

# **A plan to build a learning society together**

*Catalyzing Collective Intelligence For a Learning Planet*

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

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**A learning society facilitates both individual and collective learning**, so that the knowledge and experience of some make learning and innovation easier for others. It **learns to learn** by optimizing the way each person and each structure learns, including both humans and machines. It **relies on research, using the potential of digital methods, and is open to innovations from all countries**, adapting them to its ecosystem whenever they are relevant. In this way, a learning society develops its own capacity to adapt in a world where change is ever faster, more volatile, complex and uncertain, giving rise to fearfulness and the temptation to withdraw. This way, it is better able to meet its challenges and enable each citizen and young person to meet their own. With a light touch of public governance, it brings together each person's efforts and uses its collaboration with other learning societies to build, together, a much greater entity – a learning planet, capable of rising to challenges such as those of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). It is about creating new organizational modes, harnessing the collective intelligence and affirming values to be able, together, to build tomorrow's world.

**The first part of the report summarizes the mindset and principles needed to put the learning society in place. Inclusivity, trust, sharing and cooperation are its core values; they promote the pooling of each person's experiences in order to achieve progress for all.** By any standards, to bring about these changes, the personal and professional development of all the actors must be a stated priority. The challenge is to move from a control-based approach to a trust-based approach, from one of hierarchy to one of mentoring, which helps each person to advance by relying on research and contributing to knowledge-building.

The recommendations that follow should not be imposed, therefore, but are best worked out collectively, prototyped and tested with willing trailblazers who have the means to experiment as well as to document and share their journey.

**In the second part of the report, we have gathered a number of innovations already present in the institutions and bodies and in different areas of learning. We have given special attention to the new technology enabling the setting up of a 'digital campus', a real, enhanced knowledge ecosystem that is fast, decentralized, cooperative, inclusive and open.**

**All our interlocutors want to be part of a broader movement in order to overcome certain cultural or institutional barriers and optimize the impact of actions they have already taken individually.** This report therefore makes a plea for stepping up research, facilitating access for everyone to training, experience and results, and involving as many people as possible in carrying out innovative projects.

**The third part of the report makes recommendations, in the form of five overall actions and thirty operational proposals,** and stresses their complementary nature. To enhance the synergies and system-wide impact, it is necessary, at the same time, to:

- **Favour experimental approaches to learning in the regions to prototype, document, share and evaluate promising projects for the benefit of all.**
- **Create digital learning ecosystems, with a notebook to enable each learner to document their learning, make career choices, meet peers and mentors and map out their future.**
- **Stimulate educational research, by harnessing all the disciplines and turning them into participatory learning sciences in which everyone can be asked to take part as fellow researchers capable of innovating.**
- **Reinvent and enhance research-based training of actors in the learning society, in particular the trainers, trainers-of-trainers and decision-makers, by creating a digital campus to serve as a resource centre for the pool of actors in the learning society.**
- **Invite our partners to join with us in building a learning Europe and a learning planet, by together creating an international alliance that is both agile and equipped with digital platforms for sharing research and innovation, training all the actors wishing to contribute and harnessing the collective intelligence by opening up to society's initiatives and questions, at a time of co-development of human and artificial intelligence.**

An implementation timetable for these proposals, and the financial resources needed, have been set out in as much detail as possible. Particular reliance could be placed on the various funds

available from the different learning society institutions, from local authorities, or calls for tender at the national level (such as ANR, PIA and PIC in France) or at the European level under the Framework Programmes of the Directorate-General for Research and Innovation (FP 9, currently being negotiated) or by developing the Erasmus programmes and setting up European universities.

The various proposals in this report will benefit from a light-touch and unified governance framework, to minimize the institutional ‘silo’ effect and maximize the synergies between the proposed actions. The report suggests that these actions and proposals should be integrated into a **five-year interministerial plan**, which could be steered by an *ad hoc* legal entity **set up with the aim of transversality, with broad flexibility of action and capacity for dialogue, communication and initiative, bringing a high level of expertise and practicality to this clear and ambitious mission.**

**The learning society as a public service must emerge gradually, to facilitate the necessary evolution and adaptation while making sure that it is not left to the digital multinationals to take over everyone’s learning experience. It also means gathering together the forces that already exist both in France and among our international partners, particularly in Europe, to allow everyone to develop his or her potential and help build the future together, as this is a key issue in democracy. At a time of growing division between those who benefit and those who suffer from globalization and the ongoing digital revolution, when inequalities of skills and knowledge foment fear and rejection of the Other and are being exploited by politicians in all the Western countries, it is urgent and necessary to create the conditions that will allow everyone to learn to seize the new opportunities that are opening up.**

## 5 ACTIONS, 30 PROPOSALS

- ▶ **Action 1: Favour and support experimental approaches to learning in the regions**

### Proposal 1

**Open up actual and digital third places<sup>1</sup> to facilitate the exchange of knowledge**

### Proposal 2

**Organize a “learning Festival” to celebrate all kinds of learning**

### Proposal 3

Train people to provide the interface between researchers and those on the ground.

### Proposal 4

Train dropouts and prevent failures at degree level by personalized courses of study.

- ▶ **Action 2: Create digital learning ecosystems**

### Proposal 5

**Build a national « digital campus » to gather contributions from each university.**

### Proposal 6

**Issue each learner with a lifelong number and notebook to facilitate their training, career choices and entry into the workplace.**

### Proposal 7

**Set up an open badge system and reintroduce validation of acquired experience (VAE) to build a society based on recognition.**

### Proposal 8

Set up a platform for sharing trainers' questions and answers.

### Proposal 9

Set up a platform for sharing teaching practices.

### Proposal 10

Set up a platform to put high-impact educational innovations to use.

### Proposal 11

Set up a consultation process for all learners.

- ▶ **Action 3: Stimulate research and development around learning at all stages of life**

### Proposal 12

**Create scientifically remarkable and educationally invested research centres to serve as benchmarks.**

### Proposal 13

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<sup>1</sup> Third place : [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Third\\_place](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Third_place)

**Develop participatory research into learning to harness collective intelligence and understand the changes taking place.**

**Proposal 14**

**Draw on “labschools” to create spaces to research solutions in all learning society structures.**

**Proposal 15**

Introduce a new “research contract” between teaching faculties, laboratories and schools.

**Proposal 16**

Step up moves to create a national network of educational researchers.

**Proposal 17**

Devise a secured centre for lifelong digital education and learning data.

**Proposal 18**

From Carnot Institutes of Education to “What Works Centers”.

**Proposal 19**

Set up a learning society ethics committee.

► **Action 4: Encourage the professional development of actors in the learning society**

**Proposal 20**

**Set up ‘labs for the jobs of the future’ open to all who wish to contribute to them.**

**Proposal 21**

**Launch excellence initiatives for learning institutions (known as IDEA) to turn universities into learning organizations.**

**Proposal 22**

**Create a learning society postgraduate institute (IHESA) to train change makers.**

**Proposal 23**

**Set up an Academy of Mentors to promote innovative faculties.**

**Proposal 24**

**Set up a network of postgraduate teacher training institutes (the French ESPE) inventing new ways of learning and teaching.**

**Proposal 25**

Redefine the scope of teacher training courses.

**Proposal 26**

Expand the remit of France’s postgraduate institute for training senior education managers (ESENESR) to help it adapt.

► **Action 5: Towards a learning Europe and a learning planet**

**Proposal 27**

**Set up an international alliance of universities for sustainable learning societies, in synergy with the process of setting up the European universities.**

**Proposal 28**

**Create an equivalent of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change for intelligence, learning and skills.**

**Proposal 29**

Set up an 'Erasmus mundus' of the actors in a learning Europe.

**Proposal 30**

Create a platform to facilitate international partnerships and learn from others.

## Afterword: Recommendations for the other actors in the learning society

(Recalling the report of April 2017)

We are all born researchers. Each of us has the capacity to develop the automatic practice of thinking about our learning, learning from our mistakes and the questions we ask, and passing that learning on to others while at the same time learning from them. By avoiding competitive or distrustful attitudes, we can promote an approach based on trust and cooperation – which goes beyond the scope of education and research because it is a democratic principle. This prompts a number of recommendations, for everyone.

**Building learning organizations**, all of whose members can learn from each other, with each person's experiences and lessons making it easier for the others. Collective intelligence and constant adaptation to changes in the environment guarantee the sustainable development of the organization. All organizations can become learning organizations, with those dedicated to learning, teaching and research ideally placed to set an example.

### **Supporting the learners: proposals for parents**

Become a learning family, create an environment where your children, like you, can learn how to learn, to find themselves and develop their potential. Help them find places where they can flourish and prepare for the future, and make those places their own.

### **Creating a learning classroom: proposals for teachers**

Create learning ecosystems in your classroom that foster success, engagement and pleasure in learning, for instance by promoting cooperation within peer groups and encouraging pupils to learn from each others' progress. Set up networks with other classes across all levels, categories and disciplines. Document and share your questions and experiences.

### **Becoming a learning institution: proposals for educational institutions**

Encourage creativity among all the staff and learners, and give them the means in terms of administrative support, time and space, to work on projects individually and together. Stimulate everyone's personal and professional development, backed by research.

### **Towards learning universities: proposals for universities**

Hold a collective discussion about the future of the university and its role in the learning society. Document the students' learning and the educational initiatives taken by the teacher-researchers, in open source mode. Work to put in place, and further explore, the freedom to learn, teach and conduct research, and encourage those willing to mentor the students in their projects. Devise participative research projects and interdisciplinary approaches, and develop creativity and a sense of engagement.

### **Creating regions of learning: a proposal for local authorities**

Promote inclusive learning, from basic up to higher education. Revitalize learning within families and communities. Facilitate effective learning for professional life as well as learning in the workplace. Extend the use of modern learning technology. Promote quality and excellence in learning. Create third-party spaces, as a free and trusted framework open to all, to facilitate the design of new ways of learning, conducting research and harnessing the collective intelligence in your area. Share your inspiring experiences with other learning regions.

### **Recommendations to the creative, knowledge-building communities**

Develop open platforms, tools and portfolios and dedicated spaces favourable to the emergence of ideas, participative research and creative knowledge, through peer-group exchanges, questioning and collaboration. For maximum impact, these tools should be available to all as part of the open educational resources, to facilitate interaction among these communities, in person and remotely.

### **Investing in learning initiatives: a proposal for funders**

Invest in projects that explore new ways of learning, teaching and conducting research into the learning society. Finance learning collectives, and projects providing a framework for sharing success stories and learning lessons from failures. Invent funding methods that enable the large-scale take-up of innovations that contribute to an inclusive learning society ('social impact contracts', for example).

### **Contributing to the development of learning societies: the role of international organizations**

Compare national policies for developing the learning society and for R&D in lifelong learning. Start an international debate about the best ways to encourage these dimensions, and foster the emergence of international collaboration on these issues to maximize their development as well as the synergies between learning societies. Become involved in research into the co-development of different types of intelligence (people and machines, individuals and collectives) and in training the actors in the learning society to be capable of driving national and international and programmes on these subjects so vital for the future.

The complete version of the report (in French) is available at <https://cri-paris.org/news/un-plan-pour-co-construire-une-societe-apprenante/>.