

CREATORS IN RESIDENCE, BARCELONA



education participation
support **creativity** cooperation
innovation **network culture** local

1. Origin

1.1. Presentation

The following article describes one of the most emblematic cultural projects in the city of Barcelona: *Creators IN RESIDENCE in secondary schools of Barcelona*. This project has three objectives:

- a) Connect contemporary creation with adolescents;
- b) foster intersections between the cultural and education systems; and

- c) contribute to the transformation of the different participating agents: students, teachers, creators, mediation teams, schools and arts centres.

It has been developed, since its implementation in 2009-2010, in 27 secondary schools in the city of Barcelona. In the first three pilot projects, the schools were proposed by Barcelona Education Consortium. Since the 4th year they have been selected based on a public call, open to the 74 secondary schools.

The districts where this project has been carried out are: Ciutat Vella, Eixample and Gràcia (centre zone); Sants-Montjuïc (south of the city); Les Corts and Sarrià-Sant Gervasi (west); Horta-Guinardó (east); Sant Andreu and Sant Martí (north); and Nou Barris (northeast).

1.2. Concept

Originally, the project was launched in 2009, by the Barcelona Arts Institute (Barcelona City Council), in the framework of the development of the Strategic Plan on Culture (Programme “Culture, education and proximity”). It was created to increase the links between culture and education and to connect contemporary creation with the formal education context.

In this respect, IN RESIDENCE was designed as a programme involving the following fixed variables:

- a) extensive (the whole academic year),
- b) intensive (at least three hours per week),
- c) relational (involving students, teachers, creators, coordinators, arts centres, schools),
- d) process of shared creation with the artists;
- e) visibility (it must be presented).

The main difficulty derives from this complexity: IN RESIDENCE introduces uncertainty, flexibility, chance, the unexpected... in a very rigid context (education), where everything is planned, controlled and regulated. For example, the school must make a great organisational effort to adapt the two-hour sessions to the creator or allocate more than one teacher.

2. Objectives

This project has three objectives: connect contemporary creation with adolescents; foster intersections between the cultural and education systems; and contribute to the transformation of the different participating agents: students, teachers, creators, mediation teams, schools and arts centres.

3. Challenges and characteristics

3.1. Key-elements

Apart from the complexity derived from these aforementioned elements (long duration, intensity, managed uncertainty and adaptation to the organisational structure of the schools), the following elements are significant:

- a) **Multidisciplinarity:** despite the predominance of the visual arts, dance, theatre creation, the performing arts and multidisciplinary projects are also important.
- b) **Mediation:** the residencies are coordinated by diverse mediation teams, experts in intersections between culture and education.
- c) **Connections:** different art centres, museums, art factories, social centres and cultural platforms are connected to the residencies, supporting the development of the specific projects of the residencies underway.
- d) **Public call:** selection of the schools through a public call made by Barcelona Education Consortium.
- e) **Visibility of the processes:** each residency has a blog that records the development of the project, from beginning to end.

- f) **Presentation:** all the processes and resulting works are publicly presented, both in schools and art centres.
- g) **Innovation:** in our environment, no systematic and ongoing programme that includes these elements and that has a consolidated trajectory, beyond isolated and individual experiences, has been developed.
- h) **Exhibition:** the finalised processes are presented in a group exhibition, every six months, in an exhibition venue in the city. The Fundació Suñol (2010), Fabra i Coats-Fàbrica de Creació de Barcelona (2012) and La Capella (2014) have hosted or will host this exhibition.
- i) **Assessment:** all the participants (students, teachers, creators and mediators) participate in the programme assessment processes.



3.2. Actors of the project

Beyond these main characteristics, it is important to note the main actors and allies of the project, which are divided into the following conceptual groups:

- a) **Shared management and conception:** IN RESIDENCE was created by the municipal Institute of Culture of Barcelona, and was conceived and launched jointly by Barcelona Education Consortium (CEB) and the A Bao A Qu Association. Five years later, these are the three main actors of the project.
- b) **Coordination and curatorship:** the coordination tasks of the residencies are carried out by mediation teams, in a framework of public-private and associative cooperation. The main team is A Bao A Qu, which has coordinated 23 of the 29 residencies to date. Over time, four other teams have been added: Graner – Mercat de les Flors (an art factory and the educational team of a performing arts venue), Sala Beckett/Obrador Internacional de Dramatúrgia (art factory), Fundació Joan Miró – Colectivo Azotea (the education team of an art centre and a curatorial group) and, finally, MNAC (education team of a museum). Moreover, these five teams are also responsible for proposing the participating creators every year, with curatorial tasks.
- c) **Creator/teacher binomial:** the participating teachers work together with the creators in a shared project.
- d) **Education community:** the programme obliges teamwork with the other teachers in the school, so that the residency expands and impacts on the whole school, including students, parents, and so on.
- e) **Structural connections:** the MACBA education team has participated in the development of the residencies since the 3rd year (2010-2011).
- f) **Individual connections:** each residency is linked, depending on the creative process to be developed and, also, on the area it is located, to one or several cultural facilities or platforms in the city and the

neighbourhood: MUHBA, the Social Centres Network, the Photography Archive or the Barcelona Poetry Week are some of the art centres and initiatives that have been linked to specific residencies.

IN RESIDENCE was designed as a programme involving the following fixed variables: extensive (the whole academic year), intensive (at least three hours per week), relational (involving students, teachers, creators, coordinators, arts centres, schools), process of shared creation with the artists; visible (it must be presented).

4. Impact and first review

The main success of this project has been the fact that it is no longer a pilot programme and has become a structural programme, based on the ongoing cooperation of the departments of culture and education (three-year agreements) and on the cooperation with public and private associative agents in the cultural sector. Continuity is its main value, as well as the intrinsic values it contains. Moreover, IN RESIDENCE helps foster the right to participation of all its participants in the cultural life of the city. It is also a transforming experience for all those who have participated.

However, in relation to the challenges pending it will probably be appropriate to increase the processes of assessment, systematisation of results obtained and of general visibility. Starting a project such as this one requires a period of training of mediators, experts both in the field of culture and education (very limited number at present), as well as incorporating into their development a process of prior training for the creators. Moreover, once underway, the instrument of the public call should be extended, both to creators and mediators, in parallel with the current system of invitation by mediators.

5. Other information

Website of the project: <http://bcn.cat/enresidencia>

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