



BULLETIN No. 26

September 2019

Table of Contents

Editorial <i>Chris Duke</i>	2
Critical Global Issues and the Extinction Crisis	3
<i>Navigating climate crises: Deepening the conversation about contributions of adult educators</i> <i>Shirley Walters</i>	4
<i>Navigating climate crises: Deepening the conversation about contributions of adult educators: A response</i> <i>Soonghee Han</i>	14
<i>Climate Change – Time is of the essence</i> <i>Jim Falk</i>	17
Anniversaries	19
<i>Reflecting back and looking forward: Work in progress</i> <i>Barry Golding</i>	20
Modes of Learning	22
<i>Chesterfield’s People’s Assembly: but is it legitimate?</i> <i>Martin Yarnit Talk Shop</i>	22
<i>Synagogues and pedagogues: rethinking educational priorities</i> <i>Tom Schuller</i>	24
<i>The Impacts of Non-Formal Education in Promoting Lifelong Learning in Cambodia</i> <i>Neak Piseth</i>	27
<i>Characteristics of local volunteers in Quality of Living Improvement program of Non-formal Education</i> <i>Leakhena Orn</i>	28
<i>Guidelines for arranging lifelong learning resources in the neighbourhood of Chulalongkorn University to promote youth to be lifelong learner</i> <i>Ms. Prakaidow Kaewchaithen</i>	29
Special Interest Groups	31
<i>Directions for the PIMA LLL SIG</i> <i>Brian Findsen</i>	31
<i>China’s ageing population</i> <i>Peter Kearns and Denise Reghenzani-Kearns</i>	32
Member News and New Members	36
<i>Brief reflections – one month in Iran</i> <i>Barry Golding</i>	36
<i>New Members</i>	38

Editorial *Chris Duke*

dukeozenay@gmail.com

This is a bumper edition of the Bulletin in return to school and work month in the northern hemisphere, for the undeniably big reason that we face ecological catastrophe that has led to use of the term *Extinction Crisis*. It is striking how global warming, something now well-known and established for decades - and long strenuously denied by those with much to lose from the required changes of culture, lifestyle and behaviour – has suddenly burst into life and popular consciousness. Nations line up to declare a crisis. Citizens talk about behaviour change and try out the first hesitant steps on a long and difficult road.

Do some of us maybe still ask what this has to do with adult learning and education? Do we still say we should keep out of politics, and just do well what we are called to do: improve educational provision of adults and enhance learning opportunities in school and beyond? Rather, we have no business campaigning for adult learning and education if we ignore the pressing needs of the world beyond education. As Jim Falk powerfully asserts, time is now of the essence. Whichever doomsday scenario you favour, it is evident that devastating change can any time now spin out of control. The interconnectivity of trends and events will then indeed spell doom.

It is with this awareness of unprecedented crisis during the short time of human habitation and then domination of Mother Earth, that the PIMA Committee decided to trial a webinar on this crisis, to take place 23rd October at 5.00 pm Australian time. You will be receiving an invite shortly. It will be kicked off by PIMA President Shirley Walters in presenting the thought piece that appears below. A separate notice will come to all members about the event and how to join in. The webinar will be moderated by Shirley's predecessor as first PIMA President Dorothy Lucardie.

As well as the *Time if of the Essence* piece by international Greenpeace leader and activist Jim Falk, this Bulletin includes a further deepening of the conversation by Soonghee – a conversation started with Shirley some years ago. They found common ground over the deeper causes. Soonghee takes that up here, and we must now ask how to help a society emerge to be 'educated' into new values and behaviour. This must surely enter the lifelong learning agenda at every stage of learning throughout life.

Other parts of this Bulletin have a more familiar form. We take up themes from recent issues, with another anniversary consideration of history and the future 'looking back and looking forward'. Barry Golding draws on work that he is doing in preparation for Australian ALA's 60th anniversary. We can be trapped in history and tire of it. We can also learn from history; but are not good at doing so. To forget is to fall prey to those who would remove identity and collective shared wisdom; and of course to repeat patterns and mistakes again and again.

Martin Yarnit presents a fresh approach to our long-running theme of the crisis in democracy – one with which the UK now desperately wrestles as ‘Brexit’ appears to approach end game. Also focusing on local learning, action and development are three contributions from Thailand and Cambodia, by graduate students at Dr Archanya Ratana-Ubol’s impressive programmes at Thailand’s old and prestigious Chulalongkorn University. This centre of action research has become something of a node in the PIMA network. Maybe some universities in other countries could adopt a similar novel approach to using PIMA for the early and mid-career development and mentoring of next-generation leaders?

In this same section Tom Schuller challenges and widens our thinking – about the meaning and use of words as well as about what we prioritise - in looking at education across the board. Lifelong learning especially in this social media and fake news era calls for critical reflection and care to use the great gift of words and language to best practical effect. It had never occurred to me before to connect the word and meaning of synagogue with our familiar use of pedagogue.

Brian Findsen, the new convenor of the Special Interest Group on Later Life Learning, sets out possible directions for this SIG. And Peter Kearns and Denise Reghenzani-Kearns draw on a recent conference opportunity in China to focus on demographic change and later life learning needs as an ageing population; something critical for many of the more advanced economies globally, which demands our attention as special advocates of adult and later life learning.

We conclude with an uplifting – and again challenging – ‘Letter from...’ by Barry Golding, reflecting on time in Iran and seeing things that the popular negative stereotypes (remember George Bush Junior’s ‘axis of evil?’) tend not to include. The Bulletin would welcome more reflective ‘Letter from’ contributions as ‘nativist’ nationalistic trends tend to fold down our capacity and willingness to learn about – and from – others.

Our new members on this occasion include two very welcome Cambodians who contribute to this issue, and the formidably qualified and experienced doyenne of Latin American popular adult education and social change, Rosa Maria Torres.

Critical Global Issues and the Extinction Crisis

A version of this ‘Thought piece’ will be published in the Journal of Vocational, Adult and Continuing Education and Training (JOVACET) in October/November 2019. It follows on from a previously published article Walters, S. 2018. ‘The drought is my teacher’: Adult learning and education in times of climate crisis. *Journal of Vocational, Adult and Continuing Education and Training (JOVACET)*, 1(1): 146–162, South Africa.

Navigating climate crises: Deepening the conversation about contributions of adult educators *Shirley Walters*

ferris@iafrica.com

Introduction

It is worse, much worse, than you think. If your anxiety about global warming is dominated by fears of sea-level rise, you are barely scratching the surface of what terrors are possible. In California, wildfires now rage year-round, destroying thousands of homes. Across the USA, '500 year' storms pummel communities month after month, and floods displace tens of millions annually (Wallace-Wells, 2019: inside cover).

Every day a new extreme weather event confronts us through the media. As adult learning and education (ALE) is often embedded in everyday life, I will start with contemporary stories from two different parts of the world.

Hurricane Maria struck Puerto Rico on 20 September 2017. It was the most intense tropical cyclone worldwide during that year and it caused catastrophic damage to the environment and a major humanitarian crisis, including destruction of roads, bridges, the electricity grid, water supplies, agriculture, and so on. There was major flooding, a lack of food, housing was destroyed and businesses wiped out, with the related jobs. Puerto Rico is in a hurricane zone – they know about them; they plan for them. But nothing they did helped them prepare for the vengeance of Hurricane Maria. The catastrophe was compounded by the slow relief processes and the disdain shown to Puerto Ricans by President Trump (Kolhatkar, 2019). Puerto Rico is referred to by some citizens as 'a colony' of the United States, and as with the 2005 Hurricane Katarina which devastated New Orleans and resulted in 1833 deaths, the citizens, who are largely Hispanic or African-Americans, experienced a lack of urgency in the relief efforts to mitigate the devastation (Klein, 2018).

The second story is situated in southern Africa. On 14 March 2019, Cyclone Idai devastated central Mozambique, eastern Zimbabwe and southern Malawi. Catastrophic flooding has killed more than 1 000 people in Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Malawi (Arndt, 2019; Fitchett, 2019). Officials have warned that the toll is likely to be much higher once bodies are found when flood waters recede. This is the worst cyclone to hit southern Africa in recorded history. The city of Beira has been 90% destroyed. Entire villages have been wiped out. The cholera outbreak has grown rapidly, with governments and aid agencies trying to contain it. Many health centres in the cyclone-affected communities have been swept away by flood waters, while the health centres run by relief agencies are barely enough to support thousands of displaced people. Many affected areas are still inaccessible by road, complicating relief efforts and further heightening the threat of infection due to water contamination. While various relief agencies are doing their utmost to help, there has been limited financial aid or political will coming from the African Union, including the South

African government, to support relief efforts. The South African Defence Force budget has been slashed and citizens are preoccupied with, for example, electricity outages, national elections and other local concerns. This results in much more muted responses to the tragedies (Bloom, 2019).

Hurricane Maria and Cyclone Idai are just two of many contemporary examples around the world of climate turmoil and disasters. Both illustrate how people are left largely to fend for themselves in appalling conditions.

People of all ages and in all parts of the world have to learn to respond appropriately at times of crisis and, importantly, to mitigate the possibilities of, for example, increased floods, droughts and fires. The purpose of this article is to suggest some ways in which adult educators can contribute to collective efforts at navigating climate crises. I begin by highlighting some pertinent aspects of 'climate crises'.

Climate crisis

There are growing numbers of scholars who, on the available evidence, are predicting the possibility of human extinction within this century (Scranton, 2015; Bendell, 2018; Selby & Kagawa, 2018).

Fossil fuels are heating the planet at a pace and scale never before experienced. Extreme weather patterns, rising sea levels and accelerating feedback loops are commonplace features of our lives. The number of environmental refugees is increasing and several island states and low-lying countries are vulnerable. Some argue that we are on an ecocidal path of species extinction. We are losing species 1 000 times more quickly than we have ever before (Johnson, 2019), and governments and the international platforms such as the United Nations Paris Climate Agreement deliver too little, too late – this is reinforced by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report (IPCC, 2018). Most states continue on their carbon-intensive energy paths, with devastating results. There are growing numbers of environmental activist-scholars warning that political leaders across the world are failing to provide systemic solutions to the climate crisis; the private sector are both complicit and often inhibited by the current economic paradigm; and civil society is mostly too ill-equipped and uninformed to pressure for change. As highlighted previously (Walters, 2018), there are numbers of governments who deny the reality of accelerated climate change and continue to support fossil-fuel extraction and use.

A small number of countries have declared a 'climate emergency', but the Secretary-General of the United Nations (United Nations, 2019) says in his report on progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that 'progress has been slow on many Goals, that the most vulnerable people and countries continue to suffer most, and that the global response thus far has not been ambitious enough'.

Linking climate crisis and 'othering'

Naomi Klein (2017b: 35) presented the Edward Said Memorial Lecture in 2016. She made the compelling link between climate crises and 'othering'. She quotes from Edward Said's seminal work, *Orientalism*, where he describes 'othering' as '*disregarding, essentialising, denuding the humanity of another culture, people or geographical region*'. Once 'the other' has been firmly established, the ground is laid for any transgression: be it a terrorist attack, violent expulsion, land theft, occupation, or invasion. Because the whole point of 'othering' is that the other doesn't have the same rights, the same humanity, as those making the distinction. What does this have to do with climate change? As Naomi Klein (2017a) argues, 'perhaps everything'. It also has everything to do with adult learning and education.

Fossil fuels aren't the sole driver of climate change – there is industrial agriculture and deforestation – but they are the biggest. The thing about fossil fuels is that they are so inherently dirty and toxic that they require sacrificial people and places: people whose lungs and bodies can be sacrificed to work in the coal mines, people whose lands and water can be sacrificed to open-pit mining and oil spills. According to Klein (2017b), as recently as the 1970s, scientists advising the US government openly referred to certain parts of the country as 'national sacrifice areas'. As Naomi Klein argues, there must be theories of 'othering' to justify sacrificing an entire geography – theories about the people who live there being so poor and backward that their lives and culture doesn't deserve protection. Turning all that coal into electricity requires another layer of 'othering' too: this time for the urban neighbourhoods next door to the power plants and refineries. In southern Africa, North America and elsewhere, these are overwhelmingly communities of colour, forced to carry the toxic burden of the collective addiction to fossil fuels, with markedly higher rates of respiratory illnesses and cancers. It was in fights against this kind of 'environmental racism' that the climate justice movement arose.

According to Klein (2017b), fossil fuel 'sacrifice zones' dot the globe. This kind of resource extraction is a form of violence, because it does so much damage to the land and water that it brings about the end of a way of life, the death of cultures that are inseparable from the land and which sever indigenous people's connection to their culture. It is well known that these practices were enacted through colonisation and imperialism over centuries (Carpenter & Mojab, 2017). Fossil fuels require sacrifice zones: they always have. And you can't have a system built on sacrificial places and sacrificial people unless intellectual theories that justify their sacrifice exist and persist, and refer to others as 'less than'.

Climate crises affect poor and marginalised people disproportionately, as seen in the two examples described earlier. This is unsurprising. The majority of people in the world are poor and they live on land that is least protected from extreme climate occurrences. They have few resources to mobilise in order to protect themselves. This is not to say that they do not do what they can under extreme conditions. However, they do not necessarily have sophisticated equipment for forewarning nor are they able to mobilise resources quickly to

escape the onslaught of extreme weather. It is also convenient for governments and corporations to focus on what individuals should do when it is they who must lead (Byskov, 2019). The media attention is also muted – such occurrences are away from the public gaze of international media hubs. For example, if there is a dramatic incident in Paris in France, compared to one in Beira in Mozambique, or in an urban centre like Cape Town compared to a peripheral town like Beaufort West in South Africa, it is obvious which one will gain more coverage. Climate injustice and inequity are the order of the day, and while everyone is affected, the majority of people who bear the burden of these realities are people of colour and people who are poor.

How can adult educators help with navigating climate crises?

In this section, I expand on some of the issues raised previously (Walters, 2018): heartfelt pedagogies, active citizenship, challenging ‘othering’, deep adaptations and lifelong learning orientations.

Heartfelt pedagogies: Climate crises are changing the world, as we know it. They are systemic forces that threaten our collective and personal well being. The changes are coming thick and fast and are creating a range of emotions, from uncertainty, fear and anger to denial and deep senses of loss. Leonie Joubert (2019) describes how climate activists are ‘canaries in the coal mine of mental health decline’. She describes how the medical community is giving unprecedented attention to the mental health fallout from the acute stress of surviving extreme weather events or the chronic distress of facing the existential threat of our own extinction.

The impact of the pervasive trauma and grief in communities affected by climate crises may be similar to other difficult circumstances of trauma, loss and violence of various kinds propelled by devastating economic, health or political conditions. As educators we need to acknowledge the traumatic situations that many adult learners experience. I have written elsewhere (Ferris & Walters, 2012), in an HIV and AIDS context, that educators need to develop ‘heartfelt pedagogy’ as we design and facilitate interventions which take account of traumatic lived experiences. As the impact of climate crises intensifies, pedagogical approaches that acknowledge the trauma will be extremely important. These include a raft of methodologies that engage the whole person through embodied learning, including playfulness (Gordon, 2019), feminist pedagogies (Manicom & Walters, 2012) and mindfulness practices. (Berila 2015)

Active citizenship: Climate crises raise many questions about natural resources and forms of energy. It is within entangled economic, political, social and cultural contexts that debate about climate change lives. The debates are highly charged politically and economically. It is

therefore no wonder that governments or corporations do not necessarily want to encourage citizen participation – clandestine deals made in secret out of the public gaze are more common. We need to acknowledge that what we are required to do will not be approved of universally by the authorities – it sometimes requires subversion of the status quo. There are powerful people with vested interests who will do anything to continue to make a profit and will spread ‘fake news’ rather than confront the deep climate crises. It is therefore important that we as educators and activists critically engage with and question what we are told so that we are more able to help our students and others to be curious and more sceptical of what appears in the popular media.

There is a well-known slogan among many of the social movements which proclaims, ‘we don’t need climate change, we need systems change’. This is recognition that it is the current economic system that is causing much of the problem. Therefore, if we as citizens and educators are to imagine an alternative economic system, fundamental questioning of contemporary taken-for-granted values and beliefs is required – this relates to what we eat, what we buy, how we live and what we value. Encouraging all people to recognise their own agency as active citizens is compelling: the climate crisis requires collective efforts of all sectors and levels of society to work and learn together if there is to be any chance of success. The issues are far too important to be left to politicians alone. As a poster at a recent climate change protest of scholars reads: ‘There is no Planet B.’ Adults who have been socialised into a world of consumerism and waste need to be open to learn from the children who are demonstrating a greater sense of urgency. As Greta Thunberg (2018), the young Swedish climate activist, proclaims – ‘we need to act with urgency, as if our house is burning!’

Others, like George Monbiot (2018), argue for a new politics in an age of crisis – one that encourages all citizens to participate actively in finding solutions. Educators and adult learners are also citizens – active citizenship is for everyone, and involvement in social movements, as we did for example, in the struggle against apartheid in South Africa or through forms of community-based participatory research, are important responses.

Challenge ‘othering’: A critical aspect of a lifelong learning (LLL) orientation across all generations is the challenging of ‘othering’ – be it based on gender, ‘race’, ethnicity, class, language, religion, age, geography or ability. Building tolerance, mutual respect, compassion and a sense of community is critical to challenging the strategy of ‘divide and rule’ that is so powerfully applied. As Wallerstein (2009) urges, we need to have at the forefront of our consciousness and our actions the struggle against the three fundamental inequalities of the world – gender, class and race/ethnicity/religion. The ways in which we confront such deep prejudices and discrimination within our society and ourselves call for life-deep learning ourselves and with others. This is central to a ‘heartfelt pedagogy’. There are many examples of these through anti-racism education, through feminist pedagogies, popular education, including through pedagogical responses to HIV and AIDS – we do not have to

reinvent the wheel as there are many radical traditions that can be drawn on in order to induct educators through professional development programmes.

Deep adaptations: The innovative work of Jem Bendell (2018) is instructive when he argues for the deep adaptations that are required by all of us as citizens. He argues for processes which have everything to do with us as educators: building resilience; relinquishment and restoration. He states, in summary:

Resilience: 'is the process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats or significant sources of stress ... bounding back from the experiences' (American Psychology Assoc, as quoted by Bendell). The key question to ask is: *How do we keep what we really want to keep?*

Relinquishment: It involves people and communities letting go of certain assets, behaviours and beliefs where retaining them could make matters worse. For example, withdrawing from certain coastlines, shutting down vulnerable industrial facilities or giving up expectations of certain types of consumption. The key question is: *What do we need to let go of in order not to make matters worse?*

Restoration: This involves people and communities rediscovering attitudes and approaches to life and organisation that have been eroded. For instance, acknowledging different ways of knowing, changing diets back to matching seasons, re-wilding landscapes, rediscovering non-electronic powered forms of play, increased community-level productivity and support. The key question is: *What can we bring back to help us with the coming difficulties and tragedies?*

Accompanying accelerated climate change are inevitable experiences of loss. We need to come to terms with deep loss of what we care about and value. We therefore need to embrace grieving as part of living. In many cultures this does not happen; therefore learning from those who do integrate bereavement into their lives more easily would be a place to turn to in order to learn from them. This raises the question of which and whose knowledge counts at times of climate crisis.

It is poor, working-class and indigenous individuals and communities who often have the experiences and knowledge of how to respond to immediate crises. We do need to promote local indigenous knowledge and strategies, which shows how populations living under multiple interrelated risks employ specific strategies for coping and recovery. Middle class and wealthier people are more mobile and can often choose to leave and go elsewhere. Climate crises can invert who knows more when and where in order to deal with the situations. The knowledge and strategies of many indigenous peoples around the world about how to live in harmony with Mother Earth are sorely needed. Climate crises can invert where expertise and deep knowledge lie. It is up to educators to help broaden what is

considered as ‘really useful knowledge’ and ensure that the knowledge hierarchies that currently exist are challenged.

Lifelong learning orientations: All of the above point to the importance of lifelong learning (LLL) orientations and approaches as being fundamental to responding to the deep adaptations that climate crises demand. People of *all ages* are affected: from birth to death. From birth we are required to learn respectful relations to water and all natural resources; to respect the diversity of fauna and flora and all living things, as crucial to our collective survival. Capitalism thrives on rampant consumerism and waste, whereas what is needed is an attitude of conservation, preservation and appreciation of the finiteness of the planet.

If we accept Naomi Klein’s (2014) argument, that the climate crisis is a confrontation between capitalism and the planet, then virtually everything as we know it has to be rethought and relearned. We are challenged personally and collectively to rethink how we live, what we value and what we stand for. It demands that we have concern for those with little or no voice in governance, the poor and the unborn. It calls for new and imaginative thinking across all spheres of economic, social, environmental and cultural life, including in education.

A lifelong learning orientation has implications for the diffuse learning environments of home, work, the media and society in general. It is also important to have the infrastructure through media, ICT and systems of education and training institutions to be able to communicate and engage citizens when crises arise. The inculcation of an approach to learning throughout life, which encourages all people to remain curious and creative, will support society’s abilities to take on the environmental challenges as they manifest themselves across different social classes, cultures, beliefs and traditions.

Building resilience through a lifelong learning orientation across all generations at personal, organisational, community and societal levels should help our collective abilities to respond. Taking the use, preservation and conservation of water, as an example, across all spheres and stages of life, when severe droughts set in, society is more able to adapt and respond appropriately when all of society has an understanding of the finiteness of water.

As rapid climate change can be turbulent, we do not know what is coming at us, so we do need to be open to learning and adapting fast. The role-modelling of education and training institutions in school and post-school education and training systems is vitally important to demonstrating the values for a resilient future – for example, including the reuse of water, recycling, avoiding the use of plastics, the use of renewable energy; valuing conserving, preserving, reusing as important values in every aspect of institutional life; maximising land for food production; building capacities for disaster mitigation; deepening understanding of the dramatic changes in the biosphere; encouraging sustainable innovations to respond to climate crises with the long-term future in mind; and applying heartfelt pedagogies to lifelong learning orientations and approaches.

The curricula in all education and training institutions, and in other learning spaces such as the home, work and cultural centres, and through the media, would do well to learn from holistic approaches to education and learning by many indigenous peoples around the world who live the interconnections among all life forms, including Mother Earth (Solon, 2018).

Concluding thoughts

The climate crisis raises fundamental questions about the kind of economic and political futures that are possible if life on the planet is to be sustained and/or regenerated. As Naomi Klein (2017a) argues, there are urgent choices to be made to avoid catastrophic climate disruption, which includes changing just about everything about the economy, as we currently know it. There are growing numbers of scholars, activists, politicians and educators who are putting forward ideas for alternative futures: Fioramonti (2018) describes the ‘well-being economy’ as one such example.

Wallace-Wells (2019) argues that it is time both to resist that which is compounding the climate crisis today and also to dream, to imagine alternative futures. Adult learning and education have vital roles to play in both – but these are not neutral or technical undertakings. They involve thinking politically as we teach/learn and organise, so that we can become climate-crisis resilient.

I have argued that adult educators and adult learners are also citizens. Our identities as citizens merge with our identities as educators and learners. As in other political struggles, such as that of the anti-apartheid movement and the mobilisation for access to anti-retroviral medication at the height of the HIV and AIDS pandemic, educators and students were in many instances allies fighting for social and economic justice. Pedagogies and curricula were shaped very much by these struggles. At this time of massive threat to life as we know it, it is time to draw on past experience in order to act with even more urgency. The climate crises demand that scholars and practitioners work across disciplines to address many of the intractable problems. It is clear that we need a range of adaptive skills, expertise and commitments, all enhanced through processes of learning. Adult educators, and all other educators, have extremely important roles to play – both as citizens and in their professional capacities – to act urgently ‘as if our houses are on fire’!

“Treat the earth well. It was not given to you by your parents. It was loaned to you by your children.” Native American Proverb

References

- Arndt, C. 2019. 'Cyclone Idai shows why long-term disaster resilience is so crucial'. In *The Conversation*, 4 April 2019. Available: <<http://theconversation.com/cyclone-idai-shows-why-long-term-disaster-resilience-is-so-crucial-114762>>. [Accessed 4 April 2019]
- Bendell, J. 2018. Deep adaptation: a map for navigating climate tragedy, IFLAS Occasional Paper 2, 27 July 2018. Available: <www.iflas.info>. [Accessed 4 October 2018]
- Berila, B. (2015) Integrating mindfulness into anti-oppressive pedagogy: Social justice in higher education. Routledge, New York.
- Bloom, K. 2019. 'Drought and domestic violence: Fallout from a changing climate' In *Daily Maverick*, 19 March 2019. Available: <<https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2019-03-19-drought-and-domestic-violence-fallout-from-a-changing-climate/#.XJCg-xDnQVU.email>>. [Accessed 19 March 2019].
- Byskov, MF. 2019. 'Climate change: Focusing on how individuals can help is very convenient for corporations'. In *The Conversation*, 9 February 2019. Available: <<http://theconversation.com/climate-change-focusing-on-how-individuals-can-help-is-very-convenient-for-corporations-108546>>. [Accessed 9 February 2019]
- Carpenter, S & Mojab, S. 2017. Revolutionary learning: Marxism, feminism and knowledge. USA: Pluto Press.
- Ferris, H & Walters, S. 2012. Heartfelt pedagogy in the time of HIV and AIDS. In Manicom, L & Walters, S (Eds). *Feminist popular education in transnational debates: Building pedagogies of possibility*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan: 75–91.
- Fioramonti, L. 2017. *Wellbeing Economy: Success in a world without growth*. South Africa: Pan Macmillan.
- Fitchett, J. 'Why the Indian Ocean is spawning strong and deadly tropical cyclones'. In *The Conversation*, 8 May 2019. Available: <<http://theconversation.com/why-the-indian-ocean-is-spawning-strong-and-deadly-tropical-cyclones-116559>>. [Accessed 8 May 2019].
- Gordon, G. 2019. Available: <<http://psychologypodcast.libsyn.com/163-restoring-the-playground>>. [Accessed 1 May 2019].
- Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). 2018. Global warming of 1.5 degrees centigrade: Special Report, United Nations. Available: <<https://www.ipcc.ch/sr15/>>. [Accessed 1 December 2018].
- Johnson, J. 2019. *One million species on the brink of extinction, finds UN report*. In *Truthdig*, 6 May 2019. Available: <<https://www.truthdig.com/articles/one-million-species-on-the-brink-of-extinction-finds-u-n-report/>>. [Accessed 16 July 2019].
- Joubert, L. 2019. Climate activists: canaries in the coal mine of mental health decline. *Daily Maverick*, 12 June 2019. Available: <<https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2019-06-12-climate-activists-canaries-in-the-coal-mine-of-mental-health-decline/>>. [Accessed 12 June 2019].

- Klein, N. 2014. *This changes everything: Capitalism vs the climate*. London: Allen Lane.
- Klein, N 2017a. *No is not enough: Resisting Trump's shock politics and winning the world we need*. Chicago: Haymarket Books.
- Klein, N. 2017b. Let them drown: The violence of othering in a warming world. In Prashad, V (Ed). *Will the flower slip through the asphalt?* New Delhi, India: Leftword Books.
- Klein, N. 2018. *The battle for paradise*. 20 March 2018. Available: <<https://theintercept.com/2018/03/20/puerto-rico-hurricane-maria-recovery/>>. [Accessed 27 March 2018].
- Kolhatkar, S. 2019. *Trump's disdain for Puerto Rico should be his undoing*. *Truthdig*, 5 April 2019. Available: <<https://www.truthdig.com/articles/trumps-disdain-for-puerto-rico-should-be-his-undoing/>>. [Accessed 5 April 2019].
- Manicom, L & Walters, S (Eds). 2012. *Feminist popular education in transnational debates: Building pedagogies of possibility*. New York: Palgrave Publisher.
- Monbiot, G. 2018. *Out of the wreckage: A new politics for an age of crisis*. London, United Kingdom: Verso.
- Prashad, V (Ed). 2017. *Will the flower slip through the asphalt?* New Delhi, India: Leftword Books.
- Satgar, V (Ed). 2018. *The climate crisis: The South African and global democratic eco-socialist alternatives*. Johannesburg: Wits University Press.
- Scranton, R. 2015. *Learning to die in the Anthropocene: Reflections on the end of civilization*. USA: City Lights Books.
- Selby, D & Kagawa, F. 2018. Teetering on the brink: Subversive and restorative learning in times of climate turmoil and disaster. *Journal of Transformative Education*, 16(4):302–322.
- Solon, P. 2018. The rights of Mother Earth. In Satgar, V (Ed). *The climate crisis: The South African and global democratic eco-socialist alternatives*. Johannesburg: Wits University Press.
- Thunberg G. The disarming case to act right now on climate change. TED Talks on uTube. Available: <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H2QxFM9y0tY>>. [Accessed 20 February 2019].
- United Nations. May, 2019. *Progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals*. Report of the Secretary-General, Economic and Social Council, New York: United Nations.
- Wallace-Wells, D. 2019. *The uninhabitable earth: Life after warming*. USA: Tim Duggan Books.
- Wallerstein, I. 2009. *Crisis of the capitalist system: Where do we go from here?* The Harold Wolpe Memorial Lecture presented by Immanuel Wallerstein. Cape Town, November 2009. Available: <<http://www.wolpetrust.org.za/lectures/2009/crisis.pdf>>. [Accessed 3 March 2018]
- Walters, S. 2018. 'The drought is my teacher': Adult learning and education in times of climate crisis. *Journal of Vocational, Adult and Continuing Education and Training (JOVACET)*, 1(1):146–162.

Navigating climate crises: Deepening the conversation about contributions of adult educators: A response *Soonghee Han*

learn@snu.ac.kr

I have once had an opportunity to address keynotes with Shirley at a conference that delivered the theme of sustainable development and lifelong learning. I remember she began with the same example of Hurricane Maria which struck Puerto Rico severely. She and I had surprisingly similar perspective on the way we understand the phenomena and how to overcome the challenges. We both focused on human greedy desires, the capitalist production system that constantly stimulates the desire for consumption, and the disastrous consequences in exploitation of Mother Earth. We both focused on the key contribution of adult learning and education, especially social and collective learnings which go beyond individual level of thought changes. Society needs to learn at a collective level. At lunchtime, we had a chance to talk further about how to help a society emerge to be 'educated'.

Responding to Shirley's article now is a chance to continue our conversation. I always love what Shirley mentions in various articles, especially some chosen statements that really pinpoint exactly the core issues. For example 'the issues are far too important to be left to politicians alone'. Previously politicians often said that 'education is too important to be left to educators'. Now, I 100% agree that politicians are negotiating with entrepreneurs to ruin Mother Earth.

Shirley notes that the only power adult learners possess comes from the power of citizens, not individuals but as collectives: 'I have argued that adult educators and adult learners are also citizens. Our identities as citizens merge with our identities as educators and learners. As in other political struggles... educators and students were in many instance allies fighting for social and economic justice. Pedagogies and curricula were shaped very much by these struggles... It is clear that we need a range of adaptive skills, expertise and commitment, all enhanced through processes of learning.'

This is witnessed in the history of political changes of Republic of Korea, where continuous civil movements have changed the shape of the democracy: destroying the long-standing authoritarian government of the previous century; building civil societies in the new millennium; and recently the Candlelight Civil Revolution in 2016-2017 that dismissed the President of the country. No one taught, but everything that was learned emerged in the plaza where they gathered. As Shirley commented, it was solely citizens' power that evolved alongside the collective experiences they share; 'virtually everything as we know it has to be rethought and relearnt'... 'we are challenged personally and collectively to rethink how we live, what we value and what we stand for'. I strongly believe that collective wisdom does exist, and that the power practically works.

Overall, I also agree that 'the climate crisis is a confrontation between capitalism and the planet'. The notion of 'sustainable development' is a way of rethinking the way the two

concepts of capitalism and the planet are interconnected. Capitalism by nature searches to find ways to exploit the planet whatsoever. There is little room to make it sustainable. Therefore the two words - 'sustainable' and 'development' – seem incompatible. Needless to say, sustainability is primarily linked with the way physical environmental issues are dealt with, including fossil fuel, waste, and forest destruction. It is however related more with a human value system that drives human desire to accelerate the exploitation; for example, how to live in this world with its limited physical resources. We need to challenge narrow tunnel vision fixed on economic development, driven by capitalism at the expense of everything else. The key point here resides in the way human minds understand one's own life. It requires the transforming of the human mindset: to re-learn how to live, and what is valuable in life.

Sustainability begins with a critique of 'developmentalism'. This is a fetish that capitalist production system has created, in which the desire is embedded in a series of ideologies: that GDP needs to grow constantly, living standards need to be upgraded, personal consumption levels must constantly rise. In this perspective, developmentalism was fetishism for materialism. Is it not possible to give up the obsession? I believe it is. The only way is to 'unlearn' what we've learnt, and 're-learn' completely a new thought system. It is all about adult learning and education. As I have written elsewhere, 'the only way out from this self-contradiction is to re-learn the way we understand the purpose of life, social dynamics, politics of changes, and fatalism embedded inside. We should re-define the framework of developmentalism'.

Shirley's proposal on 'citizenship' as the conceptual platform of adult learning and education targeting climate crises reminds me of the notion of 'global' citizenship, which shows in SDG 2030 Goal 4.7. From a viewpoint that climate crises go beyond the territories of states, global citizenship is a possible invention that can extend the nation-state boundaries of citizenship to the global level, where 'the way we live for life' extends to the level of global sustainability.

SDG 2030, especially article 4.7.1, includes the keyword 'global citizenship education' that can be a torchlight in this new type of adult education movement. Global citizenship education (GCED) is tentatively defined as any educational effort that aims to encourage the acquisition of skills, values, attitudes and behaviors to assume an active role of learners to face and resolve global challenges, and to become proactive contributors to a more peaceful, tolerant, inclusive and secure world. GCED nurtures the following three core dimensions of learning: (1) to acquire knowledge, understanding and critical thinking about global issues and the interconnectedness/inter-dependency of different countries and different populations; (2) to have a sense of belonging to a common humanity, sharing values and responsibilities, sharing empathy, solidarity and respect for differences and diversity; (3) to act responsibly at local, national and global levels for a more peaceful and sustainable world.

Recently global citizenship education is understood as a part of transformative education, inheriting the teachings of Paulo Freire or Jack Mezirow. This relocates citizenship education towards the project-based, participatory-oriented, and transformative, and in the context of lifelong learning. Though as yet lacking universal definition, it could be adopted as a tool for challenging and transforming societies in collective and participatory ways. Citizenship education, local and global, goes beyond individual enlightenment, to the level of mobilising a village, a town, or a city to learn how to re-define its social problems and find alternative social institutions to readjust.

The 'learning cities' programs, in this sense, can be an excellent seedbed transformatively to try to change a body of society in collective ways. It needs to be re-interpreted as being transformative enough, participatory enough, and collective enough to make the changes happen.

Up to now, the dominant approach of learning cities has been understood as a social support system expanding the supply of individual learning accessibilities and educational programs. I propose an alternative way to understand the notion of learning society: to regard it from the perspective of social and collective learning; making a society a learning and self-adaptive organization.

Complex systems theories see societies as supra-organizations composed of individuals as sub-organizations. The societies themselves perform collective learning beyond what is reduced to the aggregate of individual learning. In this sense, social changes are nothing but the learning outcomes that cities or societies have performed. From a systems approach, a society as a super-organism can be the agent of learning activities. A learning society is a society that actively learns. New social institutions with changed social norms are the outcome of the learning of the society.

This is not a new thought. Previously, we frequently talked about a learning organization in the sense that companies are learning; a learning nation where a nation is learning. In this vein we can expand the frame to the nature of Industry 4.0 as smartly learning production systems that communicate, collect data, and learn how to manage the needs of consumers in a self-organizing manner. Many research studies have already revealed the domain of societal learning and collective intelligence, the unit of learning being a community, an organization, or a society. Not without controversy, Engeström also argued that a society learns by expanding. Wenger proposed a Community of Practice that is also a community to learn how to change the structure and network to cope with new challenges. There are numerous ways of arguing that a system can learn.

Looking back, we have too long privileged a traditional concept of education. Even Paulo Freire argued that 'education does not change the world; education changes the people; people change the world'. To me, transforming a social body is to teach that body itself to perform learning. It includes more than teaching knowledge in a classroom; and ends up

with a stabilising system at societal level. The activities of adult learning and education include mobilising people and resources, bringing new information and knowledge, performing thought experimentations, stabilizing the new patterns and fractals, and institutionalising them politically or governmentally.

This looks like what popular education has practised, but goes further. It is quite close to what social pedagogy has practised, but also goes beyond. Our task is to redesign the way and territory in which adult education is assigned to perform over an extended territory. I would like to call it *the pedagogy of systems*. A city is a supra-system that emerged from the collectives of people as sub-systems. Teaching a city goes beyond teaching people individually. Adult learning and education thus needs boldly to expand the territory on which it plays. Moreover, it needs to be more trans-functional. That means being merged with other social functions, with clear goals of transformation, and various methods to align people in the plaza of collective intelligence.

Climate Change – Time is of the essence *Jim Falk*

jfalk@unimelb.edu.au

Of course, there are many ways of looking at Climate Change. But here is one, which is not often highlighted so starkly: it is that time is of the essence. Any solicitor will tell you to look twice when you see that in a contract. What is to be done must be, but also in a fixed time. This emphasises the “Change” in climate change. Change is a function of time; in this case a rapidly increasing atmospheric concentration of carbon dioxide or CO₂, and other greenhouse gases.

The functional form of this increase is sometimes called “exponential”, but is in fact a complex function of biophysical, social, economic, and political factors involving the gases we emit, the response of the planet to them, and corresponding biophysical impacts and feedbacks. In particular, the emissions of CO₂ have increased at a rate, which is more than linear. Averaged over each decade it has increased from 3.1 ± 0.2 GtC yr⁻¹ in the 1960s to 9.4 ± 0.5 GtC yr⁻¹ during 2008–2017.¹ That is to say, despite all the international agreements, including the Paris commitments, the emissions curve, and corresponding atmospheric concentrations, continues to rise – at an increasing rate.

The relationship between the change in the gas concentrations and climate impacts is complex. I will not try to summarise it here. Humans are not fish – it is the impacts on land with which we come first into contact. A recent account of these can be found in the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Special Report on Climate Change and Land. The changes on land are more severe than in the oceans, leaving aside ocean acidification from absorbed CO₂, and as the report notes:

Deferral of GHG ... emissions reductions from all sectors implies trade-offs including irreversible loss in land ecosystem functions and services required for food, health, habitable settlements and production, leading to increasingly significant economic impacts on many countries in many regions of the world (high confidence). Delaying action as is assumed in high emissions scenarios could result in some irreversible impacts on some ecosystems, which in the longer term has the potential to lead to substantial additional GHG emissions from ecosystems that would accelerate global warming (*medium confidence*).ⁱⁱ

Because the rate of emissions is growing, their impacts are rising, and these threaten to cause substantial further emissions. In addressing the problem time is of the essence, but as a global community, we are not so far up to the challenge of adequately modelling these complex interactions or acting to prevent them.

One characteristic of our dilemma is that, in relation to the dynamics of the change, the concentration of greenhouse trace gases in the atmosphere is a leading indicator. But impacts of those increasing concentrations lag by years, decades and in some cases centuries. Thus, impacts currently experienced across the planet are a poor indication of the severity of what we have set in motion.

These impacts are also masked by “noise” - the fluctuations in the climate system of which the most short-term is “weather”, slightly longer is seasonal, and all are modulated by interlinked variations in ocean and atmospheric circulations (eg El Nino) and the responses of the biosphere. So what we feel are lagging indicators, and the impact on daily life is masked from the damage already done.

If adequate response is to be made in the limited time available, leading indicators of impact need to be created. Scientific models (whether computer or otherwise) create one tool for doing that. But such tools are so rarified as to be largely obscure to the general public. They are able to be translated into “fake news” by less scrupulous politicians and media.

The invention of the IPCC is another attempt to get round the filtering between science and the rest of humanity. Yet, it too lags rather too much, not the least because of the complexity of the task of herding researchers and summarising unending published research, but also because of the long bureaucratic processes foisted upon it by nervous nation states.

Nevertheless, the importance of the IPCC should not be minimised. In 1989, supported by a bright postgraduate student, I wrote one of the first books on climate change: *The Greenhouse Challenge: What's to be done*.ⁱⁱⁱ I was sceptical of the then computer models, but very clear that increasing greenhouse gases was not an experiment we should conduct on ourselves and the planet. Although I laid out my ideas on what was to be done, I did not foresee the invention of the IPCC. My prescriptions were more general, including a series of initiatives leading to learnings as one community began to gain understanding from others

about the seriousness of the problem. The necessary responses could be broadly defined especially in the energy field – right back then.

Sadly, deflected by entrenched interests, lack of understanding, deliberate obfuscation, and political resistance, even the extraordinary level of innovation particularly in energy technology has not led to a deployment fast enough to deflect the growth of greenhouse gases.

It is clear that part of what is needed is a form of education. Yet it cannot be restricted to traditional institutions and media. Last month, as Chair of the Board of Directors of Greenpeace Australia Pacific, I participated in the International Council Meeting of Greenpeace. There 27 delegates representing Greenpeace offices spread from China to Australia, to Latin America, Europe and Russia, met to work on the central strategic goal to “hasten the inevitable decline of coal”. Greenpeace is tackling this within a sophisticated theory of change, utilising multiple types of strategies. These range from pressing banks and insurance companies to refuse insurance and funding to coal mines, to seeking to broadcast the message by stringing banners across the flagpoles at Parliament House, and under the Sydney Harbour Bridge during the lead-up to the Federal election.

Greenpeace considers we are in a “climate emergency”. That is not a statement about the the lagging indicators of climate change, but about the dynamical implications of the alarming growth in the leading indicator(s) of atmospheric concentrations.

This I think is the sort of program of life-long learning that is required. Collectively we must coerce, attract, entice, induce, seduce, and otherwise persuade our neighbours, communities, business leaders, politicians, educators, media and other players to understand why in this sense we are in an emergency; and that they need to act. No doubt PIMA has its role to play in that, for this is a project of education affecting the lives of all. And in this project, time is of the essence.

ⁱ Le Quéré, C., Andrew, et al., “Global Carbon Budget 2018”, Earth Syst. Sci. Data, 10, 2141–2194, <https://doi.org/10.5194/essd-10-2141-2018>, 2018. P.

ⁱⁱ “Summary for Policy Makers”, Climate Change and Land: an IPCC special report on climate change, desertification, land degradation, sustainable land management, food security, and greenhouse gas fluxes in terrestrial ecosystems at its 50th Session held on 2 – 7 August 2019.

ⁱⁱⁱ Jim Falk and Andrew Brownlow, The Greenhouse Challenge: What’s to be done, Penguin and Heinemann, Melbourne, 1989.

Anniversaries

The Bulletin has been running several articles about anniversaries: remembering and valuing our history in order to look forward more capably and better informed. Berry Golding here

reports on Australia preparation for its 60th anniversary next year. Note that Tom Schuller's article below on synagogues and pedagogues also has an anniversary twist.

Reflecting back and looking forward: Work in progress *Barry Golding*

b.golding@federation.edu.au, www.barrygoanna.com

Two years ago the peak adult education body in Ireland, AONTAS, as part of its 50 year celebration, put out a tender for someone to comb through the journal, *The Adult Learner* journal and antecedent Journals and write a history based on the evidence in the journal. I was attracted by the challenge of what I would learn as a consequence, not by the very modest amount they had allocated to undertake this huge task. To my surprise they liked the bid that I crafted with statistical wizard and old friend and colleague, Dr Jack Harvey. Our bid was leveraged off the partly quantitative methodology employed by Roger Harris and Sandra Morrison in their 50-year thematic study published in the *Australian Journal of Adult Learning* (Vol 50, Special Edition, pp.17-52) in 2011. Part of the method we used in crafting the narrative for our AONTAS research product was to consult key players to reflect back on their experience and cast forward.

Systematic analyses of past publications including journals combined with critical reflective narratives from key players are excellent opportunities for organisations to take a breath and critically look back as well as cast forward. Too often we look for solutions for recurring problems that our past actions have actually created (or worsened), without critically reflecting on what caused the problem in the first place.

A year later and my article was published as a peer reviewed article in the *Adult Learner* 2020 journal, see link. Its full reference is Golding, B. & Harvey, J. (2019). '50 Years of AONTAS: Developments in the field of adult education in Ireland as reflected in the contents of *The Adult Learner* and its antecedent journals', *The Adult Learner*, 2019, pp.21-56. The complete 2019 edition including our article is at: https://www.aontas.com/assets/resources/Adult-Learner-Journal/ALJ2019/15010_Aontas_Adult_Learner_2019_WEB.pdf

I approached Adult Learning Australia (ALA) early in 2019 with the idea of doing something similar for their 60th 'Birthday Celebrations' in 2020. Again it would be a very big job with 168 journals and 1,031 articles from 1,450 authors over 60 years. Again, it was leveraged in part on the Harris and Morrison (2011) 50-year study, but oriented more towards a history of how and why the national adult learning vision of the 1940s has to 2020 not been realised. While some Australian States took up the challenge and the national government

wrote policies and published reports there was no real commitment to implement a national system. The rest was plain hard work, with a long trail of policy and exhortation without funding or follow through. The aim is to produce evidence based research article for peer review in the 2020 *Australian Journal of Adult Learning* (AJAL). Watch this space.

As part of the same 2020 'ALA turns 60: Looking back and casting forward' project commissioned by ALA, I am also assembling a set of around 25 'Cameos', edited by myself but constructed from contributions provided from a number of key players in adult learning in Australia and overseas, in response to 10 questions. These key players have been asked to provide critical, honest and succinct responses to the following questions.

1. Please add (below) your name and current title (to be included at the top of the Cameo):
2. Please summarise (below) your <u>current</u> affiliations or achievements associated with ACE and/or ALA:
3. Please summarise (below) your main <u>past</u> affiliations or achievements that are associated with ACE or ALA:
4. What do you regard as ALA's most important achievements?
3. What do you regard as the main issues facing adult learners in diverse community settings in 2019?
4. Have you any suggested solutions to these adult learner issues?
5. What do you regard as the biggest <u>current or future</u> 'hurdles' facing ALA (or other peak national ACE organisations) in promoting ACE?
6. Have you any suggested solutions to these national peak body hurdles?
7. What do you regard as the main <u>current or future</u> 'hurdles' facing academic journals (such as AJAL) in the field of ACE?
8. Do you have any suggested solutions (below) to the hurdles facing ACE journals?
9. Please feel free to add (below) <u>anything else</u> you think is pertinent to ALA's history or its 60 th anniversary:
10. Please feel free to add <u>anything else</u> (below) you think is relevant that you'd like to see included in, or added to your Cameo.

The intention is for the Cameos, once finalised in a form contributors agree with as final, to be circulated (in part or in full) by ALA, such as by posting to the ALA website, and adding to ALA *Quest* newsletter or *AJAL* during 2020 as part of the ALA 60th Birthday Celebrations. Again, watch this space.

Golding, B. & Harvey, J. (2019) '50 Years of AONTAS: Developments in the field of adult education in Ireland as reflected in the contents of The Adult Learner and its antecedent journals', The Adult Learner, 2019, pp.21-56, complete edition available at: https://www.aontas.com/assets/resources/Adult-Learner-Journal/ALJ2019/15010_Aontas_Adult_Learner_2019_WEB.pdf

Modes of Learning

Chesterfield's People's Assembly: but is it legitimate? *Martin Yarnit Talk Shop*

martinyarnit@gmail.com

Citizens' Assemblies are suddenly all the rage. On the issue of climate change alone, in England citizens' assemblies are being set up or planned in Leicester, Oxford, Sheffield and Camden, while six House of Commons Select Committees have come together to announce one beginning in the autumn.¹

Much of this sudden flurry of passion for deliberative democracy reflects the overnight appearance of Extinction Rebellion (XR) as a direct action force on climate emergency, and its demand that 'Government must create and be led by the decisions of a Citizens' Assembly on climate and ecological justice'.

To all these we can add the Chesterfield People's Assembly (CPA) which held its first meeting at the end of July attended by 70 people ranging in age from eight to eighty. Chesterfield, with its 70,000 population, is a large market town renowned for being the home of George Stephenson, the railway engineer, and for being represented in parliament for many years by Tony Benn, the Labour Party radical.

There was a high level and wide-ranging discussion during the course of the day which implicitly reflected the UN's conclusion that *without coordinated and collaborative approaches at linking Climate Action and SDGs [Sustainable Development Goals] programs in terms of national implementation strategies...any little gain made in one could easily be eroded by the inaction in the other.*

¹ The House of Commons select committees organising the citizens' assembly are BEIS, environmental audit, housing, communities and local government, science and technology, transport and treasury.

The six areas highlighted by the Assembly for further work reflect this approach: democratic engagement, education, biodiversity, diet and food, Chesterfield tackles climate change-towards a local plan of action, making the change easier. ²

Although covering ground similar to the citizens' assemblies mentioned above, the Chesterfield People's Assembly is different in two important respects.

It uses the same technique of deliberative democracy to reach decisions, but its purpose is to draw together those who want action on climate change. In that sense, it is a mixture of local activists and concerned citizens rather than a carefully selected cross section of the local community. There is a second difference: rather than being set up by a public body – a council or parliament – CPA is a bottom-up initiative. That carries the risk that its conclusions can be safely ignored by the local council. However the fact that the Council's deputy leader met us beforehand and showed up on the day - as well as the local MP - suggests that the People's Assembly has already acquired a degree of legitimacy.

If you visit the Involve website, involve.org.uk, you'll see the amazing variety of initiatives that use deliberative processes. (Involve has emerged as one of the key centres of expertise and advice in this area.) Some require stratified samples and sortition but not all.

One of the most notable successes of the new wave of deliberative democracy is in Ireland. After years of constitutional deadlock, the government set up a citizens' assembly to report on areas ripe for reform. A representative sample of 99 citizens, selected at random and chaired by a high court judge, sat on twelve occasions and concluded that there should be referenda on two 'hot-potato' issues: gay marriage and abortion legalisation.³ The referenda produced a yes vote in both cases, and the government carried out its commitment to legislate.⁴

Our aim in Chesterfield was and is to involve an inclusive range of people in an action planning process, so it was diverse even if not fully representative. Can it achieve legitimacy nonetheless?

Frome's Flatpack Democracy is the appropriate analogy. In that case, a self-appointed group of people in a small market town in the rural southwest of England tested a hypothesis - that there is local support for a new way of running the Council by getting elected to do just that. They have evolved a way of working that eschews party politics in local government in favour of acting 'as normal people would': by putting the interests of the town and its

² The SDGs are defined [here](#).

³ <https://www.citizensassembly.ie/en/About-the-Citizens-Assembly/CA-Fact-Sheet-June-2018.pdf>

⁴ See: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MjpuDk9_BWl for Patrick Chalmers' video on the citizens assembly on abortion in Ireland that paved the way for its legalization.

people first.⁵ In Chesterfield, another self-appointed group of climate change activists will develop and implement a plan. If they succeed and win local support, voilà, you have legitimacy.

Tom Schuller is a visiting professor at the University of Wolverhampton. He was the co-author of *Learning Through Life*, the final report of the UK national inquiry into the future of lifelong learning. His most recent book is *The Paula Principle: how and why women work below their level of competence*. A shorter version of this article sub-titled 'Augur should prompt the creation of a network of secular synagogues for adult peer-learning' appeared in *Times Higher Education (THE)* on 27 June 2019 as 'Kosher learning'.

⁵ <https://iffrome.org.uk>

Synagogues and pedagogues: rethinking educational priorities *Tom Schuller*

tomschuller48@gmail.com

Derivations of words throw up some significant curiosities. I knew that a pedagogue was originally someone who led a child around, including to school. The term then took a professional turn, to refer to the specialised function of instructing children. But I had never noticed the – to me now rather obvious – etymological similarity between pedagogue and synagogue.

Apparently, a synagogue originally had no intrinsic connection to Judaism. It was a place of assembly, where adult males came together to socialise and discuss issues. It's not clear who did the bringing together, and the word referred from the start to a place not a person, so it immediately diverged from its etymological sibling. The key point is that a synagogue was a secular space where adults learnt from each other. It then (probably during the Babylonian exile) became exclusively identified with the Jewish religion, as the place where Jews could come together to read scriptures and, eventually, worship.

So far, so mildly interesting in a pub quiz a kind of way. But just think what might have happened to the history of education if the original institutional character of the synagogue had been maintained, and had developed into a general way of organising learning (as pedagogy did). We could have seen, from the outset, a network of adult education centres accepted as an integral part of any modern society, as schools and colleges now are. These might have been self-organised, or they might have evolved into more structured and professionalised forms.

We might as a result have had 'synagogy' as a term to describe how people come together to learn from each other. It's true that we've had attempts to mainstream the notion of

andragogy as a counterpart, or counterweight, to pedagogy. These have been successful only in the comparatively rarified discourse of adult education professionals, and then only in certain countries. The word itself is not important, but if the notion of synagogy had taken off, it would have signalled a broad cultural commitment to adult learning as part of regular civic life.

And here is the real point, the substantive relevance. Put crudely, pedagogy has stifled synagogy. The education of young people has swollen to dimensions, which crowd out the chance of a balanced system of lifelong learning. We are on course for social arrangements, which channel all young people up to the age of 20 and perhaps even 25 into some kind of formal learning. Adolescence is grossly extended. The pedagogues will have their work cut out to lead many of these adolescents unwillingly to school, let alone to keep them there in any positive sense; and it's not at all clear what the benefits are, to anyone.

Imagine instead that the public commitment, and the resources, had been to learning for all - to synagogy not just pedagogy. Let's shorten the historical timeframe massively, back just two decades or so, narrow the focus to the decision to aim for 50% enrolment in higher education, and consider the potential alternatives.

The Institute for Fiscal Studies in the UK estimates annual up-front government expenditure on higher education at around £17 billion, depending on various assumptions. The projected cumulative higher education debt mountain is much higher – in the region of £50 billion. For the purposes of this argument it doesn't much matter whether we think of the debt as public or private, so we can sidestep the debate as to whether young people are deterred by fear of a financial arrangement, which is not a debt in the true sense. It's still money that has gone out of the door, paying for university expansion.

Much of that expansion has been physical, with shiny new buildings popping up everywhere to accommodate students, including in places of acute public housing shortage. It's not clear who has really benefited from all this additional spending. Certainly the lives of university staff, apart from a few at the very top, don't appear to have improved, with heavy demands that bear only a distant relationship to teaching or research, on procedural tasks such as quality assessment. As for the students, the experience is often depressing, with contact hours at anorexic levels; and talking of depression and anorexia, students' mental health is an increasingly serious issue through to the point of suicides.

But what about the benefits, the improved careers? Very varied, is the answer, very varied indeed. Some graduates from some universities do very well, moving quickly into highly paid work, but it's not at all clear how much that has to do with what they have learnt as opposed to the signalling provided to employers by the selectiveness of these universities. Some do much less well, and some poorly. In any case, the fundamental measure of the graduate premium means that their success is defined in relation to those who do not

graduate – a thoroughly relative concept, which has only a tenuous link to our overall wellbeing.

That's enough of the negative. I don't want to do down higher education, still less those who work in it. My point is simply to ask what the opportunity costs have been of the billions spent on higher education. Let's take just the current spend of around £17billion, not the cumulated total; and let's just take the part of it, say 20%, that would have been available if universities had not all rushed to expand. That gives us about £2.5billion. Had it gone into promoting synagogy, not swelling pedagogy, what might the consequences have been? (With all due respect to all university students, the 'ped' part of pedagogy does increasingly apply to them, as mature students in the UK have been largely shown the door.) A big chunk of it – perhaps half of the 20% - should go into further education colleges. But let's say the remaining 10% - that is, £1-1.5 billion - was available for our secular synagogues. Imagine how many towns and villages across the country could have well-designed local centres where adults could easily come to learn, sometimes from each other and sometimes calling in outsiders with particular expertise or experience to give their discussions shape and direction.

This happens, of course. It's an age-old image; it is in exactly this mode that the University of the Third Age operates, and it flourishes. But the U3A is largely self-funding, which inevitably restricts its social range, and it caters for a specific age group, when what we need is wide-ranging and diverse. Other adult colleges survive. I'm particularly proud of the Working Men's College in Camden where I served as governor, but there are equally worthy others to be found in London and beyond. Yet they are under-recognised and in constant danger of total marginalisation.

A decade ago *Learning Through Life*, the final report of the National Inquiry into the Future of Lifelong Learning, analysed the age distribution of all the resources going into learning - government, employer and individual expenditure. We showed that the allocation of the total across four adult age groups - 18-25, 26-50, 51-75, 76+ - was respectively 86%; 12%; 2.5%; and 1.5%. This is a striking misallocation, especially given demographic trends towards an ageing population. My guess is that the concentration on the front end is even greater now, even though the population growth has been mainly in the older age groups.

What more appropriate fora could there be than our 'secular synagogues' to raise the level of civic debate – most pertinently, to encourage the kinds of exchange that we need in the wake of Britain's Brexit debacle? Different generations might meet and learn from and about each other – a crucial social challenge, with huge implications for health and wellbeing. In particular, the massive availability of online resources means that almost infinite content is there for the downloading. What is needed are spaces for these resources to be used collectively, with the proper professional support to make full use of the wonderful opportunities the new technologies offer.

Exactly a century ago the National Commission on Adult Education sketched a picture of just such a network of learning spaces. A centenary revisiting of that seminal report is under way, and there are other commissions under way as lifelong learning maybe enters one of its recurrent upswings. Any of these could seize the moment.

The Impacts of Non-Formal Education in Promoting Lifelong Learning in Cambodia *Neak Piseth*

neak_piseth@yahoo.com

The Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) established Cambodia's Education 2030 *Roadmap* in February 2019 as a guideline for Cambodia to become an upper middle income country by 2030, and a high-income country by 2050. This aligns with the Incheon Declaration which pointed towards the starting of a renewed global education vision for 2030, and aimed to *"ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote life-long learning opportunities for all."*⁶

Fostering lifelong learning is crucial not only for Cambodia. It is also crucial for all countries to take this action in order to develop their countries with the fast-paced changing world. Particularly, in the case of Cambodia, Non-formal Education (NFE) has great impacts on promoting lifelong learning and especially in providing second chances of learning to those people who are deprived of opportunity, such as seniors, women, children, school drop-outs, and marginalized groups.

Cambodia is one of the developing countries that suffer a very severe legacy from recent disaster: under the Pol Pot regime almost three million people died. Most of the surviving people are illiterate, disabled, widowed, and/or senior in age. NFE has played a vital role in providing these kinds of people with second chances to have access to education as well as to be lifelong learners.

There are many NFE programs emerging to fill the gaps in formal education, such as functional literacy, post-literacy, equivalency, re-entry, income-generation, and life skill programs⁷. All these programs have roles and functions to promote lifelong learning in Cambodia. For instance, in functional literacy programs concentrate on how to teach at-risk people to read, write, and do numeracy. Also after finishing this course they can attend the post-literacy program, which focuses more on continuous learning as a stepping-stone towards lifelong learning learners in the future.

In addition, the Government and NGOs have constructed many learning spaces through the concept of NFE, such as reading spaces, libraries, and community learning centers (CLCs). Of

⁶ MOEYS, 2019: Cambodia Education's 2030 Roadmap

⁷ MOEYS 2008: National Policy on Non-Formal Education

particular and intriguing interest, CLCs have played a significant role in promoting NFE to the community, and are considered as being people's second schools and homes. For example, at the CLCs they conduct NFE programs such as functional literacy, post-literacy, equivalency, re-entry, income-generation, and life-skill programs for the community people.

At the other extreme, NFE in Cambodia is quite unique compared to the NFE conducted in other countries, because the setting and location are flexible and various. So NFE could take place not only at the conventional CLCs but also at the pagodas, churches, the houses of the chiefs of the villages, and even at formal schools, in order to reach all the people in the community. More or less, Cambodian people are thus able to have access to education through NFE in order to promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.

In a nutshell, NFE is having great impact in promoting lifelong learning in Cambodia by providing second chances to the vulnerable groups, giving them access to education and to upgrading their knowledge and skills. Prospectively speaking, Cambodia will become an upper-middle income country by 2030 as stated in the Roadmap and Cambodian; and it will become a country of lifelong learners through implementation of NFE programs as one of the main key drivers.

Characteristics of local volunteers in Quality of Living Improvement program of Non-formal Education *Leakhena Orn*

ornleakhena125@gmail.com

I am a Cambodian school-teacher who is now also studying for a master's degree at Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok, Thailand.

Non-formal education in Cambodia is designed to provide opportunity to those people who were not able to study in formal school because of different issues at all ages. Many programs were created to try to make sure that all people can read, write, calculate, and have the abilities to solve their problems in everyday life for a better living, such as: functional literacy program, post-literacy program, income-generating program (vocational training), re-entry program, and equivalency program.

Quality of Living Improvement is one of the programs in non-formal education in Cambodia, which plays a very important role of training about life skills, and solving community problems such as violence, HIV/AIDs, human rights, agriculture, drugs and even general law etc. These aim to transfer this knowledge to uneducated people for their better living, through conducting training courses or workshops in each target community.

Local volunteers who are working as facilitators play a very important role in this program. To make the program successful, the facilitators must be well prepared in their work and have good communication with people in the community. However, there are different

courses that they have to be responsible for, and they have to work with people from different backgrounds and different age levels, uneducated, and vulnerable people.

It is very important to have good communication between facilitator and participants. Having strong passion and being patient are also keys to being an effective facilitator. Another thing is that the facilitators are mostly local youths from the community. They are young and have less experience of working with people, so confidence is needed when they are standing in front of a lot of adults. All of these things are about the characteristics that they need to develop - and that can be developed.

This means strengthening the characteristics of volunteers who are working as facilitators, to improve their work through studying about their communication, self-esteem, confidence, organizing, and teamwork. Then we need to find out what they need to develop, which helps the courses become successful so that people in the community are able to get fruitful knowledge to apply in their daily living.

My master's study will focus on volunteers on the Quality of Living Improvement program in non-formal education in three provinces; these are Tboung Khmum, Kampong Cham, and Takeo Province. In these three provinces, there are 26 centers to study. The objectives of the study are:

- 1) To study roles of local volunteers in the Quality of Living Improvement program.
- 2) To study about desired characteristics, what to improve about local volunteers.
- 3) To propose guidelines for effective approaches to use in improving the characteristics of volunteers.

The study will be conducted as both qualitative and quantitative research. Participants will be local volunteers, participants of the program and local committee members. The research uses observation, activity log, survey, and interview. Data will be analyzed through content analysis and SPSS. After studying roles as a facilitator and characteristics of the work, I will know what the facilitator needs in terms of improving their characteristics (behaviour, skills and abilities) according to the real situation. When a facilitator has strong characteristics and he/she can work very well with people, the knowledge that the course aims to provide will be more effective and people should understand better, and apply what they learn in living better. The test of success will be in terms of learners' increase and decrease of what they know and can do.

Guidelines for arranging lifelong learning resources in the neighbourhood of Chulalongkorn University to promote youth to be lifelong learner *Ms. Prakaidow Kaewchaithen*

pentdowluf@gmail.com

Lifelong learning resources play an important role in improving the quality of education and youth development. Education systems in Thailand should emphasize availability and use of various learning resources. Until now, reliance on a single learning resource, the school system, has proved to be insufficient for youth development, causing incapability of new young generation, lack of living skills and self-development because additional learning resources are unavailable. (Archanya Ratanaubon, 2005)

Chulalongkorn University is a leading university located in the heart of the city, where transportation is convenient. The area is at the heart of an educational system of schools and universities, and a source of working people and diverse learning resources. However, I could find no research exploring the state, problems, and needs for the services of lifelong learning resources. Therefore, my research aimed to study these things in the area surrounding Chulalongkorn University, to build up understanding of stakeholders in learning resource management and related agencies about the behavior of youths in using learning resources, and their needs for learning resources. The results should provide evidence about ways to manage learning resources consistent with youth behaviors and needs, leading to the development of young people into lifelong learners and self-developers, with readiness for the Thailand 4.0 era: a creative and innovative age for Thai people.

My methods are related to exploring documents including books, articles, websites and research. I collected data using a questionnaire on the state, problems, and needs for lifelong learning services and resources. The key informants were 400 young people who have used the services of six learning resources in the area surrounding Chulalongkorn University, which include library, museum, a science and technology park, an art gallery, sports and recreation center, and a public park.

The findings of this study could provide an insight into the state, problems and youth needs for lifelong learning resources and services of the area surrounding Chulalongkorn, and the needs to promote youth self-directed learning to enhance their experiences and potential. The result would be to seek more knowledge for their own good and for social and national development, and a foundation for lifelong learning.

The work and findings were consistent with the study by Chavalit Phonakorn (2017), which concluded that educational development under the framework of Thailand 4.0 towards the 21st century needs to begin from learners' practice for self-learning. This means changing a teacher to a mentor or a coach; focusing on multidisciplinary learning; linking of knowledge and imagination; and tangible changes to meet learners' needs, such as shared work, creativity, and good communications. Educational management requires learners' satisfaction and a challenge to seek good learning processes.

References

Chavalit Phonakorn (2017). The Study of Thailand 4.0 Era. Retrieved from <http://km.li.Mahidol.ac.th/thai-studies-in-thailand-4-0/>

Archanya Ratanaubon et al. (2005). Lifelong Learning Resources Management: Public Park: Bangkok: V.C.T. Communication.

Special Interest Groups

Directions for the PIMA LLL SIG *Brian Findsen*

brianfindsen@gmail.com

Over the last month or so I have been pre-occupied in transitioning from being a professor of (adult) education at the University of Waikato and “retiring” into less constrained circumstances as an independent lifelong learning consultant. The dynamics of this consultancy will need to wait a while as I am due to go to Taiwan on three occasions in the period September 2019 to January 2020. This time period will include leading a symposium on later life learning at the International Association for Gerontology and Geriatrics (IAGG), 23-26 October, in Taipei. As mentioned in the previous newsletter, the principal objective for the LLL SIG of PIMA is collectively to promote greater engagement from seniors in all forms of learning, aligned to lifelong principles of economic sufficiency, personal development, active citizenship and social inclusion. My personal preference is to concentrate on the themes of active citizenship and social inclusion.

Specific suggestions for development in 2019-2021 as the SIG:

- We encourage more engagement of individuals from a diverse array of countries - increasing membership.
- We critique proclamations from prominent global organizations and agencies that should have older people as a priority; for example, the UNESCO Agenda 2030 Item SDG 4.0 where education is the focus which does not give much emphasis to later life learning.
- At local and national levels we develop a map of what is occurring in our respective countries in LLL. This necessitates leadership from respective national-level organizations such as ACE Aotearoa (New Zealand).
- We focus on a specific social issue for a specific duration, such as combatting ageism in our societies.
- We look for greater alignment between policies on lifelong learning and active ageing in our respective nations.

Since the previous newsletter, I met with Peter Kearns and Denise Reghenzani-Kearns in Coolangatta (Australia) to look into possible joint developments. At a practical level, it is feasible for more effective collaboration to occur (see above strategies) in adjacent countries, ideally supported by the respective national-level adult learning organisations, as in this case, ACE Aotearoa and Adult Learning Australia.

While in Taiwan in the immediate future, I would like to help further develop co-operative ventures among close neighbours. An example of possible activity may include, as was implemented in February 2017: cooperation between Australia and New Zealand in the Getting of Wisdom activities, conferences, field trips and publications (in the ALA journal special issue), with members of the LLL SIG working together on any of the above objectives.

Closer co-operation in neighbouring countries does not negate possibilities of other forms of collaboration from non-adjacent nations. This can be implemented through skype/zoom sessions on specific issues.

I seek the following information from participating members of this SIG:

- Are the objectives above realistic for your country?
- Would any of you wish to host activities (e.g. conference/field trips/publications) involving full membership of this SIG in the early part of 2021?

I look forward to further communication and any feedback that you may see fit to provide.

China's ageing population *Peter Kearns and Denise Reghenzani-Kearns*

p.kearns@netspeed.com.au, d_reghenzani@hotmail.com

China, like other East Asian countries, has a major problem with its ageing population. The significance of this issue led one of China's leading universities, Tsinghua University, to convene an International Symposium on *Ageing Well and Public Service Delivery: Policy and Practice* on 15-16 June 2019, in association with a number of other organisations with an interest in this subject.

Following our role in editing the 2018 PIMA SIG Report *Towards Good Active Ageing*, we were invited to participate in this Symposium; see Denise's report at

<http://pascalobservatory.org/pascalnow/pascal-activities/news/report-international-symposium-ageing-well-and-public-service-deliv>.

The Tsinghua event had great value for us in promoting contacts with organisations interested in ageing issues, particularly in China. These included the National Interdisciplinary Institute on Ageing (NIIA) located in Southwest Jiaotong University, Chengdu. NIIA shares with PASCAL and PIMA an interest in integrated approaches to ageing.

In the case of PASCAL, this includes our work on an EcCoWell approach to learning city development, including our work on the EcCoWell experience; see the Glasgow University CR&DALL working paper series publication

<http://cradall.org/workingpapers/building-good-sustainable-communities-through-learning-city-eccowell-approach>.

Another recent work of interest for NIIA was the *Blue Book of Healthy Ageing (no 2)* reporting on *An Index of Healthy Ageing in Urban China (2017-2018)*. The Blue Book Index followed the interdisciplinary interests of NIIA and gave the results from the application of the Index in 38 large and medium sized cities in China. The Index was derived from the work of the World Health Organisation in building Age-friendly Cities and Communities and provided five cross-sectoral perspectives – health care, transportation, economy and finance, human settlement, and social equity.

The report on the Index reached two main conclusions:

- There was a low level of development of elderly-oriented urban infrastructure in China;
- There was a lack of tolerance towards the aged in society.

A reading of the report suggests a third major conclusion:

There was considerable diversity and inequality in development of provision for the elderly in the 38 cities in the study with inland cities lagging behind cities in the coastal regions in the east of China.

The data given in the Blue Book for the 38 cities show this ranking in the assessed ratings.

Table 1 Best performing cities

Ranking	City	Score
1	Shenzhen	53.18
2	Zhuhai	52.37
3	Guangzhou	50.93
4	Beijing	49.00
5	Nanjing	46.47
6	Kunming	45.09
7	Hangzhou	43.53

Table 2 Worst performing cities

Ranking	City	Score
32	Hefei	33.30
33	Nanchang	32.77
34	Changchun	32.52
35	Fuzhou	32.42
36	Xining	31.17
37	Chongqing	29.39
38	Shijiazhuang	27.70

The Blue Book gives summary profiles for all cities included with radar chart profiles. In some cases these are linked to other research sources such as data in the China Economic Green Development Report 2018, which shows Shenzhen first in terms of the green development index used.

China has good learning city initiatives in cities such as Beijing, Shanghai, Hangzhou, so we wonder what contribution the experience of these cities might make to developments across China in addressing the needs of ageing populations in inland urban areas. Ye Zhonghai, Zhang Yong and Ma Lihua in a recent article on China's Learning City Construction since the 1990s point to the imbalance in China's regional development between the east and inland regions, and note that learning city initiatives, which are strongest in the east of China, could support development in the inland west of China. This, Ye Zhonghai and colleagues argue, will require a strategy of collaboration.

A typical profile for a low performing city such as Chongqing points to the extent of the problem in many inland cities.

Figure 3 Low performing city profile

A typical profile for a low performing city such as Chongqing points to the extent of the problem in many inland cities.

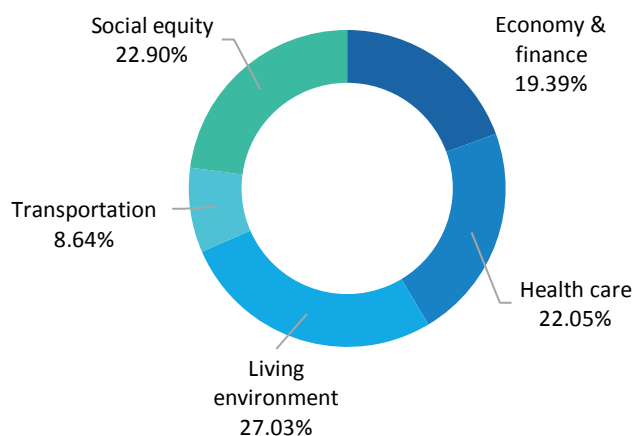


Figure 4 Groups of scores of Chongqing’s Healthy Ageing Indexes

Social equity	Economy & finance	Health care	Living environment	Transportation
22.90%	19.39%	22.05%	27.03%	8.64%

The data for Chongqing point to the need for an integrated holistic approach that connects developments across these areas in enhancing the well being of older people. The value of linking health and learning objectives is shown by the experience of Cork in applying EcCoWell ideas developed by PASCAL over the past 6 years.

The Blue Book overall shows a bleak picture of Chinese cities planning for an ageing population. Past urban planning did not recognise the needs of a ‘fast-paced ageing society’. The imbalances shown by the Blue Book Indexes point to major challenges faced by China in responding to an ageing population.

We wonder, then, whether international ideas and experience can contribute to Chinese inland cities finding ways to enhance the well-being of their ageing populations. While, of course, the experience of China’s established learning cities such as Beijing, Shanghai, and Hangzhou can contribute much, there are further sources of ideas in the experience of learning cities in countries such as the Republic of Korea while cities in the UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities provide a further source of ideas. In the case of South Korea, the 2018 PASCAL Conference in Suwon revealed good approaches in addressing well-being across all age groups, including seniors, while the experience of Seoul with its splendid 50 Plus Foundation illustrates the value of such innovations. The work of the Seoul 50+ Foundation is covered in a useful article by Un Shil Choi in the 2018 report of the PIMA SIG *Towards Good Active Ageing for All* that we edited.

Universities can have a key role as catalysts in such developments. The PASCAL International Conference planned being by PASCAL in association with 6 universities for Taiwan in the autumn of 2020 could provide an opportunity to share ideas on developments especially in East Asia. A theme proposed for the conference is *Lifelong-learning engagement for sustainable regional development*. This could include looking at ways of strengthening the engagement of universities in regional development. An important area would be the role of universities in responding to ageing populations in ways that strengthen welfare and age-friendly communities for older people, as well as social and economic development in general. We welcome readers' views on these questions.

*We are most grateful for assistance in preparing this paper by the National Interdisciplinary Institute on Ageing at Southwest Jialong University, which made their Blue Book of Healthy Ageing available to us. Their interdisciplinary approach to ageing well has much in common with the EcCoWell approach to integration developed in PASCAL's work on learning cities.

Member News and New Members

Brief reflections – one month in Iran *Barry Golding*

b.golding@federation.edu.au, www.barrygoanna.com

Chis Duke suggested that I reflect on a recent one-month, self-organised holiday in Iran. When I decided to visit, the first question people asked is why on earth would you go there?

In brief, it was a huge privilege to be so warmly welcomed as a visitor to such an interesting and important part of the world. There were almost no other Western tourists, but locals were universally keen to open their hearts, their minds and their country. It was totally safe on the ground for us as independent travellers. I cried when I was so warmly and unconditionally welcomed as an outsider to go into a Friday Mosque within the ancient Tabriz Bazaar. Most of the fears about being Moslem in the world are totally irrational. We were welcomed more warmly and unconditionally than any outsider, particularly any Moslem, would be welcomed be Australia.

It was necessary to find 'Plan Bs' to get around the crippling US sanctions, re-imposed when the US government unilaterally walked away from the existing international agreement limiting nuclear activity. This involved making bookings through third party companies and countries, getting a local debit card, and accepting that several commonly used vectors of international communication and funds transfer would not be possible. The negative press and irrational fear about Iran was at its height while we were there, with the US reportedly coming within ten minutes of launching a military attack in the Straits of Hormuz. Not wearing shorts, the need for women to wear a scarf in public, and the gender segregation of swimming in pools, are the main obvious necessary compromises for travellers. Iranian women can now do most things aside from being the President, a judge or ride a motorbike.

Iran as an Islamic Republic very dependent on fossil fuels is not without its problems, but in most respects it is a very safe, clean, modern, highly educated and literate society. Previous civilisations have removed most of the tree cover and many modern cities are severely drawing down the water table by pumping. The landscape has a stark beauty, from the extensive snow-covered mountains over 4,000 metres above sea level, to the extensive deserts and the small amount of forests along the Caspian Sea margin in the north.

The public transport systems (metro systems, airports, rail services) are very good despite the sanctions. In western terms everything is incredibly cheap, but the sanctions are biting harshly into its people and economy.

Bounded to the west by protracted military conflicts in Iraq, also to the east in Afghanistan, and to the south at enmity with some of the pro-American Gulf States, Iran sits in a geopolitically difficult context in 2019. It is still living the dreadful legacy of a horrific and pointless conflict with Iraq (1980-88) that ended with millions of deaths and stalemate. While it has little appetite for more military conflict, it has intervened to support several nations and peoples (rightly or wrongly) fighting other liberation struggles in North Africa and the Middle East. It is understandably concerned about being dragged unwittingly into other conflicts by the major powers.

The literary, technological, political and present day legacy of the achievements of the ancient and highly developed Zoroastrian civilizations and the Persian Empire are evident everywhere. This is a very proud country, whose main crime in the past century has been to stand up against provocation and attempts at regime change engineered largely outsiders, most recently including the US.

Of the many countries I have been to in the world, this is the country I have learnt the most from. I came away humbled by the warm welcome and the ongoing indignities its proud and patient people have been forced to endure, and are currently reliving. Iranians find themselves in 2019 in a very conflicted and contested geopolitical context, being forced to develop a national 'learning and coping culture' necessary to preserve and also transform their ancient traditions and modern civil society.

If you do go to Iran, and I encourage you to do so to see and learn for yourself, you will learn as much about the relative poverty and backwardness of many aspects of our own culture, lives and nations as you will about Iran. You will also learn to better accept, understand and appreciate religious and cultural difference, at home and abroad, rather than fear and dislike based around irrational fear and misinformation.

New Members

MR PISETH NEAK *neak_Piseth@yahoo.com* is a lecturer in English at the Royal University of Phnom Penh, in Cambodia's capital city. He is currently studying for a master's degree in non-formal education at Chulalongkorn University, Thailand. At his own University he also works as a volunteer promoting self-directed learning among students on their road to lifelong learning. He has published in both Cambodian and English to work for the same cause. Neak joins PIMA because he sees its LLL-oriented work as addressing 'pressing global issues, local and ecological issues', especially by using LLL to these ends.

Neak Piseth takes a special interest in marginalized groups and in communities, and sees community learning centres (CLCs) as an important research subject and a great avenue for them in pursuing their lifelong learning'. In this issue of the Bulletin he contributes a short paper on the impacts of NFE in promoting lifelong learning in Cambodia.

DR ROSA MARIA TORRES DEL CASTILLO *Fronesis2015@gmail.com* is now an independent work living in Quito Ecuador. She is an educationist, linguist and social activist, a researcher and international adviser in the fields of education, youth and adult education, literacy and written culture, educational innovation and change, learning communities, and lifelong learning.

Rosa Maria has a formidable record of adult learning and education and social change activism in Latin America and beyond. She has lived in Ecuador, Mexico, Nicaragua, the USA and Argentina, working in the academic world as well as with social organizations, governments and international agencies; and has undertaken professional missions in all Latin American and Caribbean countries as well as in many African and Asian countries.

In Ecuador she has been Pedagogical Director of the National Literacy Campaign "Monsignor Leonidas Proaño", 1988-1990, and Minister of Education and Cultures in 2003. She attended The 1990 Jomtien conference and the Dakar Education Forum in 2000 and worked extensively on the first decade of Education for All, 1990-2000. In 2000 she organized the Latin American Statement on Education for All signed by over 10,000 people and institutions from all over the world; and between 2000 and 2010 moderated the virtual community *Comunidad E-ducativa* all as a volunteer.

She has worked for UNICEF and UNESCO at national, regional and world levels in different capacities; and as a consultant and adviser, for example in 1990-96 as senior education adviser at UNICEF New York and editor of the *Education News* bulletin while based in Buenos Aires, along with much else during that decade. In 2000 she became part of the

international expert group in charge of conceptualizing and organizing the United Nations Literacy Decade (2003-2013), and drafted the Base Document for the decade “Literacy for All”, which proposed a holistic understanding of literacy as a lifelong learning continuum, including children, youth and adults. The document was approved at the World Education Forum in Dakar in 2000, but unfortunately UNESCO decided later to discard this and return to the conventional understanding of literacy and adult literacy.

Rosa Maria was a personal friend of Paulo Freire, whom she met in 1985 in Sao Paulo. They worked together several time in Brazil and elsewhere, and she wrote the prologue of one of his last books, *Profesora sí, tía no. Cartas a quien pretende enseñar*. Currently she is organizing a book with articles they wrote together, and interviews conducted with him.

She has published many books and over 1,000 academic and journalistic articles in several countries and languages as well as moderating several virtual communities. Since 2013 she has been studying the Finnish education model and writing on it ‘with Latin American eyes’. She has worked for over twenty years on citizen education and civic learning issues, through newspapers, virtual communities. More recently, she has had a personal blog <https://otra-educacion.blogspot.com/> along with Twitter and Facebook accounts.

MRS LEAKHENA ORN Ornleakhena125@gmail.com is the second Cambodian colleague to join PIMA in recent weeks. She is a secondary school teacher working in Tboung Khum Province, and currently doing graduate study degree at Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok, also a volunteer youth worker.

She finds that many grade 12 school leavers are at a loss about what to do and she seeks to inspire ‘love, passion, interest, and talent for their future career’, and where to focus for a good future. ‘... it is very important for them to learn what they really love and they can see opportunities for what they can be in the future. They will not choose to learn because their family, friends or teacher advise them to but they learn because they love it.’ She wishes to learn more about how to do this, and also for students to care for both their mental and physical health.

Leakhena writes here about her study of the characteristics of local volunteers in the Quality of Living Improvement program of Non-formal Education.
