



International Association of

Educating Cities

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EDUCATING CITIES
FOR A BETTER WORLD



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Citizenship Ceremony in Geneva

experience

Citizenship Ceremonies in Geneva, Coming of Age

Legal age represents a major transition for young people who suddenly become citizens who are responsible for their actions in the eyes of society and the law. In order to make young people aware of, and prepare them for, this responsibility and officially celebrate this important stage, each year the City Council of Geneva, in collaboration with the Association of Municipalities of the Canton, organises a ceremony addressed to all the young people who are about to turn 18 years of age.

Geneva, capital of the canton of the same name, is the second largest Swiss city after Zurich, and the largest French speaking city in the country. It has a population of more than 185,000 inhabitants and 450,000 in the canton.

The first time this coming of age ceremony took place was in 1942, in order to highlight, in a solemn manner, the entry of young people into civic life. As from 1943, girls were also invited to a reception which at the beginning was held separately from the ceremony for boys.

In 1999, the initial name of "Civic Celebrations" was replaced by "**Citizenship Ceremony**", a term that was more appropriate for especially describing the acquisition by young people of their status as citizens. In 2000 there was another major change: as from that time all the young people who reside in the canton, Swiss or foreigner, are invited to this Citizenship Ceremony. The city of Geneva is thus showing everyone that it is "City of the World, City of Peace" which welcomes all young people without discrimination.

The Citizenship Ceremony is a unique occasion to make young people aware of their rights and duties as citizens, as well as contribute to the fostering of civic commitment and the development of a citizen-minded spirit.

The ceremony, directed by Mr. Manuel Tornare, Administrative Councillor and Mayor of Geneva, is also attended by a (continued on page 2)

"The city of Geneva has been celebrating the coming of legal age of its young people since 1942 by holding a reception, which, as well as being an informational and fun event, transmits the notion of individual and collective responsibility for the rules and duties that make community life possible."

editorial

Based on the request of different member cities, the International Association of Educating Cities has initiated, in an experimental phase, and in collaboration with the Spanish International Cooperation Agency for Development, the **Seminar** entitled "**Educating City and Local Governance**" for the main purpose of going deeper into the relationship between these two concepts and their adaptation to the different cities in the IAEC.

This Seminar invites municipal officers, on the one hand, and different organisations from civil society, on the other, to discover and develop the educative sides of their programs and activities. Furthermore, we invite the participants to explore rational, realistic, diverse and useful forms of transversal collaboration: amongst the participants and between them and different organisations from civil society.

In order to bring the proposal into line with different realities, there are 4 European and 4 Latin American cities participating in this pilot phase of the seminar. Each of these seminars has three sessions: (continued on page 3)

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Councillor of State as well as approximately one hundred cantonal, municipal and judicial representatives; it is organised by the Youth Bureau of the Department of Social Cohesion, Youth and Sports of the city of Geneva, and has the support of the Association of Municipalities of Geneva.

In order to attract the interest of the young people involved, the ceremony is divided into three parts: the first is an official section, presided over by the Mayor, in which the young people listen to a speech from a Councillor of State.



Official presentation with the Mayor



Young people enjoying the evening

The second part consists of an interview with someone whose life-long journey is particularly significant to the community, and whose experience could have an impact on the young people. At different celebrations they have invited, for example, a representative from the Free Afghanistan Association, a concentration camp survivor, a nun known for her charity work in several countries, a survivor of Hiroshima, on the anniversary of the first nuclear bomb attack,

or, at the latest celebration, one of the first Swiss environmentalists.

The third part of the celebration consists of a show; for example, comic skits evoking major events that have taken place in the city or canton. Finally, the young people receive a book of photographs of Geneva, a useful address guide both for their professional path and their daily life use and a purchase voucher to be spent as they choose on a DVD, book, etc. They are also reminded that from now on they are committed, responsible participants within the principle of social cohesion.

At the last reception in January 2008 more than 1,100 people participated, including 900 young people, which shows the tremendous acceptance of this celebration that has been held for more than 65 years and which fosters commitment amongst young people to democratic ideals, citizenship and coexistence.

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

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city networks

★ The city of Changwon (Republic of Korea) is organising the seminar entitled **"The Right to Learn, Citizenship Building, and the City as Community Maker"** which will take place on 26 and 27 September.

Changwon, which sits on the Executive Committee since last April, conceived of this seminar in order to foster the growth, strengthening and dissemination of the IAEC in the Asia-Pacific region. To do so it has invited various Asian cities, the Secretariat and different IAEC member cities.



The seminar will combine plenary sessions and working groups, which will be organised around:

The right to learn will delve deeper into how to foster this right amongst all people, reorganising the structure and socio-cultural environments of the city and promoting active participation of people in this process in different areas of education (formal, non-formal and informal).

The citizenship building will approach the idea of how to promote citizen participation in order to delve deeper into the collective construction of the city as a democratic space.

The city as community maker will explore further the need to learn to live together, interact with others by respecting their interests and values, and move from an



orientation centred on individual interests to another based on shared objectives and social justice.

This seminar will also make it possible for the participants to learn about the educating policies and experiences of Changwon, since it is being organised as part of the "Learning Festival" organised by the city each year.

interview

Marta Vincenzi Mayor of Genoa, Italy



Which have been the political and social changes of note in the «Genoa, Educating City» process?

This challenge, full of risks and opportunities, cannot be achieved alone: in this process other institutions, associations, organisations, schools, universities, companies, foundations, banks and the citizenry in general meet, with the same level of importance. This broad level of participation, as utopian as you can imagine, but just as ineluctable, concerns itself with all the issues involved in configuring the governance required for the collective construction of the city, a solid ideal value set out in the Charter referring to the educative project of the city.

What does the Eugenia Pact consist of and what is its balance sheet?

It is a process that is an attempt to promote active citizenship on the part of citizens and social organisations; cross-institutional coordination; expansion of the public sphere through the diffusion and decentralisation of institutions, power and social inclusion; as well as the activation of resources and synergies addressed to city development linked to cultural growth of individuals. No obligations have been imposed on the signers of the pact; there has been no interference in relation to the legitimacy of the educative decisions made outside the limits of the pact; we have not tried to configure it as a form of privileged access to public resources. It has reached an acceptable level of self-organisation, with its own regulations on how it functions, and it has so far been signed by 400 citizens. In the last five years it has convened various assemblies, coordination meetings and meetings of the thematic committees and it has prepared a considerable volume of documentation.

Which changes have taken place in the municipal government in order to foster

citizen participation?

We are carrying out initiatives to listen to and engage in dialogue with the citizens through the organisation of meetings with committees or individuals, with the collaboration of a bureau set up for this purpose that is called "Dialogue with Citizens and Saturdays with the Mayor", which gathers letters sent to the Council, which it hands over to the Departments of the Council and the competent services, follows up their administrative course and provides the citizens with feedback. This powerful attempt to find specific forms and initiatives for citizen participation, in the different phases of city government, is based on a reform tending towards the maximum decentralisation and a solid idea of the dimensions of the Metropolitan City as a place for redefining projects for the future of the city, from the improvement in the quality of the services provided to its citizens to the ongoing construction of a sense of belonging.

What does forming part of the IAEC mean for Genoa?

Participation in this network fosters the visibility of Genoa in the world, increases the potential for knowledge and dialogue on the course of international events and constitutes a major learning experience for administrators and civil servants.

Which are the benefits of the existence of an Educating City bureau within the organisational structure of the City Council?

The main purpose is to be able to guarantee that we have a place to promote and expedite a large number of public policies which today are characterised by the transversality of the interventions, by inter- and intra-institutional coordination capacity, and by cooperative methodologies amongst the municipal services and outside them.

Which future challenges does Genoa face as an Educating City?

We have the need and opportunity to upgrade our trajectory as an Educating City based on two aspects. The first refers to the contents and the second to the method. The questions posed have not exhausted their own strength and deep significance: "Which are the social and integrating policies we need? How do we confront the major urban and social transformations? What does opening up to citizen participation mean?"

All of these are questions that are fully relevant today. We find ourselves in a situation

editorial

two in the form of workshops while the third consists of an assessment of the work carried out. In the first workshop, persons responsible for the management of services, departments, agencies or municipal companies participate in order to bring to light the educative factors implicit in the different policies, initiatives and actions and to foster collaboration between departments of the City Council.

The second workshop extends invitations to various groups of citizens with the same goal and to foster networking, both amongst these groups and with the local government.

The objective of the third session, in which the IAEC expert team, formed by Mr Joan Manuel del Pozo and Mr Josep Centelles, intervenes along with representatives from the Municipality, is to make an evaluation of the previous sessions and put forward a small number of actions to be encouraged or implemented in the short term by the Municipal Government, in the framework of the Charter of Educating Cities.

At the final seminar an additional session is planned to evaluate the contents and methodology of the pilot seminar and the results obtained. The considerations arising from the evaluation will provide indispensable information for a later stage in training actions of this type. All the cities in the pilot group will participate in this sessions, which will also be open to attendance from other cities.

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of having to reformulate the responses that we have hardly sketched out, because they have already been surpassed by legislative changes, by the activity of the social agents, by the growing splitting up of social links, by the ongoing reduction of resources, by the advance of the new technologies, etc.

In relation to methodology, it appears that the issue of the analysis and location of citizen resources for carrying out a specific project for the city, which has been so valuable in the last few years for the development of Genoa, cannot be postponed. We understand "resources" here to mean the effort made to obtain the greatest involvement possible of the citizenry in their future.

For more information go to: www.edcities.org

experience

Sabadell fosters citizen co-responsibility on health issues

Bearing in mind that health is one of the most important aspects of quality of life, fostering healthy living conditions and the proper running of public health services are also very important for the population in general.

The City Council of Sabadell, a city of approximately 200,000 inhabitants located 20 kms. northwest of Barcelona, set up the Municipal Health Council in 2000 in order to improve the health policies of the city and the quality of life of its citizens. This is done through a participatory lens which takes into account the needs of the population and the vision of different social agents in decision making and planning of municipal health policies.

In the initial phase of the participatory project, the consortium opened itself up to a discussion in order to define the statutes, actions and participation mechanisms of the council. Once the working methodology was defined, the ordinary meetings were first held, which have been taking place 3 or 4 times per year since then.

Participating in the Council are: the Municipal Health Service; representatives of the regional government; primary health care services; hospital services; neighbourhood associations; trade unions; political parties and representatives of the city districts.

Furthermore, of special note is the presence of persons with special difficulties (patients with chronic and mental illnesses) and their relatives, who can directly impact the health services they receive. The idea is to involve all the social agents who intervene in one way or another in the health area.

All of these agents exchange knowledge and information and make it possible to design and start up policies and initiatives in the health area adapted to the real needs of the population. Moreover, by including citizens in the decision making, the Municipal Health Council is fostering both the legitimacy of the programs set up by public administrations as well as the co-responsibility of the citizens themselves in promoting health.

One of the first results of the meetings of the Health Council was the creation of different working commissions including, of special



Council meeting

note, the "Mental Health Working Group", set up in 2001. This group, amongst other initiatives, has promoted the drafting of an action protocol for psychiatric emergencies.

Another example of the work of the Council is the Project against Depression, an awareness campaign designed to foster its early detection led by the "Consorti Hospitalari Parc Taulí", which also involves the participation of civil society.

The Council has also intervened in the process of creating the Municipal Plan against Drug Addition, and, in community health projects in the Neighborhood Refurbishment Plan promoted by the City Council and the Catalan Regional Government in order to stamp out urban decay and improve the quality of life in the districts of Sabadell, in this case: Can Puiggener and Torre Romeu.

The accumulated experience after 8 years of work has encouraged more coordination amongst entities, institutions and the City Council and has allowed the city to detect gaps and to set up specific plans. The challenge that is posed for the near future is to increase the involvement of the citizenry in terms of their individual and collective responsibility in health related issues.

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

"Citizens, social entities and institutions in Sabadell are involved in improving health and the quality of life in their city through participation in the Municipal Health Council"

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did you know that...

★ On 26 June Santarém hosted a meeting of the IAEC Portuguese network under the theme of: "The delegation of powers to the municipalities".

★ During June and July the pilot training seminar on "Educating Cities and Local Governance" was held in Rosario, Quito and Medellín".

★ Guadalajara invites all cities in the IAEC to discuss the theme of the 11th Congress: "Sport, Public Policies and Citizenship" through the blog: <http://xiaice.guadalajara.gob.mx>

the voices of the cities

1. The City Council of Palmela (Portugal) has been fostering the training of adults in the municipality through a system of **Recognition, Validation and Certification of Skills** acquired throughout one's life. Skilled technicians issue certificates in primary and secondary education or give guidance to individuals in programming the training required to obtain their diplomas.



2. The **Diversity Stamp** is an initiative of the Department of Labour of the City Council of Sao Paulo (Brazil) to recognise and give value to the effort of companies and organisations in promoting cultural and gender diversity and in equalising the working conditions of their employees.

3. **León Charge your Batteries** is a program of this Mexican City Council created to collect and recycle batteries, thus reducing pollution caused by poor management of this waste product. Thanks to this awareness campaign León has treated more than 12,000 tonnes of batteries since 2007.

