



**UN-Habitat World Urban Campaign Newsletter, February 2020**

## GLOBAL URBAN DEVELOPMENT (GUD) IN BRAZIL: PORTO ALEGRE URBAN THINKERS CAMPUS IN ZISPOA HIGHLIGHTS PROGRESS OF SUSTAINABLE INNOVATION ZONES



Global Urban Development organized a second Urban Thinkers Campus in Porto Alegre during December 14-19, 2019, following up on GUD's successful Urban Thinkers Campus in November 2017. For this new Urban Thinkers Campus, GUD's organizing partners and event hosts included the Porto Alegre Sustainable Innovation Zone (ZISPOA), Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul (UFRGS), Pacto

Alegre, Vila Flores Cultural Association, UFO Sustainable Innovation Hub, and the Council of Architecture and Urbanism of Rio Grande do Sul (CAU-RS).



GUD's November 2017 Urban Thinkers Campus focused on "Sustainable Innovation Zones as Catalysts for the New Urban Agenda, Sustainable Development Goals, and Paris Climate Agreement through Citizen Empowerment, Entrepreneurial Engagement, and Strategic Collaboration", with particular emphasis on the first two years of substantial progress by ZISPOA. For December 2019, our Urban Thinkers Campus highlighted more than four years of ongoing excellent progress by ZISPOA, as well as the rapidly growing international movement of Sustainable Innovation Zones, with two new zones that were launched in 2018, the Santo Angelo Sustainable Innovation Zone (ZISSAN) in Brazil, and the Panama City Sustainable Innovation Zone (ACTA) in Panama, plus three more zones currently being organized in Brooklyn/New York City (US), London (UK), and Toronto (Canada). Several other Brazilian cities in Rio Grande do Sul, including Caxias do Sul and Pelotas, are considering the possibility of establishing Sustainable Innovation Zones similar to ZISPOA and ZISSAN. Also, numerous cities globally are discussing potentially organizing Sustainable Innovation Zones, from Accra (Ghana) to Bangalore (India).

At our recent Urban Thinkers Campus there was a special session featuring a detailed presentation and discussion about ZISSAN, including 20 people from Santo Angelo led by ZISSAN Coordinator Helenice Reis and ZISSAN's co-founder, Jorge Tonetto. In addition, there was another special session highlighted by four lively and inspiring videos: 1) Jose Barria presenting the ACTA Sustainable Innovation Zone in the Calidonia/La Exposicion neighborhood of Panama City; 2) Michael Menser explaining the Brooklyn Sustainable Innovation Zone around Brooklyn College; 3) Janine Campling, Haddy Cessay-Jones and Prakash Kamtam describing the London Sustainable Innovation Zone in the Borough of Camden; and 4) Michael MacLennan discussing the Toronto Sustainable Innovation Zone in the Scarborough community.

Another focus of GUD's 2019 Urban Thinkers Campus was on our productive collaboration with the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul (UFRGS), where the ZISPOA Project office is located in the GRID research center at the Engineering School's headquarters, the historic Centenario building. UFRGS is consistently ranked among the best universities in Brazil, and is one of the largest and most important institutions located in ZISPOA. Many UFRGS professors are providing leadership and support for ZISPOA through a faculty group called ZISProf, which includes teaching UFRGS courses in which students engage in research and action projects related to ZISPOA, and professors and students together conduct research focusing on ZISPOA and Sustainable Innovation for Porto Alegre. Through the leadership and advocacy of ZISProf, the President and Vice Presidents of UFRGS have committed to the university becoming a world leader in Sustainable Innovation by 2030 in teaching, research, campus facilities management, entrepreneurship and technology development, public and community service, and internationalization.



In recognition of this vital commitment, the Urban Thinkers Campus was opened by welcoming remarks from UFRGS President, Rui Vicente Oppermann, Vice President for Research, Rafael Roesler, and Engineering School Dean, Luiz Carlos Pinto da Silva Filho. This enthusiastic opening was followed by a detailed speech by ZISPOA Coordinator and UFRGS International Visiting Professor Marc Weiss on the "Evolution of ZISPOA since 2015" and then by powerpoint presentations and extensive discussion of seven recent major activities at UFRGS, either directly initiated by, or closely coordinated with, ZISPOA and ZISProf: 1) developing a new Sustainable Innovation Professional curriculum and certificate program for masters and doctoral students across the entire university, directed by three ZISProf leaders, Professors Angela Danilevicz, Luis Felipe Nascimento, and Istefani de Paula; 2) creating a new Sustainability Office, headed by Andrea Loguercio, to facilitate Sustainable Innovation projects at UFRGS; 3) research on how to transform the historic Centenario and Chateau buildings into the two greenest in Brazil, as a first step towards greening the entire university campus, in the spirit of the ZISPOA Solar Post (charging electronic devices from renewable energy) located in the courtyard of the UFRGS Management School; 4) researching how to organize a solar electric cooperative that will enable ZISPOA to become the most solar-powered urban area in Latin America by 2030; 5) developing the Creathon (co-creation hackathon competition) as a collaboration of the Porto Alegre City Government, Pacto Alegre, UFRGS, ZISPOA, UFO, Thought Works, Yara, Sebrae, Tecnopuc, and



Tecnosinos encouraging and supporting new private entrepreneurial and citizen/community-based solutions for recycling and zero waste in Porto Alegre; 6) research on how to develop electric car sharing in ZISPOA, led by the E-24 Mobility Lab at UFRGS; and 7) designing and developing a model Sustainable Innovation Parklet for ZISPOA with a solar post for powering LED lights and charging electronic devices, use of recycled building materials produced by an organization supporting livelihoods for low-income families, a dedicated bike lane and secure bike parking, outdoor street and sidewalk seating and reduced car parking, an open-air green roof with attractive planting, and other key features. This new parklet, located in ZISPOA near UFRGS, opened on the evening of December 17 with a special Green Drinks celebration for the Urban Thinkers Campus. It received financial support from the Swedish Embassy in Brasilia and an international Swedish company, Tetra Pak, and from two local cafes, Josephyna's and Sim Sala Bim, plus in-kind support from Pacto Alegre, UFRGS, the Porto Alegre City Government, and several other supporting local organizations and businesses.

Another session of our recent Urban Thinkers Campus highlighted Porto Alegre urban and regional Sustainable Innovation actions involving GUD, ZISPOA, and UFRGS as key partners, including the Pacto Alegre public-private-civic-university partnership to help generate more dynamic economic growth and promote higher quality of life for Porto Alegre (modeled on Barcelona), and innovative technology initiatives by the city and state governments and other major universities such as PUCRS, UFCSPA, and Unisinos. The 2019 Urban Thinkers Campus also involved: 1) showing "Citizen Jane" (a documentary film about Jane Jacobs) at the Vila Flores Cultural Association, followed by a discussion about Participatory Community Transformation and ZISPOA with the Council of Architecture and Urbanism (CAU-RS), and the UFRGS Post-Graduate Program in Urban and Regional Planning (PROPUR); 2) a co-creation workshop led by Pulsar at the UFO Sustainable Innovation Hub, exploring how people and institutions can strategically organize future Sustainable Innovation Zones in Brazil; and 3) UFRGS student presentations (organized by ZISProf) about their semester-long ZISPOA Sustainable Innovation research and action projects.

Two other important recent activities by GUD and ZISPOA, both held during late September 2019, were: 1) helping organize, for the third

time since 2016, the annual Sweden-Brazil Innovation Week seminar in Porto Alegre, with this year's theme exploring smart city solutions for urban solid waste management (which immediately gave birth to the Creathon project mentioned above); and 2) helping organize at UFRGS an International Seminar on Participatory Community Transformation, with Professors Fabian Domingues, Eber Marzulo, Tarson Nunez, Wrana Panizzi, and other members of PROPUR's Identity and Territory Research Group (GPIT), in collaboration with City University of New York (CUNY) Professor Michael Menser and his Center for the Study of Brooklyn.

Our December 2019 Urban Thinkers Campus helped GUD and ZISPOA conclude the year with high energy and considerable optimism for 2020, starting with UN-Habitat's World Urban Forum 10 during February 8-13 in Abu Dhabi.

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Article by Global Urban Development

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