Lifelong learning in cities.
The growing importance of community learning places for inclusion, citizenship and social sustainability

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Why cities

- Drivers of national and regional economies
- Engines for prosperity and well-being of their communities
- Places of growing social inequality
Cities economic development

- Hi-tech industries, innovation
- Sustainability and smart technologies
- Access to investment
- Promotion of local culture
- Skills development strategies
- Social and cultural development

Infra-structure development

Skills development strategies

Social and cultural development
Why learning cities

Individual learning needs...

• ...to be met where people are living
• ...allow citizen to understand and react
We recognise the crucial importance of learning as the major driving force for the future prosperity, stability and well-being of our citizens

(A charter for learning cities, 1998)
Some key ideas

- Relationships and identity linked to the place where people live and work
- Collaboration and coordination
- Learning opportunities within the community
Change

- Community involvement
- Strengthening the support structure
- State responsibility
- Learning of individuals and organizations
Local-level co-operation
• builds stronger communities

Stronger communities
• create possibilities for solutions to complex problems

Possibilities can be realised building
• community capacity
• means to turn actions into effective policy

Information, connectivity and learning
Indicators for a sustainable learning city

- Equity of access to key services
- Support to cultural integration
- Political participation of citizens
- Mechanisms for a community to fulfil its own needs through community action
- Mechanisms for political advocacy to meet needs that cannot be met by community action
- Mechanisms for a community to identify its strengths and needs

improvement of society
maintenance of improved conditions
Rethinking learning cities
Rethinking lifelong learning?

- "We need to invest more in skills in Europe...Stronger investment in skills is vital for strengthening competitiveness and boosting growth. And most of all, it is crucial to help people to realise their professional dreams and goals and reach their potential" (Marianne Thyssen)
Vocational aspect of citizenship

Lifelong learning about “learning the skills” for employability

Jobs’ crisis as skills’ crisis

Education as common good?
Skills and competences required for employability are the same ones required for participation in the social sector (Borg & Mayo, 2006)

The competencies required by the jobs of the future are very much the same as those required by the citizens of the future (Ján Figel 2006)

[Skills] are the best insurance against unemployment and are an important factor for personal development and active citizenship (EC 2009)

New Skills Agenda for Europe supports training, learning, re-training and upskilling in order to better equip citizens for the labour market (EC 2016)
Policy for sustainable learning cities

- Recognition for the role of learning for the development of cities and local communities
- Creation of the conditions and the structures to take advantage of local assets
- Partnership
- Investment in human resource development
- Supporting adaptive communities
In most countries, Learning Cities and Learning Regions have become the main agents for implementing LLL for all. [...] 

Skills mismatches between supply and demand have to a large extent disappeared, not least thanks to strong partnership between the supply and demand sides. This, in turn, has led to a strong focus on innovation in learning and education. 

National governments are strongly supporting these developments, in particular through monitoring a flexible but coherent system of accreditation of LLL. [...] 

Cities and Regions and the individuals also contribute to the financing of LLL, seen by them as investments for a green growth future (2013).
Thank you
Overcoming the gap between policy and reality

1. A vertical planning
   • among different parts of the educational system

2. An horizontal planning
   • among government departments at national and regional levels and all main stakeholders

3. A system of financing LC
   • creating a coherent and affordable system

4. A focus on collective change
   • building capacity for communities to preserve and create their shared wealth
Rethinking learning cities

100 and more learning cities
Join the UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities

Rethinking Education
Towards a global common good?
Learning for...

Economic performance

- Organisational learning
- Learning-by-doing and learning-by-interacting
- Innovative approaches
- Adaptability to emerging needs

Personal and social benefits

- Influence on social behaviour and social cohesion
- Engagement in social networks
- Effects for disadvantaged and low skilled people