

# REVIEW OF TALCA'S **CULTURE 21: ACTIONS** SELF-ASSESSMENT

DECEMBER 2015



## culture 21

Agenda 21 for culture

As part of its participation as a Leading City of Agenda 21 for culture in 2015, the city of Talca conducted a self-assessment of its cultural policies in December 2015. The basis for this activity was the “[Culture 21: Actions](#)” document, which was approved by the Committee on Culture of United Cities And Local Governments (UCLG) in March 2015 and enables cities from around the world to examine their strengths and weaknesses in this area based on a common reference framework. Furthermore, the exercise has made it possible to compare each city’s evaluation with the average drawn from the opinions of a global panel of experts.

The exercise conducted in Talca involved staff from the Municipal Cultural Authority of Talca, the departments of Productive advancement, Urban planning, Public Cleanliness and Environment, and Education of the Municipality of Talca, and a range of members of civil society from indigenous associations, the culture sector and the cultural and creative industries, as well as from the communication sector.

The following people took part in the self-assessment exercise: Rafael Muñoz, Municipal Cultural Authority of Talca; Cristina Zúñiga, Municipal Cultural Authority of Talca; Carolina Sanhueza, director of the Municipal cultural centre; María Elena, Mapuche Community; Pedro Espejo, representative from the indigenous Corporation; Oriana G., director of the Estampa Maulina Ballet; Pamela Bórquez, Municipal Cultural Authority of Talca; Fernando Cordero, La Prensa newspaper; Claudio Ramos, Flora and Fauna; Carla Leal Quintana, Minga magazine and co-founder of Flora and Fauna; Jorge Valderrama, Historical archive; Alejandro de la Puente, Urban planning; Pamela Herrera, architect; Blas Becerra, Productive advancement; Cristian Ramírez, Public Cleanliness and environment; and Carlos Montero, Education.

This document, which was prepared by Antoine Guibert, expert for the implementation of the Agenda 21 for culture, in close cooperation with the Secretariat of the Committee on Culture of UCLG, provides an overview of and analyses the evaluations carried out in the city of Talca, compares them with the features of the global average and suggests some aspects which may merit follow-up.



SELF  
ASSESSMENT

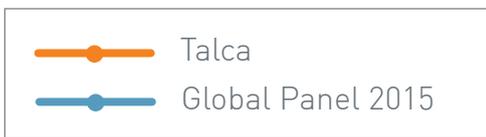
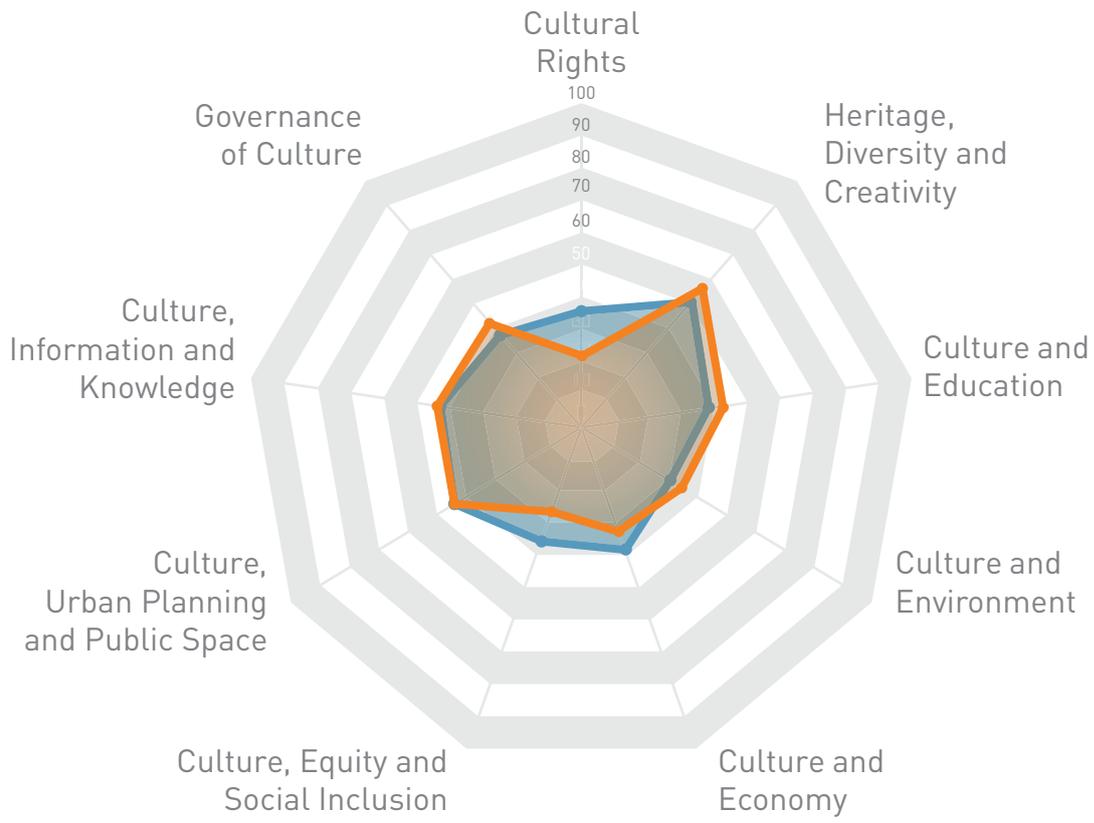


# GENERAL OVERVIEW

Talca is the capital of the Maule region, a region in central Chile with a strong identity and rural tradition, and has over 250,000 inhabitants. It is located in a seismic zone and major earthquakes have destroyed it regularly throughout its history; the most recent earthquake was in 2010, the most severe in its history. At the time of this self-assessment, in December 2015, many buildings and culture infrastructure have not yet been rebuilt and it should be stressed that the city's culture-related initiatives are very dynamic but also very recent. The results of this self-assessment must be interpreted and analysed in the light of this specific and difficult context, and as a starting point of a continuous process that encourages the adoption of new initiatives oriented towards Talca's sustainable development.

Despite this difficult context, overall, Talca ranks above the averages produced by the 2015 global panel of experts. As shown in Figure 1, the city obtained scores above or equal to the global average in the following thematic areas: "2. Heritage, diversity and creativity" (with an average score of 57.3, above the global average of 50); "3. Culture and education" (43.75, compared to a global average of 38); "4. Culture and environment" (35, versus a global average of 30); "7. Culture, urban planning and public space" (44, the average); "8. Culture, information and knowledge" (44.32, above the global average of 43); and "Governance of culture" (43.12, above the global average of 37). In contrast, Talca received scores below the world averages in three areas: "1. Cultural rights" (21.5, below the world average of 35); 5. "Culture and economy" (32.3, compared to the global average of 38), and 6. "Culture, equity and social inclusion" (27, versus a global average of 35).

Figure 1: Talca Self-assessment and data from the Global Panel 2015



This Radar 1 was elaborated on the basis of results provided by the City of Talca and the average obtained from a world panel of 34 experts.



# CULTURAL RIGHTS

In the thematic area of cultural rights, Talca's average score was 21.5/100, below the global average of 35/100. These results are understandable because this thematic area is quite new in Talca, and a lot of the participants discovered the concept when performing the self-assessment. Although the thematic area was new, the participants expressed great interest in it and willingness to work on it.

The concept of cultural rights does not appear explicitly in the cultural policies and programmes of the Municipal Cultural Authority. However, although they are not explicitly linked to this concept, the Authority does carry out activities which could fall within this category. The Municipal Cultural Centre, for example, is conducting a project on access to and citizen participation in culture aimed at the entire population and throughout the territory. Despite this, these activities are not particularly geared towards the most vulnerable groups in society, nor are there any minimum service standards to ensure basic cultural services. In contrast, very special attention is being given to Talca's indigenous peoples. The Authority is in contact with Talca's indigenous association, Inche Tañi Mapu, and together they have undertaken several initiatives. The community has built a traditional Mapuche ruca (the traditional Mapuche house) partly with the support of the Municipality, and Mapudungun classes are given to the Mapuches and the general population at the Municipal Cultural Centre.



# HERITAGE, DIVERSITY AND CREATIVITY

In thematic area “2. Heritage, diversity and creativity”, Talca obtained an average score of 57.3/100, higher than the global average of 50/100. The Municipality created a body dedicated to culture, the Municipal Cultural Authority of Talca, in 2013, but there are still very few interconnections with other local policy areas. The budget allocated to culture is higher than international standards and it remains stable over time. Cultural initiatives usually value artistic creation and local craftsmanship, but the largest share of the budget is allocated to events which give special priority to products from outside Talca. In contrast, great effort is being made with regard to access to the cultural activities on offer; these events are usually free of charge or at an affordable price. The local cultural supply covers a very broad range of cultural sectors, although quite an insignificant presence has been identified for some of them, such as the creative industries or local contemporary culture.

In response to the 2010 earthquake and to the crisis situation experienced at that time, the Municipality decided to develop a broad range of cultural initiatives with major events, in order to give a new boost to social life and well-being in people’s daily lives. It should be emphasized that culture-related initiatives to rebuild a territory and respond to a crisis situation are extremely interesting, and this is an example of a good practice which could be used as a model for other cities. At the same time, with regard to cultural heritage, Talca is in a particular situation, given the repeated destruction and the loss of a large part of its tangible heritage caused by the earthquakes, which have affected the city regularly. In this connection, it is also worth highlighting the “Qué Talca tu patrimonio” [How is Talca, your heritage] programme as an example of good practice; it was launched by the Authority and consists of work to identify, evaluate and mobilize the community in relation to their cultural heritage.



# CULTURE AND EDUCATION

In thematic area “3. Culture and education”, Talca scored an average of 43.75/100, higher than the global average of 38/100. In general, the curricula for pupils in primary and secondary education include the acquisition of a wide and diverse range of cultural skills and knowledge. They usually include some references to the local cultural context, but this is not reflected in official education policy documents. Thanks to some specific cooperation projects, links have been made between education and cultural policies on an ad-hoc basis, but a permanent common strategy is lacking. Schools and education centres often organise cultural and creative activities, albeit on their own initiative, and there is no framework for cooperation or permanent cooperation programmes with the culture sector or the municipal cultural services. Some of Talca’s cultural institutions regularly offer educational activities; for example, thanks to the Municipal Cultural Authority, the universities of Talca offer art education that has been recognised for its high level. During the self-assessment process, great interest was shown in strengthening the cooperation between the education sector and the Municipal Cultural Authority.

The Werken Escolar programme, which was launched in 2015, should be singled out as an example of a good practice in terms of the links between culture, education and cultural diversity. The programme gives pupils from the second stage of primary education in the municipal schools the opportunity to establish a dialogue and learn about Talca’s indigenous cultures in the Mapuche ruca (traditional Mapuche house). These children become werken (“messengers” in Mapudungun) and are given the task of spreading the knowledge that they have acquired about the indigenous culture among the community, thereby facilitating intercultural dialogue, knowledge of the other and the fight against discrimination and racism.



# CULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

In thematic area “4. Culture and environment”, Talca scored an average of 35/100, above the global average of 30/100. In general, cultural policies do not make the connections between culture and environmental sustainability clear, and the local strategies to promote sustainability do not refer to cultural factors. Nevertheless, the Municipal Cultural Authority, carries out many cultural activities that link culture and the environment in the area of the local cuisine, customs and local products. Talca offers a wide range of gastronomy, and the Municipal Cultural Authority fully recognises this dimension as part of the local culture. A great deal of work is performed in this area, and the Chancho Muerto Fiesta [Dead Pig Festival] should be noted as an example of a good practice.



# CULTURE AND ECONOMY

In thematic area “5. Culture and economy”, Talca scored an average of 32.3/100, which is below the world average of 38/100. In general, local economic development strategies seem to be quite insensitive to the specificities of the culture sector in economic terms, and there are no mechanisms which might shed light on the contribution of cultural agents to the local economy. Nevertheless, the Communal Development Plan for Talca, which, at the end of 2015, is in the process of being drafted and has not, therefore, been adopted yet, seems to incorporate a cultural dimension. Limited dialogue has been identified between the organizations responsible for promoting economic development and agents from the culture sector, but the self-assessment process opened up a forum for dialogue between them and an interest in involving the Municipal Cultural Authority in the drafting of the city’s Communal Development Plan. Some businesses support cultural projects as part of their social responsibility programs, but there are no public support mechanisms at the municipal level to facilitate voluntary contributions. With regard to tourism development, the importance of drawing up a tourism development plan that is based and places greater value on Talca’s cultural resources has been identified. Talca stands out for its recognition of the craft professions in the territory and the value placed on them.



# CULTURE, EQUALITY AND SOCIAL INCLUSION

In thematic area “6. Culture, equity and social inclusion”, Talca obtained an average score of 27/100, which is below the world average of 35/100. In general, Talca’s strengths lie in the accessibility of its cultural facilities and venues for everyone. The majority of cultural events and activities are free or at an affordable price, thereby making access to culture democratic, and measures have been taken to make cultural facilities accessible, for example, for disabled persons. Talca also stands out with regard to the gender perspective, although this is not on a formal basis, and it promotes the active involvement of women in cultural activities and organizations.

Cultural activities take place in suburbs, including in the most difficult (in terms of poverty or exclusion) areas of the territory, but these programmes are not specifically dedicated to the fight against poverty. There are also activities which promote intergenerational cooperation, but they are not part of a specific and permanent programme. Finally, there are also cultural activities aimed at social inclusion, such as the Estampa Maulina Folk Ballet, which puts on dance workshops in prisons. During the self-assessment process, the need for local conflict resolution strategies with a cultural dimension was highlighted.



# CULTURE, URBAN PLANNING AND PUBLIC SPACE

In thematic area “7. Culture, urban planning and public space”, Talca has an average score of 44/100, which is equal to the world average. Talca’s Communal Regulatory Plan explicitly acknowledges cultural factors and the protection of heritage, and there are effective conservation mechanisms in place. There is an inventory of national monuments and the Municipal Cultural Authority is also conducting work to identify and protect local and intangible heritage. With regard to citizen participation, some general shortcomings are identified, but the Communal Development Plan, under preparation in 2015, is opening forums for citizen consultation and seems to integrate a cultural dimension into the city’s territorial development. The Municipal Cultural Authority often organizes cultural activities and events in public spaces and in the historical quarter, but this is not integrated into an explicit programme to occupy the city’s public space.

Talca is at an emerging stage with regard to some of the actions in this thematic area, which caused the final score to be lowered. Therefore, actions related to public art, the landscape and the cultural impact assessment have not been implemented. Within the field of architecture, although architectural criteria generally exist (height, etc.), there are no architectural guidelines necessarily related to the territory’s cultural identity.



# CULTURE, INFORMATION AND KNOWLEDGE

In thematic area “8. Culture, information and knowledge”, Talca scored an average of 44.32/100, slightly above the global average of 43/100. Talca is notable for freedom of expression and the diversity of the local media, which reflects the plurality of opinions. In general, the existing information system is free and pluralistic, but this situation owes more to civil society initiatives than to local government policies in this regard. The involvement of Talca’s universities in this area should be stressed; for example, with the creation of the Cultural Policies Observatory of the University of Talca, or a research project on cultural processes and social innovation. Great interest has been shown in developing policies and programmes to enable cultural agents to participate in international cooperation networks. The lowest scores refer to actions related to new technology and the digital sphere.



# GOVERNANCE OF CULTURE

In thematic area “9. Governance of culture”, Talca scored an average of 43.12/100, slightly above the global average of 37/100. Talca has formally adopted the Agenda 21 for culture, and the Communal Culture Plan adequately maps out and structures the actions in terms of the schedule and the location in the territory. Talca’s lowest scores are in the area of citizen participation in cultural policies, an area in which efforts are being made to establish new practices. Cooperation, coordination and complementarity between the different levels of governance and other public or private organizations in the city are still at an emerging stage.



# CONCLUSIONS

On the basis of this observation, the following conclusions can be presented:

- » The city of Talca has significant experience in designing and implementing cultural policies and actions in a post-disaster crisis situation, in order to promote the rebuilding of the area and its sustainable development. The city also stands out for its practices which link culture, education and cultural diversity, as well as for the connections between culture and environment in the field of the local gastronomy and of local customs and products.
- » The aspects which could warrant greater attention in the future and for which Talca could benefit from the example of other cities include, in particular, the thematic area of cultural rights, citizen participation and governance, the link between culture and economy, the link between culture, urban planning and public space, as well as the link between culture, equity and social inclusion.



# CONTACT

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