



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
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Cities of inclusion: UNESCO Learning City Award 2019







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UNESCO Institute
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The UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL) undertakes research, capacity-building, networking and publication on lifelong learning with a focus on adult and continuing education, literacy and non-formal basic education.

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Introduction

In order to support local governments in developing concrete strategies for building learning cities, the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL) established the UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities (GNLC) in 2013. Since then, it has grown rapidly and now has more than 170 active members. The network's central tenet is to promote policy dialogue, peer learning, capacity building, knowledge production and exchange among member cities. The UNESCO Learning City Award was introduced in 2015 to honour member cities that have made significant progress towards promoting lifelong learning for all. The award was first conferred on 12 cities in 2015 and on 16 cities in 2017, during the Mexico City and Cork International Conferences on Learning Cities, respectively. This year, in Medellín, the third Learning City Award is being conferred on 10 learning cities, representing all five UNESCO regions. The cities are:

Colombia, **Medellín**

Denmark, **Sønderborg**

Egypt, **Aswan**

Greece, **Heraklion**

Malaysia, **Petaling Jaya**

Mexico, **Santiago**

Nigeria, **Ibadan**

People's Republic of China, **Chengdu**

Republic of Korea, **Seodaemun-gu**

Ukraine, **Melitopol**

I am pleased to see the active contribution of the growing number of cities joining the UNESCO GNLC and hope that this booklet will both encourage peer learning among member cities and motivate and inspire urban communities worldwide to join our network.

David Atchoarena, Director

UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning



UNESCO Learning City Awardees 2019





Melitopol | Ukraine

Seodaemun-gu
Republic of Korea

Heraklion | Greece

Chengdu | People's Republic of China

Aswan | Egypt

Petaling Jaya | Malaysia

1. Colombia, Medellín

City population: 2,4486,723 (2016)
City/urban area: 380.2 km² (2016)
Annual GDP: US\$6,643 (2014)

Within the past decade, Colombia's second largest city, Medellín, has broken free from its troubled past and is now recognized around the globe for its advancements in technology and innovation. Its transformation is due, in part, to large financial investments in education projects, including scholarships, reading initiatives and sports for integration. In order to boost citywide lifelong learning opportunities, the local government has played a substantial role in improving the lives of its citizens. Initiatives include:

The **En el Colegio Contamos con Vos** (We count on you at school) initiative, which has successfully reintegrated over 4,600 school dropouts by engaging with them on a one-to-one basis.

The development of the **Mova Teacher's Innovation Center**, where teachers can access teacher-training opportunities and benefit from pedagogical innovations.

'Medellín, How Are We Doing?', a **multi-sectoral monitoring and evaluation mechanism** that combines both subjective opinions of the population with objective indicators to chart the course of Medellín as a learning city.



Knowledge ceremony



'We count on you at school' programme

'Only with education do we close the social gaps. Only with education do we overcome the vicious circle of violence and poverty. In Medellín, we invest in opportunities endorsed by its citizens. Medellín is a city that is known for rising from its darkest hours. Its people have found in education a possibility of resilience and transformation.'

Federico Gutiérrez, Mayor of Medellín



SDG workshop

2. Denmark, Sønderborg

City population: 74,737
City/urban area: 495 km²
Annual GDP: US\$56,394

Sønderborg's unique location at the border of continental Europe has given it the ability to cooperate across cultures and dividing lines, so that, today, people of 120 different nationalities reside in the city. Sønderborg is committed to becoming carbon neutral by 2029 and, since 2016, it has developed lifelong learning initiatives as a member of the UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities (GNLC). Prominent examples of the municipality's efforts include:

Its **Green Curriculum**, which is based on the four cornerstones of sustainability (environmental, economic, social and cultural), the UN Sustainable Development Goals and the UNESCO Key Features of Learning Cities, ensuring that pupils achieve basic scientific knowledge, competencies and a willingness to participate in the development of a sustainable society.

The **annual Celebration of Volunteers**, when local politicians and officials serve dinner to all volunteers within Sønderborg Municipality. The purpose of the event is to recognize and celebrate voluntary social and health promotion work.

The **Passage Til Virkeligheden initiative**, which was developed to increase the population's understanding and respect for skilled craftsmanship as part of a sustainable society.

'Fostering lifelong learning is a core endeavour of Sønderborg Municipality, which we achieve through strong political commitment, partnerships and quality education "from ABC to PhD". By embracing the four dimensions of sustainability, 17 SDGs and Key Features of Learning Cities, the municipality secures development of decent jobs for all and its goal of becoming carbon neutral.'

Erik Lauritzen, Mayor of Sønderborg



Local action

3. Egypt, Aswan

City population: 1,425,000 (2012)
City/urban area: 34,608 km²
Annual GDP: US\$2,549

Located in the south of Egypt, about 680 km from the country’s capital, Cairo, Aswan is popular with tourists who want to explore historical sites but escape the hustle and bustle of the more frenetic cities in the north. In addition to its natural beauty, Aswan can be proud of the strides it has made in implementing lifelong learning across the city’s civic life. With an integrated network comprising government, NGOs and the private sector, Aswan has:

Launched an **entrepreneurship programme** in cooperation with the Social Fund for Development and the Agha Khan and Om Habibeh Foundations that has, to date, benefitted 1,000 young people, half of whom are girls.

Made a concerted effort to ensure lifelong learning is available to all by building **120 community centres** that target dropouts in deprived areas, as well as nearly 40 specialized schools for students with disabilities.

Implemented the **‘Green Eco-Friendly Schools’** project in 15 primary schools; here, students plant and maintain gardens, learn about water conservation, and learn to lead healthy lifestyles.



Participation of girls in solar energy school in Aswan



Aswan Green City

'In addition to being a member of the UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities (GNLC), Aswan is part of the UNESCO Associated Schools Network, and therefore keenly promotes quality education for all. We are proud to be recognized by the UNESCO GNLC with this year's Learning City Award, and will continue to build a learning city that supports the UN Sustainable Development Goals by linking education to the needs of society.'

Ahmed Ebrahim, Mayor of Aswan



Smart games

4. Greece, Heraklion

City population: 173,993
City/urban area: 684.3 km²
Annual GDP: US\$18,000

As the capital and largest city on the Greek island of Crete, Heraklion plays a major role as the island's administrative, economic and cultural centre. However, like many cities across the globe, it is undergoing a period of socio-economic and cultural change. As a result, there is an urgent need to mobilize all available human and financial resources to respond to local social, economic, cultural and environmental challenges. In order to achieve these goals, the municipality developed effective monitoring and evaluation approaches and created:

A **Lifelong Learning Centre**, which is responsible for adopting and implementing the Lifelong Learning Programme of General Adult Education for all members of society, with a particular focus on vulnerable social groups such as the unemployed, prisoners, refugees, migrants and people with disabilities.

The **'Demoscopio'** to promote democratic dialogue, youth innovation and entrepreneurship in Heraklion. The purpose of the Demoscopio is to achieve the greatest possible consensus on the development issues of the city.

The **'Fit for All'** programme, an innovative and fun way to bring Heraklion's citizens and the refugees residing in the city closer together by promoting equity and inclusion through sports and educational activities based on subjects such as local culture and tradition.

'When it comes to planning our future, education undoubtedly constitutes one of the strategic cornerstones for the Municipality of Heraklion. We fully believe that such an important social good ought to be protected, enhanced, and that it should remain a driving force in our city. By promoting cooperation, respect and solidarity, we strive to establish Heraklion as a leading learning city.'

Vasileios Lamprinos, Mayor of Heraklion



Personal empowerment workshop

5. Malaysia, Petaling Jaya

City population: 732,667 (2017)
City/urban area: 97.2 km² (2018)
Annual GDP: US\$9,508

The city of Petaling Jaya is located just outside Malaysia’s bustling capital city of Kuala Lumpur. For much of the city’s short but vibrant history, it has been closely tied to the iconic capital, but, today, it has been doing much to make a name for itself. Petaling Jaya has made great strides to improve access to public learning spaces and makes good use of the resources provided by partners. As part of its overarching goal to implement lifelong learning policies across the city, Petaling Jaya initiated the SMART PJ Project. Some of its key successes include:

The **PJ City Bus** (and PJ School Bus), a free bus service across four city routes, which connects many public learning spaces, including schools in deprived areas; the buses also disseminate information through their on-board screens.

The **Recycled Sack Project**, where ‘urban poor’ city residents are taught how to make various types of recycled sacks/bags out of used buntings and banners so that they can be sold to the city council, NGOs and colleges.

The **Lifelong Learning IT Program**, which targeted a small indigenous community at the Bukit Lanjan National School, providing them with the digital skills required to ensure they will have access to knowledge and quality education.



Young learners with their certificates



Agro Box

'Petaling Jaya (PJ) continues to seek partnerships with corporations, organizations and individuals for community projects that enhance the city's sustainable social, environmental and economic development (SEED). As part of the PJ Learning City initiative, the recently-launched PJ SEED community grant programme, for example, helps with the planning and execution of activities that benefit the community.'

Sayuthi Bakar, Mayor of Petaling Jaya



Vision Santiago sporting activity

6. Mexico, Santiago

City population: 42,407
City/urban area: 763.8km²
Annual GDP: US\$9,005

Santiago is located within the metropolitan area of the city of Monterrey in Mexico's northern Nuevo León state. Already renowned for its natural beauty, cultural richness, traditions, folklore, historical relevance, cuisine and hospitality, the city is also exceptional in its embrace of lifelong learning and efforts to introduce lifelong learning to its citizens. As part of its plans for the city, Santiago is continuously developing innovative programmes that are inclusive and promote gender equality. Exemplary efforts include:

The **Vision Santiago** project, which fosters educational, social, cultural and commercial activities by providing new learning spaces and promoting sporting activities within communities.

Opening schools in the afternoons to strengthen the relationship of children and families to schools.

The **Designed for Better Learning** programme, which upgrades the quality of school environments, improves learning outcomes, and fosters teacher and community engagement.

'Our mission and vision is to promote learning as the guiding principle of municipal action, and to have a city that retains its identity and history, but also speaks to new generations. We want a Santiago that offers everyone the same opportunity for development, and that provides its citizens with the necessary tools to learn both inside and outside the classroom.'

Javier Caballero Gaona, Mayor of Santiago



Day of the Dead

7. Nigeria, Ibadan

City population: 3,160,000
City/urban area: 6,800 km²
Annual GDP: US\$2,029

Ibadan is the capital of Nigeria's Oyo State and the third most populous city in the country. It is also home to one of Africa's leading academic institutions, the University of Ibadan. Recognizing the importance of lifelong learning for sustainable development, Ibadan continues to implement policies that ensure its citizens have access to quality further education. Recent notable lifelong learning opportunities include:

The **OYOMESI (Oyo State Model Education System Interventions) initiative**, which seeks to use short-term intervention strategies and principles to find solutions for a better education system.

The **OYOMESI Festival of Learning**, which raises awareness of the importance of lifelong learning among Ibadan's citizens through workshops and activities aimed at learners, educators and businesses.

The **OYOMESI Consortium**, comprising experts in the field and organizations including Microsoft, Google and WestAfricaENRG, all of whom work together to build the competencies of Ibadan's citizens.



Technical College, Elekuro Exhibition Booth



Participants at the Children's Conference plenary session

'Ibadan is continually striving to turn the ideal of "inclusive education" into a reality. We do this by consolidating the principles of lifelong learning and promoting efforts towards sustainability.'

Oluseyi Abiodun Makinde, Governor of Oyo State



Employment training for people with disabilities

8. People's Republic of China, Chengdu

City population: 16,045,000
City/urban area: 14,335 km²
Annual GDP: US\$14,062

The lively and beautiful city of Chengdu, the capital of Sichuan Province, is also one of the largest cities in western China. A popular tourist destination – not least because of its famous giant pandas – it is also recognized as a hub of commerce, finance and transportation in the west of the country. To take advantage of this role and its central location, Chengdu promotes inclusive learning and education by:

Establishing various **learning activity spaces for older people**, offering diversified learning courses and themed activities.

Extending vocational training opportunities in the city by offering **100 professional development programmes**, including those tailored to the integration of migrant workers.

Creating **employment platforms** and renovating learning and training spaces in order to give people with disabilities equal opportunities to learn.

'As a cultural city with a history dating back over 2,000 years, Chengdu firmly believes that learning makes life more wonderful and a city far stronger. Winning this year's Learning City Award inspires us to continuously engage in lifelong learning for all, and to promote inclusiveness and access to learning opportunities.'

Qiang Luo, Mayor of Chengdu



Adult learning activities in the city

9. Republic of Korea, Seodaemun-gu

City population: 310,795
City/urban area: 17.6 km²
Annual GDP: US\$30,600

Seodaemun-gu, a suburb of the Korean capital of Seoul, has taken an innovative approach to learning city development. Confronted with a sudden influx of new residents, and with around 30,000 non-literate people living in its district, the city devised a lifelong learning programme aimed at integrating its residents, thereby helping them escape social isolation and urban poverty. In addition to a strong monitoring and evaluation mechanism, key components of the programme are:

The **Se-Ro-Gol-Mok**, or Vertical Alley Activation, project, which takes advantage of the city's many high-rise apartments, creating small learning communities that teach 50 courses each year in residents' living rooms, thus innovatively using local spaces and learning resources.

Jjim-jil-bang Learning, an initiative that targets merchants, providing them with lifelong learning opportunities.

A concerted effort to **enable citizens to access learning** opportunities at any time of the day by opening up more than 40 learning spaces in the evenings.





Learning festival (2014)

'It is an honour to win the 2019 UNESCO Learning City Award. Seodaemun-gu has established more than 50 lifelong learning centres, employs more than 150 community lecturers and, by operating 140 learning spaces inside of apartment complexes, has created a culture of learning throughout life. We will continue to provide learning programmes that meet global standards to improve the quality of life of our citizens.'

Seok-Jin Mun, Mayor of Seodaemun-gu



Personal development programme

10. Ukraine, Melitopol

City population: 150,900
City/urban area: 49 km²
Annual GDP: US\$1,711

Known as ‘the gateway to the Crimea’, Melitopol enjoys an important geopolitical location in Ukraine and well-developed industrial centres. Today, the city is looking to utilize the power of lifelong learning to enhance its human capital, which is essential to its sustainable growth. Despite tensions in the region, Melitopol has been successful in implementing lifelong learning across the region, with recent achievements including:

The **Adult Education Centre**, which provides free educational services to the adult population, including refugees and veterans, to increase entrepreneurship and knowledge of business basics to raise their competitiveness in the labour market.

Mapping of educational resources on Google Maps (maps.google.com.ua) to disseminate lifelong learning opportunities among the population.

A **public sociological survey** conducted in late 2017 with 5,000 city residents and 12 focus groups to map individual, public and institutional urban resources of lifelong educational services.

'The military conflict in eastern Ukraine caused a massive migration of civilians. Melitopol therefore faced a new challenge: thousands of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in need of adaptation into the community. Lifelong learning can address some of the problems facing IDPs and can change perspectives, so that Melitopol's citizens see IDPs as an opportunity, and not as a problem.'

Serhii Minko, Mayor of Melitopol



Melitopol Voices for Democracy



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