6,500 companies, 98% of which are micro and small businesses.

Comprised of 16 cultural facilities including Culture Houses, Articulated Life Units, Theatres and Sound Production Laboratories, the CATUL Network is a project of the Secretariat of Citizen Culture and the Undersecretariat of Art and Culture of Medellín City Council, in partnership with Comfenalco Antioquia (Family Compensation Fund, established as a non-profit organisation). The network stretches across the city and the districts into which it is divided and impacts, on average, around 400,000 people each year.

The Culture Houses were born in the 1990s as a response to the wave of violence experienced during those years. They worked together with the communities, but were not associated with one another. In 2014, the Culture Houses began to work together under a coordinated network model.

The project involves artists, grassroots organisations and community groups through the dynamization of spaces for co-creation, co-management and shared responsibility, in order to provide training and foster free and collaborative learning experiences, recognising the diversity of subjects, communities and territories. At the same time, it is committed to defending traditional knowledge and practices as forms of legitimate expression and understanding of the social reality.

The following actions are developed within the framework of the project:

→ **Co-Creation Laboratories:** Meeting spaces for creation, experimentation and the exchange of knowledge among established artists and artistic and cultural actors of the territory.

→ **CATUL Festival:** Presentation of experiences and processes developed throughout the year



Articulated network of Culture Houses, Theatres, Articulated Life Units and Sound Production Laboratories that seeks to guarantee the ownership and enjoyment of cultural rights.

across the Network, brought together in an event to publicise the proposals, workshops and actions undertaken in the various cultural facilities.

→ **Neighbourhood Museographies:** Processes of museographic creation of contents developed in the facilities, with the aim of making these products known using interactive devices. The interactive loom of the workshop *Tejiendo Memorias* (Weaving Memories) and the interactive record player for the festival *Manrique Siempre es Tango* (Manrique is always Tango) stand out in particular.



→ **A First Aid Kit in your Garden:** Those participating in the sowing and gardening processes of this project go to other territories to exchange knowledge and experiences.

→ **School of Co-Creative Thinking:** A meeting space for mediators (workshop leaders, trainers, coordinators, managers and advocates) who seek to rethink the pedagogical directions taken by the Network.



→ **Sound Production Laboratories:** Experimental spaces for training and the production of different musical, audiovisual and artistic sound movements in the city.

In recent years, there has been a significant increase in the number of people participating in the training processes carried out in the network's facilities. The importance of the project lies in the collective creation of meaning and the strengthening of the capacities to transform the environment, through multiple processes of artistic creation. At the same time, joint reflection is encouraged to provide feedback on the proposals, so that the project can be permanently evaluated and rethought from a horizontal perspective. Since 2016, processes that transcend the local sphere have been generated and consolidated as cultural proposals of the city, such as the *Festival Hablemos Hip Hop* (Let's Talk Hip Hop), *Pedregal es Salsa* (Pedregal is Salsa), *Caminata Punk* (Punk Walk), *Manrique es Tango* (Manrique is Tango) and the *Foro Cocina como Acción Social* (Kitchen Forum as Social Action).

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Santos

ANTI-RACIST EDUCATION FOR THE INCLUSION AND VALORISATION OF ETHNIC AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY



Educational programme to raise awareness of the past and lay the foundations for a society that respects and takes pride in its diversity.

Santos is a port municipality located on the coast of the state of São Paulo in Brazil. Its economic activity is primarily based around tourism, fishing and trade. Founded in 1546 within the context of European colonisation and slavery, it is one of the oldest cities in Brazil and was the scene of an intense resistance to slavery as well as the abolitionist movement. With around 433,311 inhabitants, 72.16% of its population is white, while 26.71% is black or mixed race, 0.99% Asian and 0.11% indigenous.

Over 520 years since the arrival of European colonisers in Brazil and 130 years since the abolition of slavery, indicators related to the education, social advancement and poverty of the black, mixed race, indigenous and migrant populations continue to demonstrate inequalities at the national and local levels.

These inequalities are reinforced by an education based on Eurocentrism, where the contributions of the African civilisation and diaspora, of Afro-Brazilian culture, and of indigenous peoples in the historical and cultural construction of Brazil have been systematically made invisible or approached from a distorted perspective. An education in which important reflections on issues such as institutional racism, the myth of racial democracy, prejudice, colourism and white privilege have also been ignored.

In order to transform this reality, in 2003 a federal law made it mandatory to include the teaching of Afro-Brazilian and African history and culture within the educational curriculum of all public and private schools in Brazil.

In this context, since 2004, the Secretariat of Education in Santos has been undertaking actions in favour of anti-racist education, with the aim of giving a voice and prominence to historically marginalised groups and restoring the value of their tangible and intangible heritage. To this end, a programme has been set up that integrates, among other actions: training for the education community and citizens; the reorganisation of the school curriculum from the perspective of diversity and anti-racism; urban routes to increase the visibility of the contributions of the different communities to Brazilian history and culture; networking with community actors and political advocacy.

The project enables an average of 360 teachers per year to participate in specialised training, either classroom-based or

via virtual format. Further, training activities open to the community are offered in which an average of 100 people per year participate. Educational urban routes that promote experiential and critical reflection also attract nearly 3,000 students annually.

Among the changes generated by the initiative, the growing number of cross-cutting projects in schools can be highlighted, which has increased from three projects in 2010 to 45 in 2019. Through these actions, the reading of works by previously ignored authors has been encouraged, emphasis has been placed on valorising the cultural and aesthetic expressions of marginalised communities, and new heroes and heroines have been discovered. In the same way, schools have made a commitment to the appreciation of black aesthetics that have been stigmatised until now (such as Afro hair), acting decisively in response to reports of cases of racism and actively involving families in the different proposals. At times, the changes have involved very small but significant details, such as introducing coloured pencils in schools that reflect different skin tones.

Actions to increase visibility and exchange good practices have also been supported and, since 2015, thanks to the implementation of the Support and Guidance Forum (with the participation of representatives from the municipal level, the city's different ethnic communities, public bodies, schools and universities), the community has been involved in proposing actions and following up interventions, with a focus on political advocacy.



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Torres Vedras

IN THE HEART OF MY CHILDHOOD



The municipality of Torres Vedras is located in the Oeste region of Portugal and is made up of 13 rural communities with a total of 79,465 inhabitants. Its main economic activity is the agro-industrial sector, being one of the main suppliers of horticultural products to the Lisbon Metropolitan Area. Population distribution by age groups underlines the progressive ageing of the population, with 19.6% of people aged over 65, compared to 15.7% aged 0-14.

In recent years, changes in dynamics and lifestyles have led to a progressive separation between the younger and older generations, reducing the spaces and moments for them to share and interact. This has contributed to the creation of prejudices and stereotypes that accentuate this estrangement and widen the existing intergenerational gap.

In order to tackle this situation, the project "In the heart of my childhood" was initiated in 2014 by the Torres Vedras City Council. It aims to generate meeting spaces from which children, young people and senior citizens from rural areas of the municipality can embark on a process of mutual knowledge and exchange, through activities that link memory, life and art.

With the collaboration of writers, senior citizens transform their memories into small informal novels or memory books, in a process that enables them to recover experiences, contextualise them and reflect on their lives in retrospect. Another line of action encourages encounters in the classroom between senior citizens and young art students. On the basis of these meetings, the young people create their works, which they capture in their own artist's book, with the help of the teaching staff and the collaboration of invited artists. Reading and choral singing workshops are also held with primary school pupils in which the repertoire is based upon the children's songs that the older generation sang during their childhood, and the texts collected in their memory books. Further, the project promotes the public presentation of the artistic works produced in festivals and exhibitions, with the aim of showcasing the value of the process and sharing the lessons learnt with the community.

Since 2014, the project has directly involved 472 participants, including children, young people and senior citizens. Indirectly, it has involved over 1,000 people.

From a qualitative point of view, the use of art (in its different forms of expression: literature, visual arts, music, etc.) makes it possible to create



Project aiming at strengthening intergenerational relationships by creating meeting spaces for children, young people and senior citizens from rural areas of the municipality through activities that link memory, life and art.

strong emotional, cognitive and emotional links among people of different ages, socioeconomic and educational levels. Thus, for the participating senior citizens, the project helps to give meaning to their own experiences and to share them with the whole community. Further, listening to the songs from their childhood, sung by the children of today, and seeing their life stories re-interpreted in an artistic manner in the works created by the students, allows them to feel recognised and to connect from an emotional dimension, fostering their self-esteem.



Complementarily, working with the living memory of the community, through interaction with senior citizens, contributes to a greater understanding of local history and strengthens young people's sense of belonging. The project offers them an opportunity to find out what life was like in their territory in the past, establishing a direct link with their ancestors and recognising their contribution to the common good. The initiative is also a space from which to reflect on the fragilities of the different stages of life, accepting that all people are vulnerable and in need of care at some point in their lives, and therefore appealing to intergenerational solidarity as a way to build inclusive communities.



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