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VOL. 9. ISS. 18**THE UNIVERSITY AND ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP: EXPANDING THE INSTITUTION.****Coords. Ángel Portolés Górriz**

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"The revolution has to be urban or nothing at all."

Henri Lefebvre

We are currently immersed in a process of reflection-action on the role institutions play in the communities in which they are located and where many of their projects are centred. In this new relationship framework, boundaries are extended to include affective and emotional aspects resulting from exchanges between the people in the institutions and those in their localities. From this perspective, factors such as horizontality, participation or solidarity share a space with concepts like caring or support.

Spain's Organic Law 6/2001 on universities formalises the function of cultural extension in the university, and in its Article 93 establishes universities' obligation to connect to the contemporary system of ideas. To this end, universities should provide the necessary means to strengthen their commitment to intellectual reflection, to create and disseminate culture, to encourage rapprochement between the cultures of the humanities and the sciences, and to transfer knowledge to society through the dissemination of science.

Implicit in the university's mission to produce scientific knowledge is the responsibility to transfer its results to tangible projects with an impact in the community. Universities' socio-cultural services are also bound by this principle and have made culture their main asset in their endeavour to ensure scientific research becomes part of social reality.

From this perspective, each university has addressed its cultural programmes to the community with a view to the position it should take in its sphere of activity. Academia, as an institution, is increasingly assuming a community-oriented mission that enables local citizens to feel ownership of the institution through culture, by constructing a model based on a sustainable, hybrid, inclusive and permeable network in which the university is a driving force of these communities.

The concept of university social responsibility presents a major challenge: to guarantee their commitment to socially and environmentally sustainable development (Gasca-Pliego and Olvera-García, 2011).



François Vallaeys (2014) proposes the concept of the socially responsible university based on the management of four unvarying impacts of higher education institutions: the impacts of the organisation itself; the impacts deriving from the education they provide; the impacts of the knowledge they produce; and the impacts arising from their relationships with their social environment, their networks, contracts, extension and neighbourhood relationships, social, economic and political participation and their embeddedness in the territory (p. 107). Vallaeys' proposed university social responsibility model is based on the institution's presence and rootedness in the territory (p. 109) through the development of mutual learning communities between academic actors and external social actors, on socially relevant interpersonal relationships or on the protection of local heritage woven into a common language and coexistence.

This edition of *kult-ur* focuses on the diversity of approaches as a lens through which to learn about and discover research that links surrounding communities (social, cultural, heritage, etc.) with the university. This perspective positions the institution as an ecosystem in which cultural models are coordinated for an active citizenship, transfer in research and in social and cultural processes and a proliferation of contexts (national and international) as well as the relationships that develop out of the learning processes themselves.

In his article, Antonio Javier González Rueda invites us to reflect on cultural observatories through an analysis of the noun observatory, the adjective cultural and the phrase cultural observatory. Essential to this approach are the importance of context and the need to keep sight of the qualitative dimension of cultural observatories, an approach that aligns with good practices such as those of the Grenoble Observatoire Des Politiques Culturelles and the Chilean government's Observatorio Cultural. González Rueda concludes with a set of key factors for cultural observatories, such as the importance of how they evolve through, adapt to and anticipate changes in the context in which they develop, or the creation of networks for sharing knowledge and experiences.

In his article on the Atalaya Project and its importance as a tool and a guide, Salvador Catalán Romero traces the Observatory's main actions and the outcomes it has produced in this open process. In December 2004, the Vice-Rectorates for Culture of the public universities in Andalusia met in Malaga to raise awareness of innovative initiatives for disseminating and spreading culture, through shared, collaborative work, independence and social commitment, in a new stage of university engagement with citizens. In February 2005, the Atalaya Project and its Cultural Observatory – OCPA – was founded in Carmona (Seville) with the support of the University of Cadiz.

María Blasco Cubas reflects on the cultural dimension in a relatively new university: the University of San Jorge, in Zaragoza. She discusses the underlying reasons for, mission and programming directions of a university extension service within the university campus and its connections with the wider community, the rest of society. Her description paints a picture of the reality of the teams that design cultural management programmes throughout the academic year.

In turn, Raúl Abeledo Sanchis draws on his experience at the University of Valencia in his analysis of cultural observatories. The seminar *Observatoris culturals en les universitats públiques del segle XXI* (Cultural observatories in public universities of the 21st century), held at that university in 2022, discussed the strategies, potential and limitations of these institutions for the creation, reflection and transmission of thought through cultural management, from a constantly critical, collective and open perspective. Founded in 2019, the Observatori Cultural of the University of Valencia has become a key player in the academic institution by furthering understanding of the systemic challenges and conflicts of today's world; the role of research and cultural management in this area; and, finally, positioning the role the University of Valencia plays in this sphere as a public institution responsible for knowledge, science and culture.

In the interview conducted for this issue, we learn about an experience that could well be described as good practice: the Public University of Navarra (UPNA) book group. In this in-depth exchange, Begoña Espoz González, the book group's coordinator, emphasises the importance of building strong communities of readers on university campuses. Book groups foster freer, fuller and more tolerant citizens, both on and off campus, in the present while participants study, teach or develop their careers, and in the future during the rest of their lives. The example of collaboration between the Cultural Activities Services and the university libraries paves the way to a full education and the creation of a third space in higher education institutions.



Finally, the Biblos section takes us to a high level European summit, held in Oporto under the Portuguese Presidency of the Council of the European Union. In March 2021 this EU University and Culture summit, titled Fostering the Union through culture and the arts, attracted reflections from hundreds of specialists on seven pillars of the university framework: democratic access to heritage, and artistic expressions and experiences; the arts as a strategy and their different viewpoints; scientific and artistic worldviews; integration of artistic experiences in higher education institution curricula; museums at the heart of the university; the arts as a driver of community and regional development; and the arts, health and wellbeing.

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