Seminar Series 2015-16

From smart cities to smart learning environments. A comparative study

Dr Ilpo Laitinen, Director of Administration City of Helsinki
Professor Jari Stenvall, Sciences University of Tampere.

Tuesday 9th February 2016, 1600-1730

Room 432, School of Education, St. Andrews Building, 11 Eldon Street, University of Glasgow, Glasgow, G3 6NH

We are in the midst of a new economic age, a complex competitive landscape defined largely by globalization and digitalization. That means that the utilization and production of knowledge and innovativeness have become critical to organizational survival (Uhl-Bien, Marion, McKelvey, 2007).

Our study concentrate on the issue of challenges to learning environment within the concept of smart city, characterized by multiple focus areas (Lee - Phaal - Lee, 2013). The learning dimension is becoming more central within smart city discussions. Thus smart city initiatives will include more investments in training and in continuing education, in order to foster city's learning and innovation capacity (Neirotti, De Marco, Cagliano, Mangano, Scorrano, 2014, 6-7). In addition, it is now acknowledged that smart cities include also so called soft factors, that have to be holistically accounted for (Syväjärvi, Laitinen et al., 2015). The generally held precept is that accomplishment of this learning smart city goal requires new, innovative models for collaboration.

Universities are also involved in this novel vision of learning smart cities. This is because new organizational hybrids are emerging, compelling HEIs to cooperate with many different partners/stakeholders, all involved in the process of building such model of city. Considering that the purpose of smart city programs is to create something new and unique, it is possible to describe a smart city program as a learning process.

Our research is a comparative study based on a qualitative research. The material has been gathered from the cities of Helsinki and Catania. The target cities showcase varied successes and models of smart cities. In the cities mentioned, key people of the smart city concept – with different kinds of professional backgrounds – were interviewed, both individually and in teams. All interviewees have at least a basic knowledge of information technology and of organisational learning processes. On the basis of interviews it is possible to create an overall picture of learning processes incurring in the organisations involved (Universities and local governments) and of the smart city programs produced or to be still developed.

Ilpo Laitinen is both a senior level director and researcher and thus show the capability of working across the boundaries of academia and the public sector. The work that he undertakes in both of

those realms is looking for new solutions to improve the quality of the public sector in the city that is among the world leaders in providing service to its people.

Internationally experienced both in science and management eg. in public administration, HEIs within learning regions and a higher education & HE policy research (incl. eg. U21, HER-network, Pascal International Observatory).

https://www.linkedin.com/in/ilpo-laitinen-7a529a15

Jari Stenvall is the Professor of Administrative Sciences at the University of Tampere. He has acted as a permanent expert for a Finnish parliamentary committee tasked to find solutions ensuring that government operations are functional, efficient, and strategic based on parliamentary principles. He has acted as the leader of an evaluation team to appraise the Finnish government reform processes, influencing those focused on municipalities. These reforms have been among the key issues of the Finnish government.

Key Words: Smart City, Learning, Open system, Adaptive Organizations

All are welcome, but a reservation is essential. Please RSVP to cradall@gla.ac.uk to book your place.