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Global Collaboration and Advocacy for Adult Learning: Contributions of a Civil Society Network.

Edited by Chris Duke and Heribert Hinzen

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Global Collaboration and Advocacy for Adult Learning: contributions of a Civil Society Network.

Editors Chris Duke[±] and Heribert Hinzen[*]

Abstract The next UNESCO World Conference on Adult Learning and Education (CONFINTEA VII) will take place in Marrakesh in June 2022. It will be a time to reflect on the past decade and prepare for the future. It will be a chance to integrate deeper with the Education Agenda of the Sustainable Development Goals. Civil society has been playing an increasingly important role and should continue to do so. To prepare for this engagement the editors have selected articles on important aspects related to adult learning and education within lifelong learning for sustainable development from the past two years of the PIMA Bulletin for this collection. They cover a wide variety of thematic areas, and they are related to policy, practice and theory of our field. In addition, it can serve as a reader for students and staff.

Keywords CONFINTEA, sustainable development, lifelong learning, citizenship education, community learning centres, pandemic, global warming, climate justice, financing, digitalization, another world

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Table of Contents

Conclusions

Introduction – a global tipping point

Engaging with adult learning and education through information exchange and cooperation

Chris Duke and Heribert Hinzen

The thirty-one papers grouped as five thematic sections that comprise the main text of this symposium are drawn from two years of the bimonthly PIMA Bulletin, a young global network of people involved in and committed to advancing adult learning and education (ALE). Ahead of those five Parts, Paul Stanistreet meditates on the emergency that humankind and our world are now in. PIMA gives voice to young as well as mature-age people, nurturing new generations for active leadership, and to 'field practitioners' more used to doing than teaching and research as well as well-known scholar-authors.

The Bulletin seeks critically to explain and advocate the adoption of a lifelong learning perspective and practice; throughout the formal system of school and college education that the term education usually calls up, but especially in all walks of life and living that follows all that is called and commonly understood as education and training, as if learning then ends and (adult working) life begins. This means equally the many other ways that people learn throughout their lives after school, deliberately, guided, self-directed, usually in the process of doing other things and being other than 'a student.'

It comes from a conviction that learning, and resulting change in understanding, experiencing, being and doing are essential to our individual and group survival. This still seems hard to see and understand through usual discourse and in-profession jargon and acronyms. The Bulletin therefore seeks contributions from 'Outside the Box' of normal practice, and to engage with and help solve the many interlocking problems on which Stanistreet ruminates. Each Part is introduced by a few editorial paragraphs. This Introduction explains why this symposium was drawn up at this time.

A few months back members of PIMA discussed how to engage more in current processes of defining giving ALE a stronger part in implementing the UN sustainable development agenda, thinking about joint publication on areas of ALE within lifelong learning (LLL), and looking especially at gender and climate in the contexts of digitalization and globalization. We knew that the Bulletin had recently published highly relevant materials on all these matters and decided to put a volume together which could assist ourselves and others on the way to CONFINTEA VII in 2022, the 7th in a series of World Conferences convened by UNESCO every 12 years from 1949 on Adult Learning and Education. This would be a contribution and at the same time a tool for ALE advocacy.

The Editors both enjoyed honorary academic status at the University of Glasgow, and this idea was discussed between PIMA and the University's research and development centre and publisher CR&DALL. How could discourse on ALE and LLL - climate justice, gender equality, later life and other important themes, all by then in the context of the global COVID-19 pandemic, be deepened using these materials? The main readership in mind would use such a text for advocacy, informing present and potential PIMA members, and as supplementary material for civil society activists, scholars, students, and others.

We decided together to focus on CONFINTEA VII one year ahead and encouraging new efforts there to investigate futures of ALE within LLL and Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). Other thematic areas could be global warming and climate justice through the lens of women and gender activists; another perhaps on community-based research and the social responsibility of higher education. The approach sat well with CR&DALL's 'work-in-progress' series, and a tendency in the Bulletin towards more intense focus on key themes, by way of Special Issues.

PIMA had early decided to engage in the preparatory processes of the forthcoming CONFINTEA. The UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL) in Hamburg leads CONFINTEA, with many partners and stakeholders participating in its activities.

Several PIMA colleagues had joined the 2017 CONFINTEA VI Mid-Term Review in Suwon and Osan in Korea. This stocktaking event looked back to CONFINTEA VI in 2009 in Brazil, and forward by reflecting on the Bélem Framework for Action (BFA) in light of the Education 2030 Agenda of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). UIL produced the substantial report *Towards CONFINTEA VII: Adult learning and education and the 2030* Agenda.[1]

In 2020 UIL, in cooperation with the International Council for Adult Education (ICAE), DVV International and other partners, organized and implemented sub-regional civil society consultations to inform and exchange early and ensure future engagement.

In another important process the BFA had called for substantially improving data collection and monitoring of ALE. UIL turned this into a regular Global Report on Adult Learning and Education, GRALE. The 5th such GRALE based on over 150 country reports, will be published alongside CONFINTEA VII in Morocco. Its major theme relates to global and active citizenship education.

We need now urgently to develop ideas and perspectives from civil society about how to engage ALE in the full SDG agenda. ALE contributes to achieving many other SDGs beyond Education Goal 4. But it is essential that CONFINTEA VII sees ALE as an equal part of the education system like the kindergarten, schools, vocational training and universities. We must also show that ALE is more: cross-sectoral and inter-disciplinary; a movement to support for achieving all 17 SDGs.

Some corner stones of this discourse are obvious. They relate to BFA areas such as policy, governance, financing, participation, inclusion, equity, and quality. A potential new framework for action from the Morocco conference must come up produce new ideas built on the trilogy of policy, legislation, and financing. What will be the position adopted with respect to the SDGs and ALE on global warming, climate justice and environmental education? What is new for ALE as lifelong learning in the new digitalized world which both empowers and can exclude, misinform, and disable? As Paul Stanistreet, from his vantage point in UIL shows, emergency is already upon us. The time for empty rhetoric and leisurely incrementalism has passed.

[1] https://uil.unesco.org/adult-education/confintea/towards-confintea-vii-adult-learning-and-education-and-2030-agenda-0

Meditations on an emergency

Paul Stanistreet

Paul Stanistreet is Head of Knowledge Management and Communications and Executive Editor of the International Review of Education – Journal of Lifelong Learning (IRE), UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL). *The post is an updated version of a blog post first published on Only Connect, UIL's blog, and also draws on the author's introduction to the August 2021 issue of IRE.*

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 CO2 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 marginalised 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 recognising 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 optimise our chances of getting there. There is no chance at all if we don't.

Part 1

CONFINTEA and the We Are ALE Campaign

In this opening selection following Paul Stanistreet's lucid warning we look through several participants' eyes at the 7th major global periodic gathering of adult educators and others involved in ALE, LLL, the SDGs, and the climate crisis, now being convened in Morocco in 2022. The periodic CONFINTEA meetings are opportunities for reflection, review and above all to set new targets and thrash out realistic means for their attainment.

Here we pursue Stanistreet's call for transformation, as seen through the eyes of a senior member of a leading CSO, the German DVV International (DVVI), which continues to play a vital part in driving forward relevant and useful, ethically based, adult education for development at home and globally. Germany also hosts the relevant UN lead agency UIL in Hamburg.

The third section here also comes from a leading light of DVVI, Uwe Gartenschlaeger, who returned to HQ after serving a period as DVVI Regional Director based in Vientiane, capital of LAO PDR and one of SE Asia's poorest countries. It is fitting that DVVI together with the current President of PIMA, Shirley Walters, should play a prominent part in bringing together these papers from the PIMA Bulletin. They are joined by Gartenschlaeger's predecessor Heribert Hinzen, now Vice-President of PIMA and also his predecessor in Vientiane. Alternation between Head Office and field – 'grassroots hand-on' – service is an important way of linking global and general with local and particular: a link where much of the fine rhetoric of lifelong learning fails to take root.

In this Part, Hinzen follows his fellow-countrymen, drawing together work in three Bulletin articles. Before and after that the passionate and fittingly pragmatic PIMA President provides a detailed appropriately critical review of the most recent GRALE Report and issues a practical challenge for action to CONFINTEA VII. She pulls together two Bulletin 'calls to arms' on behalf of the *We Are ALE* five-year campaign recently initiated by DVVI after wide consultation and already making waves.

1.1 Transformative Learning. The Role of ALE in the Context of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)[2]

Christoph Jost

Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) has become a key element of the United Nations' 2030 Agenda and its sustainable development goals (SDGs). Furthermore, the increasing need for and attention to the broad field of sustainability requires a more comprehensive elaboration on the role and contributions that adult learning and education can make in this context.

[2] https://www.dvv-international.de/en/materials/publications/expert-and-position-papers

Educational Approaches Promoting Sustainable Development

To achieve sustainable global change, a transformation of educational organizations, systems and content is also necessary - in formal as well as in non-formal education. On the path of transformation to a more sustainable and just world, adult education has a crucial role to play because of its interdisciplinary orientation, diversity of content and methods, its focus on the interests and needs of the target group, and its openness to all. It is particularly important that not only children and young people but also adults are reached with ESD measures: they are in decision-making positions, are role models, and can drive the transformation of society today.

The approach of transformative education goes beyond the classical concept of education: it aims at a changed culture of teaching and learning which makes it possible to develop new patterns in politics and economy, and in the private sphere. This comprises also a new understanding of development and progress; new forms of living together and doing business; and a changed relationship between humans and nature. In terms of the Whole Institution Approach, transformative education is not only about implementing ESD at programme level, but about the holistic redesign of teaching and learning environments, a changed understanding of teaching and learning, and the promotion of the development of teachers' and learners' competence with the aim of building a more sustainable world.

Multi-Perspective View of the World

ESD focuses on a holistic and global view of our complex world with its interdependent ecological, economic, social, and political dimensions. Every individual has a different idea of sustainable development and is guided by his or her own life and experience. Therefore, a social process of understanding and negotiation is needed about what the path to a sustainable society can look like. ESD learning processes should motivate people to look at a topic from a variety of perspectives. These can be different ways of thinking, technical approaches and narratives, reference areas - from local to global -, temporal perspectives and interests.

ESD does not aim to dictate values, but rather to engage in a discourse on values that makes visible the diversity of knowledge, views, ideas, and beliefs that exist simultaneously. In relation to the teaching and learning context, this also means not overwhelming learners morally, and making transparent and reflecting one's own point of view and experiences as a teacher.

Participatory Education as a Key Pillar of ESD

The participatory education approach, based on the work of the Brazilian educator Paulo Freire, is a core element of non-formal learning processes in various countries around the world. The pedagogical attitude underlying the participatory education approach consists in the principle of learning that activates the abilities and potential of learners, with the aim that they move from passive to active perception and participation in the learning process. Learners are at the centre of the learning process as competent, active, self-directing and respected individuals who are empowered to change their reality and participate in decisions that affect their lives.

Thus, participatory education offers the space to test one's own ideas, visions, and options for action on sustainable development and to stimulate social action by strengthening participation and self-efficacy.

Methodological-Didactical Diversity in the Implementation of ESD Approaches

In order to enable participatory educational offers, and to provide a space for reflection on one's own actions and values, as well as to open up a space for experimenting with ideas for alternative options for action, a participant-oriented didactic approach is required. Methodologically, this process can be supported by using diverse, interactive methods that are oriented towards the experiences and lived realities of the participants, and which, based on this, open new perspectives.

ESD promotes learning on three levels: Cognitive learning ("head") enables a better understanding of complex global contexts. Through a change of perspective ("heart"), the interests and needs of other actors are clarified and this enables the participants to re-evaluate the situation and develop their own point of view. The action orientation ("hand") creates spaces for ideas and experimentation in which participants can not only think about transformative action but also implement it in their own environment. The self-efficacy of both teachers and learners can thus be experienced, and commitment to the transformation of our society strengthened.

Key Competencies for Teachers and Learners to Become Agents of Change

During the process of negotiation and understanding towards a sustainable society, it is important to involve and activate people of all ages in the sense of lifelong learning. To this end children and young people, as well as adults, must possess certain key competencies that enable them to critically reflect on their own roles and actions, to act sustainably in complex situations, and actively and cooperatively to help shape the future.

The competencies comprise cognitive, affective, volitional, and motivational elements. They are thus an interplay of knowledge, skills, and abilities. Building competencies goes far beyond imparting knowledge. They must be developed by the learners themselves based on their experiences and lived realities, and then applied in concrete situations to learn to assess the effects of their own actions. The competencies are relevant for understanding all SDGs and for bringing about a necessary societal transformation. They represent a link between individual and societal well-being.

In conclusion, the goal of ESD is to open possibilities for understanding oneself as an acting subject in a complex global web, through a better understanding of the world and one's own attitude. Transformative education creates spaces and perspectives that encourage reflection on one's own attitudes, foster a change of perspective, and promote sustainable action based on self-efficacy experiences.

1.2 Reflecting on GRALE 4 – the global report on adult learning and education in the midst of Climate Crises and COVID-10

Shirley Walters

Introduction

The Global Reports on Adult Learning and Education (GRALE) reports are a product of UNESCO, coordinated by the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL). A primary source of information for GRALE 4 is a self-reporting survey from 159 of the 197 UN Member States. This is both a strength and weakness of the reports. It is a strength because Member States are strongly encouraged to account for their achievements in line with the Belem Framework for Action (BFA), which was adopted at UNESCO's Conference on Adult Education (CONFINTEA VI) in 2009. A weakness is that the GRALE reports are inclined to give only a partial view of adult learning and education (ALE) within countries because of the ways the survey is administered in many countries.

This review of GRALE 4 begins with an overview of the report and its findings. I then highlight some key fault lines reflected in the report. As the authors of the report acknowledge, the report is (almost) global in geographical reach, but not in ALE breadth and depth. In the context of major socio-economic-ecological crises, what do we need to do to use this opportunity?

Background to the GRALE 4 Report

Roughly every 12 years starting in 1949, UNESCO has convened an International Conference on Adult Education which came to be known as CONFINTEA. At these conferences, members of UNESCO commit to achieving goals for the next twelve years. In 2009 at CONFINTEA VI, the Belem Framework for Action (BFA) was adopted. One of the current purposes of GRALE reports is to monitor progress against the BFA. The first GRALE report was compiled in 2009, the first-ever undertaking of a global report on the status of ALE. GRALE 2 was completed in 2013, GRALE 3 in 2016, and GRALE 4 in late 2019.

GRALE 4, in addition to monitoring the BFA, also provides monitoring information on the Recommendation on Adult Learning and Education (RALE) which was adopted by UNESCO Member States in 2015. The three categories of RALE are:

- Literacy and basic education
- Continuing education and professional development (vocational skills)
- Liberal, popular and community education (active citizenship skills)

Governments of 159 countries submitted national reports for GRALE 4. UIL coordinates the research, recruiting a team of researchers and international experts to assist. Besides monitoring against BFA key themes, each GRALE Report has a specific focus. For GRALE 4 it is, `*Leave no-one behind: participation, equity and exclusion*'. 'Leave no-one behind' was the resounding message of the United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). GRALE 4 argues that ALE has a crucial role to play in achieving SDG 4, 'which aims to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote Lifelong Learning (LLL) opportunities for all quality education'. In addition, it is

essential for achieving other SDGs: on climate change, poverty, health and well-being, gender equality, decent work and economic growth, and sustainable cities and communities.

GRALE 4 draws heavily on countries' responses to the GRALE 4 survey, and analyses evidence of progress since GRALE 3 in five areas, drawn from the BFA and RALE. These are:

- Policy
- Governance
- Financing
- Quality
- Participation, inclusion, and equity

These areas are discussed separately, but also in an integrative way, in the conclusion, also describes the methods used and identifies the limitations and strengths of the approach to data collection and analysis used. Part 2 considers what is known about participation, what is not known, and why it matters, opening with a discussion of ALE as defined in the BFA and RALE, especially the extent to which non-formal education is on the radar.

Key findings on the monitoring of GRALE 4

There is wide acknowledgement of the crucial role ALE plays in terms of the achievement of a range of SDGs. ALE however remains low on the agenda of most Member States – participation is patchy, progress inadequate and investment insufficient. The authors argue that unless the direction is changed, the targets for SDG 4 will not be met, placing the other SDGs in jeopardy.

- As summarised succinctly by Rubenson, Boeren and Stepanek (2020), these 159 Member States reported progress in several of the BFA areas of action.
- Policies: two out of three countries pointed to improvements in ALE policies, partly through greater involvement of stakeholders.
- Governance was another area where most countries saw improvement (75%).
- Participation: despite self-reported improvements, participation in ALE remained precarious for large groups. Overall, over half of Member State saw an increase in the participation rate in ALE provision; about a quarter reported no change. The findings suggest inattention to participation among vulnerable groups. Globally, the lowest participation rates were reported for adults with disabilities, older adults, and minority groups. Access to high-quality participation data – or any data at all – is an issue: just over a third of Member States report `not knowing` ALE participation rates for vulnerable groups, and much the same proportion did not even know about what provision is available for these groups. This is a significant problem indicating potential lack of provision and

proper monitoring. It further suggests that learning outcomes are not informing policymaking and planning in those countries.

- Financing: While there is a broad consensus on the importance of broadening the base of financing ALE, GRALE pays particular attention to public financing. It reminds policymakers of the special importance that public funding plays in reaching the vulnerable groups. It is disturbing that globally, there was only a 28% increase to public financial resources allocated to ALE according to GRALE 4, and a 17% decrease since 2015.

One out of five Member States reported spending less than half a percent of the education budget on ALE, and 14% reported less than 1 percent. A great concern is that about a third of low-income Member States reported that public spending on ALE declined. More transnational cooperation, and crucially more transnational funding, is needed between countries, as committed to in the BFA, as well as alternative financing mechanisms such as debt swap and cancellation. Also, more funds and technical support are necessary from international development partners.

There is a broad trend of inequity in ALE financing for people on the margins of society. A third of Member States reported not knowing if marginalised groups were prioritised for ALE financing; a slightly lower proportion said they did not know if migrants and refugees were a priority. If this is not clear, then these people—some of the most vulnerable and excluded populations across the world—are not nearly a high enough priority.

- Quality of adult education has been a recurrent issue in the GRALE reports. It is encouraging that three out of four countries reported major improvements in ALE quality over the last three-year period. In particular, two areas saw improvement in developing criteria for ALE curricula, and in teaching methodologies, with around 75% reporting progress. In contrast, just over half of Member States reported improving pre-service training for ALE educators. Member States also reported less progress in employment conditions for ALE educators compared to other features of quality, except for pre-service training.
- Partial coverage of ALE: Member States focused more on literacy and basic skills and continuing training and professional development (TVET). The findings reveal how the dominant discourse of human capital theory prevails globally, with workplaces redefining ALE direction in profound ways. The third RALE category, popular-liberal-community education, is largely absent.
- Data on ALE participation in most UNESCO Member States outside the European Union (EU) and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) sphere are typically limited and at best sketchy, with notable exceptions. This

> impedes efforts to improve participation rates, and to understand who is participating and why. Both are essential to achieving SDG 4 and advancing towards the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. There is a general lack of urgency when it comes to collecting more comprehensive data on ALE. Too often, support for ALE is a rhetorical afterthought, all emphasis going to schools and universities.

Fault lines: Reliability of the findings

GRALE 4 builds on previous GRALE reports to provide evidence of change over time. The definition of ALE used by UIL is broad. It includes all formal, non-formal and informal or incidental learning and continuing education (both general and vocational) undertaken by adults. Evidence in this report is structured according to the RALE categorization of ALE in terms of:

- Literacy and basic education
- Continuing education and professional development (vocational skills)
- Liberal, popular and community education (active citizenship skills)

The emphasis throughout is on participation *for* something, in particular for ALE as a means of achieving the SDGs.

The report found definitions of ALE to vary widely, depending on the immediate needs, priorities, and contexts of their populations. Some countries position adult basic education as a core focus; others see it more broadly. The question of definition is a key one. It has major implications for any attempt to monitor a 'moving target'. It also has major implications for who is asked to fill in the survey when it arrives in a country, as the responses flow from there. As Rubenson et al (2020) state, the approach runs the risk of obtaining unreliable data dependent on who exactly completed the questionnaire. This is a fundamental limitation of the report. There is no cross-checking of the information presented; therefore, one can have little confidence in the detail. The researchers can only draw out possible trends.

If the RALE categorisations of ALE are to be used, surely there must be a process which ensures that data for the three categories are collected from each Member State. This would require an intersectoral approach resulting in a higher quality of data, improvement in the knowledge base of ALE, more collaborative governance, and a more comprehensive understanding of ALE. By leaving the filling of the survey to chance, the picture is inevitably skewed and incomplete, undermines its usefulness.

The paradoxical position of ALE

Report after report from the International Labour Organisation (ILO), the World Economic Forum (WEF), OECD and UNESCO, highlight the critical importance of universal lifelong learning in responding to the challenges of globalisation, climate change, public health, gender equality, mass migration, and the emergence of a fourth industrial revolution, and all that Artificial Intelligence (AI) and robotics will mean for work and wider society.

But the history of international commitments and subsequent outcomes affecting adult literacy and wider ALE is not good. It is 30 years since the first international commitment to halve the rate of adult illiteracy was agreed in Jomtien; and 20 years since the same commitment was adopted as part of the Education for All (EFA) agenda. By 2015, the end of the EFA period, far less progress had been achieved on adult literacy than on the other measured EFA goals; and wider ALE was not adequately measured at all. This pattern risks being repeated with the SDGs.

A graphic illustration of the marginalisation of ALE is the fact that the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) omits funding for ALE. In 2015 GPE accepted responsibility for ensuring that the full range of commitments made under the Sustainable Development Goals would be achieved. The focus is mainly on children's education, contested though this is within the GPE Board.

Without investment in ALE, and in global citizenship education in particular, few of the other SDGs are achievable. As stated before (Walters 2018), the achievement of the SDGs can be seen as both a great achievement within the global community and 'too little too late', depending on your perspective. The Goals carry within them hope and scepticism: hope because at last 'sustainable development' is agreed as the most critical frame for the UN to reference as it tackles global issues; scepticism because, in the views of analysts like Jason Hickel (2015), "The SDGs fail us…. They offer to tinker with the global economic system in a well-meaning bid to make it all seem a bit less violent. But this is not a time for tinkering".

The global manifestations of climate crises and the COVID-19 pandemic show starkly that deeply transformative socio-economic-ecological changes are now urgently needed.

Response to the absence?

GRALE 4 captures a partial snapshot of the globally parlous state of ALE, particularly for the marginalised. It acknowledges that current ALE data are incomplete and inadequate; and that we lack understanding and urgency when it comes to collecting more comprehensive. It holds up a mirror to the limited ALE investments by most governments, most often used by those who already have basic education, and are employed, middle class, urban citizens. It shows how training in the workplace is fundamentally reshaping understandings of ALE, for the most part underpinned by human capital theory. The humanistic, democratic tradition of ALE, which UNESCO has supported, is in retreat. Or is it?

Limitations in present monitoring procedures result from GRALE reporting being mainly in two of the three RALE categories: literacy and basic education, and continuing education and professional development (vocational skills); and these are not comprehensive. It does not report on liberal, popular and community education (active citizenship capabilities) at all. Given that there are no data on the latter, it would be premature to pronounce on loss of the humanistic, democratic tradition. We must insist on collecting data in all three categories, when surveys are undertaken.

To overcome this absence, can we as civil society organisations and networks, step into the breach and develop a proposal to monitor globally popular-liberal-community education? What would this entail and who may be interested to explore this possibility?

There are some innovative examples of monitoring in new ways ranging from a Wikipedia approach to the Global Atlas on Environmental Justice.

Given the flourishing of social movements and civil society organisations in many parts of the world in response to the many crises, and the interest in climate justice, people's health, sex-gender equality, and more, we need to widen understandings of ALE. It is within civil society that much of the innovative ALE has been taking place over many years. Monitoring the third category would shine a light on the ALE which addresses inequalities and injustices,and encourages all citizens to participate actively in finding solutions to the deep socio-ecological challenges of the time.

The next UN Conference on Adult Education, CONFINTEA VII, is to be held in 2022 in Morocco. Could this be the time to launch such a project?

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1.3 Why is Adult Education neglected – and what can we do to change this?

Uwe Gartenschlaeger

Although the situation is different in parts of Europe, Adult Education is still very low on the global education agenda. It is missing in SDG 4, and the Global Partnership for Education as the main funding mechanism still uses 'Quality Education for all Children' as its main claim, thus repeating the stereotypes that many have concerning the education sector. Why are we still facing this situation despite all the successes and the fact that, for example, in the Nordic countries or in Korea, adult education is perceived as a main success factor?

Some of the reasons are linked to the very nature of adult education; some are the impact of developments and discussions from outside:

Adult education is 'messy' and difficult to define in universally accepted ways. Contrary to schooling, which is perceived still within the framework of a model developed in the western

world, adult education varies in its manifestation and even the wording, including the concepts of popular education, adult literacy, non-formal education or *folkbildning*,[3] to name just a few. What might be thrilling for us looks a bit confusing for those outside our inner circle.

Years of neglect and low funding have relegated adult education to a perception of sub-standard, poor-quality education, low in prestige. In many regions, we are confronted with a vicious circle: low funding leads to low quality and a lack of impact, which leads to continued low funding.

ALE is complex to deliver and manage. It doesn't always offer 'outcomes' that are easy to explain and count.

ALE doesn't have well-organised constituencies and claim-makers as compared to formal systems of education. Our global voices are weak and suffer from the fragmentation of adult education. We do not have, for example, powerful unions or global networks united around key messages.

The global discourse on education is dominated by economists, who see education as an investment which is most effectively focused on children, preferably small children. A sense of the need for adult learning and personal development is missing.

There is a chronic lack of reliable data on youth and adult education. As a result of the above-mentioned fragmentation and a lack of resources, the database collected on adult learning is much weaker than on schooling. This lack of evidence directly affects the recognition of our sector, although we are not so naïve as to think that political decisions are always taken based on evidence.

So what can be done to change this gloomy picture?

First and foremost, I think our sector should try to unite around a common brand and agree on some key messages describing what we are doing without losing the diversity and regional traditions of adult learning. The attempt of the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, and DVV International, to define Adult Learning and Education (ALE) as a global name for what we are doing is promising and deserves support. [see 1.5 below]

We should try to capitalise on some discussions that have the potential to strengthen the role of adult education. One case is the SDGs: Although adult education is not mentioned explicitly, it is inherent in the lifelong learning concept of SDG 4 as well as in many other targets. Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship Education are other examples; we cannot cope with the current climate crisis without raising awareness and sense of responsibility among youth and adults.

We should more strongly communicate the conceptual reflections on which the need for more adult education is based. Challenging the narrative that education is for children is essential. The history of European enlightenment and *folkbildning* provides evidence about the importance and impact of offering learning opportunities to people of all ages.

[3] https://www.sv.se/en/this-is-sv/what-is-folkbildning/

The current situation demands more adult education to enable all of us to take well-informed, balanced decisions in a complex world. Hopefully, we will soon be able to deliver this message even more successfully.

1.4 CONFINTEA VII in Morocco in 2022 – moving towards a major contribution to ALE and the SDGs

Heribert Hinzen

This note has two purposes: to inform the PIMA membership and readers of the Bulletin what has happened so far, and what is forthcoming apropos CONFINTEA VII; and to document the involvement of PIMA members in the process. It alsot outlines the potential for further engagement.

The November 2019 UNESCO General Conference decided that CONFINTEA VII (Conférence Internationale sur l'Éducation des Adultes) would be held in Morocco in 2022. These world conferences on adult education have been convened every twelve years by UNESCO since 1949.

CONFINTEA VI took place in 2009 in Brazil. It concluded with the *Belem Framework for Action (BFA*) stating clearly that "Lifelong learning 'from cradle to grave' is a philosophy, a conceptual framework and an organizing principle of all forms of education, based on inclusive, emancipatory, humanistic and democratic values". "We recognize that adult education represents a significant component of the lifelong learning process, which embraces a learning continuum ranging from formal to non-formal to informal learning." In respect of institutionalizing adult learning and education (ALE) through Community Learning Centres (CLC) the BFA called for "creating multi-purpose community learning spaces and centres".

In the process leading to CONFINTEA VII the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL) in 2020 sent questionnaires via the UNESCO National Commissions (Natco) for country reports on the state of the art of ALE. These go to Ministries of Education. In the worst cases there was no response, or a lone bureaucrat responded minimally just fulfilling what was requested. In the best cases the questionnaire is taken up as a joint venture, where the Ministry invites non-state-actors, civil society, professional institutions, providers and academia from all levels to have informed discussion on the reality of ALE in the country. This is then reflected in the country report.

In 2021 there were preparatory CONFINTEA VII regional conferences, sometimes following prior sub-regional consultations. In the worst cases only a few Governments participated, sometimes with low-level representatives. It would be best if the national delegations to the conferences are inclusive – high-level Government plus senior representatives from non-state-actors, civil society, professional institutions, providers and academia. Reports and outcomes of the regional conferences inform the global CONFINTEA VII. UIL has a special section on its website where the information is up-loaded (see https://uil.unesco.org/adult-education/confintea/seventh-international-conference-adult-education-confintea-vii)

The CONFINTEA Mid-Term Review *Towards CONFINTEA VII: Adult Learning and Education and the 2030 Agenda*, took place in Suwon-Osan, Republic of Korea in October 2017. That made clear that something like the integration of two processes – the SDG Education Agenda and the Goals of CONFINTEA – is of high importance for future implementation and monitoring.

Also, the new *Recommendation on Adult Learning and Education (RALE)* was adopted by the UNESCO General Conference of 2015. The BFA of CONFINTEA VI had called for a review of the old 1976 Recommendation. RALE was drafted in a longer consultative process initiated by UIL, together with concerned institutions and stakeholders. It was then taken to the authoritative body of UNESCO, the General Conference where all Member States are represented, which asks Governments and all in the ALE sector to observe it. Note that these normative documents and recommendations are explicitly signed by Governments as member states of the UN and UNESCO.

Both global processes of the SDG and CONFINTEA are highly relevant for PIMA, its members and partners. Future macro-level strengthening of ALE as a sub-sector within the education system of each country within the perspective of LLL, may enable engaging with adults and the elderly, for example via U3As (universities of the third age).

ALE as a profession did not find its way onto the Education 2030 Agenda but is indirectly included in the targets by phrases like "provide learners of both sexes and of all ages". The overarching Education Goal calls to "Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all." CONFINTEA VII will be the place to deepen discussions on the importance of ALE for LLL and thus the SDGs, and to come to a set of coherent indicators and an appropriate way for monitoring the global and national development of related processes.

DVV International has taken up this challenge through its headquarters, offices and partners. It started with an approach to deepen the understanding of ALE within LLL, and the importance of both for all the SDGs, by providing a systematic analysis in the publication *Youth and Adult Education in the Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals. Role, Contribution and Further Potential.* This is available free of cost on the DVV website (see https://www.dvv-international.de/fileadmin/files/Inhalte_Bilder_und_Dokumente/Materialien/Analysis/DVV19002_Studie_SDG_WEB.pdf) DVV International has also created the opportunity to share experiences through conferences in 2019 such as The Power of Adult Learning and Education – Achieving the SDGs, in Weimar, combined with its 50th Anniversary; and Adult Education for Achieving Sustainable Development Goals in Belarus, which also celebrated the 10th Anniversary of the Country Office in Minsk. The Regional Office in Bishkek organized The Forum on Global Citizenship Education: Opportunities and Challenges for Central Asia in Chok Tal in Kyrgyzstan which helpfully deepened the debate on citizenship in its local and global dimensions. All deserve proper follow-up.

PIMA has signed up to the new campaign *We Are ALE* which is going to last for the next five years. It is a great chance for all in PIMA to support and further growth. The Call to Action of the campaign *We Are ALE* has made an important proposal full of opportunities such as:

"6. Engage in the UNESCO processes in your own country and region leading up to UNESCO's Seventh International Conference on Adult Education – CONFINTEA VII, to be

held in 2022, to ensure strong civil society engagement in the conference processes, programmes and outcomes.

Meet with the UNESCO National Commission and Ministry of Education to know more about country preparations for CONFINTEA VII and seek participation.

Present a Civil Society Organization (CSO) position paper on ALE and issues on global citizenship education to delegates and government agencies attending CONFINTEA VII.

Link up with ICAE and DVV International to participate in the CONFINTEA VII sub-regional consultations being organised by UNESCO Institute of Lifelong Learning (UIL) and regional offices of UNESCO."

Here are some examples and experiences to build on these interwoven linkages, where we have chances to cooperate with partners in our countries and globally, as individuals or in associations.

Example 1: CONFINTEA VII - sub-regional and/or regional meetings

We had the first round of regional meetings by UIL, ICAE and DVV International already in 2020 to inform focal points and civil society of their plans, and to invite their cooperation. In 2021 all regions had their pre-conferences, often with prior sub-regional consultations.

In February 2021 the Central Asia sub-regional consultation took place with country representatives from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan, the UNESCO Almaty Office, DVV International, and ASPBAE. It was a rich meeting, and a quite substantial report is available via http://en.unesco.kz/summarising-the-sub-regional-consultation-for-confintea-vii-in-central-asia-and-iran

Here I point to another opportunity to get involved in such processes. We had built a Team of Consultants, including colleagues from Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan as well as PIMA, and participated in an open call for writing the Central Asia sub-regional report. The sub-regional reports formed the basis for similar earlier reports like one in 2009 on *The state and development of adult learning and education in Asia and the Pacific, Regional synthesis report*, which will be major contributions to the global conference in 2022. This Team won the contract, and we developed the Central Asia sub-regional report. Similar opportunities to make use of professional expertise are available in other regions also.

Example 2: Bringing ALE closer to the SDG and the 2030 Education Agenda

In previous PIMA Bulletins we were informed of the UNESCO 'Futures of Education' initiative, where Executive Members of PIMA joined an ICAE writers' group to contribute a statement on *Adult Learning and Education (ALE) – Because the Future Cannot Wait*. It is a very helpful orientation in the process towards CONFINTEA VII, and also guidance in the new ALE campaign now started up. It adds well to *Embracing a culture of lifelong learning. Contribution to the Futures of Education Initiative. Report. A transdisciplinary expert consultation* which UIL also published in 2020.

Another initiative is a collection of relevant articles for a Special Issue of the *International Review of Education* Journal of Lifelong Learning published by UIL and planned to be ready for CONFINTEA VII in Morocco. The tentative title is *Strengthening the future of adult education and lifelong learning for all: Building bridges between the CONFINTEA and SDG*

processes. Key themes will cover inter-sectoral issues, principles of ALE and LLL, literacy, financing, and monitoring, from theoretical, political, and practical perspectives, community learning centres (CLC) as hubs for ALE and the SDG, and peoples´ participation. Several of the contributing authors are PIMA members.

Example 3: Global citizenship education - narrowing the generation gap

It is important that younger generations join the ALE campaign, the CONFINTEA and the SDG processes. One important theme is global citizenship education, a term that incorporates ALE for sustainable development, human rights, and participatory democracy. These studies can take place in CLCs, folk high schools, or study circles. Digital and blended modes of learning and teaching are used. They are even more important for community-based ALE.

Two PhD students and two professors of the Adult Education Academy on International and Comparative Studies in Adult and Lifelong Learning are currently researching and writing a contribution for the Portuguese journal *SISYPHUS*, looking at learning communities in their four different home countries in the context of citizenship education. This is also the major theme of the 5th GRALE (*Global Report on Adult Learning and Education*), to be published alongside CONFINTEA VII in 2022. Two of the contributors are members of PIMA.

Example 4: Financing of ALE – studies, findings, recommendations

The 2009 Belem Framework for Action (BFA) of CONFINTEA VI identified five important areas which need to be addressed: policy, governance, financing, participation, inclusion and equity, and quality. ALE is underfinanced in most countries. All the GRALE reports so far have chapters on financing: improvements in some countries are balanced by downward trends in others. There is also a dire need for more information, and for relevant and robust data.

A Webinar started with the ICAE report on *Financing Adult Education. The way forward: What works, how and why?* and covered all three ALE domains listed in the UNESCO Recommendation on Adult Learning and Education (RALE) which "…includes many learning opportunities for equipping adults with literacy and basic skills; for continuing training and professional development, and for active citizenship, through what is variously known as community, popular or liberal education." There are six case studies covering examples from all continents. The study also investigated different funding opportunities, public, private company or individual, and a variety of funding mechanisms and models. It concludes with several interesting findings, including the lack of ALE financing in the architecture of global development aid. However, the recommendations are very helpful for influencing governments and multilateral stakeholders: to do its job well ALE needs strong policies, legislation and financing. The presenter, Katarina Popovic, ICAE Secretary General, is also a PIMA member.

The second report, *Public Financing of Popular Adult Learning and Education (ALE)* was based on work led by a Team of Consultants with 22 authors and 14 country and case studies on the history and understanding of popular ALE, their governance and structures, financing, and support, with recommendations. 'Popular' comes from RALE and includes "community, popular or liberal". Some of the case studies use 'general, democratic or civic'. A key finding of the study is the diverse reality of public financing and related mechanisms from national to local level in different countries, which have in common that it is nowhere enough to reach the SDG goal and 'leave no-one behind'. All three consultants are PIMA members, as are several of the case study authors.

By now all the sub-regional preparatory meetings have taken place. All came up with recommendations for country level, sub-regional, regional, and global level cooperation. Several PIMA members were deeply involved, for example Shirley Walters who presented a civil society perspective with a strong focus on ALE in respect of global warming and climate justice, at the Eastern and Southern African consultation.

These and other examples show challenges and opportunities for us as PIMA to further engage in the process of CONFINTEA VII as already contributing civil society activists and professionals. We should fully support the *We Are ALE* campaign. And after participation in the regional conferences of 2021, many of us will hopefully meet and take part in CONFINTEA VII itself in 2022.

1.5 PIMA supports five-year ALE Campaign and Branding Project, We Are ALE

Shirley Walters

An Adult Learning and Education (ALE) Branding Project initiated by DVV International was developed as an idea by various international adult education-related organisations culminating in the launch of a common logo for adult learning and education (ALE) in March 2021. A team from the different world regions working in different adult education movements and organisations - ICAE, UIL, ASPBAE, GCE, CEEAL and others – took part in a participatory action research and development process by means of three intensive multi-day workshops. The final stage was a logo developed by a German marketing company. It is hoped that by working together in promoting a global brand, organisations and networks will be more successful individually and collectively in advocating for greater involvement and investment in the field.

DVV International initiated the 'branding adult education' logo project with the idea of creating a commonly owned collective identity for Adult Education. The perception of the context and need was that the field is littered with a range of descriptors such as non-formal education, continuing education, adult basic education etc. making communication with governments, donors, private sector, and social movements, very difficult.

The project was thus developed in collaboration with 13 international associations, including PIMA, from all regions of the world. It will help us maintain a consistent and collaborative effort for education and advocacy initiatives. Medium-term action includes engagement in the UNESCO processes in our own countries and regions and internationally, leading up to UNESCO's Seventh International Conference on Adult Education – CONFINTEA VII. We aim to ensure strong civil society engagement in the Conference processes, programmes, and outcomes.

We are all now invited to popularise and use the logo. A lead partner is the International Council for Adult Education (ICAE). PIMA is part of this global alliance of networks, associations and organisations for adult learning and education. The core aim is to ensure that

ALE is seen, understood, and valued by governments, international agencies, the private sector, civil society, and education institutions.

While Agenda 2030 identifies lifelong learning (LLL) as critical to the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), ALE, which is a significant part of LLL, is largely invisible. One reason for this is that we are divided into diverse communities of practice: workplace learning, community education, university-based adult education, lifelong learning, continuing education, health education, vocational training, adult basic education, literacy, popular education, social movement learning, public education, women's education; and so, the list goes on. Those outside our field do not understand 'ALE'. We do ourselves a disservice by not self-identifying under a common umbrella while continuing in our specialised areas of practice. This campaign promotes ALE as the umbrella term whereby we can campaign and work cooperatively for the good of all.

Organisations, networks, and associations sign up at no cost to become partners in the project. The PIMA Executive has invited the organisations involving its PIMA members to do the same, popularising and using the logo. This should demonstrate the inherent connectedness between literacy, adult basic education, continuing education, popular and civic education, workers' education, lifelong learning, non-formal education, later life learning etc. Together we can assist this initiative on the basis and in the collective interest of our different field experiences.

For the first time, an open alliance of ALE partners has created and accepted three attributes for ALE: justice, well-being, and change; and a common global definition and vision of adult learning and education. The definition echoes that of UNESCO's 2015 Recommendation on ALE (RALE), which includes three key domains of learning and skills: literacy and basic skills, continuing education and vocational skills, including liberal, popular and community education and citizenship skills, for youth and adults including the elderly. The ALE campaign strives to unite ALE advocates, organisations, and practitioners including those in health services, workplaces, communities, universities, and the media, to support the campaign and together strive for a healthier planet and a better world.

Part 2

Reviewing: Towards Lifelong Learning

In this Part we take four cases where the broad ambitious idea of lifelong learning appears in different ways and places: first in post-Independence Tanzania, with a charismatic and committed teacher (Mwalimu) for President. Today, 'Education' is often linked with if not appended to Employment, Youth, the Arts, or at least Training, and carries rather low status in the ministerial order. Nyerere's influence, like that of contemporary non-westerner Paulo Freire, continues to echo through the language and ambitions of educational activists.

Following Hinzen's reflections on personal growth through 'North-Global South' adult education and development trends, another eminent European and global AE leader, Sir Alan Tuckett, takes the centenary of the UK 1919 Report to recall its Challenges, Themes, and Points of Focus as they apply today. Lifelong learning within an integrated national strategy for education and learning is a permanent necessity: 'our quality of life in the future will depend on averting a climate catastrophe'. We must achieve healthy social and ecological balance in a disturbed place and time.

The third paper presses us to look forward at a neglected third dimension of lifelong learning. This demands not only breadth of policy vision for learning outside the classroom, and beyond the narrowly economic, to address deeper levels. This is less a reflection on history than awareness of needs more starkly exposed by the C-19 pandemic in mental and spiritual health: less interrogating the past, although traditional wisdom needs recognition, than realising that a 'new normal' may be upon us and must fast be learned.

Daniela Bavcandzi writes from one of the world's chronically perturbed regions of the world (SE Europe gave us the term Balkanisation as has the Middle East the now sad 'Arab Spring'). She sketches the intensely difficult political and administrative realities that confront a small new nation with a long proud history, as it seeks educational transformation in the quest for membership of the European Union. The 'Giant' of lifelong learning still waits on the threshold!

2.1 Julius Nyerere: 50 Years of Education Never Ends

Heribert Hinzen

The International Conference on 50 Years Adult Education in Tanzania. *Revitalizing Adult Education for Sustainable Development* took place in June 2021, as a hybrid gathering, with participants meeting on campus at the University of Dar es Salaam School of Education and via digital mode. Almost 100 colleagues took part. For further details see: http://soedco.udsm.ac.tz/

A special issue of Papers in Education and Development was published in advance to commemorate Nyerere and his writings, and experiences and impact on adult education in subsequent decades. It concentrated on research findings in the situation today while also

appraising the past. Budd Hall contributed a reflection on Elimu Haina Mwisho: Mwalimu Nyerere's Vision of Adult Education.

Nyerere as an adult educator

Julius Kambarage Nyerere was the leader of the anticolonial movement in Tanganyika, which later joined with Zanzibar to become the United Republic of Tanzania. He had studied to become a teacher, and throughout his life carried this as a title – he was Mwalimu.

Three quotations derived from his major writings touch on education matters:

- 'The importance of adult education, both for our country and for every individual, cannot be over-emphasized.
- Education is something that all of us should continue to acquire from the time we are born until the time we die.
- All this means that adult education has to be given priority within the overall development and recurrent revenue allocations of governments or other institutions.'

They are from these writings of Nyerere between 1967 and 1976 on Education for Self-Reliance – a first policy directive on education; Education Never Ends – a New Year´s Eve address to the nation; Relevance and Dar es Salaam University – speech on inauguration day; Our Education Must be for Liberation – opening of an international seminar; Adult Education and Development – address to the conference of the International Council for Adult Education (ICAE) in Dar es Salaam.

There can be no doubt that Nyerere placed high importance on adult learning and education (ALE) within a lifelong learning (LLL) perspective. Much related to this can be found in concepts, policy and practice within countries, and international policy recommendations even today. It is of course difficult to construct a direct causal relationship. But the UNESCO Conferences on Adult Education (CONFINTEAs), and the UNESCO Reports on the Future of Education from Faure in *Learning to Be* in 1972, and Delors in *Learning, the Treasure Within* in 1996, through to the current initiative on Learning to Become: all these documents are historical products of their time. All look at the diversity of knowledge, competencies, skills as well as attitudes, behaviours, and values. They contribute to a shift from a human right to education (often understood as schooling only) to the perspective of a human right to lifelong learning, just as Nyerere did in his speeches, writings and engagements at his time, when putting adults high on the education agenda.

Commemorative book

Colleagues in Tanzania are at an advanced stage of publishing a collection of articles to celebrate Mwalimu's life as well as draw lessons learned the next generation. Most contributors are from Tanzania and look at what has been achieved in the past decades. However, ever since the 1970s there has been regional and international cooperation with adult educators, especially in the Nordic countries. The Folk Development Colleges are active, recognized by the Tanzanian Government, and supported by the Karibu (Welcome) Tanzania Organization KTO. Swedish adult educators presented findings on the role and functions of Swedish development aid over past decades during the 2021 conference [see below 3.1].

Another contribution is on Tanzanian and German cooperation in adult learning for development. A historical legacy of 50 years told through the roles of programmes, personalities and DVV International was co-authored by Frauke Heinze, now Regional Director for Eastern Africa based in Dar es Salaam, Heribert Hinzen, who decades ago succeeded Helmuth Dolff, then Director General of DVV, and others who started the contacts with Tanzania and the international work of the German folk high schools. Helmuth Dolff also joined hands with Paul Bertelsen, Roby Kidd, and Paul Mhaiki after the Tokyo 1972 CONFINTEA III, in initiating the lead international civil society adult education movement with the founding of ICAE in 1973, and its first Executive Committee Meeting in Cologne a year later.

Biographical reflections

It is rare to be able to remember the past for the future from a professional, personal, and political account over such a long period of one's life, and I took up the invitation to join the Conference with a keynote: The contribution of President Nyerere to the development of adult education and lifelong learning in Tanzania and globally. I looked with changing lenses at Nyerere's influences and impact, and at myself, through a biographical lens: from a seminar in 1972 on Nyerere and Ujamaa in Tanzania and my doctoral comparative dissertation on Adult Education and Development in Tanzania. During that time, I joined the Research and Planning Department of the Institute of Adult Education at Dar es Salaam to evaluate the mass campaign *Chakula Ni Uhai* (*Food is Life*) in 1975, I participated in the UNESCO Seminar on Comparative Structures of Adult Education in Developing Countries in Kikuyu, Kenia, getting involved in a study on *Education for Liberation and Development. The Tanzanian Experience*, for the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL) in their series on reforms in education with a – at that time 'lifelong education' – perspective.

I served as its Deputy-Director of DVV International from 1978, and coordinated projects in Tanzania, Kenia, Uganda, Somalia and Zambia. I also took over as Editor of *Adult Education and Development* winning Julius Nyerere, Paolo Freire, Kamla Bhasin, Chris Duke, Lalita Ramdas and Roby Kidd among its authors. I proceeded to almost four decades of work for DVV International in headquarters, country, and regional offices, including Tanzanian adult education as an important partner. I served as ICAE Vice President and a Member of the CONFINTEA VI Consultative Group, during the period that the Belem Framework for Action, the Education 2030 Agenda of the Sustainable Development Goals, and the UNESCO Recommendation on Adult Education emerged. Even today these experiences influence and inform my university teaching and research in comparative ALE. My life would surely have been different personally, professionally, and politically without these experiences in Tanzania, and of Nyerere.

Nyerere – legacy and recognition

In 1976 Nyerere gave the keynote address on Adult Education and Development to the first World Assembly of the ICAE and became its Honorary President. He raised his voice for adult education as being of the highest importance for every individual and for society. Ever since, ICAE has been in the lead of a global movement, contributing to UNESCO Reports with a special orientation to adults: in 1996 with *Adult education and lifelong learning: Issues, concerns and recommendations*; and in 2020 with *Adult learning and education – because the future cannot wait*.

CONFINTEA VII in 2022 in Morocco will be the first on the African continent. It should be an opportunity to remember early leaders and events as milestones to the right of all people to a full cycle of lifelong learning. In 2009 Julius Nyerere became a posthumous member of the International Adult and Continuing Education Hall of Fame, together with Paolo Freire who also took part in the big 1976 Tanzania meeting and contributed to the development of adult education in Tanzania in his own way.

2.2 Adult Education and Lifelong Learning for 21st Century Britain. The Centenary Commission on Adult Education[4]

Alan Tuckett

A Permanent National Necessity

If people are to adapt, they will need flexible and generic capabilities.

Early in 2018 a group of adult educators, recognising the historic importance of the 1919 Ministry of Reconstruction Adult Education Committee's *Final Report*, set up the Adult Education 100 campaign. They wished to encourage a programme of activities, centred on the centenary of the 1919 Report, which would both recover and re-evaluate the twentieth-century history of adult education, and set out a vision for life-wide adult education for the century ahead.

As the Preface explains, "adult education must not be regarded as a luxury for a few exceptional; persons here and there, it is a permanent national necessity, an inseparable aspect of citizenship, and therefore should be both universal and lifelong". It continues as follows.

"Adult education and lifelong learning mean a great deal more than the acquisition of skills. The 1919 Report argued that the demand for adult education "originates in a desire among individuals for adequate opportunities for self-expression and the cultivation of their personal powers and interests. In other words, a desire for what we would now call social and cultural capital, and greater self-realisation.

Neither in 1919 nor 1942 could people have imagined that by 2019, life expectancy at birth would have risen from 56 years for men and 60 years for women, to 79 years and 83 years. Lives are longer and should be richer in every sense. Lifelong learning has a vital role to play in making this a reality.

It has always been a challenge to most effectively balance provision for adult education and lifelong learning in support of economic prosperity, on the one hand, and for individual flourishing, social and community development and democratic engagement on the other. Over the last 20 years at least, we have got that balance wrong, focusing resources on the former and

[4] Published by the School of Education, University of Nottingham www.CentenaryCommission.org

running down support for the latter. This has had damaging consequences for personal development, social fulfilment, community engagement, and the health of democracy.

The rejuvenated provision of adult education and lifelong learning – formal and informal – will take various forms, many of which are extraordinary, innovative, and creative – and include digital developments, to reflect contemporary contexts. It will involve broadening and deepening our understanding and experiences of learning, to include self-organised, peer-to-peer, and networked models, alongside more orthodox forms of education.

Our economy, our communities, our democracy, all need people with the practical and thinking skills to face up to today's challenges…."

The Challenge

The Preface continued with four challenges, the fourth being artificial intelligence and 'the tyranny of machinery'.

- Most jobs will be affected in some way by current economic and technological developments – estimates of occupations that will disappear entirely range between 9% and 44%. If people are to adapt, they will need flexible and generic capabilities.

The first three challenges read as follows:

- In the midst of war, people sought peace and international cooperation to secure it. Today, the most pressing global issue is climate crisis – which requires citizens to understand how they, wider society and their elected leaders can act effectively to combat and deal with this threat.
- In 1919, the Commission were concerned about the demands of women for equality in the workplace and society. While gender equality is still a persistent issue, the challenge of social and economic inequality in the UK in 2019 extends far beyond gender, into race, disability, sexuality, and social origin.
- The belief in the 1919 Report that adult education can heal fractured communities and foster a healthy democracy is a powerful message. The analysis of the 2016 Referendum vote suggests that communities are more divided than in living memory, many feeling 'left behind' by – or excluded altogether from – today's politics and public debates. As people grow tired of the failure of representative politics to achieve change, adult education can help them find confidence and a voice to participate in local, regional, and national debate and action.

The campaign has four interacting themes, six points of focus, and 18 recommendations:

Four interacting campaign themes

I. The 'Centenary Commission', composed rather like the Ministry of Reconstruction Adult Education Committee, and with essentially the same brief.

II. Research and educational projects around the history and record of adult education, ranging from adult education classes and undergraduate student projects to research funded by research councils.

III. Archival and curatorial projects to preserve the records of adult education.

IV. 'Knowledge exchange' activities to build public discussion about the role and significance of adult education.

Six points of focus

Focus 1: Framing and Delivering a National Ambition

Focus 2: Ensuring Basic Skills

Focus 3: Fostering Community, Democracy and Dialogue

Focus 4: Promoting Creativity, Innovation and Informal Learning

Focus 5: Securing Individual Learning and Wellbeing

Focus 6: Attending to the World of Work

18 Recommendations

The Recommendations mainly address practical policy imperatives and requirements particular to the UK situation. Here in full are the final conclusions.

Conclusion

"The 1919 Report advocated the 'permanent national necessity' of adult education to deal with the democratic, societal, and industrial challenges that were already at that time unfolding. A similar range of challenges were faced in 1945, and again adult education was seen as a vitally important part of the way forward, with investment over the subsequent thirty years leading to an expansion of university adult education departments, the active role of local authorities, increased industrial education and training, and the expansion of the WEA and other community and voluntary groups – culminating in the creation of the Open University as a world leader in adult and lifelong learning provision.

However, as Helena Kennedy QC put it in her 1997 report on Further Education, the UK system is still based on the principle that 'if at first you don't succeed, you don't succeed'. That remains true today. The regulator for Higher Education, the Office for Students, allows universities to focus on 17- and 18-year-old applicants. If at first they don't succeed, universities are permitted

to wash their hands of them. The Access & Participation Plans don't require universities to give any second chances, as other countries do.

Following the 2008-9 international financial crises and global recession, Britain has suffered a 'lost decade' of austerity, increased regional inequality, stagnant productivity and living standards, and a fractured society and democracy. Once again, the promotion and development of adult education across our communities and society has become an urgent 'national necessity'.

- Necessary to enable citizens to engage in educated reflection, critical thinking, and democratic discussion.

- Necessary to promote community cohesion through the co-creation of educational provision involving members from across the various communities.

- Necessary to promote understanding of different cultures and backgrounds. Not only to engender an appreciation of those with protected characteristics that need to be respected, but to create a strong collective understanding that can withstand the erosion of rights, and the hostility towards 'other' groups. And which can create the basis for making progress within a common appreciation that promoting the rights of each is the surest way of securing the rights of all.

- Necessary to give members of society the capacity and capabilities to engage with the world of work constructively, whether through informed discussion over technological and other developments in the workplace or combining with others to establish their own enterprise or social enterprise.

And necessary to enable all members of society to consider and analyse the great challenges for the future – of tackling the damaging effects of income and regional inequality; promoting cohesion amongst all members of society whatever their race, religion, or other protected characteristic; and ensuring that the climate crisis does not wreak the devastation it threatens.

In this Report we take the long view – to consider the worlds in which our children and grandchildren might live, and to stress the importance of preparing now to ensure society develops in a direction that will lead to positive outcomes over time. AI and other technologies could well displace up to half of current paid employment. That might lead to a society in which only half the adult citizens were employed – working as long hours and as stressed as today – while the other half languish without work or sufficient income.

Or we could take another path, with the work shared out, and the working week being gradually reduced over time.

Such a development itself could be welcomed as liberating, or feared as threatening, depending upon the context in which it develops and the manner of its introduction. If employees gained the right to paid time off to pursue education, that would enhance their lives, and might well lead to them becoming more engaged in their communities, more active as citizens and electors, and more committed at work – leading to higher productivity and increased opportunity for all to benefit from a still shorter working week over time.

The economist John Maynard Keynes believed that by now we would be working 15 hours a week, since in that time we would be able to produce more than the workforce could do in his

day in 40 hours. But we have not yet transitioned to the shorter working week. Productivity growth has been used to boost output ever higher over the ninety years since Keynes suggested we should instead use the productivity growth to enjoy more leisure time. This is unsustainable. So, having paid time off from work to study should be a priority for society and Government, as well as employers, as we move towards a more sustainable world of work, enlightenment, and human survival.

Our quality of life in the future will depend on averting a climate catastrophe. If any justification is required for providing increased educational opportunities for all, surely this is it – the importance of enabling educated discussion of such grave issues and problems, and how to go about tackling them, as individuals, communities, workplaces – and as a society.

Provided such catastrophe is averted, we can expect lifetimes of up to a hundred years, with increasing numbers remaining mentally and physically fit into their 90s. Lifelong learning needs to be about individual benefit and fulfilment as well as productivity at work and social engagement – although the enhanced mental and physical health that is associated with education will in turn benefit the economy and society. A far greater investment in lifelong learning will pay off in every sense. There is no benefit to be had from further delay."

2.3 Life-deep learning

Dorothy Lucardie and Chris Duke

Since the 1960s the concept of Lifelong Learning has been developed to portray the ongoing, self-motivated learning undertaken in formal, non-formal and informal learning contexts. The term is inclusive of all age groups across the life span and brings together the previously separated areas of children's learning and adults' learning. While the concept is inclusive of a wide range of learning such as personal development and citizenship, it has been narrowly interpreted by governments and funding bodies as a linear path from kindergarten, through 10-12 years of education, and then completion of tertiary studies.

To emphasise the breadth of Lifelong Learning, the dimension of Life-Wide has been added to encompass learning for all aspects of an individual's life, at work, at leisure, in the community and in relationships. So, Learning is Life Long and Life Wide. Something of this was recognised with the adoption of the term and concept recurrent education especially by OECD from the early seventies.

Over more recent years the term Life-Deep Learning has also been introduced into the conversation. While this added dimension has been welcomed it has not been clear what the concept of life deep learning is describing. Belanger (2015) in '*Self-construction and social transformation: Lifelong, Life-wide and Life-Deep Learning*' proposed that "The demand on individuals to co-determine their increasingly non-linear educational life paths is one of such trends reflecting the growing emphasis on the intimacy of learning". For Belanger, the intimacy of learning includes the subjective experience of learning and the process of constructing the self.

In the 2018 PASCAL conference held in Suwon in the Republic of Korea, discussion on Life-Deep Learning arose from presentations made under the theme "Lifelong Learning as the key to solving community problems". Presenters spoke about spirituality (Maria Liu Wong), wisdom built over time (Gumpanat Boriboon), emotional learning and inspired learning (Eunice Q Areola). PIMA members were invited to contribute to the 2019 *Bulletin No 23* to follow up on the discussion; three articles there addressed perspectives of life-deep learning.

In responding to the question what is Life-Deep Learning, Gumpanat Boriboon asked 'Is it a term that includes the cultural dimension of learning and knowing?' and expanded his contention at Suwon of the value of local wisdom as a 'valuable treasure of the country'. He believes that older people's 'knowledge and experience should be preserved and transferred to the next generations'. (PIMA, 2019)

Eric Zimmerman contributed on 'Jewish Resiliency: personal, collective, political and religious'. For Zimmerman "Jews' (resiliency) has always meant not springing back to a previous condition but being able to create something new, a better situation for the collective". (PIMA, 2019)

In the third contribution, from Peter Kearns 'Being human in the era of the Fourth Industrial Revolution and AI', Kearns proposed that "The process of lifelong learning must be directed at the qualities that make us distinctively human, with the four bits of intelligence identified by Schwab being expressed in imagination, compassion, empathy, autonomy, citizenship, and creativity. This gives meaning and purpose to our lives, and empowerment to individuals and communities". (PIMA, 2019)

Is Life-Deep Learning about spirituality, wisdom, emotional development, inspiration, resilience, making meaning or making sense of life, reflection, and transformation? Can this dimension of learning embrace the concept of learning to be, as proposed by Kearns?

During 2020 the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic has upended our sense of normality and introduced great uncertainty. It has exposed the great inequalities between people and between nations. Many are re-examining their expectations of life. It may be that a great deal of transformational learning has occurred because of the dramatic changes we have all experienced.

Adults and children have had to learn a whole range of new skills and attitudes including learning at home, parents as teachers, using technology, developing empathy and compassion for others in the community, and stepping up as active citizens to meet lockdown requirements. Increased participation in learning for pleasure and interest has also been displayed by individuals, families, and communities. Singing, life drawing, dancing, cooking, creative pursuits, seem to have replaced learning for work, for many people across the world, not least because so many have lost all or part of their jobs.

Has the pandemic also sharpened our focus on Life-Deep Learning, what it means, and the impact it may have on individuals, communities, and our societies? PIMA intends to extend the discussion on Life-Deep Learning, perhaps with a special focus on pandemic or other major crises.

2.4 Adult Education – the Giant in Waiting

Daniela Bavcandzi

In countries where education and economic reform take a slow pace, and reforms and foreign aid overlap, is there room for expectations of timely results?

In the Republic of North Macedonia, popularly known internationally mainly for furious differences about its new name with Greece (it was until 2021 officially FYROM – Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) - there is much talk of reforms. There are lots of new pieces of legislation and new strategies adopted in all sectors, all aimed at shaping the country's condition for EU accession. Education is central to this accession, and the EU and other international donors invest millions of euros (€) through their instruments, to bring North Macedonia's education closer to EU standards.

Of all education segments in the country, the adult education sector still receives least attention from central and local authorities. Its potential is still widely unrecognized as a factor in both economic and social development. Reasons for this situation should be sought in the transition from communist to capitalist systems that was prolonged over a 30-year period; inexperience in modern governance processes; the proliferation of bureaucratic structures; and legislation that remains somehow detached from operational necessities.

The Education Strategy 2018-2025 set several concrete aims and indicators concerning further improving adult education in the country. It is a mixture of measures and activities evidently driven from lessons learnt in the past 5-year reforms, but there is still room for coordination and efficiencies, especially in quality assurance, employers' involvement, and local self-government responsibilities.

Among many challenges, one of the major ones is the validation of non-formal and informal learning. The strategy sets the need to establish and implement a system of validation results of non-formal and informal learning, which is still in its embryonic phase. Furthermore, there is a need to manage the existing system for the Macedonian Qualification Framework (MQF) management.

The Strategy sets out pathways to improve the inclusion of stakeholders such as businesses in education, which remain one of the major challenges yet. However, there is a need for innovative and proven mechanisms for involving businesses in education which are, even as we speak, given a back-seat in the formulation of qualifications, even in creating Occupational Standards.

Regrettably, late in the 2nd decade of this century, FYROM with the EU engaged international expertise in this area and received clear guidance on how to move towards a lifelong learning system embracing all ages and all phase of formal education and informal learning throughout life. Despite apparent keen interest and discussion, the resulting expert advice was unable to convince the Macedonian education and labour stakeholders to turn their focus away from bureaucratic education structures and empower businesses to lead and drive the creation of Occupational Standards and Qualifications, as main movers of the economy to achieve the relevance of education at all levels, or to engage effectively with other civil society sectors. Let’s hope that implementation of the Strategy will still prove be timely and effective, boosting the potential that adult education could have in the economic and social development of local

communities in North Macedonia and even in this perturbed region of SE Europe more generally.

We remain “in waiting”.

Part 3

Some Country Perspectives

Here we take snapshots along the road to CONFINTEA VII from an African regional perspective and from three countries each in Asia and Europe. The first three have wider resonance, the remaining four probe deeper into different countries and traditions. Indeed, Mats Ehn gently confronts his country and the Global North with a paradox fundamental to collaborative survival of our species, and which the outcomes of the November 2021 Rome G20 and the Glasgow COP 26 meetings did almost nothing to allay. Shirley Walters locates women, their work, status, and treatment, at the heart of fast-approaching climate catastrophe. She and David Harrington provide a stark and unvarnished account of the African reality.

Balazs Nemeth offers a thoughtful quietly trenchant account of the position in his country, illustrating the value of pre-CONFINTEA VII stocktaking review and reporting at sub-regional level. This is followed by another, politically more overt, account of a local ALE civil society educational response to unsympathetically ideological government, part of the ALE and lifelong learning reality that will surely also confront those gathering for CONFINTEA VII in Morocco. Khau Huu Phuoc provides a commendably open and balanced account and analysis of Vietnam's CLCs, both function, success and limitations and prospects. Two Thai adult educators then give a detailed and heartening account of community development work in Thailand; heartening in that it appears to provide for social as well as locally led economic development, and meeting needs and interests identified within the villages.

The paper concluding this section has relevance beyond the East Asian region where Hong Kong is located and is undergoing deep political change, striking a realistic, pragmatic and ultimately hopeful note of ALE survival continuing under different auspices and often names. It is relevant to many others in the 'family of nations' where old ways and freedoms have been terminated or significantly curtailed yet support for and provision of adult education and lifelong learning, even for active citizenship, persist. It would merit serious attention at CONFINTEA VII.

3.1 A Swedish paradox – adult education and international development cooperation

Mats Ehn

As we have seen from various reports by organizations like the ICAE and OXFAM, neither public funding for adult education nor public funding for development cooperation is faring well globally. Cuts have become the norm, as well as the failure to ensure sustainable institutions. The global campaign We are ALE can be seen as a response to this.

In contrast to this global trend, Sweden still has a robust public system in all three domains of the UNESCO Recommendations of Adult Learning and Education (RALE) from 2015. Adults are assured the legal right to participate in schooling up to the secondary level, to qualify for tertiary education; investments in vocational training as well as in Swedish for immigrants are

substantial, and the more than 150-year-old *folkbildning* or popular education sector mainly run by civil society organizations is thriving, with its freedom of syllabus constantly taking on new challenges in contemporary society.

The *folkbildning* sector has two branches: the study circle organizations and the folk high schools. The study circle organizations are run by civil society organizations. They are present in all municipalities in the country, do non-formal education mostly as evening courses, and have about one million participants every year. The folk high schools have been growing substantially in numbers and full-time students in recent years. They offer both formal and non-formal education and are also more and more seen as important actors, not only by the Ministry of Education but also by the Ministries of Integration and Labour Market. Together the two branches are allocated substantial public financing each year.

The public support for *folkbildning* is based on four goals:

- To strengthen and develop democracy
- To increase the capabilities of citizens to change their lives and participate in all spheres of society
- To bridge educational gaps
- To increase interest for and participation in cultural life.

Within this framework. each *folkbildning* actor designs its own programme.

Of course, there are clouds in the sky. There has for several years been growing marketisation of parts of the adult education sector. New Public Management principles of governance instead of trust and professionalisation are present. The growing authoritarian right-wing movement is a real threat to the idea of critical thinking and learning for active citizenship.

Sweden's overseas development cooperation, contested by the right-wing, is still living up to its standards and international agreements. The financial goal of dedicating 1% of GDI is upheld. Sweden is one of only four OECD countries that achieves the goal of 0,7% set by the Organisation. The goals and the strategies of Swedish development cooperation are based on a rights-based approach and the perspective of the poor. They adhere to the Paris agreement on climate change, and Agenda 2030 for a sustainable future. Substantial parts of the cooperation are channelled through Swedish civil society organisations to organisations and movements in the global south.

One would think that given the high national appreciation of adult learning and education, and the strong Swedish commitment to development cooperation multilaterally, bilaterally and through civil society, ALE would play a major role in this field. Paradoxically this is not so. ALE is almost totally absent in Swedish development cooperation, be it bilateral or through civil society.

Why is that so?

To understand this paradox thorough investigation is needed. Here I only propose some possible answers.

1. The low status of ALE globally might affect interest in bilateral development cooperation in this area
2. The failure of Swedish *folkbildning* organisations to form
3. The weak position of ALE, both in the educational sector and in civil society organisations focused on issues like democracy, gender equity, and climate justice, and the failure to show that ALE is crucial for success. Swedish civil society organisations and their counterparts use very much the participatory methods of *folkbildning* in development cooperation, but do not see the need to advocate the right to education for adults, and the importance of creating sustainable institutions.

A shining exception to this paradox is the Swedish Tanzanian cooperation in ALE [see 2.1 above]. Starting with an agreement between President Julius Nyerere and Prime Minister Olof Palme in the seventies, a national structure of Folk Development Colleges (FDCs) was created and has against all odds survived and become a part of the Tanzanian education system. Over the years there has been an intensive exchange between Swedish folk high schools and Swedish university departments in adult education; their Tanzanian counterparts. Karibu Tanzania Organization (KTO), the umbrella organization for the FDCs, is now maintaining and developing this unique structure combining further education, vocational training and learning for active citizenship with a special focus on gender equity. The Tanzanian example can be seen as a showcase for what can be achieved through the combination of long-term bilateral state and civil society engagement in development cooperation.

Through DVV International, the German adult education movement has managed to establish itself as the main actor in international development cooperation in the field of ALE, contributing with substantial financing, advocacy and sharing of experiences globally. When will Sweden and the other Scandinavian countries step up and share the responsibility? Could the We are ALE campaign be the moment?

3.2 Towards CONFINTEA VII – East and Southern African Civil Society Responses and Perspectives

Shirley Walters and David Harrington

A consultative Zoom meeting on 21 June 2021 had about 100 representatives from. from government, civil society, and the private sector in many countries of the East and Southern part of the Africa. Two reports on literacy and a synthesis of country reports discussed four key questions. Two regional ALE experts gave civil society perspectives. Their contributions here address key issues for CONFINTEA VII.

Shirley Walters: Civil Society Response and Perspective

1. ALE is entangled in all aspects of living, including livelihoods do is intimately connected to the climate emergency that is unfolding.

2. Climate Emergency: The southern African region is defined by scientists as a 'climate change hotspot'. This means that we will experience much more severe impacts, with more frequent droughts, less regular rainfall, less certain food supplies, more frequent cyclones, and more frequent flooding. Average annual temperatures across southern Africa may increase by up to 3 degrees by the 2060s and 5 degrees by 2090s – a temperature that would render human life nearly impossible. To survive we must adapt and change the ways we live, including our ways of farming, restoring forests, improving water supplies and management; transiting rapidly away from fossil fuels, and grow economies in ways which do not make matters worse.

The climate emergency is very real for our region. It links to health, food, housing, gender-based violence, work, transport – it impacts every aspect of life. We all know this from the catastrophes that we are all experiencing. We have all to be in a permanent state of readiness to respond to regular waves of crises.

3. Women are central to caring for community and planet. In our region, women carry primary responsibility for producing, processing, and preparing food, provisioning of water and fuel, and caring for family and community. Because of these roles, women – working-class, indigenous and peasant women in particular – rely on `natural resources` and healthy environments. Women are central to adapting to and mitigating the effects of climate change. In a crisis, women often also experience the brunt of people's anger and frustration. The current health pandemic has also seen a gender-based violence pandemic. Gender justice is part and parcel of social and environmental justice.

4. Civil society is the lifeblood of the ALE movement. Most ALE occur in civil society organisations and social movements. However, the ways the Belem Framework for Action (BFA) and Global Reports on Adult Learning and Education (GRALE) report are structured around policy, governance, financing, participation, quality; they are directed to the much smaller, mainly governmental, education department programmes. A rationalist, instrumental strategy is being used, with a particular and narrow idea of what ALE is. It captures a small slice of ALE. We know that most ALE happens experientially, through organising, through mainstream and social media, through self-directed digital platforms, through indigenous knowledge practices. Given this reality, and the importance of ongoing monitoring of ALE, we need investment in developing creative, innovative ways of capturing the data on the ALE occurring in civil society – at present 'what you can't measure doesn't exist'. This must change. There are several great examples to capture data about 'hard to measure' practices. We support monitoring ALE; but the methodology must expand to fit the realities of ALE, so that the reports are truly 'global' and inclusive.

5. We are ALE campaign - ALE is a 'big tent' concept:

A major challenge still is limited common understanding of ALE. The BFA committed to trying to change this, but we have made little progress. We do however now have a five-year campaign coordinated by ICAE and initiated by DVV – *We are ALE*. This campaign advocates an all-encompassing 'big tent' understanding of ALE including literacy and ABE, work-based learning, health education, community, and popular education, continuing education,

agricultural extension. etc. Wide-scale advocacy is necessary to create the 'big tent' understanding of ALE reflecting RALE and GRALE definitions. This needs collective, strong support. Commitments to monitoring ALE nationally, regionally, and internationally must continue. However, it must be accompanied by advocacy and education of and by governments and civil society, to have the RALE categories of ALE understood. A partnership between UNESCO and civil society could yield more comprehensive results.

6. Build affordable, accessible learning environments: Given the times of crisis within which we live, a conducive learning environment which allows learning to occur anywhere, anytime, in any way, is critical. So much `just in time` learning occurs through use of ICT and media, as we have learnt through Covid and other crises. Ensuring affordable, accessible means of communication and education is essential to helping us sustain ourselves and the planet as we support actively engaged citizens.

7. In conclusion: Our societies need to learn, unlearn, and relearn [see also 4.1 below]. ALE is central to this. The whole of society is involved – government, civil society, the private sector. Acknowledging the central role of civil society in ALE crucial and must be included as one of the key themes for CONFINTEA VII.

David Harrington: Civil Society Response and Perspective

1. Digital Approaches:

a. The conversation on digitisation of ALE is occupying ever more space since COVID struck.

b. As with all adult education, this conversation needs to be contextualised.

c. In many African countries, ALE is still taking place mainly in non-formal spaces, with little or no access or infrastructure to facilitate digital approaches.

d. The digital readiness of most African countries is still lagging far behind European countries. It will take many years to catch up.

e. Even within countries that have some digital readiness, the most vulnerable and marginalised communities (often the target of ALE interventions) do not have digital access.

f. As most African countries already struggle to fund ALE, where are the funds for digitisation going to come from?

g. Technology companies are licking their lips as people rely increasingly on virtual and digital means for work and education since COVID. Their motivation is principally monetary.

h. We cannot allow CONFINTEA VII and the new framework for ALE to be dominated by digital approaches that will leave developing countries behind.

i. Education is a social activity. This is especially true in African contexts, where family, group and community are integral to how people live and learn.

j. We must continue to find ways for people to learn safely in face-to-face settings, within the limitations imposed by COVID.

k. In summary, we need a balance between making the most of digital solutions (where available) and investing in and advocating for creative and safe approaches for people to

continue learning in socially engaging settings. Digital approaches are a two-edged sword: if allowed to dominate, they threaten to redefine how we learn and how we understand education – not necessarily for the better.

2. Financing of ALE:

a. We need to stop repeating ourselves.

b. The same arguments have been made for decades on the importance of adequately financing ALE. While these arguments are clear and convincing, funding of ALE remains very low in most countries.

c. In most African countries, state budgets are insufficient to respond to needs and challenges.

d. Within the education sector, ALE must compete with other sub-sectors for funding. This is a losing battle so far.

e. In Belem, CSOs proposed a benchmark of 3% of education funding for ALE. This has not been realised in most African countries.

f. In many African countries, education is heavily subsidised by international donors who influence which sub-sectors of education are financed. ALE is low on their list.

g. ALE is undeniably multi-sectoral. Ministries of Education cannot be expected to finance ALE that intersects with a range of other sectors, such as health, agriculture, labour, etc.

h. The obvious answer is that ALE needs to be funded across multiple sectors.

i. Of course this is a big challenge, but it is essential. We need to start the conversation and begin exploring modalities to fund ALE across sectors.

j. If we don't do this, we will find ourselves in 10 or 20 years still lamenting the underfunding of ALE.

3. Integrated Approaches to ALE

a. Understanding of ALE is still reduced to literacy acquisition in many African countries.

b. One reason for this is that funding for ALE is not even sufficient to adequately finance high quality basic adult literacy. Proposing an expanded and more diverse ALE requires additional funds. These seldom exist.

c. From personal experience, it is not that Ministries don't want to introduce more innovative approaches to ALE. They usually just don't have the funding to do it.

d. Approaches to literacy in many African countries are literally from the last century.

e. Functional Adult Literacy is often no more than traditional literacy/numeracy that touches now and again on examples from agriculture or other sectors.

f. Literacy and numeracy are foundational skills. However, many illiterate and low-literate adults are not interested in literacy classes. Dropout rates are often very high.

g. Innovative approaches to ALE delivery are needed that are truly integrated: approaches that foreground the knowledge and skills that adults need and are interested in, and in which literacy

and numeracy acquisition can be embedded. DVV International is rolling out such approaches in Southern Africa.

4. Cooperation and exchange between and among African countries will greatly help.

a. Historically, Africa has looked outwards to Europe or further afield for expertise and guidance on adult education.

b. Within Africa there is a wealth of knowledge and experience on ALE, which is also embedded in African contexts.

c. Exchange and learning between African countries is poor.

d. All across Africa, we are often reinventing the wheel as a result of the lack of exchange with other African countries.

e. MOJA (www.mojaafrica.net) is one mechanism that can be used to improve exchange, training and learning among African ALE stakeholders.

f. DVV International launched MOJA in 2021. It is still rolling out across Africa. It will grow and expand, introducing new functionality in response to its members.

g. Even before COVID, the opportunities for ALE stakeholders in Africa to meet up were few. MOJA aims to fill a gap in ALE in Africa by fostering and facilitating exchange and learning among stakeholders.

3.3 We are ALE – Hungary prepares for CONFINTEA VII

Balázs Németh

Reflections from the Country Report to the Central-Eastern Europe sub-region - the Covid-19 situation making us reconsider what matters and who we are.

At this time of growing uncertainty and economic instabilities, we must consider and rethink our values and principles to find a stable and reliable route out of this pandemic situation. History has taught us not to underestimate large scale virus-based pandemics as we look back a hundred years to rediscover the lessons of the Spanish Flu and its consequences.

Although that situation was very different, we should not forget our recent past. with such rather lethal virus pandemics as Ebola and AIDS. In this regard, COVID-19 is different and can be handled by new creative innovative vaccines to control infection and effectively reduce related mortality rates too. Adults of all continents have had to experience again that life is fragile. So much is valuable that we should collaborate to overcome, and step forward to a new, so-called post-COVID future. Some say that COVID-19 will always stay with us as flu does, but this turbulent and global case with several mutants has recently made things complicated enough to raise and speed up vaccination rates.

In the context of adult learning and education, the global challenges of health and well-being are outstanding matters of social and economic concern in respect of employability, community participation and family responsibilities. It has turned out that the Hungarian situation reflects local-regional problems of health care and health-related services that were inherited and still resonate: challenging dimensions of system maintenance with the issue of financing; governance resulting in temporary shortages of doctors and nurses to be directly involved in the fight against the second wave of the pandemic. However, most decisions, having been based on professional virologists and researchers, have helped to reach an advanced rate of vaccinated adults and older adults, with a real 'herd' of vaccinated people effectively resisting the virus and its occurring mutants, aiming for immunity.

In Hungary today, the most challenging and necessary topic of health and well-being is to make people recognise their responsibility towards their own and their community members' health. People as adult learners must learn to become and stay vaccinated to resist viruses. This is a rather complicated issue at a time of uncertainties and a globally connected world of information full of fake news and propaganda. Adult education must help people to become and stay critical thinkers and consider what things are at stake, referring to social cohesion, stability, economic growth and prosperity, together with equitable, inclusive and tolerant environments.

It is, also a hard and difficult fact that in some particular cases the political may make for populist steps, and favour top-down policies instead of good compromises that reach for consensus and understanding in society, over challenging issues like a pandemic. It is sad to see a fragmented and polarised society over several issues causing conflict and misunderstandings, even in cases with universal, global, and transnational dimensions. Party-politics, traditional media, social media, community problems: each reflect real and virtual fragmentation. This all points out that active citizenship education needs to be developed in several contexts in Hungary.

International co-operation in European and other global platforms to develop adult learning and education other than Vocational Education and Training (VET) is limited. Scrutinizing the world of adult learning and education, recent trends show that Hungarian adult education and training have been deformed mainly or exclusively to VET, more precisely, continuing VET for adults in both formal and non-formal structures. VET has become a major and dominant field for government-recognised adult education and training intending to strengthen the employment and employability of adults through labour market-oriented training programmes provided by VET centres in each county across Hungary and financed by the national budget.

It was the Hungarian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MKIK) that pushed setting up such a scheme to train adults in vocations through skills development, based on the skill needs of major big employers. The Act on Adult Education and Training of 2013 (LXXVII/2013 Act on Adult Education), and its modification through an 11/2020 government decree set out to register and declare the start of specific programmes for adults, following the aim of the National Government to raise necessary skills and competencies of adults according to labour market needs.

This new Decree was accepted by majority vote of Government parties MPs in 2020 to initiate further high-quality non-formal training programmes for adult learners. It aimed to tie central government actions to the needs of the major multinational industrial and trade firms, keeping

SMEs away from such focus, together with minimising educational and training enterprises for individual training in skills and competence development, and participating with their bids in particular VET programmes. These orientations can be easily linked to OECD's skills policy frames and the CEDEFOP platform through country reports. (oecd.org); Hungary (europa.eu)

One significant consequence of this fragmented and reductionist orientation is lack of concern for other important fields of adult learning and education demonstrated by UNESCO as needed to raise participation. Thus, the Hungarian government cannot be identified as an active participant in participatory discourses at the UN and at the UN High-Level Panel (UNHLP to focus on Agenda 2030 and its SDGs, in the context of high-quality education and lifelong learning. Nor has Hungary been very active in the Council of Ministers of the EU to enhance adult learning for the last more than ten years. Consequently, it has not made use of the non-vocational-oriented adult learning initiatives of the European Commission, with equitable, inclusive and equality measures of better participation by vulnerable groups of adults across Europe and its regions suffering difficulties, inequalities, and deprivation.

International governmental and non-governmental organisations must call for more active involvement of nation-states in the development of adult learning programmes to raise both employment and active citizenship, with a clear and balanced format, avoiding reductionist views, and focus to become legitimate. Another reason for such an approach is that we may want to help underrepresented and vulnerable groups to get more attention and care. To get integrated and get access to adult learning we need to reconfigure laws, financing, and policies to result in better provision in adult education with a learner-centred focus. This is well demonstrated today by ICAE, DVV International, the European Lifelong Learning Platform, and EAEA, as civil society platforms of adult learning and education to strengthen the role, visibility, and necessary involvement of their voices, through dialogue, platform-building and common actions. We are ALE is also not at all visible yet in Hungary, at any official professional bodies' activities or platforms.

You will find internationally oriented and led campaigns and activities are found only in a small number of civil society groups, some university departments and institutes having been engaged in the research and development of adult education and learning devoted to non-vocational adult learning and education. There are some small steps towards professional development and research work: see the Role of EPALE HUNGARY and other research environments. [EPALE Hungary at: Andragógiai Kutatások Szakmai Műhelye | EPALE (europa.eu)]

One important and exceptional positive example is the EPALE Hungary platform, a special platform formed from 2017 in accordance with the EPALE platform itself. This may be the only case where non-vocational adult education practices are collected with country and topic-specific scopes. [The National Office of Vocational Education and Training and Adult Learning]

Also, the Adult Education Committee of the Pedagogical Commission of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences has created an Adult Education Research Workshop at EPALE Hungary to discuss certain research and development issues recognised as current trends. These are:

- Intergenerational learning
- Museum Andragogy/Adult Education in Museums

- Digitalisation – the role of digital education in the learning of adults
- Andragogy and Adult Learning Policies – In between employment and social cohesion
- Andragogy and the profession of adult educator
- Learning Communities and Learning Cities in the Dimension of Andragogy/Adult Education
- Adult Education Research and Basic Skills Development.

Those topics have generated discourse amongst some young researchers and lecturers with both academic and professional backgrounds, to collect and share ideas, narratives and critical approaches as to how adult learning participation, performance and partnership-based actions can be pursued in mutual commitment.

Another valuable example of Hungarian universities being involved in international research and development programmes with an impact on national ALE formation is the European Erasmus+ INTALL project. Here partner universities and their designated departments or institute have been collaborating on international studies in adult and lifelong learning through the annual Adult Education Academy at the University of Würzburg, and simultaneously developing an on-line tool for students of the field at MA and doctoral levels with the aim to expand their knowledge and skills in the field.[5]

A particularly important outcome of this Adult Education Academy programme is a recent collection of studies published by the University of Florence: International and Comparative Studies in Adult and Continuing Education which includes a paper on learning cities with reference to the case of Pécs, Hungary, compared to trends in India, Palestine, and the UK.[6]

Members of the Adult Education Committee of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences try to indicate and refer to the trends and issues signalled by EAEA, ICAE, ESREA on the one hand, and to those of UNESCO UIL, OECD and ILO on the other in the SDGs discourse. In this regard, members of the Committee have discussed influential aspects of the Futures of Education focus and related comments, for example of ICAE, and collected reflections on the ILO publication of Working for a Brighter Future and the OECD PIAAC survey's relevant materials on the changing skills of adult learners in Hungary. This means that professional academic bodies are aware of international trends; they are relating their work to aspects of global trends compared to local and regional realities.

In conclusion, the Education and Training Monitor2020 of the European Commission indicates that adult learning participation has recently been measured by the Hungarian government at 5.9.%, below the EU average of 7.9%, for 2019 [Education and Training Monitor 2020 (europa.eu)]

[5] This platform is called INTALL@home. Adult Education Academies - Fakultät für Humanwissenschaften (uni-wuerzburg.de); INTALL@home - Fakultät für Humanwissenschaften (uni-wuerzburg.de)

[6] https://fupress.com/catalogo/international-and-comparative-studies-in-adult-and-continuing-education/4405

This echoes two things. One is that the statistics are far behind the realities; seemingly more adults participate in learning activities beyond statistical reach, resulting in lower figures than expected. The other is that the rate for Hungary is still below the need for a more competitive adult public with better skills and competencies. This underlines the necessity for clear and stronger emphasis on expanding adult learning opportunities in dimensions of both VET and non-vocational adult learning o NVAL. We can only hope that the Hungarian government will make efforts to prepare well for UNESCO CONFINTEA VII in 2022, and preliminary events in Europe, by involving internationally recognised experts and researchers with practical and academic experience.

3.4 Citizen Education and The Long 40 Years: a work in progress[7]

Martin Yarnit

Immediately after World War One, in 1919, the British government set up a Commission to create a framework for adult education [see also 3.2 above]. One of the key recommendations of the final report was that university extramural departments, local authorities and the subsequently created Workers' Educational Association, the WEA, should form local committees to run adult education programmes. This foundation stone provided the basis for the development of distinct traditions in the four parts of the United Kingdom, that drew on history and social movements in different ways. Wherever there were miners, for example, there were well established relationships between the National Union of Miners and the universities, drawing students into 30-week tutorial classes and, often, preparing them for higher education through Ruskin College, Oxford. Notable in the capital, London, was the city-wide programme of day and evening classes managed by what in 1965 became the Inner London Education Authority.

De-industrialisation, and the curtailing of trade union power that was the hallmark of Thatcherism, marked the turning point for the tradition of adult learning that was created in the decades after 1919. The working class, its collective institutions and its communities, were transformed by economic change and by the arrival of economic and other migrants from every continent. The habits of learning together were replaced by internet communication. So when the adult educators of today came together to reflect on the 1919 report and its meaning a century later, they were grappling with a bewildering landscape. That included me and my friend and colleague, Jol Miskin, as much as everyone else.

Ten years earlier, we had mounted a project called Cicero that offered groups of working-class students a visit to Brussels, the European Parliament, and a tour of EU institutions, after a WEA introductory course. That was when Britain was still a member of the EU, when there was European funding for UK adult education, and when the WEA prided itself on its commitment to social action education. Things are very different in 2021, but when the WEA advertised a

[7] https://www.centenarycommission.org/wp-content/uploads/reports/The-Centenary-Commission-on-Adult-Education-Report-LOW-RES.pdf

programme of funding for innovative initiatives, Jol and I applied and were successful. He had recently retired from the WEA after a lifetime campaigning for education with a political edge. After a stint with the WEA in Liverpool I had gone on to co-found Adult Learners Week and to set up a national programme for community learning champions.

Our plan was to study and to try to make sense of the transformatory changes brought about during what we called *the long 40 years* – from 1979, when Margaret Thatcher became prime minister through to 1997, when Tony Blair was elected in a landslide for Labour, and on to 2019 when many Labour voters defected to the Conservatives, creating a landslide victory for Boris Johnson. Another key event during this period was the referendum on EU membership in 2016. The focus will be on how these events have played out in our region, Yorkshire, where coal mining, once a major employer, scarcely exists any longer, and where many traditionally Labour constituencies are now held by the Conservatives.

Our students – not recruited at the time of writing – would be at least dimly aware of these political changes and the accompanying social shifts, but few would have had the opportunity to view the 40 years as an event, and to consider how their lives and those of family, workmates and communities had been changed by it. We began this October, running through till Christmas 2021. The outcome, we hope, will be a collective account of the period and its impact, seen from many different points of view, and one that addresses one of the themes of the 2019 report of the Centenary Commission, fostering community, democracy, and dialogue. The interpretation will take shape on a website and there may be an exhibition. We hope to demonstrate that learning about the pressing political issues of today remains at the core of liberal adult learning.

3.5 Community Learning Centres Progress towards Education for All in Vietnam

Khau Huu Phuoc

Community learning centres in Vietnam

Vietnam started its project of building learning societies in 2005. However, the phrase *learning societies* first appeared in official government documents earlier, in a report by the country ruling Party at a national conference in 2001.

Community learning centres (CLCs), institutions advocated by UNESCO for the provision of learning opportunities in flexible modalities for all people with various needs, are key players in the process of building learning societies, and adult learning and education (ALE) providers in Vietnam.

The Law on Education (National Assembly of Vietnam, 2005, and 2019) provides that CLCs are continuing education institutions that implement literacy programmes, and other programmes responding to the needs of learners, updating their knowledge and skills, and transferring technology on the simple principle that ‘I learn what I need to’.

Starting with two pilot centres in Hoa Binh and Lai Chau Provinces in the north of Vietnam in the project "Promoting Community Learning Centres in Vietnam" (MOET, 1999), this community learning movement quickly picked up momentum and became the most extensive network of ALE centres in Vietnam. CLCs have over recent years sustained their number of around 11,000, being present in nearly all communes and wards of the country and providing learning activities which range from literacy to post-literacy, from income-generation to leisure skills and providing knowledge to improve daily life for people of all ages in the locality. They also improve local people's knowledge of civil laws, legitimate actions, and legal processes.

Adopted by Vietnam, the UNESCO-advocated CLC model has been implemented with degrees of innovation to suit the socio-economic situation of the country. Being "learning facilities of the people, by the people and for the people" (MOLISA, 2018, & MOET, 2018), they are autonomous but still receive the supportive involvement of the government at all levels. In fact, they are under the direct management of the commune/ward People's Committee, and the head of the local People's Committee is also the director of the CLC (MOET, 2008, and 2014). This gives the Centre an advantage: easy alignment of CLC programmes and activities with central Government direction.

Take for example, the first outbreak of coronavirus in 2020. Local governments, by directives of the Central Government, were to take control measures by raising people's awareness of the disease and giving advice on disease prevention. In their double role as head of the local authority and leader of the CLC, they organised appropriate CLC activities in cooperation with mass organisations like the Vietnam Women's Union and the Youth Communist Union.

Besides the directors, CLCs also have as their two deputy directors the deputy director of the local unit of the Vietnam Association for Learning Promotion and a local school headmaster. The Vietnam Association for Learning Promotion promotes learning mainly through raising funds and coordinating programmes and activities of different unions and associations in Vietnam like the Women's Union, Youth Communists' Union, and Farmers' Association. CLCs are under the professional direction & guidance of a district Board of Education and Training, a sub-unit of the Ministry of Education and Training. This mechanism enables support in programme implementation.

Challenges faced by CLCs

The dual role of management members helps keep CLCs functioning at low cost, as the directors receive salaries through their main duty in the government or school, with only a modest responsibility allowance for this second duty. However, many directors and deputy directors are already overloaded with work in their main duty, thus not fully dedicated to this 'secondary' role.

Operating on the principle 'by the people and of the people', CLCs have another downside: they do not have permanent staff or teaching staff of their own. They call for and rely on volunteers living in the area. These are often not teachers by profession, with little or no skill of teaching, not to mention andragogy that facilitates transferring of knowledge to adult learners who make up the majority of CLC programme participants. About 50% of the CLCs in Vietnam also have seconded teachers from local schools. While this has the advantage of utilising people with knowledge and teaching skills, the practice faces obstacles due to conflicts with regulations on teacher arrangement by the Ministry of Home Affairs.

CLCs do not have an infrastructure of their own but use shared offices of local People's Committees, often located in rooms set aside by the Committees which are quite limited in space and facilities. Teaching conducted at CLCs usually has local people gather in a room where instructors present a thematic talk, a mode of teaching and learning that does not attract learners.

Another challenge is financing. CLCs receive modest regular operation budgets from the government but not strong linkage with other line agencies (Đỗ, 2018). Many have been unable to mobilise resources from society. In places where CLC management committees are proactive, they may face a shortage of funding for the programmes they want to organise, while in other places where CLCs are quiet, the budget provided may not be fully utilised. According to Vũ (2020), only about 30% of the CLCs in Vietnam are operating effectively. The figure reported by the Department of Continuing Education is higher, at 75.6%, (MOET, 2018) due to different standards being applied.

Future direction

For the past few years, a pilot model has been initiated by many local governments, which have combined their CLC with the local Cultural House and Sports Centre to use their facilities for learning activities of the CLCs. However, the merger results in the dismissal of education officials like those from the local unit of Vietnam Association for Learning Promotion and a local school, resulting in a lack of any professional contribution in management. Despite this problem, merging has proved efficient in many cases and promises to be a successful model.

At a Conference concluding a project 'Enhancing lifelong learning movement in families, family clans, and communities till 2020' in November 2020, the Minister of Education and Training, Phùng Xuân Nhạ, told top education leaders that "talking about education while disregarding continuing education is looking at just half the issue". This does highlight CLCs' future role in the Vietnam education system.

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3.6 A learning community in Thailand: Ban-Peung sub-district in Nakon-Panom Province

Sumalee Sungsri and Bussalin Changsaluk

Introduction

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

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

To help every group of Thai people in every part of the country to receive lifelong learning opportunities, the government has paid for various efforts to identify proper strategies and to encourage all sectors to take part in organising and promoting lifelong learning. One of these is the promotion of learning communities. This paper presents the process of developing a learning community in one sub-district in the north-eastern part of Thailand.

A Learning Community in Ban-Peung sub-district

General Background

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

The process of developing a learning community

The process of developing a learning community included the following steps. Knowledge About learning communities was provided by a resource person to the NFE staff, and to community leaders and committees. NFE teachers invited village leaders and committees for a one-day meeting. After they had realised the benefits and understood the process of developing a learning community, a core group was formed. This was composed of the head of the sub-district, the village headman of every village, and a committee member of every village. The abbot of Ban-Peung temple and the NFE coordinator of Mueng District non-formal education centre acted as advisors. The core group extended ideas about creating a learning community to people in each village through various channels. They included: religious and cultural activities at the temples, village meetings, and informal meetings.

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

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

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

- promoting reading

- tourism for natural and cultural preservation

These problems and needs were used as basic information for developing a community development plan. Each of the 6 groups proposed about 2 projects according to the needs that they identified above. Related agencies, organisations and local communities were asked for cooperation as stakeholders of the learning community. They included: the temple, the local administration organisation, the District NFE Centre, Public Health Centre, Community Development Centre, Agriculture Centre, local primary schools, and the village committee.

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

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

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

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

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3.7 Is Adult Education Relevant to Hong Kong?

Benjamin Tak-Yuen Chan

Recent issues of the PIMA Bulletin discuss roles for adult education in bringing forth awareness of the climate crisis and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), helping to shape the understanding of complicated world issues, and fostering entrepreneurship education. Important occurrences include the Adult Learning and Education (ALE) branding project led by DVV, and the next world congress CONFINTEA VII in 2022. As all these take place within the professional space that is familiar to adult educators and lifelong learning practitioners around the world, I would like to pose a question about its relevance to a territory that has allowed itself to be left behind in the global discourse about adult learning.

The Past and the Present

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

Collaborative programmes for training adult educators and lifelong learning practitioners saw a succession of institutions including the University of British Columbia, the University of Surrey. The last one to leave was the University of Nottingham around 2011. Hong Kong's homegrown training programme, the Graduate Diploma in Adult Education and Training (predated by a Certificate and Diploma), offered by the University of Hong Kong School of Professional and Continuing Education (HKU SPACE) morphed into the Postgraduate Diploma in Adult Training and Vocational Education in 2015 and now has a focus on training and development only.

HKU SPACE sponsored the *International Journal of Continuing Education and Lifelong Learning* for a worthwhile decade-long existence ceasing publication in 2016. Hong Kong's self-imposed isolation from the wider context of discussions going on in adult learning and lifelong education was not helped by the fact that it has not been embraced into the UNESCO framework as was neighbouring Macao, which became an associate member in 1995 while still a Portuguese colony. Another reason for lack of international presence is Hong Kong policymakers' low regard for this domain of educational practice, shared by similar economies like Singapore which has not participated in global surveys including the latest round for the Global Report on Adult Learning and Education GRALE (UNESCO, 2019) [see 1.2 above].

The two long-term providers with roots in adult education, Caritas Adult and Higher Education Service and the Hong Kong College of Technology, have transformed entirely into further education institutions, with a change of name in the former to Caritas Institute for Community Education. In the university sector, the Government established a self-financed Open University of Hong Kong (OUHK) which is now a predominantly full-time degree offering university. Its open-entry distance learning provisions are on the wane each year. Continuing

education units in six (two have closed down) of the eight public universities long ago ventured into the market for full-time self-financing sub-degree and degree programmes, making these their major income staple, while short courses and part-time certificate and diploma programmes languished after losing their lustre as learners chased higher level qualifications.

State of Adult Education Provision

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

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

Hidden Adult Educators

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

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

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

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

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

Alternative Ways of Imagining Practice

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

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

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

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

This article lacks the scope to explore each of the learning areas open to adult educators. Advocating for patient rights, climate justice, and media literacy are just some areas where gaps are waiting to be filled, and needs are pressing. In an earlier article (Chan, 2013), I wrote about educating the citizens of Hong Kong to be equipped to participate in discussions concerning health-care reform where health resources allocation, funding for pharmaceuticals and improvement on health services delivery impact on the lives of many in the community, and no adults and their families are spared. I continue to draw inspiration from overseas examples of participatory adult education programming and the time has come to try this out in Hong Kong. Adult education is therefore still relevant.

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Part 4

Battling Pandemic

On the face of it, a section on the Covid-19 pandemic is out of place in a study about adult learning and education as a prelude to the 7th global conference on ALE in 2022. The fact is that the pandemic has swept aside, or more accurately perhaps under the carpet, the chronic and potentially lethal crises facing our world and its peoples: the issues addressed in the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, and above all the climate crisis, and the fact of a new Great Extinction. Whether it recedes to 'just another annual flu jab' on mutates and persists to nibble in its millions into the global population, it has focused the minds of ordinary people and where politically imperative of governments and their leaders. And as Chris Brooks observes, "those towards the bottom of the power pyramids have so often taken the problem by the scruff of the neck".

Rajesh Tandon sets out the basic proposition and, in the process, narrates how pandemic lockdown affects each life in personal ways: probing life deep as well as long and wide (see 2.3 above). Two contributions set out how China and the UK are responding in educative ways to the pandemic, especially for older people. Thomas and Carol Kuan do likewise from Singapore, but with a different twist, looking it also in macro-time with the virus itself as another competitive living organism. Peter Kearns draws on evolving experience of the UNESCO and UIL-led global learning cities network (GLCN) to see what this shows us by way of local-level efforts to work together for balanced healthy development which includes managing pandemic.

In the concluding section 4.7 Chris Brooks also locates the C-19 particularity in a larger picture in asking (generic questions from a French socio-political perspective) what lessons there are for the taking. The whole of Part 4 carries a current of essential transformation reaching out beyond inevitably conservative system adjustment to what is often called the unknown 'new normal'. Specifically, Brooks in ungarnished words fingers: the myopic compartmentalisation of many power-seeking national leaderships, which has also emerged as the termites of the SDGs; and the need for and the demonstrable results-getting, of massive decentralisation.

Facing tentative often local responses to pandemic, and the wilted outcome of COP 26 in November 2021, will those driving and all taking part in CONFITEA VII now grasp this larger reality, and the commanding need for a lifelong learning framework for all human enterprise? (see also 5.3)

4.1 Unlearning During Lockdown?

Rajesh Tandon

Staying inside the house with two grown-up kids (my son & daughter) for 10 weeks straight… what a constraint! No house help, no vendor at the door, no sight of neighbours!

This was an enormous constraint, externally imposed, with an infusion of fear and uncertainty. So, pressure for 'unlearning' began to mount.

Food habits, work habits, travel habits…every aspect of my being had to be 'unlearned'.

And each 'unlearning' had to be infused with new learning.

I got 're-connected' with my two kids… by cleaning the house together, by washing dishes and clothes, by cooking interesting food, based on whatever supplies existed at home then.

And we started to find new ways of 'being' with each other… playing cards, listening to music (even with diverse tastes), exercising at home together, watching serials & movies together (even though it took a while for all three of us to agree on some).

I called up many distant relatives to ask about their health; I connected with some old college friends I had lost touch with. It turned out to be quite a pleasant experience, surprisingly. Many a time, I have believed that it would be difficult to 're-connect', and do not try. Lockdown induced trying… trying new behaviours, to learn anew, as we 'unlearn' the old.

PRIA offices were closed down, so work from home was not difficult, as it was a part of the habit anyway. But not being able to visit the office and not meeting colleagues was irritating. As more gradual lockdown began two months ago, returning to office gave a sense of comfort… of the familiar.

Taking walks in the neighbourhood parks was sheer joy, with the smell of fragrance in the fresh air. I even started tending to my garden and got some fresh plants. The colour of the flowers began to shine, as 'new' birds began to sing. My senses of smell, hear, taste and touch got revived to a new level of pleasure…the forgotten Freudian 'id.

A realisation has begun to sink in about my privilege; I am part of that tiny percentage of Indian (indeed global) citizens who own a house with separate rooms for us all, a terrace to look out, a garden to tend to; we had food stored in the house, in the refrigerators; we have the comfort of fans and air-conditioning; we have savings to lean on, and jobs which still pay; we are healthy, our bodies are well-nourished from birth!!

I began to re-learn to thank Gods for our fortunes, for being able to 'stay the course' during such violent disruptions, to be able to relish the warmth of love and camaraderie.

Soon, I also realised that the work I have been doing for the past four decades is not enough; more and more, stronger, and deeper, efforts are needed to 'disrupt' the forces of privilege to just a few, the underlying dynamics of perpetuating and exacerbating inequality within and across societies today.

My thanks to lockdown, so that I have begun to take unlearning-changing-relearning seriously again - not only for myself but finding ways to support others too.

4.2 Rethinking Education for Chinese Senior Citizens During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Liu Quan and Yuan Dayong

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

Education for older people is a national strategy. COVID-19 had a far-reaching impact on older people. Developing senior citizen education effectively helps to prevent and control the pandemic situation, and to promote social stability. In the early stage of the pandemic, most of the confirmed cases in China were older citizens over 60 years old. They could not be ignored; they needed to be specially protected in this situation. Therefore, we should strengthen the awareness of older people in pandemic prevention, enhance their cultural knowledge and enrich their daily life to make them skilful and occupied.

With the acceleration of China's ageing society and the popularity of the concept of lifelong learning, senior citizen education has become the concern of the whole society. China's national strategy Education Modernisation 2035 states: "we must speed up the development of senior citizen education in an urban and rural community". It is acknowledged that the development of education for the aged is a positive measure to deal with the ageing of the population, and an essential step for constructing a learning society.

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

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

Affected by COVID-19, the way of learning and living of elders changed a lot. For retired people, social interaction is an indispensable part of their life. Due to the pandemic, they are

temporarily isolated at home. Most of their social activities such as travelling have been interrupted, and they can only interact with each other through WeChat, Tiktok, and other online social media. For the older learners, the pandemic hindered them from normal and regular classroom learning. Almost all the senior education institutions have postponed the opening of the school, and students cannot go back to school for offline learning.

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

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

Generally speaking, the pandemic has a certain impact on the physical and mental health of seniors, which limits their physical activity and affects their mood to a certain extent. What's more, the pandemic has also changed their way of learning and living, from individual and classroom learning to distance learning and family group learning. However, everything has two sides. In China, an old saying goes 'Luck and Misfortune come in turn'.

This pandemic also makes us rethink the teaching methods of senior Universities in China. In the future, education for older people should be more flexible; the content should be more diversified, and more proficient preparation of learning should be designed for older people.

4.3 Some International Perspectives on Longevity and Recovery from the Pandemic

Peter Kearns

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

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

Community Recovery Programme

I worked on each of these with my wife Denise Reghenzani I confine these remarks to the third of these papers, Connecting Up in a World of Turbulent Change.

The PASCAL EcCoWell programme which I founded in 2012 was directed at an integrated/holistic approach to building learning cities and neighbourhoods. Integrating the learning, health, and environment strands are central to the initial phase of EcCoWell development. It is reflected in the 2017 UNESCO Cork Call to Action for Learning Cities. The 2020 EcCoWell2 Community Recovery Programme ran from March to October 2020 with nine participating regions. Its report was released in November 2020 and available on the PASCAL website.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

4.4 What is Covid-19 teaching us as adult learners?

Thomas Kuan and Carol Kuan

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

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

Most humans (mainly westerners) are not willing learners: many hate being told to wear masks, keep social distancing, and avoid large gatherings; they want 'freedom' in their lifestyles.

However, most Asia-Pacific nations accept social or collective responsibilities as one of their behaviours. It is a blessing that Wuhan City first noticed Covid-19 and informed the World Health Organisation WHO on the virus spread. Wuhan City, with its strong governmental actions, slowed the Covid-19 spread. It could have been even worse had the virus been started in countries with lax social enforcement, caused many more million deaths. Covid-19 has caused global financial recessions, massive unemployment, and created a fear of infection. Nations are imposing lockdowns to flatten and prevent the virus from spreading and are pouring in funds to prevent social disorientations and business disruptions. Depending on the boats they are on, some nations are also already preparing for future waves of the infection before populations are vaccinated and the virus is mostly eliminated.

What has all this to do with adult learners, particularly later life learners?

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

Economically, Covid-19 shows that embracing gig work is necessary as fewer jobs are available. Gig work now becomes the new trend as youths create new businesses using the Internet as a resource for learning and earning. Experienced workers start gig work to monetise their experience, skills, and knowledge. When the pandemic recovery comes on, some developed economies will face labour shortages as job markets expand; they will notice that more adults and youth have given up hope of working. Policies to nurture hidden skills and talents are necessary to solve manpower issues. As Singapore's Senior Minister Tharman said 'never underestimate how previous skills and old skills are relevant to the future. They're always relevant'. He suggested for companies to 'bring forward hiring to today, this year and next year'.[8] The 'employing forward' concept means investing in the otherwise lost skills and experiences of human resources. It sustains employability, especially for third agers, as Covid-19 is redefining work caused by technology, health, and climate changes.

Covid-19 forces learners to hasten their adoption of online learning, e-payments, virtual socialising, and entertainment. Hopefully, these activities will protect mental health, as loneliness caused by a prolonged feeling of idling at home affects the emotions. For older adults experiencing isolation during the pandemic, having more meaningful relationships seems to be more important than just having more interactions with others, and maintaining these relationships may require the use of technology to connect with loved ones. It is social and mental health for them. In U 3rd Age in Singapore, we collaborated on a 'Project Buddy' where lonely and isolated seniors were matched with volunteers (both young and old) to have regular phone conversations.[9] We also participated in a public event to share on 'Positivity Through the Generations', which included qigong exercises for physical and mental health.[10]

[8] www.straitstimes.com/singapore/companies-have-to-play-ball-in-providing-traineeships-attachments-for-retrenched-workers

[9] https://www.u3rdagesingapore.org/post/project-buddy-a-community-project-by-ageless-online-with-u-3rd-age

[10] https://www.u3rdagesingapore.org/post/hwss-may2020

Trust the Process

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

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

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

4.5 Older adults and COVID-19 in the UK: the changing face of learning[11]

Alexandra Withnall

The move to online learning for the elderly

COVID-19 first reached the United Kingdom (UK) late in January 2020. Since then, every part of the country has been affected. Older people appeared to be particularly vulnerable to the virus. Their comparatively high death rate at the height of the pandemic can be ascribed to physiological changes that accompany ageing, especially if they have underlying ill-health conditions. In the UK early on, many were returned to a care home after a hospital stay without being tested for the virus, despite the high risk of transmission to other residents. Lockdown became a recurrent way of life.

Lockdown was especially difficult for older people. many spent several months confined to their homes unable to see family and friends, and with some having trouble in obtaining basic food supplies. For people living alone, the sense of isolation has been particularly acute, and many older people are fearful and reluctant to venture out. Yet since we know that continuing to learn during difficult times can help build confidence, and create a more fulfilled life as well as improving wellbeing, what forms of learning have been available to older people during this time? Since what most isolated older people probably need is contact with others, a number of educational providers and others with an interest in older people's lives have used the internet to reach them, and to expand their repertoire of learning opportunities.

Digital skills and communicating online

Obviously, a pre-requisite for online communication is the possession of basic digital skills. Learn my Way is a website of free online courses to help people in general to develop these skills including a guide to online safety, while the BBC has produced a simple step-by-step to

[11] A longer version of this paper can be found in PIMA Bulletin No. 32 September 2020

video calling your family using a smartphone, or how to receive such a call using a desktop computer. The University of the Third Age (U3A) in the UK has been especially active in producing a series of 'how-to' guides for online communication including the use of Facebook, WhatsApp groups and the increasingly popular internet conferencing tool, Zoom.

Maintaining physical and mental health

Imparting information and advice to older people as to how to maintain physical and mental health during the lockdown and beyond has been a priority for government. Accordingly, there has been no shortage of internet advice from national and international organisations about setting a daily routine, maintaining physical wellbeing through daily walks or home-based exercise, alleviating stress, keeping an active mind by reading, writing, playing games, doing jigsaws and so on, as well as paying attention to sleep, taking time to relax and learning how to express worries to others by phone or through video calls. Exploring what the internet has to offer that might include discovering 'things you enjoy' or pursuing a new interest is also recommended. Also, many organisations working with older people have produced detailed advice and links to guidance specifically relating to the coronavirus for people with serious underlying health conditions.

The arts and creativity

Pursuing interests through internet learning is not new. Platforms such as Futurelearn in the UK have been offering a range of online short courses (known as MOOCs) for some years now. Although they have apparently proved very attractive to a range of older learners, there is still a paucity of research as to how they engage with MOOCS (Liyanagunawardena and Williams, 2016). Similarly, the Open University in the UK offers a range of courses for over-50s that are entirely free. The University of the Third Age (U3A) which boasts 444,000 members across the UK has been particularly active during the lockdown in offering ideas for its members to keep learning and to keep them connected, such as: joining a virtual choir; taking part in a maths challenge, and participation in an interactive creative writing session.

In addition, a comparative newcomer to the scene, Rest Less, which describes itself as 'the UK's fastest-growing digital community for the over-50s', offers the chance to browse over 50,000 courses from various countries, some free and some incurring a cost. It also offers help with job search, managing money and volunteering. It is also likely that GetSetUp, an American site that considers itself 'the largest senior to senior live interactive educational platform' and which advertises its 'fun and engaging' short courses frequently on social media, attracts older learners from the UK.

As with other generations, older people may well enjoy the online availability of arts productions from the National Theatre which has been offering Thursday night play screenings, international concert series, museum tours, online access to art collections etc. which are widely available and can be accessed through the Google Arts and Culture website. However, in respect of older people, two particular developments are worthy of note. The first is the work of the Women's Institute (WI), the largest community-based organisation for women in the UK, which originated in Canada and now boasts 220,000 members nationwide, the majority of whom tend to be older women. Currently unable to meet in person, members can now access a fascinating range of online events such as cookery demonstrations, talks and practical activities, many of them organised through Denman, the WI's own residential adult education

college, or through their local Federations. Use of Zoom enables participants to watch and engage with Denman tutors and to learn new skills. Sadly, Denman's future as a residential centre is in doubt due to loss of income during lockdown; but the move to online learning appears to have been very well received by many WI members despite a small charge to register for online activities.

The second development, the King Lear prizes, is an innovative creative arts competition for people aged over 70 (over 60 in one case) who were quarantined or mainly stuck at home during the lockdown. The categories in which entries were invited included a short story, poetry, a solo musical composition, a 15-minute drama and art or photographic offerings. Although final judging has not yet taken place, the organisers were amazed at the number of entries in each category – more than 16,000 short stories alone were submitted. The King Lear initiative continued over the 2021 summer on a small-scale basis, inviting entries for haikus, face mask designs and a 'Samuel Pepys diary 'entry challenge, as well as an artistic depiction of summer fruit or vegetables. Documented reactions so far seem to show that many older entrants are delighted to be offered a showcase for their creative talents.

Is online learning the future for older people?

This snapshot of online learning and creative activities for older people in the UK suggests that during the pandemic, the internet has come to the fore as an educational tool. Even before the coronavirus struck, there had been a rapid increase in the numbers of people aged 55 plus who had recently used the internet (for any purpose) according to figures produced by the Office for National Statistics (ONS, 2019). However, in a briefing produced by the Centre for Ageing Better (2020), a charitable foundation funded by the National Lottery, it is suggested that whilst COVID-19 has encouraged more older people to get online and to use the internet in new ways, it has also actually deepened the digital divide, in that those who do not have digital access are at even greater risk than before of missing out in all kinds of areas of life. Age remains the biggest predictor of whether a person is able to get online; 3.7 million people over the age of 55 were among the four million who have never used the internet in 2019 (ONS, 2019). They are also likely to be in poorer health, less well-off and less well educated than their peers.

Centre for Ageing Better research indicates a range of complex barriers that some people in later life still face in getting online. These include a lack of confidence; prior limited exposure to computers during employment; ageism and internalised stereotypes about the ability to learn; perceived value and relevance; and of course, access to, and affordability of equipment especially as community provision in centres and libraries has mostly disappeared during the lockdown. The Centre emphasises the need to provide other opportunities for older people who are currently excluded, especially in relation to public health messages and advice; but a need to expand access to technology, provide equipment and invest in building digital skills is also identified. There is still a long way to go, especially if social distancing measures remain in place for the foreseeable future. Older learners who lack confidence in their own abilities and in using technology will doubtless continue to need personal support. Online learning may be the future for later life, but we cannot afford to leave anyone behind.

Finally, we need carefully designed and executed research to better understand how older people who do embrace online learning choose their platforms, what they are interested in learning, and how they engage with what is offered. How do they seek and use the information to manage their health and wellbeing in pandemic? If they choose to build on an existing

interest or learn a new skill, how is this best delivered digitally, bearing in mind what we already know about how older people learn? And crucially, what training will be available to those who develop online programmes and activities specifically aimed at older learners and who will deliver it? There is a new research and action agenda to be explored which is urgent if we are to face the digital future with confidence and enthusiasm.

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4.6 Adult learning and education: A tool to improve health and well-being in the context of COVID-19[12]

Henrique Lopes and Veronica McKay

In this article we argue that adult learning and education (ALE), as a component of lifelong learning, is critical in breaking pandemic secondary transmission chains. Education and specifically health literacy are necessary to enable citizens to obtain and use the appropriate knowledge to care for themselves and their dependants. In the long term, only the strengthening of learning and literacy levels and the improvement of the communication capacity of the health authorities can respond to these kinds of problems. In the short term, ALE interventions become critical.

Too much information

The pandemic has required that all people of all social strata have needed to engage with the coronavirus. Discussions about the virus, its size, and how it is spread have become common parlance. Even the least well prepared were forced in a very short time to acquire knowledge of how the virus multiplies, flattening the curve, exponential growth, the national need for ventilators, and a range of information that they never expected to be included in their life skills repertoire. COVID-19 has necessitated understanding concepts such as asymptomatic but contagious, social distancing, and changes in social and cultural conventions, for example, greeting one another, and knowing that one has to wear a mask because of social responsibility and empathy towards others: "I wear a mask not only to defend myself from infection but also to protect others from an infection."

[12] See https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11159-020-09843-0 for a more detailed version of this study

The need for information on caring for dependent

Older people being a high-risk group, they need to know what they can and cannot do. ALE for this target group should also be aimed at helping them to change behaviours that have been ingrained for decades, and specifically designed to support and manage emotional problems resulting from the interruption of contacts between older people and their families in situations such as when they are admitted to hospitals and nursing homes.

Learning how to be ill and how to deal with risk patients at home

Transmission pathways of the disease and their management in households must be learned. People in households who were previously ill or who have comorbidities represent a risk to the other people in their households. Only by teaching the rest of the family how to behave will it be possible to avoid spreading the virus in households with an infected person.

Taking on the functions of children's education

With the closure of schools, parents must provide home-schooling for their children. In situations in which digital learning is possible, the parents need guidance on how to use digital resources to ensure ongoing learning at home. If such resources are not available the parents need to learn how to manage their children in cooperation with their schools; and when children return to school, they need to know how to protect themselves and others at school, with friends and in other social spaces, to mitigate the spread of the virus.

COVID-19 and the law

As countries move to different levels of lockdown in line with the spread of the virus, their citizens have needed to understand the regulations associated with each level, what they may do and what is prohibited. Legislation pertaining to national social safety nets is important concerning accessing healthcare and social grants, and in providing information on their eligibility to access social services.

The ability to decode information and identify fake news

Since most national and international health authorities release daily statistics and other related information, people are required to navigate volumes of information and to be able to interpret the data correctly. Decoding and interpreting information is vital. When US President Trump announced bleach-based vaccine, there was an outbreak in the United States of hospital admissions due to people drinking bleach to ‘kill the virus’ and showing the need for accurate ALE which is accessible and packaged successfully for various literacy levels.

Digital literacy

The pandemic has unprecedentedly accelerated digitalisation of all processes: ‘everyone going online’. Citizens, whether prepared or not, were forced to master digital tools for:

- using pandemic tracking systems
- providing healthcare by digital means (consultations, counselling, daily follow-ups for COVID-19 patients, etc)
- performing professional activities through working remotely
- participating in schooling and higher education through digital means

- accessing common services such as banking services which are now online.

More than ever, the most vulnerable groups have been forced to go it alone, having been exposed to challenges for which no one has prepared them. COVID-19 has contributed to both highlighting what was already broken and increasing social inequality. What we see now is the tip of the economic and social inequality iceberg; it is anticipated that pandemic will impact vulnerable people who are thrown into situations of precariousness owing to unemployment, their health status, and socio-economic challenges from which they are unable to recover.

The only tool that can begin to respond to these challenges is the long-term improvement in the education of most of the population and, immediately, launching even basic health and digital literacy and numeracy training programmes that will enable citizens to gain an understanding of the current environment.

4.7 COVID-19: What Lessons Can We Learn?

Chris Brooks

The predicament

Being right does not always help. We have seen this in many instances with the COVID-19 pandemic in recent months. In the PIMA Bulletin we have worried about several major defects in our societies, which do not appear much in newspaper and television discussions. But they are fundamental to education, and its role in trying to keep our societies reasonably stable and capable of plotting and planning a better future. Of the many issues, we have discussed there are four that I would like to remind us of:

1. We are ill-equipped to analyse data and information to draw rational decisions. In particular, we are generally very poor at understanding and analysing numbers and statistics.

2. The internet and associated social media add to these difficulties by propagating erroneous or deliberately false information which often acquires a life and a truth of its own in large parts of the popular mind.

3. The institutions of liberal democracy are less and less credible in much of the population's mind. The leaders of these institutions are more and more questioned, and their knowledge and authority increasingly repudiated.

4. The 'elite' are less and less tolerant of the views of others that do not coincide with their own. Alliances between the liberal, progressive intelligentsia and the working class have broken down, in significant part because of the arrogance of the elite.

The COVID-19 climax

We have seen all these issues at play during the crisis we are living through with COVID-19. There is not space enough to enumerate all the examples. Suffice it to say that we have all seen that the statistics are at best unhelpful, and at worst misleading; we have all seen how journalists have used them for sensation rather than an explanation; we have all read of conspiracy theories about the origins of COVID-19 and more seriously about corrupt conspiracy between governments and the pharmaceutical industry concerning vaccines and drugs. The French Professor Didier Raoult's propaganda campaign has gained much popular support because of its anti-intelligentsia tone. None of this will help us in preparing to cope with future waves of COVID-19, or in rebuilding the shattered economies which will soon emerge in what is likely to be the worst economic recession since the end of the Second World War.

In coming weeks and months, we will see many parliamentary and independent commissions and enquiries into the COVID-19 crisis. Most will centre on the pointless exercise of apportioning blame and finding scapegoats. Few will concentrate on trying to address the long-term problems that this crisis has brought to light. Emmanuel Macron, the President of France, has described the French executive as 'flabby and hard of seeing'. That seems to me an understatement, but at least a helpful starting point. We must all be concerned about building a new public policy system which is less vulnerable than the one we have seen in action since the pandemic broke out.

Political failure and social disaster

It is clear to all of us that the organisation of both our economies and our societies leaves much to be desired. We have seen how COVID-19 disproportionately affects the vulnerable: those who are sick and towards the end of their lives, but more crucially the poor, the badly housed, the unemployed, those with hard manual jobs and poor working conditions, like garbage removers and road sweepers, and immigrant communities. Those living in cramped and dense housing with little or difficult access to green space are also highly vulnerable and disproportionately affected by COVID-19.

So COVID-19 has underlined the growing inequalities of an increasingly materially prosperous world. Incremental change to the ordering within and between our societies will do little to remove these underlying causes, which have meant that the poor pay a very disproportionate price once again.

The forthcoming recession will make change more difficult but also more necessary. Inequality issues will become aggravated by major economic downturn and large-scale unemployment, especially the large-scale youth unemployment that confronts us for the next ten years. Health inequality, housing inequality, education inequality and the growing gap between the haves and the have-nots are likely to get even worse. The miserable efforts of public policy to tackle these issues in the past are certainly no way forward for a better world.

So, what about Emmanuel Macron's flabby and hard of seeing State? Like others in developed countries, we have seen how poorly policies are tied up into a coherent strategy: housing, education, skills, and infrastructure are each conceived and implemented as separate and non-connected policies. Taxation policy is even worse, in that it constantly fails to address the splits of GDP between capital and labour, when we know that a higher proportion of national wealth

going to the wages of the mass of the workforce is an indispensable element for reducing poverty.

What about the myopic short-sightedness that Macron talks of? How are our education systems turned towards the future? Have they started to give all young people some chance of playing a constructive role in the economy of artificial intelligence? Have we thought about the distribution of infrastructure, housing, and training opportunities in relation to the gaping inequalities that COVID-19 has so clearly underlined? No. Governments have just continued to waddle on.

Letting go and getting on with it

One of the bright spots of the COVID-19 crisis is how those towards the bottom of the power pyramids have so often taken the problem by the scruff of the neck. They have just got on and done what needs to be done. Local general practitioners, nurses, local mayors and community groups of all sorts, often at great risk to themselves and in defiance of central rules, have helped limit the disaster. This underlines the massive inefficiency of the over-centralised State, and the need to decentralise decision-making and action to the lowest possible level, to ensure that central government concentrates on the strategic issues helps the process of action and change and does not harm it.

We need less centralised and more strategic central government, and more public investment that enables citizens and their families to take responsibility for their lives, rather than providing miserly income transfers which mitigate the misery but maintain the poverty. Why do so many people have to eat bad food? Or have no access to green space or clean air? So little chance of access to good schools or decent jobs? Surely the State with all its redistributive power is supposed to be responsible for these considerations.

Making a new start and trying to provide the basis of rebuilding public confidence in the institutions which are supposed to hold society together and to plot pathways to a better future: this is the challenge laid bare by the crisis of COVID-19. Failure to rise to the challenge guarantees victory for the populists.

More broadly this situation also requires us to see the failures of the meritocracy which has shaped the post Second World War world. Whilst it may have helped liberate us from the restrictive social structures of the past, it has also created generations of leaders who have no critical self-doubt. Over time this lack of self-doubt turns into arrogance and a despising attitude towards the poor – the ‘little people’. These then become the electorates of Trump, LePen and Bolsanaro. Contempt can be as lethal as poverty.

Part 5

Means and Methods

This 5th Part traverses several different perspectives on what is needed for ALE oriented towards lifelong learning to be of real value: from financial and other resources to deeper understanding and vision as to how to be effective.

Ruth Sarrazin points up the difficulties that popular, participatory, civic, and action-oriented ALE can encounter under defensive and authoritarian governments; and possible ways to protect popular education by rolling it in together other aspects of ALE. its different elements. Peter Kearns notes the contextual reality of a confrontation between capitalism and the planet, pointing up ways of drawing on all elements of learning for healthy living.

Where Sarrazin suggests a tactic for bundling up public education for community and social benefit, Shauna Butterwick proposes 'disruptive, reactive, and divisive public discourse' to break a conservative consensus of ever-rising inequality; and Alan Tuckett seeks the means to move beyond rhetoric to action, and to energise the 7th global CONFINTEA at a time when gradualism is not enough - 'the future won't wait'. Sections 5.3 and 5.4 probe the use of different distance media and techniques to engage and support learning at a distance.

One thread running through Part 5 is how to reconcile the powerful contemporary social and other media with the need for collaborative solidarity which is most effective at local levels. There is also the sinister thread of 'fake news' created to mislead, which is fundamentally opposed to all rationality and learning, and so to ALE and LLL in all their forms. On a personal, energising, and hopeful note, Shirley Walters, Archanya Ratana-Ubol and senior students and colleagues at her leading Thai university celebrate face to face learning through dialogue, and the gentle power of networks "in thinking and talking 'outside the box'".

5.1 The public financing of popular adult learning and education (ALE)

Ruth Sarrazin

In August 2020, DVV International commissioned a study of the public financing of popular (also known as community or liberal) adult learning and education (ALE). The reasoning behind this was the recognition that while the funding of literacy and vocational education from public sources is widely accepted and mainly granted in many countries, this is far less the case for popular ALE. With its role in fostering active citizenship, it is still often a controversial issue. Furthermore, there is often little knowledge about its benefits, and of existing financing models. DVV International wanted good practice examples and recommendations to strengthen advocacy work and ensure the public funding of this part of ALE.

The study was conducted by a team of three consultants, Chris Duke, Heribert Hinzen, and me, together with 22 authors from different parts of the world. At its heart were 14 country and case studies, from Scandinavia to Uganda and Palestine to New Zealand, to name a few. They present a variety of contexts: geographical, political, economic, cultural. Diverse as the countries are, the definitions of popular ALE and the funding mechanisms applied: from countries with a strong history of the institutionalisation of popular ALE and corresponding funding systems, to countries that are just now exploring new paths towards sustainable ALE structures and financing systems.

Diversity, complexities, practicalities

The lack of reliable and comparable data makes it difficult to provide concrete numbers, for example about the percentage of the total education budget accounted for by popular ALE. But it is obvious from the studies that the public funding of ALE, especially popular ALE, is very small compared to other education sectors. It is however, extremely valuable in practice. Compared with for example vocational education and training (VET), popular ALE attracts much less interest and money from the private sector, making public funding even more important.

The studies show that governments use mostly supply-side funding mechanisms for popular ALE, meaning that the money goes more to institutions that offer ALE than to individuals or companies that demand it. Usually, the State supports providers and offers considered to be in the public interest. There are differences in how public interest is defined: top-down or bottom-up, often a mix of both. In some cases, popular ALE offers are funded no matter what the content is, if they find enough participants.

The importance of public money is underlined by the fact that for some providers of popular ALE public funding can comprise 50 % or more of the total, usually with participant fees covering the rest. Add the fact that popular ALE is often a vibrant part of community life, with high levels of civic engagement and volunteering, and a little public money can have a big impact. Nevertheless, we are nowhere near reaching the full potential of popular ALE with the little funding currently provided.

The diversity of countries and the historically evolved systems presented in the studies do not allow one-size-fits-all solutions, that can be copied from one country or context to another. But the studies provide some comprehensive understanding of the functioning, advantages and challenges of different funding mechanisms and approaches. They also provide some important lessons and recommendations.

These include that regular financial support – even if far too little – is more useful than short-term funding, e.g. through tenders which prevent agencies from providing reliably. If there is no basic funding for ALE providers, they have constantly to chase money from different sources, taking resources that could otherwise be spent on providing ALE and adding to the precarity of working conditions in the sector.

The studies also show that other forms of public support are often crucial: for example, of premises by public authorities can help a great deal. In some countries, public bodies provide training for staff and educators or help with free materials and equipment. All these must be counted in when looking at public funding, making the picture even more complex, but also a bit brighter.

Public funding for institutions is often attendance-based, sometimes attainment-based, and there are different mechanisms to monitor the outcomes of popular ALE. Many of the authors argue that the existing monitoring systems do not allow us to measure the real impact of the money spent. To improve these mechanisms is a recurring recommendation. After all, the question is not only how much money is spent, but also how it is spent and what impact it has on people and communities on the ground.

Another lesson is that the lines between the three types of ALE (literacy and basic skills; continuing training and professional development, and active citizenship, see UNESCO 2015) are blurry to say the least. Look closely and you will find that popular ALE is a vital part of most literacy and VET activities (for example in the form of "life skills" or "employability skills"). The best strategy to protect and advance this vital element of popular ALE is to embed it within a larger all-encompassing concept.

A public and political affair

Popular ALE is usually associated with political empowerment and enhanced participation, making it a strong tool for democracy. Depending on the political context, however, this can be a controversial and sensitive topic in advocacy work. Therefore, one overall recommendation is: "Rather than explicitly campaign for ALE for political change, its future may be best served, and a flow of resources assured to local communities where the heart of community learning and active citizenship reside, and grow, simply to argue for the full spectrum of ALE as an indivisible right and necessity, rather than separate, as for IT or languages" (Duke, Hinzen, Sarrazin 2021).

We sometimes hear the argument that popular ALE is a private matter, a 'nice-to-have' for individuals. We underline its much broader meaning and role.

First, education, which includes ALE, is a human right. As humans, we are by our very nature 'designed to learn'; we would not survive without learning. It is written in our DNA. Accordingly, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights defines education in a very holistic sense: "Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality…" (United Nations 1948). But a human right is not an actual right if it cannot be realised. Therefore, States have to play an important role in the provision of lifelong learning, including ALE in all its dimensions, by setting the framework conditions and providing at least some stable basic financing.

Secondly, popular ALE has enormous benefits not only for the individual but for communities and societies as a whole. Popular ALE may be less easy to grasp, and its outcomes, hard to count or translate into profit. But it helps us to cope with a changing world throughout our whole life. It improves our mental and physical health, boosts our confidence, empowers us to participate in society, navigate in a globalised world and actively shape our future.

Popular ALE also has an important role to play in coping with and eventually recovering the current COVID-19 pandemic. Think of health education, media literacy or education for tolerance and solidarity. Much learning today happens informally via google, social media, or YouTube. Understanding these new media and critical reflection on their contents and sources is vital for dealing with fake news and conspiracy theories that are on the rise.

Against this backdrop, governments across the globe should have a big interest in supporting popular ALE as a crucial part of ALE.

Advocacy

To provide a clear, compelling message on the benefits of popular ALE and to better communicate them to governments and other stakeholders is another recurrent recommendation from the studies, which come just in time for the *We are ALE* campaign recently launched by ICAE and a global alliance of ALE networks, associations, and organisations. They have chosen three keywords or goals that are at the heart of ALE: *justice, well-being, and change*. No doubt, popular ALE has an important role to play here.

The study was presented at a webinar organised by DVV International, together with another study conducted by ICAE, which looks at financing of the whole ALE sector in all its facets (Popović 2021). The two studies are complementary and provide important tools for advocacy also about the upcoming CONFINTEA VII, and the preparatory regional consultations.

Besides the 14 country and case studies, the study includes summaries of key elements of the studies and a synthesis of local findings and global trends.[13]

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5.2 How do we approach a contemporary philosophy for adult learning in a sustainable world?

Peter Kearns

The timely and provocative articles by Shirley Walters and Han Soonghee in PIMA Bulletin No 26 raise fundamental questions about what kind of society we should aspire towards and the role of adult learning in achieving such a society.

[13] Dig deeper and read the studies online: https://www.dvv-international.de/en/materials/publications/analysis

Climate change is a critical issue happening in a context of deep societal change driven by influences such as new technologies including artificial intelligence, demographic change with ageing populations, the decline of many traditional influences that have bonded communities, and the emergence of unstable tribal groups linked by social media: it is a world of turbulence and dislocation.

Professor Han puts the choice starkly as a confrontation between capitalism and the Planet. Such a confrontation raises difficult political choices that impede action in democratic capitalist countries like Australia. Is a middle path possible that could lead to a sustainable democratic society?

Economist Jeffrey Sachs is among those who argue for such a middle path in *The Price of Civilization*, with the sub-title "Reawakening virtue and prosperity after the economic fall". His argument for such a middle path, closely linked to achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals, is elaborated further in his subsequent *The Age of Sustainable Development*, issues confronting attaining the UN SDG objectives.

In discussing what he sees as pathways to a sustainable society, Sachs sees the need for an integrated approach linking economic, social, environment, and political objectives.

The first analytical part is to understand the interlinkages of the economy, society, environment, and politics. The second normative part is to do something about the dangers we face, to implement the SDGs, and to achieve them. (Sachs 2015:42)

PASCAL has been interested in integrated cross-sectoral approaches to learning city development for some years through the EcCoWell initiative, taken up by the city of Cork.

Sachs returns to the point raised by both Shirley Walters and Han Soonghee of the need for active citizenship and a sense of community as the conceptual platform for sustainable development. Sachs builds a mindful society, with eight dimensions of mindfulness set out. The centrality of citizenship entails social and political responsibilities. Without accepting social and political responsibilities the individual cannot actually find fulfilment (Sachs 2012:163).

This links the social and political responsibilities of the individual to their happiness and fulfilment, taking us back to the UNESCO philosophy of 'learning to be' elaborated by Vaill as learning as a way of being (Vaill 1996). The middle path of responsible citizenship sought by Sachs has a long historical pedigree with links to both Buddha and Aristotle. The link to happiness and personal fulfilment then takes us to use of the annual World Happiness Reports as a better metric of social progress than traditional GDP measures which serve the developmental causes of capitalism.

Finding a sustainable middle path means going beyond GDP measures of capitalism which favour on-going growth objectives but tell us little about the quality of life and well-being of the bulk of the population. The World Happiness Report metrics are useful in this regard. A further example is provided by the General Progress Indicator (GPI), an economic indicator incorporating environmental and social factors ignored by GDP assessments.

Linking active citizenship to happiness and personal fulfilment opens up of a broad approach to the qualities needed by individuals and communities to thrive and survive in this era of

dislocation and turbulence. Authors as varied as Schwab (2016) founder and CEO of the World Economic Forum) and Vaill (1996) have noted this requirement.

Schwab in *The Fourth Industrial Revolution* responds to the technological megatrends of the 'Fourth Industrial Revolution', arguing the need to nurture and apply four different kinds of intelligence in this context in moving towards 'a truly global civilization':

- Contextual (the mind) - how we understand and apply our knowledge
- Emotional (the heart) - how we process and integrate our thoughts and feelings and relate to ourselves and to one another
- Inspired (the soul) - how we use a sense of individual and shared purpose, trust, and other virtues to effect change and act towards the common good
- Physical (the body) - includes personal health and well-being.

Like Schwab, Vaill sets out a range of types of learning needed to thrive in the 'permanent white water' of the contemporary world. While most are familiar to educators, most interesting is 'spirituality and a sense of meaning' and 'spirituality as holistic perception'. Thus, both Schwab and Vaill see the need for spiritual, inspired, perceptions in learning and creating meaning and purpose, and in building the qualities, such as trust needed in a sustainable society.

All this sets an agenda for adult learning which we need to pursue in community and other social contexts such as learning neighbourhoods, business enterprises, and other organisations.

I agree with Han that we need to redefine our concept of a learning city: from a community using its resources to open learning opportunities throughout life for all residents, to one denoting a community engaged in a learning journey towards a good sustainable future that brings a sense of meaning and purpose to the lives of citizens, including understanding the responsibilities that local and global citizenship entails, matters that require thought and elaboration. Shirley Walters and Han Soonghee open landscapes that we need to explore for a contemporary philosophy of adult learning in a sustainable world, where inclusion brings civic responsibilities and an ethical and moral platform for such a world. What are the next steps?

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5.3 The Media as an Effective Tool of Adult Education

Khau Huu Phuoc

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

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

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

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

Such shopping sprees can be seen in the media, depicting Hongkong, Japan, Korea, Singapore, even as far away from the original epicentre Wuhan as California in the USA. Such a scene was seen in Hanoi, Vietnam on the night of March 2, 2020. But it was gone as quickly as it came. What happened then?

On March 7, 2020, the Government and media gave news of a Vietnamese returning from a trip to Italy, England, and France showing signs of sickness; tested the result was positive. As soon as people heard the news, they did what people in other countries had done: rush to the supermarket and began collecting things for future use. A panicking experience was about to explode.

The next day, things returned to normal, except that the streets were quieter, with fewer people moving around. Had there been any media announcement that the information was wrong? Had the Government declared that the patient had flu, not the dreaded C-19? No. More confirmed cases were announced, but what made this shift in attitude in people and their behaviour was they had learned and understood that the disease was not as terrible as they had thought. The Government had done a wonderful job of adult education.

TV programmes showed the deputy Prime Minister chairing a meeting during which he expressed the nation's resolution to fight the potential epidemic, quoting the Prime Minister: "We must fight the disease as we have fought an enemy". He ordered the Ministry of Health to set up a webpage, giving information on how the disease may be transmitted, how people can

prevent infection, how the country government at all levels has prepared for this scenario. He made it clear that the Government and the media would be transparent in all matters so that people would know the real situation. Panic would not solve the problem and people should react knowledgeably. The following days the media informed people that there would be no food and other daily supply shortage because food suppliers and providers had previously made big stocks in preparation; instant messages from the Ministry of Health popped up on smartphones, giving updates of the disease.

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

The term education is commonly taken to mean imparting knowledge in a formal environment, conducted by a solemn-looking person who is usually referred to with reverence as teacher or master. It came from the long past, when children's learning by playing with and mimicking adults was no longer sufficient to result in children growing up to become good at a trade, and as knowledgeable in a field as older people (Dewey 2019). Adults resorted to storing knowledge in the form of books and other teaching materials and educating children in structured ways that knowledge was thought to be best absorbed by learners.

UNESCO has emphasised that though education is an essential requirement for human society to advance, how it is done is of equal importance; and that learning should take place throughout one's life. According to UNESCO, lifelong learning is "rooted in the integration of learning and living, covering learning activities for people of all ages (children, young people, adults, and the elderly, girls and boys, women and men) in all life-wide contexts (family, school, community, workplace and so on) and through a variety of modalities (formal, non-formal and informal) which together meet a wide range of learning needs and demands. Education systems which promote lifelong learning adopt a holistic and sector-wide approach involving all sub-sectors and levels to ensure the provision of learning opportunities for all individuals (UIL n.d).

Considering this definition, a common belief is that education can and should also be done outside the formal schooling context. It then falls into the domain of community learning centres (CLCs). There were over 11.000 CLCs in 2018, one in almost every village and ward (the smallest administration area in cities) (MoE 2018). They have played a big role in promoting adult education. They disseminate practical knowledge of health, farming, technology, and skills of various trades, spreading government directions and policies (MOET 2007). They draw attention to environmental deterioration and raise awareness of environmental preservation. Each is some distance away from home, so one must get out of the house.

The media, including TV, Internet, and radio, are the click of s computer mouse, a slight touch of the phone scree away.

Vietnam has utilised the media to its best effect. Banners and posters along the streets can be succinct lessons for road users. A minute's stop at a set of traffic lights is enough to learn that washing hands with soap is an effective way to eliminate most bacteria. Eyes roaming the street while sitting on a bus can take in the lesson that the Coronavirus does not kill in most cases; that symptoms can be like a mild cold. Leaflets distributed to households serve the same educational purpose. An exciting music video clip on YouTube by a Vietnamese music group shows how to stay away from the disease; the clip is now known around the world and is

remade by people in different countries (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p0MxcBvCoZk). "A little knowledge is a dangerous thing": we need to put all media to use to educate young and old.

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

5.4 Digital popular education: A contradiction in terms? A reflection on a smartphone-based health course

Astrid von Kotze

Health relates directly to gender, economic systems, cultural norms, the history of colonialism. It is a political issue. Given basic inequalities between men and women, women face much greater risks of disease and poor health. Furthermore, since care work is mainly performed by women, their health and wellbeing are closely connected to community health. Such issues gave rise to the 'Woman's Health Course' (WHC), offered by the Popular Education Programme (PEP) in Cape Town for three years. In 2020, because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the course had to be offered via smartphones, using a WhatsApp platform.

The timing of the WHC worked well. Just as participants were pushed into severe COVID-19 lockdown and anxiety and insecurity levels were rising, the course opened a little window to the world. In retrospect, participant Abigail Izaks posted: 'This group helped me cope during the lockdown and kept my mind occupied while there was such a lot of stress due to personal issues etc but also the global pandemic, all the insecurities, how are we as a family going to get through this?' The WHC had a therapeutic value; it enriched women's lives. But this doesn't mean it was worthwhile as an example of popular education. If physical distancing is to be part of our world in the future, we need to better understand how to shape popular education so it can still achieve its political purpose of leading to progressive transformative action.'

Can a popular education approach work online, and if so, how? The contradiction between collective participation, the ongoing negotiating of power, and individual engagement through a medium was felt in every way. Popular education is about balancing power and forging horizontal relationships so that dialogue leads to the production of 'really useful knowledge'. As facilitators we tried to make the process as interactive and creative as we knew how, given the short timeframe. Here is a report on some of the tensions and contradictions, as an invitation to engage further with the question: how can a popular education approach work, online, across cultures, languages, generations, and geography – in times of pandemics?

Tension 1: between isolation and the curse of insularity

All digital education confronts the challenge of isolation. In times of pandemic, this becomes double isolation. Everyday life shrinks to immediate family and household members. Livelihood activities within the informal economy, and the daily small acts of hustling for food, are not permitted. On the one hand, insularity is to be a safety precaution; but it increases the risk of hunger. This is experienced as a curse when access to virtual channels of communication is limited, and, conversely, gossip and hear-say feed intolerance and stigma. Reality becomes distorted – made worse by the fear of infection (rates of diabetes and hypertension are high), food insecurity, and the threat of domestic violence. If nothing else, the course broadened horizons, asked questions outside the ambit of daily life, challenged thinking, and corrected misperceptions and stigmatising rumours.

Tension 2: between the head, the heart, and the hands

We all learn best when activating all our senses and faculties. What happens to embodied learning when all we have is WhatsApp exchanges? Communication thus truncated lacked the empathy and warmth transmitted in face-to-face learning. The face mask that shields in physical encounters seemed to be carried into WhatsApp communication as, again, there is a barrier, exacerbated using English as a lingua franca. The frequent sharing of prefabricated knowledge and downloaded quotes by participants acted as a further distancing mechanism, despite the intention of creating empathetic bridges.

Tension 3: between 'enough' and 'too much'

We should be delighted that the course was experienced as relevant and useful. We should take the positive assessment as a compliment – yet there is the niggling doubt that the course did not go beyond individual personal growth, towards recognising the common good as a greater good. For an educator-activist with a clear bias and political purpose the question of 'is it enough?' arose frequently. For example, within the limited scope of the course, we could only touch on the broader dynamics of patriarchy, colonialism, and capitalism. The limitations were frustrating in their superficiality. How much information, time spent on dialogue and analysis, is enough? How much is too much, given the extremely little time available and participants' previous marginal exposure to and engagement with printed text?

Tension 4: between individual and group tasks

The mix of individual and group tasks was well received. It posed individual challenges to 'dare' to articulate own views; but also provided opportunities for exchanges with others, thus widening one's perspectives and interpretations. But did we go far enough in critical explorations? Did we push assumptions, challenge long-held beliefs, make connections

between the singular and the common? How could group tasks have functioned as 'rehearsal space' for new views and feedback-giving on arguments?

Tension 5: between experiential knowledge and online information

There was extraordinary diligence with collecting information from the internet: many participants submitted lengthy, detailed text, most of which was copied directly from the internet without reflection, and/or from their own experience and knowledge. Maybe the joy of internet 'surfing' with purpose took over, together with the belief that this is what education demands? For sure, if we are looking for ideas and personal experiences, tasks must be formulated explicitly!

Tension 6: between hope and faith

The metaphor of hope was intended to inspire a positive outlook towards the future. Many participants responded to the question 'what gives you hope?' by affirming their faith. On the one hand, the powerful strength that women derive from their faith is a relief; on the other, it leads to asking: 'how does faith relate to agency?' We also realised that in preparation for the task we needed more text, images, inspiration.

Tension 7: between reflection and action

The most severe limitation of the course was in action. Popular education has a strong emphasis on praxis. While tasks took care of the reflection, the action was lacking mainly due to the corona pandemic that still enforces physical distancing or even isolation. The question as to how participants would use what they had learned was mainly responded to with examples of how they would impart the knowledge, teach the skills, share the information with others around them. Implementing campaigns has to wait until after the crisis.

Can we do popular education using smartphones? We will certainly make adjustments and try again.

5.5 Another world is possible – steps from rhetoric to action

Alan Tuckett

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

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

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

These views don't develop accidentally. Most funding for education goes to schools and universities. When decision-makers do look at adult learning and education they find it hard to see what difference investment can make in a context where outcomes are regularly measured. Measurement matters. It is harder to capture growth in community confidence and resilience than it is to measure whether someone passed a test. With the growth of neo-liberal policies among development partners, as well as governments, there has been a marked shift away from broad capacity-building in favour of short project-based and measurable activity.

That is no reason to give up. Look at the SDGs. Hardly any can be achieved without adults' learning. It is a message ICAE makes in the UN High-Level Policy Forum. It is also central to UNESCO's view. We need to make sure that it is one we make together at the next International Conference on Adult Education (CONFINTEA) in Marrakech in 2022. The formal structures for preparing for CONFINTEA VII started in 2020 with country reports, followed in 2021 by regional conferences. At the main event ICAE will work to host a civil society event ahead of the formal conference. Meanwhile key tasks are working locally to identify priorities, to influence government reports, get places on national delegations, and engage with ICAE in making a global case in which learner voices take a prominent role,

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

In response to a call to action from Alan Tuckett, the PIMA President wrote to the chair of the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) Board, telling her that "it's not the time to wash your hands of ALE!", and urging making GPE voices heard:

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

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

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

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

5.6 Disrupting reactive and divisive public discourse through adult education

Shauna Butterwick

Troubling times

We are assaulted every day by protectionist and xenophobic world views as expressed by some proponents of the UK Brexit campaign and former US President Trump. In Canada, ultra-conservative politicians are emboldened to engage with similar expressions, creating a climate

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

Countering authoritarian world views

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

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

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

Alex Himelfarb, a Canadian social scientist, and political pundit, like Lakoff advises that we need to create opportunities and spaces for people to see "a plausible, feasible alternative to the status quo" (p. 108). Adam Kahane similarly notes that we need stories and debate "that enable us to create new futures" (p. 137). Hoggan spoke with Vietnamese monk Thich Nhat Hanh who states that: "there is suffering, fear, and anger inside of us, and when we take care of it, we are taking care of the world" (p. 224).

As for activists, the monk, like Lakoff and others, cautions against playing the same game as those we oppose. We must "speak the truth, but not to punish" (p. 231). Creating conditions for

respectful listening across differences is essential to creating life-affirming counter-narratives; listening is as much a political project as is enabling the disenfranchised to find their voice (Bickford, 1996).

Creative Community-Based Arts Engagement

What kind of processes support the disenfranchised to speak their truths and create a clear language about what we want? Community arts-based engagement has much to offer. Arts-based activities that are embodied and participatory can create "conversations that inculcate hope and visions" (Solnit, 1918, p. 4). The arts are particularly useful in exploring complexity and conflict. Creating opportunities to speak about what we want requires orientation to local contexts, where creative methods reflect specific community conditions. Community-based arts involves working with the community, not for or about community. To create a language of hope and healing, creative practices must be participatory, collaborative and involve a critical examination of existing injustices and explorations of ways to intervene.

Creative practices that focus on lived experience from the perspective of the community, not outsiders, enable explorations of problems and deeper understanding. Creative practices can involve participants telling difficult stories. Adult educators facilitating such processes must be aware of these risks and that risks are not equally shared. Canadian feminist Sherene Razack (1998) brings to attention dangers of storytelling in the context of hierarchies of privilege and penalty. We must find ways to support participants' courage, what some have called 'brave space' (Cook-Sather, 2016). Adult educators must challenge the notion that safety for all participants can be created; what is safe for one can be risky for another. Instead, educators should support participants to "face that danger and to take risks", by showing them "that painful or difficult experiences will be acknowledged and supported, not avoided or eliminated" (Cook-Sather, 2016, p. 1).

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

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5.7 Nothing beats meeting face-to-face! Use opportunities to connect with PIMA members

Shirley Walters

PIMA is a network of 200 adult education and lifelong learning activists, scholars, and practitioners across at least forty countries. When you are travelling look up PIMA members where you will be visiting. I did this recently when visiting Bangkok and was delighted to meet Professor Archanya Ratana-ubol, University, and a group of her post-graduate students, some of whom are also PIMA members, at Chulalongkorn University.

It was wonderful to meet one another face-to-face. Archanya showed me aspects of the impressive campus, and I met five masters and doctoral students. We spent two hours discussing their emergent research projects. Two were from Cambodia, Neak Piseth and Leakhena Orn, recently became PIMA members and wrote in the Bulletin short introductions to national NFE programmes and local volunteers in Cambodia. Archanya actively recruits for PIMA and sheme to speak about PIMA to the students. We spent structured time talking about students' research and informal time over a tasty supper. I also met the staff of the Lifelong Learning Department. Neak Piseth presented me with a self-published book on his moving journey from poor rural background in Cambodia to doing a master's in Bangkok. The importance of the invitation for young and emerging scholars to write short pieces for the Bulletin in English for an international audience cannot be overestimated. In this Bulletin there is a reflection on what it means for them.

I came away once more struck by the importance of using every opportunity to meet PIMA members face-to-face whenever possible. This helps build the sense of common purpose and solidarity that is sorely needed in all our contexts.

5.8 Our Extraordinary and Fascinating Journey with PIMA

Archanya Ratana-ubol and students

Due to the breakthrough of globalisation within the digital era, the world keeps changing on a very fast track, and a plethora of issues emerges containing many distractions and challenges. At the other extreme, as in the past, the thing to be the most concerned about is traditional security related to the use of military, war, balance of power and alliance-building. Right now,

we concern ourselves more with non-traditional issues which go beyond the military and war. These cover broader aspects of security - hunger, diseases, climate change, and so on.

Therefore, we scholars and researchers must work in a cooperative and collaborative spirit to respond to these challenges. One of the great examples must be the establishment of PIMA, a global network of experienced individual adult learning and education professionals with various interests especially in the different angles and contexts of lifelong, life-wide, and life-deep learning in the interests of greater social, economic, and ecological justice, locally and globally.

Seeing these good causes and impacts of PIMA, we as a group of students, namely Mr. Neak Piseth, Mrs. Leakana Orn, Mr. Thanisorn Kasemsan, Na Ayuttaya, Mrs. Vichchuda Tuantranont, and Mr. Dech-sri Nopas, of the Lifelong Learning Class of the Department of Lifelong Education, Faculty of Education, Chulalongkorn University, are under the supervision of and received great guidance from Prof. Dr. Archanya Ratana-Ubol to embark on our extraordinary journey with PIMA.

In a similar vein, we believe in the power of sharing and exchanging ideas with like-minded people to seek common ground in solving issues; we chose PIMA as our communal and global platform to mobilise our initiatives, perspectives and ideas across the globe. As a result, we have more courage and guts to take urgent action to generate `out of the box thinking` and address contemporary global and local issues. Likewise, to attain these ideas, PIMA has provided all the members with a privileged opportunity to write their retrospective experiences and innovative ideas in each PIMA Bulletin at no fee, to raise their voices to be heard, and to circulate their ideas to people in need of information.

For all that a virtual network is crucial in our global world; nothing can beat face-to-face or physical contact. On October 17, 2019, we had the special privilege to meet Prof. Shirley Walters, President of PIMA, for fruitful discussion. We are so grateful to have met her in person and be easily able to express our thoughts and exchange ideas. We had discussion on many significant points, especially our research interests.

A short but powerful word from Shirley Walters was that the research problems we are investigating must be concrete and concise, so that we can have a deep understanding of the problem; then the problem will be more easily solved. Furthermore, we learnt that two important components of lifelong learning are encouragement of curiosity, and creativity amongst learners and ourselves; and another new term agnotology, which is the deliberate spreading of falsehood. Once we are curious about something, we tend to have a lot of unlocking questions to do, and we try to find the answers. Then the creativity will come; and as a result, invention and innovation emerge. Moreover, we are delighted to have discussion with her. Certainly, we use the same body language, which means we share common ideas and thoughts. Hence, we can unleash our potential through network-sharing in order to have a good impact on our society.

As our last statement we would like to encourage everyone to become a member of PIMA to tap into benefits of sharing ideas and raising their voices to be heard through this global platform. We wish and encourage all PIMA's members to contact one another via this platform and to make personal contact when the opportunity arises. In this sense, we would like to end our fascinating description of our journey with PIMA by the short inspiring guide: "if we want

to go fast, go alone; if we want to go far, go together as a great team of PIMA". Please come and join us!

Conclusions

A campaign and a compact for adults' learning and their full participation

Chris Duke and Heribert Hinzen

[The careless use and deliberate abuse of language damages essential tools of our trade. It hampers effective collaboration in comparative study and global advocacy of ALE. This article proposes one way to overcome it, in inviting PIMA to play an active part. Ed].

This trans-sectoral collection of recent papers is apolitical yet committed to promoting global transformations in the management of ourselves and our societies; and to principles and modes of governance essential as the ecological clock strikes twelve. Our opening 'meditation' signalled that time has run out, most obviously in terms of close to unstoppable global warming but also in the management of ever more complex societies overstressed in terms of health and welfare, security, and lifestyles, also constantly sharpening internal and international conflicts – 'culture wars' – that make consensual evolutionary change well-nigh impossible.

Populism has become more widely adopted as a mode of winning electoral popularity; inequalities widen; and often unwritten checks on self-serving seizure of power are ignored or overridden. The power of modern IT media and management tools in the hands of those in power threaten political and even social conventions that have hitherto favoured consensual gradualism over the arbitrary exercise of power. On the other hand, the same mass media can empower people movements and call leaders to account. Investigative journalism has become a hazardous occupation.

These papers suggest that CONFINTEA VII is likely to be a well-informed and well-prepared gathering of 'old ALE values' seeking to advance the public good through alliance between viable partnership of the global and mainly governmental, and local mainly community-driven energies. The profile at the Conference of the civil society sector, which is best equipped to energise local communities in an essential bottom-up top-down equilibrium, will likely be further enhanced, following a trend from at least CONFINTEA IV in Paris, where Cold War tensions did not prevent a CSO-driven resolution agreeing on 'the right to learn'. Papers in this collection show how that voice has grown stronger, even as more formal international intergovernmental collaboration has become more difficult.

For a more self-confident and better networked ALE community, the 2022 CONFINTEA gathering could not be more important and timelier. This movement must walk a tightrope: balancing between requiring governments to harden and resource the essential albeit minimal infrastructure of laws requiring adequate and lifelong learning policies and practices, enabling public resources, and arrangements to ensure that what is mandated is then enacted and well monitored to ensure high quality fit for purpose. At the same time, it must fearlessly yet sensibly and pragmatically empower local communities to take control of their infinitely diverse context-specific communal learning needs – again working sensitively and here for collaboration with local level governments.

This volume provides ammunition and guidance about walking that tightrope. In a highly volatile fast-changing geopolitical setting, misjudgement can lead to rising authoritarianism feeding off nihilistic failure of governance, and cultural collapse. Both the Faure, Delors and now Zewde reports and the inspirational disruption of Gandhi as well as Freire and Illich are

required. National culture, the culture of the people, is an energy core more potent even than the power of the media. ALE has a vital role to play in influencing and altering that culture, ensuring that its influence is bring, restoring faith in science, reason and 'human decency', and giving access to the means for constructive and usable popular education.

The symposium is infused with the belief that informed and active involvement of all citizens of all ages is essential to collective survival. If this makes it 'political' *de facto,* so be it. Adult education has often and still in recent times sought not to get involved in politics, so as not to attract negative attention, become tainted, or worse. In a world increasingly riven by ideological confrontation it is necessary to be innocent of purposeful political identification but clear and consistent in the principles where we stand and the desirable ends that we seek.

Civil society is thus accepting responsibilities that formal intergovernmental bodies, owned by Nation States, and confined to consensus-seeking by persuasion and a shared morality that the big diverse UN member-state system, simply cannot assure. Ideological confrontations harden; street battles become common as democratic dialogue fails, so control is tightened, patience turns to despair, citizens become distrustful and can be wilfully misinformed despite the best efforts of the UN system.

PIMA is one small young network of principled and pragmatically oriented members, sustained like so many other activist civil society bodies by volunteers. They have a freedom and so also a responsibility not granted to the big agencies, powered, and staffed as these usually are by capable and highly skilled citizen-administrators from all parts of the world. It is 'mission impossible' to extract consensus and high-level outcomes that would effectively remove those in political power, to solve critical world problems. The outcomes of the November 2021 COP 26 meeting in Glasgow as this volume goes to press bear witness to sad reality.

It is fitting that the production of this symposium and call for action is shared by the venerable yet heavily 'engaged' University of Glasgow – engaged in its locality and as an eminent global contributor. Glasgow includes an R&D arm in CR&DALL, a recent manifestation of its long history of adult education, local community, and participatory action research, with a formidable record of ALE and LLL scholarship worldwide.

PIMA delights in what may become a new partnership vehicle modelling urgent collaborative action between these two and other CSOs where lifelong learning is understood to be vital to social and ecological survival. Collaborations via CR&DALL's 'work-in-progress' series may not even bear names like learning and education. All will however be about LLL for necessary action, in different arenas with different advocates from different sectors of society and its governance.

The international CSO or NGO movement has become an important influence alongside the IGO system of UN and other bodies. These sets of arrangements and machinery are complementary: each needs the other to achieve results. Neither can be effective without this partnership. This includes what is called the private sector, and now the broad messy land of quasi-partnerships, consultancy, and influencers in between. That area is of ever-greater significance and may be seen as part of the non-governmental CSO 'third sector'. not always favourably by some in that sector who see it as net malign. Adaptive relearning may be needed here also.

As CONFINTEA VII approaches the third landmark UNESCO Education report will come to be read and marked as a new sibling to Faure and Delors another quarter-century on. We conclude with its conclusion and perhaps a new purposeful point of take-off.

The Zewde Report concludes thus: "This chapter has proposed that in a new social contract for education we should enjoy and expand the educational opportunities that take place across life and in different cultural and social spaces. As we look to 2050 there are four principles that can guide the dialogue and action needed to take this recommendation forward:

- At all times of life people should have meaningful quality educational opportunities. Learning should be lifelong, life-wide, with weight and recognition given to adult education. We should employ inclusive design principles and begin any planning with a focus on serving those most marginalized and those settings that are most fragile.
- Healthy educational ecosystems connect natural, built and virtual sites of learning. We should better appreciate the biosphere as a learning space. Digital learning spaces are now integral to educational ecosystems and should be developed to support the public, inclusive and common purposes of education. Open access and open-source platforms, with strong protections for student and teacher data, should be prioritized.
- Government capacity for the public financing and regulation of education should be strengthened. We should build the capacity of states to set and enforce standards and norms for educational provisions that are responsive, equitable and uphold human rights.
- The right to education should be broadened. We are no longer well served by framing the right to education simply around schooling. Everyone everywhere should have a right to lifelong learning. We should support the right to information and the right to culture as necessary enabling components of the right to education. A right to connectivity must be built in.

In making a new social contract for education, these four guiding principles should be taken forward. At local, national, regional and global levels we need to commit to dialogue and action around these principles and support the reimagining of our futures together." (115)

The Zewde Report supports and strengthens arguments of ICAE for ALE as a sub-sector of the education system in a lifelong learning perspective. It is also a call for ALE as a civil society movement to join the dialogue and action. More than that, it is time for civil society to lead the transformations required for ecological and therefore human survival. PIMA stands to engage in both, working together to this end. The future will not wait. The *We Are ALE* campaign is one good vehicle to mobilise for this in the coming pre-CONFINTEA months. The PIMA Bulletin is available to inform of developments and for exchange between the diversity of actors towards the common goal of a human right to adult learning and education.

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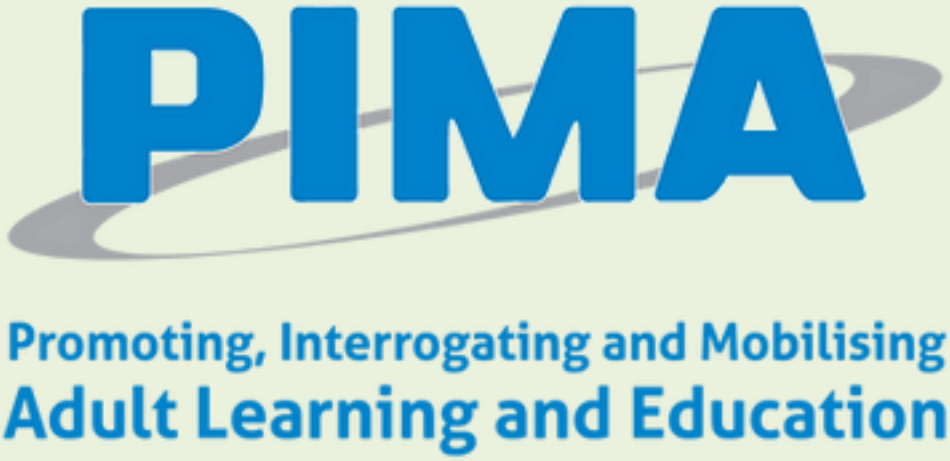

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