

Application Form

CATEGORIES IN WHICH YOU WANT TO APPLY THE EXPERIENCE

1: TYPE OF EXPERIENCE: *choose the most important element (choose only one element which you consider the most outstanding of your practice).*

A) Deliberation Citizen assembly / deliberation workshop / lottery / legislative theater / participatory planning	
B) Decision Participatory budget / referendum / consultation / participatory process with vote	
C) Citizenship Citizenship / community action / permanent council / civic education / associationism / other initiatives to reinforce local democracy	X

2: TYPE OF GOVERNMENT: *choose one only.*

A) Up to 50,000 inhabitants (towns, small cities, rural areas).	
B) Cities between 50,000 and 250,000 inhabitants.	X
C) Cities between 250,000 and 1,000,000 inhabitants.	
D) Large cities or urban areas of more than 1,500,000 inhabitants.	
E) Supralocal, regional, provincial governments	

Experience data: *complete the information below in a clear and concise manner.*

Title of the experience: "Ave para Todos"
Name of the city or region: Guimarães
Inhabitants of the city or territory: 156 852
Country: Portugal
Institution presenting the candidacy: Laboratório da Paisagem de Guimarães

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Website of the experience or institution: https://www.labpaisagem.pt/oaveparatodos/		
Profiles in social networks of the experience or the institution: https://www.instagram.com/labpaisagem/ https://www.facebook.com/labpaisagem https://www.linkedin.com/company/labpaisagem/mycompany/ https://twitter.com/labpaisagem		
Start date of the experience: December 2019		
End date of the experience: July 2022		
Budget of the experience: <p>The project had an approximate budget of 40.000€, which covered its three main areas, environmental education, research, and communication. This budget ensured that all initiatives were free and open to participation.</p> <p>Considering the human resources involved in the project, its education component was led by two environmental education technicians partially allocated to the project, while the research component was carried out by two researchers also partially allocated to the project. Communication and social media were managed by the communication coordinator. All other initiatives and components of the project implementation were carried out by the team at the Landscape Laboratory.</p>		
Type of candidacy <i>(mark with an X in the right column)</i>	New experience	X
	Innovation on an existing experience	
	Continuity of an experience	
Type of experience <i>(mark with an X in the right column, you may choose more than one)</i>	Participatory budgeting	
	Participatory planning	
	Standing council	
	Workshop / meeting for diagnosis, monitoring, etc.	

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	Public hearing / forum		
	Poll / referendum		
	Assemblies / Citizen juries / Deliberation spaces		
	E-government / Open government / Digital platforms		
	Citizen initiative		
	Other (specify): Research and Environmental Education Project		X
Objective of the experience <i>(mark with an X in the right column, you may choose more than one)</i>	To achieve higher levels of equality in terms of participation		
	Including diversity as a criterion for inclusion		
	Community empowerment		X
	To empower non-organised citizens		X
	To increase citizen's rights in terms of political participation		
	To connect different tools of participation within a participatory democracy "ecosystem"		X
	To improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the mechanisms of participatory democracy		
	To improve the quality of public decision-making through the mechanisms of participatory democracy		
	To improve the evaluation and accountability of the mechanisms of participatory democracy		
To improve any public policy through the active participation of the public		X	
Territorial area <i>(mark with an X in the right column, you</i>	All the territory	Local	
		Regional	X



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<i>may choose more than one)</i>	District	
	Neighbourhood	
Thematic area <i>(mark with an X in the right column, you may choose more than one)</i>	Governance	
	Education	X
	Transport	
	Urban management	
	Health	
	Security	
	Environment / Climate change and/or urban agriculture	X
	Civic associations, grassroots and new social movements	
	Culture	
	Housing	
	Job creation	
	Decentralization	
	Local development	
	Training / learning	X
	Economy and/or finances	
	Legal regulations	
Social inclusion		
All		

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	Other (write the topic)	
<p>Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) associated with the practice</p> <p><i>(mark with an X in the right column, more than one option can be chosen, you can also add the specific target)</i></p>	SDG 1 - No poverty	
	SDG 2 - Zero hunger	
	SDG 3 - Good health and well-being	
	SDG 4 - Quality education	X
	SDG 5 - Gender equality	
	SDG 6 - Clean water and sanitation	X
	SDG 7 - Affordable and clean energy	
	SDG 8 - Decent work and economic growth	
	SDG 9 - Industry, innovation and infrastructure	
	SDG 10 - Reduced inequality	
	SDG 11 - Sustainable cities and communities	
	SDG 12 - Responsible consumption and production	
	SDG 13 - Climate action	
	SDG 14 - Life below water	X
	SDG 15 - Life on land	
	SDG 16 - Peace, justice and strong institutions	
	SDG 17 - Partnership for the goals	

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PART 2: DESCRIPTION OF THE EXPERIENCE

Fill in the following fields clearly and concisely. You can add links, images or graphics if you consider it appropriate.

Context:

In a **maximum of 300 words**, present the cultural, geographical, historical, institutional and socioeconomic context of the city, region or territory in which the experience takes place.

Guimarães is a city located in the northwestern region of Portugal, with a rich cultural and historical heritage, having been declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2001 due to its significant role in the formation of the Portuguese national identity. In fact, Guimarães is commonly referred to as the "birthplace of Portugal" due to its association with the country's founding legend.

Geographically, Guimarães is situated in a valley surrounded by hills and mountains, with the Ave River running through the city. The region is known for its fertile soil and mild climate, which has contributed to the development of agriculture and livestock farming. Guimarães is a thriving industrial centre, with a strong textile and clothing industry, as well as manufacturing in areas such as metalworking and plastics. The city also has a growing tourism sector, which has benefited from its cultural and historical attractions.

In recent years, Guimarães has taken significant steps towards promoting environmental sustainability and education. For instance, the city has implemented several initiatives aimed at reducing its ecological footprint, such as prioritizing renewable energy sources, reducing the city's reliance on fossil fuels, and mitigating its carbon footprint, promoting sustainable transportation options, and implementing waste reduction programs, such as composting, recycling, and waste separation inspiring a transition to a circular economy model. Additionally, the municipality has developed an environmental education program for youth, coordinated by the Landscape Laboratory, which encourages schools to adopt sustainable practices and engage in environmental activism. Thus, environmental education is seen by the municipality as a clear commitment to the empowerment of youth, as it equips them with the knowledge and skills necessary to become active and responsible citizens in the fight against climate change and environmental degradation, shaping the future of their community and the planet as a whole.

Precedents:

Explain the precedents and origins of the experience: if it is the innovation of an existing experience, what are its origins; if it is a new experience, what are the antecedents in participation in your city, region or territory. You can also indicate if you have been inspired by experiences in other cities/countries. (In a **maximum of 300 words**).

The experience described here is a river conservation project with the intention to preserve the biodiversity around the river, clean the water lines but at the same time raise awareness of the community that lives, work or studies along the river.

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It started because our water lines were one of the worst aspects that our city had in terms of environment, and the city hall, even though we already had a cleaning plan, decided to upgrade this plan, and create a project more focused on the community, and how could they help us maintain the river clean and preserve it.

Within the regional Portuguese context, this project is distinctive as there are currently no similar initiatives in the region. The project is characterized by its multidisciplinary approach, which includes scientific research as well as communication and environmental education components. The latter are designed to provide the community, especially young people with knowledge and persuasive arguments for decision-making regarding the preservation and conservation of rivers and their biodiversity.

So, this project aims to empower and engage the local community in promoting biodiversity and a better future for all, through knowledge dissemination and participatory activities.

Objectives of the experience:

*What is the objective listed in Part 1 that you think is the most important, and indicate other outstanding objectives of the experience. (In a **maximum of 100 words**).*

The main objective of this project was to create a sentimental bond between the local community and our main water line (Ave River), by giving them context and history of those said water line, information about the biodiversity that lives there and giving them tools to help them participate in the conservation of our natural heritage. Other important objectives include a) Fostering scientific research on our water lines and their biodiversity; b) Creating opportunities for public engagement and participation in conservation activities; c) Building conservation plans using the local community ideas for better preserve the water lines.

Methodology:

*Describe the methodology of the experience: phases of the process, participation channels. (In a **maximum of 300 words**).*

The project's methodology combined several different approaches, including environmental education in schools¹, a communication campaign on the preservation of water lines, and scientific research and environmental education that resulted in the publication of a book about the methodology of this project², finalising with an expansion of the project for two local secondary water lines.

The environmental education part was the most notorious, as it involved more than 600 students between 24 different schools and ages ranging between 9 and 18 years old. There was a mix of theoretical sessions and more practical ones. Firstly, the participants learned a

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little bit about the river, his biodiversity, geographical location, and a bit about its past, and then we created a small assembly where the participants could devise some ideas to preserve and protect the river. We ended the project with a field trip to the riverbanks with every single participant so they could make an oversight of the conditions of the river, to give them tools to create a more dynamic and participative community.

All initiatives carried out within the project were completely free of charge, making participation channels easier and more accessible to all. This was a deliberate effort to ensure that the project was inclusive and that everyone, regardless of their socioeconomic background, had the opportunity to learn about and engage in the conservation of our rivers and their biodiversity. One of the core ideas of the project was that environmental education and conservation initiatives should be available to everyone, and that by providing free access to such activities, more people will be inspired to get involved in protecting our natural resources. In this way, the “Ave para Todos” not only contributed to the conservation of rivers but also helped to build a more equitable and sustainable community.

¹<https://www.labpaisagem.pt/oaveparatodos/>

²<https://www.labpaisagem.pt/14327-2/>

Innovation:

*Explain what you consider as the most innovative aspect(s) in the practice. (In a **maximum of 150 words**).*

In terms of innovation, this project had a lot of aspects that can be considered new. For example, the fact that assemblies were created between participants (children and young adults) to have their opinion about the conditions of the Ave River as well as creating solutions to solve the problems that this river was suffering from. The most important part of this project was that the political local power listened to the ideas of this young participants and gave life to some of them: for example, creating a floating barrier to collect the drifting plastic waste from the river, creating a bin to discard masks, and even fishing from the past an old profession called river guard.

Also, this project created a cell phone app that is free to anyone download, that has some tools for the community to help us preserve the river and maintain it clean.

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Inclusion:

*Point out the importance of including as many groups and diverse populations as possible, and how you have achieved it. (In a **maximum of 150 words**).*

The most important part of this project was to involve the local community, such as students, local associations, parish councils, for the same goal, to protect and preserve our natural heritage and our planet. So, the project focused a lot on that aspect, by using participants assemblies, and community field trips to create the pretended bond between the community and the river. The fact that the ideas given to us by the participants were used by the local government creates a political and decision-making inclusion on the community. And every single tool and session applied in this project was created so that everyone could understand it, being young or old, different literacy grades or scholar degrees.

Communication:

*What has been the strategy and communication channels of the experience for engaging the population. (In a **maximum of 150 words**)*

The “Ave para Todos” project has employed a variety of communication strategies to engage the population. The project was promoted by the Landscape Laboratory, which has used multiple channels such as its website, social media platforms, and newsletters to promote the project's activities and results. Besides that, a book was published containing all the methodology of the project so that other municipalities could learn from it and implement the same type of projects in their own region. The app created throughout the project also can be used has communication, because it can be used to sensitise the population, and used as a tool for practical classes in schools. This project was already presented in different international and national congress, demonstrating the importance of this project for the community¹.

¹<https://sites.ipleiria.pt/5ciعاد/pt/apresentacao/>

Articulation with other actors:

*Explain how the experience was articulated with different actors and simultaneous or pre-existing processes. What roles did these participants assume? Explain the degree of success of this articulation. (In a **maximum of 150 words**)*

This project involved different set of actors, including schools, groups of volunteers, local and national scientific experts, and local government.

Schools were engaged in awareness-raising activities, educating children about the importance of preserving our rivers and their role in the environment. Groups of volunteers were involved in overseeing the future conditions of the river and spreading the information through the community. Scientific experts provided the technical knowledge. Local government contributed to learn and apply the solutions encountered during the project.

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The involvement of multiple stakeholders ensured the project's success and sustainability, highlighting the importance of community engagement in environmental initiatives.

Evaluation:

*What evaluation mechanisms have been implemented? Develop whether the citizenry has participated in the evaluation of the practice. (In a **maximum of 300 words**).*

In this project different evaluation mechanisms were used to measure the impact created in the community.

The environmental education component of the project underwent a more thorough evaluation process through the administration of questionnaires to all students at both the start and end of the program. The survey was designed to understand what their prior knowledge about the river was, and to assess what they learned during this project. In each session, the level of student satisfaction was assessed. The data collection process was anonymous and allowed for free notes on students' opinions about the explored topics.

Furthermore, social media platforms were used to disseminate project information and to engage with the public. The project team monitored social media comments and feedback, responding to inquiries, and addressing concerns. Social media metrics, such as likes and shares, were also used to evaluate the project's reach and impact and even the number of copies of the book that were distributed where counted as well.

The community also helped evaluating the impact of this project by using the app created for the project and giving us feedback on it and giving us a lot of information necessary for the preservation of the river.

Impacts and results

*Describe the impacts and results of the process. How many people have participated, and what are their profiles? What have been the impacts on public policies, the functioning of the administration, and the citizenry? (In a **maximum of 300 words**).*

This project had a good impact in the community, in terms of the number of people reached and the changes achieved in public policies and community mindset towards conservation and preservation of rivers. It is difficult to calculate the exact number of participants, but we estimate a reach of more than a thousand citizens, if we count the spread of the information received in our sessions from the participants to their families and friends. The project's communication in an international congress and in other public events played a crucial role in increasing its reach.

The involvement of the community, particularly youth, was a vital component of the project. Habits developed in early ages tend to endure into adulthood, and it is essential to create a relationship of respect for nature conservation from an early age. More than 90% of the participants said in the last questionnaires that they changed their own behaviours and habits towards environment conservation. Besides that, the fact that these young

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participants saw their ideas being used by the local government can have a huge impact in their future professional life, their decision-making and in their political trust.

The app that was created in this project had, has, and will have a considerable amount of impact in the community, because it is a tool provided to the local community so they can be informed, inform the authorities and make their contribution to help preserve this natural heritage spots, creating a more sustainable city for them and protect their planet.

PART 3: EXPERIENCE SUMMARY

*A summary of the experience: origins, objectives, operation, results, monitoring, and evaluation. (Do not hesitate to repeat aspects that have already been written before. This summary will be shared on the digital platform for open evaluation and in the publication of the award). (In a **maximum of 500 words**).*

“Ave para Todos” started because our water lines were one of the worst aspects that our city had in terms of environment, and the city hall, even though we already had a cleaning plan, decided to upgrade this plan, and create a project more focused on the community, and how could they help us maintain the river clean and preserve it.

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This project had a lot of different methods of evaluation, the environmental education component of the project underwent a more thorough evaluation process through the administration of questionnaires to all students at both the start and end of the program. Furthermore, social media platforms were used to disseminate project information and to engage with the public.

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In conclusion, “Ave para Todos” was a successful initiative that achieved its main objective of creating a bond between the participants and the Ave River, but also promoting river conservation through education and research. It is a steppingstone and an alternative approach that can be replicated and used in a national or international level.

We invite you to share annexes that allow you to better illustrate your experience: videos, photographs, documents... These can be sent through a file transfer service, such as WeTransfer, Dropbox or Google Drive.

Thank you for participating!