



**TALCA**  
CIUDAD PILOTO • CULTURA 21  
Pilot City for Agenda 21 for culture,  
United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG)

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## **CULTURA 21: ACTIONS PERSPECTIVES AND RECOMMENDATIONS BASED ON THE EXPERIENCE OF TALCA**

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The "Pilot-cities" program, launched in preparation for the [new Agenda 21 for culture](#), seeks to empower beneficiary cities with the implications that culture has on local sustainable development. This is to the extent that policies in these areas include external support, consulting, and a boost in international visibility.

Included in the specific aims of the 2014 "Pilot-cities" program was the "presentation of the new Agenda 21 for culture draft, and promotion of a discussion on its content, methods, and feasibility with experts and the city's cultural actors."

During Dr. Beatriz García's visit to Talca in November of 2014, the draft of the new Agenda 21 for culture was presented and discussed. The following issues were the most prominent contributions to the draft, spotlighting the critical feedback of the city and its cultural actors.

## A. CULTURAL RIGHTS

Talca is a young city with a large student population. The city's youth, in particular those who are underage carry high expectations, but often feel they are culturally invisible to the city. The cultural rights of minors who hold strong opinions and the ability to express them do not have the right to vote. They therefore require special consideration.

In the case of youth belonging to disadvantaged groups and/or those with less access to education, a thorough effort to help them understand and explore their cultural rights could offset their feelings of detachment. It could also deter them from inclinations toward vandalism, such as public graffiti, in communities where they do not value, or feel valued, in their role as citizens.

## B. AND F. CULTURE, DIVERSITY AND SOCIAL INCLUSION

Community meeting spaces like the Culture Centre in Talca are essential to break down generational and social barriers.

Universities must be encouraged to maximize their civic role and contribute to exchange between diverse communities. It is not enough to offer high level programs. Rather they must identify and overcome barriers in order to understand the activities beyond those interest groups directly involved.

## C. CULTURE AND EDUCATION

The artistic education offered by local schools opens doors for youth, but it also creates expectations. Outside of offering a primary and secondary education, it must also explore options for ensuring its own recognition in the context of higher education.

Artistic education must evolve with time and overcome established norms. The tradition of teaching music, visual arts, and theatre, among others, as separate disciplines is a challenge made by newer generations of youth. Consequently, we must continue breaking fragmented

visions of culture. This is necessary not only from a "cultural policy" perspective, but rather an educational one.

## D. CULTURE AND ECOLOGY

The recognition and celebration of local gastronomy is an essential part of cultural identity. It is also a way of expressing the value of unique geographical contexts through local products.

Just like gastronomy, we must recognise the value of other types of products and forms of craftsmanship. These must be interpreted as a form of creative and cultural industry that can advance emerging types of expression, rather than only traditional ones. The latter may include, for example, making modern jewelry using older techniques and materials.

The landscape is another fundamental aspect of identity. Cities like Talca act as an extraordinary laboratory for testing the richness that can come from an honest dialogue between urban and rural contexts. However, this requires a great deal of sensitivity and a long-term work program to bridge gaps. The point of departure can be interpreted as the kind of "identity crisis" that currently exists in Talca. This crisis must also be seen as an opportunity

## E. CULTURE AND ECONOMY

The most entrepreneurial actors in the private sector understand the value of involving themselves in their immediate surroundings and developing civic functions. This applies to sponsorships as much as to transfers of knowledge like management techniques. Nevertheless, limited perceptions of what culture may encompass, compounded by a lack of incentives to become members of cultural networks, explain an absence of common initiatives.

The development of "cultural management" workshops, stimulating participation from the hotel, commercial, and public industries, is an effective way of making the private sector feel valued. When cultural actors include private entities in the process, it helps to positively develop conversations on the differences between sectors. This emphasises the importance of simultaneously questioning and protecting certain aspects of what are considered to be offered culturally, rather than commercially.

## G. CULTURE AND PUBLIC SPACES

Both senses of community and belonging are always forged in public spaces. In Talca, the destruction of historic public spaces and the loss of material heritage are due to a regular cycle of seismic activity. It has made the city's need for physical and symbolical reconstruction very clear. This is to maintain and reinforce its collective identity.

Citizens' appropriation of public spaces is built not only through cultural events, but also by stimulating everyday interaction between social and generational classes. Joint work efforts between cultural and environmental actors, such as cleaning and landscaping, are important.

In places that have lost their material heritage, specific projects for reconstructing collective memory are crucial for safeguarding the importance of public spaces as places of interaction and citizenship building. These may include both physical and virtual signposts in urban areas that give a narrative, or history, of the city, rather than just directions.

## H. CULTURE AND KNOWLEDGE

Means of communication and mass media are fundamental elements in the accessible and pervasive dissemination of ideas into everyday life. It is essential that traditional media like press, radio, and television are used as much as newer ones, such as digital networks, in the city's cultural strategy

University cities like Talca have the added opportunity of maximizing a fusion of culture and knowledge in a creative, innovative, and sustainable way. This can be achieved particularly through the student community with incentives and means to act as agents of communication. Examples include creating independent magazines or discussion forums.

New technology offers a wide variety of affordable platforms. It is important to ensure that access to these platforms is varied. (See section B)

## I. GOVERNANCE OF CULTURE

The creation of a "Multi-sectorial Cultural Network" helps avoid the replication initiatives and improve the transferral of knowledge between various specialists.

The primary challenge in making such networks a reality is perceived "lack of time", or added workload, which "force cooperation" between actors that might be more flexible without being forced into commitments.

To overcome this perception we must identify specific areas of cooperation, create a concrete schedule for obtaining results, and involve actors without a previous history of collaboration that can provide entirely new perspectives.

It is also essential that the network is centred upon a work program which is not dominant over another actor or sector. Instead, it must be a "genuinely collective project".

The fundamental ambition in Talca is to create a communal "identity project", and thoroughly explore it throughout 2015. It will offer an opportunity to test the immediate benefits of this network.