

Creative Europe PARTNERSEARCH

REFILL · Temporary revitalisation of empty spaces with cultural uses

PROGRAMME

Application will be submitted to the first call of **Creative Europe**, which will be launched on December 2013. Specifically, the project is set out in line with the culture branch of the program, as a cooperation project.

PROMOTER

Barcelona Provincial Council (Diputació de Barcelona) is a local public administration that promotes the development and welfare of citizens in the province of Barcelona in collaboration with its 311 municipalities.

Actions carried by Cultural Department at Barcelona Provincial Council cover different fields, from public libraries to cultural heritage, artistic dissemination, popular culture and cultural resources and activities. Its main goals are cooperation with the municipalities of the province in all matters relating cultural activities as well as training and advice on cultural policies.

INTRODUCTION

Cultural and creative activities contribute positively to a sustainable development from the point of view of economic growth, but also of the creation of quality employment, social cohesion and improving quality of life.

Besides, transition from an industrial economy to an economy based on the tertiary sector or, in other cases, the economic crisis, has left all over Europe spaces -public or private- fall into disuse. Often, these spaces are waiting for the necessary resources to carry out the activity for which they were designed, or for the approval of an urban plan that will allow their reclassification (and revitalizing), or for a public or private agent that decides to buy them to promote a new activity. Ultimately, those spaces are waiting for a new function.

It is an opportunity cost, but also an open window to cultural uses that could breathe life to these spaces and the areas where they are located in the meanwhile before their final function is decided. Such kind of actions can take advantage of art and culture capacity to revitalize declining areas, at the same time that give an opportunity to artists and cultural agents to

perform their activities in unusual spaces at affordable prices or even without charge. The underlying idea is that the activation of a space, in spite of being temporary, facilitates the starting of an appropriation process by the local community, which generates a set of networks and relationships persisting in the long term, even though functions and users change.

In recent years there have been several public and private initiatives in this regard: different projects with the common feature of being oriented **to give cultural uses to those temporarily empty or underused spaces**. They all highlight the need to overcome the *hardware thinking* regarding the cultural and urban strategies, as well as the flexibility required to be open to the new dynamics of cultural expression, where long duration and stability are not priorities. Experiences like these put into practice an adaptive strategy, in terms of software, which considers the possibility of rescuing unused assets for the promotion of the cultural and collective life.

In addition, such actions carry, in most cases, a positive economic impact in the surrounding area: direct impacts given by job creation, but also indirect and induced impacts due to the multiplier effect of their related activity.

Barcelona Provincial promotes the creation of a partnership oriented to spread out this kind of experiences through the territory –most of them have been developed in large metropolis- as well as systematizing, giving them visibility, and fostering transnational cooperation between all the actors involved.

OBJECTIVES

The main objective of the project is **to generate cultural activity in declining areas in Europe with the aim of contributing to their revitalization**. Such initiatives are an opportunity to strengthen dialogue and cooperation between local administration and citizens, and the fact that people can have a real and effective participation contributes to democratic maturity, **help the shift to new software strategies and, ultimately, encourage the sustainable development of the regions**.

The temporary reuse of empty spaces will achieve the following specific objectives:

- Strengthening the viability of cultural and artistic projects which will have available singular spaces for their activities at affordable prices or even without cost.
- Promoting joint work and exchange of experiences among several cities and regions in Europe to address a common situation: the existence of empty and underused spaces susceptible to host temporary cultural uses.
- Encouraging international mobility of cultural and artistic agents.
- Disseminating the tools and information generated.

FORESEEN ACTIVITIES

The project will entail **two levels of work and reflection - local and international -** in order to take advantage of the economies of scale given by its transnational dimension. Thus,

issues relating to strategy and coordination will be considered between all members while the implementation of pilot projects will be managed locally.

The key proposed actions are:

1. **Diagnosis and intervention strategies:** compilation and classification of reference experiences (inventory, mapping, contacting), and existing requests for intervention. Definition of the conceptual framework: the relationship between spaces and cultural functions, key variables, economic viability, ways of participation of local community, etc.
2. **Digital platform** for dissemination, networking and joint work between partners. It will comprise:
 - Database of best practices that systematizes the existing experiences
 - Networking space
 - Map of empty spaces whose owners or managers are interested in hosting cultural uses at the partners territories
 - International directory of stakeholders interested in carrying out artistic or cultural activities in such areas
 - Legal documentation: tenders and models
3. Promotion of one or more **pilot project** for the reuse of empty spaces through art and culture in the territory of each partner. The establishment of local groups dedicated to responding to specific demands and implementation and management of these pilot projects is foreseen. They will care for systematizing phases, action protocols for each case, participation of local social and cultural agents, etc. One of the most important tasks of these groups will be the legal issues (specific regulations of each country will have to be considered).

REQUESTED PARTNERS

It is envisaged the formation of a mixed partnership with the participation of local and regional governments, private landowners and groups or organizations fulfilling the requirements listed in Creative Europe guidelines. In every case they must have access to empty or underused spaces available for temporary cultural use or, alternately, be involved in such a process.

CONTACT DETAILS

Those interested in participating in the partnership please contact Ms. Marga Julià no later than **15th January 2014**.

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