

# Cork Call to Action for Learning Cities

## Global goals, local actions:

Towards lifelong learning for all in 2030

### Preamble

- 1.** We, the mayors, deputy mayors, officials and representatives of cities worldwide, education executives, education experts, representatives of UN agencies, the private sector, and regional, international and civil society organizations from 180 cities in 80 countries, have assembled in Cork from 18 to 20 September 2017 for the third International Conference on Learning Cities (ICLC), dedicated to transforming global goals into local actions.
- 2.** We recognize that education and lifelong learning are at the heart of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and indispensable for their achievement.
- 3.** We are committed to achieving sustainable development in all its dimensions, recognizing the links between all of its social, environmental and economic aspects in order to secure a sustainable future for all. Another important dimension is culture, which includes the celebration of cultural diversity, provision of opportunities for cultural expression, and the protection and extension of cultural heritage.
- 4.** Effective implementation requires, among other things, protection of all human beings from poverty, hunger and violence; assuring inclusion, equity, gender equality, equal rights and the promotion of peace; effective management of the planet's natural resources and action on climate change; and ensuring sustainable economic growth to enable people to fulfil their potential and to enjoy prosperous and fulfilling lives for themselves and for their communities.
- 5.** Partnerships, networks and global solidarity will be needed to tackle the numerous challenges in the world and to ensure equal opportunities for all, particularly for the poorest and most vulnerable.
- 6.** We aspire to build mindful learning cultures in our cities that foster global consciousness and citizenship through local action to implement the SDGs.
- 7.** We believe that cities, by mainstreaming lifelong learning, are important drivers for achieving this global vision. In implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, we follow the Agenda's fundamental guiding principle, which is to ensure that no one is left behind.
- 8.** To support the building of sustainable learning cities that are green, healthy, equitable, inclusive, entrepreneurial and capable of offering their citizens decent work opportunities, we:
- 9.** **recall** the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2015, aiming to end poverty, protect the environment, ensure equity and prosperity for all, and create peaceful and healthy living conditions in all parts of the world;
- 10.** **reaffirm** our commitment to SDG 4, through which member states committed to 'ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all' and SDG 11, which aims at making 'cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable';
- 11.** **recognize** that the SDGs set out our common vision, but that local governments and communities are the key drivers for achieving them;
- 12.** **affirm** our collective understanding of the importance of lifelong learning for unlocking the full potential of urban and rural communities and securing sustainable living environments for present and future generations;

**13.**  
**recall** the main guiding documents for learning cities, namely the *Beijing Declaration on Building Learning Cities*, the *Mexico City Statement on Sustainable Learning Cities*, and the *Key Features of Learning Cities*, which provide a comprehensive checklist of action points to enhance and measure the progress of learning cities, and recognize the advancements made by member cities;

**14.**  
**acknowledge** the diversity of Learning Cities, their different stages of development and variation in terms of size, population, economic strength and political autonomy, resulting in a great diversity of challenges and actions for a more sustainable future and opportunities for creative initiatives.

#### **Call to action:**

**15.**  
Recognizing the role of lifelong learning as a driver for environmental, social, cultural and economic sustainability and acknowledging the importance of involving all stakeholders in the process, we:

**16.**  
**call upon** mayors to implement the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular SDG 4 and SDG 11, according to the specific situation and needs of their respective cities to achieve sustainability in all its dimensions;

**17.**  
**call upon** national governments to provide the fundamental conditions and sufficient resources for building learning cities and to adopt inclusive policies to ensure that urban growth will benefit both urban and rural dwellers;

**18.**  
**call upon** all public and private actors, traditional and non-traditional stakeholders across all sectors in cities and communities, including higher education and training institutions as well as youth representatives, to come together in partnership to promote lifelong learning at local level in order to ensure that all generations are involved in the process;

**19.**  
**commit to** following a sector-wide approach in building learning cities and bringing the learning city concept to the attention of all partners involved in education and sustainable development at local and national levels;

**20.**  
**commit to** making inclusive, equitable quality education and lifelong learning opportunities widely available and extending the scope and benefits to cities' surrounding areas, including innovation in the use of digital technologies for collaborative learning;

**21.**  
**commit to** strategic networking among member cities, documenting and disseminating activities for shared learning, and monitoring and evaluating progress;

**22.**  
**call upon** UNESCO to support capacity-building for the planning, implementation and monitoring of learning cities, based on the principles of lifelong learning and sustainable development.

**23.**  
In particular, we commit to implementing lifelong learning strategies pertaining to the social, environmental and economic dimensions of the SDGs that:

**24.**  
**promote** equitable and inclusive learning and living environments by eradicating all forms of discrimination and widening access to learning opportunities for all members of society, particularly for vulnerable groups;

**25.**  
**promote** green and healthy learning and living environments by combating climate change, pollution and poor health conditions and fostering safe drinking water and sanitation, sustainable mobility and good health services;

**26.**  
**promote** opportunities for decent work and entrepreneurship, including enhancing skills development and securing safe and healthy work conditions for everyone, particularly in the informal work sector.

**27.**  
We express our deep appreciation to the authorities and people of Cork for their hospitality, support and leadership in hosting the third ICLC, and we note with appreciation Cork's continued dedication to building a learning city and further promoting the learning city approach.

*Cork, 19 September 2017*

## UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities

*'Lifelong learning for all is our city's future'*

For more information on the UNESCO  
GNLC's work and joining the network,  
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