Inclusive policies and practices in cities

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The case for inclusion in learning cities (i)

- **Over half of humanity** – 4.2 billion people – **lives in cities**, and this is predicted to grow to 5.2 billion by 2030

- Cities around the world are facing **acute challenges in managing rapid urbanization**:
    - Providing adequate housing and infrastructure
    - Supporting the well-being of growing vulnerable populations

- **Learning opportunities** in cities must be of high quality, inclusive of the diverse backgrounds of all learners and offered on a continuous basis throughout life

The case for inclusion in learning cities (ii)

- The *Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education* was adopted in 1994 by the World Conference on Special Needs Education

- The '**International Forum on Inclusion and Equity in Education**' in Cali, Colombia – 25 years after Salamanca

- A platform to discuss inclusive education and the capacity of schools to accommodate and embrace special educational needs

- At the city level, an increasing amount of attention has been directed towards **inclusion-as-accessibility**

- **A more holistic understanding of inclusion in cities** is needed

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**International Forum
on Inclusion and Equity in Education -**

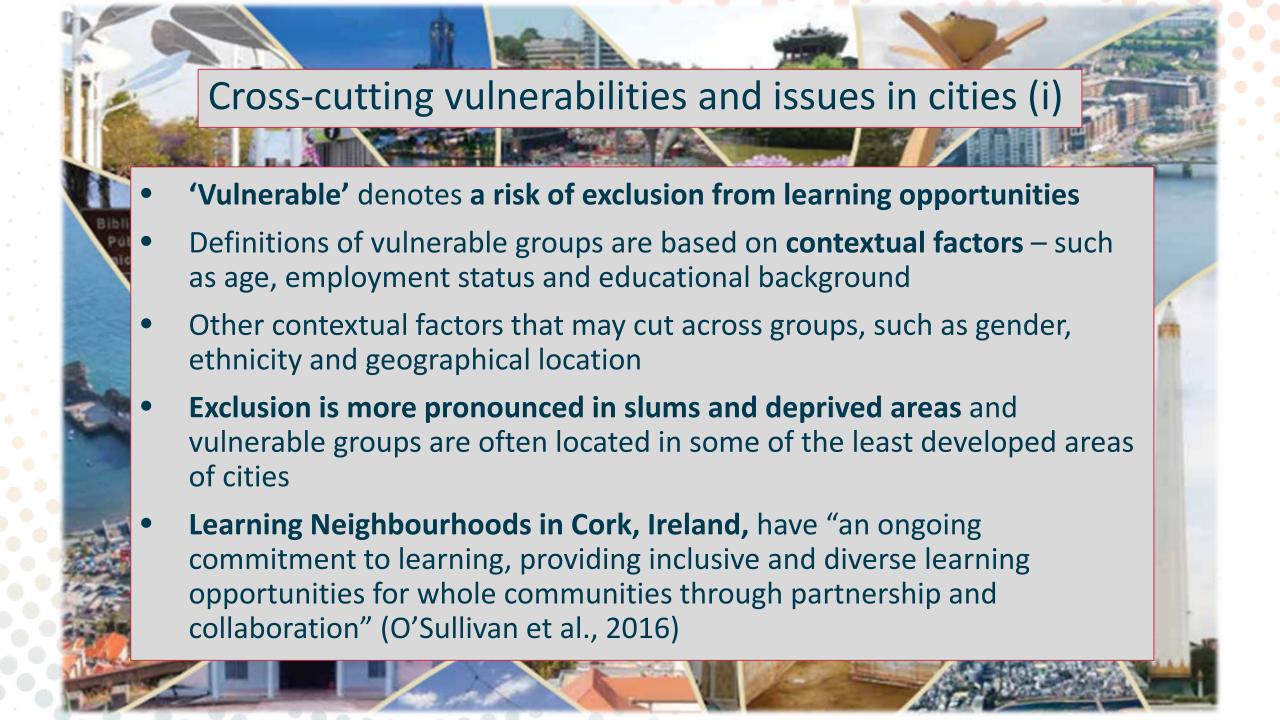**Every learner matters**

Cali, Colombia
11-13 September 2019

Key concepts for inclusion (i)

- **Inclusion** in education – a process to help overcome the barriers that limit the presence, participation and achievement of learners

- **Equity** - ensuring 'fairness'; that is, the needs of all learners have equal importance

- **Social inclusion** - the accessibility of public services and activities to all and the involvement of all in decision-making processes

- **Inclusive education** - the accessibility of learning opportunities to all and the involvement of individual learners, families and communities in decision-making processes

- **Access** is the foundation of inclusion as it ensures the presence of learners, **participation** requires that learners actively contribute or respond to learning opportunities, and **involvement** demands that learners are co-constructors of learning opportunities.

Key concepts for inclusion (i)

- **Lifelong learning** is inclusive – it is all-encompassing and holistic

- **Learning cities** are action-orientated intermediaries of lifelong learning

- They translate the vision of lifelong learning for all into **practical, people-centred measures** to sustainably develop urban environments

- Through **participatory cross-sectoral governance structures and multi-stakeholder involvement,** learning cities support social inclusion and inclusive education

GOVERNANCE

PARTICIPATION

Cross-cutting vulnerabilities and issues in cities (i)

- **'Vulnerable'** denotes **a risk of exclusion from learning opportunities**

- Definitions of vulnerable groups are based on **contextual factors** – such as age, employment status and educational background

- Other contextual factors that may cut across groups, such as gender, ethnicity and geographical location

- **Exclusion is more pronounced in slums and deprived areas** and vulnerable groups are often located in some of the least developed areas of cities

- **Learning Neighbourhoods in Cork, Ireland,** have "an ongoing commitment to learning, providing inclusive and diverse learning opportunities for whole communities through partnership and collaboration" (O'Sullivan et al., 2016)

Cross-cutting vulnerabilities and issues in cities (ii)

- There is the potential for **the same person to be affected by different forms of exclusion** – an individual may be both a migrant and a young person at risk, or a digitally excluded person with disabilities

- ✓ **Lifelong learning policies and practices** can respond to the needs of different groups, which in reality often overlap.

  - *For example, in Vienna, Austria, the Youth College (Jugendcollege) of the 'Start Vienna' integration initiative provides services for migrants who are not in education, employment or training (NEET). The initiative was developed in 2015 with the involvement of the Department for Integration and Diversity of the city along with numerous educational institutions and funding agencies.*

- Difficult to define groups precisely, but necessary in order to organize discussions around **concrete policies and practices** aimed at addressing a particular issue

Research on vulnerable groups in cities

- Ahead of this conference, the **UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning** commissioned an overall research paper on inclusion, as well as background papers for the following groups:
  - **Youth at risk (NEETs)**
  - **Migrants**
  - **Digitally excluded populations**
  - **Persons with disabilities**

- For each group, we will provide an overview of their **context, existing policies and practices for their inclusion in cities, and key challenges**

Youth at risk (NEETs): Context and examples

- **NEET – not in education, employment or training** – term first emerged in the UK in the late 1980s

- ✓ Policies and practices tend to aim either at:
  - ✓ **preventing young people from becoming 'NEETs'** – by, for example, supporting school-to-work transitions
  - ✓ **re-engaging young people who have already fallen out of education, employment and training**

- *The BladeRunners model of the City of Vancouver is considered to be one of the most successful programmes in Canada to support transition to employment of disadvantaged youth (OECD LEED, 2013) – a unique system of '24/7 support' for employment-related issues*
- *An example of community-based outreach work is the 'one-stop shop' approach in two communities in Costa Rica, Desamparados and Upala, which is part of a strategy to raise the profile of youth employment services - the programme targets young people aged 15 to 35 in vulnerable situations*

Youth at risk (NEETs): Challenges

- **Difficulties in distinguishing, reaching out to, and tracking NEETs** (data)

- Strong education, training and labour market information and analysis systems, which cover the **non-formal and informal sectors and qualitative job aspects**

- **Lacking clarity in responsibilities**, overarching vision, a clear mandate or target group

- **Limited capacities for co-ordination** and the absence of effective accountability mechanisms

- **Securing sustainable funding**

- A need for policy frameworks to facilitate **transitions from the informal to the formal economy**

Migrants: Context and examples

- In an era of profound demographic, socio-economic and technological changes, **migration and forced displacement are top policy concerns**

- Besides economic factors (either internal or international), irregular migration and forced displacement related to crisis, armed conflicts and natural disasters have **increased in intensity**

- ✓ Policies and practices for the inclusion of migrants support **access to basic services, language learning and the admittance of undocumented children into local schools**

    - *The City of Hamburg, Germany, started a pilot project, 'I am a Hamburger!', which provides people with migrant backgrounds (and especially from the Turkish community) with information, guidance and education on how to go through the naturalization process*

    - *In São Paulo, Brazil, the programme Portas Abertas: Português para Imigrantes (Open Doors: Portuguese for Migrants) has provided language instruction to migrants as a structured public policy since 2017*

Migrants: Challenges

- **Poor access to basic services** – such as education, housing and transport

- **Lack of human and financial resources and poor co-ordination**

- Planning implies adopting **holistic approaches favouring inclusion over marginalization and segregation**

- **NGOs and humanitarian agencies need to coordinate with local authorities and other national departments** to make sure the voices of migrants and the forcibly displaced are heard on the design and delivery of services

Digitally excluded populations (i)

- In most cities, there are people who are excluded from learning by either an **absence of digital infrastructure or a deficit in digital skills – and often both**

- Exclusion is exacerbated by **digital divides** that have emerged between social groups and generations

- ✓ Measures to promote digital inclusion in cities are often centred on **infrastructure** in relation to **digital access**, or they address **skills development** in the areas of **digital literacy and data literacy**

    - *In Singapore, the MySkillsFuture portal (http://myskillsfuture.sg) enables people to create individualized learning and career profiles, access labour market information, explore training opportunities to acquire skills aligned with industry needs, and identify job opportunities aligned with their career goals*

    - *In Giza, Egypt, a project focussed on advancing girls' and women's literacy through an innovative technology-enabled approach - literacy skills were embedded into an integrated curriculum (Al Mar'ah Wal Hayah) or 'Women and Life', and included empowerment activities for women's social, cultural and economic growth*

Digitally excluded populations: Challenges

- **Digital access** remains a critical issue in many rural and **poverty-afflicted urban areas**

- **Underdeveloped infrastructures** tend to add a new layer of exclusion from full access to city resources, services and learning opportunities

- More subtle forms of exclusion are currently related to the **ability to critically and reflectively deal with issues such as privacy** and data misuse

- With the increasing pace of transformation of all industry sectors, **the competencies and literacies needed by employers are evolving rapidly**

Persons with disabilities: Context and examples

- Persons with disabilities have for a long time faced exclusion due to **insufficient levels of accessibility in cities**

- While inclusion is a wide-ranging principle**, accessibility is also a right specifically for persons with disabilities**

- ✓ Accessibility should go beyond physical changes and specialized provision only - it has to do with **social participation and cultural values that underlie actions towards building safer, more inclusive, equitable and accessible environments for all**

  - *In Duhok, with some 800,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) mainly from Mosul as well as Syrian refugees, a range of training programmes have been put into place directed towards the psychological rehabilitation of adults*

  - *The city of Sharjah in the United Arab Emirates has been recognized as an 'Accessible City for the Physically Disabled' by the World Federation of Disabled (Gulf News, 2018) - for the past 38 years, Sharjah has been offering various services for persons with disabilities, especially in the transport sector*

Persons with disabilities: Challenges

- Cities are still not designed with thought given to a **range of physical disabilities** or **a variety of cognitive impairments**

- Much of the debate as to whether a city is disability-friendly tends to focus on **mobility and physical infrastructure**

- Where there are comprehensive interventions in learning, these more often concern **children in education rather than youths and adults**

- Stakeholders have incorporated 'inclusive discourse' into their documents, but there is **still much to be done about how to make inclusion happen in real life**

- Ultimately, **city-level policies and practices need to actively involve persons with disabilities**, who are in many contexts left without a voice or a presence

Directions for the conference

- **Inclusion in cities** remains an under-researched topic yet one of significance for lifelong learning and sustainable development

- ✓ This conference can:
  - ✓ Reaffirm the importance of what is already known while **developing a more holistic understanding of inclusion in cities**
  - ✓ Broaden inclusive education in formal schooling to **inclusive learning in all modalities** (formal, non-formal and informal)
  - ✓ Expand cities' responsibility for inclusion from the improvement of physical infrastructure to the **cultivation of social inclusion across all spheres and spaces** (families, communities, workplaces, libraries, museums, digital platforms and beyond)

- **Exchanges between cities** during the conference will provide further insights to guide policy initiatives

Thank you!

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