



EXPERIENCE

Pimp my yard

PARTICIPATORY REHABILITATION
OF COMMUNAL NEIGHBOURHOOD SPACES

The city of Katowice is the main city of the province of Silesia (Poland) and is home to around 300,000 inhabitants. Historically, Katowice has been recognised for its coal and steel production, dating back to the 19th century, but in recent years, the city has become one of the country's most important political, administrative, economic, scientific and cultural centres.

There are many neglected and unattractive courtyards within the city. The project begins with the process of choosing the participating courtyards. Residents submit proposals for their courtyards to be renovated and three courtyards are selected for refurbishment, to be carried out by the residents, with support and guidance provided by architecture professionals and the Institute of Culture 'City of Gardens'.

Once the courtyard has been selected, a series of workshops are organised with neighbours. The aim of the workshops is to pinpoint the needs and problems detected and to find appropriate solutions to them. During this stage, it is important to establish close cooperation among the architects, organisation and residents, as well as with those in charge of property management and sponsors.

Following agreement on the project, the contractor company is selected. Construction work usually lasts between two and three months. Prior to its inauguration, the

Pimp my Yard aims to revitalise courtyards and encourage residents to work together to improve the appearance of their neighbourhood

parties involved meet to remodel the courtyard, carrying out small jobs such as assembling furniture, painting and gardening tasks. Finally, the courtyard is unveiled, with the attendance of all those involved in the project, to celebrate the end of the renovation, which involves half a year of joint effort.

The majority of the courtyards designed as part of the **Pimp my Yard** project are based on the scheme outlined above. However, the project formula continues to evolve. During one edition, the organisation held an architectural competition for the creation of an emblematic square. In 2019, the design of the courtyard was decided upon during workshops organised by **Pimp my Yard** aimed at young architects and students of architecture.

The joint work carried out to create a welcoming courtyard also strengthens interpersonal relationships, since the resulting new and attractive spaces allow residents to grow plants, hold barbecues, have a coffee or watch films together; all of which is the fruit of their combined efforts. In this way, residents go from being people merely living in the same building to becoming true neighbours. Further, the transformation of the courtyard brings about changes in people, who recognise the importance of their participation in the design and care of community spaces. Another important aspect of the project is that it highlights the importance of good practices and sets new trends in terms of public space design. In addition, the project includes green solutions and recycling methods.

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EDITORIAL

With the COVID-19 pandemic still active, experts from around the world have been warning, for months now, about the impact that this crisis will have on the global economy over the next few years. The forecasts are clear: a generalised recession is on the horizon. This, however, will not affect everyone in equal measure. As we are already seeing, the effects on socio-economic development will tend to be more prominent among those sectors of the population that already found themselves in situations of greater vulnerability before the health crisis. It will be the nature of our responses to this crisis that will determine how it will ultimately affect our municipalities, and their residents.

Proximity helps us to become aware of the complexity of the different axes of vulnerability that cut across the diverse groups and people living in our municipalities. Within this context, Educating Cities, now more than ever, must stand alongside those sectors of the population most in need of support, in a bid to make this recovery inclusive. To this end, we encourage you to strengthen municipal action in the light of the values of the Charter: equal opportunities, inclusion, social progress and sustainable growth. The collateral effects of the pandemic also invite us to renew our commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals, to ensure that all citizens have access to knowledge and skills, and can develop attitudes and values that enable them to live with dignity and to feel like an integral part of the community.

It's time to join forces, to work together and seek alliances to catapult education to the centre of the recovery. Safeguarding and prioritising investment in education, boosting training, driving entrepreneurship, supporting research, fostering social innovation and improving employability are, among others, some of the key strategies that must be prioritised in this endeavour.

For all these reasons, the slogan for this year's International Day of the Educating City is: "The Educating City leaves no one behind". The IAEC Secretariat hopes that both the slogan and the initiatives that you organise with a view to 30 November, in celebration of the International Day, serve as revitalising tools for reflection and action, in order to continue to position education as a key political lever to correct inequalities and generate well-being.

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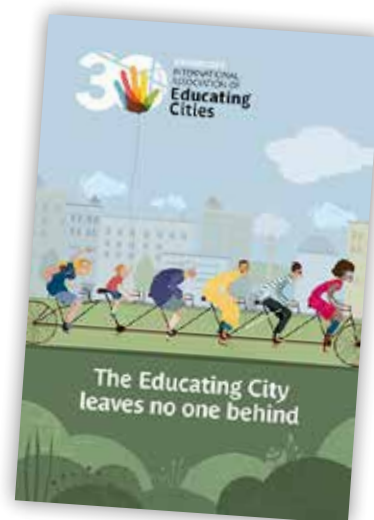
DID YOU KNOW THAT...



- You can check out the **Focus Experiences from the special 30th anniversary edition**, which pay particular attention to the topics highlighted in the recent update of the Charter of Educating Cities, [here](#).

- On 30 November, we will celebrate the **sixth edition of the International Day**, with the slogan **"The Educating City leaves no one behind"**.

We encourage you to join the celebration! Over 180 cities from 12 countries participated last year. Get inspired by taking a look at the myriad of events they organised. And don't miss the video summary! You can find everything on the [web page of the event](#).



- The **16th International Congress of Educating Cities** will take place in Andong (Republic of Korea) between 25 and 28 October 2022. The theme is: **"Shaping the future of education: innovation, tradition and inclusion"**.
- With the aim of raising awareness about the importance of care in creating better cities for all, the next edition of the Educating Cities Award will focus on **"Best educational practices in the promotion of care"**. The Terms and Conditions will be published in September.
- Impetus has been given to virtual training in recent months.
 - Presentation of the guide: **"Methodological Guide: From reading the charter to constructing an educating city"** in parallel sessions aimed at the Spanish Network of Educating Cities (Red Estatal de Ciudades Educadoras, RECE), cities in Latin America, and the Portuguese Network.
 - The Latin American Delegation has launched virtual course on **"Sexual Diversity"**, **"Education and environmental awareness in cities"** and **"The Charter as a roadmap for the construction of the Educating City"**. It has also organised numerous Learning Cyber C@fés and educational dialogues.
 - The cities forming part of the Spanish Network had the opportunity to join the #ParticipativeChildhood virtual cafés, and municipalities in Mexico, Portugal and Brazil have also benefited from other online events.
- IAEC organised various **conferences of interest**. Did you miss them? Watch them here:
 - **Playable City**: Barcelona, Paris and São Paulo tell us how to make public space available for playing and learning outdoors.
 - Conference-colloquium by Nélida Zaitegi: **"Education in Times of Emergency: Call for action from Educating Cities"**.



INTERVIEW

Mr. Héctor López Santillana

MAYOR OF LEÓN, MEXICO

How would you describe the city of León?

León is known as the “Cradle of the Free Municipality”, due to an event that took place on 2 January 1946, in which the people of León sacrificed their lives so that their decision in the elections would be respected. We have faced wars, epidemics and pandemics, floods, and economic crises, but we have managed to get through them all thanks to the solidarity and synergies between society and government. We don't wait for others to solve our problems, we act. This has made León a thriving, prosperous and dynamic city, with people who know how to work together.

What are the main challenges you have faced during your mandate and which aspects have you prioritised as an Educating City?

It is important to mention that we were the first government of continuity in León's history. This has allowed us to implement and mature a change of model, to include all those who had been marginalised in development. We call this model 'De la periferia al centro' ('From the periphery to the centre'). We have been making progress in solving the problems of insecurity, addictions and lack of opportunities at the root, and in achieving a lasting peace, where all citizens feel included in development. We have driven joint work among the different departments of the municipal administration and civil society through the Mesa de Enlaces de Ciudad Educadora [Liaison Committee for the Educating City], where decisions and actions are taken together through the development of public policies with an educational vision.

What role have citizen education and participation played? Could you give us some examples?

Within the vision of the Educating City, we seek to bring about a comprehensive change starting from the environment; turning citizens into educating agents, transforming our city into an open-air classroom. We like to see citizens as agents of change; with their own thoughts, as people capable of analysing and proposing solutions. Under this vision, we have implemented programmes such as 'Promotores Ciudadanos' ['Citizen Champions'], 'Lab León', 'Promotores del Deporte' ['Sports Champions'], and the inclusion of young people in Citizen Councils, so that we can get to know their vision for the development of an Educating City. With this in mind, with the 'Vía Directa' ['Direct Route'] strategy, at least once a week, we visited the neighbourhoods and rural communities so that people could present their concerns to us, and, for the first time, we managed to ensure that the representatives of the rural communities could be democratically elected and not appointed by the mayor.

The initiative 'Redes de mujeres sin violencia' ['Women Free of Violence Networks'] won the Award on Good Practices on Civic Education through Participation in 2018. What did this award mean for the city and for the initiative?

The 'Women Free of Violence Networks' programme consists of bringing together women from neighbourhoods and communities to prevent violence and foster community organisation and sisterhood. From 2015 to date, more than 18,349 people have joined the networks. The Award gave us the opportunity to position León internationally and to raise awareness about this educational



programme. Currently, the Women Free of Violence Networks have been replicated in cities such as Irapuato and Guanajuato City. Further, the strategy was adopted by the Guanajuatan Women's Institute [Instituto Estatal para las Mujeres Guanajuatenses, IMUG], with the commitment to replicate it across the different municipalities of our state.

León leads the Mexican Network of Educating Cities. What potential does this network have to address the problems and needs of member cities?

Coordinating the efforts of the Mexican Network has been a privilege, because it has allowed us to weave a nationwide web of cities that have a shared vision, and that seek to accompany each other in this task. We have worked to increase the number of cities participating in the Network, and have succeeded in integrating four new cities. In 2019 we hosted the National Congress of Educating Cities and we carried out an agreement with the UNESCO International Centre for the Promotion of Human Rights. Being able to count on this network has been especially valuable in complex and uncertain times, such as the one we have experienced with the COVID-19 pandemic, because from the beginning, we had virtual meetings to share what we were doing.

Can you explain some of the local government's successes and lessons learnt during these years in office?

One of the main achievements is the Alumbra León Programme ['Light Up León'], which in five years, has increased the number of LED luminaires from 200 to more than 72,000 and, when completed, will represent more than 90% of the municipal public lighting. This has generated savings of more than 170 million pesos, which are now allocated to social work. Besides, we have constructed more than 76 km of cycle lane; we have built affordable housing for people without social security; we have brought drinking water and drainage systems to areas that did not previously have these services; we have made a historic investment in scholarships, infrastructure and equipment for schools and we have supported more than 1,500 small- and medium-sized enterprises with furniture, equipment and tools.

Finally...

Thank you to the cities that are joining this effort; to those who have shared their successful experiences, and to those who have allowed us to learn from their best practices. We must leave individualism and personal interests behind, because the future will depend on the ability to be organised, to live more in communities, to be more participative and practice self-management.

>> More information at www.edcities.org.



EXPERIENCE

Ouro Musicians:

SOCIAL INCLUSION THROUGH COLLECTIVE MUSIC PRACTICE

The municipality of Gondomar, with a total of 169,239 inhabitants, is located in the Porto Metropolitan Area, and it consists of seven districts, either urban or rural. In the 2019/2020 academic year, 13,274 students were enrolled in the public schools within the municipality.

Ouro Musicians (Músicos d'Ouro) is a project launched in 2014 committed to democratising access to culture for children and young people in situations of social vulnerability through collective orchestral practice. It is offered in schools in the municipality that fall under Educational Territories of Priority Intervention, with the aim of strengthening social inclusion and promoting students' educational success.

Each orchestral group consists of 32 members. The groups are composed in such a way as to ensure that 75% of group members meet the pre-established criteria of social vulnerability. The remaining 25% are young people who do not meet these criteria, in an aim to cultivate bonds of friendship among young people from different backgrounds and social realities. The project provides the participants with the musical instruments, who commit to look after them during their time in the orchestra and a team of professional musicians teach the different string instruments, through individual and group classes that are held weekly outside of school hours.

A highly customised training is provided, adapting the musical text to the evolution of each youngster, thus enabling the active participation of all members of the orchestra, regardless of their level. Similarly, more experienced participants are encouraged to become mentors to newcomers, fostering peer education and support. Also,

a calendar of concerts is planned, which take place both in the school and in other contexts.

Since its inception in 2014, around 170 young

Collective music practice fosters the acquisition of social-emotional skills, allows children and adolescents to explore their own creativity, and offers enriching experiences which contribute to improving their well-being and academic development

people have taken part in the project in three municipal school clusters and throughout the course of 2019, 23 performances were given by the orchestra. A high follow-up rate has been observed among these young people, considering that around 90% of the boys and girls decide to renew their participation year after year. Similarly, many participants continue to be involved in the orchestra as tutors or mentors to the younger students after completing their schooling. In this sense, interested youngsters are encouraged to continue their music education through the municipality's provision of specialised training, as well as being able to access an international music certification scheme. Further, a parallel orchestra has also been formed so that they can continue practising.

Through music education, the acquisition of social-emotional skills and values such as responsibility, teamwork, commitment to the group and a sense of belonging are fostered. Similarly, collective music practice allows participants to explore their own creative expression, as well as offering enriching artistic experiences that highlight the importance of diversity. Both dimensions contribute to improving the well-being of children and adolescents, generating positive impacts on their academic and personal development.

The project also contributes to strengthening territorial cohesion in the Gondomar municipality, tightening the links with the local fabric of associations (through the organisation of joint concerts, initiatives of solidarity to raise funds, etc.) and encouraging the participation of families.

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