



11th INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF EDUCATING CITIES

“Sport, Public Policies and Citizenship. Challenges of an Educating City”

Declaration of

Recitals:

The 11th International Congress of Educating Cities, held in Guadalajara, Jalisco, Mexico on 22, 23 and 24 April 2010 under the title *Sport, Public Policies and Citizenship. Challenges of an Educating City*, brought together representatives from 68 Educating Cities from 14 countries on 4 continents in order to endorse the value of sports, physical exercise and recreation in the construction of an educating city. This recognises the need to strengthen democracy by improving and diversifying experiences related to keeping fit and living healthier lifestyles, particularly in urban environments, where people are increasingly feeling the weight of restrictions on their ability to do sports and take daily physical exercise.

We declare that:

The Educating City stands by the twenty principles laid out in its Founding Charter, which mentions - in principles 1, 4, 8, 10 and 11 – the importance of sport, physical exercise and health education as well as the need to have spaces, equipments and sufficient public services in place for such activity. The Educating City is based on a harmony with the principles set down in UNESCO’s 1978 *International Charter of Physical Education and Sport*, establishing Physical Exercise and Sport as a fundamental human right.

Sport is an activity closely associated with citizenship building and its exercise, which is why public policies shall set out a legislative framework for establishing the right of every city-dweller to enjoy the benefits of a range of physical exercise and sport. A right not only necessary in the promotion and preservation of good health, but also in building up community bonds through social inclusion processes, interactive skills, and education in values such as equality, solidarity, teamwork, companionship, effort and many others.



As a consequence, the lack of administrative, organisational and budgetary resources for spaces and facilities for physical exercise and sport shall be seen as a shortfall in the management of public resources and urban planning, given the serious problems facing public health, including a lack of public safety, social disintegration and environmental degradation which are known to be connected to an incapacity to provide sport for urban lifestyles. The cost of not taking this opportunity to tackle this problem, when the conditions are still insufficient for all ages to do sport, is as obvious as it is burdensome. The lack of physical/sport activities is a real deficit in comprehensive education, to which the whole population has a right.

Municipal governments and citizens must work together to reverse trends in the ways sport and physical exercise are structured today, marked as they are by a high degree of commercialism, growing privatisation of public resources (infrastructure, services, public space and so on), and the perversion of its integrating meaning. These factors have a synergic negative effect on the accessibility, availability, quality and feasibility of physical exercise and sport, creating social fragmentation and various stripes of fundamentalism.

Faced with these trends, educating cities have a fundamental responsibility to democratise sport in order to counterbalance the tendency towards which sport is becoming either a mass passive-spectator activity or an elitist practice only accessible to a few.

Educating Cities, therefore, are committed to:

- Encouraging physical exercise in public and private schools at all levels. To achieve this, appropriate infrastructure and trained personnel must be assured;
- Promoting methods of social communication through governmental health agencies, aimed at encouraging physical exercise/sports, with trained personnel, as a way of preventing illness and as a therapeutic option for certain chronic illnesses. Furthermore, transversality shall be promoted in public policies.
- Developing public policies that will guarantee space for sport, i.e., social spaces, for pedestrians, cyclists and all types of non-motorised urban transport, along with the necessary safety and protection against traffic accidents caused by motorists;
- Raising awareness amongst companies of the importance of sport and physical exercise, ensuring that their workers have suitable conditions to do sport, as per Article 24 of the



Charter of Human Rights, which views recreation as an inalienable individual right and a basic human need;

- Considering sport as an integral part of the culture in which city-dwellers live. To do so mechanisms for the promotion of sports will be encouraged, bearing in mind the aptitudes and preferences of different sectors of the population, according to their tastes and abilities, their family and work situation and all hindrances to sport becoming a pleasant and healthy part of their daily lives.
- Focusing particularly on vulnerable groups, such as children, immigrants, the unemployed, the differently-abled and senior citizens in order to find possible ways for them to become more integrated into sports activities on a regular, routine basis, and also enabling them to become more socially integrated.
- Encouraging association through sport networks, which in turn serve as generators of human capital and thus strengthen the social fabric.

Given the current social, cultural and public health dynamic of the cities, a major commitment is needed to establish public policies that contribute to making sport part of their culture, a recognised way of building citizenship and improving the quality of life in Educating Cities.

Guadalajara, Jalisco 24 April 2010.