



ON BOARD

Nantes Transfer Story

Introduction

“My interest to be involved in this project is to have the opportunity to meet people we know exist but don’t have the opportunity to meet, and then together be innovative joining our efforts towards a common goal”, says Fabienne Affilé Headmaster of Pre-school Henri Bergson in the South District of Nantes.

The ON BOARD **Educational Innovation Network (EIN)** represents the formal and visible structure and organisation that integrates the rich and diverse education projects being developed in Nantes, which today are not so coordinated or well-known outside. The signing of the political declaration in Viladecans (Feb 2019) concretised our common ON BOARD beliefs that:

- modernisation of the traditional education systems is necessary in order to prepare our citizens for the 21st century’s challenges and needs
- Education is the responsibility of society as a whole
- The Education Innovative 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.

For this, the role of cities is essential.



Jean-Marc Launay, Deputy Headmaster of Stendhal secondary school in Nantes, had lots of things to say after the ON BOARD Team Meeting in Halmstad:

“I learned a lot about the global and shared approach based on neuroscience. I was also very interested in hearing about the way Halmstad teaches starting not only from pupil’s needs but also their desires and interests especially in designing special tools to help the concentration and well-being of children such as the « quiet corner » with special furniture (armchair...) and the « indoor stationary bikes » for getting students to relax again after a stressful time.”



Jean-Marc Launay in the center during a speed-networking session in Halmstad

Jean-Marc Launay was most impressed about the strong partnership developed with the university and how it helped support scientific and technological teaching approaches and interactions with companies, including the innovative integration of company-designed “smart” furniture to try out in the classroom.

Launay came away convinced that diverse stakeholder *“confidence and shared visions are the basic points to have a better chance to make pupils successful”*.

Why did Nantes need an Educational Innovation Network?

Now, let’s step back in time, for context, in 2017. Nantes was faced with the challenge of how to cope with its economic developments that should help position the region as a technological and innovation pole, meeting the requirements for technological skills and competences that all this entails. The city was therefore keen on knowing more about Viladecans’ plans for introducing Learning and Knowledge Technologies, because we felt this could be an opportunity for us to learn how to tackle our city’s digital divide.

Economic and social inequalities within the city and between different districts were also concerns. From what we understood, the EIN’s cross-cutting and collaborative approach could be the most suitable means to strengthen relationships between local stakeholders, in particular families, since they play such a vital role in the success of children’s education.

At the URBACT City Festival in Tallinn, in September 2017, we got the first chance to know more about Viladecans' EIN Good Practice up close. We were immediately impressed by the integrated approaches, strong political involvement, and family engagement, together with innovative ways of putting unusual stakeholders together, especially companies. Admirable, too, was the way Viladecans integrated parents in the school's activities and even had a special room in the school for their meetings.

That said, we in Nantes knew there were many differences between the situation in Viladecans and our own.

2 main differences stood out:

- the size of the city (Viladecans is ¼ the size of Nantes)
- the organization of schools and links with the city are different, too.

Significant as these differences were, we nonetheless set out to implement the ON BOARD transfer process, adapting it to our situation in the creation of the URBACT Local Groups (ULG) in only 2 City Districts (North and South) to start with.



Colin de la Higuera (teacher at the University of Nantes) participated in the ON BOARD meeting in Albergaria.



Colin is a computer scientist-turned-educator who currently holds a chair at UNESCO. He felt the great energy coming from the Portuguese hosts as they showed their education innovation projects, which brought in a wide variety of stakeholders such as companies, parents, even grandparents, and the university.

“I think it’s great, and I noticed it also with the other cities of the project. The wish to have a more open and innovative approach of education is absolutely fantastic”.

Colin took note of another phenomenon, about how the EIN stakeholders worked, in practice. *It was “a kind of « nice naivety », of their not being afraid of obstacles. I have sometimes the impression that we take obstacles too much into account and so we give up changing things because it would be a too big job.* He went on: *...“Projects will be successful only if we change our habits. Projects can be stronger than habits”.*

From Good Practice inspiration to making things happen locally

Not to “copy and paste” the Good Practise but to be “Inspired” by it - to adapt it to our territorial approach and the size of our city: that’s why we chose to start projects in the 2 pilot districts (North and South), which shall allow us to monitor success and to plan for post-project network sustainability. To be absolutely clear about this approach with our URBACT Local Group members, we concentrated on 4 thematic priorities for the local stakeholders, each one involving its own sub-set of complex actions:

First, is **Territory**, which means defining the precise geographic work reference, the required approach defined by project stakeholders in that area, and face the challenges of a "living project" approach, which requires flexibility for innovation and a framework for public service offer.

Second, is the **Networking**, which means organizing the coordination, promoting exchanges and communication between stakeholders, and identifying common objectives for a collaborative work.



Third, is the **Transversal approach**, since it should allow combining views and facilitating bridges between stakeholders, sharing information, opening education beyond the school curriculum and ensuring the involvement of all agents, including parents and children.

Finally, **Autonomy** is needed to facilitate experimentation, adapt initiatives to the realities of the territory and empower stakeholders, among others.

Overseeing the city's transfer network journey is the URBACT Local Group. This group of local agents involved in the Good Practice transfer process, creates and coordinates the working sub-groups in each participant District; and starts implementing pilot projects, relevant and appropriate to each context. This will facilitate the engagement of schools' teachers, parents and stakeholders in the neighbourhood following the EIN's working principle of "learning by doing".

ON BOARD's first transfer steps, therefore, were to identify the first 'doers' for the implementation of these pilot projects. These projects have since received the EIN label, and are aimed at showcasing its first results to raise interest among other education innovation stakeholders.

How we have organized the Transfer



We must say that it was not usual in Nantes to have a systemic networking approach like ON BOARD, even if an initiative presents transversal ways of action. We soon discovered that, for our EIN to work best, we would focus our efforts in only one part of each of the two districts, in disadvantaged neighbourhoods. What's more, we defined a common perspective for the groups, describing the common goal and working methodology, and set forth a number of expected achievements for the pilots and the EIN, as described below:

1. Adapt the network to children and families' needs
2. Identify resources needed and those made available from district stakeholders' contributions
3. Define an action framework including the thematic approach, educational spaces and times, communication actions and participation of other agents, i.e. business companies.
4. Define available resources within each context (budget, time, space, **piloting process**, a **"wish list" of things to do**) and organize the interactions between the local and the international ON BOARD work.

Because the EIN transfer was in the 2 different city districts (North and South), the local group of stakeholders also split into 2 sub-groups (one for each district), to more closely reflect each reality and potential. This allowed focusing on different themes: "Health" in the North and "Garden and sustainable development" in the South.

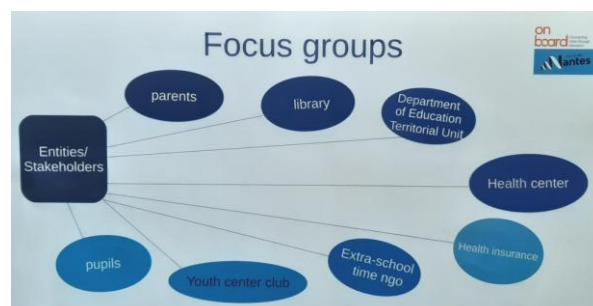
Educational Innovation Network in Nantes: 2 Districts - 2 Approaches

Emotion **NORTH** **Brain**

Main theme : well eating for health

- **one exhibition** made by the 7 elementary schools of the district and showed in each of them and other places like social centers
- **a video** made by children of elementary and low secondary school about
 - well eating : what does it mean for me
 - I have learnt that...
 - the role of sport

Les groupes d'aliments



Brain **SOUTH** **Emotion**

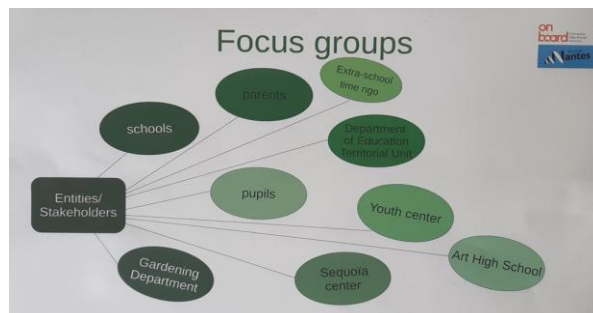
main theme : garden and sustainable development

jardin en chaussons

a little garden just outside school's doors to share gardening activities between school (pupils, teachers, parents) and the neighbourhood

On Air

to make pupils able to mesure quality of air in their low secondary school and in the district's neighbourhood



We involved special guests working on these topics from the Health Center, the Health insurance and library for the North, the Sequoia Center, Art High School, and, the Gardening Department for the South.

Cecile Moisdon, Head of Sequoia, a scientific center, dedicated to supporting schools, teachers and parents, located in the disadvantaged district of Dervallières, attended the network meeting in Tallinn

She appreciated how the Estonian city had put so much energy into organizing meetings with local stakeholders of the education community. ***"I was quite impressed by the high level of development of digital innovation especially when visiting the MEKTORI Center".***

At the same time, she spotted opportunities in the area of sustainable development: ***"I got the idea that we could further develop the links between Sequoia, the Youth Center situated in Dervallières and the teachers".***



What challenges lay ahead upon ending the ON BOARD experience?

First and foremost, it is to achieve a durable, flexible network in each District that can enlarge the process in the 2 first Districts and inspire 2 new Districts to join (West and East). Here's how we would like to do this:

- Showcase the ON BOARD North and South Districts' work as a way of energizing the PEdT in Nantes. This means adapting the EIN's initiatives to already existing institutional frameworks; supporting the animation of the network at the level of the "Educational district's teams"; and, involving diverse stakeholders at different times of children (in and out of school), including companies;
- Adapt the EIN's initiatives to already existing institutional frameworks;
- Support the animation of the network at the level of the "Educational district's teams" in Nantes;
- Involve diverse stakeholders at different moments of children's life (in and out of school), including companies.

Lucie Bouchet-Martins, from the Foundation Agissons pour l'emploi (Let's work for employment), where she is in charge of recruiting processes, had this to say after the TM in Albergaria.

"I was very impressed by the willingness of how the members of the local group worked together with schools and the University of Aveiro, especially between companies and schools."

Of particular interest to her was the case of the entrepreneur who, after having left the town few years ago, had come back to create his own company in Albergaria. He wanted to give back to his city what it gave him, working now on projects, based on the needs of schools and children, in collaboration with companies. Lucie totally coincided with his views on the need for non-academic stakeholders to work with schools: ***"To address the challenges young people are facing, while giving clear and precise project opportunities to teachers and pupils"***.



Lucie Bouchet-Martins and Marie Cauchy, Nantes Local Group, in Albergaria

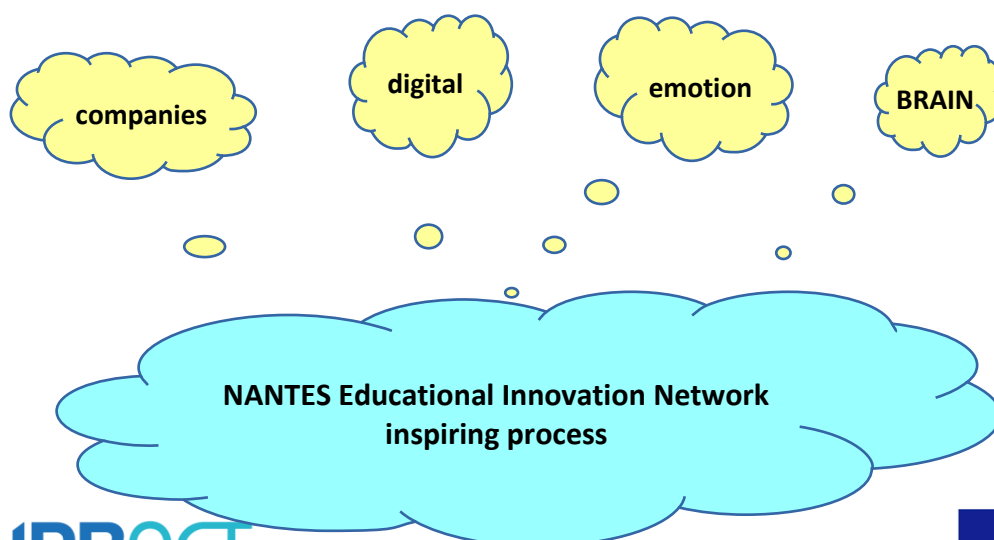
Marie Cauchy, from ADN Ouest, a digital network company, is particularly involved in « employment and training » but also in the ways of promoting digital jobs among young people by making them more attractive. Marie was impressed upon seeing a peer in Albergaria doing the same job as she does to develop the attractiveness of digital jobs for young people. She noted that although they were using the same coding initiation and the same tools as in Nantes, Albergaria had much stronger involvement of local companies. Marie summed it up: *“....the cooperation of companies is very well organized and we should be inspired by this to do the same in Nantes”*.

URBACT support



The multi-disciplinary participation of our local project members at the ON BOARD international meetings was inspiring. They have built a bridge of communication to channel new information and methodologies with other city stakeholders, doing their best to make the meetings and transfer experience as real and relevant to the others as possible.

We have also learnt a lot from each ON BOARD host city and from the Good Practices, particularly about what it takes to develop a dynamic network, based on children's needs. We are integrating these inspiring elements:

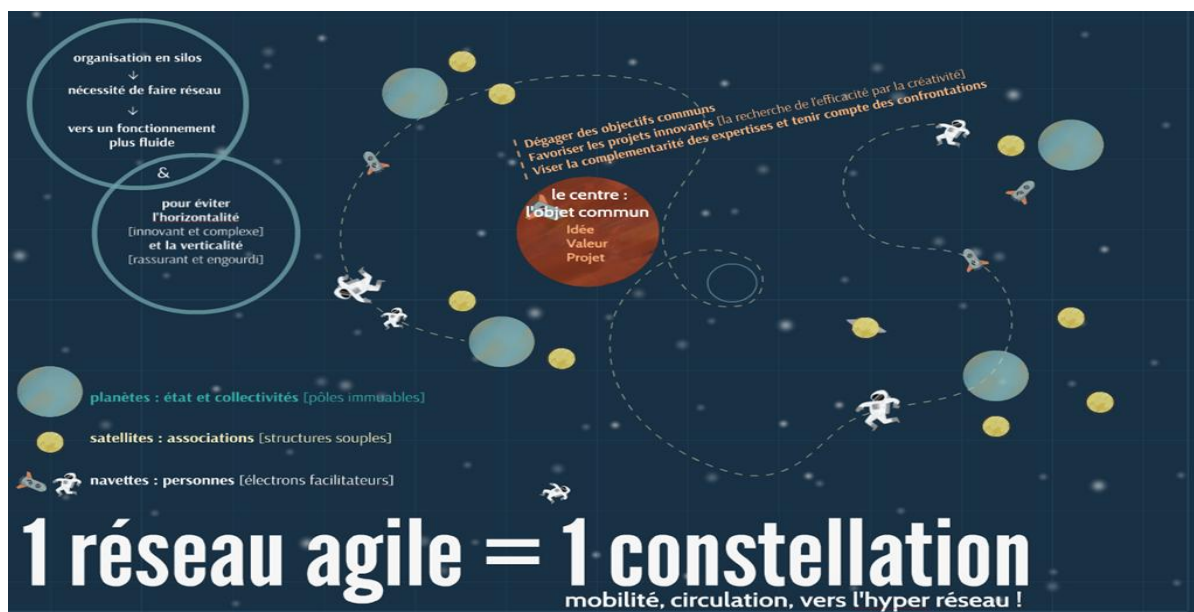


Maddy Audebeau, in charge of pilot projects for Sustainable Development with schools of Nantes, particularly in disadvantaged districts, and Noemie Chevallereau, responsible for after-school activities managed by the French country-wide NGO Léo Lagrange Ouest, located in Henri Bergson school attended the meeting in Tallinn.



Maddy noticed the energetic and open interactions among ON BOARD's 6 dynamic cities to share their experiences, with the same strong wish to learn from each other. She was quite interested by the participation of elected officials, too, and how closely they worked with their respective teams. Impressed, too, by Tallinn's innovation in digital development: ***"very far ahead of what we have in Nantes" and the dynamism of Youth Centers: "so open to their districts nearby in order to give more chances for fulfilling of young people"***. She realized Nantes had to do more to: a) involve parents and other local stakeholders; and, b) improve activities adopting a territorial approach in Dervallières district together with the Social and Youth Center.

On her side, Noemie highlights Tallinn's innovative Educational methods about digital starting from the very early age (7 years old), ***"quite different from our side where things develop differently"***. ***"What impressed or surprised me the most was the way of organizing the school-career. Children have to choose very early about their future (9 years old) and what do they want to learn to get it. In France it's later, mostly between 16 and 18."***



We will use the Transnational Meeting in Nantes (dates postponed because of the Covid 19 outbreak) to assess concretely the projects we want to develop and we will organize “Sharing Games” to collect experiences from all partners regarding the permanent way of networking during this meeting.

Conclusion

The actions described in our Transfer Story were in progress when **Covid 19** suddenly jumped into our lives, with schools closed and all other daily life abruptly affected, including our work in ON BOARD. Though we continue to work together online with ON BOARD partners, and depend on health developments that affect our project results in the short term, we are going forward according to our local situation to find the best ways to achieve sustainability. We are doing so using ON BOARD examples, or starting points, of what can be done, integrating the EIN spirit.



Nantes near-future situation is seen in 3 steps below:

