
CASE STUDY: CATALONIA, SPAIN

DEVELOPING CLUSTERS FOR THE CREATIVE INDUSTRIES IN BARCELONA

INTERARTS FOUNDATION

Context

The Interarts Foundation develops cluster projects based on the idea that culture incubators are traditional sources of jobs and can be an alternative in areas where the manufacturing base has been lost. Interarts also follows a policy trend by which creativity and innovation are encouraged through the creative industries sector.

Hence, Interarts has identified a few locations in Barcelona for the development of creative industries clusters, such as one in the neighbourhood of Sant Cosme. The idea is to bring people together from different sectors with the aim of creating a critical mass that generates a multiplier effect and acts as an engine for innovation. This idea is being developed as part of an on-going debate with the local authority in Barcelona about the economic role that the creative industries have to play in the local economy.

The Interarts Foundation is an independent private cultural foundation that works with public, private and third sector agents to increase local employment and encourage entrepreneurship. Interarts works in a partnership with the key local actors to identify the problems facing them and tries to address those problems from a cultural perspective.

Activities carried out

Interarts has carried out feasibility studies to create centres for creative scenography industries (artist industries). The scenography industries have traditionally served 'fiestas' and local cultural events. However there is potential to extend these activities to other areas such as tourism, industry, commercial events, product launches and film production.

The aim of these centres is to become a magnet for economic activity and to bring together all industries within the sector (including ancillary support services). Interarts expects these centres to generate numerous spin offs that will create local employment opportunities and encourage entrepreneurial activity.

Achievements and successes

- The project partnership has successfully convinced local policy makers that culture is a viable alternative to traditional models of job creation and a potential engine for growth. There is now a willingness to listen and a change in mentality can be detected; a mentality that is more open to see the role and potential of the creative industries in the economy.
- Cultural clusters is a model that has proved to be successful in economic and social terms. Cultural clusters recognise that local people tend to work on local cultural events on a voluntary basis and there is an opportunity to make a living out of it. Cultural life within

the community adds a sense of place and a sense of belonging and hence contributes to a stronger social fabric in the local community.

- In Barcelona, some ethnic minority communities have lived in areas that are isolated from the mainstream. This has enabled them to develop a strong and defined culture. This is perceived as being a positive contribution for the development of creative industries clusters in those areas.
- Barcelona is a very innovative and creative place and a natural hub for the development of creative industries clusters, and there is also a high level of associationism.

Problems facing Interarts in developing creative industries clusters

- The context is highly political. In order to develop creative industries clusters, barriers to seeing culture as a means of economic change beyond being a mere activity need to be overcome.

Lessons learned that can be transferred to other initiatives for employment creation and promotion of entrepreneurial activity

- The importance of collaboration between public, private and third sector actors.
- The importance of creating spaces in which creative activities can be developed in an indigenous way.
- The importance of creating wider networks for the cluster to become sustainable.

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