



**Declaration of the XVII International Congress  
of Educating Cities  
Curitiba | Brazil, 2024**

Between May 21 and 24, 2024, the XVII International Congress of the International Association of Educating Cities (IAEC) was held in the city of Curitiba, bringing together representatives from 136 cities from 12 countries, from 4 continents. The central theme of reflection and debate was: **"Sustainability, Innovation and Inclusion in the Educating City: transforming the present"**. This theme was developed through conferences, workshops, spaces for dialogue, posters and study visits.

The theme was divided into three thematic axes:

Social Sustainability: inclusion and cultural pluralism

The sustainability perspective is based on the interdependence between the natural, socioeconomic and cultural environment. Respect and care for nature are part of the need to guarantee the right to a dignified and quality life for the whole citizenry, based on equity, coexistence and good living. These concepts encompass the inclusion and the non-discrimination, the respect for plurality and cultural and individual diversity, the social justice, the human rights, the gender equality, the culture of peace and the non-violence, from the perspective of active and co-responsible citizenship.



## Environmental and economic sustainability: innovation and transformation of territories

Social innovation leads to new economic and environmental perspectives, enhancing learning logics in the city and driving the transformation of territories. These different transformations – ecological, social, institutional and territorial – can contribute to promoting changes in lifestyles; at the same time, it is necessary to review production and consumption models in order to move towards circular, supportive and inclusive models, in symbiosis with nature, protecting and regenerating it.

## Education for sustainability

Citizenship education, in its formal, non-formal and informal modalities, is the purpose and engine of sustainability. An Educating City is concerned with current issues related to sustainability, the resilience of communities in the face of climate change, innovation and inclusion, and seeks to encourage, develop and disseminate initiatives that offer opportunities. To this end, the construction of knowledge and the awareness and formation of an active and co-responsible citizenship will be promoted that contributes to transforming the relationships between people, and between people and nature, based on the construction of a new social paradigm that puts life at the center.



### **The Educating Cities affirm that:**

Cities are points of convergence of complex, dynamic and sometimes contradictory processes. Considering the various imbalances and socio-environmental crises experienced on a daily basis, one of the great contemporary challenges is to establish a positive harmony between human actions and the conscious and responsible use of natural resources.

The current conditions of production and reproduction of life have demanded that the economic and social development of cities be based on: (1) sustainable initiatives, based on respect and protection of the environment and its various ecosystems, which promote the adoption of healthier lifestyles; (2) innovative initiatives that make it possible to find creative solutions to contemporary problems, that bring new values and social logics and contribute to the development of people; (3) inclusive initiatives, from the perspective of equity as a guiding principle for the promotion of fairer and more solidary societies.

The XVII International Congress of Educating Cities focused on the educational and transformative capacities of people and cities. The contents have promoted reflections and the exchange of experiences that inspire the transformation of the present and also envision a more prosperous and sustainable future.



### **The Educating Cities commit to:**

1 – Encourage the principle of equity, seeking the autonomy and the personal, social and professional development of people with functional diversity and/or in situations of vulnerability, promoting their inclusion as active citizens. Thus, with a view to their full development and quality of life in the city, social, educational and individual aspects will be considered, quality, accessible and sustainable education will be promoted, interpersonal relationships and community networks will be strengthened, and intersectoral commitment will be sought to ensure equal opportunities.

2 – Encourage the civic and autonomous participation of children in a city that welcomes and respects them, promoting spaces for dialogue in which priority is given to childhood in the different municipal areas of the public agenda. To this end, their active participation in the community will be encouraged through the implementation of public policies.

3 – Promote actions in different spaces of the city in which cultural plurality, intergenerational dialogue and respect for diversity are articulated, fostering spaces for meeting and different experiences, since the human dimension is the starting point for the construction of a sense of belonging and human values, with education being one of the main tools on the path to peace.

4 – Implement actions that promote the participation of local communities in their territory and have an impact on it. This implies the search, by the local governments, for possible solutions to environmental problems, in an extensive way and



with a social and economic perspective, attending to the complexity of the causes that generate them and through actions that involve the community and democratize access to information, knowledge and technologies.

5 - Encourage the implementation of intersectoral public policies that promote changes in local administrations and in the habits of citizens. All this with a view to adopting sustainable lifestyles, such as encouraging the use of bicycles, improving public transport, increasing renewable energy and energy efficiency, reducing waste generation and encouraging its recycling, increasing urban greenery and caring for watercourses, among other initiatives, which aim to contribute to minimizing the impact of climate change.

6 - Stimulate actions that contribute to the social, solidarity, circular and income-generating economy, through the implementation of public policies for the promotion, creation and maintenance of community gardens, school farms and practices such as the reduction of food waste or the exchange of recyclable materials for locally produced products, with a view to adopting sustainable eating habits, local commerce and food and nutrition security.

7 - Develop technological innovation projects that encourage research, production and use of renewable energy sources, such as the construction of photovoltaic panels and other renewable energy sources, in order to generate autonomy in the local energy grid, ensure access to clean energy for all people, especially women (who suffer from scarcity because they are responsible for most care tasks) and contribute to the energy



transition for decarbonisation and the reduction of environmental impacts.

8 - Create and expand sustainable urban spaces, through green infrastructure and the maintenance and revitalization of outdoor public places, such as gardens, squares, parks, aiming at the rewilding of the city, the reorganization of ecological relationships and the regeneration of ecosystems, recognizing that nature-based solutions are key strategies to address climate change and other environmental problems.

9 - Implement Intersectoral Committees for Environmental Education, formed by public institutions and organized civil society, and support the development of Environmental Education Programs to strengthen public policies for education for sustainability, which include, in particular, increased training for adaptation to climate change and, thus, reduce the losses and damages caused by this phenomenon in communities.

10 - Promote the development of actions in favor of Education for Sustainability through Permanent Forums with a view to the socialization of good practices developed in formal, non-formal and informal education, as well as the dissemination of events, academic research, book presentations and scientific publications, to promote debate and improvement around current socio-environmental problems, with an emphasis on climate change and biodiversity loss.

11 - Promote eco-social learning experiences at all levels and educational modalities, to raise awareness and foster attitudes towards the adoption of responsible and sustainable lifestyles oriented to the exercise of socio-environmental citizenship,



based on the understanding of the interdependent relationships of human life and the limitations of the Planet.

12 - Establish ongoing training programs for educational agents, as well as for the community in general, which promote active participation and co-responsibility to ensure the survival of current and future generations, care for life, equal opportunities and people's happiness.

The IAEC and its member cities are convinced of the urgency of developing initiatives aimed at caring for the common good. Therefore, they call on the citizenry as a whole and supra-municipal administrations to face the current socio-environmental problems with responsibility, competence and commitment, seeking solutions based on the development of visionary and assertive actions and policies, from the perspective of sustainability, innovation and inclusion.