



About UNESCO-IHE

UNESCO-IHE Institute for Water Education is the largest international graduate water education facility in the world and it is based in Delft, the Netherlands. The Institute confers fully accredited MSc degrees, and PhD degrees in collaboration with partners. Over 15,000 water professionals from more than 160 mainly developing countries and countries in transition have been educated at the Institute.

The mission of UNESCO-IHE is to contribute to the education and training of professionals, to expand the knowledge base through research and to build the capacity of sector organizations, knowledge centres and other institutions active in the fields of water, the environment and infrastructure in developing countries and countries in transition.

www.unesco-ihe.org

Contact us

Are you interested in collaborating with us to explore how the concept of city-to-city learning can help your city become more disaster aware and resilient?

Please contact

Dr. Chris Zevenbergen
Professor of Flood Resilience of Urban Systems
UNESCO-IHE
c.zevenbergen@unesco-ihe.org

Dr. Berry Gersonius
Senior Lecturer in Urban Flood Resilience
UNESCO-IHE
b.gersonius@unesco-ihe.org

Dr.ir. Sebastiaan van Herk
Partner at Bax & Willems Consulting Venturing
s.vanherk@baxwillems.eu

www.unesco-ihe.org/city-2-city-learning

City-to-City Learning for Disaster Resilience Towards secure, sustainable and vibrant cities



UNESCO-IHE
Institute for Water Education

Bax & Willems
Consulting Venturing

City-to-City Learning for Disaster Resilience

Together with the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction and the Dutch Ministry of Infrastructure and Environment, UNESCO-IHE Institute for Water Education is involved in capacity development projects helping cities to learn from each other about disaster resilience.

UNESCO-IHE supports learning initiatives on a wide range of issues, from assessing risks and opportunities to the demonstration of adaptation measures and implementation of strategies.

The key to our approach is working in partnership, addressing the needs of the citizens, policy makers, practitioners and other community stakeholders, by facilitating the exchange of knowledge and experience between member cities. To boost this effort, UNESCO-IHE can leverage its strong global alumni network, consisting of over 15.000 water experts from more than 160 countries. These water professionals are ‘working on the ground’, often in positions of influence and they understand how their city should deal with water-related hazards.



The concept of city-to-city learning and its benefits to cities

Cities around the world are facing unprecedented challenges as they deal with climate change, rapid urbanization, increasing disaster risks, volatile economies and environmental pressures. City-to-city learning aims to build greater institutional and human capacity to accelerate progress towards disaster resilience. The main difference and advantage of this initiative over other capacity development services, such as technical training, is that cities learn together and from each other’s knowledge and experience.

UNESCO-IHE aims for cities to become learning organizations by engaging in city learning networks. Many of the problems cities are facing are shared by other cities, even on the other side of the world. Often they have complementary strengths and weaknesses and by cooperating, they can offer reciprocal support and services.

Six reasons why city-to-city learning is important

1. It accelerates the transfer of knowledge and experience from city to city
2. It fosters the joint creation of new knowledge in cities
3. It empowers local governments by creating a collective voice
4. It reinforces local networks by stimulating active participation of policy makers, practitioners, the private sector, NGOs and citizens
5. It enhances the collective memory of participating cities
6. It increases the capacity of cities to learn



“Increasing resilience in your city is about learning how to lead change. It can seem like a huge challenge at first, until you discover how to start.”

Wouter Lincklaen Ariëns
Leadership Coach at TransformationFirst.Asia™

City-to-city learning as continuous process

The starting point for a city to engage in city-to-city learning, is knowing what needs to be discovered. This could be informed by a self-assessment, which helps a city to understand its gaps and challenges in disaster risk reduction. The next step is to connect cities to this initiative and to organize and facilitate peer learning activities. This is followed by the knowledge transfer and development step, in which the actual knowledge exchange and co-creation with and between cities will take place. Finally, the learning outcomes will be evaluated and the learning process will be adjusted. This will feed into the first step of this continuous process of city-to-city learning.



What we can offer to cities in need

UNESCO-IHE can facilitate city-to-city learning initiatives through its tailor-made training service. This service caters directly to the needs of each city or development organization. The initiative can vary in length and depth, ranging from an exchange of several days, to a tailored city-to-city learning programme in which regular learning activities are mixed with case studies and modules requested by the involved cities.

UNESCO-IHE has, for many decades, assisted cities across the world to become more disaster resilient. Examples can be found at:

www.unesco-ihe.org/city-2-city-learning



“City-to-city learning is the most valuable means of collaboration”

Tamsin Mills
Senior Sustainability Specialist,
City of Vancouver Sustainability Group