

PASCAL European Network of Lifelong Learning Regions (PENR3L)



THE LIMERICK DECLARATION

on Learning Cities and Regions

(with addenda on the role and responsibilities of Universities, Schools, Industry, business and commerce and Local and Regional Authorities)

The PENR3L project

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The Limerick PENR3L Declaration

We recognise the urgent need for local and regional authorities to meet the changing economic, social, political, environmental, cultural and management challenges of 21st century life. We believe that the solution lies in a better understanding of the underlying regional dynamic which balances the global and the local, develops the social capital already existing in most communities and fosters innovation, creativity and growth. This can only be achieved by a large increase in continuous and lifelong learning for management, professionals and councillors, eventually extending to the citizens themselves. In short, cities and regions must become learning cities and learning regions, developing their human, intellectual and community potential for the benefit of all, and engaging all stakeholders in this task.

We, new and potential members of the PENR3L network, declare that we will foster and develop new knowledge, expertise and resources to help create learning cities and regions well able to meet the future with confidence, imagination and success.

In particular we believe that the following list of strategic directions will help local and regional authorities to construct stable, prosperous and sustainable learning regions that will benefit all its institutions and citizens.

- **exploiting the resources and expertise of Higher Education Institutions, thus helping them to fulfil their third mission in the Bologna process**
- **mobilising the energies and potential of other public and private sector stakeholders for social and economic growth**
- **fostering innovation, creativity and vision in people and organisations**
- **capitalising on diversity as an investment, valuable for economic, human and intellectual growth**
- **adapting and using already existing tools and materials to increase lifelong learning opportunities for all citizens**
- **requiring all institutions and workplaces, including the local authority itself, to become learning organisations with continuous improvement programmes for all employees and high quality benchmarked standards**
- **developing interaction between the local and the global to create investment opportunity**
- **continuously improving employability and skills to meet the changing requirements of the world of work**
- **releasing the talents, skills, experience and knowledge of the community in active citizenship projects**
- **using the media imaginatively to publicise and celebrate the learning region internally to its citizens and externally to its customers and potential investors**
- **enabling people and institutions to become actively involved with environmental protection projects**

Addendum 1: The Role and Contribution of Universities in Learning Region development

There are several ways in which universities can, and should, help in Learning Region development

- 1. Widen participation to allow local and regional government employees to take part in university education**
- 2. Design, develop and deliver tailored courses on aspects of learning region policy and practice**
- 3. Carry out commissioned research activities for local/regional authorities**
- 4. Open up international gateways to other regions**
- 5. Participate in international surveys and studies**
- 6. Provide dynamic leadership in the development of a learning region**
- 7. Encourage students and staff to volunteer their skills, creativity and knowledge for the development of learning regions**
- 8. Participate in fruitful partnerships with other stakeholders to help build learning cities and regions**
- 9. Create and manage action research and development projects in partnership with local and regional authorities using local, national and international funding sources**
- 10. Transform themselves into a true Learning Organizations as exemplars**
- 11. Help design and monitor continuous improvement programmes for staff in local and regional authorities**
- 12. Develop indicators and monitor learning city/region development**
- 13. Design, develop and apply tools and techniques that help create a culture of learning in the region**
- 14. Make University facilities available for learning city/region activities and events**
- 15. Represent the city in projects, missions and other events nationally and overseas**
- 16. Become involved in celebration events such learning festivals, fairs open days etc**
- 17. Help communicate the lifelong learning message within local and regional authorities**
- 18. Exchange staff regularly with local and regional authorities**
- 19. Run seminars and workshops for local and regional authorities**
- 20. Develop and publish case studies of good practice**
- 21. Carry out Learning Needs Audits on behalf of local and regional authorities**
- 22. Develop brochures, booklets and other materials**
- 23. Develop and deliver learning modules, degree courses, post-graduate study etc**
- 24. Make an inventory of the university's potential contributions to regional economic, social and environmental development from all Faculties**
- 25. Promote the cultural heritage of the region while at the same time broadening the cultural horizons of its people**

Addendum 2: The Role and Contribution of Business, Commerce and Industry in Learning Region Development

1. Includes Learning Region development in its own corporate development strategy, for example by

- a) Recognising the benefits to the company and acting upon them**
- b) Contributing to the Learning Region development strategy**
- c) Linking aspects of its own development strategy to that of the learning region**
- d) Using the Learning Region as a marketing tool**
- e) Seconding people to learning region strategy development and delivery as part of management development programme**
- f) Making financial contribution in accordance with perceived benefit of learning region concept**
- g) Contributing to regional skills and competences development strategy future and present needs**
- h) Encouraging creativity and innovation as a regional development**
- i) Including Learning Region topics in its continuous improvement courses for management and professionals**
- j) Participating in Conferences, seminars and courses on regional development**
- k) Making its facilities available to organisations in the region**
- l) Encouraging International links between regions and using them for trade development**
- m) Making its Quality Management and Learning Organisation expertise available to regional institutions**
- n) Displaying Learning Region posters and making other literature available to employees**
- o) Keeping employees informed about learning region strategies and rationale**
- p) Encouraging suppliers and customers to participate in Learning Region development**
- q) Establishing robust links with the local and regional authority**

2. Fulfils its corporate social responsibility mission, for example by

- a) Becoming involved in Regional Social development strategies that will enhance learning**
- b) Supporting local community organisations involved with learning**
- c) Encouraging employees to get involved with the learning region active citizenship strategy**
- d) Include an element of new learning in the promotion of cultural events in the region**
- e) Including community contribution in personnel continuous development strategies and allowing a proportion of time to carry it out**
- f) Sponsoring and participating in regional learning celebration events eg learning festivals**
- g) Participating in 'Learning at Work' days**
- h) Sponsoring competitions involved with learning**

3. Enters into partnership with local schools in a variety of ways, for example by

- a) Participating in mentoring and telementoring schemes with pupils**
- b) Providing work experience for pupils**
- c) Providing short term secondments for school staff**
- d) Setting up close cooperation Twinning schemes with local schools eg Woodbery Down/IBM**
- e) Including teachers on management development courses**
- f) Facilitating displays of schoolwork on company premises**
- g) Commissioning art and design works from the school**
- h) Encouraging employees to act as school governors and school committee members**
- i) Allowing use of company training facilities**

4. Enters into partnerships with universities, for example by

- a) Developing and delivering on-site courses relevant to the company continuous development programme**
- b) Developing and delivering higher degrees for company personnel**
- c) Initiating joint research and development projects relevant to company needs**
- d) Exchanging personnel between university and company**
- e) Providing student placements**
- f) Sharing facilities, resource and expertise**

Addendum 3: The role and contribution of schools in learning region development

- 1. Establish close links with the community in which it resides as part of the learning region strategy**
- 2. Communicate learning region messages to parents in its newsletters and other literature**
- 3. Act as a conduit between the local authority and parents on learning region matters**
- 4. Allow the use of its classroom and laboratory facilities for local learning city meetings and events**
- 5. Establish partnership links with local industry as part of learning city partnership strategy**
- 6. Use mentors from the community in accordance with learning city mentoring strategy**
- 7. Promote community service as an essential part of its curriculum**
- 8. Involve itself in the region's active citizenship strategy both as contributor and receiver**
- 9. Actively encourage ideas from students and staff for the better development of the learning region**
- 10. Link its students and staff to other schools nationally and internationally on learning region topics**
- 11. Encourage home-school cooperation projects as part of the learning region strategy**
- 12. Use the knowledge, skills, experience and talents of people in the community to enrich students' education**
- 13. Facilitate consultation strategies on behalf of the city and involves students and staff in analysis**
- 14. Is represented on the learning region development committee**
- 15. Actively assist in the development of the learning region strategy for schools**
- 16. Participate in local learning region events eg a display stand at learning festivals**
- 17. Publicise its activities in the local media as a means of enhancing the learning region and its own image**
- 18. Display the work of its students in visible places eg libraries, city hall, restaurants, surgeries to enhance the learning region and its own image and message**
- 19. Run courses for the community on modern educational methods and how people learn**
- 20. Include learning city publicity materials in its open days for the community**
- 21. Display learning region publicity materials eg posters in the school**
- 22. Include learning region message in citizenship courses for its students**
- 23. Participate in environmental care projects as part of learning region activities**
- 24. Implement learning organisation strategies in common with other learning region institutions**
- 25. Represent the region in projects, missions and other events nationally and overseas**
- 26. Help carry out Learning Needs Audits in the community on behalf of learning region**
- 27. Involve itself appropriately in those cultural events that are part of the learning region strategy**
- 28. Actively promote the benefits and joys of learning in the community**
- 29. Include learning region topics on in-service teacher training courses and staff meetings**