

Individual Author Contract - Consultant

Request for a written proposal

Reference: Senior Researcher/Researcher

Request to submit a written proposal for a work assignment with the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL).

Title: Sustainable Cities: Inclusion, Equity and Lifelong Learning – Digitally Excluded Populations

UIL is inviting individuals to submit written proposals for the work assignment described in attachment I.

When preparing a proposal for this assignment, please take into consideration the attached Terms of Reference (see attachment I).

Your written proposal should include a Technical Proposal consisting of:

- an up-to-date curriculum vitae;
- a technical approach and methodology for the assignment, including a work plan in line with the Terms of Reference.

The proposal should furthermore state that

- the work assignment will be developed and completed within two months;
- the total amount payable upon completion of the assignment will be 3,000 US dollars.

Please note that the work assignment should be developed and completed before 27 July 2019. Your technical proposal and supporting documents must be in English, as must the final assignment.

UNESCO places great emphasis on ensuring that the objectives of the work assignment, as described in the Terms of Reference, are met. Accordingly, in evaluating the proposals for the assignment, attention will focus first and foremost on the technical elements included therein. From those proposals deemed suitable in relation to the criteria set forth in the Terms of Reference, UNESCO shall select the proposal that offers the Organization the best value.

Your proposal should be submitted by e-mail no later than close of business (18:00) on **5 June 2019**. E-mail proposals should not exceed 5MB in size.

The e-mail should be addressed to: learningcities@unesco.org.

It is the individual's responsibility to ensure that his/her proposal is received by the deadline.

Thank you for your interest in this UNESCO assignment; we look forward to receiving your proposal.

UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning

Terms of Reference

Background

UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL), located in Hamburg, Germany, is one of UNESCO's key education-related institutes and is the only organizational unit in the UN family that holds a global mandate for lifelong learning. Taking a holistic and integrated, intersectoral and cross-sectoral approach to lifelong learning as the guiding paradigm for 21st century education, UIL promotes and supports lifelong learning with a focus on adult learning, continuing education, literacy and non-formal basic education. Its activities place particular emphasis on furthering educational equity for disadvantaged groups and in the countries most afflicted by poverty and conflict.

UIL is currently organizing the Fourth International Conference on Learning Cities (ICLC), which will be dedicated to the theme of 'Inclusion – A Principle for Lifelong Learning and Sustainable Cities' and take place in Medellín, Colombia from 1–3 October, 2019.

The objective of this conference is to identify and discuss effective lifelong learning policies and practices that support the development of inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable cities.

More specifically, the objectives of the conference are to:

- 1) develop a common understanding of inclusion as part of lifelong learning and sustainable development;
- 2) identify public policies and planning approaches (e.g. governance, finance, intersectoral and multi-stakeholder approaches) that strengthen inclusion at the city level as a priority for lifelong learning and with a particular focus on vulnerable groups;
- 3) share experiences on the implementation of local actions that support inclusion through lifelong learning and have an impact on vulnerable groups; and
- 4) document monitoring mechanisms to assess progress towards the implementation of local inclusion strategies.

In preparation for the Fourth ICLC, UIL is commissioning background documents on specific topics and questions related to inclusion and lifelong learning. These papers will contribute to an enhanced understanding of the ways in which lifelong learning policies and practices contribute towards the development of inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable cities.

Duties and Requirements

The UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning is seeking to recruit a senior researcher (author) specializing in inclusion and lifelong learning, and with knowledge and expertise in the area of digital inclusion.

The researcher should have a) an advanced university degree (Master's degree or equivalent) in education, international development, sociology, public policy or a related discipline; b) at least seven years of professional experience as a researcher and/or analyst specializing in issues of inclusion and lifelong learning, including expertise in the area of digital inclusion, four years of which have been acquired at an international level; c) a proven publications record, particularly in peer-reviewed journals; d) excellent spoken and written English.

The senior researcher/researcher will develop a background paper focusing on inclusion and lifelong learning, paying particular attention to the needs and expectations of digitally excluded populations in cities in low-income, middle-income and high-income countries.

Objectives:

To enhance understanding of the ways in which local lifelong learning policies and practices address the learning needs of digitally excluded populations living in cities.

Issues and examples referred to in the document should seek to maintain an overall balance according to region (sub-Saharan Africa, Northern Africa and Western Asia, Central and Southern Asia, East and South-eastern Asia, Oceania, Latin America and the Caribbean, Europe and Northern America) and country income level (low, lower middle, upper middle and high).

Concepts

Develop a conceptual framework of lifelong learning for digital inclusiveness in cities.

- Define and discuss the concept of digital inclusiveness in the context of cities and with respect to lifelong learning.
- Across a range of contexts, identify which populations are considered to constitute digitally excluded groups in cities.

Consider the following guiding questions:

- How do the concepts and principles of digital inclusiveness feature in the design and implementation of lifelong learning policies at the local level (including within learning cities)?
- How are digitally excluded groups identified at the local level?

Policies and practices

Present evidence on lifelong learning policies and practices at the city level (including the learning city network) that are successfully addressing the needs of digitally excluded populations.

- Focus on policies and practices that promote lifelong learning for digitally excluded populations.
- Identify intersectoral and multi-stakeholder approaches that promote digital inclusion through lifelong learning policies and practices.

Consider the following guiding questions:

- How are cities collaborating with national authorities to ensure the provision of lifelong learning programs for digitally excluded groups? Are there multilevel governance frameworks/mechanisms in place that contribute towards strengthening this collaboration?
- How are urban policies and planning initiatives addressing inclusive ICT usage for all?
- How can 'smart cities' engage digitally excluded groups?
- At the local level, which key players are involved in developing and implementing policies related to digital inclusion, and how are these policies linked to the education sector and, in particular, to the provision of lifelong learning opportunities?
- At the city level, which institutions and sectors are participating in the planning and implementation of lifelong learning policies to address digitally excluded groups?
- How does lifelong learning leverage national and local resources to address the learning needs of digitally excluded groups?

Challenges

Identify the challenges faced by cities when developing and implementing lifelong learning policies and practices for digital inclusion. Present relevant recommendations on how to overcome any identified limitations.

- Identify the gaps in developing and implementing learner-centred lifelong learning policies and practices for digital inclusion.
- Focus on what information, knowledge and evidence are needed to improve digital inclusiveness in cities.

Consider the following guiding questions:

- What kind of learning environments (formal, non-formal and informal) have adopted a lifelong learning approach to include digitally excluded groups? How do such environments address the learning needs of different groups?
- To what extent are multiple sectors and stakeholders engaged in the development and implementation of lifelong learning policies and practices for digitally excluded populations? Where collaboration is currently limited, how might it be improved?
- Are sufficient and sustainable financing arrangements in place at the local level for initiatives geared towards inclusion? How might stakeholders maximize resources?
- How are local governments collecting data on the learning needs – in particular, the digital learning needs – of all citizens?
- What mechanisms and forms of capacity development are needed at the local level to monitor digital inclusion as part of lifelong learning?
- What information, knowledge and evidence are needed to improve the inclusion of digitally excluded populations in lifelong learning policies and practices?

In addition to the above, the senior researcher should reflect on the following rationale.

Rationale: Rapid urbanisation and digitally excluded populations - challenges to and solutions for the development of inclusive, safe and resilient learning cities through lifelong learning

Lifelong learning is rooted in the integration of learning and living. It covers people of all ages, in all life-wide contexts and through a variety of formal, non-formal and informal learning modalities that together meet a wide range of learning needs and demands. Lifelong learning is a key principle of Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG4) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development – ‘ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all’.¹ This goal, with its ten targets, calls upon governments and other stakeholders to enable people of all ages and from all socio-economic and cultural backgrounds to participate fully in and benefit from quality lifelong learning opportunities.

In the Incheon Declaration and SDG4 of the Education 2030 Framework for Action, inclusion and equity in and through education are presented as the cornerstones of a transformative education agenda. In particular, Target 4.5 aims to eliminate gender disparities and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations. Target 4.a, meanwhile, focuses on providing safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all.

What is ‘inclusive education’?

¹ UNESCO. 2016. *Education 2030: Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action for the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning for all*. Available at: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000245656>

Inclusion as an integral part of lifelong learning reaffirms each individual's right to education as upheld in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Further, in the Conclusions and Recommendations of the 48th session of the International Conference on Education (ICE) chaired by UNESCO-IBE in 2008 and entitled 'Inclusive Education: The Way of the Future', 155 Member States and other stakeholders reaffirmed the principle of inclusive education as fundamental to the achievement of human, social and economic development. Importantly, ICE participants endorsed 'inclusive education as an ongoing process aimed at offering quality education for all while respecting diversity and the different needs and abilities, characteristics and learning expectations of the students and communities, eliminating all forms of discrimination'.²

In line with the above, inclusion is understood as a process concerned with a) learning how to live with and learn from difference; b) identifying and removing barriers through the collection, collation and evaluation of information from a wide variety of sources in order to plan improvements in policy and practice; and c) placing a particular emphasis on those groups of learners who may be at risk of marginalization, exclusion or underachievement.³

As a component of lifelong learning, inclusive education encourages an 'active role and the participation of the learners themselves, their families and their communities'.⁴ By adopting a holistic approach, inclusive education aims to 'strengthen the links between schools and society to enable families and the communities to participate in and contribute to the educational process'.⁵ In order to improve outcomes for disadvantaged children, youth and adults, inclusive education proposes 'to develop coordinated efforts to tackle the factors that have put these groups in situations of vulnerability and to enhance the factors that support them, across all aspects of their lives, and across their life spans, from conception through to adulthood'.⁶

Further, in line with the ICE recommendations, inclusive education is also about urgently addressing social inequity and poverty levels, as these are major obstacles to the implementation of inclusive education policies and strategies.⁷ Such recommendations endorse the principles of equity and social justice as inherent to inclusion. Social inclusion can be defined as 'the process by which efforts are made to ensure equal opportunities – that everyone, regardless of their background, can achieve their full potential in life. Such efforts include policies and actions that promote equal access to (public) services as well as activities to enable citizen's participation in the decision-making processes that affect their lives'.⁸

Importantly, equity 'considers the social justice ramifications of education in relation to the fairness, justness and impartiality of its distribution at all levels or educational sub-sectors'.⁹ This approach takes into consideration the fact that a needs-based distribution of resources is fair or justified. Currently, however, the equitable allocation and distribution of resources and the creation of needs-

² UNESCO-IBE. 2008. *Final Report. 48th International Conference on Education – 'Inclusive Education: The Way of the Future'*.

³ UNESCO (UNESCO-IBE). 2016. *Training Tools for Curriculum Development – Reaching Out to All Learners: A Resource Pack for Supporting Inclusive Education*.

⁴ UNESCO-IBE. *Final Report. 48th International Conference of Education – 'Inclusive Education: The Way of the Future'*.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Mel Ainscow. 2016. 'Diversity and Equity: A Global Education Challenge'. *New Zealand Journal of Educational Studies*, November 2016, Volume 51, Issue 2, pp 143–155.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ The Division for Social Policy and Development (DSPD) of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), in collaboration with UNESCO and the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT), held an Expert Group Meeting on 'Creating an Inclusive Society: Practical Strategies to Promote Social Integration' at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris, France, from 10-13 September 2007.

⁹ UIS. 2018. *Handbook on Measuring Equity in Education*. Montreal, Quebec (citing Holsinger 2008, p. 4).

based educational strategies are hindered by a lack of data pertaining to vulnerable groups. ‘Today, many of the most marginalised groups remain invisible in education data at the global and national levels. This includes children and adults with disabilities, those displaced by conflict, child soldiers and labourers, as well as nomadic populations’.¹⁰

Inclusive education at the city level

Today, half of humanity – 3.5 billion people – lives in cities and 5 billion people are projected to live in cities by 2030. Many of these cities are increasingly attracting people of all ages and from diverse socio-economic and cultural backgrounds in search of better lives, greater safety, basic services and decent work. Cities around the world are facing acute challenges in managing rapid urbanization – from ensuring adequate housing and infrastructure to supporting the well-being of growing vulnerable populations that include migrant populations, the poor and at-risk youth. The environmental impact of urban sprawl also represents a considerable challenge for cities and rural areas alike.

Access to high-calibre, resilient infrastructures and the provision of basic services for all urban and rural dwellers are key components of development objectives, as are local economic opportunities for the creation of decent jobs and social cohesion. Yet, in order to achieve this, learning opportunities in cities must be of high quality, be inclusive of the diverse backgrounds of all learners and be offered on a continuous basis throughout life.

For instance, the *Learning Cities and the SDGs: Guide to Action* that resulted from the Cork Call to Action for Learning Cities underscores how ‘responding to the learning needs of all groups in society fosters equity and inclusion’¹¹ and thus supports both SDG4 (‘Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all’) and SDG 11 (‘Making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable’). It is of particular importance that attention be paid to marginalized and/or vulnerable groups, including ‘women and girls; people with disabilities and reduced mobility; migrants and refugees; and ethnic minorities’.¹² The Guide to Action, shaped by fresh experiences and good practices in cities, provided guiding questions to assess cities’ progress.

Learning cities thus can become safe, resilient and sustainable when guided by the principle of inclusion. Cities can be key hubs of action in which local governments empower diverse communities and social actors to engage in the formulation of policies and strategies that lead to inclusive lifelong learning opportunities for all.

Digitally excluded populations – challenges for inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable cities

The remarkable advances in digital technologies and the rapid expansion of internet connectivity have made today’s world increasingly interconnected. Knowledge of and familiarity with digital technologies are thus essential. Leveraging information and communication technologies (ICTs) to sustain livelihoods is no longer a specialized skill, but is now, for many, a prerequisite to prosperity. However, the digital dividends – that is, the development benefits derived from using these technologies – are not enjoyed by all. The World Bank points to the inequalities underpinning the general enthusiasm for ICT usage: six billion people have no access to broadband; four billion have no access to the internet,

¹⁰ UIS. *International Observatory on Equity and Inclusion in Education*. Available at: <http://uis.unesco.org/en/topic/equity-education>.

¹¹ UIL. 2017. *Learning Cities and the SDGs: A Guide to Action*. Adopted at the Third International Conference on Learning Cities, held in Cork, Ireland, in September 2017.

¹² Ibid.

and two billion have no access to a mobile phone.¹³ In addition to deficiencies relating to infrastructure and access to devices, a major gap can be also found in terms of digital skills, in particular among certain population groups.

The UN estimates that, in 2017, the global population of people aged 60 or older numbered 962 million – more than double the total recorded in 1980¹⁴ (UN 2017). This age group is the most affected by the technological gap. 79 per cent of the 16-55-year-old internet users accounted for by Spain's Asociación para la Investigación de Medios de Comunicación (Association for Communication Media Research) have internet access, but access decreases to 29 per cent among 56-70-year-olds and just five per cent among 71-80-year-olds.¹⁵ In addition, a lack of literacy skills is often linked to poverty, which may restrict access to and the efficient use of ICTs. The older generation and people with low levels of literacy constitute two groups, among others, that struggle to catch up with ICT skills and are at risk of being left behind.

Worldwide, many cities are enthusiastic about the positive changes that ICT usage can bring about. There is, for example, a dominant trend of smart urbanism, whereby ICTs are used to enhance city infrastructure, and to incorporate technical interventions into core public service systems such as transport, business, energy, housing, education, hospitals, the environment, etc.¹⁶ These projects' good intentions can only be fully realized if and when the population on the wrong side of the digital divide are able to make full use of the smart solutions. To achieve this, it is necessary to: provide (at least) adequate or (ideally) high-performance infrastructure (such as high-speed internet in both urban and rural areas); ensure that devices (such as computers, tablets and smartphones) are available and affordable; and equip individuals with the skills required to use them.

Local governments can play a vital role in implementing national policies or initiatives designed to minimize digital exclusion. Alternatively, they can take the initiative to design and provide training programmes that reach a specific group of digitally excluded learners – such as a programme to equip elderly people with digital skills by teaching them how to use computers and smartphones. In these cases, actions are government-sponsored, but non-governmental organizations can also assist in bridging the digital divide by promoting ICTs within the context of lifelong learning. For example, by providing low-cost, simple, programmable technology, NGOs can fuel new learning opportunities while mitigating people's exclusion from ICT skills development on account of low literacy levels. In the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, education and lifelong learning for all can help to overcome the challenges encountered by this target group, as both a goal and a means of development.

Output

- A. The work assignment shall consist of a background paper of approximately 6,000 words (excluding appendices, annexes and bibliographies) written in the English language at a very

¹³ World Bank, 2016b. *World Development Report 2016: Digital Dividends*. Washington DC, USA. Available at: <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/961621467994698644/pdf/102724-WDR-WDR2016Overview-ENGLISH-WebResBox-394840B-OUO-9.pdf>.

¹⁴ UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division. 2017. *World Population Ageing 2017 - Highlights (ST/ESA/SER.A/397)*. Available at: http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/publications/pdf/ageing/WPA2017_Highlights.pdf

¹⁵ Diaz-Lopez, M^a del Pilar, Remedios Lopez-Liria, José M. Aguilar-Parra & David Padilla-Gongora. 2016. *Keys to active ageing: new communication technologies and lifelong learning*. SpringerPlus.

¹⁶ Borkowska, K. and Osborne, M. 2018. 'Locating the fourth helix: Rethinking the role of civil society in developing smart learning cities'. *International Review of Education*, 64(3), pp. 355-372. Available at: <https://link.springer.com/content/pdf/10.1007%2Fs11159-018-9723-0.pdf>.

good level. It shall also include an abstract adapted to a non-technical audience. It shall be structured as follows:

- abstract;
- introduction;
- a conceptual framework on inclusion and lifelong learning in cities, focusing on how these cities meet the needs of digitally excluded groups in ways that contribute to the development of safe, resilient and sustainable cities;
- a section examining urban policy and planning for the inclusion of digitally excluded populations in lifelong learning: approaches and effective policies; key elements; challenges and recommendations;
- a section examining the local implementation of lifelong learning opportunities in cities, with a focus on digitally excluded populations: approaches, key elements and good practices; challenges and recommendations;
- a section examining the data collection and monitoring mechanisms used by local governments to identify the digital learning needs of all citizens; challenges and recommendations’
- conclusion: key issues and recommendations for policy-makers and practitioners;
- bibliography (in Endnote, where possible).

B. A list of 16 to 20 recommended case studies/examples of good practice for further research.

Final Remarks

Background data collected for the preparation of the output detailed above shall also be delivered to UIL on completion of the contract.

The paper shall follow the style guidelines laid down in the UNESCO Style Manual:

<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0014/001418/141812e.pdf>

The background paper shall not be circulated or published in any form without prior approval from UIL.