Learning Cities and Whole-community Approach

1 supporting chronically ill people, especially most disadvantaged

2 strengthening preventive care and management for chronic diseases

3 preventing chronic diseases

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Learning cities and whole-community approach

- Cities - proximity to communities and local stakeholders place **cities** in a **privileged role:**
  - accessing most disadvantaged and vulnerable
  - capacity to target place-based interventions
- **Learning city** 'effectively mobilises its resources in every sector to promote inclusive learning from basic to higher education' (UNESCO, 2015, p. 9)
- **Whole-community/society approach**: cooperative, collective, and connected work and relations; vulnerable individuals are cared for; community members of all ages; resources are shared

Towards healthy learning cities

- everyone is supported and no one is left behind
- economic, environmental and human losses in the event of crisis are prevented and curtailed
- disparities, injustices, inequalities are addressed
- mutual support
- local initiatives of different scale, scope, and outreach
- collective, systemic, and inter-sectoral action
- flexibility (constant change), learning, innovation, creativity, opportunity

What we learnt

- From system-level *top-down* actions down to multi-sectoral planning to *bottom-up* CSO, neighbourhood-level, and citizen-led initiatives

- Varied and wide-ranging actors: local government, formal and non-formal education and learning institutions and organisations (e.g., IGOs/NGOs/CSOs within the youth and adult education sectors, workplace learning, businesses and foundations)

- Processes: independent and collaborative work/partnerships/networks, innovations, technology

- A lot of challenges but many more opportunities

City authorities

- **Importance**: bringing multiple and diverse actors/stakeholders together as agents of change; creating a holistic and co-ordinated system/learning structure; joined-up services

- **Challenges and needs:** political will; capitalising on available capacities; limitations of existing structures; uniform responses

- **Example**: bringing a range of actors together/partnerships ---
  - Learning materials targeting different family members for a more effective communication (Lima)
  - Art education to address mental health issues, community health promoters to facilitate citizens to learn healthy behaviours (Bogotá)
  - Council's Community Activation and Learning Team: Community Connector Hubs – care packs, counselling, targeted social connections, digital connection) (Melton, Australia)

Civil society (CSOs) and city residents

- **Importance**: support of disadvantaged and vulnerable groups; enable social connections to counter isolation and related stresses; support learning and education especially for misinformation/unwarranted fears; active and knowledgeable citizens

- **Challenges and needs**: lack of financial resources, attacks on civil society

- **Example**:
  - disseminating critical information to raise awareness; provide medicine, medical support, and counselling – door-to-door visits social media campaigns, phone calls, text messages, etc. (India)
  - Tackling children's mental health (Dhaka)
  - Facilitating relevant conversations at neighbourhood level (Manila)

Universities, colleges, and schools

- **Importance**: timely and accurate scientific information to the public; mental and physical health support; health-related skills training; public health campaigns

- **Challenges and needs:** lack/absence of infrastructure (e.g., digital, for co-operation), financial support, capacities

- **Example**:
  - hotlines by medical/nursing students for health-related concerns, regular blogposts, podcasts with evidence-based information (Brazil)
  - support groups, streamed wellbeing classes (e.g., yoga, fitness, nutrition), videos how to talk about disease with children and youth to reduce their anxiety (UK)

Young people

- **Importance**: flexible, innovative solutions; adaptability; motivation; supporting the vulnerable

- **Challenges and needs**: not taken seriously, not supported

- **Examples**:
  - the organisation of tutoring for families and students by young people (Mantes-la-Jolie, France)
  - digital skills training; volunteering with the elderly, low SES, women and girls (global)
  - grassroots mobilisation capacity to sensitise and build solidarity in planning, designing and delivery of learning opportunities (All-Africa Students' Union)

Digital skills and media literacy

- **Importance**: accessing information, social connection in digital spaces, mutual support, raising awareness (wide reach)

- **Challenges and needs**: digital divisions and digital exclusions (poorest, the elderly hit the hardest); misinformation

- **Example**:
  - Libraries, community centres, educational institutions providing services (training and access to technology)
  - Brimbank (Australia): *Boomers to Zoomers* programme to enhance adults' digital skills
  - Chefchaouen (Morocco): ICT-based and TV-based learning programmes on health-related issues to raise awareness
  - Spain: collective awareness raising campaigns where residents share videos of their experiences
  - Brasília: *Videos Help Hearing Impaired People*

(Digital) art spaces: Making culture more inclusive

- **Importance**: access to most vulnerable for mental health and support, sense of connection and belonging

- **Challenges and needs:** digital capacity, digital devices

- **Example**:
    - virtual museums and exhibitions (Bulgaria, China, France, Italy, Lebanon, Republic of Korea)
    - online music platforms and concerts (Italy, Mexico, Spain)
    - (short) films (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Spain, UK)
    - writing competitions (New Zealand)
    - online book-reading sessions by theatre artists (Republic of Korea)
    - online arts and crafts workshops (China, Mexico)
    - literary work from local writers and publishers included in baskets with food and other necessities (Uruguay)
    - artists, writers, and journalists compiled and digitalised a collection of literary works entitled 'Caring for Each Other is a Human Right' (Iraq)

Digital platforms

- **Importance**: supportive, transparent, enabling environments for communication between stakeholders to share information, provide feedback, work together to manage risks/prevention

- **Challenges and needs:** digital capacity, digital devices

- **Example**:
    - creation of a virtual platform for those aged over 65 (Mantes-la-Jolie, France)

The private sector

- **Importance**: provision of financial and other resources, relevant capacities and expertise, alternative ways of finding solutions

- **Challenges and needs:** supportive policies and regulations to ensure the private sector thrives and benefits communities; building trust between actors

- **Example**:
  - *Togetherall*, a Digital Mental Health Support Service (global): service free to users and utilised by some 250 private and public sector organisations
  - Platform *COVIDHQ Africa*, The Mastercard Foundation: storytelling to share experiences of COVID-19, challenges, and practices to build resilience (public awareness role, countering misinformation)

Recommendations

1. Joined-up, multi-sectoral planning, action and service provision and multi-level partnerships to ensure inclusivity and targeted action

2. Targeted skills development, especially digital skills and information and media literacy

3. Strengthening adult, community and youth services, historically under-resourced, but closest to citizens – to build learning systems that support the most vulnerable

4. Platforms for public engagement and cooperation

5. Mutual learning: appropriate transfer of learnings and initiatives from other contexts

Thank you!

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