

Start Learning Cities UP - Project proposal

Friuli Venezia Giulia Autonomous Region

Project description, previous experiences and planned activities

In 2019, the Friuli Venezia Giulia Autonomous Region activated the regionally directed project "Learning Cities in Friuli Venezia Giulia Pilot Project" within the framework of a partnership with the Municipality of Modi'in Maccabim Re'ut (Israel), the Union of Israeli Municipalities and the Multidisciplinary Centre of Modi'in Maccabim Re'ut.

This international cooperation made it possible to test, through the coordination of the regional administration, the Learning Cities model¹ in the Municipality of Trieste, which in July 2020 obtained UNESCO's recognition as a Learning City, and to set in motion a process to ensure that lifelong learning would be recognised as one of the political priorities of the Autonomous Region of Friuli Venezia Giulia, with a broader and more transversal value with respect to other regional policies - such as family policy - in line with UNESCO's principles of Learning Cities.

In this regard, already in the unitary Programme 2021-2023 of the interventions in the field of lifelong learning and guidance of the Friuli Venezia Giulia Region, pursuant to art. 26 paragraph 1 of Regional Law no. 27 of 21 July 2017, and approved by DGR no. 1012/2020, the regional vision on learning was expressed, which is that of a Learning Region, in which quality *life-long* learning, projected to respond to the needs of the future and carried out in a widespread manner and in formal and non-formal contexts, generates transformative experiences in people, as an essential condition for developing in the individual knowledge and skills that are consistent with the new technologies, as well as the ability to actively interact with complex contexts.

The project also allowed the Friuli Venezia Giulia Autonomous Region to join the international network Pascal² and contributed to the stipulation, in April 2022, of the Joint Memorandum of Understanding between the Friuli Venezia Giulia Region and the Municipality of Modi'in Maccabim Re'ut, which politically and institutionally strengthened the relations between the Friuli Venezia Giulia Region, the Municipality of Modi'in Maccabim Re'ut with its

¹ We live in a rapidly changing world where social, economic and political norms are constantly being redefined. Anthropological and social studies have shown that citizens who acquire new knowledge, skills and attitudes in a wide range of contexts, are better equipped to adapt to social and environmental changes. Lifelong learning and the idea of the learning society, therefore, have a vital role to play in our generation's transition to sustainable societies.

Since the idea of 'lifelong learning' is an essential survival characteristic of humanity and is deeply rooted in all cultures, UNESCO established a Global network of learning cities in 2015. Although the concept has a solid foundation in developed regions, it is also rapidly gaining strength in developing countries and today 294 cities in 76 countries are part of the network.

The objectives of the Global network of learning cities are:

- promote learning from basic school to university studies;
- revitalize learning in families and communities;
- facilitate learning in the workplace;
- extend the use of modern technologies for learning;
- improve quality and foster excellence in learning;
- cultivate a lifelong learning culture.

For the guide on becoming a learning city see

<http://uil.unesco.org/fileadmin/keydocuments/LifelongLearning/learning-cities/en-guidelines-for-building-learningcities.pdf>

²The PASCAL Observatory (Place And Social Capital And Learning) was founded by the RMIT (Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology) and the University of Stirling in 2002 and is now a well-established part of international research on practices to improve the quality of life at regional and local level.

In the PASCAL Observatory, important projects pertaining to social, economic, cultural and environmental development are assessed in order to support the exchange, bilateral or multilateral, between local agencies, cities and communities in different parts of the world aimed at the transfer of knowledge and best practices on regional development.

Specifically, the PASCAL Observatory has included the topic of Learning Cities among its areas of particular interest and supports local, regional and national governments, businesses and work organisations in developing innovative responses to the major challenges that cities are faced with, and in particular that of building sustainable learning cities.

The network includes not only local administrators but also academics and associations and, therefore, membership of the PASCAL Observatory brings a number of benefits to the participating cities and administrations, such as, for example, getting in touch with other cities around the world and networking, in order to exchange good practices on the development of learning cities.

Multidisciplinary centre, and the Union of Israeli Municipalities, identifying specific areas of intervention of common interest.

In this regard, the Regional Law no. 22 of 28 December 2022, in article 7, paragraphs 49 and 53, provided that the Region, in compliance with the aforementioned agreement, should support the international partnership activities with Israel developed in recent years through a multi-year international cooperation project under regional direction, called the "Start *Learning Cities* UP" Project.

The same norm also identifies the possible objectives of the above-mentioned project and in particular: to develop international platforms aimed at implementing innovative lifelong learning models, including digital ones; to foster cooperation and exchanges between Israeli and local municipalities to implement the learning cities model; to develop frameworks aimed at fighting the phenomenon of anti-Semitism; and to foster exchanges between schools at an international level.

This project proposal "Start *Learning Cities* UP" is meant, therefore, to concretely implement and develop some of the areas of intervention highlighted in the aforementioned agreement and indicated in article 7, paragraphs 49 and 53 of Regional Law no. 22/2022.

The objectives of this project proposal are as follows:

1. Foster knowledge and exchange of good practices within the Learning Cities/Learning Region framework;
2. Facilitate mutual acquaintance between the Municipalities located in the territories of the Friuli Venezia Giulia region and in the State of Israel, with a view to collaboration and future twinning;
3. Cooperate on the creation and dissemination of new technologies to improve the quality of services for the citizens, especially in the area of lifelong learning;
4. Organize educational initiatives aimed at fighting the rampant phenomenon of anti-Semitism and related phenomena that generate hatred towards the State of Israel;
5. support education and lifelong learning in order to foster the sustainable development of local communities by enhancing models of learning cities.

These objectives will be developed through the following five work packages (WP), which involve:

1. Setting up a **Platform** to implement an innovative Learning City and Learning Region model at local and national level;
2. Developing **partnerships and exchanges between** Israeli and local **municipalities** to implement the Learning City Model;
3. Developing **Lifelong Learning** models **towards digital hybridisation** in a Learning City/Learning Region;
4. Designing actions to **fight the phenomenon of anti-Semitism** within Learning Cities;
5. Fostering **exchange between schools and students** according to the Breaking Classroom Walls (BCW) model.

The individual WPs are briefly described below, highlighting that they are interrelated, as they are designed and implemented within a common framework, which is the Learning City/Learning Region model.

In addition, all developed outputs will be enhanced and promoted through WP1, which stands as the core of the project.

It is hoped that the project results can be further enhanced with an event dedicated to Learning Cities during the events to be held in Gorizia as part of the "European Capital of Culture Nova Gorica-Gorizia 2025".

Moreover, the project, in addition to its individual outputs, will have wider repercussions, as it may, in the future, contribute to bringing the subject of the Learning City/Learning Region to the attention of the Conference of Italian Regions and Autonomous Provinces through the interregional commissions established at national level.

Project Partners

1. The Autonomous Region of Friuli Venezia Giulia represented by the Lifelong Learning and European Social Fund Service as Lead Partner and managing WP3 for the part pertaining to ESF+ resources

2. Municipality of Gemona del Friuli as a partner participating in the experimentation of the learning cities model in Friuli Venezia Giulia
3. the Institute of International Studies of Gorizia (ISIG), which contributes as a technical partner to the realisation of WP1, WP2, WP3 and WP4
4. University of Trieste - Department of Life Sciences, which contributes as a technical partner to the realisation of WP4
5. ISIS Dante Alighieri of Gorizia, which contributes as a technical partner to the realisation of WP5
6. Municipality of Modi'in Maccabim Re'ut of the State of Israel as an international partner and Learning City
7. Multidisciplinary Centre Modi'in Maccabim Re'ut as an international partner expert in learning cities and implementer of the Israeli learning cities model
8. Ironi Bet Mod'in High School in Modi'in Maccabim Re'ut as a school contributing to the realization of WP5.

Project Activities

The activities to be developed in the project are as follows:

WP1	Setting up a Platform to implement an innovative Learning City and Learning Region model at local and national level
WP2	Developing partnerships and exchanges between Israeli and local municipalities to implement the Learning City Model
WP3	Developing Lifelong Learning models towards digital hybridisation in a Learning City/Learning Region
WP4	Designing actions to fight the phenomenon of anti-Semitism within Learning Cities
WP5	Promoting exchange between schools and students according to the <i>Breaking Classroom Walls</i> (BCW) model

WP 1- Platform

In order to capitalize on and make available to other territorial realities, models and good practices for the dissemination of the Learning City/Learning Region model, it is planned to create a **platform** open to all, which will provide access to good practices, guidelines, and various material, starting from the experiences of the city of Modi'in Maccabim Re'ut with its multidisciplinary centre and of the Autonomous Region of Friuli Venezia Giulia together with the City of Trieste.

The planned **activities** are as follows:

- Setting up of an English-language IT platform open to all, where best practices, guidelines, various materials on local, national and international experiences can be collected;
- Identification of a model for selecting and 'prototyping' good practices;
- Selection of good practices in the Friuli Venezia Giulia region and Israel, their 'prototyping' and inclusion in the platform;
- Selection of good practices at national and international level, their 'prototyping' and inclusion in the platform;
- Realisation of informational and educational events/seminars, also in partnership with the Pascal network;
- Activity monitoring.

The **partners** involved are the Friuli Venezia Giulia Autonomous Region, the Multidisciplinary Centre of Modi'in Maccabim Re'ut, the Institute of International Studies of Gorizia (ISIG), in partnership with the Pascal network.

The planned financial resources amount to a total of € 70,000.00 during the three-year period 2023 - 2025.

The aforementioned resources are assigned to ISIG, as technical partner, and are used to cover the costs for internal staff employed in project activities, consulting, transfers and consumables.

WP2 - Collaborations and exchanges between municipalities

Collaboration between different realities on subjects of common interest fosters mutual growth and implementation of the Learning City model.

The objective of this WP is to increase in Friuli Venezia Giulia and Israel the number of cities recognized as Learning Cities by UNESCO. In order to achieve this objective, we intend, first of all, to test and consolidate a SWOT analysis mechanism that will enable the individual municipalities to highlight the possible themes to be developed in order to implement the Learning City model in the specific territories of reference. At the same time, it is intended to strengthen cooperation between the municipalities of the Friuli Venezia Giulia region and Israel through mutual exchanges of best practices and twinning.

The following **activities** are planned:

- Modelling of the assessment prototype and SWOT analysis to highlight areas of intervention that should be developed within the LC model;
- Testing the SWOT analysis device with at least one Municipality in Friuli Venezia Giulia and at least one Municipality in Israel;
- Activating exchanges between municipalities to develop partnerships and carry out activities based on the Learning City model;
- Technical assistance in collaborative tasks to implement activities based on the Learning City model;

The **partners** involved are the Friuli Venezia Giulia Autonomous Region, the Multidisciplinary Centre of Modi'in Maccabim Re'ut, the Institute of International Studies of Gorizia (ISIG), the Municipality of Gemona del Friuli, additional Municipalities that may be identified in Israel and Friuli Venezia Giulia

The planned financial resources amount to a total of € 40,000.00 during the three-year period 2023 - 2025.

The aforementioned resources are managed by ISIG, as technical partner, and are used to cover the costs for internal staff employed in project activities, for consulting, for transfers also incurred by municipality of Gemona and other municipalities in Friuli Venezia Giulia that will be involved, and for consumables.

WP3 - The Lifelong Learning model towards digital hybridisation

The Covid-19 pandemic has given an unimaginable acceleration to the process of moving towards digital. Today, education has an urgent need to develop new hybrid learning models, in which the digital and the traditional in-presence worlds coexist and complement each other. The development of a Learning City/Learning Region must also include devices to foster and support the transition from online learning to digital hybridisation.

The aim of this WP is to explore issues regarding digital hybridisation in training contexts, testing new tools and models such as microcredentials, open badges and asynchronous reporting/recognition of online learning activities.

The activities envisaged in the WP and to be included in the call for applications under the ESF+ specific programme no. 3/23 - "Development of new tools and models towards digital hybridisation", concern:

- Study of models and tools
- Test of models and tools in Friuli Venezia Giulia and Israel
- Dissemination of best practices
- Training for trainers

The **partners** involved are the Autonomous Region of Friuli Venezia Giulia, the Multidisciplinary Centre of Modi'in Maccabim Re'ut, VET organisations accredited and identified through a call for applications, and the Institute of International Studies of Gorizia (ISIG).

The planned financial resources amount to a total of € 215,000.00 during the three years period 2023 - 2025.

The aforementioned resources, in the amount of € 200,000.00, are managed by the Research, Lifelong Learning and European Social Fund Service, which, within the Specific Programme 3/23 of the Periodic Operations Planning Document ("PPO 2023") of the European Social Fund plus (ESF+) 2021-2027, will identify an implementing entity, through a specific call for proposals, to cover the costs related to the execution of the WP tasks, while the remaining 15,000.00 € are assigned to ISIG, which as technical partner will ensure the necessary connections with the other WPs of the project.

WP4 - Fighting the phenomenon of Anti-Semitism in Learning Cities

The Joint Memorandum of Understanding between the Friuli Venezia Giulia Region and the Municipality of Modi'in Maccabim Re'ut stipulates that within the framework of the Learning Cities, the parties will cooperate in the organization of initiatives aimed at fighting the spreading phenomenon of anti-Semitism and related phenomena that generate hatred towards the State of Israel.

In order to give concrete expression to the above-mentioned, we plan on the one hand to carry out research to investigate the phenomenon of anti-Semitism, particularly among the young population in Friuli Venezia Giulia and Israel, and on the other hand to develop, in collaboration with a group of appropriately trained teachers, educational courses aimed at young people to prevent the emergence of discriminatory and anti-Semitic phenomena.

As the regional administration has an ongoing cooperation with the University of Trieste - Department of Life Sciences for applied research in sociological fields concerning youth conditions and is funding a PhD, the aforementioned research will be carried out through a collaboration with the Department and with the possible involvement of the International School for Holocaust Studies (ISHS) of the Yad Vashem Museum in Jerusalem.

The planned **activities** are as follows:

- Definition of the research project;
- Research on factors and perceptions of the phenomenon of anti-Semitism in Friuli Venezia Giulia and Israel, applied in an educational context;
- Teacher training and exchange of experiences;
- Development of educational pathway prototypes and their testing.

The **partners** involved are the Friuli Venezia Giulia Autonomous Region, the Multidisciplinary Centre of Modi'in Maccabim Re'ut, the Institute of International Studies of Gorizia (ISIG), the University of Trieste - Department of Life Sciences.

The planned financial resources amount to a total of €45,000.00 during the three years period 2023 - 2025.

Within the above-mentioned resources, the amount of €15,000.00 is provided under the Regional Law no. 22/2022, while €30,000.00, earmarked for the implementation of the research, is part of the funding provided for interventions under article 36bis, paragraph 3bis, of Regional Law no. 13/2018, which stipulates that the Region shall support the training of school teachers, studies and research to celebrate the Days of Memory and Remembrance.

The resources allocated to the definition and implementation of the research project and for the training of teachers are managed by the University of Trieste - Department of Life Sciences through a special agreement with the regional administration.

The remaining resources, amounting to €15,000.00, are managed by ISIG, as technical partner, and are used to cover the costs for internal staff employed in the project tasks, for consulting with the ISHS of the Yad Vashem Museum in Jerusalem, for teachers' transfers and for consumables.

WP5 – School and Student Exchange

The Friuli Venezia Giulia Autonomous Region, together with the municipality of Modi'in Maccabim Re'ut, has already started (virtual) exchanges between students both on the celebration of Remembrance Day and on the workshop "Breaking Classroom walls (BCW)" presented at Expo Dubai in February 2022. In early 2023, a first exchange between students and teachers from ISIS Dante Alighieri in Gorizia and Ironi Bet Mod'in High School (Israel) has also been carried out.

Through WP5, it is intended to continue these exchange experiences according to the Breaking Classroom Walls model, planning a second exchange in the school year 2023-2024 with the involvement also of students from other schools in the region.

The **partner** involved is ISIS Dante Alighieri of Gorizia, in collaboration with Ironi Bet Mod'in High School (Israel).

The planned financial resources amount to a total of € 20,000.00 for the years 2023 and 2024.

The aforementioned resources are managed by the ISIS Dante Alighieri of Gorizia through a special agreement with the regional administration and are intended to refund the expenses incurred by the two schools for transfers in Friuli Venezia Giulia and Israel and for project-related activities carried out by the staff of the ISIS Dante Alighieri of Gorizia.

Budget

160,000 €, allocated in budget chapter no. 13957, distributed among the five WPs as follows:

WP1 Platform	70.000 €
WP2 Collaborations and exchanges between municipalities	40.000 €
WP3 The Lifelong Learning model towards digital hybridisation	15.000 €
WP4 - Fighting Anti-Semitism in Learning Cities	15.000 €
WP5 – School and Student Exchange	20.000 €

The resources are distributed over the three years period as follows:

year 2023	60.000 €
year 2024	50.000 €
year 2025	50.000 €

These resources are supplemented by additional regional resources under Regional Law no. 13/2018 from chapter no. 13951 in the amount of €30,000.00, to support the implementation of the WP4 intervention.

In addition, for the realisation of WP3, resources provided in the specific programme no. 3/23 of the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) 2021-2027 - PPO 2023 from chapters no. 13812 (regional share), 13735 (State share) and 13736 (EU share) in the total amount of 200,000 € will be used.

The summary of resources by funding source and year is as follows:

	Regional Law 22/2022	Regional Law 13/2018	FSE +	Total per year
year 2023	60.000 €	30.000 €	200.000 €	290.000 €
year 2024	50.000 €			50.000 €
year 2025	50.000 €			50.000 €
Total by funding source	160.000€	30.000 €	200.000 €	390.000€

Project duration

The project has a three-year duration starting in 2023.