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## TERRASSA WHITE PAPER ON CULTURE



DEMOCRACY  
STRATEGY CROSS-SECTORIAL  
GOVERNANCE  
CREATIVITY CITIZENSHIP  
HERITAGE INNOVATION  
PARTICIPATION  
INSTITUTIONAL

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### 1. Context

Terrassa is a medium-sized city in the province of Barcelona (Spain). As of January of 2017, it had a population of 217,000. It is an ancient Roman city, and was once the production centre for the region's textile industry. Today, it is an important hub for roads and trains in Catalonia. It also has a broad social sphere that provides very diverse cultural activities which also compliment the city's architectural heritage. Up until the middle of the last decade, City Council policies were geared towards democratising access to culture through public services, and creating municipal facilities for them. In 2010, along with the voluntary sector, the Council of Arts and Culture identified the complexity of the city's cultural environment. As a result, the city adopted a process of participation, consultation, and joint reflection to lay the foundations for an action plan on cultural policy.

### 2. Objective

The white paper aims to turn culture into a shared project among all the city's stakeholders. It is committed to creativity and innovation through a focus on the sector's needs and the participatory development of a roadmap for the next few years.



**THE WHITE PAPER COMBINES REFLECTIONS BY EXPERTS ON STRATEGIC LINES THAT WILL DEFINE THE CITY'S CULTURAL FUTURE AND OUTLINES OVER 100 PROPOSALS RELATED TO: THE PERFORMING ARTS, VISUAL ARTS, TRADITIONAL AND POPULAR CULTURE, MUSIC, READING AND LITERATURE, AND CULTURAL INDUSTRIES.**

### **3. Origins of the project**

The cultural policy of the Terrassa City Council was characterised by its commitment to building public cultural facilities to enable citizens' access to culture. Between 2009 and 2010 the city established the Council of Arts and Culture, aimed at carrying out an assessment of the cultural sector in order to later develop an action plan. The assessment process confirmed the depth and diversity of the city's cultural life. In order to avoid an action plan that was not reflective of the reality in the sector, the City Council and the Council of Arts and Culture decided to broaden the scope of the investigation through a process of social partnership and participation. This would rely on the city's cultural fabric including professionals, business networks and social economy in the cultural sector, and citizens in general.

### **4. Content and development**

The participatory process that led to the development of the Terrassa white paper took place between 2013 and 2015, and stemmed from three specific events. The first was the Terrassa Congress of Culture in January of 2013. This brought together representatives from throughout the sector and confirmed the need to deepen knowledge of the sphere's ecosystem. As a result, projects were organised around five key areas: governance, culture as a tool for social cohesion, cultural capital and external image, innovation and creativity, and connectivity. These areas helped structure the phase of citizen partnership and participation,



marked by two particularly significant events. First, a series of conferences were held from April to May of 2015 in which a number of figures reflected on each of the key areas. Second, in September of 2014, ten work groups were established, with two for each area, with open citizen participation and facilitated by specialists in the area.

## **THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE TERRASSA WHITE PAPER STEMMED FROM 3 SPECIFIC EVENTS: THE TERRASSA CONGRESS OF CULTURE, AND A PHASE OF CITIZEN PARTNERSHIP AND PARTICIPATION, INCLUDING A SERIES OF CONFERENCES AS WELL AS 10 WORK GROUPS ESTABLISHED WITH OPEN CITIZEN PARTICIPATION AND FACILITATED BY SPECIALISTS IN THE AREA.**

The results of this process were recorded in the white paper, which combines reflections by experts on strategic lines that will define the city's cultural future. The document also outlines over 100 proposals that are related to each of the areas and linked to different cultural sectors, including the performing arts, visual arts, traditional and popular culture, music, reading and literature, and cultural industries.

### **5. Primary stakeholders**

The Municipal Council of Arts and Culture of Terrassa started the initiative and led the project politically, alongside the Councillor for Culture from the City Council. The Council is a participation body of the city comprised of local entities in the cultural sphere, the City Council's cultural services, and non-municipal cultural institutions throughout the city. These include the National Museum of Science and Technology of Catalonia, the Institute of Theatre, the Catalonia Graduate School of Film and Audiovisual Production, the Textile Documentation Centre, and others. The participative process was coordinated by the technical staff of the municipal Cultural Services. The white paper contains contributions from notable figures from local



and Catalan culture. Throughout the process, participation by cultural sector entities and citizens was essential. This helped to recognise their complexity. All of this made it possible to create and disseminate a shared analysis and roadmap on the future of culture in the city.

## IT IS COMMITTEE TO CREATIVITY AND INNOVATION THROUGH A FOCUS ON THE SECTOR'S NEEDS AND THE PARTICIPATORY DEVELOPMENT OF A ROADMAP FOR THE NEX YEARS.

### 6. Evaluation

The project has set a trend for refocusing Terrassa's cultural policy. Municipal political groups accepted the proposals of the white paper which eventually became the common reference document. From this perspective, the outlook is very positive. With regard to the application of the measures outlined in the document, particularly in the area of investments, it has not been possible to turn positive reception of the white paper into significant, concrete increases in funds invested in culture. However, there is room for advocacy among municipal political groups.

### 7. Recommendations

In our case the assessment was made by a specialist. Given the results, we recommend that the assessment phase also be participatory so that a certain level of multisectoral homogeneity can be created in the process of analysis and improvement. Working with a participatory method, this diagnostic stage may ensure a greater degree of homogeneity in the final results.



## 8. Other information

This article was written by Pietat Hernández Núñez (Director of Cultural Services of Terrassa) and Guillem Ramírez Chico (UCLG).

Terrassa participated in the European Pilot Cities programme, promoted by the UCLG Committee on Culture and Culture Action Europe.

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