

## MEDELLIN CULTURAL POLICY 2002-2014: A PUBLIC AND SUSTAINABLE POLITICAL- CULTURAL PROJECT



**PARTICIPATION** INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT  
PUBLIC SPACE **EDUCATION** **DIVERSITY** PEACE  
HUMAN RIGHTS ENVIRONMENT SUSTAINABILITY  
SOCIAL INCLUSION CAPACITATION

### 1. Context

Medellin, Colombia's second city, capital of the department of Antioquia, is located in the Cordillera Central in the Aburrá valley. As an Industrial city, it began providing clothing, fashion, education and health services. It has 2,441,123 inhabitants; with nine municipalities making up the Metropolitan Area (3,500,000 inhabitants). Its territory (38,034 ha) is composed of: an urban area, urban expansion areas and a rural area. Administratively it is composed of 6 zones, 16 communes and 5 townships (rural area). The city, one of the most violent in the world in 1991 (381 violent deaths / 100,000 population), had 38 homicides / 100,000 inhabitants in 2013. The city develops processes involving creators, managers, entrepreneurs, organisations, educational institutions, communities and stakeholders committed to culture as an axis for economic, social, environmental and territorial policies; it also conducts significant advances in the ability to build empowered participatory institutional arrangements from the continuous increase in social investment with interventions that seek the equality of citizens' access to educational opportunities, employment, housing, public space, culture, health and community involvement."

The cultural policy, a public-private social actors initiative, is the result of the awareness of the 90s for the need to build a city project due to the violence to which it was afflicted; it was based on the

processes of cultural, territorial and city planning, and the consolidation of political-cultural thinking and citizen participation with groups who decided to enable resilience through art. The trends (Constitution, General Law of Culture, legislative developments, national and departmental plans for culture), set standards for the culture factor of coexistence, strengthening citizenship and the opportunity for decent living. The Municipal Development Plan 2012-2015 appropriated life, equality, education, innovation, knowledge and sustainable development, centred on the respect and empowerment of identity diversity, transparency and good governance as keys for Medellín; its goal is "to contribute, through cultural action and public education, to the appreciation of life and diversity, as an imperative principle for peaceful coexistence"; it recognises the efforts needed to make culture and education factors of social transformation; as well as conservation and respect for life; it recognises artistic expression as the core of culture, public enjoyment, of the right to free expression, and reaffirms culture as a fundamental dimension of the integral development of citizenship and recognition of human diversity and social wealth.

MEDELLÍN PROMOTES THE IMPLEMENTATION OF PARTICIPATORY CULTURAL POLICIES IN THE SERVICE OF CONSOLIDATING CULTURAL CITIZENSHIP, FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF LIFE, HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND THE WELFARE OF ALL ITS PEOPLE.

## 2. Medellín and culture

The cultural political project of Medellín, 2002-2014, is projected in the Plan for Culture 2011-2020. It undertakes culture as a competitive factor without abandoning equality and care for vulnerable populations in order to achieve social justice in a context of guaranteeing rights, valuing diversity, territory, aesthetics and an understanding of the creations, memories and heritage as a foundation of shared meanings. Policy and strategic guidelines:

- Expansion of citizenship and cultural democracy: incentives for creation and production; participation and enjoyment of the cultural offer; circulation; visibility of emerging or unrecognised manifestations.
- Inter-culturality for the construction of the city and cultural democratic citizenship: Dialogue; inclusion of the displaced population and new immigrants; impetus and recognition of rurality and other territoriality.
- Impetus and generation of social recognition of heritage and memories to strengthen links between citizens; protection, appreciation, preservation, dissemination and sustainability of goods, demonstrations and cultural memories.
- Construction of citizenship: citizen-city relationship; recovery of public space as a cultural asset; coexistence in diversity; citizenship education.
- Development and strengthening of training and artistic and cultural education: capacity building; opportunities for experimentation and creation; social networks from art training, public education and technical and technological training for the development of creative enterprises.
- Knowledge management, access to information and technologies in dialogue with culture: research and innovation; science and ICT; reading and writing, consolidation of the Public Library System.
- Medellín, a communicated and communicator city: communication as a cultural practice for the construction of the public; communication media for cultural democratic citizenship.
- Culture and development: The human being as an agent and purpose for development; professionalization and specialisation of the cultural sector to enhance its competitiveness and local development; coordination of cultural endeavours with the productive vocation of the city.
- Interaction of Medellín with the Metropolitan Region, the Department, the Country and the World: Culture and competitiveness, culture and its application in other planning instruments; educational and cultural opportunities; ICT, public spaces, roads and equipment; national and international cultural positioning.

- Strengthening the institutional and cultural sector: Sustainability, public-private-NGO relations, Municipal Culture and governance System; partnerships with cities linked to the UCLG.

The Cultural Development Plan 2011-2020 contemplated an agreement with the Instituto de Cultura de Barcelona, to promote dialogue with local, national and international experts; they defined approaches to rights, population and land to build a document that allowed for the definition of policies, the interpretation of the issues and challenges of development with social equity, environmental sustainability, capacity building, citizen empowerment, achieving democratic citizenship and social interaction.

According to the Agenda, the leadership of cultural policy focuses on the Secretariat of Citizen's Culture, from which they work on agreements on the problems of coexistence, security and construction of the public in areas such as public space; information is provided on the processes and public tenders are carried out for the execution of the resources using different strategies, such as the portal [www.culturamedellin.gov.co](http://www.culturamedellin.gov.co). Medellín is a leader in educational planning, cultural and educational community policies for ethnic diversity, training of entrepreneurs and creative businesses, and the public management of culture has expanded beyond the traditional sectors.

The Municipal Culture System has sectorial, territorial and population councils, there are workshops, networks and organisational processes from which policy building is led. There is the Entrepreneurship Park, the Explora Park, Ruta N and the *Medellinnovation* project, amongst other initiatives, which project the transformation of the city and where culture is crucial, as well as a cultural educational provision that expands the possibilities for creators, managers and citizens. The mayor maintains relations with the Ministry of Culture and international organisations in order to focus their priorities and progress in obtaining resources from national and international cooperation with the support of the International Cooperation Agency of Medellín -ACI-, where the exchange of good practice is promoted.



### 3. Objectives and implementation of the project

#### 3.1. Main and specific objectives

**General Objective:** Promote and consolidate Medellín as a cosmopolitan, equitable, inclusive, deliberative and diverse cultural space that promotes the implementation of participatory cultural policies in the department of consolidation of cultural citizenship, sustainable development and improving the quality of life, human development and welfare of all its inhabitants.

**Specific objectives:** Consolidate a culture of peace, based on dialogue, democratic participation and peaceful resolution of social conflicts; promote access to cultural goods and services; ensure conditions for the creation, dissemination, circulation of productions and copyright; integrate Medellín into the Latin American region and the world through ICT; promote respect for difference and recognition of creations, demonstrations, traditions and emerging expressions; articulate culture and education; strengthen democratic governance and coordination of actors and institutions in the cultural development of the city.

#### 3.2. Actions

- Creation of the Secretariat of Citizen's Culture, a formulation from the Medellín Culture Plan 2011-2020, the corrective and community culture plans, the Municipal Cultural System, strengthening the

cultural budget with an average investment of 3% of public resources from the city; implementation of participatory budgeting in response to requirements proposed by citizens.

- Cultural policies for gender equality, inclusion and recognition of the cultural rights of vulnerable groups: Afro-Columbian, indigenous, children, youths, seniors, LGBTI, disability, displacement, among others.
- Through the consolidation of library parks, neighbourhood libraries, historical archives and documentation centres, both cultural and memorial, museums, parks, theatres, cultural centres, music schools and public spaces for cultural practices; elements of daily life for the enjoyment of culture, recreation and sports, Pedagogical planning makes equipment available to citizens, in an equal and balanced way and contributes to urban regeneration in the city.
- Ample supply and support to organisations that guarantee the access and cultural enjoyment of citizens through training programmes and wide public support.
- Public Library System: impact on knowledge generation, use of ICT, promoting reading, connecting territories for human development, improvement of public space with architectural equipment on a large scale.
- Municipal Reading Plan *Medellín, a city for reading and writing*: promotion of reading and writing; book and Editorial Fund events.
- Restoration, strengthening of memory centres and Historical Archives; Watchers of Cultural Heritage; Asset Protection Plan, pre-Hispanic roads intervention, education in favour of heritage, Museums Network, inventories of goods and expressions, cultural memory of administrative districts, Special Safeguard Plan of Upholstery Culture, patrimonial research, among others.

THE CULTURAL POLICY, A PUBLIC-PRIVATE AND SOCIAL INITIATIVE, IS THE RESULT OF THE AWARENESS GENERATED IN THE 90's FOR THE NEED TO BUILD A CITY PROJECT IN ORDER TO FACE THE VIOLENCE TO WHICH IT WAS AFFLICTED.

- Concerted support, incentives, infrastructure for performing arts, open rooms (performing arts, dance, music, theatre, circus, visual arts, crafts, audiovisual, communication, cultural management, literature and heritage).
- Networks for coexistence (Schools of Music, Performing Arts, Visual Arts, Dance).
- Studies on creative businesses to generate sector policies; Park E; support for cultural projects, cultural markets.
- Investment incentives in accordance with the law (General Participation System; tax on mobile telephony, public entertainments Act; Procultura Stamp).
- Programmes for life, mobility, coexistence, security, surveys on civic culture; Citizens Covenants; Education and Coexistence Board in Football; programmes for ethnic, sexual and gender diversity; volunteering, among others.
- National and international events on culture and development; cultural industries; museums, libraries, living-culture community, heritage, reading, practices, habitat; III Iberoamerican Congress on Culture; City Congress; Medellín-Barcelona Chair.
- Implementation of Agenda 21, agreements, exchanges of experiences.
- Evaluation of cultural policies. Studies on the state of the art in various sectors.

### 3.3. Phases

The cultural project has now passed through moments of reference such as the *Cultural Development Plan of Medellín: Affirmation of life and creativity* of 1990, based on the need to recover the path of coexistence and respect among citizens, the role of the cultural sector in the recovery of peace, respect for life and cultural rights, transforming the culture-show into culture for coexistence, affirmation of life and recognition of creativity as a hub of cultural development.

2001-2003: Competitive Medellín: Culture without borders. Consolidation of processes of production, circulation, access to knowledge, science and technology; Cultural Metropolitan System, cultural programming, support for cultural projects; promotion and training for production, circulation and

cultural enjoyment; contests and incentives, editorial, artistic training and restoration of monuments. Creation of the Ministry of Citizen's Culture (2002).

2004-2007. Medellín, a multicultural city. Strengthening of decentralisation, promoting cultural awareness; promoting artistic and literary traditions; networks; training; contests and incentives; memory processes, heritage and identity; Network of museums; multicultural and diversity policies; educational planning and meeting spaces, enjoyment and quality of life. Instigation of zonal plans, the Land Use Plan, the Special Asset Protection Plan, the district plans for culture; establishment of the participatory budget; generation of affirmative action (indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities); Creation of the Chair of Medellín, performance of various city conferences. Agenda 21 for Culture was adopted which prioritizes culture-development relationships and the focus on rights in cultural development, dialogue with Barcelona began and the strengthening of culture as a factor of economic development was incorporated into management by promoting cultural enterprises.

## THE RECOGNITION OF CULTURAL POLITICS AS AN ACHIEVEMENT OF THE CITIZENS, ENDORSES THE RECOGNITION OF CULTURAL SUBJECTS AS ACTORS IN CHARGE OF DEFINING THE PRIORITIES.

2008-2011: Medellín, supportive and competitive: Development and welfare for the entire population. Driving the process from its guidelines: Arts and Culture; Artistic and cultural training; Medellín, a great scene; Infrastructure and cultural services; Medellín, a city for reading; Planning and strengthening of the cultural sector; Organisation and youth participation; Sexual diversity. Continuity of processes, mainstreaming of culture in the development plan, creation of the Museum of Memory.

2012-2015: Medellín, all for life. Management strategies centered on: A city that respects, values and protects life; art and civic culture for life and coexistence: Ethnic diversity for a vital city; Art and culture for life and citizens; Education and vibrant civic training; Patrimony and Cultural Research, Strengthening the cultural sector; Youth for life, Living city, cultural infrastructure for life; Medellín live-reading; Sexual and gender diversity.



### 3.4. Obstacles

- Small complex social dynamics, micro-traffic and bands create "invisible borders" in some neighbourhoods and prevent free access and participation in cultural life.
- Inequality in relationships with the Department (high level of concentration of cultural resources of the region in the capital city).
- Construction of new urban ruralities that expand the field and affect the ways of understanding and culturally bringing alive those territories.
- Absence of an observatory (cultural research on the city, monitoring indicators, systematisation of processes and experiences, etc.).
- Insufficient interaction with other sectors (economic, political, social and environmental).

### 3.5. Results

The recognition of cultural politics as an achievement of the citizens endorses the recognition of the cultural subjects as actors in charge of defining the priorities. In reference to the principles of Agenda

21, we can highlight the following:

- a. Estimation of cultural planning as a tool for transformation and social change, support of agreements between citizen and State.
- b. Greater coordination between local, district, city and metropolitan cultural processes, and global challenges represented in Agenda 21.
- c. Reflection on cultural policies that qualify the view of actors and cultural governance in the city.
- d. Public spaces as axes of quality of life and scenarios for fun and cultural enjoyment.
- e. Construction of participatory, democratic citizens, with capacities to meet the challenges of development in urban, rural, sectorial and institutional environments.
- f. Public and widely disseminated contests open to citizens.
- g. Consolidation of public-private, community and cultural institutions with a social basis.
- h. Establishment of transparent political culture, participatory development of cultural policies.
- i. Participatory budgeting as a public practice.
- j. Policies of culture-education-science and technology, Explora Park, Public Library System, Ruta N, Medellín Digital, Botanical Garden, scholarships, among others, that strengthen the relationship between science and culture.
- k. Knowledge and learning in cultural management in Medellín, as references in the cultural policy for the country and the region.
- l. Consolidated Public Library System with an average of 5,000,000 visitors and 3,000,000 direct beneficiaries, with inclusive welcoming meeting and spaces for the promotion of innovation, reading, knowledge, library services, the digital culture, and national and international coordination.
- m. Establishment of the Comprehensive Care Centre for Sexual and Gender Diversity.

CULTURAL POLICIES HAVE CONSOLIDATED MEDELLIN AS A CULTURAL SPACE OPEN TO THE WORLD THAT IS EQUITABLE, INCLUSIVE AND DIVERSE.

## 4. Impacts

### 4.1. Impacts on the government

The investment remains at a high level in terms of the municipal budget, making culture a priority; the cultural impact has made the Secretariat a reference point for advice regarding various cities; its organisational and budgetary structure and management transparency are consolidated; legitimacy and trust of citizens has generated private counterparts; Medellín has won international awards in libraries, architectural design, research, reading and the Altavoz programme, among others.

### 4.2. Impacts on culture and cultural workers in the city

Strengthened institutions; strengthening of rurality as a cultural territory; provision of comprehensive and articulated stimuli; culture as the core of knowledge management; participation as an exercise of consolidated cultural citizenship; cultural policies of inclusion, territorial equity and recognition of diversity redefine the city; networks, facilities and cultural consolidated public spaces; internationalisation and wide circulation of creators and managers; strengthening cultural industries; valuation of land and memories, development of innovation; formalisation of political literacy; progress in building policies for the Living Culture Community; advances in education-culture relationships.

### 4.3. Impact on the city / territory and its population

Consolidated democratic cultural citizenship; integration and coexistence of citizens in public cultural spaces; inclusion and equality; decentralisation and support for creative community processes; collaborative learning, training for future generations; greater trust among citizens; compliance with the law; ability to improve relationships; decrease in the use of weapons and organised crime; achieving a shared responsibility in terms of the use of public resources that strengthens citizenship; strengthening local and urban memories; strengthening institutional, sectorial, population, community, and district planning.

### 4.4. Cross-disciplinary impacts

Social appropriation of ICTs; further rapprochement to science, technology and innovation from culture; improvement of public education for mobility, coexistence, security; improvements in urban and rural public spaces and their ownership; public policies for population groups: Indigenous, LGBTI,

Afro-Colombians, gender, disability, street, prison; incorporation of culture in education; citizen participation in culture; internationalisation of the city; awareness of the behaviour on the road; impact on sport and conflict resolution through cohabitation agreements; participation of culture in processes of productivity and competitiveness; human development through reading and writing and equipment that seeks a solution to the needs of the population, with equality.

#### 4.5. Continuity

The Cultural Development Plan 2011-2020 is anticipated as a tool that organises the desires of the citizens and traces routes that complement district and communal culture plans; a Municipal Culture System comprised of sectors, actors with wide territorial representation and fully operational; A Participatory Budget that ensures the prioritisation of needs; partnerships for the transfer of knowledge and experience; financial sustainability that ensures the implementation of the plans; availability of an institutional structure (Ministry of Citizens Culture and Deputy Mayor for Education, Culture, Participation, Sport and Recreation) that ensures the maintenance of culture in central government decisions; the formation of cultural actors and the community ensures future generations. The city is expected to launch a cultural observatory to promote processes of information, research, monitoring and tracking.

### 5. Other Information

The City of Medellín was nominated in the first edition of the "UCLG International Award - Mexico City - Culture 21" (January-May 2014). The jury for awarding the prize produced its final report in June 2014 and asked the UCLG Committee on Culture to propagate this project as an exemplary practice.

Application approved in September 2014.

Good practices published in October 2014.

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<http://www.reddebibliotecas.org.co>

<http://www.culturaemedellin.gov.co>

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Social networks: Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/AlcaldiadeMed>

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