

Vietnam Forum on Lifelong Learning: Building a Learning Society

Hanoi, 6 – 8 December 2010

Building Learning Cities as a Strategy for Promoting Lifelong Learning

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7 December 2010



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



Preamble

- The discourse of ‘lifelong learning’ as a ‘master concept for educational policies’ has been widely accepted;
- Some pragmatic approaches have been adopted;
- An example of these approaches is the building of a learning region/city/community;
- The concept of a learning region/city/community can apply at all levels of local government, the main focus tends to be on cities;

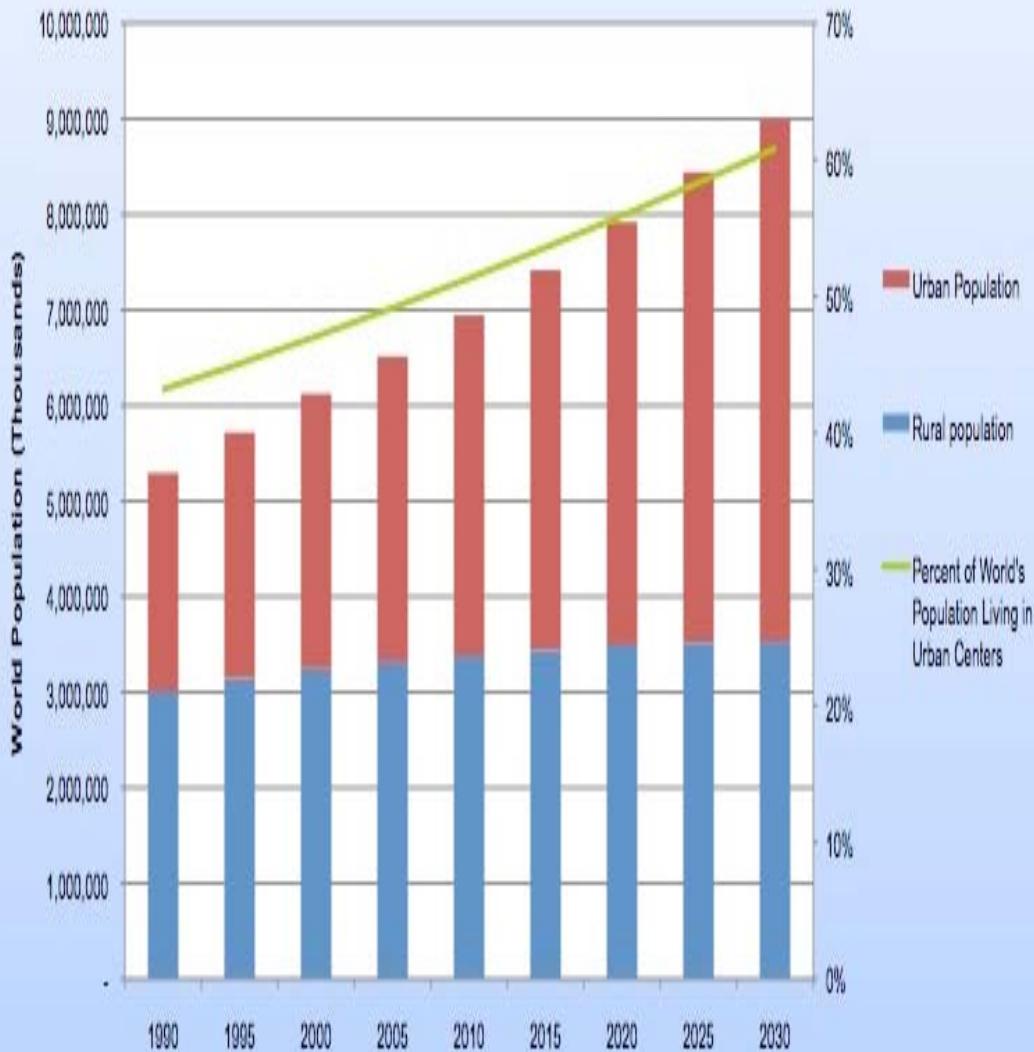
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Why cities?

- Cities offer a more favourable setting to solve social and environmental problems;
- Cities generate jobs and income;
- Cities could deliver education, health care and other services more efficiently;
- Cities present opportunities for social mobilisation and women's empowerment;

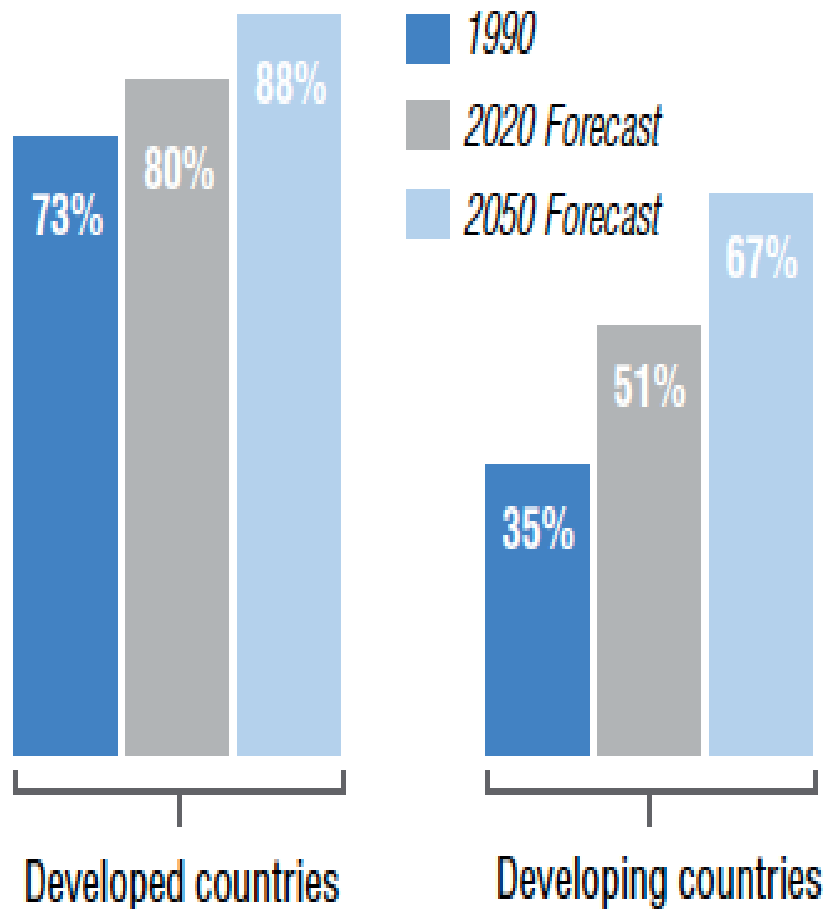
World Projected Population



Source: United Nations

- In 2008, for the first time in history, more than half of the world's population lived in towns and cities.
- Nearly all the population increases will be in urban areas in the developing countries.

Percentage of total population living in cities, 1990-2050(forecast).



Source: IBM Institute for Business Value analysis of United Nations data.

- Urban population is going to jump from 3.4 billion in 2009 to almost 5 billion in 2030;
- Urban population growth will mostly concentrate in Africa and Asia.

- In the building of the learning society, the national government has a major role in setting the agenda and the vision.
- However, a nation is after all a sum of all its communities. A learning nation can only be built community by community.

Why learning?

- Cities with better-educated individuals have stronger economies;
- In term of social inclusion or exclusion and learning, lower educational levels are associated, with unemployment;
- Learning is critically important in a city's efforts to attract and retain skilled and diverse workers;
- Learning is crucial to improve the quality of life.
- Cities in a globalised world cannot afford not to become learning cities (Longworth, 2010).

The evolving concept of learning cities

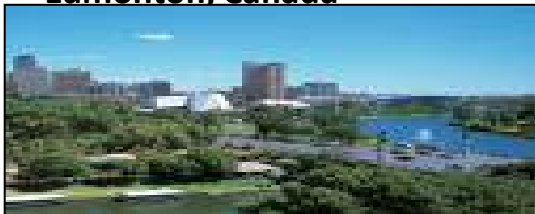
- In 1973, OECD initiative to create the 'Educating Cities': seven cities participated in this initiative.



Edmonton, Canada



Edinburgh, Scotland



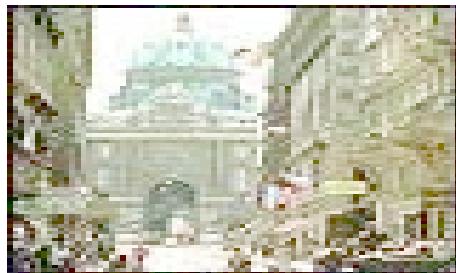
Adelaide, Australia



Kakegawa, Japan



Pittsburgh, USA



Vienna, Austria



Gothenburg, Sweden

- The concept was further developed at the First International Congress on Educating Cities organised by the Barcelona City Council in 1990.
- The report of this congress considered education in its broadest sense, beyond the school system, and identified some of the principles that should be adopted by the educating city:
 - a need for integrated planning;
 - a relationship between education and cultural development;
 - the need to deal with inequality and demands for education throughout life.

- In 1993 OECD published a report *City Strategies for Lifelong Learning*, which defines a *'Learning City'* as *a city in which communities attempt to learn to learn collectively as a means of changing their own futures.*

- In 1996, three rather synchronised international efforts highlighted the importance of learning for the society of the future:
 - UNESCO: *Learning: The treasure within*
 - OECD: *Lifelong Learning for All*
 - The European Union proclaimed 1996 as the "European Year of Lifelong Learning"

➤ The European Union (EU) undertook concrete actions and in particular, implemented the European Lifelong Learning Initiative (ELLI) and the programme “Towards a European Learning Society” (TELS) .

➤ ***A Learning Community is a City, Town or Region which mobilises all its resources in every sector to develop and enrich all its human potential for the fostering of personal growth, the maintenance of social cohesion, and the creation of prosperity.***

(ELLI definition, quoted from Longworth, 1999).

Learning cities in action

- **United Kingdom:** In 1996, Liverpool declared itself to be a 'City of Learning' and the UK Learning Cities Network (LCN) was established. Now, LCN has 80 member cities and regions.
- **Germany:** the national programme 'Learning Regions - Providing Support for Networks' was launched in 2001, which supported some 70 regions.

- **Canada:** In 2003, Victoria set a goal of being a “leading learning community” by 2020. Vancouver aims to be a Learning City. St. John’s and Edmonton have made efforts to become learning communities.
- **Australia:** Every state now has its own government inspired and funded learning cities association. In Victoria, for example, all municipalities of more than 5,000 people are expected to belong to this and to pursue learning city policies.

- **Japan:** In as early as 1979, the city of Kakegawa was declared the first Lifelong Learning City in Japan. Since then, the Japanese lifelong learning city project has been implemented as part of the policy for promoting lifelong learning by city/town/community units.
- **South Korea:** The *Lifelong Education Law* was enacted in 1999, which states that “government can designate and support selected municipalities, districts, and counties as lifelong learning cities”. In 2001, the first 3 cities were selected and announced as ‘Lifelong Learning Cities’. Up to 2008, a total of 76 local governments were designated as ‘Lifelong Learning Cities’.



- **South Africa:** In 2001, the Western Cape, one of the nine provinces in South Africa, started the 'Learning Cape' framework as one of the four key pillars for economic and social development.
- **China:** During 2002-2005, the city of Beijing participated in the EU funded PALLACE project. Since the national government has strived to build a learning society, many cities and communities have been mobilised to build learning cities and communities. By 2009, there were more than 200 cities/urban communities in China that had set up their goals for constructing learning cities.

- Since the 1st Congress held in Barcelona in 1990, eleven International Congresses of Educating Cities have been held.
- By 26 November 2010, the International Association of Educating Cities (IAEC) has a membership of 422 cities in 36 countries.



09/11/2010

Members cities of the IAEC

Educating City

IAEC

Charter

Member Cities

Organization

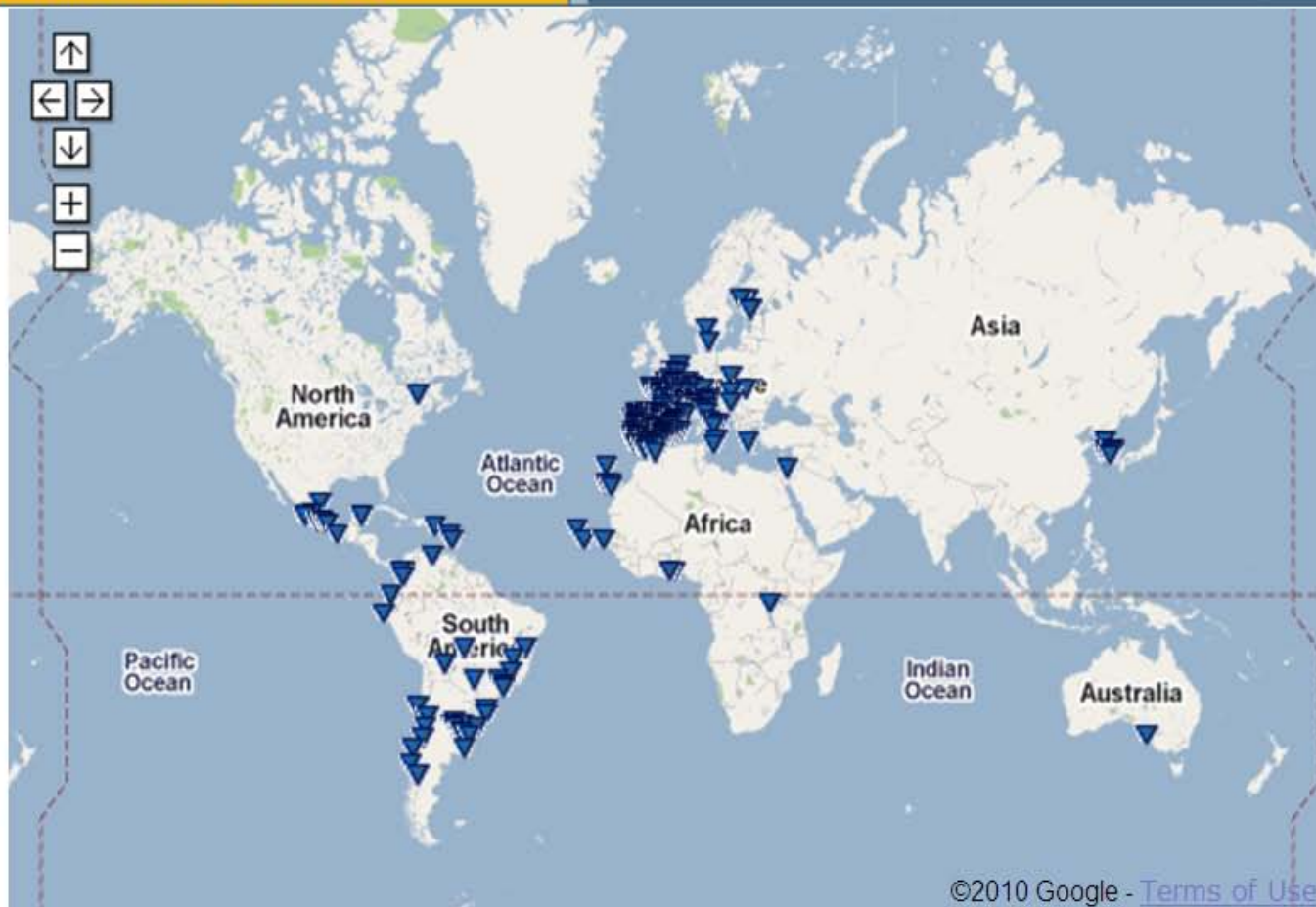
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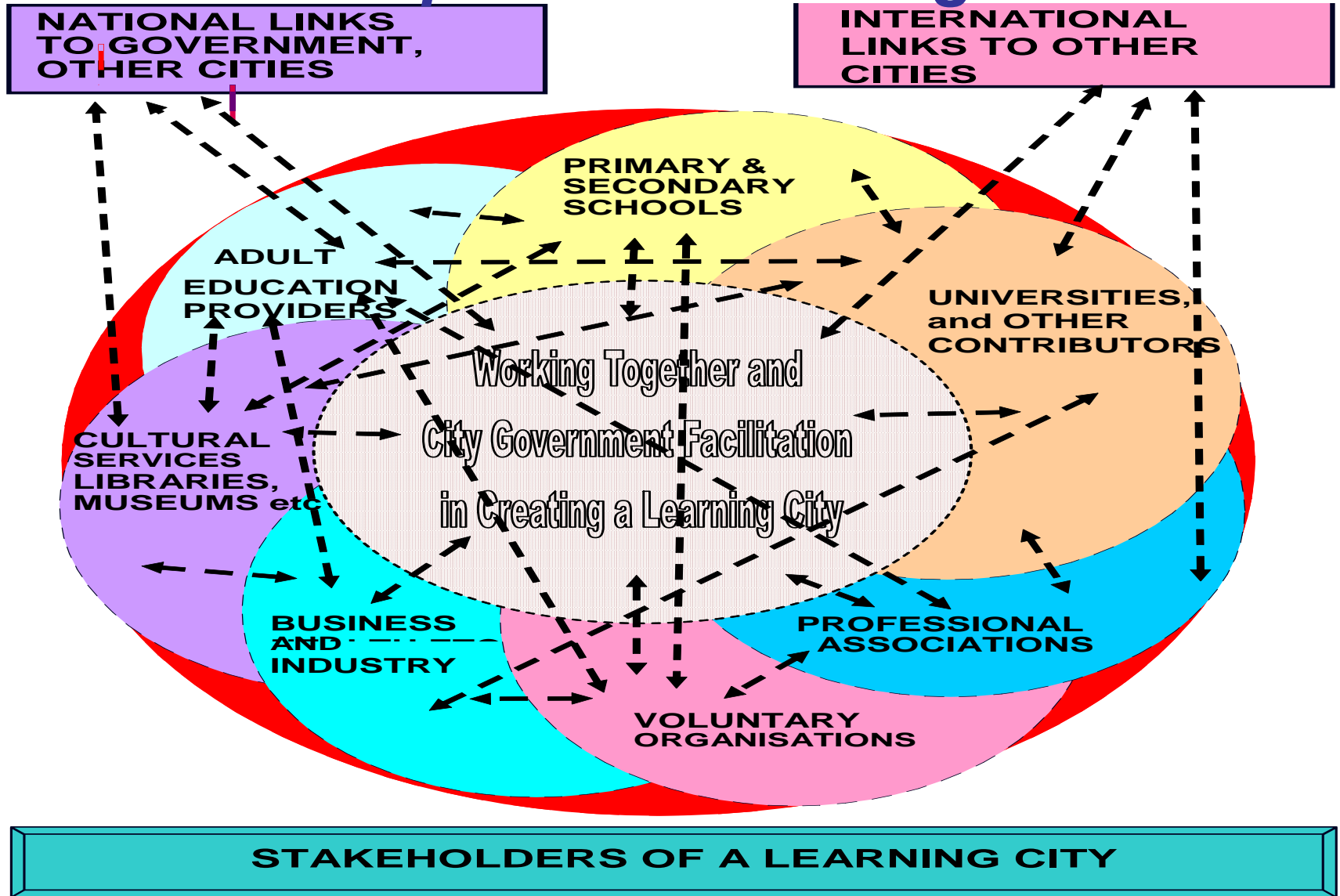
- There are more than 1000 cities in the world have already become or are building Learning/Educating cities.
- This clearly shows that the building of Learning/Educating Cities has become a considerable world-wide phenomenon.

How to build learning cities?

➤ *Political will and commitment*

The first sentence of the **Charter for Learning Cities** created by the ELLI in 1998 is: ***We recognise the crucial importance of learning as the major driving force for the future prosperity, stability and well-being of our citizens.***

➤ Partnership and networking



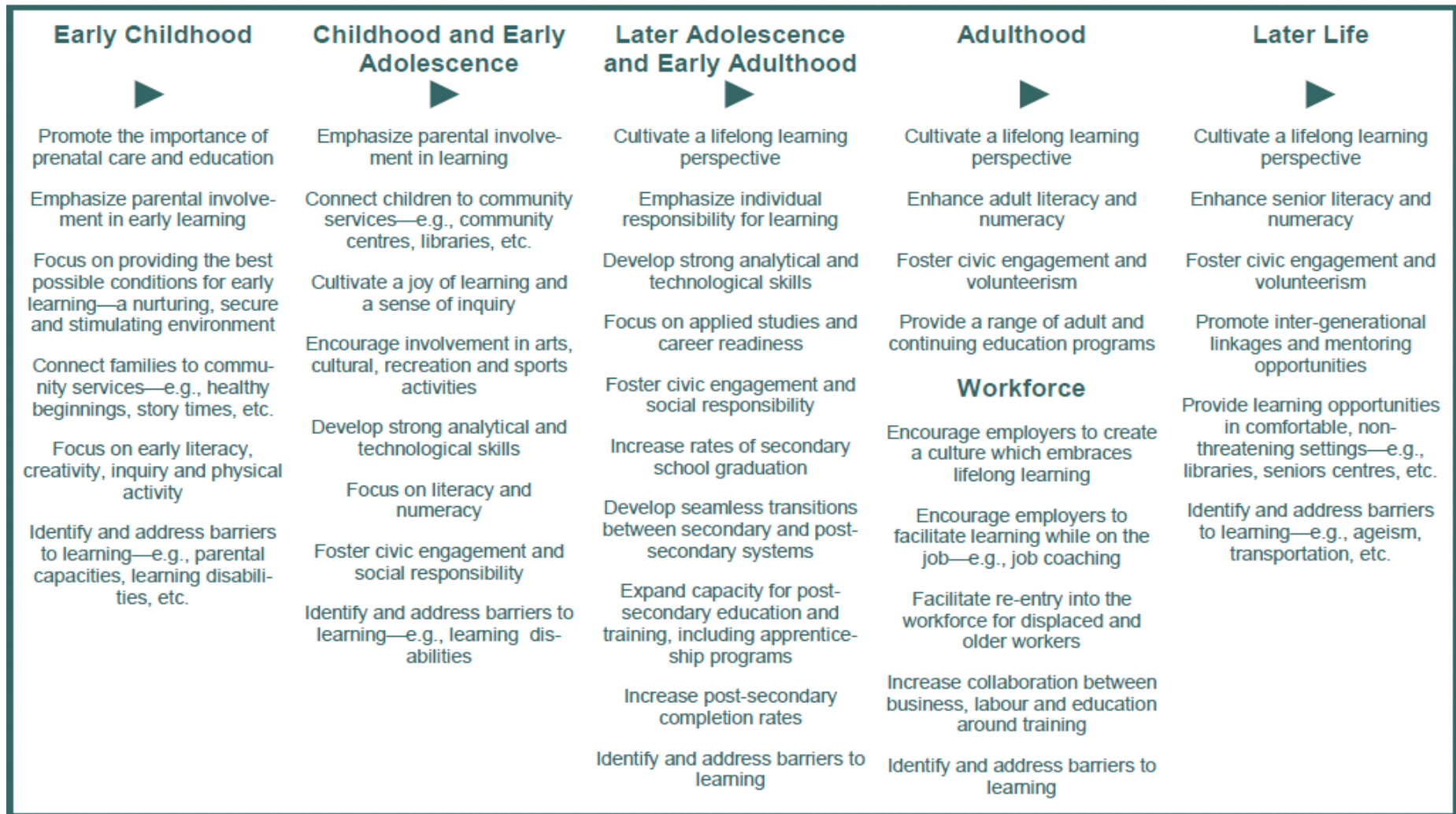
Adapted from Longworth (2006) *Learning cities, learning regions, learning communities: Lifelong learning and local government*. Oxon: Routledge.

➤ ***Assessment of learning needs***

The Charter of Educating Cities urges that in order to undertake appropriate action, the persons responsible for municipal policy must obtain accurate information on the situation and needs of the inhabitants.

➤ *Increasing learning opportunities*

- In a learning city, a variety of learning opportunities must be made available where, when, how and from whom the learner wants it with the learner's consent.
- In the building of learning cities in South Korea, the expansion of educational programme provision in diverse aspects by lifespan stages tops the list of policy options.



Source: Lifelong Learning Strategy for the City of Vancouver, 2006.

➤ *All stakeholders as learning organisations*

- All institutions and workplaces, including the local authority itself, to become learning organisations with continuous improvement programmes for all employees and high quality benchmarked standards.

➤ *Promoting wealth creation & employability*

- Social harmony and economic prosperity are key overarching goals for building a learning city.
- The Charter for Learning Cities calls for promoting wealth creation through entrepreneur development and assistance for public and private sector organisations to become learning organisations.

➤ *Involving higher education institutions*

- To carry out commissioned research activities;
- To participate in fruitful partnership with other stakeholders;
- To encourage students and staff to volunteer their skills, creativity and knowledge; and
- To make facilities of higher education institutions available for learning city activities and events.

➤ *Celebrating and rewarding learning*

- Learning festivals as a way of broadcasting the message of learning to a large number of its citizens.
- In South Africa, held every year, the Learning Cape Festival (LCF) highlights and profiles education, training and development activities in the Western Cape through debates, events and workshops.

LEARNING CAPE FESTIVAL 2004



Meet

Linda Mooti

Employment: Machinist
Student: Quality Control

*Technology enables
 lifelong learning
 preparing for tomorrow's
 job opportunities and
 a better life for all.*

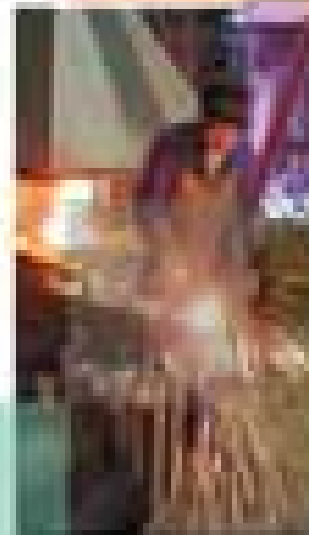
life can be different



Presented in partnership with the Learning Cape Festival
The Learning Cape Festival 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007
in collaboration with the Department of Education and Skills



LEARNING CAPE FESTIVAL 2004



*Technology enables
 lifelong learning
 preparing for tomorrow's
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life can be different



Presented in partnership with the Learning Cape Festival
The Learning Cape Festival 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007
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Challenges

- Lack of clear and genuine political will, motivation and intention;
- Frequent political changes as well as changes of personnel and re-bordering of cities/regions;
- Some local authorities may have limited potential to coordinate various stakeholders; and
- Cities are bounded entities, and by definition borders and boundaries have the potential to be inclusive as well as excluding.

Concluding remarks

- To realise lifelong learning for all relies not only on macro-level actions of the national government, but also the more micro-level activities of cities;
- Building learning cities has been proven to be a pragmatic approach to promote lifelong learning;
- The practice has been spreading to the developing countries;
- As the urban population in Africa and Asia is increasing rapidly, it is time for us now to anticipate meeting the learning needs of citizens;

- There is a need to facilitate networking so as to serve the creation of learning cities in the developing countries.

The screenshot shows a web browser window displaying a UNESCO website. The browser's address bar and toolbar are visible at the top. The website header features the UNESCO logo and a user status of 'guest (Read)'. The main content area is titled 'The Creative Cities Network' and includes a description, a date added (2004-12-08), and a date modified (2008-04-22). A 'Read more:' section lists several links related to the network. On the right side, there is a calendar for May 2010 and a 'Participate' button. The footer contains UNESCO contact information and portal statistics.

Topic Explorer

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- The Creative Cities Network(0)**

[Site Map](#)

LOGIN

Username:

Password:

LOGIN

Language

-- Languages --

The Creative Cities Network

The Creative Cities Network connects cities who want to share experiences, ideas and best practices aiming at cultural, social and economic development. Cities may apply to be endorsed by the Network and join the programme to ensure their continued role as centres of excellence and to support other cities, particularly those in developing countries, in nurturing their own creative economy.

Date Added: 2004-12-08 2:15 pm
Date Modified: 2008-04-22 10:09 am

Read more:

- [What is the Creative Cities Network?](#)
- [Why cities?](#)
- [Why join the Network?](#)
- [Cities appointed to the Network](#)
- [How to apply](#)

May 2010

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Participate

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Tools

Editors of this Topic

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Many thanks!

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