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Conference Report

21–23 October 2013, Beijing, China

International Conference on Learning Cities

Lifelong learning for all: Inclusion,
prosperity and sustainability in cities



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Executive Summary

The first International Conference on Learning Cities, which was co-organised by UNESCO, the Ministry of Education of China and Beijing Municipal Government, took place from 21–23 October, 2013, in Beijing. The aim of this conference was to mobilize cities to promote lifelong learning for all as a vector of equality and social justice, social cohesion and sustainable prosperity. The specific objectives of the conference were:

- Adoption of the *Beijing Declaration on Building Learning Cities* and the *Key Features of Learning Cities*; and
- Exchange of best practices in building learning cities in the international community.

Over 550 delegates from 102 countries attended. These included mayors, city education executives, education experts, and representatives of UN agencies, regional organisations, non-governmental associations and international corporations. Senior international, national and municipal representatives, including Vice-Premier of China Ms Liu Yandong and Mayor of Beijing Mr Wang Anshun, addressed plenary sessions and regional panels. Discussions focussed on the stages of development necessary to turn cities into learning cities and communities that nurture active citizenship, promote economic and cultural prosperity and lay the foundation for sustainable development. UNESCO Director-General Ms Irina Bokova hailed the Conference as “a milestone” that goes ‘to the heart of UNESCO’s work in lifelong learning’.

The conference culminated in the adoption of the *Beijing Declaration on Building Learning Cities* and the *Key Features of Learning Cities*. The *Beijing Declaration* affirms the vital importance of education for the future of all human communities. It concludes with the following ‘Call to Action’:

- Urging UNESCO to establish a global network of learning cities to support and accelerate the practice of lifelong learning in the world’s communities;
- Calling upon cities and regions in every part of the world to join this network;
- Encouraging international and regional organisations to become active partners in this network;
- Calling upon national authorities to encourage local jurisdictions to build learning cities, regions and communities, and to participate in international peer-learning activities; and
- Inviting foundations, private corporations and civil society organisations to become active partners of the network.

The *Key Features of Learning Cities* were also endorsed as a normative instrument to help municipal governments and other city stakeholders in their efforts to build learning cities.

In all, the conference generated the momentum to accelerate and support the practice of lifelong learning in the world’s communities through the establishment of a global network of learning cities.

I. Overview of the Conference

The influence of cities in national and world affairs has increased considerably in recent years. This is partly due to the growth in the number of city dwellers. Since 2008, the majority of the world's population lives in cities. By 2030, the proportion is likely to exceed sixty per cent. As cities expand, municipal governments face challenges associated with social inclusion, new technologies, the knowledge economy, cultural diversity and environmental sustainability. In response, a growing number of cities are developing innovative strategies that allow citizens of all ages to learn new skills and competencies throughout life, thereby transforming their cities into 'learning cities'.

More than 1,000 cities and urban areas in the world have become or are in the process of becoming learning cities. Many of these cities are keen to benefit from participation in international policy dialogue, action research, capacity building and peer learning, and to effectively use learning city approaches to promote lifelong learning for their citizens.

International experiences have shown that building a learning city entails a continuous process that involves advocacy, facilitation and capacity-building. In recognition of this process, the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL) took the initiative to prepare a dynamic international platform for cities to exchange ideas and good practices on effective approaches to building learning cities. In doing so, UIL has adopted the following working definition:

A Learning City is a city that effectively mobilizes its resources in every sector to:

- Promote inclusive learning from basic to higher education;
- Re-vitalize learning in families and communities;
- Facilitate learning for and in the workplace;
- Extend the use of modern learning technologies;
- Enhance quality and excellence in learning; and
- Nurture a culture of learning throughout life.

In so doing, it will create and reinforce individual empowerment and social cohesion, economic and cultural prosperity, and sustainable development.

In 2012, UNESCO decided to co-organise the First International Conference on Learning Cities in collaboration with the Ministry of Education of China and Beijing Municipal Government. The organisational process began with preparatory meetings to establish collaborative partnerships and develop draft versions of the *Beijing Declaration* and the *Key Features*. These were held in Hamburg, Beijing, Hangzhou, and Jeju (Republic of Korea). Additionally, the draft Key Features were piloted in a number of cities in each UNESCO region.

To establish a truly global network of learning cities and build synergies between different international and national initiatives, UIL invited relevant national, regional and international organisations and agencies, as well as private sector corporations, to serve as collaborating partners of the conference. The following twenty-three collaborating partners agreed to support the organisation of the conference:

• International and Regional Organisations/ Agencies

- The United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT)
- Arab Urban Development Institute (AUDI)
- European Commission
- Organization of Ibero-American States for Education, Science and Culture (OEI)

• Ministries of Education of Member States

- China
- Japan
- Republic of Korea
- Romania
- Turkey
- Viet Nam

• International and Non-governmental Associations

- Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA)
- International Council for Adult Education (ICAE)
- PASCAL International Observatory
- dvv International



- **Foundations and Corporations**

- Asia-Europe Foundation
- Festo Didactic
- IBM
- Intel, Inc.
- Kings Group
- Microsoft, Inc.

- **Cities and Universities**

- Beijing Municipality
- Cape Higher Education Consortium
- Beijing Normal University
- Swansea University
- University of South Australia



UIL, in collaboration with the Beijing Municipal Government and Beijing Normal University, developed a conference website in English and Chinese (<http://learningcities2013.org>), providing participants with the Conference programme, practical information and related news items.

Alongside the main conference proceedings, a special exhibition was held, illustrating through texts and images, the activities of the three co-hosts in relation to lifelong learning and learning cities.



国际学习型城市大会

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON LEARNING CITIES
CONFÉRENCE INTERNATIONALE SUR LES VILLES APPRENANTES

中国 北京
Beijing, China

2013年10月21日-23日
October 21-23, 2013

中华人民共和国教育部
Ministry of Education of China

联合国教育、科学及文化组织
United Nations Educational Scientific and Culture Organization

北京市人民政府
Government of Beijing Municipal City



II. Conference Inputs and Discussion

A. Opening of the Conference

- **Master of ceremonies:**

Mr Yuan Guiren, Minister of Education of China

- **Opening addresses:**

Mr Wang Anshun, Mayor of Beijing Municipal Government, China

Ms Irina Bokova, Director-General, UNESCO

Ms Liu Yandong, Vice-Premier of China

The conference began with a series of opening addresses from the host organisations. [For opening addresses, see Appendix C] As Conference Chair, Mr Wang Anshun, Mayor of Beijing Municipal Government, welcomed participants and introduced the development of Beijing as a learning city. He explained that this development has been proceeding under the Chinese National Medium and Long-Term Plan for Education Reform and Development by 2020. He expressed high expectations for the conference, recognising the valuable opportunity for Beijing to learn from the best practices of other learning cities.

Welcoming addresses were also delivered by Ms Irina Bokova, Director-General of UNESCO and Ms Liu Yandong, Vice-Premier of China. Both stressed the importance of lifelong learning for lasting peace and sustainable development, and the key role of cities in this initiative.

“Solutions lie in the imaginations of women and men, in their rights and dignity, in societies that are just and inclusive. At this time of change, lifelong learning has never been more important – and cities, where more than half of the world’s population lives today, have a leading role to play in creating new opportunities for learning.”

Ms Irina Bokova

Ms Bokova began by quoting the Discourses and Sayings of Confucius, reflecting the deep roots of lifelong learning in China. She declared Beijing the



best place to hold the first International Conference on Learning Cities and stated that UNESCO places the promotion of learning cities at the heart of its work in lifelong learning. UIL leads the work through the establishment of “a dynamic network – at the global, national and municipal levels, bringing together experts and the private sector”.

Ms Liu affirmed that the building of learning cities in China would be placed at the centre of the national plan, helping to fulfil the “Chinese Dream of the nation’s great rejuvenation”. This strategy is closely connected with economic development, social transformation and civilization.

“The construction of learning cities and the provision of better learning services to urban citizens can enhance the level of morality and culture amongst them, the quality of their lives and expectations of happiness, increase the capacity for employment, entrepreneurship and career transitions, and facilitate the comprehensive and personalised development of each and every individual... Lifelong learning makes the future of life more beautiful.”

Ms Liu Yandong

Ms Liu exhorted mayors and education executives to promote lifelong learning in order to create a better future for cities. She issued a call for action to officials: first, to put people first by satisfying the learning needs and aspirations of different groups; second, to stimulate creativity and promote prosperous and sustainable development; third, to create a learning environment and build cities of tolerance and harmony; and finally, to strengthen international cooperation and promote mutual exchanges between learning cities. She pledged the Chinese government's support for UNESCO's initiative.

Following the opening addresses, Mr Carlsen, Director of the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL) and Secretary-General of the Conference, outlined the background of the conference. He explained UIL's work in the development of learning cities and presented the conference programme. The delegates unanimously adopted the conference agenda and ratified the election of the Chair and the Vice-Chairs, the General-Rapporteur of the Conference and the members of the Drafting Committee.

[For member list, see Appendix B].

B. Plenary Sessions

1. Making a case for building a learning city

- **Moderator:** Mr Walter Hirche, President of the German National Commission for UNESCO, Germany
- **Keynote address:** Ms Lu Xin, Vice-Minister, Ministry of Education of China
- **Panellists:**
 Ms Mariko Sato, Chief, UN-HABITAT Bangkok
 Mr Steffen Lehmann, UNESCO Chair, Professor of the University of South Australia, Australia
 Ms Graciela Messina, International Consultant, Argentina
 Mr George D Thomas, Partner & Director, Smarter Cities & Growth Initiatives, Greater China Group, IBM

The first session discussed the concept of lifelong learning and presented concrete cases for building learning cities to support mayors, city education executives and experts in championing the concept.

In her keynote address, Vice-Minister Lu introduced the progress and achievement of the learning cities projects by the Ministry of Education. Shanghai became the first learning city in China in 1999; there are now 100 learning cities in China. The government has adopted this strategy to create policies and guidelines for more learning opportunities. For example, China has established a legal framework to promote lifelong learning, launched learning organisations, promoted e-learning through its 'Smart City' programme, and worked towards creating a lifelong learning culture with activities such as the 'knowledge feast'.

Ms Sato of UN-Habitat argued that cities need to transform their development approach towards 'sustainable urban development', aiming to establish "more compact, socially inclusive, better integrated and connected cities". The core idea behind this approach is to bring people to the centre of decision making, requiring that urban planners establish continuous learning systems, from local communities to the municipal government.

Mr Lehmann asserted that learning city, by its nature, is more sustainable and thus attracts skilled workers and greater investment. Mr Lehmann argued that, as a city's quality of life is directly connected to its educational strength, learning should be placed at the forefront of all urban development. He identified three components for building a sustainable learning city: 'green campuses', where informal learning coexist with formal education and biodiversity is linked to urban development; 'learning gardens', where citizens increase their awareness of the importance of natural resources through farming and gardening; and a city's 'built heritage', which embodies identity, culture and history.

Ms Messina stressed the crucial importance of lifelong learning for a more equal future. She identified lifelong learning for all as a key mechanism for reducing educational inequality, racial segregation, violence and other social problems. Mayors and city education executives must fully understand the concept in order to design appropriate policies and programmes.

Mr Thomas of IBM discussed the future of 'smarter' cities and the important role of education from the perspective of a private-sector organisation. He stressed the need to change the traditional education format and to develop outcome-driven curricula, learner-centric collaborative education, lifelong talent management, and technology-enabled outcome-



oriented processes. In this regard, he underscored three critical areas: improving teaching effectiveness and student outcomes; enabling greater insight about learners' needs through predictive analytics; and maximizing operational efficiency and effectiveness.

This session affirmed urbanisation as a megatrend and, thus, the growing importance of cities for development. However, cities are not only generators of social inclusion, decent jobs and innovation but are also settings of social exclusion, violence, environmental deterioration and poverty. The impact of urbanisation depends on individual citizens and their ability to turn their cities into prosperous communities. Therefore, the principle of 'people first' was emphasized, involving citizens in the decision-making process. A sustainable urban development approach based on lifelong learning for everyone is imperative to the achievement of sustainable urban development.

2. The building blocks of a learning city

- **Moderator:** Mr Gwang-Jo Kim, Director, UNESCO Bangkok
- **Keynote address:** Mr James Bernard, Global Director, Partners in Learning, Microsoft Corporation
- **Panellists:**
Ms Dana-Carmen Bachmann, Head of Unit, Vocational training and adult education, Directorate General Education and Culture, European Commission
Mr Jun Ge, Managing Director, Intel China Ltd.
Mr Nader Imani, Head of Global Education, FESTO Didactic

The second session featured perspectives from both the public and private sectors on concrete future requirements for building learning cities. The panellists from the private sectors illustrated cases from their respective corporate education programmes. Their presentations showcased how corporations react to and anticipate changing conditions in the workplace and the market.

Information and communication technology offers a huge potential for the education sector. Mr Bernard of Microsoft Corporation delivered a keynote address emphasising the opportunities and challenges involved in using this new technology in education and learning. Twenty-first-century learning skills blend formal and informal learning, focusing on employability and workplace readiness, and creating further avenues for a personalized learning environment.



Microsoft introduced its initiative of Innovative Teaching and Learning Research to promote teacher training. This programme helps teachers to gain a clear understanding of how to use information and communication technology in the classroom.

Ms Bachmann from the European Commission presented the Europe 2020 Growth Strategy. This ten-year plan aims to keep Europe highly competitive in education. The European Commission defines its growth vision as smart, sustainable, and inclusive. It underscores that its goals can only be achieved through quality general education, quality vocational education, and access to training for all citizens. Therefore, the European Commission has included 'Skills and competence development for European Union citizens' as the key to its Growth Strategy. In its specific Education and Training Strategy for Europe 2020, it has made lifelong learning a priority, identifying three areas of action: delivering the right skills for employment; identifying new innovative ways of teaching and learning; and bringing new approaches to funding and partnerships.

Mr Ge of Intel China discussed the meaning of quality education provision in a global information society. Each modern education system will be "preparing students for future success in a global information society". Students therefore need to be equipped with 21st century skills: communication, critical thinking, problem solving, digital literacy and collaboration. He pointed out that many education systems are currently unable to teach these skills. Therefore, national, regional and local governments and educators must take on the responsibility to reform their education systems and transform teaching methods. Intel applies a five-prong approach to developing student-centred education: 1) research, monitoring and evaluation; 2) professional development, 3) curriculum and assessment; 4) information and communication technology and 5) sustainable resourcing.

Most citizens develop skills to meet labour market demands. However, existing education systems often fail to train the skills required by employers. Mr Imani of industrial training company FESTO Didactic discussed how to match skills development to workplace realities. First, learning environments need to serve as a 'bridge between education institutions and the labour market' by implementing demand-driven learning and hands-on training. Second, professional competences ought to be defined to include knowledge and experience in relation to specific jobs and generic skills. Third, information and communication technology, blended learning and networked learning should be included in learning. Finally, he emphasized that project-led learning is necessary to offer comprehensive and relevant opportunities.

From this session, it is clear that lifelong learning represents a crucial strategic response to emerging urban socio-economic challenges. However, there is still a long way to go to fully operationalise the vision of 'Lifelong Learning for All', despite efforts of governments and international organisations. The recent results of the OECD's Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIACC) demonstrate that, even in developed countries, a large portion of the adult population lacks literacy skills. Moreover, the failure of education and training systems to address the severe skills mismatch is apparent both to employers and employees. Clearly, political agendas are not sufficient to make lifelong learning for everyone a reality. The perspective to define lifelong learning has to accommodate the skills demanded by employers. In this sense, the private sector has the potential to become a strong partner to build learning cities by offering innovative approaches, advanced technology and a training perspective closely linked to the labour market.

3. The major strategies for building a learning city

- **Moderator:** Ms Benita Carole Somerfield, International Chair of the U.S. Library of Congress Literacy Awards (2013), former Executive Director of the Barbara Bush Foundation for Family Literacy (1988–2012), United States of America
- **Keynote address:** Ms Un Shil Choi, President, National Institute for Lifelong Education (NILE), Republic of Korea
- **Panellists:**
Ms Constance Chigwamba, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education, Sport, Arts and Culture, Zimbabwe

Mr Michael Osborne,
Co-Director of PASCAL Observatory, University of Glasgow, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
Mr Ron Faris, President,
Golden Horizon Ventures, Canada
Mr Zhou Zheng,
Senior Consultant/Acting City Account Manager of East China, Siemens



The third plenary session presented important approaches for building learning cities that could be adopted by city governments and other stakeholders.

In the Republic of Korea, strategies to promote learning cities have changed with the country's development. Ms Choi from the National Institute for Lifelong Education reported that the learning city has evolved "from version 1.0 to version 3.0". Learning cities in Korea were able to arrive at this stage due to the Government's support for the Lifelong Education Law, the National Lifelong Education Promotion Plan, and the already implemented Lifelong Learning Cities Project. Under version 3.0, the learning cities of the Republic of Korea have moved towards a community-centred approach. This process includes the establishment of the nationwide learning cities networks, expansion of community learning, fostering learning culture, close connection between education and job creation, and consideration of senior citizens as active learners.

Mr Faris was deeply involved in the development of the Composite Learning Index (CCI) of the Canadian Council on Learning and explained three main implications for the Key Features of Learning Cities: first, understand that every learning city is unique; second, support access to valid local data through interactive web tools; and, finally, ensure long-term political will and commitment.

Mr Zheng presented the research methodology and outcomes of the Siemens Green City Index, a tool to evaluate sustainable development in 130 major cities. Each city report generated through the index contains overall lessons for the region as well as detailed city profiles describing individual performances and best practices. The lessons contained in the series are intended to help cities learn from each other as they debate policies and strategies to minimise their environmental footprint.

Mr Osborne of PASCAL emphasised research and collaboration to promote learning cities. He suggested the following approaches: 1) prepare quantitative datasets of the key features of learning cities and utilise longitudinal analysis on the data sets; 2) use comparative analysis to measure performance; 3) benchmark current infrastructure development and practice; 4) highlight cases of good practice; 5) collaborate by sharing knowledge among cities; and 6) review progress at regular intervals.

Ms Chigwamba of the Ministry of Education, Sport, Arts and Culture of Zimbabwe underlined that, while urbanization is increasing rapidly in Africa, the majority of people in the African region still live in rural areas and their needs must be included in learning cities. She suggested using the ‘learning community approach’ to work out strategies on how urban and rural areas in Africa can cooperate to provide lifelong learning for every citizen.

There is no ‘unified model’ for building learning cities; diverse strategies and approaches are needed, depending on local socio-economic, environmental and cultural contexts. Cities have to take a holistic perspective reflecting a wide variety of learners, and different aspects of lifelong learning and its benefits. The Composite Learning Index (CCI) framework based on the ‘Four Pillars of Learning’, developed for UNESCO by the Delors Report, serves as a good model. Furthermore, as ‘big data’ takes centre-stage in policy-making, data collection and analysis can help cities provide quality learning for the well-being and happiness of its citizens.



4. Introduction to the draft Beijing Declaration on Building Learning Cities and Key Features of Learning Cities

• **Moderator:** Mr Heribert Hinzen,
Regional Director of dvv international in the Lao People’s Democratic Republic

• **Presenters:**
Mr Norman Longworth, UIL Consultant
Mr Jin Yang, Senior Programme Specialist, UIL
Ms Mara Nadiezhda Robles Villaseñor,
Minister of Education, Mexico City, Mexico
Ms Judith James, Strategic Projects Manager,
Planning and Strategic Projects Unit, Swansea
University, United Kingdom of Great Britain and
Northern Ireland

In the final plenary session, Mr Longworth and Mr Yang introduced the draft *Beijing Declaration on Building Learning Cities and Key Features of Learning Cities*. Delegates discussed these two documents and reached consensus on their significance.

The primary purpose of the *Beijing Declaration on Building Learning Cities* was to document the commitments made by delegates at the Conference to building learning cities. It was also intended to serve as a reference point, and a clarion call to develop fully fledged learning cities. It calls upon city authorities to promote inclusive learning; to facilitate family, community, and workplace learning; to extend the use of learning technologies; to enhance learning quality; and to foster a lifelong learning culture to transform the cities into more inclusive and sustainable communities. The declaration calls upon UNESCO, international and regional organisations, national governments, foundations and private corporations to become active partners with communities and local officials to promote the building of learning cities. It asks these institutions to establish a global network of learning cities and support the development and implementation of lifelong learning strategies in cities and urban regions.

In his presentation, Mr Yang underscored the importance of the *Key Features of Learning Cities* as a tool for monitoring the building of a learning city; as a mechanism to transform political and theoretical discourses into concrete strategies, to measure progress over time, and to evaluate the benefits of implemented approaches. The framework, inspired by UNESCO’s logo, has three components: the wider benefits, major building blocks and the fundamental conditions necessary to build a learning city. Following the deliberations of the drafting committee, UIL submitted a total of forty two features to the conference.

UIL selected cities in each of the UNESCO regions to pilot the *Key Features*. The aim was to gauge the relevance and the feasibility of the *Key Features*. Two of the eight cities that participated in the pilot project – Mexico City and Swansea – delivered reports in this session. Their experience affirmed that the *Key Features* can be a useful monitoring tool.

Ms Robles from Mexico City discussed the value of participating in the pilot project; the benefits include deepening the understanding of a learning city and providing practical steps for different stakeholders. Ms James from Swansea encouraged other cities to use the *Key Features* as a monitoring tool to identify strengths and weaknesses as a potential learning city. She proposed that cities should identify stakeholders and develop collaborative partnerships with them.

Participants suggested providing further support disadvantaged groups and rural dwellers, increasing human security, promoting cultural diversity, mobilising citizens' participation and establishing learning organisations. Some delegates also suggested cooperation with established networks such as the Creative Cities Network and the Child-friendly Cities. Both the *Beijing Declaration* and the *Key Features* were amended, incorporating the issues raised by the members of the Drafting Committee and conference delegates, and adopted by the Conference.

C. Parallel Regional Forums

The parallel regional forums enabled participants to exchange information on best practices in their countries. There were five regional forums, which explored region-specific cases and issues in building learning cities.

Each forum was managed by a moderator with expertise and understanding of the circumstances in the region. In order to foster productive discussion, the Conference Secretariat requested that the panellists and audience members focus on three key questions:

- Is the learning city concept relevant to your region?;
- What are the key issues that cities in your region must address in order to become learning cities?; and
- How can cities in your region best collaborate with each other?

The five regional forums endorsed learning cities as beneficial to the prosperity, employability and overall well-being of citizens. Based on the diverse social, political, cultural, and economic environments in each city, a variety of approaches to building learning cities and making lifelong learning possible for all was adopted.

1. Regional Forum on Africa

• **Moderator:** Mr Jean-Marie Ahlin Byll-Cataria, Chair of the UIL Governing Board and former Executive Secretary, Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA)

• **Panellists:**

Mr Haskins Goitsemodimo Nkaigwa, Mayor of Gaborone City Council, Botswana
Ms Therese Olenga-Kalonda, Minister of Education, Kinshasa Provincial Government, Democratic Republic of the Congo
Mr Farouk Iya Sambo, Commissioner of Education of Kano State, Nigeria
Mr Jerry William Silaa, Mayor, Ilala Municipal Council, United Republic of Tanzania
Mr Comlan Ametowoyona Adjahouinou, Mayor of Lomé, Togo



The African Regional Forum opened with remarks about the rapid economic growth and urbanisation rate in Africa. In light of these trends, cities will play an increasingly important role in the promotion of education and learning. Participants recognised that the concept of a learning city is very relevant to the region. Some affirmed that cities have already become learning cities by placing learning at the forefront of their policies and strategies.

Mr Adjahouinou presented the 'Entrepreneurship Programme' in Lomé, Togo as an example of a learning city initiative. In this case, the city council collaborated with the university to create learning and employment opportunities for citizens.

The case presentations emphasized that 'Education for All' remains the priority of African cities. Mr Nkaigwa and Ms Olenga-Kalonda urged governments to take responsibility for basic infrastructure, such as school furniture, textbooks and financial support systems, to ensure the right to basic education for all Africans.

Furthermore, as Mr Silaa pointed out, promoting lifelong learning in order to stimulate green economy is an important issue in the region.

Participants emphasized the significance of political will and the involvement of different stakeholders in building elaborate lifelong learning systems. Mr Iya Sambo highlighted that national and local governments should combine their efforts to develop systems and policies to promote lifelong learning in urban areas. He also stressed the importance of partnerships among different ministries at the local government level. At the end of the discussion, participants highlighted the need for platforms and forums where cities could learn from each other and work together.



2. Regional Forum on the Arab States

- **Moderator:** Mr Osman M. Nour, Advisor, Arab Urban Development Institute (AUDI)

- **Panellists:**

- Ms Ekbal El Samaloty, Chairwoman of Eve Future Association and Dean of Social Work Institute, Egypt

- Ms Foziah Al-Suker, Director General for Adult Education, Ministry of Education, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

- Mr Mohammed Easa Alkhumiri Alharmi, Director, Ministry of Education, Specialized Schools Department, United Arab Emirates

The Regional Forum on the Arab States demonstrated the importance of making lifelong learning a high priority to governments. Mr Alkhumiri Alharmi presented the example of the United Arab Emirates, whose core activity in promoting lifelong learning for all has been the provision of the quality of educational opportunities. Various programmes have been implemented at the municipal level, including the Knowledge Village, the City Academy, and adult education centres.

In general, the participants agreed that increasing literacy rates is of primary importance. In particular, women are often excluded from educational opportunities and thus are unable to read and write. Therefore, women are the critical target group for building learning cities in the region. In this regard, the Ministry of Education of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is implementing the 'Learning Districts' programme, which promotes capacity building for women with low educational levels and limited economic opportunities. Ms Al-Suker described the programme as a learning opportunity for disadvantaged women to become literate and be active members of their communities.

Building a learning city is a collective activity that requires the involvement of both government and civil society organizations. Participants stressed that in order to establish the partnerships required for a learning city, certain barriers must first be overcome. These include a lack of culture of partnership and diverging interests in partnership.

Ms El Samaloty presented the Egyptian government's 'Friendly Learning Environment Project' as an example of a partnership between government and civil society. The project organised committees in different municipalities by appointing local community leaders from different groups such as youth, women, and older people. In doing so, local stakeholders cooperated with the government to improve learning environments by carrying out research and communal activities. The Arab States Regional Forum affirmed that building learning cities should be the region's key development strategy. They also emphasized the importance of government commitment to provide lifelong opportunities for all citizens and the need for partnership among cities in an Arab cities network.

3. Regional Forum on Asia and the Pacific

- **Moderator:** Mr Gwang-Jo Kim, Director, UNESCO Bangkok

- **Panellists:**

- Mr Jose Enrique Sandejas Garcia III, Mayor, City Government of Balanga, Philippines

- Mr Shaji Baby John, Chairman of the Kings Group, India

- Mr Wang Chengbin, Vice Mayor of Changzhou, China

- Mr Ki-Dae Yang, Mayor of Gwangmyeong City, Republic of Korea

The Asia and the Pacific Regional Forum highlighted a case of reconstructing a city based on lifelong learning concepts. Mr Sandejas Garcia presented the 'Balanga 2020: World-Class University Town' project. The programme aims to transform urban design, land use, policies, and marketing strategies to strengthen the learning environment of the city and ensure sustainable development.

Due to Asia's extensive experience in building learning cities, this regional forum discussed effective strategies. Mr Wang shared the example of how Changzhou is expanding citizens' learning opportunities. It has diversified learning paths through expanding access to the university community, developing an e-learning platform, linking programmes in high schools and vocational colleges, and recognizing learning results. Learning organisations are also important to cultivate a learning culture and increase citizens' participation.

Mr Yang introduced Gwanmyeong City, the Republic of Korea as a pioneer in the field. He cited the creation of a strong network of lifelong learning institutions as an essential factor to a successful learning city project. The network is a platform that informs citizens about opportunities to participate in community learning activities.

Based on his experience in community development, Mr Shaji forwarded his vision of a learning city as a city where all citizens could learn, work and play within walking distance. He urged creating an elaborate ecosystem when building a learning city and argued that modern technology and entrepreneurs can support sustainable urban living.

There was a broad consensus that building learning cities is an efficient way to achieve social cohesion, increase employment and for everyone to pursue happiness. Instead of suffering from brain-drain, the cities in the region are enjoying brain-gain because of their educational power. Furthermore, cities have an interest in sharing their experiences in lifelong learning and are moving to support cities in other regions.



4. Regional Forum on Europe and North America

- **Moderator:** Ms Dana-Carmen Bachmann, Head of Unit, Vocational training and adult education, Directorate General Education and Culture, European Commission

- **Panellists:**

- Ms Veronika Schönstein, Project Manager, City of Freiburg, Germany

- Mr Dimitrios Raftopoulos, Director of Lifelong Learning Research Institute, Greece

- Mr Klitos Symeonides, President of Cyprus Adult Education Association, Cyprus

- Mr Ramón Martínez de Murguía Urreta, Director of Training and Learning, Ministry of Education, Basque Government, Spain

The Regional Forum on Europe and North America recognised that the concept of a learning society has become a considerable universal phenomenon in Europe and North America. Cyprus and Spain provided examples of recently developed lifelong learning policies. Mr Symeonides presented Cyprus' expansion of learning opportunities for workers and migrants. The government also facilitates cooperation across regions and cities to promote lifelong learning. Mr Martínez highlighted his government's commitment to achieving the highest level of training in the Basque Country. The Lifelong Learning Act provides a legal foundation for lifelong learning policy in the Basque Country and includes the provision of various learning opportunities, such 'experienced schools' to help older people enter the job market.

The forum also acknowledged the importance of lifelong learning and skill development to respond to the ongoing economic crisis, ageing societies, and broader economic and social inequality in Europe. Mr Raftopoulos urged the European Union to train and re-train older workers, particularly in new information

and communication technology. This would ensure valuable skills for older citizens and challenge stereotypes about their learning capacity.

Ms Schönstein asserted that all stakeholders should be involved in promoting lifelong learning, taking Freiburg's Lernen vor Ort ['Learning locally'] programme as an example. She emphasized the importance of developing systematic and structured activities, communicating information and outcomes on the basis of a cross-sectorial collaboration.

Participants recognised the relevance of Strategic Framework for European Cooperation in Education and Training (ET 2020) and the need to promote lifelong learning culture in spite of the high level of participation in learning. Furthermore, the quality of training and education systems should be improved to foster social cohesion and active citizenship.

5. Regional Forum on Latin America and the Caribbean

- **Moderator:** Mr Luis María Scasso, General Director for Cooperation and Lifelong Education, Organization of Iberoamerican States (OEI)

- **Panellists:**

- Ms Blanca María Cayo Quintana, Metropolitan Councillor of Lima, Peru

- Mr José Simões De Almeida Junior, Secretary of Education, City Hall of Sorocaba, São Paulo, Brazil

- Ms María Carmen Hidalgo Baeza, Coordinator, Sustainable Development in the Villages of Knowledge, International Relations Directorate of the Ministry of Education and Culture, Paraguay



The Regional Forum on Latin America and the Caribbean focused on successful experiences in building learning cities and promoting lifelong learning in the region. Many cities in this region have a strong tradition of popular education, expanding learning opportunities to combat high levels of social inequality,

violence, and poverty. Ms Hidalgo presented 'Villages of Knowledge' as a good example of this approach. This is a literacy programme for indigenous people aiming to strengthen individuals' capacity to become lifelong learners and active citizens. The government has built six schools through the project, which are managed by local leaders and residents.

The participants pointed out that along with indigenous peoples, migrant workers should be a priority for education and learning opportunities. Mr De Almeida introduced the Cultural Centres of Sorocaba, Brazil, an organisation that distributes books to all citizens, and has developed cultural activities to encourage learning in public spaces.

In Lima, cultural centres aim to increase the sense of belonging through community education. Ms Cayo presented the city's 'Building a Child-Friendly City' project. The project includes public events where everyone can participate and learn how to become active citizens.

A particular concern was youth empowerment. Youth remain the most marginalised group in the region and governments need to find mechanisms to engage them in quality learning processes. The participants highlighted the importance of better learning environments, including more schools, better teacher training, and improved funding. Participants also emphasised the need to integrate ICTs into education to meet the demands of the modern job market.

D. Mayors' Forum

- **Moderator:** Ms Imee Marcos, Governor of Ilocos Norte, Philippines

- **Panellists:**

- Mr Xian Lianping, Representative of Mayor of Beijing Municipal Government, China

- Mr Sampo Suikko, Vice Mayor, Espoo, Finland

- Ms Raghd Shehada, Member of the City Council in Hebron Municipality, Palestine

- Ms Pusadee Tamthai, Deputy Governor of Bangkok Metropolitan Administration, Thailand

- Mr Jean Sony Pierre, Mayor of la Croix-des-Bouquets, Haiti

The purpose of the Mayors' Forum was to establish best practices and strategies to champion lifelong learning for all in cities. There is growing political recognition that lifelong learning is vital to sustainable development in urban areas. Developing a lifelong learning system needs political will and commitment.

Chaired by Ms Marcos, the forum offered mayors and educational executives the opportunity to present their strategies and actions for implementing lifelong learning.

Beijing is promoting lifelong learning by transforming itself into a sustainable learning city. Mr Xian from Beijing identified lifelong learning strategies as a high priority for sustainable development. Measures include general access to lifelong learning through government support, lifelong learning systems and learning organisations. He also emphasized the close link between lifelong learning and the municipality's development plan.

Finland is recognized as a country with one of the highest levels of participation in lifelong learning. Mr Suihko from Espoo explained some of the factors underlying his country's excellent performance in lifelong learning: a strong formal education system, which includes open access to education; a student-centred system; well trained teachers; decentralized decision-making; and a high level of appreciation of education in society.

Espoo aims to make the 'joy of learning' part of every citizen's experience. The Regional Centre of Expertise in Sustainable Development has worked with partners to influence attitudes and to support changes in everyday practices, putting the focus on lifelong learning. The municipality has implemented specialised local programmes, such as the Annual Tree Planting Day, and health and sustainable lifestyle initiatives, including a gardening programme for all learners.

Hebron is one of the world's oldest cities with rich cultural assets. Ms Shehada spoke about the importance of lifelong learning and reinforcing comprehensive interactive learning centres to preserve the history, tradition and heritage of the city.

Ms Tamthai illustrated that a learning city creates educational, cultural, athletic and recreational activities to make full use of its human and physical resources. She mentioned that Bangkok, as the UNESCO-designated World Book Capital for 2013, is an example of Bangkok Metropolitan Administration's initiative to promote lifelong learning.

Mr Pierre from la Croix-des-Bouquets shared why educational technology is critical to understanding a city's potential. He suggested conducting empirical studies to define 'community' according to the cultural characteristics of a city.

Although the definition of lifelong learning and its targets vary according to their context, many local authorities consider lifelong learning policy as a priority

in their sustainable development agenda, an idea repeated several times in the forum. It was also widely recognised that lifelong learning not only encompasses education but is related to social, political, economic and health issues. Therefore, the panellists highlighted the need for local governments to deploy a full range of resources, and emphasized that each city's unique culture is the essential ingredient to promote lifelong learning for all citizens.

E. Open Marketplace

- **Moderator:** Mr Valerio Giuseppe Ricciardelli, Managing Director, FESTO Didactic in Italy

This session provided collaborating partners with an opportunity to showcase their activities related to the conference theme and to build relationships and networks while promoting lifelong learning in their organisations.

The session brought together experts from the private sector and universities. The participants discussed ways to ensure the quality of education and support building learning cities in their regions.

Mr Ricciardelli opened the session by reflecting on the importance of quality training programmes to increase industrial productivity and develop the private sector in the local economy. He illustrated several critical elements to improve training quality such as analysing key competencies and job profiles and designing modular training programmes.

Participants stressed the need for specialised training for teachers and educators to be incorporated into the development of learning cities. They affirmed the importance of teachers and stated that "quality education begins with quality teachers" and suggested that the Conference Secretariat include this topic in the follow-up conference. The participants developed a working definition of a teacher or educator in the 21st century. They concluded that a teacher or educator is someone who knows what to teach and how to communicate to the new generation.

The paradigm shift in teaching and learning methodologies was also a major focus of the session. Participants repeatedly emphasized the changing role of the teacher. They also noted how technology is transforming learning settings. The Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) is an example of how a teacher-centred approach needs to adapt to a learner-participatory context.

F. Closing of the Conference

• Master of the ceremonies:

Mr Jean-Marie Ahlin Byll-Cataria,
former Executive Secretary, Association for the
Development of Education in Africa (ADEA)

• Speakers:

Ms Shirley Walters, Representative of the
International Council of Adult Education and
Director of the Division for Lifelong Learning,
University of the Western Cape, South Africa
Mr Arne Carlsen, Director of the UNESCO Institute
for Lifelong Learning (UIL)
Mr Seung-il Na, Vice-Minister of Education,
Republic of Korea
Ms Lorraine Kingston, Deputy Lord Mayor of Cork,
Ireland
Mr Liu Limin, Vice-Minister of Education, China
Mr Yang Xiaochao, Deputy Mayor of Beijing
Municipal Government, China

The formal adoption of the outcome documents took place in this session. The Chair of the Drafting Committee, Ms Brown Burke, presented the draft of the *Beijing Declaration on Building Learning Cities*. The participants endorsed by acclamation both the *Beijing Declaration* and the *Key Features*.

The *Beijing Declaration* affirms the vital importance of education for the future of human communities. It also expresses the delegates' commitment to "the task of nurturing lifelong learning, in order to empower individuals, to promote social cohesion, economic and cultural prosperity, and to foster sustainable development". It concludes with the following 'Call to Action':

1. We call upon UNESCO to establish a global network of learning cities to support and accelerate the practice of lifelong learning in the world's communities. This network should promote policy dialogue and peer learning among member cities, forge links, foster partnerships, provide capacity development, and develop instruments to encourage and recognise progress.
2. We call upon cities and regions in every part of the world to join this network, to develop and implement lifelong learning strategies in their cities.
3. We call upon international and regional organisations to become active partners in this network.

4. We call upon national authorities to encourage local jurisdictions to build learning cities, regions and communities, and to participate in international peer learning activities.
5. We call upon foundations, private corporations and civil society organisations to become active partners of the global network of learning cities – drawing on experience gained in private-sector initiatives.

The General-Rapporteur of the Conference, Ms Walters, presented her report, examining how each of the items on the conference agenda had been addressed [See Appendix D]. She confirmed the following lessons learned from the conference:

- People come first – learning cities are by the people, of the people, for the people
- Political leadership, with long term vision, is critical
- Advocacy of the centrality of learning throughout life is very important
- It requires good governance
- A holistic approach across ages and sectors is essential
- Social justice for all women, men, and children is essential
- Sustainable cities become learning cities
- Empowerment through networks and partnerships must take place
- It is important to bench mark, to measure progress and to share leading practices
- Research and development which takes into account large data sets which include transport systems, housing, education, social care, land use, urbanisation etc. is important, as is the qualitative and quantitative capturing of learning experiences and outcomes
- Most importantly, there must be an acknowledged link between social justice and economic development – a narrow focus on the economy will not yield the results

Following the General-Rapporteur's report, Mr Carlsen gave the closing address on behalf of Mr Qian Tang, Assistant Director-General for Education of UNESCO. He expressed sincere thanks to the Municipal Government of Beijing and the Ministry of Education of China for hosting and organising the conference, and to all participants for opening a new chapter in building learning cities. He stated that UNESCO would play a leading role and would endeavour to implement both outcome documents.

As the representative of the conference's Vice-Chairperson, Mr Na congratulated the organisers on the successful event. He affirmed Member States' responsibility to develop learning cities and to spread

lifelong learning culture. He pledged, on behalf of the Korean Government, to share the Republic of Korea's extensive experience in building learning cities and to remain committed to lifelong learning.

Ms Kingston, Vice-Chairperson of the Conference in the Europe region, also thanked UNESCO, the Municipal Government of Beijing and the Ministry of Education of China in making the conference a remarkable opportunity for lifelong learning stakeholders. She discussed Cork's EcoWell Project and asserted the need for a network that facilitates knowledge and experience sharing to build sustainable learning cities.

In their closing addresses, Mr Liu and Mr Yang acknowledged to organisers and participants their dedication and commitment to the Beijing Declaration and the Key Features. On behalf of the Chinese host organisations, Mr Liu stated that Chinese government will uphold its steadfast leadership and cooperate with all stakeholders in an effort to achieve the strategic goal of establishing a basic framework for building a learning society by 2020. Mr Yang appreciated the conference as a splendid opportunity for representatives to exchange experiences and ideas to build learning cities. Furthermore, he reaffirmed the determination of the Beijing Municipal Government to promote the construction of learning cities.

G. Study and Cultural Visits

All participants had an opportunity to enjoy a cultural visit in Beijing on the third day. Participants were divided into three groups and travelled to different locations to reinforce their understanding of Beijing as a learning city in the past and present. The study and cultural visit destinations included the Imperial College, the Confucian Temple, the Capital Museum and the Zhongguancon Science Park, as well as UNESCO World Heritage sites, such as the Great Wall, the Imperial Palace and the Summer Palace in Beijing.

Group 1

Imperial College/ Confucius Temple

The Imperial College was the centre of education in ancient China. It was the highest educational organ in charge of national education. The Confucius Temple was where the memorial services for Confucius were held. These two buildings are outstanding examples of the education culture of ancient China.

Great Wall

The Great Wall is the world's largest military structure with a total length of more than 20,000 kilometres. It was built from the 3rd century BC to the 17th century AD. It is considered as a national symbol



of the protection of national security and Chinese culture from outside invasion. It demonstrates the architectural, technological and artistic excellence of ancient China.

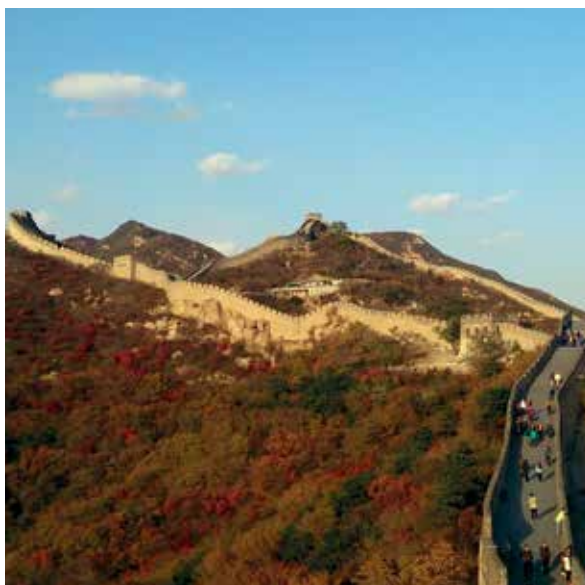
Group 2

Capital Museum

The Capital Museum is the historical and cultural heart of China. It exhibits 5,622 pieces of historical significance. It also possesses rich collections of old Beijing folk customs and Beijing's modern art. It represents the endeavour of the Beijing Municipal Government to be the cultural capital of the world. It also serves as the research centre of archaeology, cultural exchange centre, educational institute for the public and youth, and facility where ceremonies and rituals are held.

Imperial Palace

The Imperial Palace was the emperors' residence from the 15th to 20th century. It is also known as the 'Forbidden City'. It is a combination of construction techniques and architectural art from the Ming and Qing dynasties. There are scenic gardens and buildings with around 10,000 rooms and a million pieces of furniture and works of art.



Group 3

Zhongguancun Science Park

The Zhongguancun Science Park is the first high-tech park in China. It is the technical hub with the highest concentration of talent and educational resources and is referred to as 'China's Silicon Valley'. Many big companies such as Stone Group, Founder Group, and Lenovo Group started in Zhongguancun.

Summer Palace

The Summer Palace is the formal royal palace that has a beautiful harmony between natural landscape and traditional architecture from the Qing Dynasty. The palace is divided into three parts: the administrative area, the residence and the recreation area. It is an outstanding example of the oriental garden style that has had a substantial impact on garden design and culture.





III. Conference Outcomes

The conference adopted two outcome documents: the *Beijing Declaration on Developing Learning Cities*, and the *Key Features of Learning Cities*. After the conference, Mr Qian Tang, UNESCO's Assistant Director-General for Education, officially dispatched both documents to all 195 National Commissions of UNESCO Member States and their Permanent Delegations to UNESCO. He also invited them to forward these documents to the concerned national and municipal authorities to follow up on the conference outcomes. UIL will disseminate the outcome documents to the national authorities of UNESCO Member States and partners in the six UN languages (Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish).

A. Beijing Declaration on Building Learning Cities

Lifelong Learning for All: Promoting Inclusion, Prosperity and Sustainability in Cities

Preamble

We, the participants at the International Conference on Learning Cities, co-organised by UNESCO, the Ministry of Education of China and Beijing Municipal Government (Beijing, 21–23 October 2013) declare as follows:

We recognise that we live in a complex, fast-changing world where social, economic and political norms are constantly redefined. Economic growth and employment, urbanization, demographic change, scientific and technological advances, cultural diversity and the need to maintain human security and public safety represent just a few of the challenges to the governance and sustainability of societies.

We affirm that, in order to empower citizens – understood as all residents of cities and communities – we must strive to give them access to and encourage their use of a broad array of learning opportunities throughout their lives.

We believe that learning improves quality of life, equips citizens to anticipate and tackle new challenges, and helps build better and more sustainable societies.

We acknowledge that the concept of learning throughout life is not new; it is an integral feature of human development and is deeply rooted in all cultures and civilisations.

We maintain that lifelong learning confers social, economic and cultural benefits to individual learners and communities and should be a primary focus of cities, regions, nations and the international community.

We acknowledge that the majority of the world's population now resides in cities and urban regions, and that this trend is accelerating. As a result, cities and urban regions play an ever greater role in national and global development.

We recognise that “learning communities”, “learning cities” and “learning regions” are pillars of sustainable development.

We accept that international and regional organisations, as well as national governments, have a vital role to play in developing learning societies. However, we are aware that this development must be rooted in sub-national regions, cities and all types of community.

We know that cities play a significant role in promoting social inclusion, economic growth, public safety and environmental protection. Therefore, cities should be both architects and executors of strategies that foster lifelong learning and sustainable development.

We acknowledge that cities differ in their cultural and ethnic composition, heritage and social structures. However, many characteristics of a learning city are common to all. A learning city mobilises human and other resources to promote inclusive learning from basic to higher education; it revitalises learning in families and communities; it facilitates learning for and in the workplace; it extends the use of modern learning

technologies; it enhances quality in learning; and it nurtures a culture of learning throughout life. We envision that a learning city will facilitate individual empowerment, build social cohesion, nurture active citizenship, promote economic and cultural prosperity, and lay the foundation for sustainable development.

Commitments

We commit ourselves to the following actions, which have the power to transform our cities:

1. Empowering individuals and promoting social cohesion

In today's cities, individual empowerment and social cohesion are crucial to the well-being of citizens; fostering participation, trust, connectedness and civic engagement. To equip citizens to anticipate and tackle the challenges of urbanisation, cities should attach great importance to individual empowerment and social cohesion.

In developing learning cities, we support individual empowerment and social cohesion by:

- ensuring that every citizen has the opportunity to become literate and obtain basic skills;
- encouraging and enabling individuals to actively participate in the public life of their city;
- guaranteeing gender equality; and
- creating a safe, harmonious and inclusive community.

2. Enhancing economic development and cultural prosperity

While economic development plays a fundamental role in increasing standards of living and maintaining the economic health of cities, cultural prosperity is a powerful contributor to quality of life. As a repository of knowledge, meaning and values, culture defines the way people live and interact within communities.

In developing learning cities, we will enhance economic development and cultural prosperity by:

- stimulating inclusive and sustainable economic growth;
- reducing the proportion of citizens living in poverty;
- creating employment opportunities for all citizens;
- actively supporting science, technology and innovation;
- ensuring access to diverse cultural activities; and
- encouraging participation in leisure and physical recreation.

3. Promoting sustainable development

To ensure the future viability of communities, natural resources must be used in ways that ensure a good quality of life for future generations. Sustainable development cannot be achieved through technological solutions, political regulations or fiscal incentives alone. It requires fundamental changes in the way people think and act. Lifelong learning is a necessary part of making this change.

In developing learning cities, we will promote sustainable development by:

- reducing the negative impacts of economic and other human activities on the natural environment;
- protecting the natural environment and enhancing the liveability of our cities; and
- promoting sustainable development through active learning in all settings.

4. Promoting inclusive learning in the education system

All citizens, regardless of ability, gender and sexuality, social background, language, ethnicity, religion or culture should have equal access to learning opportunities. If a person is excluded from participating in the education system, their ability to develop as individuals and contribute to their communities may be impaired.

In developing learning cities, we will promote inclusive learning in the education system by:

- expanding access to early childhood care and education;
- expanding access to formal education from primary to tertiary level;
- expanding access to and participation in adult education and technical and vocational education and training;
- systems in order to offer diverse learning opportunities and meet a range of proficiencies; and
- providing support for marginalized groups, including migrant families, to ensure access to education.

5. Revitalising learning in families and communities

Lifelong learning is not confined to educational or business settings. It infuses the entire life of a city. In most societies, the family is an especially important setting for learning. Learning in families and local communities builds social capital and improves the quality of life.

In developing learning cities, we will revitalise learning in families and local communities by:

- establishing community-based learning spaces and providing resources for learning in families and communities;
- ensuring, through consultation, that community education and learning programmes respond to the needs of all citizens;
- motivating people to participate in family and community learning, giving special attention to vulnerable and disadvantaged groups, such as families in need, migrants, people with disabilities, minorities and third-age learners; and
- recognising community history and culture, and indigenous ways of knowing and learning as unique and precious resources.

6. Facilitating learning for and in the workplace

Due to globalization, technological advancement and the growth of knowledge-based economies, most adults need to regularly enhance their knowledge and skills. In turn, private and public organisations need to embrace a culture of learning.

In developing learning cities, we will facilitate learning for and in the workplace by:

- helping public and private organisations to become learning organisations;
- ensuring that all members of the workforce, including migrant workers, have access to a broad array of learning opportunities;
- encouraging employers and trade unions to support workplace learning; and
- providing appropriate learning opportunities for unemployed youth and adults.

7. Extending the use of modern learning technologies

Information and communication technologies (ICT) – particularly the Internet – have opened up new possibilities for learning and education. Modern cities must enable all citizens to use these technologies for learning and self-empowerment.

In developing learning cities, we will extend the use of modern learning technologies by:

- developing policy environments favourable to the use of ICT in learning;
- training administrators, teachers and educators to use technologies that enhance learning;
- expanding citizens' access to ICT tools and learning programmes; and
- developing quality e-learning resources.

8. Enhancing quality in learning

It is not sufficient for lifelong learning policies and practices to focus on increasing numbers of participants. In many cities, there is a disparity between the numbers of people participating in education and learning and those who succeed in mastering relevant, portable skills and competences. Quality is, therefore, of utmost importance. In particular, there is an acute need to foster skills, values and attitudes that will enable people to overcome religious, linguistic and cultural differences, to coexist peacefully, and to discover shared human, moral and ethical principles.

In developing learning cities, we attach great importance to enhancing quality in learning by:

- promoting a paradigm shift from teaching to learning, and from the mere acquisition of information to the development of creativity and learning skills;
- raising awareness of shared moral, ethical and cultural values, and promoting tolerance of differences;
- employing appropriately trained administrators, teachers and educators;
- fostering a learner-friendly environment in which learners have, as far as practicable, ownership of their own learning; and
- providing support to learners with special needs, in particular those with learning difficulties.

9. Fostering a culture of learning throughout life

Most people today experience a variety of learning environments. When the outcomes of all learning are valued, rewarded and celebrated by a city, this strengthens the position of learners in society and motivates them to learn further. This motivation should be supported by the provision of comprehensive information and advice to help people make informed learning choices.

In developing learning cities, we will foster a vibrant culture of learning throughout life by:

- recognising the role of communications media, libraries, museums, religious settings, sports and cultural centres, community centres, parks and similar places as learning spaces;
- organising and supporting public events that encourage and celebrate learning;
- providing adequate information, guidance and support to all citizens, and stimulating them to learn through diverse pathways; and
- acknowledging the importance of learning in informal and non-formal settings and developing systems that recognize and reward all forms of learning.

10. Strengthening political will and commitment

It takes strong political will and commitment to successfully build a learning city. Politicians and administrators have primary responsibility for committing political resources to realising the vision of a learning city.

In developing learning cities, we will strengthen political will and commitment by:

- demonstrating strong political leadership and making a steadfast commitment to turning our cities into learning cities;
- developing and implementing well grounded and participatory strategies for promoting lifelong learning for all; and
- consistently monitoring progress towards becoming a learning city.

11. Improving governance and participation of all stakeholders

All sectors of society have a key role to play in learning and education and should participate in building learning cities. However, stakeholders and citizens are more likely to contribute to building learning cities if decisions are made in a participatory way.

In developing learning cities, we will improve governance and participation of all stakeholders by:

- establishing inter-sectoral coordination mechanisms to involve governmental and non-governmental organisations and the private sector in building learning cities;
- developing bilateral or multilateral partnerships between sectors in order to share resources and increase the availability of learning opportunities; and
- encouraging all stakeholders to provide quality learning opportunities and to make their own unique contribution to building a learning city;

12. Boosting resource mobilisation and utilisation

Cities and communities that embrace lifelong learning for all have seen significant improvements in terms of public health, economic growth, reduced criminality and increased democratic participation. These wider benefits of lifelong learning present strong arguments for increased investment in the building of learning cities.

In developing learning cities, we will boost resource mobilisation and utilisation by:

- encouraging greater financial investment in lifelong learning by government, civil society, private sector organisations and individuals;

- making effective use of the learning resources of all stakeholders and developing innovative funding mechanisms to support lifelong learning for all;
- removing structural barriers to learning, adopting pro-poor funding policies and providing various types of support to disadvantaged groups;
- encouraging citizens to contribute their talents, skills, knowledge and experience on a voluntary basis; and
- encouraging the exchange of ideas, experiences and best practice between organisations in different cities.

Call to Action

Numerous places already define themselves as learning cities or regions. They are keen to benefit from international policy dialogue, action research, capacity building and peer learning, and to apply successful approaches to promoting lifelong learning. Therefore,

1. We call upon UNESCO to establish a global network of learning cities to support and accelerate the practice of lifelong learning in the world's communities. This network should promote policy dialogue and peer learning among member cities, forge links, foster partnerships, provide capacity development, and develop instruments to encourage and recognise progress.
2. We call upon cities and regions in every part of the world to join this network, to develop and implement lifelong learning strategies in their cities.
3. We call upon international and regional organisations to become active partners in this network.
4. We call upon national authorities to encourage local jurisdictions to build learning cities, regions and communities, and to participate in international peer learning activities.
5. We call upon foundations, private corporations and civil society organisations to become active partners of the global network of learning cities – drawing on experience gained in private-sector initiatives.

Acknowledgements

We are grateful for the generous hospitality and steadfast leadership of the Chinese Ministry of Education and the Beijing Municipal Government in co-organising this Conference. We also acknowledge the achievements of the Beijing Municipal Government in transforming the vibrant Chinese capital into a learning city.

We thank the Ministry of Education of China, National Commission of China for UNESCO, FESTO Didactic, DVV International, Kings Group, Organization of Iberoamerican States (OEI), and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) for financially supporting the participation of delegates from lower-income countries.

B. Key Features of Learning Cities

1. Introductory Note

Several approaches have been taken in recent years to translate the concept of a learning society into reality. One significant example is the growth of 'learning communities', 'learning cities' and 'learning regions'. Although the idea of a learning city has mostly been conceptualised in developed countries, facilitated by the OECD since the 1980s and the European Commission since the 1990s, it is now rapidly gaining momentum in developing countries. In more and more Member States, local authorities now claim to be learning cities/regions/communities. Their proliferation has become a major worldwide phenomenon, with considerable educational, social, economic and environmental implications.

What is a Learning City?

Cities differ in their cultural and ethnic composition, in their heritage and social structures. However, many characteristics of a learning city are common to all. The initiative on learning cities developed by the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning defines a learning city as follows:

A Learning City is a city which effectively mobilises its resources in every sector to

- promote inclusive learning from basic to higher education;
- re-vitalise learning in families and communities;
- facilitate learning for and in the workplace;
- extend the use of modern learning technologies;
- enhance quality and excellence in learning; and
- foster a culture of learning throughout life.

In so doing it will create and reinforce individual empowerment and social cohesion, economic and cultural prosperity, and sustainable development.

Why monitor progress in developing learning cities?

Since a learning city facilitates lifelong learning for all, and therefore helps to realize the universal right to education, building such a city has far-reaching appeal. This is a continuous process; there is no magic line over which a city will pass in order to become known as a learning city. There are, however, attributes by which a learning city can be recognized, mainly in terms of what it does rather than what it is. The construction of a learning city entails an operational and pragmatic approach to the implementation of lifelong learning. It is not an abstract theory. If a city has the political will and commitment to build a learning city, it will also need a set of indicators or key features against which it can monitor its progress.

Put simply, monitoring the progress of a learning city is necessary for three main reasons:

- To transform political and theoretical discourses into concrete strategies and approaches;
- To measure progress over time; and
- To evaluate the benefits of the strategies it has put into place

The Key Features of Learning Cities will make it possible:

- To support in a meaningful way the development of lifelong learning within and across member cities;
- To determine up to a certain level how much progress is being made to implement lifelong learning for all in many of the world's communities; and
- To facilitate international comparative analysis and experience-sharing and mutual learning among member cities.

The development of the Key Features of Learning Cities

This normative instrument for measuring learning cities is the result of a long consultation process. Initially, UIL held a workshop on developing a framework for the Key Features of Learning Cities from 3 to 5 July 2012. Experts representing some of the partners for the establishment of IPLC, including the PASCAL Observatory, Bertelsmann Foundation, CISCO Systems, Beijing Municipal Education Commission, National Centre of Education Development Research of China, Kuwait University and the Cape Higher Education Consortium, as well as some UIL professional staff and consultants, participated in the workshop.

This workshop first of all drew inspiration from the following well-established conceptual frameworks and indicators for measuring social and economic development:

- *The Human Development Index (HDI) and related indices developed by UNDP (2007);*
- *The Revised Official Monitoring Framework for the Millennium Development Goals: goals, targets and indicators (UN, 2008);*
- *The Knowledge Assessment Methodology: Variables and Clusters by the World Bank (2012);*
- *The Better Life Index by OECD (2012);*
- *The Future We Want – RIO+20 Report (UN, 2012);*
- *A New Global Partnership: Eradicate Poverty And Transform Economies Through Sustainable Development (UN, 2013); and*
- *Post-2015 Development Agenda: Goals, Targets and Indicators (The Centre for International Governance Innovation and the Korea Development Institute, 2012).*

Inspired by a list of criteria for indicators developed in the UN report *Analysing and Measuring Social Inclusion in a Global Context* (UN, 2010), the following criteria were endorsed at the workshop to develop the Key Features of Learning Cities.

- *Ambitious but achievable* – achieving the target should represent significant progress but should also be realistic.
- *Crucial* – every feature reflects a value, a priority or a critical issue.
- *Relevant* – a feature must fit its intended purpose; achieving the target should contribute significantly to meeting a key objective.
- *Clear and understandable* – a feature must be simple and easy for all stakeholders to understand, and should make sense to the average person.
- *Easy to measure* – a feature should be measured by available data, or by data to be collected through a well-designed survey.
- *Valid and reliable* – people must trust the information that a feature provides.

As a result of intensive debates and group work, the workshop produced the first draft of the framework of the Key Features of Learning Cities. Taking the comments from experts into consideration, UIL has produced a draft which was presented in the 1st meeting of the Expert Group for Developing Learning Cities in Hangzhou, China. In April and May 2013, UIL consulted some experts and a number of cities on the relevance of the key features and the feasibility of data collection. On 4–5 June 2013, UIL held a second meeting in Jeju Island, Republic of Korea. The participants of the meeting elaborated further on the draft Key Features of Learning Cities.

Based on the expert group's validation, UIL selected a number of cities in each of the UNESCO regions for piloting, which was completed in September 2013. The Key features reflect the results of the piloting.

Components of the framework of the Key Features of Learning Cities

As shown in Figure 1, the framework of the Key Features of Learning Cities corresponds to the pediments, columns and foundation steps of the UNESCO logo. The Pediment – three areas of focus reflect the wider benefits of building a modern learning city, broadly defined as:

- (1) Individual empowerment and social cohesion;
- (2) Economic development and cultural prosperity; and
- (3) Sustainable development.

The Columns – six areas of focus reflect the major building blocks of a learning city:

- (1) Inclusive learning in the education system;
- (2) Re-vitalised learning in families and communities;
- (3) Effective learning for and in the workplace;
- (4) Extended use of modern learning technologies;
- (5) Enhanced quality in learning; and
- (6) A vibrant culture of learning throughout life.

The Foundational Steps – three areas of focus reflect the fundamental conditions for building a learning city:

- (1) Strong political will and commitment;
- (2) Governance and participation of all stakeholders; and
- (3) Mobilisation and utilisation of resources.

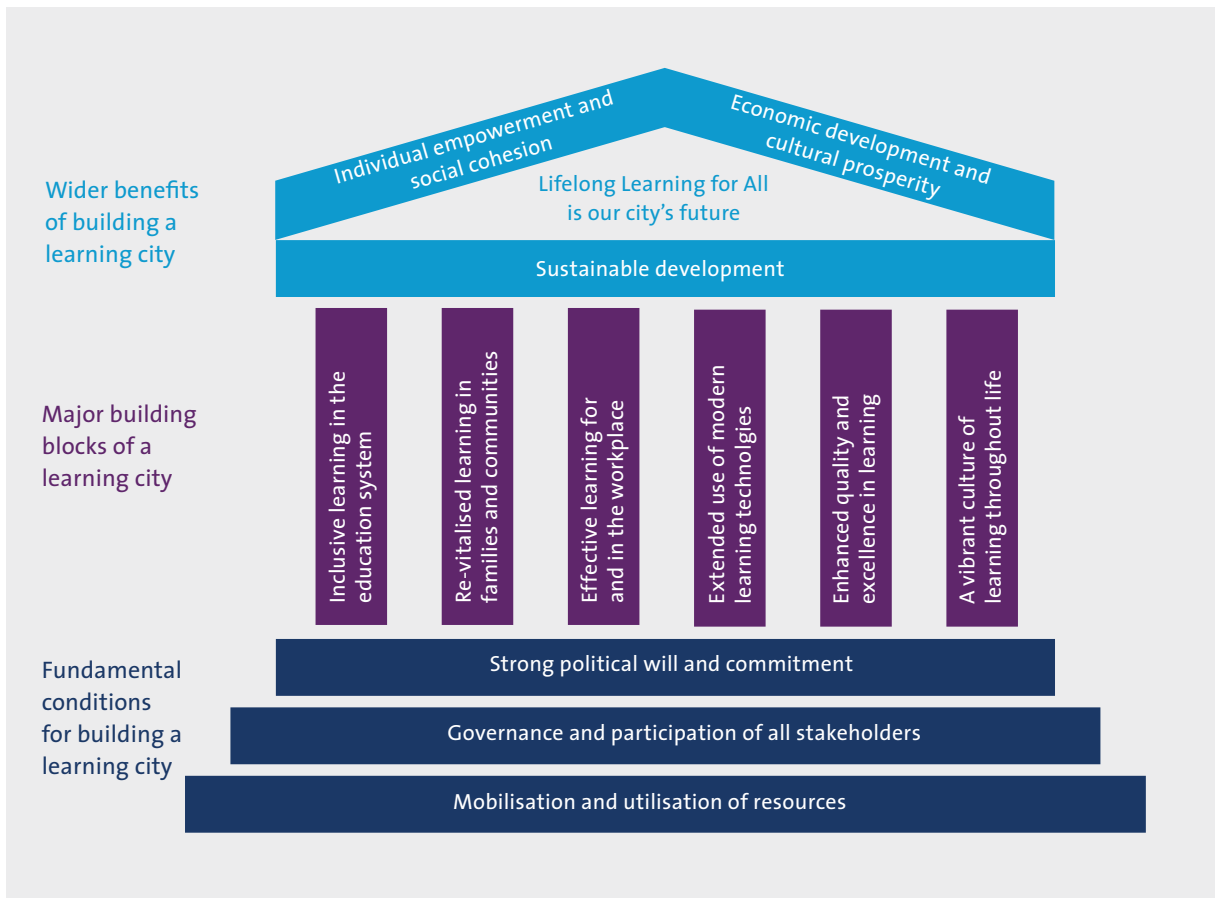
A total of 42 features are included in the Key Features of Learning Cities. Most of the features are quantitative, and related statistics can be provided by the responsible city authorities. As for qualitative features, some can be measured by the results of a survey conducted by independent professional agencies such as Gallop, while others can be measured through expert review of reports provided by the responsible city authorities.

The objective is not to make distinctions between cities. Each city is different and its progress towards a learning city can only be measured within the context of its own cultural, economic and social history and traditions.

How to use the Key Features of Learning Cities

Formally endorsed by mayors and city education executives of learning cities as well as experts participating in the International Conference on Learning Cities, the Key Features can serve as a comprehensive checklist of action points to help

Figure 1: The Framework of the Key Features of Learning Cities



municipal governments and other stakeholders of cities in their efforts to build learning cities that promote lifelong learning for all.

Furthermore, as the members of a global network of learning cities need to be recommended by UNESCO Member States, the national authorities of the Member States can use the Key Features to select and recommend cities to join the network.

More generally, the Key Features can also be used as a reference document for international organisations and national authorities in promoting the development of learning nations, regions, cities and communities.

2. List of key features and measurement

Area of focus	Key features	Possible measurements	Source of data	Statistical data in 2012 or survey/review results
1. Wider benefits of building a learning city				
1.1 Empowering individuals and promoting social cohesion	1.1.1 Ensuring that every citizen has the opportunity to become literate and obtain basic skills	Adult literacy rate: Total number of literate persons aged 15 and above, expressed as a percentage of the total population of that age group	Official data provided by city authorities	Male % Female % Total %
	1.1.2 Encouraging and enabling individuals to actively participate in the public life of their city	Participation rate in election: Participation rate of population of eligible age in the most recent major election in the city	Official data provided by city authorities	% (Year)
		Participation in volunteering and community activities: Percentage of citizens involved in unpaid volunteering and community activities in the 12 months preceding the survey	Survey results	%
	1.1.3 Guaranteeing gender equality	Gender equality in politics: Percentage of seats held by women in city council/congress	Official data provided by city authorities	%
		Gender equality in business management: Percentage of seats held by women in boards of top 10 enterprises	Survey results	%
	1.1.4 Creating a safe, harmonious and inclusive community	Crime level: Number of recorded crimes per 100,000 inhabitants	Official data provided by city authorities	
		Social mobility: Percentage of citizens with disadvantaged social background who believe that their children will enjoy higher social status than themselves	Survey results	%
	1.2 Enhancing economic development and cultural prosperity	1.2.1 Stimulating inclusive and sustainable economic growth	Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita: Total value produced (adjusted for purchasing power parity in US\$) within a city divided by the total number of inhabitants	Official data provided by city authorities
Urban poverty: Percentage of citizens living below US \$1.25 a day (PPP) at 2005 international prices			Official data provided by city authorities	%
1.2.2 Creating employment opportunities for all citizens		Unemployment rate: Unemployed working age population (15 years or older) as a percentage of the total labour force	Official data provided by city authorities	Male %
				Female % Total %
1.2.3 Actively supporting science, technology and innovation		Human resources in science and technology (HRST): Professionals working in a science and technology occupation as a percentage of total employment	Official data provided by city authorities	%
	Patent filing: Number of new patents per 100,000 inhabitants			Official data provided by city authorities

Area of focus	Key features	Possible measurements	Source of data	Statistical data in 2012 or survey/review results				
1. Wider benefits of building a learning city								
	1.2.4 Ensuring access to diverse cultural activities	Participation in cultural activities: Number of visits to museums, theatres, cinemas, concert halls and sporting events per inhabitant per month	Official data provided by city authorities or survey results			No. of visits		
	1.2.5 Encouraging participation in leisure and physical recreation	Participation in physical exercise and sports: Percentage of population participating in physical exercise or sports no less than five times a week	Survey results			%		
1.3 Promoting sustainable development	1.3.1 Reducing the negative impacts of economic and other human activities on the natural environment	CO2 emissions: Total CO2 emissions, in tonnes per capita	Official data provided by city authorities			No. of tonnes		
		Waste management: Total annual domestic waste collected and processed, in kg per capita per year	Official data provided by city authorities			Kg per capita		
	1.3.2 Enhancing the liveability of cities	Living condition: Percentage of population living in slums	Official data provided by city authorities			%		
		Public transportation: Citizens' satisfaction with the public transportation system	Survey results	5 Excellent	4 Very good	3 Good	2 Fair	1 Poor
	1.3.3 Promoting sustainable development through active learning in all settings	Education for sustainable development: Effective measures for promoting sustainable development at all levels of education	Experts' review	5 Excellent	4 Very good	3 Good	2 Fair	1 Poor
		Environmental stewardship: Citizens' perception of their own behaviours in terms of environmental responsibility	Survey results	5 Excellent	4 Very good	3 Good	2 Fair	1 Poor
2. Major building blocks of a learning city								
2.1 Promoting inclusive learning in the education system	2.1.1 Expanding access to early childhood care and education	Enrolment in pre-primary education: Net enrolment rate in pre-primary education (ISCED o)	Official data provided by city authorities	Gender	Boys	%		
					Girls	%		
					Total	%		
	2.1.2 Expanding access to education from primary to tertiary level	Mean years of schooling: Average number of years of formal schooling received by people aged 25 and older	Official data provided by city authorities	Gender	Male	years		
					Female	years		
					Total	years		
2.1.3 Expanding access to and participation in adult education and technical and vocational education and training	Participation in adult learning and education: Percentage of citizens aged 25–64 that reported receiving education/training in the 12 months preceding the survey	Survey results			%			

Area of focus	Key features	Possible measurements	Source of data	Statistical data in 2012 or survey/review results	
2. Major building blocks of a learning city					
	2.1.4 Providing support for marginalized groups, including migrant families, to ensure access to education	Support for disadvantaged groups: Measures adopted by the city authorities to support learners from linguistic/ethnic minorities and disadvantaged backgrounds Support for senior citizens: Measures adopted by the city authorities to support senior-citizen learners (aged 65 years and older)	Experts' review Experts' review	5 4 3 2 1 Excellent Very good Good Fair Poor 5 4 3 2 1 Excellent Very good Good Fair Poor	
2.2 Revitalising learning in families and communities	2.2.1 Establishing community-based learning spaces and providing resources for learning in families and communities	Infrastructure: Number of functional community-based learning spaces (including community learning centres, cultural houses and public libraries) per 100,000 inhabitants	Official data provided by city authorities		
		Policy initiative for supporting learning in families: Availability of policy to support learning in families	Experts' review	5 4 3 2 1 Excellent Very good Good Fair Poor	
	2.2.2 Motivating people to participate in family and community learning	Participation in community learning: Percentage of citizens participating in community learning activities on a regular basis (not less than 2 hours per week)	Official data provided by city authorities		%
		Participation in family learning: Percentage of citizens engaging in learning activities in their families in the 12 months preceding the survey	Survey results		%
2.2.3 Recognising community history and culture, and indigenous ways of knowing and learning as unique and precious resources	Development of learning resources through indigenous knowledge: Number of learning programmes based on community history, culture and indigenous knowledge developed by the city authorities	Official data provided by city authorities			
2.3 Facilitating learning for and in the workplace	2.3.1 Ensuring that all members of the workforce, including migrant workers, have access to a broad array of learning opportunities	Employees' participation in education and training: Employed people's participation rate in job-related education and training	Official data provided by city authorities or survey results		%
		Migrant workers' participation in education and training: Existence of initiatives or strategies adopted by city to support migrant workers' participation in education and training	Experts' review	5 4 3 2 1 Excellent Very good Good Fair Poor	

Area of focus	Key features	Possible measurements	Source of data	Statistical data in 2012 or survey/review results
2. Major building blocks of a learning city				
	2.3.2 Helping public and private organisations to become learning organisations	Learning organisations: Existence of initiatives or strategies to develop learning organisations that encourage employees' participation in learning	Experts' review	5 Excellent 4 Very good 3 Good 2 Fair 1 Poor
	2.3.3 Encouraging employers and trade unions to support workplace learning	Employers' financial commitment to skill development: Total investment in employees' education and training as a percentage of the employees' payroll in both the public and private sectors	Official data provided by city authorities	Public sector % Private sector %
	2.3.4 Providing appropriate learning opportunities for unemployed youth and adults	Youth involvement in education and employment: Total number of youth (aged 15–24) not in education, employment or training as a percentage of the total youth population	Official data provided by city authorities	%
		Training for the unemployed: Percentage of the unemployed enrolled in various employment training programmes offered in the city	Official data provided by city authorities	%
2.4 Extending the use of modern learning technologies	2.4.1 Training administrators, teachers and educators to use technologies that enhance learning	ICT Training for administrators, teachers and educators: Percentage of teachers/educators who have received ICT training in the last 12 months	Survey results	Schools % Community learning spaces %
	2.4.2 Expanding citizens' access to ICT tools and learning programmes	Use of ICT for class activities: Percentage of teachers/educators who use ICT on a regular basis for class activities in schools and community learning spaces	Survey results	Schools % Community learning spaces %
		Mobile penetration rate: Total number of people with mobile phone connections as a percentage of the total population	Official data provided by city authorities	%
		Internet usage: Percentage of citizens with household or shared access to the internet	Survey results	%
		Participation in learning through the internet: Average number of hours per week that citizens use the internet for learning purposes	Survey results	hours
2.5 Enhancing quality in learning	2.5.1 Promoting a paradigm shift in education and learning	Paradigm shift in education and learning: Education policy to promote a paradigm shift from teaching to learning, and from the mere acquisition of information to the development of creativity and learning skills	Experts' review	5 Excellent 4 Very good 3 Good 2 Fair 1 Poor

Area of focus	Key features	Possible measurements	Source of data	Statistical data in 2012 or survey/review results
2. Major building blocks of a learning city				
	2.5.2 Raising awareness of shared moral, ethical and cultural values, and promoting tolerance of differences	Learning to live together: Percentage of citizens who socialized with people from other cultures on a regular basis	Survey results	%
	2.5.3 Employing appropriately trained administrators, teachers and educators	Availability of appropriately trained teachers/educators: Ratio of students/learners to teachers/educators in pre-primary, primary, secondary, and adult and continuing education	Official data provided by city authorities	Pre-primary education % Primary education % Secondary education % Adult and continuing education %
	2.5.4 Fostering a learner-friendly environment	Learner-friendly environment: Percentage of learners satisfied with their learning environment	Survey results	Schools % Community learning spaces %
2.6 Fostering a culture of learning throughout life	2.6.1 Organising and supporting public events that encourage and celebrate learning	Advocacy for learning: Existence of public activities (adult learning week and learning festivals) and use of all media to promote and celebrate learning	Experts' review	5 4 3 2 1 Excellent Very good Good Fair Poor
	2.6.2 Providing adequate information, guidance and support to all citizens, and stimulating them to learn through diverse pathways	Information and services: Percentage of learners satisfied with the provision of information and counselling to learners	Survey results	
	2.6.3 Developing systems that recognize and reward all forms of learning	Recognition and reward of learning outcomes: Availability of policy and practice of recognizing, validating and accrediting all learning outcomes	Experts' review	5 4 3 2 1 Excellent Very good Good Fair Poor
3. Fundamental conditions for building a learning city				
3.1 Strengthening political will and commitment	3.1.1 Demonstrating strong political leadership and making a steadfast commitment to turning our cities into learning cities	Leadership: The strength and commitment of leadership demonstrated in developing and implementing the learning city strategy	Experts' review	5 4 3 2 1 Excellent Very good Good Fair Poor

Area of focus	Key features	Possible measurements	Source of data	Statistical data in 2012 or survey/review results				
3. Fundamental conditions for building a learning city								
	3.1.2 Developing and implementing well grounded and participatory strategies for promoting lifelong learning for all	Public policy and strategy: Legislation, public policy and strategy for promoting 'lifelong learning for all' adopted by the city council/	Experts' review	5 Excellent	4 Very good	3 Good	2 Fair	1 Poor
	3.1.3 Monitoring progress towards becoming a learning city	Measures to monitor progress: Measures adopted by the city authorities to monitor progress in developing and implementing the learning city strategy	Experts' review	5 Excellent	4 Very good	3 Good	2 Fair	1 Poor
3.2 Improving governance and participation of all stakeholders	3.2.1 Establishing inter-sectoral coordination mechanisms to involve governmental and non-governmental organisations and the private sector	Mechanisms for stakeholder coordination: The effectiveness of measures to encourage stakeholder mobilisation and coordination in developing learning cities	Experts' review	5 Excellent	4 Very good	3 Good	2 Fair	1 Poor
	3.2.2 Encouraging all stakeholders to provide quality learning opportunities and to make their own unique contribution to building a learning city	Stakeholders' participation: Stakeholders' commitment, plans and actions to develop better and more accessible learning opportunities within their areas of responsibility	Experts' review	5 Excellent	4 Very good	3 Good	2 Fair	1 Poor
		Private sectors' commitment: The existence of partnerships and cooperation between the city and the private sectors to support the learning city strategy	Experts' review	5 Excellent	4 Very good	3 Good	2 Fair	1 Poor
3.3 Boosting resource mobilisation and utilisation	3.3.1 Encouraging greater financial investment in lifelong learning by government individuals	Financial investment in education and learning: Public expenditure on education and learning as a percentage of the total city budget	Official data provided by city authorities					%
		Distribution of public education expenditure: Percentage of public education expenditure spent at different levels/types of education	Official data provided by city authorities	Basic education (ISCED 0-3)				%
	3.3.2 Making effective use of the learning resources of all stakeholders to support lifelong learning for all	Effective use of resources: Innovative ways of mapping and utilising human, financial, cultural and other resources available to city to facilitate learning in the city	Experts' review	5 Excellent	4 Very good	3 Good	2 Fair	1 Poor

Area of focus	Key features	Possible measurements	Source of data	Statistical data in 2012 or survey/review results
3. Fundamental conditions for building a learning city				
	3-3-3 Adopting pro-poor funding policies and providing various types of support to disadvantaged groups	Subsidies to disadvantaged groups: The allocation and effective use of funds to support the participation of disadvantaged groups in learning	Experts' review	5 4 3 2 1 Excellent Very good Good Fair Poor
	3-3-4 Encouraging citizens and residents to contribute their talents, skills, knowledge and experience on a voluntary basis	Citizens' contribution to helping other citizens learn: Percentage of citizens who contribute their skills, knowledge and experience to help other citizens learn at least once a month in the 12 months preceding the survey	Survey results	%
	3-3-5 Encouraging the exchange of ideas, experiences and best practice between different cities	International partnership: Progress in facilitating and utilizing opportunities for international partnerships and exchanges with other learning cities	Experts' review	5 4 3 2 1 Excellent Very good Good Fair Poor



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IV. Media Coverage and Feedback

There has been massive and positive coverage of the International Conference on Learning Cities in media outlets around the world. Many international, regional and national organisations and agencies actively reported the outcomes of the conference within their network. Furthermore, participants provided positive feedback to UNESCO on the conference and showed high expectations for the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and the Key Features of Learning Cities. It appears that the follow-up actions are taken in many cities, such as Cork, Ireland, and Balanga, Philippines.

A. Media Coverage

UNESCO/UII Press Releases

- “We need Learning Cities for a Better Future for All,” declares UNESCO Director-General in Beijing, October 21, 2013
- UNESCO Director-General Meets with Premier Li Keqiang of the People’s Republic of China, October 22, 2013
- “The thriving cities of the future will be learning cities”: UNESCO helps shape the future of cities, November 11, 2013

Coverage in China

English language coverage

- China promotes lifelong learning, People’s Daily, October 22, 2013
- China promotes lifelong learning, China.org.cn, October 22, 2013
- Chinese VP Liu Yandong Emphasizes Lifelong Learning, Women of China, October 22, 2013

Chinese language coverage

- 联合国教科文组织首届国际学习型城市大会在京开幕, CCTV, October 22, 2013
- 首届国际学习型城市大会: “学习型城市”有了具体评估标准, CCTV, October 23, 2013

Coverage in other countries

Canada

- China values educational development, lifelong learning, CanIndia, October 22, 2013

India

- China values educational development, lifelong learning, Prokerala News, October 22, 2013

United States of America

- UNESCO Chief Holds Talks With Chinese Premier, RTT News, October 22, 2013

Coverage by international, regional and national organisations, agencies and associations

Beijing Municipal Commission of Education

- 首届国际学习型城市大会在北京举行, October 28, 2013 (in Chinese)

East-China Normal University

- Snapshot on International Conference on Learning Cities, November 7, 2013

dvv international

- International Conference on Learning Cities in Beijing, October 21, 2013

Festo Didactic

- Festo Didactic as Global Sponsor of UNESCO Learning Cities, November 28, 2013

International Council for Adult Education (ICAE)

- Learning opportunities within 15 minutes’ walk from homes of all citizens, Voices Rising, No. 453, November 15, 2013

PASCAL

- First report from the inaugural UNESCO International Conference on Learning Cities, Beijing, October 24, 2013

The Open University of China

- First International Conference of Learning Cities Held in Beijing and Addressed by Liu Yandong, November 26, 2013

University of Deusto

- The University of Deusto and the Basque Government take part in the International Conference on Learning Cities in Beijing, China, November 12, 2013

Swansea City

- Swansea on global learning stage with city giants, October, 2013
- Swansea is first city in UK to pilot UNESCO's "Learning Cities", 29 October 2013

B. Feedback from Participants

"The Conference adopted a declaration to establish a network of cities that will promote lifelong learning. Congratulations to Mr Arne Carlson and his UIL team for the excellent work and good results!"

Qian TANG, Assistant Director-General for Education, UNESCO

"Dr. Ekbal and I are so grateful for attending the conference that enriches our knowledge, and exchange unique experiences in short time. Especially we would like to apply this system in Egypt."

Sawsan El Sherif, Associate Researcher of Social Research Center-American University, Egypt

"I would like to submit the results of this conference to our municipal city council in Maputo as soon as possible in order to ensure the integration of Maputo City in this wide movement on Building Learning Cities around the world."

Simao Mucavele, Councillor of Education, Culture and Sport, Maputo City Municipality, Mozambique

To provide alternative learning opportunities for marginalized and disadvantaged groups in Cochin City, India, Mr Shaji Baby John asked UIL to offer guidance and support. "We are also working out a comprehensive plan" to promote the Global Network of Learning Cities in other cities in India.

Shaji Baby John, Chairman, Kings Group of Companies

Inviting UIL as the external advisor of the city government, Mr Joet Garcia mentioned "we would like to know more about your learning city ideas and see how this can further benefit our city."

Jose Enrique Sandejas Garcia III, Mayor of Balanga, Philippines

"I think we all gained a lot from this conference, and certainly meeting so many people in the same field as us was the most valuable outcome...The event provided many opportunities to exchange ideas and network with other like-minded experts with an interest in learning cities."

Steffen Lehmann, Professor and UNESCO Chair in Sustainable Urban Development for Asia and the Pacific, University of South Australia, Australia

"The Lord Mayor, Catherine Clancy, is hosting a Civic Reception in December to acknowledge our attendance and to publicise the Declaration on Learning Cities."

Tina Neylon, Coordinator, Cork Lifelong Learning Festival, Ireland

Sharing the future plan to write articles about the significance of the declaration and the conference, Mr Roger Boshier expressed "...thank you for a splendid experience in Beijing. I found the entire conference immensely enjoyable and value the contacts made there."

Roger Boshier, Emeritus Professor, Department of Educational Studies, the University of British Columbia, Canada

"It has been a pleasure to share this experience of joint work. Hope we can continue working together looking for a better education for all."

Luis María Scasso, Director General for Cooperation and Lifelong Education, the Organization of Ibero-American States for Education, Science and Culture (OEI)

Ms Mara Nadiezhda Robles Villaseñor congratulated UNESCO and UIL on its success in leading the international community to promote lifelong learning for all and showed a high interest in the next conference.

Mara Nadiezhda Robles Villaseñor, Minister of Education, Mexico City, Mexico

“It was well organised and there was a good balance of presentations and interactions which made it a great learning experience for the participants. As a follow-up action from us in ASPBAE, we are sharing the main points of the Beijing declaration, key features document, good/best practices shared from the different countries, and the conference summary during our consultation workshop next week in Jakarta, Indonesia with our partner education advocacy coalitions from the Asia Pacific region.”

Maria Helen Dabu, Capacity Development and Advocacy Adviser, Asia South Pacific Association for Basic and Adult Education

Describing the conference as a ‘great historical moment’, Ms Lydia Zhou, on behalf of Intel, stated “Big congratulations to UIL for a great & successful meeting held in Beijing to promote lifelong learning. We wish UIL will continuously lead the role to promote the lifelong learning.”

Lydia Zhou, PRC K-12 Education Programme Manager, Intel

V. Appendices

A. Conference Agenda

Time	Activity
Sunday 20 October	
9:00 – 17:30	Arrival and registration Venue: Lobby of Beijing International Hotel
Monday 21 October	
8:30 – 9:10	Opening Ceremony Venue: Grant Hall A on the 3rd Floor (for all plenary sessions and the Mayors' Forum) Master of Ceremonies: Mr Yuan Guiren, Minister of Education of China Opening addresses: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mr Wang Anshun, Mayor of Beijing Municipal Government, China• Ms Irina Bokova, Director-General, UNESCO• Ms Liu Yandong, Vice-Premier of China Languages: Chinese, English, French and Spanish (for all plenary sessions and the Mayors' Forum)
9:15 – 10:00	Introduction to Conference preparation and Conference Agenda <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mr Arne Carlsen, Director of the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL), Secretary-General of the Conference Adoption of Conference Agenda Election of the Chair and Vice-Chairs, General-Rapporteur of the Conference, and Drafting Committee
10:00 – 10:30	Tea break
10:30 – 12:30	Plenary session (1): Making a case for building a learning city Moderator: Mr Walter Hirche, President of the German National Commission for UNESCO, Germany Keynote address: Build the Learning City to pursue a Life-long Education for All <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ms Lu Xin, Vice-Minister, Ministry of Education of China

Time	Activity
Monday 21 October	
10:30 – 12:30	<p>Panellists</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning and design for sustainable urban mobility: Ms Mariko Sato, Chief, UN-HABITAT Bangkok • Sustainable Green Cities are Learning Cities: Learning to live sustainably in a world of finite resources: Mr Steffen Lehmann, UNESCO Chair, Professor of the University of South Australia, Australia • Lifelong learning for individual empowerment and social inclusion: Ms Graciela Messina, International Consultant, Argentina • Smart Cities and Human Resources Development: Mr George D Thomas, Partner & Director, Smarter Cities & Growth Initiatives, Greater China Group, IBM
12:30 – 14:00	<p>Lunch</p>
14:00 – 15:30	<p>Plenary session (2): The building blocks of a learning city</p> <p>Moderator: Mr Gwang-Jo Kim, Director of UNESCO Bangkok</p> <p>Keynote address: ICT and lifelong learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr James Bernard, Global Director, Partners in Learning, Microsoft Corporation <p>Panellists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of lifelong learning in Europe: Ms Dana-Carmen Bachmann, Head of Unit, Vocational training and adult education, Directorate General Education and Culture, European Commission • Transforming Education in the Digital Era: Mr Jun Ge, Managing Director, Intel China Ltd. • Skills Development for Sustainable Economies: Mr Nader Imani, Head of Global Education, FESTO Didactic
15:30 – 16:00	<p>Tea break</p>
16:00 – 17:30	<p>Plenary session (3): The major strategies for building a learning city</p> <p>Moderator: Ms Benita Carole Somerfield, International Chair of the U.S. Library of Congress Literacy Awards (2013), former Executive Director of the Barbara Bush Foundation for Family Literacy (1988-2012), United States of America</p> <p>Keynote address: The Rise of Lifelong Learning Cities in the Republic of Korea</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms Un Shil Choi, President, National Institute for Lifelong Education (NILE), Republic of Korea <p>Panellists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Putting the idea of learning cities into action in Africa: Ms Constance Chigwamba, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education, Sport, Arts and Culture, Zimbabwe • The role of research and collaboration in promoting the learning city: Mr Michael Osborne, Co-Director of PASCAL Observatory, University of Glasgow, United Kingdom • Assessment of learning cities/regions: Mr Ron Faris, President, Golden Horizon Ventures, Canada • The development of Green City indicators in the International Community: Mr Zhou Zheng, Senior Consultant/Acting City Account Manager of East China, Siemens
18:00 – 20:30	<p>Reception and cultural activities</p>

Time	Activity
Tuesday 22 October	
9:00 – 10:30	<p>Plenary session (4): Introduction to the draft Beijing Declaration on Developing Learning Cities and Key Features of Learning Cities</p> <p>Moderator: Mr Heribert Hinzen, Regional Director of dvv international in the Lao People's Democratic Republic</p> <p>Presenters:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to the draft Beijing Declaration on Building Learning Cities: Mr Norman Longworth, UIL Consultant • Introduction to the draft Key Features of Learning Cities: Mr Jin Yang, Senior Programme Specialist, UIL • Reports on the piloting the Key Features of Learning Cities in two cities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ms Mara Nadiezhda Robles Villaseñor, Minister of Education, Mexico City, Mexico - Ms Judith James, Strategic Projects Manager, Planning and Strategic Projects Unit, Swansea University, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
10:30 – 11:00	Tea break
11:00 – 12:30	<p>Parallel Regional Forums</p> <p>Regional Forum on Africa</p> <p>Venue: Function Room 2 on the 1st Floor</p> <p>Moderator: Mr Jean-Marie Ahlin Byll-Cataria, Chair of the UIL Governing Board and former Executive Secretary, Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA)</p> <p>Panellists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr Haskins Goitsemodimo Nkaigwa, Mayor of Gaborone City Council, Botswana • Ms Therese Olenga-Kalonda, Minister of Education, Kinshasa Provincial Government, Democratic Republic of the Congo • Mr Forouk Iya Sambo, Commissioner of Education of Kano State, Nigeria • Mr Khatib Adulrahman Khatib, Mayor of Zanzibar Municipal Council, United Republic of Tanzania • Mr Comlan Ametowoyona Adjahouinou, Mayor of Lomé, Togo <p>Languages: English, French</p> <p>Regional Forum on the Arab States</p> <p>Venue: Function Room 3 on the 1st Floor</p> <p>Moderator: Mr Osman M. Nour, Advisor, Arab Urban Development Institute (AUDI)</p> <p>Panellists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms Ekbal El Samaloty, Chairwoman of Eve Future Association and Dean of Social Work Institute, Egypt • Ms Foziah Al-Suker, Director General for Adult Education, Ministry of Education, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia • Mr Mohammed Easa Alkhumiri Alharmi, Director, Ministry of Education- Specialized Schools Department, United Arab Emirates <p>Languages: Arabic, English</p>

Time	Activity
Tuesday 22 October	
11:00 – 12:30	<p>Regional Forum on Asia and the Pacific</p> <p>Venue: Function Room 8 on the 2nd Floor</p> <p>Moderator: Mr Gwang-Jo Kim, Director of UNESCO Bangkok</p> <p>Panellists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr Jose Enrique Sandejas Garcia III, Mayor, City Government of Balanga, Philippines • Mr Shaji Baby John, Chairman of the Kings Group, India • Mr Wang Chengbin, Vice Mayor of Changzhou, China • Mr Ki-Dae Yang, Mayor of Gwangmyeong City, Republic of Korea <p>Languages: Chinese, English</p> <p>Regional Forum on Europe and North America</p> <p>Venue: Function Room 5 on the 1st Floor</p> <p>Moderator: Ms Dana-Carmen Bachmann, Head of Unit, Vocational training and adult education, Directorate General Education and Culture, European Commission</p> <p>Panelists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms Veronika Schönstein, Project Manager, City of Freiburg, Germany • Mr Dimitrios Raftopoulos, Director of Lifelong Learning Research Institute, Greece • Mr Klitos Symeonides, President of Cyprus Adult Education Association, Cyprus • Mr Ramón Martínez de Murguía Urreta, Director of Training and Learning, Ministry of Education, Basque Government, Spain <p>Languages: English, French</p> <p>Regional Forum on Latin America and the Caribbean</p> <p>Venue: Function Room 6 on the 1st Floor</p> <p>Moderator: Mr Luis María Scasso, General Director for Cooperation and Lifelong Education, Organization of Ibero-American States for Education, Science and Culture (OEI)</p> <p>Panellists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms Blanca Maria Cayo Quintana, Metropolitan Councillor of Lima, Peru • Mr José Simões De Almeida Junior, Secretary of Education, City Hall of Sorocaba, São Paulo, Brazil • Ms Alexandra Peláez Botero, Secretary of Education, Medellín Education Secretariat, Colombia • Ms María Carmen Hidalgo Baeza, Coordinator, Sustainable Development in the Villages of Knowledge, International Relations Directorate of the Ministry of Education and Culture, Paraguay <p>Language: English, Spanish</p>
12:30 – 14:00	Lunch

Time	Activity
Tuesday 22 October	
14:00 – 15:30	<p>Mayors' Forum: Lifelong learning for all is our cities' future</p> <p>Venue: Grand Hall A on the 3rd Floor</p> <p>Moderator: Ms Imee Marcos, Governor of Ilocos Norte, Philippines</p> <p>Panellists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr Xian Lianping, Representative of Mayor of Beijing Municipal Government, China • Mr Sampo Suihko, Vice Mayor, Espoo, Finland • Ms Pusadee Tamthai, Deputy Governor of Bangkok Metropolitan Administration, Thailand • Mr Jean Sony Pierre, Mayor of la Croix-des-Bouquets, Haiti • Ms Raghd Shehada, Member of the City Council in Hebron Municipality, Hebron Municipality, Palestine <p>Meeting of the Drafting Committee</p> <p>Venue: Function Room 5 on the 1st Floor</p> <p>Languages: English, Chinese</p> <p>Open marketplace organised by the collaborating partners</p> <p>Venue: Function Room 2 on the 1st Floor</p> <p>Moderator: Mr Valerio Giuseppe Ricciardelli, Managing Director of FESTO Didactic in Italy</p> <p>Presenters:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4–5 representatives of the collaborating partners
15:30 – 16:00	Tea break
16:00 – 16:40	<p>Adoption of the outcome documents</p> <p>Moderator: Mr Jean-Marie Ahlin Byll-Cataria, former Executive Secretary, Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report of the Chair of the Drafting Committee • Adoption of the Beijing Declaration on Building Learning Cities • Endorsement of the Key Features of Learning Cities
16:40 – 17:30	<p>Closing ceremony</p> <p>Master of ceremonies: Mr Jean-Marie Ahlin Byll-Cataria, former Executive Secretary, Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report of the General-Rapporteur of the Conference: Ms Shirley Walters, Representative of the International Council for Adult Education and Director of the Division for Lifelong Learning, University of the Western Cape, South Africa • Mr Arne Carlsen, Director of the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL), Secretary-General of the Conference

Time	Activity
Tuesday 22 October	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr Seung-il Na, Vice-Minister of Education, Republic of Korea • Ms Lorraine Kingston, Deputy Lord Mayor of Cork, Ireland • Mr Liu Limin, Vice-Minister of Education, China • Mr Yang Xiaochao, Deputy Mayor of Beijing Municipal Government, China
18:00 – 20:30	Dinner
Wednesday 23 October	
9:00 – 17:30	Study and cultural visits: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Best practices for building a learning city in Beijing • Some of the UNESCO World Heritage sites in Beijing

B. Members of the Bureau of the Conference

Chair:

- Mr Wang Anshun, Mayor of Beijing Municipal Government, China

Vice-Chairs:

- Ms Constance Chigwamba, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education, Sport, Arts and Culture, Zimbabwe
- Mr Mohammed Ahmed Al-Sayed, Mayor of Doha, Qatar
- Mr Seung-il Na, Vice Minister of Education, Republic of Korea
- Ms Lorraine Kingston, Deputy Lord Mayor of Cork, Ireland
- Ms Mara Nadiezhda Robles Villaseñor, Minister of Education, Mexico City, Mexico

General Rapporteur of the Conference:

- Ms Shirley Walters, Representative of the International Council for Adult Education and Director of the Division for Lifelong Learning, University of the Western Cape, South Africa

Drafting Committee

Chair:

- Ms Angela Brown Burke, Mayor, Kingston and St. Andrew Corporation, Jamaica

Members:

- Mr Tesfaye Shiferaw, Vice President for Research and Community Services, Bahir Dar University, Ethiopia
- Mr Kolawole Oseni, Chief Cultural Officer of Lagos state Ministry of Home Affairs and Culture, Nigeria
- Ms Sawzan El Sherif, Associate Researcher of Social Research Center, American University, Egypt
- Mr Osman M. Nour, Advisor of the Arab Urban Development Institute (AUDI)
- Ms Chen Li, Professor, Executive Dean of Beijing Institute for Learning Society, Beijing Normal University, China
- Mr Lam Huy Le, Interim Director, SEAMEO Regional Center for Lifelong Learning (SEAMEO CELL), Viet Nam
- Ms Kristiina Erkkilä, Director of Development, Education and Cultural Services, City of Espoo, Finland
- Ms Tina Neylon, Coordinator of Cork Lifelong Learning Festival, Ireland
- Mr Luis María Scasso, General Director for Cooperation and Lifelong Education, Organization of Iberoamerican States (OEI)

Advisors:

- Mr Roger Boshier, Emeritus Professor, Department of Educational Studies, University of British Columbia, Canada
- Mr Norman Longworth, former UNESCO Chair, UIL Consultant, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
- Mr Heribert Hinzen, Regional Director of dvv international in the Lao People's Democratic Republic

C. Opening Addresses

Liu Yandong

Vice-Premier of China

Promoting Lifelong Learning to Create a Better Future for Our Cities

Dear Ms Irina Bokova,
Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen:
Good morning,

It's Beijing in October; the autumn air is crisp, and the landscape around the city is charming. Representatives from 102 member states of UNESCO gathered together to bring forth a plan for learning cities, which reflects a common wish and solid will shared by people from all over the world and those with breadth of vision to promote lifelong learning of all and to create beautiful future for cities. Today, on behalf of the Chinese government, I would like to extend my warm congratulations to the Conference and a sincere welcome to Director-General Irina Bokova and distinguished guests!

In this modern era, universal and lifelong learning has become a global trend, and in this push for learning, cities have garnered a great deal of importance. Although cities account for only 2% of the land area, they are inhabited by more than half of the world's population and serve as the center of our economic, political and social lives. As the pace of urbanization continues to accelerate, 60% of the world's population is expected to be living in cities by 2030, with those cities in the development of all countries gaining a more prominent position. Meanwhile, we are aware that global conflicts, including economic, political, social, are all intertwined; the path to answering the complex questions of our populations, resources, energy and environment as well as the road to global economic recovery from the international financial crises will be long and tortuous. Cities are faced with a frequent movement of persons, rapid technological advancements, a growing focus on public safety, a widening gap between the rich and poor, a convergence of cultural diversity, the lack of employment opportunity, and an aging population, as well as many other new challenges.

How to cope with these challenges has become a common issue throughout the world. More and more countries have turned their gaze towards the construction of learning cities, the prominence of which has taken precedence in urban development strategies. The construction of learning cities and the provision of better learning services to urban citizens can enhance the level of morality and culture amongst them, the quality of their lives and the expectation

of happiness, increase the capacity of employment, entrepreneurship and career transitions, and facilitate the comprehensive and personalized development of each and every individual; the construction of learning cities can improve the overall quality of workers and human resources, develop creative and innovative potential, promote the upgrading of urban industrial structure, create a favourable urban environment, stimulate the vigour and vitality of urban development, and promote the prosperity of cities. The construction of learning cities, establishing the basic footing for universal and lifelong learning, can address the opportunities and challenges of economic globalization, a multi-polar world, and information technology, be good for bridging gaps among regional development and deliver an inexhaustible drive for the sustainable development of our nations. With the theme of Lifelong Learning for All: Promoting Inclusion, Prosperity and Sustainability in Cities, this Conference boosts the integration of urban resources to bring out their potential, promotes lifelong learning to conform with the development of the times, push forward equality, justice and social harmony, improve public welfare and create a better future; this Conference is of great realistic and far-reaching historical significance.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The Chinese nation has always laid a great emphasis on literacy and education; the belief that "one is never too old to learn" is deeply rooted in the hearts of the Chinese people. The Chinese government has always insisted on the priority of educational development and attaches great importance to universal and lifelong learning. The Education Law of the People's Republic of China was adopted in 1995, proposing the gradual establishment and improvement of a system of lifelong education. Entering into the 21st century, the State clarified the system of lifelong learning, with the formation of a learning society as an important objective in the construction of a moderately prosperous society. In 2010, the national medium to long-term education reform and development plan was implemented, which aims to fundamentally achieve the modernization of education, the basic framework for a learning society, and the drive for the nation to enter the ranks of talented human resources by 2020.

After years of effort, China's national education system has become increasingly sound, in the hopes of laying a solid foundation for the construction of a learning society. 160 million students benefit from the universal nine-year compulsory education, with a gross enrolment rate of 85%, and the pace of the development of vocational education is accelerating, with continuing education for employees reaching 185 million people. Thus, the average years of schooling for the working-age population and the new labour

force are 9.6 years and 12 years, respectively. The gross enrolment rate for higher education is 30%, with a population of 120 million people who have received a higher education, which accelerates the transformation from a nation with large population to a nation with powerful human resource. In the past decade, China has witnessed almost one hundred cities developing as learning cities, exploring channels and methods with Chinese characteristics: First, the formation of a sound government-led pattern of community involvement. All levels of government have developed regulations and policies to increase funding support to promote libraries, science centres, museums and other public cultural facilities, free of charge, with extensive involvement on behalf of enterprises, institutions, social organisations and individuals, enriching the social background of lifelong learning. Secondly, the construction of an institutional “bridge” to lifelong learning. The promotion of the coordinated development of academic and non-academic education, the mutual communication between vocational and general education, the exploration of a credit bank system, and a mechanism of mutual recognition of learning outcomes will provide opportunities for every person who has the desire to learn. Third, the improvement of an open sharing information service network. The creation of the four categories of public service platforms of community education, industrial and corporate training, online learning and open education will strengthen distance education alongside the construction of 6 open universities for the majority of rural and remote poverty-stricken areas. Today, China has nearly 570 million Internet users, and online learning has become a new choice for education. Fourth, the creation of a culture of learning for all. One-sixth of cities have proposed the construction of learning cities, and with nearly ninety percent of provinces and municipalities having carried out Lifelong Learning Weeks and with more than 400 cities having organized reading festivals, reading months, and reading season activities, learning enterprises, learning communities, and learning families continue to emerge. It has become a common practice in China to let cities become schools without walls and let learning become a part of everyone’s daily life.

At present, China’s development has already reached a new point in history, and the Chinese people fight hard to realize the Chinese Dream of great rejuvenation. The China Dream is the shared wish and dream of Chinese people to live a better life, is the unification of our country, our nation and our people. The construction of a learning society and making lifelong learning a spiritual status and a way of life for all people can help everyone’s dreams come to a fruitful reality, which is an important part of the China Dream and a strong support by which this dream can come true. China is in

the process of creating a new stage of the “economic upgrading”, in which we will focus more closely on the link between the construction of learning cities and economic development, accelerate the knowledge renewal of workers and the enhancement to their innovative ideas and skills, issue bonuses for talent, and deliver intellectual support for higher level, higher quality development in the process of industrialization, informationisation and agricultural modernization. China’s rate of urbanisation has already reached 52%, from now on with more than 10 million rural citizens migrating to cities and towns each year, and we will emphasize more closely on the link between the construction of learning cities and the process of new urbanization. With humans at the core of urbanization, and through agricultural education and training, we will promote the orderly migration of this population and help them integrate into these cities. China is undergoing a social transformation, and we will focus more closely on the link between the construction of learning cities and the progress of civilization, which will make learning an aspect of social culture, enhancing the cultural features and taste of our cities and conserve the spiritual character of our citizens. It is our hope that, through our tireless efforts, learning may become the most beautiful scenery of our cities and China may become a nation of learning.

Ladies and gentleman,

We live in an era of economic globalization and an era that will witness the further development of a knowledge-based economy. A new industrial revolution filled with technological innovations is on its way, and the construction of learning cities has already become the necessary path by which we can promote the tolerant, prosperous and sustainable development of cities. I would like to take this opportunity to make a four-point proposal:

First, put people first and satisfy the learning needs and aspirations of different groups of people within our cities. The promotion of lifelong learning, after all, is to realize the overall development of human beings. All nations should continue to improve their laws, regulations and public policies, play a role in professional organisations, and promote the active cooperation of the public sector and non-governmental organisations to create a better learning environment within urban construction. Strengthen the open sharing of various educational resources, facilitate school services that are open to the community, and put to use the revolutionary role of information network technology. Provide rich and high-quality learning resources to meet diverse learning needs, and strive to build a learning society where everyone can learn, anytime and anywhere.

Second, stimulate creative potential and promote the prosperous and sustainable development of our cities. A city's prosperity not only means a growth in wealth, but it also means the development of an economic, political, cultural, social and ecological civilization. While cities provide excellent living conditions for citizens and comfortable working environments, they also face population growth, housing shortages, traffic congestion, environmental pollution, employment difficulties and public security issues. Eliminating such "urban blight" depends on the enhanced quality of participation and public contributions. We should fully stimulate public enthusiasm for learning, enhance human capital, encourage innovation and creativity, and allow talent to play its role as a powerful driving force of innovation so as to improve the quality of urban development and provide a solid support for its expansion.

Third, create a learning environment and realize cities of tolerance and harmony. Economic globalization and urbanization have delivered diverse resources and structural complexity to urban populations. Cities should not only provide suitable living spaces for citizens of different cultures, ethnicities, races, classes and even countries, but they should also create and safeguard equal learning opportunities and rights to promote social fairness and justice. We should establish full coverage, facilitate a network of learning cities, promote communication between people for mutual understanding, trust and cultural identities, and enhance the inclusiveness and harmony of our urban communities.

Fourth, strengthen international cooperation and promote the construction of mutual exchanges between learning cities. Each city has its own regional advantages, historical heritage and unique cultural background, and the building of learning cities should both follow a common philosophy and also encourage cities to blossom and flourish. We should respect the characteristics and individual choices of each city, and the construction of learning cities should be an important part of cultural exchanges. We should encourage more countries and cities to participate in a policy dialogue, a sharing of ideas, action research and capacity building, sharing our experiences and sophisticated, high-quality resources to build a better and more harmonious global village.

For a long time, UNESCO has been committed to promoting lifelong learning, the construction of learning cities and international cooperation, of which the Chinese government offers the highest of compliments. Back in the 1960s, UNESCO proposed the concept of "lifelong learning", and emphasized lifelong education as the cornerstone of a learning society in 1972 and 1996 and the key to entering the

21st century. Last year, Secretary General Ban Ki-moon put forth the Global Education First Initiative to mobilize the international community to support the development of education, the implementation of which has an important significance for the Millennium Development Goals. The Chinese government has, on several occasions, carried out fruitful cooperation with UNESCO. In September of this year, President Xi Jinping stressed the efforts to develop Education for All, lifelong education and the construction of a learning society, indicative of the determination of the Chinese government, during his congratulatory video message to the United Nations Global Education First Initiative. We will continue to support UNESCO's efforts, exchange and share successful experiences, help and promote the construction of learning cities in developing countries, provide valuable experiences and urban case studies, and contribute Chinese wisdom and strength.

Ladies and gentlemen,

There is an old Chinese saying that "there is never an end to learning." The value of learning is infinite, and it will lead the way to a better future. Let us join hands and strive to expand the breadth and depth of learning in urban construction, promote wholesome and sustainable urban development and establish lasting peace, common prosperity and a harmonious world in which we can make great contributions!

I wish the Conference a complete success!
Thank you all!

Irina Bokova
Director-General, UNESCO

Excellency Ms Liu Yandong, Vice Premier of China,
Excellency Mr Yuan Guiren, Minister of Education of China,
Honourable Mr Wang Anshun, Mayor of the Beijing Municipal Government,
Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am honoured to open the first International Conference on Learning Cities, co-organised by UNESCO, the Ministry of Education of China and the Beijing Municipal Government. I can hardly think of a better city for this event than Beijing. The tradition on lifelong learning has deep roots in Chinese society. The great Confucius reflected on his own life with the following words: At fifteen, I set my heart upon learning. At thirty, I planted my feet firmly upon the ground. At forty, I no longer suffered from perplexities. At fifty, I knew what the biddings of Heaven were. At sixty, I heard them with a docile ear. At seventy, I could follow the dictates of my heart; for what I desired no

longer overstepped the boundaries of right. Wish we all could experience such a lifelong process of learning...

We are brought together today by a shared conviction, that learning is essential for individual dignity, that learning is the best way to bring sustainability to development. This conviction has never been so urgent. Change is racing across the world. New technologies are opening vast opportunities for creating and sharing knowledge. At the same time, all societies are facing steep challenges, to their resilience, to their sustainable development. We need societies that are inclusive and knowledge-based to confront these challenges. These must be built on learning throughout life.

Lifelong learning is the philosophy, conceptual framework and organizing principle for education in the 21st century. These words are from the 2009 Belém Framework for Action, the final document of the Sixth International Conference on Adult Education. They are not yet a reality. Since 2000, many countries have made strong progress in expanding opportunities for formal basic education – but we know this is not enough. We must examine the quality of education, its relevance and its equity. We must grasp its ability to unlock the innovation all societies need.

This is why inclusive, holistic and flexible lifelong learning is so important. Lifelong learning is more than adult education. It is more than technical and vocational education and training. It reaches beyond the walls of class rooms, to take in non-formal and informal learning. It is about the kind of society we need for a better future.

Innovation and resilience have deeper roots than financial or economic assets. Solutions lie in the imaginations of women and men. They must be nurtured in the capacities of individuals to realise their rights, in societies underpinned by justice and dignity. This is what I mean by calling for a new humanism for the century ahead. This is an appeal to invest in every woman and man as a source of dignity, as a wellspring of innovation.

In this context, cities have never been so important -- as platforms and architects of positive change. The May report of the United Nations High Level Panel on Post-2015, co-chaired by President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono of Indonesia, President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf of Liberia and Prime Minister David Cameron of the United Kingdom, made the stakes clear: Cities are where the battle for sustainable development will be won or lost.

More than half of the world's population today lives in the cities – in one generation, this will rise to two thirds. Cities are our greatest motors of dynamism,

growth, innovation and 'living together.' But they are also sources of injustice, poverty and exclusion. Cities are key actors for peace and development in the century ahead -- our challenge is to ensure that this peace is lasting, that this development is sustainable. Infrastructure planning, water and energy supply – these are essential 'hardware' for sustainable cities.

They need the right 'software' to work. This is why this International Conference on Learning Cities is such a milestone. This goes to the heart of UNESCO's work in lifelong learning, to provide women and men with tools to make the most of change, to create more inclusive, prosperous and sustainable societies.

During this Conference, we must agree on the key features of learning cities, on their foundations and building blocks, and on a checklist for action, to be adapted to individual contexts. This draws on the leading work of the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, which has created a dynamic network – at the global, national and municipal levels, bringing together also experts and the private sector.

I wish to thank all participants to this Conference, from Governments and cities across the world, municipalities across China, from civil society and the private sector.

I am especially grateful to the Government of the People's Republic of China for its leadership and support to UNESCO. This reflects the remarkable progress China has made in promoting lifelong learning and building a learning society. This is highlighted in the National Outline Plan for Medium and Long-term Education Reform and Development (2010–2020), and we see it in the determination of the Beijing Municipal Government to build a learning city. China is leading from the front – having organised the 3rd International Congress on Technical and Vocational Education and Training in Shanghai in 2012, and as a Champion Country of the United Nations Secretary-General's Global Education First Initiative, which UNESCO is steering forward. In his video address to the first anniversary of the Global Education First Initiative held in New York on 25 September, H.E. President Xi Jinping stated: Education is the foundation of national development in the long run. It is the fundamental way for mankind to pass on civilizations and knowledge, bring up new generations, and create a better life. As the President stated, lifelong learning has a key role to play in this strategy.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We need to place lifelong learning at the heart of all our work to build inclusive knowledge societies, at the heart also of the post-2015 global development agenda. This is the way to unlock the potential of every society. This is the way to bring sustainability to all development efforts. Cities have a unique role to play here.

This is our call to action today, to work with Governments, civil society and the private sector in building – city by city – a future of dignity for all. I am not saying this will be easy – but I believe we share a vision, we have experience to build on, and we can move forward together.

Thank you.

Wang Anshun

Mayor of Beijing Municipal Government, China

Honorable Madam Liu Yandong, Vice Premier of China,
Honorable Madam Irina Bokova, Director-General of UNESCO,
Honorable Mr Yuan Guiren, Minister of Education of China,
Distinguished guests,
Ladies and gentlemen, friends,

In this harvest season of autumn, we gather in the beautiful ancient Chinese capital city of Beijing, to convene the first-ever International Conference on Learning Cities. First of all, on behalf of the Beijing Municipal Government, I would like to extend my warm congratulations to the opening of the conference and sincere welcome to all distinguished guests and friends! I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to the co-organizers of this Conference - UNESCO and the Ministry of Education of China - and to all collaborating partners and the media, who have given great support for the Conference!

Since the 1970s, the concept of “learning society” proposed by UNESCO has been widely recognized in the international community. The Chinese government has actively endeavoured to embrace this concept and set up the strategic goal of establishing the basic framework for building a learning society by 2020. This goal has been incorporated into the overall national education reform and development plan, and been pursued in a comprehensive and coordinated manner.

As China’s capital, Beijing has a wealth of educational, scientific, and cultural resources, and accommodates 93 universities, 1,711 primary and secondary schools, 288 research & development institutions, 165 museums, 25 public libraries, 19 cultural centres and numerous grassroots cultural and educational institutions, with about 650,000 professionals in the field of science and technology. In all, Beijing possesses good fundamental conditions and intellectual resources to be a pioneer in building a learning society.

In recent years, the Beijing Municipal Government has attached great importance to the construction of a learning city, and has clearly put forward the goal of

developing Beijing into an advanced learning city by 2020. To achieve this goal, our Municipal Government has integrated the building of a learning city into the economic and social development plan of the city, promulgated the *Decision to Vigorously Promote and Implement the Construction of a Learning City*, and also formed a leading group to co-ordinate the work of the construction of a learning city. Until now, all districts and counties of the city have established their community education networks, within which the community college or adult education centre at the district-level are playing a pivotal role; more than 60% of the educational institutions are open to all community residents; more than 400 villages have established farmers’ distance learning sites. With these developments, the city has not only initially built a comprehensive network for promoting learning, but also enhanced a lifelong learning service system.

Through practice, we have realized that the construction of a learning city is of great significance for improving the level of scientific, cultural and moral qualities of all citizens, for promoting the all-round development of individuals, and for achieving social harmony and sustainable development of a society. Meanwhile, we also realized that the construction of a learning city is a systematic social development project, which needs unremitting, adventurous and innovative efforts and actions.

At present, Beijing is in a critical period of transformation and development, facing the constraints relating to demographic change, natural resources and environmental issues, the challenges of industrial restructuring, and the contradictions caused by the dual urban-rural structure. The solution to these problems and promote sustainable urban development relies not only on the efforts of the government, but also on the support and participation from all citizens and from all fields of the society.

We will take this conference as a great opportunity to learn advanced experiences and practices from cities around the world in order to further promote education for all and lifelong learning, to improve our mechanisms and channels of learning, to promote the development of education and connect it closely with urban development, to improve the scientific and cultural qualities of all citizens, to stimulate urban vitality, to shape urban civilization, and to provide an inexhaustible force for urban innovation and development.

First, we will improve the system of lifelong education, develop quality school education, vigorously carry out community education, greatly strengthen rural education, deeply improve continuing education, and greatly accelerate the development of modern distance education.

Second, we will build a lifelong learning service system serving the whole society, open all types of schools and training institutions even further to citizens, develop professional and community learning courses catered for residents' learning needs, and set up various forms of learning and training activities.

Third, we will actively promote the construction of learning units, learning institutions, learning associations and all other types of learning organisations, and improve the building of learning organisations.

Fourth, we will accelerate the development and improvement of a government-led, market-oriented, socialized and multi-layered vocational education and training system, to strengthen the provision of vocational and technical training for all types of employees.

Fifth, we will accelerate the improvement of organisational management, financial resources, evaluation and reward, advocacy and publicity, as well as accreditation of learning outcomes, to provide a strong institutional guarantee for the construction of a learning city.

Through these efforts, we will transform Beijing to an innovative, dynamic, and knowledge-based international metropolis.

Ladies and gentlemen, friends,

The first International Conference on Learning Cities brought together around 500 delegates from more than 100 countries around the globe. With the theme 'Lifelong Learning for All: Promoting Inclusion, Prosperity and Sustainability in Cities', the conference provides a great opportunity for all participants to discuss critical issues and to draw blueprints for the construction of learning cities and learning societies in the international community. The outcomes of the conference are of far-reaching historical significance for worldwide education reform and development, as well as for the achievement of harmonious economic and social development. As the host of the conference, Beijing Municipal Government will make every effort to provide quality service for the conference.

I believe, through the joint efforts of all distinguished guests, the conference will be a great success for strengthening exchanges and deepening cooperation among cities, and for making significant contributions for the establishment of learning cities around the world.

To conclude, I wish the first International Conference on Learning Cities a complete success! I wish all the distinguished guests enjoy a very pleasant stay in Beijing!

Thank you!

D. Report of the Conference by the General Rapporteur

Shirley Walters

Professor of Adult and Continuing Education, Director of the Division for Lifelong Learning, University of Western Cape, South Africa; and representative of the International Council for Adult Education (ICAE)

It is a privilege to present to you the general rapporteur's report. I thank you for the privilege of being elected to this position. I have tried to listen very carefully to the presentations, the questions and comments. I recognise that in this short presentation I cannot do justice to the nuance of your arguments and points made, but I do hope that I have captured the main issues and fault lines satisfactorily. I have been deeply impressed by the high level presence and commitment of the Chinese Government, Beijing Municipality and UNESCO, which augurs well for the outcomes of this meeting.

I will try to be clear and simple without being simplistic. In the presentation I will use quotes, which I present in quotation marks, from people's direct words. In this way, I trust that at least some of your voices will come through directly.

What is the big issue?

The main issue that emerged relates to "Learning to sustain life through building learning cities". By this is meant that we all need to learn to sustain all life, which includes humans, plants, animals, and all living things, through respect of our interrelationships and interdependence within the concept of the learning cities.

Why is this important: why learning, why cities, why build a learning city network?

We have heard a great deal about the inevitability of urbanisation with the prediction of 60% of the world's population living in cities by 2030. There are huge pressures on the environment, on the social and physical infrastructure which includes housing, health, sanitation, water, social sectors, communications, and transport. This is resulting for example in growing urban poverty, air pollution,

migration (both immigration and emigration), crime, drug trafficking, human trafficking, corruption and other social ills, together with local/global competition amongst people, communities and cities to survive. There is growing discontent from citizens from lack of infrastructure and support, which results in increased citizen discontent and resultant activism.

There is increasing evidence that there is growing inequality in the world and it is inequality rather than poverty per se which causes the greatest discontent. As a participant said, “with social inequality and overcrowding there can be no learning”. Another said, “We have inherited wounded cities”, therefore it is essential that “people must be at the centre of our concern”. Gender equality and gender justice must be an aim of learning cities as “gender-based violence is rampant”. We know well that violence effects people’s ability to learn. Women are often the centre of families and communities: they and the children must be treated with dignity and respect.

All people, across generations, have a need to ‘belong and to feel connected to others’ in order to thrive and innovate. We know well that violence, fear, overcrowding, and a culture of extreme individualisation, leads to alienation and separation of people from one another which perpetuates the cycle of violence and ill health.

In order to help counter many of these social, cultural and economic issues, promotion of quality, accessible lifelong learning for all is essential. We heard that learning citizens are happier, more innovative, more entrepreneurial, and more prosperous; have more dignity, will feel more connected. As was said, “Learning makes life more beautiful”.

We were informed that “cities are where battles for sustainability will be won or lost”. The connection between learning cities and sustainability of the cities and the planet was described. We heard that “sustainable green cities become learning cities..... and develop eco-citizens”. From a young age children must be taught the importance of recycling and ecological thinking in general. Learning cities lead to a great “rejuvenation of society”, and sustainable cities recognise that we must “work with nature”; “we need to give joy while learning and teaching”, and “we must find new synergies between modern and traditional cultures” while encouraging and supporting learning across all generations and within and across formal and informal settings.

What are the building blocks of a learning city? What are the major strategies?

Leadership is very important in the building of a learning city where the political will is needed for long term commitment, as short-termism will not work. The kind of dedicated long term leadership of President Nelson Mandela, who spent 27 years in prison to ensure a democratic South Africa, was used to illustrate this point. The commitment being shown by the Chinese and South Korean governments to the holistic concept of the ‘learning city’ is commendable. The questions that need to be confronted in the process of building a learning city are political, social, economic, cultural and environmental.

The important principle of building on what is already there within the society was emphasised. The encouragement of communities of practice, and learning communities, was stressed in formal education institutions at all levels, at workplaces, in neighbourhoods, on streets, in libraries, museums, cultural centres, prisons, and through use of media, and in how public spaces are used. While the formal education and training systems are important the learning within informal contexts must also be encouraged strongly. Within all organisations, including local government and political structures, learning cultures must be enhanced and they must be encouraged to be ‘learning organisations’.

The importance of learning across all generations is important, and we are reminded of the long history of the wisdom of this through the life of Confucius. It is also essential to work carefully with the children from a young age by providing pre-school education which can inspire wisdom and creativity while ensuring their safety. At each developmental stage ideas of ecological intelligence, including interdependence of all living things, values of compassion, peaceful coexistence, inter-connectedness, and values of learning throughout life, need to be taught and encouraged. Across all ages and in/with nature, we must learn to live, work, plan and be together, in what is sometimes referred to as lifelong, life wide and life deep learning.

The use of learning festivals, reading weeks, creation of ‘bright spots’ to advocate for learning, and to acquire a range of skills, attitudes, ideas, and to inspire learning across society, should be considered. There should also be encouragement, for example, of learning circles, philosophers debates in coffee shops, and ‘learning on the move’, as so many people spend so much time in transit on trains, buses, or taxis. An excellent example of achievements in constructing a learning-orientated area, where learning opportunities are within 15 minutes from people’s homes, was given from Dongcheng District of Beijing.

The use of new ICTs to communicate through social media, to give access and encourage quality self-directed and collective learning any-time, anywhere, was emphasised. We heard of seismic technological changes, for example cloud technology that is allowing access to people in deep rural areas. It is important though that technology is used appropriately and it was stated very strongly on a cautionary note, that “it is social innovation rather than technology that is most important”.

The different use of public spaces which enhance learning, calls on educators, political officials, town planners, urban planners, architects, sociologists, and others, to work together to develop the best ways of doing this.

Much of the educational practice that exist in schools and universities has not changed over centuries with it continuing to be professor or teacher centred. There is growing innovation which challenges this paradigm, which moves the student to the centre, and which ‘flips the classroom’. This means that the time in face to face sessions maximises opportunities for collective, critical thinking and problem solving, with students being able to access the facts through lectures on line. The question is: how flexible can teachers, students and administrators be to ensure an innovative, quality, relevant, accessible and successful pedagogical experience. This includes rethinking instructional strategies, student support, curriculum, assessment, and the physical environments.

At the centre of learning is knowledge. There was recognition of all forms of knowledge, whether tacit, localised knowledge, including indigenous knowledge, or more codified and generalised knowledge. All are important and various connections or paths must be built between these, for example using recognition of prior learning, national qualification frameworks, credit accumulation and transfer, and guidance and counselling for the navigation by individuals and groups through and across systems. There was also recognition that knowledge is co-constructed across a range of sectors or groups in society, which include universities, social movements, other civil society organisations, workplaces, industry, and governments.

These new realities require multi-sectoral and collaborative approaches, which encourage partnerships. The capacities and the processes of building collaborative partnerships can also not be taken fore-granted – they need to be taught/learnt. These include the importance of building relationships of trust, shared norms and values; common motivations; creation of strategic goals and objectives; resources for operational undertakings; champions who will help to drive the collaboration. In a nutshell it

includes a kind of ‘relational agency’, which is a term developed by Anne Edwards of Oxford University. Working across boundaries is central to building a learning city, so the skills and capacities to do this must be recognised and developed.

Another aspect of working across boundaries was that between cities, towns, and villages, to ensure that the urban city is not cut off from or further privileged compared to the rural villages. It has been explained that the concept of the ‘learning city’ refers to the core-city and its city and its region. It is also possible to talk about learning regions which have learning families, learning communities and villages. But given the growing importance of cities and their challenges for the majority of women, men and children in the world, ‘learning city’, which has an inclusive meaning, is preferred.

What are the lessons learnt so far?

The hosting of this conference by Beijing Municipal City and Ministry of Education of China and UNESCO, demonstrated through concrete examples and key features of a learning city, many of the lessons listed here:

- People come first – learning cities are by the people, of the people, for the people
- Political leadership, which has long term vision, is critical
- Advocacy of the centrality of learning throughout life is very important
- It requires good governance
- A holistic approach, across ages and sectors is essential
- Social justice for all women, men, and children is essential
- Sustainable cities become learning cities
- Empowerment through networks and partnerships must take place
- It is important to bench mark, to measure progress and to share leading practices
- Research and development which takes into account large data sets which include transport systems, housing, education, social care, land use, urbanisation etc. is important, as is the qualitative and quantitative capturing of learning experiences and outcomes
- Most importantly, there must be an acknowledged link between social justice and economic development – a narrow focus on the economy will not yield the results.

Is this about achieving the impossible?

There was a sense that through the adoption of the Beijing Declaration, the adoption of the Key Features of Learning Cities, which are practical hands on tools, the building of the network amongst people concerned with developing learning cities, which is championed by the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, there is a strong chance that this initiative could flourish. It would be important to work towards the regular recognition of outstanding or leading learning cities from all the regions to act as lighthouses for others to follow. This should be done recognising that 'one size does not fit all'.

Now it is time to take up the challenge as stated by Albert Einstein, "If you can't explain it simply, you don't understand it well enough". I wish you well as you go back to your respective countries with these inspiring and practical messages to share, so that your cities and regions can embrace learning for all across the society. I thank you for your insights which have enriched the meeting. I also wish to express deep appreciation to our hosts and compliment them and the organising team for a job well done.

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INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON LEARNING CITIES
CONFÉRENCE INTERNATIONALE SUR LES VILLES APPRENANTES

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