



12th International Congress of Educating Cities “Green Environment, Creative Education” The Changwon Declaration

Under the theme of *Green Environment, Creative Education*, the 12th International Congress of Educating Cities was held from 25 to 29 April 2012 in Changwon, Korea. Based on the Educating Cities Charter, the principles resulting from the Earth Summit (Rio de Janeiro, 1992), and the Objectives of the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, the participants at the 12th International Congress of Educating Cities discussed and debated what roles they must play, and how to face the challenges to increase sustainability not just with regard to the environment, but also in social, cultural and economic terms. This Congress also explored and exchanged innovative educational practices and experiences to transform cities into sustainable ones that would lead to a better quality of life for all citizens.

Representatives from 54 member cities from 17 countries and 298 non-member cities from 25 countries, as well as experts, practitioners, members of various international organizations and representatives of civil society attended to this Congress, the first to be held in Asia. Special mention should be made of the fact that 154 cities from the Asia Pacific region participated in the Congress.

Participants of this Congress declare that Educating Cities should be committed to the following principles:

- Educating Cities must make conscious efforts to transform perspectives and ways of thinking and living into ones that are more harmonious and respectful of nature. That change would require creative education to foster people’s critical understanding and keen awareness of general interests and the common good, of solidarity, of culture, and of the environment.
- Educating Cities must work to change the ways cities are governed; to update city infrastructures by applying sustainable criteria; to devise effective policies on public space, ecomobility and biodiversity; and to develop cooperative actions for sustainable urban living.
- Educating Cities must encourage more actions taken and increase communication channels in order to develop an exchange of good practices and put into place strategic plans for urban sustainability in the areas of transportation, tourism, energy, and urban agriculture as well as



architecture and design. Furthermore, Educating Cities must anticipate the necessary changes, taking into consideration the causes and consequences of climate change and focusing on solutions to it.

- Educating Cities must move towards democratic, inclusive and ecological governance which supports citizen participation and coexistence. Educating Cities must seek an integrated networking of social values, and provide creative education for citizens to take the necessary steps towards sustainable development and to increase awareness that sustainable living is important, desirable, and achievable. Urban policies and programs must encourage equity and equal opportunities, regardless of gender, ethnic or cultural origins, social-economic status, religion or physical condition.

- Educating Cities must stimulate creative education within the context of lifelong education. They must create innovative educational mechanisms which go beyond the conventional, school-based educational system, and embrace education in the city at large, where urban space becomes a lifelong learning center and a base for the creative, communicative, and critical practice of education. As a flexible, enriching open space, the city offers a means to put into practice the importance of a sustainable environment, cultural diversity, and social justice.

This Congress has stressed the notion that the changes for a sustainable environment must occur in, by and for the Educating City. Creative education is absolutely necessary in this course of changes, transformations, and innovations. A citizenry that is responsible, participatory, communicative, creative, and aware plays an active role in co-building the sustainable city.

Educating Cities agree to jointly put these principles into practice in order to achieve cohesion and solidarity among human beings as well as their harmonious coexistence with nature.