

Areguá, Creative City of UNESCO

Report of Activities October 2019 – September 2020

Background:

In 2018, invited by members of Plan CHAR¹, together with representatives of the National Commission of UNESCO in Paraguay, Leticia Casati, the Minister of UNESCO in Paris, visited Areguá to attend a meeting with representatives of Areguá's local culture sector and authorities. On that occasion, she emphasized Areguá's many attractions and encouraged those attending the meeting to participate in UNESCO's invitation to join the Creative Cities' Network.

That same year, the Municipality nominated Gabriela Frers to draft the application document at the request of the Plan CHAR working group's members, but this was not submitted since the application date would not be until 2019. The following year, the project designer, together with a Plan CHAR's team, reviewed and improved the application document, which was signed in July by the Mayor of the City and submitted on time to UNESCO.

¹Working group of Plan CHAR's Project (Aregua's Historic quarter)



Photo: Meeting with Leticia Casati, the Minister of UNESCO in Paris

UNESCO's Creative Cities Network

The Creative Cities' Network was created in 2004, to promote cooperation with and between cities that endorse creativity as a strategic factor of sustainable urban development. The 246 cities that currently make up the Network are working together towards a common goal: to position creativity and cultural enterprises as a central part of their local development plan and to actively cooperate on an international level in this field.

Approved Application and nomination

On 31 of October, 2019, we received news that the project submitted to UNESCO by the Municipality and Plan CHAR on behalf of the city of Areguá had been approved and that it had obtained the nomination of Creative City in the category of Crafts and Popular Arts.

The application project included a Governance structure for the implementation of planned activities -with a minimum of adjustments-, made up of: The Municipality of Areguá, as the main partner, the Government of the Central Department, the National Secretariat of Culture (SNC), the National Secretariat of Tourism (Senatur); the Paraguayan Institute of Crafts (IPA), the School of Natural Sciences (FACEN), and as representatives of the civil society: the Working Group of the Plan CHAR project, the organizations Estación A — Núcleo Cultural, Cento Cultural del Lago and the foundation El Cántaro. The project was coordinated by Gabriela Frers (the focal point), from Estación A, and the secretariat was managed by Blas González, from Senatur-Areguá.

The Newsletter of Areguá, Creative City of UNESCO

AREGUA

Cindad Creativa de la Unesco!













Launching of the newsletter in the premises of Senatur- Areguá

In November, the magazine: "Areguá, Creative City of UNESCO" (produced by an editorial team made up of three organisations: Plan CHAR, Estación A and CAPADE) was launched. This first edition was elaborated with the collaboration of various enterprises and the collaboration of members of the community. The cover title was: The nomination of Areguá as a Creative City of UNESCO!

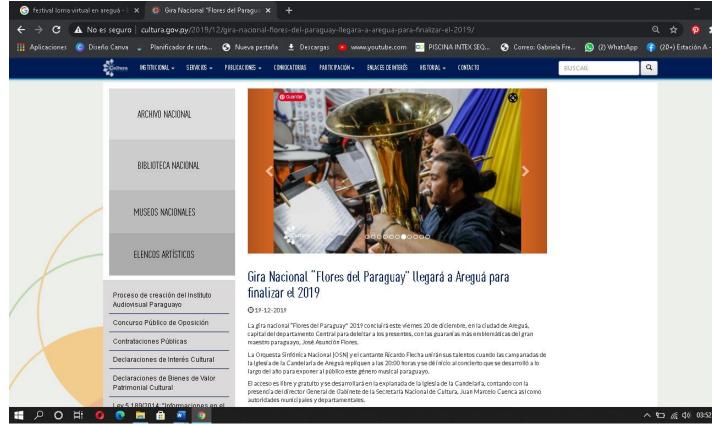
Launching of the nomination

On December 20th, a concert was held on the hill leading up to the church, in memory of the great Paraguayan musician and composer José Asunción Flores. This was the last event of a national tour: "Flores del Paraguay", carried out by the National Symphony Orchestra and the renowned artist, Ricardo Flecha, with the participation of other distinguished guest artists. The Areguá Creative City's Project was launched that same evening. The event

was organized by the Government of the Central Department, the National Symphony Orchestra and the Municipality of Areguá. Other local artists and performers took part in the event, such as the Municipal Youth Ballet and the Adult Ballet.



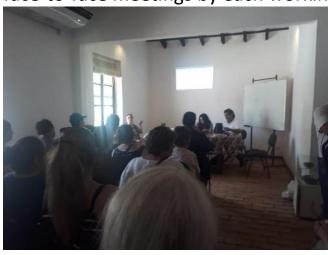




The Governance

The governance team started its meetings on a regular two weekly basis and an open invitation to the community was made, requesting the creation of different work-groups. Due to the health situation, face-to-face meetings had been suspended since March and communication is maintained by virtual means, with occasional

face-to-face meetings by each working team.





Despite the limitations as a result of health measures and reduction of economic resources, members of the Governance team have developed an intense work rhythm in their own institutions and organizations so as to promote and fulfil commitments regarding the "Areguá, Creative City of UNESCO" project.

"Dialogues on Culture and Development"

On 6th of March, a meeting of cultural managers called "Dialogues on culture and development from a territorial point of view", was organized and held by the National Secretariat of Culture and backed by the Municipality of Areguá, Fundación El Cántaro, Estación A - Núcleo Cultural, Jakaira Alternativa Expresión, RED Centros y Espacios Culturales del Paraguay, the Governance team of Areguá Creative City and Itaipú Binacional.







Minister of Culture Rubén Capdevila at the Meeting "Dialogues on culture and development from a territorial approach"



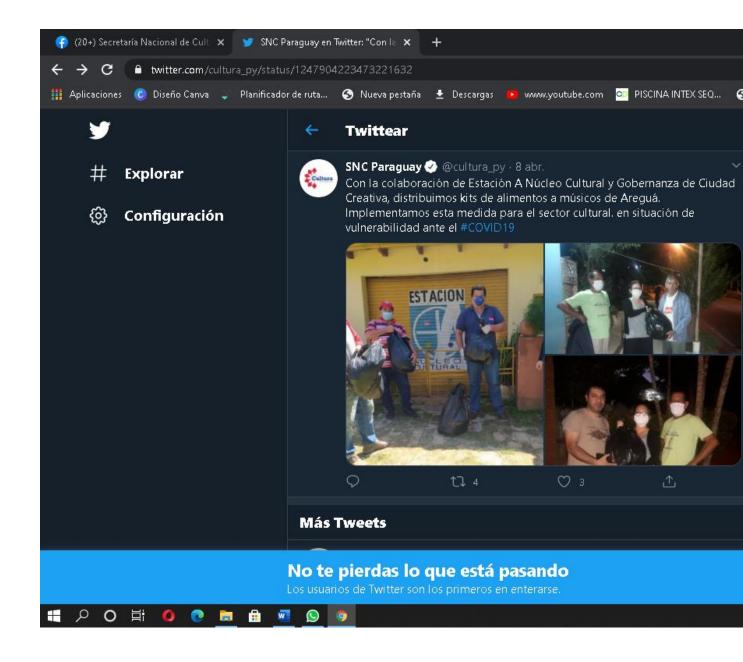
March and the COVID 19

When the pandemic broke out, the situation of isolation and the suspension of activities generated great concern and economic

hardships, which led to the community coming together for the following activities:

The Municipality of Areguá endorsed community food activities "ollas populares" in schools and different neighbourhoods of the town; the Páez Mongers family organised a community cooking activity that lasted for two months, preparing lunches for approximately 400 people daily, with the support of the Paraguayan Institute of Crafts (IPA) and the community; Estación A and Plan CHAR collaborated with the distribution of food packages provided by the National Secretariat of Culture (SNC) and others, and delivered these to the artisans and artists of the town; The Foundation El Cántaro and the Association of Artisans of Areguá (AAA), organized the delivery of the packages to the families of their partners and students; in various neighbourhoods and hamlets the inhabitants themselves organised the distribution and provision of food packages to the more needy. The Paraguayan Institute of Crafts (IPA) delivered food packages to more than 500 artisan families in Areguá.





Progress of the project "Areguá, Creative City of UNESCO"

During the first months of the year, the organizations and institutions of the governance team developed a plan of activities with the corresponding budget for its implementation. This plan was submitted to the Municipality, the main partner of the project. Although it was not possible to receive financial support and activities had to be reduced, the Municipality's Cultural Department accompanied and participated directly in several of the actions

undertaken, with contributions from other members of the Governance team.

A new museum in the city

On Sunday, March 8th, 2020, the Centro Cultural del Lago (CCDL) opened its new museum space called "Earth. Fire. Water. Ceramic Towns of Paraguay" in order to commemorate its 10th. Anniversary.

In a decade of intense work, the CCDL has managed to position ceramists of Areguá on the national scene and market, as well as bring together other regional potters, including those from Asunción. With this initiative, the CCDL continues to commit itself to the creation of spaces that show the evolution of pottery in the country, at this exciting time, when new initiatives and new generations are increasing and renewing the aesthetics of the pottery industry of Paraguay.

"Earth. Fire. Water. Ceramic Towns of Paraguay" focuses on the production of the three traditional Paraguayan pottery towns: Tobatí, Itá and Areguá. The CCDL is sponsored by the Itaú Foundation.



Imagens of the museum







Rogelia Romero, ceramic craftswoman from Aregua

Development of the Project

Estación A and the coordination team of "Areguá, Creative City of UNESCO", backed various projects such as the magazine "Areguá, Ciudad Creativa de la UNESCO", submitted to the National Fund of Culture and Arts (Fondec) by the director of PlanChar, Arch. Manuel Cubilla. Estación A also presented the project: "Strengthening of the Jewellers Association of Valle Pucu", presenting the project to the Paraguayan Institute of Crafts (IPA). Both were approved and we are awaiting funds for their implementation.

In response to the UNESCO Creative Cities' Network, Gabriela Frers, coordinator and Focal Point of the project, developed and submitted the proposal of "Areguá Creative in times of Covid", which was approved by the Network. Its support consisted in promoting activities pertaining to the proposition on an international level.

To the summons of "Fondos de Cultura para iniciativas ciudadanas", Estación A -Núcleo Cultural presented a project: "Areguá Creativa y Circuitos Solidarios Covid 19" which has been approved and is being implemented.

International Ceramist's Day

In the month of May, as part of the celebration of the International Ceramist's Day, Estación A and the Cultural Department of the Municipality, with the support of IPA and the Creative Cities' Network, produced and publicized 4 videos of different artisans.





Inter-institutional Agreement for the Governance

That same month, an inter-institutional agreement was drawn up to establish and define the participation of the 11 institutions and organisations that make up the Governance group. In July, the agreement was signed in each individual institution. Unfortunately, the pandemic made it impossible to hold one single event for the signing of the document.

In mid-September, the signing of the document establishing an interinstitutional partnership for the implementation of the project "Areguá, Creative City of UNESCO" was completed with the following institutions and organizations: The Municipality of Areguá, as the main partner; the Central Department Governance; The National Secretariat of Culture (SNC-); National Secretariat of Tourism, Paraguayan Institute of Craft, the Working Group of Plan CHAR, Estación A – Núcleo Cultural, Consejo de Aguas de las Vertientes from Areguá, and the Foundation El Cántaro and El Centro Cultural del Lago.



Rubén Capdevila, the Minister of Culture, with members of the Governance team



The Governor of the Central Department Hugo Javier Gonzalez with members of the Governance team

The "Bandera Jeré" is an Intangible Cultural Heritage

In the month of June, the Municipality declared an Intangible Cultural Heritage of Areguá the traditional manifestation of popular religiosity known as the "Bandera Jeré", celebrated in the Caacupemí neighbourhood of Areguá to commemorate the feast day of Saint Anthony.

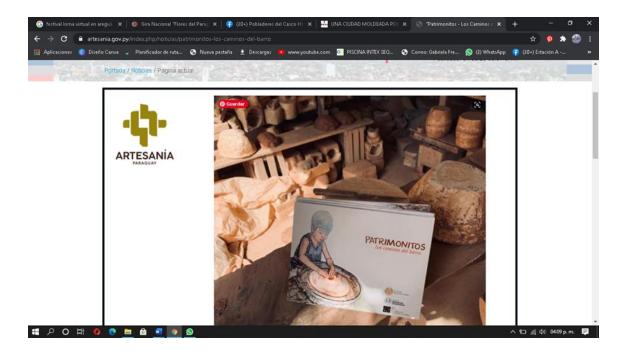
The project was submitted by the Director of Culture of the Municipality of Areguá and aims, through the National Secretariat of Culture, to promote this event as Intangible Cultural Heritage of the Nation and subsequently, to apply for the status of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Mankind.



Photos: Ysanne Gayet

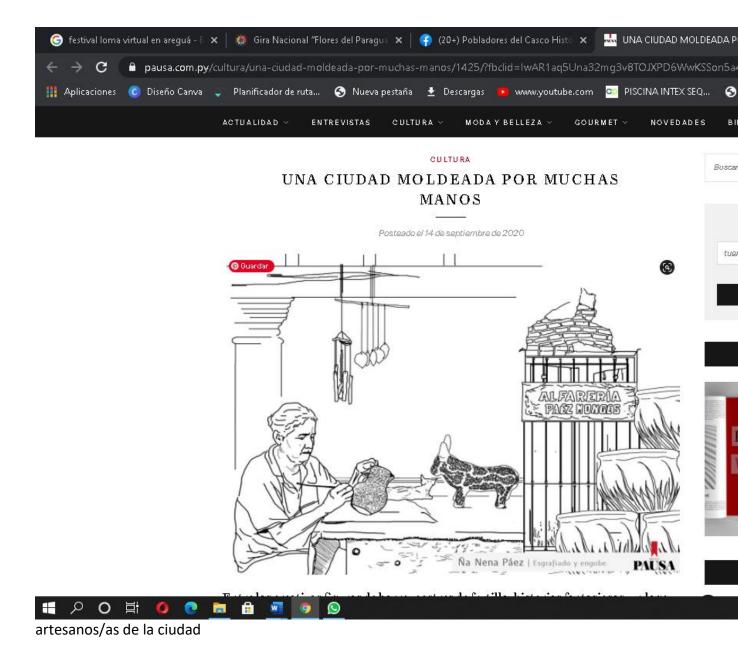
"Patrimonitos" and "Los Sonidos del Barro"

El Cántaro published the book "Patrimonitos", with the support of IPA and the organization called Pobladores por el Casco Histórico (Inhabitants of the Historical Centre), an educational material for children in which the work of outstanding artisans in the community is brought to light. It was proposed as a leading Project for the year 2020 to the UNESCO Creative Cities' Network.









Sonidos del Barro (Sounds of clay)

This is another initiative of El Cántaro Foundation and consists of podcast programmes in which stories of the town and its people are told. These are broadcasted by WhatsApp and social media.



"SALIENDO DEL MOLDE - conociendo nuestro arte popular" - "Breaking away – Learning about our Popular Art"

This is a project of the Centro Cultural del Lago that consists of information, photographs and in some cases, audio-visuals of 50 artisans from Areguá. Data about how they started in their trade and their every day working life was uploaded on the Facebook, blogspot and instagram platforms of the Centro Cultural del Lago thus enabling the artisans to be better known to the public and help with the promotion of their products in these difficult times.



Mirá las stories de:

#ArtesanoDeAregua



Nicasia Delvalle #ArtesanosDeAregua





Festival "Loma Virtual" (Virtual Hill)

In July, the Municipality of Areguá, through its Department of Culture, in partnership with Estación A, cooperation of the National Secretariat of Culture and Radio Areguá FM, held the "Festival Loma Virtual — Virtual Hill Festival", celebrating Friendship Day; with the participation of outstanding artists from the Community in a virtual tour of the most characteristic and beautiful landscapes of the city. The event was part of the project "Areguá Creativa y Circuitos Solidarios Covid 19" and "Areguá Creative in Times of COVID", with the support of the UNESCO Creative Cities' Network.



Recording in "La Loma (the hill)" to the singer-songwriter Rafael Rojas



Los Estacioneros de Caacupemí (religious song)



Municipal Ballet of Adults





Luis Duarte y Los Quiñónez



The hostess Fátima Ayala in the Train Station



The group "Las Voces de Areguá"



🗣 Areguá // 🛊 Artesanía y arte popular

Festival Internacional Virtual Loma en Areguá

Cuando: Vie, 31/07/2020

Desde 2019, Areguá es una Ciudad Creativa de Artesanía y Arte Popular de la UNESCO en Paraguay. Conocida como una de las tres ciudades cerámicas clave de Paraguay, la ciudad también es conocida por ofrecer una gran variedad de artes populares que incluyen música y danza en particular.

Para celebrar el Día Mundial de la Amistad, la ciudad organizó el 'Festival Internacional Virtual Loma' que reunió a artistas y músicos locales para actuar desde los paisajes más destacados de la ciudad. El Festival también contó con actuaciones artísticas de otras Ciudades Creativas de la UNESCO en la región.

El Festival Internacional Virtual Loma es una actividad del Proyecto " Areguá Creativa y Circuitos Solidario ", que contó con el apoyo de la Red de Ciudades Creativas de la UNESCO. Implementado por la Municipalidad de Areguá en colaboración con Estación a Núcleo

















"Manos Creativas de Areguá" (Creative hands of Areguá)

In August and September, a series of 7 video pods of artisans was made, with the aim of making both them and their work visible, thus aiding with the commercialization of their products and contributing to the Cultural memory of Areguá. This initiative is part of the projects already mentioned in the previous paragraph, promoted by Estación A and the Culture Department of the Municipality of Areguá, with the backing of the National Culture Secretariat and the UNESCO Creative Cities Network.



Belén Rodríguez and the craftwoman Gloria Cáceres

Belén Rodríguez and the craftman Pedro Cristaldo

Creative Cities Virtual Meeting

In that same month, the first meeting between Creative Cities in the field of Crafts and Popular Arts was held, at the invitation of the City of Joao Pessoa, Brazil. At this meeting it was agreed to create a cultural observatory and to hold monthly virtual meetings to exchange experiences and initiatives.

João Pessoa invita para una reunión virtual de las Ciudades Creativas en Artesanía de la UNESCO en Latinoamerica









meet.google.com/sek-bzvy-mxg
03 agosto 19h GMT

International materials to celebrate the first year of Creative Cities

In September the elaboration of various materials began, with the participation of other Creative Cities, for which the governance team of Areguá, Creative City invited 7 cities of Latin America. These were produced within the framework of the projects "Areguá Creativa and Cirsol covid 19", with the support of the National Secretariat of Culture and "Areguá Creativa in times of covid". Their promotion was backed by the UNESCO Creative Cities' Network, and implemented by Estación A - Núcleo Cultural, with the support of the Municipality's Culture Department and the project's governance team.

The materials for the month of October were:

- An audio-visual on handicrafts integrating material from the Creative Cities of San Ignacio de las Casas, Mexico; Joao Pessoa, Brazil, Trinidad, from Cuba, and Areguá, from Paraguay.
- 2. A joint introduction of the cities

The following months:

- 3. A book of traditional foods and natural medicines
- 4. An international Virtual Festival.

The audio-visual materials were shown in a face-to-face event as well as in a virtual one on La Loma (the hill) in the city of Areguá; this was broadcasted through the social media on October 31st, celebrating the first year of the nomination of Areguá and other participating cities as UNESCO Creative Cities. The material has also been distributed at international level through websites and social networks of the participating cities and the UNESCO Creative Cities Network.

Santuario de la Divina Misericordia (Sanctuary of the Divine Mercy)



Photos: Satina Chamorro, Centro Cultural del Lago



Photos: Satina Chamorro, Centro Cultural del Lago

On the 3rd of October the artwork created by Koki Ruíz, a renowned visual artist and cultural manager, was inaugurated in the chapel of the Sanctuary of the Divine Mecy, in Kokue Guasú, Areguá. Koki's creation was made with pieces of ceramic fired in the Noborigama (high temperature oven) of the AAA, Areguá. These pieces were shaped with handmade designs and patterns, and then glazed by artisans from Aregua's Association of Artisans (AAA). All these preparations were a joy to behold, and were shared, while visiting the association, with Belén Rodríguez, director of Culture of the Municipality at the time, with whom we discovered all the work that was going into Koki Ruiz's wonderful creation.

Devastating Fires

The drought during the month of October came with a wave of fires that ravaged parts of the outskirts of the town and destroyed important and emblematic natural spots. Much of the Koi Hill's vegetation and wildlife was lost, as well as the Guggiari woods where many of the trees were devoured by flames. Other wildfires caused the loss of crops, animals and constructions.

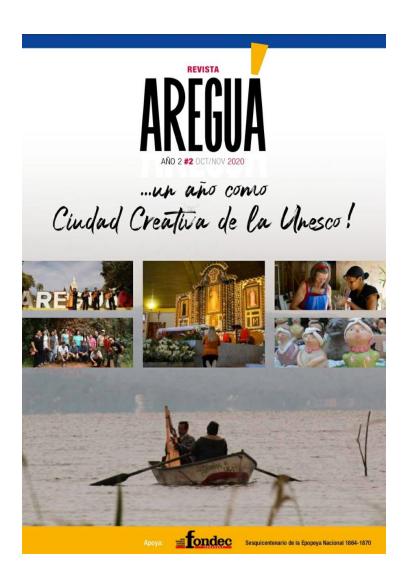
"The fires left inhabitants of Areguá greatly saddened and in a state of shock. It all seemed like a bad movie to us; we could feel the heat in the air, the smoke in our eyes and fear and pain in our souls. In the midst of all this confusion and the need for quick thinking and decisions, the unity of our people, their love of the hills, the forest, for life.... emerged, and everyone mobilized, helped, and joined the Park Rangers, the local firemen, and firemen who came from different towns to help save Areguá". G.F. Newsletter Areguá, UNESCO's Creative City



Photo: Celso Velázquez, Newsletter Areguá Creative City of UNESCO

The Magazine "Aregua, Creative City of UNESCO, 2020

A new edition of the magazine Areguá, Creative City of UNESCO has been drafted over the past months thanks to the support of Fondec (National Fund for Culture and Arts), which has funded three of the four editions planned for the year. This edition focused on the present and past of the city, highlighting the work of its actors, weaving together present and past so as to keep the memory of the city alive and make the cultural and the every day labour of the community known. This is an initiative of the organisations: CAPADE, Plan CHAR and Estación A - Núcleo Cultural



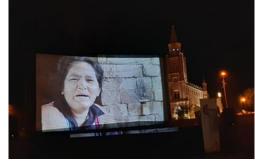
First Anniversary of Areguá as a Creative City of UNESCO

Beginning on 30th of October and ending on 8th of November, in the framework of the first anniversary, the city organized a week of celebration with various cultural activities, with the support and active participation of institutions and organizations that make up the governance team of the project "Areguá, a Creative City of UNESCO". The program included craft and food fairs, the Areguá Literature Panel, tours (with guides) to craft workshops and the Paraguayan Ceramics Museum (Centro Cultural del Lago), outdoor cinema and art festivals.









Acto central en "La Lona"

Projecting Videos



Granting of certificates





























Governance Structure Areguá Creative City of UNESCO























