What is a learning city?

‘A learning city promotes lifelong learning for all’

UNESCO defines 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 and social inclusion, economic development and cultural prosperity, and sustainable development.
Key features of a learning city

- Wider benefits of building a learning city
- Economic development and cultural prosperity
- Lifelong learning for all is our city’s future
- Sustainable development

Major building blocks of a learning city

- Inclusive learning in the education system
- Revitalized learning in families and communities
- Effective learning for and in the workplace
- Extended use of modern learning technologies
- Enhanced quality and excellence in learning
- A vibrant culture of learning throughout life

Fundamental conditions for building a learning city

- Strong political will and commitment
- Governance and participation of all stakeholders
- Mobilization and utilization of resources
- Individual empowerment and social cohesion
- Economic development and cultural prosperity
- Lifelong learning for all is our city’s future
- Sustainable development
Why build a learning city?

‘Lifelong learning lays the foundation for sustainable social, economic and environmental development’

Change begins with the citizen
Citizens must be empowered to anticipate and tackle constantly changing social, environmental and economic challenges.

Lifelong learning is an important way of empowering citizens
Providing citizens with a broad array of learning opportunities helps them develop the skills, competences and attitudes needed for sustainable development.

Implementation happens at the local level
Cities have the facilities and potential to motivate and enable citizens to learn.
What is the UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities (GNLC)?

‘The UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities is an international policy-oriented network for inspiration, know-how and best practice’

Every city is unique. Yet when it comes to learning, cities share certain characteristics. 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 other cities.

The UNESCO GNLC supports and improves the practice of lifelong learning in the world’s cities 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.
Join the UNESCO GNLC and enjoy the following benefits:

**Receive guidance and support**
- Access tools and strategies for developing learning cities.
- Keep up to date on learning city developments.

**Be part of a dynamic network**
- Exchange information with other learning cities.
- Communicate with a network of experts and professionals.
- Build partnerships.
- Host conferences and meetings.

**Enjoy recognition for your efforts**
- Share your milestones and inspire other cities.
- Showcase your city.
- Apply for the UNESCO Learning City Award.
For more information on the UNESCO GNLC’s work and joining the network, please visit
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