

UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities

Guiding Documents



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



UNESCO Institute
for Lifelong Learning

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Its publications are a valuable resource for educational researchers, planners, policymakers and practitioners.

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Foreword



Lifelong learning is becoming increasingly important in today's world and is an integral part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Global visions for the future of lifelong learning are being discussed at the international level, and regional and national political leaders are working towards establishing the appropriate legislative frameworks. Meanwhile, more and more of the world's cities are making implementation happen by building learning cities. Learning cities enable their citizens to learn throughout life. In doing so, they enhance individual empowerment, social cohesion, and economic and cultural prosperity, thereby laying the foundation for sustainable development.

Learning cities at all stages of development can benefit greatly from sharing ideas with other cities, as solutions for issues that arise as one learning city develops may already exist in another. The UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning established the UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities (GNLC) in order to promote this sharing of ideas, and to provide cities with the expertise, guidance and support they need throughout the development process. This international policy-oriented network serves as a source of inspiration, know-how and best practice for those involved in building learning cities.

I am pleased to introduce the Guiding Documents of the UNESCO GNLC. These Guiding Documents consist of the *Beijing Declaration on Building Learning Cities* and the *Key Features of Learning Cities*, both of which were adopted at the 1st International Conference on Learning Cities in Beijing, China, in 2013. They serve as the basis of our work and provide cities and partners with guidance on building learning cities.

I wish to take this opportunity to express my appreciation to UNESCO GNLC cities, partners and supporters, all of whom recognize the major role played by lifelong learning in enhancing social, economic and environmental sustainability. I would also like to encourage cities and partners all over the world to join the initiative and create lifelong learning opportunities for all in the world's communities.

Arne Carlsen
Director
UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning

Introduction

We live in a complex, fast-changing world where social, economic and political norms are constantly being redefined. Reducing poverty, boosting economic growth and employment, managing demographic transformations, promoting diversity and equality, tackling climate change, ensuring public safety and responding to urbanization are just some of the challenges we face. These challenges need to be tackled on multiple levels. At the international level, we need our leaders to set out clear visions for peace, prosperity and sustainability. At regional and national levels, politicians must establish the appropriate legislative frameworks. At the local level, implementation takes place. And at the citizen's level, change begins. Lifelong learning can lay the foundation for this change, as citizens who develop their knowledge, skills, values and attitudes throughout life are better equipped to help society overcome the challenges it faces.

Enabling citizens to learn throughout life has become a priority for communities around the world. Lifelong learning as the foundation of sustainable social, economic and environmental development is also at the heart of UNESCO's learning city concept.

To support the implementation of lifelong learning, the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL) established the UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities. The network promotes policy dialogue and peer learning among member cities; forges links; fosters partnerships; provides capacity development; and develops instruments to encourage and recognize progress made in building learning cities.

The work of the network is based on two key documents: the *Beijing Declaration on Building Learning Cities* and the *Key Features of Learning Cities*. The *Beijing Declaration on Building Learning Cities* outlines the role of lifelong learning in promoting inclusion, prosperity and sustainability in cities, and it affirms commitments to twelve actions for developing learning cities. The *Key Features of Learning Cities* provides an overall framework of key features of learning cities and a comprehensive checklist of action points to enhance and measure the progress of learning cities. Guided by these documents, the network aims to help cities use the power of lifelong learning to secure a sustainable future.

1. 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-organized by UNESCO, the Ministry of Education of China and Beijing Municipal Government (Beijing, 21–23 October 2013) declare as follows:

We recognize 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 civilizations.

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

We accept that international and regional organizations, 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 mobilizes human and other resources to promote inclusive learning from basic to higher education; it revitalizes 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 urbanization, 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;
- improving the flexibility of lifelong learning 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. Revitalizing 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 revitalize 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
- recognizing 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 organizations 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 organizations to become learning organizations;
- 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:

- recognizing the role of communications media, libraries, museums, religious settings, sports and cultural centres, community centres, parks and similar places as learning spaces;
- organizing 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 realizing 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 organizations 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 mobilization and utilization

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 mobilization and utilization by:

- encouraging greater financial investment in lifelong learning by government, civil society, private sector organizations 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 organizations 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 recognize 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 organizations 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 organizations to become active partners of the global network of learning cities – drawing on experience gained in private-sector initiatives.

2. 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 conceptualized 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 mobilizes its resources in every sector to

- promote inclusive learning from basic to higher education;
- revitalize 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.

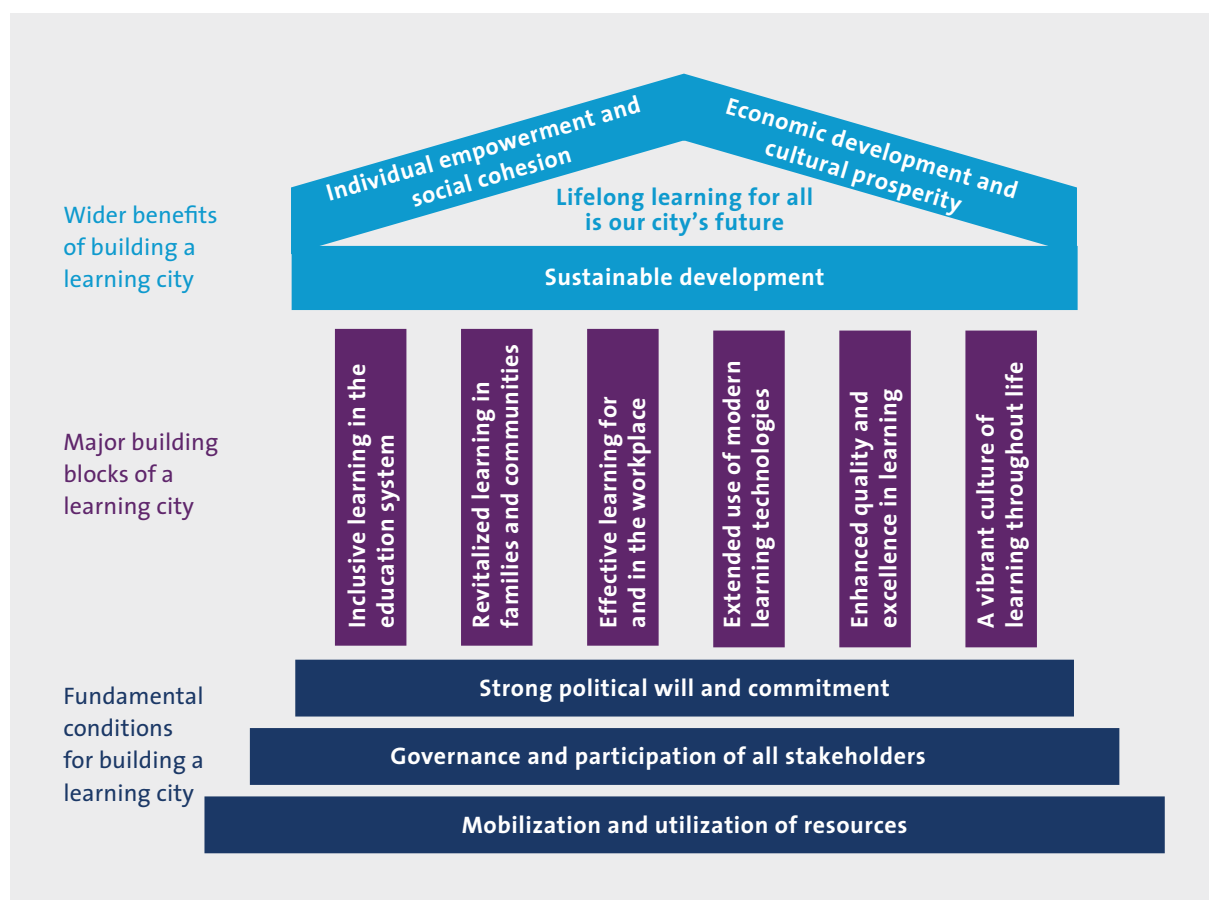
The Pediment – three areas of focus reflect the wider benefits of building a modern learning city, broadly defined as:

- (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) Revitalized 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.

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



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) Mobilization and utilization 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 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 organizations 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		US\$
		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	Experts’ review	5 Excellent	4 Very good	3 Good	2 Fair	1 Poor
		Support for senior citizens: Measures adopted by the city authorities to support senior-citizen learners (aged 65 years and older)	Experts’ review	5 Excellent	4 Very good	3 Good	2 Fair	1 Poor
2.2 Revitalizing 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 Excellent	4 Very good	3 Good	2 Fair	1 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 Recognizing 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 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								
	2.3.2 Helping public and private organizations to become learning organizations	Learning organizations: Existence of initiatives or strategies to develop learning organizations 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 12 months preceding the survey	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 Organizing 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 organizations and the private sector	Mechanisms for stakeholder coordination: The effectiveness of measures to encourage stakeholder mobilization 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 mobilization and utilization	3.3.1 Encouraging greater financial investment in lifelong learning by government	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)				%
		Adult and continuing education					%	
		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 utilizing 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

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 Excellent	4 Very good	3 Good	2 Fair	1 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 Excellent	4 Very good	3 Good	2 Fair	1 Poor

The UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities in a Nutshell

Vision: Lifelong learning for all is our city's future.

Mission: To support and accelerate the practice of lifelong learning by promoting policy dialogue and peer learning among member cities; forging links; fostering partnerships; providing capacity development; and developing instruments to encourage and recognize progress made in building learning cities.

Guiding Documents:

- The *Beijing Declaration on Building Learning Cities* outlines the role of lifelong learning in promoting inclusion, prosperity and sustainability in cities and affirms commitments to twelve actions for developing learning cities.
- The *Key Features of Learning Cities* provides an overall framework of key features of learning cities and a comprehensive checklist of action points to enhance and measure the progress of learning cities.

Learning city: The Guiding Documents define a 'learning city' as a city that effectively mobilizes its resources in every sector to promote inclusive learning from basic to higher education; revitalizes learning in families and communities; facilitates learning for and in the workplace; extends the use of modern learning technologies; enhances quality and excellence in learning; and fosters a culture of learning throughout life. In doing so, it will enhance individual empowerment, social cohesion, economic and cultural prosperity, and sustainable development.

Network: Membership of the UNESCO GNLC comprises learning cities at various stages of development. Partners and the Secretariat of the UNESCO GNLC also make essential contributions to the network.

Secretariat: The Secretariat of the UNESCO GNLC coordinates the network. The Secretariat is based in the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL), the only organizational unit in the UN family that holds a global mandate for lifelong learning.

‘Lifelong learning for all is our city’s future’

For more information on the UNESCO
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