

ENSAIO GERAL



AGENDA 2030 - SDGs



CULTURE 21 ACTIONS - COMMITMENTS

1. CULTURAL RIGHTS
5. CULTURE AND EDUCATION
6. CULTURE, EQUITY AND SOCIAL INCUSION

**COMMUNITY, CULTURAL, SUPPORT, INCLUSION,
EXCHANGE OF EXPERIENCES, EDUCATION,
PROMOTION, ARTS, ACCESS, CULTURAL RIGHTS**



1. Lisbon and culture

Lisbon is a city with a vibrant cultural life with traditional venues, unconventional venues, private not-for-profit cultural associations/foundations, and public cultural companies. However, the Lisbon metropolitan area has 2.869.033 inhabitants, of which 16.9% are at risk of poverty or social exclusion and often do not have the opportunity to access and enjoy cultural events.

The Lisbon City Council believes that the right to culture is a prerequisite for a society that promotes freedom of thought and expression and equal opportunities for all. The guarantee of this right and the full exercise of contemporary democracy presuppose broad access to culture as a factor of knowledge, creation, enjoyment, participation and development. Cultural offer is one way of ensuring this, but it is also essential that it is accessible to everyone. Therefore, this project aligns with the "Strategies for Culture of the Municipality of Lisbon (2022).

2. Project goals and implementation

2.1. Main goal and specific objectives

The general aim of ENSAIO GERAL is to promote access to culture for people at risk of social exclusion, seeking inclusion through culture and making them feel part of cultural life and to contribute to the creation of relational ties with the artistic world and its professionals. Also, it aims to raise awareness of the social responsibility of cultural institutions. Its specific goals are:



THE LISBON CITY COUNCIL BELIEVES THAT THE RIGHT TO CULTURE IS A PREREQUISITE FOR A SOCIETY THAT PROMOTES FREEDOM OF THOUGHT AND EXPRESSION AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL.

- a) Achieving social inclusion through culture.
- b) Reducing cultural illiteracy.
- c) Making these special audiences feel part of the cultural life of the city:
 - » Getting them socially involved by taking them to cultural events (makes them feel socially included);
 - » Making them 'discover' culture and that culture is also for them;
 - » Providing potentially transformative experiences;
 - » Promoting close contact with artists (getting to know them and have a conversation about the performance) or visit the theatre building and backstage.
 - » Avoiding wasting empty seats without incurring costs, including additional human resources.
 - » Increasing the social responsibility of cultural institutions.
- d) Avoiding wasting empty seats without incurring costs, including additional human resources.
- e) Increasing the social responsibility of cultural institutions.


2.2. Development of the project

The programme was proposed and initiated by Polo Cultural Gaivotas | Boavista - Loja Lisboa Cultura as a result of the daily contact with cultural agents and, as a centre for artistic creation and capacity building.

The beneficiaries of this programme are people at risk of social exclusion of any kind, from shelters for children and adolescents, institutions that support emigrants and refugees, people with physical or mental disabilities, or addicts or ex-convicts. The concept of ENSAIO GERAL is essentially facilitating access to culture for people who have more difficulties in accessing and enjoying this fundamental right. However, the main reference criterion for the audience's choice is the socio-economic one. Other criteria taken into account, are social backgrounds that usually reduces the practice of cultural enjoyment (including those who wouldn't identify with the cultural places or cultural events), or those who live in social environments that don't encourage cultural habits (e.g. shelters), in short, groups that, for various reasons, have a higher incidence of cultural illiteracy.

ENSAIO GERAL's main action is to take selected audiences to selected performances.

Polo Cultural Gaivotas | Boavista - Loja Lisboa Cultura (LLC) mediates the search for new audiences and available venues while points out to artistic institutions the need to intensify the search for greater social accessibility to culture.



ENSAIO GERAL SEEKS INCLUSION THROUGH CULTURE, AND MAKING PEOPLE IN SOCIAL EXCLUSION FEEL PART OF CULTURAL LIFE AND TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE CREATION OF RELATIONAL TIES WITH THE ARTISTIC WORLD AND ITS PROFESSIONALS.

LLC bridges the gap between artistic structures with empty venues during dress rehearsals (or regular performances) and people at risk of social exclusion, supported by third sector or non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

Making the match audiences - performances LLC also seeks the appropriate performance for each audience, considering that some content may be disturbing for these specific people.

Dress rehearsals are also strategically chosen moments because:

- a) Do not involve any costs for the organiser;
- b) Are moments that more easily promote direct contact between the audience and the artists;
- c) Facilitate a possible visit to the theatre and backstage.

However, venues often offer tickets for public performances and our audiences also take advantage of these opportunities.

The LLC brings audiences and performances together, knowing that neither third sector organisations nor cultural institutions have the resources to support this type of initiative. In its daily work, the LLC, driven by its direct proximity to cultural operators, seeks to carry out projects that are deemed necessary for the cultural sector and that the private sector is unable to provide, thus fulfilling its public service mission.

The program has two different types of partners:

- (1) Artistic structures and concert halls (venues), which we not only help to develop a socially responsible approach, but also provide them with contact with unlikely audiences and thus increase their audiences.
- (2) Third sector organisations, private social welfare institutions, shelters, associations supporting migrants and refugees, organisations supporting the recovery of people with addiction and all kinds of organisations that combat social exclusion.



3. Impacts

3.1. Direct impacts

In the first year we had 364 spectators, many of whom had never attended such an event before. Many of the cultural organisations hadn't had any previous contact with people at risk of social exclusion, and through this project they became aware of the importance of arts and culture for these audiences.

Some of the audience reactions were very positive, including the promotion of enrollment in a circus school, and the explicit appreciation towards the musicians' explanations before their performance.

The Municipal Council is now thinking of expanding the scope of ENSAIO GERAL in different ways, such as negotiating participation in the project with the cultural organisations that receive municipal financial support, or involving the venues of the Um Teatro em Cada Bairro network.

ENSAIO GERAL guarantees the effective exercise of the right to cultural enjoyment, equality and dignity, as well as sustainability (seizing the opportunity to occupy a space that would otherwise be empty).

3.2. Evaluation

At the beginning (February 2023), this was a pilot project and therefore, it was specially the implementation planning that was designed.

The tasks were:

- a) mapping the two types of agents/stakeholders (audiences and venues);
- b) creation of a small group of 5 third sector partners and 5 cultural agents – one month to execute;
- c) implementation of the pilot project/partnerships - 31.03.2023;
- d) implementation of the overall project - until 31.12.2023;
- e) internal and external communication of the project - phased and to accompany the dates of the tasks.



This planning was accomplished. Expectations were exceeded in the number of partners, performances and public.

In the early future will be designed methodologies such as metrical indicators and goals (as number of new partners, public, diversity of types of audiences and cultural activities) and will be established instruments of evaluation (satisfaction surveys).

3.3. Key factors

A very good knowledge of the team of both the third sector and the cultural sector (the players and the exact focal points).

Since everything is the result of the bridge created between those who have it and those who need it, in other words between those who have seats and those who want to go and attend performances, the whole process is highly unbureaucratic and functional, requiring only good coordination between Polo Cultural Gaivotas | Boavista - Loja Lisboa Cultura (LLC) and the focal points of any of our partners. The fact that there is no cost to either party is another key factor.

3.4. Continuity

As the matchmaking is part of the daily work of Loja Lisboa Cultura, the operating costs are part of its regular budget. LLC is part of a larger department (Divisão de Ação Cultural) that, after the launch of ENSAIO GERAL, began to think about expanding its scope in various ways:

- a) Negotiating participation in the project with the cultural organisations that receive financial support from Lisbon Municipality.
- b) Involving the venues integrating the network Um Teatro Em Cada Bairro (a network of venues and spaces for artistic creation and presentation that respond to the growing demand for work and presentation spaces in the city, as well as involvement and proximity work on a territorial and community basis).

In terms of replication, this is a very simple project that can be implemented quickly. It only requires the team to have a very good knowledge of both the third sector and the cultural sector.



ACCESS TO DRESS REHEARSALS DOES NOT INVOLVE ANY COSTS FOR THE ORGANISERS, AND ALLOWS TO BOTH CONNECT WITH THE ARTISTS AND VISIT THE THEATRE AND BACKSTAGE.

4. Further information

Lisbon was a candidate for the sixth UCLG – Mexico City – Culture 21 – International Award (November 2023 – March 2024). The jury for the award drew up its final report in June 2024, and requested that the Committee on Culture promote this project as one of the good practices to be implemented through Agenda 21 for culture.

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