



Ardmhéara Bhaile Átha Cliath
Lord Mayor of Dublin

Nial Ring

UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities,
UNESCO Institute of Lifelong Learning,
Feldbrunnenstrasse 58,
20148 Hamburg,
Germany.

20th November 2018

Dublin's Application for Membership of UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities (GLNC)

Dear Sir/Madam,

It is with pleasure that I write to you to formally endorse Dublin's application for membership of UNESCO GLNC. Dublin, as Ireland's capital city, is the largest urban area in the country, is the most populated area in the country, is the economic driver of the country, and has the highest proportion of universities, colleges and other learning settings in the country. As a city, Dublin has undergone significant change in the past 40 years; from economic stagnancy in the 1980s, through to growth and success in the 1990s and 00s, only to suffer severely straitened circumstances during the global economic crisis, and now after a significant period of austerity, the city and its people are beginning to thrive once again.

Every city's character is influenced by its physical infrastructure and geographic setting, but the true sense of a city's character and its identity is defined by its people. Regardless of whether a person is native to Dublin, has moved here from another part of Ireland or another part of the world, as citizens we all contribute to the flow of urban living, ensuring that tradition is respected, diversity is encouraged and innovation is embraced. My role as Lord Mayor is about ensuring that the quality of life for all Dubliners - for the young and old, for those who are succeeding and for those that are struggling to succeed - continues to improve. To achieve this, my office and my colleagues in Dublin City Council make decisions every day that directly affect our fellow citizens, and we are keenly aware of this responsibility. We firmly believe that this collective decision to endorse and support Dublin's membership application to UNESCO GLNC will contribute positively to the lives of all of its citizens.

We hope this application will be successful and that Dublin can begin its journey towards establishing a learning city as defined by the 1st International Conference on Learning Cities in 2013. I am heartened that Dublin's ambition to be recognised as a learning city is supported not only by my office and Dublin City Council, but also by central government through policy and funding. Dublin's learning city objectives are being spearheaded by a cluster of universities and colleges across the city under the aegis of the Programme for Access to Higher Education (PATH), which is funded by Ireland's Higher

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Education Authority (HEA). The cluster working on this programme is called the Leinster Pillar 1 Cluster and comprises: University College Dublin (UCD); Trinity College Dublin (TCD); Dún Laoghaire Institute of Art, Design and Technology (IADT); Marino Institute of Education (MIE); and the National College of Art and Design (NCAD).

This cluster has a funded mandate from the HEA to undertake a three-year cycle of cross-city, cross-community initiatives, underpinned by intergenerational awareness and commitment to lifelong learning principles. Within the cluster, IADT and MIE have specific responsibility for coordinating this application for membership to UNESCO GLNC and for fostering, sustaining and extending the learning city concept to stakeholders beyond the cluster to ensure that all levels of learning in the city - regardless of mode, setting or sector - are included. I can confirm that Denise McMorrow, Student Experience Manager (IADT) and Trevor Purtill, Research & Development Programme Manager (MIE) will be the lead individuals in this regard, and both have the endorsement and support of myself and my office. The overarching aims of this initiative are to establish sustainable intergenerational learning communities in the city and to work towards developing a strategy to attain the award of UNESCO Learning City for Dublin.

Lifelong learning is key in creating Dublin as a sustainable city and society. Lifelong learning and education in an ever changing economic landscape, therefore, becomes a main driver in developing the resources necessary for people to achieve sustainable environmental and social and economic advancement. Dublin has enormous potential to stimulate and support learning among its citizens in ways that can help tackle existing issues, strengthen social cohesion and solidarity, and transform the prospects of communities for the better.

In addition to new learning-centred initiatives such as Community Mentoring (TCD), Open Learning (UCD), a yearly Creative Arts Summer School (NCAD), and a yearly citywide Learning Festival (IADT & MIE), the Dublin as a learning city concept will also amplify existing community learning outreach initiatives by using our citywide network and by retaining an inclusive and intergenerational focus as a core operational tenet. In doing so, we strongly believe that Dublin's citizens will benefit from enhanced individual empowerment and employability, social inclusion, social mobility, economic development, cultural prosperity, and sustainable development.

On behalf of my colleagues in Dublin City Council and in Leinster Pillar 1, and more importantly, on behalf of my fellow citizens, true Dubliners all, I submit this application for membership of UNESCO GLNC. If I can be of further service or if you require additional clarification, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Kind Regards,

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