

COMPARATIVE STUDY OF INNOVATIVE MUNICIPAL MODELS IN CULTURAL LEISURE



AGENDA 2030 - SDGs



CULTURE 21: ACTIONS - COMMITMENTS

1. CULTURAL RIGHTS
8. CULTURE, INFORMATION AND KNOWLEDGE
9. GOVERNANCE OF CULTURE

MONITORING, INSTITUTIONAL, PARTNERSHIP, NETWORK, MAPPING, BASIC SERVICES, DEVELOPMENT, PEER-TO-PEER, CAPACITY, KNOWLEDGE

1. Montreal and culture

As a French-speaking cultural metropolis in North America, Montreal is known for its cultural vitality. Its unique identity is the result of a mixture of French, English, and Indigenous traditions, and is enriched even more every day by the cultures of the world that live there. Montreal has developed a cultural ecosystem that promotes professional, emerging, and amateur artistic expressions, access for all, and exposure to cultural events.

Montreal has invested in the development of its cultural and recreational facilities (Quartier des Spectacles, Maisons de la culture network, library network, recreation and community centres), as well as in its range of activities. For nearly 40 years, it has promoted decentralization in its neighbourhoods, which continues through the Quartiers Culturels approach, contributing to the strengthening of community identity, quality of life, and the cultural, social, and economic vitality of the city's neighbourhoods. Its actions focus on culture as a lever for social, economic, and cultural development, while contributing to social interactions and bonds.

Cultural recreation is a sector that was particularly affected by the effects of the pandemic through the closure of venues, cancellation of activities, isolation of citizens, the effects of the digital divide, and much more. The fragility of the sector was exacerbated by COVID-19, which caused a loss of revenue and public disengagement, among others. To help revive the sector, Montreal conducted a Comparative Municipal Models Study to help create a development strategy that would support cultural citizenship and participation. The Comparative Study addresses this need for one of the least documented sectors of municipal recreation.

The Comparative Study, or cultural recreation more broadly speaking, meets the objectives of Agenda 21 in terms of cultural rights and heritage, diversity, and creativity. It is also aligned with the Rome Charter and with the 2030 Agenda SDGs, in particular SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities), 17 (Partnerships for the Goals), and 3 (Good Health and Well-being).



THE GOAL OF THE STUDY IS TO IDENTIFY LOCAL, NATIONAL, AND INTERNATIONAL BEST PRACTICES IN INNOVATIVE CULTURAL RECREATION MODELS.

2. Project goals and implementation

2.1. Main goals and specific objectives

The purpose of the comparative study is to identify local, national, and international best practices in innovative municipal cultural recreation models. The specific objectives are:

- To identify good practices.
- To identify success and risk factors.
- To suggest ways to contribute to the development of municipal cultural recreation activities.

2.2. Project development

Through research, documentary evidence, and interviews with 10 cities, the strategies, issues, and practices of Barcelona (Spain), Bogotá (Colombia), Brasilia (Brazil), Copenhagen (Denmark), Manchester (United Kingdom), San Francisco (United States), Seoul (South Korea), Sydney (Australia), Trois-Rivières (Canada), and Vancouver (Canada) were analyzed in order to identify inspiring examples of municipal intervention in the area of cultural recreation and amateur artistic practices that could be implemented in Montreal.

The analysis identified three models and compared approaches across a range of indicators (cultural action, policy, governance, partnerships, community and recreation organizations, citizen participation, disciplines, infrastructure and facilities):

- Partner Municipality: the city as a partner of the communities and not as a direct intervener;
- Welfare Municipality: the state is at the heart of policies and views the communities as beneficiaries;
- Hybrid model: seeking a balance between a strong civil society and a social-democratic form of government.

This documentary process has made it possible to identify a variety of approaches that would give life to citizen cultural expressions. Within the post-pandemic recovery context, the study contributed to the dissemination of good practices on cultural recreation as a lever for development, social cohesion, and the improvement of quality of life and the environment. It also contributed to the process of updating the role of the Department of Culture in cultural recreation so as to implement a development strategy and promote cohesive municipal actions with the different boroughs and organizations.

The target audience is recreation stakeholders, municipal officials, and cultural workers. The study provided several strategies and initiatives (public-private partnerships, infrastructure and facilities, the content on offer, the use of public spaces, etc.) that could be used to improve the services offered by the municipality and support organizations in developing their own events. It is a source of inspiration for creating interdepartmental ties and generating opportunities for collaboration between municipalities, organizations, and institutions in order to promote cultural and citizen participation. The results of this study allow us to reflect on development perspectives and to establish concrete lines of action.



THE ANALYSIS IDENTIFIED THREE MODELS – PARTNER MUNICIPALITY, WELFARE MUNICIPALITY, AND A HYBRID MODEL – AND COMPARED THE APPROACHES ACROSS A RANGE OF INDICATORS.

3. Impacts

3.1. Direct impacts

The main impact was the follow-up planning: a development strategy to issue a series of recommendations and prioritize actions that would position cultural recreation and its sustainable development at the heart of municipal activities. This would increase the accessibility of cultural participation and the dissemination of citizen creation. The study has made it possible to document and demonstrate how cultural recreation contributes to the development of a strong society, establishing its position as a fundamental building block for well-being and for the healthcare system in general.

3.2. Assessment

The success of the Comparative Study on Innovative Municipal Cultural Recreation Models relied heavily on the support of the stakeholders (Artenso, members of the multi-sectoral monitoring committee, and municipalities responding to the study). In addition, the high level of involvement from colleagues throughout the city neighbourhoods, and in the various central services, has led to both local and metropolitan mobilization. The fact that the process was listed as a priority for the Cultural Development Department of the Department of Culture made it possible to allocate the resources that would contribute to the successful completion of the project.



THE STUDY PROVIDED SEVERAL STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE THE SERVICES OFFERED BY THE MUNICIPALITY AND SUPPORT ORGANIZATIONS IN DEVELOPING THEIR OWN EVENTS.

3.3. Continuity

At the same time, the Department of Service carried out a diagnosis of amateur artistic practices to register the specialized places and facilities throughout Montreal. In a second phase, these two documents aim to draft and design measures, actions, and objectives on the development of cultural recreation by analyzing the cultural recreation and amateur artistic practice ecosystems. The work will be supervised by an expert committee composed of stakeholders from the field and a follow-up and mobilization committee composed of municipal employees.

4. Further information

Montreal was a candidate for the fifth UCLG Mexico City – Culture 21 International Award (February - June 2022). The jury for the award drew up its final report in September of 2022, and requested that the UCLG Committee on Culture promote this project as one of the good practices implemented under Agenda 21 for culture.

This report was written by Marie-Ève Courchesne, Commissioner for Culture, Recreation, and Amateur Art, Montreal, Quebec, Canada.

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