

LONG LEARN ACTIVE LEARNING MATERIALS

FOR CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT IN

LOCAL AND REGIONAL GOVERNMENT

LOCAL LEARNING PROVIDERS

AND

**EVERYONE AND EVERY ORGANISATION WITH AN INTEREST IN CREATING STABLE,
VIBRANT AND PROSPEROUS LEARNING CITIES, TOWNS AND REGIONS**

Chapter 6 Session 6.7:

Family Learning: Families as Learning City/Region Stakeholders

‘No matter how much leadership proclaims the virtues of prosperity, stability and the fulfilment of human potential, it is individuals and their families who will decide whether or not the game is worth the candle, the ones who will or will not deliver their talents in the service of others and the city
From ‘Learning Cities. Learning Regions, Learning Communities – Lifelong Learning and Local Government’ (Norman Longworth)

Chapter 6 Session 6.7:

Family Learning: Families as Learning City/Region Stakeholders

Session outline: Families are the well-springs of attitudes, values, outlooks, manners, mindsets, standards, morals, and ideals. As such they are arguably the most important stakeholders in the city or region. This lesson therefore explores the role of the family and changing perceptions of the family in a changing city, and what can be done to help families play a fuller role in the building up of their own cities and regions as learning cities and regions. Through a series of assignments and exercises, learners will appreciate the issues, experience good practice and contribute also their own ideas and knowledge on the various roles and responsibilities of families in cities and regions.

Guidelines for using this Active Learning session

Goals

The creation of learning cities and regions is in all our interests. It promotes social stability, encourages wealth creation, and enables citizens to fulfil their potential, their dreams and their ambitions. It is a survival strategy for our future, and that of our children and grandchildren. But it won't happen unless all of us play our part in making it so. It won't be a simple transition process, to be put into practice by someone else in the local authority. That means that we all, especially local government managers, professionals and staff, need to know and understand more about what it is, why it's important and what the major issues and opportunities are. There are many of them. These sessions have been written to enable each of us to increase our understanding and knowledge of those issues and opportunities. Each one, and there are 57 of them, takes a different theme and offers the learner new insights.

Learning approach

This is an Active Learning session. Lifelong Learning has taught us that people learn best when they are actively involved in the learning. We have therefore given the ownership of the learning over to you, the learner. As well as presenting new concepts in the assignments and exercises, we draw upon your experience, creativity, imagination and knowledge so that you can better understand the subject matter, and will be better able and more motivated to act upon it. You may, or may not, have a learning leader to help organise the groups, and to bring several learners together into discussion groups and sessions. That will certainly make it easier. We all have different learning styles – but we can also all learn from each other. That is why this session, like all the others, recommends a mixture of individual, small group and large group work, so that ideas and experiences and understandings can be bounced around people. Above all you are urged to make this an enjoyable experience. Learning can be fun. It's up to you to make it so.

Learning Organisation

You will find that the session is divided into 2 main parts

- ✓ **The Learning Space:** A set of assignments that will unlock the brain and involve learners in practical discussions and exercises leading to a greater understanding of the issue
- ✓ **The Learning Kitbag:** A set of source learning materials that provide additional information, charts, diagrams, case studies etc to stimulate further insights.

While each session could be used individually as a self-learning module, it is preferable if there is a learning leader to organise small and large group discussions and to act as a focal point. This can be a departmental manager, a staff member appointed to perform that task, or a professional educator from inside or outside of the organisation. Assignments may be studied on site, or set as preparation for group discussions in the workplace or at a learning provider.

The whole course can be incorporated into a continuous professional development programme in the workplace, or taught separately at a school, college, community centre or university. It takes its provenance, and its inspiration, from the book:

Learning Cities, Learning Regions, Learning Communities – Lifelong Learning and Local Government
By Norman Longworth, published by Taylor and Francis ISBN 10 0 415 37175 9

Learners taking the course are recommended to obtain this book either from Amazon.com or from the publishers at http://www.taylorandfrancis.co.uk/shopping_cart/search/search.asp?search=longworth

Target Audiences

The session will be suitable for those who wish to improve their understanding of the session title's theme, in order to help influence the city, town or region's response to the realities of the 21st century. This includes:

- Elected representatives and Mayoral staff
- Managers, Professionals and staff from all departments in local government as part of a continuous development programme
- Community and Voluntary organisation leaders
- Educators at all levels in local and regional stakeholder organisations, including schools, universities, colleges and workplaces
- Industrialists and Business people as stakeholders in the local authority
- All Citizens with an interest in the development of their community
- Students in universities, adult education institutions and teacher training establishments

Further Reading

Learning Leaders wishing to update themselves on the subject matter of this module will find the following additional references useful.

- 'Lifelong Learning in Action – Transforming 21st century Education' by Longworth, (Taylor and Francis, Abingdon) http://www.taylorandfrancis.co.uk/shopping_cart/search/search.asp?search=longworth
- 'The Local and Regional Dimension of Lifelong Learning ' EC Policy Document found on <http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/poledu/tels.pdf>

Ideas for treatment particular to this session: *For seminars and courses with several participants it is suggested that assignments 1 to 3 are completed as an exercise for individuals with the answers debated in open session afterwards, facilitated by a learning leader. Assignments 4 to 9 may be completed in small groups of 2 or 3 people again with the results discussed after completion. Assignment 10 can be either an individual or a small group exercise – you may wish to change the people working together to enable a mix of ideas, experiences and opinions. Assignment 11 is another opportunity for individual creative expression, which should be displayed for all to see after completion, perhaps as a competition. The last assignment should provide the feedback that will enable you to improve the session next time round.*

For self-learning individuals all assignments will be individual efforts but try to find someone with whom you can discuss your answers and opinions either by email or face to face. In this way you can enrich the learning experience by experiencing other viewpoints.

The Learning Space

Assignment 0: These learning materials derive from, and extend, the concepts and ideas in ‘Learning Cities, Learning Regions, Learning Communities.’ Reading pages 137 to 140 of this valuable book before carrying out these assignments would provide an excellent introduction to the session, and strengthen learning.

Assignment 1: What do you understand by the term ‘Family Learning’

Assignment 2: Can you think of 3 examples from your own experience or knowledge

Assignment 3: Have a look at the poster on Actionsheet 1 in the learning kitbag below. Put a tick in column A if it is true of your own family when you were growing up. Put a cross in column B if it happened in practice. Put a circle in column C if you subscribe to this ideal at present in your own family or, if you don’t yet have one, whether you will make it happen when you do.

Assignment 4: The following are quotations from various sources. In the first blank column put a mark out of 5 denoting your opinion of the importance of the statement for you 1= crucial 2= very important, 3= quite important 4= low importance 5= no importance. In the second column put a mark out of 5 for the way in which you believe your city or region is tackling the issue. 1= has it completely under control to 5= does nothing about it.

<p>‘Just as neighbourhoods are the key building blocks of a city, families are the key building blocks of a neighbourhood. Strong families create healthy communities where neighbours know and trust each other, and where children grow into healthy and productive adults.’ ‘Safe Passages’ - Washington DC City Wide Strategic Plan</p>		
<p>‘Family living is the single greatest influence on an individual’s life. Traditionally, families have played a critical role in society with family life shaping the structure of communities’ - Commission on the Family</p>		
<p>‘Todays family has new needs. For example, there is a need for income support for the ‘one-parent family’, childcare for dual-earner families, care in the community for older people etc. Those needs have to and are being translated into new family-friendly policies, so as to enable all family members to participate fully and equally in society. To facilitate this a wide range of support services, facilities and environments needs to be developed’ .- Dublin City Family-friendly Strategy</p>		
<p>‘We seek a society where children are respected as young citizens with a valued contribution to make and a voice of their own; where all children are cherished and supported by family and the wider society, where they enjoy a fulfilling childhood and realise their potential’. The National Children Strategy (2000)</p>		
<p>‘Local Government has to do its job (and do it well) but in the end, no community can succeed without strong families. Everything we do should put families first and make our city a good place to raise children.’- Anthony A. Williams, Mayor Washington DC, USA</p>		
<p>‘Research has indicated the critical importance of early years in developing learning skills</p>		

<p>and the benefits of early interventions in tackling educational disadvantages are well documented. <i>Childcare services</i> focus on child development when in a childcare service, Department of Education focus on the child when in school but no one is focusing on assisting 'parents as educator's as well as carers - <i>Dublin City Family friendly strategy</i></p>		
<p>'There are recommendations on how to "Implement Equality for Older People" with regards to employment, life-long learning and participation in the policy making-process, to name a few. There is a need to combat ageism and focus on harnessing the contribution that active older people can make in terms of caring, mentoring and participation in the community and workforce'. - The Equality Authority</p>		
<p>'Skills such as language acquisition, social competence, coping, the ability to think critically and the capacity to learn, all develop in the first years of life, before a child enters formal schooling, while he/she is part of the family. Consequently, what happens – or doesn't happen – in early childhood has a critical impact on prospects for child development, ability to learn in school, and to be healthy and productive in adulthood. Human capital – and hence opportunities for nations to progress – is being squandered on an enormous scale because hundreds of millions of young children worldwide are not ensured the conditions needed to thrive and to reach their full potential.' - Unicef</p>		
<p>'the culture of many working class communities is ingrained with hostility to education and everything it represents. These are the hard-core challenges facing each city and region if we are to establish a truly and genuine learning society for all, and we must start with the family unit.' (Bill Williamson – Lifeworlds)</p>		

Assignment 5: In general, what points do you think all these quotations are trying to make about families and communities?

1

2

3

4

Assignment 6: Actionsheet 2 in the learning kitbag below contains a number of changes in the traditional conception of cities and families. Tick in box A if these are happening in your own city or region and in box B give a personal approval rating – 1= don't approve 2= approve with reservations, 3= it's part of the rich pattern of modern life.

Assignment 7: Does your city or region have a family learning strategy? If so what are the main highlights?

Assignment 8: The quotation below is from 'Lifelong Learning in Action'

'Families too are important. Special programmes to enhance the role of the family in the community should be initiated. 'Families which learn together are more likely to stay together.' Schemes might include joint family qualifications, family learning days, inter-family links through e-mail to others in the locality, the country or internationally, the family learning album and the development of special family courses'. Lifelong Learning in Action

A: What sort of things do you think a 'Family Learning Album' might contain?

B: What sort of things could families linked to families in another country learn from each other? Think of eight. Say which family member might benefit most from the things you have chosen

1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	
8	

C: How do you think that Family Learning might contribute to the development of your city as a learning city

Assignment 9: Read the piece on Family Learning Days on Actionsheet 3 of the learning kitbag. If something similar were organised in your city or region, how do you think that the following might contribute?

5.1 The local radio or tv station _a) _____
 b) _____
 c) _____
 d) _____

5.2 The local newspaper _a) _____
 b) _____
 c) _____
 d) _____

5.3 Your own workplace _a) _____
 b) _____
 c) _____
 d) _____

5.4 Your local community centre _____

5.5 The Local or Regional Authority _____

Assignment 10: Actionsheet 4 of the learning kitbag contains a composite of actions taken by several learning cities and regions in their family development policies. In the last column, tick if your city or region does something similar. Add any other ideas that these might generate in the empty rows at the end.

Assignment 11: You are entering a competition to design a poster that will demonstrate the virtues and values of family learning. Go to it!

Assignment 12: This completes this session but not hopefully your need for knowledge on this important subject. You are invited to complete the diagram on the next page by ticking the relevant box.

LEARNING CITIES AND REGIONS FOR THE FUTURE - YOUR LEVEL OF KNOWLEDGE

		High	Enough to get by	Not enough	None	Session
1	Consultation methods and levels					7.1, 7.2
2	Characteristics of a Learning Organisation					2.3
3	Your city as a learning organisation					2.4
4	Skills and competences for learning cities and regions					1.6
5	The city as an ideopolis					1.5
6	Learning Communities in all their senses					2.5
7	Smart cities, wired cities, slow cities					2.6
8	Learning Festivals for developing a learning culture					3.3
9	Learning Charters for demonstrating a city's commitment:					3.2
10	Leadership in the Learning City/Region:					3.4
11	Tools for measuring city and region performance					3.1,4.1,4.2, 4.3,4.4,4.5
12	Lifelong Learning as wealth creator					5.3, 1.5,2.3
13	Tools for activating learners – Personal Learning Audits					5.4,5.5,5.6, 5.7,5.8,5.9
14	Stakeholders in the Learning City/Region – Who? What?					6.1
14	Schools as Stakeholders in community, city and region					6.2, 8.4
15	Higher Education as a stakeholder in community, city and region					6.3
16	Business and Industry as stakeholders in community, city and region					6.4
17	Adult Education Colleges as stakeholders in the city					6.5, 8.5
18	Bringing Museums, Libraries, Archives and Galleries into the learning world					6.6
19	Family Learning					6.7
20	The power of partnerships					6.8
21	Using Technology in the learning city					7.3
22	Active citizenship and volunteering in the learning city					7.4
23	Mentoring in the learning city and region					7.5
24	Resources for the Learning City and region					7.6
25	Global roles and responsibilities for learning cities and regions					8.1
26	Internationalising Learning City Networks					8.2, 8.3
27	International projects as learning city stimulators					8.4, 8.5
28	Two-way profiting from international cooperation					8.6
29	Organisational issues in the learning city and region					9.2
30	Enabling issues in the learning city and region					9.3
31	Pedagogical issues for learning cities and regions					9.4
32	Practical Actions to become a learning city					9.1, 1.4
33	Learning Cities for Elected Representatives (Councillors)					4.6
34	Individuals as learners					5.1,5.2,6.7
35	Change, society and the city/region					1.1, 1.2
36	Learning City Domains					1.3
37	Some Research results on Learning Cities and Regions					4.2,4.3, 4.4
38	Towards true Learning Societies					2.2
39	Defining Learning Cities and Regions					2.1

All sessions shown in the last column follow the progress of the book 'Learning Cities, Learning Regions, Learning Communities – Lifelong Learning and Local Government' by Norman Longworth (Taylor and Francis – www.tandf.co.uk/books/) ISBN 10 0-415-37175-9, and add new dimensions. They are downloadable from www.longlearn.org.uk

Assignment 13: On the lines below please put your personal reactions to working on this session, based on how much you have learned, how much you have worked creatively and how your ideas have developed as a result.

Chapter 6 Session 6.7

The LEARNING KITBAG

<u>THIS FAMILY</u>	<u>A</u>	<u>B</u>	<u>C</u>
VALUES LEARNING AS A DESIRABLE ACTIVITY			
ENCOURAGES THE HABIT OF LEARNING IN EACH FAMILY MEMBER			
LEARNS FROM EACH OTHER			
VALUES EACH INDIVIDUAL FAMILY MEMBER			
DEVELOPS THE FULL POTENTIAL OF EACH FAMILY MEMBER			
LEARNS TOGETHER FREQUENTLY			
LEARNS FROM OTHER FAMILIES			
HAS ESTABLISHED LEARNING LINKS WITH OTHER FAMILIES IN THE SAME COUNTRY			
HAS ESTABLISHED LEARNING LINKS WITH OTHER FAMILIES IN ANOTHER COUNTRY			
HAS A LEARNING PLAN FOR EACH MEMBER OF THE FAMILY			
CONTRIBUTES FULLY TO THE COMMUNITY IN WHICH IT LIVES			
CONTRIBUTES TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE GLOBAL COMMUNITY			
FREQUENTLY CELEBRATES THE FUN OF LEARNING			
FOSTERS RESPECT AND TOLERANCE FOR OTHERS			
CHERISHES AND IMPROVES THE LOCAL ENVIRONMENT			
PARTICIPATES IN FAMILY LEARNING DAYS ORGANISED BY OTHERS			
FORMALLY ANNOUNCES WHAT IT HAS LEARNED IN THE PREVIOUS YEAR ON BIRTHDAYS (AS IN JAPAN)			

Actionsheet 2**Changes in family life in the city**

	A	B
more single, separated, divorced, common law, same sex partners and step/half brothers and sisters.		
population mobility		
reduced support from the extended family		
increase in the number of single parent families		
increase in the number of non-national families without extended family support.		
high rates of crisis/teenage pregnancies		
increase in gay/lesbians/bisexual partners/families.		
decrease in the birth-rate		
families tend to be smaller		
more women participating in the workforce		
economic pressure for parents to remain in the workforce		
high concentrations of lone parent families with young children in some parts of the city, with a higher poverty risk than the rest of the population.		
ageing population		

Add others in the blank rows

The UK Campaign for Learning runs Family Learning Day each year, usually in September. In its publicity leaflet it describes the purpose of the day. 'Family Learning Day' it says 'Is an opportunity for families and their friends to get together and have fun learning something new. The learning may be new to the whole family or may be a chance for one family member to share skills or knowledge with the rest of the family.'

It points out that the family was, traditionally, a significant source of learning, an activity which passed to the school with the introduction of compulsory education. Nevertheless, even today, children only spend 15% of their waking hours in school, and this is where the opportunity for learning in the family arises. The Campaign believes that lifelong learning will be essential for survival in the twenty-first century. In the past an adult may have expected to learn the majority of skills and knowledge required to earn a living in the early years of life. In the future that early learning will only be the foundation stone for a lifetime of learning. A family life that embraces learning can help to confirm the habit of continual learning from early life. Adults can no longer assume that they are familiar with everything being taught in school. By learning with their children, they not only support the children's learning but also discover new things themselves.

The different institutions in a locality were invited to join in. Ideas which arose from the day were:

For Libraries - invite authors to discuss writing about family relationships

- run a competition for children to write family stories
- provide family history tracing packs and how to produce a family history scrap book

For Museums and Galleries

- promote family visits through local schools
- organize a paint a family portrait competition

Zoos, Aquariums etc

- Work with local newspaper to produce a feature on animals in the community

Residential homes

- interview the residents to provide a picture of family life 30 years ago
- organize a teach-in for older people given by youngsters
- preserve memories of family life through audio and videotapes

Universities

- organize a family fun day
- give a discount on fees for more than one family member

Youth Clubs

- Make displays on members' family histories
- use the internet to teach older people
- organize a family learning day

Schools

- organize an after-school family activity
- run a weekend family learning activity
- organize a family competition
- Launch a family literacy project

Actionsheet 4

Actions to create a family-friendly city

The following is a composite list of actions that have been taken in some cities and regions to improve family life

Development of a vision statement outlining the importance of family in learning city development	
Recognising the need for <i>all</i> members of the family to contribute to the growth of a learning city	
Facilitating a City-wide debate on social income for all and ensured that this issue is addressed at national level	
Inviting comments and ideas on family actions from all neighbourhood groups and city associations	
Approaching workplaces to encourage flexible working practices for vulnerable families	
Increasing the range of, access to and viability of services and supports for parents, young people, children, older adults, carers and dependants	
Integrating all services connected with the family into one large unit	
Developing guidelines to encourage widespread use of family-friendly work practices	
Increasing the ability of families to take a leading role in learning city development.	
Establishing and supporting family associations in each neighbourhood	
Encouraging the employment of older adults in the workforce	
Developing mechanisms for consultation with all family members to increase their participation in policy-making-process.	
Increasing the number and diversity of "safe and stimulating" environments for children/young people in each neighbourhood.	
Developing a family charter outlining the commitment of the city/region to family support	
Encouraging debate amongst all stakeholders about the value of the family	
Developing 'family learning plans' showing how inter-generational learning can take place	
Driving a cultural change agenda on family learning via establishment of a Public Relations and policy group.	
Celebrating frequently the family and its role in the city	
Establishing links between local families facing similar challenges	
Establishing email links between families at home and abroad through community action	
Developing a database of family-friendly good practice	
Exploring and debating the changing form of family and the equal right to kinship recognition, and inheritance rights of those within alternative family structures such as same sex partners and parents, single parents etc	
Including a range of appropriate media, TV, community media etc. to promote a family-friendly City	
Increasing the number of childcare places and options (include childminding)	
Providing special early warning assistance for parents in targeted communities or groups	
Developing training courses for carers and home helps	
Developing a 'befriending' or mentoring service for vulnerable families	
Developing strategies to keep parents informed about family friendly initiatives	
Reducing the financial barriers to family participation in initiatives	
Increasing the number of parenting courses, especially for new parents	
Increasing the number of courses available in community centres for families	
Creating incentives to participation in such courses, in particular, for vulnerable parents.	
Provide easy to use, accessible information on family support and childcare services via the city's or region's website	
Developing a 'family resource pack' that all families can use	
Setting up a network of parent development groups/centres especially for new parents	
Encouraging relevant agencies (e.g. maternity hospitals, geriatric departments etc) to appoint Family Guidance and Support Officers to assist families in identifying appropriate support services	
Facilitating innovative initiatives for all family members in their local neighbourhood.	
Increasing the number of family friendly recreational facilities and	

LEARNING MATERIALS ON CITIES AND REGIONS FOR THE FUTURE – A REMINDER

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