



International Association of

# Educating Cities

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Information  
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EDUCATING CITIES  
FOR A BETTER WORLD



## experience

### "Youth Alternative", a school cooperative in the city of General Alvear

The Argentinean city of General Alvear, capital of the Department with the same name, with 48,000 inhabitants, is characterized for being home to numerous and very diverse cooperatives. An example of this is that it hosts the first Cooperative University in the country.

The 4-220 Nicolás Luna public secondary school posed the idea of creating a school cooperative to confront the lack of interest of students in the learning path proposal and the little feeling of belonging to their school, as well as the lack of initiative, the excessive free time and the high rate of truancy.

This initiative arose from this situation,

and was conceived as a way of encouraging students from 12 to 19 years old to participate in the education process, giving them a leading role and offering them a new learning alternative through cooperative education.

To do this, a teaching team was assembled, which was advised by a specialist in cooperativism. Following this, the idea was spread amongst the students, and the first activities were carried out to raise funds. An Executive Board managed by the students was created, with the support of teachers and families. For its part the City Council offers them guidance and advice, and is in charge of promoting the initiative nationally and internationally.

Amongst many other activities, the young people manage and organize the bookstore, the photocopier and the kiosk. They raise funds through different endeavours, such as the manufacture of bags using recycled clothing, raffles or sales of food prepared by the students. They organize field trips, sports tournaments, solidarity actions, single-issue

assemblies, awareness campaigns on diverse subjects, etc. In order to strengthen relations between students, families and the school, films are screened, and there are games, informal talks, musical activities, community meals, etc. Youth also carry out a weekly radio program which publicizes the activities of the school and the cooperative and discusses school cooperativism. Moreover, in order to share experiences and strengthen ties, "Youth Alternative" organizes annually the Provincial Meeting of Secondary Schools Cooperatives.

This experience, which began in 2009, is now in the consolidation phase, with 52% of the students associated to the cooperative. It has contributed on the part of these young people to generating a feeling of belonging to the school and to encouraging their participation, improving their relationship with the school. Thus, students who before did not know what to do with their free time, are now involved in the different activities organized by the cooperative. Teamwork, companionship, and one's own effort are now shared values.

**Presented by:** City Council of General Alvear, Direction of International Cooperation

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"Youth Alternative", a school cooperative as a way of encouraging teamwork, mutual aid, one's own effort and solidarity.

# editorial

Last March we held our annual Assembly in the city of Granollers. Despite the fact that the small and medium-sized cities represent nearly 68% of the total of the members of the IAEC, this was the first time that a town of these dimensions hosted the Assembly. Little by little, the international institutions are increasingly recognising the importance of small and medium-sized cities in the urban planning process, as well as their contribution towards a more sustainable and balanced growth. The IAEC has been long promoting this recognition thus we celebrate it.

Although it could be said that demographically Granollers is a small town in terms of its dimensions, for the IAEC it is, without doubt, a major town in terms of its public policies, made with and for the people, for knowing how to put into practice the Charter of Educating Cities, and for being a very active town in the heart of the organisation.

Granollers prepared a complete and attractive

programme for the holding of the Assembly, which in addition to the necessary statutory issues, also included dialogues with Mayors, experts and academics, and a varied programme of study visits and cultural performances.

In this Assembly it remained clear that 2017 will be a year full of challenges and new possibilities, as the approved Action Plan highlights. This Plan, among many other actions, includes: the joint celebration of the second edition of the International Day of the Educating City (on 30<sup>th</sup> November); advice and training for new member cities as well as the new municipal teams as a result of the electoral processes; the call for the second edition of the Educating City Award; the production of guidelines for promoting the Educating Cities Label on member cities' initiatives; the organisation of study visits to pioneering experiences; the publication of the 6<sup>th</sup> monographic volume of the Association; the preparation of the 15<sup>th</sup> International Congress that will be held in Cascais in 2018; the strengthening of the

existing territorial networks and the creation of new ones, or the promotion of the Association in Africa. Without doubt, the advances in the fulfilment of this ambitious Action Plan will require the involvement of each and every one of the member cities.

Perhaps one of the main lessons learnt by the nearly 70 cities from 11 countries who met up in Granollers, after sharing a day and a half of intense activity, can be summed up well in a quote by the Deputy Mayor of Education, Francesc Arolas, paraphrasing the Uruguayan journalist and writer Eduardo Galeano: "Many small people, in small places, doing small things, can change the world".

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## did you know that...

★ Mayors of 142 cities from 18 countries joined voices in celebrating the **International Day of the Educating City**; the celebration counted with the support of UN-Habitat, UCLG, Metropolis, ICLEI and Mercociudades as well as internationally well-known experts.



★ Godoy Cruz hosted the **2<sup>nd</sup> Meeting of Argentine Educating Cities** that took place on 14<sup>th</sup> December 2016. The participating cities agreed to start procedures for the creation of an **Argentine Network**.



★ Paredes hosted the **National Meeting of the Portuguese Network** on 29<sup>th</sup> January in which representatives from 39 cities participated. Furthermore, the Network is preparing the **7<sup>th</sup> National Congress** which will take place in Guarda from 25<sup>th</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup> May. Identity will be the topic which will orientate the discussions and works of the congress.

★ The IAEC participated in the **United Cities and Local Governments Retreat** held in Barcelona from 20<sup>th</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> February and in which representatives from national and regional local governments associations took part.

★ The **8<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Asia-Pacific Network** will take place in Suseong-gu (Korean Republic) on 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> September 2017 and will be focused on **Education for global citizenship**. The theme of the Meeting was agreed in a meeting of the Asia-Pacific Network held in Changwon on February 27<sup>th</sup>.



★ The IAEC was invited to join the Organising Committee of the **World Forum "Urban Violence and Education for Coexistence and Peace"** that took place in Madrid from 19<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> April. Experiences from various cities of the IAEC were presented in this event. More information at <https://capitaldepaz.madrid.es/>



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★ A **new video** produced together with the UCLG, about the contribution of the local governments to the **Sustainable Development Goal 4 of the United Nations**: "Ensure inclusive and quality education for all and promote lifelong learning" is now available. You can consult the video in our YouTube channel: [www.youtube.com/educatingcities](http://www.youtube.com/educatingcities)

# interview

## Mr. Celso Ferreira Mayor of Paredes, Portugal

**In 2006, the City Council of Paredes decided to take action in the area of education. Why?**

When we decided to launch the Paredes Education Charter, education was in poor shape in the city. In 2006 we ranked ninth from the bottom in the country in terms of educational performance, and today we are amongst the top. We had a school drop-out rate of 43%, which is now practically zero. In the last year all our schools scored, for the first time, above the country's average in national exams.

**How was it possible that of all the political forces reached agreement in respect of education issues?**

We had a broad debate in the entire city, which culminated in the largest meeting of the Municipal Assembly of Paredes in its history. By nature, people are resistant to change, however this was a clear and very democratic process and practically all the residents finally accepted the advantages of the project. Measures were adopted that completely broke with the past. It was a decision reached amongst practically all the parties represented in the Paredes Municipal Assembly.

**The construction of new schools was an important part of the changes made ...**

The entire Paredes school system was rethought and the paradigm of schooling was changed. Modern, well-prepared and equipped schools, with gyms, libraries and lunchrooms were motivating factors.

**What uses were given to the old school buildings?**

Paredes is one of the most dynamic cities in Portugal regarding the association movement. The 64 schools that were closed as a result of the implementation of the Education Charter became a source of opportunities for many cultural and leisure associations and for Social Solidarity Institutions. Some became elderly day centres, others became cultural centres, elderly residences, a barracks for the National Republican Guard... Thus, the Education Charter also contributed to making improvements in this sector.

**In 2007, the City Council of Paredes signed**



**a collaboration agreement with the Business Association for Social Inclusion (EPIS, original initials) in order to fight against school drop-out and failure at school. What have been the results of this joint work?**

We tried to involve the entire community, by also calling on families and companies to get involved. Paredes was the first city in the country to join an initiative of the Presidency of the Republic in fighting school drop-out and failure, establishing collaboration with the EPIS Association to implement family programs, through which a network of mediators works in training families, achieving, as mentioned before, remarkable results in the fight against school drop-out and failure. The objective was to help families better understand their children, as well as the challenges that the schools issue.

**Paredes has a great tradition in the wooden furniture industry, generating 60% of domestic furniture production. What programs have been carried out to encourage the continuation of this tradition amongst young people?**

Paredes is a centre of excellence for furniture production, with factories equipped with the most innovative and modern technological advances. There was, however, something missing in the value scale: design. In order to help overcome this lack, the City Council of Paredes launched the project Art on Chairs,

which opted for design in order to add value to the furniture made in Paredes.

The initiative has been a success and has received the RegioStars prize of the European Commission for the best European project of 2014. Work is being done along the line of increasing brand recognition of furniture manufactured in Paredes, with our sites naturally set on export, but also on the city. The project ensures that all the community is involved, and, in particular, young people, in order to reinforce the awareness of the importance for the local economy of a sector that directly or indirectly employs around 50% of the city's population. This is a project that is still ongoing, but the results so far achieved have exceeded our expectations.

**Paredes has a business network that is sensitive to social issues. Can you give us another example of the collaboration agreements between companies and the City Council?**

There has been major involvement of companies in Paredes in terms of corporate social responsibility. Of special note, for example, is the project "A Factory for Timor", an initiative of diplomatic solidarity launched by the City Council of Paredes that sprung from an invitation to furniture factories in the city to donate machinery in good condition for the creation of the first furniture factory in East Timor. We want to replicate this project in Mozambique and we are in negotiations with Guinea-Bissau as well. Companies in Paredes are deeply involved in the development of the communities where their businesses are located, which is the way of strengthening their commitment to their workers.

**Cities learn, collaborate and are inspired by each other. Does Paredes share projects with other cities?**

In the area of international relations, the City Council of Paredes is carrying out various projects with different foreign cities. We collaborate in areas as different as culture, industry, administrative modernisation and city development. Cooperating is important because we all grow by learning from the work of other cities.

**More information at [www.edcities.org](http://www.edcities.org)**



# experience

## Building the best neighbourhood in Changwon

**Changwon was built in 1973 as part of a large-scale program of economic expansion carried out by the government of the Korean Republic, and since then it has not stopped growing. It is the only planned city in the country to be a residential and industrial complex. In 2010 two bordering cities were annexed to it, Masan and Jinhae, bringing together more than one million inhabitants.**

The fast economic and industrial growth that the city went through led to an increase in urban waste and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from factories, private vehicles, as well as the contamination of the water in the Sincheon River, due to the industrial waste dumped into the river and the waste generated by the population itself, significantly damaging the local natural ecosystem.

On the other hand, the fact that 90% of the population was from other parts of the country, meant that the citizenry did not feel much attached to their neighbourhoods.

In response to this situation and in order to make the city a healthier and more sustainable place that would be pleasant to live in, the City Council of Changwon in 2008 made a political commitment to become a World Environmental Capital by 2020. As part of this policy the "Building a better neighbourhood" program was created, which is characterized by its two-pronged objective: to give the citizens a leading role in the design and development of actions to improve the quality of life of their neighbourhoods and to generate a feeling of belonging to the same.



Residents, with the support of local professionals, neighbourhood leaders, social entities and the local government, identify the problems of their neighbourhood and put forward and design possible solutions. To do this, participants receive specific training.

The proposals are presented to the City Council, which, from amongst all the projects, decides on the actions to implement and provides the funding. An executive committee, made up of representatives of the citizenry and entities that join the initiative, leads and manages the Program.

The planting of almost 4 million trees, the publicity of best practices for the sustainable use of electricity and water in the home, awareness campaigns on the negative effects of consumerism, the organization of second-hand markets to foster the re-use of things, the pacification of streets, the recycling of waste, amongst many other actions, have contributed to notably reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emission levels in the city, lowering the average summer temperature between 3 and 7 degrees. At the same time, thanks to the project the water quality of the river has increased, going from level 3 (not suitable for wild animal life) to level 1.

Other actions carried out in order to foster local culture and traditions are, for example, the transformation of a street into a space for art, with murals on the walls done by local artists, which attracts the attention of both local population and visitors, as well as the renovation of small museums for various



From an industrial dormitory-city to a city of opportunities, thanks to the participation of its citizens in improving the quality of life of the municipality.



cultural activities, or the installation of mini libraries in the parks made by the residents themselves.

Changwon is now a municipality characterized for its friendliness and vitality, committed to encouraging a feeling of belonging to the city among its residents and improving the quality of life of its neighbourhoods, thanks to citizen participation.

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