



ENCATC news

A monthly e-newsletter for the latest in cultural management and policy



Dear colleague,

The month of September marked a significant step in our collective journey towards a regenerative future as we gathered in Barcelona for the **2025 ENCATC Congress**. Guided by the theme "*The Future Is Cultural: Policy, Practice, and Education*", with this focus, we brought together **more than 200 academics, researchers, decision makers, experts, practitioners, artists, and emerging professionals from 38 countries** to co-create a vibrant hub for action and transformation in the cultural sector.

We met at a moment when the world faces ecological uncertainty, democratic fragility, rapid digital transformations, and persistent inequalities. Against this backdrop, the Congress reaffirmed a vital conviction: culture is not an accessory to human flourishing, but a driving force for transformation—anchoring our efforts to build futures that are inclusive, resilient, and sustainable. Discussions emphasized the urgency of embedding sustainability, ethics, and community engagement into curricula, while embracing experiential learning that equips future leaders to navigate complexity with creativity and responsibility. As participants noted, cultural managers today must be more than administrators: they must act as agents of change, balancing artistic vision with organizational sustainability.

The contributions of all speakers and participants testified to the crucial importance of the Congress as a platform for innovation, dialogue, and knowledge exchange to continue nurturing the leadership and ideas that will shape the cultural landscapes of tomorrow. . Once more, this global gathering proved its capacity to build bridges between research, education, and practice, showing how academic work in cultural management can directly inform pedagogy, inspire policy, and shape real-world cultural action.

Yours faithfully,

GiannaLia Cogliandro Beyens
ENCATC Secretary General



A Call to Put Culture At the Heart of The Global Development Agenda: The Keynote Speech by Ernesto Ottone R.

The 2025 ENCATC Congress opened with an inspiring keynote by **Ernesto Ottone R.**, Assistant Director-General for Culture at UNESCO and winner of the 2025 Award for Outstanding Contribution. His intervention set the framework that would resonate throughout the event as he emphasized the role of culture to build regenerative futures. He emphasized that culture must stand at the heart of the global development agenda, on par with health, education, and climate action. Cultural policy, he noted, is not only about heritage but also about **building social cohesion, peace, and resilience** in the face of conflict and polarization. In his talk, Ottone called for deeper integration of culture with education, science, technology, and the environment, while stressing the importance of forging alliances across global institutions, regional bodies, and local communities. He highlighted the urgent need to **make culture measurable and investable**, to defend cultural rights and freedoms, and to embrace digital innovation as a tool for protection and access. His message underscored **culture's role as diplomacy**: a universal language capable of uniting even adversaries.



Education and Research Sessions: when academic work directly inform pedagogy, inspire policy, and shape global cultural action.

The 16th edition of the Education and Research Sessions reaffirmed their role as a **dynamic space for academic dialogue** and **cross-sector exchange**. Bringing together researchers, educators, and cultural professionals, the sessions provided a platform to collectively reflect on how cultural policy, management, and education can help shape inclusive and sustainable futures.

The papers presented by **more than 100 participants** from **38 countries** throughout **28 sessions** addressed some of the **most pressing issues facing the cultural field today**, including sustainability, cultural rights, audience participation, heritage practices, innovation, and organizational resilience. These discussions not only showcased rigorous academic inquiry and pedagogical innovation, but also highlighted culture's transformative capacity to respond to global challenges, foster well-being, and inspire new forms of governance, exchange, and practice.

To continue this reflection beyond the Congress, ENCATC has curated a new publication: **ENCATC 2025 Book of Proceedings – The Future Is Cultural: Policy, Practice, and Education**, bringing together 30 peer-reviewed papers from the Education and Research Session. This new volume gathers global perspectives, with authors from Europe, Asia, Africa, and the Americas exploring the role of culture in sustainability, inclusion, innovation, and peacebuilding. It offers interdisciplinary dialogue on urgent topics such as climate action, cultural rights, digital transformation, governance, and community-based cultural initiatives. Closely aligned with UNESCO's MONDIACULT 2025 themes, the book provides a timely contribution to international debates on cultural policy and management. More than a record of scholarly exchange, it demonstrates ENCATC's unique capacity to build bridges between research, education, and practice, showing how academic work in cultural management can directly inform pedagogy, inspire policy, and shape real-world cultural action.



Catalysts for Regenerative Futures: the Awards Ceremony Celebrated Role Models Shaping the Future of Culture

The 2025 edition of the Award Ceremony provided a unique opportunity to celebrate changemakers who are actively building regenerative futures. More than a celebration, the Ceremony carried a dual purpose: to inspire current and future generations of cultural leaders, policymakers, educators, and researchers, while also elevating role models whose ideas, methods, and evidence are already transforming the sector.

This year's Ceremony recognized outstanding achievements across four distinctions. The Award for Outstanding Contribution was presented to **Ernesto Ottone R.**, Assistant Director-General for Culture at UNESCO, in recognition of his remarkable impact on the field. The Research Award honored **Giada Calvano**, CEO and Founder of Chloe Sustainability in Spain, for her visionary work. The Best Research Paper Award was bestowed upon **Marta Gertrudes and Paula Ochôa** of Universidade NOVA de Lisboa in Portugal for their academic excellence. Finally, the Best Innovative Teaching Methods Award celebrated the creativity and dedication of **Cleopatra Charles** from Rutgers University–Newark and Margaret F. Sloan from James Madison University in the United States.

[Read more](#)



The work of the MONDIACULT Focus Groups to inform the global cultural policy

The ENCATC flagship event provided a vital platform for advancing global dialogue on culture's role in sustainable and regenerative futures. It was the opportunity for the **six Focus Groups on MONDIACULT** to meet in person to co-produce knowledge and collaboratively contribute to cultural policy development. These groups are designed as spaces for learning, critical dialogue, and advancing personal and institutional knowledge on key cultural priorities. After a total of **17 online meetings**, one of the sessions of the ENCATC Congress was specifically devoted to an in-person gathering of the Focus Groups. Participants kept on working to produce concrete recommendations to feed into the **Mondiacult Digital Library** and the **2025 MONDIACULT Conference**.



Focus on Training Programmes and Global Challenges in the annual Global Conversation

Each year, the ENCATC Congress hosts the **Global Conversation**, a flagship series in partnership with the Association of Arts Administration Educators (AAAE). The session has become a cornerstone of the Congress, offering a unique platform for academics, practitioners, and cultural leaders from around the world to exchange ideas and explore how cultural management education can evolve in response to a rapidly changing world.

The 2025 edition of the Global Conversation placed a powerful question at its center: *How do training programs in cultural management innovatively address contemporary challenges?*

As societies confront interconnected crises—climate change, forced migration, digital transformation, geopolitical tensions, and deepening inequality—arts and culture are not insulated from these pressures. Indeed, they are often on the frontlines, both as spaces of resilience and as sectors uniquely vulnerable to disruption. For cultural managers, these global dynamics demand new skills, new mindsets, and new forms of responsibility. The Global Conversation set out to explore how education and training can rise to this challenge.



Annual Policy Debate: A Dialogue with Creators to Explore the Relationship between Artists and Cultural Managers

What makes a relationship between artists and cultural managers truly fruitful? What are the biggest challenges facing artistic creation and exchange in a rapidly changing world? And when it comes to politics—are artists navigating collaboration, conflict, or sheer indifference? These are the questions driving this year's ENCATC Annual Policy Debate, that tackled how **artistic voices** can both **shape and be shaped** by cultural management and policy at a time when culture is increasingly recognised as a cornerstone of sustainable development. The session unfolded as a candid conversation with leading voices from the artistic and cultural field, that shared their perspectives on the **delicate balance between creation, management, and policy**. In a world marked by ecological uncertainty, democratic fragility, digital acceleration, and widening inequalities, this dialogue shed light on **how creators and cultural leaders can together contribute** to more inclusive, resilient, and regenerative futures.



Young and Emerging Researchers and Professionals Took Stage for the In-person Meeting of the Research Platform

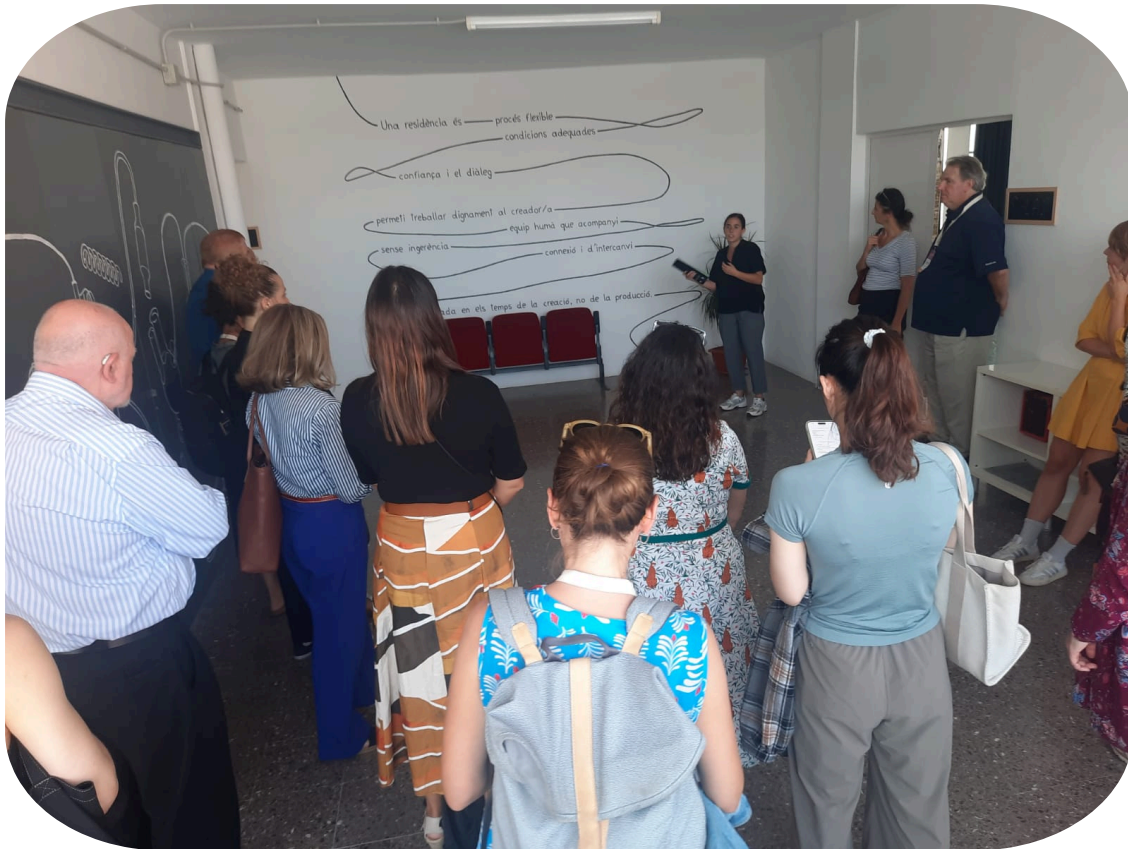
In the days of the Congress, the **Research Platform**, the new ENCATC initiative established earlier this year, met in person for a meeting that focused on **Young and Emerging Researchers and Professionals**. The session brought together **more than 40 participants**, creating a vibrant and dynamic exchange. Chaired by Richard Maloney, with contributions from previous ENCATC research Award winners and emerging researchers Giada Calvano, Jenni Pekkarinen, and Carlotta Scioldo, the discussion explored the diverse experiences and challenges facing young and emerging researchers in the cultural sector. Participants shared perspectives on PhD development, the transition to post-PhD academic and professional careers, and the shifting demands of education and research in culture. The dialogue highlighted both obstacles and opportunities, emphasizing the evolving, complex nature of the field and the need for continued collaboration.



Leading by example: The Projects Showcase of the Congress

The Projects Showcase session spotlighted pioneering work shaping the future of cultural management and policy. This curated session brought together academics, practitioners, and emerging leaders from across the globe. Projects spanned critical themes—from climate resilience and digital transformation to heritage, education, and cultural rights. Rooted in the values of sustainability and innovation, the showcase highlighted the power of cross-sector collaboration - participants will encounter fresh methodologies, participatory practices, and place-based cultural strategies. From projects reimagining the role of culture in sustainable development to case studies illustrating the intersection of policy, practice, and research, a particular focus was placed on inclusive cultural ecosystems and co-creation with local communities. By connecting practice with policy, these initiatives foster resilient and future-oriented cultural landscapes. This

dynamic session reinforced ENCATC's commitment to excellence in cultural education and applied research.



Cultural beauties of Barcelona took Central Stage at the Study Visits

During the ENCATC Congress study visits in Barcelona, we explored **five cultural institutions** that showcase the city's dynamic artistic ecosystem. At the **Museu de la Música**, one of Europe's leading instrument collections, visitors experienced both the historical heritage and immersive soundscapes of 2,000 preserved instruments. **Nau Ivanow** highlighted its role as a creation factory for the performing arts, supporting emerging theatre and fostering international collaborations. At **Piramidón**, a hybrid space combining studios, exhibitions, and residencies, we discovered how over 170 international artists have developed their practices in a collaborative environment since 1990. The **Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona (MACBA)** emphasized its mission to enliven contemporary art, particularly Catalan production, through research, knowledge dissemination, and critical engagement to inspire societal transformation. Finally, **Sala Beckett** stood out as a vibrant venue for contemporary playwriting, training, and debate, deeply committed to nurturing Catalan dramaturgy. Together, these visits revealed Barcelona's commitment to both preserving heritage and driving cultural innovation.



Participants to the Pre-Congress Study Tour Experienced the Barcelona Cultural Landscape

As a pre-programme to the 2025 ENCATC Congress, participants were invited to take part in a Study Tour designed to deepen understanding of cultural policy and practice in context. Through curated visits to **cultural centres, museums, and FiraTàrraga**—one of Europe's **leading performing arts markets**—the Study Tour offered a unique opportunity to explore how local and regional cultural ecosystems operate, adapt, and innovate. Participants engaged in dialogue with representatives of the autonomous communities, gaining insight into current policy frameworks in the performing arts and exploring models of festival and market organisation. It wasn't only an introduction to Barcelona's cultural landscape, but a platform for learning, exchange, and the creation of meaningful cross-sector partnerships.



The Congress Legacy: Our Precious Collaboration with Local Partners

The ENCATC Congress 2025 was possible thanks to the deep collaboration with our local partners: **Universitat de Barcelona, Universitat Internacional de Catalunya, Universitat Oberta de Catalunya, and Espronceda Institute of Arts and Culture.** We are sincerely grateful to them and we are glad that the Congress **has left a meaningful legacy** for Barcelona and its institutions. The partners declared that the Congress provided an exceptional **platform to expand international connections**, deepen exchanges across academic, political, and cultural fields, and reinforce the program's global positioning. They also underlined the relevance of **offering colleagues a valuable space to reflect collectively on the future of cultural management and policy.** Lasting contacts and conversations are said to have enriched both local and European networks, sparking new ideas and collaborative opportunities. Together, these outcomes highlight the Congress as a catalyst for visibility, dialogue, and innovation, leaving a transformative impact across Barcelona's cultural and academic landscape.



...and after the Congress? Give Your Contribution to the European Journal of Cultural Management and Policy

The 2025 edition of the ENCATC Congress was also the opportunity to launch the first 3 special issues of our open access European Journal on Cultural Management Policy, the official ENCATC Journal published by Frontiers. To keep on engaging with the topics discussed during our flagship event, participate to the global conversation giving your contribution to the three special issues. Their themes represent the most relevant topics in the cultural management and policy community, and are aligned with the priorities of the 2025 MONDIACULT conference:

- The Economy of Culture – looking back, reflecting forward;
- Digital Technologies in the Cultural Sector;
- Climate Action in the Cultural Sector: Responsibility and Systemic Transformation.

Researchers can now **submit their contribution** for these three special issues.

Submit your contribution

In addition, you now have the opportunity to become a guest editor of three further special issues, focused on the following themes: Cultural Rights, Culture and Education, and Culture, heritage and crisis.

These special issues will complement the three recently published ones, forming a curated collection aligned with UNESCO's thematic priorities, which highlight key challenges and opportunities for the future of culture.

Guest Editors are invited to draw inspiration from UNESCO's framing of these priorities and to actively engage colleagues in contributing to the Special Issues - you can [click here to explore UNESCO themes](#).

Submit your expression of interest

The **photos of the Congress** are now available: don't forget to download them from our shared folder.

Download the Congress Photos



See you next year! Save the date for the upcoming 2026 ENCATC Congress!

Our 2026 Annual Congress will take place in **Nice** next **September 2026**. Make sure to mark your calendar, as we'll once again offer a platform dedicated to fostering dialogue, sparking innovation, and further enriching the sector.



**Co-funded by
the European Union**

ENCATC is the European network on cultural management and policy. It is an independent membership organisation gathering over 100 higher education institutions and cultural organisations in over 40 countries. ENCATC was founded in 1992 to represent, advocate and promote cultural management and cultural policy education, professionalise the cultural sector and make it sustainable, and to create a platform of discussion and exchange at the European and international level.

ENCATC is also an NGO in official partnership with UNESCO.

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