

## Seminar on Creativity and Innovation in Cultural Cooperation Projects

Barcelona, 26th January 2009

### Abstract

The Seminar on "Creativity and Innovation in Cultural Cooperation Projects" was organised in Barcelona, the 26<sup>th</sup> of January 2009, by the Barcelona University, the European Network of Cultural Administration Training Centres (ENCATC) and the Interarts Foundation. It received the support of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE) of the European Parliament. This initiative took place in the frame of the European Year of Creativity and Innovation 2009, and was actually one of the first public actions of this Year.

The Seminar was very useful to generate many ideas that we wish to synthesise as follow in 5 short abstracts:

#### *1. Recognition of the complexity of concepts and processes regarding creativity and innovation*

The debate on creativity and innovation arouses questions the cultural management professionals could partly feel close with, but it now goes beyond its usual framework and can provoke certain disorientation.

Creativity and innovation situate increasingly the creative processes and the cultural action in a logic of dialogue and interaction from different points of view: on one hand, the "users" (the public, the audience, and the consumers), instead of acting only at the end of the processes, being only the addressees of those ones, become active agents, within participative processes of innovation; on another hand, an encounter happens between other disciplines and other territories and contexts.

Bellow that perspective, new increasing complexity processes are coming out, in a bidirectional o multidirectional way: the cultural sector receives outputs from those processes, but it also feeds other sectors. In the same that it's important to integrate models coming from the business world, it's also important for the companies to get inspiration from the processes and forms of the cultural sector, and to recognise the potential of creativity when it comes to rethink organisation and work systems. In any case, dialogue forces to face change, to assume new risks and give up some other things.

In that context, we learn how to conceive innovation in a more complex way, beyond the purely technological definitions, and in terms that are peculiar to the traditional cultural work: innovation derives from a few people passion, and generates emotional stimulations for those who experiment it.

#### *2. Organisation and dynamics of cooperation*

As a consequence of the mentioned complexity, the organisation frameworks also evolve. There is a shift towards working through platforms and other type of structures, more adapted to take advantage of the transversal connections.

Theses platforms allow exploring the margins, as a source of creativity and innovation, and they represent the expression of a cooperation that shouldn't get reduced to projects implementation, as it gains a special value when it nourishes the reflection and the solving problems processes. On another hand, in front of the risk that contains any bet on innovation, the cooperation can be a resource of security, which strengthen the self-capacity and prepare to face change. Despite this fact, some data indicate that cultural organisations in Catalonia are not very keen on changing their organisational models through cooperation, especially with institutions from other countries.

### *3. Social dimension of creativity and innovation*

Debate on culture, creativity and innovation has been orientated principally towards questions related with the organisation forms and the economy agenda. But we can also observe, even if in a less explicit way, some aspects related with the social implications of these processes.

In that sense, creativity is being proclaimed as an expression of liberty, and its dynamism comes out in these contexts which plainly recognise the social and cultural diversity. On another hand, the firm position achieved by Medias and the contents distribution entities makes that the guaranty of an equal access for all, and the policies addressed to them, are very relevant.

Finally, the risks and tensions that innovation necessarily generates require positive and interested attitudes toward change. The potential of the cultural action to provide trust between the different segments of the population remains essential. As well, we shouldn't forget some well-known experiences to support innovation (creative capital funds, programs for talent training...), based on the social responsibility of companies, universities and public administrations.

### *4. Challenges of consciousness-raising*

As it occurs frequently in the meetings of the cultural sector, the debate has been accompanied by a significant dose of claim.

Among the topics that could motivate future actions of consciousness-raising, we find in the first place the necessity to recognise culture as an economy sector comparable to any other. On another hand, there is a lack of some broader visions regarding the meaning of creativity and innovation, being able to integrate the inner and different value of culture.

This increasing recognition has to be also reflected in the design of adequate policies, able to foment risk taking, both in the cultural and the educative arenas.

### *5. Policies*

From the experiences and reflections presented at the Seminar, many orientations for future policies of support to creativity and innovation come out, from the point of view of the cultural cooperation.

There is a necessity of policies able to catalyse the latent creative potential, switching from a theoretical discourse that recognises the culture capacities, to specific programs able to make it tangible. Among other projects, this means the incorporation of adequate financing systems to the innovative and audacious projects.

On another hand, there is a lack of policies able to overcome the obstacles, in the different sectors (the European Year for Creativity and Innovation offers the opportunity to keep exploring the transversal qualities of the European financing programs) as well the financing programs regulation at any level, often too rigid to integrate innovative propositions.

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