

San Cristóbal de Las Casas

UNESCO Creative City
Crafts and Folk Art



2015 – 2019
Monitoring Report

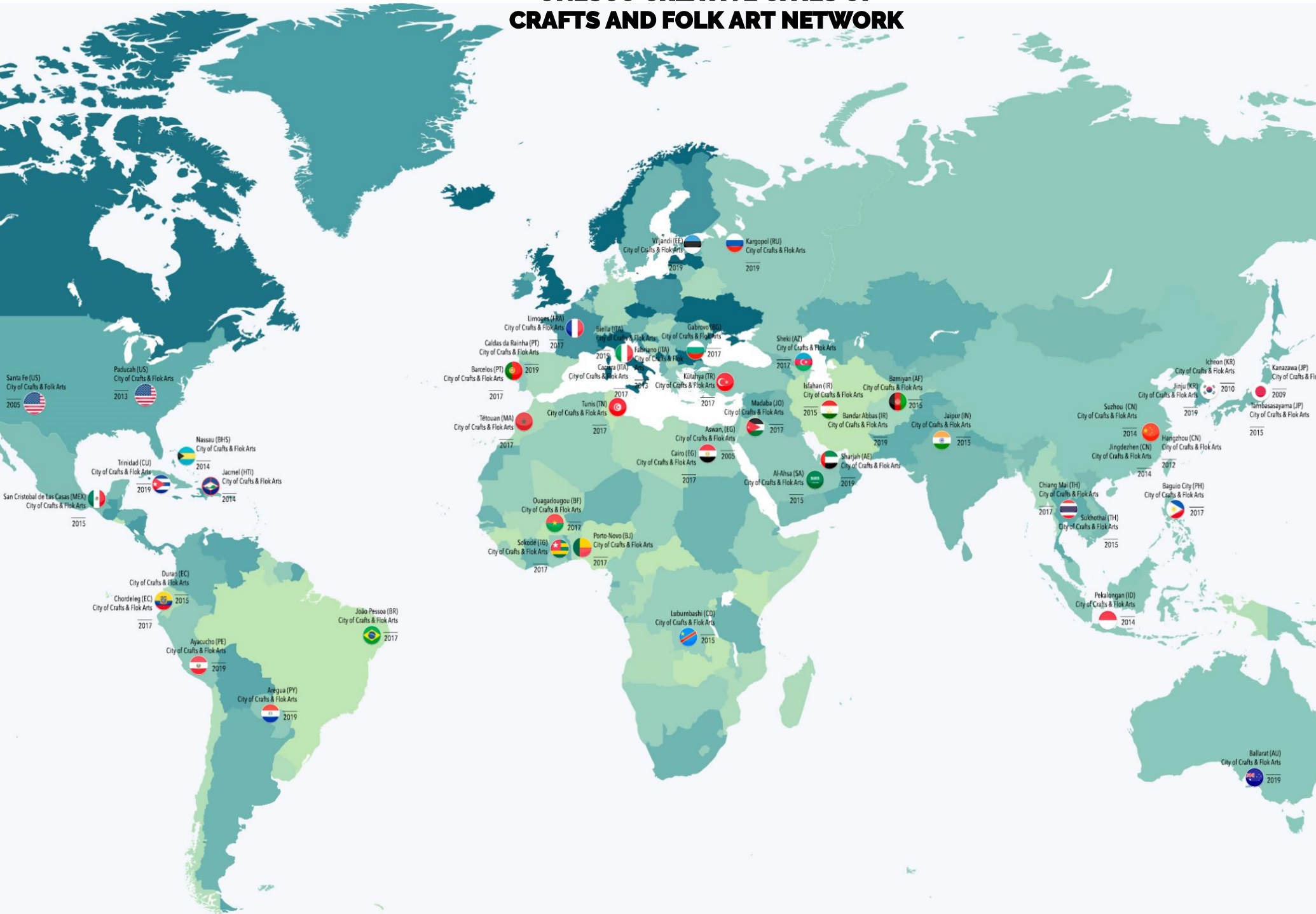




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UNESCO CREATIVE CITIES OF CRAFTS AND FOLK ART NETWORK



1. Executive Summary.

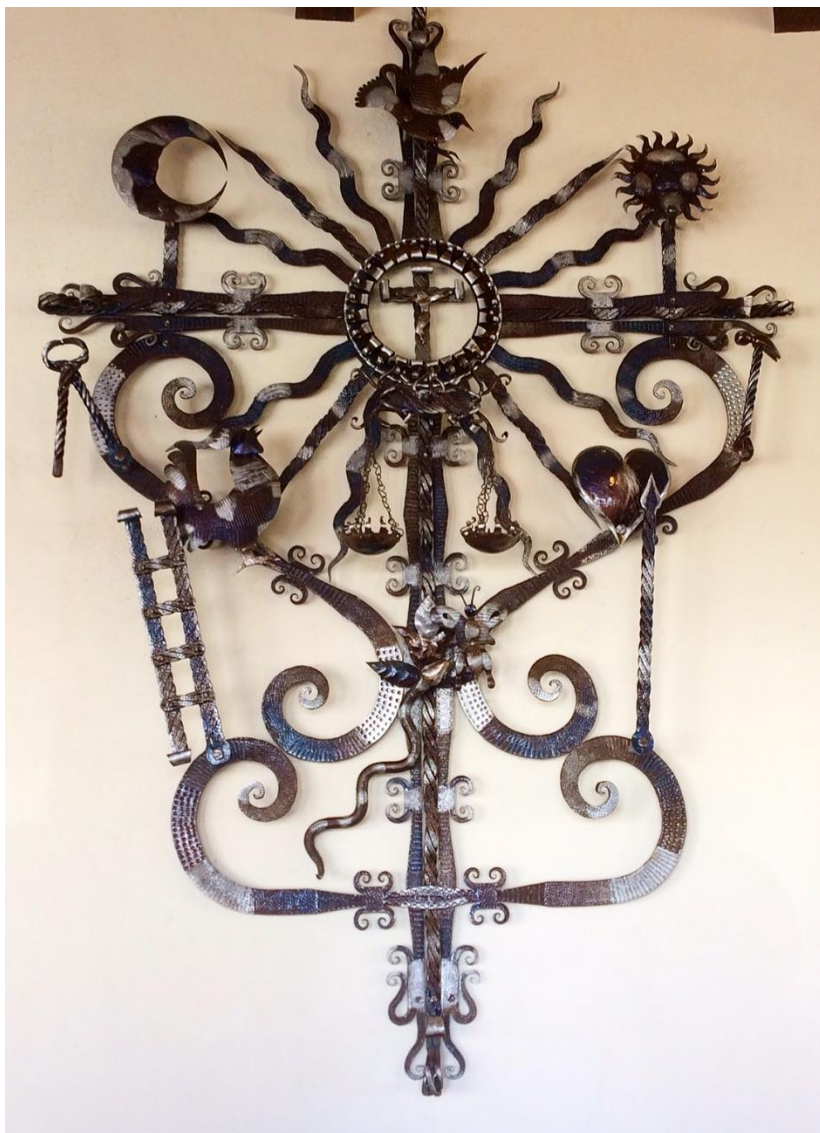
In 2015, San Cristobal de Las Casas was the first Mexican city to become a UNESCO Creative City of Crafts and Folk Art. We decided to bid for that designation because of the strong presence of our artisans, craftsman, and women, and artists who historically have maintained the presence and local exchange of crafts and folk art that has forged an essential part of our cultural identity.

For us, Crafts and Folk Art go back several centuries, and this expertise shows, ever so clearly, in the gorgeous pieces created by the hands of our artisans. Those unique pieces express not only the love of those who made them, but talk as well about hundreds of years of knowledge, history, and culture born with our native communities and later mixed with those of the Spanish men and women that came to found the City. With their colors and patterns, they remind us of our cosmogony, our relationship with nature, and with the universe. Moreover, they are a reference to our ancestry and the miscegenation that created our culture.

Our commitment to the conservation of our traditional knowledge is one of our key pillars, and the inclusion of innovation to guaranty its sustainable evolution is the other.

With this monitoring report, we want to show to the UCCN the main activities done in the City in the past four years that highlight the importance of Crafts in San Cristóbal de Las Casas.





San Cristóbal de Las Casas, México

2. General Information.

CITY: San Cristóbal de Las Casas

COUNTRY: Mexico

CREATIVE FIELD: Crafts & Folk Art

DATE OF DESIGNATION: December 11, 2015

DATE OF SUBMISSION OF THE CURRENT REPORT: December, 2019

ENTITY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE REPORT: Municipal Government of the City

FOR THE REPORT: Department of Economy & Creative City

PREVIOUS REPORTS: None

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Annual Meetings





3. Contribution to the Network's Global Management.

3.1 PARTICIPATION IN UCCN ANNUAL MEETINGS.

2017. Enghien–Les–Bains, France.

Paducah, US. First official Crafts and Folk Art Meeting.

2018. Krakowice (Krakow & Katowice), Poland.

During the Annual Meeting, specifically in the City of Katowice, San Cristóbal de Las Casas, had a Pavilion dedicated to "Poxil Yu' Un Balumil: The Great Catalog of Crafts," where we exhibited a variety of textiles from different indigenous communities of the region. We also presented a selection of photographs of daily life in the city and made a tasting of a traditional drink known as Pox.

2019. Fabriano, Italy.

During the Annual Meeting, at the invitation of the Secretariat, we participated in the thematic session called "Building the Power of Culture for Inclusiveness" where we presented San Cristobal de Las Casas' experience on this matter alongside representatives from Nassau City of Crafts and Folk Art, Wuhan City of Design and Turin City of Design.

3.2 HOSTING OF A UCCN ANNUAL MEETING.

None.

3.3 ORGANIZATION OF A WORKING OR CO-ORDINATION MEETING.

During 2019 San Cristobal de Las Casas, has been working quite closely with the Mexican UNESCO Office and the other Mexican Creative Cities (Ensenada–Gastronomy, Puebla–Design, Morelia–Music, Guadalajara–Media Arts, Mexico City–Design) to create a Mexican Network that may help improve the coordination and communication among the nominated cities in our country and those trying to apply to the UCCN.

3.4 INTERNATIONAL MEETINGS ON ISSUES RELATED TO CREATIVE CITIES.

San Cristóbal de Las Casas has been very active in the UNESCO Creative Cities Network, by repeatedly offering its support and expertise at international meetings.

Over the past four years, San Cristobal de Las Casas:

Participated as a guest speaker at 10+ forums, symposiums and conferences.

3.5 FINANCIAL AND/OR IN-KIND SUPPORT PROVIDED TO UNESCO SECRETARIAT.

None.

3.6 MEMBERSHIP OF STEERING GROUP.

No.

3.7 PARTICIPATION IN EVALUATION OF APPLICATIONS.

2019. Ayacucho, Peru; 2019. Ballarat, Australia; 2019. Barranquilla, Colombia.



National & International Forums

4. Major initiatives implemented at the local level.

...to achieve the objectives of the UCCN.

4.1 CREATION OF THE MUNICIPAL DIRECTION OF ECONOMY AND CREATIVE CITY.



To have better management of the Creative City Program, in 2015, fifteen days after our nomination as a UNESCO City of Crafts and Folk Art, the local government decided to create a "Direction of Creative City," which was dependent of the municipal Office of Tourism.

In 2018, with the change of administration, the new government decided to make the "Direction of Creative City" an independent office that could work alongside the Office of Culture and the Office of Tourism but with a self-controlled policy.

Later, in 2019, realizing the importance of the Creative Economies and Cultural Industries, the municipal government decided to rename the office to "Direction of Economy and Creative City," setting a precedent nationwide by regulating the economic policy of the city from the Creative Economies and Cultural Industries point of view.

http://www.sancristobal.gob.mx/media/2019/07/file_1647379488.pdf

4.2 INCORPORATION OF THE CREATIVE CITIES PROGRAM TO THE MUNICIPAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN.

During the 2018-2021 Administration, we were able to include the Creative City's objectives in the Municipal Development Plan,

placing our public policies on the guideline of Economic Development.

With this inclusion, from the municipal government, we aim to promote innovation and creativity in San Cristóbal de Las Casas to ensure the human development of our community, the encouragement of the conservation of our heritage and the dignification of our cultural identity.

Our objectives are in line with the UN SDGs, the state, and national development plans and were published on the Official State Gazette, making them the first of their kind on a national level.

http://www.sancristobal.gob.mx/media/2019/10/file_6906230769.pdf (pg. 4, 262-270)

4.3 CREATIVE COLLECTIVE PROGRAM.



During 2019, officials from The British Council Mexico contacted the office of Creative City from San Cristobal de Las Casas and the other five Mexican Creative Cities to implement the "Creative Collective." This program supports the creative economy with social impact in Mexico. Its main goal is to strengthen the capacities of different actors in the creative economy, setting three main strands: *Young creators, Creative leaders & Policy.*



The Mexican Creative Cities, as strategic allies of the Creative Collective, participated directly in the Young Creators program and the Creative Leaders.

Besides capacity building across these three strands, Creative Collective includes several other activities, including conferences, seminars, and public forums, as well as new research on the creative economy through open publications.

Our first interaction was the "Creative Enterprise Programme" where three young creators from San Cristobal de Las Casas won the opportunity to strengthen their creative/cultural programs using design thinking, meeting local experts, generating an entrepreneur network and, above all, getting the opportunity to recognize the real value of their creative/cultural project.



4.4 CIRCLE OF PEACE.



Within the framework of the International Day of Peace and willing to put an end to violence and conflicts that surround our communities, we proposed the "Circle of Peace." This program seeks to

foster within the minds and hearts of children the necessary conditions to achieve internal and collective peace, as well as generate spaces of mutual respect and coexistence with diversity. All this through play, games, meditation, and movement.

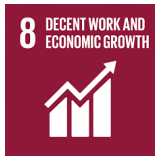


The Circle of Peace aims to establish a connection with our emotions through bodily expression, generating a space where nonviolence, coexistence with diversity, and mutual respect are encouraged. Our main goal, however, is to strengthen the children's right to live and play peacefully in violence-free environments.

In our first edition, we had +500 students and teachers from primary schools in the urban and rural areas of the city.



4.5 CRAFTSMEN AND WOMEN MAPPING



To accomplish the proposed project of the "observatory and research program," we have started mapping our creative sector by identifying some of our main creative actors: craftsmen and women, artisans, leaders, creators, artists, educators, and researchers.

We understand that this is a mid/long term project, so we will keep on working to guaranty the publication of the results in the future. However, these first steps allow us to understand the reality of those creators we have already identified.

<https://www.facebook.com/GobiernoSanCristobal/videos/2449311905182071/>



San Cristóbal de Las Casas, México

4.6 BARRIO, ARTE PÚBLICO Y MEMORIA.

"Neighborhood, public art, and memory" is a project that aims to provoke a dialogue between creative communities united by the knowledge and use of clay, pottery and ceramics.



With the support of residents of the San Ramón, a neighborhood recognized locally as the potters' neighborhood, and the College of Architects from San Cristobal de Las Casas; we held a contest was to place the "Sculptural Stele" alluding to the importance of pottery in the history of the City and the Neighborhood.

The second phase of the project is still to be held.

4.7 MEXICAN CREATIVE CITIES NETWORK



Since 2018 the Mexican Office of UNESCO and the Mexican Creative Cities have tried to create the Mexican Creative Cities Network, to help all of its members to better articulate and cooperate amongst them. In this, we have held several reunions, and last November, with the aid of the British Council Mexico, we were able to reunite the now eight Creative Cities in Mexico City to establish the first points to be addressed.



In January 2020, we expect to have all eight Mayors, Focal Points, and Municipal Officials together to finally and officially establish our Mexican Network, which is expected to work as a platform between the eight nominated cities and those who are planning on becoming one.



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4.8 "GALA DE ZARZUELA" IN AID OF THE RECONSTRUCTION OF HISTORICAL MONUMENTS OF THE CITY CENTER.



Back in 2017, at 23:49 on September 7, San Cristobal de Las Casas was severely struck by an earthquake of an estimated magnitude of 8.2. This led to the closure of 21 historical monuments due to their critical state. After 2 years, 18 of those monuments remain closed and in urgent need of intervention. However, Federal Funding have been allocated to the reconstruction of housing, hospitals, and schools.

Following the above, San Cristobal de Las Casas Creative City and the Consultative Council of the Historical Center decided to work together and generate a Cultural Event to raise funds for the most urgent interventions needed. With this Zarzuela Gala, and the attendance of +700 people, we were able to fundraise USD +6,000 to finish the conservation of the south wall and the chandeliers of San Francisco's church.

<https://www.facebook.com/GobiernoSanCristobal/videos/1542631985906011/>





5. Major initiatives implemented through inter-city cooperation. ...to achieve the objectives of the UCCN.

5.1 FIRST INTERNATIONAL CRAFTS AND GASTRONOMY FESTIVAL "SABORES Y SABERES".



In February 2018, with the participation of delegates from different Creative Cities from Crafts and Gastronomy clusters and representatives from the Mexican UNESCO Office, San Cristóbal de Las Casas, held its first International Festival, "Sabores y Saberes." From the 2nd to the 5th, our city filled up with crafts, music, and gastronomy from Paducah (USA), Icheon (Korea), Popayan (Colombia), Ensenada (Mexico), and San Cristobal de Las Casas.



The project was divided in different phases.

a) Expo-fair of crafts from San Cristobal and our visitors.



b) Outdoors Gastronomic & Musical performances (from locals & Visitors).



c) Plenary sessions & visits to original communities.



d) Exchange of artisanal knowledge: ceramics. Pottery masters from Icheon (Korea), Paducah (USA) and San Cristóbal.





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in 2013

e) Five-course meal offered by Paducah, USA

With the help of students from UACH a local culinary school.

<https://m.facebook.com/story.php?fbid=1051975238275593&id=10050>

[64669633317](https://m.facebook.com/story.php?fbid=1051975238275593&id=10050)



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Cultural Organization



ENSENADA

Designated
UNESCO Creative City
in 2015

e) Five-course meal offered by Ensenada, MX

With the help of students from Parmentier a local culinary school.

<https://m.facebook.com/story.php?fbid=555954481449553&id=2328742>

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Designated
UNESCO Creative City
in 2005

f) Cooking masterclass offered by Popayan (COL) ...to students from the Integral System for Family Development





g) Musical mash-up between a Mariachi Band and a Blue Grass Band.

Entirely out of the calendar was this fantastic mash-up. As a welcoming gesture to our guests, we decided to invite a Mariachi band to a dinner party offered by the municipal government. The mariachi band started playing, and soon after, one of the members of the Bluegrass band joined them.

And after the official closing ceremony of the "Sabores y Saberes Festival," the same mariachi band was invited to play with the bluegrass band. They decided to do it in one of our pedestrian streets for the enjoyment of our local community.

5.2. DECLARATION OF SAN CRISTOBAL "SABORES Y SABERES".



One of the main results of the "International Festival of Crafts and Gastronomy: *Sabores y Saberes*," was the "San Cristobal's Declaration."

During the plenary sessions, presided by Mrs. Nuria Sanz, former Director of the Mexican UNESCO Office, with the intervention of the Mayors of San Cristóbal de Las Casas, Paducah, and Icheon; as well as those from representatives, creators and focal points of all the attending cities, we established a guideline or recommendations named: San Cristobal's Declaration.

We heartily invite you to consult the Declaration here: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1C9JCyO69erf_gIVP13XXlr8IU21VJQt/view?usp=sharing, and to embrace our recommendations and principles as if they were yours.



RECOGNIZING the testimony of the artisans, chefs, artists and creatives that participated to the Festival "Sabores y Saberes" that clearly stated: creatives need to have common spaces of interaction, and for a suitable period of time, to share and work in communion; exchange perspectives about their different cultures; identify new and appropriate spaces for cross collaboration, collective creation in real time and exchange of processes and techniques; creatives need to be involved in ensuring that all necessary resources will be provided by the hosting organization, and the documentation of this process will be available to share as well, and improve upon with other members of the UCCN.

RECOGNIZING that the Festival "Sabores y Saberes" represents a new format for UCCN meetings ideal to share experiences, promote the local culture, achieve mutual recognition and understanding, contribute to the economic development of the hosting City's Creative Sector, and to nurturing a culture of peace and sharing, by:

- The implementation of the concept of "Creative Contamination" among different clusters: mixing the creativeness of two or more clusters, represented both by public officials and by expert knowledge keepers, to create a cultural product totally different and new, still respectful of each UCC's cultural heritage and tradition.
- The participation in a commonly developed project with the active collaboration between visiting and local expert knowledge keepers, visiting and local apprentices to share and learn new techniques and methods, thus reciprocally contributing to the professional development of a new globalized and experienced group of creative experts.

PRINCIPLE 5: Strengthen the mutual cooperation between clusters and cities by sharing creative resources and events, and by exposing the creative actors to new experiences derived from "Creative Contamination" among two or more clusters meeting together.

PRINCIPLE 6: Stimulate the collaboration between Crafts and Folk Art, Gastronomy and Music, with Literature, Media Arts and Film clusters to create compelling storytelling messages about the uniqueness of each artisan, chef, cook, farmer, musician, instrument builder of the Gastronomy, Craft and Folk Art and Music networks. Crafts and Folk Art, Gastronomy and Music are particularly suited to non-verbal communication among peoples of different culture, and speaking different languages, thus allowing "Creative Contamination" of different local cultural expressions.

5.3 DAY OF THE DEATH FESTIVAL "CUÉNTAME UN CUENTO EN GOSPEL LLORONA".



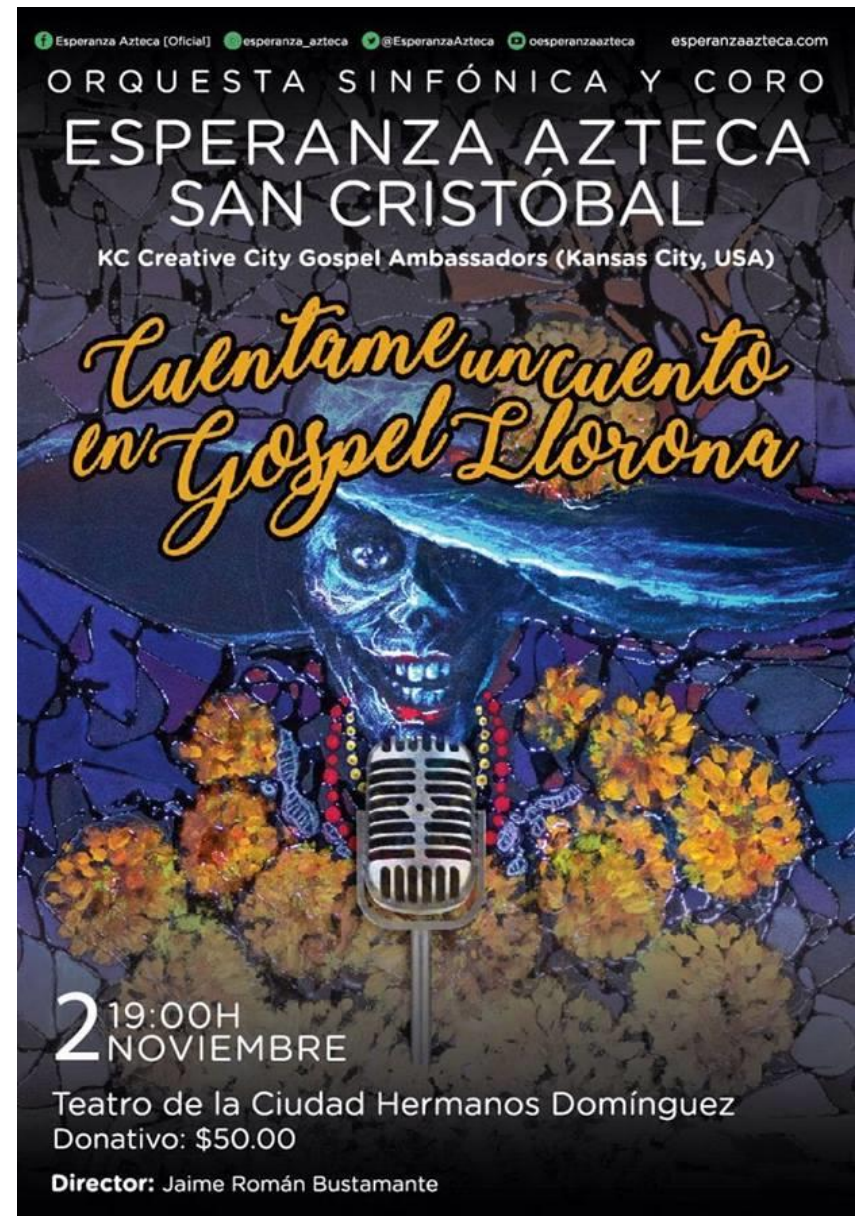
After the fantastic experience we had with the mariachi-bluegrass mash-up, we had the opportunity of meeting the focal point of Kansas Creative City of Music at the 2018 annual meeting in Krakow-Katowice.

With this mash-up in mind, we started imagining how a city of music and one of crafts could collaborate, and the result of this was our festival "Cuéntame un cuento en Gospel, Llorona" (Tell me a story, in Gospel, Llorona).

With this project, we were able to showcase one of the main traditions of the Mexican culture "Día de los Muertos," to our guests from Kansas, and they showed us how amazing the Gospel music could be. "Cuéntame un cuento en Gospel, Llorona" was particularly important because it involved the "Esperanza Azteca choir and orchestra" formed by more than 350 young men and women from San Cristóbal.

We divided the project into three stages: the rehearsals, the first performance +200 guests in San Antonio's church, and the second performance at the main theater of the city "Teatro de la Ciudad: Hermanos Domínguez" for +900 people in the audience.

<https://www.facebook.com/GobiernoSanCristobal/videos/2019263561494202/>





Rehearsals







5.4 CREATIVE TEXTILES.



With the eminent process of selecting candidates to join the UCCN, the city of Como, Italy, invited San Cristóbal de Las Casas to work together in a project named: Creative Textiles.

The base of the project was to exchange materials and techniques between the craftsmen and women from both cities. Thus, in April 2018, we received seven pieces of silk from Como, which were later embroidered by our craftswomen, using traditional Mayan symbology.

We presented the results of this exchange at the 2018 UCCN Annual Meeting in Fabriano, Italy. The pieces arrived later at the UNESCO headquarters in Paris and also to some other European Cities.

<https://www.comocreativa.com/en/international-projects/>



Artisan: Tania Beatriz Gómez Vázquez

Working time: 35 hours

Name of the embroidery: Rhombus and butterfly

Description: Baby blue silk blouse with rhombus aligned on a straight line, with spirals on their sides and butterflies.

Material: Baby blue Silk fabric from Como, Italy and 100% cotton thread.

Meaning: in Mayan symbology, we represent the world with a rhombus, which is the center of the universe, and its points are the four cardinal points. The butterfly is a metaphor of the sun "because she also goes to the underworld when the day becomes night."

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1avFYahjXIZWG5A5qbsEq0qeu5gHRR0qr/view?usp=sharing>

San Cristóbal de Las Casas, México

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https://www.comocreativa.com/il-progetto-frame-creative-presentato-durante-il-xiii-unesco-annual-meeting/



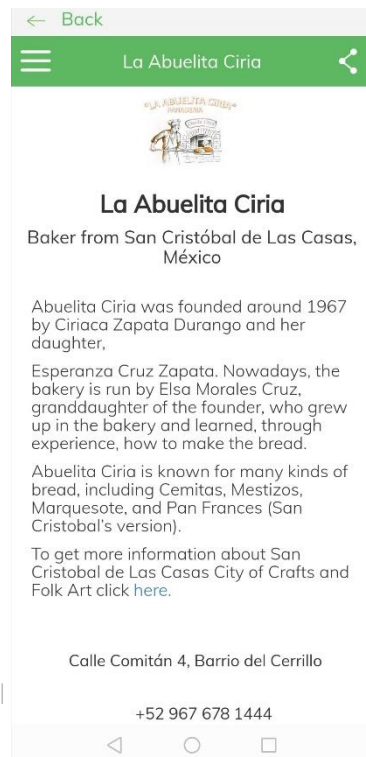
5.5. BREADS OF THE CREATIVE CITIES



For the 1st edition of the project "Breads of the Creative Cities," San Cristóbal de Las Casas, reach out to two of our traditional bakeries, "Migas" and "Abuelita Ciria." They were kind enough to let us see the process of making one of our most famous traditional bread "Cazueleja" and even lend us their recipes for making it. During the "Days of Bread" in the 2018 UCCN Annual Meeting, one of our chefs brought some *cazueleja* samples with her. You can find both bakeries and their recipes at the Trust Tm app.



http://www.itkius.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/FINAL_Booklet-Days-of-Bread.pdf



For the 2nd edition of the project, representatives from the ITKI-US and Tucson, US (Creative City of Gastronomy), came to San Cristobal to visit three of our traditional bakeries.





Capital of Crafts – City of Creativity Suzhou, China



Feria Artesanal y de Manualidades Nicolina Castro, Popayan, Colombia



Feira Internacional de Economia Criativa de João Pessoa, Brazil.



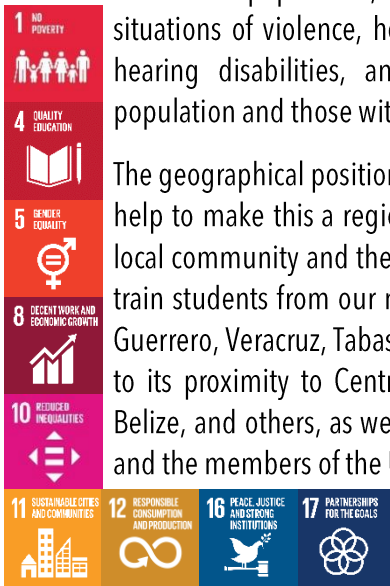
6. Proposed Action Plan

...for the forthcoming mid-term period of four years.

6.1.1 LOCAL PROJECT 1. SCHOOL & LAB OF CRAFTS, FOLK ARTS, AND TRADITIONAL TRADES.

With the perspective of preserving our traditional knowledge and dignify it, we are committed to promoting equitable and sustainable education that can also serve as an engine for the economic development of our City. The School-Lab's primary goal is the strengthening of the productive capacity of our most vulnerable population, among which we consider: women in situations of violence, homeless people, people with motor and hearing disabilities, and our elderly or young unemployed population and those with unfinished education.

The geographical position of San Cristóbal de Las Casas, could also help to make this a regional training place that may prepare our local community and the rest of the State of Chiapas. It could also train students from our neighboring states (for example: Oaxaca, Guerrero, Veracruz, Tabasco, and the Yucatan Peninsula); and, due to its proximity to Central America, to people from Guatemala, Belize, and others, as well as to the members of the Crafts cluster and the members of the UCCN.



6.1.2 LOCAL PROJECT 2. NEIGHBORHOOD AT HEART.

Neighborhood at Heart focuses on the dignification of our craftsman and women, the strengthening of neighborhood cohesion, and the re-appropriation of public spaces through the promotion of identity elements of our community.

It puts particular attention to the 10 Historic Neighborhoods of the city (which initially worked, each one, with a particular trade). The project also seeks to promote a sense of belonging and identity that may reinforce our community. It would also generate, through crafts and culture, the reconstruction of our social fabric, the promotion of equity, and the repositioning of our artisans as relevant figures in our community.

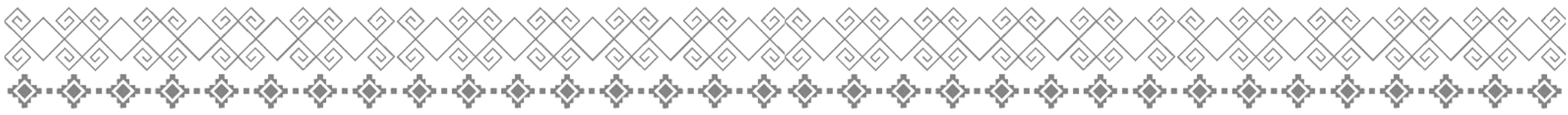


6.1.3 LOCAL PROJECT 3. CREATIVE CITY'S OBSERVATORY.

This project aims to the creation of an Observatory and Research Center to study and promote the creative economy and cultural industries in the city and region.

Its main goal is to study and analyze the creative sector as well as the structure of the local creative economy, by mapping the actors involved in the field, primarily, those of crafts and folk arts. We expect to generate instruments, documents, and methodologies of study to share with other cities as a good practice, also, to produce indicators and registers to help local, regional, and national governments with the outlining of their Development Plans and Cultural Policies.





6.2.1 INTERNATIONAL PROJECT 1. INTERNATIONAL MULTI-CLUSTER FESTIVAL.

In the past four years, we have come to realize that to guaranty the sustainability of the projects aimed to achieve mutual understanding and exchange of cultural backgrounds, cross-pollination is essential. Thus, by mixing the creativeness of two or more clusters, we may create a different cultural product and contribute to the professional development of our creative actors and ensure a better approach to the sustainable development of the involved cities.

This kind of festival also presents a unique occasion for a cross-cultured and trans-disciplinary laboratory to promote creative collaboration, strengthen multilateral cooperation, and generate a momentous educational opportunity. Helping as well in the documentation and preservation of traditional knowledge and, at the same time, making sure that traditional practices can evolve with the addition of innovation and knowledge from other parts of the world making them regain their productivity.



6.2.2 INTERNATIONAL PROJECT 2. INTERNATIONAL CREATIVE RESIDENCIES.

The residence's program is aimed for artisans and creators of the UCCN. Its purpose is to open a space for reflection on crafts and folk arts and to build a creative, productive, and knowledge-sharing

environment around various artistic disciplines. The residents are expected to face creative experiences that may be transversal to their profession, to generate a positive impact on their work development process. Residents will re-elaborate new lines of work –based on creative experiences– undergoing training and creating moments.

The focus of this experience is to improve products linked to creative industries, in particular, those linked to crafts and folk arts, or those transversal to it. This project aims to promote the crafts sector in the city, to expand the competitiveness and quality of our crafts, to include innovation, and, finally, to encourage research and documentation of traditional knowledge.

6.3. ESTIMATED ANNUAL BUDGET FOR IMPLEMENTING THE PLAN.

Local Projects	=	MXN 1,750,000.00
International Projects	=	MXN 1,250,000.00
Grand total	=	MSN 3,000,000.00 per year



The financing will come from the government on the three levels (national, state, and municipal), Public & Private Sector, and international funding (when applicable).

6.4. COMMUNICATION AN AWARENESS.

We will use various media and social networks to reach different audiences. To do so, we will implement a multi-segment strategy using the media at our disposal: print media, social media, and radio. In addition to work with the distribution channels of the UNESCO, UCCN, Mexican Creative Cities, State Government, Municipal Government, and international partners like the British Council.

We will also maintain our support for social media campaigns which aim to revalue the crafts sector in Mexico and promote the consumption of local products/crafts, and update our official web site and social media.

A crucial tool for us is to develop our inhabitants' awareness about the nomination of San Cristóbal de Las Casas as a UNESCO Creative City because of its excellence in the Crafts field, to strengthen their pride for their cultural expressions and turn them into its primary supporters.

The advertising campaigns shall emphasize the importance of crafts and folk arts and traditional knowledge to safeguard the identity of our community.





Direction of Economy and Creative City.

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“Craftsmanship isn't like water in an earthen pot, to be taken out by the dipperful until it's empty. No, the more drawn out the more remains.” –Lloyd Alexander



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San Cristóbal de Las Casas
CITY OF CRAFTS & FOLK ART

Designated
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in 2015