



PIMA Bulletin No. 21
December 2018

Special Issue on Learning in Later Life: Towards good active ageing for all

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EDITORIAL *Chris Duke*

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This issue of the Bulletin is devoted to a substantial Special Report on **Learning in Later Life**. It also concludes a cluster of papers arising from the PASCAL Suwon Conference at the end of August. All other items are carried over to issue No. 22, which will be published in January 2019.

Bulletin No. 20 included five ‘reflections’ after the PASCAL Learning City Conference, Suwon, South Korea’, contributed by Rob Mark, Colin McGregor, Shirley Walters, Han Soonghee and Heribert Hinzen. This issue adds two further contributions by Waltraut Ritter, Hong Kong, and Dorothy Lucardie, Australia, the President of PIMA.

The second of these, in the Suwon spirit of learning from and working forward, invites Bulletin readers to contribute to a new discussion on richer meanings of Lifelong learning. Suwon Discussion at Suwon reflected on it as not only cradle to grave - in an older expression, womb to tomb. It had also to be Life-wide, spanning all fields of human activity, including family and local community, the full diversity of workplaces and arrangements, and the ‘global community’ and global ecosystem; and *Life-deep*. The term, not new but seldom probed, attracted murmurs of assent but little analysis.

The President here invites contributions, a few paragraphs or a page, about Life-deep learning, exploring what this really means. She and PIMA through the Bulletin ask why it matters, how seriously it should be taken, and how it might be given more practical expression through learning support, education and training. *Please email draft contributions and expressions of interest to the Editor, chris.duke@rmit.edu.au.*

For compelling reasons lying beyond 'education', the education and learning of older adults has become a subject of significant economic, health, other social, and now political concern. Dramatically changing demography affects labour markets and reinforces well-established programmes for senior citizens, notably among them Universities of the Third Age (U3A). They are informed by the recognition of 'use it or lose it'; and the value of community companionship for wellbeing. From being an economic burden on social welfare and health budgets as 'retired-age' populations expand and 'working-age' numbers decline, older adults are increasingly seen as a resource: a source of employees and citizens with active minds, knowledge, wisdom and skills.

This much extended special end-of-year issue is devoted to a substantial Report addressing a main theme of the Suwon Conference. Edited by Peter Kearns and Denise Reghenzani-Kearns on behalf of the PIMA Later Life Learning Special Interest Group or SIG, it carries contribution from 15 authors. It appears also on the PASCAL Website with the work of other SIGs and will be taken up in other national, local and trans-national forums. Readers are invited to disseminate it widely, and assist its study, influence on policy, and practical application.

1. REFLECTIONS AFTER THE PASCAL LEARNING CITY CONFERENCE, SUWON, SOUTH KOREA

HOW DO YOU KNOW YOU ARE IN A "LEARNING CITY"? Waltraut Ritter

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As a visitor to a city, how do you know whether you are in a city that is a place where some collaborative thinking and knowledge-sharing is visible in how the urban space looks and feels? Can a learning city strategy save your city from being just a nondescript, soulless urban agglomeration?

Exploring the city on foot prior to the PASCAL Learning City conference in Suwon, a city where language does not help you to decipher your surrounding by reading (unless you can read Hangul), observation of street life can tell you a lot about a city.

Transport and urban mobility is one of the core systems in a city, and it is also one of the main areas of activities in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Urban transportation accounts for around 25% of total CO₂ emissions in cities.

At first sight, Suwon seems to be dominated by wide roads and busy car traffic; the modal share of private cars with 34% is higher than in Seoul (23%) or Tokyo (12 %) according to the 2017 Urban Mobility Study by the Centre for Liveable Cities; but the city has also embarked on a real-life-learning experiment as host of the international Ecomobility festival in 2013.

For one month, a central district with 4,300 residents in the city was closed to fossil-driven transportation, and citizens had to learn how to organise their everyday life of getting around by walking, cycling, wheeling or other means of active mobility. It was a commitment to changing mobility preferences and demonstrated the value of continuous learning and experimentation in a city space.

It mobilised residents and stakeholders in a neighbourhood and across Suwon, made urban mobility a subject of public debate, and led to lifestyle changes, encouraging individuals to make smarter mobility

choices. The experiment also had an impact on urban governance, as citizens are now directly involved in the design and implementation of driven low carbon urban transport planning.

Urban mobility is a good place to start with for transformative lifelong learning, as everyone moves around in his/her city. Learning about sustainable mobility also covers many aspects of lifelong learning, such as community-building, health, environment, culture.

And – smart mobility resulting from collaborative learning in cities is highly visible.

LIFE-DEEP LEARNING: A NEW FOCUS FROM THE WORLD FORUM FOR LIFELONG LEARNING IN SUWON, KOREA *Dorothy Lucardie*

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In 2015 UNESCO undertook a worldwide review and published a new Recommendation on Adult Learning and Education (CONFINTEA VI, 2015). This refers directly to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and highlights the connection that the *“aim of adult learning and education is to equip people with the necessary capabilities to exercise and realise their rights and take control of their destinies” (CONFINTEA VI, 2015).*

Supporting this recommendation the UN Secretary General (Global Campaign for Education, 2015) proposed that quality education and lifelong learning opportunities were key transformative and mutually reinforcing actions to meet the SDG post-2015 vision. Of the 17 sustainable development goals that have been adopted across the globe Sustainable Development Goal 4 *Ensuring equitable access and quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for all* is proposed by many to be the key to achieving all of the SDG through the transformation of individuals and communities.

Under the sub theme *Lifelong Learning as the key to solving community problems* adult educators from across the globe gathered in Suwon under the auspices of PASCAL, AJOU University and GILL to consider how SDG 4 is linked with the concept and practice of Learning Cities. SDG 4 is acknowledged by the organisers (PASCAL International Observatory, 2018) not only be about education and learning but also to include learning across the lifespan, lifelong, life wide, life deep, formal, non-formal and informal. Learning cities promote lifelong learning for all (UNESCO, 2017); for the Global Network of Learning Cities *“lifelong learning lays the foundations for sustainable social, economic and environmental development” (UNESCO, 2018).*

The Suwon presentations brought together speakers who have used these concepts within their community practice, with government, within civil society, and in the private sector to work and learn together. They included an exploration of the role of lifelong learning in the Thailand context using local government initiatives to achieve a learning city in a sustainable way at the practical level (Gumpanat Boriboon, 2018); the creation of a new breed of youth entrepreneurs in the Philippines who apply sustainability to business ideation and are mindful of the importance of considering the Sustainable Development Goals in relation to business processes (Eunice Areola, 2018); creative local action as a response to global goals (SDG) (Maria Wong, 2018); and how participatory processes create a space for transformative social learning in Taiwan (Yahui Fang, 2018).

Key themes drawn from the knowledge and experience shared were: the importance of existing local knowledge - “local wisdom is a treasure”; the use of strategies that create personal and community transformation; and how learning cities can provide a catalyst for transformation. Reflection on these themes opened up discussion at the conference on what is meant by the term “life deep learning”. Does this refer to the spiritual dimension of learning as explored by Wong? Is it a term that includes the cultural dimension of learning and knowing? (Gumpanat Boriboon) - or indeed the application of knowledge at a deeper level (Areola)? Or by using the term *Life-deep learning* are we embracing the impact that empowerment and participation have on both learning and being?

Participants expressed keen interest for further discussion on life-deep learning. This has therefore now been proposed as a lead topic of the first 2019 PIMA Bulletin.

Members are invited to contribute to this issue by contacting the editor Chris Duke chris.duke@rmit.edu.au stating their interest as soon as possible.

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2. LEARNING IN LATER LIFE SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP (SIG)

TOWARDS GOOD ACTIVE LEARNING FOR ALL: IN A CONTEXT OF DEEP DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGE AND DISLOCATION *Peter Kearns and Denise Reghenzani-Kearns (Editors)*

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Please see the full report at: <http://pobs.cc/1lbrs>