

# Focus Experience

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Educating Cities  
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## Title

## Max Jacob Cultural Centre of Quimper (*Pôle Culturel Max Jacob*)

### Basic data

**City:** Quimper

**Country:** France

**Number of inhabitants:** 67.255

**Topics:** Associationism and participation, urban development, art and humanities, Lifelong learning.

**Principles of the Charter of Educating Cities:** 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 10, 14, 18

### Summary

Quimper City Council, in order to encourage the exchange of cultural activities, promote diversity and develop meetings between artists and citizens, has set up the “**Max Jacob Cultural Centre**” project, a space for artistic and cultural experimentation.

The centre will be in the area of a neighbourhood undergoing transformation; that of the station. The space will be open to the whole city and all age groups. Cultural proposals will have specially adapted spaces, based around an old renovated theatre: the Max Jacob Theatre. The spaces will include rehearsal rooms, training classrooms, exhibition and performance areas and so on, to practice music, plastic arts, live performances, Breton culture (music, language, dancing and so on). There will also be a teaching space dedicated to gardening.

The project brings together organisations that are committed in various ways to education (the young theatre association, amplified music, the conservatory, art school, Breton culture etc.). The centre will thus make it possible for synergies to form between various experiences in order to propose transversal educational routes.

The Max Jacob Centre management team that is bringing together the various agents in the territory will take an original composition. The City Council wants the project to be built cooperatively, involving not only the cultural agents of the territory but also the citizenry.



View of the future building *Alvéole Son*  
Berranger & Vincent



Workshop of music and dance of the Conservatory of  
Music and Acting of Quimper (April 2011)

## Objectives

- To have a dedicated space for artistic and cultural experimentation, which will include a space for coexistence.
- To create the conditions needed to encourage meetings and exchange between artists and the citizenry.
- To support the artistic and cultural activities done in the city.

## Methodology

In Autumn 2008, Quimper City Council polled the citizenry on the subject of the general state of Culture. This was aimed at all the citizens and the objective was to open up cultural policy to debate. This meeting gave rise to the idea of creating a cultural and artistic space: the Max Jacob Cultural Centre.

In 2009, the first stage consisted of gathering the wishes and needs expressed by cultural agents and politicians. Before taking a decision, a number of considerations, opinions and standpoints needed to be shared in order to reach an agreement on the future of the centre. To do this, professionals and experts were invited to present and share their experiences in the context of developing innovative cultural projects. At the same time, a specialist in cultural policy ran a number of workshops with cultural agents in order to create an ethical consensus protocol to express the shared values and principles on which this new initiative should be based.

Quimper City Council has worked hard on the production of the cultural and artistic project based on the centre's technical programme, which was completed in 2010. A specific work team has been created, made up of citizens and financial and cultural agents that will be in charge of managing the coexistence space of the centre.

In 2010, a request was made for projects, in order to "imagine" the future Max Jacob Centre. This produced a number of proposals: a special open day for families; free-use software and digital creation for students and the general public, decorating a new space for the exhibition of children's work and so on.

Berrenger & Vincent Architects have recently won the official competition to design the project.

The project's creation is transversal, involving participation from citizens and various other bodies. The City Council's services are also participating in the project.

The Max Jacob Centre has a budget of € 14.2 million, supplied by Quimper City Council, the department of Finistère and the Brittany region.



**10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Trés Tôt Théâtre Cultural Association at the Max Jacob Theatre garden (2010)**  
© Pascal Perennec



**Performance of the students of the Conservatory of Music and Acting of Quimper**

## Social and urban context

Quimper is in the region of Brittany, and is the historical and cultural capital of the Cornouaille area. It has a population of 67,255 and covers an area of 84.45 km<sup>2</sup>.

By age group, the population is divided up as follows: 25 and under, 31%, 26 to 64, 52% and 65 and over, 17%. 3.2% of the population are immigrants.

The city does not have a very high unemployment rate (5.6%).



View of the Quimper Cathedral © Ackles29

On January 1, 2000, the city joined the nearest towns (Ergué-Gabéric, Guengat, Plogonnec, Plomelin, Plonéis and Pluguffan) to form a metropolitan area of 85,410 inhabitants, the *Quimper communauté*.

The Quimper metropolitan area is the region's main employment centre. The economic activity is divided between service and administrative sectors and the agriculture and the food industry. Industrial activity and tourism also play a large role in the territory's economy. In the 1980s, a large number of establishments previously involved in traditional sectors, changed mainly to the economic sectors of the canning, pastry-making, fashion and ceramics industries.

## Assessment

The assessment of the project is ongoing, based on the Max Jacob Centre's ethical consensus protocol. The first part of the architectural project will begin at the end of 2013.

### Strengths:

- Involvement of a large number of varied organisations (city council, cultural organisations and agents, the citizenry, etc.).

### Weaknesses:

- The project is only in the early stages of implementation and still needs to increase visibility particularly with regard to the population.
- The diversity of the organisations involved can often be the sources of conflict.

## Ressources

**Presentation of the Cultural Centre by the Mayor of Quimper, Mr Bernard Poignant:**  
[http://www.dailymotion.com/video/xckma\\_budget-2010-le-pole-max-jacob-nouve\\_news](http://www.dailymotion.com/video/xckma_budget-2010-le-pole-max-jacob-nouve_news)

## Contact

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