Latin American Arts for Inclusive Cities

Culture and art as factors for social cohesion and sustainable urban development

Study of 'Best Practices'

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1.   Introduction

In a context of rapid and unplanned urban growth leading to widespread social inequality and environmental damage, especially in Latin American cities, the project 'Culture and arts supporting social cohesion in Latin American cities - LAIC'[1] has sought primarily to explore concrete proposals to promote and strengthen the role of arts and culture as drivers of inclusive and sustainable development and to foster exchanges and joint actions between the EU and Latin America to mainstream culture policies and initiatives in urban development strategies, drawing on successful projects that support social cohesion. The project focused on five Latin American cities: Puebla (Mexico), San Salvador (El Salvador), Medellin (Colombia), Lima (Peru) and Curitiba (Brazil).

Based on the LAIC project, this study of 'best practices' aims to:

- Review how the relationship between culture and development from a public and institutional perspective has changed over the last three decades, both nationally and internationally.

- Analyse intercultural relations in urban settings, bearing in mind that myriad cultural symbols and behaviours now converge in the same territorial spaces.

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[1] 'Culture and arts supporting social cohesion in Latin American cities' is a project developed by Interarts (Spain) and BOZAR (Belgium) and funded by the Directorate-General of International Cooperation and Development, Regional Programmes for Latin America and the Caribbean (Unit G2) of the European Commission. For more information on the project please visit http://www.fomecc.org/laic-news

■ Highlight a series of benchmark culture-related projects from Latin America and the European Union, according to a set of evaluation criteria based on urban development and the sustainable strengthening of the community.

■ Provide innovative and creative recommendations in the field of culture to support policies, programmes and lines of action in sustainable urban development processes.

Neighborhood of Moravia, Medellin, Colombia. Photo: Isabel Tobón

2. Context

In the last few decades the relationship between culture and the public sphere has been the source of debates and dialogues that have revealed the need to foster policies and good practices in line with culture management and the development of societies, at local, regional, national and international level.

One example of how culture has gradually become a factor in development is UNESCO's changing approach to culture over almost forty years in various documents, including the Mexico City Declaration on culture policies of 1982, which proposed a cultural dimension to development, highlighting the relationships between culture and democracy, science, education and communication, and the Global Report on Culture for Sustainable Urban Development 'Culture: Urban Future' of 2016, which reinforces the cultural dimension of development adding categories related to urban development and sustainability.

From the point of view of culture policies at the continental or supraregional level, significant headway has been made, partially in response to conceptual analyses and proposals on the role of culture in development dynamics. Here it is worth underscoring sectoral culture policies within the European Union, whose main framework since 2007 has been the European Agenda for Culture, as well as those in Latin America, where the first Cultural Action Plan of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) was drawn up for 2015-2020 with social development and culture as one of its cornerstones.

In 2010, local and regional governments at international level implemented the United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) platform, publishing a policy document entitled 'Culture: the Fourth Pillar of Sustainable Development', which proposes that in addition to economic growth, social inclusion and environmental balance, culture be considered a factor in human development.

On the basis of the above, the relationship between culture and development is currently characterised from the institutional standpoint by:

- The role it plays in public management or governance in respective national political processes.
- The relationship it has with urban development in cities ensuring the sustainability of society and integration of people via policies for participation, mobility, resilience, etc.

The progress of culture as a development factor in the last few decades has given rise to political declarations and documents both at state level and among networks of cities and regions. However, we still urgently need to push forward practical actions in concrete programmes that legitimise and make the theoretical and political grounds of this relationship tangible.

UrbanLab, *Medellin, Colombia. Photo: Isabel Tobón*

3. Culture: development and dialogue

During the modern process of the creation of the nation-state, a homogeneous culture model was usually linked to a geographically defined territory. However, these same nation-states are now containers of myriad cultural symbols with multiple meanings that call into question paradigms that until fairly recently seemed irrefutable features of a 'national identity'.

The cultural references that are currently linked to a given nationality are arguably very different to those linked to that same nationality at the end of the 20th century. In this context, tensions in all countries between what it has been and what it will become, what is its own and what is foreign, the native and the immigrant, what is acceptable and what should be rejected, all have an influence on its politics and economics, and can sway the outcome of elections, the enacting of certain reforms and laws, whether the country joins an economic bloc or common zone, the emergence of integration movements and exploitation of differences, or conversely, at the other end of the spectrum, trends towards segregation and marginalisation or sectarian movements. Once again, the dialogue between identity and difference, between us and them, has become topical, albeit cloaked in new terms. We can now affirm more than ever before that identity is a plural noun – identities - which are completely dynamic in that they are built day by day, in which the only important factor is not the uniform or what unites, but rather what is different, what sets one group apart from another, and which are no longer a status. Identity primarily acquires meaning by being constituted as a 'form' of appearing to others.

The possibilities for dialogue between differing identities are determined by *intercultural relations*, which today exist not only between geographical boundaries, but rather at the convergence of a huge diversity of symbols in one sole space; i.e. in the simultaneity of

symbolic territories within one physical region. Despite walls being built and/or borders closed to prevent the 'other' getting in, this 'other' is no longer 'out there' somewhere else on the map but lives with us, sometimes through their symbols, sometimes physically: in a foreign person - emigrant or tourist, in a work of art, on a CD, a film, a dish, a drink, a religious cult, etc. We are therefore required to take a stance on this and take into account how their presence and activity could interfere with 'our' culture, their beliefs with 'our' religion, their work with 'our' economy, their customs with 'our' morals, and so on, becoming a challenge to the internal dynamics of governance and social sustainability.

Closely tied to current configurations of identities and intercultural relations is the phenomenon of the **_emergency of the local_**, whose cultural realities are manifested in specific contexts, and are somehow resistant to homogenizing or unifying cultural discourses. Contrary to the fears that emerged when the idea of a global and interconnected world began to take shape in the late twentieth century, the cultural

Center of Cultural Development, *neighborhood of Moravia, Medellin, Colombia. Photo: Isabel Tobón*

particularities of small contexts did not necessarily disappear but were often reaffirmed and became distinctive and value-generating stamps in that global scenario. Cities and small regions no longer felt fully represented in the world by national governments and started creating their own networks and organisations for cooperation and joint work.

Multiple cultural identities in one territory, new conditions for interculturality, and the growing importance of small local contexts and realities allow us to address not only the tensions but also the major challenges that the cultural dimension entails in its relationship with sustainable development. In the current global context, every sustainable development project must be able to further intercultural construction while aware that cultures are no longer necessarily separated by borders or territorial boundaries as they were some decades ago, but inhabit the same cities and perhaps even the same neighbourhood. The diversity of creeds, political choices, sexual orientations, aesthetic tastes and symbolic languages has possibly never been as visible in small territories as it is today, and when a development project aims to engage many of the people who represent such differences, a dialogue must be set up between them and the project or it will be devoid of a cultural framework to support it in time, i.e., to make it socially sustainable. Today, any governance action for sustainable social development should involve working 'with' those targeted rather than merely 'for' them. Therefore, participation must not be restricted to making communities into simple bodies that opine or validate, but rather must acknowledge them as decisive actors and carriers of knowledge and a transformative potential who must be involved throughout the planning and execution process within the dynamics of development.

Another challenge for the dynamics of sustainable development is bolstering the *emergence of the 'singular'* as innovative potential. The many small contexts that are thinking about and proposing solutions to economic, social, environmental or cultural issues from their own diversity and testing them out in their respective territories should lead

to different ways of generating national policies and even international guidelines. We need to sustain the momentum and enthusiasm that each territory proposes in solving its own problems and to harness the lessons learnt from both national policies that come from governments and international policies from multilateral organisations. The emergence of the singular in the global context in part explains the arguments against standard development models, which are based on the premise that solutions to problems could be uncritically transferred from one territory to another, and stresses the importance of analysing the varying ways in which different places have addressed similar problems, in keeping with their own conditions.

The problems and challenges facing sustainable development are global and can be abstracted and generalised, but the solutions and means of addressing them depend on the singular, on the various ways that communities deal with a specific situation, and the singular is always directly linked to a social way of being, to a culture.

4. Significant artistic-cultural experiences of sustainable urban development

In the set of codes and symbolic languages that make up the broad spectrum of culture, artistic practices play a vital role. The capacity of artistic languages to integrate, communicate, raise awareness and express affords huge potential for social intervention processes because strategies can be created as part of development programmes or policies. Artistic practices allow us to act in physical and non-physical spaces, for instance by enabling interventions in public spaces in cities, and can contribute to changing the conduct or stances of people faced with certain situations. This is why they have such potential to bring about positive change in educational and cultural processes, and can even support resilience processes.

The enormous possibilities that artistic practices offer in sustainable development processes are often noted on a case-by-case basis and presented at forums, events and publications as successful experiences, good practices, case studies and so forth. However, these experiences come to be deemed satisfactory after they have been carried out and they are perhaps a small proportion of the vast quantity of projects and practices that are undertaken in the world; that is, very few manage to achieve significant relevance and impact. This perhaps points to the need for pre-established minimum valuation criteria, which artistic practices that seek more relevance and efficiency in relation to sustainable development dynamics should aspire to.

Setting minimum criteria for what is understood as a 'good practice' in culture and the arts within a framework of sustainable urban development could contribute to the planning processes of this type of proposal, leading to a kind of log book that would enable projects, objectives and actions to be devised with greater certainty. In addition, it could be a fundamental factor for analysis and reflection among cooperation organisations, funding agencies and public policy bodies, and guide their strategies, programmes and resources.

Below are a series of practices selected by a method of induction based on real experiences; i.e. by firstly examining the common features of practices deemed to be successful and secondly classifying them according to thematic area. The order in which they are presented is purely organisational and in no way indicates relative importance. For each area, one or more significant cases that exemplify it were chosen and a description is given based primarily on information from the website or blog of each experience, project or collective.

a. Best practices in urban intervention

For a good practice to have an impact on sustainable development, it must connect various social stakeholders, human groups, or community bodies in the public space. One of the hallmarks and merits of such practices is that they generate interaction and interlocution with the public space. A good practice is created when the various parties involved in developing a project participate and actively cooperate on jointly building a community space (a neighbourhood, square, park, etc.). Culture in general and its various practices sustain these processes in relation to sustainable development dynamics because they not only work with objectives based on social inclusion and equity, but in addition, through artistic practices, they enable means and languages of expression that open spaces of negotiation, consensus or social dialogue on any issue.

There are numerous examples of good practices through artistic languages that have made dialogue and debate on controversial issues possible, giving rise to specific policies in the medium and long term or concrete actions in the short term. Interventions in all kinds of community in the public space have taken place through the use of symbolic artistic expressions which, in many cases, have made it possible to convey a message to society by crossing social barriers and generating dialogue.

Significant experiences of best practices in urban intervention:

- *Basurama* Madrid and Bilbao, Spain, Milan, Italy

This research, creation and cultural and environmental production group was founded in 2001 and focuses its study and action on production processes, the waste that these generate and the creative possibilities that these contemporary situations afford. Since its creation in the Madrid School of Architecture it has evolved and taken on new forms. It strives to study phenomena inherent to the mass production of real and virtual waste in the consumer society, contributing new visions as drivers of thought and attitudes. The collective finds gaps in the generation and consumption processes that not only raise questions about the way we use resources but also about the way we think, work and perceive reality.Basurama has set out to find waste in places where it may not be obvious and to study waste in all its formats. It has become a multidisciplinary space where differing activities are carried out simultaneously with a common approach. In addition to the visual arts in the broadest sense of the term, its activities include all kinds of workshop, presentations, concerts, screenings and publications. Basurama also seeks to create a platform so that people from the social fabric who occupy very different places yet are not very far from each other can network and work together, so it is also considered as a creative node and meeting space. For further information, see basurama.org/

Photo: Basurama

- **_La Ciudad Verde_** ('The Green City'). Colombia, Mexico and Ecuador

This international movement uses 'artivism' to promote cities and regions in a more sustainable fashion. It is made up of individuals and organisations working for sustainable development in their communities by sharing strategic resources, networking, and maintaining a strong national voice. It is an independent movement that is not linked to any organisations or political parties. The movement technically pushes forward the creation of better public policies on sustainability, creating commitments and monitoring the political stakeholders responsible for them. In addition, it supports the process of creating sustainable cities and regions, studies successful experiences from other regions, and makes objective proposals for the local context. Its purpose is to build bridges between citizens and policy makers to generate a debate that will feed into improvements in public policies in the long term by diversifying processes and enabling greater sustainability. For further information, see www.LaCiudadVerde.org

Photo: La Ciudad Verde

b. Best community practices:

Good practices depend on communities and the extent to which the community feels rooted and takes ownership of them. It would therefore be difficult to rate an experience as good that takes place only at institutional level without the support and legitimation that comes from active participation and a community response. When it comes to sustainable urban development, they generate and stimulate changes of form, background or scope in the culture, bringing transformations, transmutations and transgressions with them respectively. That change may be a physical one involving buildings, urban renewal or creating or remodelling a public space, but there are also changes in other spheres: social, environmental, economic or symbolic. Major culture projects through artistic projects where various disciplines converge have an impact on societies since they help to re-signify problematic or decisive facts, and can even break down established cultural conventions and paradigms. Artistic practices that are rooted in the community can visualise problems through media and communication strategies that have an impact on urban policies or education.

Significant experiences of best community practices:

- *BijaRi* Sao Paulo, Brazil

This is a collective of artists, architects and designers who came together in 1997 while studying at São Paulo University's School of Architecture and Urban Planning. Its interests and research focus on the struggles of various stakeholders and social groups for rights in the

Photo: BijaRi

urban setting. The group aims to find a synthesis between artistic practice, urban design and political action through projects that are found

at the intersection of art, criticism of spaces and urban life. Drawing on a wide range of resources and technologies including poster campaigns, mapping, large-scale video projections, installations, performances and VJing, BijaRi creates tactical actions in public spaces, outside the realm of established art circuits. Operating through these cracks and divides, BijaRi is interested in the friction of such realities to shape new poetic and political places. For further information, see www.bijari.com.br/

- ▪ **_Ciudad Emergente_** ('Emerging City'). Santiago de Chile, Chile

This producer of urban innovation seeks to improve quality of life in developing cities by managing information platforms and high-impact participatory projects. Founded in 2011, *Ciudad Emergente* aims to be the main Latin American centre specialising in urban tactics and web applications to collect, disseminate, socialise and coordinate valuable information on quality of life in developing cities and neighbourhoods. Its methodology is designed to identify problems, inform debates, reach consensus, build agendas, implement projects, support urban co-production processes, and fine-tune the monitoring of urban welfare indicators. For further information, see www.ciudademergente.org/

Photo: Ciudad Emergente

c. **Best collaborative practices:**

One indicator to measure good practice is the extent to which the people who it is aimed at defend or criticise it, including any complaints or demands they have, because this means that they have taken on a role of shared responsibility. The local dimension plays a decisive role in this ownership since people tend to feel far closer to things that are tailor-made specifically to their own context. When a policy has a direct impact

on the shaping of its physical or symbolic territory, people feel that they have been convened, and that convening is cultural in the sense that they fear that their very way of living will be affected. This convening does not only mean that they respond to institutional calls, but that it is often the community itself that drives issues forward and demands changes or initiatives in public policies. It is important to stress this because it presupposes the institutions' capacity to listen and interact; behind a good practice pushed forward from the local level, there is almost always a public administration or institution that was able to structure and lead the force and reason of the community, prioritising governance processes.

When it comes to increasingly frequent artistic practices linked to the community, their collaborative nature means that the creative processes are shared and that the citizen is a fundamental part of the process. These are not unidirectional laboratories where the community is merely a frame or space in which the artist works. The creation, signification and re-signification based on artistic processes in and with the community become collective processes where the artist becomes a mediator and to a fair extent is no longer the protagonist. This sheds more light on the community and gives way to integration from what is symbolic that often has a real influence on empowerment and social change processes.

In Latin America, subsidy programmes for housing, health, employment and, more broadly, economic regulations are national policies that often have an impact on aspects that can be considered in varying degrees as common social development goals. However, in areas such as culture, local transport systems, protecting natural ecosystems, urban planning and often even education, communities are much more vociferous about the need for participation and are far more proactive. As stated at the beginning of this report, it is crucial to raise the profile of local scenarios, especially when it comes to interventions that affect relations in communities: public space, the diversity of cultural expressions, the variety of dimensions that converge in social life, the multiplicity of singular identities, and so on.

Significant experiences of best collaborative practices:

- **World Bike Forum** Global

The World Bike Forum is the most significant global citizen pro-cycling event. Although there are other global events on the relationship between cycling and sustainable mobility, this is the only one that is completely horizontal and participatory: it is

Photo: World Bike Forum

designed, organised and maintained by citizens in several countries. The Forum came out of a terrible and intentional incident on 25 February 2011 when a driver ran into 20 cyclists who were on a bike ride in Porto Alegre, Brazil. Following the tragedy, cyclists from that city could have merely gone out and protested in response. However, they decided to make something positive out of it and created the World Bike Forum, which seeks to unite citizens of the world to work towards more sustainable cities, with the bicycle as their symbol. The Forum's aim is to become the true global voice of citizens in favour of sustainable mobility. It sixth edition was entitled 'Handmade Cities'. For further information, see www.fmb6.net

- **El Churo** Quito, Ecuador

This group of young people has been managing, promoting and upholding cultural and citizen and community communication projects with an emphasis on young people since 2005. They work in promoting rights, interculturality, constructing policies aimed at young people, and cultural diversities by producing radio programmes and products, managing artistic festivals, holding talks, cinema forums, educational workshops, participatory proposals, and communication strategies, fostering the exercise of human rights, involving social organisations, and youth culture platforms and organisations. For further information, see elchuro.org/

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d. Best practices in educational and learning processes:

This aspect is perhaps the most common; the feature that most springs to mind when we think about what good practices linked to culture entail. However, this does not mean it is not important, especially because the way we understand this characteristic today differs
considerably to how we understood it until fairly recently. Since the end of the last century, experiences can be found that reversed the roles and took creative and symbolic languages as a means for education, not only at the restricted formal institutional level but also at a wider level, in which citizen participation processes with non-formal or informal means were proposed. Today, the latter is the most relevant in the relationship between culture and sustainable urban development.

Artistic practices and symbolic interventions play an increasingly important role as mediators in awareness-raising processes to the most important matters on public agendas: diversity in issues of sexuality and gender; violence; mobility; environmental and public space problems, as well as reconciliation processes in countries and regions where violence prevails or has prevailed. From another perspective, there are also mass artistic training processes, particularly in Latin America, which have been galvanised as major educational strategies aimed mainly at children and young people and in some cases as general platforms to supplement formal education processes, while in others as initiatives aimed at preventing or counteracting the effects of social problems in specific contexts (drug trafficking, drugs, unemployment, etc.). Examples of such processes include the *Sistema Nacional de Orquestas y Coros Juveniles e Infantiles de Venezuela* ('National System of Orchestras and Youth and Children's Choirs of Venezuela'); the *Plan Nacional de Música para la Convivencia en Colombia* ('National Music Plan for Coexistence in Colombia'), and at local urban level it is worth highlighting the *Redes de Formación Artística* ('Arts Training Networks') of the City Council of Medellin, which includes a Music Schools Network and networks for dance, theatre, visual arts and reading, and libraries.

Significant experiences of best practices in educational and learning processes:

- *Makea tu vida* ('Makea your life'). Barcelona, Spain

This is a non-profit social and educational organisation that works in the realm where design and ecology meet. Its work is aimed at promoting open design,

Photo: Makea tu vida

knowledge sharing, and collective creativity, applied and reused in differing contexts and situations. Since its creation as an action group in 2006, it has focused on generating participation strategies that shed light on the issue of waste, raise awareness of how we use resources and consume, and transform the many dimensions of our habitat (public, community and private space). By applying co-creation and collaborative design methodologies, the group gives workshops on collective construction of tools and utilities, space equipment, relational platforms (digital and in-person), artefacts and objects. For further information, see www.makeatuvida.net/ y www.el-recetario.net

- *EscueLab.org* Lima, Peru

EscueLab.org is a space that seeks to encourage young creators, theorists and activists to project their ideas, to design and build possible futures that imaginatively tackle the existing gap between technology and society. EscueLab.org offers a dynamic and modular learning concept, focused on project entrepreneurship and bringing together disciplines

that are usually taken separately. This line of action boosts transdisciplinary knowledge in the fields of art, science, technology and new media, going beyond commonplace classifications and conventional divisions. For further information, see www.facebook.com/escuelab/

Photo: EscueLab.org

e. **Best practices in sustainable management:**

A good practice or significant experience of culture as it relates to sustainable urban development can arise spontaneously, especially when it is citizen- or community-based. However, planning and management is required for it to continue, with rigorous, efficient methodology when implementing projects or programmes, through a system of effective weighting between the objectives and results obtained. Good management practice involves documenting and recording all actions that are undertaken.

Often, the significant experiences that attract the most attention at forums, seminars and events are those that best use their information through the project execution. The continuity of a particular event or process, which is an apparently important variable when selecting significant experiences, can be distorted if it can not systematically show its history: any interruptions there have been, how it has been evaluated,

the mistakes made, and the reasons behind good outcomes. In the particular case of artistic practices and processes, good management entails rigour in the production processes, from creation to implementation. Making management a tool for the sustainable development of artistic and cultural processes strengthens the creative process, considering the process itself critically by analysing and evaluating the various existing resources, proposed objectives and final result.

Significant experiences of best practices in sustainable management:

- ***Crac*** Valparaíso, Chile

This is a cell of actions and a collective research platform that has been working in the city of Valparaíso since 2007. Through artistic residences, research, actions, critical pedagogies and radical architecture, the group proposes a critical interweaving

Photo: Crac

whereby the public sphere, city and territory comprise a network of connections and subjective associations of social experiences. Its projects are non-profit and are based on the transdisciplinarity of art, the public sphere, the city and the territory, implementing a network of connections and associations around socio-urban experiences. From the multiplicity and plurality of ways of understanding the city and the place where we live, CRAC's proposal focuses on understanding the relationship of subjectivity in the city based on transversality as a form of knowledge, through a flexible and autonomous management model, collaborative networks, sharing working models, solidarity and generosity with the expertise to work together and shape a common space. For further information, see www.cracvalparaiso.org/

- ***La ONG (Nelson Garrido Organisation)*** Caracas, Venezuela

This is a self-managed cultural space where a range of art-related activities are interweaved. With photography its fundamental axis, since 2002 it has been training photographers in workshops that are run in four annual cycles. At the same time, its three exhibition halls continuously exhibit the work of artists who are or have been part of the space, providing a sounding board for minorities and shedding light on numerous proposals. Its headquarters houses a public library with a large collection of specialist photography books, which has become a reference point for this discipline not only in Venezuela but also Latin America. It also has a sound recording studio, a screen-printing workshop and a photo lab. The organisation offers its spaces to theatre and dance groups and also hosts film screenings on its roof. It is the artists who take ownership of space and the alliances they make that constitute this organisation's dynamism and diversity. In this space for reflecting on ideas that was founded over ten years ago, the doors are open to all those who have not yet found their place and those who are looking out for new languages. For further information, see www.laong.org/

f. Best practices in cooperation:

One feature of significant experiences in the relationship between culture and cooperation in sustainable urban development is collaborative practices, since these involve transfer, expansion or adaptation processes from one reality to another, taking into account the differences of each context. Furthermore, this feature also comes to the fore when seeking to address an issue or implement a strategy in one context, drawing on a previous experience in another context. It is only possible to adapt a practice and experience from a given context to another distinct one if throughout its implementation the information has been systematised, the results analysed and the requirements to improve and adapt it to the new context identified, by cooperating with other organisation and bodies in the society. Often, when an experience that has already been carried out in one context is transferred to another, with a clear definition of the aspects that must be adapted to the new reality enabled by knowledge-sharing and cooperation, it can surpass the scope of the initial practice

and add value to it, thereby creating a chain that enables greater qualification of artistic projects and their results.

Significant experiences of best practices in cooperation:

- Knowledge- and experience-transfer process of the ***Unión de Músicos Independientes de Argentina*** (Independent Musicians of Argentina Union (UMI)), to create the ***Unión del Sector de la Música*** (Music Sector Union (USM)) in Medellin, Colombia.

The Independent Musicians of Argentina Union was set up in 2001 and has become a major platform for participation in the music sector in Argentina. It pushes forward debates on issues such as copyright, working conditions and social security for musicians, in particular by holding talks with government agencies. This has led to considerable headway in legislation and public policy, resulting in laws and regulations that facilitate the creation, production and circulation of music in Argentina. In 2008, the Promotion of Cultural and Creative Industries Programme (FOMECC Colombia) began running associative initiatives among cultural entrepreneurs in the city of Medellin, aimed at bolstering certain links in the value chain in their respective sub-sectors. In the case of the music industry, managers and entrepreneurs from Medellin were put in contact with the Independent Musicians of Argentina Union (UMI). After a long period of contact between the two parties, the Music Sector Union (USM) was set up in the city of Medellin. It went beyond the concept of a guild to engage all stakeholders and organisations along the music production chain, proposing better conditions for training, production and circulation of products and artists. Among other outcomes, this resulted in dialogue with public and private stakeholders that have an impact on the sector. Since 2009, the USM has become a benchmark association that operates at national level and has

Photo: FOMECC Colombia

garnered legitimacy as key player for all stakeholders in the music sector in Colombia. For further information, see www.umiargentina.com; usmcolombia.org and http://www.fomecc.org/

- ▪ **_Institut pour la ville en mouvement – IVM_** ('City on the move institute'). Paris, France, Buenos Aires, Argentina, Sao Paulo, Brazil, and Shanghái, China

This is a non-profit association with representatives on several continents. One of its areas of work involves various university chairs in China, France, Brazil and Argentina that share experiences and knowledge, reflecting on urban mobility from an innovative perspective, which comprise the academic side of IVM's projects. It welcomes people from the business world, researchers and academics, cultural operators, and representatives from city institutions, to develop research and action projects within a framework of cooperation. Its mission is to present concrete solutions, hold international meetings, generate inventories and documentation on original urban and architectural approaches, mobilise experts and people with multidisciplinary skills, and disseminate knowledge and awareness-raising strategies aimed at generating opinions on the challenge of mobility in contemporary societies. For further information, see www.ville-en-mouvement.com/

g. Best innovative practices:

One of the contributions attributed to the creative sector in its relationship with sustainable urban development is the ability to generate innovative processes for solutions to socially challenging situations. Creative does not necessarily mean innovative, so the creation-innovation relationship should not be taken for granted. Some events that are creative in the artistic sense

El Gran Aula, *Buenos Aires, Argentina. Photo: A77*

become so well-known that they identify and globally position a city or region (festivals, meetings, biennials, creative fairs, etc.), generating economic activity, tourism, and community ownership, although they do not necessarily generate socially innovative processes. Significant experiences when it comes to the relationship between culture and development should transcend the simple creative act per se to put the experience, methods and dynamics of creative processes at the disposal of the society and in dialogue with it, in a way that contributes to finding solutions to specific problems or even shedding a light on these problems from an unconventional perspective that had not previously been used and that allows them to be tackled differently. When it comes to generating images of the world, experimental practices and contemporary art interventions, in their interaction with contexts and their people, in particular make it possible to hazard diagnosing and approaching social problems from a novel angle, which usually reveals factors for analysis that have not been seen from the other angles. Similarly, when solutions or approaches are proposed on the basis of these new angles, communities usually receive the best of what comes with a creative-innovative language.

Significant experiences of innovative best practices:

- *A77* Buenos Aires, Argentina

This group of architects builds projects with their own hands. Their work entails producing a range of everyday objects from materials discarded by industry that can be as large as architecture pieces. They combine art, architecture,

We Can Xalant, *Mataró, Spain*
Photo: A77

sociology and urban planning in their projects, with particular interest in the creation of ephemeral institutions, the activation of social dynamics in the public space, and self-management of cultural spaces. They specialise in

experimental housing and design, as well as in projects that interweave contemporary art with urban planning by producing constructive devices and social dynamics. For further information, see estudioa77.com/

- ▪ **_Recetas Urbanas/Santiago Cirugeda_** ('Urban recipies/Santiago Cirugeda'). Seville, Spain

Architect Santiago Cirugeda's project transcends the boundaries of traditional architecture in terms of both materials and processes, working in many cases with recyclable or reused inputs, detachable structures, occupation and appropriation of the public space, as well as citizen participation and activism. The more social side of his work applies a concept of architecture as a people-centred rather than design-centred solution. As a virtual strategy, the general public have responded warmly to Urban Recipes because it teaches people ways to carry out their own interventions in spaces, taking advantage of legal loopholes. For further information, see www.recetasurbanas.net/

Photo: Recetas Urbanas

h. Best creative practices:

One of the characteristics of processes linking culture and sustainable urban development is the use of creative media and artistic languages to analyse and solve social problems. This instrumentalisation of art is frowned upon and ineffective when the priority is placed on objectives that undermine the technical or aesthetic qualities of creative content. We refer to languages and symbolic expressions as a means of expression in complex social realities precisely because we recognise that these languages embody logic and specific forms that we need to know and use properly if we are to achieve good quality results. In the same way as we would not accept a development cooperation project that was presented with shortcomings in its formal use or inconsistent arguments, we should not accept a social intervention using creative languages, however legitimate it may seem, that does not present a final result by applying artistic and aesthetic components and elements, with a creativity that is characteristic of these languages. Therefore, good practices or significant experiences in the cultural and developmental framework are based on all or some of the aforementioned characteristics (innovation, cooperation, resilience, creativity, collaborative processes, community involvement, etc.), in addition to proposing training, production, curating and exhibition or dissemination processes which guarantee that rigour and technical know-how are being applied to the creativity.

Significant experiences of best creative practices:

- *Fábrica de Arte Cubano (FAC)* ('Cuban Art Factory'). La Habana, Cuba

This was conceived as a strategy to re-appropriate an old oil factory building. It was repurposed using mainly reused materials, and made by linking creation, projection and community work processes through arts and creative disciplines including film, music, dance, theatre, fine arts, literature, photography, fashion, graphic design, and architecture. Although the strictly artistic qualities of this project are outstanding, it has also had socio-cultural impact by engaging the community through projects aimed at children and adolescents. For further information, see www.fac.cu/

- ***Proyecto Ultra*** ('Ultra Project'). Santiago de Chile, Chile

The purpose of this project is to see the urban fabric as a place that is constantly changing, and to understand creativity as an innovative contribution to the country's growth. This project seeks to strengthen and develop artistic platforms for intervention in the city, with a view to improving people's quality of life, recovering tangible and intangible heritage, encouraging people to take part in local cultural development, and giving value to artists' and creators' work nationwide. For further information, see proyectoultra.com/

5. Recommendations to foster culture and art as factors for social cohesion and sustainable urban development

The final part of this report puts forward a raft of recommendations and suggestions to support innovative and creative international cooperation policies, programmes and lines of action in the field of culture as a driving force for sustainable urban development processes:

✔ Strengthen creative ecosystems. Just as there is no culture without creation, there is no creation without resources, strategies, methodologies or processes. No symbolic, artistic or aesthetic expression appeared spontaneously; there was always a creator, even if she or he was anonymous or unknown. Today more than ever urban settings require creators who respond to the current challenges of cities and their complex development. Cultural and educational policies should foster people's creative spirit, structuring cultural ecosystems that enable decent working conditions for those who make this their professional project: artists. A creative ecosystem means seeing value chains from the perspective of the creative industries; in other words, creators must have access to training and resources to become professional, be able to secure financing and production for contents or proposals, protect or share their work through the system of legal rights management that they choose, and have channels through which to exhibit, which involves dealing with the public, the community and the market.

Resources, spaces and networks should be guaranteed so that every work or artistic proposal can be disseminated professionally in a wide range of settings and communities.

National culture policies should lay down the conditions that allow for ecosystems or systems that value creation. They should be interconnected in international bodies to facilitate cooperation and exchange between territories.

✔ Acknowledge artistic language as a form of knowledge through research processes. We shall only truly be able to mainstream artistic languages and knowledge as a key to sustainability in the dynamics of urban planning if we accept that such languages allow us to see reality through a different lens than scientific language, which they can complement and even question. One of the hallmarks of many current proposals that link culture to sustainable development is that they involve professionals from many disciplines, but this entails prior understanding of the validity of all the knowledge concerned: artistic, scientific, technological, etc. This requires participation and collaboration in development projects, or tools to document social situations that need institutional intervention.

Language and knowledge that enable artistic disciplines to be constructed must be new know-how that is mainstreamed in urban studies and new perspectives on city development.

✔ <u>Transcend the idea of urban space as merely physical.</u>

Urban planning can be literally defined as the arrangement and organisation of spaces and buildings in a city. In principle this definition would be sufficient both to explain the construction of the great cities of antiquity and to respond to the challenges of the modern metropolis, with just a minor addition: spaces should refer not only to the physical dimension but also the symbolic, and buildings should not be conceived as empty. In the sustainable cities that we dream of for the future, the contents are becoming far more important than the containers. Amazing parks and imposing public buildings are useless unless they become spaces for the people, unless they embody a discourse, community praxis, unless they give rise to a feeling of appropriation. Urban renewal processes in several Latin American cities have shown that recovering or regenerating old suburbs and neighbourhoods is effective in terms of security and territorial integration only if the 'poetics' of the place and the community habits can be changed. Demolishing or constructing a building will never be enough to create a new social space; it is necessary to create a meaning, and all meaning is cultural.

The social significance that a physical space can generate depends largely on the symbolic content associated with it: the often-intangible contents that artistic expression can generate bring a social value to those spaces that they would not have by themselves.

✔ Prioritise participatory and collaborative practices.

The current configuration of cities and their developmental needs entails overcoming the often-entrenched practice in society of decisions falling exclusively to institutions and citizens acting as a legitimation or consultation body. Current development dynamics increasingly demand that cities be built with and by the people. This implies understanding the community as a body of knowledge that knows its environment better than any external agents; and as a body of action, without which change cannot be brought about. It is in these scenarios of necessary mediation and 'agency' that the cultural dimension of development becomes important, encouraging communities to generate processes of self-recognition, re-signification, understanding of their environment, or simply, proposing and expressing their will.

Sustainability in participatory and collaborative practices requires that a practice be implemented in a way that is 'consistent and relevant to the cultural reality in which it is rooted'.

✔ **Advocate for inclusive knowledge and culture management.**

The wide range of experiences that local contexts can generate by applying cultural practices for sustainable urban development can only be utilised globally if they are sufficiently disseminated, known and socialised, which takes more than simply holding international events where such experiences can be described and shared with others.

International and predominantly technical knowledge-management platforms are increasingly needed to contribute to collecting and disseminating systematised experiences so that they can be applied in other contexts.