

## **The Cities, the people and the environment: The Polis Program in Portugal**

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The Polis Program was created by the Portuguese Central State back in 2000 with the objective of improving the quality of life of both city inhabitants and other city users. To achieve its objectives it was important to step in for a requalification planning based on two major perspectives: for the one hand, a requalification based on an urbanistic line and on the other hand, a requalification oriented by an environmental line.

It is our objective to give answer to some questions regarding the mainstream objectives of the Polis Program. Did the cities were Polis intervened were re-qualified and revitalized? Well, first we must know that the Polis Program had an illustrative character and that it had its timing an should not be seen as replacement for other interventions in the cities aiming for urban requalification. This means that interventions in public spaces, for instance, are necessary and must be part of a continuous process. Nevertheless, it's our opinion that the Polis Program outcomes were very significant and imprinted a new dynamic in the agenda of public policies makers, especially in terms of sustainability, putting the environmental issues in the order of the day by bringing back some of Nature to the city.

Despite of some incompleteness in achieving its goal, the Polis Program acted like a medium between the public sphere and decision makers, and did in many cases re-qualified territorial parcels like waterfronts, urban parks and gardens, contributing to a more pleasant place to live and to use.

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