



culture 21
UCLG Committee

BARCELONA: PEER LEARNING VISIT REPORT

NOVEMBER 2024



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UCLG
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PEER LEARNING REPORT



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INTRODUCTION

The peer learning visit held in Barcelona from November 26 to 28, 2024, was organized under the Leading Cities programme of the UCLG Committee on Culture. This initiative aims to foster peer learning and capacity-building on culture and local sustainable development among cities worldwide.

The visit focused on cultural mediation, aligning with Barcelona's Cultural Rights Plan "Fem Cultura" approved in 2022, concretely with Measure #8 "City Museums: innovation, education and the right to participate in Barcelona's cultural heritage", which includes a line of action, among others, based on "promoting the creation of mediation and community interrelation services within the structure of the facilities or in close relationship, and the International Conference for Cultural Rights "Culturopolis" held the same year.

More specifically, the aims of the visit included the following:

- To present and discuss the general context of cultural policies in Barcelona and participant cities and organisations, and how they relate to cultural rights and local sustainable development;
- To become familiar with key cultural agents and projects in Barcelona, and to learn from their achievements;
- To learn about the state of the art and new perspectives on cultural mediation in Barcelona and participating cities and organisations, and more concretely, to share the results of the study carried out in 2023-2024, "[State of the Art and New Perspectives on Cultural Mediation in Barcelona](#)", written by local expert Cristian Añó, with cities that have significant experience in this field;
- To address the specific theme of cultural mediation with policies, programmes and activities focused on museums and heritage;
- To provide an informal networking space for participating cities and other stakeholders to meet and exchange views, with opportunities to ask questions, discuss opportunities and challenges and share experiences.

The event brought together representatives from cities that are leaders in cultural policies, cultural mediation and sustainable development. Participating cities included **Montreal, Lisbon** and **Rio de Janeiro**, as well as the host city. Delegates shared their experiences and contributed to discussions on cultural rights, community engagement, and mediation practices.



INTRODUCTION

This framework highlights Barcelona's approach to cultural mediation and the innovative measures implemented to ensure the inclusion of diverse voices. The visit also provided an opportunity for mutual learning, collaboration, and the exploration of strategies to advance cultural rights globally.

SUMMARY OF THE PEER LEARNING VISIT

DAY 1: 26 NOVEMBER 2024

WELCOMING THE PARTICIPANTS

The **Institut de Cultura de Barcelona (ICUB)**, established in 1996 by the Barcelona City Council, manages municipal cultural facilities and services, aiming to position culture as a key driver of the city's development and international projection. It also supports the emergence and consolidation of private cultural initiatives within Barcelona.

Marifé Calderón, Head of cultural mediation at the Cultural Heritage Department of ICUB, welcomed the delegation at the Palau de la Virreina, located at the very centre of Barcelona, and made a brief introduction on Barcelona's cultural policies and the objectives of the peer learning visit.



SUMMARY OF THE PEER LEARNING VISIT

VISITS

The **Centre de Cultura Contemporània de Barcelona (CCCB)** is a cultural hub located in the Raval neighbourhood in Barcelona, focusing on contemporary culture and societal challenges. It hosts exhibitions, debates, festivals, concerts, and educational programmes, emphasizing innovation and creativity.

Susana Arias, Head of the Mediation Department at CCCB, welcomed the participants and set the premise of cultural mediation as an institutional responsibility and as an element to introduce complexity and plurality, as well as to foster freedoms and democracy in public space. She provided an overview of the neighbourhood's context, emphasizing the CCCB's extensive network as one of its key strengths. Susana also highlighted various cultural mediation initiatives linked to the ongoing exhibitions, focusing particularly on a unique programme in collaboration with a local school. As part of this initiative, one class attends lessons at the CCCB three mornings per week, following a jointly designed curriculum that integrates the school's educational goals with the cultural centre's resources and expertise.



SUMMARY OF THE PEER LEARNING VISIT



“The pandemic gave us this opportunity: it was our Troia horse. We had an exposition on William Kendrick and they were studying colonialism.”



SUMMARY OF THE PEER LEARNING VISIT

Yolanda Jolis, Head of the Education Team of MACBA, Ricardo Pérez-Hita, Education Team of MACBA, Andrea Miguel, Head of Sustainability and Jardí Ambulant project, and the Director of Conservation and Research of MACBA, **María Berriós**, received the delegation and conducted a session on the mediation programmes of the museum and their impact on local communities, focusing on mediation practices as a means of research, testing and experimentation. They showed a strong work in empowering educators to facilitate them transferring cultural and artistic practices, schools and children. Other initiatives highlighted were “**I had things asleep...**”, an autonomous group of women who go to the museum on a weekly basis, who experience distress, neurodivergence or mental health issues, that visit the museum, discuss and make creative activities, and the “**Mobile Garden**” (“Jardí Ambulant”), a neighbourhood hub to facilitate encounters and dialogue between the museum and local community members.



SUMMARY OF THE PEER LEARNING VISIT



“In these contexts, art is sometimes a pretext for dialogues and discussions, and sometimes it is the focus.”



SUMMARY OF THE PEER LEARNING VISIT

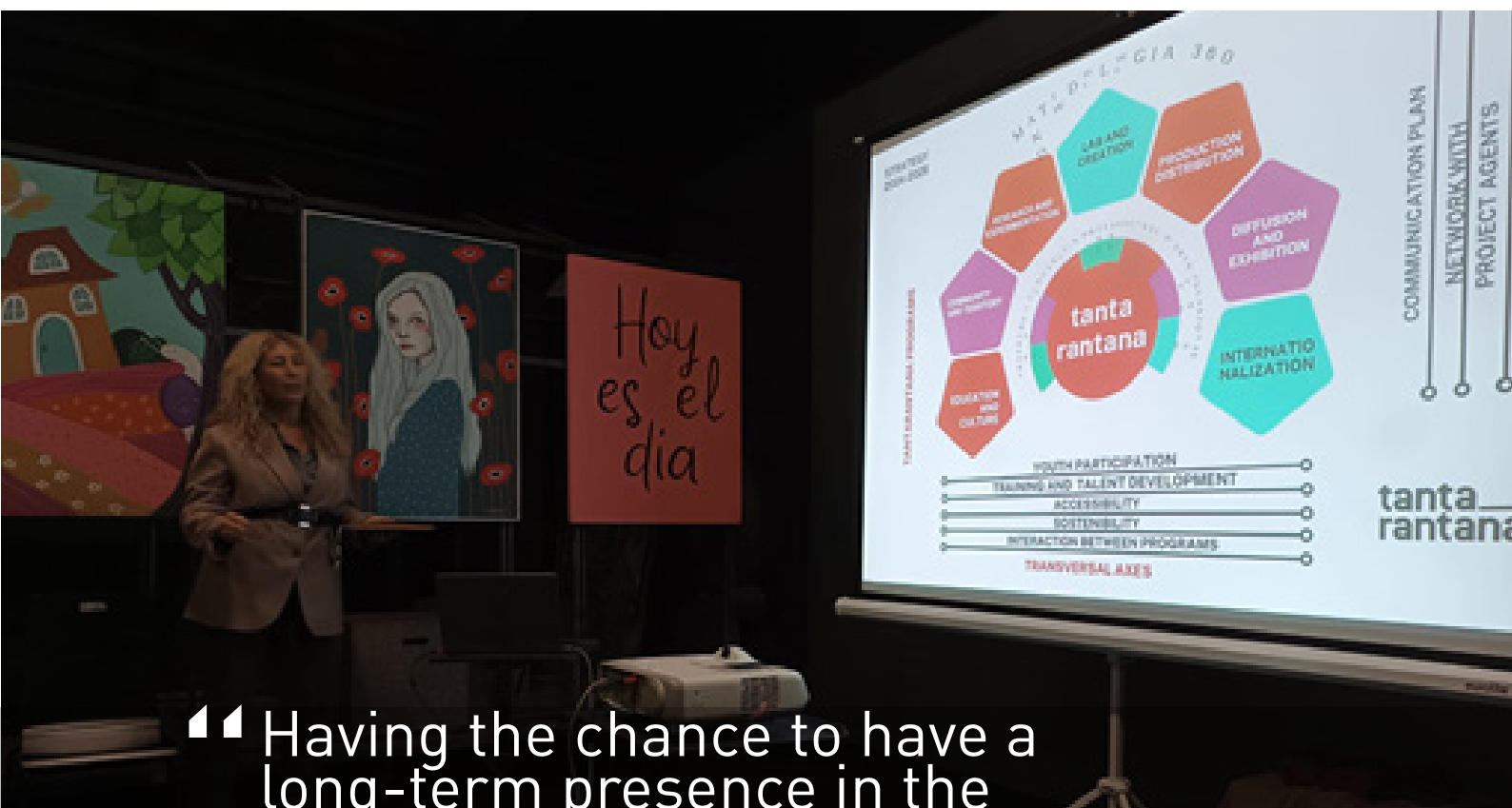
EXPERIENCE IN CULTURAL MEDIATION

The **Fàbriques de Creació at Teatre Tantarantana** is a creative space in Barcelona dedicated to fostering the development of performing arts. It supports artistic experimentation by providing resources and opportunities for independent creators and companies.

In the afternoon, the delegation visited one of the Fàbriques de Creació (Factories for Creation) spaces at Teatre Tantarantana for an interactive session with local cultural mediators. **Rosa Gibert**, Director of the Fàbriques de Creació programme, **Ferran Murillo**, Director of Teatre Tantarantana, **Maika Pacheco**, Manager of Teatre Tantarantana, and the team of the “Espai límit” company, who is in residence at Tantarantana, shared insights into their programmes, discussing both best practices and challenges. These included their artist residency initiative, an educational programme with school IES Milà i Fontanals, the intergenerational community programme PI(E)CE, and an international exchange and co-creation project involving artists from around the world.



SUMMARY OF THE PEER LEARNING VISIT



“Having the chance to have a long-term presence in the theatre is a privilege, and we have the responsibility to ensure that it is a safe and inclusive space.”



SUMMARY OF THE PEER LEARNING VISIT

DAY 2: 27 NOVEMBER 2024

VISITS

The **Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya (MNAC)** is a local leading art museum that showcases a vast collection of Catalan art from the Romanesque period to the mid-20th century. The museum also promotes educational activities and cultural programmes to connect the public with its collections and exhibitions.

On the morning of the second day, the delegation travelled up Montjuïc to visit the Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya (MNAC), where they learned about the museum's educational initiatives and mediation strategies. M. Esther Fuertes and the team of the Education Department with Sandra Figueras and David Pablo showed how the MNAC goes beyond being a traditional art museum to become a dynamic cultural space committed to education, equity, and public engagement. Among its many activities, they highlighted the **Tandem project** with Miquel Bleach School, aimed at transforming working methodologies through art; their comprehensive educational programme "**Art i a través de l'art**"; their **artist residency project** with schools; and "**Mirades insumises**" ("unsubmissive gazes"), an initiative exploring themes of gender and sexual diversity through art.



SUMMARY OF THE PEER LEARNING VISIT



“Children working with an artist wanted to explore the hidden side of the museum, so they spent a night here as part of the project. It’s something we never imagined until they suggested it.”



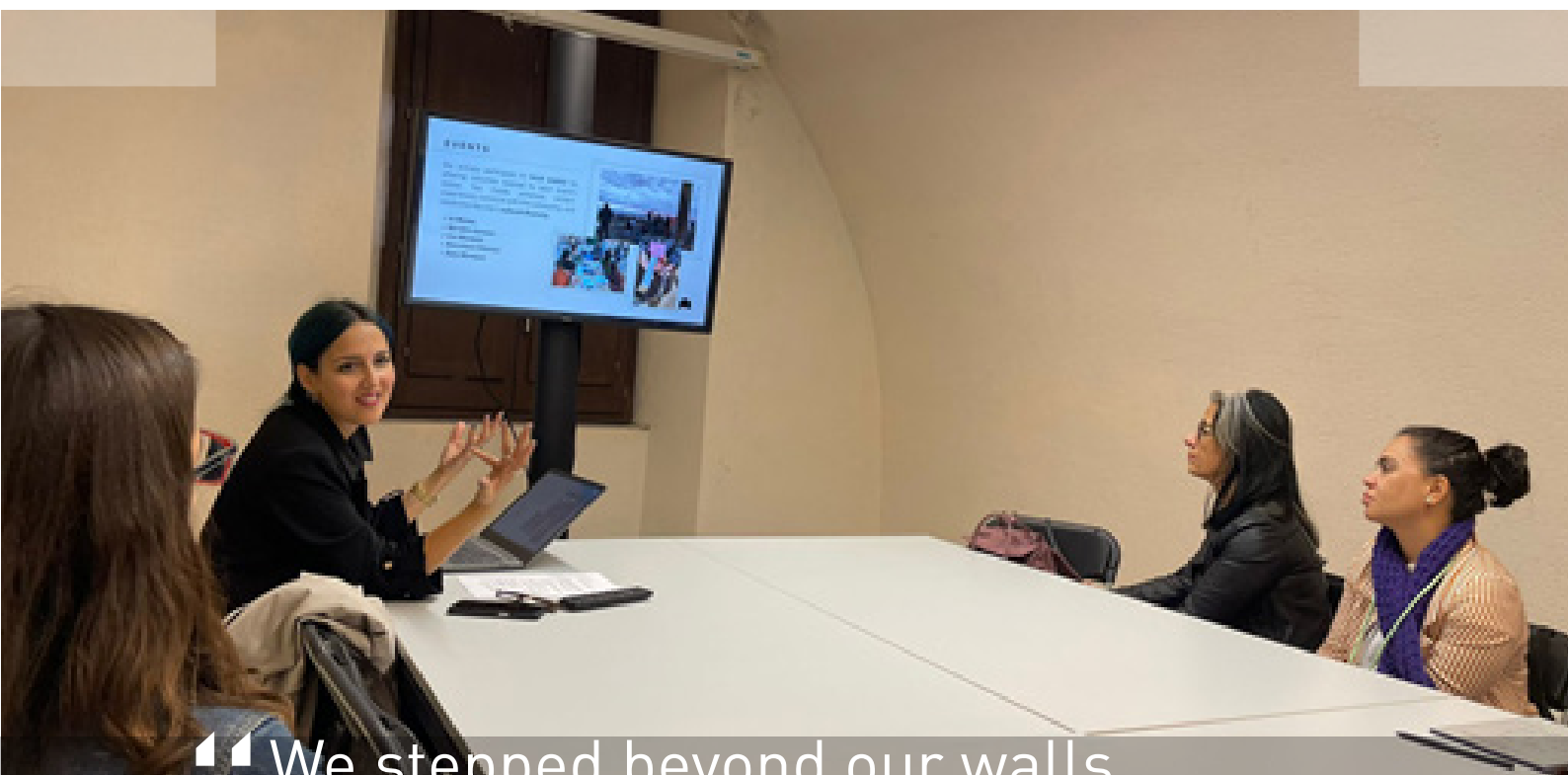
SUMMARY OF THE PEER LEARNING VISIT

The **Castell de Montjuïc** is a historic fortress located atop Montjuïc Hill, offering panoramic views of the city and the Mediterranean Sea. Originally built in the 17th century, it has since been transformed into a cultural site with exhibitions and events. The castle's history is marked by its complex role in various military conflicts, and today it serves as a space for visitors to explore its grounds, learn about its past, and enjoy cultural and artistic activities.

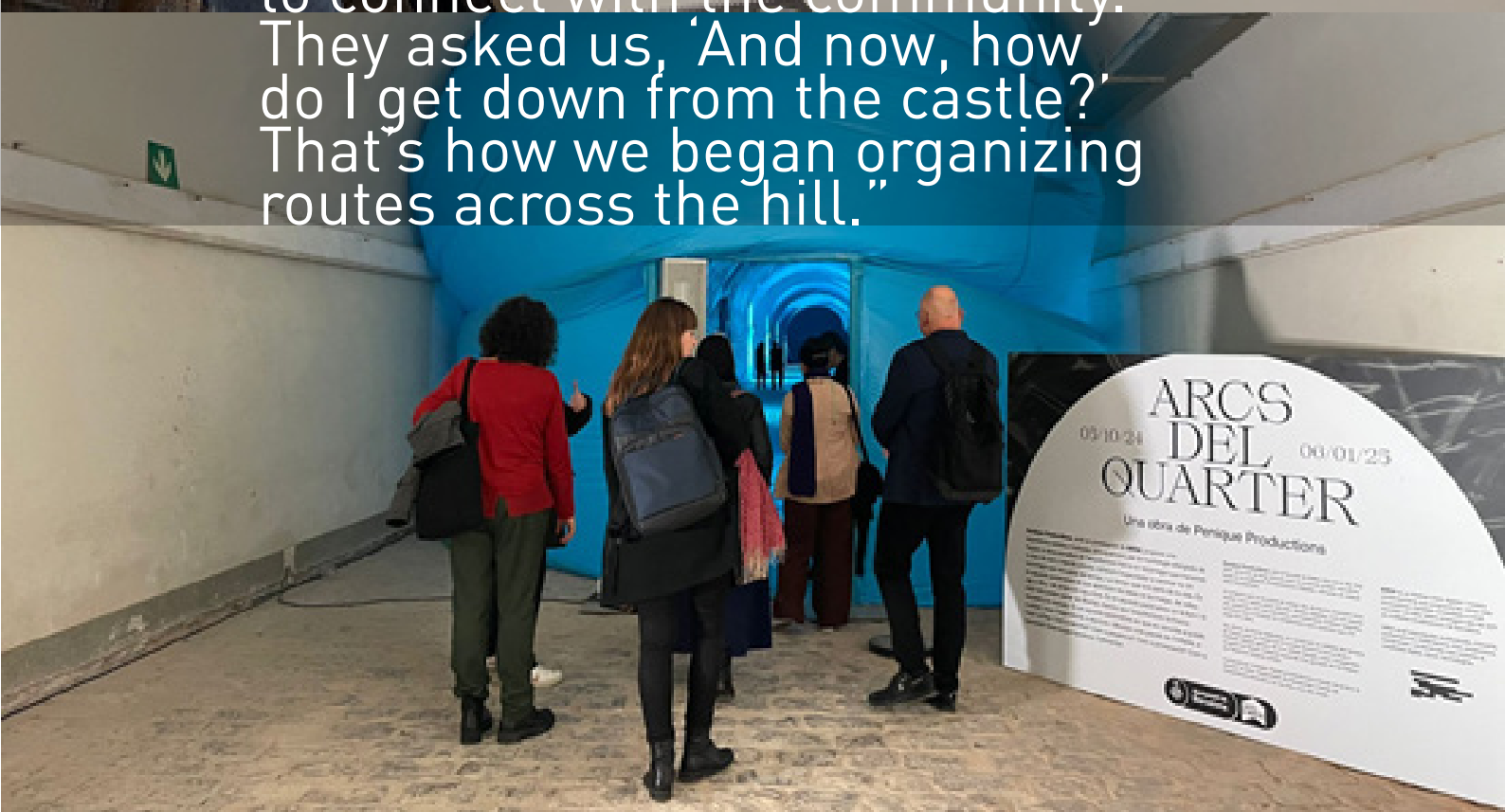
Not far from the MNAC lies the **Castell de Montjuïc**, the location of the second visit of the morning. Montserrat Torras Virgili, Head of El Castell de Montjuïc, and Mariona Quesada Fernàndez, Head of the Mediation, Education and Creation Service, welcomed the delegation, provided a guided tour of the castle and presented insights into its integration into cultural mediation. They emphasized efforts to raise awareness of its past as a site of repression, including its use as a prison by fascists, while transforming it into a vibrant cultural hub for the community. The castle now goes beyond traditional tours, hosting a variety of dynamic activities such as **festivals**, outdoor movie screenings, family programmes, **thematic trails on the hill**, **community programmes**, **literary residencies**, performances, creative workshops, among others. Additionally, they highlighted efforts to reframe the castle's narrative through thematic visits focused on the Spanish Civil War, often in collaboration with the MUHBA for combined experiences.



SUMMARY OF THE PEER LEARNING VISIT



“We stepped beyond our walls to connect with the community. They asked us, ‘And now, how do I get down from the castle?’ That’s how we began organizing routes across the hill.”



SUMMARY OF THE PEER LEARNING VISIT

PRESENTATION OF PARTICIPANT CITIES AND DISCUSSION

In the afternoon, a session at the **Museu d'Història de Barcelona (MUHBA)** provided the opportunity for delegates from the participating cities of **Montreal, Lisbon** and **Rio de Janeiro** to share their experiences and engage in discussions on cultural mediation practices with local cultural stakeholders.

Jaume Muñoz, Director of Cultural Heritage, ICUB, welcomed all participants, expressing gratitude to the international delegates for their participation in the peer-learning visit, while also acknowledging the important work being done in Barcelona. Then, **Jordi Pascual**, Coordinator of the Culture Committee of UCLG, provided an overview of their mission and initiatives, and its recurrent collaboration and joint work with Barcelona, also (but not only) on culture mediation. Following this, **Cristian Añó**, local expert on cultural mediation, presented the report "State of the art and new perspectives on cultural mediation in Barcelona," outlining key findings and conclusions.



SUMMARY OF THE PEER LEARNING VISIT



SUMMARY OF THE PEER LEARNING VISIT

After this introductory part, **Marta Llobet**, Programme manager and focal point for culture of UCLG, presented the international guests from **Montreal, Lisbon** and **Rio de Janeiro**.

Montreal: **Michel Vallée**, CEO of Culture Pour Tous, shared several key initiatives focused on cultural mediation and community engagement, including Les Journées de la Culture (Culture Days), the organization's flagship project; Racines Plurielles (Plural Roots); the Réseau d'écoles culturelles hémisphères (Network of Cultural Schools); and Culturepédia. He concluded his intervention with a song, leaving the audience with the following thought-provoking message: *"Where did all those people go who had something to say? We brought someone into the world, maybe we should listen to them"* (From "Un musicien parmi tan d'autres" – Harmonium).



“Our work creates unlikely encounters, showing how art engages communities and brings together people from diverse backgrounds, including those with disabilities. Cultural mediation helps foster these connections.”

SUMMARY OF THE PEER LEARNING VISIT

Lisbon: **Sara Brighenti**, Deputy Commissioner of the National Arts Plan, Portugal, emphasized the need for ambitious cultural initiatives, aiming for broad impact through a systemic, democratic approach. She explained how the National Plan for the Arts involved schools, universities, and cultural institutions, and was driven by desire rather than obligation, focusing on co-creation. The Porto Santo Charter, co-created with youth, was also highlighted as an example of active collaboration. Brighenti also called for greater cultural mobility, connecting central and peripheral areas and breaking down institutional barriers for more inclusive engagement.



“Culture should be a way forward, fostering safe spaces for learning and community-building, with artists and cultural mediators leading the way.”

SUMMARY OF THE PEER LEARNING VISIT

Rio de Janeiro: **Cíntia Monsores**, Coordinator of Territories and Cultural Diversity, Municipal Secretary of Culture, Rio de Janeiro, explained how the methodology for involving people in the process in Rio de Janeiro began by listening to individuals from peripheral territories, and identifying the elements they felt were important to their communities to develop a subsequent strategy. The process involved recognizing the popular cultures people identified with, such as specific regional cuisines, June festivals (Quadrilhas Juninas), and traditional practices like the “ball players” (Bate Bolas). Although there were four main focus areas, Cíntia specifically highlighted the Baiana de Acarajé, to promote a certification methodology for their traditional cuisine as well as monitoring their profession.



“We listened to the communities and identified the cultural elements that matter most to them, ensuring their presence in public spaces and their right to work and express their identities.”



SUMMARY OF THE PEER LEARNING VISIT

DAY 3: 28 NOVEMBER 2024

The **Monestir de Pedralbes** is a historic monastery in Barcelona, founded in 1327, known for its Gothic architecture and cloister. It serves as a cultural and historical site, offering visitors a glimpse into the life of the Poor Clare nuns who lived there for centuries. The monastery now hosts exhibitions, educational programmes, and events that highlight its artistic, spiritual, and cultural significance.

The morning of the last day of this peer-learning visit started in the Monestir de Pedralbes, where the delegation was welcomed by Anna Castellano, Director of the Monestir de Pedralbes, and their team, Mireia Alcon, Head of Education, and Gemma Bonet Pascual, responsible for the Activities Service. They explained their commitment to making its 700-year-old building accessible to the community. Accessibility is promoted through participation, community engagement, and transformation, exemplified by projects like “**Guide me**” with guides on the autism spectrum, and “**Perceptions Walk**” (Passeig de percepcions), a sensory-guided tour with music, or “**The oldest museum**” (el Museu més gran), in collaboration with active local associations through photography for old people. After this presentation, the delegation went on a tour to the Medieval Garden of the Monastery.



SUMMARY OF THE PEER LEARNING VISIT



“Our initiatives revolve around interdisciplinary themes such as heritage, women, spirituality, and ecology”.



SUMMARY OF THE PEER LEARNING VISIT

The **MUHBA Cases del Bon Pastor** is a museum dedicated to the city's 20th-century housing history. It features a refurbished block of "Cases barates" ('affordable houses') from the Bon Pastor neighbourhood, built in 1929, highlighting the area's social and architectural heritage.

The final visit of the programme took place at the **MUHBA Cases del Bon Pastor**, coordinated by Carmen Cazalla Ocaña, where the delegation explored cultural mediation in a unique neighbourhood context. The visit began with a guided tour showcasing exhibition spaces that chronicle the city's housing struggles throughout the 20th century. Following this, neighbours who had lived in the "Cases barates" themselves, offered an insightful tour of four restored houses, illustrating the evolution of living conditions in Bon Pastor from 1929 to 2017. This visit underscored the museum's co-management model, involving collaboration between civil society, the municipality, and the MUHBA, while highlighting the active participation of local residents in shaping and developing the project.



SUMMARY OF THE PEER LEARNING VISIT





CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The peer learning visit in Barcelona underscored the importance of cultural mediation as a tool for fostering inclusivity and diversity in cultural policies. The visit constituted an organic continuation of the study on cultural mediation initiated by the city of Barcelona in 2023, with the report “[State of the Art and New Perspectives on Cultural Mediation in Barcelona](#)”, written by local expert Cristian Añó, as the main outcome.

The international participants of the visit attended special presentations by the teams of several local cultural centres, which showed detailed aspects of the implementation of local cultural mediation programmes. They also presented the cultural mediation work they promote in their cities, and contributed to the debate on cultural mediation innovations in local and global cultural policies.

In this regard, participants emphasized the need for continuous dialogue among cities to share best practices and innovative approaches.

Key recommendations include:

- Establishing a global network of cultural mediators for ongoing knowledge exchange.
- Investing in capacity-building programmes to enhance local cultural mediation efforts.
- Promoting policy frameworks that prioritize cultural rights and community participation.

CÍNTIA MONSORES

“The Peer Learning visit was a unique experience that gave me the chance to experience and learn about different methodologies for cultural mediation, as well as languages and values.

In my city, I lead the Coordination of Territories and Cultural Diversity, whose main guideline is to develop and implement public policies for democratisation that give priority to territories and producers that have historically been excluded from access to cultural citizenship, as well as promoting management and dialogue to foster popular cultural heritage. In this way, the learning experience, focused on mediation, provided an opportunity not only to exchange methodologies, but also to network, contributing to a better understanding of the differences and similarities between cultures.



CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Although the experience was enriching, some challenges arose, such as language difficulties and adapting to the climate. However, these obstacles were overcome with the support of the programme's super team as well as the participants and contributed to my personal growth.

It was an extremely positive and transformative experience. As well as helping to improve my skills, I had the opportunity to expand my world view and better understand the complexities of cultures. This experience not only helped me improve my professional skills, but also made me more sensitive to global issues and human diversity."



ANNEX 1 LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

DELEGATES FROM CITIES

- | Michel Vallée, President and director general, Culture pour Tous!, Montréal
- | Sara Brighenti, Deputy Commissioner, National Plan for the Arts, Portugal; Coauthor and promoter of the Porto Santo Charter
- | Cíntia Monsores, Coordinator of territories and cultural diversity, Culture Department, Rio de Janeiro

LOCAL CULTURAL ACTORS, INCLUDING STAFF OF LOCAL MUSEUMS AND OTHER CULTURAL CENTRES, AND BENEFICIARIES OF THE PROGRAMMES DEVELOPED BY ICUB

INSTITUT DE CULTURA DE BARCELONA (ICUB) REPRESENTATIVES

- | Jaume Muñoz, Director of the Cultural Heritage Department
- | Marifé Calderón, Head of cultural mediation at the Cultural Heritage Department

CULTURE COMMITTEE OF UNITED CITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS (UCLG) REPRESENTATIVES:

- | Jordi Pascual, Coordinator of the Culture Committee of UCLG
- | Marta Llobet, Programme manager and focal point for culture
- | Agnès Ruiz, Policy officer and focal point for culture

EXPERT IN CULTURAL MEDIATION

- | Cristian Añó, (Sinapsis)



ANNEX 2 AGENDA OF THE PEER LEARNING VISIT

AGENDA OF THE PEER LEARNING VISIT

TUESDAY 26 NOVEMBER 2024

- | | |
|-------------|--|
| 9.30 | Meeting point at Institut de Cultura de Barcelona (ICUB), Palau de la Virreina |
| 10.30-12.30 | Visit to Centre de Cultura Contemporània de Barcelona (CCCB) |
| 12.30-14.00 | Visit to Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona (MACBA) |
| 14.00-16.00 | Lunch |
| 16.00 | Experience in cultural mediation at Teatre Tantarantana (Fàbrica de Creació) |

WEDNESDAY 27 NOVEMBER 2024

- | | |
|-------------|--|
| 9.30-11.30 | Visit to Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya (MNAC) |
| 12.00-14.00 | Visit to Castell de Montjuïc |
| 14.00-16.00 | Lunch |
| 16.00-19.00 | Presentation of participant cities and discussion at the Museu d'Història de Barcelona (MUHBA) |
| 19.30 | Dinner |

THURSDAY 28 NOVEMBER 2024

- | | |
|-------------|-------------------------------------|
| 9.30-11.30 | Visit to the Monastery of Pedralbes |
| 12.00-14.00 | Visit to MUHBA Bon Pastor |
| 14.00 | Lunch and end of the visit |



ANNEX 3

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- **Secretaria Municipal de Cultura do Rio de Janeiro** (Rio de Janeiro, Brasil)
- **Culture pour Tous** (Quebec, Canada)
- **Porto Santo Charter**
- **Porto Santo Conference** “From Democratisation to Cultural Democracy: Rethinking Institutions and Practices”, 27-28 April 2021 (Porto Santo Island / Madeira Regional Government - Portugal)
- **National Plan for the Arts** (Portugal)



CONTACT

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