



## Bulletin No. 38

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## **Editorial** *Chris Duke*

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[This issue of the Bulletin is unusually long and diverse. Readers are reminded that it is an open access publication. Anyone is welcome to share it, in full or a particular article or passage, acknowledging the original PIMA source.]

How will we remember 2021? The year of COVID-19 (variant Delta) and what it meant to oneself, one's family, community, life, work, even country? Maybe if we are in educational settings - school, community centre, or higher education institution (HEI) - for its transformative effect on teaching methods, market appeal, loss of income and insecurity of employment?

This Bulletin concludes with a vigorous account of personal life under C-19 for Lauren Spring, mother of a full-voice 'class of one', in days fragmented and time-contested by multiple demands as a lifelong learning facilitator teacher. This paper is linked with a new question for PIMA, about what prolonged pandemic means and is doing to and for young people of pre-school and early adult age.

New pedagogy prevails meanwhile, as a host of teachers and learners acquire new ICT (Information and Communication Technology) skills. And political language shifts from pandemic to endemic. The new narrative is 'just another flu jab', heralding a new normality, as health is balanced with or displaced by economics. What is the virus already doing to and for the young? And what should we in the We are ALE alliance, be doing about it?

Does this time of unsettling disruption and ambiguous transformation explain why, as history and allied subjects disappear from many educational curricula in favour of assumedly utilitarian STEM subjects, more and more history finds its way into the fiction and drama of print, film and other broadcast entertainment: out of the classroom and into the broadcast and other newer media.

The bigger world beyond ALE and LLL, like the TV dramas and other celebrations and nostalgic reminiscences of the past in the countries that I know best, is much focused on past heroes and highlights. In ALE the names and dates of key writers and reports cross the stage as anniversaries come around – the founding of DVV and the UK 1919 report, Freire, Faure, Delors, 1976 and Nyerere, early CONFINTEAs, the founding of ICAE. As we self-immense in new forms of history, remember that 'history' is not just his-story of great men of the past, but a living and ever-changing reflection of our changing selves today.

ALE as Cinderella the Poor Cousin clings tenuously to the mainstream 'education industry', which tends like most other socio-economic sectors to focus inwardly: on its own health and welfare, identity, output measures and survival. Our great figures are long-sighted educators

generous of spirit. Our anniversary dates are the birth of prominent institutions, new perceptions, and significant educational policy shifts. Here we add to this ALE ‘roll of honour’ with the upcoming 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of PRIA, a very special ALE player that lives in the ‘real world’ of local field and slum in modern India, as well as on the global and national stage. And Paolo Freire’s anniversary lives on in next year’s global CONFINTEA consultation, as Fabiola Munhoz explains.

We might as active citizens also ask which are the big events in wider world history of the ‘I remember where I was when...’ kind. Here we choose two other anniversaries less obviously significant for ALE: the 100<sup>th</sup> birthday of PRC in China, and the 50<sup>th</sup> of Greenpeace. 2021 may also mark the acceptance of C-19 as the ‘new normal’. And it is the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of 9/11; the end of the USA’s longest war, and a key change-point in the bloodied history of Afghanistan’s struggle. How do such big events affect the work of ALE? Do any of them signal tendencies towards or away from LLL for all? Or are these worlds mutually irrelevant?

There’s no doubting that climate change has become a dominant and urgent reality – competing with but far bigger and more important than the pandemic for attention and action. This Bulletin opens with the climate emergency and action to combat it – Shirley Walters on emergency, fear and apathy, Elizabeth Lange on civil disobedience, Katie Ross on regeneration. Brad Davison addresses directly the dominant socio-economic paradigm that has swept the world from the 1980s, and which, like wars, the ALE community tends to tiptoe past, as being ‘too political’. Traditionally adult education has focused more on individual learning and opportunity, avoiding the dirty hands of political ideology.

As Paul Stanistreet argues however, this is no longer possible, even as we prepare in different countries and regions for the next big global ALE event, CONFINTEA VII in Morocco. There, top-down and bottom-up, governmental and civil society, arrangements and processes come together. ‘Only connect’ is easier said than done.

Dividing the Bulletin into themes and preoccupations is a riddle. Separating climate change from the SDGs is an undesirable impossibility. Climate connects with or impacts across each of the Goals; but so does ‘Lifelong Learning’ without which, it is argued, no Goal can be attained, including Education Goal 4 itself. Likewise, C-19 affects in myriad ways the theme of our special interest group Later Life Learning, led by Brian Findsen; and with it other changing demography, and new perceptions of life roles and ageing driven by social as much as economic factors.

Another tension is increasingly and all but overwhelmingly these days found between the formal and often targeted subject matter – be it wealth or poverty, living standards, health or illness, happiness, loneliness or starvation, agriculture or manufacturing – and the tools and processes whereby we work towards them, including institutions, networks and lobbyists, as well as the new ICT.

A case in point is Bruce Wilson’s long reflective review of a Project about the contribution of the EU to the SDGs in Asia-Pacific. In the previous Bulletin, No. 37, seven different participants in that work told stories of what they learned from the process of participation:

not only or mainly the formal project outcomes but the processes themselves, and how for some it changed them. Look at them again from this point of view: so much more diverse learning takes place than the formal outputs and deliverables reveal.

Standing back and offering an outcomes-oriented synoptic review, Project Director Wilson addresses outputs as intended in the contract with the EU; but his chosen focus is on the power of partnerships. Look similarly at Tom Sork's note under 'We are ALE': that conference was the work of nine partner bodies; similarly, in Munhoz's Latin American account. The Director of Greenpeace Australia-Pacific (GPAP) recently told a Zoom meeting in Australia that GP's successful impact, and all it has achieved in capturing public attention, and now pushing the private sector into abandoning coal, is owed to finding and working with very many partners, and to coordinating all their efforts.

'Process vs product' is an unavoidable undercurrent running through most of the fields that PIMA addresses. Maybe it is time to bring it into the light for fuller scrutiny.

If that is for the near future – it is in a sense one theme of anniversary analyses – 'looking back to move forward' – this Bulletin also raises two new themes.

The first is tourism, a huge growth industry vital to some economies but seldom considered by the ALE community. Adults can usually play at home or abroad. Tourism takes many forms. Mass tourism in huge cruise vessels is being banned in some cities. Can tourism also possibly be a means for cross-cultural learning, within and between countries? Think about weekenders, holiday cabins and second homes, not always welcome in 'host communities', as a recent headline suggests: "Don't like roosters and cow mess? Don't come here, Spanish village tells tourists." Wide-vision economist Chan Jin Hooi explores this subject, and Jim Walmsley offers comments within one country.

Contributions on tourism as learning in different countries, especially examples of well-managed mutual learning through tourism, will be welcome.

So will contributions on the impact of C-19 on young people's development, identity formation and confidence, as regular routines of teaching, learning, formal curriculum, and assessment have altered. Post-school institutions turn to the adult population to backfill vacant student places. Let us in turn look deeper into the pre-adult years, asking how damage can be contained and learning become an ingrained lifelong habit in these new times.

## **Sustainable Development Goals and Climate Justice**

**Climate emergency: Terrible fears one minute and apathy the next *Shirley Walters***

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Have you read the novel *Weather* by Jenny Offill (2021)? In it an unqualified librarian, Lizzie, is the central character. She works with an environmentalist who is writing papers and giving lectures on the state of ‘climate emergency’. She has a podcast, which people respond to with questions. Lizzie takes on the job of answering these. People are worrying about what to eat, where is a safe place to live, going to Mars, building a ‘doomstead’, whether recycling works, what places to visit before they disappear (called the going, going gone trips), what to do to help, and so on.

The author uses a fragmentary structure which captures everyday happenings, conversations, throw away lines. The effect is not a linear story but a collage of insights, emotions, and responses to ‘weathering’ the climate emergency, along with other disasters or emergencies. Like a firework display many ideas are in the air at once. There is no ‘right answer’. It’s a mirror to many concerns. It’s powerful, evocative, and funny. This is a pre-apocalyptic novel, and its subject is dread, not disaster. It’s an example of ‘non-speculative climate fiction’. It gently reinforces the personal and political dilemmas that we all face.

Presently, there is a build up towards the next international climate conference in November in Glasgow, COP-26. In preparation for this conference, the UN-sponsored Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) recently released its latest comprehensive report on the state of the earth’s climate. UN Secretary-General described the report as a ‘code red for humanity’ and called for decisive action. Greta Thunberg described it as a ‘wake-up call’ and urged listeners to hold the people in power accountable.

As Brian Tokar (2021) notes, the report affirms much of what we already knew about the state of the global climate, but it does so with considerably more clarity and precision than earlier reports. It removes several elements of uncertainty from the climate picture, including some that have wrongly served to reassure powerful interests and the wider public that things may not be as bad as we thought. The IPCC’s latest conclusions reinforce and significantly strengthen all the most urgent warnings that have emerged from the past 30 to 40 years of climate science. It is ‘code red for humanity’.

How do we as adult educators, scholars, and activists respond – with fear, apathy, or action? One way is to deepen our own learning. As Bob Hill (2012) asserted, prerequisites for learning about climate justice are activism and engagement with real world climate crises within actual, diverse contexts. Solving the climate crisis affects all aspects of society – it is a vast and complex landscape.

To complement the ways you are engaging, PIMA is making a modest contribution through the *Climate Justice and ALE webinar series* and through regular contributions to the PIMA Bulletin, including a PIMA Bulletin *Special Edition on Climate Justice and ALE*, which will come out in November. This Bulletin will build on the webinars which are designed and facilitated by the PIMA team of: Shauna Butterwick, Jane Burt, Darlene Clover, Astrid von Kotze, Joy Polanco O’Neil, Dorothy Lucardie, Liz Boulton, Colette February and Shirley Walters.

**The next webinar is:**

***Ecofeminism makes sense: Towards life-affirming Adult Learning and Education (ALE)***

**Date: 13 October 2021**

**Length: 75 min**

**Time:** PDT 8am (Vancouver); 16:00 BST (London, UK); 17:00 CAT/CEST (Harare, Berlin);  
20:30 IST (India); 02:00 AEDT (Sydney)

**Please register in advance for this meeting – click on this link:**

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/88273246469?pwd=SEUwT0dqc1lDZ0xhSnF0dTB5R1EvZz09>

Meeting ID: 882 7324 6469

Passcode: 690915

So, how do you relate to these quotes from Jenny Offill's book?

'Environmentalists are so dreary'.

'People are really tired of being lectured about the glaciers'.

'In chaotic times people long for a strongman'.

`Young person: What if nothing I do matters? Old person: What if everything I do does?`

`What are the best ways to prepare my children for the coming chaos? You can teach them to sew, to farm, to build. Techniques for calming a fearful mind might be most useful though.`

'How do you maintain your optimism?'

How are you responding to the Climate Emergency personally, pedagogically, and politically? Do you have any suggestions for, or feedback on, PIMA's responses?

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**Two Elephants in the Room: how nationalism and neoliberalism thwart the global agenda for transformation *Bradley Davison***

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## **Introduction**

The achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) requires significant action across environmental, political, economic, and cultural dimensions. The 17 goals and 169 targets are all interlinked and their success is dependent and interdependent on one another. In recent times, nationalism has become more prevalent with the proliferation of neoliberal globalisation. Nationalism often breeds xenophobia and has been used as an economic tool, undermining fair access to justice, equality, and participation in societal institutions. The exploitation of people and planet are rooted in neoliberal economics that demand infinite supply and promise infinite growth. Ultimately, this has only increased inequality and caused environmental degradation.

Nationalism emerged as a function of modernisation, including secular and humanistic consciousness of affording citizens equal standing and dignity based on ownership of that nation. This however led to international competition over status, including continuing economic growth, and superiority over other nations. It became a tool for xenophobic actors in the racist climate that developed after World War I, at a time of turning both towards and away from cosmopolitan international collaboration and a UN system.

The globalisation of neoliberalism required a mantra of ‘us against them’ in what became a global competition for profit. Nationalism through its power to demonize a particular grouping can place the economic shortcomings of a nation-state on those groups. This ethnic-related nationalism presents as a way to protect the State through conspiracies about certain peoples, often with cultural, political, religious or racial profiles different from the dominating class.

In an age of resurging nationalism, it can be argued that neoliberal globalisation has contributed to this proliferation. Nationalism provides the political barrier and an ‘us against them’ mantra for the competition and over-limited regulations required by neoliberal governance and economics. This complex political dynamic impinges not only on the global agenda for transformation’s goals regarding access to justice and reduced inequalities but also on those relating to the protection of the planet’s ecosystems and the fight over climate change.

This paper thus presents nationalism and neoliberalism as opponents to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Achieving the SDGs requires a global effort across varying disciplines, and a plethora of actions. One such action that could aid the cause is to address the rise of nationalism and the systems that it aids. This will protect not only social and democratic rights but also the ecology of the planet.

## **Neoliberalism, nationalism and the exploitation of people and planet**

Often considered a modern phenomenon, nationalism is a tool used by states or people to bind them together to achieve mutual goals. It is a political tool for actors, one that has been wielded by conservative leaders to retract from international goals and agendas, or by more progressive liberals with notions of rights and universal welfare.

Nationalism should not be viewed as purely negative. While it has been used as a means to create foreign/immigration policy aimed at excluding certain groups of people based on the colour of their skin, it could also be interpreted as a movement demonstrating pride or solidarity among a group of people. While xenophobic nationalism exists, so does ethnic nationalism, an important distinction. Ethnic nationalism is the notion that every ethnic group has a right to self-determination. What this means depends on the circumstances, but this right generally is expressed in two forms.

When ethnic nationalist agitation calls for restructuring the state in such a way that wealth, power and resources are redistributed to sub-national entities to allow more equitable access to ethnic groups

Or, and in a more extreme setting, when ethnic nationalism calls for the secession of a group from a state to form their own sovereign entity.

How does nationalism link to neoliberalism and the exploitation of people and the planet?

Neoliberal globalisation describes the worldwide implementation and integration of an economic model emphasising “free markets” and “free trade”. Reduced government regulation, privatisation of government enterprises, the lowering of barriers to international trade and, reduced government spending, are just some of the concepts incorporated into this system supposedly to maximise economic efficiency. Consequences of this system include harm to small enterprises, a race to the bottom in developing countries to maintain productivity but at the expense of worker rights, and, crucially, increased conflict where people are left behind. This is particularly evident in certain ethnic or religious groups which have been uprooted from their lands and pushed into insecurity, fear, and civil strife, particularly where the state may want to protect economic interests.

Neoliberal states may need nationalism to survive, as nationalism can harness the competitiveness and state pride needed to succeed in an international climate. Similarly, I contend that nationalism can harness the capital possible for states, the driver and hub of economic management, to contest in global systems.

### **The urgency of the SDGs and the climate and justice crisis**

The most urgent and threatening of the challenges addressed by the UN agenda for Sustainable Development through its 17 goals and 169 targets are those posed by climate change, which presents a survival threat to all people, fauna and flora. Rising temperatures and sea levels and other weather extremes cause more poverty, starvation and massive population displacement, as Earth’s capacity to resist the change decreases. The capacity of the oceans to absorb heat and carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) is waning with increasing greenhouse gas output. Glacier melt accelerates and the habitats and habits of the ocean flows and of oceanic life and behaviour alter or are rendered extinct. The threats are manifold and ever more manifest with new extremes of high temperature, prolonged drought, destructive flooding and hurricanes, and all-consuming wildfires, and loss of glaciers and habitat evident on every continent. The implications permeate every SDG and require coordinated cross-goal action.



## **To achieve the SDGs we must address the nationalism-neoliberalism nexus**

Nationalism is a defining feature of our world, permeating every facet of our being and significantly influencing our politics and economics. Nationalism has been presented as a tool; at times used to enforce a dignity and pride among peoples with a shared history, culture, or language; but often warped to serve xenophobic or ethnic-based purposes.

The impact on climate change of nationalism and neoliberalism functions across all social, cultural, economic, environmental, and political arenas. In addressing the rise of nationalism globally, either through a multilateral world order that condemns and actions against overtly xenophobic nationalistic governments, or by supporting developing nations or nation-states in the attainment of recognised sovereignty, dignity, democracy and human rights, we can begin to quash unsustainable neoliberal governance.

By giving indigenous peoples, women, and ethnic minorities, among other marginalised groups, fair access to justice and the institutions of law and power, nationalist sentiments may dwindle in what could become a more collaborative approach to sustainable economic development. At present groups are made as ‘others’ to allow for the exploitation of their lands or as scapegoats for poor economic performance. Here nationalism aids and abets neoliberal governance, and vice-versa. Sustainable development, addressing climate change, and reducing inequality in the world, cannot be achieved without addressing the realities of neoliberalism and nationalism impacting on all the sustainable development agenda. Problems and solutions are alike interconnected. They demand a more effective multilateral world order with the capacity to quash non-sustainable neoliberal governance and a more collaborative approach to sustainable development.

## **Defending Life: The Importance of Civil Disobedience *Elizabeth Lange***

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### **Old Growth Trees**

Their ancientness, embodied knowledge, and powerful presence elicits profound reverence. Walking in the forests of Vancouver Island has literally had me falling to my knees, from awe and respect. Some of the oldest DNA on Earth is found in trees, given that they are some of the oldest living beings on Earth. When you walk among giants whom 10 people linking hands cannot encircle, you realize that these trees are living beings, elders who have survived incredible natural events as well as human machinations. Some are called witness trees...witness not just to some catastrophe, bearing the scars in their bodies, but witness to much of earth and human history.



Vancouver Island is part of the Pacific Northwest temperate rainforest ecosystem. Red and yellow cedar, Douglas fir, Sitka spruce, and hemlock naturally blanket the rugged, deep, and isolated valleys. Their height and girth are astonishing. Coastal trees are considered “old-growth” from 250 years old but can live to 1500 and 2000 years, such as the Cheewhat Giant, a nearby Western red cedar. The oldest tree in the world is south of us, located in California, a bristlecone pine almost 5000 years old. It began its life during the Ancient Egyptian civilization! The biggest tree, by girth and volume, is a giant 2000-year-old sequoia, also south of us in California. The Carmanah Giant, a Sitka spruce, at 95 metres tall is the tallest in Canada. So, the west coast of North America is a special series of ecosystems.

### **Old Growth Logging and Climate Change**

While many believe that old growth logging is a thing of the past in Canada, this is definitely not the case! Canadian public outcry as well as two previous campaigns by environmental nongovernmental organizations (ENGOS) calling for international boycotts, were able to prevent logging and establish national parks in protection of some pristine places. Yet, at least one third of all logging here is STILL from productive old-growth forests...as, of course, they net the most profit for their effort.

Intact original forests are critical to climate policy and biodiversity preservation both as the lungs of the planet and wildlife habitat. Many of the unique species far up in the canopies are not yet known. Trees are carbon sinks who are needed for their cooling and rainmaking capacities. Healthy, intact, hydrated forests are less vulnerable, important when British Columbia is suffering from devastating drought, record heat waves, and the ravages of fire and flooding. As the World Wildlife Fund asserts, a healthy planet begins with healthy forests and people. Forest degradation is even a major driver of zoonotic diseases like COVID-19, while healthy forests offer countless medicinal benefits.

Salmon are the keystone species up and down the coast. Their health is vital to the health of these ecosystems and Indigenous cultures have relied on them. Removing trees increases the temperature of water, which disrupts salmon spawning. It reduces rainfall, leaving remaining trees vulnerable to drought and “blow down”. Clearcutting creates landslides which destroy spawning creeks. In this dance of life, salmon feed the trees, the soil as well as sea and land beings...in an ancient yet fragile life cycle. Several resident orca pods are on the brink of survivability due to dramatically shrinking salmon numbers.

The WWF has been tracking all the global deforestation fronts. In their 2015 *Living Forests Report*, they identify 24 deforestation fronts, including the multiple drivers of deforestation and thus how responses on multiple fronts are most effective. Yet, in the last dozen years, another 10% of these vital forests have been lost.

### **Defending Life through Civil Disobedience**

*Let your life be a friction in the machine...* Thoreau

Forest protection movements are now often led by *Indigenous Land Defenders*, given the importance of forests to their very identity, survival, and sense of place. Their long presence in many forests and their forest knowledge is becoming critically endangered.

Land Defenders (and Water Defenders) understand themselves as carrying forward their ancient traditions and within this, their sacred duties of protecting all life forms. They do not consider themselves as “protestors” to extractive industry as settler people do, but rather as continuing their stand against colonialism and all its extractive, dehumanizing, and destructive forms, including Western ways of knowing and researching.

There is a very long list of Indigenous Land Defenders who have lost their lives in the defence of life. The organization *Global Witness* determined that 164 land defenders lost their lives in 2018 alone. *Amnesty International* considers Latin America the most dangerous for Land Defenders, particularly those facing Big Oil. The *Environmental Defence Fund* say few deaths ever see justice.

In Western politics, the term civil disobedience was popularized by Thoreau in the 1800s who refused to pay taxes which supported the institution of slavery. Civil disobedience is vital to Western democracy as it is the only mechanism open to those who believe that certain laws, commands, or the authority of a government are unjust, illegitimate, and/or immoral. It goes one step beyond voicing an objection to a law by engaging in non-cooperation or action that is illegal. A core strategy for civil rights and labour movements around the world, civil disobedience is resolutely nonviolent where normally law-abiding citizens are arrested according to the beliefs of their conscience.

For example, in 1993, it took the largest mass arrest in Canadian history—of 932 people—to protect forests in Clayoquot Sound, Vancouver Island. The original plan was to log 75% of the old-growth forest, where simply amazing trees grow—by age, height, and girth. It was one of the first times that local residents, First Nations, and environmental groups worked together to stop logging...facing down police aggression, logger intimidation, and criminal charges. Called the *War in the Woods*, the Peace Camp had over 11,000 people involved in the protest. The resulting trials clogged the courts for months. In the end, it was international media coverage of arrests and jail sentences of peaceful protestors as well as a boycott of BC forest products that turned the tide. News coverage and lost revenue brought the forestry companies and governments to the negotiating table with ENGOs and First Nations, who were ultimately given the logging rights and control over forest resources and protected areas.

Another example is the 1970s Chipko movement in the Indian Himalayas. Chipko means “to hug” from which the phrase “tree hugger” comes, as local women stood with their backs to trees holding hands, to impede foreign logging companies. Chico Mendes, a Brazilian rubber tapper in the Amazon rainforest led blockades in the 1980s, asserting protection for Indigenous peoples using the forest for their livelihoods in perpetuity over generations. Many Indonesian locals have lost their lives protecting their lush forests, plundered for teak, mahogany, and other wood and now for oil palm plantations, acacia timber, and corporate agriculture. Canopyplanet.org says Indonesia’s forests contain: 10% of the world’s mammal species, 16% of our planet’s bird species and 11% of earth’s plant species as well as containing large swaths of peatland...some areas 10 feet deep...needed as carbon sinks in a climate changing world.

Sweden has seen a 35% increase in deforestation during the global neoliberal economic era. Old growth trees covered in lichens, the primary food of the reindeer, are pivotal to the life and identity of the Sami. The Sami, biologists, and now the *Fridays for Future* movement continue to call for protection of old-growth trees. Germans, in the *Forest Occupation Movement*, have been mobilizing themselves as highways, mining, factories, and parking lots threaten forests and contribute to “ecocide”. Occupations are spreading across Germany, Poland, Switzerland, Belgium, and France.

### **Defending Fairy Creek: Indigenous Ways of Knowing and Being**

Logging is about to take place in an ecologically sensitive and pristine area called Fairy Creek, named for its magical watershed and Big Trees. Since last August, it has been blockaded by a small group of young people calling themselves Forest Defenders. One month into the blockade, a Pacheedaht hereditary leader, Elder Bill Jones, age 81, came out in support of the young protestors. He called for more careful stewardship of Fairy Creek and adjacent forests, asking people to unite with their hereditary leadership in protecting their sacred places.

The Union of BC Indian Chiefs (UBCIC) through their “Protect our Elder Trees Declaration,” called on government to assist First Nations in breaking from Western practices like old-growth forestry that violate traditional beliefs. They asserted forestry should follow sacred principles, including “utmost respect, taking care of, and everything is connected”.

Indigenous Elders and young leaders have been leading this blockade, teaching all the blockaders through their Indigenous knowledge, protocols, and sacred ceremonies. They have kept the protests peaceful, even in the face of police provocation, bullying, and assault. They have engaged in land healing and cedar cleansing ceremonies after police raids and protest camp take-downs, using traditional teachings to ensure nonviolence, positive language, dignity, and respect, while remaining resolute.

Protestors are also learning from direct action trainers and previous protests in finding new, ingenious ways to delay loggers. The group *Elders for Ancient Trees*, those over 50 years of age, come *en masse* to buoy spirits and use large numbers and age to overwhelm police exclusion lines. Some of them were in Clayoquot, bringing their knowledge and experience to the front lines as well as organizing protests of government and police. Many, like myself, come as parent and son/daughter duos as a form of intergenerational teaching. Through ceremony, we elders have had the opportunity to give thanks for the courage of those using their younger bodies to defend life.

With no end in sight, Fairy Creek will easily surpass Clayoquot to become the largest civil disobedience campaign in Canadian history. In the context of IPCC’s Code Red for Humanity, it is time for a “cultural rethink”... not only connecting the ecological dots in forests beyond “forests as resource” but toward the aliveness of forests that are our upright kin, vital to our human future.

### **What is Needed?**

Different actions are needed by local, national, and international actors. If you wish to support this forestry protection movement, please see my blog post that explains the political nuances and details actions you can take, especially as international voices, to help shift logging policies here in Canada.



<https://www.elizabethlange.ca/blog>

Thank you to all who are willing to support this action for a better human future!

### **Finding and Creating Regenerative Communities *Katie Ross***

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Dear PIMA Community. What an honour to be welcomed into this group. Some of you are close colleagues, and many I am excited to meet and get to know.

Chris Duke kindly asked me to write a brief introduction to myself. To do so, I thought I might start with the question: what brings me joy? Professionally, I cherish the experience of collaboratively imagining and co-designing meaningful fun, on provocative, experiential learning journeys. This has been a passion for quite a while. As a young child I was passionate about seeking justice for those - like children and nature - who have trouble being heard in the dominant power structures. This led me to environmental and sustainability research and education. For the past ten years I have been engaging in sustainability action research, during which one of the primary desired outcomes is transformative learning for all the participants involved. So many stories to share there.

Most recently, my passion culminated in a doctoral thesis on transformative learning and sustainability. Through this process, I began truly to realise the profound mutual co-arising between the state of the world and the dominant ways of both perceiving reality and coming to know reality.

As many of you have likely considered, the dominant ways of perceiving and knowing are to make meaning through distinction alone, rather than seeking to be making meaning through understanding the relationships, let alone finding the meaning that emerges from evolutions of relationships. So now, what brings me great joy is co-creating learning experiences, which provide the opportunities for participants to experience, what it might be like to perceive realities in relational and complex ways, and why that matters for humanity, nature, and the diverse societies across our shared Earth.

For the last six months, I have been fortunate to have academic long service leave in Australia, which I spent volunteering at three different types of regenerative land practices –

one residential permaculture site, one Indigenous-led native grains farm, and finally an Indigenous agroforestry property. This time away, working with the land, supporting incredible initiatives, with a significant detox from all things electronic, has been a profound gift of joy.

Now that my long-service leave is drawing to a close, I find I am at a crossroads. Do I go back to the ‘comfort’ of working within the university five days a week on projects that offer a comfortable sense of ‘status’ and ‘role’ and ‘contribution’, and that stimulate my mind and in some sense, contribute to the greater good – when deep down, I feel they do not speak to my deeper beliefs about what the world and I actually, desperately, need in this time? How do I balance the needs of participating in the economic realities of society, while achieving a vision inspired by Satish Kumar’s dream of working four hours a day, so that we have time to do what matters most in this world – connecting with community, soil and soul?

For now, I am trying to aim for that. Negotiating a contract that is part time, in order that I help can develop transdisciplinary and experiential electives on sustainability and complexity, as well as support the Indigenous-led native foods movement in Australia. I believe Indigenous-led native food movements have the potential for incredibly profound life-long learning. Through Indigenous-led reclaiming and celebrating of food <language> <culture> <land practices, the broader populace can be engaged in experiences of diversity, relational ways of perceiving, genuine reciprocity and healthy food. These experiences might lead to much more multi-faceted forms resilience, and ways of being that begin to address and heal the lingering impacts of colonialization and the inconceivable degradation which has happened to our world over the last 400 years (that is since parts of humanity began perceiving ourselves as separate from and superior to each other and nature).

I am not sure what the future holds, but I look forward to connecting with everyone, and working towards - in the words of Charles Eisenstein - creating the more beautiful world we know is possible. Please reach out to me as well, if this has raised any sparks of joy or other emotions within you.

## **We are ALE**

### **Meditations on an emergency *Paul Stanistreet***

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The devastation caused by floods and fire this summer is a wake-up call with regard not only to climate change, but to lifelong learning too.

The floods that devastated parts of Asia and central Europe and the wildfires that reshaped the landscape in Greece and North America this summer supplied what are sure to become some of the defining images of our time. This year will be remembered as the one in which wealthy nations came face to face with the reality of climate change. As Malu Dreyer, the Minister-President of Rhineland-Palatinate, Germany, noted of the floods in her state, climate change is ‘not abstract any more. We are experiencing it up close and painfully’. There are no longer any safe places, no exemptions for the privileged.

This sobering picture was confirmed by the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change’s new [report](#) on the climate emergency, which was published on 9 August 2021. The IPCC Report – the definitive and uniquely authoritative word on the physical causes of global warming – found it ‘unequivocal’ that human activity was the cause of climate change, making extreme climate events, including heatwaves, heavy rainfall, and drought both more frequent and more severe. Already, every region in the world was experiencing some combination of rising temperatures, forest fires, flood or drought, the Report said. Only ‘strong, rapid, and sustained’ reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, and attaining net zero CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in this decade, will prevent further climate breakdown and limit global warming to 1.5 °C. Without it, larger scale, extreme weather events such as floods and heatwaves would become more common, and human life on the planet would become more precarious.

However, the IPCC report is not a counsel of despair. Although we are uncomfortably late in acting, and many of the changes we are seeing are ‘irreversible’, it is not yet *too* late, and there is still much we can do, and much we can save. As Inger Andersen, Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme, [noted](#) at the report’s launch, ‘the power is in our hands at this point’, and there is an onus on every business leader, politician and policymaker ‘to consider how to be a contributor’. The problems caused by climate change can be mitigated, if not solved, but only through concerted, intersectoral action everywhere, on every front, in every community, wherever we live in the world. The IPCC report represents an unchallengeable mandate for far-reaching change in every aspect of the way in which we live, including, quite crucially, in education.

This is what makes the challenge so daunting. We are used to experiencing the world as unsolvable. As Fredric Jameson observed, it is easier to imagine the end of the world than the end of capitalism. While systems of power are more nebulous and harder to challenge than before, it is also the case that we have forgotten that change can and does happen; and that collective action can make other worlds possible. It is important that we believe this. The old, dying orthodoxy of endless economic growth and limitless consumption will take all of us with it, unless we can find a new language of hope, founded on planetary sustainability, collective action, and a commitment to equitable and inclusive futures.

Education has an important role to play in this, not just in response to change, but as a driver of it. This is a challenge to the global education community, at every level. We cannot wait for change to arrive, but must, instead, in all of our practice, strive to embody the sort of change we recognize as essential in wider society. Among other things, this means reframing our understanding of lifelong learning, and reviving some old, now unorthodox and

unfashionable, understandings of the term, making them meaningful to a new generation of people facing new, unprecedented challenges.

Gert Biesta wrote some 15 years ago that lifelong learning had come to be understood ‘in terms of the formation of human capital and as an investment in economic development’, a transformation felt at both the level of policy and the level of the learner and learning provider. If anything, in the years since, this trend has become more established, more seemingly permanent. Learning for purposes other than work is, by comparison, more marginalized than ever. It is under pressure everywhere. Yet, despite the predominance of what Biesta terms the ‘learning economy’, it is increasingly evident that we need something else: lifelong learning that prepares us to be not only good and efficient workers, but also thoughtful, active citizens, adaptable and resilient, yet creative, cooperative, and imaginative enough to shape new futures based on collective thought and action and a desire for social and environmental justice.

Biesta’s call for us to reclaim ‘those forms of collective learning – learning with others and from otherness and difference – which are linked to empowerment, collective action and social change, and to the translation of our private troubles into collective and shared concerns’, is more pertinent and urgent than ever. The horrific images from China, Germany, Greece, Austria and other places, and the astonishing heatwaves in North America, which saw new record temperatures four or five degrees higher than the previous ones, are a wake-up call, with regard not only to climate change and the prevailing economic model driving it, but to education too. They tell us that business as usual is no longer an option. We need to create a new normal based around the idea of sustainable living, and to realize the potential of lifelong learning to empower people to make the change we need.

While we all have an obligation to be mindful of our environment and ethical in our behaviour in the different aspects of our lives, there is, I believe, a special obligation on those of us who work and learn in education to highlight the wider value of lifelong learning and foster its democratic function. Education that empowers and enables, that connects and inspires, and, in the best traditions of adult education, foregrounds dialogue and co-production of knowledge, is more necessary than ever.

What might this mean in practice? At the level of the learner, it might mean becoming a learner-activist, championing environmental concerns at school or college, and taking what you learn into your community. For teachers, it could mean embodying democratic practice and the principle of co-production of knowledge in your teaching; and building networks of mutual support. At the level of local and national government, it may mean rebalancing the dimensions of education and lifelong learning and recognizing that, in some key respects, the system is broken, its resistance to change indicative not of health or robustness but of dysfunction. At the level of the international education community, so critical in all of this, it must mean renewing the education discourse in a way that makes change thinkable and hope possible.

Of course, the kind of cooperation that is required to respond to the climate crisis is unprecedented, but so too is the emergency. It is on an entirely different scale from every



other challenge we face, the pandemic included. We cannot know if we will be successful or anticipate what will emerge from our response to the crisis. But by acting as though another world is possible, we optimize our chances of getting there. There is no chance at all if we don't.

## **Adult Education in Global Times (AEGT): research conferring in global virtual space** *Tom Sork*

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More than 400 registrants participated in a four-day virtual research conference hosted by the Canadian Association for the Study of Adult Education (CASAE), the University of British Columbia, and seven other partnering organizations. Billed as *Adult Education in Global Times: An International Research Conference*, it was originally scheduled for June 2020, in Vancouver, Canada, but rescheduled for June 3-6, 2021, as a fully virtual event. The conference program included nine pre-conferences, a documentary film festival, organizational meetings, and over 200 presentations—papers, roundtables, symposia, panels, and posters—by researchers from around the world. The “*We Are ALE*” campaign, hosted by the International Council for Adult Education, was featured during a plenary session on 5 June.

A collaborative, multi-organizational research conference of this scope is a rare event in adult education. The most recent was held at UBC in Vancouver in 2000 and involved five organizations. In addition to CASAE, partners in the 2021 conference were the Adult Education Research Conference, American Association for Adult and Continuing Education, Adult Learning Australia, European Society for Research on the Education of Adults, Indian Adult Education Association, International Society for Comparative Adult Education and the Standing Conference on University Teaching and Research in the Education of Adults.

Although some who participated lamented the COVID-induced necessity to hold the conference virtually, others were thankful that they were able to participate without the expense, environmental impacts, and health and safety issues we currently face. Other conferences that many PIMA members regularly attend continue to struggle with what might now be outmoded designs that require carbon-spewing plane trips, expensive hotel stays, and steep registration fees. Although AEGT 2021 was by no means trouble-free, it did provide a model for bringing scholars together from across the globe to share their work in a more inclusive and less polluting way. As dire predictions of coming environmental calamities accumulate, a major rethink is underway about how we assemble to share our work, establish and maintain networks, and sustain solidarity while coping with multiple, intersecting “wicked problems”.

Those interested in what happened at the conference and the wide range of research presented can view the program and download the *Proceedings* at <https://edst.educ.ubc.ca/aegt2021/>



## **Paulo Freire's Centenary: his legacy as educator is vital for strengthening Y&AE for democracy *Fabiola Munhoz***

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During September, the Latin American Campaign for the Right to Education (CLADE) launched a campaign through communication, awareness and dialogue activities in order to remember the importance of the legacy of the Brazilian educator Paulo Freire and reaffirm our option and struggle for a liberating education that strengthens democracy and promotes social transformation, towards a more just, equitable, sustainable and peaceful world.

CLADE is a plural network of civil society organizations, with presence in 18 Latin American and Caribbean countries and, from its founding moment, has assumed the thought and pedagogy of Paulo Freire as one of its main principles for the struggle for the human right to education in the region.

Emancipatory education, critical thinking, the transformation of educational environments and relationships into spaces for the collective construction of knowledge, reading of contexts, search for alternatives and transforming actions within the horizon of democracy, have been at the core of CLADE's strategic work.

Within this framework and having in mind the centenary of Paulo Freire, to be celebrated on September 19, CLADE, articulated with the Latin American and Caribbean Campaign in Defense of Paulo Freire's Legacy, organized by the Council for Popular Education in Latin America and the Caribbean (CEAAL), began a month of communication, awareness and dialogue actions, to recall the importance of Freire's legacy for the guarantee of an emancipating and critical education, which strengthens democracies in our continent and around the world.

Each week of the month, starting on September 3, CLADE members have been conducting and disseminating webinars, messages and materials in various formats shared through social media and other channels, as well as interviews and conferences, in order to highlight different concepts related to Freire's legacy for the realization of an emancipatory and democratic education.

The last week of the campaign, from September 25 to 30, will highlight activities and messages about Freire's legacy for the guarantee of Youth and Adult Education (Y&AE) as a key fundamental human right to promote sustainable development, human rights and, with them, our democracies.

In this framework, the Platform of Regional Networks for Youth and Adult Education in Latin America and the Caribbean, of which CLADE is a member, together with the Latin American Association of Popular Education and Communication (ALER), CEAAL, the International Federation Fe y Alegría (FIFyA), the Network of Popular Education Among Women in Latin America and the Caribbean (REPEM) and the International Council for Adult Education (ICAE), with the sponsorship of DVV International and Open Society Foundations, will hold a webinar on September 30, from 17h to 19h (Brazil time, GMT-3), to take up, disseminate and discuss the struggles, demands and proposals of the subjects and activists of Y&AE in Latin America and the Caribbean, on the way to the International Conference on Adult Education (CONFINTEA) VII, which will take place in 2022 in Morocco.

The event, which will have simultaneous translation in Spanish, Portuguese, English, Creole and French, as well as interpretation in international sign language, will address, among other aspects, the importance of Freire's legacy for the guarantee of Y&AE as a human right, popular and transformative education in the Freirean perspective, the situation of Youth and Adult Education in Latin America and the Caribbean in the context of pandemic, as well as the context of Y&AE for migrants and refugees in the region. More information and the link to register to the activity will be available soon here:

<https://redclade.org/noticias/paulofreirevive-y-es-vital-para-fortalecer-nuestras-democracias/>

### **Freire's contributions to Y&AE: towards sustainable development and social and environmental justice**

Inspired by Paulo Freire's perspectives and teachings, and with CONFINTEA VII on the horizon, members of the Regional Networking Platform for Y&AE in Latin America and the Caribbean advocate for a new Y&AE, which should be popular, free, secular, inclusive, emancipatory and transformative. An education that shouldn't have colonial, sexist, patriarchal and racist features.

In front of welfare and remedial approach that is usually given to Y&AE, we defend that this educational modality must be of quality, with cultural and social relevance. In front of onslaught of tendencies that attempt to privatize education, the right to Y&AE must be guaranteed free of charge. Their homogenizing vision must be overcome with the conception of Y&AE based on the valuation and exercise of education in its multiple expressions. From this point of view, Y&AE not only has a high educational value but is also a commitment to the transformation of reality, to the change of social structures. Faced with different forms of discrimination and exclusion of a structural nature, this educational modality must contribute to lay the foundations for our societies, which shouldn't be colonial, patriarchal and racist.

In times in which the motivations for continuing studies, mainly of people over 15 years of age, have been transformed and go far beyond the fulfillment of academic training needs, the priority of Y&AE should be community, permanent and popular education because it is carried out with and in all areas where human beings develop their activities. Furthermore, it takes community processes as the basis for educational objectives and is committed to the process of popular movements and the overcoming of all forms of oppression. Thus, Y&AE

should stop concentrating on formal education and give priority to non-formal and popular education, promoting the social construction of knowledge in communities that foster intercultural, intergenerational and intersectoral encounters.

From this perspective, which is in line with Freire's thought, the new understandings of Y&AE are based on conceiving human beings as subjects of education capable of producing the urgent and necessary changes for the construction of a more just and sustainable society.

For these reasons, and in compliance with the principles of lifelong education, governments should recognize education throughout life and for the diversity of the population as a human right, guaranteeing its full functioning through public policies, institutions and pertinent resources. Literacy, being the basis for the continuity and completion of studies, mainly of the sectors with higher levels of vulnerability, in current times, requires a broad and diverse vision and educational offer that guarantees the continuity of studies at all levels and areas of the educational systems, overcoming the traditional basic literacy approaches, recognizing learning developed in daily life and developing educational processes from the culture and mother tongue.

On the other hand, assuming the challenges of the current context of multiple crises and the effects of COVID-19 pandemic on the daily life of humanity, we propose to rethink an Y&AE whose principles should be the following: education to create harmonious relationships among human beings, community and mother earth, to enjoy health with integral well-being, and to contribute to develop a resilient society, which preserves the existence of all living beings; a liberating and transforming Y&AE, as part of social and popular movements and as a political-educational strategy and project, in such a way that people and communities become active subjects of the required transformations of the planet; education for the construction of a society free of all kind of discrimination, inequality and exclusion; a community and democratic Y&AE, for coexistence, participatory democracy and socio-community participation; an education based on social justice and political, social, cultural, economic and environmental rights of individuals, peoples and nature.

In other words, we defend an education and Y&AE for the encounter among cultures, that overcomes inequalities derived from colonialism, for intercultural dialogue and revaluation of collective knowledge. Based on Freire's legacy, the transformative education we need, to build the world we want, is one that guarantees the right to know and the accumulated knowledge of humanity and science, with its use for the benefit of all people, from critical pedagogies and cultural dialogue for global citizenship, the defense of rights, peace, common goods and the care of our common home.

Read more in our regional statement towards CONFINTEA VII: <https://redclade.org/wp-content/uploads/Posicionamiento-Plataforma-EPJA-hacia-la-CONFINTEA.pdf>

## Later Lifelong Learning

### Information and Opinion *Brian Findsen*

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#### Information

In an allied piece for this newsletter, I inform you about *Covid, older adults and learning in Aotearoa New Zealand*. Here I focus on the intent for this Special Interest Group and what it could achieve. Below I have formulated a set of modest goals for which I encourage your active contribution, including raising any contentious issues faced by older people in your country.

Here are goals for the 2021-2022 year

1. We encourage more engagement of individuals from a diverse array of countries - increasing membership.
2. At local and national levels we develop a better understanding of what is occurring in our respective countries in LLL.
3. We focus on a specific social issue for a specific duration, such as dealing with covid-19 and/or combatting ageism and discrimination in our societies.
4. We look for greater alignment between policies on lifelong learning and active ageing in our respective nations.

As convenor I have felt that I could have provided stronger leadership. I encourage you to be more active and to invite others to join us. The website for PIMA is as follows: <https://pimamembers.wixsite.com/network>

Carol Kuan, based in Singapore, provides support, and together I would like to include more information about who is in the membership, and commentary on particular issues in members' localities. I am sure that among the wider membership there are plenty of colleagues with a keen interest in older adult learning/education, so please contact me ([brianfindsen@gmail.com](mailto:brianfindsen@gmail.com)) to join.

Normally, I would expect a paragraph to introduce yourself to others in the SIG. Ideas for future activities are especially welcome.

#### Opinion

I am a member of another network of people interested in active ageing. There have been regular webinars held, of varying quality. The information on what is going on under the cloud of covid in various countries has been illuminating, but if I have one criticism it is that few colleagues engage in delving beneath the surface to ask more "why" questions, especially regarding how governments are inadvertently or deliberately leaving older people out of engagement.

Too often older people are treated as passive recipients of government services rather than as thinking, creative persons with much to offer society based on substantive life experiences. More typically, older people, most in retirement, have more disposable time to think through issues less impeded by the need to undertake demanding paid work. While psychological texts will tell us that rigidity is a common negative attribute among older people, less often will they interrogate how wisdom amid seniors can be enhanced for the betterment of the entire society.

With regard to covid and older people (see associated article), the absence of real interrogation of government practices, especially those connected to lockdown of a society, has been prominent. The money spent on convincing the public that the covid strategy advocated by government is non-contestable has been huge. Television advertising has not been subtle, in trying to cajole citizens to think in accord with government wishes and act accordingly.

In New Zealand, Prime Minister, Jacinda Ardern, for whom I voted and have had great respect, has recently announced that “we are the only source of truth”. Censorship of alternative ideas has been stern. Alternatives are readily dismissed as conspiracy theory or misinformation (as opposed to missing information). What happened to critical theorists?

They are now usually forced to communicate ideas underground and/or via social media.

My hope is that any new social order that may emerge from the impact of covid will have an enlightened place for older people, and that deviance will be not only tolerated but welcomed.

## **Covid, older adults and learning prospects in Aotearoa New Zealand *Brian Findsen***

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It is now 23 August 2021 and the 7<sup>th</sup> day of a level 4 lockdown in Aotearoa New Zealand. I am subject to the rules surrounding this harsh constraint from government – leave home only for essential services (e.g. supermarkets; petrol service stations); no schools or universities open; almost all businesses closed; compulsory mask wearing in indoor facilities; keeping one’s distance from neighbours; no physical contact with family outside of your home. Only six hours’ notice was given (48 hours for those not in residence to get home) so some people have been trapped away from home.

After around a year of almost normal life, New Zealanders could be forgiven for thinking that covid – now the Delta variant – was an issue for other countries. Not so. As of today, 148 cases have been identified, after the initial identification of covid in a visitor from New South Wales occurred and the country has been abruptly shut down.

My interest in learning in later life and the well-being of seniors (I am currently a Board member of Age Concern Hamilton) has been my major research arena for the last 20 years. Understanding what is happening (or not happening) for elders, in my view, is best developed

by knowing about the life circumstances for them, especially in terms of opportunities and constraints for their learning, mainly non-formal or informal (self-directed). Hence, the covid outbreak and its risks for seniors (there are few tangible benefits!) can be interpreted via selected life conditions as follows:

*Social inclusion/exclusion:* One of the global issues for most elders is dealing with fewer social networks and allied social isolation. As a result of the lockdown, many of the usual avenues for seniors' social interaction have been curtailed. For instance, as indicated by the NZ Aged Care Association, all rest-homes are closed for visiting. Services such as Meals on Wheels have to find different modes of delivery without physical contact. Family members under level 4 cannot interact first-hand other than by online. The mental health of people, not just older adults, has become a prominent issue but older persons who do not have relations living with them are especially prone to loneliness and depression.

*Technology:* While many people my age (I recently turned 70) do have sufficient knowledge and skills to communicate remotely, this cannot be assumed for all people my age and older who undertook paid work in a different era. Banks, in particular, keen to close their doors in many places (despite their huge profits), now assume that older people have a computer and cell phone to learn to deal with financial transactions. In the recent outbreak of covid, a case (person) visited the relatively remote area of the Coromandel and the community have rushed to get tested and/or get vaccinations. The scanning of QR codes has been made mandatory by government. It has been noted by Age Concern at the national level that local older people are less likely to have a cellphone and/or do not drive! Further, going to a GP anywhere is more problematic and people are advised to consult remotely (phone/online) in preference to face to face consultation.

*Housing:* New Zealand has a major shortage of suitable homes and the costs of houses has increased dramatically well beyond many people's levels to purchase or to have the ability to meet mortgage payments in a low level economy. Older people are increasingly placed in jeopardy. According to the 2018 Census in the age group of 60-64, one quarter does not own their home and the need to rent is increasing. (Thousands of people are now housed in motels throughout the country as homelessness has escalated and older people are no exception to this predicament). Further, many landlords enact ageism, preferring younger people to rent their properties.

I have above identified three areas where greater numbers of older people are feeling more vulnerable, thus nullifying their desire to learn in any environment where costs are out of reach or everyday realities make provider organized learning difficult to achieve.

Reference: [www.ageconcern.org.nz](http://www.ageconcern.org.nz); *Senior Watch* 23 August 2021.

## The Sustainable Development Goals – Reflective Review of the RMIT-led EU and Asia-Pacific Project

### Developing Insights into the Power of Partnerships: The EU SDG Project in review *Bruce Wilson*

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Jean Monnet Network on The European Union's Role in the Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals in Asia Pacific

#### Introduction

In June 2017, the European Union (EU) institutions and the Member States reached agreement on a new European Consensus on Development: 'Our World, Our Dignity, Our Future'. The Consensus is important as development is a shared competence between the EU and its Member States. It sets a framework for the negotiations that occur subsequently over actions targeted at specific developing nations and how those actions will be funded and managed.

The Consensus very clearly situates the intent of the EU with respect to development in the context of the United Nations (UN) Global Agenda to 2030. It commits the EU and Member States to implementing the Agenda, with its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), across all internal and external policies, emphasising a comprehensive and coherent approach. The parties aim to balance the environmental, economic, and social dimensions of sustainability, addressing the interlinkages amongst the SDGs and the international impacts of their domestic actions.

The European Consensus on Development frames the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in partnership with all developing nations... The purpose of this Consensus is to provide the framework for a common approach to development policy that will be applied by the EU institutions and the Member States while fully respecting each other's distinct roles and competences... Actions by the EU and its Member States will be mutually reinforcing and coordinated to ensure complementarity and impact. (The New European Consensus on Development 2017, 4).

The new Consensus is aligned with the key principles of the 2030 Agenda:

- People – human development and dignity;
- Planet – protecting the environment, managing natural resources and tackling climate change;
- Prosperity – inclusive and sustainable growth and jobs; and
- Peace – peaceful and inclusive societies, democracy, effective and accountable institutions, rule of law and human rights for all.



A fifth ‘p’, Partnership, is the central concept of the framework. ‘Parliaments, political parties, regional and local authorities, research institutions, philanthropic organisation, cooperatives, the private sector and civil society have become instrumental partners in reaching the most vulnerable and marginalised people’ (The New European Consensus on Development 2017, 37).

### **The Power of Partnership**

An important illustration of the power of partnership has been provided by the Jean Monnet Network on ‘the EU’s Role in the Implementation of the SDGs in Asia Pacific’. The Network itself has been a partnership amongst five universities and 14 chief investigators, with many participants from government, business, and non-government organisations. More importantly, it has explored important examples of the EU’s work to implement the SDGs in parts of Asia Pacific, illustrating the multidimensional partnerships that have formed to carry the work forward. The value of universities supporting partnerships in this was recognised in the *Time Higher Ed (THE)* ranking of universities in supporting implementation of the SDGs, where the Jean Monnet Network is identified as an outstanding global example.

An emphasis on the importance and potential impact of partnerships is not new, of course. Partnerships have in various ways been taken for granted as a means of consolidating resources and achieving synergies. However, the scale of current challenges, as reflected in the UN Global Agenda, means that partnerships and collaboration are essential to achieving successful outcomes. The development of effective partnerships, whether between governments, amongst civil society organisations, or between government and civil society organisation, cannot be taken for granted. Differing interests, linguistic and cultural perspectives, scale, resources, capabilities, and accountabilities can all affect the formation, dynamic and effectiveness of partnerships.

The Jean Monnet Network on the EU, SDGs and Asia Pacific has explored a range of types of partnerships and their potential to transform individual and community circumstances, and through scaling of place-based initiatives, to contribute to the transformation envisaged in the UN Global Agenda. One of the key insights from this work has been the integral role of partnerships in contributing to social innovation, and how central these initiatives are, alongside scientific innovation, in addressing ‘wicked’ problems. In many respects, there has been too much of a focus until now on science and technology as the most appropriate means of addressing a broad range of environmental and biodiversity issues. While this realm of enquiry is necessary, innovation in social, political and governance processes and structures is just as important for delivering impact.

### **A Concluding Conference**

Many contributions to a conference convened by the Jean Monnet Network in March 2020 confirmed these insights from the project’s case studies. The year 2020 marked five years of action in the journey to achieving the 2030 Transformational Agenda’s 17 Sustainable Development Goals as well as the close of the Jean Monnet Sustainable Development Goals Network’s project. The concluding conference in March 2021 provided a platform to explore

the evolution and progress of the Transformational Agenda and issues encountered on the journey.

The conference theme, “Europe, the Asia Pacific and the Global Transformation Agenda”, was chosen to explore the work of researchers and others involved in various aspects of the Network over the past three years, and to enable the sharing of ideas about the current state and future challenges of the Global Agenda. In keeping with the Network’s goal, and one of the project’s stated aims, nurturing a new generation of researchers, the first day of the conference was a forum for Early Career Researchers to share their work, with an experienced Network researcher leading the discussion and providing expert comment and direction.

The subsequent two days provided an opportunity for members of the Jean Monnet Network to exchange thinking and ideas about current issues and future directions for the Global Agenda with other researchers. Panels and individual presentations discussed single SDGs in the context of case studies but also broader and conceptual issues across the full range of the Transformational Agenda. The papers highlighted the challenges, explored progress, and drew attention to the inherent Agenda contradictions and the complexity of avoiding ‘siloeing’ – that is, focusing on one Goal to the exclusion of others.

Two consistent themes in the Network’s program have been the importance of a holistic approach to the Goals, and recognising the contextual, place-based nature of the Goals, meaning that outcomes of interventions to achieve a Goal must ultimately be tangible and benefit communities on the ground in a particular place. During the course of the project, specific resources have been developed to support a place-based focus. One example is the Guidelines for Voluntary Local Reviews see [https://www.uclg.org/sites/default/files/uclg\\_vlrlab\\_guidelines\\_2020\\_volume\\_i.pdf](https://www.uclg.org/sites/default/files/uclg_vlrlab_guidelines_2020_volume_i.pdf)), prepared by United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) in Barcelona and UN-Habitat. However, this and other similar guides tend to emphasise the measurement of cities and regions against agreed indicators which can continue to imply a rather fragmented approach. The key is to recognise that action on one Goal or aspect of a Goal will have consequences in several other areas, all of which need to be kept in perspective.

The conference provided an opportunity for Network members to present critical insights from the project. One significant contribution was the introduction of a new conceptual framework for development action, dubbed ‘*the Propeller Model*’. The model emerged and evolved through interactions and discussions amongst Network members about how to understand the effective contribution of the EU to the implementation of the SDGs in particular case study sites in the Asia Pacific region, drawing on their own experiences in the field. The case studies were drawn from Lao PDR, the Philippines, Bangladesh, and Vanuatu.

To achieve the transformations envisaged by the ambitious agenda of the Global Goals, the ‘Propeller Model’ theorises development as a dynamic and reciprocal process rather than approaching it as a one-way or top-down process. The model takes into account the way that place-based realities equally influence development actors, and interpretation of the relevance of the Global Goals. This exploration of the conditions shaping transformation is the key focus of one of the monographs in production by the Network.

The conference illustrated the importance of the Transformational Agenda and the interconnectedness of the Goals. Originally conceptualised as an in-person event, the reality of COVID-19 transformed the conference into a hybrid event with a small in-person contingent of presenters/audience at RMIT University, and a far broader geographical reach via technology than an in-person event could have achieved. Presenters came from the UK, Australia, New Zealand, Singapore, Bangladesh, Kuwait and Brazil, to name but a few locations, and brought case studies from yet other countries. Their contributions drew attention consistently to the contextual nature of the Goals, and the need for partnerships at all levels.

One session, devoted to the Lao PDR case study, was an exemplary demonstration of the potential impact that can be achieved when intergovernmental partnerships are supported by collaboration with non-government organisations, local and international, who have developed their own partnership framework. This case study amplifies the ambitions of SDG 17 to build the coherence and capability that can lead to transformational change as sought by the Global Agenda. This is necessary as well, to address the current threat posed by the pandemic and future threats, expected and unexpected.

One issue, which remains a challenge, is how we understand the limits to economic growth, still promoted in SDGs 8 and 9. This was canvassed in a session in the conference to which I contributed. My perspective is that a political economy predicated on growth and the competitive pursuit of profit cannot deliver a transformed world. It raises the question of how we can envisage an alternative. I drew on Albenaz Azmanova (2020), who offers a thorough and comprehensive review of critiques of capitalism, from liberal, welfare and neoliberal perspectives now to the debates about precarity capitalism. In her view, collapse or revolution are both highly unlikely, but there is evidence that we are on the verge of a moment where the mode of development might evolve, capitalism might be overcome under the weights of its limits, and alternative, cooperative forms of economic activity will emerge. This line of thought remains to be explored further.

### **Broader Learning about the Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals**

The Network's research collaboration has demonstrated that the European Union (EU) plays a significant role, at multiple levels, in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Asia Pacific. Its impact derives from its bilateral diplomatic efforts, its contributions to regional intergovernmental forums, from its formal aid to governments for specific initiatives, its 'public' diplomacy in many countries, and its direct support to non-government organisations (NGOs) in some countries. Importantly, these activities interact and are supported by many EU corporate entities and NGOs that have an active presence in the Asia Pacific region.

It is widely recognised that a significant part of the EU's effort has focused on the causes of poverty, and on improving living standards. The EU's own data show that improving education and health systems, as well as support for economic development (including enhancing trade), has been a key focus of the strategies adopted to assist achievement of the Goals.

More recently, the EU's commitment to global climate action has become central to its engagement with Asian and Pacific nations. This priority is hugely important to Pacific nations where rising sea levels pose an existential threat. Specific initiatives promoted by the EU have ranged from investment in research on climate trends and adaptation to encouragement of practical measures to reduce emissions. Apart from ongoing multilateral and bilateral diplomatic pressure, trade negotiations have provided a valuable forum for confronting trade partners with the challenge of emissions reduction.

Work on energy transitions, in particular, has challenged both G20 partners, such as Australia, and rapidly industrialising nations like China, with the need to transform their economies away from coal and conventional manufacturing to embrace renewable energies and circular economy principles. EU work on policies and programs to support 'just' transition for displaced workers and communities has resonated in parts of Australia, where there have been examples of smart specialisation guiding governmental response to the closure of coal-fired electricity generation, and to the cessation of logging in old timber forests.

However, research in the Pacific, in particular, has demonstrated that the EU's contribution, both material and advisory, is not visible in public debate. The role and resources of China are much more likely to feature in local reporting of development initiatives.

The effectiveness of the EU's engagement depends on the formation of partnerships, and in that respect, both formal EU representatives and EU NGOs have shown considerable flexibility and willingness to adapt to emerging circumstances. In some circumstances, the formation of close partnerships has resulted in significant improvement to the impact of key programs.

The Network's various research initiatives have highlighted the importance of engaging directly with the emphasis on transformation that is at the heart of the United Nations Global Agenda. Notwithstanding the focus on economy and industry in SDGs 8 and 9, existing economic systems do not support an ongoing emphasis on growth. Transition to a transformed world will involve a careful rethinking of how economies work to enhance the living standards of the vast majority of the world's population, at the same time as reducing emissions and containing the exploitation of natural resources. The EU, through its own consultative processes and resources, its partnerships with international networks, and through its corporations and NGOs, will exercise crucial leadership in this work, and in the process of negotiating just transitions. Part of this process focuses on practical action, alongside promoting civic learning and rethinking local

Universities are another critical resource in this process. Network members have found that the way in which their own institutions engage with the SDGs can itself be organisationally transformative, not only with respect to their management of resources, but also with their development of programs more attuned to students' and employers' prospective needs. More importantly, universities engage with external partners including governments, industry, and community networks. These relationships allow universities to bring the SDGs to the attention of their partners, and to encourage shared action to implement the global agenda.

*Horizon Europe's* commitment to the global agenda in focusing Europe's research and innovation effort is a constructive example of the way in which governments can bring together and concentrate partnerships to address daunting issues. It is another example of the way in which the EU can exercise global leadership.

Underpinning all of the specific EU and European NGO actions is a commitment to key values of democracy and human dignity. The openness and transparency which this encourages enable critical engagement with the EU's own actions and approach, and with the broader Global Agenda. As the result of lengthy and open consultation, with a quest for consensus, the UN Global Agenda suffers from ambiguities, potential contradiction, and cultural bias. The willingness of European citizens and organisations to engage in public debate on these issues, both to highlight inadequacy and to promote learning which can enhance the Agenda itself and practical action, is essential if transformation is indeed to be achieved.

### **Conclusion**

Apart from the emphasis on partnerships and learning, the final events of the Network activities affirmed two key themes that have been addressed in earlier commentaries from this project:

a) the importance of seeing the UN Global Agenda as an integrated framework for transformation of fundamental aspects of how our economies, social relations, cultural interactions, and environmental engagement are understood and managed at present. We have spent some time trying to understand how the 17 Goals can be seen in relationship to each other, and yet structured so as to guide governmental and civil society action. Hence, our emphasis on the importance of transformational Goals that respect the environment, and the importance of climatic action; on the provision of essential public services; on the complex 'intermediate' goals involving public-private collaboration; and on reconciliation. These four themes are the heart of the Global Agenda; they help to frame how we continually look for and encourage connections amongst the broad range of actions that will be necessary to deliver it.

b) the challenge of Global Governance. Ben Cashore has challenged us to understand that achieving the UN Agenda is not simply a technical or scientific challenge where we can marshal the intellectual resources of the world's nations to solve wicked problems. The threats to our existence involve also a moral dimension, and recognition that not all interests and ambitions can be reconciled in delivering the outcomes, which the Agenda promotes. There are some issues where we simply have to say 'no, this cannot continue'. Nowhere is this more apparent than in relation to climate. As the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has demonstrated, the prospect of calamity is now very close. Our only option is to say 'no' to fossil fuels, and yes to rethinking the primacy of a different way of understanding how energy is produced.

This phase of our work in the EU Centre of Excellence is now complete. We now turn our attention to a new project focused on understanding how social innovation can connect with science more effectively, in order to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

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## Other Anniversaries, remembering for the future

### Declassing oneself: PRIA approaches 40 – where did it start? *Sumitra Srinivasan*

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We in PRIA are delighted to inform you that PRIA will complete 40 years of its kaleidoscopic journey on February 6, 2022. Our long-term interventions to build human and institutional capacity of civil society organisations and the sector are steeped in our core belief in creating an inclusive, just, and democratic society. Here we take a look at where its creator and lifetime leader Rajesh Tandon set out in a direction different from a more conventional academic and administrative highflyer career including work at NLI (National Labour Institute) and PECCE (Public Enterprise Centre for Continuing Education). Next year we will engage with the story and current role and work of PRIA itself

#### *Kya Kar Rahe Ho, Babua? (Son, What Are You Doing?)*

Early morning in the summer of 1977. A young man, in his mid-twenties, was determinedly trying to lift the hoe attached to the bullocks in the fields that surrounded a village in Kherwara block. This young man had spent the better part of six months living in the villages of southern Rajasthan (in India) undertaking field work for his PhD thesis.

The initial bus ride to Kherwara had been jarring to his senses, he later wrote in the preface to his thesis, submitted in May 1978.

*Once I got down from the bus and started locating the field office of Seva Mandir, I realized that my appearance was out of sync with the place... [from the] array of mud houses, a few villagers, mostly men, were curiously looking at me. Was there potential for any meaningful and worthwhile experimentation in this setting? It was not clear ... However, I did sense certain excitement [in me] about the context. Most of that excitement was related to the novelty of the setting and a certain curiosity about rural India...*

He began living in the villages to carry out his data collection. Rural life was a sharp contrast from the urban life that he was used to. There was no electricity. A bath was a dip in the somewhat dirty water of a nearby river -- the whole village bathed and washed clothes there. Cattle also walked into the water to cool themselves. The open pastures were the toilet facilities.

The initial weeks were disorienting and even discomfoting. But a large number of people were living there without any seeming discomfort; why couldn't he? Gradually, he became accustomed to village life, adopting a style of dress (kurta-pyjama with flip-flops) that helped him blend in.

'Declassing oneself', the subject of conversations with peers at the prestigious Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) in Kanpur where he had studied electrical engineering, played in his mind. The final act in immersing himself and feeling one with those who were poor and marginalised meant he had to learn how to plough the fields using the technology that the poor farmers in rural India had been using for generations.

This had brought him to the fields of maize and corn that early morning.

An elderly farmer, sitting under a shady tree, had been watching him for some time. Why was this city-bred, well-educated boy working in the fields?

*"Kya kar rahe ho, babua?"* (What are you trying to do, son?)

*"Kisan ban na hai, kaka."* (I want to learn how to be a farmer, Uncle.)

*"Accha? Kyon?"* (Really? Why?)

*"Kyonki agar mujhe gaon ke logon ke saath kaam karna hai, toh mujhe kheti-badi sikhna hoga."* (If I want to work with the rural poor, I must learn how to cultivate fields, to grow crops, which is their main source of livelihood.)

The old man continued to look puzzled.

*"Tum che mahine se hamare beech rah rahe ho, gaon-gaon gaye ho. Tumhare tarah ke log kitne mile?"* (For six months you have been living among us. How many people like yourself have you encountered in the villages you have visited?)

The question caught the young man by surprise. What was the elderly farmer trying to get at?

There were few professionally educated villagers. The two field facilitators from Seva Mandir had undergraduate degrees, one in agriculture and the other in accounting. He was not sure if the schoolteacher in the village, or the patwari (village land record official) had formal degrees. There was certainly no professional researcher with two degrees (engineering and MBA).

*"Bahut kam, kaka."* (Just a few, Uncle)

*“Tum hamare jaise ban ne ki kyon koshish kar rahe ho? Hum peedhiyon se hain kisan, hamein kheti aati hai. Hum woh kar lenge. Tum apni padhai hamari sahyog ke liye, hamari unnati ke liye, istamal karo.”* (Why are you trying to become like us? We are farmers, for generations. We have the knowledge to cultivate our fields. Use your education and knowledge to support us in bringing the change we need.)

And from this encounter was seeded the idea of setting up and sustaining a support organisation that would train, use local knowledge, and develop capacities of the poor and marginalised to participate effectively in the developmental efforts of India through collective efforts.

This organisation is Participatory Research in Asia, PRIA, established in 1982, by Dr Rajesh Tandon.

Today PRIA continues to play a vital cutting-edge role in Indian and global social and community thought, life and work with a close-packed series of Webinars. On 15 September for example there was a *Samvad – Conversation on Re-designing Civil Society Eco-System: From Local to Global*, in collaboration with International Centre for Non-Profit Law (ICNL), USA; Asia Democracy Network (ADN), South Korea/ Thailand and Voluntary Action Network India (VANI). Next year PRIA itself, and also this Bulletin, will tell us more about its present and future work.

## **Greenpeace turns 50: any lessons for the rest of us? *Jim Falk***

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[Jim Falk is Chair, Board of Directors and National Trustee, Greenpeace Australia-Pacific Ed.]

Greenpeace is 50 years old this year. But it is easy to forget that Greenpeace, with its proud and iconic history, its ships patrolling the seas, its reputation for cutting edge action in defence of the environment, and its strong campaigning on climate change, requires a culture, leadership, and governance. Above all it must be able to learn – year after year. It must find ways to adapt, grow in understanding, and succeed. For that it needs to sustain a flexible and adventurous culture, and to resist the tensions, which destroy organisations from inside, as well as attacks from outside. Those external challenges can be expected daily from those whose interests it confronts.

A style of the organisation was set from its beginnings. When a dozen peace activists set sail from Vancouver on an old fishing vessel - the Phyllis Cormack - on 13 September 1971 bound for the island of Amchitka off the Alaskan coast where a US nuclear bomb test was imminent, they unwittingly shaped what would eventually become Greenpeace. As that name suggested, it would be an organisation committed to the belief that peace and sustainability were intertwined goals. By sailing into the blast area, they put their lives in the way of the test. They took the public into an area where most could not go – “bearing witness” on behalf



of many others. They utilised the methodology of “non-violent direct action” with its history of success in India under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi, and a long adherence to it celebrated by the North American Quakers. And of course, like Gandhi, they were not deterred by laws when they judged non-violent transgression was required to follow a greater moral imperative.

Nevertheless, the crew of 12 who took this courageous action 50 years ago would have been astonished that they had seeded Greenpeace with such a vigorous plant that it would become one of the world’s largest and best-known environmental campaigning organisations. And, in the course of growing to that imposing scale, Greenpeace has had to learn a lot.

First it had to set its basic parameters. These were non-violence, absolute independence from business and political parties and government funding, combined more ethereally with “hope and action”. Its mission even now is true to its beginnings - “to protect the planet in all its diversity and promote peace and non-violence”.

Built on this goal, the evolving organisation had to learn how effectively to confront national power. From the ramming of a ship by the French government after interrupting and delaying a nuclear weapon test to, in August 1973, sailing the vessel Greenpeace-III with several ships into another test zone at Moruroa atoll, it had to be prepared to anticipate the preparedness of the State to confront it with coercive violence. Greenpeace-III was boarded by commandos, the crew beaten and arrested. Greenpeace needed to develop a new preparedness: to see beyond these expressions of national coercive strength to the broader power of changing public opinion. This, together with improved technical capacity, resulted in the French ending atmospheric nuclear testing in 1974.

In 1985 the French attempted retribution by sinking the Rainbow Warrior. One Greenpeace crew member died in the two limpet mine explosions. Ghastly though this was, it did not sink the organisation. Greenpeace had learned resilience. But it was not until 1996, after Greenpeace once more had sailed to Mururoa to contest French underground testing and were for their pains again been brutally attacked by French commandos, that the global opposition to that testing reached the point that the French President would announce a “definitive end” to the programme. Of course, Greenpeace was not solely responsible for that outcome, but it could certainly take pride in having played an iconic and potent role.

Some of the things learned have been seemingly very simple – like the extraordinary power of combining a serious action with a very funny narrative. A Greenpeace pioneer – Rex Weyler – recounts how in 1981 in Vancouver, an oil tanker was set to enter the Salish Sea loaded with water as a “test” of how easily a tanker could manoeuvre to a site where a port was proposed. In response Greenpeace mounted a “test blockade”, bringing the ship to a halt in full view of the press, and carried the joke through telling police it was “just a test”, that they were “testing the handcuffs”, “testing the jail”, with even the police getting in on the joke by providing the prisoners with hamburgers “to test”.\* The port was never built. Successes are also lessons. Greenpeace worldwide continued to perfect the art of building and deploying such narratives. \*<https://www.greenpeace.org/international/story/48457/greenpeace-50-years-rex-weyler-mailbag/>

Greenpeace activists have also learned the need to be versed in and use relevant science. But whilst engaging with science they have also had to understand the ways science is used in the arena of contestation. Activists will often be caught up in the realities of scientific and technological controversy (whether over nuclear energy or the destruction of the ozone layer), and have to learn how to participate, whilst respecting the norms and traditional practices which impart to science its particular authority and legitimacy. In the course of engaging with this, Greenpeace has developed its own laboratories. At one stage it built a car with twice the fuel efficiency of its counterpart on the market; it also developed its own ozone friendly “Greenfreeze” gas for use in air-conditioners and refrigerators.

Another challenge has been to develop a “theory of change”. It is not enough to take actions; they must be taken in the realistic understanding of how they expect to achieve objectives. That theory must embrace how a focussed global organisation can contribute to action across and in concert with many others. How to do that, while maintaining identity and even supporters, is yet another constant challenge. And of course, how to avoid the pitfall of magical thinking that campaigning organisations easily fall into, whereby bold tactics and actions become the focus of attention, with their contribution to the goal somehow assumed as magically inevitable.

Other insights learned have been equally difficult, notably how to act simultaneously at global and local scale. There may be a sweet spot in the balance between these two. but if so, it is desperately elusive. For Greenpeace for example, funds are raised nationally but must support global campaigns. The results of actions must satisfy supporters in local and national settings, even as they must also appreciate the need for regional and global campaigns which may focus, for example, on the Amazonian Rain Forest rather than their own local concerns. Balancing these two, and explaining the balance, is an ongoing dilemma.

Greenpeace has evolved to become a network of 26 “NROs, or national regional offices” (semi-independent organisations usually incorporated and governed under local law) in over 55 countries across Europe, the Americas, Africa, Asia and the Pacific. Binding this network into cohesive action is a continuing challenge. The knowledge that common basic values are held is not enough. Greenpeace has had to learn to manage, lead and govern itself globally. That has been an evolving challenge.

I have watched this process with interest since 1996, particularly in the construction of a system to govern Greenpeace. In 1996, in my first round as Chair of the Board of Greenpeace Australia Pacific, I was appointed by Greenpeace International to membership of a small working party which took a first step in consolidating the authority of the International Executive Director and staffing. At the same time, at the urging of the Trustee of GP-New Zealand, and myself, the management of Greenpeace was separated from and made subject to governance by the Council - an independent body composed of the Trustees (normally the Chairs of the Boards of the NROs).

That provided a defensible system of governance. But the harder task was to create a sufficient sense of Greenpeace as a global force, as opposed to a collection of national entities, to develop a global response able to confront increasingly global opponents. That

would mean developing a global culture, collectively constructing global strategies which all would adhere to, and - the really hard part – sharing resources in a way that enabled global strategies to be applied in strategically important places.

In 2000-2001 I was elected by the Council to head an international Working Group to take forward the further integration required. We styled the goal and process as “One Greenpeace”. By now, that has become a well understood label for what is by now a deep working value adhered to across Greenpeace.

The work to achieve “One Greenpeace” has continued over the subsequent two decades, with much development, and increased capability. Not only does each NRO now contribute a significant amount to the global campaign funds, but 80% of every NRO’s campaigns must be aligned with and carry forward the global campaigns that have been collectively agreed. At the front of the campaign objectives has been to hasten the end of fossil fuel use, in the interests of restraining the plunge into dangerous climate change.

In short, over the 50 years of its existence, Greenpeace has shaped itself as a learning organisation. To that end, even now it has a Greenpeace “academy” for staff. Following its objectives have forced Greenpeace to find and implement solutions to problems with which the world in which Greenpeace campaigns is also struggling. Tackling the two challenges right now which stand out - the COVID-19 (SARS-CoV-2) pandemic and the increasing impacts of Climate Change - illustrates similar lessons. These problems cannot be solved in any one country. They must be conceptualised and acted upon simultaneously globally. At the same time, global strategies will be meaningless if there is not the will and capacity to implement them locally and regionally. The only way to achieve this is to build a culture and corresponding governance structures which are able simultaneously to value and promote such a perspective. Perhaps above all else that might be distilled from Greenpeace’s learnings, if we are to build a sustainable future, collectively, across the planet, we will need to get much better at finding how to do this.

## **Nothing fails like success: How Chinese Communist Adult Education went on a long march into a PowerPoint snooze fest *Roger Boshier***

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### **Science and Democracy**

One hundred years ago about 3,000 Peking University students marched to the Gate of Heavenly Peace to protest the way China was treated in the Treaty of Versailles. Mao Zedong had recently arrived from Hunan and the visitor can briefly sit in the chair he occupied when employed as a library assistant at Peking University – the red house. The last emperor was overthrown in 1911 and, by May 4, 1919 leading scholars, writers and activist students were fed up with squabbling warlords and foreigners occupying ‘concession areas’. Activists wanted science and democracy and soon discovered adult education was more important than banners and guns.

## **Pedagogy and Tragedy on the Long March**

May 4<sup>th</sup> movement members were keen on free-thinking, democratisation, and the study of literature. But neither warlords nor Nationalist soldier/politicians like Chiang Kaishek intended to give the fledgling Communist Party space to debate theoretical or practical problems. However, once World War Two got underway and Japan occupied China Nationalists and Communists needed to work together. The United Front did not last and, with Japanese bombers destroying working-class districts like Zhabei in Shanghai, and gangsters shooting Party members in the street, Communists decided to flee coastal districts and settle in rural ‘base areas’.

Not long after Party members settled in Jiangangshan in rural Jiangxi, casualty rates soared, food was scarce, families were in disarray, and there were many serious arguments, illnesses, and shortages. The nascent Red Army needed to leave Jiangxi and find a remote base area far from predations of Nationalist armies, Japanese soldiers and Russian (Commintern) advisers. During the Long March Red Army organisers mounted participatory adult education events aimed at illiterate peasants curious about Communism. Dance, theatre and singing troupes went ahead and organised learning events at the next Long March stopping place.

When the Long March reached Zunyi in Guizhou, there was a spirited debate about an old problem. “Our Russian comrades (eg. Otto Braun) are with us on this Long March, but is Soviet Communism what we need in China?” Russia opted for industrialisation and had giant mines and steel works. But should we Chinese be attacking cities? What about rural areas? China is an agricultural country.

Throughout this Zunyi meeting Mao Zedong condemned Russian Communism and the idea it was a model for China. Otto Braun, a Russian representative in Zunyi (and on the Long March), was not impressed by Mao’s anti-Stalin attitude. However, Mao’s Zunyi speech had widespread support and he was elected Chairman of the Chinese Communist Party,

The Long March left Jiangangshan 16 October 1934 and was in Guizhou 7-18 January 1935. It took another year to cover the best part of 6000 miles to Pao’an and Yan’an in Shaanxi province. Years later, Boshier and Huang did a long interview in Yan’an with Granny Wu – who, with her sister, watched bedraggled Long March “soldiers” pass through her remote village of cave dwellers. Granny Wu makes good dumplings and is one of our best informants

## **Red Star Over Yan’an**

The Long March left Jiangangshan and reached Pao’an in Shaanxi in October 1935. In July 1936 Missouri journalist Edgar Snow and New Jersey medical doctor George Hatem walked to Mao’s hideout, where Snow secured many lengthy interviews with Mao and, in *Red Star Over China*, broke news concerning the cross-country Communist escape and revolution in China. Shanghai intellectuals liked the sound of Communist utopia and came to northern China looking for Chairman Mao and offering help. Without doubt, the post-1936 ‘Yan’an way’ was an extraordinary era in Chinese adult education. But 21<sup>st</sup> century scholars and officials know little or nothing about it

## **Adult Education After Liberation**

Without adult education there would have been no Communist revolution and, by the time Mao announced creation of the People's Republic, Party activists well understood how to organize vibrant – and immensely enjoyable – learning events. Moreover, after 30 years of war, most Chinese hoped by 1949 that guns would be discarded and large-scale adult education programs would take their place. But what kind of education should this be?

After being appointed Head of the National Bureau of Workers' and Peasants Education, Yao Zhongda, his wife, and daughter moved into accommodation inside the Zhongnanhai leadership compound at the Forbidden City. Yao lived and worked near Premier Zhou Enlai; Mao Zedong lived over a wall in Section A.

By 1949 China was in a mess but still looked to the Soviet Union for models of how to build Communist utopia. Yao Zhongda, a farm boy from Tang Xian County, had done a good job as a Red Army soldier and, after liberation, was tasked to launch literacy campaigns, repair a fractured nation and help citizens build skills needed for “modernisation”. However, despite having lived in the same leadership compound as Mao Zedong, during the catastrophic Cultural Revolution (1966 to 1976) Yao Zhongda was sent to Ningxia border regions for ‘re-education in the countryside’.

Yao's friend Li Li was humiliated by her workmates in the Shanghai Education Bureau but, being a former soldier in Chen Yi's New 4<sup>th</sup> Army, she was not easily subdued. Much later, authors of this paper went to Shanghai and interviewed Li Li; she had clear recollections of swimming the Yangtze and getting to Shanghai in time for liberation - part of the biggest river crossing in military history. Chen Yi became Mayor of Shanghai, called Li Li to his office and said, “we need adult education ... lots of it ... how about you be the organiser?” From that day on, Shanghai became a hotbed of adult education activism.

## **Cultural Fever and Curious Foreigners**

After 1976, Deng Xiaoping abandoned the worst excesses of Maoist chaos and violence and launched a program of ‘reform and opening’. There were new opportunities for foreigners to visit China, and for Chinese citizens to have foreign books, ideas, and friends.

Just before Christmas 1984 Roger Boshier, Ingrid Pipke and James Boshier entered the freezing Faculty Club at East China University where leading adult educators and their staff had assembled to hear from Canadian visitors. But instead of a talk they were broken into groups and told to look at and answer three questions (eg. what distinguishes a child from an adult learner?) and make group reports. Several good reports stimulated argument and questions.

Canadian visitors then went to a steel factory and huge tobacco works. At the tobacco factory several hundred workers had assembled in a hall with a small television screen at the front. Chinese characters appeared on the screen. There were no graphics, pictures or sound. However, as text rolled by we were told it was a lesson on fluid mechanics (hydraulics).

Learners scribbled notes with the stub of a pencil. When the screen went dark, foreigners were asked if they had any questions for learners.

Boshier pointed to a young man in an immaculate Mao suit and said ‘Ni hao, what do you now know about hydraulics that you did not know yesterday? Audience members roared with laughter. He had learned nothing from tiny scrolling text but was not going to say this in front of workmates or three foreigners. Then it was tea and cakes and tour of the tobacco factory. As visitors encountered learners from the just finished experiment in 1980s distance education, the workers were friendly, convivial, and appreciative.

### **Outstanding Headteachers**

Later the authors were asked to orchestrate an educational event for China’s outstanding school headmasters and head mistresses, who would enjoy an all-expenses paid sojourn in a Hangzhou luxury hotel. Organisers wanted these head teachers to learn about similarities and differences between China and Canada.

Yan Huang handed out 5’ x 8’ cards and felt pens, and said ‘On each card, write a word that comes to mind when I say “China” or “Canada”. You have 30 seconds! Go!’ When ready, hundreds of China cards were posted on one wall; Canada-related cards on another wall.

“OK, on your feet, this group go to the China wall and select the five “stand-out” - most significant - words.”

“This other group – go to the Canada wall and select the five stand-out words.”

“Now get into groups, appoint a recorder and discuss why you chose these words and not others. Why are they significant?”

During the “reporting back” there was good humour and a high energy level.

This opening activity spawned a wide range of activities – including singing, dancing, drawing, skits – for the next two days. The entire program flowed from cards on the wall. and the focus was on participants’ knowledge. During breaks, participants whispered in our ears – “we like this. It’s fun. We are learning. We need more of this in China. Xie, xie!”

Yan Huang is from Xiangtan County - where Mao comes from – and head teachers were intrigued by learning from a Chinese woman who used participatory – and enjoyable – methodologies. They also chuckled when Yan decisively corrected benighted Renmin professors who mistakenly thought George Bush was President of Canada!

### **Bravo UNESCO**

At one time, the two leading Chinese university graduate programs in adult education were at Beijing Normal and East China Normal (Shanghai) Universities. Both programs were weakened by the fact adult was folded into higher education. Moreover, after China joined the WTO, and Peter Senge toured China talking about learning organisations, old adult education graduate programs came to embrace human resource development and very narrow-minded and neoliberal notions of lifelong learning. Adult education fell off its perch. However, after

the obsession with learning organisations faded, Beijing decided learning villages, towns and cities were a priority; the Central Party School was told to develop the theory, but it would be mayors and other municipal officials who put theory into practice.

Unlike the USA, China pays its annual dues to and supports UNESCO. In 2013 Beijing hosted the third UNESCO conference on learning cities and sent Vice Premier Madame Liu Yandong, the only woman in the Politburo, to greet delegates and discuss the learning society. Boshier was seated in the Canada section of Row 2.

Madame Liu, an open-minded, jovial, humorous, intelligent, and well-educated woman gave an extraordinary speech dwelling on human needs and the importance of democratising learning opportunities and education. On the way out she spent several minutes talking with Boshier. When asked about the biggest impediment to making Beijing into a learning city, she said laughing loudly ‘my colleagues; they think it is all about money. You and I know it’s about human needs’. Liu’s analysis of adult education and lifelong education strongly echoed the work of Professor Ye Zhonghai at East China Normal University. Delegates at this UNESCO meeting heard one of the most lively and enlightened analyses given by a very high-ranking Chinese official.

### **Goodbye Theatre Troupe, Hello PowerPoint**

Without adult education there would have been no Communist revolution in China. Yet the extraordinary creativity and effectiveness of Yan’an era Communist adult education is now forgotten, dismissed as not relevant to the future. In 21<sup>st</sup> century China almost every adult education event as Communist Party initiative features PowerPoint tedium where someone - an academic, Party-Secretary or Mayor - bemoans teacher-centred education and the silencing of learners.

Even at official Communist Party events it is clear many PowerPoint presentations are not made by the speaker. Instead, they are made by staff, the audio-visual, publicity or communications department. Slides are crammed with words and the speaker reads text off the screen. Bored audience members play with computers or phones, and text other class members.

PowerPoint travesties are not confined to Asia. But PowerPoint with Chinese characteristics has its own problems. If re-education in the countryside becomes the solution, throwing the media projector off a bridge would be a good idea.

## **New Themes**

**Solidarity and the middle path: Reflections on travel, tourism and hospitality sectors post Covid-19** *Chan Jin Hooi*

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In pre-Covid years, the tourism sector developed at a rapid pace, contributing significantly to the home and host countries. In 2018, there was a record of 1,400 million international tourists travelled worldwide, a rise of 6% over 2017, according to the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO, 2019). Due to the growth of budget airlines and the rise of digital services, the tourist numbers have fast accelerated in recent years as compared to the past decades. For instance, there were only 25 million international tourist visits in 1950, rising to 166 million in 1970, and then 435 million in 1990. The rapid growing number of travellers has contributed to global economic growth. It generates foreign exchange, drives regional development, directly supports numerous types of jobs and businesses, which underpins many local communities. A recent report by OECD (2020) highlighted that tourism directly contributes an average of 4.4% of GDP, 21.5% of service exports, and 6.9% of employment in OECD countries.

Nonetheless, there are significant backlashes in many touristic destinations, both in cities and rural destinations. Academia and the media have widely coined and discussed the term *over-tourism* to represent the phenomenon where a destination received substantial number of tourists and related tourism activities and establishments, which prove excessively disruptive and hard to manage. Over-tourism could be due to limitation in physical carrying capacities or social-psychological perspectives of residents' perception on how tourists and their activities have an impact on their daily life (Mihalic, 2020). Some critical tourism scholars have therefore advocated "degrowing" the tourism sector (see Hingins-Desbiolles et al., 2019; Butcher, 2021), a reversal of mass consumerism trajectory fuelled by growth-obsessed capitalist firms.

Tourism is an activity in which "self" encounters "other". In many settings, it sets a stage for various degrees of interaction between residents and tourists across different geographical regions or cultural backgrounds (Wang, Berbekova & Uysal, 2021). This generates many possibilities for tourists to establish emotional intimacy with residents (Woosnam & Norman, 2010), which could be the key motivation of travelling for some tourists who seek a taste of authentic local life and culture, as well as the potential to build new friendships. This is something we still observe in tourism prevalent in some indigenous communities.

While we cannot ignore the social and economic benefits tourism brings to local communities, tourism also holds the potential to empower marginalized communities socially, economically, and politically (van den Berghe, 1992). The benefits of tourism for tourists themselves are also obvious, particularly our mental health after a long Covid lockdown. Many of us do feel the need to get out of our homeworking routine within the confine of our four walls to somewhere, anywhere for a holiday. On-demand TV tourism and drama programmes may help vicariously, but the experience they offer is virtual, not real. We do know the healing power of being a tourist, our desire to be a tourist. But how are we going to balance the demand and benefits of tourism while avoiding the challenges and issues of over-tourism?

An area receiving less attention but of growing interest is the efforts to build relationship between tourists and residents. There is an emerging perspective - the *Emotional Solidarity Theory* (Hammarström, 2005) propounding a more interactive approach in building affective



bonds between residents and tourists. Emotional solidarity is commonly expressed as the perceived emotional closeness and degree of interaction between one individual with another, which develops from shared actions, common beliefs, and interaction (Suess, Woosnam & Erul, 2020). In the case of tourism, it could be viewed as affective bonds between residents and tourists. Tourism scholarship has adopted this concept to measure and explain residents' attitudes toward tourists and thereby tourism development. As a positive sociocultural phenomenon, emotional connection would produce various positive perceptions (Joo & Woosnam, 2020), encourage the formation of friendship (Capistrano & Adam, 2018), enhance place attachment (Aleshinloye et al., 2020), decrease stereotypes (Woosnam et al., 2018) between tourists and residents.

As over-tourism is partly a result of residents' perception of tourism development, policy-makers and tourism industries should explore the ways to build a better understanding and even a mutual learning environment for tourists and residents. Emotional solidarity could be a useful concept, where more interactions among tourists and residents should be explored in order to build stronger affective bonds. Post-Covid, there might be a middle path toward quality development of tourism industry, going beyond the sole focus on economic benefits for local businesses, or efforts in self-gentrification of the local community (Chan et al., 2016), but building emotional solidarity between the tourists and residents.

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## **Covid and tourism: the need to think and learn *Jim Walmsley***

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Exactly one hundred and eighty years ago the world changed in a very fundamental way. Not instantly but gradually. It was in 1841 that Thomas Cook's trip between Leicester and Loughborough in the English Midlands launched the era of what became known as mass tourism. By the year before Covid struck (2018-9), there were over 1.4 billion international tourists and billions more domestic tourists. The "industry" was growing at about 3% per annum. Australia had over nine million international visitors, despite being distant from most of the world's population centres. In Australia, spending by both international and domestic tourists topped Aus\$120 billion. The industry employed over 650,000 people, or about 5% of the workforce. Importantly, 44% of expenditure was in regional [ie. non-metropolitan] destinations. Economically, then, tourism was very important.

Then came Covid. In many senses, Australia was lucky. Being an island nation distant from the rest of the world, it was able to pursue a policy of isolation and thereby control, by and large, the influx of disease. Decades were rolled back to a time when quarantine stations (latterly hotels) provided a line of defence. The downside was that this policy stopped international tourism in its tracks. Eventually, of course, Covid did filter through, notably the Delta variant. Government works best when it has precedents to rely on. With Covid there were no precedents except perhaps for the "Spanish flu" of 1919. Having seen the 'success' of the national quarantine, the State governments in Australia plumped for what were essentially local quarantine arrangements: lockdowns whereby people in certain areas (or entire States) were limited in what they could do and how far they could travel to do it. So, in a short period of time, in-bound tourism had more or completely stopped and domestic tourism had been

massively curtailed, given that the lockdown areas were the main population centres and thus the main source of domestic tourists.

How did people learn to cope with this situation? How did governments learn which policies to apply? How did the tourism industry learn to adapt? And how did the population learn to adjust to a world where travel was extremely limited? The brief answer is chaotically. This is not meant to be a disparaging comment. The emergence of Covid heralded a degree of turbulence in the socio-political and economic environment that surrounds us. In such an environment, 'learning to learn' might well be an appropriate strategy. Continually adjusting and tweaking policies is not necessarily a bad thing; except if it is based on a poor understanding of turbulence.

Predictably but sadly, governments get dazzled by economic statistics and fail to grasp the turbulent nature of wider societal change. This is not to decry the importance of economics as one perspective on the contemporary world. For example, this article began by quoting economic statistics. Moreover, the growth of mass tourism owes much to economic considerations like cost minimisation and affordability. But there is much more at stake than economics. There is an entire realm where tourists and hosts interact and learn from each other. Governments in Australia have nevertheless leapt in with monetary grants to enterprises that have lost income during Covid, with tourism providers very prominent, as well as 'job-keeper' subsidies to help employers maintain staff who might otherwise be retrenched. This may be politically shrewd, but it overlooks the place of tourism in society and means that government learning, in the sense of adapting to turbulence, might be maladaptive.

There is a crying need for a broader understanding of what tourism involves if we are to learn from the Covid experience and enter a post-Covid world with confidence. There seems to be blind faith on the part of government in the belief that things will 'bounce back' after Covid. Subsidies will tide people over until we return to something 'normal'. But will things rebound after Covid? It seems unlikely. WFH (working from home) has succeeded and already is impacting on city centre office space demand. Lockdown has fostered greater awareness (and appreciation?) of the local environment. Social relationships have been re-evaluated. In this context, governments need to realise that there is no such thing as 'the tourism industry'. Compare, for example, the dairy industry or the aluminium industry. What there is, is a continuum of human activity that goes from international travel, through domestic travel, through holidaymaking, to leisure, recreation, and home-based hobbies. For instance, it is impossible to say what proportion of a café's trade or theatre visitation is actually 'tourism'.

Therefore, the use of economic statistics on income and earnings is fraught with difficulty. People engage in discretionary activities because of their intrinsic attractiveness. People derive satisfaction from their varied undertakings. Government statistics do not capture this. What Covid does is provide an opportunity for those in the policy arena to reflect on the motivation that drives people into various fields of endeavour. Some aspects of international travel might be thought of as *positional goods*, in so far as what people do reflects something about their social standing and tastes. Trips to Svalbard or opera performances are a case in point. "Lager louts' holidaying in Mediterranean resorts have very different goals.

Governments need to learn to view tourism differently, more in accord with societal behaviour. Sadly, much of the ‘boosterism’ that has focussed on tourism has had elements of cargo cult. A common attitude has been that visitors will come and bring with them jobs and wealth. This unsophisticated reasoning fails to ask what it is that an area offers in order to attract visitors. Above all, this mentality blinds people to issues of sustainability in tourism.

Is an area being “loved to death” it is not uncommon for locals in a tourist area to blur the words tourist and terrorist. Grievances arise when seemingly trivial issues like parking become more difficult during high tourist seasons. More significant is the experience of places like Barcelona and Venice, where restrictions are needed to limit the number of visitors. And what of the social sustainability of tourism? Who gets the rewards? The world abounds with examples of tourist venues where locals are priced out of the local housing market because of demand fostered through facilities like Airbnb. *Who wins and who loses?* This question often goes unanswered.

As Thomas Cook and successors in mass tourism realised, there is a strong desire to see new places and have new experiences. This experience changes the tourist. It also changes the host community. Not all change is necessarily good. As a society we need to learn how to manage tourism to enable it to be a force for advancing the human condition as well as for personal gratification. Host communities need to learn how best to handle tourism. One of the most profound things that Thomas Cook did was to reduce the *uncertainty* of travel. Package tours brought travel within the realm of industrial workers by taking away the uncertainty of arranging travel and accommodation. What the current Covid-based hiatus has done is re-impose significant uncertainty in both domestic and international travel. How we learn to adapt will influence levels of well-being for the next decade and more.

## **Pandemic and the lifelong learning of the young** *Dorothy Lucardie, Chris Duke*

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News and opinion pieces where we live in Australia are preoccupied with managing and then recovering from the C-19 pandemic, sadly also too often with avoiding blame rather than learning to do better.

A focus for many months was on protecting the elderly and those who cared for them. Of late, with the evolution of C-19 to the delta variant, it has been shifting more to vaccinating the young, schools and their students proving efficient spreaders, and schools being closed where not already closed by general C-19 lockdown. The concern then shifts more to making up for damage suffered: missed or inadequate study and learning of subjects in the formal curriculum, and the difficulty of catching up; problems of final year students as final examinations fall due; and the knock-on problems for higher and further education institutions in identifying and enrolling their next intake.

Institutions adapt as fast and well as they can to ‘home learning’, using new ICT methods. For most of the wealthier schools in the private sector, they and their screen-reared clientele are more familiar with this than many rapidly long-suffering maybe less IT-literate parents, who become ‘in loco’ home tutor-supervisors. It was soon observed how much young people miss being with their school friends, despite daily tic toc chatter; even teachers came to be seen as well-liked friends, and good guide-instructors.

Less evident, but maybe more important, is loss of the social learning that non-instructional ‘off-piste’ hours of the school day allow. Many modern families are small, and street interaction is perhaps highly restricted, especially in cities and under lockdown. . Kids then have little opportunity for peer learning, and for gaining the skills to interacting effectively: an important dimension of the identity formation and social skills that are part of an emergent and maturing identity and personality. Employers come to look for ‘soft skills’ that make for good workers and members of workplace communities; schools even if consulted are less able to give confident advice to complement disrupted formal end of school assessment.

PIMA has an interest in lifelong learning: not just the learning and education of adults. Disrupted early years learning and learning ‘life-deep’ may scar for life, taking us into social and emotional identity and character formation. It is quite possible, that more serious damage will be inflicted by disruption to these early formative years and familiar learning settings than to the economy, where employability, GDP, and skills required for production, distribution, and consumption, along with multitudinous professional and technical support systems, are recognised as being at risk. A worrying signal is the sharp rise in mental health problems and medical consultations among young people.

There is also rising awareness of ever greater inequity and social injustice as a threat to law and order, in the battle against C-19; also rising anxiety about ‘long covid’ danger. But what about the foundations for fit-for-purpose lifelong learning for today’s young?

If this is a subject of interest to you, you may wish to write to Dorothy Lucardie, [dorothy.lucardie@bigpond.com.au](mailto:dorothy.lucardie@bigpond.com.au) and myself, [dukeozenay@gmail.com](mailto:dukeozenay@gmail.com), offering reflections and experiences for a future Bulletin.

## **Pandemic Pedagogy** *Lauren Spring*

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*It's possible to feel two or more emotions at the same time.*

It's 9:02 am. on a Tuesday morning in early April 2021 and I am reading a library book about “feelings” to my three-year-old daughter. I have exactly 2.5 minutes to finish it, get her set up with a puzzle, snacks, drawing paper and markers, and to run to my laptop on the dining room table before it's time for me to login to teach as part of the Art Gallery of Ontario (AGO) Virtual School Programs for the next 3 hours.

But on this particular Tuesday, at 9:04 am. my daughter wants to keep reading with me. She's not in the mood to play by herself while mama teaches, and papa closes the door in the basement and gives a power-point presentation at a zoom staff meeting. It's going to be a rough day.

*It's possible to feel two or more emotions at the same time.*

I love my job with the AGO and am so pleased that my Department at the institution has been able to “pivot” during the pandemic to offer free programs for students and teachers (and parents who have somehow become full-time teachers). I am also thrilled that we have been able to shift many of our adult education programs to Zoom as well—corporate tours, community groups, tours for folks with varying accessibility needs. I'm grateful I am still gainfully employed during a global pandemic, but my heart is also breaking as I see my little girl's chin quiver.

“But I want to play with *you* today, mama. I don't want you to teach.”

My daughter's been having a lot of big feelings lately. We've all been having a lot of big feelings lately. And I don't have time to finish reading about them with her this morning because it's 9:05 already. We moved a few months ago — bought a tiny house outside Toronto. It feels surreal and decadent to have a backyard with a garden after 20 years of living in very small apartments in the big city. If municipal governments decide to lock up and fence off all playgrounds and green spaces again, we'll be okay. We are now people who have a backyard.

But, as it turns out, our yard also came with 6 very beautiful and very sick ash trees, that, according to all expert arborists I consulted, will have to come down soon as the failing branches could become hazardous to those walking or playing beneath. My daughter is devastated by this fact. We all are. But as an only child with 2 parents working from home full-time, these ash trees have become some of her primary playmates during this latest lockdown. She was inconsolable yesterday when yet another well-meaning “tree doctor” confirmed the emerald ash borer had infested the trunks past the point of no return. Chopping down trees is officially one of the worst things to have to spend (an exorbitant amount of) money on.

We explained that they are sick and dying and we don't really have any other choice but to cut them down. But her little park-buddy and her dad were recently diagnosed with Covid-19 and we've also explained to her that we're not seeing them for a few weeks because they are sick and now my daughter is desperately afraid the two of them will die too.

“No, honey. They are sick, but they will get better.”

“Why can't the ash trees get better then, too?”

I have no real answer to these questions. New ones arise hourly, and my brain is foggy from staying up until 3 a.m. each night to get all of my computer work done after my daughter goes to bed. I want to be present. I want to be beside her when these big feelings and big questions

wash over, but I'm already late and my colleagues will be expecting me to login and do a tech check and prepare my slides before we go live to 900 students in exactly 14 minutes.

"I want to play with you too, honey, but mama does need to teach."  
"Why?"

"Well, because it makes me come alive in important ways and that's good for me, and good for you, and good for the family. I'm lucky I can do what I love to do for work" (and we also now have a mortgage, and we need to set aside \$3,000 to chop down these magnificent ash trees).

At 9:21, I finally manage to login.

"Sorry, I'm late."

"No worries, can you share the slides?"

I do. Our Tuesday theme is "Art and the Environment" and I'll be delivering 3 back-to-back programs. The first is for kindergarten grade 3 students, then grade 4s to grade 8s, and then for high schoolers. The first image for today is Willie Cole's *Work Animal*, a sculpture made out of disassembled and reassembled bike parts arranged to resemble a West-African antelope head. Within no time my colleagues are counting me in for the start of the webinar. Minutes later, I am asking students why they think Willie Cole decided to use a bike as material here? What might a bike represent? My daughter colours quietly in the hallway.

Though I can't see any of their faces, the responses come rolling in (via my colleagues on tech support who filter out the curse words and other nonsense replies).

"Cheap transportation"

"More environmentally friendly"

"Energy"

"Exertion"

"Freedom. I am so happy I have my bike in this pandemic. It's the only thing I can do in the day. Just long bike rides in the ravine."

The comments roll in so fast, it's a challenge for me to validate them all. I miss knowing which kid said what, seeing their little faces light up when we round the corner in the gallery space, and they set eyes on a "real" Willie Cole.

"Whoa! Is that made out of bikes?! Wait, it's an animal!"

I miss hearing from teachers, post-tour, about the kids who never talk in class and yet for some reason were eager to answer every question during the visit. I miss witnessing the gravitational pull some of them feel towards certain paintings and sculptures; and I miss gently approaching to remind them that even though we *really* want to, we cannot touch those

1867 impressionist brushstrokes. I miss all of this, and more, but there have been unexpected advantages too. Our reach has expanded exponentially. In a typical pre-pandemic year, our team of Art Educators tours approximately 35,000 students. From Oct 2020 to June 2021, more than 755,000 students participated in our Virtual School Programs. I am now often recognized at the playground. I'll be helping my daughter climb up the ropes at our local park and will see a group of grade 5 students whispering and pointing at me. A few minutes later, one approaches and says:

“Hey, are you the person who talked to our class about that beautiful painting with dots that look like beads?” (Christie Bellcourt's *Wisdom of the Universe*).

We've also been able to establish some neat partnerships with other institutions, exploring how the arts intersect. We shared our platform with the MOMA; the Toronto Symphony Orchestra; the Hong Kong University Museum and Art Gallery; the National Ballet of Canada, and the Canadian Center for Architecture.

Accessibility-wise, these Virtual School Programs have also been a game-changer. Not only are students joining us daily from as far away as the North West Territories, New York City, Rio de Janeiro, and Berlin, but even those who live a short drive instead of a plane-ride away have been discouraged from visiting in the past because of ticket and/or school bus fees. Those who might feel hesitant to speak up and share ideas in person, seem to be more confident doing so via the chat feature. Still, I miss their faces and voices and gasps and laughter.

*It's possible to feel two or more emotions at the same time.*

Later that same afternoon my mom shows up to play with my daughter while I facilitate a virtual Adult Program. We have to use our childcare hours with her sparingly, as it only seems “safe” for them to play outside together, and the weather is still cold and my daughter hates wearing her boots because they are “too scratchy”, and no stores are open for us to go in and try on new ones. I hear my mom coaxing my daughter to build a snow fort through the dining room window as I push the lunch dishes aside on the table to make room for my laptop in the spot where the light is best. I login early this time and load the slides for folks from the Alzheimer's Society, with whom the AGO has a long-standing partnership. I've always enjoyed exploring the Gallery with this group.

The tour is ostensibly for those diagnosed with Alzheimer's and as we focus on various art objects and I recount stories of when and where and why and how they were produced, unexpected conversations surface, and often astounding and vivid long-term memories are sparked. I've heard couples marvel at the muscles on Bernini's Jesus and recall and co-narrate stories of their honeymoon across Italy, I've seen others pause in front of Colville's Soldier and Girl at Station and suddenly get tearful and recount stories they thought they had forgotten about their uncle's time as part of the French army in Mali..... After years of facilitating these tours in person, it seems to me that that they are, in fact, as much for the caregivers (family members or paid support workers) as they are for the designated participants themselves. Whether caregivers are loved ones or paid workers, they consistently



report during these tours how nice it is to have an occasion to talk about something other than medication and daily tasks of living, to be in a cultural instead of clinical setting. Shifting these programs online has had some advantages—it's less stressful for some participants to join from their own living rooms than it is to navigate downtown public transit or parking; I can share works from the vaults that are currently not on display in the galleries, but that I am confident participants will find compelling. But, I've noticed, caregivers generally don't join for these sessions. Perhaps they are "zoomed" out from other engagements; or feel hesitant to attend a program that's not really "for" them when the "real" participant doesn't need to the same assistance they would require in person.

On this particular Tuesday afternoon, as my mom is pulling out the sled from the shed and proposing a walk to the park, only 6 participants have managed to login. Technology is still a struggle—especially for those joining from care homes where workers are stretched thin and overwhelmed. Even if participants are able to see the images clearly, some of them have difficulty unmuting their microphones in time to answer the questions I pose. One elderly man is sitting on the couch, but the screen is clearly all the way across the room—there's no way he'll be able to hear or see anything from there, I think. Midway through the tour a personal support worker in his long-term care home comes in, looks at the screen and says: *"Oh, I am sorry! I thought it was his zoom yoga class, for that one I always to set it up far away so he can move around!"* Other participants forget to mute themselves when the phone rings and they answer it and carry on a long, loud conversation. I am grateful for the woman who is so taken with the Emily Carr painting *Stumps and Sky* that I've shared with the group that she tells us all about her university years in British Columbia and asks question after question about Carr's life and feminism and innovative artistic style. In person, I might gently suggest that we hear what others think about the work too. But I can see one participant has fallen asleep, and another has turned off his camera because he feared the session was being recorded. I encourage this woman's questioning, grateful that I'm not the only one talking. There are 5 minutes left now and my daughter is crying at the door to come back inside.

*Please, mama! Can Nani come inside to play with me, please? Why do I have to be cold all the time when she comes to play?*

I am not exactly sure what kind of learning is taking place during this pandemic, but it's clear that the theme of that book my daughter and I trudged through the snow and cold to fetch from the library's curbside pick-up station rings true.

*It's possible to feel two or more emotions at the same time.*

## Welcome to new member

**Brad Davison** [Davison.bradley97@gmail.com](mailto:Davison.bradley97@gmail.com) [brad.davison@rmit.edu.au](mailto:brad.davison@rmit.edu.au)

Bradley Davison is a recent researcher at the RMIT European Union Centre, and currently the Melbourne Branch Chair of the European Studies Association Australia and New Zealand (ESAANZ). He now works as a Policy Officer within the Victorian State Government, for the Department of Transport's Resilience and Emergency Coordination Team. Currently, in September 2021, he is also on secondment to the COVID-19 response team, and filling both roles.

He attended RMIT University where he studied a BA in International Studies and a BA (Hons) in International Studies. His honours thesis analysed the nuclear energy policies of three European Union countries, Germany, France, and Poland. His thesis received the Tom Nairn award as the highest scoring thesis in his graduation year.

Though not now in academia, Brad retains links with RMIT where he worked in the EU in Asia Pacific team referred to by Wilson above. His research interests include climate change and environment policy, security studies, European politics, and the intersection between international relations and the environment. He has a substantial paper in this current Bulletin No. 38, which 'brings the elephants out into the light'.

*PIMA Website* <https://pimamembers.wixsite.com/network>

