



Educating Cities

Information bulletin • 2007

Educating
cities for a
better world

The Youth Cultural Centre of São Paulo

experience

The city of São Paulo guarantees the rights of youth through a Cultural Centre designed for and by young people

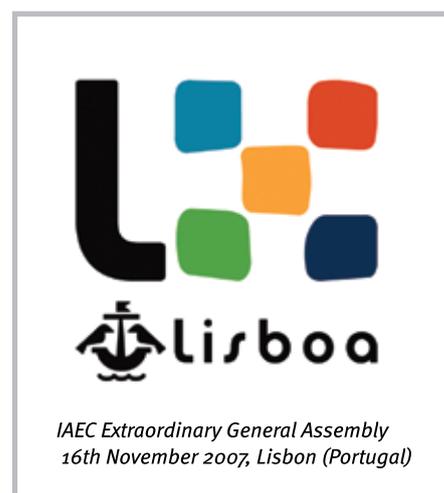
In São Paulo –Brazil's largest city, with 11 million inhabitants, 43% of which are under 24 – the institutions have decided to take seriously the concerns and needs of young people who to date have felt they have been treated in a paternalistic way or that they have been artificially integrated into the "adult" segment of the population.

"The Youth Cultural Centre of São Paulo is a decisive choice in favour of fostering culture through information, participation and training and it functions as a centre for artistic production and innovation"

The Youth Cultural Centre, addressed to young people from 15 to 29 years old, has been improving this situation through a facility measuring some 8,000 sq. m. in which activities are carried out that guarantee the rights of youth, such as: information, culture, recreation and training.

The Centre was created by renovating a building in the northern zone of the city that had been abandoned for more than 15 years, a zone with a major lack of public and private investment and infrastructure and cultural activity. After a participatory process open to the entire community, entities, and associations in the area, it was decided that this space would be used for youth development. In order to transform this Centre into a space open to the community, the façade was built with large windows that let you see what is happening inside, fostering the permeability of the neighbourhood which it serves. Specifically, the Centre wants to serve the most socio-economically underprivileged population in the bordering areas as well as broadening its radius of action and influence throughout the region.

The Centre, which opened at the beginning of 2006, functions as a space for production, exhibitions, innovation and expression of opinion through different services. The information services (continued on page 2)



The Youth Cultural Centre of São Paulo

include a library with more than 10,000 books, CDs, DVDs and photographs, and a desk to listen to the needs and opinions of young people on the information and materials available. The training services consist specifically of courses, lectures, workshops, study halls, projects, a language laboratory and computers with free Internet connection. The access to and support for culture is shown by promoting cultural actions in the region and the city as a way of making local production visible. Socialisation, getting together and recreation are promoted through a theatre, an amphitheatre, a place for watching videos and holding concerts, and there are also gardens and a cafeteria.

Through these services **The Youth Cultural Centre** meets several basic objectives: to offer young people a variety of quality cultural activities and make their own production visible by guaranteeing their autonomy and helping shape and consolidate their identity. To do so it provides them with advice, services, activities, projects and tools to express themselves and communicate.

Thus, young people from the entire area have a top quality artistic program, multi-disciplinary spaces and useful tools that facilitate encounters and participation and promote the creation of their own projects that respond to their

own interests, something that is basic to the credibility of initiatives of this type designed for and by them.

The Centre is a pioneer project rolled out by the Municipal Department of Culture of São Paulo and is given advice by the NGO called the "Integrated Centre for Studies and Programs in Sustainable Development". It is managed by professionals with training and experience in the area of cultural programming, recreation and social networks, with the aid of a team of technical assistants who, at the same time, have the support of counsellors that have direct contact and interact with the public.



Internet Space



Hip Hop Presentation

After one year's experience, the results are very satisfactory in terms of the use of the services and participation by the young people. This is a pioneer experience in the city, the first public facility created by the city council of São Paulo and addressed to and managed by young people although due to its recent creation it is having difficulty in making itself visible in other areas of the city. The objectives now are to broaden the recognition of the Centre and the activities in order to reach the maximum number of people, involving them in the projects and encouraging their participation.

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

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city network

The right to an Educating City was the slogan for the 4th Meeting of the Brazilian Network held on 12 and 13 April in Salvador de Bahía, at which around 300 people from 30 cities participated.

The issues dealt with at the meeting included: the right to an educating city; the role of local governments in compliance with the Millennium Development Goals; the promotion of life-long learning; cultural diversity; the commitment to human rights; public education, technology and digital inclusion. Through these thematic axes experiences were exchanged and participants reflected on how to approach the challenges that Brazilian cities face from the perspective of the educating city.

Within the framework of the conference the Magazine of the Brazilian Network of Educating Cities was launched. An action plan for 2007-2008 was also adopted, which includes: the creation of an advisory group that participates in the coordination (carried out by Belo Horizonte); the expansion of the IAEC across Brazil; the mobilisation and involvement of different departments of local administrations and the community in the incorporation of the concept of the educating city into their actions; the holding of a Latin American Conference of Educating Cities in Belo Horizonte (December 2007) and the publication of the second issue of the network magazine coinciding with the 10th International Congress of the IAEC: "Building Citizenship in Multicultural Cities" to be held in São Paulo from 24 to 26 April 2008.

For more information: www.edcities.org



interview

Sergio Fajardo Mayor of Medellín



We know that Medellín is opting in a major way for education, as shown in the slogan “Medellín, the Most Educated City”. What do you, Sergio Fajardo, understand by an Educating City?

Any city attempting to fit into the 21st century must make education one of its main challenges. An educating city is one that sees education in a broad sense, as a tool of social transformation that makes its citizens part of the world and makes them equal in terms of opportunities for knowledge and development, a city that is of and for the citizens. A city that builds consensus under the premises of respect and that prioritises equitable participation of all the communities that form part of it.

What has been, in your judgement, the most important actions or experiences that have been carried out in Medellín in order to improve the social situation since you took office?

In Medellín we have gone from fear to hope, and this has been achieved through integral intervention aimed at overcoming the immense social inequalities that characterise cities in our country and in Latin America.

The main thing is the way of doing policies, of managing the city, vis-à-vis the citizens, in a transparent way, prioritising investment in the places that need it, without making concessions to private interests and being clear on the precept that public funds are sacred.

We have managed to reduce violence based on a different model of intervention, (...) We recovered the value of human life and immediately after we began with other actions that involve the use of public spaces. The 5 Library Parks (Parques Biblioteca) are the best example. These are high quality public spaces set in the places in which they must be located, in the heart of the communities. These spaces are enriched by the Library, there citizens can find books, technology, entrepreneurial centres, all these conceived as development tools. (...)

How do you think your work as a teacher has influenced the life of the municipality?

I am a teacher by profession and vocation. This is a source of great pride and I am convinced

of the importance of education in development. My training as a mathematician and teacher has allowed me to address the problems of the city from a logical viewpoint, using strict discipline and emphasis on knowledge of the city to seek solutions.

As in all educational processes, there are things to be done and we are doing them, one by one, carefully, and learning from each process.

As a journalist you have worked in many different media, the press, radio and television; up to what point is the image and communication important in municipal policies? Have you kept in mind the mechanisms and channels of communication with the citizens?

I am a mathematician and I have a deep respect for the practice of journalism and at the same time I have been lucky to be a columnist in different media. The effectiveness of public communication is one of our great concerns, and it is not only based on information but it is also centred on pedagogy and taking into account all types of public and their characteristics when it comes time to preparing each message. It is very important for us that the city understand and participate in this transformation and in this sense communication is vital.

In our management we have heavily emphasised the strengthening of the community media, improving the content of our own media and clear transparent policies of contracting advertising with the media, making sure that priority is given to the understanding of the message over any other interest, while we strive to receive from all the citizens all possible feedback in order to make continuous improvements.

After four years at the head of the Mayor's office, what has been the secret for winning so much popular support?

(...) Our initial challenge was to recover the credibility of the citizenry in the Mayor's office as a transparent, legitimate entity, which is working to improve the quality of life of everyone. Once this goal was met, our concern was to involve the community in all the city's development processes, as an indispensable requirement to achieving social, economic and cultural transformation.

The recognition by the people of our work is precisely due to the fact that we have taken on a deep responsibility for and commitment to our public management principles. All our programs and projects have a deep social meaning and are the result of dialogue and consensus with the community, which guarantees that we are attending to the local needs, based on the principles of equality, transparency and information so that the citizen can always see things clearly. (...)

For more information: www.edcities.org

editorial

What do we talk about when we speak of an Educating City?

We talk about...

- The city as an area generating education in the broad sense.
- Education as a key factor in the development of the different personal and collective projects.
- The importance of this factor in the construction of knowledge and values, of a more educated citizenry, more apt to generate development, more cohesive and prosperous, more creative and more capable of living in peace.
- A new scenario, a new panorama which includes – in addition to families and schools – unrecognised agents to date and which includes all citizens no matter what their ages or social condition.
- A city that knows its de-educating agents and decides to counteract them within a framework of multi-faceted actions in which education is one of the key elements.
- The responsibility of local governments and also different institutions and groups that intervene in the city.
- The necessary leadership capable of stimulating collaboration, synergies, dialogue and agreements from a perspective of rights and duties.
- Democratic governability in which education constitutes a transversal factor and one of its main axes.
- The need to re-read the different policies and actions from the perspective of their educative impact and emphasise the development of these vectors.
- Turning policies in pedagogy.
- Constant improvement in lines of information and communication with all citizens, which is a condition *sine qua non* for their participation in the different possible spheres.
- Establishing evaluative procedures which boost creativity, rigour and analysis of different actions.
- A horizon. The roads which lead to an Educating City must be built by everyone: local governments and civil society. Going down them must constitute an opportunity for personal and collective development, permanent learning, within a democratic and freedom-affirming perspective.

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experience

North African women in Sant Boi move to the beat of the city

In Catalonia, a Region of Spain, the arrival of immigrants is creating a more and more diverse social and cultural reality. This calls for the participation of all the administrations, entities and associations in order to be able to respond effectively to the new challenges and opportunities that a multi-cultural society poses. We must pay attention to the situation of women in the immigrant community as they are still vulnerable in many ways.



The different public administrations and bodies offer courses that have traditionally been framed in the context of teaching the local languages and informing about the resources and services available in the immediate environment, ignoring however spaces for more recreational activities. These official courses have always been viewed very positively, but for the women they are just one more burden in their daily lives.

In order to improve this situation, the City Council of Sant Boi de Llobregat, a city of 80,000 inhabitants near Barcelona, set up the "El Farah" immigrant women's association seven years ago in order to promote training activities but also to foster awareness, cultural exchange and recreation to strengthen integration and social cohesion.

One of these activities consisted in incorporating physical education into the annual municipal program, an initiative driven by the Province of Barcelona (supra-municipal administration) which, under the slogan, "Woman: Get Out and Move About", brought physical activity to women who normally did not get much recreational exercise, as a way of improving their health and quality of life; designing a program adapted to their needs through music, dance, games, etc.

The "El Farah" association in conjunction with the Women and Sport study group of the National Institute of Physical Education of Barcelona has adapted this program to immigrant North African women. It is an innovative experience for the women themselves and has turned out to be very appealing.

Thus, during the course of the activities that are carried out twice a week, from mid-September to

mid-June, a group of North African women meet at the "Can Massallera" sport centre to work on such important aspects as the knowledge and care of their bodies and their possibilities, doing posture and relaxation exercises and strengthening inter-group dynamics through games, dance, etc. Moreover, this group has come into contact with other groups of local women, demonstrating that physical activity is also an element that fosters exchange and cultural interaction.

The main goal of this experience is, therefore, to improve the quality of life of North African women, foster social integration and facilitate the interaction of cultures. Moreover, it also benefits the city itself since it makes public opinion and the institutions sensitive to cross-cultural coexistence and helps to dampen racist attitudes and behaviour.

The results cannot be more satisfactory: the program has continued since 2000 and has been adapting to the needs of the group by combining the expectations of the women with the philosophy of the program "Woman: Get Out and Move About".

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

"The "El Farah" association has been bringing physical education to North African women for the past seven years, fostering their integration and improving their quality of life"

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did you know that...

- ★ "Local policies on childhood and adolescence" was the theme of the Meeting of Educating Cities of Chile held in Vallenar on 6 and 7 June.
- ★ The 3rd Meeting of Educating Cities of Mexico was held in Playa del Carmen from 13 to 15 June.
- ★ The city of Changwon (Korea) will host the 6th National Festival of Life-long Learning from 5 to 9 September 2007.
- ★ The deadline for the presentation of candidacies to host the 11th International Congress of Educating Cities in 2010 is 1 October.
- ★ Santa Maria da Feira will host the 2nd National Congress of the Portuguese Network of Educating Cities on 25 and 26 October 2007.
- ★ The 2nd World Congress of United Cities and Local Governments will be held under the title of: "Changing cities are driving our world" in Jeju (Korea) from 28 to 31 October 2007. www.cities-localgovernments.org

the voices of the cities

1. Our times and time-tables affect our quality of life. The Time Office of Rennes (France) works with the municipal services, other administrations, associations and companies in order to learn about the evolution of the needs of the citizens and propose and evaluate measures to reconcile time-tables. www.ville-rennes.fr/temps

2. Illness, and, in particular, hospitalisation, represents for children and young people a time of rupture in their daily lives. The Turin Hospital Play Group (Italy), organises recreational activities that allow children and youth to express the difficulties of hospitalisation and inform them of hospital procedures. www.comune.torino.it/gioco/giocospedale

3. "100,000 commitments to Zaragoza" (Spain) is the fourth phase of the project known as Zaragoza, water-saving city, designed to

bring together and disseminate 100,000 water saving actions of 25,000 citizens to legitimate this city as the World Water Capital (headquarters of the UN Secretariat of the Water Decade) and the organising city of the 2008 World's Expo focussed on water and sustainable development. www.zaragozaconelagua.org

