

MUSIC

MEDIAARTS

DESIGN

HAND CRAFT

LITERATURE

GASTRONOMY

**COLOMBIAN NETWORK
OF UNESCO
CREATIVE CITIES**





COLOMBIAN NETWORK OF UNESCO CREATIVE CITIES



unesco

Member of
Creative Cities Network

Popayán

Gastronomy (2005)

Bogotá

Music (2012)

Medellín

Music (2015)

Buenaventura

Gastronomy (2017)

Cali

Digital Arts (2019)

Valledupar

Music (2019)

Ibagué

Music (2021)

Pasto

Crafts and Folk Arts (2021)



The Colombian Network of UNESCO Creative Cities: Weaving Culture, Creativity, and Development

The UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN) was created in 2004 to foster cooperation among cities that recognize creativity as a strategic driver for sustainable urban development—across economic, social, cultural, and environmental dimensions.

Today, the Network encompasses eight creative fields: Crafts and Folk Arts, Digital Arts, Film, Design, Gastronomy, Literature, Music, and Architecture.

When a city joins the Creative Cities Network, it becomes a privileged partner of UNESCO. It commits to sharing its best practices and developing partnerships involving public, private, and civil society actors. The goal is to strengthen the creation, production, distribution, and dissemination of cultural activities, goods, and services, while fully integrating culture and creativity into sustainable development plans.

In 2023, eight Colombian cities came together under a shared vision: to make creativity the driving force of their development. Thus was born the **Colombian Network of UNESCO Creative Cities**, a bold initiative rooted in collaboration, cultural exchange, and the transformative power of creativity.

Each of these cities was recognized by UNESCO not only for their talent and tradition but for proving that art, music, gastronomy, crafts, and creative technologies can change realities, unite communities, and build a better future.

These are territories where culture is not an accessory, but a driving force that boosts the economy, strengthens identity, and fosters a sense of belonging.

Inspired by the mandate of the UNESCO Creative Cities Network, the Colombian Network aims to build bridges between cities that believe in the power of their knowledge—of their artists, cooks, musicians, artisans, digital creators, and cultural managers. Together, they are writing a new chapter in the story of local sustainable development.

In this journey, creativity is not only seen as artistic expression but as a vital tool for transforming the economic, the social, the environmental—and the human.

Colombia currently has eight cities designated by UNESCO in various creative fields:

Popayán (2005 – Gastronomy)

Bogotá (2012 – Music)

Medellín (2015 – Music)

Buenaventura (2017 – Gastronomy)

Valledupar (2019 – Music)

Santiago de Cali (2019 – Media Arts)

Ibagué (2021 – Music)

Pasto (2021 – Crafts and Folk Arts)

The Network was formally established through a Memorandum of Understanding signed by the cultural authorities of the member cities—a symbolic and practical pact that recognizes the collective power of territories when they unite around a common purpose: to place creativity at the core of their future vision.

With this commitment, in 2024 the Network outlined a roadmap to guide its actions, structured around six strategic lines:

1. Governance of the Network
2. Knowledge and experience exchange
3. Circulation of cultural goods, services, and knowledge
4. Identification of best practices
5. Strengthening ties with the private sector and civil society
6. Advocacy within the Mondiacult 2025 Agenda

To lead this process, **Bogotá assumed the role of Technical Secretariat** for a two-year term, with the mission of supporting, energizing, and connecting these cities through a continuous and constructive dialogue.

This document highlights not only the milestones achieved but also the dreams, challenges, and lessons learned along the way. It tells the story of a network that weaves identities, knowledge, and a shared future—one that continues to build a more equitable, diverse, resilient, and inclusive country through creativity.



Added Value of the Colombian Network of Creative Cities

The Colombian Network of Creative Cities brings together technical efforts not only from its member cities, but also from national institutions such as the **Ministry of Cultures, Arts, and Knowledge** and the **Ministry of Foreign Affairs**, both of which have supported the launch of this initiative. Today, the Network is a valuable platform through which cities can drive their development, place creativity and cultural and creative economies at the center of their local development agendas, and engage actively in international cooperation. The Network offers significant added value to its members, including:

- **Knowledge exchange:** Facilitates connections between cities and promotes the exchange of good practices and experiences in the cultural and creative sectors, across the eight creative fields: crafts and folk arts, digital arts, film, design, gastronomy, literature, music and architecture. This is made possible through collaboration with the UCCN sub-networks.
- **Sustainable urban development:** Promotes culture and creativity as tools for achieving more equitable and sustainable urban development, contributing to the creation of inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable cities.
- **International visibility:** Offers Colombian member cities a global platform to showcase their cultural and creative initiatives, attracting potential investors and cultural tourism.
- **Strengthening the creative industries:** Contributes to the growth of local creative economies, generating employment and economic opportunities.

→ **Social cohesion:** Promotes social cohesion through culture, fostering diversity and inclusion.

→ **Ideas lab:** Serves as a space to experiment and develop innovative projects and ideas driven by the country's cultural and creative actors.

→ **Promotion of cooperation:** Encourages cooperation between and among UNESCO Creative Cities that recognize creativity as a strategic driver for sustainable urban development.

→ **Data and statistics generation:** Develops tools to evaluate the impact of the Creative Cities Network, allowing for informed decision-making about future strategies and projects. This enables cities to assess the impact of their initiatives, identify areas for improvement, demonstrate the value of the Network, allocate resources efficiently, and design more effective cultural policies.

The Network's Contribution to Local Public Policy

The Network also strengthens key aspects of public policies in each of the Colombian Creative Cities:

→ **Culture as a driver of development:** Recognizes culture and creativity as engines of economic, social, and environmental development. By fostering the creative economy, jobs are generated, economic diversity increases, and urban spaces are revitalized.



→ **Public spaces and quality of life:** Encourages the creation of high-quality public spaces that serve as places of cultural expression and social gathering. These spaces improve citizens' quality of life and strengthen social fabric.



→ **Citizen participation:** Promotes active participation in cultural life, reinforcing a sense of belonging and social cohesion. An engaged citizenry is key to building fairer, more equitable cities that recognize creativity as a foundational value.

→ **Innovation and creativity:** Stimulates innovation and creativity as tools to solve urban challenges. Through cultural projects, cities can find creative solutions to issues like mobility, waste management, and climate change adaptation.

→ **Preservation of cultural heritage:** Emphasizes the value of cultural heritage as a key resource for sustainable development. Preserving and promoting heritage strengthens local identity and attracts cultural and sustainable tourism.



In 2005, Popayán became the first city in the world to be recognized as a City of Gastronomy within the UNESCO Creative Cities Network, thanks to an initiative led by the Popayán Gastronomic Corporation. This milestone marked a turning point in showcasing the culinary richness of the capital of the Cauca department and opened a path full of opportunities for promoting its gastronomic heritage.

Since then, this designation has brought multiple benefits to the city and the region. It has positioned Popayán as a national and international reference in cultural and gastronomic tourism, attracting visitors, chefs, and scholars interested in its traditional cuisine. It has also led to the establishment of flagship events such as the Popayán Gastronomic Congress, which annually brings together national and international experts, strengthening the dialogue

POPAYÁN

The First City of Gastronomy in the UNESCO Creative Cities Network

between tradition and culinary innovation. It is recognized as the first event of its kind in Colombia and the oldest in Latin America.

Over the past 20 years, Popayán's gastronomic scene has evolved positively, giving deserved value to the traditional cuisine of both the city and the department. Academic offerings have expanded as well, with four universities now offering Gastronomy programs.

Moreover, this recognition has created economic opportunities for small producers, traditional cooks, and food entrepreneurs, promoting sustainability and local development.

Looking Ahead

Popayán's future as a Creative City of Gastronomy must focus on strengthening gastronomic education, supporting local farmers' markets, and developing strategies that integrate gastronomy with cultural and ecological tourism.

The goal is to establish Popayán not only as a gastronomic tourism destination, but also as a model creative city that fosters innovation, identity, and sustainability in the food sector.

UNESCO granted this distinction two decades ago, but the ongoing challenge is to prove, year after year, that Popayán is a living epicenter of gastronomic culture, with a heritage that is constantly renewed and projected to the world.



IN 2005, POPAYÁN BECAME
THE FIRST CITY IN THE WORLD
TO BE RECOGNIZED AS A
UNESCO CREATIVE CITY OF
GASTRONOMY.



Bogotá, the capital of Colombia with a population of 8 million, was designated a UNESCO Creative City of Music in 2012, thanks to the diversity of its traditional, popular, and urban musical expressions, as well as its strong presence in academic and avant-garde music. Today, this cultural richness has translated into a dynamic public and private music scene that positions Bogotá as a visible and influential platform in international circuits.

The creativity and innovation of the city's music ecosystem have been defining traits of Bogotá's identity as a Creative City. Over the years, the Colombian capital has forged a deep connection with music, establishing itself as one of Ibero-America's musical capitals—driven by robust creative processes and diverse, discerning audiences.

BOGOTÁ

Bogotá Sounds Like Colombia—and the World



One of the city's most globally recognized strategies is the "Festivales al Parque" (Festivals in the Park)—a series of nine open-air festivals that transform public spaces into stages for citizen gatherings. These festivals span genres from rock and hip-hop to joropo and vallenato.

As an example, Rock al Parque 2024 drew over 380,000 attendees to enjoy 58 bands and more than 750 musicians. These inclusive festivals run throughout the year and are complemented by other public initiatives—such as Festival Centro, Monumentum, and the Bogotá edition of Petronio Álvarez—as well as private events like the Estéreo Picnic Festival, which annually welcomes nearly 200,000 people.

Bogotá is also home to the Movistar Arena, a public-private partnership venue that, since 2018, hosts around 130 major musical performances per year, equipped with cutting-edge technology and a ca-

capacity of 14,000 spectators. Thousands of concerts and festivals also take place throughout the city each year.

In addition, Bogotá boasts the largest network of cultural venues in Colombia.

ONE OF THE MOST GLOBALLY
RECOGNIZED STRATEGIES
COMBINING MUSIC AND PUBLIC
SPACE AS A SITE OF CIVIC
ENCOUNTER IS BOGOTÁ'S
"9 FESTIVALES AL PARQUE."



In 2023 alone, Bogotá hosted 3,300 cultural events featuring 342 artists, drawing over 1.2 million attendees, generating 26,500 jobs, and contributing over USD 100 million to the local economy—a dramatic rise from USD 51.2 million in 2012. Since its designation as a Creative City of Music, Bogotá’s music sector has grown by nearly 150%.

Looking ahead, Bogotá is preparing to host the first edition of the International Violin Competition in October 2025—a one-of-a-kind initiative in Latin America. This event aims to attract world-class national and international talent, promote local musicians, and position the city as a global reference for classical music. It is also expected to benefit over 30,000 children and youth participating in the “Vamos a la Filarmónica” program, while further strengthening the Bogotá Philharmonic Orchestra system.

In Bogotá, music is organically woven into cultural policy through cross-sector strate-



gies and projects—led not only by the Culture, Recreation and Sports sector, but also in collaboration with other areas of government. This integrated approach ensures sustainability in the city’s creative vision.

We are proud and excited to be a UNESCO Creative City of Music, and we remain committed to working with our global peers to ensure that music—and the arts in general—play a central role in shaping the future of our societies.



Medellín stands as a vibrant stage where music is more than just art—it is the heartbeat that narrates the city's story of transformation and resilience.

With deep roots in a history marked by violence and conflict, Medellín now resounds with a renewed sound that blends urban rhythms, technological innovation, and musical traditions that both honor the past and look boldly toward the future.

The Sound of Resilience and Transformation

Music in Medellín reflects its unbreakable spirit. In neighborhoods such as Comuna 13, where street art and graffiti have become visual testimonies of survival, urban rhythms emerge to tell stories of struggle, hope, and unity.

In these spaces, music becomes a powerful tool for social change—each beat a form of resistance, each lyric a message of reconciliation.

MEDELLÍN

Creative City of Music

The city's ability to transform pain into creativity has inspired generations of musicians and positioned Medellín as a cultural symbol of resilience.

Innovation, Tradition, and Urban Music

Medellín's musical landscape is fueled by a unique duality: the fusion of tradition and innovation. On one hand, ancestral rhythms and popular expressions preserve the essence of Paisa culture; on the other, the city pioneers new forms of urban music and technology-driven sound.

Projects like Medellín Music Lab, led by the Secretariat of Citizen Culture, train young talent in digital production and hybrid sound design, breaking boundaries and reimagining the urban genre. These training spaces—combined with major festivals like Festival Altavoz, Medellín Marcha Musical, and other public cultural initiatives—create an ecosystem where creativity thrives through idea exchange, experimentation, and collaborative growth.

Government and Culture: An Unbreakable Commitment

Medellín's vision as a Creative City of Music is backed by a government that firmly supports cultural development and innovation. The city has implemented public policies that promote the creative economy and encourage citizen engagement through music. Sectoral roundtables, public-private alliances, and networking events bring together artists, technicians, cultural managers, and music industry players to design sustainable growth strategies.



This integration of music as a catalyst for urban development is reflected in the creation of quality public spaces that not only beautify the city, but also foster social cohesion and inclusion.

Community Impact and Paisa Identity

Paisa music has the power to transform lives. It bridges generations, amplifies the voices of historically marginalized communities, and projects local identity to a global audience. In Medellín, every music event becomes a collective celebration that invites active citizen participation. From concerts in emblematic venues to neighborhood initiatives—where urban music projects combine with public art interventions—the



city demonstrates that culture is the key to unlocking new social and economic development opportunities.

Through its membership in the UNESCO Creative Cities Network, Medellín gains global visibility to showcase its musical diversity and innovative spirit.

An Integrated Proposal for the Future

Being recognized as a Creative City of Music is also an invitation to invest in research, education, and collaboration across sectors. Contributions from a wide range of actors show that creativity and cultural economies can become strategic tools for sustainable urban development.

In Medellín, music acts as: A catalyst for data generation to inform public policy, a space for experimentation that inspires new business models, and a symbol of collective identity that connects its people to the world.

Ultimately, Medellín presents itself as a city in constant evolution—where music, with its power to heal, unite, and inspire, is at the core of social and economic transformation. With a unique proposal that blends innovation, tradition, and institutional commitment, Medellín reaffirms its role as a creative and cultural epicenter, inviting local authorities, investors, and music industry stakeholders to become part of a project that continues to write history—in the rhythm of its vibrant sound.

A close-up photograph of a traditional Colombian dish served in a dark, hollowed-out coconut shell. The dish features large, succulent shrimp, white fish, and slices of plantain, all in a light-colored broth. A fresh lime wedge and a slice of tomato are garnishes on the side. The bowl sits on a light-colored, textured surface.

A Recognition of the Flavors and Traditions of Colombia's Pacific Coast

In 2017, Buenaventura was included in the UNESCO Creative Cities Network, a distinction that positions the city not only as the commercial heart of Colombia's Pacific region, but also as a global epicenter of gastronomic creativity. This designation honors Buenaventura's vast intangible cultural heritage, where traditional cuisine plays a central role as a driver of sustainable development and cultural identity.

The gastronomy of Buenaventura is a living expression of ancestral knowledge, passed down through generations by traditional cooks, fishermen, farmers, and hunters of the region. The use of local ingredients—such as fresh fish, shrimp, piangua (a native mollusk), coconut, and aromatic herbs—not only enriches traditional dishes but also sustains environmentally responsible fishing and farming practices.

BUENAVENTURA

Creative City of Gastronomy

Key Areas for Continued Strengthening

→ **Promotion of Cultural Entrepreneurship:** Strengthen networks among cooks, fishermen, hunters, and farmers, encouraging collaborative work to safeguard traditional knowledge and practices.

→ **Recognition of Human Talent:** Value and uplift the gastronomic knowledge of traditional women cooks through training, research, and cultural promotion—aligned with Colombia’s national policy for safeguarding traditional cuisines.

→ **Visibility in Cultural Circuits and Festivals:**

Promote Buenaventura’s culinary heritage at both local and international festivals, highlighting the cultural richness of the Colombian Pacific.

The designation as a Creative City of Gastronomy has transformed Buenaventura into a global reference—not only for its seaport, but for the richness of its culinary traditions and the potential of its creative industries.

At the national level, this designation strengthens the positioning of Colombia’s Pacific region as a land of creative and sustainable opportunities. It boosts collective self-esteem, fosters pride in local heritage, and generates new economic opportunities—especially for youth, women, and Afro-Colombian communities—who find in cuisine a powerful medium to express identity and transform lives.



Today, Buenaventura moves forward with the conviction that its cuisine is a bridge between past and future. This UNESCO recognition celebrates traditional flavors while also inviting the world to explore new paths in culinary innovation, research, and sustainable tourism.

Being a Creative City of Gastronomy is a call to continue building a Buenaventura that is proud of its legacy and open to the world—as a cultural, gastronomic, and creative port of the Colombian Pacific.

AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL, THIS DESIGNATION STRENGTHENS THE PACIFIC REGION’S IDENTITY AS A TERRITORY OF CREATIVE AND SUSTAINABLE OPPORTUNITIES.



Cali presents itself to the world as a vibrant meeting point between creativity and technology, where media arts blend tradition and innovation. Since being recognized by UNESCO as a Creative City in 2019, Colombia's Pacific capital has become a dynamic hub of collaboration among artists, technologists, and citizens—transforming culture into a powerful engine for social and economic development.

A Path Shaped by Art and Technology

The road to this designation began with Cali's official application to the UNESCO Creative Cities Network in June 2019, a process involving local and national stakeholders committed to the vision of transforming the city through art and technology. Sectoral roundtables and consultations were held with academic institutions, cultural collectives, and public entities to develop an action plan highlighting Cali's strengths in visual, audiovisual, and digital arts.

In November of the same year, Cali was officially designated a UNESCO Creative City, joining a global network and reinforcing its identity as a creative epicenter in Latin America.

CALI

Creative City of Media Arts



The Cali City of Media Arts Council, acting as the city's focal point to UNESCO and in coordination with the Cali Mayor's Office, plays a key role in nurturing and expanding this creative ecosystem. The Council includes representatives from the Secretariat of Culture, academic institutions, media arts collectives, and cultural enterprises—forming a collaborative governance model that advances Cali's vision as an international reference for digital arts.

This collective effort sustains and grows initiatives such as the Media Arts Circuit, which fosters spaces for experimentation, training, and dialogue around technological arts.

A City Where Innovation Amplifies Identity

World-class festivals and events—such as the Cali International Film Festival and the iconic Feria de Cali—are increasingly embracing media arts as a core element of their cultural programming. These events showcase video-mapping installations and interactive experiences that amplify Cali's cultural identity and extend the reach of its

creative ecosystem. They serve as convergence points where diverse artistic expressions and local traditions thrive through technology.

A Creative Future for All

In this way, Cali continues to build its identity as a Creative City where culture is the backbone of social transformation and inclusive development. The local government and the Cali City of Media Arts Council are committed not only to supporting today's creators but also to shaping a future where innovation and culture generate new opportunities for the entire community.





Valledupar, recognized as a UNESCO Creative City in 2019, is more than just a city—it is a song that rises from its core, a vibrant echo that resonates between the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta and the Serranía del Perijá. Nestled along the banks of the Cesar and Guatapurí rivers, its very essence is woven from notes and verses that have made music the soul and driving force of its territorial development.

Being a Creative City is not merely a title—it is a declaration of identity, a commitment to culture and innovation. In Valledupar, music is not just tradition; it is a bridge to economic growth, social cohesion, and international projection. The city has become a national reference point for music, promoting creativity and a deep sense of responsibility toward music and literature alike.

VALLEDUPAR

Creative City: The Musical Heartbeat of a Living Culture



Creativity and Commitment in Harmony

Valledupar has embraced this commitment with passion and dedication, implementing strategies that promote creativity, innovation, and social inclusion. The city revolves around music to strengthen its social fabric and share its cultural richness with the world, working to consolidate its identity as a Creative City and drive economic development through culture. Urban planning increasingly integrates music and the arts as tools for progress, generating opportunities for artists and creative entrepreneurs.

The city fosters knowledge exchange and collaboration, connecting local creators with global peers, enriching its cultural scene, and strengthening its identity. Its cultural infrastructure is emerging as a musical creativity hub, guaranteeing community access to spaces for artistic expression and reinforcing its national leadership.

These efforts also support daily governance aligned with sustainable growth plans and responsible environmental stewardship, ensuring balance between culture, environment, and tourism. Valledupar is becoming a model of integrated regional development with a strong creative purpose.

From Cultural Roots to New Horizons

These initiatives are bearing tangible results. Programs in music, theater, dance, film, literature, and painting have strengthened artistic seedbeds, giving new generations a pathway for development through culture. With Decree 007-01 of November 5, 2020, the city established "Orange Development Areas", now recognized as cultural and creative districts: Viejo

Valledupar and Caminitos del Valle. These zones have invigorated cultural activity, entrepreneurship, and tourism in the city's historic center.

The Vallenato Festival, the city's flagship event since 1968, remains a powerful symbol of its musical identity—alongside other cultural manifestations that continue to be renewed and strengthened over time. The gradual recovery and creation of neighborhood and rural festivals are helping to revive local traditions, turning Valledupar step by step into a living stage of cultural diversity.

Cultural Policy and International Alliances

The development of a comprehensive Cultural Policy marks a milestone in Valledupar's journey as a Creative City. It includes proposals such as the creation of a "musical bank", the promotion of social responsibility through music, and international partnerships between cities. These initiatives ensure that music will continue to evolve and transcend within the Vallenato tradition and across the broader region.

THE FUTURE OF VALLEDUPAR
IS A HORIZON OF SOUNDS AND
CONNECTIONS. THE CITY IS
PREPARING FOR A CULTURAL
SISTERHOOD WITH MIAMI,
MONTERREY, AND VALLEDUPAR.

The municipal stimulus program strengthens this commitment, ensuring that culture remains the soul of Valledupar's progress.

This international collaboration will solidify Valledupar's position on the global map. Events such as the Book Fair and the Congress of the Colombian Network of Creative Cities also reinforce the dialogue between music and literature. Valledupar is a city that sings, that dreams, that innovates.

Being a Creative City of Music is not just an accolade or a membership—it is a commitment to history and the future, and an invitation to keep weaving, with notes and words, the soul of a people that never stops dreaming.





In November 2021, Ibagué was recognized by UNESCO as part of the Creative Cities Network in the field of Music—a designation that not only reaffirms its identity as Colombia's Musical Capital, but also opens new doors for the city's cultural, social, and economic development.

This recognition was no coincidence—it is the result of a deeply rooted musical tradition, a vibrant artistic community, and an institutional commitment to culture as a force for transformation.

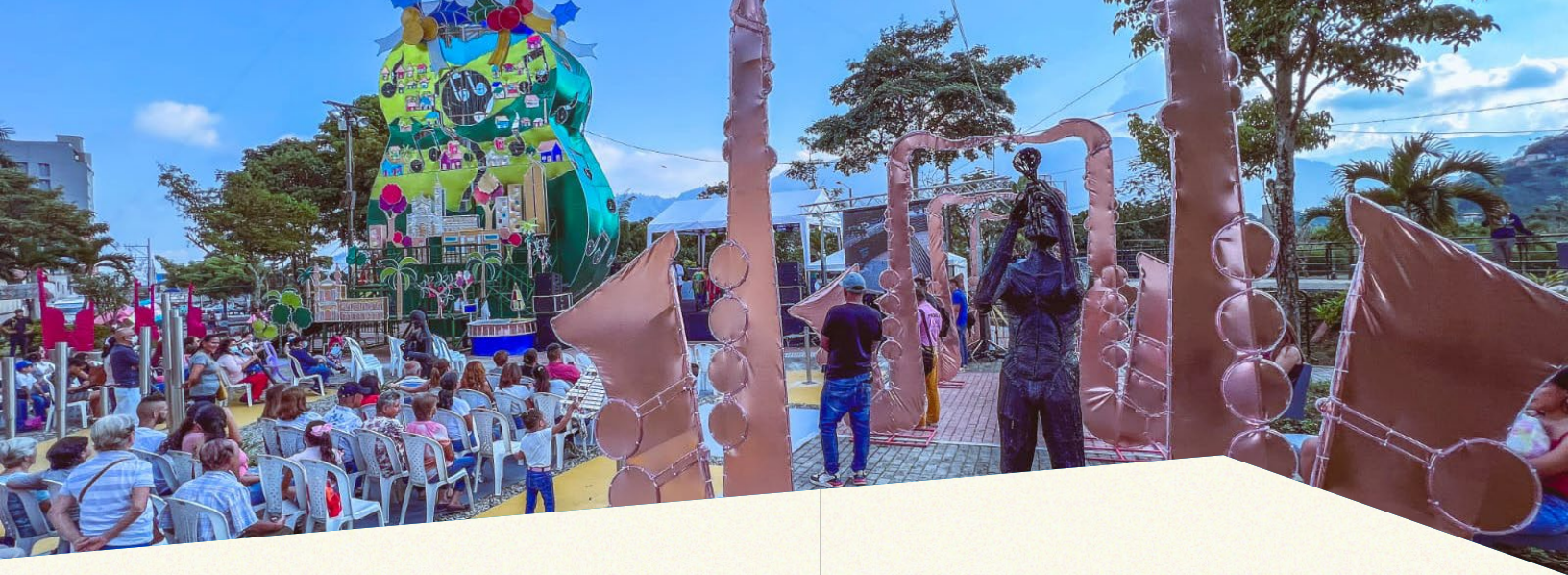
A Legacy of Music Education and Excellence

For over a century, Ibagué has been a national epicenter for music education, creation, and dissemination. Since the founding of the Tolima Conservatory in 1906, generations of musicians have found in Ibagué a space for learning and inspiration.

Today, the city is home to both the Amina Melendro Conservatory of Ibagué, a technical education

IBAGUÉ

Creative City of Music: A Sonic Legacy for the World



institution, and the Tolima Conservatory, a nationally accredited higher education institution with a strong focus on musical and cultural training. Additionally, the EFAC – School of Artistic and Cultural Training offers vocational programs in traditional music, dance, and theater.

A Vibrant Ecosystem of Festivals and Community Engagement

Ibagué's musical richness is expressed through its diverse festivals, including: Festival Nacional de la Música Colombiana, soon to celebrate its 39th edition in 2025, Concurso Nacional de Duetos Príncipes de la Canción, Festival Folclórico Colombiano, with 50 editions, Ibagué Ciudad Rock, with 20 editions, and more recent events like Festival Disonarte, Ibagué Festival, Ibafest, and Tolijazz. These events have fostered a thriving ecosystem where traditional and contemporary genres coexist and flourish.

Yet beyond formal festivals and institutions, Ibagué is a city where music is part of everyday life. From community music schools to independent ensembles, music resonates across the city as a shared language that unites its people. A clear exam-

ple is the "Cátedra Ibagué Musical", which reached 3,500 children and adolescents in 2024, as well as the Simifarte Program, which brings non-formal education in traditional music, dance, and theater to neighborhoods and rural areas across the municipality.

Music as a Catalyst for Development

Ibagué is more than a city of musical legacy—it is a living, evolving territory where music remains at the core of its growth and transformation. Its participation in the UNESCO Creative Cities Network has reaffirmed its global potential and opened new opportunities that require vision and sustained commitment.

Today, Ibagué is not only Colombia's Musical Capital—it is a global benchmark for how culture and creativity can drive sustainable development. With every note that echoes through its streets, Ibagué continues to weave a future in which music will remain the heart of its identity and global reach.



The municipality of Pasto is home to dynamic cultural and artistic processes that foster productivity, imagination, and creativity. These qualities are vividly reflected in its arts, crafts, and ancestral knowledge—contributions of immeasurable value to humanity, as evidenced by several UNESCO recognitions.

Among them is the Carnaval de Negros y Blancos, declared an Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. Likewise, the traditional knowledge and techniques associated with mopa-mopa varnish, a unique artisanal practice from Pasto, are included in UNESCO's List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding. Additionally, Pasto's historic city center is recognized as a Site of Cultural Interest, featuring colonial and republican architecture that captivates cultural tourism.

PASTO

Land of Heritage



A City of Crafts and Folk Arts

The designation of Pasto as a UNESCO Creative City in Crafts and Folk Arts in 2021 marked a hopeful milestone for its cultural and artistic development. By joining the prestigious UNESCO Creative Cities Network, Pasto's artisan and folk art communities gained international recognition for their essential role in preserving and promoting traditional knowledge and techniques.

This designation not only highlights the richness of Pasto's cultural heritage but also opens new doors for knowledge exchange, collaborative networks, and international cooperation in the field of creative practices.

Pasto, Land of Heritage: An Integrated Vision

Pasto, Tierra de Patrimonios (Land of Heritage) is a comprehensive project that strengthens cultural ties, ensures intergenerational knowledge transfer, and drives the economic development of the municipality. Its short-, medium-, and long-term activities play a vital role in promoting and celebrating arts and culture—enriching the lives

of all who live in and love Pasto, while reinforcing its social fabric.

Artists of all disciplines—dance, theater, puppetry, circus, visual arts, film, performance, literature, poetry, dramaturgy, music, digital creation, storytelling, creative writing, and more—as well as knowledge keepers, artisans, creators, and cultural managers, are recognized for their professionalism, often working independently or through self-managed initiatives. This vitality is evident in Pasto's year-round artistic and cultural calendar, active in both urban and rural areas, as well as in the numerous national and international showcases featuring local talent.

Cultural Infrastructure and Policy

Traditional celebrations and festivals dedicated to film, theater, dance, literature, oral storytelling, and music, alongside cultural fairs, museums, libraries, and independent cultural venues such



as theaters, galleries, and exhibition halls, are key platforms for artistic encounter, preservation, circulation, research, and dissemination. These are spaces where diverse knowledge systems, artistic practices, and cultural traditions converge—forming the heart of Pasto’s vibrant cultural life.

A key milestone in the city’s cultural planning is the Decennial Culture Plan (2020–2030), collaboratively developed with artists, cultural sectors, local communities, and various population groups. The Municipal Culture Council ensures active citizen participation in the planning, promotion, and strengthening of the city’s cultural development.

In addition, Pasto benefits from municipal networks of museums, libraries, and puppetry, which serve as platforms for knowledge-sharing and collective learning.

A Creative, Productive, and Inclusive Future

All of these initiatives confirm that Pasto is home to artistic and cultural processes that promote regional development, encourage creativity and productivity, and ensure the preservation of both tangible and intangible heritage. As Pasto’s unique cultural identity gains increasing international recognition, it becomes essential to expand opportunities for artists, artisans, knowledge bearers, and cultural leaders—while enhancing training, promotion, and wide circulation in both national and global forums.

These efforts reflect the commitment, pride, and organization of Pasto’s cultural sector—showcasing a model of creativity rooted in heritage and open to the world.

THERE ARE ARTISTIC PROCESSES
IN PASTO THAT PROMOTE
REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT,
CREATIVITY, AND PRODUCTIVITY.

MUSIC
MEDIAARTS
DESIGN
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**COLOMBIAN NETWORK
OF UNESCO
CREATIVE CITIES**