From “Cuines del Món” Gastronomic BiblioLab to “Cuinem Santa Coloma”: Cooking cultures and social cohesion at Fondo Public Library (Santa Coloma de Gramenet, Barcelona)

Abstract: This communication presents a library service carried out at the Library of Fondo, Santa Coloma de Gramenet. Cuines del Món, a gastronomic BiblioLab, is part of the BiblioLab programme of the MLN at Barcelona province (Catalonia). Cuines del Món starts from an analysis of the surrounding area of the library, a highly intercultural one, and with some associated problems like a high poverty index. Cuines del Món is about gastronomy and cooking but, above all, is about community building, interculturality in view. The aim is to offer a space, a completely equipped kitchen, and related cultural activities, which provide a positive interaction working on common interests producing active and collaborative relationships between people and groups which normally would not establish contact, establishing mechanisms or resources to achieve a culturally diverse participation in its activities, by recognising diversity, promoting the knowledge and the visibility of cultural diversity, and implementing measures to ensure equity, egalitarian access to information and culture, rights, opportunities to people issued from diverse cultural and social origins and avoiding discrimination. All this with an active involvement of citizens.

Keywords: Interculturality, makerspace, gastronomy, participation, library services

1 The city of Santa Coloma, a diverse city

Santa Coloma de Gramenet (117,597 inhabitants) is a town of the metropolitan area of Barcelona, separated from this by the river Besòs. This proximity, together with a history of welcoming immigrant communities and an accelerated and chaotic urban growth, has resulted in what one can see in the Llatí and Fondo neighbourhoods. These neighbourhoods have a population density of 28,480 inhabitants per square kilometre and 36.9% of the population is of foreign origin. Nearby, neighbourhoods have similar proportions.

Santa Coloma has a very young population (17.6% under the age of 15), and many of them are children of the last wave of immigration to the city (2000-2010). 22% of children live in poverty. The city’s inhabitants have the lowest available family income in Catalonia, and 33.7% of the population have educational levels equal to or lower than primary education. Unemployment—although it does not grow—continues to be high (8,515 unemployed in December 2017). (Memòria Tècnica..., 2018)
2 The Libraries of Santa Coloma being attentive to diversity

In accordance with Article 28 of Law 4/1993, of March 18, on the library system of Catalonia, the Department of Culture of the Generalitat de Catalunya has developed and updates the Map of the Public Reading of Catalonia (MLPC). This includes input from the Council of Libraries and the representative associations of the local administration of Catalonia. It covers the needs of public reading and the type of library service that corresponds to each municipality (Mapa de Lectura Pública de Catalunya, 2014).

This map has established for Santa Coloma de Gramenet a public library network consisting of one central library (Biblioteca Central) and three neighbourhood or proximity libraries (Biblioteca Can Peixauet, Biblioteca Singuerlín and Biblioteca del Fondo). The Fondo Library was the last one to open its doors in September 2014.

The local network is part of the Barcelona Municipal Libraries Network (from now on MLN). The local network presents its yearly strategic plan which, for 2018, takes into account several elements designed to promote a more peaceful and inclusive community. The strategic line about “community, reading promotion and cultural work” includes the goal of improving reading habits of the community and deepening youth-oriented services. The project Cuines del Món is considered a linking project which includes both reading habits and youth-oriented services. Moreover, in the functional programme of the library this project was settled as its essence in community building.

2.1 The Biblioteca del Fondo (Library of Fondo)

The functional programme (Santa Coloma de Gramenet 2013) of the Library was established bearing in mind the multicultural environment. The project supports and promotes the development of strong relationships between the many nationalities that coexist in the neighbourhood of Fondo with an emphasis on the tradition, language and customs that they carry with them. Therefore, recognition of diversity was considered through different objectives:

- creating and consolidating respect and recognition of the other; promoting social inclusion; promoting the mix of cultures, sexes, ages, etc.;
- facilitating meeting and participation spaces;
- generating feelings of belonging to the community and the city;
- encouraging positive values such as participation, tolerance and respect among users; and
- meeting the needs of participation in the world of culture of the users as a whole. Cooking was seen as something connecting all cultures.

Eating is the most important thing throughout life, a daily activity that takes time, knowledge and creativity. And gastronomy, being a nice metaphor of unity in diversity, was then seen as an optimal starting point to achieve the objective of cultural cohesion in the area of influence of the library (Bardají; Chavarria, 2016).
3 Libraries and maker culture: BiblioLab at Barcelona Municipal Libraries Network (MLN)

The fact of having a kitchen installed at the core of the library, physically and metaphorically, where practical and creative workshops are held, is not an extravagance but an example of maker culture. It responds to new forms of learning and creation. It is a makerspace as it combines tools, an interested community of users and a will that moves the participants to form and share their creations and ideas with the others; it is a place where knowledge and shared tools are combined, a focus on learning and practical exploration, the desire to collaborate on projects along with others. In this sense MLN has been implementing a new strategy for the whole network based on maker culture.

MLN is a key instrument of public cultural, social and educational development in Catalonia (serving a community of 2.7 million users). It is in charge of the provision of support and continuity with regard to the library project in the province of Barcelona with a commitment to the provision of quality services, balanced regional planning and a network-based working model.

3.1 BiblioLab Programme at MLN

BiblioLab is an MLN programme that develops and supports actions aimed at accessing knowledge through experimentation and creative and innovative methodologies in a collaborative public space. The projects developed as part of this programme span on different branches of knowledge, whether they be technological, or social science projects (nutrition, agriculture, gastronomy, nature, etc.), art projects (music, plastic arts and crafts) or those related to reading and writing—the essence of libraries.

With this programme the Barcelona Provincial Council aims to promote creation and creativity among its citizens, highly valuable skills in areas such as education, culture and entrepreneurship and research in general. This requires attention to the criteria of equal access, economic sustainability, efficiency, service quality and relevance, capitalising and placing value on library resources and network-based activity and local, accessible facilities that are well established in the region.

The objectives of the BiblioLab programme are:

- promoting individual and collective development through dynamic learning, creativity and innovation.
- providing the public with access to creative and digital manufacturing technologies and training in their use.
- promoting the value of experience: experimentation is a central element within the learning model and should permeate all knowledge access across the board.
- promoting participation: stimulating active community involvement in the design and development of actions. Projects should contain an educational focus but, critically and horizontally, should not be directed or generate passive citizenry.
- increasing the social value of public libraries: expanding their range of focus, turning them into active agents working and researching new forms of knowledge and information production and guiding users with regard to adapting to the continuously changing environment (BiblioLab... 2017).

4 From “Cuines del Món” to “Cuinem Santa Coloma”

Cuines del Món (from now on, CdM), Gastronomic BiblioLab, is one of the flagships of the bibliolabXBM programme. The reason for its establishment has been previously explained. Now it will be briefly presented how it was established as well as its outputs. After that, it will be followed by a presentation of the next important qualitative step ahead.
a. Cuines del Món (Gastronomic BiblioLab): Mission, vision and objectives

After the inauguration of the library, in November 2014, a Commission was convened from the Mayor’s Office involving different town sectors (cultural, economic, health, education) who set the mission and objectives of the project, together with the lines of action or levels of activities.

The mission which CdM wants to serve is seeing creation and innovation as a result of multiple and connected areas of involvement, looking for social and cultural cohesion.

The vision stands on the recognition of diversity and on gastronomy as a metaphor of unity in diversity, so we foresee a peaceful community where everyone can feel at home and respected in his or her diversity.

Therefore, CdM is, above all, a project that aims to create mutual relationships and exchange knowledge through gastronomy, which helps to get to know our neighbours better. Many of the workshops are focused on developing social and cultural cohesion encouraging community members to share their knowledge with their fellow citizens. These workshops include and engage people from the various neighbourhood cultural communities, and promotes cultural exchanges between them.

The CdM project is geared towards fostering social cohesion, designed to be a source of knowledge and exchange, innovation, creativity and peaceful coexistence in a culturally diverse neighbourhood, with an aim to strengthen community ties.

The objectives which have been mentioned at the beginning of this article are included in the following:

• to create a space for gastronomic divulgation that represents the diversity of the Fondo neighborhood;
• to become an exchange space where you can meet the different cultures, and do it through the kitchen;
• based on the fact that the Espai Cuines del Món is within a public library, it also seeks to help intercultural relationships facilitate trusted exchanges while promoting reading habits and abilities, training and information, thus contributing to building social and cultural capital within the community, and helping to create a sense of community, belonging and collective identification.4

Regarding the activities, it was predicted that they would be of three interrelated levels:

1. An academic level, in relation to food, nutrition, science and cooking (with the presence of cooks and/or university professors), more directly linked to the Ciutat Universitària Program;
2. An informative/formative level, which brings together people from different origins to share a cooking session where similarities and differences are explained; and
3. A social level, with the transfer of space to neighborhood entities that use it within their support and promotion activities for people.

At the same time, the project CdM is part of the municipal strategic project “Santa Coloma, Ciutat Universitària”,5 which aims to publicize Santa Coloma de Gramenet as a strategic point in food and nurturing at a European level and to be a reference of gastronomic knowledge.

b. Cuines del Món: what has been achieved (2014-2018)

Here are presented the operative objectives and what has been accomplished in the four first years of the Fondo Library.

In summary, during its first four years of existence, and without any other similar project from which to learn or take ideas, the programme Cuines del Món has been a success. And the success is that it can continue to grow and improve for the best of the community the library serves, which understands and values this investment within the library.

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4 From the Acta de la reunió del 28/11/2014.
5 Santa Coloma, Ciutat Universitària: <https://www.gramenet.cat/santa-coloma/ciutat-universitaria/>. [Access: 27/8/2018].
| Objective | What has been accomplished | Evaluation |
|-----------|---------------------------|------------|
| Establishing a calendar | 2014-2016 Activities related to the municipal calendar (Setmana de la Ciència (Science Week), Santa Coloma Degusta) and calendars of different cultures have been maintained (Christmas, Ramadan, Chinese New Year, Easter). Eleven children activities have been held every two months, over a period twenty months. | 2014-2016 Goal partially achieved. Programming in the medium term has been limited by the shortage of staff throughout the library service since the opening of the Library. |
| | 2014-2016 | 2014-2016 |
| | 2017-2018 | 2017-2018 |
| | There has been at least a monthly children’s workshop as well as a monthly adult activity. A Gastronomic Club has started to meet once a month to share knowledge and improve techniques. | 2017-2018 Goal achieved, due to new staff who serve the library. |
| | 2014-2016 During the spring of 2015 a set of activities around rice was organized (Passa’m l’arròs): it included 3 activities for adults and a workshop for children. | 2014-2016 This goal has not been fulfilled. No cycle could be organized in 2016. |
| | 2017-2018 Activism around bread, chocolate, beans, as well as about Chinese New Year, Christmas, Lent and Easter, and Ramadan traditional food have been held every year. | 2017-2018 Goal fulfilled. |
| Think about some sets of activities on food, meals, traditions, etc. | 2014-2016 | 2014-2016 |
| | 2017-2018 | 2017-2018 |
| Organize activities that have a popular aspect, which accommodate all social sectors and where simple activities are carried out (people invited to cook and explain a dish of their culture). | 2014-2016 Twelve workshops have been held, with people from the neighborhood invited; Cooks from different cultural origins have been invited from five restaurants of the municipality. | 2014-2016 This goal has been fulfilled. |
| | 2017-2018 Five workshops have been held with people from the neighbourhood invited; Cooks from different cultural origins have been invited from six restaurants of the municipality. | 2017-2018 This goal has been fulfilled. |
| Schedule activities that have a more social side, in collaboration with neighbourhood entities. | 2014-2016 Activities have been organized in collaboration with entities and health services, especially mental health, and “Centres Oberts” and “Casals”. Five different entities have made about twenty workshops in the kitchen. | 2014-2016 This goal has been fulfilled, and It continues to expand. |
| | 2017-2018 Activities organized in collaboration with entities and health services, especially mental health, and “Centres Oberts” and “Casals”, schools have increased to double the number up to 43 workshops by nine different entities. | 2017-2018 Goal achieved and getting to its limit of disponibility. |
| Include activities that do not necessarily have an intellectual and social burden and are more entertaining and practical (workshop for singles, a menu of € 2, etc.). | 2014-2016 There has been no specific activity of this type, although the activities of the mentioned social aspect start from nutritious and economic cooking. | 2014-2016 The goal has been accomplished in part. |
| | 2017-2018 The same as in the previous period. | 2017-2018 The same. |
Objective | What has been accomplished | Evaluation
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Include actions with a more scientific and academic aspect, with the help of the Campus de l’Alimentació and the CNL-L’Heura to define culinary science. | 2014-2016 Within the Programa Municipal Ciutat Universitària, or with other proposals received, thirteen activities have been organized. | 2014-2016 This goal has been fulfilled. 2017-2018 Due to this period these kind of activities have diminished. Only seven took place. | 2017-2018 Goal partially fulfilled. 

Establish a list of possible collaborators from the neighborhood (cultural or professional associations and families), from the University, etc. | 2014-2016 The list of collaborators has been established and continues to grow, especially in the number of cultural entities present in the neighborhood and diverse resources and services. | 2014-2016 This goal has been fulfilled, and it continues to expand. | 2017-2018 This goal has been fulfilled, and it continues to expand. 

Give a standard visibility to the project, while designing the documentation. | 2014-2016 A specific logo has been designed; posters have a standard visibility. | 2014-2016 The goal has been partially accomplished. | 2017-2018 The goal has been partially accomplished. 

Acquire the necessary material for children’s activities in the kitchen. | 2014-2016 Suitable kitchen tables and kitchen utensils have been purchased. A special budget is available for the basic fungibles of the kitchen. 2017-2018 This is an ongoing investment to replace or buy new necessary kitchenware and the like. | 2014-2016 This goal has been fulfilled. | 2017-2018 This goal has been fulfilled. 

Establish some evaluation mechanism of the activities. | 2014-2016 After two years of operation it is necessary to establish a mechanism that allows a more qualitative than quantitative evaluation. | 2014-2016 This goal has not been fulfilled. | 2017-2018 This goal has not been fulfilled. 

Increase the special collection, in contact with specialized libraries and in collaboration with the CRAI of the Campus of the Feeding (fill the gaps, acquire materials on the kitchens of those places of the world that still are not in the collection and write the collection development policy). | 2014-2016 The collection Fons Especial Cuines del Món has doubled, and now exceeds five hundred documents; In 2016, an average of forty-five documents / month (1,5 doc./dia - of an average total of 110 loans / day) have been borrowed by users from around the province. The collection development policy has not yet been written. 2017-2018 The collection has continued to increase, and donations specialized in catalan cuisine have been received. The circulation has only slightly increased. | 2014-2016 This goal has been accomplished in part. | 2017-2018 This goal has not been fulfilled. 

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c. One more step: “Cuinem Santa Coloma” (= We Cook Santa Coloma)

The Library Services Management Office (Diputació de Barcelona) has set a line of project financing oriented to promote partnerships between public libraries and other cultural, social, economical, academical, etc. institutions serving their same community.

This is perceived from the Fondo Library as an opportunity. The Fundació Privada Germina (from now on Germina) has been contacted to apply for this financing. The Campus de l’Alimentació of the University of Barcelona has also been contacted to establish lines of collaboration. However, more will join during the year according to the needs.
4.1 Biblioteca del Fondo Cuines del Món

Cuines del Món was about setting up a project for the whole community, with all its diversity, as it is with all other library projects and services. The Fondo neighbourhood, among others, has been a place of immigrations since its origins in the 1960s with the arrival of people from others parts of Spain. This phenomenon of immigration changed at the beginning of the 21st century, with the arrival and settling of thousands of people of foreign origins. This fact increased the intense sociocultural diversification of the neighbourhood.

Then, Cuines del Món, on one hand addressed the fact of integrating foreign migrants with their participation; and on the other hand, its mission was broader, taking into account the neighbourhood as a whole, the whole local community. Diversity in a wider sense takes this into account together with cultural diversity, generational, functional and gender identity diversities.

For this, Cuines del Món can only exist with the implication of all different social agents: all residents, neighbours, business people, traders and catering services, and also professionals, specialists or technicians (health or mental health, pharmacists, linguists, biologists, etc.) as are professors and students of the local Campus de l'Alimentació or tecnitians of the national health service. Finally, the library being a service of the local administration we work in our area of influence, with other town services and all of the administrations with competencies in this area.

4.2 Germina Foundation

The mission of Germina Private Foundation is to offer opportunities to improve the quality of life for children, young people and their families, especially those that are vulnerable, guiding them and promoting them to be the protagonists of their own process.

This general objective is specified in the current 2018-2022 strategic plan, which encompasses four strategic lines. Two of them are specifically linked to the work that can be carried out through the Cuinem Santa Coloma BiblioLab project. One of them is about the commitment to the community, consolidating the territorial impact based on the promotion of participation, the social transformation and the settling of the families that attend (Strategic action 3). The project BiblioLab basically seeks the transformation and improvement of the nearby environment where the Germina Foundation is established, the Fondo neighbourhood, in collaboration with different agents such as the library or the University, thus reaffirming this community commitment. The second one is about the Urban Time Social Enterprise. Deployment and validation of the social enterprise model dedicated to offering job opportunities in the leisure sector to vulnerable young people, thus closing the circle of social attention and promotion of people in the entity (Strategic action 4). The execution of the main part of the project BiblioLab (the activities to be carried out in the library itself) will be subcontracted to the social enterprise Urban Time, linked 100% to the Germina Foundation. This keeps the not-for-profit spirit. Urban Time works to offer first job opportunities to vulnerable young people as responsible to carry out the activities held in the library.

4.3 The project “BiblioLab Cuinem Santa Coloma”

4.3.1 Objectives

The general purpose of BiblioLab “Cuinem Santa Coloma” is to promote access to knowledge through experimentation and innovative and creative methodologies within the framework of the Fondo Library and the CdM with the participation and collaboration of citizens and relevant agencies.

Specific objectives related to the participation and empowerment of the citizenship are:

- facilitating spaces to meet and relate to others in an intercultural context;
- promoting and consolidating respect for the other with its diversity;
• favoring settling in the territory;
• fostering employment among young people in the area.

Related to the generation and diffusion of knowledge, the objectives are:
• reading and writing promotion;
• satisfying the needs of cultural participation;
• generating and disseminating knowledge;
• validating a model of community participation in the context of a library permeable to the neighborhood in order to be replicated.

The recipients of the project are citizens present in the surrounding area of the Santa Coloma de Gramenet Fondo Library, with special attention to diversity, both cultural (different origins) and generational (diverse ages).

4.4 Methodology

The social challenge to which the project responds is the improvement of social cohesion in the neighborhood of Fondo promoting knowledge among neighbours through their active participation in the proposals that are carried out in the Library space. The project will be executed on three different bases: “Cuines del Món” (World Cuisine) a thematic axis based on cooking and diversity; the actual kitchen space of the library as the main stage of action; and a stable programme (4 days a week, November to June) which includes the presence of 3 people from Urban Time (one of them coordinating the project with the direction of the library).

Specifically, it will be carried out through different actions. To increase participation and citizen empowerment, the following actions will be implemented:
• Children’s and family workshops about cooking and stories.
• Cooking workshops (family, children, reusing, healthy cooking, “lowcost”).
• “Masterchef” competition aimed at young adults (bimonthly).
• Library open to the neighborhood: visits to the Campus of Nutrition-UB Torribera, fresh market, community vegetable gardens or activities at neuralgic Plaça del Rellotge, near the library (monthly).

To promote the generation and diffusion of knowledge it is proposed to do:
• Reading activities: tales of the world or gastronomic tales.
• Workshops given by UB students (bimonthly).
• Master-Classes by lecturers at the UB (2 a year).
• Dissemination through social networks and production of collections and video materials.

It is central to the BiblioLab strategy to involve citizens in the design and execution of the project. This is why a group has been selected to design the project within the Germina Foundation, with young people and families who propose what kind of activities can be more attractive to be carried out in the Library.

Also, the execution of the project will be carried out by young people from the area who will be contracted by the social company Urban Time, as has already been said.

4.5 The Library role

Last, what is the role of the library and what relation does it have with its own mission as a public library? Cuines del Món at Fondo library is a space for culinary dissemination that represents the diversity of the neighborhood of Fondo; the library offers this exchange space where one can learn about different cultures through cooking culture and also as part of the Projecte Ciutat Universitària. All this without losing sight
of the fact that the public library in a neighborhood such as Fondo in the Santa Coloma de Gramenet cannot ignore its necessary contributions to the social cohesion of the surrounding community and to the promotion of reading.

In addition, the Cuines del Món project as a makerspace or BiblioLab in the library, expands the perception of our mission from the promotion of reading to being places to experiment with new things, where different experiences are shared, new knowledge is created and it is done in a collaborative way. This has been done in the Espai Cuines del Món at the Fondo Library with the community, with their abilities and knowledge, the experience of each other and the will to collaborate. It is about taking a step forward and leaving the community and its agents to take a more active role in this project.

From the conception of the project, the will to attract new audiences to the library has been present, in order to make them aware of the diversity of services and the collections that they have at their disposal once they have crossed its threshold.

Regarding reading, on the one hand, the special collection Cuines del Mundo promotes reading through understanding of the recipes. On the other hand, both reading novels that have culinary themes, as well as science publications (chemistry, nutrition, etc.) or the history of cooking are understood as essential elements of the project.

The participatory realization of new projects, visits, experiments, proposals etc. in Espai Cuines del Món of the library or other resources of the city (University Campus, Germina Foundation, CNL, schools, Grameimpuls, CatSalut, etc.) must necessarily force the writing of objectives, methodologies, products or results, recipes, and encourage the most creative writing at the same time.

In this same sense, the realization of audiovisual presentations of the projects that are being developed, requires writing scripts, setting ideas and looking for information for a good and documented realization.

5 Conclusions

The project “Cuinem Santa Coloma” (Cooking Santa Coloma) brings new strength to “Cuines del Món”. First, conceptually it expresses clearly that World Cuisine (=Cuines del Món) includes the local cooking traditions from the Barcelona area, Catalonia and different provinces of Spain, since the neighbourhood was built in the 1950s-70s to accommodate the workers from different Spanish origins attracted by working possibilities in the industry and services around the metropolitan area of Barcelona. This was already a highly diverse neighbourhood, and a possibility of enriching different traditions. Diversity was enlarged by the new migratory waves of people in the beginning of the 21st Century from other European countries, mainly from Eastern Europe and from Asia, Africa and Latin America.

Cooking Santa Coloma calls to put all this diversity in view. With the aim to create a positive interaction, working on common interests, producing active and collaborative relationships between people and groups which normally would not establish contact; adding mechanisms or resources to achieve a culturally diverse participation; promoting the knowledge and the visibility of cultural diversity; and implementing measures to ensure equity, egalitarian access, rights, opportunities to people issued from diverse cultural and social origins, and avoiding discrimination.

The expected results range from:

- increasing citizens’ participation in the library,
- opening up to new audiences (more diverse populations in correlation with their presence in the territory, and teenagers and youth population);
- improving in social cohesion and coexistence through time and activities shared; generating and transferring of knowledge;
- linking and transferring of knowledge between University and community;
- improving the employability of neighbourhood young people at risk, becoming positive benchmarks in the community.
The activities should take different orientations and each of them could only take place putting in practice different kinds of partnerships (town hall services, university and sociocultural charities, as well as with simple neighbours/users).

Seeing the almost natural flow of the project we can say that what is coming next is what was thought first. Unexpected in a way, but programmed in another.

The Fondo Library as a public library is a part of the local library network and of the Barcelona Municipal Library Network and has a privileged position within society. Everyday service to the community sets us up as a local cultural point of reference and at the same time presents a demand to broaden our possibilities to the new demands emerging from the community.

All those engaged in this project Cuines del Món/Cuinem Santa Coloma believe that it will deepen the impact on people’s lives. Firstly, the youth of Urban Time, then the life of those attending the activities, library users, and finally the whole neighbourhood, building community and a sense of belonging.

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