

Uruguay

In 2007 Uruguay ratified this Convention, which cleared the way for a number of legal and institutional initiatives for the promotion of cultural expressions. It guaranteed innovative plans in the field of cultural policies at the national level, meant to promote social inclusion and the improvement and professionalization of work in the field of culture and the arts in the country. The same year the National Directorate of Culture became an executive unit with the task to "promote and preserve the cultural heritage", thus facilitating the coordination and execution of cultural development projects under government responsibility.

This report shows to which extent the understanding of cultural diversity has not been limited to the promotion of cultural expressions, but has also contemplated social inclusion and the recognition of cultural citizenship. The policies implemented were targeted at children, young people, women, people in prison and homeless persons. The measures were not only designed to facilitate access to cultural goods, but also to encourage production in the cultural sphere. Decentralization has been a distinct feature, which makes it easier to gain access to urban, suburban and rural areas.

On the basis of what has been carried out in the country so far it is deemed necessary to assign more importance to communication and add more weight to disseminate the contents and objectives of the Convention and current cultural policies in the country as well as to promote the evaluation of what has been done in order to verify good decisions, introduce improvements, where errors were made, and gain knowledge as to which degree citizens know and make use of the actions undertaken.

As far as the territorial aspect is concerned, efforts towards more decentralisation could be observed; however, the distance between Montevideo and the interior of the country continues to exist. Special attention is paid to management questions regarding the formulation of art projects and the strengthening of the coordination between the areas, which work in the field of implementation of cultural policies. First steps have been taken towards a solution of these challenges by setting up a cabinet for cultural affairs (in which all parties involved within the Ministry of Education and Culture join together) as well as monthly meetings of the directorates of culture of all provinces ("departamentos") with the National Directorate of Culture. It will be necessary to grant continuity to these policies in order to strengthen and consolidate the activities implemented so far.