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GLOBAL URBAN DEVELOPMENT: THE PORTO ALEGRE SUSTAINABLE INNOVATION ZONE (ZISPOA): TWO YEARS OF ACCOMPLISHMENT AND PROGRESS



The Porto Alegre Sustainable Innovation Zone (ZISPOA): Two Years of Accomplishment and Progress

The Porto Alegre Sustainable Innovation Zone (Zona de Inovação Sustentável de Porto Alegre--ZISPOA) is now entering its third year of activity. Global Urban Development (GUD) previously reported for

the *WUC Newsletter* and World Urban Campaign Website in October 2015 when we began organizing ZISPOA, and again in September 2016 summarizing our first year of progress. In December 2016 we published a detailed article about ZISPOA in a Habitat III special issue ("A New Urban Paradigm: Pathways to Sustainable Development") of the United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) international journal, *Policy in Focus*.



ZISPOA has accomplished many things during the past 12 months. For example, we recently completed our second consecutive year as a main partner with the Swedish Government and Nós Coworking to organize Sweden-Brazil Innovation Week in Porto Alegre. In October 2016, Sweden's Ambassador to Brazil, Per-Arne Hjelmborn, helped us launch a solar charging station for electric car sharing in ZISPOA, built by several local startups. During October 2017, Cecilia Lif, Counselor from the Swedish Embassy in Brasília, helped us inaugurate a major ZISPOA Bike-Friendly Festival and street fair, with exhibits and presentations by many bike organizations, businesses, and leaders such as Mobicidade, Pedal das Gurias, Vila Velô, Pedal da Inclusão, E-Bikes, PedAlegre, Bike PoA, and Porto Alegre City Council Member Marcelo Sgarbossa; with entertainment provided by the Marquise 51 Creative Hub; and with the support of Mayor Nelson Marchezan Jr. and the Porto Alegre City Government in helpfully closing the street to motor vehicle traffic for eight hours. Also, with leadership by Council Member Andre Carus (Chairman of the Health and Environment Commission), the Porto Alegre City Council officially recognized the boundaries of

ZISPOA, with the intention of providing more policy support including expedited permitting for sustainable innovation investments such as installing solar panels on buildings. In addition, we launched the Solar Post, a solar charging station for mobile phones and electronic devices at the Administration School of the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul (UFRGS), built by local startup Elysia Energia Solar.

The theme of last year's lectures and seminars was sustainable cities, and this year's theme was sustainable mobility and sustainable energy, including multiple speeches by Mattias Goldmann, CEO of Fores, a sustainable innovation "think tank" in Sweden, and Professor Semida Silveira, who heads Energy and Climate Studies at the Royal Institute of Technology (KTH) in Stockholm. Last year ZISPOA worked with the the Swedish Institute and with Swedish Incubators and Science Parks on promoting sustainable mobility in Porto Alegre through the global Smart Living Challenge. This year, we worked with them to organize the 7 Day Move Smart Challenge with nearly 100 people in Porto Alegre participating in two Work Labs and sharing their sustainable urban mobility choices every day for one week through videos and postings on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

In March 2017, Professor Luiz Carlos Pinto da Silva Filho, Dean of the UFRGS Engineering School, invited Global Urban Development (GUD) to establish the ZISPOA Project at UFRGS. As a result, many professors and students are now more actively involved in a wide range of activities, including connecting ZISPOA Faculty Advisers with ZUNI (ZISPOA at Universities) for students. More than a dozen university courses at UFRGS, along with several courses at other universities such as PUCRS and Unisinos, have been working on ZISPOA research and action projects. For example, Professor Luis Felipe Nascimento's students at the UFRGS Administration School provided the leadership to create the Solar Post, and also played an active role supporting solar energy, electric car sharing, and the ZISPOA Bike-Friendly App. Professor Julio van der Linden's UFRGS Design students helped create logos and other visual images for ZISPOA projects and activities. Professor Darci Barnech Campani's UFRGS Engineering students helped improve sustainability and resource efficiency for Vila Velô, a startup bicycle store, bike service center, cafe, and meeting space in ZISPOA.



In addition to the ZISPOA Project at UFRGS, where we have office space at the Disaster Risk Management Research Center (GRID) and hold weekly ZIStalks (lectures) and monthly ZISPOA Stakeholders Meetings in the historic Centenario Building, during the past year we helped launch a new startup hub and co-working space in ZISPOA, Órbita Coworking, where we held a special monthly Green Drinks networking event during 2017 Sweden-Brazil Innovation Week, and where we will host another special Green Drinks on 11 November as part the 10-12 November UN-Habitat Urban Thinkers Campus in Porto Alegre. The theme of this GUD-ZISPOA campus is "Sustainable Innovation Zones (ZIS) as Catalysts for the New Urban Agenda, Sustainable Development Goals, and Paris Climate Agreement through Citizen Empowerment, Entrepreneurial Engagement, and Strategic Collaboration." Activities will take place at UFRGS, Órbita Coworking, and the Vila Flores Cultural Association, a dynamic collaborative space in ZISPOA and a key partner of GUD. During the Urban Thinkers Campus we will show and discuss three recent documentary films about the history and future of the sustainable innovation and creative collaboration movements in Porto Alegre: *Forever Gaia*, *Substantivo Femino*, and *Coletivas Criativas*.



Over the past year ZISPOA transformed its initial six working groups focused on advancing our key elements -- Innovation and Technology, Entrepreneurship and Startups, Sustainability and Resource Efficiency, Creativity and Collaboration, Participatory Community Management, and Business-Friendly Environment -- into project-based action groups designed to accomplish our five major goals for becoming the most solar-powered, bike-friendly, energy-efficient, digitally connected, and renewable technology-friendly, circular economy in Latin America. These action groups include POA Solar, ZURB (ZISPOA Urbanism), ZUNI, Collaborative Business Workshops, Green Drinks, and others. Also, numerous sustainable businesses are thriving and startups are growing, such as Ecolite, Loop, Elysia Energia Solar, Reciclo, Young Energy, Ecotelhado, E-Bikes, MVM, Vila Velô, JAD, and many more.



Finally, GUD and ZISPOA are partnering with the US Consulate in Porto Alegre, the Porto Alegre City Government (including Porto Alegre Resiliente, part of the Rockefeller Foundation's 100 Resilient Cities Initiative), UFRGS, and the international GeoSUMR Partnership (Geoinformation for Sustainable Urban Management and Resilience), to strengthen the capacity for using geospatial data to promote solar power and sustainable energy inside ZISPOA and in the nearby 4th District regeneration area.

ZISPOA is the first implementation step of GUD's 2015 World Bank-funded Leapfrog Economic Strategy for the State of Rio Grande do Sul, including its capital city of Porto Alegre, to become the most sustainable and innovative place in Latin America by 2030. GUD intends that Sustainable Innovation Zones be organized in many other cities throughout the state, the nation, the continent, and beyond. The past

two years of accomplishment and progress by ZISPOA have enabled the citizens of Porto Alegre to begin believing that generating sustainable innovation and inclusive prosperity truly is possible, not only for the city and the state, but also for Brazil and for the world.

Article by Marc A. Weiss

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