



NOW COMMUNITY MEETING
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Innovative practices on youth engagement and employment
A selection from the Guangzhou Award for Urban Innovation
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Introduction

The following practices serve to illustrate how cities from different regions in the world are tackling the issue of sustainable urban development with a special focus on youth engagement and employment. These case studies are sourced from the Guangzhou Award for Urban Innovation. The Award is co-sponsored by UCLG, Metropolis and ICLEI. The purpose of the award is to support city-to-city cooperation and the sharing of knowledge, expertise and experience for the accelerated implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Many more case studies are available at: www.guangzhouaward.org/

The cases are presented in alphabetical order by country.

**The La Paz Zebras of Bolivia:
Citizen Culture Project**

This is a city initiative to raise public awareness on road safety in a city where road injuries and death are notoriously high. The La Paz Zebra initiative is an undertaking aimed at actively involving highly vulnerable youth in a citizen education program. Youth-at-risk are trained to become “civic educators” and are paid a minimum wage disguised and role-acting as zebras, in reference to zebra or pedestrian crossings.

The aim is to change both driver and pedestrian behavior in this rapidly growing city of 2.5 million inhabitants. The initiative encourages both groups to obey traffic signs and rules. The outcome is changing people’s behavior resulting in less traffic congestion and accidents, and providing youth at risk with a unique opportunity to become active and responsible citizens.

The impact of this initiative has been mostly local but is now spreading to other cities across Bolivia as well as to other countries in Latin America.

The transformational nature of this initiative lies in its friendly and comic dimension and the innovative manner of engaging and integrating youth at risk. Youth are given a meaningful role in society, one which both empowers them and provides them with respect and dignity. As a



result, many of the more than 5,000 youth who have participated in this initiative in the last 7 years have continued their education and found decent jobs – and some have pursued higher education. This initiative is outstanding in its simplicity, transferability and social impact. It is a highly replicable initiative that requires very few resources and yet responds effectively to SDG 4: education and life-long learning; SDG 8: Decent work and economic growth; SDG 11: sustainable cities and communities, in particular for urban safety and security and public spaces.

Repentigny, Canada

A City for All

Repentigny is an off-island suburb of Montreal, Quebec, Canada. With a population of approximately 84,000, it is the home of many cultural festivities.

“A City for All” is a refreshing and exciting three-initiative proposal wrapped under one banner:

- The Citizens and Families initiative connects citizens and municipal staff with information quickly and effectively, a key characteristic of a smart city.
- The Youth initiative focuses on a multimedia lab housed in the city’s library, providing access to digital technologies focusing on creativity and expression. More than 18,000 teenagers are using the facility since its opening, many of whom are developing essential skills and knowhow for the future.
- The Vulnerable People initiative provides assistance to citizens by telephone or the web linking to a wide range of social and community resources. To date, the data have shown that 30% of requests for assistance were in relation with basic needs: food, shelter and material assistance, and 67% of the vulnerable persons were women.

Importantly, these initiatives are generating insights and data that will be used for future planning and development policies and goals. The City of Repentigny’s initiatives are part of a broad vision and highly replicable actions to develop an inclusive city at a human scale, to enable innovation, and to engage youth in creativity. This initiative most strongly correlates with: SDG 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe resilient and sustainable; SDG 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all ages; SDG 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable education and promote life-long learning opportunities for all; and SDG 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.

Public Participation for a Better Surabaya, Indonesia

3R Waste management

Surabaya is Indonesia’s second largest city and the capital of East Java Province with a population of 3.3 million and a population density close to 10,000 people per square kilometer. Against a background of increasing waste generation and the degradation of social and



environmental conditions, the City of Surabaya, lacking a budget for environmental management, launched a participatory 3R (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle) waste management system.

The initiative started in one suburb. What was unique, however, was the mobilization of everyone: people, community and youth groups, schools, SMEs and enterprises. This breadth of engagement rapidly became a social movement and, as a result, other suburbs and neighborhoods rapidly came on board. The mayor herself visited every neighborhood to explain how the 3Rs would help create jobs and improve quality of life, especially health and wellbeing.

A contributing factor to success also resided in a concerted effort to apply lessons learned from international best practice and technology, leading to the creation of an economically viable waste management system including a robust monitoring and reporting system. Surabaya thus adopted and adapted existing approaches to paper, plastic, metal and glass recycling and for the composting of organic waste and methane capture for energy production.

Important outcomes of the initiative include a reduction in the absolute and per capita production of waste in a city that is experiencing rapid population and economic growth, and new jobs and business opportunities in the recycling and composting business, especially for youth.

Last but not least, the movement is being kept alive with uncommon innovation. For example: residents can pay for their public transport with empty plastic bottles. Surabaya's 3Rs initiative is a compelling contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals 3: health and wellbeing; SDG 6: clean water and sanitation; SDG 7: affordable and clean energy; SDG 8: Decent work and economic growth; and SDG 11: sustainable cities and communities.

Water Banking Movement:

Transforming Glintung, Indonesia - Go Green from Flood Risk Area

Malang city has 5.5 per cent of the city living in slum conditions covering 608 Ha. The slum settlements are largely inhabited by informal sector workers and are often vulnerable to flood and disease. Glintung community, with the support of Malang city, has demonstrated an environmentally sustainable approach to addressing climate change challenge through collective action. The neighborhood leaders inspired a social environmental movement to transform Glintung from a flood-prone settlement into a climate resilient kampong through a participative approach.

Malang city government integrated this social movement with the pilot project – Water Banking movement. The community initiatives included tree planting in the neighborhood, building catchment areas in every house, building vertical sky gardens, producing organic produce and integrating local cultural heritage. The technical solutions were provided by Faculty of



Engineering, Brawijaya University, and local businesses provided a dedicated market for organic food products.

Today, the inhabitants Glingtung no longer suffer from floods and water-borne diseases. Inhabitants of all age groups, and especially youth and older persons, have a steady and growing income as their organic produce is gaining market share. They are also benefiting from better nutrition. This initiative is highly replicable in many low-income communities in most low-income neighbourhoods in the world and supports the implementation of SDG 1: end poverty; SDG 2: end hunger and improve nutrition; SDG 3: health and wellbeing; SDG 8: decent work and inclusive economic development; and SDG 11: sustainable cities and communities.

Krasnoyarsk, Russia Mayor's Labour Unit

Krasnoyarsk is the largest industrial and cultural centre of Eastern Siberia as well as the capital of Krasnoyarsk Territory, the second largest region in Russia by area. The city covers an area of 353 square kilometres and is home to 1,091,000 inhabitants.

Though the young generation takes up an important proportion of this population, there was no youth policy after the collapse of the Soviet Union. During the Soviet era, the young people had not had to worry about not being able to get a job as the youths of today do.

In view of this situation, the city has launched the initiative Mayor's Labour Unit. This initiative recruits teenagers between the ages of 14 to 18 into the Mayor's Labour Unit. During extracurricular time, the city convenes the Unit members and dispatches them for paid social services, for instance, cleaning the streets, hairdressing the pensioners or teaching the elderly how to use a computer. The purpose is to help these young people build up their work skills and to cultivate in them a sense a citizenship and responsibility. Aside from these training opportunities, the city offers the teenagers career guidance. Also, the Mayor meets with these Unit members to discuss a wide range of topics, including the challenges the city is faced up with and what are possible solutions.

Since its launch in 2004, the initiative has been well received by the inhabitants. The popularity, however, could also mean a challenge to the city, as the budget can only cover a certain number of youth. The initiative provides a first experience of employment for 4,000+ teenagers annually and 100,000+ accumulatively. It has also benefitted many more people as the youth carry out meaningful social services. The yellow T-shirt they wear as uniform has become a cultural emblem of the city. Given the success of the initiative in the city, the initiative has been replicated to the whole of the Krasnoyarsk Territory and inspired other Russian cities.



The initiative is particularly relevant to SDG 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all; and SDG11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.

Mezitli, Turkey

Mezitli Women Producers Market

Mezitli Metropolitan Municipality is a fast growing city in the Mersin region of Turkey. It has a population of 187,536 and a 2.87% annual growth. Since 2014, Mezitli has been implementing a women's empowerment initiative that is anchored in a women's only market. The municipality has experienced rapid population growth due to internal migration as well as an influx of refugees from neighbouring Syria. This led to the need for economic projects as well as an inclusive approach to mitigate poverty as well as potential conflict. In this context, improving women's access to economic opportunities was identified as a priority.

Traditionally, women in the region have tended to be economically dependent on male relatives and husbands. This leads to lack of confidence and inability to make many life choices independently. Options for productive activities are often limited by lack of capital as well as an administrative environment that discourages women setting up their own business.

The Women's only market is free (no fees) which makes entry easy for women. A wide range of products is sold, including farm produce from neighbouring rural areas as well as traditional handicrafts. Having a women's only market brings into one space women from different ethnic, educational and socio-economic backgrounds. This promotes exchange and mutual support that build women's confidence. The market is also used to organize women, educate them on production and marketing practice as well as inform them of their rights and encourage them to participate in public life.

Since the initial model market started in 2014, seven more markets have been opened and the intention is to eventually have a women's only market in each of the 40 sub-districts of Mezitli. The municipality is also working on forming a women producers' cooperative that will be in charge of organizing the market.

This initiative is noteworthy for its multi-pronged approach to gender equality, social inclusion and job creation. By providing a dedicated space for women of all ages and all walks of life to take part in economic activities outside the home, the initiative has raised women's, and families' economic status, empowered women to participate in public life and enhanced social cohesion, especially vis-à-vis refugees and immigrants.



This initiative responds to SDG Goals 5: Gender Equality; and SDG 8: Decent work and economic growth; and SDG 11: sustainable cities and communities. It further supports the goal of the New Urban Agenda to establish positive economic and environmental links between urban, peri-urban and rural areas.

Boston, USA:

Youth Lead the Challenge: Youth Participatory Budgeting

Boston is in many ways a thriving city of some 680,000 inhabitants. It has, however, a persistent problem of youth at risk who risk dropping out of school, joining street gangs and jeopardizing their long-term future. Most of these youth have expressed little of no interest in civic affairs, believing that their voice is neither heard nor matters.

This initiative empowers youth to participate in decision-making. Youth are directly involved in participatory budgeting with allocated resources (1 million US\$ per year), participatory policymaking and citywide collaborations. The objective is to increase youth engagement in civic affairs and thereby cultivate lifelong commitment and learning. An extensive network of partners has been created with youth serving agencies, universities and schools. The project has evolved since its first phase to include children as young as 12 years old and incorporates the voice of disenfranchised groups such as homeless youth and youth involved in gangs in detention centers. National and international partnerships are being forged with other cities such as Baku in Azerbaijan.

Since Boston won the Guangzhou Award for Urban Innovation in 2016, many other cities have followed suit, with some smaller cities kick-starting the process with as little as \$50,000.

The initiative is considered exemplary in its commitment to forging collaboration between cities facing challenges with rigorous participatory methodologies led by youth, and continued focus on increasing the voice of youth in local government decision making. The initiative supports the implementation of SDG 4: education and life-long learning; SDG 11: sustainable cities and communities; and SDG 16: access to justice for all and accountable and inclusive institutions.

