# Background Report: Lithuania

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# 1. General information on the Learning City of Kaunas

Kaunas, the second city of Lithuania, has moved towards the Learning City in 2001, based on learning partnership networks. Several stages of the development may be described:

- **Initiating** in 2000- 2001. The initiator was the Institute of Educational Studies at KTU (Head prof. Palmira Juceviciene).

- **Creating** of the general network of the Learning City  (the main agents: Institute of Educational Studies, Institute of Business Strategy, KTU, and the Municipality of Kaunas). The result – the General network and the Learning City  Council were established in 2004 (see Figure 1).

The network which influences the development of Kaunas into a Learning City realises a great number of goals:

- Teaming up all the people and organisations who are able and willing to contribute to a common purposeful activity for the development of the city;
- Developing and supporting partnership networks among the residents and organisations of Kaunas;
- Training learning consultants;
- Developing the contemporary competence of learning in  the residents of Kaunas City;
- Developing different kinds of organisations (both educational and non-educational) to become learning organizations;
- Disseminating and implementing newly created knowledge and innovations for the purpose of a more effective performance;
- Analysis of the cases of the learning cities and their associations around the world, etc.

- **The Strategy of the Learning City** was developed and adopted by the Learning City  Council; it was approved by the Municipality of Kaunas as part of the city development strategy in 2002.

- **Different networks of the Learning City**  - of local communities, schools, colleges, universities, business organizations, theatres, museums, other organizations, associations, municipality and its organizations – are have been in the process of continuing development for reaching different objectives identified in the Strategy of the Learning City   since 2004.
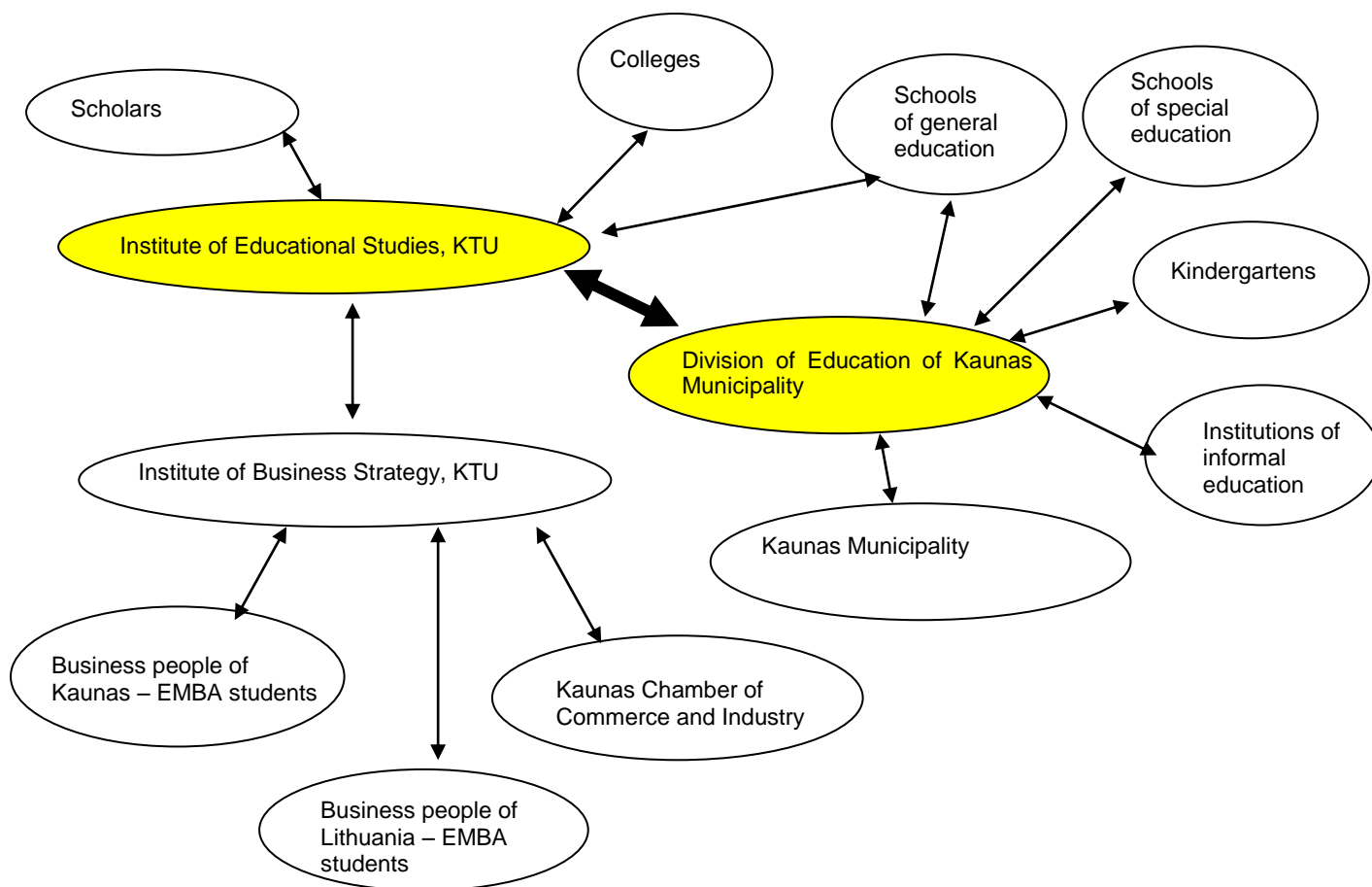
Figure 1. The general network for developing Kaunas into the Learning City

## 2. The genesis of Kaunas as the Learning City

The initiators of the network that form the backbone of the project *Kaunas – the Learning City* can be considered the Institute of Educational Studies of Kaunas University of Technology (KTU). The idea of developing Kaunas into the Learning City emerged in this scholars group. It relied to a large extent on the ideas of Norman Longworth described in his book 'Making lifelong learning work: learning cities for a learning century' (2000) and the experience accumulated by KTU researchers. The researchers have involved the Division of Education of Kaunas Municipality, which

provided its enthusiastic support to the proposal. Later, the Municipality of Kaunas city was also made familiar with the idea, and it agreed the plan to develop Kaunas into the Learning City.

In 2000, based on the analysis and assessment of European, Japanese and American experience, a full strategy for the Learning City development and the methodology of its implementation was drafted. After the municipality had officially confirmed the aim of creating Kaunas as a Learning City, it became a member of the European Lifelong Learning Initiative (ELLI). The first stage of drafting a complex programme 'Kaunas – the Learning City' was launched.

In 2001, at the city conference 'The Learning City – a vision of Kaunas' future' the conceptual guidelines of the Learning City were adopted. It was decided to put into practice a plan in which the city is capable of:

- discovering the learning needs of its inhabitants and understands that they can change;
- supporting the continuous learning of its inhabitants;
- making its citizens aware of the need of continuous learning;
- directing learning efforts towards building competences that enable success in life and at work; these competences are perceived in the broadest sense – not only as capabilities, but also as knowledge, attitudes and values underlying the quality of life of individual and its surrounding environment;
- building learning partnership networks among individuals, their groups, communities and organizations;
- providing learning through information and communications technologies;
- transforming organizations into learning organizations;
- involving citizens in the improvement of city life and the environment;
- encouraging professionally and emotionally  learning in the families;
- promoting learning in various ways, such as using the media, dissemination of  'good practice', festivals of learning and other means;
- uniting the efforts of business, non-governmental organizations, educational institutions and other organizations into one whole by enabling continuous learning of individuals and organizations in attaining modern competences, competitiveness in the market, quality leisure time and good relationships;
- creating learning centres at city level, and developing the functions of the city libraries up to the level of the learning centres and supporting their activities;
- making available an organizational structure – the Committee/Commission of the Learning City.

The following main traits of the Learning City have also been emphasised: a) the acquisition of necessary knowledge through research and practice, the development of capabilities, attitudes and values in formal, informal and non-formal ways (e.g. by emphasising experiential and collective learning); b) using up to date skills and

competences of learning; c) identifying the characteristics of learning communities; d) creating new learning partnership networks; e) utilising modern means of communication; f) understanding the local and global nature of learning and partnerships; g) developing learning organizations.

Before the Learning City Council was created, the function of coordinating its development was given over to the Division of Education of Kaunas city. One has to note that the development of Kaunas into the Learning City has always been based on the principle of *praxis,* where knowledge is born at the interaction between theory and practice and when researchers and practitioners cooperate. Initially, the focus was on ways of stimulating the processes of individual and collective learning in the city as a value in itself; there were attempts to put this into practice. The paradigm of the 'double aim' for both sustainable development and the Learning City was not yet visible at that point.

## 3. Further development of Kaunas towards the Learning City

In the period from 2002 to 2007 the city made many efforts to develop the services of formal and non-formal education. The Learning City Council was founded and started its activities. Many special events – forums, conferences, and seminars – took place in the city that contributed to the dissemination of information about the Learning City and its development, promoting particularly the participation of citizens. The city was included in the European Commission Learning City projects and other international activities (in particular, the SOCRATES project PASCAL European Network of Learning Regions - PEN3RL). However, one should admit that coordinating the fragmented activities of all institutions (education, culture, business, etc.) into one common direction was not a great success, even though the Learning City development was explicit as part of the strategic plan of Kaunas city. Such a situation raised the need to prepare a special strategy for developing Kaunas as the Learning City. This included:

*Research.* Significant attention was paid not only to the practical steps in developing the Learning City, but also to the research that would make it more successful.

*The learning needs and innovativeness of citizens* which were surveyed in 2002 (729 respondents, representing various groups of city inhabitants) and in 2003 (800 respondents). The research was carried out by the researchers of the Institute of Educational studies of Kaunas University of Technology, led by the author of this paper. It was noticed that the preferred learning needs of citizens were to a large extent related to obtaining and developing information-based (emphasis on IT literacy) and communication-based (emphasis on foreign languages, especially English) capabilities. The strongest motivation for learning belonged to families rather than employers. However, more pragmatic learning motives prevailed. The inhabitants were not inclined to pay for their studies. Young people were more inclined to learn in the frame of formal and non-formal education, whereas the older

people were more into sharing their experience. Women were generally more favourable to learning and developing themselves than were the men. The citizens demanded modern rather than traditional forms of learning. However, the real meaning of learning from experience was understood rather superficially and lacking the depth and possibilities described by constructivist writers (Jarvis, Holford & Griffin, 2004). In effect, modern learning competences were missing. However, the citizens of Kaunas placed emphasis not only on the material, but also on the spiritual, interests of their learning, and their scope was not particularly balanced.

The system of social-economic and managerial factors influencing the Learning City development has also been researched.

*Social-economic factors.* Jucevicius (2007) has distinguished the following economic factors that influenced the development of the Learning City as:

- the emerged or emerging middle class,
- egalitarian social structure and equal opportunities,
- functioning market mechanisms and innovative private enterprises,
- the presence and participation of educational institutions,
- entrepreneurship and openness of social-economic system,
- finance for innovation, technological infrastructure.

From this, it was concluded that Kaunas possessed the basic preconditions for the further development of a Learning City – the basic market institutions were present and functioning, a low level of unemployment (at that time), a widely accessible system of education, educated inhabitants constituted a significant share of the population, especially in the fields of engineering and management, a high level of start-ups. However, some findings showed that these basic framework conditions were not, in themselves, sufficient for effective innovative activities of citizens, communities and organizations. Jucevicius (2007) indicated an extremely low level of citizen expenditure on education and low organizational investment into science and research. In the author's opinion, neither inhabitants nor organizations were personally responsible for the processes of learning and innovation. He also noticed that this trend was also reflected by the statistics on innovation: many of the widely used innovation indicators were not calculated at the city level. So he suggested a need for a greater emphasis on leadership and management factors that would compensate for the not yet fully functioning social-economic aspects of the learning city at this time.

*The management factors* that now influenced the Learning City development were based on the ideas of knowledge management suggested by Newell *et al.* (2002). This enabled a conceptualisation model of innovative activities within communities. The researcher identified that the parameters that were particularly related to management aspects were the following:

- political commitment,
- public information,
- promoting partnerships,
- developing the leaders of learning,
- promotion of values of continuous learning,
- promoting  technological development,
- mobilization of citizens,
- organization of the events of learning.

These management factors were closely related to the socio-economic factors of the Learning City.

*The presence of management factors and their links with economic factors.* The empirical findings of this research led to the conclusion that learning was largely perceived as an activity initiated by teaching. It was reflected in research into socio-economic factors that investment into education was predominantly a public rather than a private activity. Even the surveyed experts tended to misperceive the Learning City as a place whose inhabitants participated mainly in processes of *formal* learning. All this pointed to the importance of the management factors, such as greater political commitment to the Learning City initiative, more public information about the Learning City, educating its leaders, and promoting the values of lifelong education by emphasising the new paradigm of *learning*.

Jucevicius (2007) also discovered that the offerings of the various organizations connected with learning were fragmented, and made little contribution to the Learning City implementation. The market context by itself did little to increase innovativeness in individuals and organizations. The author believes that the successful performance of individuals and organizations depends on their common understanding of the innovation process as collective learning and would improve by the creation of learning partnership networks. It is a combination of such management factors as establishing partnerships and mobilizing citizens, as well as expressions of political commitment and public information. The other management factors, for example the promotion of a welfare and information society were related to the existence of a larger emerging middle class and a more robust technological infrastructure.

Thus, even though one might claim the existence of the basic economic preconditions for developing Kaunas into the Learning City, their presence/emergence was, unfortunately, too fragmented and uncoordinated, i.e. these factors were not a product of systematic management actions. Most of the

factors that called for coordinated implementation were found to be in the initial phase of development. Some were in fact being implemented, but without proper understanding that they were of importance to Learning City objectives. These research findings led to the observation of a certain management paradox: i.e. that the success of Learning City implementation depends on finding an effective balance between management and socio-economic factors, enabling *decentralised* learning of individuals and organizations through *centralised* municipal policy measures.

*Research on the implementation of educational functions by city organizations.* In 2006, the Institute of Education studies of KTU researched the educational functions of 398 organizations in Kaunas city. It was taken as a basic conceptual assumption that every organization, whether modern or traditional, has to fulfil an educational function to ensure its development. The educational functions of traditional organization are usually associated with the training of its employees. These educational functions are implemented by organizing all types of training and internships inside and outside the organization (programmes at universities and high schools, etc.). In this respect, a modern organization would normally be a learning organization (Senge, 1990; Pedler, Burgoyne & Boydell, 1991). The educational responsibility of a learning organization will ensure continuous individual and collective improvement inside, as well as outside, the organization, working with potential employees, clients, customers, partners, competitors and other stakeholders. In the best case, the educational functions are implemented not by placing emphasis on employee training, but rather on creating a learning environment inside the organization that encourages continuous individual and collective learning.

The research results have revealed that most organizations in Kaunas city were more explicitly focused on the training of their employees, rather than creating a learning culture. Although some traits of a learning organization were detected, especially in the pre-school establishments, secondary schools, high schools, bookstores, banks and tourism organizations, we were not able to find any true learning organizations which fulfilled the criteria as normally defined in the city. The research also revealed that there were some organizations that fulfilled no educational functions at all, i.e. were not interested even in improving the standards or qualifications of their own employees.

In parallel with the research and reflection on its results, practical activities of developing the Learning City were taking place. As the idea of the Learning City was spread among the citizens; the so local communities were becoming increasingly active. Most schools of the city aspired to become learning organizations. Some of them, coordinated by the Institute of Educational Studies, KTU, joined the European Elos Network (the European network that connects secondary schools and education advisory organisations in order to promote European citizenship among secondary school students). Executives of business organizations also became interested in the ideas of the Learning City. The Learning City Council, involving the representatives of

different interest groups, was aiming to coordinate its activities. As a result of this movement, the Learning City Council and some of member organisations raised the following question: is the development of the Learning City, when learning processes are empowered at different levels, an aim in *itself*? Can its benefits be increased?

The activities of the PENR3L project were carried out together between six universities and other organizations from six EU countries, including KTU. Other projects on sustainable development were also carried out by KTU and the city Municipality, inspiring the notion that the learning processes and skills that were being developed may be an excellent tool (but only a tool) for solving the everyday problems of individual citizens, communities and organizations that require innovative approaches. As a result of scholars and practitioners working together, the concept of the sustainable development of Kaunas into the learning city based on the 'double aim' was formulated. But the vision of Kaunas as a *sustainable* Learning city still had to be agreed upon.

## 4. The vision of Kaunas as Sustainable Learning City

The starting project of this vision in 2007 was entrusted to the researchers at the Institute of Educational Studies at Kaunas University of Technology (coordinated by the author of this article). The conceptual background was to strengthen the general preconditions for the emergence of innovative community. The Sustainable Learning City is based on the creation of an innovative community of sustainable life and development. This city draws on the following principles for sustainable policy and behaviour as formulated by Becker (2003):

1. Stability and vitality of the system.
2. Environmental sustainability.
3. Economic sustainability.
4. Social sustainability.
5. Cultural sustainability.
6. Educational sustainability.
7. International issues of sustainability.

This means that **if**
- The social interests of actors are realised, and cooperation and a learning culture is developed  the city is a community-based city, a city that is sensitive to individuals and their families , an intellectual and educational city; a city of culture;
- The economic interests of actors are fulfilled, the city is an entrepreneurial and high value-added producing city, a city promoting the opportunities;

- The environmental interests of actors are satisfied, the city is an *environmentally friendly city, a healthy city, a safe city;*
- The technological infrastructure is developed and actively used, the city is an *e-city;*
- An interaction between all the above-mentioned general preconditions takes place; the city is *intelligent and innovative,* and, by being so, confirms the high qualities of the city.

**A community-based city** promotes the active participation of the city inhabitants in city life and in solving its problems; supports good neighbourhood practices at the level of local governance. It is capable of democratically solving the problems of the city and its inhabitants. The city provides full support to the initiatives of the location-based neighbourhood; supports the sense of city and community identity among its inhabitants.

**A city sensitive to individuals and their families** publicly expresses respect for individuals and their families. It is friendly to family lifestyles; provides moral, psychological and educational support to families; consults young couples and provides informal education on family life management, medicine, psychology, education, work career, business start-up and management; promotes learning families; ensures childcare possibilities in pre-school educational institutions; ensures life-long and life-wide learning possibilities in the city.

**An intellectual and educating city** means professionally and democratically solving issues important to the city; recognizing the individual and collective intelligence of its inhabitants and, on this basis, seeking instruments to develop as the Learning City. It provides a quality pre-school and secondary school education to all the children of the city; ensures the competence of children, youth and adults in planning their life and career path and provides advice on these issues by helping to reconcile the interests of the city and its inhabitants in this area. The city also provides as a right, city-level advice to parents and helps create the learning partnership networks of parents and teachers, in which they can share their experiences; involves experts in various education-related fields, especially in professional careers, educating children and youth (experts should also include pensioners); ensures quality training of the specialists in the areas of importance to the city. It supports the effective functioning of all stages of education (from pre-school to university education and continued education), as well as a smooth transition from one stage to another based on the linkages among formal, informal and non-formal education The city supports all city organizations in carrying out their educational functions related to the upgrading of employee qualifications, as well as providing a sufficient supply of the possibilities of informal and non-formal education. It promotes research activities in the city and acts upon the results of this research.

**A city of culture** is capable of effectively balancing its cultural heritage with the needs of modern life and includes European as well as multi-cultural dimensions

(Sassatelli, 2008); it promotes high standards of work culture, inspires city inhabitants to adopt cultured lifestyles. It promotes the professional and amateur arts. The city cherishes its history, cultural and artistic traditions, and celebrates city festivals as cultural events. It also maintains a culture of family, 'being together,' and motivates citizens to keep to it.

**An entrepreneurial and high value-added producing city** is business-friendly, promoting the entrepreneurial spirit of its inhabitants (Gillen, 2009), creating high standards of quality of life. It provides special educational programmes promoting entrepreneurship and creating educational environments that foster it. The city has an effective regional business system, numerous knowledge-based enterprises that base their activities on modern technologies and creative methods of work organization, and many effectively functioning business clusters and networks.

**A city promoting opportunities:** notices and recognises the positive initiatives of citizens, communities and organizations on issues important to the city, local communities and organizations; it develops the capabilities of inhabitants, communities and organizations by its educational, organizational, management, psychological and other kinds of support.

**An environmentally-friendly city** is a green city, rationally using its water and energy resources and fights against pollution; it makes sensitive and rational solutions to the welfare of animals in the city.

**A healthy city** promotes healthy lifestyles among its inhabitants from an early age , creates conditions to return to a healthy lifestyle for people with addictions. It promotes understanding of healthcare issues among inhabitants, ensures an effective healthcare system, and creates **c**omfortable and ergonomic physical infrastructure for all its inhabitants. According to Tsouros *et al.,* (1998), special attention is paid to the universities that might have a mission to act as health promoting universities.

**A safe city** ensures the safety of its inhabitants at work  as well as providing and ecologically safe environment and paying attention to the physical safety of citizens and their property in the streets, other public places and at home. It also creates conditions for the safety of children at home and at school. This concept of the Safe City is narrower than the one Axworthy, Fallick and Ross (2006) use to define a secure city, as it is combined with other issues of a sustainable city.

**An E-city (reflecting the essence of the e-Kaunas strategic plan for 2006-2015):** has a network enabling data exchange encompassing all sectors (municipality, education, healthcare, transport, culture and others), as well as a system of information services that  provides the stakeholders with all the necessary information on social, economic and cultural life of the city. It creates an *electronic card for the city*, as well as a modern internet site that effectively provides information

for local needs and world-wide, and **c**arries out an effective public relations campaign of e-city ideas in all types of media.

**An intelligent city** understands the most important trends influencing city development, their potential consequences, and is capable of using this understanding timely for solving development tasks. Such a city is usually understood to combine two approaches: a) a stress on applied information technologies and virtual spaces to urban functions and activities (it is closely related to the e-city); b) an emphasis on a real environment for technological innovation based on clusters and institutions for R&D, and product and process innovation (Komninos, 2002, 2006). A broader approach is applied when the city understands all the political, social, intellectual and other resources that are present, as well as on regional, national and international levels, and is capable of making proper use of them for city development. Many enterprises, organizations and institutions of the city possess collective intelligence systems. The city is capable of obtaining and disseminating the information needed for learning and improvement as well as for problem-solving. The intelligent city as a 'smart' city (Bronstein, 2009) is capable of capturing the 'best practices' of sustainable learning cities and using them for development and problem-solving.

**An innovative city** develops and promotes the innovation culture of its inhabitants; is capable of using these in providing creative solutions. Dvir & Pasher (2004) refer to 'innovation engines' that supply the generation and dissemination of knowledge that adds value in the city. They tend to refer to these cities as *knowledge cities* rather than innovative cities. No matter how they are referred to, such cities identify and are capable of implementing innovations that inspire organizations, communities and families. The city promotes innovative organizations and innovative businesses, as well as innovations in education, culture and other areas of social life (Marceau, 2008; Wang, 2007).

**The strategic aim of developing Kaunas into the Learning City** has been described as follows: to enable the individual and collective learning of citizens 'at all times and in all places', as well as fostering the organizational learning of the city and its organizations and communities in a way that would  solve problems of importance to the city, its inhabitants, communities and organizations and develop in a sustainable way those aspects that would enable Kaunas to become a first-class place  for living and working, and a favourable location to develop economic and social  activity.

In 2010 the Network functions on two levels:

a) *Network of Agents for the Learning City*: Coordinator – the Learning City Council; Executive Body - Division of Education at the Municipality of Kaunas, Scientific Advisor - Institute of Educational Studies at KTU.
b) The Learning City different networks - local communities, schools, colleges, universities, business organizations, theatres, museums, other organizations, associations, municipality and its organizations.

## 5. Cooperation of the network partners with each other

*1. The case of schools network (Network A)*

In this report, one of the learning networks of Kaunas as the Learning City– a network of schools which consists of all schools of general education, 69 schools in total, is presented.

The aim of this network is educating active citizens who are provided with quality general education under the conditions of limited resources allocated for education. The performance of this network may be characterised by learning the principles of management, leadership, developing learning organizations, cultural development, dissemination of good practice. The coordinator of this network is the Division of Education of Kaunas Municipality; the facilitator's role is played by Kaunas Centre of Teachers' Qualification.

The Institute of Educational Studies at KTU, aiming to assist the main agents in the network to acquire relevant competence, organised Master's studies in Educational Management for school managers and teachers, as well as specialists working for the Division of Education. More than 300 teachers completed this programme in the recent decade; they became part of the teachers' learning partnership network.

Ten schools of Kaunas are involved in the European network of Learning schools Elos (developed as a result of two Comenius projects).

Some new activities have been initiated recently. One of them is a conference of school representatives for solving the problems of school restructuring. It is not an episodic but an institutionalized activity when school representatives act together and discuss the issues of school restructuring. Another important aspect is involvement of all the schools of general education, together with community centres, for developing a safe environment for students. The schools in partnerships encourage the community centres and, at the same time, local communities and families for activities targeted at the success of the educational process. As a result of this activity, students' school attendance has significantly improved and the number of

teenage delinquents has decreased. The third direction of performance are common discussions and suggestions for the Lithuanian Parliament on the amendment to the Law of Education.

The Municipality is financing a special TV show 'The School Window' on the second programme of the National Television. The schools present their projects, innovations, initiatives of school communities and their achievements. The schools also communicate on the communication platform established and coordinated by the Division of Education. These are opportunities for schools to share information and examples of good practice.

In addition, the Municipality has an agreement with the daily paper '15 minučių' ('15 Minutes'), which provides updated information of schools' activities, discussions on the issues of organizing the process of education and school management.

There is also a network of subject teachers. There are 32 methodological boards established according to different fields of activity; they involve all the teachers of the city. The performance of the councils is coordinated by elected chairpersons, whereas the cooperation is monitored by Kaunas Centre of Teachers' Qualification and the Division of Education.

Teachers' activities in the network has recently intensified as they started establishing students' business enterprises. There is a continuing sharing of information, events are organized not only in schools but also in business enterprises and big shopping centres. All school managers are members of School Managers Association, they are also members of the national Association. This Association also involves the Division of Education and the Department of Education and Culture of the Municipality. The most important decisions on issues of Education development are made in common, information is shared.

In Kaunas, a learning partnership network of institutions for pre-school education also exists. Its performance is based on similar principles.

Thus the network of schools in the city consists of different networks developed aiming for the improvement of education quality. The result of its performance is the achievements of schools and students that are rated as the best in the country.

2.  *The case of municipality, business, education and culture agents network (Network B)*

**Another informal network** has been developed for solving the problem of revitalizing the Centre (the Downtown - Laisvės alėja) and the Old Town of Kaunas. The aim of the network is to revitalize the centre and the Old Town of Kaunas to make them more attractive for local people and tourists.

*Some history*

When in the Central part of Kaunas a  mega-shopping centre 'Akropolis' (which draws on the concept 'a city within a city') was built in 2007, the number of people visiting the Downtown (Laisvės alėja) and the Old Town of Kaunas has dramatically decreased. Businesses have expired in this part of Kaunas. This problem became more severe because of the economic crisis. Still, Laisvės alėja and the Old Town of Kaunas are pedestrian areas that could be attractive to people according to urbanistic principles. A lot of cultural and educational establishments are situated in this area (four theatres, five museums, two universities, etc).

*Development of Network B*

Relatively, one may speak about a single network, even though two parts of this are visible:

   *a)* the part of the Old Town in the network;
   *b)* the part of Laisvės alėja (the Avenue of Liberty, the main pedestrian street of the city) in the network.

(a) This part of the network was initiated by business people who attracted the initiatives of those in culture and education, representatives of not only formal institutions but also informal, e.g. groups of amateur artists; the part of the network was supported by the Municipality. However, business people should be regarded as the organizers of this part of the network.

(b) Another part of the network was initiated by theatres and universities. Business people joined them; the Municipality has granted their support. Above all, the universities should be regarded as the organizers of this part of the network.

When the Municipality started to support both parts of the network, it also played the role of a coordinator providing opportunities for the two parts to become one network. A highlight of this activity was the conference 'The Opportunities of Cultural Life in the Downtown and the Old Town of Kaunas' organised by the Department of Education and Culture at the Municipality of Kaunas 17 September 2010. It discussed considerable results of revitalising the centre and the Old Town of Kaunas according to the following scheme: cultural events- attracting local people and tourists- encouraging business- increasing the cash flow- support of business for culture and education.

The ideas of the Master's thesis 'Revitalising Laisvės alėja from the point of view of consumer behaviour' (written at Kaunas University of Technology) were presented at the conference. The thesis draws on a comparative analysis of city centres in other

countries and research on the local people of Kaunas to provide a perspective for the development of Kaunas city centre.

The participants of the conference noted effective effort of all partners in the network. Life in the Old Town has been revitalised, which attracts new customers for the business. A conclusion was made that revitalising the Downtown (Laisvės alėja) now has to be a priority task which has to be solved using the potential of all partners in the network.

Thus the two above described networks are an illustration of effective network performance:  these networks are able to share experience with other networks.

## 6. The leading actors in the network and how are they involved in the project

There are several 'gatekeepers' of the Learning City:

The coordinator – the Committee of the Learning City, scientific advisor – Institute of Educational Studies, Kaunas University of Technology.

In the case of network A:  The coordinator of the network is the Department of Education and Culture of Kaunas Municipality. It is responsible for maintaining the partnership with the Institute of Educational Studies at KTU, coordination of schools and institutions of non-formal education, also the performance of Kaunas Centre of Teachers' Qualification;

In the case of network B: The network coordinator is the Department of Education and Culture of Kaunas Municipality.

The management of the network and its hubs on the operational and strategic level

   a) The Learning City Council (formed by order of the Mayor, functions on a voluntary basis), involves representatives of different enterprises and organizations is responsible for developing the strategies of the Learning City;
   b) The Municipality of Kaunas which makes strategic decisions on developing Kaunas as the Learning City;
   c) The Committee of the Learning City is responsible for coordination of different activities of a Learning City development
   d) The Department of Education and Culture of Kaunas Municipality responsible for supporting the performance of the Learning City Council and systemic performance of cultural and educational institutions for developing the Learning City.

## 7. The current quality practice

The quality mechanisms are in the phase of development. Currently we rely on the following statements:

*A learning partnership network: main conceptual statements*

1. Drawing on Tichy (1981), Garavan, Costine and Heraty (1995), a network is treated as social capital.
2. Particular attention is paid to the relations among members of the network; the essence of the relations is given a precise description by the theory of social exchange which defines networks as exchange in the group – between two or more members (Blankenburg, Eriksson and Johanson, 1997).
3. Experiential learning is learning from one's own and common with others performance. The main method of learning is reflection.
4. Reference is made to the Theory of Social Learning which allows treating learning as social participation. This implies more than communication with individual people in particular cases. The emphasis is on involvement into the practice of social communities and developing identity in line with the relationships to these communities.
5. Networks may be created among people and organizations (inter-organizational networks).
6. Learning partnership networks may be prescribed or emergent (Tichy, 1981). A prescribed network is usually formed with reference to the performance carried out in an organization or among several organizations. An emergent network is treated as having a certain compensatory effect: this network emerges because the forming of the prescribed network has not considered all the relations relevant for the performance. Emergent networks are informal structure in an organization or among organizations; they are spontaneously formed as people associate with each other. The main difference between prescribed and emergent networks is that the former focus on duties and responsibility, whereas the latter on individuals and their interrelations.
7. The feature of inter-organizational networks is that they function as prescribed networks among organizations but in reality an emergent network also is formed on its basis; the performance of the prescribed network is usually effective when an emergent network is functioning in addition to the prescribed network.
8. A network may be characterised by its aim, participants, relations among them, functioning ('sequence of events'), structure of coordination. Participants may be agents and members. Agents of the network are subjects (individuals, groups or organizations) involved into the performance of the network. Members of the network are its agents aware and conscious of their membership in the network.
9. A learning partnership network is based on <u>communication and collaboration</u> (according to Osguthorpe, Harris, Harris and Black (1995), collaboration is

cooperative activity which has common aims and commitment; collaboration usually is multifaceted, i.e. it has more than one aim) and learning from each other.

10. Effective performance of learning partnership networks is conditioned by effective communication.

*A learning partnership network is presented drawing on the following characteristics:*

1. The essence of the network (nature: prescribed or emergent); members (what people and organizations) and their relationships; coordinating structure (if it exists).
2. Genesis of the network.

*Quality management characteristics for learning partnership networks:*

1. The network has a clearly defined **aim** of its functioning; the aim is familiar to all members of the network.
2. The network has developed and agreed on **rules** that facilitate its functioning.
3. All members of the network are aware of their **membership**, understand the rules and stick to them.
4. **Management** provides conditions for a successful functioning of the network: every partnership should have clear aims and objectives, plans for their implementation in terms of time and quality; at least one of the managers in member organizations should be responsible for the success of the partnership; the network should have a manager and secretarial assistance that maintain its functioning; management of the network should be active, encouraging participation and contribution (Longworth, 2003); learning in partnership should be defined as an aim or as a means of reaching the aim; the network should have developed mechanisms for maintaining learning in partnership (Juceviciene, 2007).
5. Effective **communication** that facilitates reaching the aims (regular meetings of the network, electronic and other forms of communication), informs about the progress.
6. The **nature of relationships** in the network: the relationships are based on trust, assistance, exchange of information, stability of relationship (manifested as partners' determination to maintain the relationships, even though this is not an easy task), commitment.
7. Every member of the network enlarges their resources by acting in the network, develops by communicating and cooperating in performance and exchanging information; all this is treated as personal **benefit** and benefit for the Learning City.

## 8. The role of EU policies, R3L+ project, added value and transfer strategies

As mentioned above the initiative of the network *Kaunas – the Learning City* emerged inspired by the existing research (e.g. Longworth's 'Making lifelong learning work: learning cities for a learning century' (2000)) and the experience accumulated by KTU researchers rather than under direct influence of EU policies. The researchers involved the Division of Education of Kaunas Municipality, which provided its enthusiastic support to the proposal. Later, the Municipality of Kaunas City agreed the plan to develop Kaunas into the Learning City.

After the municipality had officially confirmed the aim of developing Kaunas into the Learning City, it became a member of the European Lifelong Learning Initiative (ELLI). The city was included in the European Commission Learning City projects and was involved in other international activities (in particular, the SOCRATES project PASCAL European Network of Learning Regions - PENR3L) provided an opportunity to share experience and to learn from partners with a rich experience in the development of the Learning City/Region.

| Country: Lithuania | Policy Framework | Scope | Lead sector | Locus of control | Organisational type of network | Dimensions (vertical, horizontal) | Key issues | Key elements of regional/local strategy | Financing | Role and improvement of quality |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| MACRO-level (city level) | Regional development programme | City | Public administration and higher education | Regional committee | Formalised | Bottom-up | Promoting life-long learning and sustainable development | sustainable development; capacity building; human capital development; creativity and innovation; social cohesion; life-long learning. | public budget; business. | Policy formation and development; social dialogue;development of learning organizationsstakeholder consultation on regional learning strategies; building of local development platforms; knowledge transfer; developing creativity and learning-to-learn skills; creating equal learning opportunities for citizens; urban development. |
| MICRO-level<br><br>Two particular networks:<br>**a)** network of schools;<br>**b)** network for city centre development | **a)** programme for development of school network;<br>**b)** local development initiative | **a)** all schools of the city (69);<br>**b)** local initiative of business, culture and education institutions | **a)** Education<br>**b)** Business, education and culture | **a)** Department of Education;<br>**b)** Department of Culture and Education (co-ordinating role) | **a)** formalized;<br>**b)** non-formal | **a)** top-down;<br>**b)** bottom-up | **a)** promoting quality of education and life-long learning;<br>**b)** sustainable development of Kaunas city centre | **a)** capacity building; human capital development; social cohesion; life-long learning;<br>**b)** sustainable development; capacity building; human capital development; creativity and innovation; social cohesion; life-long learning. | **a)** public budget,<br>**b)** public and business. | **a)** development of learning organizations; building of local development platforms; knowledge transfer; developing creativity and learning-to-learn skills; creating equal learning opportunities for citizens.<br>**b)** social dialogue; building of local development platforms; developing creativity and learning-to-learn skills; urban development. |

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