

## THE CREATIVE, CULTURAL AND DIGITAL INDUSTRIES AS AGENTS OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN THE CITY OF GUADALAJARA



DEVELOPMENT LOCAL CREATIVITY  
CREATIVE INDUSTRIES TECHNOLOGY  
INNOVATION SUSTAINABLE DIGITAL  
ECONOMIC CULTURAL

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### 1. Guadalajara and culture

Guadalajara, the capital of Jalisco, is located in western Mexico, and is one of the most populated cities in the country. Founded in 1542, it has historically been the cradle of great Mexican cultural movements. For example, muralism with José Clemente Orozco, Mexican surrealism with María Izquierdo and the architectural modernism of Luis Barragán. Also, the internationalisation of Jalisco music with Consuelo Velázquez and the “mariachi”, as well as the success of Guillermo del Toro’s Mexican cinema. In addition, the city has gained attention for its technological development and innovation, to such an extent that it has been labelled as the Mexican “Silicon Valley”.

In 2010, the federal government issued a call for proposals to develop a global technological and creative production district in the country. Guadalajara, which had already identified the creative, cultural and digital industries as an opportunity to bring development and wellbeing to its inhabitants, was selected to host the project.

In 2017, the city was designated to be part of the UNESCO Creative Cities Network, in the Media Arts category. Since then, more focused efforts were made to promote, highlight and link local creative and digital industries projects. Furthermore, the Directorate of Creative Industries was created in 2021, the first governmental body of its kind in Mexico. This unit manages a comprehensive strategy to boost the creative industries sector, which produces a chain reaction.

Guadalajara's Municipal Development and Governance Plan 2021-2024 establishes the strategies: a) Promote creative industries and encourage artistic manifestations; b) Strengthen cultural industries and creative enterprises to generate and disseminate their contents; c) Promote local artistic creation, cultural enterprises and creativity-based industries in the city. Guadalajara currently hosts major international events such as the International Book Fair, the Guadalajara International Film Festival, Intermoda, and Pixelatl Festival, among others.

**The objective is to manage a strategy to boost the local creative ecosystem in order to establish a sustainable development alternative that has a social, cultural and economic impact on the city and its population through creativity and innovation.**

## **2. Goals and project implementation**

### **2.1. Main aim and specific goals**

The main objective of the initiative is to manage a strategy to boost the creative industries sector in Guadalajara, which will establish a sustainable development alternative that will have a social, cultural and economic impact on the city, as well as in all sectors of its population, through creativity and innovation.

The specific objectives of the project are: (i) positioning the city of Guadalajara internationally as a relevant actor in the field of creative industries, (ii) strengthening the local creative ecosystem through the adoption of good practices and the attraction of global talent, (iii) fostering and promoting creative and digital entrepreneurship to establish sustainable businesses with a social perspective, (iv) providing spaces for the training, professionalisation and networking of talent in the digital and traditional creative industries, and (v) establishing mechanisms that enable the democratisation of information and technological tools.

### **2.2. Development of the project**

Guadalajara, in line with its entrepreneurial actions in the face of the oscillating challenges, obstacles and opportunities of current events, has identified in the creative, cultural and digital industries the opportunity to promote the development and wellbeing of its inhabitants. Since the establishment of the Directorate of Creative Industries (DIC), Guadalajara has undertaken a comprehensive strategy to boost the creative industries sector in order to produce a chain reaction, i.e. to consolidate the local creative ecosystem, attract global talent and forge strategic alliances that will enable its international



positioning. All of the above with the primary objective of establishing a sustainable development alternative that has a social, cultural and economic impact on the city and its population, through creativity and innovation.

## Guadalajara has identified the creative, cultural and digital industries as an opportunity to promote the development and wellbeing of its inhabitants.

Since its creation in 2021, the DIC has implemented the following tools that have served to materialise the aforementioned objectives. Also, over the years, they have become public policies:

- **Creativa GDL:** Considered the flagship programme of the DIC, its objective is to promote and boost creative and digital entrepreneurship through incubation and acceleration processes, with the aim of developing sustainable business units with a social perspective. Since its foundation in 2021, it has supported, in Mexico and other Spanish-speaking countries, more than 145 projects focused on virtual reality, augmented reality, video games, animation and audiovisual and musical production. The programme is supported by a network of strategic allies to provide a comprehensive training experience: Universities to disseminate the programme and attract talent, specialists in the aforementioned fields to provide mentoring and training courses, as well as entrepreneurs for liaison and investment.
- **Guadalajara Disueña:** Created in 2023, it was established as a platform for the training, professionalisation and networking of talents in the area of design and traditional creative industries. In its first generation, it benefited 32 integral design talents - in the leather goods, textile, furniture and jewellery industries - who received more than 60 hours of accompaniment and training by business leaders and renowned designers, coaching in forming business units and dissemination of their works in the media.



- **Catapulta Creativa:** Launched in June 2023, it is a project that promotes the democratisation of information and technological tools through the academic curriculum, with the aim of training and involving the population. In most cases, and as a way of retribution, graduates of both Creativa GDL and Disueña are the ones who lead the activities.
- **International agenda:** International cooperation efforts that have allowed the adoption of good practices to enhance the capacities of the local ecosystem, such as joining the UNESCO Creative Cities Network in Digital Arts, the designation as World Book Capital, the signing of cooperation agreements with Angouleme (France) and Bogotá (Colombia), as well as collaboration with events such as the Pixelatl Festival and Talent Land.

## 3. Impacts

### 3.1. Direct impacts

The impacts of these initiatives have been the following:

- **Creativa GDL Programme:** Support to 145 projects through incubation and acceleration processes over 3 generations of the programme. More than 2200 applications were received from Mexico and other countries such as Colombia, Argentina, Ecuador, Venezuela, Uruguay and Chile.
- **Guadalajara Disueña Programme:** More than 350 applications were received, and 32 participants were selected. They were offered more than 66 hours of specialised accompaniment.
- **Catapulta Creativa:** More than 144 activities have been carried out, benefitting around 3500 people.

### 3.2. Key factors

Guadalajara is developing a comprehensive programme that addresses the guidelines and objectives set by global cultural governance with the intention of meeting local needs. In this sense, it has positioned the creative, cultural and digital industries as relevant agents of change in the local sphere thanks to the work developed by the DIC, an entity that has formulated public policies in this area.

Likewise, and as suggested by the Rome Charter, it has launched programmes that contribute to the development of key competencies among citizens, through actions such as the promotion and support of digital creative entrepreneurship, the training and professionalisation of traditional creative talent and the democratisation of information and technological tools through capacity building.

**Creativa GDL supported 145 projects through incubation and acceleration processes; Guadalajara Disueña offered 166 hours of specialised accompaniment to 32 participants; and Catapulta Creativa carried out more than 144 activities for 3500 people.**

## 4. Further information

This article was written by Carlos Bañuelos Barrios, Responsible for the General Coordination of Economic Development of the Government of Guadalajara, Jalisco, Mexico. The photographs featured in this good practice belong to the Municipality of Guadalajara.

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