

# LIVING MY CULTURE HERE / TOWARDS A CULTURAL AND COLLECTIVE RECOVERY



## AGENDA 2030 - SDGs



## CULTURE 21: ACTIONS - COMMITMENTS

1. CULTURAL RIGHTS
6. CULTURE, EQUITY AND SOCIAL INCLUSION
9. GOVERNANCE OF CULTURE

WELL-BEING, INCLUSION, INTERGENERATIONAL, COMMUNITY, PUBLIC SPACE, DIGITAL, ACCESS, CITIZENSHIP, SUPPORT, INSTITUTIONAL



## 1. Vaudreuil–Dorion and culture

Vaudreuil–Dorion is located near Montreal and has a population of 43,000, but it is estimated that nearly 20,000 new citizens will move there by 2031. The immigrant population increased from 5% in 2001 to 18% in 2016, which led to a loss in social cohesion. In response, the I am... project was confirmed in 2016 by the UCLG Mexico City – Culture 21 International Award. The political will to continue this work remains a priority and has been reinforced by the catastrophic effects of the global pandemic on the local cultural fabric.

The project Living My Culture was conceived and implemented in order to respond to the situation. It allowed citizens to enjoy their cultural rights while also adhering to the strict public health measures, and the guidelines of Agenda 21 for culture, especially with regard to equity and social inclusion, public space, and cultural rights.

The Culture Department has mobilized its teams to plan the implementation of structuring cultural actions aimed at sustainable cultural revival for the community, and at addressing the impacts of the pandemic on mental health. Actions are developed jointly between municipal services and cultural and community actors, and therefore largely adhere to the goal of achieving sustainable cities under the United Nations 2030 Agenda.

**THE PROJECT AIMS TO DEVELOP PHYSICAL AND EXPRESSIVE SPACES TO PROMOTE CITIZEN CULTURAL ACTIONS.**

## 2. Project goals and implementation

### 2.1. Main goal and specific objectives

The project's goal is to achieve a sustainable post-pandemic cultural revival by implementing structuring actions to create a fertile ground that would establish and support multiplying citizen-led cultural initiatives. In addition, it aims to develop physical and expressive spaces to promote citizen cultural actions.



## 2.2. Project development

The aim of the Cultural Service teams was therefore to enable citizens to regain the possibility of living their culture and recover by doing so. This involved viable and sustainable mechanisms, despite the strict public health measures. In order to do so, it was vital to mobilize all municipal services, for whom the cultural response to recovery was the clearest approach. This demonstrated a long-term approach to anchoring the city's work in culture, particularly internally.

Since the project's goal is to reach all citizens of all ages, particular attention has been paid to inclusiveness through the development of actions that respond to different issues and lived realities. It is composed of four structuring cultural actions:

- Cultural dissemination to seniors confined to their homes or isolated in their care residences, with the aim of addressing issues of loneliness and mental health as a major regional problem. The goal would be to mobilize and provide work to artists and cultural actors, ultimately creating and disseminating travelling shows (musical presentations, performances).
- Implementation of the municipal citizen cultural platform I am MOZAIK, in order to improve cultural access despite the lockdown measures. This platform included a virtual cultural program with free access (music, theatre, poetry, etc.) and a tool for citizen expression (MOZAIK cultural newspaper) where citizens and cultural organizations were invited to share on culture and the pandemic.
- Transformation of the city into an outdoor exhibition circuit to compensate for the closure of indoor and/or private cultural sites. Outdoor exhibits were created so that citizens could visit them safely. Partnerships between authors and visual artists were also another approach, offering poetry and technology tours.
- Creating Le 405 park and making it a completely safe cultural destination during the summer season, encouraging citizen cultural initiatives in order to spur a cultural revival that is truly community-led.



## 3. Impacts

### 3.1. Direct impacts

In order to facilitate a cultural revival through its citizens, municipal services worked together to create physical and communication spaces that encourage initiatives. Two of the key initiatives were awarded: the Je suis MOZAIK citizen cultural media and the development of Le 405 park. The project very quickly led to a multitude of collaborations with local actors, and gave citizens' back their rights and spaces where they could live their culture.

### 3.2. Assessment

The evaluation was done based on different indicators for each of the projects carried out, depending on the timing and the actions, and included: reports by the field teams on cultural dissemination to seniors; performance indicators for the web platform, site views and the number of downloads for the city on display; and, finally, an evaluation of the number of visitors to Le 405 park, as well as testimonies from citizens for whom it was of great importance throughout the pandemic.

**IT WAS VITAL TO MOBILIZE ALL MUNICIPAL SERVICES, FOR WHICH  
THE CULTURAL RESPONSE WAS THE CLEAREST APPROACH.**



### 3.3. Key factors

- The background of the I am... project
- Citizens' recovery of their cultural rights as an important part of their revitalization.
- The reappropriation by citizens of their culture in both virtual (MOZAIK platform) or physical (Le 405 park) places of sharing.

### 3.4. Continuity

The success of the actions has led elected officials and the municipal administration to reflect on the sustainability of certain actions, which could further improve the city's performance even after the pandemic. The success Le 405 Park has revealed the need for public spaces for cultural exchange and meeting places. The MOZAIK platform has also become a benchmark for cultural exchange and dissemination. A cultural parade was recently added to the project in order to reach citizens directly in their neighbourhoods.

**TWO OF THE INITIATIVES WERE AWARDED: THE I AM MOZAIK CITIZEN CULTURAL MEDIA, AND LE 405 PARK.**



## 4. Further information

Vaudreuil-Dorion 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.

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