Report on the

13th PASCAL International Conference

University of Glasgow, 3-5 June, 2016

LEARNING CITIES 2040 was the theme that brought over 100 academics, analysts, practitioners and decision-makers from 31 countries together in Glasgow, 3-5 June 2016. With over 60 papers in parallel session and 17 city showcases from Asia, Europe, the Middle East and Oceana, the Glasgow conference was a learning city microcosm. The welcome addresses by members of the Glasgow City Council, a major address by Prof. David Gaimster, Head of the Hunterian Museum, and keynotes by Peter Kearns, Director of the Learning City Network, by Professor Christina Slade, Vice-Chancellor of Bath Spa University, and Raul Valdés-Cotera, Senior Programme Specialist, UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, went far beyond the conventional, blending the general and the specific, the short and the long term, the familiar and the unconventional. Their commitment to participate and the serious nature of what they had to say reflect positively on the importance of the conference theme and met the high expectations of the audience.

The Conference built on PASCAL experience with learning cities since 2010 through two programs, PASCAL International Exchanges (PIE, 2010-2013) and Learning Cities Networks (LCN, 2014-2016). The Conference was a team effort on the part of Catherine Lido and Lesley Doyle, under the direction of Michael Osborne, all of the University of Glasgow.

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.

How do we make progress? The new PASCAL Learning Cities Networks 2 program will be implemented in 2016-18. The 14th PASCAL Conference will be held in South Africa at the Skukuza lodge in Kruger National Park, 17-19 October 2017; the 15th conference, perhaps on a major university campus in New York City, is anticipated for 2018. A progress report will be made available to the 2017 UNESCO International Conference of the Global Network of Learning Cities. PASCAL will co-operate closely with UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, the WHO Healthy Cities and Age-Friendly World initiatives, and other organisations.

Prior to the conference, at its 72nd meeting, the PASCAL Board elected Peter Kearns of Australia, and re-elected its leadership and membership.

Key areas for innovation

The 13th conference adopted The PASCAL Glasgow [Statement on Innovation in Building Sustainable Learning Cities](#).

PASCAL will contribute to future directions for sustainable learning cities, with a focus on innovation and entrepreneurship in learning city development. Achieving this objective will require a significant extension of partnership in learning city development, starting with dialogue and partnership with cities and organisations with complementary agendas, such as Healthy Cities and Green Cities. Following a recent call by UNESCO to *Rethink Education*, innovation should be built into the DNA of all sustainable learning cities.

The Conference identified six key areas for innovation and exchanges of information and experience over the next two years, culminating in the 2018 PASCAL conference.

1. Holistic development in learning 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 U N Sustainable Development Goals and climate action objectives. This approach aligns well with the OECD's 2016 report on [Trends Shaping Education](#).

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. Partnership action will build synergies and value-added outcomes, and entrepreneurial drive and ingenuity, so that each agenda strengthens the others.

2. Innovating entrepreneurially towards inclusion

Inclusion has been a basic objective of Learning Cities; it figures prominently in key OECD objectives. Innovative and entrepreneurial applications of contemporary and emerging technologies are 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. 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 is required at all levels, including in local neighbourhoods.

4. Harnessing technology and big data

The development of big data and new forms of digital technology provide opportunities for productive innovation. 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. 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. 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.

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 is an urgent priority: educational and cultural institutions, and events such as learning festivals, can help learning cities make progress toward the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, and respond to conflict and the large scale migration of refugees. This is an area for collaboration and innovation in sharing ideas on productive strategies, supported by people-to-people exchanges.

Josef Konvitz
Chair, PASCAL Board
Paris, June 2016