Promoting, Interrogating and Mobilising
Adult Learning & Education

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Editorial *Chris Duke*

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We begin this ambiguous New Year on an upbeat note: Chris Brooks demurs at the prevailing doom and gloom with which we farewelled 2020, noting causes for collective pride. Yet there is also a blunt closing challenge: in his rural village 'flat-earthers' display 'thoughtless thinking and a failure to identify and examine the facts'. 'Surely this is a major educational failure. What should we do?' Brooks asks.

First, however, please note the upcoming Webinar a few days after you received this Bulletin, jointly with Canadian and UK kindred bodies, which asks: about links between ***Climate change, resource extraction, and adult learning and education – what are the links.*** Note to President Shirley Walters' purposeful confrontation of these vital issues via the 'impacts of extractivism on African women and… women-centred and just development alternatives'.

Here we go first to the theme of the Special Interest Group on later life learning convened by Brian Findsen who opens the set. In this symposium, most of the contributions arise from his invitation to *consider different countries' responses to the COVID-19 pandemic*.

The final paper here, by Ornwipa Mongkondaw, looks at a different aspect: older people not as a health-vulnerable problem, but as a resource: a reservoir of old wisdom and a means to transfer knowledge to youth, and assist their viable future in rural Thailand.

A new book on higher education co-edited by PIMA members Maria Slowey and Hans Schuetze with a colleague of Slowey is subtitled 'Challenges of Migration and Ageing Populations'. For sure, Covid-19 is an unwelcome companion to older adults; but with wise leadership and good thinking, they, like migrants, also represent an invaluable resource and not just a problem. Nor is a virus a brand-new foe to humankind: Carol and Thomas Kuan remind us that 'viruses are 1.5 billion years old living proteins… Longer civilisations have developed indigenous cures'.

We invite and encourage members from other countries to add to the discussion (send papers to Brian Findsen as Convenor, or myself as Bulletin Editor), for the next issue.

Most of these papers are from countries with reasonable records of pandemic management; we need also to hear more from Europe, Africa, and the Americas. Every country faces much the same dilemma: how rigorously to combat C-19, which takes its heaviest toll among the elderly; and how to balance this with the economic damage of rigorous lockdown and adequate support to people affected.

The second main section of this Bulletin probes themes, which deserve PIMA attention through 2021. Also, in continuing to examine modes of collaboration by PIMA and its members with other global and regional networks and organisations, Heribert Hinzen draws attention to the role that universities can play in promoting active applied adult learning, and ways that PIMA members can collaborate, as by building on the work of the Wurzburg's Adult Education Academy now involving 10 universities. 'New roles for new times' may

sound like a tired slogan reaching its late middle age: but in this century, decade and year, it has a new urgency that PIMA should address.

Back in 'Other themes', Bernt Gustavsson begins: 'Mass media and social media spin us around in labyrinths, such that, ultimately, we do not know where we are or what we can believe and know'; and closes with the question: 'what and how do we think together to be the right, the good and the true? What can be an answer in this time of 'post-truth?'

Gavin Moodie comes onto similar issues in exploring the thorny and superficially speaking internal conundrum for university administrators: free speech on campus; and the need to rethink this in current political-social contexts. Administrators allowing or banning visits and speeches on campus by controversial speakers whether of left, right, or of other kinds of passion, face a choice between student action, perhaps violent and destructive, and opprobrium from mass and social media for allowing or prohibiting. Citing Voltaire is all very well, but big reputations can be shredded; image may mean success or bankruptcy. Is the rehabilitation of science and reason enough to guide appropriate long-vision policy and action? Or do the market values of governing bodies prevail?

Between Gustavsson and Moodie there is also a relevant celebration of working-class scholarship (in the UK 'neath the dreaming spires of Oxford) by Budd Hall. Who gets to go there? Whose knowledge counts for what? How far are universities (and in which if not all countries) asking the research questions that the community wants and needs to be answered? We used to speak of 'organic intellectuals'; for New Zealand according to Roger Boshier, farm-gate intellectuals. Steve Garlick has pressed the question on universities: are they good at…or good for…what? And are ALE and LLL policy, research, and 'knowledge' (still) made in the North for export to the global South? And will it ever be thus?

This Bulletin also carries for the first time a book review – something that may become a regular feature. The review and the book, on *Public Sociology as Educational Practice*, are recommended and of relevant interest. But they carry another story, and a different important question for universities, the scholars of the academy, and the production, ownership, and use of knowledge, as Hall's preamble to the review explain. In separate correspondence this reviewer explains why he had withdrawn the review, which has instead been welcomed, to the Bulletin:

"I am very concerned about the evolution over the past years amongst many of the established publishing companies to charge fees for the sharing of intellectual property created by scholars such as myself. I am particularly concerned when this practice affects the dissemination of knowledge in a field such as community development. Academics are not paid for articles that are published in journals such as the CDJ [Community Development Journal]. Oftentimes our IP rights are taken by the journals in question. But more disturbing is the impact that a paywall creates for those who do not subscribe to a given journal, or who do not have funds to do so or access through a university library. Community Development started as a field of theory and practice based in communities and driven by the concerns of communities to create more opportunities for improved lives… It saddens me that the Community Development Journal, in particular, long the vehicle for transformative

community action, would now be located behind a paywall. The idea that I would personally pay to be able to freely circulate a book review that I had written myself, is exploitative and furthers knowledge inequity."

To Gustavsson's Jekyll and Hyde ambiguity of the mass and social media we may add the consumptive commodification, conscription, and collusion of the mainstream academic press. It is a subject to which we may return.

Two Victories for Science and Rationality: Why so much doom and gloom?

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As 2020 closed and New Year opened, we have been drenched with articles about the past twelve months as *annus horribilis*. I am unconvinced by this pervasive pessimism, a mixture of defeatism and anxiety. Many positive attitudes stand out about 2020 - community resilience, determination, and popular courage being widespread across the globe.

Two events warrant particular attention: the public battle against the Covid 19; and the success of president Elect-Joseph Biden.

First, many, including me, feared the re-election of Donald Trump. He has not been re-elected. President-Elect Biden has won a substantial majority in the Electoral College and is even more legitimate because of his 7,000,000 lead in the popular vote.

Second, despite its terrible impact, the fact is that Covid-19 has not turned out to be a new Black Death. Health systems have risen to the occasion and through a mixture of science, artificial intelligence, good public policy support, and entrepreneurial endeavour we have two vaccines approved in the US and the UK to fight Covid-19, and through artificial intelligence, we are further along in our quest to understand the structure of proteins.

These two events signal a defeat for the sirens of pessimism. They are a major achievement for a reason, rationality, political intelligence, and science, indeed for the modern world itself.

President-elect Biden

It has been sadly obvious for a long time that the alliance between the open-minded working class and the liberal intelligentsia has broken down. Many factors are at play, but most important are these: the failure to respond to the consequences of globalisation which have harmed the skilled and semi-skilled working class very badly; the arrogance of many in the new liberal elite who have replaced concerns about poverty and social justice by gender and its self-righteous language of 'political correctness'; a failure to deal with excessive individualism; and a refusal to control and contain 'casino capitalism'. All of this has been made worse by the mass misinformation spread by the so-called social media, and the collapse of the historical hierarchies of knowledge and information.

Biden's victory is a great moral and political triumph. It is a source of hope, which offers us many lessons for charting a positive way forward for humanity. While it is clear that Mr Biden will not be able to reunite a divided America, because of Republican Party partisanship, it is worth remembering that he won because he was calm, measured, decent, and positive. He refused the anger of Trump, knowing that this always leads to hate. This adds to the greatness of his victory.

But perhaps more important is the fact that he addressed the question of class and the class divide. In a world where wealth and power are concentrated in a few urban places, where it is difficult for those without a second University degree to get a foot on the social-economic ladder, it is not surprising that those left behind are angry and vulnerable to demagogues. Mr Biden did very well in winning the rust belt states of Wisconsin, Michigan, and Pennsylvania. He did this by speaking the language of the man in the street not the Hilary Clinton arrogance of 'deplorable' or the Barack Obama superiority of 'bitter'. The President-Elect produced empathy and respect, and cleverly recast his opponent: "I've dealt with guys like Donald Trump all my life…. who would look down on us because we didn't have a lot of money or our parents did not go to college", he said in a speech in Manitowac, Wisconsin "Guys who inherit everything they have ever gotten and squander it." He brilliantly showed that a dash less contempt from the meritocratic elite towards those with less education, planner speech, and concern about class and poverty would go a long way in rebuilding a successful progressive alliance. It shows the way forward to help avoid the traps of hubris and political absolutism so present in much of the discourse of the new elite.

Anne Case and Angus Deaton (*Deaths of Despair and the future of Capitalism*, March 2020, Princetown University Press), have produced outstanding research that shows that white working-class males are amongst the most underprivileged socioeconomic groups; UK data shows that white males from low-income families are the least likely to go to University. Case and Deaton research found that white middle-aged working-class 'deaths of despair' have driven a decline in US life expectancy. Yet most of the new liberal elite are unable to recognise this with their view that 'whiteness, cisgenderness* and maleness' are privileges. Those who challenge their refusal to examine the facts are accused of being reactionary and dismissed. Class issues are considered less important in some eyes in comparison with gender, sexuality, and ethnicity. [*Cisgenderness is the new term for people who are happy with the sex they were born with]

It would seem that this process poses two major challenges for education.

- Education systems should not be used to force changes in people's opinions. But surely people can and should be educated into a position of being able to consider, in a well informed and critical way, the policy proposals put before them, and to distinguish and reject distortions, lies, and conspiracy theories ever-present in parts of the political class and much of the social media. Such an education system must also reinforce the collective understanding of basic scientific and historical knowledge. When the popular vote in the UK was extended by Gladstone (1867) it was accompanied by W.E. Forster's Education Act in 1870, so that the newly enfranchised voters could vote wisely. Educationalists are clearly in need of revisiting this question.

- Secondly, while we should not purposefully educate people to hold views other than those that the liberal-minded university graduates have decided are 'correct', we do need to learn to accept different language and accents, and to be able to understand and speak the different cultural languages of class if we want to understand what someone else is saying. Without this, we cannot even start a useful dialogue - and without that, there is no basis for progress. Educators need to stop the worrying drift towards political correctness in language and action, and to embrace an approach that allows for an understanding of differences in social and cultural language and expression.

The Covid crisis

Plagues happen in any era. This one has been abated by the magnificent progress that education has produced in science, in business organisation for example in pharmaceuticals and vaccines, and the general level of training of nurses and doctors. They have nailed the lie of anti-modernity voices, so opposed to science and modernity, who told us that Covid-19 was 'nature's revenge' for climate change and environmental damage. As if nature was always a friend, and viruses was not part of nature! Many, like me, may remember school friends in leg irons because of polio, school friends sent to and not always returning from sanitoriums with tuberculosis. Not to mention diphtheria, tetanus, pertussal, hepatitis B, measles, etc. A fool is no less dangerous for meaning well.

Our societies have done very well despite the failures of national administrative bureaucracies reliably to manage the crisis with foresight, clarity, and determination. First civil society - the supermarket cashiers and shelf fillers, garbage collectors and street cleaners, the lorry drivers and the postal workers: these have assured us that, more or less, life goes on as normal.

The current news as I write just before Christmas - that the US and UK are now inoculating people with Pfizer's vaccine - has shown that government subsidy, excellent science, and efficient and intelligent private enterprise can today do what was historically impossible, or which took decades. This breakthrough should have and improve countless millions of lives - a tremendous victory for science, scientific education, knowledge, and wise and supportive public help. Let us think of these events when the quirky irrationality of back-to-nature advocates invite us to reject inoculation against Covid 19, and indeed to reject so many forms of progress made from science. Let us not return to the world of the flat earth.

Those who invite us to return to the past should seriously reconsider their logic. However, in the valley where I live, the majority of people share the flat-earth view, even though over 20 per cent have been infected by Covid and too many are dead. The idea that somehow the past was a golden era, that nature is always a friend, is an irresponsible nostalgia based on thoughtless thinking and a failure to identify and examine the facts. Surely this is a major educational failure. What should we do?

Later life learning symposium

Covid and older people in Aotearoa New Zealand

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Writing in early December 2020 the situation in Aotearoa New Zealand is one of relative normality. While people speak of a new normal, this country has oscillated between the past normality (as before Covid-19) and the occasional new normality. The original Covid-19 lockdown in New Zealand occurred on 26 March with a minimal notice from the Government. It lasted 50 days in which the harshest level 4 restrictions and the only fractionally less harsh level 3 were in operation. Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern stated a need 'to go early and hard'. Since then, there has been sporadic identification of clusters of covid activity (community transmission), which the authorities have managed to bring under control. Auckland, the largest city, has been under level 2 restrictions, but for the most part, the entire country has been predominantly at level 1 with no community transmission and everyday life continues.

Today the area of sport illustrates how fortunate we have been. In the city where I live, Hamilton, the visiting West Indies side plays the New Zealand Black Caps team in a T20 cricket event. Nobody is compelled to wear a mask; there are no restrictions on who mixes with whom; socially distancing is not enforced, though many people still are cautious. Major rugby games (rugby being almost a national religion) have been played to full audiences. At the gym today on a treadmill I watched Bristol play Worcester on one of the wall TVs: no spectator public was present amid empty stands. This illustrated a contrast in fortunes for NZ compared in this case with England.

But how have the lives of older adults been affected? To the extent that older people were already marginalized before covid, this pattern still operates. In the current circumstances, as an older adult myself, my wife Caterina and I have twice travelled to the South Island to help sustain local tourism, which is suffering because of a lack of international visitors. We were not required to conform to any special covid-related expectations. I work as a volunteer for the Board of Age Concern Hamilton; the usual services (shopping and visiting services, health promotion, elder abuse detection and elimination, continuing education events) recommenced some months ago. The reality that we were moving into summer lifted the spirit of seniors and the general public alike. As long as the government keeps tight control on border entry (only NZ citizens and permanent residents are allowed to enter) and requires subsequent quarantine, the public remains optimistic.

At a political level, the Labour Government, formerly the coalition leader in a Mixed Member Proportional (MMP) Government environment), won a majority of the October general election vote to form a new Government: a landslide victory attributable to two main reasons: a) the previous Government gained the support of the populace – 'a team of five million' – because of its democratic strategies in controlling covid; and b) the outstanding leadership of the young PM, Jacinda Ardern, in persuading the public of the need to observe sensible health

practices through daily TV appearances with the key health official, in the early stages of the pandemic.

In the SuperSeniors e-newsletter, there is renewed concentration by the Labour Government on reducing digital exclusion. Older adults are especially susceptible to digital marginalization. A *Skinny Jump* not-for-profit organization has instigated a low-cost prepaid broadband service to heighten and implement digital inclusion. Similarly, the Digital Inclusion Alliance Aotearoa (DIAA), is focusing on this issue. The new Government is also under pressure to establish a Commissioner for Older Persons, consistent with policy statements emerging from the document *Better Later Life – He Oranga Kaumatua.* In the same newsletter, there is awareness of the Government and its institutions more vigorously attacking unequal employment opportunities among seniors who have been disproportionately affected negatively by hiring and firing in the covid context.

In summary, current political and health conditions are conducive to sustaining strategies by Government and supportive charitable agencies to continue good work for the benefit of seniors. This is not a taken-for-granted phenomenon, as vigilance at all levels remains necessary to avoid covid dominating the life circumstances especially of older New Zealanders in the future.

2020: The Effects of Covid-19 on Adult Learning using Digital Technology

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Aotearoa New Zealand made a go hard and go early response to the Covid-19 pandemic. Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern, closely accompanied by Director-General of Health Ashley Bloomfield, quickly shut our national borders and created a culture of compliance to following stringent national lockdown guidelines beginning in March 2020. The strict lockdown period, during which time citizens were recommended to stay at home other than for essential personal movement, began earlier, and finished later, for those aged over 70 years. Except for essential services such as supermarkets, pharmacies and petrol stations, all businesses shut down. Healthcare services were re-prioritised and educational facilities were closed.

Immediately, the lockdown effects of Covid-19 meant an instant drop in the availability of face-to-face learning opportunities for adult learners. Libraries closed, and learning festivals and community events were all cancelled or postponed indefinitely. Happily, following these restrictions, a nationwide Covid-free period of 102 days ensued, and although some small breakouts of community transmission have occurred on and off throughout the year, life has gradually returned to a pre-Covid way of life for the vast majority of New Zealanders, as Brian Findsen has clearly outlined in this issue.

That said, when the pandemic arrived, necessitating quarantine and lockdown containment measures, a ‘sink or swim’ technology moment also arrived. It rapidly became vital to order

groceries online, conduct banking online, connect with family and friends through technology, and communicate with health-care providers, often online. For many older New Zealanders, this triggered a genuine motivation to learn technology skills and usage for a real purpose in place of regular face-to-face interactions. Avoiding exclusion from society was a huge incentive for older people to take up and/or improve using internet technology during and since the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The use of technology to promote social connection and enhance wellbeing for older adults offers one effective pathway to positivity, flourishing, social connection, and learning in ageing. However, the inclusion and exclusion of digital technology usage is a social, economic, political, and cultural issue for older adults at both micro and macro levels, and not only in Aotearoa New Zealand. For instance, at the micro-level, frustration, physical and mental limitations, mistrust, time issues, and self-efficacy appear to impact individual older adults' likelihood to adopt technologies. Implications at the macro level indicate that organisational and societal policies need to confront barriers for older adults' using digital technology. More effectively addressing fears related to the security of technology and personal data would be a good place to start. Additionally, social and systemic policies regarding older adults need scrutiny to ensure the avoidance of ageist language, ideas, and strategies.

Digital technologies might have been considered a panacea for older adults experiencing social isolation and loneliness both before and since the Covid-19 pandemic. In response to challenges of decreasing physical and social interactions and being 'locked up' or housebound, digital and visual technologies offered potential social connections and new learning opportunities for older adults. Internet-based communication tools (for example, Skype, FaceTime, Zoom, WhatsApp, Messenger, and WeChat) present low-cost or free opportunities to connect emotionally and socially while staying physically distanced. It is also worth noting that numbers of tech-savvy older adults were already on the rise before the pandemic, with growing numbers of people aged over 65 going online daily and owning a smartphone.

Conversely, it cannot be ignored that barriers to accessing and using technology prevent many older New Zealanders from taking up these options. Over-70-year-olds, whose school life, work-life and social life preceded the widespread use of digital technology of today, face the challenge of learning new skills in later life. This is often exacerbated by devices and software designed without inclusive principles in mind (eg. lack of large text, easy-to-read fonts, captions, too many small buttons). The financial costs of purchasing devices and maintaining monthly internet access present another common barrier; for those with low incomes, access is challenging, and maybe well-nigh impossible. This is notably so for marginalised groups in our society, especially older Indigenous Māori people who have the lowest financial wellbeing in Aotearoa New Zealand, according to a December 2020 Commission for Financial Capability (CFFC) report (click here to read the report). Taken together, all these barriers amount to a significant difference inability to participate in society and build meaningful relationships, social connections, and workplace participation.

The recently re-elected Labour Government appears to be placing digital exclusion more centrally on their agenda (also mentioned in Brian Findsen's report in this issue). This is a positive step forward. Returning to the pre-Covid 'normality' of marginalisation, digital exclusion, ageism in workplace appointments would be a step backwards. Instead, I believe that we are presented with a unique post-Covid opportunity to carve out new normality - a normality where Government-sustained strategies to address older adults more equitably must be in our landscape for 2021 and beyond.

Older people and Covid-19 in the UK: recent developments

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PIMA Bulletin No. 32 (September 2020) carried a preliminary analysis of how Covid-19 appeared to be changing the face of later life learning in the UK, with a move to a wide variety of online learning opportunities, many of which were proving extremely popular with a whole range of older people. At the same time, it was observed that this move, while to be welcomed in many ways, also had the effect of widening the digital divide between these enthusiastic learners and those older people who had no access to, or no interest in, online learning. Since then, further responses to the pandemic have brought other issues to the fore in respect of older people.

In common with many other European countries and the USA, the gradual lifting of initial lockdown restrictions saw a rise in the numbers of people affected by Covid-19 as autumn approached in the northern hemisphere. By early January 2021, daily deaths went above 60,000 daily across the UK (December 2020), the highest number in Europe; the majority of these were among people over 50. It became apparent, as numbers rose, that further action would be necessary. The four constituent countries of the UK each chose to respond differently, although all imposed some further form of lockdown with no sense of overall national unity. In England, a second lockdown took place from 5 November to 2 December 2020, although this time, schools, colleges, and universities remained open. Emerging from lockdown, 99% of the population finds itself still considerably restricted within a high or very high coronavirus risk category or Tier, to be reviewed every two weeks, and with a brief respite for five days over Christmas. These Tiers have proved particularly controversial: some politicians, including some within the ruling Conservative party, have argued that the rules are inconsistent and inappropriate, given regional differences in infection rates.

One more positive development is a move to enable care home residents in all Tiers to see their families again, with the dispatch of sufficient coronavirus test kits to enable two visitors per resident twice a week, assuming a negative test. Visitors still have to wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) and follow stringent infection control rules. There is still some risk, but it is felt that the benefits of allowing residents to see their families in person after such a long time are vital to residents' continuing health and wellbeing.

Against this background, the UK has become the first western country to licence a vaccine developed by Pfizer-BioNTech, with the prospect of mass immunisation beginning before the end of 2020. The UK purchased 40 million doses of the vaccine, which is said to have had 95% efficacy in its final trials. Care home residents, together with care home staff, National Health Service (NHS) and social care staff, and other people over 80, are amongst the first people to be offered the vaccine, after which all those over 50 will be placed on a priority list in age bands, with the oldest taking precedence. However, the practicalities of being able to administer the vaccine within care homes, let alone within the general population, are subject to controversy. Anecdotal evidence also suggests that many older people are still very concerned about the safety and efficacy of the vaccine, with fears expressed that it has been 'rushed out'.

Nevertheless, this brief snapshot suggests emerging reasons to be hopeful for the future of the nation's health, despite some existing controversies. What cannot be ignored are the knock-on effects of the pandemic in other areas of older people's lives. A recent report from the Centre for Ageing Better, an independent charitable foundation, has commented on some of the lessons to be learned from the experience of lockdown, apart from the obvious need to build a healthier and more resilient population. These include constructing warm homes; building economic activity especially as it is apparent that Covid-19 is becoming responsible for triggering a long-term unemployment crisis, with older workers particularly affected. Training and retraining of older workers will be vital. Besides, as was seen previously, we will need to find ways of bridging the growing digital divide; and, hopefully, of sustaining the sense of community that appeared during the first lockdown, in a way that will enable older people to play their part in renewing their societies (Centre for Ageing Better, 2020).

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Rethinking Education for Chinese Senior Citizens During COVID-19 Pandemic

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Since the end of 2019, the coronavirus disease COVID-19 first outbreak in Wuhan in China immediately spread to all parts of the country. Although COVID-19 affected a wide range and infected a large number, of people, China managed to control this pandemic and returned to normal within six months. By November 28, 2020, there were only 280 cases left, according to the National Health Committee Statistics of China, and more than 80,000 people were cured completely, China had overcome the difficult time of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Education for older people is a national strategy. COVID-19 had a far-reaching impact on older people. Developing senior citizen education effectively helps to prevent and control the pandemic situation, and to promote social stability. In the early stage of the pandemic, most of

the confirmed cases in China were older citizens over 60 years old. They could not be ignored; they needed to be specially protected in this situation. Therefore, we should strengthen the awareness of older people in pandemic prevention, enhance their cultural knowledge and enrich their daily life to make them skilful and occupied. With the acceleration of China's ageing society and the popularity of the concept of lifelong learning, senior citizen education has become the concern of the whole society. China's national strategy *Education Modernization 2035* states: "we must speed up the development of senior citizen education in an urban and rural community". It is acknowledged that the development of education for the aged is a positive measure to deal with the ageing of the population, and an essential step for constructing a learning society.

The University for the Senior Citizen had been popular before COVID-19 and older people could benefit from the learning process. Senior citizen education in China began to rise in the 1980s, and it developed quickly. The basis of the practice in our country, the organizational form includes not only the formal education of the University for the Senior Citizen (also named The Elder University) but also the informal elder education organizations, such as in community education and network education. Before the pandemic, China's senior education was mainly carried out through face-to-face guidance from universities or community colleges for older people, or by the elders also, doing self-learning for themselves.

Generally speaking, the content of the courses in most institutions involves health care, calligraphy and painting, literature and history, sports, and vocational skills. The form includes not just indoor teaching but also outdoor observation, practice, training, and other practical activities. For instance, some institutions like Harbin University for the Senior Citizen, Qiqihar TV and Radio University for the senior citizens, Jiagedaqi Community Education College for Elders, etc. all provide free lectures such as traditional Chinese culture, health care, and elders' forum, in addition to their professional courses, which are deeply loved by senior students and become the civil brand of lifelong learning activities. Besides these, there are some older people getting information and doing self-learning through reading books, newspapers, browsing network news, and talking with their peers.

Affected by COVID-19, the way of learning and living of elders changed a lot. For retired people, social interaction is an indispensable part of their life. Due to the pandemic, they are temporarily isolated at home. Most of their social activities such as travelling have been interrupted, and they can only interact with each other through WeChat, Tiktok, and other online social media. For the older learners, the pandemic hindered them from normal and regular classroom learning. Almost all the senior education institutions have postponed the opening of the school, and students cannot go back to school for offline learning.

To enrich elders' daily life and keep them in a good state, however, and also in response to the Ministry of Education's call for 'classes suspended but learning continued', community college and universities for older adults throughout the country have actively integrated teaching resources and moved the classroom online. Online teaching became the main way for most senior universities to keep learning during the pandemic. As for the course content, taking account of the interests of elders and strengthening their body protection during the pandemic, traditional Chinese Massage, Acupoint Massage, Taiji Yoga, etc. are generally

offered. There are also interesting courses such as Basic Introduction to Putonghua, English, Cantonese songs, etc.

Like primary and secondary school students, older students learn about course information through a WeChat course group, enter the live room at the specified time, and actively interact with teachers. After class, there is usually a Q & A session and homework. Unlike youngsters, older students do not have to submit paper-based assignments; but they need to record a video or a voice. For example, to consolidate the learning, Guangzhou Open University for Senior Citizens also organizes *Online Question Answering* Competitions and students' presentations. Apart from the organizational learning way, a considerable number of senior students in the Third Age University of Shanghai carry out self-learning for 1-2 hours every day through computers, mobile terminals, TV, books, newspapers, and magazines, during the pandemic period. Their main concern is the news and current events related to the pandemic situation. They also watch TV series, learn music and literature, etc.

Generally speaking, the pandemic has a certain impact on the physical and mental health of seniors, which limits their physical activity and affects their mood to a certain extent. What's more, the pandemic has also changed their way of learning and living, from individual learning and classroom learning, to distance learning and family group learning. However, everything has two sides. In China, an old saying goes: Luck and Misfortune comes in turn'. This pandemic also makes us rethink the teaching methods of senior Universities in China. In the future, education for older people should be more flexible; the content should be more diversified, and more proficient preparation of learning should be designed for older people.

Some International Perspectives on Longevity and Recovery from the Pandemic *Peter Kearns*

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I have been involved since 2018 in three international projects involving policy for ageing populations, and the broader question of the role of learning cities in recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic**.** These were:

- Towards Good Active Ageing for All: Report of the PASCAL/PIMA SIG (2018)
- The Longevity Dimension in Inclusion for Ageing Populations (2020).
- *Connecting Up in a World of Turbulent Change* Report of the PASCAL EcCoWell Community Recovery Program.

I worked on each of these with my wife Denise Reghenzani (d_reghenzani@hotmail.com). The Longevity paper on inclusion for ageing populations is to be published by the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning UILL). As I am not free to comment on it, I confine these remarks to the third of these papers, *Connecting Up in a World of Turbulent Change*

The PASCAL EcCoWell programme, which I founded in 2012, was directed at an integrated/holistic approach to building learning cities and neighbourhoods. Integrating the

learning, health, and environment strands were central to the initial phase of EcCoWell development. It is reflected in the 2017 UNESCO Cork Call to Action for Learning Cities.

Participants in the 2020 EcCoWell2 Community Recovery Programme, which ran from March to October 2020 were: Cork, Limerick, Wolverhampton. Wyndham, Cotonou learning cities, Datong Taipei and Harlem New York learning districts/neighbourhoods Glasgow University and Beijing Academy of Educational Sciences. The report of the programme was released in November 2020. It is available on the PASCAL website. Reports from each of the participants are included in this report, together with my overview and commentary.

While participants' reports cover a wide territory, some general themes may be discerned in the reports that point to future directions for learning cities and lifelong learning. All participants were focussed on 'recover better' ideas, rather than more of the same. Some of the main themes in the reports were:

1. A strong interest in psycho-social aspects of recovery, ranging across aspects such as mental health and well-being, local and global consciousness, empathy, and new ways of thinking about older people.

2. An important aspect of this orientation was the interest in imagination and empathy. The Wyndham learning city articulated this as a 'new model of partnership with empathy'.

3. This interest in ways of building stronger partnerships included broader and stronger public/private partnership- a concept advocated by the UN - and illustrated in the Wolverhampton report.

4. New ways of looking at learning in a rapidly changing society were touched on in ideas on transformative learning ranging across spiritual, emotional, cultural aspects with the arts playing a key role. This approach goes along with Gratton and Scott's ideas on the hundred-year life and was brought out strongly in a paper by Professor Atsushi Makino (Tokyo University), which is now available on the Glasgow CR&DALL web site.

5. The local neighbourhood was seen as particularly important in building resilient, sustainable learning cities. It is where person-to-person relationships are played out, and values such as inclusion can be made real. This argues for stronger public/private collaboration in building strong neighbourhoods. Cork and Limerick commented on their learning neighbourhood experience; they held a joint virtual meeting to compare experiences.

6. The programme confirmed the crucial role of local learning centres: community colleges, elders' universities, kominkan, etc, in extending inclusion and lifelong learning objectives in local communities. Universities can support these institutions in various ways as the roles of the Beijing Academy of Educational Sciences show.

7. A feature of the report was how the Coronavirus pandemic had simulated imaginative ways of using learning technologies to build local and regional networks. A good example was the Global Learning Festival initiative taken by Wyndham and Melton learning cities in partnership. This concept has potential for further development in contributing to global consciousness.

Overall, the thrust of the reports was towards the need to re-imagine and rethink learning cities in a rapidly changing turbulent society; and to take some steps towards the future envisaged. It also showed the value of sharing ideas in a structured way across a diversity of communities and institutions. The transition to a technology-driven longevity society is throwing up a broad mix of fundamental issues to be addressed. What can PASCAL and PIMA contribute?

What is Covid-19 teaching us as adult learners? *Thomas Kuan and Carol Kuan*

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One year on, global Covid-19 has infected more than 96 million people, and causing over 6.0 million deaths; and the numbers are increasing, as large populations are still not tested. In some countries, the fourth and fifth waves are already happening amidst new variants, such as the UK variant strain appearing. The fear of a 'next virus' pandemic is real and dangerous, as the Covid-19 pandemic is likely to be the defining struggle of this generation.

Viruses are 1.5 billion years old living proteins, which mutate to cause large-scale breakout every decade. Older civilisations have developed indigenous cures, like Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM); today, several pharmaceutical companies have produced effective vaccines. There are many theories regarding this serious outbreak; according to some Asian (Chinese and Indian) astrologically theory, it is the alignment of planets and the Sun. Their predictions of eclipses, especially the Great Conjunction (when Jupiter and Saturn were aligned) in December 2020 expected that this would intensify the current Covid-19 outbreak. While experts are still investigating, the original, older civilisations noted that it is a natural phenomenon that seems to be difficult to manage, but it can be controlled with some social discipline.

Most humans (mainly westerners) are not willing learners: many hate to be told to wear masks, to keep social distancing, and to avoid large gatherings; they want 'freedom' in their lifestyles. However, most Asia-Pacific nations accept social or collective responsibilities as one of their behaviours. It is a blessing that Wuhan City first noticed Covid-19, and informed the World Health Organisation (WHO) on the virus spread. Wuhan City, with its strong governmental actions, had slowed the Covid-19 spread. It could have been even worse had the virus been started in countries with lax social enforcement, would cause many more million deaths. Covid-19 has caused global financial recessions, massive unemployment, and created

a fear of infection. Nations are imposing lockdowns to flatten and prevent the virus from spreading, and are pouring in funds to prevent social disorientations and business disruptions. Depending on the boats they are on, some nations are also already preparing for future waves of the infection before populations are vaccinated, and the virus mostly eliminated.

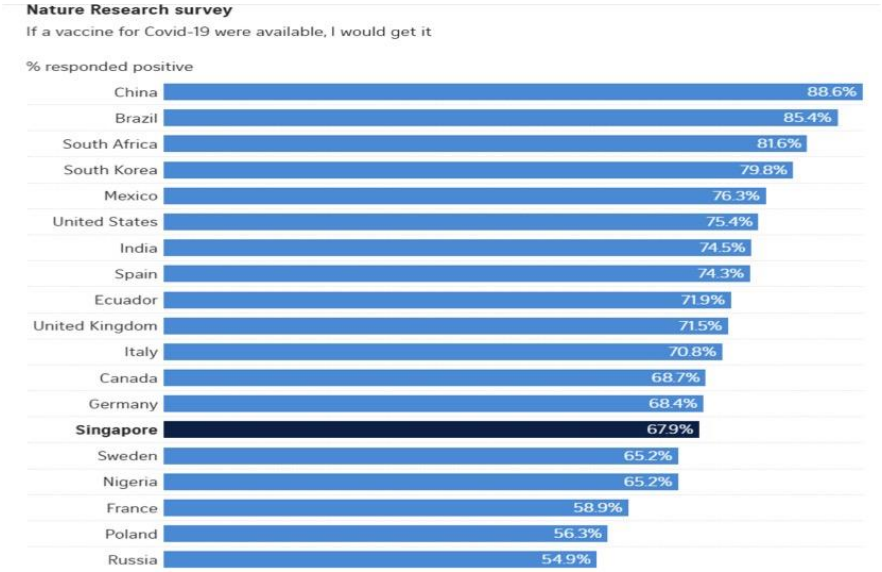
What has all this to do with adult learners, particularly later life learners? Or rather, what can Covid-19 teach us to learn? For one, the pandemic teaches humans to 'learn and relearn' - by listening to instructional guidelines on social distancing, by taking personal responsibilities on keeping healthy, and by being socially responsible by not spreading the virus. People are also learning to adapt to virtual meetings for family, friends, and community conversations. For later life learners who are not computer-savvy, they are being nudged to learn, to prevent a feeling of isolation.

Economically, Covid-19 shows that embracing gig work is necessary as fewer jobs are available. Gig work now becomes the new trend as youths create new businesses using the Internet as a resource for learning and earning. Experienced workers start gig work to monetise their experience, skills, and knowledge. When the pandemic recovery comes on, some developed economies will face labour shortages as job markets expand; they will notice that more adults and youth have given up hope of working. Policies to nurture hidden skills and talents are necessary to solve manpower issues. As Singapore's Senior Minister Tharman said 'never underestimate how previous skills and old skills are relevant to the future. They're always relevant'. He suggested for companies to 'bring forward hiring to today, this year and next year' (www.straitstimes.com/singapore/companies-have-to-play-ball-in-providing-traineeships-attachments-for-retrenched-workers). The 'employing forward' concept is investing in the otherwise lost skills and experiences of human resources. It sustains employability, especially for third agers as Covid-19 is redefining work caused by technology, health, and climate changes.

Covid-19 forces learners to hasten their adoption of online learning, e-payments, virtual socialising, and entertainment. Hopefully, these activities will keep mental health at bay, as loneliness caused by a prolonged feeling of idling at homes affects the emotions. For older adults experiencing isolation during the pandemic, having more meaningful relationships seems to be more important than having more interactions with others, and maintaining these relationships may require the use of technology to connect with loved ones. It is social and mental health for them. Within U 3rd Age, we collaborated on a 'Project Buddy' where lonely and isolated seniors were matched with volunteers (both young and old) to have regular phone conversations https://www.u3rdagesingapore.org/post/project-buddy-a-community-project-by-ageless-online-with-u-3rd-age. We also participated in a public event to share on 'Positivity Through the Generations', which included qigong exercises for physical and mental health. (https://www.u3rdagesingapore.org/post/hwss-may2020).

Trust the Process

Not every person trusts vaccines available because of different political viewpoints, manufacturing processes, vaccine efficacy, and effectiveness, or other personal reasons.



Source: The Straits Times, Dec 12, 2020

This graph shows acceptance of vaccines as in December 2020; it will change as vaccines are widely available, and leaders and citizens take the vaccine jabs.

Covid-19 teaches that everyone has only one life; it is for them either to cherish or to risk. Adult learners can trust the process as they reflect on the interaction of internal factors -- such as one's stress response, cognitive capacity, personality traits, and physical health -- and external factors like social connectivity and financial stability. Covid-19 teaches learners self-resilience.

As Covid-19 emerges as the scourge of the decade, it is teaching us to 're-learn' and to collaborate against natural calamities like climate change. Human beings are the only creatures that have the power to destroy and also to fix, the nature of Earth. For, later life learners who have taken so much in resources from Earth, it is also time for them to return resources to Earth as part of their legacy.

Intergenerational learning – from old local wisdom elders to youth in rural Thailand

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This article explains and analyses an intergenerational learning process between local wisdom philosophers and youth in the local Ban Sao Luang community in the Mueang Nan District of Nan Province, in Northern Thailand. The Ban Sao Luang community is influenced by the

Lua's weaving culture, whose weaving design is unique to the habitat of Lua people, indigenous people who formerly lived in the mountains of Laos. They are mostly dependent on agriculture and animal husbandry. The Lua people weave their own clothes for daily use and important rituals. Lua women weave the clothes, and they also pass the knowledge down through generations.

The Ban Sao Luang community carries the local weaving culture from Lua, including cotton harvesting, spinning, beating, dyeing, and weaving. Their uniqueness lies in their hand-woven fabric; with the cotton fibre is produced by manual spinning. The design is neat and colourful: Pong design, Man design, and Kamkerb design. Nowadays the Ban Sao Luang community invents its unique weaving design called 'Nam Lai Bor Suak' which is inspired by the shape of a 700-year-old terra cotta. They use a technique called Koh weaving, using their hands to arrange the threads to make a design that looks like a flowing river. They believe that this design will make those who wear it prosperous and wealthy as shown in picture on the left.

Nam Lai Bor Suak design

In earlier times the weaving knowledge of Ban Sao Luang community was passed down through the generations. The learning process consists of many steps. The original learning process is one-way teaching by local wisdom philosophers and elders, who received the knowledge directly from weaving expert families. These local wisdom philosophers teach the people in the community, but this causes discontinuities in transferring knowledge.

Therefore, the number of people who acquired such knowledge is decreasing. Moreover, the learning process is not only complex and time-consuming; there is also a generation gap between local wisdom philosophers and youth, causing negligence and loss of interest in weaving. This would probably lead to the extinction of the local weaving of the community.

For this study, the researcher interviewed two local wisdom philosophers and five youths. She found that people in Ban Sao Luang community are aware of the significance of the intergenerational learning process, of participation, and the need for adjustment to a friendlier environment in the community. Here there is a fundamental reliance on human capacity and human dignity for creating opportunities and areas for an intergenerational learning process between local elders and youth. This process between local wisdom and young people consists of group volunteer gatherings, group meetings and discussion, and collaborative planning, decision-making, and problem solving.

The next steps are weaving, designing, marketing, and promoting; and observing, including observing themselves and others to see whether or not one understands the weaving process. Lastly, group reflection is needed, to exchange experiences and any problematic matters related to the method of weaving and weaving design.

If no solution is proposed, all will continue discussing and come to a decision together for solving the problems of weaving marketing.

Weaving with a traditional loom (left) and Natural dyeing (right)

The conclusion is that there must be an area and space for all members of the community where they feel comfortable and safe to discuss and exchange opinions related to weaving or any other problems. They can then come together and create value in local weaving, collaboration between old wisdom and the young. After the community succeeds in this intergenerational learning process, their success should be publicized in the community, for everyone to be encouraged to continuously improve themselves, demonstrating as a community model for other communities that are facing similar difficulties.

Other Themes and Issues

An unnamed but significant problem *Bernt Gustavsson*

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Mass media and social media spin us around in labyrinths, such that, ultimately, we do not know where we are or what we can believe and know.

Every piece of knowledge produced in science is set in the triangle of politics, media, and science. At the same time, we are told by authorities that we need to learn to be critical. How do we do this? How can we? By believing in scientific evidence in randomised trials? By being detached and distant? Maybe by taking up all possible perspectives on an issue?

Yes, because we live in a purported pluralistic society, and in one which provides and requires different perspectives. Hannah Arendt advocated such a society after the experiences of Nazism; bluffs and obfuscation have occurred in not just one but several American presidential elections. We form a common judgment by visiting one another. This means that we open ourselves to perspectives other than our own, leave aside our self-interest, and think more broadly and generally, what is best for everyone, for the public interest? Kant talked about how an aesthetic judgment is formed; how we judge what is beautiful and ugly. Arendt made it a political judgment. She believed that an open, pluralistic society, with an open public where free discussions could take place, was possible. Is that so?

The opposite of Arendt's dream, the dream of one of the most important political thinkers of our time, is the phenomenon that has many names: populism, nationalism, authoritarianism,

fascism; the phenomenon where a leader decides what is true, who can afford to have 'alternative truths', and 'alternative facts'. Anne Applebaum, a political journalist who happens to know politicians around the world, described this back in 1999 when she attended a New Year's party in Poland, where everyone professed democracy, human rights, and freedoms. Then she makes a journey around the world, wherein country after country, people and politicians have turned to believe in authoritarian leaders, to be anti-immigrant, and to put the democratic rules of the game out of play. She describes this in the book called *The Twilight of Democracy*.

My reaction to that development is to put the knowledge I have gained through Swedish folkbildning, through the experiences I have had in South Africa and other countries, and through lifelong studies of the history of philosophy and science. I plan to show, beyond all the ominous tendencies, what possibilities are available, by examining three questions: *What is the right thing, what is the good thing, and what is the true thing?*

I use the breaks and patterns to explore the relationship between the universal and the particular. Thinking about these two different approaches is a serious task; most dividing lines in contemporary politics distinguish between what can be said to be universally human, and what is special, specific to different groups of people. The question is: who or what can claim universality? And what is the particular? - Especially for different nations, communities, and minorities. In other words, what and how do we think together to be the right, the good, and the true? What can be an answer in this time of 'post-truth'?

The Richness and Variety of Working-Class Scholarship

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Last July a wonderful virtual conference was held celebrating working-class scholars and scholarship. Peter Shukie* of Blackburn College in North-western England led a team of organisers of one of the freshest and most fascinating conferences that I have participated in. The event was about giving voice to those who have journeyed beyond the socio-economic constraints of being ascribed a life of a non-academic expectation arising from cultural rupture and fragmentation in pursuit of personal growth; and inhabiting the socio-cultural 'otherness' and alien terrain of the university, with its implied requirements to metamorphose into middle-class facsimile, replete with a current new accent. The conference aimed to acknowledge and promote a different academic space, where constellations of academics and researchers with a working-class heritage came together to conceptualise and capture the difficulties, and successes, of accessing and finding acceptance in the culture of higher education and the university. My thoughts in this PIMA newsletter are based on reflections shared at the end of the conference.

**Peter advises that: 'All the videos are here, and available to share on the Website at https://workingclassacademics.co.uk/conference-2020.*

Working-Class Academics and Working-Class Knowledge

Let us remind ourselves of an earlier would-be working-class scholar's experiences. The story begins in 1895 where we learn about the character of Jude, the stonemason determined to learn deeply so, as to become a Minister. The late David Watson, historian, and adult educator, brought to my attention Thomas Hardy's *Jude the Obscure*. Jude is a poor stonemason determined to become a scholar of note, who decides that Oxford University would be the place to engage with fellow scholars. The resistance offered by the Oxford of the day to Jude's efforts to learn amongst them was brutal. Jude is thrilled by seeing the spires of Oxford as he visits, seeking admission after many years of learning on his own. He learns that Oxford was not ready for the self-taught intellectual. The Master of Balliol College, after listening to Jude's request to study there, tells Jude: "I venture to think that you will have a much better chance of success in life by remaining in your sphere". (Hardy,1895:117) Jude begins to understand the differences between the knowledge of the community and the knowledge of the academy, "He (Jude) began to see that town life was a book of humanity infinitely more palpitating, varied and compendious than the gown-life" (118).

Let me use Jude's last sentence - *that town life was a book of humanity, infinitely more palpitating, varied and compendious than gown-life* - as a link to the concept of knowledge democracy. Peter Shukie, the leader of the Working-class Academics Conference, noted in so many words that working-class origins, far from being about a deficit, are about an asset. As Jude says. the life of the town, of the streets, of the social movements, of the neighbourhoods, of the land, are rich, palpitating, and compendious. Working-class academics and working-class students are how this energy, variety of knowledge, and values can find their ways into higher education. But finding a way in for these ways of thinking is not easy. What is called the Western Canon, the body of Eurocentric knowledge, has so monopolized and silenced other ways of knowing over the past 500 years that one of our Portuguese colleagues, de Sousa Santos, says that we have experienced and continue to experience *epistemicide*, the killing of other knowledge systems. His work refers specifically to how Eurocentric knowledge has eliminated the diverse knowledge systems of the global South and the Indigenous land-based peoples.

But the same can be said for class-based knowledge. Historians are familiar with the idea that history is written by the victors. Feminists are familiar with the reality that history has been largely written by men. In Canada, we know that our history has been told by non-Indigenous people. From a class perspective, indeed, academic knowledge has largely been written by non-working-class scholars. Regardless of the discipline, explanations, and understandings of the world that we all live in has been written largely by non-working-class scholars and intellectuals.

This does not mean that no academic work written by non-working-class scholars has been useful. Both Marx and Engels came from bourgeois backgrounds. Paulo Freire, the Brazilian scholar-activist who wrote *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, was raised in a privileged household in North-eastern Brazil. Even Gandhi came from a privileged background. But these authors are the exception. They are to be sure intellectual allies and even very useful guides, but when

one thinks about the vast body of academic knowledge, the absence of scholarship written by working-class intellectuals stands out. We are missing what Jude said in the late 19th century could be found in the streets and homes of our communities: the knowledge that more palpitating, varied, and compendious than what is found in academia. How did this come to pass?

Imagining an Inclusive University

One of the characteristics of even the best scholars is our eloquence and generosity with *critique*, but often silence or vagueness about *creating*. One of the qualities of the excellent working-class scholarship is the attention given to the question of creation. Accepting the many reasonable explanations for the exclusion of working-class knowledge and working-class scholars, what might we imagine for a truly inclusive university? First, we would like to see conferences, seminars, working groups. exist everywhere, in all spaces of higher education. It should not be exceptional.

I would like to use three themes that were presented in this conference to open our imaginations about what a truly inclusive higher education institution might look like. Let me draw on these as starting points. They are 'creative placemaking' offered by Christian Bell, 'zine-making' by Kristy Fife, and 'curriculum and class' by Ian Duckett

Creative Placemaking

Christian Bell asks whether a community of creatives might be the basis for a new narrative about learning, action, and higher education in the working-class town of Blackburn. There are several exciting elements within this question. First is the notion of place. Place, land, location, roots, are all fundamental to building a knowledge base that draws on the knowledge of everyday people for change in a community. He speaks of action research - what Rajesh Tandon and I refer to as participatory research, a knowledge accumulation process where the research question comes from the place, the community. He speaks of 'creatives': people who construct and share knowledge in artistic ways. These are critical elements in imagining a university in new ways. The research focus comes from the questions in the community itself, not from an academic journal. The university or higher education institute would have deep organic structural relationships with the community, with the trade union structures, the social and ecological justice organizations, Black Lives Matter and other equity movements.

Zine Making

Kristy Fife shares her experience in zine-making as an educational and action-oriented form of knowledge-making, building on Christian's experience as a 'creative'. In our work on knowledge democracy, we speak of the need as scholars to explore the use of the arts as a tool for making and sharing knowledge: zines, poems, dance, theatre, ceremony, murals, quilts, and more. This is because the arts allow for the integration of cognitive and affective knowing. Zines through their disruption of the printed form allow for emotions to come onto a page, in a way that linear text often does not. Poetry allows us to feel as well as learn cognitively. The inclusive university that we imagine, one where working-class scholars and

working-class students are comfortable and supported, will be a creative space where emotions and logic are never far apart, and action for change is a given.

Curriculum and Class

Ian Duckett says something important: "working-class skills have been narrowed, undervalued and downgraded by the ruling class". He was speaking specifically about the skills agenda that governments all over the work have been spreading, though adult and further education programmes. The skills favoured by government programmes are those which global capital needs so that workers everywhere can plug into global assembly lines. We can extrapolate from his reference to the entire curriculum of higher education. Our knowledge base is limited for historic reasons to a Eurocentric, white, mostly male, canon. This knowledge base is also limited by the exclusion of working-class knowledge, knowledge of racialized communities, of women and youth, the differently able, and more. The curriculum of our reimagined universities will need to be locally placed, supportive of community-driven participatory research, open to arts-based research and pedagogy, incorporating working-class skills and knowledge: skills of community-building, resilience, advocacy, solidarity, ceremony, confronting authority, and more. And what more? - of Joy and Hope.

Free speech on campus: rethinking for current political-social contexts

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Disputes – they are not always debated – about free speech on higher education campuses are annoyingly local, in time as well as place. They are also depressingly partisan. We can all recall but less commonly see applied the saying attributed to Voltaire: 'I disapprove of what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it' (Hall / Tallentyre, 1906: 199).

Free speech is a political right importantly different from the duty of free scholarly discourse, or academic freedom as it is commonly known (Scott, 2017). Yet free speech is fundamental to democratic education, in Dewey's (1916) sense of developing a fully informed public and building a democratic community of citizens who can think and act intelligently and morally. This is central to PASCAL, as *Bulletin* editor Chris Duke pointed out in commissioning this piece.

This piece does not argue for a particular concept or application of free speech on campus; but it suggests that the understanding of free speech may have to be revised to suit current political, legal, and educational contexts.

Political

Our current concept of free speech is a value of the Enlightenment. It is therefore European in origin. Freedom of opinion and expression is provided in article 19 of the Universal

Declaration of Human Rights, but perhaps it is understood differently in Islamic, Confucian, Hindu, and other cultures. This is particularly important in higher education as it has internationalised and seeks to extend global understanding.

Enlightenment values were developed in the modern period. Freedom of speech was not recognised in the millennium of European culture (or might we say civilisation?) before the Enlightenment, when the lords spiritual and temporal sought to control expression, and through that thought and allegiance. If we are now in a post-modern period is it worth considering whether the modern idea of free speech should be reconceptualised for post-modernity?

In the middle of the 20th-century freedom of speech was important to the political left wing to resist the right wing's attempts to suppress interest in communism, socialism, and other ideas to challenge the capitalism that had so spectacularly failed with two world wars and the great depression.

Now, freedom of speech is being weaponised by the right in the cultural war it has launched against the left and centre (Scott, 2018). The libertarian view of free speech currently adopted by the right should be limited by conditions that may apply symmetrically to the expression of left- and right-wing views, such as prohibiting:

the lewd and obscene, the profane, the libellous, and the insulting or "fighting" words, those which by their very utterance inflict injury or tend to incite an immediate breach of the peace (Murphy, J).

Speech may also be limited by prohibitions against hate speech, as occurs in many countries including Australia, Canada, and the UK, but not the USA.

Popper (1945/2012: 581) also argued that speech should be limited by the paradox of tolerance:

If we extend unlimited tolerance even to those who are intolerant, if we are not prepared to defend a tolerant society against the onslaught of the intolerant, then the tolerant will be destroyed, and tolerance with them.

Legal

We have already observed important differences in the legal status of the right to free speech. Contrary to common belief, the first amendment to the United States Constitution does not provide a general right of free speech, but prohibits governments from abridging free speech –

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press, or the right of the people peaceably to assemble and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances. (Legal Information Institute, no date).

Nonetheless, the right of free speech is so deeply and pervasively held in the USA that it is adopted by non-government institutions with a civic mission. The University of Chicago is a

private institution and thus is not bound by the first amendment, yet libertarians have adopted and widely promoted the University of Chicago's (2014) Report of the Committee on Freedom of Expression as the 'Chicago principles'.

The Chicago principles are most readily applied to Canada, which incorporated into its constitution the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms in 1982 which includes:

"Everyone has the following fundamental freedoms:

b) freedom of thought, belief, opinion, and expression, including freedom of the press and other media of communication; (CanLII, no date)

But these principles are less applicable to countries such as the UK and Australia which does not have a wide right to freedom of expression entrenched in their constitution.

Transition to universal participation

Free speech on campus is more important to the public now because of one of higher education's great successes – its transition to universal participation. The late Martin Trow (1973) explained that participation is a privilege in elite systems of higher education where fewer than 15% of the relevant age group enrolled in higher education. Participation is an advantage in mass systems, where up to half of the relevant age group enrolled. But not participating becomes a disadvantage in universal systems of higher education where more than half participate.

Trow explained that elite, mass and universal systems of higher education have different approaches to admission, curriculum, pedagogy, assessment, and quality assurance. They also have different roles in society. This is exemplified by the extent of current universities' service learning, and their extensive engagements with local, regional, and national communities. Many are deeply enmeshed in government programmes and business development.

Universities are now part of society's democratic project, as secondary schools were in Dewey's time and remain now. The idea of universities as disinterested critics of society arose from their time in elite systems of higher education when universities were as much apart from as a part of their society. Perhaps that role needs to be reconceptualised as universities are not ivory towers overlooking the fields of endeavour, but part of society's democratic infrastructure.

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Book Review: Public Sociology as Educational Practice: Challenges, Dialogues, and Counterpublics

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Eurig Scandrett, editor (2020) Public Sociology as Educational Practice: Challenges, Dialogues, and Counterpublics Bristol: Bristol University Press

Budd Hall, Co-Chair, UNESCO Chair in Community-Based Research and Social Responsibility in Higher Education

I am delighted that PIMA has agreed to publish this review of Euriq Scandrett's excellent new book on public sociology as educational practice. I was originally contacted by the editors of the UK-Based Community Development Journal. I agreed to do the review for them. The *Community Development Journal* is part of the family of journals managed by Oxford University Press. Once I finished the review and submitted it for publication, I received a notification from OUP that I should choose which kind of licence I wanted for my review. The standard licence restricted me from circulating my review to others outside journal subscribers. But I could choose a licence, which would allow me to share my article freely and openly if I paid £1,600. I wrote the review. I wanted persons of low or no income to have access to the review, but I was not willing to pay £1,600 to share a review that I had written it myself. So I pulled the review from CDJ and offered it to PIMA, as a progressive space interested in such issues. I might add that Eurig was equally stunned to learn about the fees involved in sharing articles freely from the CDJ. A big thanks to Chris Duke and PIMA for publishing it. ***Please share the review freely, openly, and confidently, with one and all!***

What is there in the water in Edinburgh? There must be something good for progressive scholar-activists. Over the past 25 years, we have seen a rich outpouring of publications on literacy, community education, popular education, participatory research, radical adult education, community development, social movement learning, environmental activism,

citizenship, and more. Eurig Scandrett, a core member of the Edinburgh movement, has brought us a major addition to the literature on knowledge, learning, and action. This book makes an important link between the fairly recent discourse (2005) of public sociology and the theories and practices of social movement education and learning that have lived a parallel life in the same universe for decades. Scandrett has brought together about 40 activist scholars to examine the discourse of public sociology as an educational practice. The book is organized into three sections: Publics, Knowledge and Practices.

Publics covered include mad people, gender justice in higher education, domestic abuse survivors, post-industrial Fife, the invisibility of class. All of these publics are examined through a dialogue on subaltern counterpublics. Knowledge includes policy research, feminist knowledge for social change, dialogical methods with youth, participative research, multilingual communication as action and art, and public knowledge within planning processes. This section like the others is dialogically examined through a reflection on 'really useful' knowledge. While one could argue that all three of the book's sections are about practice, there is a separate section called practices which looks at the expansion of precarious work, challenges in widening participation in higher education, art, identity, and the sociological imagination, community engagement, service-learning, and trade union education. This section is completed with a dialogue on public sociology practices and privatizing universities.

In his conclusion, Scandrett says, "Through a series of dialogues, this book has attempted to explore the extent to which public sociology as an educational practice contributes to social processes in which mechanisms of exploitation and oppression can be challenges" (p343). Scandrett and his colleagues have made a convincing case that the theories and practices of public sociology are a useful addition to our understandings of the relationships between lived experience, actions for cultural freedom, knowledge for social change, and the many movements of what Scandrett refers to as subaltern counter publics.

This is a major contribution by an important activist scholar and his numerous colleagues. The book is well organized, beautifully produced, provocative, and intellectually delicious. When I see books like this designed to support the emergence of subaltern counterpublics, I only wish that they could be available free of charge to those counterpublics with whom they engage. A book that costs US$155 for the hardcover copy I was given to review means that many people will not have access. The question of access to progressive works remains a contradiction for so many academics whose thought and action are genuinely transformative. We want to challenge regimes of power, but to continue to publish within a market pricing world that excludes those for whom and with whom we work.

That said, however, this is an excellent piece of work. I commend it to readers' attention. Get your library to order it and borrow it from there!

PIMA Engagement and New Members

Joint Webinar: Climate change, resource extraction, and adult learning and education - what are the links?

Host: Shirley Walters, PIMA President

Mining, we are told, is a vital necessity – it's vital for economies of the world and for maintaining our lifestyles. We also know that it contributes to global warming and the destruction of the environment. We read of families and communities forcibly removed from their land and homes to make way for mining – and the life and death struggles as communities resist. Environmental degradation is intimately connected to the global spread of the coronavirus, and it is intertwined with climate crises. These are huge, vital, and complex issues.

This is why we will make a start by addressing the question of the links between climate change, resource extraction, and ALE in our next PIMA Climate Justice and ALE webinar, which is to be held on 10 February 2021, and to which you and your colleagues are invited.

Trusha Reddy of WoMin African Alliance is one of the lead presenters. WoMin is an alliance of organisations that span the African continent, working alongside national and regional movements and women's organisations, communities impacted by mining, and mega-infrastructure development projects to expose the impacts of extractivism on African women and advance women-centred and just development alternatives. WoMin asserts a radical and African ecofeminist agenda in the conversation on the climate crisis, climate justice, and ways to protect the future of the planet and its people from corporations, their allied governments, and elites in the Global North and South. They have recently produced a 30-minute film, Women Hold up the Sky, which captures some of the struggles of African women. Webinar participants will be sent the link to the film and invited to watch it beforehand.

Judith Marshall is the other lead contributor to the webinar. Judith describes herself as a popular educator and writer on mining companies and disasters in Canada and Brazil. She spent twenty years with the Steelworkers Humanity Fund in Canada working across Canada, Chile, Brazil, and southern Africa, encouraging international solidarity through educational exchanges amongst workers.

We are delighted that the Canadian Association for Studies in Adult Education (CASAE) and SCUTREA in the UK will co-host the webinar with PIMA. Please join us as we deepen our understandings of climate justice and ALE.

Date: 10 February 2021
Time: 08:00 PST; 11:00 Eastern Time; 16:00 GMT; 18:00 CAT
Venue: ZOOM

Please register in advance for this meeting:

https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tJModuqhrTMpH9zGbVhGWYctGTgrkA6yeNcr

Universities and civil society engagement as active citizenship

Heribert Hinzen

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Within the leadership of PIMA, we regularly think about enlarging cooperation and widening collaboration through joint activities. This is done in several ways, although often more at an individual level where PIMA members support other organisations. An example last year was when we joined ICAE (International Council for Adult Education) in writing a statement for the UNESCO *Futures of Education* Initiative. Other forms are between organisations as with the PIMA Webinar Series: *Climate Justice and Adult Learning and Education* (ALE), this time in February together with the Canadian Association for the Study of Adult Education (CASAE), and the Standing Conference on University Teaching and Research in the Education of Adults (SCUTREA) on *Climate change, resource extraction and adult learning and education – what are the links?*

To take this discussion in PIMA and with other partners a step further I thought to look at some more recent activities where I as a PIMA member and others were involved.

It is combined here with *an invitation to others to share more examples of such engagement of colleagues from universities as well as a civil society* together in forthcoming PIMA Bulletins.

EUCEN Open Fora 2020

Recently I participated in the *University Lifelong Learning Open Fora 2020 of EUCEN* (European University Continuing Education Network). It was an interesting way to inform and exchange, and it worked well via one-hour-zoom-meetings. It followed a simple structure. Each day of the week, this time throughout November has a specific theme introduced by a master lecture on a Monday, and then for the following days of the week, there are presentations related to the given theme, followed by discussions. The final day is reserved for a panel where all presenters participate plus some guests.

The four themes in 2020 were: The role of ULLL in Learning Cities - HE Work-Based Learning in a Changing World - Digital learning in continuing learning – the aftermath of Covid-19 - Bridging active citizenship and ULLL. The week on citizenship was moderated by **Balázs Németh**, President of EUCEN, and PIMA member. The master lecture was provided by **Professor Sir Alan Tuckett**, former ICAE President, also a PIMA member, who dug deep into historical and current experiences from the 1919 Report on Adult Education of the British Ministry of Reconstruction and their 100th-anniversary campaign in 2019, and the early University engagement through their Departments for Extra-Mural Studies, to the deepening of climate change and the dangers of populist regimes of today.

Other presenters during the week from South Africa, Germany, and Serbia discussed distance education and other digital forms of University work during the pandemic. PIMA member **Professor Katarina Popovic**, Secretary-General of ICAE, and her colleague from the Philosophical Faculty presented the support of the University of Belgrade towards the

movement for democracy in Serbia. Guests in the closing panel represented LLLP (Lifelong Learning Platform. European Civil Society for Education) as well as ESREA (European Society for Research on the Education of Adults). Presenters and panellists were in a gender balance.

From the ten ideas in the master session, two were so close that I thought to take them further in my presentation on *Active and global Citizenship – international commitments and practical examples*. They were: "Work with agencies already engaged" and "Work with partners having common concerns".

Within the UN and UNESCO commitments, there are so many related to citizenship education, and it is explicitly mentioned in the Education 2030 Agenda of the SDG, and RALE, the UNESCO *Recommendations on Adult Learning and Education*. The practical examples I could choose were from my work with DVV International as well as the local adult education or community learning centres. Those who are more deeply interested may want to look at the latest edition of the EUCEN eJournal with several of the presentations under http://www.eucen.eu/post/ejournal-of-ulll-vol-4-no-2-available-now

Adult Education Academy 2021

The University of Würzburg over the past years has established the Adult Education Academy (AEA) on comparative studies in ALE and LLL for doctoral and master students and practitioners. This work has been enlarging over the years. It now comprises a partnership of some ten universities from the Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, India, Ireland, Italy, and Portugal, in cooperation with EAEA (European Association for the Education of Adults) and DVV International as partners. Funding has for several years come especially from ERASMUS and DAAD (German Academic Exchange Service).

Until a few years ago the EAEA was for university students only. Now there are additionally practitioners from EAEA member organisations and partners of DVV International offices, especially in Eastern Europe. Till 2020 ALA was semester-long on-line preparatory work, followed by two weeks on campus in Würzburg, the most recent being in February 2020, just before the COVID-19 pandemic lock-down. This year it has to be completely digital. Already, for several months the respective training of moderators on digital methods and tools has started.

Participants could this year choose to join any of the nine comparative groups, where they work jointly on a common research project, and where they are guided by moderators from the consortium of universities, that related to different themes. These are:

- Recognition of prior learning
- Re-thinking teaching and learning in higher and adult education during COVID-19
- Beyond temporal constraints — time in adult and lifelong education
- Global institutionalisation and interorganisational networks
- Building active citizenship through adult education — a mission, role, and responsibility
- Employability and transitions of young adults from higher education to the labour market

- The use of international organisations' survey results in national adult education policies
- Refugees in adult and higher education: a timely discussion
- Lifelong learning and continuing training in private companies

Balázs Németh from the University of Pécs and I are co-moderating Group 5 on ALE and active citizenship. Students and practitioners include participants from Austria, Georgia, Nigeria, Palestine, Slovenia, South Africa, Ukraine, and Turkey. They are now writing their transnational essays, and the comparative group work will lead to an end product which they will share with all AEA participants on the final day of the intensive full-time work during the last two weeks.

All this work is digital, not easy when there are weak internet connections, and all are somehow digital learners in the processes of digitization of teaching and learning. Those who want to know more can go to the INTALL website (www.hw.uni-wuerzburg.de/intall); or they read in the book *International and Comparative Studies in Adult and Continuing Education, Studies on Adult Learning and Education* (Egetenmeyer, Buffo & Kröner 2020) which can be downloaded free of charge from https://media.fupress.com/files/pdf/24/4405/14704.

Sharing for learning

My idea was to present a few examples of the work where PIMA members are involved. The cooperation of agencies and partners, universities, and civil society, of students, teaching staff and practitioners, are examples where active and global citizenship can be nurtured. I hope to read more of such experiences in the next issues of the PIMA Bulletin.

In the beginning, I pointed to the forthcoming PIMA & partners webinar on resource extracting. This area for me was a learning experience of a never-ending struggle. We have lived with our family in the countryside since the early 1970s. Bonn and Cologne are close by with their universities. Within the range of fewer than five miles to the next village huge plans of extracting sand and filling with ashes from waste disposal plants were advanced by the respective companies. A small group started campaigning against it, developing into an environmental association that will celebrate 50 years in 2022. If it were not for the support of university professors from biology, geography, and mineralogy who researched and provided free expertise to us, the lawyers who also lived in the area and defended our cases at the court, the continuous awareness rising in the community, the political engagement in the village council, and building alliances, there would be nothing to celebrate.

Welcome to New Members

Mats Ehn mats.ehn@folkbildning.net lives in Stockholm and has worked at Färnebo folk high school, of which he is one of the founders, for about 30 years. Färnebo is a Swedish folk high school run by organisations from the Swedish solidarity, environmental, and peace movements. During his last ten work-life years, he was the international secretary of the

Swedish national organisation for folk high schools. This involved him with the International Council of Adult Education (ICAE) as a project leader for the World Assembly of ICAE held in Malmö 2011 and a member of the Executive Committee from 2017 until April 2020. Mats see PIMA as a resource for debating and strengthening the role of transformative adult and popular education to meet the multiple crises we are facing.

Katie Moss Katie.elizabeth.ross@gmail.com is Research Director & Senior Lecturer, Institute for Sustainable Futures, University of Technology Sydney UTS), having studied environmental science, sustainable development, and transformative sustainability learning in the US and Australia. She has engaged in learning design informal K-12 and university settings, in National Parks, and community programmes. Katie is curious about ways to create change. What types of strategies and approaches work best in certain situations? What 'palette' of approaches leads to the most meaningful and well-directed change towards sustainable futures – questions she explores daily in her work as a Research Principal at UTS. She specializes in transdisciplinary action research: essentially life-long learning with the community members engaged in the research process, that agitates for change in social, technical, and governance systems.

Ms Liu Quan, or **Liuquan,** q.liu@bfsu.edu.cn is a Postgraduate student at Beijing Foreign Studies University in China, specializing in comparative education. Liuquan describes herself as an open-minded person always wanting to know and learn more about different countries and cultures. She hopes through different kinds of educational phenomena and problems to gain more insight into the whole society or the place where people live. She hopes one day to be able really to make a difference with her efforts: now the most urgent thing is learning, to enrich herself not only for curiosity but for development in the future to make a real change in the community where she lives and works. PIMA looks like a good platform for sustainable learning. Meanwhile, she wishes to share different Chinese opinions and study from other scholars, growing through a big learning community.

Ruth Sarrazin ruthsarrazin@gmail.com is Senior Information and Communication Manager at DVV International based in Bonn. Germany, currently on maternity leave in Shanghai. While there, besides doing some freelance work, she is taking the opportunity to (distance) study digital leadership at the learning lab of the University Duisburg-Essen in Germany, with a focus on educational management and online learning. Ruth studied political science, sociology, and philosophy in Germany and France, with a focus on topics on migration and integration, with a thesis on national citizenship in integrating immigrants in Germany. She then worked as a press officer at the French-German cultural TV channel ARTE for several years before joining DVV in 2013, entering 'the fascinating world of adult learning and education', where she assumed responsibility for DVV's *Adult Education and Development* and *International Perspectives in Adult Education*, along with other duties like the Institute's website and annual report.

Dr Bonnie Slade Bonnie.slade@glasgow.ac.uk is Professor of Adult Education for Social Change in the School of Education, University of Glasgow, Scotland, and Programme Leader of the International Masters in Adult Education for Social Change (Erasmus Mundus). Her main research focus is on how, across a variety of contexts (workplace, higher education, community), adult education can work as a tool for social change and individual empowerment.

Ms Tong Lien Anh tonglienanh@gmail.com is a Specialist in the Continuing Education Department of the Ministry of Education and Training of Vietnam (MOET), who lives and works in Hanoi. She is a senior expert with extensive domestic and international working experience in adult learning and education (ALE) and lifelong learning (LLL). During her 8 years working at the Continuing Education Department of the Ministry of Education and Training, she has been the person in charge of international projects on ALE and LLL between Vietnam MOET and international organizations. She is responsible for drafting the strategy on the national LLL plan period 2021-2030 and vision 2045. She is the secretary of the drafting committee of Vietnam's Encyclopaedia on LLL. She has twice been awarded policy scholarships from UILL Hamburg.