

EL CARMEN DE VIBORAL - "A PLACE TO LIVE THE GOOD LIFE": 2016 - 2026 MUNICIPAL CULTURE PLAN



HERITAGE INCLUSION PEACE DEMOCRACY
ATTRACTIVENESS CREATIVITY HUMAN RIGHTS
GOVERNANCE PARTICIPATION DEVELOPMENT

1. Background

El Carmen de Viboral is located in the Department of Eastern Antioquia, covering an area of 448 km² and home to 50,000 people (2013). It has 56 subdivisions throughout the political-administrative department, which is a rural area. Due to armed conflict, the ratio of inhabitants in rural to urban changed dramatically, displacing rural populations to the city centre or to other territories.

The economic importance of the city is linked to agriculture, although this sector has been shifting toward exporting flowers and milk due to the country's agricultural crisis and armed conflict. The economy is also driven by hand-painted ceramics, but suffered the economic crisis of the 1990s and

almost disappeared. However, over the last 10 years this sector has been resurfacing, affirming itself as a key part of cultural heritage and an active economic driver as well as source of job creation in the craft sector.

El Carmen de Viboral stands out for its cultural activity, thanks to the progressive initiative of strengthening the institutionalisation of culture. The city's tourism and cultural attractiveness has been growing, preserving the characteristics of a traditional, "slow life" town as a result of its landscape, people, urban aesthetics, public meeting spaces, and active cultural agenda.

THE 2016 - 2026 MUNICIPAL CULTURE PLAN IS A CULTURAL POLICY NEEDED TO STRENGTHEN SOCIAL COHESION IN A TERRITORY THAT HAS BEEN BROKEN AND WEAKENED BY 10 YEARS OF ARMED CONFLICT AND VIOLENCE.

2. El Carmen de Viboral and Culture

The country's reformation through the Colombian Constitution of 1991 recognised diversity and multiculturalism as constitutive of the country's strength, which led to reforms of the legal and institutional framework around culture. One result was the 2001-2010 National Culture Plan: "Towards democratic and cultural citizenship", which elevated culture to be the basis for developing social, political, and economic development that is broadly participative. Likewise, the Department Culture Plan called "The Diverse Voices of Antioquia" emphasised citizen participation as the foundation for cultural democratisation. Locally, the 2005-2015 Cultural Development Plan "El Carmen de Viboral with a Cultural Life" was the first public cultural policy for the municipality, and it contributed to cultural democratisation by strengthening the recognition of identity, diversity, artistic creation, and citizens' sense of belonging.



The 2016 - 2026 Municipal Culture Plan for El Carmen de Viboral “A Place to Live the Good Life” affirms the importance of participation processes, spaces, and scenarios, which are essential mechanisms for establishing dialogue and synergies between different sectors, actors, and regional stakeholders for optimal governance. This is particularly important in the context of a country where a cycle of over 50 years of violence has played an instrumental role in excluding most people from political and economic life.

THE PLAN FOSTERED PARTICIPATION BY THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTORS, AS WELL AS BY COMMUNITY AND CIVIC ASSOCIATIONS. FURTHERMORE, IT RECEIVED SUPPORT FROM THE MINISTRY OF CULTURE, THE ANTIOQUIA INSTITUTE OF CULTURE AND HERITAGE (ICPA), AND VARIOUS INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION PROGRAMMES.

After the 2005 - 2015 Cultural Development Plan ended, the 2016 - 2026 Municipal Culture Plan was presented as way to generate new social and political practices for changing the popular perception of culture as simply a sector reduced to arts and aesthetics. The aim is to build a cultural democracy by moving towards a more inclusive governance model. This approach encourages participation and inclusion by all stakeholders in processes of debate and decision-making, while also fighting corruption and cronyism.

The initiative is laid out in El Carmen de Viboral’s 2016-2019 Municipal Development Plan, A Territory for Life and Peace, and underscores inclusion as one of its fundamental pillars for “peace, rural life, and culture”. Furthermore, the Basic Territorial Ordinance Plan (PBOT) and the Local Tourism Plan are efforts to mediate, collaborate, and coordinate in order to make culture a driver of regional development.



Global initiatives such as Agenda 21 for culture, the Sustainable Development Goals outlined in the UN 2030 Agenda, and the New Urban Agenda are aligned with, expressed in, and part of this territorial development process for local development.

3. Objectives and Project Implementation

3.1 Primary and Specific Objectives

The main objective is to promote a territory that values and protects its cultural and natural heritage as part of its overall identity. It must strive to enable different types of expression, lend visibility to various artistic and cultural forms, recognise and support local identities and cultural rights, empower the existence of harmonious relationships between people and communities, and emphasise dialogue. Indeed, the goal is to recognise and value culture as a factor in human, social, economic, urban, and regional development.

Specific Objectives:

- Strengthen a Municipal Culture System that promotes a strategic vision for the whole territory with cultural identity as its foundation, while partnering with public and private actors
- Guarantee access to cultural goods and services and promote the improvement of socio-economic sustainability for cultural stakeholders
- Promote communication and cultural dialogue that strengthen participation processes, spaces, and scenarios
- Promote the social appropriation of heritage as a right and duty of citizens, strengthening the knowledge, value, protection, safeguarding, dissemination/outreach, transmission, and sustainability of heritage
- Promote citizen culture and the exercise of citizenship for building a place where people can live happily

3.2 Project Development



Main Actions Carried Out

1. MUNICIPAL CULTURE SYSTEM (SMCU)

- Municipal Council of Culture (CMCU) Development Plan
- Mapping out of local stakeholders and participation spaces
- Incentive programme for cultural managers, artists, and creative entrepreneurs
- Training and consulting programme for artists, managers, and creative entrepreneurs
- Setting up a directory of cultural agents, artists, and entrepreneurs
- Creating a unit focused on management, cooperation, and international relations

THE PLAN HAS BEEN ADOPTED LOCALLY AND REGIONALLY BY THE INSTITUTE OF CULTURE, REINFORCING ITS ROLE AS A LEADER IN CULTURAL MEDIATION. IT IS A BENCHMARK FOR NEIGHBOURING MUNICIPALITIES THAT HAVE NOT YET IMPLEMENTED IT.

2. ART TO LIVE

- Arts initiation and training programme for children under 6 years of age
- Arts Training School programme for youth and adults
- Culture and Territory Programme: training and promotion of cultural practices for the rural population in 16 subdivisions.
- Programme for arts and culture creation and circulation
- The Reading Trolley: Reading programme on personal stories of reading and writing
- Annual STOA philosophy forum
- National and international festival programme

4. COMMUNICATION AND PARTICIPATION FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF SUSTAINABLE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT



- Design and development of a local communication strategy
- Visibility of cultural content for local and regional radio, television, and print spaces
- Development and production of the television programme “Culture From Here” and the radio programme “Eastern News Minute”

7. SOCIAL APPROPRIATION OF CULTURAL HERITAGE

- Live Lecture Series Programme: Local Memory and Identity
- “Meeting Living History”
- Promotion of a group of cultural heritage guardians with students from educational institutions
- Preparation of a pre-inventory of Cultural and Tourism Goods
- Creation of a Ceramics Identification Centre
- “Path Through the Vereda”
- Inventory and description of documentary heritage from the municipal historical archive
- Maintenance and conservation of the city’s cultural goods

6. PROMOTION OF CITIZEN CULTURE AND THE EXERCISE OF CITIZENSHIP FOR BUILDING A PLACE WHERE PEOPLE CAN LIVE HAPPILY

- Building a tourist information point
- “Art and Culture for Peace” Cultural Plaza programme
- Creation and coordination of a Local Tourism Board
- Training days for providers of tourist services in the city
- Participation in the ANATO Fair to promote the traditions from the city
- Annual Regional Forum on Territory, Culture, and Tourism



4. Impact

4.1 Direct Impacts

Impact on the Local Government

Throughout the plan's approval process, leaders demonstrated a clear understanding of the difference between what culture is and what is cultural, broadening their perspectives and, in some cases, adopting new vocabulary for them.

Impact on Culture and on Local Cultural Actors

The plan received widespread support from cultural agents and social actors. It was seen as guideline for local development:

- "It is a plan developed based on the needs of different social groups" (Social Leader, 2016).
- "It is a very well-conceived plan. It responds to demands much more clearly than the development plan. [...] The perspective on the [rural] countryside is very comprehensive." (Conciudauría Corporation, 2016).
- "It successfully scales beyond theory or scenario, is applicable to citizens' everyday life, and seeks to be a part of rural life, parts of the education system ..." (Nybram Cultural Corporation, 2016).

Impacts on the Territory and Population

- The plan led to an increase in the budget allocated to the Institute of Culture, as well as for international and national events that boost the local economy.
- Recognition of the Institute's fair payment policy for artists participating in the events.
- Promotion of creative ventures.



- Commitment to the collective defence of local natural resources and landscapes considered part of natural heritage.
- Formation of the Network of Local Agents for International Action and Cultural Development.

4.2 Assessment

Cultural public policies still require the use of more qualitative measurements that allow for interpretations and understandings that are closer to the lived reality of communities. Therefore, a Monitoring and Evaluation System was proposed for carrying out assessments and to seek out necessary concepts, methods, techniques, indicators, and other necessary systems.

Given the current lack of both baseline indicators and cultural data at the local level, one of the main challenges is to develop an assessment that uses a new baseline, and to expand the Monitoring and Evaluation System. This would help move towards a kind of regional development that is based on culture.

ONE OF THE KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF THIS INITIATIVE IS THAT IT REPLACES AN OUTDATED NOTION OF CULTURE AS A MEANS AND END FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT. THE MODERN PERSPECTIVE VIEWS CULTURE AS A CATALYST FOR THE SOCIAL AND POLITICAL TRANSFORMATION OF POPULATIONS.

4.3 Key Factors

- The Municipal Culture Plan has garnered significant recognition for the way it gathers experiences and lessons learned from the previous plan.
- It takes on a more participatory process that adopts qualitative and participatory diagnostic methodologies and techniques, which are close to and appropriate for their respective context, while integrating urban and rural perspectives.

- It includes an "innovative" methodology with techniques and tools for close consultation as well as some with open access including workshops, discussions with focus groups, expert consultations, and community consultations, among others.

4.4 Ongoing Work

The plan has different funds coming from local, regional, national, and international sources. Day by day it strengthens synergies with institutions, entities, sectors, and cultural actors that are part of the Municipal Culture System (SMCu). Among these are the Municipal Council of Culture and the Institute of Culture, which have formulated and manage a Cultural Information System alongside strategic partners: academics, researchers, managers, and creative entrepreneurs.

5. Further Information

Carmen de Viboral was a candidate for the third "UCLG Mexico City – Culture 21 International Award" (November 2017 - May of 2018). The jury for the award prepared its final report in June 2018 and requested that the UCLG Committee on Culture promote this project as one of the good practices of implementing Agenda 21 for Culture.

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