

PORTO ALEGRE

Porto Alegre is located in the south of Brazil and is the capital of the state of RS. Porto Alegre has one million four hundred fifty thousand inhabitants, while the state of RS has ten million nine hundred thousand inhabitants.

Considering the present exchange rates, our gross internal product is about 4.8 billion dollars.

We are sometimes the first, sometimes the second capital (always very close to the city of Florianopolis) in the human development index according United Nations standards for cities.

We can begin defining sustainable development as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."

Improving the quality of life in a city, including ecological, cultural, political, institutional, social and economic components without leaving a reduced natural capital and an excessive local debt to the future generations. In that sense, we can emphasize issues such as the importance of gender equality, ethnic affirmative policies, participation in decision-making processes, and efforts on social capital building.

So, what are we thinking, what are we planning or conceiving for our future? Well, we can see it in the perspective of some of the most important guidelines of the city at this moment. I'll try to give you a little explanation one by one with a small comment if the time allows:

THE FIRST ONE THE CITY GATES

The City Gates Project is a project involving the public mass transportation in Porto Alegre.

Today we register around thirty three thousand bus trips per day either coming to the downtown area or leaving it.

I can say that, with the exception of the rush hours, those bus trips, most of the time, arrive in the downtown terminals, with no more than fifteen percent of load, no more than fifteen per cent of passengers.

As a consequence of that, we have a lot of empty buses, a lot of traffic jams and a lot of carbon emission in the downtown area.

We want the people keep coming to the downtown area, as they always did.

We must change the mass transportation system in Porto Alegre.

That's why we created the City Gates project, a BRT (Bus Rapid Transit) project, that is based on three feet or groundworks:

ONE...the gates (that work actually as commuter interchanges and at sametime, as commercial centers).

TWO...a connection of exclusive bus lane between the gates...and
THREE...a fast bus shuttle connecting the gates and passing through the
downtown area.

There is an special issue about this program: he is being built as a PPP, a public
and private partnership.

I think our project is very similar to the Bogota rapid system, except that we have
included the public and private partnership as a possibility.

THE SECOND ONE THE SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROJECT

The city of Porto Alegre launches seventy seven percent of all the sewage
produced by the population in the Guaiba Lake – without treatment. We do this
since I was a child. My generation has a guilt feeling about this.

We decided to change it dramatically implementing a ten years long program to
get back Guaiba Lake waters and make it good for people, good for swimming or
bath.

The Social and Environmental Integrated Project has just began and is moving
population from the waterways or river banks, is promoting democratic public
housing and is building a large sewage treatment plant.

This will be not an easy task, but certainly an truehearted and irreversible
resolution in the purpose of save the lake.

We`ll spend two hundred and fifty million dollars with the works and the
instalation of the sewage system: the pipeline, the treatment plant and the public
housing.

We count with the federal brazilian government and the Interamerican
Developing Bank financial support. We have already the agreement from both.
This program is a commitment in sustainability and his target is to reach in ten
years an amount of ninety two per cent of the sewage treated in Porto Alegre.

THE THIRD ONE THE MANAGEMENT PORTAL

We have implemented since three years ago a new model of management.

In our municipality, the organs for forty years have had the bad habit of working
alone, make decisions strictly within their own circles.

And that was been during a long time a factor of slowness, a cause of time
looseness.

So...

We decided to make a dramatic change...in order to gain efficiency

Instead of give money to organs, or to administrative departments, we decided to give money to programs... redirecting the budget resources toward a new model of management.

And what is a program in this new model of management?...

A program, is a group or a collection of actions, from different organs, or from administrative departments, in the same subject.

An example of a program that we have, is the program: LONG LIVE DOWNTOWN, that consists, mainly, in the revitalization of the downtown area.

Several secretaries share actions in this program... we have the secretary of culture, the secretary of public health, the secretary of planning , the secretary of public transportation, and others.

All of them, doing different actions, or realizing different projects, converging in the same program.

We have twenty one integrated programs.

And this is law today. Each program has a manager and a management committee.

All the programs can be followed by the mayor or by anyone daily through the Management Portal in internet.

The new model of management means management and financial control in the information age, but also means strong democracy and transparency. Control and democracy together in public management means that we wont let an heavy debt to the future. This means sustainability, too.

THE FOURTH ONE

OPTICAL FIBER, POWER LINE and WIRELESS CONNECTIONS

Porto Alegre already has 320 kilometers of optical fiber implanted under the soil But untill 2006 these connections were restricted to the most central areas.

Distant suburban neighborhoods like one named Restinga, for example, that is located 30 kilometers away from downtown and is a low income district of Porto Alegre, had been excluded of this digital network .

High speed internet was no more than a dream for the people who live there.

The ICT enterprise of municipality, that is named Procempa, so adopted an innovative solution: the power line system, linking the distant Restinga to the main digital network of the city using high tension power cables, giving to Restinga high speed access to the worldwide network of computers.

Today 75% of the municipal schools are connected.

In a very short space of time the children of our schools will have each one an individual electronic address and a particular email box.

Until the end of June, a doctor seated in his office located 30 kilometers far from there, will be able to diagnose by internet a medical examination taken in the far district of Restinga.

THE FIFTH ONE LOCAL SOLIDARY GOVERNANCE

Local Solidary Governance is indeed a social innovation and is the most important issue among the many different public actions and political initiatives adopted in the last three years.

The objective is put together many actors, as individual neighbors, dwellers associations, voluntary workers, private enterprises and the municipality in order to elect local targets and join efforts to reach them.

Local Solidary Governance means cooperation, co-responsibility and community initiative. The basic intention is accumulate social capital for the future.

In this framework was created also the ObservaPoa, an special site on internet, where the citizens can find information about the city.

Observapoa is a city database, with geo reference on social services and others local assets by region or district (for example: how many elementary schools, police precinct, public hospitals, nursery schools has a region).

If you are a participatory budget councilor, you can get there the better information to improve the quality of your decision. The ObservaPoa internet site is a people-centered and knowledge-based policy, just in the sense recommended by Undesa and Gaid (the Global Alliance for ICT and Development).

THE SIXTH ONE THE AGENCY FOR INNOVATION

We are creating by law a new agency for innovation. The agency goal is take advantage of the vocational tendency of Porto Alegre as a technological center in south of Brasil.

