



The PASCAL Glasgow Statement on Innovation in Building Sustainable Learning Cities

**13th PASCAL International Conference
University of Glasgow**

3-5 June 2016

Preamble

The [13th PASCAL International Conference](#) held at the University of Glasgow on 3-5 June 2016 considered future directions for learning city development at a time of considerable challenge and change.

The Conference built on PASCAL experience with learning cities since 2010 through two programs, namely [PASCAL International Exchanges](#) (PIE, 2010-2013) and [Learning Cities Networks](#) (LCN, 2014-2016). In addition, the Conference benefited from seventeen City Showcase presentations from cities in Asia, Europe, and Oceania which demonstrated a range of approaches to building learning cities.

The City Showcase presentations confirmed insights emerging from PASCAL experience with PIE and LCN. Learning cities need to be innovative in harnessing their resources, especially human resources, to address the challenges confronting them in a dynamic context of constant change. This is our vision for 2040.

The Conference agreed that PASCAL should build on the experience of the PIE and LCN, and the Glasgow Conference Showcase presentations. In partnership with the [UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning](#), we will contribute to future directions for sustainable learning cities, with a focus on innovation and entrepreneurship in learning city development.

The Conference also confirmed that learning cities should not only address their local needs, but should also build global consciousness as good citizens of a shared planet. The universal objectives of peace, social justice, and stewardship of planet earth can be fostered as fundamental features of learning cities.

Achieving this objective will require a significant extension of partnership in learning city development, starting with dialogue and partnership with complementary agendas, such as Healthy Cities and Green Cities. More holistic approaches to city development will not only benefit individual cities, but will provide a platform for a more significant contribution by cities to Sustainable Development Goals and climate action objectives of the United Nations.

These are fundamental aspirations that all learning cities should share; re-thinking the concept, role, and organisation of Learning Cities, in partnership with the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, should be a companion response to the recent call by UNESCO to [Rethink Education](#). In a world of constant change, innovation should be built into the DNA of all sustainable learning cities.

The core issues and directions

The Conference addressed two related core issues:

- a) how to progress beyond unconnected silo initiatives to holistic development that builds synergies and value added; and
- b) how to build on more holistic development in cities to foster global consciousness and citizenship, to advance the moral objectives of learning cities and to contribute to UNESCO and United Nations objectives that are widely shared.

Much remains to be done to progress both objectives. They should underpin the new PASCAL Learning Cities Networks 2 program. This is to be implemented in the years 2016 to 2018, culminating in the 2018 PASCAL International Conference

A dual approach involving both action by individual cities and systemic action by a range of international and regional agencies is also required. Close collaboration between PASCAL and the Institute for Lifelong Learning will be a key element.

Key areas for innovation

The Conference identified six key areas for innovation and exchanges of information and experience over the next two years. The 2018 PASCAL International Conference will take stock of progress and set further priorities for innovation in learning city development.

The six agreed priorities are outlined below.

1. Towards holistic development in learning cities

Complementary agendas such as Healthy Cities, Resilient Cities and Green Cities, share interdependencies and points of intersection with Learning Cities, as do less formally coordinated initiatives dealing with place-making, poverty, welfare or economic competitiveness. These require partnership action to build synergies and value added outcomes, and entrepreneurial drive and ingenuity so that each agenda strengthens the others.

An early priority is to address the common interests of Learning Cities and Healthy Cities, including strengthening learning aspects of the World Health Organisation's [Age-Friendly World](#) initiative.

2. Innovating entrepreneurially towards inclusion

Inclusion has been a basic objective of Learning Cities throughout the modern era since 1992. There has been progress in some cities, but much remains to be done

as inequity grows and exclusion persists across the world. New approaches and expanded partnership are needed to make a more significant impact on exclusion, with innovative and entrepreneurial applications of contemporary and emerging technologies. This remains a high priority for international exchanges of information and experience.

3. Culture-led development for cohesion and inclusion

Many City Showcase presentations at this Conference illustrated innovative applications of cultural policies to foster learning, a sense of shared identity, and community. There is a pressing need to develop these approaches further in the current global context.

The Conference recognised that in a world of mass migration with large numbers of refugees, cultural policies will be increasingly important in building tolerant, cohesive multicultural communities. Museums, libraries, education institutions at all levels, and a broad spectrum of civil society organisations, can contribute to these objectives, as can activities such as lifelong learning festivals. Further innovation in this area at all levels, including in local neighbourhoods, is required.

4. Harnessing technology and big data

The development of big data and new forms of digital technology provide opportunities for productive innovation in extending the quality and reach of learning cities. The Conference noted the evolving role of the [Urban Big Data Centre](#) (UBDC) at the University of Glasgow, demonstrating how big data adds value and potential to learning city development. It is likely that these tools will be harnessed in the next round of PASCAL Learning Cities Networks.

5. From city to region in the evolving universal learning society

Several City Showcase presentations demonstrated interaction between learning cities and their surrounding region, as well as the influence of regional development on a city. This points to the potential of learning city initiatives to extend benefits to all people in surrounding towns and rural areas.

The potential of regional development initiatives to impact on learning cities was also noted. PASCAL is well placed to contribute in this area because of the PASCAL [PURE](#) program which examined university and regional development linkages. Further development of these linkages is a step towards the [UNESCO Faure Report](#)'s vision of a universal learning society.

6. Fostering global consciousness and citizenship

The Conference affirmed that learning cities should foster global consciousness and citizenship as well as bringing benefits to their own people. This was seen as an urgent priority for a number of reasons including global warming and stewardship of the planet, progressing the [United Nations Sustainable Development Goals](#), and responding to conflict and the large scale migration of refugees.

Education and cultural institutions can contribute much to these objectives, and special events such as learning festivals are important. This is an area for collaboration and innovation in sharing ideas on productive strategies, supported by people-to-people exchanges.

Follow up on Glasgow

Participants at the Conference noted and welcomed the further network of innovative learning cities, known as the PASCAL Learning Cities Innovation Networks 2.

These Networks will respond to the priorities identified in this statement. The Conference affirmed that PASCAL should co-operate closely with the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, and other partners, in the implementation of Learning Cities Networks 2. A progress report will be made available to the 2017 UNESCO International Conference of the [Global Network of Learning Cities](#).

International networks of learning cities can be a moral force to progress the vision of the UNESCO Faure Report, the vision of a universal learning society. The joys and benefits of an inclusive learning society build an empathic civilisation marked by tolerance and respect for others, peace, global consciousness and human rights.