



# Membership Monitoring Report

**Montevideo UNESCO Creative City of Literature**  
*Montevideo Ciudad Creativa Literaria UNESCO*

2015 - 2019

División Artes y Ciencias  
Departamento de Cultura  
Intendencia de Montevideo

## 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Montevideo is a literary powerhouse from its earliest days. The city's myriad of artists, writers and publications, cafes and theaters, make reading and writing essential elements of cultural cohesion for the population.

As a result of Montevideo's designation, City Council resolved to undertake a series of institutional modifications. This implied the creation within city government of an area for literature to manage the designation, as well as the incorporation of all city public libraries (which traditionally worked under a different orbit) to the same division in order to undertake joint actions. To aid the transcendence in public libraries of the designation, the office undertook a consultation among public library personnel, a visit to every library advocating for the designation, as well as a general survey directed at key figures of the department of Culture to determine the symbolic importance of the designation as well as areas for further development related to literature. This process to acquaint workers with the designation is ongoing, as a means to ensure that City of Literature is more than just a title, and its objectives well-recognized by all cultural workers in the institution.

Montevideo UNESCO Creative City of Literature works to consolidate the city's driving aims to strengthen social integration and harmonious coexistence, generating interventions in public spaces that make literature approachable, attractive and available to all persons, including a Human Rights perspective that permeates cultural policies and includes a marked desire for cultural decentralization, democratizing access to literature and city resources.

## 2. GENERAL INFORMATION:

- 2.1. Name of the city: Montevideo
- 2.2. Country: Uruguay
- 2.3. Creative field of designation: Literature
- 2.4. Date of designation: October 2015
- 2.5. Date of submission of the current report: 31/12/2019
- 2.6. Entity responsible for the report: Área Letras, División Artes y Ciencias, Departamento de Cultura, Intendencia de Montevideo.
- 2.7. Previous reports submitted and dates: N/A
- 2.8. Focal point of contact:

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### **3. CONTRIBUTION TO THE NETWORK'S GLOBAL MANAGEMENT:**

3.1. Number of UCCN annual meetings attended in the last four years (please note that a regular participation in these meetings is compulsory):  
2

3.2 Hosting of a UCCN annual meeting and dates: N/A

3.3 Hosting of a working or coordination meeting addressed to one or more specific UCCN creative field representatives: N/A

3.4 Hosting of an international conference or meeting on specific issues salient to the Creative Cities with a large participation of members of the Network: N/A

3.5 Financial and/or in-kind support provided to UNESCO's Secretariat in order to ensure the management, communication and visibility of the UCCN (type of contribution, estimated value, main objectives, and dates):

Montevideo, like other cities integrating the network, believes there should not be any other specific contributions than those that are already in place related to the country's participation in UNESCO. Furthermore, support provided encompasses: payment to workers, funds destined to participation in UCCN meetings, as well as expenses related to advocating for the network in other Latin American cities in order to encourage the application to be part of the literary network.

Advocating for the relevance and usefulness of the network is key due to the lack of diversity presently represented in it. Only one city comes from Africa, only one city from South America. Travelling which for other cities means merely hours entails days and elevated costs for Montevideo. Even linguistically (such a relevant aspect in a literary city), the network as is leaves very little room for significant exchanges, in spite of Spanish being the second most spoken language on the planet. Due to this lack of representativeness of the language and any other Global South cities, it is of the foremost importance to promote the participation of South American cities in the network, which is an area of great interest for Montevideo which seeks out these opportunities continentally through contacts with city governments in neighboring countries.

It is our belief that underrepresentation of Global South cities particularly harms the network, depriving it of much-needed perspectives, conditions and concerns, ultimately threatening the network's sustainability in terms of the goals it claims to seek. We believe that our very presence in and promotion of the Cities of Literature, along with the financial support of Uruguay to UNESCO, entails the best possible contribution we can

provide.

3.6 Membership of the Steering Group and period: N/A

3.7 Participation in the evaluation of applications (number of applications evaluated per year): All applications of 2019 application period UCCN Literature.

## **4. MAJOR INITIATIVES IMPLEMENTED AT THE LOCAL LEVEL TO ACHIEVE THE OBJECTIVES OF THE UCCN:**

Montevideo Creative City of Literature advocates and works jointly with the literary sector, with special attention to emerging literary forms and audiences, with the objective of celebrating literature as tool for urban development, as well as a means for the enjoyment and democratization of access and participation in Montevideo's growing literary heritage.

### **4.1 Book Fairs and Cultural Events**

Upon designation as UNESCO Creative City, Montevideo deepened its interest in participating further in book fairs as a means to foster literary exchange and promote reading and writing. The undertaking meant working in association with the **Uruguayan Book Chamber** (Cámara Uruguaya del Libro), as well as unexpected partners and stakeholders once the invitation was made in 2016 for Montevideo to be Guest of Honor at the **2018 International Book Fair of Buenos Aires**, Argentina (FILBA). Both cities share a language and sensibility, this meant authors and artists encountered or re-encountered eager audiences and plenty of opportunities for exchange. More than 150 writers, performers and key cultural actors presented their work in a packed agenda that focused on both established authors as emerging ones through daily readings, performances, author Q&A and film showings. . We aimed to boost exposure to city literature by providing an intellectual, sensory and playful experience of our literary lineage and present.

Partners included other areas of **City Council** (collaboration providing budget, talent, logistics and human resources), **national government** (Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Military Air Force, Education and Culture), as well as the **private sector** (Uruguayan Book Chamber as well as all local independent publishers and libraries, as well as various grassroots and independent groups.) An exchange and cooperation agreement was signed by **Public Library** officials from both cities.

This book fair experience was so positive in fact, that it received a **budgetary boost** towards coming years, as it holds strategic value as a means of continued dialogue with all stakeholders in the literary and literacy fields, as well as an opportunity to raise awareness of Montevideo's designation.

Locally, Montevideo had long-standing agreements with **Uruguayan Book Chamber**, hosting both the **International Book Fair (FIL)** and the **International Children's and Youth Book Fair (FLIJ)** every October and June respectively. With a pointed strategic interest in consolidating public spaces that democratize citizens' right to culture, book fairs progressively became an area to continue developing public policies related to reading and writing as tools for urban development.

In addition to these instances, **Ideas + Fair**, an outdoor book and creation fair



traditionally held during almost all of December, became another instance where the City of Literature brand could be present and even liaise on behalf of the city's **Public Library Network**, a natural stakeholder of the designation. Furthermore, book fairs became ideal scenarios to showcase both our own **Juan Carlos Onetti Literary Prize** works and authors, as well as those titles produced by City Council itself. Providing cultural products, services and content beyond consumer trends seeks to strengthen local authors in enjoyable, accessible environments for publishers, artists and the general public to network.

<p>These initiatives address the following UCCN objectives:</p>	<p>Improving access to and participation in cultural life as well as the enjoyment of cultural goods and services, notably for marginalized or vulnerable groups and individuals, including women and youth.</p> <p>Integrating culture and creativity into local development strategies and plans.</p>
<p>And the following UCCN areas of action:</p>	<p>Pilot projects, partnerships and initiatives associating the public and private sectors, and civil society.</p> <p>Professional and artistic exchange programmes and networks.</p> <p>Communication and awareness raising activities.</p>
<p>These initiatives align with the following SDGs:</p>	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: center; gap: 20px;"> <div>  <p>4 QUALITY EDUCATION</p> </div> <div>  <p>10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES</p> </div> </div>

## 4.2 Public Libraries Network

Between 2015 and 2019 many of Montevideo’s public libraries underwent upgrades and remodeling, a few even moved. The 14 libraries very much belong to their neighborhoods of reference, and are as different among themselves as they are. Seeking **decentralization** through the creation of 6 distinct municipalities, the city interacts with a fourth level of government, which provides direct institutional connections for joint action in the territory. Montevideo’s public libraries are very much the visible face of the city’s **public policies** regarding **integration and coexistence** from a Human Rights and gender equality perspective.

In a conceptual move towards library spaces that are cultural exchange places, improvements are set to continue being implemented in the years to come entailing major budgetary investments. The process of modernizing the library network may be greatly benefited by those best practices and experiences of fellow literary cities, such a **Barcelona**, a city that underwent a similar process of change in the 1990s and has stated its willingness to share the lessons they learned with us.

### 4.2.1 Writing workshop and Reading Club at the Women’s Prison

Through application for **Gender Funds** (Presupuesto Etiquetado de Género) within

City Council, the City of Literature jointly with the **Public Libraries Network** began offering a writing workshop where a small group of students explore creativity and literacy techniques to improve their reading and writing skills while serving their sentences. A selection of their writing is transcribed and edited for legibility by a professional editor, and made into a booklet for each student to have.

Simultaneously, a selection of **bibliography** was donated to the educational center library. Besides novels, poetry and textbooks, special emphasis has been placed in forming a sizable collection of children’s books they can share with their offspring during visits. A collection of books of Women’s History has also been donated, seeking to visibilize often unknown female figures of history, artists, pioneers, activists.

When discussing the designation in the context of prison, remarkably, the idea of literature as a means for development in changing urban environments, as well as a fundamental right that may even aid rehabilitation, becomes very tangible, as improved literacy spills over into other areas of students’ pursuits.

#### 4.2.2 Juan Carlos Onetti Literary Prizes



The prizes, offered by Montevideo’s **Public Libraries Network** every winter, are open for unpublished works in fiction, children’s literature, poetry and playwriting. It constitutes the only prize in Uruguay that awards both the editing and publishing of the work as well as a monetary prize. It allows emerging, unpublished authors to publish their first work as well as promote it at the different book fairs where readings are scheduled and the book series sold.

As part of our commitment to Montevideo’s **3rd Gender Equality Plan**, in 2016 two honorable mentions were formulated to be awarded to those works evidencing helpful approaches towards removing gender stereotypes, as well as social recognition and respect towards sexual diversity. The aforementioned pledge includes: parity presence of women and men in juries and performances, as well as gender-inclusive language use in all communication materials. By acting and raising awareness of gender issues through mainstreaming, gender sensitization and problematization as organizational practices contribute to slow but far-ranging cultural changes.

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<p>These initiatives address the following UCCN objectives:</p>	<p>Strengthening the creation, production, distribution and enjoyment of cultural goods and services and fostering the creative economy.</p> <p>Developing hubs of creativity and innovation and broadening opportunities for creators and professionals in the cultural</p>
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	sector.
And the following UCCN areas of action:	<p>Pilot projects, partnerships and initiatives associating the public and private sectors, and civil society</p> <p>Communication and awareness raising activities</p>
These initiatives align with the following SDGs:	  

### 4.3 Strengthening Arts Program

Fortalecimiento de las Artes is a program that the Department of Culture of Montevideo carries out in the areas of theater, music and literature. This entails an agreement with the **Uruguayan Writers Guild** (Casa de los Escritores) through which Montevideo contributes to its functioning providing learning, networking and work opportunities to writers in the city.

Strengthening Arts Program seeks to favor artistic creation in literature and the funds provided go to support those activities where public policies in this regard overlap with the objectives of Writers Guild.

#### 4.3.1 Agreement with Uruguayan Writers Guild

Framed in public policy efforts of the **Strengthening Arts** program (described above, City Council engages the Writers Guild as representative of authors in Uruguay, and supports its endeavors through a yearly interinstitutional agreement as a means of favoring access to culture to citizens. As a key stakeholder of the literary scene, along with publishers, booksellers, libraries and other cultural enterprises, the creators that make up the guild work for all writers.

Yearly **free writing and reading workshops** are offered yearly in 6 of the 14 public libraries thanks to this working agreement, and libraries also host literary events, readings, and travelling art exhibitions the guild produces. These instances provide opportunities for free life-long ongoing education to citizens that may not have access to them otherwise. The guild also participates in book fairs through readings, meetups and other cultural activities it coordinates with the City of Literature.

### 4.3.2 Urban poetic interventions

**Zona Poema** (Poetry Zone), an undertaking of authors Rossana Malaneschii and Elbia Fernandes, is an urban poetry and design festival that includes live readings, work with imprisoned persons, a design contest to showcase poems in different neighborhoods of the city, as well as collective publications distributed at no cost. Each poem of the 21 selected is shown for a full year in the form of large blown up photographs that can be read by passers-by on the streets. Its goal is inserting poetry in the urban fabric through art, with the collaboration of public and private actors such as City Council, Writers' Guild, and the Ministry of Education and Culture.

**Un libro, un abrazo** (One book, one hug) is a civil association, which, through the sale of books, seeks to provide vocational training for persons with disabilities. The program is articulated through City Council, with the support of the National Library and publishers. It publishes classics and other authors, and the books are sold at the City Council foyer by the group at extremely affordable prices. The program is invited to events such as book fairs in order to make the program visible to a broad audience, as well as provide its beneficiaries with work experience selling the books.

**Leer es un viaje** (Reading is a trip) is a program launched by the Uruguayan Book Chamber with the support of City Council in 2017 as an initiative that seeks to bring quality literary works to all users of the city public transport system. Within the national campaign "Cuento contigo" intended to foster reading in the general public, this initiative provides Uruguayan literary works accessible via QR codes in public buses. The driving force of these efforts is the promotion of reading as a tool for personal and collective development, through activities that are fun, interactive and hopefully help persons rediscover the pleasure of reading (for fun). In a joint effort by cultural actors, educational institutions and local and national governments, the focus is making reading available in very diverse environments, not always associated to books and literature.

**Mundial Poético** (Poetic World Cup) is a project developed by writer Martín Barea Mattos which takes place throughout the city with the participation of poets from all over the world. It takes place in various locations, hosting accomplished international poets as well as emergent ones. Supported by City Council as well as organizations from the private sectors, it will present its sixth edition in 2020, having hosted more than a hundred poets from 20 different countries, as well as a couple of hundred of local writers.

EL MUNDIAL POÉTICO DE MONTEVIDEO 2019 SE PREPARA PARA SU EDICIÓN NÚMERO CINCO

DEL 29 DE MARZO AL 5 DE ABRIL. DESDE 2013 A LA FECHA

**LUNES 1 DE ABRIL**

★ 19 A 22 HS ★



MUNDIAL POÉTICO 2019

**SALA VERDI**

HEMOS RECIBIDO A 72 POETAS DE 18 PAÍSES Y HAN PARTICIPADO 200 POETAS LOCALES

**PEDRO LAGO**  
(BRASIL)

★

**RICARDO PALLARES**  
(URUGUAY)

★

**MARIELLA NIGRO**  
(URUGUAY)

★

**PEDRO TOSTES**  
(BRASIL)

★

**SAMANTHA NAVARRO**  
(URUGUAY)

★

**TÁLATA RODRÍGUEZ**  
(COLOMBIA)

★

**MIGUEL ÁNGEL**  
FUENTES GALLEGOS  
(PERÚ)

★

**ISABEL DE LA FUENTE**  
(URUGUAY)

**PEDRO ROCHA**  
(BRASIL)

★

**JIMENA MÁRQUEZ**  
(URUGUAY)

★

**FERNANDO NOY**  
(ARGENTINA)

★

**AMORA PERA**  
(BRASIL)

★

**BALAM RODRIGO**  
(MÉXICO)

★

**OMAR TAGORE & HABITANTES DE LA VIRGEN NEGRA**  
(URUGUAY)

LUNES 1 DE ABRIL / 19 A 22 HS / SALA VERDI / SORIANO 914

<p>These initiatives address the following UCCN objectives:</p>	<p>Improving awareness-raising on the UCCN and the role of culture and creativity in sustainable urban development and supporting research and analysis in this particular field.</p> <p>Improving access to and participation in cultural life as well as the enjoyment of cultural goods and services, notably for marginalized or vulnerable groups and individuals, including women and youth;</p> <p>Making creativity an essential component of urban development, notably through partnerships involving the public and private sectors and civil society.</p> <p>Strengthening the creation, production, distribution and enjoyment of cultural goods and services and fostering the</p>
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	creative economy.
<p>And the following UCCN areas of action:</p>	<p>Pilot projects, partnerships and initiatives associating the public and private sectors, and civil society.</p> <p>Communication and awareness raising activities.</p>
<p>These initiatives align with the following SDGs:</p>	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;"> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>4 QUALITY EDUCATION</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>5 GENDER EQUALITY</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES</p> </div> </div>

## 5. MAJOR INITIATIVES IMPLEMENTED THROUGH INTER-CITY COOPERATION TO ACHIEVE THE OBJECTIVES OF THE UCCN:

### 5.1 Partnerships in global networks

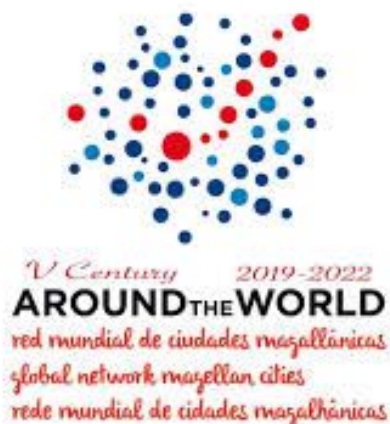
#### 5.1.1 Asociación de la Línea Aeropostal



Montevideo takes part in this network of cities from Europe, Africa and America that constituted the route of Aeropostale french airline which pioneered civil aviation. The initiative arose from Toulouse (France), in an effort create and foster cultural exchange, cultural tourism and solidarity among the 27 cities that comprise it.

Montevideo, as literary city, has focused especially on the figure of Antoine de Saint-Exupéry and his emblematic work “The Little Prince”, by designing a literary trivia board game in its name.

#### 5.3 Global Network of Magellan Cities



Montevideo, along with other 22 cities that Magellan travelled to during the first circumnavigation of the world. The goals of the network are to promote collaboration and cooperation among the cities that make it up.

The trip itself will commemorate from 2019 to 2022, 500 years of the Spanish expedition to the East Indies that resulted in the first trip ever around the world.

## 5.2 Cooperation through artistic exchange with Heidelberg

**¡ ADELANTE !**  
**FESTIVAL DE TEATRO**  
**IBEROAMERICANO**  
**1-8 febrero 2020**  
**EN EL TEATRO Y ORQUESTA HEIDELBERG**

The Adelante Iberoamerican Theater Festival that takes place yearly in Heidelberg has invited an author from Montevideo to take part in its urban art intervention for its 2020 edition. The opportunity was offered to the latest winner of the Juan Carlos Onetti Literary Prize, Pablo

Rocca. This opportunity for exchange and professionalization came about as a result of conversations with Heidelberg City of Literature coordinators during the 2019 Nottwich annual meeting.

<p>These initiatives address the following UCCN objectives:</p>	<p>Strengthen international cooperation between cities that have recognized creativity as a strategic factor of their sustainable development.</p> <p>Develop hubs of creativity and innovation and broaden opportunities for creators and professionals in the cultural sector.</p>
<p>And the following UCCN areas of action:</p>	<p>Sharing experiences, knowledge and best practices</p> <p>Communication and awareness raising activities</p>
<p>These initiatives align with the following SDGs:</p>	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;"> <div> <p>4 QUALITY EDUCATION</p> </div> <div> <p>10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES</p> </div> </div>

## 6. PROPOSED ACTION PLAN FOR THE FORTHCOMING MID-TERM PERIOD OF FOUR YEARS:

### 6.1 Local initiatives and projects aimed at achieving the objectives of the Network locally

#### 6.1.1 Literary Map

*Objectives:* To create quality bilingual merchandising materials that raise awareness of Montevideo's status as literary city, designed to entice local and international tourists to explore the city discovering its many spaces related to literature.

*Stakeholders:* Ministry of Education and Culture, National and City Heritage Commissions, National and City Tourism Boards, Book Chamber (bookshops), independent publishers, theaters, grassroot collectives and organizations that work with writing, literary workshops, cafes and cultural centers.

*Beneficiaries:* tourists as well as citizens that circulate in the city.

*Expected results:* raising awareness of immaterial and material literary heritage in the city. Giving greater access to the creative economy related to literature through a showcase of emblematic literary spots in each municipality.

<p>These initiatives address the following UCCN objectives:</p>	<p>Strengthen the creation, production, distribution and dissemination of cultural activities, goods and services</p> <p>Improve access to and participation in cultural life as well as the enjoyment of cultural goods and services, notably for marginalized or vulnerable groups and individuals</p>
<p>And the following UCCN areas of action:</p>	<p>Communication and awareness raising activities.</p>

<p>These initiatives align with the following SDGs:</p>			
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### 6.1.2 Increased year-round presence at fairs and popular city events encouraging bibliodiversity

*Objectives:* Attend book-related events on a monthly basis, selling books (Juan Carlos Onetti Literary Prizes as well as other publications by the city council) and programming literary events.

*Stakeholders:* Independent publishers and booksellers, writers, readers, students.

*Beneficiaries:* Persons who do not usually attend literature-specific events, who become exposed to the literary city brand and its guiding cultural public policies.

*Expected results:* Increase sales of literary prize books, greater impact on the public of the designation.

## 6.2 National and international initiatives and projects aimed at achieving the objectives of the Network

Given the marked Caucasian Eurocentric composition of the Literary Network, efforts to diversify the network would aid its almost non-existent representation of the Global South.

The English-only nature of the work of the Network, as well as the location of the cities (mostly all in the European continent) threatens even the best-intentioned efforts for cooperation of the cities involved. Particularly for the literary sector, where language constitutes the necessary vehicle for access, a lack of Spanish-speaking instances and activities greatly reduces the potential for actions.

Inclusion of diverse cities belonging to developing countries is a must-have if the Network is to have true impact beyond wealthy developed countries.

### 6.2.1 Increase exchange with state and private sectors



*Objectives:* Consolidate deeper relationships and brand awareness in order to improve sustainability of designation.

*Stakeholders:* Ministry of Culture and Education, Ministry of Tourism, Book Chamber, independent publishers and booksellers, writers and other creators, grassroots organizations.

*Beneficiaries:* Sectors of the creative economies that may have been absent from cultural public policy-making.

*Expected results:* The formation of a steering committee that will support Montevideo Creative City of Literature.

### **6.2.2 Seeking out Latin American cities for relevant exchanges in culture and literature**

*Objectives:* Seek out cities with whom to undertake international cooperation projects and exchange information, hopefully leading to increasing presence of the Global South in the UCCN Literature.

*Stakeholders:* City governments from Latin American developing countries.

*Beneficiaries:* Cities that can relate to and benefit from one another's experiences in the cultural and literary field.

*Expected results:* Concrete cooperation projects and exchanges in the region.  
Possible

### **6.3 Estimated annual budget for implementing the proposed action plan**

All costs associated to Montevideo City of Literature are public city funds. This includes all spaces used for activities, office spaces, personnel, contributions made to civil associations and events.

### **6.4 Plan for communication and awareness**

Brand awareness locally is the all-encompassing goal for communications onwards. The more stakeholders that come in contact with our brand and the cultural products derived, the more sustainable the designation will become. This means one-on-one contact and support of various civil society initiatives, holding gatherings and meetings with different sectors (booksellers, publishers, writers) to communicate and specially listen.

A lack of social media participation is an informed decision that seeks to prioritize limited human and financial resources that could well go implementing projects or representing the designation in real time. Once greater sustainability of resources is achieved, a targeted social media strategy will be devised.