

JOURNAL

PROJECT

CAMINA -Community
Awakening for
Multicultural
Integrative Narrative of
Almería

📍 Almería, Spain

TOPIC

Culture and cultural
heritage

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Final Journal - Community Awakening for Multicultural Integrative Narrative of Almería (CAMINA)



The Project CAMINA finished in June 2024. With this Final Journal, Ileana Toscano, UIA expert, provides an overview of CAMINA focusing on project outputs and successful results, project's plan for long-term sustainability, lessons learned and recommendations for other urban authorities that wish to implement similar innovative projects in the field of culture and cultural heritage. She concludes this final journal by sharing her reflections on the project legacy, both in terms of knowledge generated and the solution implemented by CAMINA.

CAMINA in a nutshell

CAMINA through a cultural participative approach has co-created the Novel Collective Narrative of Almería's Cultural Landscape through the active participation of experts and citizens living in Almería. The Novel Narrative has been the foundation element to shape the methodology of "civic curators", the social laboratories for cultural co-designing aimed at co-creating and co-implementing innovative cultural programmes to be deployed in the three districts of Almedina, La Chanca-Pescadería and the Centre that the Municipality of Almería has been regenerating through the project CAMINA and other initiatives. The cultural nodes (Katiuska cinema, Museum Doña Pakyta and Mesón Gitano), located in the three districts have become lighthouses of the novel cultural approach promoted by CAMINA, by hosting the participative meetings for civic curators and cultural events co-created through the CAMINA cultural participative process. The Narrative also supported the design of a Cultural Circular Route (called Open-air City Museum) aimed at re-connecting the three targeted neighbourhoods of Almedina, La Chanca-Pescadería and the Centre with the rest of the city, through physical and ICT solutions.

Executive Summary

The Project "Community Awakening and Multicultural Integrative Narrative of Almería (CAMINA)" finished in June

2024. This Final Journal provides an overview of CAMINA focusing on project outputs and successful results, project's plan for long-term sustainability, lessons learned and recommendations for other urban authorities that wish to implement similar innovative projects in the field of culture and cultural heritage.



Almería's Landscape

CAMINA has been a **holistic initiative** aimed at **rediscovering the values of culture and cultural heritage and its positive effects in the social integration** of three marginalised and deprived city neighbourhoods, located in the old town of Almería, representing the splendour past of the ancient city: **Almedina, La Chanca-Pescaderia and the Centre**.

CAMINA implemented two main project innovations in the field of Culture and Cultural Heritage, that represent the legacy of CAMINA: the **co-creation of a Novel Collective Narrative of Almería's Cultural Landscape** realised through the active participation of experts and citizens living in Almería, and the **activation of the Civic Curators - cultural laboratories for culture** to co-design and co-realise cultural activities in the target neighbourhoods. CAMINA forecasted a sound participative involvement of local communities, dedicating a special attention to the marginalised people living in the deprived neighbourhoods, that have been involved as protagonists of the project innovation and not as mere spectators. Thanks to the great effort of people's engagement, CAMINA achieved to attract people in places, that despite being the cultural heritage of the city, are considered marginalised and deprived, places where people are not used to go due to fear or lack of information. CAMINA has triggered a process of de-stigmatisation of the targeted neighbourhoods, fostering the social inclusion of the people living there.

The Municipality of Almería, through CAMINA, has had the opportunity to experiment novel approaches of project implementation that allowed to innovate the public procurement, set up of a collaborative co-design approach in the whole project development and foster a new way to coordinate project implementation, staying a step behind from the delivery partners to facilitate the participative approach.

Despite the legacy of CAMINA is more about methodology of cultural participation for culture and cultural heritage, three principal components of CAMINA remain in place since the project's end date: the exhibition space in the Museum Doña Pakyta, the circular route and the Cultural node - lighthouse Katiuska. Among them, the "Katiuska cinema" settled in La Chanca-Pescaderia neighbourhood symbolizes the new cultural concept developed by CAMINA: to make culture inside unconventional places also located in marginalised neighbourhoods.

Despite some difficulties dealing with the Pandemic, prices increasing for the building sector and internal budgetary/administrative problems of the Main Urban Authority, CAMINA demonstrated the **power of cultural participation** and the **important role of culture as a tool for social inclusion and social cohesion**, able to mobilize unexpected stakeholders and marginalised people.

Project's progress

What has happened with the project since its end date

Three principal components of CAMINA remain in place since the project's end date:

- The exhibition space in the Museum Doña Pakyta
- The circular route
- The Cultural node - lighthouse Katiuska

A short update on each is set out below.

The exhibition space in the Museum Doña Pakyta

The Museum Doña Pakyta located in the centre neighbourhood of Almería is one of the three cultural nodes reactivated by CAMINA. The Museum is the hosting place of several fine arts realised during the so called “Indaliano” period. Here it is possible to walk through the history of Almería represented in the paintings collected by the Museum. Thanks to CAMINA, the semi-basement floor of the Doña Pakyta Museum has been refurbished in 2022 and transformed into an exhibition hall with multipurpose rooms. The architectural project created a versatile space without walls and barriers to allow different possibilities from workshops and art experiments to installation and exhibition.

The first temporary exhibition was opened on 14th December 2022 as the inauguration of the new CAMINA space inside the Doña Pakyta Museum. The exhibition was dedicated to “La Chanca- Pescaderia imagination” and “Goya and Antonio Lopez”. Dedicating this first cultural event to the deprived neighbourhood of La Chanca- Pescaderia had an important value for CAMINA to put in the spotlight the need to reconnect with the roots of Almería’s history and raise citizens awareness about the cultural heritage represented by La Chanca- Pescaderia for the whole city.

In this space, it is also possible to access the audiovisual production of [3D cultural experience](#) using an immersive audiovisual system with VR glasses. This digital product has created an accessible and immersive experience of the exhibition about the target neighbourhoods of CAMINA: La Chanca-Pescaderia and Almedina.



Virtual Reality experience of the exhibition "La Chanca- Pescaderia imagination" realised for the Museum Doña Pakyta

The circular route: Open-Air City Museum of Almería

A “Cultural Circular Route” aimed at re-connecting the three deprived neighbourhoods - Almedina, La Chanca-Pescaderia and the Centre with the rest of the city was conceived based on the concept developed by the Novel Narrative of Almería (see more on the chapter “lesson learned”). The concept of the Cultural circular route evolved into the idea of “Almería - Open-Air City Museum” where tangible and intangible heritage connect the three neighbourhoods with the rest of the city.

The “Cultural Circular Route | Almería - Open-Air City Museum” consists of an exploration of the Cultural Heritage of Almedina, La Chanca-Pescaderia and the Centre neighbourhoods as well as the three “cultural nodes” located in the three neighbourhoods: the “Katiuska cinema”, the Museum Doña Pakyta and the Mesón Gitano.

An [immersive cultural experience of four heritage elements](#) through augmented reality of Almería was realised. Four heritage sites were provided through the application APP-WEB for augmented reality, they are: the Old Mosque of Almería, the Alcazaba of Almería, the Cathedral and the Caliphal Towers. 3D digital models allow to navigate the cultural heritage of Almería and through a follow up made by videos, maps, pictures and virtual tours get the knowledge of the value of Almería’s cultural heritage.

This IT intervention fosters the exploration of the Cultural Circular Route of Almería boosting the walk through the cultural heritage sites and ensuring the accessibility through the online application for disabled people.



Cultural walking in Almedina

The Cultural node - lighthouse Katiuska

The iconic “Katiuska cinema” settled in La Chanca-Pescaderia neighbourhood symbolically represents the new cultural concept developed by CAMINA: to make culture inside unconventional places and neighbourhoods through the involvement of the people for promoting cultural participation by co-designing activities.

The so called “Katiuska cinema” is an historical building from 1904, that passed through several uses: originally conceived as a grape warehouse and, shortly before the Spanish Civil War, renovated as a cinema, to be later warehouse esparto and, finally, iron. Since the Sixties the building has lost its public use. It was progressively abandoned until the Municipality of Almería decided to renovate this space through the project CAMINA to give it

back to Almería citizens as a cultural reference throughout the neighbourhood of La Chanca-Pescadería. The renovated building will be the **Cultural lighthouse of CAMINA**, hosting the **arts and audio-visual centre** with workshop rooms for youth and children, a reading room and versatile spaces for creative and co-design activities.

Unfortunately, the renovation works of the “Katuska Theatre” started with significant delay in January 2024 due to internal budgetary/administrative problems of the Main Urban Authority linked to the prices increasing for the building sector and the delay due to the Pandemic. The works contract has an initial duration of 9 months and has not been finalised by 30th June 2024 (project deadline). The total budget is of 1.231.673,82 €, while the amount executed until 30th June 2024 has been 436.057,86 €. The MUA committed to covering the costs after the project ended through their own budget and to inaugurate the arts and audio-visual centre - Katuska in February 2025.



Historical picture of the Katuska Theatre



Works inside the Katiuska Theatre

What is the project's plan for long-term sustainability

Two main plans are forecasted for the long-term sustainability of CAMINA:

- setting up and running the **Katiuska arts and audio-visual centre**
- continuing the promotion of the **civic curators**.

The “Katiuska cinema” will become the lighthouse of CAMINA hosting the **arts and audio-visual centre** with workshop rooms for youth, children and adults. The building is located in the most deprived, difficult and marginalised neighbourhood of Almería: La Chanca-Pescadería. The Municipality of Almería is willing to continue **empowering the social cohesion and inclusion of the people living in La Chanca-Pescadería** by permanently running an innovative participative cultural centre for arts and audio-visual inside the Katiuska building settled in the heart of the neighbourhood. Bringing cultural activities in this neighbourhood represents an important

milestone for Almería. It means to continue including people of La Chanca-Pescadería in the cultural programmes of the city and provide opportunities for women and girls, for migrants, for marginalised communities and for the youngest to feel included in the city life. **The Katiuska audio-visual arts centre represents the long-term vision of CAMINA to allow the people in the fringe getting involved in cultural and educational activities.**

It is forecasted that the works for the Katiuska will end in February 2025 and then the centre will be opened to citizens. The centre will be managed by the competent area in matters of cultural creation, audiovisual and innovation of Almería Municipality with the aim to continue promoting social inclusion and cohesion.



The ongoing works to transform the Katiuska cinema in the arts and audio-visual centre

The Municipality of Almería is also keen in keeping with the **‘civic curators - social laboratories for culture’**. The “civic curators” is the most innovative initiative developed by CAMINA aimed at involving cultural users, local associations, individual artists and citizens to co-design and co-realise the Cultural Programme of Almería through participatory planning workshops and collaborative culture initiatives. Almería has been preparing the needed conditions to continue promoting this successful activity.



A cultural activity implemented by the civic curators

Generated Knowledge

Lessons learned

The project CAMINA has been a holistic initiative with a high level of complexity that made an effort in deeply involving local communities, beneficiaries and target groups in cultural activities to enhance the social cohesion in Almería.

CAMINA experimented and, we could say, invented **a novel approach for promoting Culture and enhancing Cultural Heritage through a sound participatory approach** that achieved a high number of people living in the three target neighborhoods and in the whole city of Almería.

Four relevant innovations for culture and cultural heritage have been put in place to activate the local community:

- the city Narrative;
- the “civic curators” initiative;
- Innovativeness in Public procurement to enhance co-creation processes;
- the cultural circular route.



One of the co-design meetings

The city Narrative must be co-created!

The Novel Collective Narrative of Almería's Cultural Landscape has been the “umbrella” that triggered and embraced all the activities promoted by CAMINA. The Narrative was the first and main milestone that allowed the smooth development of the following activities of community engagement.

Writing a Novel Narrative for Almería was the answer to the need to invert the process of exclusion of the people living in the target neighborhoods. To collect people's stories for drawing the city narrative and foster an inclusive storytelling supported the repositioning of the cultural heritage of La Chanca-Pescadería, Almedina and the Center.

The methodology forecasted an **initial phase with the involvement of the experts of the “Instituto de Estudio Almeriense”**, the historical cultural department of the Almería's Provincial Council, that shared three landscape scenarios for Almería cultural heritage: *the Port*, that has had an important role of economic exchange for Almería, especially with the North Africa, and welcoming different cultures; *the Mediterranean Sea*, that represents a container of histories, cultures and religions; and *the Light*, that is a metaphor of life, knowledge and creation belonging to the Christian, Jewish, Muslim and Azteca cultures present in Almería.

In 2021, the Municipality of Almería launched an **open call for all the citizens** to contribute to the collaborative

narrative sharing their **own stories of life** linked to these three scenarios. About thirty stories were collected which were combined with the experts' histories to draft the narrative.

Participatory workshops with local organisations, experts and citizens allowed to refining the collaborative narrative that can be summarised in three concepts:

1. *"Belonging to the same place"*. It addresses the cultured and common stories of Almería, through a journey into the past of Almería.
2. *"The School of the South"*. It focuses on the present city. It seeks to valorise the skills and competencies of the people living in the South, through a non formal school-education approach.
3. *"Infinitive Horizon"*. It fosters a cultural dialogue with the future opportunities offered to Almería by the Port development, the multicultural communities and the novel urban public spaces.

Get inspired by the concept of **Story Bank** that could be compared to the "Noah's Ark", where the cultured stories and the story of life have an equal importance, **the "Novel Collective Narrative" fostered to connect feelings, needs, people, neighbourhoods, city imagination, future, present and past of Almería to build a common Cultural Landscape.**

The Narrative shaped the environment of Almería aimed at:

- endorsing the social laboratories for cultural co-design, the so called "civic curators",
- visioning the role of the three cultural nodes (Katiuska cinema, Museum Doña Pakyta and Mesón Gitano) connected by the cultural circular route and activated by the new cultural programme designed by the civic curators.
- designing the "Cultural Circular Route", a pathway aimed at re-connecting the three neighbourhoods of Almedina, La Chanca-Pescadería and the Centre with the rest of the city through physical and ICT solutions.

A follow-up on the Narrative was provided through [zoom-in](#) published in November 2022 and in the [Journal 1](#).

A NEW NARRATIVE: results



The "civic curators" initiative: the capacity of culture to multiply effects to attract people

CAMINA made a step forward in promoting the participation of unexpected audiences in cultural activities. **CAMINA designed a methodology able to include a wide range of people in co-designing and co-creating the Almería cultural programme.** This methodology has been called "**civic curators**", where the curators are not only cultural experts, but citizens "civic" representatives. Indeed the "civic curators" involved cultural users, local associations and citizens to co-design the Cultural Programme of Almería through participatory planning workshops and collaborative culture initiatives. The Civic curators - social laboratories for culture were active between March 2023 and February 2024.

To select the members of the civic curators, the Municipality of Almería launched a call for participants on the 15th November 2022. Twenty-two Local Associations applied to take part at the social laboratories to co-design and implement the cultural programme in Almería, twelve local organisations (applied as a consortium and sometimes involving individual artists) were selected and grouped in six civic curators.

The Novel Collective Narrative of Almería's Cultural Landscape guided the work of the civic curators as a visioning scenario where the dimensions of past, present and future of Almería are linked to arts.

Three art forms have been delivered by the civic curators representing the three Narrative concepts matched with the cultural nodes mission:

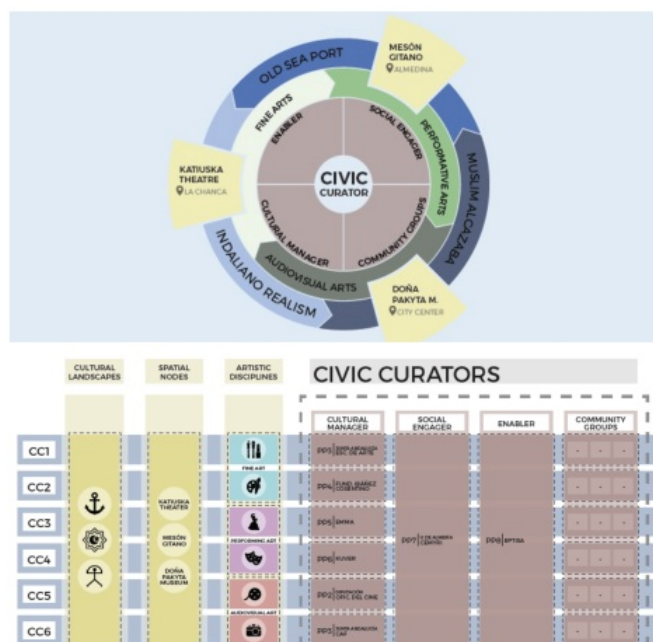
- Performative art – Cultural node 1 – Mesón Gitano – walking into the past;
- Fine art – Cultural node 2 – Museum Doña Pakyta – walking into the present,
- Audio-visual art – Cultural node 3 – Katiuska cinema – walking into the future.

Between September 2023 and February 2024, several cultural events were organised in Almería, thanks to the work of civic curators. Thousands of people participated in dance, music and theatre performances, urban walks, talks, exhibitions, artistic and photography workshops. School students were involved in video-making activities and laboratory experiences.

Many people had the opportunity to visit the neighbourhoods of La Chanca-Pescadería, Almedina and the centre of Almería, learning about the potential of these places and the importance of their heritage. Through the cultural activities spread around the three neighbourhoods and the cultural nodes, CAMINA achieved to attract people in places considered marginalised and deprived, places where people do not use to go due to fear or simple misinformation. CAMINA has triggered a process of de-stigmatisation of the targeted neighbourhoods, fostering the social inclusion of the people living there.

Follow-up on Civic curators: [Journal 3](#) and [Zoom-in 2](#)

CIVIC CURATORS: cultural managers, civic representatives, ... co-producing cultural activities



Innovativeness in Public procurement to enhance co-creation processes

To select the members of the civic curators, the Municipality of Almería launched a call for participants on the 15th November 2022. Twenty-two Local Associations applied to take part at the social laboratories to co-design and implement the novel cultural programme in Almería, while finally 6 cultural laboratories were created with the participation of 10 associations.

Before launching the call for grants, the Main Urban Authority and the delivery partners of CAMINA worked together to shape an **adequate public procurement, allowing to engage cultural and civic associations for being enrolled for working in a cultural collaborative dimension to perform cultural activities**. This process took a long time because it was needed to review the public procurement. Indeed, generally the public procurement is launched to call for cultural proposals, where the budget includes the project and the realisation of a well described artistic or cultural interventions. In the case of the call for civic curators, participants were engaged and paid for working together, through the methodology of social laboratories to co-design the cultural programme and co-realise artistic initiatives.

This effort at the administrative level demonstrated that Public Authorities, through the public procurement process, can make a difference in activating “unexpected” stakeholders that do not usually take part in the urban political process. Public Procurement could be an opportunity to promote innovation and inclusion as well as gender equality.

Through the public procurement promoted for civic curators, Almería showed that a novel methodology for cultural co-design is possible: recognising the value of the commitment and awarding the time of co-designing to provide better and common cultural projects developed by the people for the people.

Follow-up on Civic curators: [Journal 2](#) and [article “Online final event for CAMINA and HI.D.RA.N.T.”](#)

Cultural circular route through a playful approach

The project acronym “CAMINA” means “WALK!”. This was the paradigm of the project innovation that proposed to foster the connection between the three neighbourhoods and Almería citizens through cultural urban walks. By walking through cultural heritage sites, “cultural nodes” and cultural events taking place in public spaces, CAMINA has encouraged the citizens of Almería to be part of their cultural heritage and the ancient neighbourhoods.

“The art of walking” allowed the promotion of the Cultural Circular route through Almería Heritages to invite Almería citizens to rediscover their roots and the opportunities they represented.

The concept of the Cultural Circular route evolved into the idea of “Almería - Open-Air City Museum” where tangible and intangible heritage connect the three neighbourhoods with the rest of the city.

ICT deliverables, like the [immersive cultural experience of heritage elements](#) were delivered together with playful and “driven” experiences.

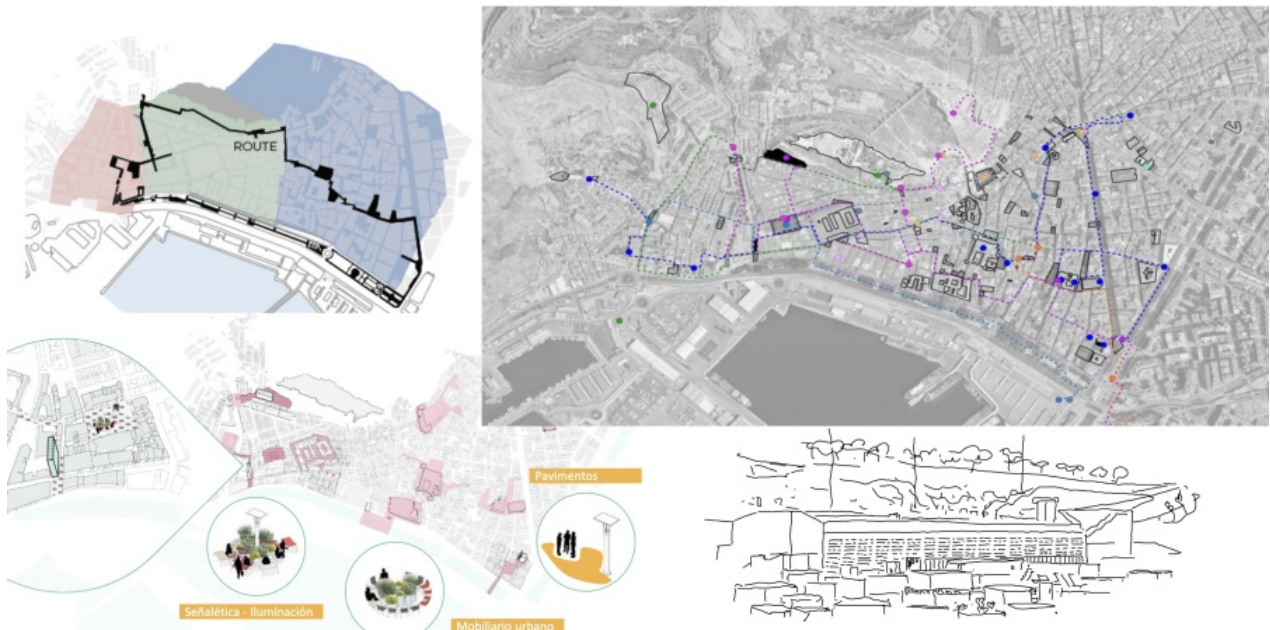
The playful and “driven” experiences were:

- [Audiobarrio](#), a sound and poetic tour of the neighbourhoods surrounding the Alcazaba of Almería, created from interviews with neighbours, street discoveries or literary encounters. A total of 16 stops where it is possible to listen to poetry, fiction, theatre or documentaries and feel an immersive sound experience in the life of Chanca-Pescadería, La Almedina, Cerro de San Cristóbal, the Historical Centre and La Hoya.
- [“Walk Your Culture Stamps”](#), a game collection of 43 stamps illustrated with local artists, iconic places or key facts of Almería. They have a reference in different disciplines: plastic arts, journalism and literature, flamenco, photography, music, the living and audiovisual arts, and material and immaterial heritage. To get people aware about the cultural history of Almería, CAMINA launched a city game that ran from May to June 2024 to collect stamps by visiting the cultural nodes and cultural places in the target neighbourhoods.
- [One city, ten routes](#), an initiative launched by the municipality of Almería to rediscover the cultural heritage of Almería. Five theatrical routes and five touristic routes were offered freely to citizens and participants to learn and see through new eyes the beauty of Almería Cultural Landscape.

The **sound participative scheme** declined in several inclusive cultural activities demonstrated that it is possible fostering a sound inclusion of unexpected people and stakeholders. This approach driven by the participation of the target population in the whole project development allowed to foster the **“Culture of co-living”** that embraces cultures, minorities and all people in a cultural project implemented by the people for the people. CAMINA has given evidence that **culture facilitates the feeling of union between people** Music, dance, performative and fine arts break down walls and bring people together.

The **collaborative approach of CAMINA enhanced the networking between the Municipality, local organisations and citizens** and allowed people to feel part of the same community.

CIRCULAR ROUTE: the art of walking. Rediscovering stories of the city



Recommendations to other urban authorities who wish to implement similar innovative projects

The Municipality of Almería shared a few recommendations for other urban authorities that are willing to implement similar projects:

1. Involve good delivery partners

To set up a good partnership is the key for the initiative's success. To promote cultural participation, the MUA should stay a step behind the work of the local community to make the project "less institutional" and close to people. Delivery partners are the facilitators of project activities: they work in strict contact with the citizens and local stakeholders creating a good environment of collaboration.

2. Be honest with citizens and people involved in the process

Running a sound participative cultural initiative requires building trust between citizens and local authorities. To be honest about project development sharing milestones, budget, methodology and commitment contributes to construct a good relationship with citizens that could follow project progress.

3. Align public procurement before starting the project

As it has been already explained, to run the civic curators required to modify the process for public procurement that took too much time due to bureaucratic issues. In order to avoid the delay due to the needed modification of the public procurement, Municipalities interested in running an initiative similar to CAMINA can do this before launching the project.

The innovative initiative required to exit from the ordinary work of local authorities. This kind of project asks for an effort in working in a more collaborative and multidisciplinary way, while local administrations that are used to work in silos should take this into consideration. The local governments should support the implementation of the innovative activity facilitating the work inside the urban authority and accelerating the modification of internal rules to allow project success.

4. To not have fear to risk for promoting innovation for social inclusion

Urban authorities should be brave to promote innovative projects focused on social cohesion through culture. The social impact of cultural projects could be visible in the long term. But the enthusiasm and people's participation are immediately visible. Projects like CAMINA invest on psychological and human support to communities that feel excluded and marginalised. The challenge is high, but evidence has shown that the roadmap for cultural participation is on the right track.

Conclusion: final reflection and main legacy of CAMINA

CAMINA invented a new approach for cultural participation putting in place a series of actions to reactivate local communities living in the target deprived neighborhoods, making them protagonists of this innovation.

CAMINA experimented **two main project innovations**, that are the legacy of CAMINA:

- the **co-creation of a Novel Narrative of Almería**
- the activation of the **Civic Curators** - cultural laboratories for culture

The Main Urban Authority of Almería, through CAMINA, has had the opportunity to experiment novel approaches of project implementation. They are:

- innovating of the **public procurement**;
- the **collaborative co-design approach** in the whole project development;
- a **new way to coordinate project implementation**, staying a step back from the delivery partners.

CAMINA has triggered an ambitious process of de-stigmatisation of the targeted neighbourhoods, fostering the social inclusion of the people living there. The holistic feature of **CAMINA allowed thousands of people to participate in dance, music and theatre performances, urban walks, talks, exhibitions, artistic and photography workshops**. Participants had the opportunity to visit the neighbourhoods of La Chanca-Pescadería, Almedina and the centre of Almería, learning about the potential of these places and the importance of their heritage. CAMINA achieved to attract people in places considered marginalised and deprived, places where people do not use to go due to fear or lack of information.

Looking back at the project that I followed since 2021, I can also comment on some difficulties encountered by CAMINA. First of all, the project forecasted a huge number of different activities that required a big effort for the urban authority to coordinate and implement all, considering the bureaucracy to follow for the project development.

The COVID Pandemic slowed down the early stage of the project dealing with the participative framework, which required to be implemented on the field and was forced to move on digital platforms. Fortunately since June 2021 it was possible to run the participative approach as planned through workshops and field works.

Last but not least, the increasing prices for the building sector and internal budgetary/administrative problems of the Main Urban Authority did not allow the timely completion of the renovation works of the cultural node "Katiuska Theatre". The MUA committed to cover the costs after the project end date through their own budget.

Despite those difficulties, the **participation of Almería citizens for writing the narrative, participating at the civic curators activities and attending the CAMINA cultural events demonstrated the power of cultural participation and the important role of culture as a sound tool for inclusion and social cohesion**, able to mobilize unexpected stakeholders and marginalised people.

CAMINA has been an emotional experience that showed the importance to collect all voices, all stories to rewrite the city imagination and narrative.

CAMINA made a step forward in conceiving a novel approach for culture and cultural heritage by involving the people to produce culture for the people to strive for an equal, just and inclusive society.



People participating at the civic curators activity

Culture and cultural heritage

See on UIA website

