

## UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities (GNLC)

### Call for applications to host the fourth International Conference on Learning Cities in 2019

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#### 1. Background

The UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL) established the UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities (GNLC) in 2015. It is an international policy-oriented network whose objective is to provide a source of inspiration, know-how and best practices to support and accelerate the development of lifelong learning in the world's urban and rural communities. The network promotes policy dialogue and peer learning among member cities, forges links, fosters partnerships, builds capacities and develops instruments to encourage and recognize progress in building learning cities.

Since its inception, the UNESCO GNLC has successfully supported and promoted the practice of lifelong learning for all in member cities. Among the network's achievements and developments, the International Conference on Learning Cities (ICLC) is a highlight. The ICLC is an opportunity for members to exchange ideas and good practices, create and strengthen partnerships, and for the network to foster the development of twin cities. To date, three ICLCs have taken place.

The first was in Beijing, China, in 2013. Under the theme 'Lifelong learning for all: Inclusion, prosperity and sustainability in cities', the first ICLC opened the global discourse on learning cities and defined the UNESCO concept of a learning city. It resulted in the adoption of the *Beijing Declaration on Building Learning Cities* and the *Key Features of Learning Cities*, which comprise the founding principles of the network and set out its fundamental guiding documents.

The second ICLC, entitled 'Sustainable learning cities', took place in Mexico City, Mexico, in 2015. The conference counted more than 650 participants and opened up the UNESCO GNLC to membership. The *Guidelines for Building Learning Cities* was launched at the event and the role of learning cities in achieving sustainable development was defined. The second ICLC also resulted in the *Mexico City Statement on Sustainable Learning Cities*.

The third ICLC was held in Cork, Ireland, in 2017. With the topic 'Global goals, local actions: Towards lifelong learning for all in 2030', the event focused on implementing lifelong learning to support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030. It resulted in the adoption of the *Cork Call to Action for Learning Cities*, based on which the *Learning Cities and the SDGs: A Guide to Action* was developed. This guide highlights concrete approaches to the development of green and healthy learning cities, equitable and inclusive learning cities, and decent work and entrepreneurship in learning cities. More than 600 delegates from more than 80 countries across the world attended the third ICLC, which also conferred the UNESCO Learning City Award to 16 cities that made outstanding progress in building learning cities by promoting education and lifelong learning opportunities for all.

The fourth ICLC is scheduled to take place in 2019 and will provide a further platform to share best practices in building learning cities, take stock of the progress of the UNESCO GNLC to date, and promote and highlight an integrated learning city approach for achieving the SDGs at local level. Concrete details and specific objectives of the 4ICLC will be available in due course.

The Coordination Team of the UNESCO GNLC, which is based at UIL in Hamburg, Germany, welcomes applications from member cities wishing to host the next ICLC.

## **2. What are the requirements for being a host city?**

In order to host the fourth ICLC, a city must fulfil the following requirements:

- Membership of the UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities is a prerequisite for hosting the conference: applicant cities must be a member city of the UNESCO GNLC.
- The host city must have a sufficient number of high-standard hotel accommodation available to welcome approximately 600 participants.
- The host city must provide complimentary meals (including breakfast) and beverages during the whole of the conference for all participants – approximately 600 delegates.
- The host city must organize flexible transportation upon arrival and for departure of participants, provide special transportation to selected persons, and provide transportation services for official events connected/organized in the scope of the conference.
- The host city must provide the venue for the conference. The venue must entail one large conference room (big enough for at least 600 participants), and several smaller meeting and conference rooms (including technical equipment) necessary for the organization and management of the conference, for the parallel sessions, for the press contacts and interviews with mayors, and for individual meetings including those between UNESCO and delegates.
- The host city must provide interpretation in English, French and Spanish, and the equipment for simultaneous interpretation based on UNESCO and ISO standards.
- The host city must organize a secondment to work at UIL in the months prior to the conference. The secondment will facilitate communication between UIL and the host city and deal with main logistical matters.
- The host city must sign an agreement with UNESCO, taking into account the previously mentioned responsibilities.

Please note that these requirements are not exhaustive and aim to provide an initial overview of the responsibilities that come with hosting the fourth ICLC. Please also note that the conference programme will be developed by the UNESCO GNLC in consultation with the authorities of the host city. The key speakers and panellists of the conference will also be selected by the UNESCO GNLC in consultation with the authorities of the host city.

### 3. When can the cities submit their applications?

The call for bids will open in June 2018. Applications should be submitted to the Coordination Team of the UNESCO GNLC, at [learningcities@unesco.org](mailto:learningcities@unesco.org), no later than 31 August 2018 as per application procedures and dates below.

### 4. Application procedure and dates

Interested cities must submit an application endorsed by the mayor, which acknowledges and accepts the above requirements. There is no official template for the application; however, applications should include:

- affirmation by the applicant city that it is willing to co-organize the conference, which includes providing a venue and hosting approximately 600 delegates;
- confirmation of the applicant city's national government;
- consent to cover the costs pertaining to, among numerous other things, hotel rooms for the UNESCO Secretariat attending the conference and at least 30 return-flight tickets for delegates of least-developed countries (LDCs);
- confirmation that the applicant city is advancing in promoting lifelong learning for all.

It is highly recommended that applications do not exceed five pages. Please ensure that your full application is submitted to the Coordination Team of the UNESCO GNLC no later than 31 August 2018, at [learningcities@unesco.org](mailto:learningcities@unesco.org).

### 5. Selection criteria

Cities will be selected based on the following criteria:

- Commitment to hosting the conference (e.g. a professional organizing team).
- Support at the national level and from the city authorities (e.g. mayor's endorsement).
- Proposed venues (i.e. the city has the capacity to host up to 600 delegates and has suitable venues/ facilities for the conference sessions).
- Accessibility and transportation to the city and venue(s), plus available transportation for arrival and departure of delegates.
- Accommodation (i.e. high-standard hotel accommodation for approximately 600 delegates is available).
- Meals (i.e. the city can provide complimentary breakfast, lunch and dinner for all delegates throughout the conference).
- Language interpretation (i.e. the city can provide interpreting services in English, French and Spanish according to UNESCO and ISO standards).
- Media services (i.e. the city can provide a professional communications team).
- Motivation (i.e. commitment to the learning city idea, involvement in the GNLC, partnerships).
- Proposed social-cultural programmes.

Applications to be a host city will be evaluated and reviewed carefully by a committee comprised of the UNESCO Learning City Team and neutral advisors at the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL). Each member of the evaluation committee will use the selection criteria listed above to rate the applicant cities.

Please note that we strive to rotate the hosting of the ICLCs to different UNESCO regions of the world. The cities wishing to host the event must have a strong commitment with the learning city concept and be advancing in promoting lifelong learning for all.

The previous conferences had strong support from different sectors and high media coverage. It is advisable that the next host city ensures broad participation from other sectors, particularly the media.

## **6. Announcing results**

The selected host city will be notified by email by 30 September 2018. The final decision will be announced to all member cities in December 2018.

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