

Summary of UIL/ PASCAL Webinar: The Challenge of Inclusion in Learning Cities – 17 June 2020

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Note: The entire Webinar is available at

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u6_zxWuFVO4&feature=youtu.be&fbclid=IwAR2nLa20H2kelalyQ5n0t5RUUpYR-0H77i6tul3qpjwGsBw1mz3AKsg-VFck

1. Introduction:

The Moderator for the Webinar was **Ms Marie Macauley, Programme Specialist, UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning.**

Marie indicated that this Webinar builds upon the Fourth International Conference on Learning Cities which was held in Medellín, Columbia in October 2019.

Over the past couple of months the UNESCO Institute of Lifelong Learning has been responding to issues related to COVID-19 (refer to <https://uil.unesco.org/covid-19-response> - which includes presentations, recording and so forth of this and previous webinars).

2. Welcoming remarks - Mr Raúl Valdés Coterá, Team Leader, UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning

Raul set the scene for the Webinar reflecting on the challenges of inclusion. Over half of humanity lives in cities and this is predicted to grow to 5.2 billion by 2030. Cities face many challenges as cities grow, particularly on infrastructure. People come to cities in search of better lives, greater safety, basic services, and decent work. Learning opportunities must be of high quality, inclusive of people from diverse backgrounds and available to all.

While cities must concentrate on inclusive physical infrastructure, particularly to include people with disabilities, cities must not forget inclusive learning in all its modalities (formal, informal, and non-formal) and the cultivation of social inclusion across all spheres and spaces (families, communities, workplaces, libraries, museums, digital platforms and beyond).

There will be a series of articles being published soon from the conference and the excellent conference manifesto.

For further references:

Background paper for the conference:

https://uil.unesco.org/system/files/iclc2019_backgroundpaper_final_en.pdf

Medellin Manifesto: https://uil.unesco.org/system/files/iclc2019_medellinmanifesto_final.pdf

In particular, the statement on Sustainable Development:

*At the heart of these challenges and opportunities lies **sustainable development**, which calls upon us to ensure that our cities' infrastructures, local economies, cultures and social spaces develop in a way that empowers individuals and communities and respects the planet applying a human –rights based approach and principles of democratic citizenship.*

3. Professor Mike Osborne, Professor of Adult and Lifelong Learning, Director of Research, School of Education, University of Glasgow, and Director of PASCAL.

Mike reminded us that the PASCAL International Observatory have been working in this space for over 20 years. He commenced by referring to research that he had conducted with Professor Norman Longworth, where the concept of the city as a locus of learning is not new.

He reminded us of the key concepts: learning society; formal, non-formal and informal knowledge; indigenous knowledge; equity, collectivism vs individualism; regulatory and policy frameworks; intersectoral collaboration; knowledge co-construction and so forth.

Indigenous knowledge is often missing in conversations around lifelong learning. For example in Australia <http://www.victoria.ca/reconciliation> has some examples of this. 'A Fair Chance for All' from Australia about equity and fairness in education and learning.

Also, Smart Cities discussions are often do not mention learning at all.

Mike left us with some questions to ponder:

- Has COVID-19 exacerbated exclusion from learning for the world's marginalised people?
- What can we learn from responses to COVID-19?
- How can the learning city concept help adult learning?
- What are the examples of 'joined-up' service delivery to promote inclusive learning?

4. Case Studies from UNESCO Global Network of Learning City members

Medellín, Colombia – UNESCO GNLC/PASCAL LCN, Ms Alexandra Agudelo Ruiz, Secretary of Education

- Have recently joined the PASCAL Learning Cities Network (LCN).

- In the 90's, Colombia suffered from hundreds of thousands of murders and Medellin was considered one of the most dangerous cities in the world. Today, it has improved its health, education, and inequity.
- It has strong education policies that have helped with the social infrastructure of the city, including a high financial investment in education.
- There are around 25,659 children and adolescents found within the Colombian territory, regardless of their nationally and immigration need international protection – they are offered full education and protection.
- They have a strong focus on Ser (Ser+ = ser más= to be more) and STEM, with a focus on female students.

Mantes-la-Jolie, France UNESCO GNLC, Ms Aminata Diawara, Officer-in-Charge Learning City

- The region was highly affected by COVID-19, with lockdown occurring for over 2 months. It is one of the poorest regions of Paris.
- There is a strong political commitment for developing Mantes-la-Jolie as a learning city, including by the Mayor.
- Various interventions have been offered during COVID including several new municipal services within days and a new health centre. Also, young people had a gift of computer equipment.
- Students will be returning to school on 22 June.

Melton, Australia UNESCO GNLC, Ms Cassandra Connelly, Lifelong Learning Projects Officer

- The governance body the Community Learning Board, with stakeholders across sectors from the Council, and externally, work on economic, social, personal, and cultural wellbeing for all.
- The creation of the Melton Learning Directory is one way to reach the community. The learning team are also seeing an increase in people who are engaging in the virtual space who had never attended in person.
- They are currently investigating options for this year's learning festival.
- Targeting 200 seniors and people from Non-English Speaking (NESP) to have classes around digital literacy through a mobile digital literacy initiative.

Notes:

- The session concluded with questions and answers, followed by closing remarks from Mr Raúl Valdés Cotera, Team Leader, UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning.
- Jac Torres-Gomez from the Wyndham Learning Community Team also presented in a UNESCO Webinar on Education and Culture – response to COVID 19 – See https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JyLyp_jPajw&feature=youtu.be&fbclid=IwAR37KrxRZHDUC5500hRCW5skFuP9-L8iE2LDCxrtAmv0lcLr7Q8ho9Hofg