

A group of diverse young people, including men and women of various ethnicities, are gathered in a circle. They are all looking towards the center where their hands are stacked on top of each other, symbolizing teamwork and unity. The background is slightly blurred, focusing attention on the hands and the people's faces. There are orange decorative elements: a vertical bar on the right side and a horizontal bar at the bottom right.

SEEK SENSE SHARE

YOUR CITY PRACTICE IN THE NETWORKS

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The following document summarises the outcomes of the Third UCLG Learning Forum, which took place during the UCLG World Congress in Bogotá and which created ad-hoc learning opportunities for UCLG internal and external networks and partners.

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FOREWORD



We, local and regional leaders, have long been aware of our great responsibility for creating better cities and for improving the lives of the people who live in them. The 2030 Agenda and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are an opportunity for us to demonstrate that it is in towns, cities and territories where development must become tangible, and equality, prosperity and environmental sustainability be realized.

The implementation of the SDGs requires enhanced action in territories based on political leadership, improved capacities and increased resources. The global community of UCLG will do all we can to play our part in our communities, whether they be large or small, urban or rural. Our will to *walk the talk* on sustainable development was expressed in the Bogotá Commitment, adopted at the UCLG Congress in October 2016, and the 3rd UCLG Learning Forum, also held at the Congress.

One key tool to foster transformation is peer-to-peer learning between local and regional governments. Sharing practices and experiences as part of a network can improve our knowledge, capacities and confidence in urban management, inclusion, sustainable growth, and governance. Learning and the transfer of practices between cities can be felt in communities, neighborhoods and regions in the form of improved services and better-informed, more responsive civil servants.

Local governments have been learning from one another internationally for over a hundred years, but communications technology now allows local practices and knowledge to be shared globally across multiple platforms more easily than ever before.

Of course, UCLG does not work alone on peer-to-peer learning; our networks and partners offer opportunities for connecting, knowledge transfer, insight, policy support and monitoring. We appreciate the commitment of United Nations agencies, the





international development community and the partners that work to build capacities on the ground.

The capacity of our administrations must improve constantly, in real time. Decentralized learning is a powerful way to improve capacities, and ideally involves stakeholder and decision maker around a practice. National governments and international institutions must also play their part in providing adequate resources, dialogue and connecting training opportunities. With support from national and international levels, and mutual exchange between local institutions across the globe, there is little doubt that we can become powerful forces for sustainable development from the bottom up.

Parks Tau
President of UCLG



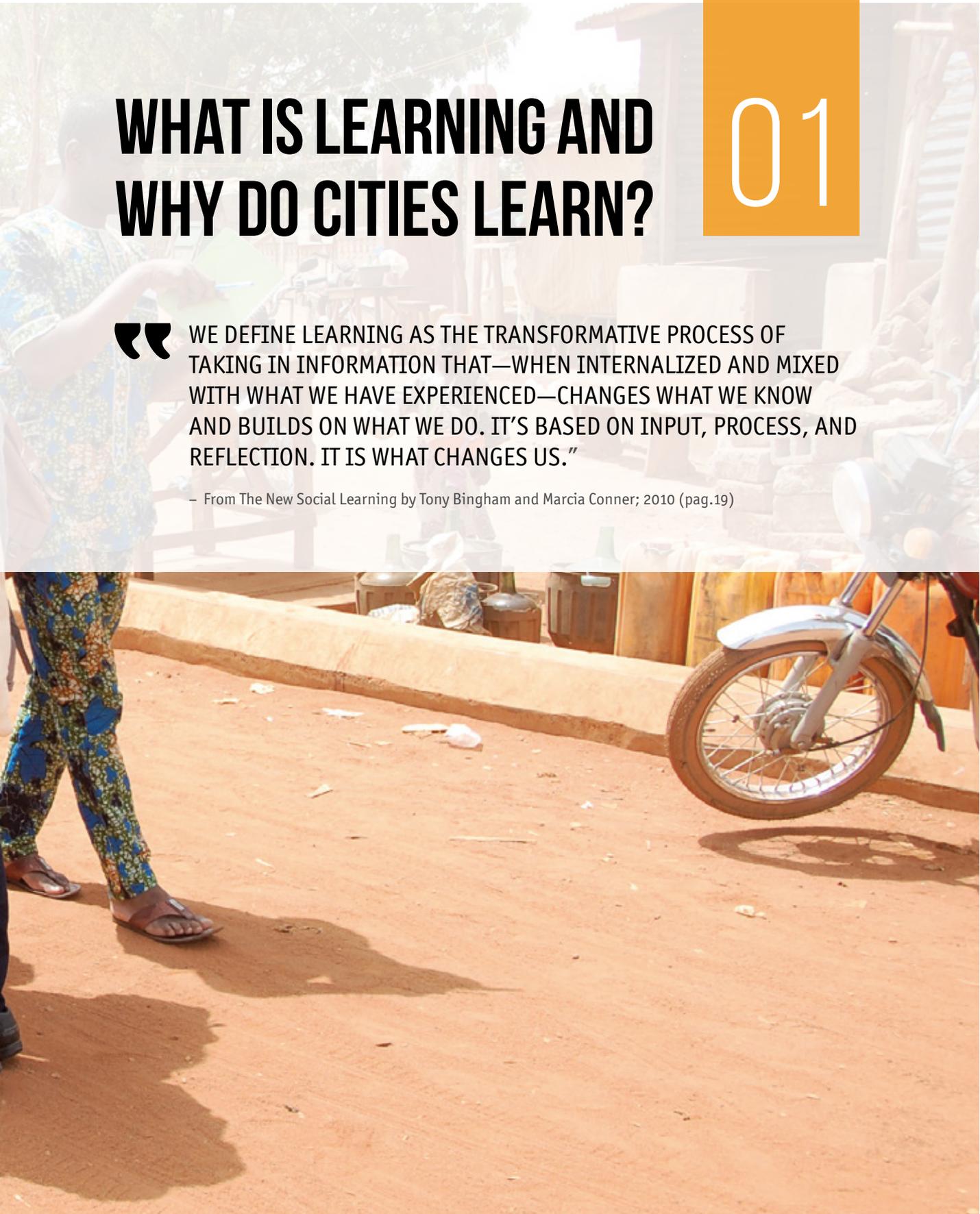


WHAT IS LEARNING AND WHY DO CITIES LEARN?

01

“ WE DEFINE LEARNING AS THE TRANSFORMATIVE PROCESS OF TAKING IN INFORMATION THAT—WHEN INTERNALIZED AND MIXED WITH WHAT WE HAVE EXPERIENCED—CHANGES WHAT WE KNOW AND BUILDS ON WHAT WE DO. IT’S BASED ON INPUT, PROCESS, AND REFLECTION. IT IS WHAT CHANGES US.”

– From *The New Social Learning* by Tony Bingham and Marcia Conner; 2010 (pag.19)



The implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is important for all cities and towns. Cities generate opportunities and play an important role as key actors in development, providing services and public goods. However, in order to live up to their potential, cities need sufficient support from

other levels of government, adequate financial resources and, last but not least, **improved capacities**.

Cities are increasingly being appreciated as complicated and complex systems made of diverse groups of people, material and resources. A city works like an organic system, reacting to global challenges, such as climate change, the financial crises, loss of natural resources, disasters or wars. Local governments and local government associations will need to increase their capacity to fulfil their roles in implementing SDGs using appropriate methods and knowledge platforms. Cities and associations who invest in learning and sharing of experiences increase their opportunities to advance the 2030 agenda for sustainable development without “reinventing the wheel”.

“ THE NETWORK ERA IS BLURRING THE LINES BETWEEN WORKING, LEARNING AND PLAYING. WORK WILL NO LONGER BE DEFINED BY AN EIGHT-HOUR SHIFT AT A PARTICULAR LOCATION. NETWORK MEANS LEARNING TO WORK ANEW.”

– Harold Jarche, *Expert on Management and Education*

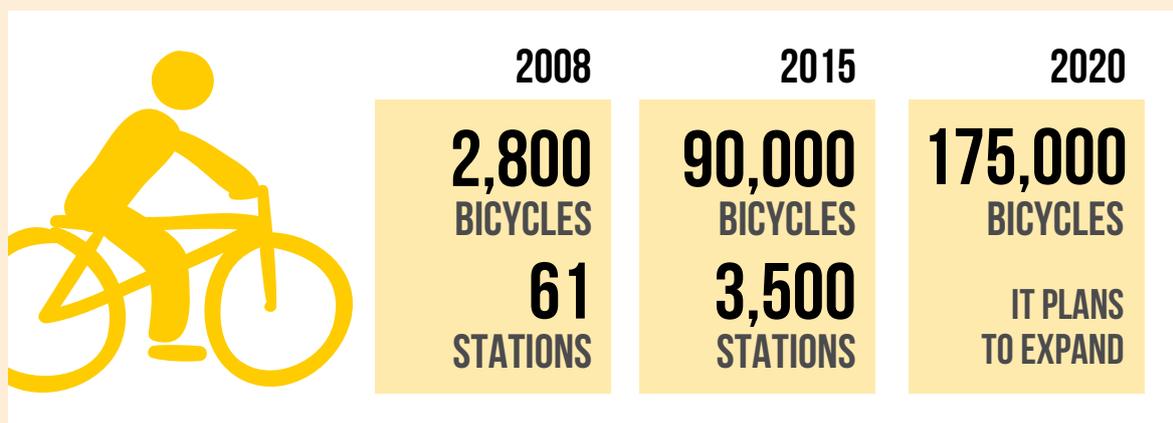
INTRODUCTION OF PUBLIC BIKE SYSTEM IN HANGZHOU¹

Due to growing traffic congestion and concerns over the environment, Hangzhou launched China's first public bicycle project in 2008. It initially began with 2,800 bicycles, and 61 stations. In 2015, it became the largest public bicycle system in the world with 90,000 bicycles and 3,500 stations. The average rent time was 33.6 minutes, and the average trip distance was 4 km. By 2020, it plans to expand to 175,000 bicycles.

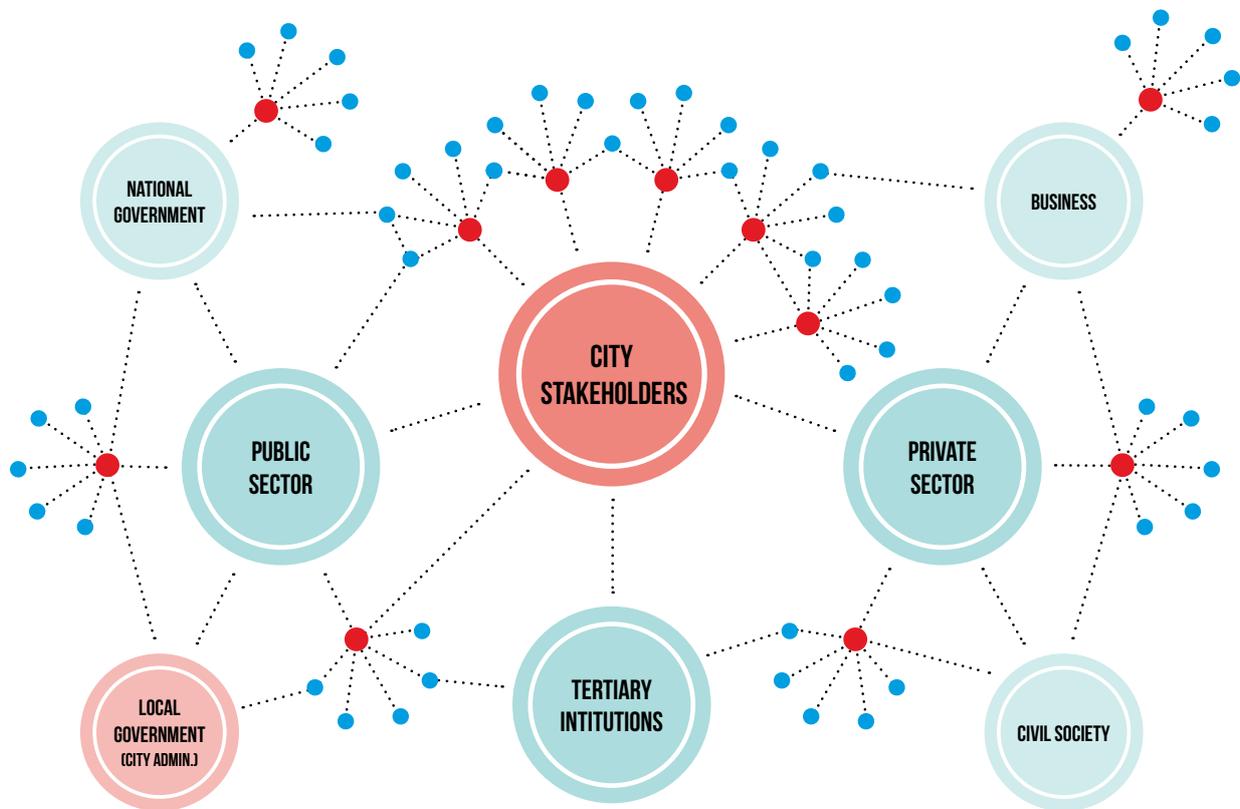
The ‘Hangzhou Model’ was adopted to many cities in China. Taiyuan City in Shanxi Province, for example, installed the model, and its system and performance

surpassed those of Hangzhou. Two cities foster exchanges on the system for the joint progress. Also, Beijing, Rio de Janeiro, and Mexico City paid attention to this success.

Hangzhou public bicycle project was awarded the 2nd Guangzhou International Award for Urban Innovation in 2014. The Guangzhou Award aims to recognize and spread the innovation in the cities and regions in social, economic and environmental aspects and to advance the quality of life of their citizens. It is co-sponsored by UCLG, Metropolis and the City of Guangzhou.



Clouds of trust



It is important to remember that city innovation and transformation are not static. Behind urban transformation, we find national institutions, the business sector, communities, with public administrations leading the way. Many actors influence and shape the city. When we see the city is under transformation, we know that it is thanks to some or all of these actors. So, when a city is learning from another city, it is important to take into account, not only mayors and technical leaders, but also other stakeholders. This point was acknowledged during the First UCLG Learning Forum, which responded to the findings of Tim Campbell as articulated in *Beyond Smart Cities* (2012).²

The graphics above represent “clouds of trust”³ consisting of interconnected networks based on trust among different stakeholders from different sectors, who learn and process ideas together. The red dots represent stakeholder belonging to local governments and, while the blue dots represent stakeholders from other areas within the “cloud of trust”.



THE VIEWS AND IDEAS OF A MULTITUDE OF PEOPLE ARE ESSENTIAL FOR US TO DECIDE FOR OURSELVES HOW WE MOVE FORWARD.

– Kasarralal Gunasekera, *Deputy Mayor of Dehiwala*

Another notable global change is **increasing complexity** due to the emergence of knowledge networks in working and social environments. Thanks to new communications and information technologies, actors are connected and affected by one another regardless of time and space, resulting in increased decentralization, complexity and uncertainty. To cope with the network era, we need to shift from vertical bureaucracies to horizontal cooperation.

¹ More information about the Guangzhou Award is available here: http://www.guangzhouaward.org/815/content_2191.html More information about the Hangzhou public bicycle project available at: <http://gbtimes.com/life/hangzhou-bike-sharing-system>.

² Campbell, Tim. *Beyond Smart Cities*. How Cities Network, Learn and Innovate, earthscan, 2012.

³ The original graphics are a result of Tim Campbell's empirical study on how cities learn. Available at: <http://www.beyondsmartcities.org/> and also in the book *How Cities Network, Learn and Innovate*, earthscan, 2012 by Tim Campbell.

“ THE BEST WAY TO BE EFFECTIVE IN AN ENVIRONMENT OF CHANGE IS TO LEARN. ”

– Kubeshni Govender, *Training Communication Professional SALGA*

As complexity grows and challenges shift, the way we approach work is drastically changing. As Harold Jarche explained in his keynote during the Third UCLG Learning Forum: ⁴ **“Modern work is like reading the changing waves and trying not to sink in an ocean of information and expanding knowledge. It's a constant effort on a changing sea.”** Jarche suggests that, in a networked world, our relationships get more complex.

As a consequence, the **learning environment** becomes crucial, as it allows cities, regional and local governments to find

innovative approaches to address challenges and meet their goals. Learning by sharing good practices and experiences unlocks opportunities to implement solutions at local level in a more successful way and also allows cities to identify future challenges and opportunities.

Learning is a continuous process that allows individuals and societies to acquire and master knowledge, as well as to expand and clarify meanings acquired through experience. Learning serves to test ideas relevant to problem solving. In other words, learning is a process, an outcome and a function that enables individuals and societies to make sense of knowledge and skills in order to face future challenges and opportunities.

It is against this backdrop that, UCLG has set up a learning mechanism that allows

⁴ The UCLG World Secretariat celebrated the Third Learning Forum in the framework of the World Summit of Local and Regional Leaders that took place in Bogotá in October 2016. More information about the Forum available at: <https://www.uclg.org/en/media/news/learning-instrumental-shape-future-we-want>



members and partners in our network to have a deeper look at complex problems and **apply a learning methodology**. One of the learning methods is “peer learning”. Peer learning usually brings practitioners and politicians together and often creates an ad-hoc network around the sharing of knowledge and experiences.

Networked learning is changing how UCLG works. In an action network, as Harold Jarche describes in the following pages, it’s becoming even more important to collaborate, to work together: the views and ideas of a multitude of people are essential for us to decide how we move forward. In this context, UCLG actively provides opportunities for dynamic learning between cities and local government associations, including peer exchanges and a wide range of other learning methods and activities within the network. UCLG promotes

working in partnerships, enabling a broader and more sustainable response to the demand for learning by cities.

MODERN WORK IS LIKE READING THE CHANGING WAVES AND TRYING NOT TO SINK IN AN OCEAN OF INFORMATION AND EXPANDING KNOWLEDGE. IT'S A CONSTANT EFFORT ON A CHANGING SEA.







FROM SEEKING TO SENSING LEARNING WITHIN NETWORKS: WHERE TO START?

02

Step 1: Understanding the context - An analytical framework for decision making

Cities and local and regional governments currently have an unprecedented opportunity to renew governance models and the social contract and to shift the priorities of governments at all levels to eradicate inequalities.⁵ Their challenge is to address a world of increasing complexity. This will require the way we work to be reshaped. In this complex environment, the best actions to take will depend on local circumstances and contexts; problem-solving is not a “one-size-fits-all” process. Decisions must be made according to changing situations, including common needs and demands.

In order to cope with complexity, cities need to develop their own sense-making process, aggregating sources of information and knowledge, filtering and analyzing, and connecting ideas. The ideas aggregated, filtered and connected by cities can be shared

through peer learning. Connecting knowledge and ideas to cities, as well as cities to cities, is key to UCLG learning. We believe that open sharing in an environment of trust is the best way to generate knowledge in our network.

One of the ways to help cities conceptualise the sense-making process of learning, is to adopt a model. The Cynefin⁶ model is one such analytical framework developed by Dave Snowden that can be used to make sense of different scenarios. The implementation of this framework can help local governments to identify solutions adapted to challenges of today. Each domain requires different actions according to the relationship between cause and effect. This relationship may vary from simple to complicated; from an ordered world, where fact-based decisions are possible, to complex and chaotic contexts where cause and effect are unordered and determined by emerging patterns. By analysing the complexity of the challenge, local governments can also identify what type of learning approach best fits to solve the problem. Complicated contexts can be solved with the help of expert knowledge, but complex and chaotic contexts require **emergent practices**; approaches based on the experience of peers become a huge asset to find solutions.

⁵ The Bogota Commitment and Action Agenda, UCLG, 2016. Available at: https://www.bogota2016.uclg.org/sites/default/files/bogota_commitment.pdf

⁶ Snowden, D. & Boone, M. “A Leader’s Framework for Decision Making”, Harvard Business Review, 2007.

“AND THERE ARE MANY CITIES THAT HAVE HAD VERY INNOVATIVE EXPERIENCES. WE USE THEM AS REFERENCES TO SEE WHAT THEY DID RIGHT AND WHICH PROBLEMS THEY ENCOUNTERED.

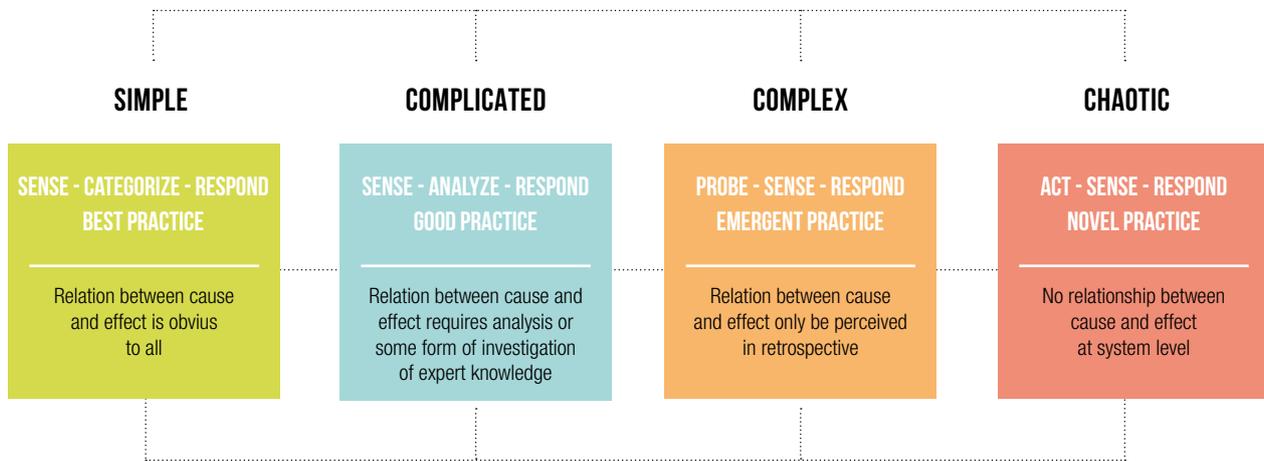
– Monica Fein, *Mayor of Rosario*

“IT DOESN’T MATTER IF YOU’RE TELLING SOMETHING BAD ABOUT YOUR EXPERIENCE BECAUSE YOU WILL COME OUT WITH THE SOLUTION IN AN HONEST ENVIRONMENT WHERE THE OTHERS ARE ALSO INTERESTED TO LEARN.

– Giovanni Allegretti, *Expert on participatory budgeting*



Analytical Framework based on the Cynefin Model



SIMPLE CONTEXTS - the best practice sphere -

In simple contexts the relationship between cause and effect is clear. The steps required to solve challenges or problems are obvious, the outcome predictable, and there are processes in place to handle them. In simple contexts, local governments need to “Sense-Categorize-Respond”, which means assessing the situation and then categorizing its type. The subsequent response can be inspired by a best practice. These types of contexts have an established “right/correct” answer, based on existing processes or procedures.

It is important to not over-simplify the simple contexts. To avoid oversimplification, clear communication channels between political leaders and professional staff are crucial. Professionals need to be able to easily and openly report situations that do not fit in the established categories, allowing the problem to be better understood. Communication channels are also crucial to enable the pursuit of innovation.

COMPLICATED CONTEXTS - the good practice sphere -

In complicated contexts, the relationship between cause and effect requires analysis, research and, depending on the circumstances,

the application of expert knowledge. Challenges in complicated contexts might have more than one “right/correct” answer. To make decisions in such contexts, local governments should “Sense-Analyze-Respond”. This means making an assessment of the situation with the help of expert knowledge, and then taking a decision on the best possible response using good practices as guidelines.

It is important to find a balance between expert knowledge and creative solutions coming from peers and professionals. It is also recommendable to assemble a multi-stakeholder (and multidisciplinary) team (including opposition voices) and to use tools to unlock collective knowledge and ideas.

COMPLEX CONTEXTS - the emergent practice sphere -

In complex contexts, the relationship between cause and effect can only be understood in retrospect. Many of the challenges and problems cities and local governments are facing today fall into this category. Snowden defines this type of context as “often unpredictable”. In order to tackle complex contexts, local governments need to “Probe-Sense-Respond”, shifting their mindset to embrace learning as a crucial

component of decision-making. Cities and local governments should try out possible solutions, inspired by their peers and then evaluate whether the strategy meets their needs. If it does, the strategy can be widened. If it doesn't, the city still acquires important knowledge that can be used to improve future solutions.

It is important to have learning methodologies and good facilitation to guide the process. The goals need to be defined cooperatively. Open communication and trust are a must for stakeholders in order that they be able to share their experiences and ideas.

CHAOTIC CONTEXTS - the novel practice sphere -

Chaotic contexts are unpredictable and the relationship between cause and effect is not identifiable. They usually arise after disasters (natural and man-made). Snowden's suggestion is to stabilize the situation as fast as possible in order to go back to a complex context, in which the flow of the decision-making process can be managed more easily.

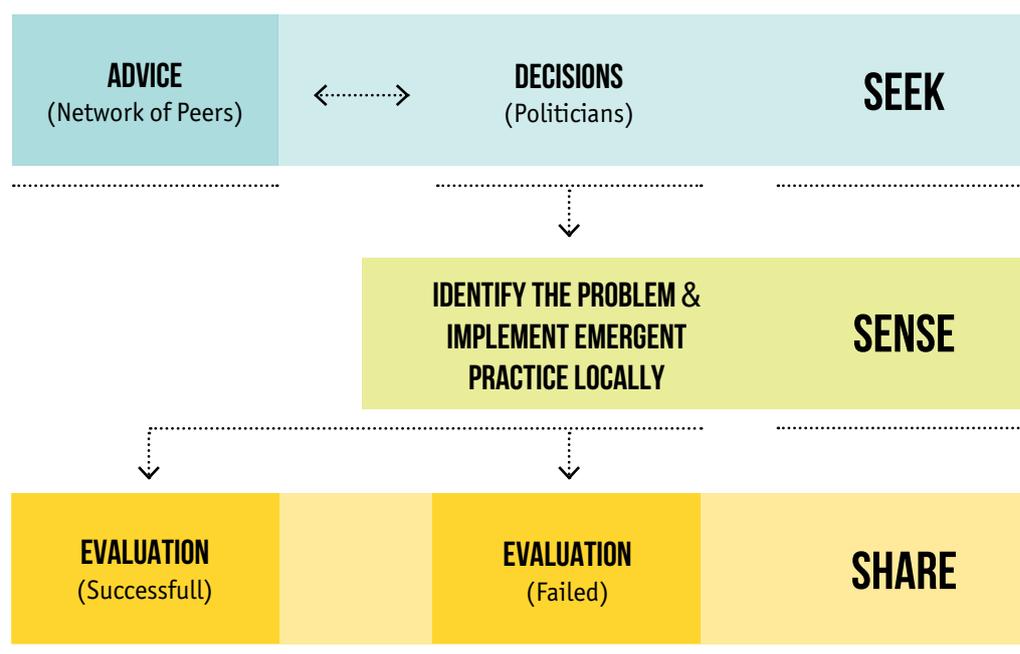
Step 2: Working "out loud" - changing the way cities work

Growing complexity affects many aspects of our lives, including our governing models and the ways we can support learning. As complexity became the norm in our century, local governments will have to get used to on-the-go learning, also defined as "emergent practice".

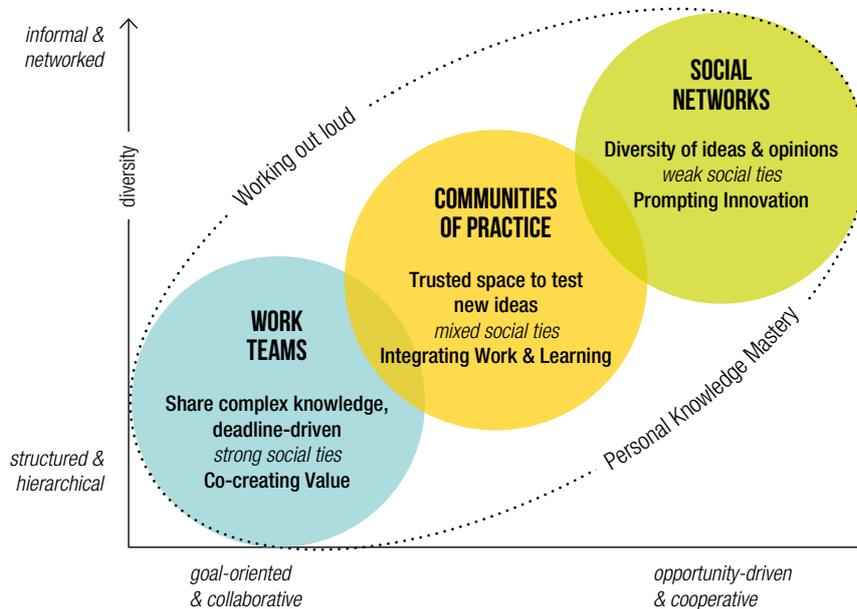
This approach requires the ability (and political will) to implement new ideas and evaluate whether they work. If they do, this knowledge can be amplified. Even if the implemented solution does not meet the challenge, the experience still generates new knowledge. This implies a shift in the working methodology for local governments. Harold Jarche⁷ expresses this shift as a movement towards a network era. Jarche argues that, in complex systems, information and knowledge flows are not linear. This increases the value of indirect and loose connections, enhancing the importance of networks and the integration of work with learning.

⁷ Harold Jarche was the keynote of the plenary "Learning Forum: Concepts and Trends" where he provided a diverse range of points of views on the importance of learning for cities. Further information about his work can be found at: <http://jarche.com/>

Emergent practice



The network learning model*



* The original model was developed by Harold Jarche. More information available at: <http://jarche.com/>

In the **network learning model**⁸ Jarche defines three different network types – work teams or productivity networks; communities of practice, or alignment networks; and social networks, or connectivity networks. These networks should operate under the principle of *working out loud*⁹, that is, by *sharing on-going practices before they are completed*. This allows information and knowledge to flow from productivity networks all the way to connectivity networks and vice versa, within a seek-sense-share logic.

SEEK: Productivity networks (work teams) are goal oriented and collaborative, the structure of these networks is structured and hierarchical, which enables the sharing of complex knowledge under a deadline-driven logic in order to co-create value. People within these networks build strong social ties. *In knowledge management, to seek is to find things out and keeping up to date through productivity networks.*

SENSE: Alignment networks (communities of practice) are trusted places to test new ideas and integrate work and learning. The structure mixtures cooperation and collaboration,¹⁰



WE NEED TO AVOID MAKING THINGS SIMPLER THAT ARE AS H.L. MENCKEN STATED “FOR EVERY COMPLEX PROBLEM THERE IS AN ANSWER THAT IS CLEAR, SIMPLE AND WRONG.”

– Harold Jarche, *Expert on Management and Education*

enabling understanding of, and coping with, changing realities and challenges in complex environments. *In knowledge management, to sense is to adopt the information including reflection and putting learning into practice.*

SHARE: Connectivity networks (social networks), on the other hand, are opportunity-driven and cooperative, and based on an informal and networked structure (no hierarchy). The knowledge and information shared within this type of networks is diverse, allowing a wide range of opinions and promoting innovation. Nevertheless, social ties are weak in this type of networks. *In knowledge management, to share is to exchange ideas and experiences with the network.*

⁸ Jarche H, *A Network Perspective*, 2016. Available at: <http://jarche.com/2016/08/a-network-perspective/> & Jarche H, *Seek<Sense<Share for cities*, 2015. Available at: <http://jarche.com/2016/09/seek-sense-share-for-cities/>

⁹ Jarche H, *Cooperation for the Network era*, 2016. Available at: <http://jarche.com/2015/08/cooperation-for-the-network-era/>

¹⁰ As it was defined by H. Jarche: Collaboration is working together for a common objective. Collaboration is usually hierarchical requiring someone to ensure that people stay on course. Cooperation is when people freely share without any requirement for direct reciprocity.

By adopting the seek-sense-share model, cities extend the border of work to communities of practice and social networks, which supports learning. In addition to the structured and goal oriented work which still needs to be done, knowledge sharing and peer learning outside traditional productivity networks becomes more important and acknowledged.

UCLG Learning Agenda:

Networks such as UCLG are interesting platforms for action. They gather local leaders and professionals from different contexts, motivated to learn beyond their cities' realities but also to nurture and benefit from international engagement. UCLG's strategy to enable the flow of knowledge at the global level is mainly through thematic policy communities (committees and working groups), regional communities (sections) social networks, briefings and peer-to-peer action learning. As collective learning is based on trust and sharing, it makes sense to connect networks and create partnerships.

Despite the individualization of the world, human beings have an inborn need for dialogue, communication and to be part of a group. The UCLG learning network offers a cross-sectorial dimension, multiplying ad-hoc opportunities to identify one's peers. The UCLG Learning Agenda reflects a wide range of actors and, as such, is used both for strengthening decentralized cooperation and for collective learning.

“ ENCOURAGING INFORMAL AND OPPORTUNITY DRIVEN COOPERATION IS A SIGNIFICANT SHIFT IN HOW WE NEED TO APPROACH WORKPLACE LEARNING IN A WORLD BASED ON KNOWLEDGE NETWORKS.”

– Harold Jarche, *Expert on Management and Education*

IN KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT, TO SHARE IS TO EXCHANGE IDEAS AND EXPERIENCES WITH THE NETWORK.

PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING IN MATOLA, SEEK SENSE SHARE

As a way to improve the institutional capacities of local governments and their associations, 8 cities in Mozambique and 6 cities in Brazil participated in the South-South Decentralized Cooperation project, coordinated and implemented by UCLG, ANAMM, and FNP between 2013 and 2015. In this project, the City of Matola wanted to introduce participatory budgeting from Brazilian cities as a tool for the city's democratic management. Participatory budgeting involves citizens in budget management through a process of debate, public hearings, and consultation on proposals on the municipal budget process.

From June 2014, several exchanges were made between two cities. These included training on participatory budgeting, an assessment seminar, and technical support for the first cycle of the budget in Matola.

In May 2016, Matola hosted the 16th ODP Conference, which more than 1,500 people in 200 cities participated in. Matola held a workshop on participatory budgeting with speakers from Porto Alegre, Caruaru City, Maputo, Mbombela, and Ampasy, to name a few, to share the result of the implementation and discuss how to improve mechanisms to build trust between government and citizens.

In addition, the Mozambican Participatory Budgeting Network has been launched. This will serve the information and advice on governance to the Mozambican cities, which have become interested in participatory politics, including participatory budgeting.

UCLG is a network of organizations and a network of people



Before the Third UCLG Learning Forum in Bogota, UCLG gathered members on two other occasions. The First UCLG Learning Forum revealed the opportunity to bring city learning to scale by UCLG becoming an “Apex” organization, connecting up a network of networks. The outcome of the Second UCLG Learning Forum, whose results were published in ‘City to City’, provided an insight on the relationships between development cooperation, development projects and city to city learning of a number of UCLG members. It confirmed the strong linkages between members and their interest to learn from one another in the UCLG network.

The main challenge of the Third UCLG Learning Forum is to acknowledge the value of learning by member cities and reach out to other cities in and beyond the UCLG network.

The main challenge of the Third UCLG Learning Forum is to acknowledge the value of learning by member cities that are active in UCLG because they share a global vision to bring social change. Change requires

“ KNOWLEDGE CHANGES SO QUICKLY, AND WE NEED TO LEARN FAST BY EXPERIENCING THINGS. MANY CITIES ARE ALREADY INVESTING IN LEARNING AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL BUT THE MOST POWERFUL AND INSPIRING FORM OF LEARNING INVOLVES DIFFERENT CITIES ACROSS THE WORLD.

– Josep Roig, *Secretary General of UCLG*

investment in 3 dimensions: motivation, capacity and access to resources. The UCLG Learning Agenda supports the member cities and partners to connect and learn together. The Forum also reached out to other cities and networks beyond the UCLG Network to unlock knowledge about new and innovative urban practices, stakeholders and policies that are helpful to motivate and build capacity to enable change. Learning doesn’t necessarily have tangible results; it is difficult to evaluate the concrete results of a peer

learning for each participant. Learning is an open-ended process, and you cannot predict how and where it will end up. However, a peer learning event is an effective way to enrich your own experience in a way that may be of use later in projects or policies. Peer learning is very powerful for cities today and can also be shaped and tested in *ad hoc* formats.

After a peer learning event, the word spreads, people connect in new ways forming new alliances and networks and things get done. This method has been successfully used by UCLG for a wide variety of purposes such as: raising awareness on the role of local governments in public spaces, reflecting on the growth and evolution of a province, understanding the situation of African's intermediary cities or, more recently, developing a tool and roadmap to localize the SDGs. During the Third UCLG Learning Forum in the framework of the UCLG Congress in Bogota, the Learning Forum gathered partners and members to strengthen the network on important issue such as public space, decent work, mobility, participatory budgeting and strategic facilitation.

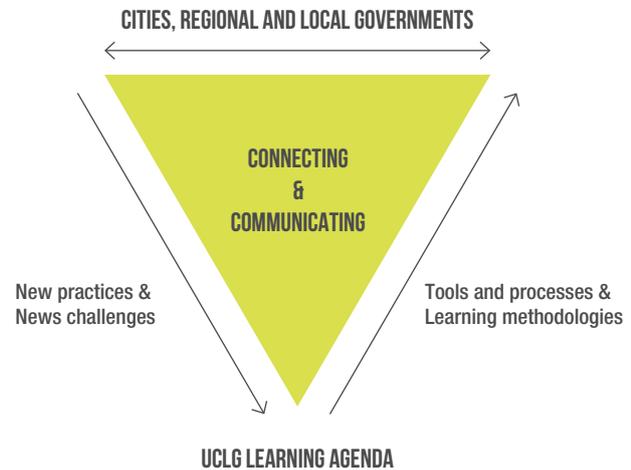
The UCLG Learning Agenda enables cities to connect in multiple ways with multiple peers. Its role isn't to train politicians and professionals but open up the field of new possibilities and show what others do. The stronger the network becomes, the better cities and local governments can perform in their own context. The UCLG Learning Agenda supports the cities through facilitation, while the cities focus on collaborative work. As cities collaborate they create knowledge and foster innovation, providing inputs to the observatory and advocacy work of UCLG. The learning agenda helps cities and local governments to develop the necessary tools and processes to share their passion, initiative and creative solutions, and tacit knowledge. At the same time, The Learning Agenda relays strongly in the cooperation, solidarity and collaboration of partners. UCLG has very limited operational capacity, but can support monitoring, connecting, has to be part of partnerships. With this in mind, the contribution and communication of partnering networks, associations, United Nations agencies and institutions becomes a vital for the learning agenda.



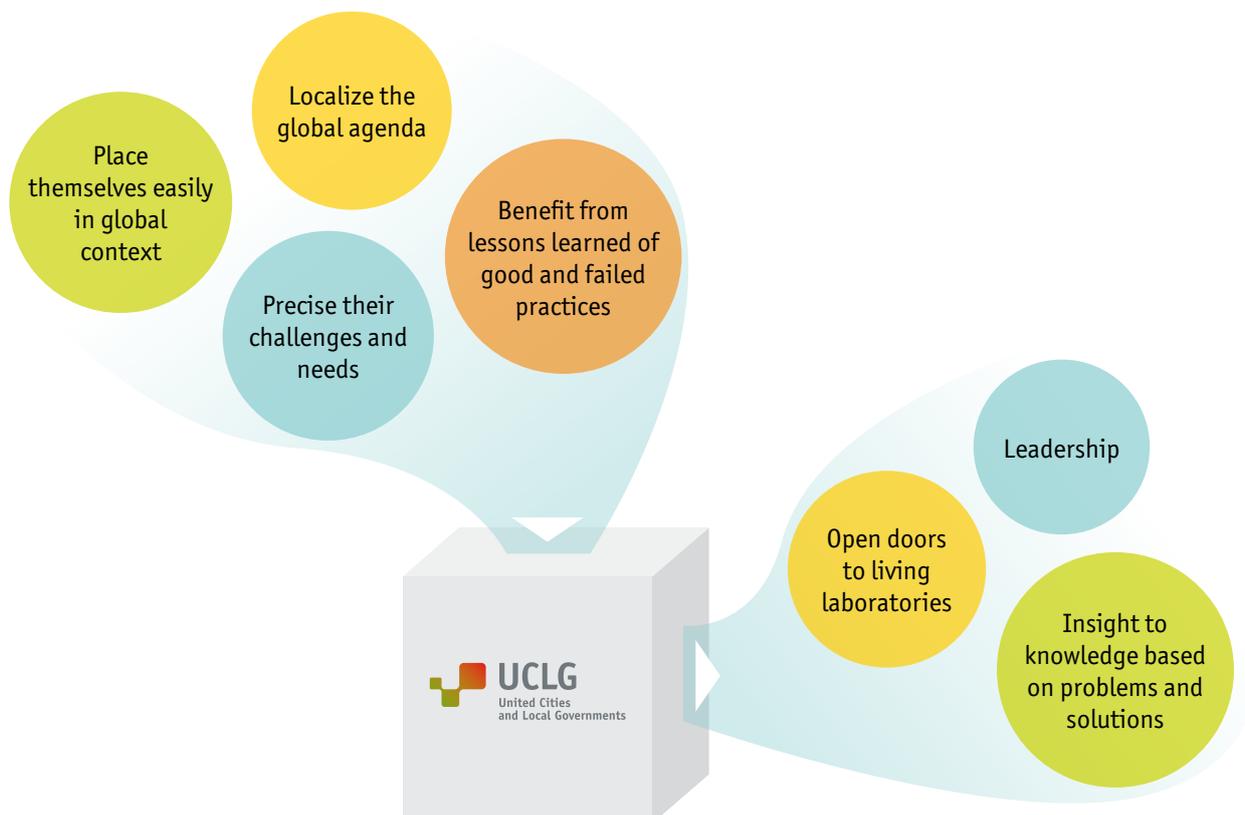
In the network era, cities can benefit by “Working Out Loud”, in order to prepare and face complex, and often unprecedented, challenges. There are several ways of doing this.

- Connecting to trend barometers or observatories, or reacting to global impacts (i.e. disaster)
- Making use of technical advice - private or public consultants (i.e. use strategic consultants recommended by other governments)
- Engaging in local government associations and telling your city’s story (form a knowledge community)
- Sharing practices within ad-hoc networks and platforms. (Scaling up the knowledge and experiences gathered at local level)

Collaborative work and learning



Learning environment to members and partners





TRUST IS A NECESSARY ELEMENT IN SHARING COMPLEX KNOWLEDGE.”

– Harold Jarche, *Expert on Management and Education*

¹¹ When talking about localization, UCLG refers always to a process of implementing local solutions at local level in line with the SDGs, as well as, the contribution from the local level to the international agendas.

UCLG and its networks want to provide a learning environment to members and partners to support the working-learning experience of organizations and people. As such, UCLG requires a certain degree of involvement and openness from them. Members and partners must communicate

their needs and expectations clearly, work on the localization¹¹ of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), be able to place themselves in a global context, and learn lessons from good and failed practices.

As an intermediary and a provider, UCLG opens its doors to a wide range of cities considered “living laboratories”, contributes to political leadership and gives insight to knowledge-based on problems and solutions. UCLG motivates and connects the development of learning programs with the members of the network.

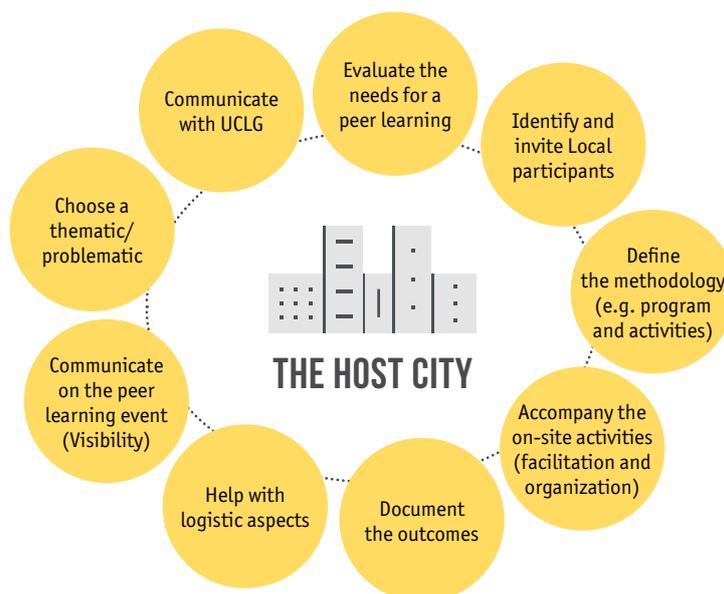
ROLES AND ACTORS IN THE LEARNING AGENDA

Many mayors appreciate learning events in order to share their own successful experiences. It is important to clearly define the roles of the actors. Ideally, peer learning involves a wide range of actors from international organizations, national governments and, most importantly, from the local level.

A host city’s role begins with identifying the topic and the methodology to invite the peers and local

participants. To welcome an international peer learning event, the host city needs to meet the logistical requirements, and organize an on-site visit. The city should also conclude the event with an evaluation and documentation to share the lessons learned more widely. The host city should clearly understand its role: to prepare, present and share. Organizing a peer learning event commits the host city to time intensive preparation and requires deep involvement before, during and after the event.

The role of the host city in the organization of a peer learning event



The role of the network, including UCLG, in organizing peer learning events is to enable peers to build a horizontal environment of trust during. Ideally, a city network is also involved according to the chosen topic to mobilize capacity around the key questions and practices. Working in open partnership to share knowledge and lessons learned is recommendable, and the result of the event should be monitored and documented. The most important role of the network, including UCLG, is to actively listen and use all the information gathered on-site. UCLG world organization can use this information to feed into its global advocacy work and to make lessons and experiences also available to others.

It is highly recommendable to communicate with professionals and local elected officials in order to move from knowledge sharing to concrete local actions. In terms of leading innovation in administrations, politicians support and defend the decisions, while professionals carry out the implementation. Both groups benefit from learning with their respective peers.

A number of conditions can enhance the effectiveness of peer learning for participants. First of all, participants should have clear ideas on the subject. The co-organizers of the peer learning event should communicate the participant list and the detailed programme beforehand to help all participants to visualize the event. Good communication between participants, networks, associations and the host city is vital to build the event; it helps to build trust and respect between each other. As a personal attitude, active listening is very important. The four elements that will help to build an effective peer learning event are:

1. openness and flexibility (nothing must be hidden from view)
2. mutually shared objective field (participants must feel they live in the same world)
3. similarities among the participants and trust

→ 1+2+3=4 → **collaborative action and learning**

The organization of a peer learning event: the role of networks and UCLG



“THERE HAS BEEN A HUGE CHANGE AND EVOLUTION IN WHAT LEARNING IS TODAY; STREAMING AND SOCIAL NETWORKS ENABLE INCREASED SHARING, CITIES ARE LABS. THERE IS AN UNQUESTIONABLE ENERGY WHEN PEOPLE START WORKING AND SHARING COLLECTIVELY TO BRING THEIR MOST DESIRABLE FUTURE INTO EXISTENCE.”

– Josep Roig, *Secretary General UCLG*

An interview with Cezar Busatto

Why does a city commit to learning?

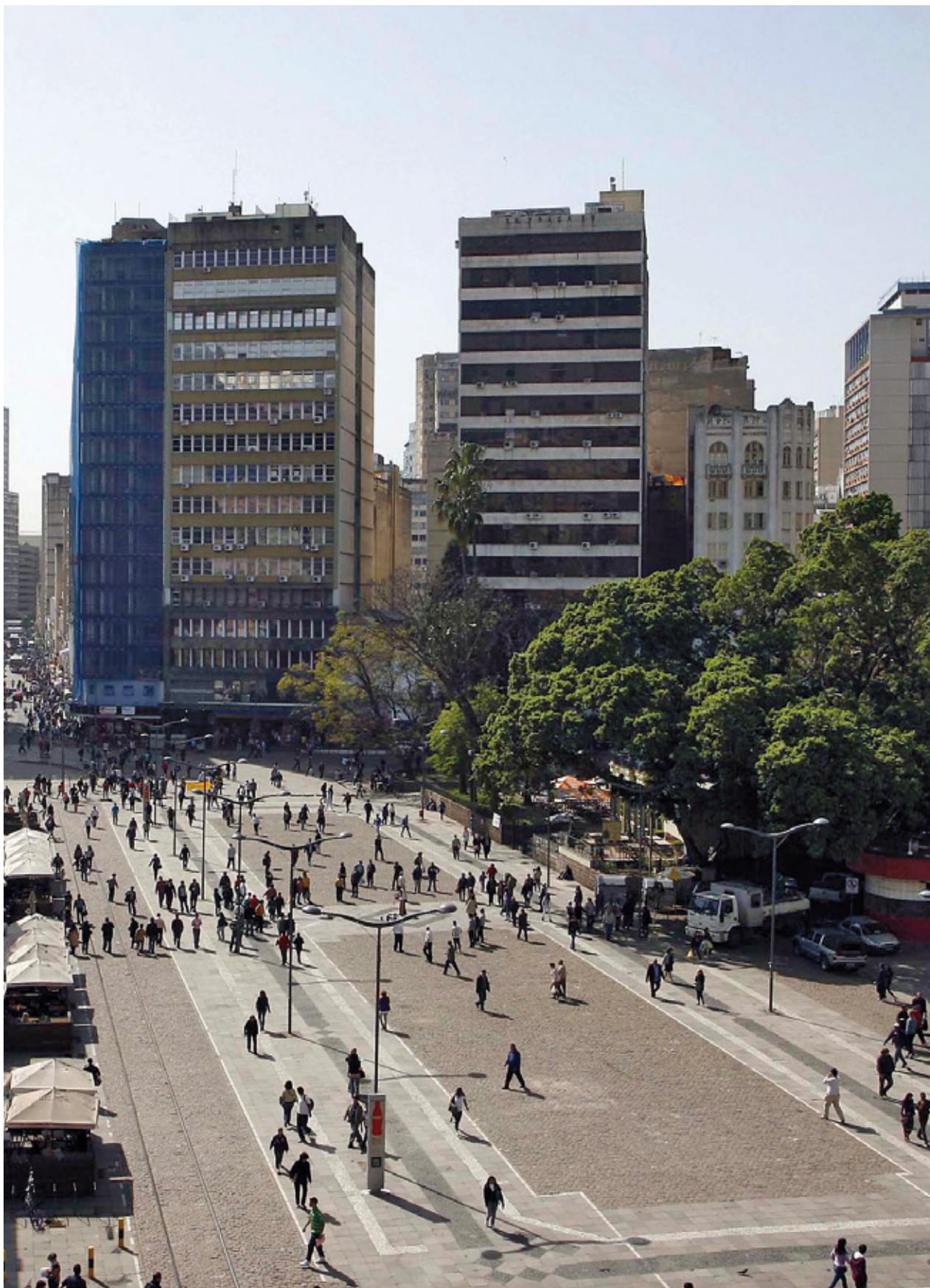
Learning is very important because each city has a unique experience in the way it addresses its problems. The uniqueness and richness of each approach is why cities develop ways to connect with each other through decentralized cooperation, which fosters

the establishment of networks of cities. An environment conducive to connections between cities introduces the opportunity for cities with different approaches towards a common problem to dialogue and share experiences and knowledge. The process of sharing experiences triggers the identification of new alternatives to approach and solve common challenges. This city-to-city relation, based on different points of view, helps the cities to find effective solutions. The process of dialogue, interaction, and the sharing of experiences is part of the peer to peer learning dynamic.

How do you connect to other cities?

For us, in Porto Alegre, the peer learning dynamic, like any city-to-city relation, has to be horizontal, based on dialogue and mutual respect towards the differences between the cities. This collaborative methodology enables local governments to hear what others have to tell and is an effective basis to build a common learning ground based on different





perceptions and realities. I believe this is a very important point. It is not about the drive to tell an experience or simply listen to others talk, without any interaction, without a spirit of dialogue, nor the disposition to share honestly. It is within the logic of sharing and the spirit of collaboration, that we will find a joint way to learn from each other. And this enables us to find new means to advance in our strategies, activities and actions to improve our cities and the quality of life of all our citizens.

What has been the focus of your cooperation?

For us, this translates into a methodology of local solidarity-based governance. Porto Alegre started to build this tendency towards a collaborative work within networks of cities with the emergence of participatory democracy. Our oldest experience is the development of knowledge and development of a joint methodology for participatory budgeting, which began in Porto Alegre. Participatory budgeting created significant progress in and for the city, still appreciable today. However, over time, the strategy proved to be restricted and too dependent on public money, which led to the implementation of people's councils and, more recently, to our policies towards a collaborative democracy through local solidarity-based governance.

Porto Alegre started to share its experience of participatory budgeting with other cities interested in implementing this tool at the local level. In this way, Porto Alegre's experience became a reference. Our experience with a participatory budget stimulated the implementation of the tool in different contexts, which boosted the confirmation of networks around this topic in Brazil, Latin America and later Europe, Africa and Asia.

Do you think sharing is a win-win relationship?

We established relationships based on dialogue and a joint search for knowledge. In our experience, other cities incorporated parts of our experience, always innovating, making each new interaction unique, even though all resulted from the interaction between cities and local governments. While we shared our experience, Porto Alegre incorporated many innovations in its own process of participation, as a result of learning generated through interaction and open discussion with other cities and within networks of cities. There are several examples illustrating our improvement on strategies and capacities: we created a new capacity building system CapaciPoa by working together with the Urban Network – European Community; we also explored alternative ways to access financial resources through the global fund for development of cities and UCLG, just to name a few.



What are the current and future approaches?

Initially, Porto Alegre interacted with cities and city networks on participatory budgeting tools and strategies. Then, we started city-to-city learning experiences on different topics. One, ongoing collaboration is around the policy promotion and collaborative management of public spaces with the cities of Durban and Bogotá as co-leaders of the UCLG Committee on Urban Strategic Planning.

We are very proud to have a city full of public spaces. We have an average of 43 square meters per inhabitant of green open areas. Our challenge is precisely to ensure the preservation and management of these social, economic and environment assets. We are presently unifying the responsibilities and management agencies to take care of public spaces in a cross-sectional and integrated way. Bogotá has created a department for the defense of public spaces, which is a relevant example for us. We are additionally creating a financial public fund to ensure the appropriate allocation of resources dedicated to public space management and planning. Recently, we have developed, in a collaborative way with citizens, local communities and government staff, a New Democratic Coexistence Code (Código Democrático de Convivencia) which will become a law on public space policies for the city.

Our extensive experience of participatory practices in the areas of public space development allows us to testify to the value of promoting democratic interactions in our city. Transparency is a key principle in the Porto Alegre management model, accounting for the strategic and transversal role of public spaces in urban policies and our recent strategy around city resilience. Our streets have been gradually changing over time from spaces dedicated to mobility to areas used for people to gather and interact. Communities organize markets, fairs, and activities such as cycling events, to name a few.

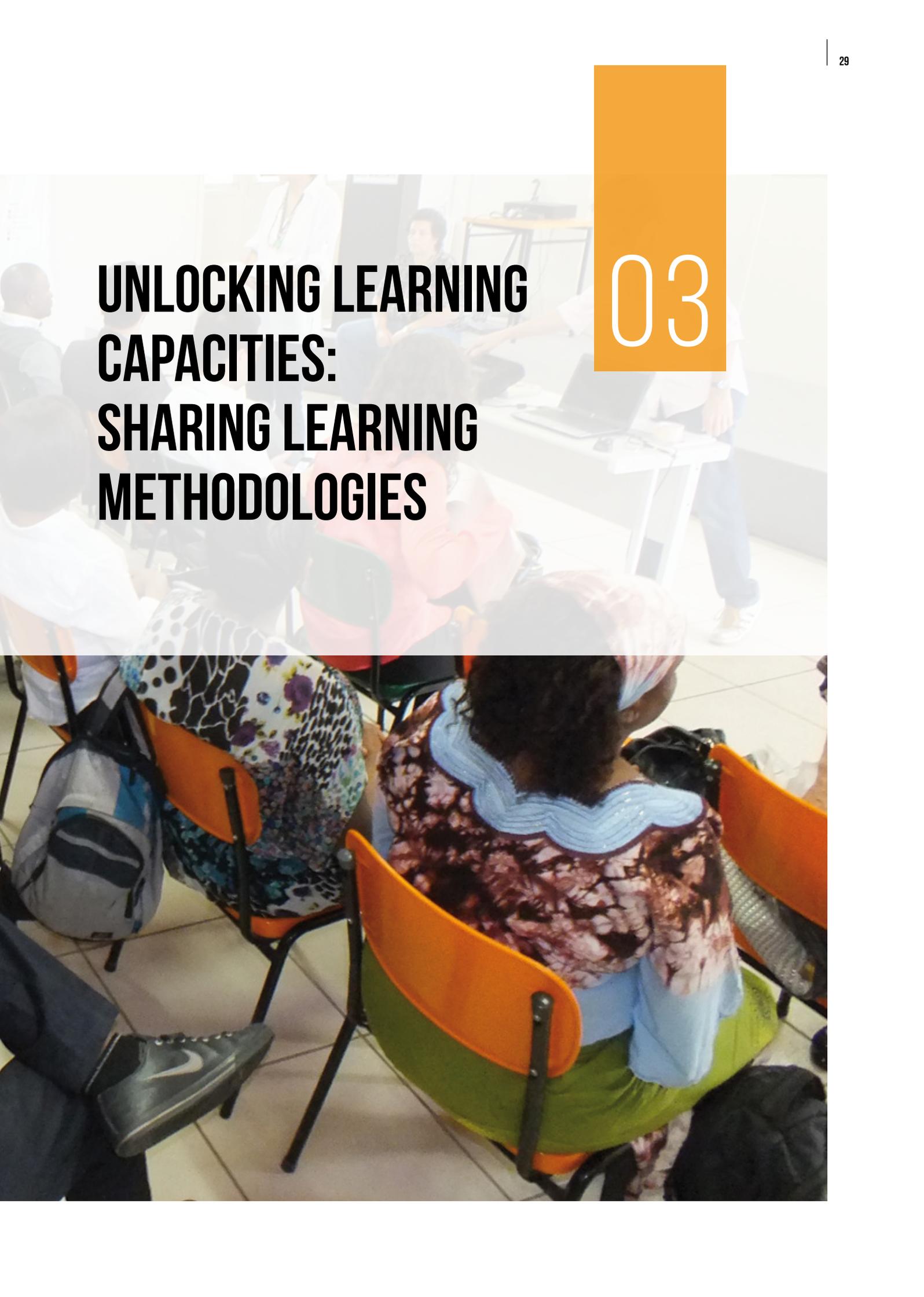
The decentralization process in Brazil effectively began with the new democratic constitution in 1989, when the municipalities got their political and administrative autonomy

WHAT IF YOU WANT TO INCLUDE THE LOCAL POPULATION IN YOUR PEER LEARNING EVENT?

There are different levels of peer learning with different scopes. Including the local population in a peer learning can be a very interesting idea as it will bring an additional perspective to the issue or challenge under discussion. However, to include citizens in a peer learning means more work, more preparation and more organization, especially during the event. You also have to consider who will attend the event because there may not be capacity for all local citizens to participate and selection might be controversial. The civil society has a lot to ask but mostly to give and this needs time to listen to them. The participation of the local population could be very fruitful in the sense that it directly confronts the local elected officials with the voters and the ones shaping and creating the city.

legally recognized. Porto Alegre benefited from this democratic change and got financial capacity to introduce the participatory budgeting process, based on its own fiscal resources, in 1990. We developed the Local Solidarity-based Governance methodology in 2005 to bring all the stakeholders together in collaborative networks to work for the local development of their communities. But each city has its own and unique experience in dealing with basically the same urban challenges. The sharing of these **diversified practices produces leadership and co-creation of better ways of dealing with old problems**. And this doesn't cost anything but a strong connection and interaction with others. The fact that we are all different makes us all at the same time **living laboratories of ways to deal with urban challenges**. **Cities learn from each other when they establish cooperative relationships through their different stakeholders, based in the sharing of their diverse ways of living and working together.** importance of networks and the integration of work with learning.





UNLOCKING LEARNING CAPACITIES: SHARING LEARNING METHODOLOGIES

03

Learning sessions can unfold differently depending on their context, content and participants. Regardless of the many variables that make every event unique, there are a series of active learning methodologies and key aspects (e.g. strategic facilitation) that should be taken into consideration when organizing a learning event. These methodologies allow active horizontal participation and unlock learning capacities among peers. There are many different methodologies that demand a diverse range of active participation during a learning event, and also different requirements in terms of preparation time and technical support. The key aspects and methodologies presented below have been tested with successful results in the different learning events organized by the UCLG learning agenda. These have included

the Third UCLG Learning Forum within the framework of the UCLG Congress held in Bogota in October 2016. Whilst there are numerous facilitation technics that are employed by learning practitioners throughout the network, four techniques that were shared are presented here. To conclude, the importance of strategic facilitation is presented, within the context of the SEEK-SENSE-SHARE model.

Strategic facilitation helps in the articulation of 'seek' and 'sense' *because* a good facilitation enables participants to discover problems and possible solutions by reflecting on concrete practices and experiences. It also allows them to channel shared experiences into reflections and thereby enables the translation of learning into practice.

“ LEARNING IS ABOUT MAKING CONNECTIONS BETWEEN PEOPLE AND ORGANIZATIONS. AS SUCH, FACILITATION HELPS TO CREATE THESE CONNECTIONS.”

– Harold Jarche, *Expert on Management and Education*

“ NETWORKING IS IN FACT ALL ABOUT LEARNING.”

– Kubeshni Govender, *Training Communication Professional SALGA*

“ A FACILITATOR HAS TO BE NEUTRAL.”

– Sogen Moodley, *MILE eThekwini*

“ THE CREATION OF SPACES DEDICATED TO LEARNING IS ABSOLUTELY CRUCIAL, FOR INSTANCE, IN CITY-TO-CITY COOPERATION.”

– Jeanette Velez, *Colombian lawyer and professor at the University of Rosario*



The world café¹²

The world café methodology is an innovative and flexible way of producing mass knowledge about a defined subject. It mainly focuses on conversations and dialogue. This methodology seeks to encourage the sharing of experiences and ideas. It requires an appropriate space and the creation of a comfortable atmosphere that is favorable to exchange. The host begins with a warm welcome and introduces the methodology, process and main goals, setting the context and sharing the ground rules. During the session, the participants are invited to sit around a table and hold a series of rounds of conversation lasting from 20 to 45 minutes about one or more questions that are defined at the beginning of the session. At the end of each round, one person remains at each table, as the host/leader, while the others

move to another table and start a new conversation, going into deeper detail as the round progresses. The table host/leader will then welcome the next group and briefly fill in on the previous conversations. After the last round of conversations, individuals are invited to share results and reflections in a large group. All the presentations are gathered together as the result of the session.

¹² More information about this method and some insights on its history and key strengths is available at: <http://www.theworldcafe.com//key-concepts-resources/world-cafe-method/>

THE WORLD CAFÉ METHODOLOGY IS AN EXCELLENT TOOL TO SENSE AND SHARE PRACTICES, AS IT CONDUCTS FEEDBACK TOWARDS SEVERAL KEY QUESTIONS OR PRACTICES WITHOUT AN ESTABLISHED HIERARCHY.

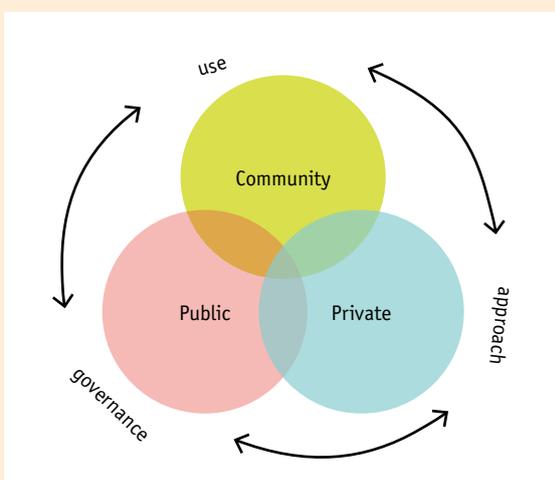


LEARNING ON PUBLIC SPACE

Using the methodology of the world café, the UCLG CUSP conducted a learning event to crystallize thinking around the need for learning exchanges between municipal practitioners within local governments. It then went beyond this in order to begin a debate about re-thinking and re-energizing and about how best to implement a public space policy based on the framework collectively developed by the UCLG CUSP team: “**Public Space Policy Framework: by and for local governments**”. The intention of the session was to explore the issue of Public Space Governance and Policy Development, particularly focusing on how to implement such policy.

After the four rounds of debate, each table moderator reflected on the results obtained based on what all the participants had produced during the session. This was the harvest of the world café on public space policy:

Local governments must work with communities to develop opportunities that will help to promote a more flexible use of public space. Public spaces are spaces that are created for everyone and should be developed with the intention of creating more inclusive cities. The development process for public space must consider how communities can take effective ownership of public spaces. Here, we refer to promoting the collective ownership of this space rather than allowing exclusivity in its use or amongst its users. Public space defines the city



and, as such, needs to be a strategic driving force for the development of the city. The city has to be seen as a holistic system for planning, development and maintenance. All three aspects have to work in synergy in order to ensure the effective development of public space. To achieve more synergistic public spaces, there are 3 key role-players which can be best described with the help of the diagram below:

Development Partners, such as UN Habitat or the NGO Avina can play a fundamental role in the development of public spaces by facilitating engagements and networking with other organizations to further the public space agenda. How can they achieve this? They can facilitate public space learning exchanges and set up communities for promoting good practices. In order to foster this work, there is a need to develop a platform for like-minded development partners working in the field of promoting public space. Development partners can assist with the development of participatory research tools and methodology. Cities and development partners can actively work together to lobby for financial resources to support the promotion of public space and develop guidelines to foster the introduction of new projects and policies related to public space. Advocacy and raising awareness of the need for public space is just one of the key areas in which development partners can engage at a global level.

Civil Society, including private developers and cultural actors, has to be more actively involved in the development of public spaces. Local government needs to foster an enabling environment in which to help citizens to actively participate in the design phase and to promote a stronger community spirit. When developing public space policy, local governments should ensure that they have credible public participation methodologies that encourage public input to be taken in consideration when contracting design and construction. Civil society can actively advocate people-centered public spaces and complement the actions of local government organizations by taking ownership of what is public. An organized civil society can lobby local government to create regulated spaces that promote a better quality living environment.

Academia can help local governments to make the connection between theory, research and practice. This is important because during the discussion sessions, students reported that they tend to see universities as being disconnected from the political sphere. Through active engagement between academia and local governments, universities should be able to take part in and influence integrated urban projects that are being put into practice. Universities

could be one of the key advocates for public space, but they currently tend to be excluded from the public space agenda. They can help to break down tensions in public space by facilitating dialogue between the various stakeholders involved in the development of public space, due to their multidisciplinary approaches. Academics should not only be seen as trainers of professionals and researchers, but also as actors within society.

Gallery of good practices

The gallery of good practices forms part of a participatory methodology that requires intense preparation before the event. Instead of the usual speeches using lengthy power-point presentations, this methodology focuses on visual displays through an exhibition of posters.

The first step is to select a topic and to identify the partners and the good practices that you find interesting for the topic. Prior to the session, partners are asked to prepare a poster following a very specific structure established by the organizers: 1) The starting point, 2) The institutional setting, 3) The approach, 4) The outcome, 5) The lessons learnt, and 6) The transfer opportunities for good practices. The organizers need to be aware of the fact that this methodology is time intensive and requires strong commitment and involvement, especially during the preparation phase. Besides the elaboration of the posters, there is an additional preparation phase for the on-site practical session. The setup for the posters needs to be carefully considered and should be in line with the setting of the room.

After a short initial plenary session describing the objectives of the session, the participants split into small groups. Each group selects two of the best practices that will be presented. Facilitation is key to moderating between the presentations and guiding the participants. To ensure the active participation of everyone involved,

the facilitator must ask all of the participants to listen to the presentations and to reflect on one or two key questions (e.g. What are the success factors associated with the good practices presented? and What are the main recommendations required to transfer the practice?).

After the poster presentations made by the speakers, in groups, the participants will share their views and reflections in line with the questions asked by the facilitator at the beginning of the session. Working in small groups helps participants to feel closer to the speakers and creates a more comfortable atmosphere in which to ask questions and make comments. The Gallery of Good Practices fosters collective learning and creates a good working atmosphere.

THE GALLERY OF GOOD PRACTICES IS AN EXCELLENT TOOL WITH WHICH TO SHARE PRACTICES WITHIN A PROFESSIONAL ENVIRONMENT IN WHICH THE SYSTEMATIZATION OF PRACTICES IS HIGHLY APPRECIATED.

LEARNING ON MOBILITY

Connective Cities is an international city platform organized as a joint venture by three German organizations (GIZ, German Association of Cities and Engagement Global) and supported by the German Government. Its mission is to facilitate exchanges and learning among city practitioners at the global level. Together with the UCLG Learning Agenda, Connective Cities hosted a learning event on mobility using the methodology of the gallery of best practices with 8 good practices from 7 different cities (Barcelona, Bogota, Buenos Aires, Bonn, Belo Horizonte, Guatemala City and Seoul).

Common objectives were defined at the beginning of the exercise:

- Learn about good practices relating to sustainable urban transport
- Analyze the factors that have made these practices a success
- Share opinions on how to transfer good practices

The main outcomes of the session

During the wrap up, each speaker or moderator summarized the success factors and made

recommendations about how to transfer these practices. Mostly, the successful factors were related to:

- Putting the user at the center of policies by connecting with the local communities
- Adapting solutions to the local context
- Being open to learn from other cities
- Gathering and using data
- Promoting intermodality
- Establishing public-private partnerships to develop the transport network
- Having the leadership of government

In the case of recommendations for the transfer of good practices in other contexts, the participants highlighted the following elements:

- The need for political support and cooperation between the national/regional and local levels of government
- Having a transparent system
- Using data to improve or plan infrastructure
- Exchanging good practices and experiences
- Understanding the local context

Peer review

The peer review methodology allows in-depth discussions about several challenges and helps us to find practical solutions for practical challenges and problems. The preparation and the peer review session is divided into 6 phases. Prior to the event, many elements have to be defined and organized. This approach requires an important amount of preparation both by the organizers and by the presenter of the case study. The very first step is to agree on a subject. The following step is to decide who will present a case study on this very specific theme. This phase is called the "casting" and the work to be done involves appointing a presenter, a moderator and a consultant. The second phase is the preparation of the case study. This includes

preparing the basic information required for a clear comprehension of the case presented.

During the presentation of the case study to peers (responders), the moderator needs to be able to guide the presenter using clear questions that help to clearly define the main challenges. The responders must pay particular attention to the explanation given in the case study. At the end of the session, they are then allowed to ask one or two questions in order to clarify issues and improve their understanding of the case or of particular facts of the situation presented. The questions cannot include solutions or recommendations. After the presentation of the case study, the moderator guides the presenter towards the presentation of one key question. This key question will

allow the presenter to guide the subsequent contributions from the responders.

During the consultation phase, the responders will provide ideas and possible solutions to answer the key question. Each responder is expected to frame their ideas, suggestions and possible solutions by referring to their own personal experiences and considering the key question presented with the case study. The respondents need to provide a great variety of different ideas with the aim of improving the capacity of the presenter to enhance the implementation of the strategy. All the contributions received must be short, clear and express support for the proposal.

In the last phase of the methodology, the presenter of the case study is asked to reflect

on the solutions and suggestions provided by their peers (the respondents). He/she will be given some time to express which of the ideas presented they consider interesting and to respond to the suggestions presented. The moderator will then summarize the conclusions for all the participants, highlighting the most interesting contributions and ideas.

A PEER REVIEW IS A GOOD TOOL FOR SENSE, AS IT CREATES AN ENVIRONMENT OF TRUST BETWEEN PEERS AND HELPS TO OVERCOME OBSTACLES WHEN IMPLEMENTING A GIVEN PRACTICE.



LEARNING ON PARTICIPATORY BUDGETS

For the first time, two UCLG Committees - the Committee on Local Finances and Development and the Committee on Social Inclusion, Participatory Democracy and Human Rights – worked together with the International Observatory on Participatory Democracy to co-organize a peer review on local finance, inclusive governance and participatory budgeting. This was based on the experience of the city of La Paz. The consultants involved included three mayors, from the cities of Sorsogon, Pasto and Badalona, who provided insights into their experiences of innovative urban financial mechanisms and participatory budgeting. The session also counted on the participation of representatives from Barcelona, Porto Alegre and Aubervilliers.

During the session, the peers highlighted some interesting points:

- The need to broaden the types of stakeholders involved in the process of monitoring the decisions made through a more participatory process. As La Paz observed: *“currently, the responsibility for monitoring the way that decisions are made through participatory budgeting and are rendered effective lays with the City Council and a small group of social representatives –which are members of the same social elites which are represented in all the representative bodies of the city. One major challenge for participatory strategic planning is to include a much broader range of social and civic stakeholders”*.
- It is important to achieve financial decentralization from the national to the local level in order to

ensure the decision-making power of the citizens. It was also noted that for participatory budgets to become fully enshrined within the participatory mechanisms of cities, they would need to be freed from the limitations imposed by budgetary availability. This has, however, been a major problem for all the cities that have conducted participatory processes in recent. As Mr Vicente Obando, the Mayor of Pasto, pointed out: *“a lack of financial resources does not allow us to meet all the needs of the city’s inhabitants and we can’t ask citizens to choose between their right to education and their right to healthcare”*.

- The need to find a balance between the role of technicians and social organizations in the process of participatory budgeting associated with feasible projects. In this regard, a representative from Porto Alegre noted that: *“the lack of technical knowledge must be overcome through making permanent and systematic capacitation processes available to the citizenry. That’s what we have tried to do in Porto Alegre.”*

All the participants acknowledged the important role that citizens play in the decision-making process of their municipalities, not only in relation to the budget, but also for the whole area of public policy. This is necessary in order to build a sense of belonging within the community. As Ms Sabater, the Mayor of Badalona, observed: *“the biggest challenge is to build a really participatory system of governance, by agreeing common priorities for the whole community and enabling it to renew the social contract”*.

Temporary think tank

A temporary think tank is an ad-hoc group of experts created to meet the needs of a particular meeting or learning session. Its objective is to come up with new ideas and advice relating to the field of expertise of the session participants. This methodology requires previous preparation. This stage is divided in 4 steps:

1. Selecting the topic and the key question
2. Inviting and briefing the speakers
3. Setting up the timing of the session: presentations, work in groups and presenting outcomes

4. Briefing the facilitators on the different tables

During the practical session

The temporary think tank session starts with a brief introduction that aims to explain the rules of the session and to create a relaxed, informal atmosphere. The presenters have 1 minute each to explain their experience to the forum and all the participants are able to choose the most interesting topic from their point of view. Based on their individual choices, participants are then divided into working groups, each of which sits around a table with a chosen presenter and a facilitator. The first part of the session in the smaller groups is dedicated to a more detailed presentation of each case. Later, the facilitator on each table moderates a debate based on key issues, building up from the initial example and culminating in comments from all of the participants in the working group. The facilitator then seeks to establish a degree of agreement on the more generalized outcomes and reflections. The results of the different discussions are then collected and presented to the whole of the group.

The art of strategic facilitation What is facilitation? What is the role of a facilitator?

Facilitation is essential for any learning event. Facilitators carry the responsibility of having to ensure that the audience, the methodology, and the speakers are linked together. In order to be efficient, facilitators need a series of soft skills to help them share observations, gather outcomes, plan, and adjust their learning methodologies to meet needs and achieve the expected results.

The facilitator first assumes the role of an architect, as he/she gathers together all the information about the participants and clarifies the purpose and desired outcomes with the organizers. Once this has been done, the facilitator can start to propose a design in order to reach the objectives. Most of the time, this involves a results-based agenda that should be strong enough to frame the event, but also flexible enough to adapt to

A THINK-TANK IS A GOOD TOOL FOR SEEK - MAKING IT A CONSULTATIVE BODY THAT HIGHLIGHTS THE OPTIONS AND OPPORTUNITIES TO BE CONSIDERED.

LEARNING ON TRIANGULAR COOPERATION AND DECENT WORK

The temporary think tank was tested at a session which was co-organized by the International Labour Organization (ILO) to explore the subject of city-to-city, South-South and Triangular cooperation towards promoting decent work. City-to-city cooperation has been increasingly linked with, and has benefited from the practice of, South-South and Triangular Cooperation. It constitutes an innovative means for developing local solutions to what are often global issues. The main question of the session was to identify criteria for good practices within C2C cooperation towards the promotion of decent work.

Participants highlighted different criteria some of which were more oriented towards LED and decent work while others focused more on city-to-city cooperation. However, the results were similar and highlighted the importance of:

- cooperation between social and institutional actors
- inclusiveness at all stages of the process
- both horizontal and vertical dialogue
- identifying needs beforehand
- the learning culture: a certain mindset to engage in C2C cooperation based on sharing and reciprocity
- the creation of methodologies and the need for facilitation brokers
- monitoring and evaluating cooperation towards the promotion of decent work and to measure the effectiveness of cooperation and ensure mutual collaboration and contributions



(markers, papers, easels, etc.) are tasks that must be done before the event starts. There are also crucial support roles which include helping the facilitator to manage the journey. These include the tasks performed by the note taker, timekeeper, photographer, translators and sound technicians. A good facilitator makes sure that all the support staff are ready for the event. During the event, the facilitator needs to work with his/her group to extract ideas and knowledge. To do this, the agenda and the objectives have to be explained as well as the ground rules. When ground rules for a learning event are mentioned, this tends to refer to the basic rules that the participants must follow:

eventual changes. The facilitator must be able to react to unexpected conditions or threats and be able to make mid-course corrections. The result-based agenda must be adapted to accommodate the realities of emerging cities.

The skills of the facilitator in his/her role as an architect are: listening, adaptability, flexibility, openness, discipline, and organization.

A second important role of the facilitator is to take care of the quality of the journey, which relates to how the event is conducted. Logistics are a key consideration here. Checking the meeting room (which must be clean and organized) and the availability of the material

- Listen carefully to each other and to listen they need to switch off their cell phones;
- Speak through the facilitator so as to ensure the smooth running of the session interventions must be short (time is precious);
- The facilitator facilitates and is therefore neutral. He/she must step back from his/her personal views and focus purely on the group process;
- Participants must openly and freely share their experiences;

Skills of the facilitator as a pilot: be neutral, use edutainment and gamification, use the power of storytelling, be innovative, be objective, stimulate interactions and build trust.

TEACHING VS FACILITATION

Teaching	Facilitating
Lead a group in acquiring new skills.	Help/make it easy to learn together in a group or to achieve something as a group.
Get measurable outcomes at the end	Help the participants to discover, understand and find solutions by themselves.
Present the information.	Guide the learning process.
Provide answers.	Provide the right questions.

An additional role of the facilitator is that of providing guidance, which essentially means leading the group through unexplored territories. This part of the task requires a lot of practice, commitment and personal work. There are other factors that must also be taken into consideration, such as the number of participants (the room cannot be crowded but

neither should it be empty), the involvement that people have during the event, the time allocated, the subject of the discussion and how well the participants know this subject.

Skills of the facilitator as a guide: be alert, resourceful, creative and confident, and show empathy.

A SUCCESSFUL PEER-LEARNING EVENT

With a view to reaching the objectives of the learning exchange, it is important to find the right balance between methodologies. When you organize an event, you have to consider the different “species” involved: UCLG members are primarily associations and local government organizations. These have different needs and expectations. The associations see themselves more as enablers than as analysts and prefer to allocate more time to comparing, listening and testing their experiences, whereas local governments tend to want to get to the point and to implement the lessons learnt within their respective territories.

It is important to bear the following points in MIND:

- A peer learning event cannot be planned only a week before it takes place; it requires a lot more time and planning, as an event normally lasts for two or three days. In order to make sure that peer learning will take place, the network and the UCLG have to work closely with the host city to define their objectives:
- A subject or a challenge that the host city wants to share and is interested in. It should be noted that if the host city decides to present a challenge and to seek solutions, the discussions and content of the event will be more interesting for all the participants, the host city and the UCLG.
- What are the main objectives? This has to be clearly explained before the event and then repeated during the proceedings to make sure that everybody understands why they are attending the peer-learning session and what is to be expected from them.
- The selection of the participants. The participants are the people who really create the event. They

could be directly contacted by the UCLG and/or the host city or they may demonstrate their willingness to participate in it.

- To define the scope of the event and to agree on a budget.
- Brief all the participants and coordinators before the event. A briefing is usually intensive, but this will pay back in results during the event. There are several ways to do a briefing. First, it could consist of the organizers asking for the speeches and the presentations of all the participants with the issues that they would like to raise during the event.
- Debrief the participants and give a small survey to the participants. This could take the form of asking them questions such as: “In your opinion, were the main objectives reached?”; “Through which activity do you think you learnt most?”; “What will you bear in mind after this experience?”; and “Would you like to participate in another peer-learning event?”
- Document and technical evaluation of the peer-learning event. Colleagues from the participating and/or other cities might have an interest in the lessons learnt. The documentation is part of the event and nurtures the advocacy and the communication strategies relating to the notion that “learning is important for cities”.

IT IS NOW YOUR TURN TO PARTICIPATE!

The UCLG is a network that likes to celebrate what its members are doing. We encourage our members and partners to seek-sense-share practices in order to face today’s challenges together. If your city is interested in learning, please contact us for further information.

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