

## ON BOARD Policy Declaration

### PREAMBLE

Society and cities are constantly undergoing rapid and profound transformation, frequently with a large degree of uncertainty. Globalisation, digitalisation, the information revolution and demographic and labour shifts, all pose greater demands upon society and its educational systems.

Education is one of the most powerful tools to provide people with the necessary knowledge and skills to face these new challenges. Correctly trained and prepared citizens ensure resilient, competitive and efficient cities.

Despite society having undergone profound and rapid advances in the last few decades; education has not evolved at the same pace. It is often highlighted that 21st Century children are learning via 20th Century methodologies. The knowledge society now demands that new educational strategies are found in order to face the challenges of the 21st Century and ensure all citizens are provided with the necessary skills and tools.

As illustrated in the document "Future and Work skills", presented by the OECD at the 2nd meeting of the G20 Employment Working Group, it is necessary "to prepare young people for the jobs of the future by ensuring that they are equipped with the right type of skills to successfully navigate through an ever-changing, technology-rich work environment, and give all workers the opportunity to continuously maintain their skills, upskill and/or reskill throughout their working lives".

Europe currently faces important challenges in education, the effort and involvement of all stakeholders will aid to meet them. Local authorities can play a key role in the education of their citizens. Their local context offers an established network of people they can collaborate with and from whom they can learn. Local governments have a key and strategic position to transform the urban environment into another educational agent. They have privileged knowledge of the stakeholders, the opportunities and the needs within the city, the economic, social, and cultural frameworks which can be made available to educational leaders, schools and teachers in order to convert these needs into real opportunities for students. They can act as a conduit ensuring that all agents in the city interact and have an active role in the educational process resulting in relevant and meaningful learning, which will additionally improve student motivation. As stated in the Pact of Amsterdam, cooperation between local authorities

and local communities, civil society, businesses and knowledge institutions is at the core of the Urban Agenda approach.

### Viladecans

The experience of Viladecans has proven that proactive policies, leading authorities and a committed education community comprising of relevant public and private sector agents in the city, have significantly improved academic results and, equally importantly, have provided greater alignment with students' interests and motivation, with families' educational expectations for their children, and with local companies' requisites in an ever-changing business environment. The participation of and contribution from a diverse range of local figures, has made the education system richer, and more responsive to real and immediate issues and challenges.

Viladecans' Educational Innovation Network (EIN) is designed to increase its citizen's capacities, broaden their life opportunities and ultimately to improve its wellbeing. The collaboration between public administration, schools, private enterprise and families has acted as the catalyst for the renewal of the education scenario in Viladecans. It has enabled a series of projects and synergies that together have brought forth a significant evolution of education in Viladecans and its upgrade in order to meet the 21st Century's educational needs.

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We, the six European Cities that participate in the **URBACT III ON BOARD Transfer Network: Viladecans (Spain), Nantes (France), Tallinn (Estonia), Albergaria-a-Velha (Portugal), Halmstad (Sweden) and Poznan (Poland)**

### BELIEVE THAT:

\_Education should be a high priority amongst local policies and strategies.

\_Modernisation of the traditional education systems is necessary in order to prepare our citizens for the 21<sup>st</sup> century's challenges and needs.

\_Local Governments are drivers of educational innovation. We are aware of the opportunities within and the needs of the city, we have unrivalled knowledge of the stakeholders and, above all, we nurture future citizens. Therefore, we should play an active role as educational policy-makers and to lead the process of modernisation and adaptation of the education system to fulfil the new needs and to meet upcoming challenges.

\_Education is the responsibility of society as a whole. Everyone is responsible in the education process: administration, teachers, families, entities and enterprises.



Education should be a shared concern and responsibility of the entire community in order to broaden opportunities of students to their full potential, in and out of school centres, because everybody is able to act as an education agent.

\_Education centres that are open and permeable to their immediate environment and to local stakeholders allow them to take into account the local needs whilst contributing to social inclusion and community building.

\_The Educational Innovation Network Good Practice is a valuable tool for cities to enable multiple forms of collaboration and the sharing of views amongst practitioners and education stakeholders. This network can act as a living education innovation ecosystem where each part has an impact on other parts and where ideas trigger new ideas and partnerships generate further partnerships.

## COMMIT TO:

### As regards to Education policies:

\_Encouraging Education is a key element in the city's strategic documents to ensure it holds a crucial position in the city's development.

\_Encouraging the Education Department holds a relevant position within the political structure in the local administration.

\_Ensuring a cross-sectional approach from the administration by fostering the collaboration of the relevant municipal services towards a common education vision (Education, Business promotion, Youth, etc.).

\_Fostering the collaboration with different local stakeholders to advance education in our cities towards a quality and modern local education model that suits our respective local contexts whilst meeting the needs and expectations of our citizens.

\_Promoting the engagement of all public and private stakeholders in education in the city (municipal education departments, teachers, parents, local companies, youth clubs, leisure entities, museums, music academies, sports clubs, etc.) and making them aware of their role in the education process.

\_Fostering the opening of schools amongst families, enterprises, entities and other local stakeholders.

\_Providing relevant training to teaching staff facilitating the necessary skills to respond to the developing educational needs of their students.

\_Promoting the internationalisation of teaching staff, students and families by encouraging their participation in international projects or initiatives.

\_Promoting ICT in education, not as an education target, but as a means to improve the teaching-learning process and a tool for inclusion.

\_Promoting innovative educational initiatives

\_Considering possible further opportunities of sustainability of the ON BOARD network once the URBACT project finalises.

### As regards to the ON BOARD project:

For the part of the Transfer Cities, Nantes, Tallinn, Albergaria-a-velha, Poznan and Halmstad commit to:

\_Adapt and transfer Viladecans **Educational Innovation Network** to the extent committed at the ON BOARD project contractual documents. More specifically:

1. To follow the commonly agreed **methodology**, which establishes the step-by-step process to progressively **transfer** the Educational Innovation Network.
2. To support with the required human and financial **resources** to make the Educational Innovation Network effective and operational.
3. To encourage that municipal policies acknowledge and take into consideration the **high profile of education and the role of the Educational Innovation Network** as an instrument for innovative and quality education projects.
4. **To develop the pilot projects** and initiatives in education so as to create the conditions for 'learning by doing' within a monitored context and the ON BOARD partners' support and expertise.
5. To enable the **communication channels** amongst the Network management bodies, the local authorities, the technical officers, and the members to operate and ensure suitable the flow of information.
6. To offer **support, expertise and guidance to the city of Viladecans** to help improve the Educational Innovation Network and contribute to shape and deliver a better version of it.

For the part of the Good Practice City, **Viladecans** commits to:



Foster the changes needed to improve the Educational Innovation Network in the city. More specifically, the City will:

1. Make all **information and knowledge available** for ON BOARD Transfer Cities throughout the ON BOARD project.
2. Dedicate the **resources and efforts** needed to improve the Educational Innovation Network.
3. Broaden the scope of the Network by extending it to **additional and more diverse education agents** in the city,
4. Define a set of **measurement tools** to monitor the impact directly attributed to the Network,
5. Increase self-management and **sustainability of the Network functioning** and its members.

The representatives of the respective cities commit to the above and sign

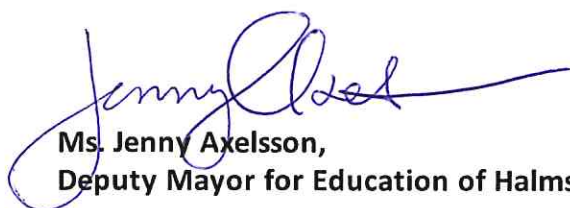
Signatures:



Mr. Carles Ruiz,  
Mayor of Viladecans



Mr. Antonio Augusto Amaral Loureiro e Santos,  
Mayor of Albergaria-a-velha



Ms. Jenny Axelsson,  
Deputy Mayor for Education of Halmstad



Ms. Katarzyna Kierzek-Koperska,  
Deputy Mayor of Poznan



**Mr. Vadim Belobrov**,  
Deputy Mayor for Education of Tallinn

**Ms. Myriam Nael**,  
Deputy Mayor for Education of Nantes

