



INTERNATIONAL
ASSOCIATION OF
**Educating
Cities**

INTERVIEW

MAYOR OF CURITIBA

Mr. Rafael Greca de Macedo

In 2024 Curitiba will organise the 17th International Congress of Educating Cities. We would like to know your opinion, feelings and expectations.

It is an honour for our beloved Curitiba to host the International Congress of Educating Cities in May 2024, an extremely important global movement that brings together almost five hundred cities in thirty countries.

It will be the first time that the capital of Paraná will host this meeting, which will give us the valuable opportunity to share our good practices such as the Curitiba Speaks programme (about listening to citizens); the Lines of Knowledge (which turns the city into a huge classroom for children); the new solar pyramid and our Lighthouses of Knowledge and Innovation. In short, programmes, projects and actions that make Curitiba what it is: an educating and innovative city that prepares its citizens for the future.

It is also valuable to have the opportunity to welcome visitors from other cities and countries, who will honour us with their experiences and knowledge. An educating city is never complete; it is built by everyone, day by day.

What city will people travelling to Curitiba find?

Those who visit Curitiba during the International Congress will get to know a city aligned with the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which increasingly prioritises sustainability initiatives,



innovative governance, encouraging education and entrepreneurship to boost economic development and give more quality of life to its residents.

Major socio-environmental projects and works and the expansion of programmes, increasingly aligned with the SDGs, show the city council's willingness to prepare the capital for the challenges of the future.

It is the city that never sleeps, the city that takes care of people, the city that innovates to offer more and more services that meet the expectations and demands of the people of Curitiba.

Thus, initiatives, such as Curitiba's Solar Pyramid, Caximba's New District, Friend of the Rivers, 100 Thousand Trees and an unprecedented fleet of new electric buses (Inter 2 and BRT), reflect the city's commitment to consolidate a climate policy, to implement transformative and inclusive actions for an emission-neutral and climate-resilient city by 2050, in accordance with the objectives of the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Curitiba has been an icon of sustainability in recent decades, the greenest city in Latin America, and a pioneer in recycling issues, what role has education played in this process?

A national and international reference in sustainability, Curitiba has a series of actions, with emphasis on environmental education, aimed at recovering the urban environment, reducing gas emissions and mitigating the effects of climate change.

Thanks to efforts started in the 1970s, Curitiba has large spaces of preserved green area. There are 48 parks in different regions of the city. Added to the squares, gardens, animation axes and environmental gardens, there are almost 13 million square metres of preserved areas with native woods, leisure and sports equipment, which provide more quality of life to the population. All this results in more than 60 square metres of green area per inhabitant, compared to the minimum recommended by the WHO of 12 square metres per inhabitant.

The start of construction of Caximba New District, the largest socio-environmental project in Curitiba's recent history and the first smart neighbourhood in Brazil, and the first tests with electric buses for the new Inter 2 and BRT (Bus Rapid Transit), point to improvements in infrastructure and urban mobility.

The Curitiba More Energy programme, which turned the Curitiba Solar Pyramid into reality, the first photovoltaic park in a landfill in Latin America, and the return of the Leaf Family, an environmental education campaign using friendly characters, reinforce basic concepts of sustainability for the daily lives of the population.

Thus, thanks to initiatives such as the new Leaf Family and programmes such as Trash that is not Trash, Composting, Electronic Waste and Ecopoints, in Curitiba, the average recycling of waste is 22.5%, well above the 3% national average.





Can you tell us about some of Curitiba's initiatives linked to the theme of the Congress?

Commitments to innovative governance, education and sustainability have put Curitiba at the top of the list of the smartest cities in Brazil and have also placed the capital in global rankings. All thanks to initiatives such as Caximba New District, the new Inter 2 and BRT electric projects, Better walking programme, Curitiba's urban farm, urban gardens, Solidarity Talbe, Lighthouses of Knowledge and Innovation and Vale do Pinhão, supporting the innovation ecosystem of the capital of Paraná.

We must also highlight the opening of the Municipal Sustainability School, in Bosque Zaninelli. In the space, a partnership between the Environment Secretariat, the Education Secretariat and the Institute of Public Administration (Imap), courses and training on environmental issues are promoted. In addition to students and teachers from the Municipal Education Network, all Curitiba residents are invited to participate in the programme of the Municipal Sustainability School, a legacy to transform people through environmental awareness, forming more conscious citizens. The idea of the Sustainability School is to train multipliers of good environmental practices.

You have been Mayor of Curitiba in two stages: the first between 1993 and 1996. How is the Curitiba of today different from the Curitiba of then? How do you combine growth with sustainability?

Curitiba has always been an example of innovation: it is historically a reference in mobility, environment and urban planning. But in my administrations we have always felt the need to broaden this scope to the areas of transformation supported by public policies, dialogue and greater efficiency.



When I was mayor 30 years ago, during my first term (1993-1996) we laid the groundwork for the revolution we have been promoting over the last six years, which comprise my second and third terms. It was back there, between 1993 and 1996, when we implemented the bi-articulated buses stopping at tube stations in the structural stations; we integrated the Streets of Citizens (headquarters of the administration in districts) in transport terminals; we built the first Knowledge Lighthouses, now known as Knowledge and Innovation Lighthouses and we opened the first popular restaurant in Brazil, at the time sold at R\$ 1. The latter reopened exactly five years ago under the Capanema Viaduct. We inaugurated the Tanguá, Tingui and Bosque Alemão parks; we delivered other city landmarks such as the Curitiba Memorial and the Bairro Novo Maternity Hospital; and we solved the flooding issues in Vicente Machado street, in the Centre, thanks to the channeling of the Ivo River.

Today, with a focus on the smart city concept that uses innovation as a social process, we are reinforcing Curitiba's commitment to innovate with a focus on the future of its citizens, betting on renewable energies, active mobility, public services in the palm of the citizen's hand, urban



revitalisation and projects to reduce carbon emissions by 2050. These are initiatives that combine support for sustainable economic growth with environmental and social impact guidelines.

One of the iconic examples of this evolution, which can be seen on the streets, is inside the Lighthouses of Knowledge, created in the 1990s as free Internet cafés for the population, and which today have become the Lighthouses of Knowledge and Innovation, maker spaces with 3D printers for prototyping. These spaces are available free of charge to students and the entire community.

Ensuring mobility in Curitiba, with about 2 million inhabitants, must be an important challenge. Which actions have been undertaken to improve public transport in the city?

Curitiba gives priority to pedestrians and clean mobility, including investments for the acquisition of electric buses.

These are investments in accessible and humane sidewalks, as well as in spaces that take people into account, in access to metro stations and in the Walk Better project.

Also noteworthy are the new bike lane structures and the bike path plan, with more than 250 km of bike lanes and shared lanes, a number that we want to double.

Curitiba, in fact, is closer to changing the energy matrix of its renowned public passenger transport system, the BRT model that has been exported to several capitals inside and outside Brazil, and becoming an even more sustainable city. The era of electromobility has already begun when we start the first tests of electric buses on the capital's bus routes in 2023.

The use of clean energy in Curitiba's public transport will start with the new Inter 2 and East-West BRT, which will have a zero CO2 emission bus fleet and self-sustainable bus stops with free wi-fi and solar power.

Curitiba's first 70 electric buses will start running by June 2024, in a major effort by the municipality, which will invest BRL 200 million in its own resources for the acquisition of public transport vehicles.

With no CO2 emissions or noise, the electric bus is considered the future of mobility in large cities and is the basis of Curitiba's Sustainable Mobility Programme. The goal is that in the medium term, by 2030, 33% of the fleet operates with zero emissions, reaching 100% by 2050, as part of the Climate Action Plan (PlanClima), aligned with global sustainability actions.

The world will get better as we move towards electromobility. The idea of self-sufficient batteries, of public transport fleets that do not poison the air of cities, which do not increase global warming and that make people go and return in full health is what represents the face of hope and the vision of the future. Curitiba is committed to the future.



Curitiba is a very prosperous city, how do you work to leave no one behind, and so that all the opportunities that the city offers are within the reach of all citizens?

I believe that we have a duty to deliver the most beautiful, humane and fair city. To do this, we seek to encourage, through education, the generation of the so-called jobs of the future and also boost the business environment and provide a better quality of life for our neighbors.

The concept of innovation has been worked on the municipal education network since childhood. From the Lighthouses of Knowledge and Innovation and the Mobile Lighthouses to the training activities for professionals in the area, innovate is a subject present daily in our affectionately called “curitibinhas”. In addition to the students, the community can use, free of charge, the entire structure of the lighthouses, which are true maker spaces (do it yourself) for the creation of prototypes.

For young people, we also offer programmes such as the First Job in Technology (1ºEmpregotech), with free computer programming courses for young people aged 16 to 22. We also inaugurated the first public Fab Lab in Brazil, a digital fabrication and prototyping laboratory where students, companies and the community can share knowledge and put innovative projects and ideas into practice for free. Curitiba's Fab Lab is endorsed by the Center for Bits and Atoms of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT).

In 2023, we also launched Empregotech 40+, to guarantee opportunities for those who have reached 40 years of age or more and want to stay connected with the new demands of the labour market. These are free Information Technology (IT) courses, with 150 places for online and face-to-face training.

We are the most intelligent and sustainable city in Brazil, an innovative city, but one that is committed to innovation as a social process.



The work carried out in Curitiba has been rewarded with awards for some of its policies. Can you explain some of these programs to us?

Winning the 1996 United Nations World Habitat Prize for my humanitarian work in general inspired me even more to promote the development of an increasingly sustainable, intelligent and humane Curitiba. In the aforementioned Caximba's New District, already under construction, irregular buildings are giving way to the first smart neighborhood in Brazil and the largest socio-environmental project in our recent history, with good environmental practices, decent housing and circular economy incentives with training for the inhabitants. This will allow the resettlement of 1,147 families that currently live in a situation of social and health vulnerability, in an irregular occupation in the Environmental Preservation Area of the Barigui and Iguçu river basins.

In addition to housing and redevelopment, the project also includes a linear park, water and sewage infrastructure works, as well as public lighting and new health, education and social assistance facilities. The works of the first 752 houses in Caximba's New District began in October 2022 and continue at a fast pace.

The Lines of Knowledge program was instituted with the intention of strengthening urban awareness, sustainability, belonging and love for the city. With this program, the city is always a classroom.

Curitiba continues to be recognized nationally and internationally for other innovation, sustainability and quality of life initiatives for its population. In 2022 alone, the capital won a number of national and international awards.

Among last year's awards, the capital of Paraná was chosen the smartest and most connected city in Brazil by the Connected Smart Cities ranking. It was also for the second consecutive year among the seven smartest communities in the world in 2022 in the ranking of the Intelligent Communities Forum (ICF).



With its Urban Agriculture Program, today with 147 community gardens and two Urban Farms, Curitiba won other international awards: it was among the six smartest cities in the world at the World Smart City Awards, in Barcelona, it was the winner of Latin America in the Sustainability category of the Smart City Latam Awards and received the Milan Pact award for the creation of the Urban Farm.

In addition, as a benchmark in urbanization and the environment, it was considered the most sustainable city in Latin America in 2022 by the Canadian magazine Corporate Knights and the second best capital in the Sanitation ranking of the Trata Brasil Institute.

What motivated the city of Curitiba to join the IAEC and offer to lead the Brazilian Network of Educating Cities (REBRACE)?

Our capital entered the selected list of educating cities in 2019, and since then it has stood out in actions that seek to expand citizen participation and promote love and care for the city.

It is important to highlight that the involvement of Curitiba with the movement of educating cities was a natural process, since the city had already been constantly developing programs and projects aligned with this concept, such as the Lines of Knowledge and Curitiba Speaks programs. ,among others, mentioned above.

The fact that Curitiba applied for and was chosen to coordinate the Brazil Network of Educating Cities (REBRACE) was a source of pride and encourages us to continue. Since 2021, the state capital has articulated new adhesions to the network. The municipality of Palmeira, for example, was one of the first, in 2022. An Educating City is one that offers all its inhabitants opportunities and spaces to practice democratic citizenship: participation, respect, tolerance, responsibility and interest in the collective. It is separating the garbage, it is respecting pedestrians in traffic, it is inclusion, it is worrying about the direction of the city. Our city does this and improves it every day.

