



International Association of

Educating Cities

18
Information
bulletin
2014

EDUCATING CITIES
FOR A BETTER WORLD



experience

Local Volunteers Bank of Águeda

The municipality of Águeda, with a population of approximately 47,800 inhabitants and a surface area of 334.3 km², is located in the Aveiro region, and is a place of transit between the coast and the interior of Portugal. Águeda achieved the status of city in 1985, thanks to its economic and social development. Nowadays, it ranks amongst the most industrialised municipalities in the country.

The municipality of Águeda created the Local Volunteers Bank in 2010, in collaboration with the National Council for the Promotion of

Volunteering (CNPV - initials in Portuguese). The Bank aims at promoting volunteering, and through it, an active, solidarity-oriented citizenry that can contribute to improving the quality of life in the city. The CNPV, made up of representatives of different ministries and social entities, is responsible for engaging new volunteers, training and coordinating them in Portugal.

Volunteering constitutes an important way of raising the awareness of and training co-responsible citizens committed to initiatives of social and community interest, to foster inclusion, cohesion, the equality of opportunities and social transformation.

The Local Volunteers Bank of Águeda arose from the need to provide the volunteer practices with a legal framework and to create a meeting space for people willing to get involved in volunteer work and social organizations, and thus joining supply and demand.

The Local Volunteers Bank brings together, on the one hand, people of all ages willing to put their skills and knowledge at the service

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The Local Volunteers Bank of Águeda is a meeting point for volunteers and social-purpose entities that helps to promote, coordinate and guide the activities of volunteers in the city.

editorial

2014 represents an important moment for the International Association of Educating Cities and its members, given that we will be celebrating the Association's 20th anniversary. The IAEC is the result of many desires joined together and the reflection of the fact that citizen education is at the heart of the priorities of more and more local governments.

The road has been long and fertile, rich in contacts, collaborations and, especially, in learning opportunities.

This year, the city of Barcelona, the cradle of this international movement, will be the host of our 13th International Congress, organized around the theme "An Educating City is an inclusive city".

The Educating cities are facing a huge challenge, which is that of working towards social inclusion. A challenge that must be approached from a comprehensive perspective in order to be able to confront existing social and economic disparities, and the inequality of opportunities, amongst different sectors

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Local Volunteers Bank of Águeda

of the community, and, on the other hand, non-profit public or private organizations with social purposes interested in welcoming volunteers and coordinating their activity. The areas of activity in which these entities work are very diverse, and range from social, cultural, sport, educational and socio-economic development activities to the protection of the environment, the promotion of health, etc.

Moreover, the Local Volunteers Bank, in order to foster, coordinate and train the volunteers, as well as to offer them support and guidance, offers training both to volunteers and institutional agents in the praxis of volunteering, which must follow a pre-established program and be guided by professionals in the entity. Another task of the CNPV is to raise awareness amongst companies so that they give credit for the experience acquired through volunteering, especially of young people seeking their first job.

There is a code for volunteer involvement, which is guided by principles such as solidarity and commitment of volunteers to the activity

they are about to engage in, participation of the organisations representing volunteers in matters that affect their practice, or the principle of complementarity, which lays on the premise that volunteer work should not replace paid professionals deemed necessary for meeting the objectives of the host organisations as defined by their statutes.

At this time, the Bank - coordinated by the Social Action Services of the Division of Social Development of the City Council of Águeda - has more than 30 entities registered, most of which are associations and Private Social Solidarity Institutions (IPSS - initials in Portuguese) and more than 200 volunteers engaged with the community through these entities. As for the profile of the volunteers, most are women, predominantly between 16 and 29 years old (51%) with university degrees (53%). The activities they carry out are as varied as keeping company and support to the elderly, helping children in shelters, helping out at hospitals or collaborating in adult literacy and education. Thus, for example, the University of Aveiro collaborates in the training of volunteers so that they



can offer support to students at the Senior Universities of Águeda.

Through this initiative, Águeda, like many other Portuguese cities, intends to strengthen the social development and commitment of the citizens in the transformation and construction of a more solidarity-based city.

You can find more detailed information about this experience at the website: www.edcities.org

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cities networks

★ Meeting of the Brazilian Network

Sorocaba will host on 18 February the next meeting of the Brazilian Network in which the future coordinating city, as well as the integrating cities of the support group to the coordination for the next two years will be chosen. In this meeting, the 2014 Action Plan of the network will be also adopted.

★ Meeting of the Coordinating Committee of the Portuguese Network

Lisbon hosted the first meeting of the Coordinating Committee of the Portuguese Network on 12 January, held after the local elections in September 2013. At the meeting representatives of the new municipal teams formed after the balloting participated.

★ Meeting of the Italian Network

The city of Turin organized a Seminar of the Italian Network on 20 November 2013 during which the member cities could share experiences and garner first-hand knowledge of various educating projects being carried out in that Piedmont City. During the seminar there was agreement on the need to give the network a new boost.

★ French Network

As part of the National Meetings of Local Education Projects held in Brest, an Extraordinary General Assembly of the French Network took place where there was a debate on the reform of school hours and on the modification of the Statutes of the French Network.

On the other hand, and jointly with other associations of local governments and in collaboration with the French Ministry of Education, the French Network organised the "1st Conference on Digitalisation in the Schools", held in Lyon on 5 December 2013.

★ Strategic Action Plan for 2015-2018

At its last meeting, the Executive Committee conferred importance to the participation of member cities and territorial networks in establishing the roadmap that will guide the activities of the Association between 2015 and 2018. To this purpose, a period will be opened next March to submit proposals.

More information at www.edcities.org

interview

Mr. Pierre Cohen Mayor of Toulouse, France

What are the main challenges faced by the city of Toulouse?

We want to reinforce the positioning of Toulouse as a knowledge city. In fact, I am totally convinced that knowledge is a source of wealth and the foundation of the emancipation of people. It allows our citizens to adapt to a world that is more and more complex and it will create tomorrow's jobs. The city that surrenders to knowledge defines, therefore, the global vision of the society that it aspires to be. The role that we ascribe to knowledge in Toulouse is key.

Thus, we have embarked on a municipal educative project that contributes a new vision of education, which cannot be conceived solely from the point of view of schooling... This project, therefore, is not a simple by-law. It is mainly and essentially a political project, founded on a solid ambition and choice.

In 2008, Toulouse set up "The Factory", an initiative to invite its citizens to imagine the city of 2030. What is the city model that the citizens have chosen?

At this time, 80% of the population is concentrated in 20% of France's territory. That is why we must be watchful so that our cities do not become expanding spaces where people are agglomerated without relating to each other, but rather spaces for wealth-creation and sharing ...

"The Factory" is the result of this ambition: to appeal to our collective intelligence in order to jointly build the vision of our metropolis, which has been the basis of the concretion of our urban project. We have made a call for the mobilization of everyone: town planners and architects, cultural, health, social action, education and economic professionals, to the academy and, of course, to our inhabitants. We have imagined, together, a more attractive, more fluid, more solidarity-based metropolis and we have firmed up this ambition by launching major works.

Throughout the last years, a large number of people, many of foreign origin, have settled in Toulouse. How do you foster their participation in civic life?

Here once more we have set up a participatory democratic structure, "the Council of Foreign Residents". I am the Mayor of everyone



in Toulouse, including those whose voices cannot be heard through the ballot box... This council fosters dialogue among cultures, the blending of the population and mutual understanding. It does honour to our cosmopolitan and multi-cultural city.

Why has education been a priority during your mandate?

I am profoundly attached to the school of the Republic, a school that emancipates, that transmits knowledge as well as values, that fosters a love for learning that will shape the citizens of tomorrow... We clearly see ourselves as "co-educators", side by side with national Education, with early childcare professionals, families, associations and other groups. Each plays a role... Access to sport, culture, recreation, knowledge, participation in social life, and everything that contributes to shaping the individual throughout their life is educational.

Toulouse is the third largest university town in France. At the same time, 17% of the population is over 65 years old. How do you reconcile the ways of life of youth and seniors?

We sincerely believe in cross-generational solidarity. We support different interesting initiatives developed by associations such as "the Grandparents school" that makes young people aware of certain issues, or "the Agreement between generations for employment and entrepreneurship" through which retirees share their work and management experience with young future workers. In addition, we have created "the Seniors Council" in order to link them with the definition of the policies that concern them...

What do you think the IAEC can offer Toulouse?

We have much to gain through the exchange of experiences and best practices.

editorial

of the population. These inequalities run the risk of worsening because of the rapid pace of change that we experience these days if there is not the determination to strengthen the mechanisms of welfare and social protection for the most vulnerable groups in society.

Moreover, this major challenge requires creativity on the part of citizens in order to reinvent both their own and their collective future. In this process those local authorities working to provide spaces for dialogue, encounter and coexistence will have a greater chance of successfully meeting the challenge of building more inclusive cities.

In a globalized world, economic-financial, social and political crises, as well as the crisis of values, tend to become international crises with collateral effects on every continent. That is why we also need to globalize possible solutions and establish mechanisms for cooperation and mutual aid. To this purpose we are making a call to all the educating cities to participate in the next Congress.

It is our wish that the 13th International Congress, which will take place from 13-16 November, will be a place for interactive, participatory and dynamic exchange that will provide the opportunity to engage in dialogue, and share with and learn from each other. That is why we encourage the educating cities to submit their experiences to the Congress by 30 March. The success of this meeting will depend to great measure on the active participation of the IAEC members and its networks, making known their initiatives and solutions to all the participants.

The Congress will also mark a decisive moment for the IAEC given that the General Assembly will set the agenda and road map of the educating cities for the next few years.

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The diversity of agents, the plurality of approaches, and the transversality of actions is what generates the richness of educative action.

More information www.edcities.org

experience

A Friendly Life-long Learning Centre, an initiative from Paju

The city of Paju, in the Province of Gyeonggi-do, in the Korean Republic, is located on the border with the People's Democratic Republic of Korea. It is a city of approximately 409,000 inhabitants that has experienced major demographic expansion due to the increase in available housing, and has doubled its population since 2000. Paju is important for being a hub for high tech industry and as the Book City, a new large area involved in book publishing, as well as for hosting cultural activities.

In the 1930s and 40s, in Korea - at the time under Japanese rule - thousands of people from rural areas were forced to work, mainly in mining, in the south of Sakhalin Island, which lacked labour. The island was divided: while the south was Japanese, the north was Russian. At the end of the Second World War, the entire island belonged to Russia, and the Korean immigrants were left under Russian rule.

At the end of the 80s, there began a process of voluntary return of Sakhalin Koreans to their nation of origin. For two decades, approximately 1,500 people joined this plan, of which approximately 1,200 settled in the Province of Gyeonggi-do. The majority were people over 60 who belonged to the second



generation of expats, who had little knowledge of Korean language, culture and history, and, accordingly, their adaptation to their new environment was not always easy.

In the face of this situation, the City Council of Paju, in collaboration with the government of the province, inaugurated in January 2011 the "Woojeong Village" a friendly Life-long Learning Centre, whose goal has been to foster the integration of the group, as well as generate opportunities for encounter and exchange with the rest of the population.

This Life-long Learning Centre, open to all citizens, has study halls, computer rooms, a cinema, library, etc. It provides, amongst other activities, classes in Korean history and culture, and in writing, singing and theatre, as well as a cross-generational

The "Woojeong Village" Life-long Learning Centre fosters the integration of Sakhalin Koreans, generating opportunities for encounter and exchange with the rest of the population.

exchange program so that Sakhalin Koreans can contribute their knowledge of Russian culture and history to new generations, while they learn from the younger people how to use the new technologies. In turn, concerts, tours, festivals and traditional games, etc. are organized, which contribute to learning about and participating in the cultural life of the city. At this time around 300 people participate regularly in the different activities organized by the centre.

Thanks to this initiative the integration of this group into Korean life and customs, as well as their local coexistence with local residents, has improved, while the conditions have been created so that this group can contribute their own cultural heritage to society. On the other hand, the broad educational and cultural offering made available by this Life-long Learning Centre has led to the improvement of the quality of life of the Sakhalin Koreans and to the reduction of educative and social inequalities vis-à-vis other population groups.

The success of this experience has led the "Woojeong Village" to be a source of inspiration to other municipalities in the region, which have decided to set up similar initiatives.

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did you know that...

★ The next General Assembly of the Association will take place on 14 March in Rosario. The Argentinean city will also host the meeting of the Executive Committee of the IAEC.

★ The cities of Mexico DF and Rosario have submitted their candidacies to opt to the organisation of the 14th International Congress of Educating Cities, to be held in 2016. The host city of the 14th Congress will be chosen at the next meeting of the Executive Committee.

★ The deadline for the submission of Experiences for the 13th Congress ends on 30 March.

★ The Cultural Committee of UCLG has opened up a period for the submission of candidacies for the International UCLG Prize - Mexico City - Culture 21. The deadline for submission of projects is 31 March. The winning city will obtain a prize of € 50,000. More information is available at: www.agenda21culture.net

★ At the 4th World Congress of UCLG a resolution was adopted to invite the IAEC to be a member of its governing bodies.

★ The Korean Federation of Mayors and Governors has awarded the city of Changwon

a prize for its openness to the world in recognition of its work organising the 12th International Congress of Educating Cities.

★ Representatives of the cities of Barcelona, Lille, Lisbon, Paris, Praia and Tampere participated in a panel discussion coordinated by the IAEC at the World Educasport Forum, which was held from 27 to 29 November in Paris.



13th International Congress
of Educating Cities 2014
Barcelona 13-16 November

