



MONTEVIDEO'S RESPONSE TO COVID-19

Montevideo supports households affected by COVID-19 through distributing necessity baskets and literary works.

Like most cities worldwide, Montevideo, the capital of Uruguay and a UNESCO Creative City of Literature, has also been impacted by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

Hometown to many renowned writers, including Mario Benedetti and Juan Carlos Onetti, literature has been the main driver and enabler of the city's creative economy, and its intercultural and intergenerational dialogue.

In this challenging scenario, the city has utilized culture, and in particular literature, to serve as a means of asynchronous communication of ideas, and provide supportive and innovative solutions to isolation and access to information.

In view of this situation, the city has distributed more than 10,000 food and hygiene baskets to the economically disadvantaged inhabitants, namely street artists and other vulnerable communities. Within these baskets, the city also provides a piece of literary work from local writers and publishers to further support them and promote the 'bibliodiversity' present in the city. Twice a month, inhabitants receive the necessity basket along with a new book, allowing them to get inspired and dive into the imaginative world of literature.

The initiative involves and supports various authors, artists and organizations in different ways and means during these trying times. In this regard, the Municipality partly purchased the books from 'Un libro un abrazo' (One book one hug), a non-profit organization, that provides work opportunities to people with intellectual disabilities. By doing so, the city of Montevideo also helps the organization to pursue its work concerning the care for the disabled.

The other collection of books for the baskets comes from the city's annual literary competition 'Juan Carlos Onetti Literary Prize'. The prize promotes via publication four literary works, respectively in the genres of fiction, poetry, children and youth literature, and playwriting. This literary prize has allowed many emerging and unpublished authors to publish their first work and gain visibility.

The baskets along with these books not only allow authors known and unknown to broaden their outreach but also offer the inhabitants solace and a sense of escape in times of lockdown.

MORE INFORMATION

- <https://montevideo.gub.uy/>