

CULTURE FOR DEVELOPMENT



STRATEGY **EDUCATION** COMMUNITY INCLUSION
CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT GOVERNANCE **CITIZENSHIP**
MANAGEMENT INSTITUTIONAL **PLANNING** HERITAGE

1. Context

The city of Azul is home to 65,000 people and is nestled in the heart of the Pampas in the province of Buenos Aires, Argentina. Founded in 1832, its name originates from the language of Indigenous Pampa, "Callvú Leovú", meaning Blue Creek (Arroyo Azul).

Its principal industry is livestock farming, while its industrial manufacturing has grown relatively stagnant. However, there is a good amount of activity in the commercial and services sectors. It is the seat of a number of public agencies, as well as administrative and judicial authorities on the regional, provincial, and national levels. Historically, it was known for its dynamic areas of education and culture.



Azul's Teatro Español (Spanish Theatre), the oldest functioning theatre in Argentina, was completely restored by community initiatives and declared an historic monument in 1988.

The project sought to use innovation to end the lowest level of development that Azul has been trapped in for the last 40 years. Productive reconversion and the closure of local industries led to its low economic growth and population stagnation through job loss. In 1960, Azul had practically the same population and socioeconomic profile as its neighbouring cities. Now, its population is half of that.

The loss of employment could be substituted by developing its cultural sectors through endeavours relating to: heritage, creativity, cultural industries, art, cultural tourism, and many others.

THE MAIN GOAL OF THE PROJECT IS TO REINFORCE CULTURE AS A STRATEGIC AREA FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT OF AZUL.

2. Azul and Culture

The project was incorporated into the city's development policies. Other than attributing a higher priority to culture, the project revolves around making sure it is recognised by all public policies. Specifically, this refers to education, economy, science, media, environment, social cohesion, and international cooperation.

There is a strong relationship between Azul – Culture for Development and Agenda 21 for culture. It is clear that the initiatives carried out in Azul were outlined in documents that were guided by the principles and commitments found in Agenda 21 for culture.

This relationship is evidenced by the fact that Azul has integrated a cultural dimension into its development policies. Therefore, it has established a profound cultural policy that incorporates culture in all public policies. It also promotes the idea that culture is a fourth pillar of society, particularly with regard to the international community and designing public policies.



The Azul Culture for Development project proposes that culture forms an essential motor for all other areas of development. It not only is reflected in, or complements, economic growth, social inclusion, or environmental balance in Azul, but culture is prioritised so that it can act as means of actively generating these.

IN AZUL, CULTURE IS PRIORITISED SO THAT IT CAN ACT AS A MEANS OF ACTIVELY GENERATING ECONOMIC GROWTH, SOCIAL INCLUSION, AND ENVIRONMENTAL BALANCE.

3. Objectives and Project Implementation

Specific Primary Objectives

The primary goal is to help consolidate the role of culture as a strategic element for community development in Azul. The specific goals of the project are:

- A. To strengthen the mobilisation of citizens and their public and private institutions, through an inclusive culture and education project based on local community management.
- B. To promote entrepreneurship and quality job creation for inhabitants through cultural projects including heritage, creativity, cultural industries, art, and cultural tourism, as well as through education, academia, businesses, supplementary services, tourism logistics, and many others.
- C. To reinforce Azul's city brand as the "City of Cervantes" and its proposal for innovative development via culture on a provincial, national, and international level. The goal of this is to achieve recognition and support that translates to actual commitments and contributions that make it possible to strengthen the project and optimise opportunities that arise out of a globalised world.
- D. To make Azul an active and substantial participant in solidifying a network of cities and other agreements, which will be achieved to make culture the focused product of networking.



Development of the Project

Together with the Municipal Executive Department, the organisations involved are:

- The Asociación Española de Socorros Mutuos (Spanish Association Relief Society) of Azul.
- The Bartolomé J Ronco Library Casa Ronco
- The Universidad del Centro de la Provincia de Buenos Aires (Central Provincial University of Buenos Aires) - Faculty of Law
- The Azul Business Centre
- The Rural Society of Azul
- The Municipality of Azul Council

THE CITY OF AZUL BELIEVES THAT CULTURE, EDUCATION, HERITAGE, AND TOURISM OCCUPY AN IMPORTANT PLACE, AND THAT ALL DRIVE PROJECT INITIATIVES WHICH SEEK TO ADDRESS THE NEEDS OF THE WHOLE POPULATION.

Countless individuals and organisations from the local, national, and international public and private sectors have made contributions which have translated into documents and projects. Some of the objectives of the project attempt to garner recognition and support for government entities in the country.

All of the residents of Azul will benefit from this project. The actions carried out are cross-cutting and affect community issues. Indeed, culture as a pillar of development has an impact upon all sectors.

4. Impacts

1.1. Direct Impacts



Impact on the Local Government

Improvement in management due to incorporating tools. Improvement in institutional cooperation. A city brand that is unique and innovative in its approach to the territory's potential.

Impact on Culture and on Local Cultural Actors

It provides a framework for all types of community endeavours, culture, and cultural stakeholders. Prioritising culture and education in people's action and sense of community has a demonstrable impact.

Impacts on the Territory and Population

The city of Azul believes that culture, education, heritage, and tourism occupy an important place, and that all of these drive project initiatives which seek to address the needs of the whole population.

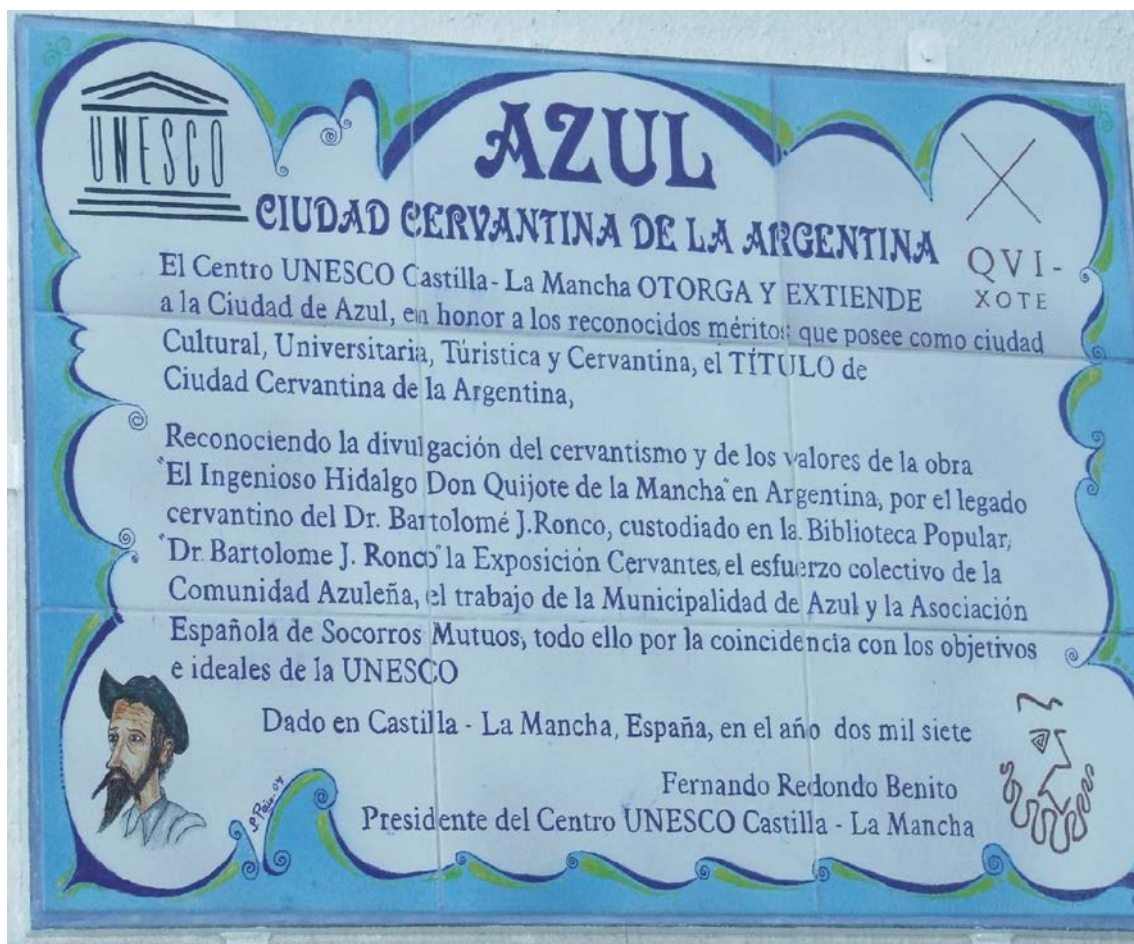
Crosscutting Impact

Given the nature of the project, and as well as becoming a part of development, not only does it impact upon the economic, social, and environmental spheres, but it also draws on them. In doing so, programmes and practices in those areas of community life are in line with the project.

Through their recognition, the artistic, cultural, and education activities carried out in Azul throughout the year have been ongoing. Simultaneously, through experienced action these initiatives have enabled the development of significant local capacities, which are suited to local development and which make up a genuine asset for social capital.

1.2. Continuity

The project is part of the city's strategic development. It has been ongoing for over 10 years. It is sustained by community participation and organisations committed to these objectives. During this time it has linked together annual activities and commitments that operate independently and lend continuity to these initiatives. It has annual earmarked municipal public financial support, which is approved and granted by the local legislative body that guarantees its commitment to non-partisan public policy.



5. Further Information

The City of Azul was a candidate for the second "UCLG Mexico City – Culture 21 International Award" (January - May of 2016). The jury for the award drew up its final report in June of 2016, and requested that the Committee on Culture promote this project as one of the good practices to be implemented through Agenda 21 for culture.

Text was approved in December, 2016.

Good Practice document published in January, 2016.

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