



Urban Agenda Platform

*The global platform for sharing progress, action and knowledge on the implementation of the New Urban Agenda to achieve sustainable urban development.*

# I AM...: Citizen Involvement, Culture and Sustainable Development

Award Scheme

Guangzhou Award

Sustainable Development Goals

Goal 11 - Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable

## Summary

This project was born from the direct influence of the Agenda 21 for Culture (A21C) of UCLG (Vaudreuil-Dorion has made the Declaration of Vaudreuil-Dorion A21C in 2016), the Sustainable Development Goals and the Fribourg Declaration on Cultural Rights.

## Background and Objective

The first results led 2 cultural policies (Vaudreuil-Dorion, 2013 and region (23 cities), 2015). The city has been closely involved in the development of the A21C of Quebec and the new cultural policy of Quebec. Now the city has added the New Urban Agenda to the works. ORIGINS In 20 years (1994 to 2014), the population of the city increased more than 115%, with over 43% more immigrants. As a result, there was a significant decline in the first language. The elected officials wanted to act before social cohesion crumbled and brought with it important social tensions. All citizens have been affected by these facts. The objective of this initiative is to recreate and reinforce sense of belonging and social cohesion. Place the citizen at the heart of the development of his community through participatory tactical cultural action. - Involve the citizens in their city, in all sectors of activity including better citizen governance and the development of a responsibility to help others. - Be sure that the citizens, the decisions makers, the civil society members and the representatives of major networks work together. - Deploy strategies for citizens to meet each other, to better understand each other and their differences in order to create a better living environment for all. Develop assessment and measurement processes with a university. Develop strategic partnerships in municipal, regional, national and international territories. Position the project and its results in official policies and models. Determine deadlines and deliverables A maximum of partners of the community were involved. This innovative partnership has therefore involved, from the beginning, the public, private and community sectors. For example, the project was launched at an official conference of the Chamber of Commerce bringing together all the leaders of all sectors. The leader: City of Vaudreuil-Dorion The main partners (more than 125): Chamber of Commerce, School Boards, The Health and Social Services Center, community organizations, etc. All the city services are involved. • Increase of the culture and social team (from 1 to 6 employees) and budget (more than \$800,000). • More than \$200,000 from the business community each year. • More than \$1,000,000 additional invested since 2011 by an agreement with Quebec government. • Building of a new library as a flagship venue for citizen participation and the A21C inside a new Town Hall (\$15,000,000) (currently in project). • Substantial increase in supply by community, cultural and health organizations.

## Outcomes and Impacts

The initiative hopes to achieve better quality of life for all. Evaluations and testimonials prove that Fragile or stigmatized citizens feel included (new networks, reflex of inclusion and help, etc.). Feelings of pride and belonging have increased significantly. Marie-Julie McNeil of the Integrated Health and Social Services Center: "The I AM... program has achieved important results... Thanks to the partnerships created, the city is no longer working in a vacuum. All subjects gained, from mental health to perinatal mourning, to problems related to homelessness and poverty. By working on issues such as violence against women or seniors, the city has made the public aware of the importance of opening our eyes to injustice. Thanks to Vaudreuil-Dorion, cultural mediation has become an important tool that saves lives and rebuilds social ties across the country." The city uses complete professional evaluation tool to assess how the project goes. The indicators include the recurrence of participation, the significant meetings made by the participants, the maintenance of contacts between citizens, the skills developed, the learning acquired, the concrete results of the partner organizations, etc. The measurements are carried out by university trainees at the master's level and the members of the City team trained for this. The city has created specific tools in planning, animation of participative meeting, follow-up, documentation and evaluation with the help of technologies in place. Training in cultural mediation and various specific training by partners according to themes (mental health, violence against women, etc.). This initiative has also brought the city More than 50 conferences and community coaching in Canada and internationally in 7 countries, including the first 2 World Summit on Culture 14 prizes including the international UCLG-Mexico City- Culture 21 prize in 2016 Pilot city in 2014 for the creation of the Culture 21 Actions tool UCLG - Leading city A21C worldwide since 2015 UCLG - Application book of the method I AM... to be published in 2018 in 3 languages



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## Innovative Initiative

I AM... takes the form of a living laboratory in the community and animated by the community. At its launch, the city imposed to itself a great challenge; 70 public activities in 3 months to quickly identify good moves, obstacles and mistakes. A rigorous evaluation of each action allows the city to readjust. When the elected representatives accepted this project in 2009, the risk was enormous. Elected officials had the courage to rely on this concept based on the proximity and transformation of each individual rather than the number of people joined at the same time. The inspiration for this unique and innovative model was inspired, among other things, by the experiences of Lyon (France). Vaudreuil-Dorion has created its own model by pushing further the role of the City and the frameworks of citizen participation. The City finances, but above all, it gathers, promotes, trains, agitates and facilitates. It deploys mechanisms of development of pride and belonging. The strategy implemented for I AM... has been applied in the municipal policies that followed (e.g. Environment, Culture) and in the way of interacting in urban development (urban revitalization of the Harwood sector, building of a new library, etc.). Also, the City has created a position dedicated to an artist on his Planning Advisory Committee. It is now being applied throughout the region by partners working in health, social development and business, for example. Every year, more than 100 workshops take place without the City being involved. The local strategy has become a regional and often extra-regional reflex since the support and conferences given by Vaudreuil-Dorion to these colleagues. Obstacles for the implementation came in the form of distrust, but then it was soon overcome in just a few months. Cultural and community organizations first thought that the city needed to take credit for their actions. Artists realized that the city offered them an important lever for their career and to anchor themselves in their community. And several cultural communities have accepted the innovative approach and are committed to it. Building trusting relationships with community leaders is the city's greatest asset.

## Conclusion

Vaudreuil-Dorion is convinced that all cities in the world can apply the model I AM... because it is focused on listening to one's environment, transversal partnerships, citizen participation as well as the importance and uniqueness of the culture of each environment. Here, culture is essential for the sustainable development of communities. The city has already begun to engage in the transmission of the experiences and is ready to continue to the extent of the city's capabilities. Since 2012, Vaudreuil-Dorion has offered more than 50 conferences, trainings and coaching workshops to as many communities in Canada and around the world (Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, South Korea, Spain, France and Mexico). An application guide for cultural mediation was written by the founder and project manager of I AM... and will be launched by the City this fall. This same person is, among others, a member of a university cultural research group, the Culture Montréal Permanent Commission on Cultural Citizenship and the official mentor A21C of the Canadian organization Les Arts et la Ville for which the City was selected as the host of the next international conference on culture and sustainable development in June 2019.

**RELEVANCE TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS**

Goal 1: End poverty in all of its forms  
Goal 2: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture  
Goal 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all ages  
Goal 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable education and promote life-long learning opportunities for all  
Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls  
Goal 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all  
Goal 9: Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation  
Goal 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable  
Target 1: Access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services and upgrade slums  
Target 3: Participatory, integrated and sustainable human settlement planning and management  
Target 4: Safeguard cultural and natural heritage  
Target 6: Improve air quality and manage municipal and other wastes  
Target 7: Universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible green and public spaces, in particular of women, children older persons and persons with disabilities  
Target 8: Support positive economic, social and environmental links between urban, peri-urban and rural areas  
Target 9: Improving resource efficiency, mitigation and adaptation to climate change, resilience to disasters and implement holistic disaster risk management  
Target 10: Support least developed countries in building sustainable and resilient buildings utilizing local materials  
Goal 12: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns  
Goal 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts  
Goal 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions for all  
Goal 17: Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development