

UCLG LEARNING AGENDA WORKING SESSION

29-30th September 2015



Synthesis of the Working Sessions

Draft 30 September 2015

Introduction and context

Some members of UCLG suggested organizing a working session before the CIB meeting (to be held in Den Haag on 1st and 2nd of October 2015). The session will be the 29th and the 30th of September 2015 at UCLG General Secretariat Headquarters.

The idea is to gather a group of active members and partners to help UCLG to build its learning agenda for cities and local governments.

Beth Peoch a journalist/consultant has been contracted for interviewing participants in order to elaborate a report on: “Defining and building on decentralized and south-south city-to-city cooperation”.

Objectives

The objectives of the meeting are:

- To **discuss the criteria** that UCLG should adopt in order to identify and implement learning activities of strategic value for its members.
- To **exchange ideas of concrete activities**, in light of the criteria discussed, that participants could propose for the UCLG Learning Agenda in 2016.
- To **envision an open process** for co-creating the UCLG Learning Agenda with members and partners.

Participants: active members in City to City learning:

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UCLG Committee on Social Inclusion, Participatory Democracy and Human Rights	Fricaudet, Magali	m.fricaudet@uclg.org
Facilitator	Blanco, Toni	toniblancog@gmail.com
Rapporteur	Peoch, Beth	bethpeoch@yahoo.com

Day 1: 29 September

9:30 Crossed Interviews

In this segment, participants interviewed one another, presenting their learning activities, indicators for these activities and their future plans.

Key points raised:

- Learning activities

- Essential elements for effective learning initiatives include commitment from both the political and technical side as well as dialogue and understanding between them; adequate human and financial resources; sufficient time for the process to unfold; openness to allow partnerships to evolve. Collaboration with other stakeholders, including universities, civil society and other actors, is also essential.
- Learning initiatives require a long-term approach; results cannot be produced/measured immediately.
- Tailor-made learning and training products adapted to the audience are critical in order to provide local authorities/other stakeholders with the tools they need to improve cities and livelihoods.
- There is a need to bring the learning back to the city and apply it in order to have impact.
- Existing knowledge must be brought together and made accessible. Too many of us reinvent the wheel when the knowledge is already there.
- City leaders can change the way cities are working. Individuals must be empowered to go back to their institutions to make change.
- Community: Given the impacts of urbanization, including political, economic and social challenges, it is essential to keep communities together within the city.

- Indicators

- Not all of the organizations have a structured approach to indicators. For example, the effective engagement with civil society in improving human development in cities could be seen as a key indicator.
- The learning benchmarking model was presented as an effective tool for capacity building of local governments to measure the effectiveness of their policies.
- There is a move from output indicators towards more qualitative outcome indicators. Indicators are normally very good on the “effect” but the focus should rather be on the “cause”.

11:00 Methodologies Roundtable

This Round Table discussion explored a number of methodologies as a means to reach different objectives. Presentations were made by VNG, MILE, Metropolis, Agenda 21 for Culture, and UCLG.

VNG International is using the **5 Capabilities** as a tool for capacity development assessment. The 5Cs are capabilities to: act and commit, carry out functions or tasks (to deliver), relate to external stakeholders (to attract resources and support), adapt and self-renew, and achieve a certain degree of coherence within the organization. The 5Cs can be used as a lens to look at existing capacity in any organization. All of the capabilities are inter-related and equally important. The methodology provides an opportunity for organizations to focus on what is going well and what can be enhanced. A toolkit is ready for use now.

MILE presented research results on their experience with **city-to-city cooperation**. Good urban strategic planning requires long-term planning, must be participatory, and impart a sense of joint ownership of the plan. The five key phases of the learning methodology behind the mentorship programme include acclimatization and “courtship”; inspiration and reflection; adoption of the learning and adaptation to the specific context; supported implementation; and after-care, which goes beyond funding. Some of the success factors for the process include: establishing clear objectives, having a realistic time frame, bottom-up monitoring and evaluation, securing funding early in the process, investing in building trust and relationships, etc.

Metropolis presented its **role as a facilitator**, who listens to and respects the diversity of cities and their approaches, while providing a collaborative framework to address common challenges. Metropolis also serves to bridge gaps, including through training sessions or ensuring dialogue between political and technical focal points to foster shared understanding to develop capacity at city level so that long-term sustainable policies are implemented that improve the life of the city dweller. Metropolis also provides peer-to-peer learning through Metropolis Initiatives, and works through strategic networks to ensure the participation of all stakeholders, especially women and youth. Continuous learning and innovation are also important parts of their work. Particular challenges encountered by Metropolis is the need to reach out to isolated cities; funding is often an issue in this regard.

Agenda 21 for Culture provided a brief overview of activities of the Committee on Culture of UCLG, with a focus on **the Pilot Cities Programme** and the Leading Cities Programme. The objectives of the Pilot Cities programme are to: foster increased local and international understanding of the connection between culture and local sustainable development; enable the design, implementation and evaluation of innovative pilot measures, through collaboration between public, private and civil

society actors; facilitate exchanges, evaluation, peer-learning and capacity-building among cities concerned with culture and sustainable development; provide visibility to the participating cities and their policies and programmes in global discussions on the role of culture in sustainable development; and contribute to advocacy efforts for the consideration of cultural factors in the paradigm of sustainable cities internationally. The project is borrowing from the Urbact methodology to promote exchanges between cities and adapting learning through specific action plans based on joint discussion and joint implementation.

UCLG presented a number of outcomes from the City Future 3 project, including **knowledge sharing, involving the political and technical level**; exchanges of experiences; increasing self-esteem of stakeholders to enable them to innovate; reflecting on existing tools; reciprocal interaction with universities; building on routines and realities that can be improved; the need to support learning and capacity building efforts and implementation; and linking to decentralized cooperation. UCLG also presented the Santa Fe (Argentina) Decent Work Partnership with the International Labour Organization that will foster learning exchanges between practitioners and peer exchanges around localizing the Decent Work Agenda. This collaboration will result in a peer-activity workshop and a final report.

15:00 Plenary Session

The plenary session considered what the criteria should be for incorporating members' activities in the UCLG Learning Agenda. Participants collectively discussed and mapped elements that should be considered when shaping the learning agenda, including the need to ground it in reality and making it evidence based, while ensuring that it is open and doesn't follow a rigid structure. Other issues raised included replicability, alignment with existing guidelines and programmes, transparency and the need for adequate funding. Another question was how to get the right mix of methodologies.

Day 2: 30 September



	Pre-learning - seek	During Learning - sense	Post-learning – share (outcomes)
UCLG	Identifying key participants and thematic issues, leaders, and donors. Support on the establishment of the agenda (experience on strategic issues)	Pilot project learning	Publications – (i.e. UCLG peer learning notes) Evaluation of outcomes (structure) to be facilitated to the committees Impact assessment through questionnaires (although learning cannot be measure)

UCLG Committees	Mapping and connecting key cities and processes that are taking place	Short-term learning events Adding/Making sense on a thematic issues (key issue)	Template (questioner) adapted by committees towards strategic documentation
UCLG Sections	Promoting members' best practices as part of the advocacy (in the global agenda) – ASPAC (learning as the implementation of the global agenda) Facilitate requests for learning Mobilize key participants	Co-funding of learning event Facilitate participation of members (ASPAC)	Measurement of outcomes/Impact Promotion of Cooperation between participants - ASPAC Follow up of the advocacy Project implementation (METROPOLIS) post-learning
Local Government Associations	Needs assessment Matching methodologies Testing new methodologies and approaching (proactive role) Check Political compliance Involve all the players Facilitate and make sure that the outcomes can be replicable	Facilitation Ensure that outcomes are replicable	Sharing and upscaling of learning Efficient communication especially to make the experience adaptable for other members
Cities – Towns	Decide on context Identify key players in the learning (importance of the technical and political alignment)	Organize Learning events Content creation Decide on Agenda	Publication on learning Connect the learning event with other project carried out by the city and other city members (example Seoul)
Academia / Other agencies	Identify Policy instruments Integration in the pre-learning to	Facilitation of learning events (as operator)	Publications (as operator) Academic outcomes are difficult to share within

	work towards an up-scale goal Input about information, tools, methodologies, policies		networks.
Donor Funders	Participate early on in conceptualization Ownership of the project/programs... co-funding Connect to the messages (share between agencies or organizations)	Provide experts (expertise of the donors can be a great input during the learning event)	Dissemination and visibilization of outcomes
Private/ business sector	?	?	?

The outcomes listed below are understood as an integrative agenda, in partnership with CIB, and cities, as well as, with Metroplis, other UCLG regional sections and commissions

Urban Academy Platform: promote online learning and webinars

- What to do with the on-line courses of members and partners, building a common strong identity.
- Value added by connecting global-local, as a way to build consensus.
- Offer can be filtered by language, issue, methodology
- Provides interactive tools (i.e. for reviewing or getting feedback)
- At least 50% of METROPOLIS MITI training programs should be offered on-line
- Phase 0 should be mapping existing observatories, training institutions, etc.
- Work with experts on knowledge management
- Search engine optimized.
- Warning: platforms like this already exists, with low interaction and very high cost of development and maintenance. A better approach would be to share existing courses in the extremely simple internal social network that UCLG is developing and that we launch in the near future.
- Identify Faciliators for knowledge sharing in regions

Culture and Sustainable Cities in Asia and Africa

- Organize a workshop/seminar.
- Find the way to relate content and on-line seminar.
- Work with national networks on issues of the Global Agenda.

SADC Peer Learning Exchange

- Choose 2-3 partners (i.e. MELGA)
- Find relevant thematic areas such Knowledge Management (LEMN), Gender, etc.
- Mix best identified methodologies

ASPAC

- Seminar with Indonesian and Indian associations on communicating SDG. A concrete activity could be communicating and create communication tools.
- Review possible learning and cities involvement

Latin America FNP- CNM

- Support Secretary generals of associations in LA (this is already on the CIB agenda also)

Localization of SDG's and Habitat III Global Agenda

- Work on thematic issues so a bottom-up perspective can be developed
- Methodological approach adapted to each region or thematic issue
- Link Goals and Rights
- Consider methodologies such as "job shadowing" between cities, where the visitor learns but also contribute with their external view. (Excellent Case Study documented in the eighties in San Francisco (Gloria Young). Also Johannesburg.
- Workshop took place in South Asia. A concrete activity could be communicating and create communication tools.
- An activity could be designed in order to keep sharing methodologies, continuing exchange like the one in this workshop.
- Peer-to-peer learning on urban goals and global agenda at the political level. (A paper exists on that matter by the Mayor of XXX).