Niels Johan Juhl-Nielsen, Danish delegate at the UNESCO conference ”Learning Cities”, Mexico City, 28-30 September 2015.

September the 20th, 2015.

On September 28-30, 2015 I attend - as a Danish delegate - the UNESCO conference ”learning cities” in Mexico City. The second ”Learning Cities” conference takes place with the headline ”building sustainable learning cities”. Se <http://learningcities.uil.unesco.org/news-and-events/news/2015-06-26-towards-building-sustainable-learning-cities/6c8dfdd9bcfd532a0958c2a15e011c48>

At the first UNESCO ”Learning Cities” conference in Beijing in 2013 a declaration was adopted and also a document on Key Features. Look:

<http://learningcities.uil.unesco.org/fileadmin/content/Publications/Conference/Beijing_Declaration_EN.pdf>

and

<http://learningcities.uil.unesco.org/key-features/key-features-of-learning-cities>

Leader of the Danish delegation (total four persons) is Dansk Folkeoplysnings Samråd by the secretary leader Trine Bendix Knudsen.

**Program for the conference in Mexico City 2015**

The conference has four plenary sessions:

* Working strategies for a sustainable learning city
* Developing sustainable learning cities around the world
* Stregthening partnership/networks for developing sustainable learning cities
* Implementing the Key Features for sustainable cities.

Further the conference has four thematic fora:

# Thematic forum 1:

How learning cities can foster global citizenship?

Thematic forum 2:

How learning cities can contribute to health and well-being? Thematic forum 3: How learning cities can encourage environmental stewardship? Thematic forum 4: **How learning cities can stimulate inclusive and sustainable economic growth?**

**The conference will entail fora for the regions in the world (e.g. Europa).**

**It’s expected that the conference at the end will decide a declaration on Sustainable Learning Cities.**

**The conference in Beijing in 2013**

A document from the first ”Learning Cities” conference in Beijing in2013 the following was stated:

* that “learning communities”, “learning cities” and “learning regions” are pillars of sustainable development”,
* that cities should be both architects and executors of strategies that foster lifelong learning and sustainable development.
* that a learning city will facilitate individual empowerment, build social cohesion, nurture active citizenship, promote economic and cultural prosperity, and lay the foundation for sustainable development.

To transform our cities, the following actions were recommended:

1. Empowering individuals and promoting social cohesion

2. Enhancing economic development and cultural prosperity

3. Promoting sustainable development

4. Promoting inclusive learning in the education system

5. Revitalising learning in families and communities

6. Facilitating learning for and in the workplace

7. Extending the use of modern learning technologies

8. Enhancing quality in learning

9. Fostering a culture of learning throughout life

10. Strengthening political will and commitment

11. Improving governance and participation of all stakeholders

12. Boosting resource mobilisation and utilisation

The call to action from the first ”Learning Cities” conference i Beijing was to establish a network of Learning Cities and Regions to support and accelerate the practice of lifelong learning in the world’s communities.

At the first ”Learning Cities” conference in Beijing in 2013 a document on Key Features on Learning Cities was adopted. A survey on how to frame ”Learning Cities”, including a number of indicators, says:

The framework of the Key Features of Learning Cities, inspired by the UNESCO logo, corresponds to the pediments, columns and foundation steps of the emblem.

*The pediment* – three areas of focus reflecting the benefits of building a learning city:

(1) individual empowerment and social cohesion;

(2) economic development and cultural prosperity; and

(3) sustainable development.

*The columns* – six areas of focus reflecting the major building blocks of a learning city:

(1) inclusive learning in the education system;

(2) re-vitalised learning in families and communities;

(3) effective learning for and in the workplace;

(4) extended use of modern learning technologies;

(5) enhanced quality in learning; and

(6) a vibrant culture of learning throughout life.

*The foundational steps* - three areas of focus reflecting the fundamental conditions for building a learning city:

(1) strong political will and commitment;

(2) governance and participation of all stakeholders; and

(3) mobilisation and utilisation of resources.

At the second “Learning Cities” conference in Mexico City the work during the last two years will be discussed and evaluated. It’s expected that the conference at the end will adapt a declaration on “Sustainable learning cities”.

/ njohan