

Launch of a knowledge repository on municipalism - Minim

Laura Roth and Elia Gran have been involved in coordinating Fearless Cities summits in Barcelona and New York, respectively. In addition to being activists at Barcelona en Comú, Laura is a scholar and Elia a journalist and they have published articles about municipalism in several outlets such as The Nation, Roar Magazine, and Open Democracy. Together, they are now launching an independent project to provide a resource to the wider municipalist movement. In the past months, they worked tirelessly to crowd-source and make available to the public an impressive and growing repository of municipalist knowledge: [Minim](#). Just before the launch, we caught up with Laura to have a chat about their vision for the project.

To get us started, how would you explain radical municipalism to a six-year-old?

Radical municipalism or new municipalism is a political project that wants to make people like you and me have a central role in politics, starting from where they live: cities and towns.

It also wants to change the way politics is done. Instead of just voting for a mayor every four years, the idea is to make politics something more democratic where all the people decide on the things that affect them and self-organise to achieve things they think are important. Some examples of these things can be the right to have a home, the need to stop climate change, or taking care of refugees.

And then the idea is for these cities and towns to collaborate with each other to achieve bigger projects.

What motivated you to set up Minim? What need did you see and how are you addressing it?

We saw that municipalist organisations in different parts of the world are doing really amazing things, with very few resources. One of the resources they mostly lack is time. And that's why, although they would like to collaborate with each other and learn from what others have been doing, they don't even know what the others are doing. Because no one has the time to share what they are doing.

So we decided to give this kind of small support by: a) organising the information that has already been produced (press articles, academic papers, videos, books, etc.), but that is scattered all over the internet, b) asking people who have something interesting to share, to spend some time writing or recording a video about it for our magazine (and paying for their time), and c) producing longer reports about topics that are especially relevant for the movement.

In addition, we're not just Elia and me but actually an amazing community of journalists, activists and scholars from different countries, all committed to the municipalist movement. They contribute by defining what happens with the platform, what's being published, engaging people, etc.

How do you make sure that this will be a 'living' and growing source of knowledge that people actually use?

We will do different kinds of things. First, we will be publishing an online magazine with original articles that we'll be assigning and receiving through a permanent open call. The idea is also to cross publish with other organisations and magazines (you'll find out about them really soon!).

Second, we'll be updating the database (it's like a library with classified information where you can search and find) with new and old content generated by journals, magazines, organisations, etc. different from us.

Third, we'll be sending out a newsletter every month, where people will find out what has been published by us or by others and also what's happening in the municipalist world.

Also, the idea is to be present at municipalist events and to have a strong online presence (mainly through twitter @Minim_municipal), so we can maintain a permanent dialogue with the users of the site.

How relevant is your platform for people outside of southern and Eastern Europe? What are the chances for radical municipalism catching on there?

This is a great question. The reason why the site uses English as its main language is to allow people from throughout the world to use it quite easily and also to publish content about what is happening in other continents. But then one of the greatest challenges we're tackling is how to "translate" practices from one context to another; even from one country to the country next-door. This is something that we consider one of our priorities and we're already working with some organisations that have more experience in this regard.

About the second question, we think municipalist projects can grow anywhere, and the experience shows they actually do. Of course, municipalism is mainly growing in Southern and Eastern Europe, but we can learn from what happens in other areas of the world. Great things are happening in places such as Argentina, Lebanon, South Africa, United States, India or Sweden. Our plan is to publish content about all the regions, to have people from these places in our community, and to show how diverse and dynamic municipalism can be.

What is your outlook for 2020?

Our main aim is to go beyond the basics of the site (the newsletter and the database), to give much more weight to the magazine and to start writing longer reports ourselves (by "us" here we mean our diverse community).

We also want to open and feed a blog where different people can make short contributions, and to generate audiovisual content. But actually, we are in the process of defining the future actions with the members of the community and we are more focused on making this a truly collective enterprise than on concrete actions. This takes time and a lot of care. For instance, in the coming months, we hope we can organise an in-person meeting and define future actions with all the people working behind Minim (members of the community, organisations we work with, etc.).

Thanks a lot for your time and good luck with the project!

The Minim-makers can be contacted under minim@gmail.com or @minim_municipal (Twitter)