

Focus Experience

#6

Educating Cities
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Title

"Social Culture"

A youth voluntary Programme from Cascais

Basic data

City: Cascais

Country: Portugal

Number of inhabitants: 205,113

Topics: Welfare, associationism and participation, culture and leisure, civics and coexistence and personal development.

Principles of the Charter of Educating Cities: 1, 4, 5, 9, 17, 20

Summary

The "Social Culture" Programme, promoted by the Division of Youth and Knowledge of the Cascais City Council, is a summer volunteer programme that tries to offer alternatives to fill the free time of young people (between 15 and 25 years old) living in the municipality, and which contributes to their personal development.

The programme is rolled out jointly by the City Council and different non-profit entities in the municipality.

The areas of action of the programme are as follows: environment, social support, heritage sites, civil protection and socio-cultural awakening.



Objectives

- To promote the healthy use of free time of young people during summer vacation, fostering their personal development.
- To bring young people closer to local realities and provide them contact with the working world.
- To foster community spirit, mutual aid and solidarity.
- To support non-profit entities of the city or those working there, to promote the feasibility of their creative projects and foster youth involvement.

Methodology

The programme takes from June to September over three different shifts, of one month each and 25 hours per week, aimed at young people from 15 to 25 years old who live in the municipality of Cascais.

They are offered different projects in the action areas mentioned above, which provide a range of options so that the young people can choose the project that they most identify with.



Volunteers coordinate leisure activities for children

The selection of young people is made jointly by the participating entity and the Division of Youth and Knowledge of the Cascais City Council. The latter is in charge of the selection of projects of the participating entities.

The criteria established for the selection of the projects and the young people are as follows: diversity of projects, number of young people involved, relevance of the project to the community, impact on training of young people in civic values, etc. The participants receive Euros 10 daily to cover the costs arising from their participation in the programme, as well as a certificate of participation.

Some of the activities are:

- Accompanying the elderly on their walks and visits to gardens, museums, etc., as well as organising recreational activities for them (table games, cinema, teas, etc.).
- Collaborating as monitors at summer camp for children and participating in the different activities that are carried out there: environment, recreation, art, etc.
- Attending to people who visit the city's museums.
- Participating in the preservation of the city's heritage by doing field work.
- Collaborating on gardening activities with children and youth with physical or mental handicaps.
- Organising information and documentation of different entities (filing, inputting data, digitalisation of documents, etc.).
- Collaborating in cleaning up graffiti and children's parks, as well as park and garden maintenance.

Through the experience, the Cascais City Council stimulates evaluation initiatives and project follow up.

Entities involved:

- The Cascais City Council and its districts.
- Non-profit entities: social solidarity institutions, NGOs, sports clubs, youth associations, schools, hospitals and health centres, etc.



Volunteers participating in a City Council Festival



Interview with volunteers



Volunteers provide information about cultural activities



Volunteers organise traditional games activities



Workshop on Portuguese traditional games

Social and urban context

The municipality of Cascais is located in the greater metropolitan area of Lisbon, where most of the country's population is located. It has 205,113 inhabitants and a population density of 1,943 inhab./km².

It is divided into 6 districts (*freguesias*).

50% of the population is made up of young people (from 15 to 34 years old).



Old Town of Cascais – Photo: Osvaldo Gago

Assessment

In 2010, 185 young people participated in a total of 35 projects linked mainly to the areas of socio-cultural activities and sport, followed by social solidarity. Furthermore, other areas of intervention were also dealt with such as heritage sites and safety, which led, in 2011, to the introduction of projects in the areas of heritage sites and civil protection.

The participation of young people in the programme was deemed very positive by the entities, who were asked for an evaluation of the work by the young people that included parameters such as: assiduity, effectiveness, initiative, motivation, punctuality and sociability.

In order to improve the programme, the participating entities were also asked for an evaluation on dissemination, the assignment of tasks to the young people, the working hours and follow up. Based on this evaluation the project was reset for 2011. The suggestions were as follows:

- having an information session addressed to the young people selected in order to inform them of the programme, the participating entities and the activities to be carried out.

- to make the programme longer, give out prizes to the best work and make the programme more dynamic.

In 2011, 525 young people registered and 56 entities joined the project, which shows its positive impact.

Resources

Presentation of the Project (in Portuguese)

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p0Ehwmad_vs

Interview with the volunteers (in Portuguese)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ovBRpSG5r30>

Contact

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