



BULLETIN NO.29
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Editorial CHRIS DUKE

dukeozenay@gmail.com

A folksy saying favoured in my 'other Sydney' out West is that *when the going gets tough, the tough get going*. This fits the mood as this Bulletin goes to press. The going always seems tough to those working in adult learning and education (ALE): poor cousin, Cinderella, little money, no recognition, left out of the global planning of MDGs and all but out of the SDGs, and so on.

Now it is tough and bewilderingly fast-moving for everyone. Contributions written short days ago - Jenny Macaffer's on climate change and what the Australian fires were like, Colin McGregor on the first impact of Coronavirus COVID-19 in New Zealand - already seem way back. Today (on 19 March 2020) we may ask: **which is the crisis**: the new pandemic encompassing all regions and by now most nations? Or the reaction which electorally sensitive politics-focused government leaders and sensation-hungry media bosses have fertilised and confused in an extravaganza of unmakeable commitments and ungrounded speculations? Together these have inflated passions, panic, and distrust of authority: especially where 'western democracy' is held to be a gift of good governance to other less fortunate and 'developing' peoples.

When politics displace good policy, and immediacy elbows out even short to medium term recognition of cause and effect, there is a reason for concern. The mood today is tinder-dry. Neither government nor media win credit for turning an as yet modest health crisis (we might say 'event' as is now a fashion) into a global epic end-of-known-normality. It is becoming something truly unpredictable and scary: like the Global Financial Crisis; or something Big in the 80s or 70s; or the Great Depression. Or is it the coming of the Great Extinction, the new Anthropocene, a new Dark Ages? Or is it even, more hopefully, saving this era's ecosystem and rediscovering some earlier wisdom and ways by humankind, the great destroyer?

Because of this sense of something different, and a commitment to look and work with imagination, hope, and charity for new possibilities, this Bulletin groups contributions into the widely felt crisis; then behaviour and implications in our world of ALE which must look outward, engage and take risks to deserve to survive; then with other perspectives, news and issues clustered together as Part 3.

Of course, the division is artificial. In one of this editor's favourite borrowed phrases 'only connect'. A thoughtful read will show that almost every item links with most of the others and to the broad themes: our-shared-world-our-shared crisis; and our professional and personal conduct as responsible active citizens. From homely yet scientific advice in New Zealand explaining why hand-washing matters (i.e. what COVID-19 **actually is**) to AI, demographic change and gender roles; it does all connect.

Community learning anchored in a good understanding of shared facts, nurturing sane and sustainable changed beliefs and behaviours based on modern tested knowledge and old wisdom; these are the basis of truly useful ALE.

A World in Crisis

Learning is the Work **SHIRLEY WALTERS**

ferris@iafrica.com

We are in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic which is disrupting lives on a grand scale through travel bans, flight restrictions, cancellation of sporting and cultural events, closure of educational institutions, endless washing of hands, self-isolation, etc. In the midst of the uncertainties, COVID-19 has got organisations and groups reaching for online meeting solutions or blended meetings, with some people face-to-face and others online. This is a time when many educators who have developed online pedagogical approaches can shine in order to create productive experiences for participants. The opportunity is here for skilled educators to share knowledge of good practices; and for others to hone pedagogical skills and abilities in virtual spaces. It is a time when communication of all kinds is critical but we have to learn to do it differently. Facilitators of different modes of learning have much to teach.

Another aspect of the COVID-19 pandemic is beginning to be explored. David Comerford, a behavioural scientist, suggests that 'Coronavirus should give us hope that we are able to tackle the climate crisis'. The Coronavirus is not the only crisis we face: the climate crisis is expected to be more devastating. But the response to the two crises is starkly different. In observing the demonstrated political will and citizens' cooperative responses, he is hopeful that the commitment he has observed in tackling the coronavirus outbreak, can be used to tackle the climate crisis. What can we learn from responses to the pandemic and apply them urgently to the climate crises?

We are told that 20 seconds of washing hands frequently is one of the key ways to prevent contamination from COVID-19. A question relevant to people who live in water-scarce and impoverished environments is what can people use if they don't have access to water and hand sanitisers? If you have ideas on this, it will be great to hear them.

As Timothy Ireland suggests, this is not the time 'to wash your hands of adult learning and education (ALE)!' To survive in contexts of multiple crises, where we have to learn, unlearn, and re-learn, from the smallest detail to the most complex, **learning is the work!**

Adult and Community Education (ACE) and climate change disruption **JENNY MACAFFER**

j.macaffer@ala.asn.au

By late 2019 after three months of unprecedented bush fires in Australia, PIMA members elsewhere were asking for accounts from Australia, and what it all meant for us all as grassroots workers and policy-makers. As was noted in the previous Bulletin (No.27) the first priority was the fight itself, mitigation and relief. After that analysis should follow. Jenny Macaffer, Chief Executive Officer of Australia Learning Australia, provides this comment, in early January 2020.

The new normal

I am in Melbourne, where people are wearing masks as some protection from the thick smoke coming off the dozens of bush fires burning wild in Victoria. In neighboring regions, people in Sydney and Canberra, have lived with smoky conditions and poor air quality for weeks from the fires burning in regions around them. [*These three cities have each been identified as worst in the world for air pollution on different recent days.* Ed]

The smoke hazards are causing health problems for people with asthma and bringing on breathing problems for others. In some instances, Ventolin is running scarce at pharmacies as people struggle to cope. I have had to take anti-histamines day and night to help stop the irritation in my sinuses. Doctors have warned people to limit their time outside.

The smoke winds its way into my mind; I can't help thinking that with every breath I am drawing in tiny particles of our forests; a five-hundred-year-old tree or something of the wildlife, the fur of a baby wombat perhaps, a minute portion of a tiny koala joey, the last stitch of a feather, or worse, a human turned in to small particles and carbon monoxide, carbon dioxide, organic compounds, and air toxins.

The eerie light hides any hint of blue and blocks out the sun. I have just heard that King Island, off South Australia's coastline, is alight. The island is full of wildlife and I think back to my visit there some years ago, watching echidnas meander across the soil, snuffling their snouts into the dirt, searching for ants, the many wallabies, kangaroos, koalas in abundance and other wildlife, what will happen to them? [*A third of the island has since been devastated, and some rare species probably doomed to extinction by habitat loss.* Ed.]

Catastrophe shared nationally

As I write this a friend on the outskirts of Perth in Western Australia has just sent me a message. She was originally hoping to come from Perth to Melbourne across the Nullarbor, driving her van from the west to the east coast of Australia. This is her annual pilgrimage, but a major fire has blocked the main highway and trucks are banked up on both sides.

She is still at home waiting, but now black smoke is rising from a separate fire in the forest next to her neighborhood. A message on her mobile phone has just come through from emergency services, 'You are in danger and need to act immediately to survive. There is a threat to lives and homes.' She is alone but for her dog. She is packing and getting out, but she asks, where will I go?

My friends in East Gippsland, Victoria, where fires are raging, have already packed up and left in their car, staying with relatives elsewhere. Another friend is recuperating from fighting a fire that came right up to his doorstep in the South East Coast of New South Wales. He and some gallant others battled the fire for hours, it burnt away the garden and turned the outbuildings to black stumps and char but they managed to save the house. They are safe for now.

People have perished, businesses, homes, and stock have been lost, and more than 1 billion wildlife are estimated dead, with many more injured or left starving. In Australia, we are used to hot summers and bushfires, but not like this.

And globally – but what about the Government?

The situation in Australia is receiving news coverage from around the world. Pop stars, actors and even one of our small neighbors, Vanuatu, have pledged funds to assist victims.

Australia is the driest continent in the world and, according to the Commonwealth Scientific Industrial and Research Organisation (CSIRO), has grown 1 degree hotter over the last century. It is like a tinderbox in many places. Twenty-three former fire chiefs tried to warn the Federal government, but they were ignored.

Scientific evidence tells us that there will be more extreme weather events like this in the future. We must learn to deal with extreme weather events more effectively than we currently do now. We need to better plan, prepare, mitigate, respond, recover and rejuvenate from these disasters and climate change disruptions.

New energy from below

The on-line social media frenzy brings stories of loss and despair but also courage and hope. Communities raw from the fires are angry, exhausted and frustrated at a continual lack of drive and leadership from the federal government. Misinformation and scam fundraising are also rife, but community goodwill gives rise to a collective response that only humans can muster.

The recent bushfires have focused attention on the crucial role that many adults and community education (ACE) organisations play in emergency management and recovery by providing venues, coordinating volunteers, training, food, support, counselling, and emergency relief.

ACE has a crucial role to play. Not just in helping us create better ways of alleviating any disaster, but in raising awareness, helping us be better informed, and improving practices and behaviours that help us to respond and adapt to, manage, and mitigate against such extreme events. It can help people make better and more informed decisions, engage in critical thinking and empower citizens to take participatory action.

Old wisdom for new needs

In his book *Dark Emu*, Bruce Pascoe puts forward a compelling argument that pre-colonial Aboriginal people right across the country built houses, lived in communities and used agricultural methods, especially fire as a tool, to manage the land for tens of thousands of years. He calls this 'firestick farming'.

We must learn from the First Nations people about how to care for the country. They believe that the fate of the people, the land and the wildlife are inseparable. We must listen and learn the language of the land. Land literacy can teach us how to tell if the earth is

healthy or not, how to prevent and respond to threats to the country and build resilience. Many land care groups already work to do this in some local regions.

Many fires are still burning, and we are yet to reach the peak fire season. There will be more struggles to come. What we need now is support for improving opportunities for ACE especially in regional, rural and remote areas of Australia, which often have fewer resources and infrastructure to build and maintain community resilience and capability.

Time for real change

These bushfires have been a wakeup call. We cannot keep doing things the way we have done them before. When the air, the water, and the earth are suffocated, so are we. We need to learn and change. ACE can play a vital role in this process and help liberate us to create a new story for our future.

What we need now is for a federal government response that complements and supports the efforts of ACE organisations and includes ACE as an essential component for any national strategy that aims to tackle climate change.

Jim Falk, Professorial Fellow in the Melbourne Sustainable Society Institute, is for the second time Chair of the Board of Directors and National Trustee for Greenpeace Australia-Pacific. Greenpeace is a global organisation firmly focussed as its matter of first priority on increasing the pressure on communities, nation-states, corporations, and institutions of governance at all scales to act to bring greenhouse gas emissions to zero before it is too late. Greenpeace globally does not as a matter of principle accept funds from government or corporations but relies on individual donations from supporters across the planet. He is therefore very well placed to see the current crises in perspective.

Timely challenges: Messages from the Australian Bushfires and the Coronavirus Pandemic **JIM FALK**

jimfalk2@gmail.com

Increasingly frequent extremes of storm, flood, fire, plague, rising seas, and devastation of species, may sound like the beginnings of a biblical account but are insignificant part a set of symptoms of the profound impact humans are having on their planet. Those impacts are intensified in some important ways by the way many now live: in large dense cities served by global flows of humans and goods, opening new vulnerabilities.

As we hardly need reminding, climate change is one key factor, and so in turn (although far from wholly caused by it) is the continuing and increasing use of fossil fuels worldwide – pumping out more carbon dioxide – leading to accelerating global warming. Our experience in Australia, in particular the much-covered 'bush fires' which have swept through large parts of the more populated states in the last two months, is just one illustration of this.

Those fires were indeed intense. In NSW the government declared a state of emergency in November 2019.¹ As the new year dawned the ACT experienced an air quality index 23 times the “hazardous” threshold, stopping MRI machines, and at times causing acute respiratory distress. Later the second most populous state, Victoria, faced similarly extreme conditions with incendiary consequences. By now we may look back on fires, which left 34 dead, about 5,900 buildings destroyed, estimated destruction of between 0.5 and 1.5 billion wild animals and tens of thousands of livestock. The damages bill from the storm and the fires were estimated at some \$2 billion.²

The relationship between climate change and these catastrophic events requires notoriously problematic modelling, but an international world weather attribution study suggests that a conservative estimate is that global warming has produced a 30% increase in the likelihood of the hot dry weather in the relevant parts of Australia which is considered a major cause of such bushfires. It predicts that with a temperature rise of 2 deg C (twice that so far) such conditions would occur at least four times more often.³

There is no doubt that the bushfires did grab global and local media and public attention. The Prime Minister was caught out lying low on holiday while the fires raged and the Commonwealth government found itself on the back foot as it tried to navigate between its internal pressures for climate denial and support for the coal industry, and the realities of escalating alarm in the community and increasingly strong positions from States,⁴ and firm statements from community, corporate and agricultural leaders called for much firmer action on climate change.⁵ An IPSOS opinion poll carried out at the beginning of February showed 68% believing the trend poses a “serious threat” to their way of life, whilst 64% believed that Australia should be “doing more” in reducing greenhouse gas emissions.⁶

However, a month later, in mid-March, those fires seem to be fading from the attention of those who did not suffer direct loss as a consequence, replaced in the news by concern bordering on panic at the prospects of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. The first case in Australia was announced in Victoria on 25 January and, by 6.30 AM on 14th March, the case numbers were travelling upwards on a scattered but seemingly exponentially increasing curve with a doubling time of about 2 days,⁷ total confirmed cases at 197 spread across all States of Australia and 3 consequent deaths.⁸

In the capital cities, the panic was palpable. In the supermarkets an odd behaviour (in Australia) had been to stock up on toilet paper, which was now very hard to find, hand sanitiser, surgical masks, and other associated preparatory medical supplies had sold out, and food hoarding was underway. The government too had announced a \$17.6 billion economic stimulus package – of which \$11 billion was to be spent in 3 months.⁹ But the stock market continued its plunge downward with the All Ordinaries dropping from above 7,000 to below 5,000.

Whilst it was still not a matter for much comment, and while in other ways very dissimilar, it is possible to observe that the bushfires and the pandemic have a number of features in common.

Of course, there are stark dissimilarities. They include the vastly different time frames on which the two sagas are being played out – climate change on a time frame of decades, to centuries, to millennia (depending on the impact considered), whilst coronavirus is travelling across the world in an escalating pandemic playing out in days, weeks and months. And of course, the genesis of the two phenomena is very different. On the one hand, we have the emergence of yet another deadly pathogen crossing the boundary between animals and humans (as with its recent predecessors – such as avian flu, SARS, swine flu, and mad cow disease) whilst highly predictable that one would come, nevertheless catching the world still inadequately prepared.¹⁰ And on the other, we have the much slower-moving train crash of climate change, which is equally predictable, completely expected (from a scientific standpoint), but for which the world is also unprepared!

As for similarities, in both cases, these are akin to Greek tragedies. The media is like a Greek chorus chanting the steady progress towards what seems likely to be a dire outcome. It is in this sense that in an interesting recent article, Waleed Aly, sought to explain "the toilet roll panic" (as well as Brexit, Australia's brutal immigration policies, inter alia) in terms of a desperate attempt to create a subjective sense of control in a world where globalisation, and the impact of our collective endeavours, seems to render us out of control, or at least insufficiently in control, of our futures.¹¹

In a previous comment in Bulletin No 26 (Sept 2019) I noted that climate change and many of its impacts constitute lagging indicators of greenhouse gas concentrations. This tends to hide the time scale in which we must act – which is soon – to bring down greenhouse gas emissions to zero. The longer we leave it, the steeper the curve of emissions grows, and the more precipitous and thus difficult the required curve of emission reductions becomes.

The same comment is true of the Coronavirus pandemic but played out in days rather than decades. Again, we must act to socially isolate ahead of the escalating cases, not the least because what we see at any time, given in part the 5-6 day incubation period, is the tip of an iceberg of undiagnosed cases, with the transmission in many cases able to precede detection. In short, detection is a lagging indicator of the spread of the virus.

In both cases, Government may be tempted to act too late, whether because of the economic impacts of locking out the coal, or tourist, gas, or oil, or overseas student markets, or sport or whatever industry makes its concerns felt.

There is also a desire to avoid the hard facts. For Scott Morrison, the Bush Fires were "no time" to talk about climate change. Similarly, the efficacy of surgical and related P2/N95 masks in avoiding droplet transmission of infection¹² is downplayed for the general public, presumably to avoid a panicked attempt by the community to secure them.

Wildly different though they are in many respects, the bushfires have, by creating a contemporaneous indicator, served to heighten community understanding of the actual impact of climate change. Similarly, the frightening pace of spread and significant lethality of the Coronavirus has the potential to remind us not only of the costs of acting

too slowly to meet a threat but also in a more basic way, the profound interdependence of human beings on the world they share with other species and with each other.

The implications of these messages are profound. Whether they will be absorbed, and if so in a lasting manner which changes behaviour, will depend very much on how well they are received, recounted, explained, and taught. Now that is a timely life-long learning challenge for all of us.

¹ Thomas Pueyo, "Coronavirus: Why you must act now", [Medium](https://medium.com/@tomaspueyo/coronavirus-act-today-or-people-will-die-f4d3d9cd99ca), 10 March 2020, <https://medium.com/@tomaspueyo/coronavirus-act-today-or-people-will-die-f4d3d9cd99ca>

² <file://localhost/x-devonthink-item/:A660885B-2421-4C47-84D7-10A509D6868B>: Calma, "What you need to know about the Australian bushfires", *The Verge*, 13 February 2020. <https://www.theverge.com/2020/1/3/21048891/australia-wildfires-koalas-climate-change-bushfires-deaths-animals-damage> Viewed 14 March 2020.

³ Gert Jan van Oldernborgh et al, "Attribution of the Australian Bushfire risk to anthropogenic climate change", *Natural Hazards and Earth System Sciences*, Preprint. The discussion started, 11 March 2020. <https://doi.org/10.5194/nhess-2020-69>

⁴ Rob Harris, "Premiers trump PM in bushfire crisis, poll finds", *The Age*, 27 January 2020, p. 8.

⁵ David Crowe, "Backing for action on climate change", *The Age*, 4 February 2020, p. 4.

⁶ [ibid.](#)

⁷ In Italy 100 known cases rose to 15,000 in 20 days, a doubling time of about 1.65 days.

⁸ Australian Government, Department of Health, Coronavirus (COVID-19) health alert, Active 14 March 2020, <https://www.health.gov.au/news/health-alerts/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-health-alert>

⁹ Shane Wright, "Budget deficit set to hit more than \$14b", *The Age*, 13 March 2020, 8

¹⁰ Jim Falk, "Governance, pathogens and human health", in Joseph Camilleri and Jim Falk, *Worlds in Transition: Evolving Governance Across a Stressed Planet*, Edward Elgar, London, Chap 9, pp. 377-444.

¹¹ Waleed Aly, "Why the toilet roll panic?", *The Age*, 13 March 2020, p. 26.

¹² Can a face mask stop coronavirus? *The Guardian*, 12 March, 2020, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/mar/12/can-a-face-mask-stop-coronavirus-covid-19-facts-checked>

COVID-19 (Coronavirus) COLIN MCGREGOR

colin.mcgregor@aceaotearoa.org.nz

New Zealand has just had its eighth confirmed case of Coronavirus. In many ways, we are lucky to be so far away. This has enabled the government to put into place measures to manage our response. However, we are already feeling the impact. Some Adult and Community Education providers have seen large drop-offs in attendance at courses, as learners fear to be with others. Tutors working for other providers are deciding to self-isolate if they fear they have the symptoms. The school and tertiary sectors are also under pressure, with huge financial losses forecast as students are prevented from arriving from

China. We have also seen examples of panic buying. Purchasing hand sanitiser in Wellington in the last few weeks has become almost impossible.

The government has just announced a ban on gatherings with 500 or more people. Adult and Community Education Aotearoa have just cancelled its May conference. Many other organisations are reviewing proposed conferences – gatherings of people could be problematic. For example, the Asia Pacific Association for International Education Conference, due to be held in Vancouver in March, has just been postponed to 2021.

The worldwide response to this issue has been patchy with often unreliable data (or no data at all), unrealistic expectations (particularly on the health sector), sometimes underwhelming government response balanced by individual heroics. At the time of writing worldwide numbers are increasing daily as is the fear. Previous events such as this have "run their course" but COVID-19 is a different beast altogether as it is much more infectious than recent outbreaks such as SARS. It will take some time to see where we end up. In the meantime, we need to keep safe through educating ourselves and others on preventative measures such as hand washing, being aware of our own bodies, and self-isolating where necessary.

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In New Zealand, we have sought guidance from the government on the fiscal impact for Adult and Community Education providers. Government funding is tied to numbers, and providers will not be able to deliver contracted numbers. Without some guarantee of funding, courses may close and there could be impacts on staffing. Our main funder has been quick to put out advice and link to our Health and Education sectors. The key advice relates to having a pandemic plan, staff and learners being aware of symptoms, preventative measures, and key contacts. ACE can assist by keeping learners informed.

The following information is from Professor Astrid von Kotze, a long time adult popular educator.

The coronavirus: what you need to know about how it is transmitted

What is this virus?

The name 'Coronavirus' (=crown virus) comes from the little spikes that protrude from the virus' surfaces, which resemble a crown or the sun's corona.

It is very delicate. That means it can be killed easily – but it is also very contagious, which means it spreads easily from person to person.

A virus is a tiny microbe that needs a 'host' – it can't go anywhere unless it hitches a ride! It attaches to a cell, takes over, makes more of itself and moves on to its next host. It moves on through droplets – tiny drops of mucus or spit, transmitted through coughing, sneezing, laughing, singing or even talking. To get access to your cells and infect you, the viral droplets must enter through the eyes, nose or mouth.

How does infection work? What puts you most at risk of getting infected?

You walk into a crowded shop. A shopper has coronavirus who may *not* know that they are infected with the virus. They may just think they have a little cold.

Risk factors:

How close you get - anything closer than 1 metre is risky so keep your distance

How long you are near the person - the longer, the bigger the risk of potential infection

Whether that person projects viral droplets on you by sneezing, coughing or laughing

How much you touch your face - we rub our eyes, scratch our itchy nose, wipe our mouths, etc all the time. Viruses stuck to our hands are then rubbed into the face

Your age and health -people with medical conditions or older persons are more at risk

You touch a surface such as a door-handle, a table, taxi fare in a public space

Whatever the other people may have touched they can pass on to you

The virus can survive on surfaces for a while. If someone sneezed on that table, or wiped nose with hand and then touched the door-handle. Etc.

Reducing the risk of infection

Wash your hands thoroughly, with soap

Do not touch your face unless you have just washed your hands. The virus does not pass through the skin.

There are numerous indications above of the actual and desirable responses of our global ALE-LLL community of learning and action. Here we turn more explicitly to how that community is faring, and what we should be doing.

The World of ALE and LLL

Sir Alan Tuckett is Professor of Education at the University of Wolverhampton and a former President of the International Council of Adult Education (2011–2015). He was Director of the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE) between 1988 and 2011. He is a UIL Honorary Fellow. He writes from a lifetime of civil society ALE leadership and forceful advocacy.

Another world is possible – steps from rhetoric to action ALAN TUCKETT

alan.tuckett@googlemail.com

Adult learning and education (ALE) makes a difference. It enhances people's dignity and strengthens civil society. It supports the development of skills for the world of today's work and the capacity to address the challenges of rapid technological, industrial, ecological and demographic change. It fosters inter-generational learning and enriches learners' engagement with arts, respect for diversity and difference. Studies show its positive health impact, its contribution to the resettlement of offenders, and the way it enriches later lives. Most importantly adult learning and education give a voice to people too often silenced in the debates that shape our future. In the words of [Rethinking Education](#), adult learning and education foster *the common good*.

All this is endorsed by an international conference after an international conference. The International Labour Office (ILO) calls for universal lifelong learning; the World Economic Forum (WEF) argues that lifelong learning is of key importance in responding to the development of robotics, artificial intelligence, and the Fourth Industrial Revolution. The Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC) surveys of adult skills, administered by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), is modified to recognise the breadth of learning relevant to twenty-first-century work. Governments sign up to major commitments to improve literacy, to secure the right to education for women as well as girls, and to ensure that no-one is being left behind.

Why, then, is ALE so marginal? First, to use an old English aphorism, 'warm words butter no parsnips'. Without money and political will, agreements stay on the page. Look at the commitments made in Dakar in 2000 – of the six goals agreed, the 2015 Global Monitoring Report (GMR) made clear that the least progress by far was made on adult literacy. And the wider adult learning goal was not even measured. In the same way, the Global Partnership for Education is charged with coordinating finance for Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4, but its chair told the International Council for Adult Education (ICAE) that there was no money for literacy – if we wanted it, civil society would have to raise it itself.

These views don't develop accidentally. Most funding for education focuses on schools and universities. When decision-makers do look at adult learning and education they find it hard to see what difference investment can make in a context where outcomes are regularly measured. And measurement matters. It is harder to capture growth in community confidence and resilience than it is to measure whether someone passed a

test. With the growth of neo-liberal policies among development partners, as well as governments, there has been a marked shift away from broad capacity building in favour of short project-based and measurable activity.

But that is no reason to give up. Look at the SDGs. Hardly any can be achieved without adults' learning. It is a message ICAE makes in the UN High-Level Policy Forum. It is also central to UNESCO's view. We need to make sure that it is one we make together at the next International Conference on Adult Education (CONFINTEA) in Marrakech in 2022. The formal structures for preparing for CONFINTEA VII start this year with country reports, followed in 2021 with regional conferences. At the main event, ICAE will work to host a civil society event ahead of the formal conference. Meanwhile, working locally to identify priorities, to influence government reports, get places on national delegations, and engage with ICAE in making a global case in which learner voices take a prominent role, are key tasks.

But how do we make a global difference with our advocacy? Good evidence helps numbers, qualitative studies, illustrated with powerful stories, involving people whose lives have been transformed through learning. Mobilising learners for public events, organised with imagination and flair. Stickability – keeping at it over the long haul, making alliances with friendly media, developing the intelligent use of social media – all matter. Taking great pictures. Making partnerships with sympathetic organisations. Briefing politicians, drafting policy responses and sharing what works with one another. What is needed is what the World Social Forum calls for: the belief that another world is possible, and that together we can make it. After all, governments already agree that adult learning and education matter. We 'just' need to convince them to match grand agreements with practical policies and sustained funding on the ground.

Nowhere is this more relevant than in the current consultation which I gather the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) is undertaking on the Strategic Plan and Funding Framework to be adopted by its Board in June 2020. Currently, the Secretariat is resisting including non-formal learning and adult education in its plan, and few if any of its grants include adult learning and education. Nevertheless, it is charged by the UN to resource all parts of SDG4 – so colleagues would help by responding to the consultation via information@globalpartnership.org. The civil society members of the board will doubtless like copies, too. They are Kira Boe, education policy lead at Oxfam; Camilla Croso of CLADE (camcroso@gmail.com); and Gifty Anyogbe Apanbil, Deputy Secretary-General at Ghana National Association of Teachers (GNAT). Maria Khan of ASPBAE is an alternate member (maria.aspbae@gmail.com). We are more effective when we all make our voices heard.

In response to this call to action from Alan Tuckett, the PIMA President has written to the chair of the Global Partnership for Education GPE Board, telling her that “it’s not the time to wash your hands of ALE!” We urge you all to use this opportunity to make your voices heard!

To Julia Gillard, Chair GPE Board

cc Camila Croso, Maria Khan, Kira Boe, Gifty Anyogbe Apanbil, Alice Albright, Charles North

I am writing on behalf of the PIMA international network of adult and lifelong learning practitioners to express the strongest concern at the lack of progress made to date in addressing the commitments made to adult learning and education (ALE) in Sustainable Development Goal 4 and its constituent targets, and the failure of the international community to secure resources for the targets to be achieved.

PIMA is a global network of experienced individual adult learning and education professionals, with an active interest especially in the different dimensions and contexts of lifelong, wide and deep learning in the interests of greater social, economic and ecological justice locally and globally. Given that a third of the SDG time frame has elapsed, and the Global Partnership for Education, which has a remit to support the full range of SDG4, is reviewing its resourcing priorities, we believe it is essential that your colleagues act to ensure that the whole of the remit can be achieved.

The history of international commitments, and subsequent outcomes affecting adult learning and education, including adult literacy, is not a success story. It is now 30 years since the first international commitment to halve the rate of adult illiteracy was agreed in Jomtien, and it is 20 years since the same commitment was adopted as part of the Education for All agenda. By 2015 and the end of the EFA period, far less progress had been than on the other measured EFA goals, and wider adult learning and education (ALE) was not adequately measured at all. There is a risk that this pattern will be repeated in the SDGs.

The right to education - with literacy its core component – is a universal human right for young people and adults alike. Without investment in ALE, and in global citizenship education, in particular, few of the other SDGs (including climate change, gender equality, poverty reduction, maternal health, and clean water) will be achievable. At the same time, reports from the ILO, the World Economic Forum, OECD and UNESCO highlight the critical importance of universal lifelong learning in responding to the challenges of globalisation, climate change, mass migration, and the emergence of a fourth industrial revolution, and all that AI and robotics will mean for work and wider society.

Faced with the scale of the challenge it is of critical importance that GPE's revised programme priorities give serious weight, backed by financial support for those elements of SDG4 affecting ALE (notably 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6 and 4.7).

We look forward to hearing the outcome of your consultations.

With best wishes

Shirley Walters
PIMA President

Disrupting reactive and divisive public discourse through adult education [SHAUNA BUTTERWICK](#)

shauna.butterwick@ubc.ca

Troubling times

We are assaulted every day by protectionist and xenophobic worldviews, such as those expressed by some proponents of the UK Brexit campaign and Trump. In Canada, ultra-conservative politicians are emboldened to engage with similar expressions creating a climate of insecurity, distrust and 'us and them' politics. Such divisive orientations, it must

be noted, are not new for many communities and groups of people who have for decades and centuries been disenfranchised by colonial regimes that enabled slavery and the displacement of Indigenous peoples from their lands and culture. Current policies and actions informed by these protectionist worldviews, such as deportations, border closures, and arrests of Indigenous leaders defending their land, are undermining many hard-won human rights achievements. How can adult education play a role in interrupting this toxicity: creating spaces for those whose stories are seldom heard to be told and listened to; and for explorations of which actions can create a more life-affirming and inclusive world?

Countering authoritarian world views

The destructive elements of such toxic rhetoric have been the focus of many authors. George Lakoff (2017, 2008), Rebecca Solnit (2018) and John Hoggan (2019) are several who offer some guidance to the creation of more life-affirming counter-narratives. Lakoff, a professor of cultural linguistics at Berkeley, has explored US political messaging for years and has turned his attention to Trump whom he regards as a 'super salesman' who repeats his ideas over and over and dismisses or demonizes those who challenge him. Authoritarian thinking, such as Trump's, are informed by rigid hierarchies that see White as better than Black, men as superior to women, and the US as superior to other nations. An alternative democratic view is more respectful of difference and oriented to building solidarity across differences and beyond one's close community.

Changing the views and rhetoric of Trump and other conservatives, Lakoff cautions, is unlikely. Retreat from engaging with this toxic rhetoric is attractive as it can be healing. We can counter with reactive dismissal of conservative ideas, using the same 'us and them' binary thinking. Lakoff and others caution against retreating or reactive dismissal of these ideas. What is needed, instead, is to model more respectful and democratically oriented engagements that support speaking about what we want, not just what we don't want.

Trump's messages and policies have also been the focus of US journalist and author Rebecca Solnit (2018), who describes the current public discourse as a "linguistic mess" (p. 4). She urges oppositional movements to be "careful and precise about language" and to "encourage the beloved community and the conversations that inculcate hope and visions" (p. 4). Canadian author, James Hoggan (2019) in his provocatively titled book *I'm right, you're an idiot*, shares Lakoff's and Solnit's concerns regarding the breakdown of civil public discourse which, he argues, "stall[s] our ability to think collectively and solve the many dangerous problems that are stalking everyone on Earth" (p. xvii). In interviews he conducted with thinkers and practitioners, the advice is offered on how to create more robust public spheres where non-polarizing and non-divisive dialogue occurs and exchanges take place such that people listen and become more thoughtful.

Alex Himelfarb, a Canadian social scientist and political pundit, like Lakoff advises that we need to create opportunities and spaces for people to see "a plausible, feasible alternative to the status quo" (p. 108). Adam Kahane similarly notes that we need stories and debate "that enable us to create new futures" (p. 137). Hoggan spoke with the Vietnamese monk

Thich Nhat Hanh, who states that: “there is suffering, fear, and anger inside of us, and when we take care of it, we are taking care of the world” (p. 224).

As for the role of activists, the monk, like Lakoff and others, cautions against playing the same game like those we oppose. We must “speak the truth, but not to punish” (p. 231). Creating conditions for respectful listening across differences is essential to creating life-affirming counter-narratives; listening is as much a political project as is enabling the disenfranchised to find their voice (Bickford, 1996).

Creative Community-Based Arts Engagement

What kind of processes support the disenfranchised to speak their truths and create a clear language about what we want? Community arts-based engagement has much to offer. Arts-based activities that are embodied and participatory can create “conversations that inculcate hope and visions” (Solnit, 1918, p. 4). The arts are particularly useful in exploring complexity and conflict. Creating opportunities to speak about what we want requires an orientation to local contexts, where creative methods reflect specific community conditions. Community-based arts involves working with the community, not for or about community. To create a language of hope and healing, creative practices must be participatory, collaborative and involve a critical examination of existing injustices and explorations of ways to intervene. Creative practices that focus on lived experience from the perspective of the community, not those of outsiders, enable explorations of problems and deepen understanding. Creative practices can involve participants telling difficult stories. Adult educators facilitating such processes must be aware of these risks and that risks are not equally shared. Canadian feminist Sherene Razack (1998) brings attention to the dangers of storytelling in the context of hierarchies of privilege and penalty. We must find ways to support participants’ courage; what some have called ‘brave space’ (Cook-Sather, 2016). Adult educators must challenge the notion that safety for all participants can be created, because what is safe for one can be risky for another. Instead, educators should support participants to “face that danger and to take risks”, by showing them “that painful or difficult experiences will be acknowledged and supported, not avoided or eliminated” (Cook-Sather, 2016, p. 1).

Counter-narratives to toxic and divisive discourse require that we support spaces where participants articulate what they want and explore how to get there. When community-based, creative, and participatory artistic engagement occurs at the community level, we can hear silenced stories, and, as Hoggan encourages, “create new futures” (p. 137). These community art initiatives are places where civil society is enacted.

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The Media as an Effective Tool of Adult Education KHAU HUU PHUOC

phuockh66@gmail.com

It is human psychology that the older one is, and the more one has witnessed, the more cautious one is in a new situation and naturally the higher the fear.

The novel Coronavirus, or COVID-19, has recently sparked such a nightmare in the minds of most people around Asia and beyond the continent. These days, people, save children, will wake up in the morning, turn on the TV, and swipe open the smartphone in search of news of the development of the epidemic. People go to work. What do they talk about at work, during a tea break, lunchtime? As is expected, COVID-19.

A child is born without much of the knowledge adults have, with no experience of mishaps that adults have gone through, and thus is unaware of what consequences may come. Adults are not just “older and bigger” children. They have different mind-sets. They each have a stock of cause-effect sequences, one leading to the next, which in turn results in another, as if there is a chain connecting all together to finally bring a disastrous ending.

Naturally, such an "informed" fear triggers a chain of reactions. Seeing scenes of lock-down zones in disease-stricken countries, where all movement is restricted, where people are advised or obliged to stay indoors, and where a trip to the supermarket is banned, people in other places and countries flock to supermarkets to hoard supplies of food, and necessities, not even sparing toilet paper in anticipation of the worst to come. Adults are quick to learn from their experience that something horrendous is coming. They envision all sorts of life-threatening factors and come to the conclusion that the world may come to an end.

Such shopping sprees can be seen in the media, depicting Hong Kong, Japan, Korea, Singapore, and even as far away from the original epicentre Wuhan as California in the USA.

Such a scene was seen in Hanoi, Vietnam on the night of March 2, 2020. But it was gone as quickly as it came. What happened then?

On the evening of March 7, the Government and media gave news of a Vietnamese returning from a trip to Italy, England, and France. She showed signs of the sickness and was soon tested for the suspected disease. The result was positive.

As soon as people heard the news, they did what people in other countries had done: rush to the supermarket and began collecting things for future use. A panicking experience was about to explode.

The next day, things returned to normal, except that streets were quieter, with fewer people moving around. Had there been any media announcement that the information was wrong? Had the Government declared that the patient had flu, not the dreaded sister of it? No. There were even more confirmed cases announced, but what made this magic shift in the attitude of the people and their behaviour was they had learned and understood that the disease was not as terrible as they had thought, as long as they knew how to protect themselves. The Government had done a wonderful job of adult education.

TV programmes showed the deputy Prime Minister chairing a meeting, during which he expressed the nation's resolution to fight the potential epidemic, quoting the Prime Minister saying, "We must fight the disease as we have fought an enemy". He ordered the Ministry of Health to set up a webpage, giving information on how the disease may be transmitted, how people can prevent infection, how the country government at all levels has prepared for this scenario. Most of all, he made it clear that the Government and the media would be transparent in all matters so that people would know the real situation. He advised that panic would not solve the problem and that people should react knowledgeably. The following days the media informed people that there would be no food and other daily supply shortage because food suppliers and providers of daily consumption things had previously made big stocks in preparation; instant messages from the Ministry of Health occasionally popped up on smartphones giving updates of the disease.

Isn't this adult education? If it is, is it effective adult education?

The term "education" is commonly taken to mean imparting knowledge in a formal environment, conducted by a solemn-looking person who is usually referred to with reverence as a teacher or master. It came from the long past when children's learning by playing with and mimicking adults was no longer sufficient to result in outcomes that children would grow up becoming as good at a trade, and knowledgeable in a field as their older people¹. Adults had to resort to storing knowledge in the form of books and other teaching materials, and educate children in the structured ways that knowledge would be, in educators' thinking, be best absorbed by learners.

UNESCO has emphasized that though education is an essential requirement for human society to advance, how it is done is of equal importance; and that learning should take place throughout one's life. According to UNESCO,

Lifelong learning is "rooted in the integration of learning and living, covering learning activities for people of all ages (children, young people, adults, and the elderly, girls and

boys, women and men) in all life-wide contexts (family, school, community, workplace and so on) and through a variety of modalities (formal, non-formal and informal) which together meet a wide range of learning needs and demands. Education systems which promote lifelong learning adopt a holistic and sector-wide approach involving all sub-sectors and levels to ensure the provision of learning opportunities for all individuals."²

In light of this definition, a common belief is that education can be done and should also be done outside the formal schooling context. Then it falls into the domain of community learning centres (CLCs). There were over 11.000 CLCs in 2018, one in almost every village and ward (the smallest administration area in cities) across Vietnam³. They have played a big role in promoting adult education. They disseminate practical knowledge of health, farming, technology, and skills of various trades. They spread government directions and policies⁴. They draw attention to environmental deterioration and raise awareness of environmental preservation. And yet, they are each a distance away from home. To learn, one must get out of the house.

The media, including TV, Internet, and radio, are just a click of the computer mouse, or a slight touch of the phone screen.

Vietnam has utilized the media to its best effect. Banners and posters along the streets can be succinct lessons for road users. A minute's stop at a set of traffic lights is enough to learn that washing hands with soap is an effective way to eliminate most bacteria. Eyes roaming along the street while sitting on a bus can take in other lessons that the Coronavirus does not kill in most cases; that symptoms can be just like a mild cold. Leaflets distributed to households will serve the same educational purpose. There is even an exciting music video clip on YouTube by a Vietnamese music group showing how to stay away from the disease; the clip is now known around the world and is remade by people in different countries⁵. There is a common saying, "A little knowledge is a dangerous thing" – we need to put all media to good use to educate young and old.

¹ Dewey, J. (1916). *Democracy and Education*. Electronic version provided by Pennsylvania State University.

² UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning. (n.d.). "Technical Note: Lifelong Learning". Available at:
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³ Ministry of Education. (2018). "Current Development of CLCs and Future Direction." *Capacity Building for CLC Management*. Internal circulation.

⁴ MOET. (2007). Decision 01/2007/QĐ-BGDĐT. Promulgation of Regulations on Establishment and Operation of Community Learning Centres.

⁵ One such clip can be viewed at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p0MxcBvCoZk>. The song advises washing hands, not putting hands to faces, limiting going to crowded places, and keeping environments clean.

Is Adult Education Relevant to Hong Kong? BENJAMIN TAK-YUEN CHAN

btychan@ln.edu.hk

Recent issues of the PIMA Bulletin (# 27 and #28) carry a number of articles about adult education. The different write-ups discuss roles for adult education in bringing forth awareness of the climate crisis and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), helping to shape the understanding of complicated world issues, and fostering of entrepreneurship education. Readers would not miss to take note of several important occurrences, namely: the Adult Learning and Education (ALE) branding project led by DVV; the next world congress CONFINTEA VII to be held in a year, the publication of the "Centenary Commission on Adult Education Report", and others. As all of these take place within the professional space that is familiar to adult educators and lifelong learning practitioners around the world, I would like to pose a question about its relevance to a territory that has allowed itself to be left behind in the global discourse about adult learning.

The Past and the Present

Hong Kong once had a burgeoning adult education sector from the 1960s which lasted into the early 1990s (Chan, 2010). Although it had always emphasized a narrow focus on vocational training for employment and remedial adult education for obtaining a school leaving qualification, this has not deterred local adult educators from partnering with their overseas peers for professional exchanges, joint projects, and collaborative programme provisions. As such, Hong Kong delegates' tracks could be found at CONFINTEA III (Tokyo) in 1972 and the ICAE initiative on researching Chinese adult education in the mid-1980s. The 2nd International Conference on Adult Education Research and its Journal was organized in 1997 by the Caritas Adult and Higher Education Service and it was the last locally planned event with a direct bearing on the field.

On collaborative programmes for training adult educators and lifelong learning practitioners, there was a succession of institutions that came, including the University of British Columbia, the University of Surrey, and the last one to leave being the University of Nottingham around 2011. Hong Kong's home-grown training programme, the Graduate Diploma in Adult Education and Training (predated by a Certificate and Diploma), offered by the University of Hong Kong's School of Professional and Continuing Education (HKU SPACE) officially morphed into the Postgraduate Diploma in Adult Training and Vocational Education in 2015 and now bears only a focus on training and development.

The HKU SPACE sponsored *International Journal of Continuing Education and Lifelong Learning* led a worthwhile decade-long existence and ceased publication in 2016. Hong Kong's self-imposed isolation from the wider context of discussions going on in adult learning and lifelong education is not helped by the fact that it has not been embraced into the UNESCO framework unlike its neighbour, Macao, which became an associate member in 1995 while still a Portuguese colony. Another reason that can be cited to account for the lack of international presence is Hong Kong policymakers' low regard for this domain of educational practice which is shared by similar economies like Singapore which has not

participated in global surveys including the latest round for the Global Report on Adult Learning and Education (UNESCO, 2019).

Screening the institutional landscape, the two long time providers with roots in adult education, Caritas Adult and Higher Education Service and the Hong Kong College of Technology, have transformed entirely into further education institutions together with a change of name in the former to Caritas Institute for Community Education. In the university sector, the Government established a self-financed Open University of Hong Kong (OUHK) which is now a predominantly full-time degree offering university. Its open-entry distance learning provisions are on the wane each year. Continuing education units in six (two have closed down) of the eight public universities had a long time ago ventured into the market for full-time self-financing sub-degree and degree programmes and made these their major income staple while short courses and part-time certificate and diploma programmes languished after having lost their lustre as learners chase higher level qualifications.

State of Adult Education Provision

What remains of formal adult education today is scanty and limited to remedial secondary education subsidized by the Financial Assistance Scheme for Designated Evening Adult Education Courses and part-time Diploma YiJin programme. In the non-formal education sector, this is dominated by job-related courses of the Employees Retraining Board as well as personal interest courses for seniors funded in part by the Elderly Commission. In OUHK LiPACE, a Capacity Building Mileage Programme for women learners funded by the Women's Commission has been running since 2004, and this is the only remaining adult education programme hosted in a university continuing education unit. From the practicalities of school operation, retaining such non-income generating pursuit is contingent on the financial health of other income streams which regularly come under threats of competition and an unstable operational environment caused by a diminishing number of learners in the market.

Writing from an institutional vantage point, I can relate to what has been said about university adult education as serving only individual needs and privileging those who know how to access courses they want for themselves. In their critique of university adult education, Shanahan and Ward (1995) regard this phenomenon as 'individualization' where reflection by learners on the structure of society is either not required or uncritical. Transposing to our own experience, when examining the top five most popular courses taken by women and older learners, what consistently comes out at the top are those courses on keeping healthy, proper eating, combating ailments, retirement planning, and household repairs. Meanwhile, courses on arts and culture and current affairs have a negligible clientele base and for most of the time have failed to run successfully. This being the case for non-formal education that is subsidized and taken out of leisure time, what more can be expected of the paid-form of professional and continuing education which is taken in the first place for obtaining a qualification that may lead to a presumed return on investment?

Hidden Adult Educators

Given that adult education still operates but on a reduced scale, why are practitioners not calling themselves adult educators? The answer is not so much in seeing the field to be of low status but rather with practitioners' lack of realization that they are actually doing adult education work. As the Government gives no importance to adult education and makes no mention of it in policymaking and official discourse, practitioners tend to identify their practice with the closest equivalent that they can find. For example, someone who teaches in the women and elderly courses would identify herself to be a teacher of non-formal interest-based courses while those who teach in remedial education would either align themselves with secondary education or further education. The same can be expected from someone teaching in retraining courses who would likely identify himself with technical and vocational education. In the absence of a professional space, no dedicated programme that teaches adult learning theory and teaching methods, and the sparse number of practitioners in full-time jobs, adult education practice has been rendered invisible.

Outside of formal education, a lot of people are involved in one way or another with the practice of adult education so long as there are places or situations where learning can take place. The arena of social policymaking and its implementation of policy objectives through designated funding scheme for community projects is one such kind of an unconventional context where alternative adult educators can be found in Hong Kong. Since the political transition in 1997, the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government has adopted a conservative-incremental policymaking approach aimed at preserving the extant power structure in society. Because of this, it has employed mostly modest and pilot measures seen to be tackling the problem to meet some of its policy objectives.

Hence, there are no shortages of designated funding schemes created to support projects (invited through open applications) to build social capital (e.g. Community Investment and Inclusion Fund), to combat poverty and address social exclusion (e.g. Social Innovation and Entrepreneurship Development Fund), to promote diversity and social inclusion (e.g. Community Involvement Broadcasting Fund) to name just a few. Since the funded projects are activity-based and embedded with educational, training and community participatory methods, the project team members would simultaneously act as adult educators and brokers of community participants' interest when leading the project initiatives.

Interestingly, what this has given rise to is a new type of adult educator, who again would not normally consider themselves to be doing adult education work but might adopt those commonly-understood names such as community organizer, social advocate, social entrepreneur or simply follow their professional titles such as social worker. The field of adult education practice has always been fluid and inclusive especially towards those engaged in leading non-formal learning, where tour guides can also be considered as adult educators (Editorial IJLE, 2008).

A professional title and an identity are important for the adult educator, but adult education has always been directed at changing the learner and therefore the values that

guide adult educator's practice should receive more attention. That leads to the pertinent question, what could this kind of adult education which is not individual-focused but community-centred achieve? Borrowing from the map of adult education territory (Boshier, 1997), which is a model for thinking about educational processes and how they could affect power relationships, Hong Kong's alternative adult educators are working within the 'structural-functionalist' paradigm. These practitioners are pragmatists who try to work through and within the system to solve problems without disturbing the power structure. They may have their target subjects' interest in mind but are necessarily also agents of the establishment.

Alternative Ways of Imagining Practice

Reflecting on the conditions of society and polity in Hong Kong, which is characterized by social inequity, powerlessness, citizens' lack of trust in the Government and questions about its ability to govern effectively (Marques, 2020), critical adult education surely can have a role to play to address the deficit and change the status quo. But this tradition is foreign to Hong Kong and what could a few adult educators working in the formal education sector make a difference to is circumscribed by institutional priorities, funding, and staff's personal preference. Overwhelmingly, they would want to work within their comfort zones and have no taste for reframing practice along the conflict paradigm to bring about substantive change, the alternative adult educators mentioned above including.

In a society like Hong Kong, 'activism' is a dirty word and 'cause' may sound less intimidating and neutral. Once we get across the labelling issue, there is decidedly hope for doing meaningful work by partnering with like-minded groups and individuals (cause-driven NGOs, research centres, think tanks, independent professionals), but the next hurdle to overcome is funding. Programmes cannot be operated without funding and non-individualized programmes certainly cannot attract self-paying students. To realize it, either donor funding or institution's course cross-subsidization could be the solution.

Based on the peculiarities of Hong Kong, programming to promote an empowering form of adult education does not imply it has to seek for overthrowing deep-seated contradictions in society and unequal power relationships as conceived from a Western perspective (e.g. radical structuralism in Boshier, 1997). What appears more important is to create an independent space for adult education practice that can resist co-optation and absorption into the dominant structures and their modus operandi, the alternative adult educators benefitting from government-funded schemes to run their projects and initiatives being an example of absorption.

A useful reference point about independent programming is to design learning for action courses that involve advocating for self, group and community interests. Such kind of programming would be able to respond to neglected learning areas that have wider social implications and promote democratic thinking and creative problem solving for its learners. To quote from Shanahan and Ward (1995), "it is when learning intersects at the point of connecting realities faced by individuals and their community and is aimed at

changing the socio-cultural and politico-economic environment can it be called empowering”.

This article does not have the scope to explore each of the learning areas open to adult educators. Advocating for patient rights, climate justice, and media literacy are just some areas where the gaps are waiting to be filled, and needs are pressing. In an earlier article (Chan, 2013), I wrote about educating the citizens of Hong Kong to be equipped to participate in discussions concerning the health care reform where health resources allocation, funding for pharmaceuticals and improvement on health services delivery impact on the lives of many in the community and no adults and their families are spared. I continue to draw inspirations from overseas examples of participatory adult education programming and I think the time has come to try it out in Hong Kong. Adult education is therefore still relevant.

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An example of a learning community in Thailand: Ban-Peung sub-district, Nakhon-Panom Province **SUMALEE SUNGSRI AND BUSSALIN CHANGSALUK**

Sungsri@gmail.com and busarin2511@hotmail.com

Introduction

In Thailand, the importance of lifelong education or lifelong learning has been recognized for many years: it was officially stipulated in the national policies and development plans beginning as early as 1940. For example, the National Education Act, 1999 proposed a lifelong education philosophy as a principle and framework of organizing the whole education system of the country. (Office of National Education Commission, 1999).

The Non-formal and Informal Education Promotion Act 2008 emphasized decentralization of administration and creating and supporting networks to promote lifelong learning for all. (Office of Non-formal and Informal Education Promotion, 2008). The Reformed National Education Plan year 2009-2016 had the objectives of developing people, developing Thai society and promoting the participation of all sectors for organizing and supporting education for all (Office of National Education Council, 2009). The National Education Plan. 2017-2036 has the vision of all Thai people obtaining high-quality lifelong education (Office of National Education Commission, 2017).

To help every group of Thai people in every part of the country to receive lifelong learning opportunities, the government has paid for various efforts to identify proper strategies and to encourage all sectors to take part in organizing and promoting lifelong learning. One of these is the promotion of learning communities.

This paper presents the process of developing a learning community in one sub-district in the north-eastern part of Thailand.

A Learning Community in Ban-Peung sub-district

General Background of Ban-Peung sub-district

Ban-Peung sub-district is one of the sub-districts of Muang district which is located in the southern part of Nakhon Phanom Province. Nakhon Phanom Province is one of the provinces in the north-eastern region of Thailand. The landscape of the Province is spread along Maekong river which divides Thailand and Laos People's Democratic Republic. Ban-Peung sub-district has an area of 113.92 square kilometres. The landscape is of the high-plain form. It has forests, small rivers, and ponds. Ban-Peung sub-district comprises 23 villages with a population of 16,601 people. Their main occupation is agriculture and as farmers. Most have a quite low income obtained from their crops once a year. As for the educational background, about 60% finished primary education, and about 27% finished lower and upper secondary education. In the sub-district, there are 7 primary schools and 2 secondary schools for school-age children.

The process of developing a learning community

The process of developing a learning community for Ban-Peung sub-district included the following steps. Knowledge About learning communities was provided by a resource person to the NFE staff. This was also given to community leaders and committees. NFE teachers in Ban-Peung sub-district invited village leaders and village committees of 23 villages within Ban-Peung sub-district for a one-day meeting. After the village leaders and village committee of 23 villages had realized the benefits and understood the process of developing a learning community, a core group was formed. The core group was

composed of the head of the sub-district, the village headman of every village, and a village committee member of every village. The abbot of Ban-Peung temple and the NFE coordinator of Mueng District non-formal education centre acted as advisors. The core group extended ideas about creating a learning community to people in each village through various channels. They included: religious and cultural activities at the temples, village meetings, and informal meetings.

The NFE coordinator of Mueng District non-formal education centre and the core group then organized a two-day workshop to analyze problems and needs and to prepare a community development plan. The 23 villages within Ban-Peung sub-district were classified into 6 groups. Each group had about 3 or 4 villages. Then the village leaders, village committee and representative of people in each group had brainstorming to analyze their problems and needs. The main problems that each group proposed were quite similar: that incomes were low because they could only sell their crops once a year. They would like to have extra occupations for income-generating.

The needs of villagers in the 6 groups can be summarized as:

- vocational training for income-generating, such as bamboo-weaving, making crispy bananas, mushroom growing
- village cooperative shops
- online marketing
- using natural fertilizers instead of chemical
- youth participation for community development
- promotion of knowledge about democracy
- improving the quality of life of the elderly
- vocational training for the elderly
- promoting reading
- tourism for natural and cultural preservation

The problems and needs of the villagers were used as basic information for developing a community development plan. Each of the 6 groups proposed about 2 projects according to the needs that they identified above.

Related agencies, organizations and local communities were asked for cooperation as stake-holders of the learning community. They included: the temple, the local administration organization, the District NFE Centre, the District Public Health Centre, the District Community Development Centre, the District Agriculture Centre, local primary schools and the village committee.

People in the villages were also encouraged to participate in operating the learning community in various ways such as expressing their needs and problems, joining in developing a community plan, assisting in organizing activities, assisting in making public relations, participating in the activities, and helping with follow-up the activities.

Activities provided in the 6 groups of villages within Ban-Peung sub-district were as follows:

Vocational groups in bamboo weaving, mushroom growing, making crispy banana; village cooperative shops; online marketing project; making natural fertilizers; community development by youth; promotion of knowledge about democracy; development of quality of life for the elderly including vocational training; reading promotion project; and tourism for natural and cultural preservation.

The benefits that people obtained from the learning community can be concluded as follows: It was community-based development and activities were served needs of people; it was the holistic quality of life development which included: education, occupations, economic, health, and culture; every group was served; activities provided promoted income-generating; the learning community extended lifelong learning opportunities for people in the community; people recognized the importance of education; it promoted people's participation in their community development; it promoted the participation of all sectors, and it created learning habits among young people.

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Voluntary-based study circles and related municipal policies: international best practices. EDITED BY CHRIS DUKE AND HERIBERT HINZEN

dukeozenay@gmail.com and hinzenh@hotmail.com

The papers gathered here were commissioned within a project sponsored by the National Institute of Lifelong Education (NILE) in the Republic of Korea (RoK). It followed a discussion with colleagues that joined the 14th PASCAL international conference in Suwon co-organized with Ajou University in September 2018, including from the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL) in Hamburg, aiming at a joint publication in English and Korean. UIL was involved because of the importance of the theme and against a

background of encouraging the study and practice of two related but different subjects: learning cities and community learning centres.

The studies were gathered to inform and assist the Ministry of Education and NILE with Adult Learning and Education (ALE) policy development and its commitment to sustainable development and the evolution of learning cities. Some cases are more obviously relevant to the Korean situation than others; all offer lessons.

This set of studies may suggest to Koreans that more inspiration and models exist and can be emulated in home base Korean development than in what most other countries have to show. It is worth noting that private education at all levels is a major and competitive part of the national education system in Korea. Yet municipal subvention proves easier to come by for grassroots community-based learning in this country and culture than in many others.

The eight non-Korean studies are diverse in style, length, and content. They approach this significant subject from different contexts and directions. They are presented here in the authors' own words and ways of seeing, edited only for ease of reading and understanding.

Together they make a valuable contribution to a theme increasingly important for the evolution and effective development of adults' and communities' learning in a time of rapid and disruptive change. Their diversity may make it harder for the Korean government and lobbyists at different levels to say what should be done there. However, they pose essential questions about what study circles mean to different countries, how they are evolving, and the different kinds of utility that they offer.

It may not be a surprise how much several of the voluntary-based study circles and their studies are going all out for support - financial, local or national government, institutional, professional or for infrastructure including buildings and places to meet. A certain form of support can be useful and make a difference as long as the main principals of voluntary and participatory approaches are respected in their actions and activities. This is very close to the debate we currently have in many countries where they are more centre or institution-based with respect to CLC or Adult Education Centres (AEC). Could we open such a debate wider into the direction - are study circles and institutions/centres in competition or do we have to search for appropriate ways of potential cooperation?

There is no doubt that we are moving deeper and faster into a certain global crisis that has implications for all as it is a time where globalisation, digitalisation, migration and demographic change are moving and shaking our people and societies. What roles are there for study circles, for CLC and AEC, for learning cities and regions - all trying to get close to lifelong learning and related policies, strategies or even systems in this context? Where are we with this discussion in the arena and agenda of the SDG, especially when we do want to contribute to more than to goal four as quality education? These cases and their review show also that study circles may be helpful to be a viable source for the much-needed debates on all the seventeen goals in a meaningful and participatory way by the people themselves.

For those that are interested in a quick look at the collection they can get a first impression by browsing through the titles and their authors:

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The editors are thankful to all who made this work possible: those from Korea, from UIL, and especially the authors. However, a big thank you must go to Muir Huston from the University of Glasgow who did some additional fine-tuning of the manuscript to be included into the Series of Working Paper where it has just appeared on <http://cradall.org/workingpapers/voluntary-based-study-circles-and-related-municipal-policies-international-best>

As most of the authors are members of PIMA we are currently preparing to put the Study Circle Report as the Working Paper onto the emerging PIMA website also.

Other news and perspectives

Learning in later life: My Taiwanese experience [BRIAN FINDSEN](#)

brianfindsen@gmail.com

Pingtung Senior Learning Centre

Over recent months (September 2019 to January 2020) I have been visiting Taiwan on three occasions, accompanied by my wife, Caterina. On two previous occasions (2013; 2018) I had presented at Later Life Learning conferences (Chiayi; Taipei), as a guest of the Department of Adult & Continuing Education (DACE) at the National Chung Cheng University (CCU). In September/October, October/November and January of this year, I was a visiting scholar in DACE at CCU helping with teaching, research, and staff development sponsored by the Centre for Innovative Research on Ageing in Society (CIRAS).

It is difficult to summarize this special experience. Having retired from the University of Waikato at the end of July 2019 as a professor of (adult) education, I had deliberately allowed space in this new “retirement” phase for this kind of opportunity. While my expenses were covered by CCU, my motivation was never to profit financially but nor was it to lose money. I will now reflect on the three visits with a heavier concentration on the third visit in January, just prior to the coronavirus outbreak emanating from mainland China.



A word on the context of Taiwan. Outwardly Taiwan is a fairly homogeneous society following Confucian ideals. To a degree this is true. Yet, as I was to become aware, there are different sub-groups related to historic immigration patterns, primarily from mainland China. Importantly, too, indigenous peoples of around 2% of the population, continue their traditions. Geographically and politically, mainland China occupies a dominant space in which most Taiwanese have considerable ambivalence – most yearning for a democratic future (reinforced at the elections in January) but also conscious of important trade connections to mainland China. In terms of population, around 24 million people occupy the territory equivalent to one-seventh of Aotearoa New Zealand - hence, a population density around 35 times of my homeland. In practice, as we often travelled on the High-Speed Train (HSR) from Taipei to Chiayi, almost constant conurbation on a North-South pathway could be observed through the windows interspersed with intense farming. Not by accident, Caterina and I agreed to be present in Taiwan in the predominantly cooler winter months.

The earliest visit typified the kind of great hospitality of my Taiwanese colleagues. David Chen, our young mentor for each visit, escorted us to accommodation and campus. I was fortunate to have a large office (an unused classroom) in which I could spread out and receive guests. On this first visit, much of my time was spent teaching both undergraduate

and postgraduate classes on selected topics, negotiated with colleagues. Obviously, the language was a major issue but not entirely different from my own NZ experiences of teaching whereby around half of my classes have been international students from mainland China. In Chiayi, at times, I conducted teaching on my own in English; on other occasions, I worked alongside Taiwanese colleagues with impromptu translation; still others David, whose command of English is strong, translated as needed. I learned to plan well but to be flexible.

The second visit included a fairly long period in Taipei where I coordinated a seminar on later life learning for the Asia-Oceania International Association for Gerontology and Geriatrics (IAGG) before going to Chiayi. I continued a teaching routine but also undertook a keynote address at an international conference where other overseas contributors came from Japan, South Korea, and Thailand. These conferences were also cultural events and featured local seniors demonstrating their engagement with learning in a variety of settings. Another observation was the explicit interconnections of different ministries of government (for instance, in Health & Welfare; Education; Employment) collaborating on active ageing and lifelong learning initiatives.

The third visit in January coincided with the end of the semester so teaching was less. This allowed space for investigating research possibilities and for a planned three site visit to Senior Learning Centers across Taiwan. DACE at CCU has been in the heart of Taiwan's developments in senior education. The policy documents of *the Active Aging Learning Center Implementation Plan (2008)* and *the Senior Education Medium-Term Development Project (2017)* have been instrumental guides for the advent of the Active Learning Centers (ALCs). Caterina and I were guests to visit three locations where ALCs had been established from the early days of 2008.

Our first site to visit was to the Pingtung County Senior Education Demonstration Center in a moderate urban setting. The venue (see photo) was originally a kindergarten which closed and is now the ALC. (This is symbolic of the changing demographics to a more aged-centered society). This center was the first established in Taiwan (104 centers in 2008; 368 in 2018) and has been funded, as for all LCs, by the Ministry of Education to a varying extent. All these centers are considered to be a result of the collaboration between the local, county and national leadership. If accompanied by Senior Education Centers (SECs), the universities are engaged in helping develop these sites. In the case of Pingtung, the SEC is located alongside the ALC in a park-like setting.

The curriculum at the Pingtung site was heavily slanted towards crafts – photography; painting; leathercraft; masks – and Caterina and I were challenged to undertake a small-scale leathercraft exercise (as seniors ourselves). However, there is a partially regulated curriculum from the Ministry of Education to which centers should adhere but also other learning events carefully chosen to reflect local priorities. In the centers we visited, teachers in programs follow a professional training regime, orchestrated by staff from DACE at CCU. To my mind, other worthwhile initiatives in this location were intergenerational activities, health promotion (driver education; anti-smoking; falls prevention) and support for a long-term care facility.

The second visit was in nearby Tainan, a major coastal city south of Chiayi, especially important in early colonization by the Dutch. This center has been part of an elementary school complex for 11 years and we were enthusiastically welcomed by music and dance as we entered their building (previously disused but now remodeled). This elder membership in Tainan, we were told, was 45,000 strong, ranging in age from 55+ to the 90s; there was a widespread engagement from young-old to old-old. Quite overtly, there was a strong concentration on new industry aligned to elders' needs and a salt farm project where more men proportionately were involved. One significant factor is the relatively low literacy level, a result of an older historical cohort, identified at 24.05% at the elementary level. Training needs of staff were consistent with the Pingtung group.

Our final visit was to a major city, Taichung, to the north of Chiayi where we were introduced to the Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Mary Senior Learning Center. This setting, amid a high-status Catholic school, was highly urbanized and this LC was one of 29 in this city of 2.8 million. This complex of facilities (including large auditorium in the basement, multi-purpose rooms, senior education center, computer room) covers four floors. There is a counselling facility, mainly telephone, which covers elders' queries from across the country and supervised by a social worker from the Ministry of Health and Welfare. The overt goals of the LC are to promote learning, train volunteers and reinforce positive attitudes. Government funding provides 70% of costs, the other 30% coming from fees and donations.

The intake for this LC is people of a higher literacy level. Apparently, too, there is little overlap in participation between the LC and the Senior Education Center (on a user pays). The scale of this LC/SEC appeared to be extensive – 45-50 teachers; 100 courses; 1000 participants per week; 13 classrooms and 4 full-time staff. Training of volunteers at multiple levels is a serious activity here and this voluntary workforce is required to undertake strenuous practice in a rural area. While the LC follows the regulations of the MOE, the orientation is towards a needs-based ideology.

To summarize, the LCs are part of a broader plan of provision, funded largely by the government through the Ministry of Education and other authorities for seniors (defined as around 55+) to take up learning opportunities later in life. While government regulations provide some consistency across the numerous LCs located in diverse environments, there is an expectation of innovation related to more localised economic/social factors. Most activities are focused on leisure and recreation yet there appears to be a strong movement towards more social enterprise and entrepreneurialism. As in New Zealand, much of the work is undertaken by volunteers. Fortunately, these unpaid older workers are properly trained and gain sustenance from contributing to their peers. The essential point is that learning in later life is treated as integral to lifelong learning for the Taiwanese and receives state support in policy and funding.

The Rapidly Evolving World of Artificial Intelligence. What should we do? PETER KEARNS

p.kearns@netspeed.com.au

In a short article titled *Being Human in the Era of Artificial Intelligence* in a 2019 issue of the PIMA Bulletin, I set out some reflections on the technologies of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, particularly artificial intelligence and robotics, with their relevance to our interests in lifelong learning and building sustainable inclusive communities.

The accelerating pace of AI development around the world was evident in a recent article in the business magazine *Fortune* which reviewed recent developments in *The Quest for Human-level AI* (Fortune, February 2020).

This showed how leading corporations such as Microsoft and Google were investing heavily in the quest for “human-level AI”, repositioning their companies in the process. “Big tech” is investing in companies at the leading edge of AI, such as Open AI, Deep Mind, Google Brain, and Facebook AI in the race to achieve Artificial General Intelligence (AGI), (Forbes February 2020, 28-33).

While commercial motives are driving this escalating development, the human consequences of AGI are receiving less attention. More needs to be done in exploring ways in which human values and moral codes can be preserved in the transition towards a probable world of AGI.

However, a useful start has been made by UNESCO in establishing its International Commission on the Futures of Education which is due to report in 2021. The terms of reference of the Commission are directed at “how knowledge, education, and learning can be reimaged in a world of increasing complexity, uncertainty, and precarity” [*a new quasi-social science term for precariousness Ed.*].

This is surely a quest that all organisations concerned with the future of homo-sapiens, such as PASCAL, PIMA, and UIL, should address in our thinking and action. Already organisations such as OECD and the World Economic Forum are contributing.

The 2018 PIMA SIG report on *Towards Good active Ageing for All* touched on some of these questions, including a short article by Tom Schuller on *Managing Transitions in Later Life*, which raised issues relevant to rethinking the life course which is surely relevant to reimagine education and learning in a world being transformed.

As the phases of life are changing with the impact of demographic shifts and new technologies, the imperative need exists to rethink how education and learning throughout life can be facilitated and supported in this ever-changing world.

Business is among the sectors recognising these critical developments with *The Davos Manifesto: The Universal Purpose of a Company in the Fourth Industrial Revolution*, which focussed around a concept of stakeholder capitalism in place of the dominant concept of shareholder capitalism. This enshrined a broadened concept of a company contributing to a sustainable world:

A company is more than an economic unit generating wealth. It fulfils human and societal aspirations as part of the broader social system. Performance must be measured not only by the return to shareholders but also on how it achieves its environmental, social and good governance objectives. (World Economic Forum, 2020)

The Davos Manifesto recognises the need for continuous learning in the workplace to maintain employability through “ongoing upskilling and reskilling”. This need is now widely recognised by business and industry organisations as varied as the McKinsey Institute and ILO while the American Business Roundtable, America’s most influential business lobby group, announced in 2019 that it would formally embrace stakeholder capitalism.

These shifts in thinking about capitalism should have their counterparts in our thinking about education and lifelong learning; perhaps with a similar concept of stakeholder education and learning throughout life providing for broader and deeper partnerships in learning neighbourhoods and cities. Building an ethical framework to underpin such a stakeholder view of education and learning throughout life should be an immediate priority. An opportunity for innovation exists using the concept and putting into practice in the role of learning neighbourhoods and cities, where new forms of partnership, could and should be developed, with more effective community learning and active citizenship.

PASCAL has been interested for some years in what can be achieved in learning neighbourhoods and cities under our EcCoWell initiative led by the city of Cork, and with projects in neighbourhoods such as Harlem, New York, and Datong, Taipei. A review of the EcCoWell experience in 2017 led to an expanded EcCoWell 2 concept, which added the learning neighbourhood concept, happiness and well-being, and entrepreneurship to the objectives of EcCoWell (Kearns & Reghenzani-Kearns, 2019).

Discussions are proceeding on implementing an expanded EcCoWell 2 grouping, perhaps adding some cities participating in the Glasgow Centre for Sustainable Healthy Learning Cities initiative which involves 14 cities in Asia and Africa, with 9 research partners supporting the initiative.

There are exciting opportunities to build on the EcCoWell 2 initiative as part of the imperative to explore "how knowledge, education, and learning can be reimaged in a world of increasing complexity, uncertainty, and precarity".

Ideas and suggestions for the EcCoWell 2 initiative will be most welcome and may be sent to me at p.kearns@netspeed.com.au, as well as being posted on the PASCAL website and PIMA Bulletin. The PIMA Bulletin can perhaps serve to maintain an on-going dialogue on these critical issues.

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Longer careers and new economics TOM SCHULLER

tom.schuller48@gmail.com

We seem to be in one of those periodic upswings when people (re)discover the case for lifelong learning. Today it's often to do with demography, but also with AI and, especially in the case of the UK, with our terrible productivity record. I've written [elsewhere on demography](#), and may come back to it in a later bulletin. Here I just report on some thoughts from an invigorating conference on Women in Economics at Warwick University, which made me think more about what we mean by a 'career', and how learning fits into changing patterns of work.

The conference organiser Stephanie Paredes Fuentes and her team did a great job of bringing students from many universities (and countries – a very international group) together to discuss some of the challenges facing women doing economics – one of the very few subjects where men still outnumber women. Luisa Affuso, the chief economist at Ofcom, graphically described some of the severe challenges she had faced as a pioneer in her profession, and this led to some discussion of what a 'career' now looks like and might look like in the future.

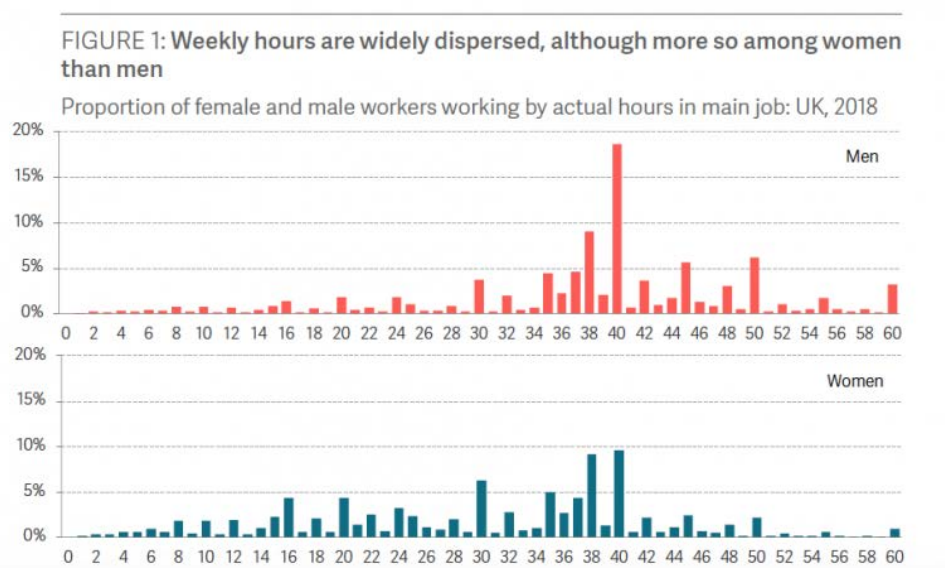
I was there to talk about the [Paula Principle](#) and brought the gloomy news of the prospective 50-year span that faces people about to start their working lives. In that more extended context, rethinking what we mean by a career becomes all the more important.

Most of the students, naturally, were more concerned with overcoming barriers to their immediate progress into work than with the second half of their working life. (These barriers include, as I was told over coffee, the attitudes of some male students who had entered economics in order to become investment bankers, and who according to my informants tended to exhibit what might be called an excessive degree of self-confidence.) But a recent report from the Resolution Foundation on working hours trends makes me

think again how important it is to be aware of patterns over the life course. (<https://www.resolutionfoundation.org/publications/the-times-they-arent-a-changin/>)

The overall message from the Resolution Foundation report is that the long-run decline in working hours has stalled since the financial crisis of 2008. Nevertheless, there is a wealth of information on overall working patterns.

Women's hours vary over the life course much more than men's, and there is far greater diversity in working time in the UK than in most comparable countries. As the RF's Fig 1 shows, this is mainly because of the pattern of female employment.



Source: Resolution Foundation, from ONS

Most particularly, part-time working – almost unknown before the First World War, and only 5% of all work in the 1950s – tripled in the post-war period and has now reached nearly 30% of all work. It has gone up steeply amongst men: in 1979 only 7% of men worked part-time; by 2009 it was 19%.

Put that next to the seemingly inescapable tendency for women to learn more than men as adults. On the one hand, it may be because women are more accustomed to putting different components of their lives together, so combining employment and learning comes more easily. On the other hand, part-timers have poorer access to training opportunities. In any event, we need to understand better the interaction between changing work patterns and access to learning, of all kinds.

For me there are 3 key points:

Notions of a professional career have not caught up with these working patterns.

This is largely because although there are many more men working part-time, they tend to be in less professional occupations. Highly qualified men are actually working longer hours than they used to. There is a striking contrast with earlier times when greater leisure was a sign of status.

'Part-time' has become too baggy a category to do justice to what is going on.

The simple binary divide lumps too much together. It is increasingly unsatisfactory – and increasingly important when it comes to women's careers. Until non-full-time working patterns are given proper attention, progress will be slow.

The life course approach is crucial.

Just reflect on the growth in labour market participation of people aged 65+: it has more than doubled, from 5.1% at the beginning of the century to nearly 11% today. In this context, women's greater willingness to learn will take on a new value.

There is a common saying, "A little knowledge is a dangerous thing" – we need to put all media to good use to educate young and old.

New Member Maria Slowey

PIMA welcomes in Professor Slowey Maria.slowey@dcu.ie, a distinguished national and global leader of ALE and LLL, with a deep understanding of research scholarship applied to practice from Ireland, where she returned after long service in university higher ALE leadership in England and then Scotland, where at the University of Glasgow she held the position once occupied by Lalage Bown and now by Mike Osborne. In view of her knowledge, experience and personal qualities Maria was invited by PIMA's Governing Committee to be co-opted to the Committee membership, which she has done.

Maria is currently Director of the Higher Education Research Centre (HERC) Dublin City University (DCU) and Professor in the School of Policy and Practice <https://www.dcu.ie/herc/index.shtml>.

In her own words, "from 2004 to 2009, I also served a term as Vice President Learning Innovation in DCU, and before returning to Ireland I worked in Glasgow University (1992-2004) where I was Professor of Adult and Continuing Education and also Vice-Dean Research and Founding Director of the Centre for Research and Development in Adult and Lifelong Learning (CRADALL). My previous positions include Head of the Centre for Continuing Education and Widening Access, Northumbria University, England, and Lecturer in Adult and Community Education, Maynooth University, Ireland. My research and policy activities focus on comparative higher education and sociological analysis of equality and access to post-compulsory education and training over the life course.'

Maria would be delighted to hear from PIMA colleagues who might be interested in some of the current EU projects with which she and other colleagues are involved: EUSRExcell (European Universities Social Responsibility Excellence); ENGAGE (Engaging students in social responsibility); and INTALL (International Adult and Lifelong Learning). Some PIMA members will also be interested in a forthcoming book (2020) which she has co-edited with Hans Schuetze and Tanya Zubrzycki, which investigates the implications of socio-demographic change for higher education across 12 countries: ***Inequality***,

Innovation, and Reform in Higher Education: Challenges of migration and ageing populations (Springer).

Invitation to Webinar on 8 April 2020

Times: Melbourne 4 pm; Singapore 2 pm; Mumbai 11.30 am; Cape Town 8 am; Germany 8 am; Vancouver 11 pm (7 April).

Adult Learning and Education (ALE), Climate Crises and COVID-19: Critical Reflections from Australia

A panel of Australian adult educators, scholars and activists – Jenny Macaffer, Jim Falk, and Robbie Guevara - will lead this. ‘Thought pieces’ published in Bulletin 29 by Jim and Jenny will form a starting point for discussion. For anyone not able to be ‘in the webinar’ at the time, written questions or reflections will be welcome. The webinar will be recorded and a summary of the discussion will be carried in the next Bulletin.

For more information on times for your region, check this ZOOM link <https://zoom.us/j/6767054688> and to register your interest please follow this link <https://forms.gle/UjaVthTsmZxCjLBFA> and complete the form.

PIMA Website goes live! <HTTPS://PIMAMEMBERS.WIXSITE.COM/NETWORK>

***COVID-19 requires that we keep physical distance but
we encourage social solidarity!***