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EDITORIAL Chris Duke

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PIMA was established five years ago with the ambition of encouraging its members, and others who share concerns about how ALE and LLL can make the world a better place, to think ‘outside-the-box’ (OTB). The Bulletin is a vehicle for doing this.

We currently often hear talk about ‘getting back to normal’ after the COVID-19 crisis, but there is no old ‘normal’ to get back to. The box has gone. No wishful thinking, no blaming and false-speaking, will put Humpty Dumpty back together again, on the recent comfy perch of prosperity for some; and doubt, ambiguity, frustration, or dire poverty for many more. This month’s 5th PIMA AGM (12th May) may prove significant in refocusing our still new network for unknown new times.

This 30th Bulletin should be read thus, and to be acted on. Our ambition remains to connect the truth-seeking of scholarship and research with wise governance, and policy-making carried into action: an action which is created, valued, owned and carried out in diverse real-world settings, from the smallest community to the most powerful global operators.

What really works? What are the underlying causes of malaise – and sources of success? How to foster a longer, deeper and wider grasp of cause and effect: of the unintended consequences of short-term politically-driven actions that may do more harm than good?

In this spirit, the current Bulletin offers four groups of contributions. Actually, almost every item interconnect with others. We begin with a long and properly critical account by Shirley Walters, President of PIMA, of the place of ALE and LLL in global and intergovernmental terms: what does the world’s best stock-taking tell us – and implications for future action together?

In the context of COVID-19, ALE is responding in a range of ways. The articles by Shauna Butterwick, Astrid von Kotze and Idowu Biao emanate or resonate with PIMA’s webinar on climate, crisis, COVID-19 and ALE. Others focus on the possibilities and dangers of the digital, distance learning and teaching responses to the ‘lockdowns’.

The third section is the result of a special relationship with Chulalongkorn University, Thailand (shortened to ‘Chula, University’), where several students and staff from the Department of Lifelong Learning are members of PIMA. Staff and graduate students write about local learning and action research. This demonstrates the building of new layers of ALE leadership by bringing students into dialogue with an international audience through PIMA. In the future, we look forward to an African, North or South American, or a European university doing the same by ‘talking’ through PIMA.

The fourth group of papers continues themes from earlier Bulletins, including the socio-political context and the responses of HEIs and other bodies: the role of HEIs and

their changing relationship to their societies; and the crisis of western democracy. Tom Schuller's demographic ageing paper underpins PIMA's Later Life Learning Special Interest Group (SIG) work. And the trailer to Bulletin 31 takes us back into the arena of another SIG, working intensively on the themes of the SDGs.

The number of new members welcomed in this issue suggests that PIMA continuously self-renews. To this welcome, we must add congratulations and delight at Robbie Guevara's appointment to preside over the world's leading ALE civil society body, the International Council for Adult Education (ICAE). We also warmly congratulate Adult Learning Australia (ALA) on their 60th Anniversary!

ALE AND LLL IN A FAST-CHANGING WORLD

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

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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 Member States. This is both a strength and weakness of the reports. It is a strength because Member States are encouraged strongly 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 within many countries.

In this review of GRALE 4, I begin 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.

CONFINTEA VII is scheduled for 2022 in Morocco so this is an opportune time for PIMA members and others to engage with the issues and prepare strategically for the conference. The preparations of GRALE 5, which will be ready for CONFINTEA VII, are already underway.

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 particular goals for the next twelve years. In 2009 at CONFINTEA VI, the *Belem Framework for Action (BFA)* was adopted. One of the purposes of GRALE reports is to monitor progress against the BFA. The first GRALE report was compiled in 2009. This was the first-ever undertaking of a

global report on the status of ALE. GRALE 2 was completed in 2013 and GRALE 3 in 2016. GRALE 4 was published late in 2019.

GRALE 4, in addition to monitoring the BFA, is also providing 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. Each GRALE Report, besides monitoring against BFA key themes, 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 critical 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 in taking stock of current developments, and analyses evidence of progress since GRALE 3 in five areas, drawn from the BFA and RALE:

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

These areas are discussed separately, but also in an integrative way, in the report's conclusion. This part of the report also describes the methods used and identifies the limitations and strengths of the approach to data collection and analysis used to monitor progress. Part 2 considers what is known about participation, what is not known, and why it matters. It opens 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 has to play in terms of the achievement of a range of SDGs. However, ALE 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, and the other SDGs are placed in jeopardy.

As summarised succinctly by Rubenson, Boeren and Stepanek (2020), the 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 an 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 with just over a third of Member States reporting ‘not knowing’ ALE participation rates for vulnerable groups. Around the same proportion did not even know about what provision is available for these groups. Not having this data is a significant problem: it indicates a potential lack of provision and proper monitoring of these groups. This further suggests that learning outcomes are not informing policymaking and planning in those countries.
- **Financing:** While there is a broad consensus of the importance of broadening the base of financing ALE, GRALE pays particular attention to public financing. It reminds policy-makers of the special importance that public funding plays in reaching the vulnerable groups. It is disturbing to note 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 spending 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 prioritized for ALE financing; and 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 big 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: developing criteria for ALE curricula; and teaching methodologies (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 pre-service training.
- **Partial coverage of ALE:** Member States gave much more focus to 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, although there are 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 the report is on participation *for* something – and in particular on 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 of their ALE activities; others see it more broadly. The question of definition is a key one with major implications for any attempts to monitor ‘a moving target’. It also has major implications for who was asked to fill in the survey when it arrived in a particular 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, and one can therefore have little confidence in the detailed data. The researchers can only draw out possible trends.

If the RALE categorizations of ALE are to be used, surely there must be a process which ensures that data for those 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 by who has received and filled it in. This undermines the usefulness of the GRALE.

Paradoxical position of ALE

Report after report from the International Labour Organisation (ILO), the World Economic Forum (WEF), OECD and UNESCO highlights 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 adult learning and education is not good. It is now 30 years since the first international commitment to halve the rate of adult illiteracy was agreed in Jomtien; it is 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 in the SDGs.

A graphic illustration of the marginalisation of ALE is the fact that the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) does not include funding for ALE. In 2015 GPE accepted publicly the responsibility for ensuring that the full range of commitments made under Sustainable Development Goal would be achieved. However, the focus is mainly on children's education, although this is contested 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'. It depends on your perspective. They 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 needed urgently.

Response to the absence?

GRALE 4 captures a partial snapshot of the global, parlous state of ALE, particularly for marginalised women and men. The report acknowledges that current ALE data are incomplete and inadequate; and that we lack understanding and urgency when it comes to collecting more comprehensive data on ALE. It holds up a mirror to the limited ALE investments by most governments: it is most often for those who already have basic education, 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 the 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 is no data on the latter category, it would be premature to pronounce on loss of the humanistic, democratic tradition. This emphasises the importance of insisting on collection of data in all three of the RALE categories, when surveys are undertaken.

To overcome this absence, could 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 e.g. 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 interests of climate justice, people's health, sex-gender equality, and much more, it is important 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 that 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.

As 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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ALE IN A TIME OF COVID-19 CRISIS

Coming to our Senses: COVID-19 as Teacher: Inspired by PIMA's webinar [Shauna Butterwick](#)

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On April 8th this year PIMA conducted a Webinar on COVID-19. During this, we explored the realities and responses to COVID-19 and climate change, the role of adult education in relation to both crises, and how we might seize the opportunities these crises bring.

Globalization has enabled the spread of COVID-19, and a globalized collaborative response is what will make a difference. Jim Falk, Professorial Fellow in the Melbourne Sustainable Society Institute and Chair of the Board of Directors and National Trustee for Greenpeace Australia-Pacific, observed how not so long ago, the Australian wildfires were front-page news, but with the pandemic, they (and climate change) now get little

attention. He also noted that while the pandemic and climate change are different phenomena, with different temporalities, both need our sustained attention.

Jenny Macaffer, Chief Executive Officer of Adult Learning Australia, discussed the value of Indigenous knowledges, their contributions to lifelong learning, and how these orientations could and should inform the way we respond to this crisis. Wider recognition of these 'old wisdoms' is needed, including how caring for the land means caring for ourselves, how learning occurs intergenerationally, and how any decision made must take into consideration the next seven generations. We need to promote and expand these old wisdoms and create a form of 'earth literacy' by listening to the land.

Nandita Pradhan Bhatt, Director of Operations at the Martha Farrell Foundation in India, brought news of how the Modi government, with little warning, shut down most of the economy and services, leaving workers dependent on informal economies without any income. Many of these poor workers are fleeing the cities, walking for days without food or water to get back to their villages, only to find they are shunned and locked out.

The final speaker in the webinar, Robbie Guevara, Associate Professor International Development at RMIT University in Melbourne and former President of ASPBAE, mapped out four kinds of learnings which are operating in this crisis:

- learning *about* the pandemic and how to keep safe;
- learning *through* the pandemic about our values and realities;
- learning to *adapt* during these rapidly changing times;
- and learning to *advocate* for change and justice;

This typology of learning has helped me to organize some reflections on how COVID-19 is our teacher.

We are learning about the COVID virus and how to keep it from spreading. The directives include keeping our distance, washing our hands regularly, not touching our faces, and staying at home. Who is able to follow these directions reveals deep inequalities in our communities and gaps between those privileged enough to meet these guidelines and many others who cannot: those who are homeless; those who live in crowded conditions; and those without ready access to water and cleaning supplies. How we respond to COVID-19 can teach us about hierarchies of privilege and penalty often hidden from view; and about how, in rich countries like Canada and elsewhere, many lack basic needs including clean water, adequate food, and housing.

COVID-19 is also teaching us about our values and priorities. Globally, more than 130,000 [*by 24 April almost 190,000 Ed.*] people have died and seniors' care homes are the hardest hit, revealing the poor state of many long-term care (LTC) homes, raising questions about how or if we value our elders and those who care for them. Some have argued that this tragedy could have been avoided if the State, in many jurisdictions, had not privatized LTC, and had not cut unionized jobs and decent salaries not been cut. The politicians who made these decisions are no longer front and centre in everyday news, but they are implicated in this tragedy. Many LTC staff, as a result of government austerity initiatives, had their wages cut and many were forced to work in numerous facilities. Now, in Canada's British Columbia (BC), the government has taken over as the employer of all LTC staff of these facilities and directed staff to work in only one facility. Many have now shifted to full-time work with improved wages. COVID-19 is now in some

prisons, with many correctional facilities in total lock-down revealing long-standing human rights violations in these institutions. COVID-19 is also showing up in homeless shelters and refugee camps.

Some governments seem now to take their social welfare responsibilities seriously, with programs launched to help those who've lost their jobs, and businesses which had to lay off workers and close. Banks are giving some reprieve on paying loans and mortgages although CEOs of banks continue to receive huge salaries.; landlords are directed to give tenants more time to pay their rent; and credit card companies have reduced their interest charges (for now). Many of these initiatives are being financed with funds, which, in the not too distant past, were unavailable for urgent needs such as those facing Indigenous communities lacking clean water supplies and decent housing.

While these programs are helping many who've lost their jobs, governments have not changed their tune when it comes to providing millions to the oil and gas industry and money to continue the construction in Canada of the greatly contested and illegal pipeline running through Indigenous territories. COVID-19 is reminding us how dependent Canada is on the United States; it's also teaching us that the reverse is true as thousands of Canadian health care workers cross into the US every day to work in our neighbour's health care system. COVID-19 is revealing the dangers and short-sightedness of a protectionist agenda. Just last week Trump directed 3M, a US company, to stop shipping N95 masks to Canada. As we in Canada watch the US become the nation with the most cases and deaths, COVID-19 is teaching us to cherish and protect Canada's public health care system; and the importance of listening to experts.

COVID-19 is teaching us that we must adapt in this pandemic. Many now work from home, and use online communication to maintain relations with colleagues, friends and family, and to teach their children while schools are closed. COVID-19 is creating opportunities for some businesses to make huge profits: those making personal protective equipment (PPE), toilet paper, and providing online delivery businesses. Meanwhile, other small and local businesses are collapsing. It's teaching us that we don't need so much *stuff*, that homemade meals are delicious, and that time with family is precious. We know that prior to COVID-19, women continued to do the majority of household and caring labour. Has the pandemic deepened this divide; or has there been a shift in this imbalance? COVID-19 is teaching some industries to adapt and retool their production lines; many are now making much-needed products. As supplies for PPE, masks in particular, are in great demand, COVID-19 has created a global movement of people sewing at home sewers around the world to producing homemade masks. I'm part of one such group in Vancouver that has taught me how we can make a difference.

COVID-19 has led to many advocacy efforts. There are daily webinars on many issues, petitions to sign, and letters to write, pushing governments and businesses to make the right decisions. COVID-19 is teaching us about our fragility, mortality, interdependence, shared humanity, and the reality of the heavy footprint our fast-forward economies place on Mother Earth. Emissions are down; we now directly observe how environmental interventions work.

COVID-19 has given adult educators an opportunity to mobilize our skills and knowledge to build solidarity while keeping our distance. COVID-19 has touched the entire world. Let us seize the opportunity afforded by this global reality as communities learn about,

learn through, adapt to, and advocate for more equality and programs and social structures essential to everyone's health and well-being.

A Few Resources

The Tyee provides information about the pandemic situation in Vancouver and BC & elsewhere
<https://thetyee.ca/>

Arundhati Roy "The Pandemic is a Portal"
<https://www.ft.com/content/10d8f5e8-74eb-11ea-95fe-fcd274e920ca>

Indigenous Knowledge and Disaster Risk Reduction International Network
<https://indigenouknowledgegenetwork.org/>

Some lessons from CoronaVirus times: Reflections after PIMA Webinar **Astrid Von Kotze**

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The language of the enemy, fighting, defence – the crisis of Covid-19 has been described as a war akin to the World Wars, but while then country was pitted against a country, this one has a common enemy and requires global collaboration to fight and defeat it. By now, people no longer *die* from the virus – they are *killed* by it. Nature is hostile, it is 'the other'.

But then – 'we are the other, too' (Frank Zappa): we have created the conditions for both the virus and the spread of it, by destroying eco-systems and the balance of the earth. The real disease, suggests Kumi Naidoo, is 'affluenza': the underlying inequalities and injustice of our societies. It is said that the virus does not discriminate – but the pandemic highlights the vast inequalities in and between societies. The wealthy have much better conditions for self-isolating, procuring food and accessing decent health care, the precariat [*usually meaning those living in newly precarious conditions Ed*] and the newly unemployed living from hand to mouth.

PIMA members recently chatted on Zoom about the climate crisis and C19: how we have to adapt our learning to the current crisis, and how and what we can learn in the crisis. In South Africa, there may be some learning happening as community action networks (CANs) are formed. Across geographic divides based on the apartheid history of separating people depending on race and class, different CANs form 'partnerships' and link up for support. In reality and not surprisingly, wealthy areas mobilise some of their ample resources for distribution to poor communities. They pass on specialist scientific information, sometimes made more accessible for second-language speakers through rendition into plain language. They purchase internet data and electricity vouchers for 'partner' organisers so that communication can be maintained.

The people in the lead of poor communities are mainly women who are imaginative and resourceful: able to feed their households, and work as caregivers for children, the sick, disabled and elderly; who take on voluntary work as they keep their households going while generating income through piece-meal employment. But the (white) wealthy

women have rarely asked themselves: what is it the women in the townships know; and how do they come to know and are able to do (and describe this in detail!) so many things that I never knew about? Suddenly, respect grows – and ‘the other’ becomes more fully human in the eyes of ‘the other others’. There is a potential that we begin to learn: not just from, but with each other, in what Freire called dialogue, as members of CANs share information and skills, question one another and begin to build new understandings.

A partnership suggests more than one-way consulting; it means active *collective* decision-making. So when the distributors of goods request Vitamin C supplements to boost their immune systems, should the wealthy CAN comply – or (here the educator in me takes over!) use this as a moment to promote healthy nutritional habits? Should they gently convey the message that ‘needs’ are created and there are alternative ways to boost immune systems – for example through eating seasonal locally available and affordable vegetables and fruit? Is this a ‘learning moment’? Or, as some would suggest, would this be a patronizing gesture that denies others to get what they want?

How do we extend the opportunity to learn from this crisis? What are the intellectual, emotional, social capabilities and resources that we, who have had access to education, markets, and jobs, have been blind to? It is time to build real partnerships.

Together, we may dialogue on how wellbeing is not based on accumulation but on enough-ness for all. If I am helping through you, and vice versa if my wellbeing is contingent upon yours – this reciprocity, mutuality, ‘ubuntu’, must become the basis of all our living. We have an opportunity to re-build, on different premises and moral foundations. Adult/community education has an important role to play in this – but only if we follow the notion that we are all learners, and all educators; and that we must listen carefully.

An Alternate Theory of Climate Change Idowu Biao

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These are not easy times. Destructive fires here, devastating hurricanes there and tsunamis over there. Also, viral (SARS, MERS, Ebola, COVID-19) attacks whose humbling effects succeed in humiliating the most intelligent species at least for a while. Many factors (extreme capitalism, denial of science, excessive injection of harmful chemicals into the atmosphere, etc.) have been advanced as explanations for the frequency of these cataclysmic phenomena. Yet, a unified theory of climate change has not emerged. One theory whose core revolves around the effect of the human family’s activities on the intelligences of other earth families is here proposed.

The earth was expressly created to be inhabited by four primordial families, namely, the Mineral, Vegetable, Lower Animal and Higher Animal families. Each of these families is endowed with an initial grade of intelligence derived from the universal interconnected intelligence and with a large amount of survival instinct. Additionally, a strategic relationship is designed to abide among these families for earth equilibrium to be maintained at all times.

Reproduction does occur in all the four families. However, only the Higher Animal family is endowed with the necessary freewill to regulate or not to regulate its reproduction within a limit that would or would not destabilize the needed equilibrium of the earth. The equilibrium of the earth is destabilized whenever, as a result of over-reproduction, one or more of the families begin to encroach on the space reserved for others. As it is, there is evidence of a reduction in required lower animal species, reduction in earth-space that ought to be occupied by vegetation and water, reduction in the population of minerals that are to secure the internal consistency of the earth (Gonzalez de Molina, & Toledo, 2014; Goodland, 1995 Newbold et al., 2016). The Higher Animal family has so far been blamed for all these typologies of reduction.

There would have been no issues if all that was to be done was to take note of various typologies of reduction. Unfortunately, each typology of reduction bears its consequence. A dangerous stimulation of the intelligences of the lower earth families occurs each time there is an attempt to tamper with their habitats and each time their habitats are actually tampered with. This submission is consistent with the working of every being's survival instinct. In other words, each time any being (e.g. any earth family) comes under threat, it falls back on its existing intelligence with a view to protecting itself. This process of setting the intelligence to work does ultimately develop the potential of the said intelligence by provoking it to reach into the higher echelons of the universal intelligence flow from which all intelligences derive. Consequently, each opportunity that is created for an earth family to defend and protect itself, improves and renders the intelligence of that family more sophisticated.

The rate of severity of recent environmental calamities derives their raison d'être from this kind of logic. Consequently, each misapplication of human intelligence upgrades the intelligence of the lower earth families; and each upgrade allows the individual intelligence and collective intelligences of these lower earth families to approach the higher grade and loftier quality of intelligence of the current most intelligent species, human beings. Each approach spells the possibility of an eventual overtaking of human intelligence by either mineral intelligence, vegetable intelligence, or lower animal intelligence, or by a combination of a few or all of these intelligences.

In other words, unless humans learn to cooperate with nature and the environment, they may soon plot their own catastrophic exit from the surface of the earth through the inadvertent raising of a combined army of intelligence against them. I read somewhere in extant social media that the current Novel Coronavirus is actually a combination of a virus existing within a species of snakes and that found in the bat. As of 10th April, 2020, Coronavirus had infected more than one and a half million) and killed about one hundred thousand people worldwide.

Why are Human Beings behaving the Way they currently do towards the Environment?

Over-reproduction that leads to over-population is at the foundation of the unresponsive human behaviour towards the environment's gentle but firm demands. Over-reproduction of human beings leads to over-harvesting of nature's produce which in turn stimulates members of the earth's lower families to begin to seek strategies for self-preservation. It is the world's high population that serves as motivation for the capitalist to over-produce with the aim of making maximal wealth or profit, since the more people there are to buy products, the more money the capitalist makes.

Two hundred thousand years ago, there was neither talk nor concern about environmental degradation as the world population was relatively low. In fact, the earth first accommodated a million human beings in about 1804 and it took 200,000 years to achieve such a feat (United Nations, 2012). However, it took the short span of 200 years to reach 7 billion in 2004 (United Nations, 2012). A number of favourable factors (improved medical services, improved agricultural practices, absence of frequent pandemics, etc.) account for this phenomenal human population growth. Here we are now with a small earth (Donges, 2018): not because of any reduction in its physical dimensions but because the human population has grown so much that human beings themselves hardly have space to hide their bodies and properties even after displacing earth's lower families from their own legitimate habitats.

Implications for lifelong learning

Commendable efforts at teaching environmental science have been made over the years by various worthy groups within both formal and non-formal learning circles. However, much of this teaching has appealed to the cognitive domain of learning: loads of facts have been dished out over the years about the earth environment and the tribulations it is going through. These are contained in numerous books, academic journals and magazines. Few of the environmental science teachings appeal to the affective domain of learning similar to the one promoted by the style of teaching and learning adopted by Budd Hall in *A letter from the Matriarch of the J Pod of Orcas to the President of the Alberta Oil Association* (PIMA Bulletin No.28 p.5). This approach of entering into discussions about environmental issues is disarming in its sheer innocence and affected by the positive and supportive emotions it elicits.

In addition to Hall's style, subsequent teaching-learning activities within the domain of environmental science and education should adopt practical approaches to learning, made up of film shows, video snaps and photographic shoots, and discussion contrasting earth environments during years past and in current times. Such an approach as this would draw numerous questions from learners. It will equally impact their emotion in positive ways, motivating them into psychomotor activities in the interest of environmental sustainability.

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Online learning in Vietnam gets a boost from COVID-19 Pandemic. What is missing? [Khuu Huu Phuoc](#)

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The Cyber World

One morning three years ago, I was sitting in a coffee shop sipping warm coffee, when I heard some giggling from a table in a corner of the room. Thinking some young people were having a good time together, I glanced over and saw four youngsters, two girls and two boys, aged about 18, fixing their eyes on their mobile phone screens in silence, their thumbs moving up and down, or quickly swiping across the screens. The scene was a flip side of what I had imagined. They were totally lost in the real world, not being socially with one another, and were totally immersed in the virtual one. A few minutes' observation revealed that they were actually communicating, not in that physical setting, but in the cyber world.

The Internet has created an invisible world, where a lot of people are present mentally, emotionally and socially for work, entertainment, socialisation, and learning.

Online education

Web-based learning began in the 1990s, but e-learning utilising full interactive features of the internet taking the advantages of Web 2.0 was experienced in 2005 (Lehman & Conceicao 2010). Online courses have since been offered by many universities and education institutions in the world, serving the learning needs of millions of people, both young and old, male and female, employed and job-seeking. The trend of online teaching and learning is obvious, but has yet to be a replacement of traditional face-to-face practice.

The COVID-19 pandemic has triggered a wave of online lessons which were transformed from the conventional classroom content delivery to internet-based projection. More than ever, online instructions seem to be the one and only option for education in places and countries where the disease is ravaging, with people in lockdown and education institutions temporarily shut. The number of these territories and countries, Vietnam included, increased rapidly day by day, to reach 209 as of April 7 2020.

The situation in Vietnam seems to confirm the alleged multiple benefits of online learning: saving time of travelling between home and learning places, reducing gas consumption, increasing the level of learner confidence due to the absence of scrutiny from surrounding people, to name a few. However, this mode of learning also comes with two inherent drawbacks: the low level of active participation; and the feeling of isolation as many students are experiencing, or in other words the feeling of not being present there, in the learning environment. As a result, it is not uncommon that students log into a class and leave it open there while the teacher is teaching, or the video is playing, sometimes only to do something else of more interest. In short, they are not actually engaged in the learning process.

Sense of presence

Lehman rightly viewed that the sense of presence in online learning does matter, and has much to do with the actual learning outcomes. According to Lehman, two aspects of online presence are required for individuals to cross the threshold of the virtual

classroom: telepresence, which is the sense of *being there* in the context of the classroom, and social presence, which is the sense of *being together with others*.

Humans are social creatures and need social support (OECD Better Life Index 2018). Biologically, they have evolved to work together in coordination, to eat and live together in communities, and in such undertakings to learn from one another. As it was, learning in primitive societies took place naturally, simply through young people watching their seniors perform tasks and then mimicking. While skills could be acquired more or less in that way, wisdom as we call it, accumulated and grew over generations to such amounts that simple imitation would not be enough, and masters or instructors or teachers, depending on how you view those knowledge-transferring people, became the ones responsible for the transmission, via the medium of language, of the systematic arrangement of wisdom (Dewey 1916). Whatever form of learning and education takes place, and however it is conducted, the ultimate aim is to prepare young persons for their meaningful future integration in society.

Learning is a social activity. Learners come together, receive instructional guidance from teachers, discuss, draw up new knowledge, and put it into application. Has the internet created a virtual community where students feel socially bound into such activities? It sure has, as can be experienced by the young people in the coffee shop that I mentioned earlier. Their contacts remained in the cyber world: they laughed at each other's posts and responded to them, seemingly forgetting their existence in this world. Has online learning environment utilised this function to provide a sense of "being there" and "being together" that makes the internet technology, the devices in use (laptop, mobile phone, camera) seem transparent, which enables learners to feel that they were actually in another location and immersed in a context where classmates and teachers were interacting?

The answer is not definite. As long as learners feel that they are sitting alone in their own places, manipulating the communication devices by tapping on keys, moving the computer mouse around and clicking, the interest of being with others for a learning task is not there. They just feel obliged to go online to fulfil the duty of a learner, for the final goal of receiving credits towards course completion.

Ally (2008, cited in Hartnett 2016) defined online education as "the use of the internet to access materials; to interact with the content, instructor, and other learners; and to obtain support during the learning process, in order to acquire knowledge, to construct personal meaning, and to grow from the learning experience". Once the element of human interaction is lost because of the inappropriate course construct, the learning environment becomes a static place in the mind of learners who are left without strong motivation for collaborative contribution to lesson contents which are displayed on the physical inanimate electronic devices in front.

The missing attribute of online lessons

As a result of COVID-19, face-to-face teaching and learning has been temporarily suspended. Education institutions across Vietnam have resorted to the internet as a teaching platform, where videos are posted for lessons, live streaming is employed for real-time teaching, and social network applications are used for information exchange and discussion. To some learners, especially those in rural and mountainous areas, this poses difficulty because of the complete shift from the brick-and-mortar classroom to

the virtual one, which is a totally new experience.

The media in Vietnam have started to look into and made some preliminary assessment of the implementation of online teaching and learning. Opinions show optimistic viewpoints of the new trend regarding the travel time saved and the idea that online learning is the best way to make use of the time during extended school closure, which otherwise would be wasted. However, they point to two major obstructions: the lack of suitable infrastructure in remote and mountainous areas, which renders this mode of teaching and learning virtually impossible; and the low *true* participation on the part of students which results from a feeling that they are isolated from the conventional classroom, thus lacking a sense of collaboration and competition, and suffering low teacher-student, and peer interaction.

Many teachers resort to social network platforms for lesson delivery, but these lack the necessary functions for online teaching and learning. A lesson is not a one-way transmission of knowledge to learners. It does not include solely giving exercises to be done. In the absence of direct human interaction in the mini-society of the class, an online lesson has to do much more to attain the same level of involvement as in an offline class.

In short, while the first obstruction is one of technology, the second is more on the methodological side and within the capability of teachers with relevant know-how to handle.

What can be done?

Technological and digital infrastructure apart, a feeling of “being there” in the physical classroom can be created by providing an environment where natural social interaction can be simulated. Lehman suggests a range of activities that enable teacher-student and peer interaction. These include: assign roles to individuals in teams, request each student to make at least one contribution during a class session, online group discussion forums, team projects, debates, fishbowl, mini-lectures, PowerPoint with voiceover, short video sequences, synchronous Web or videoconferencing, guest experts, chat, object or picture demonstration, collaborative concept maps, participant videos, virtual lab work or simulations, blog participation, interviews, and trigger videos. Of these, synchronous class sessions with webcams turned on should be exploited for real-life experience, when learners can see each other while sharing opinions, and at times having fun with each other as they do in class.

The Ministry of Education and Training of Vietnam (MOET), in collaboration with the Ministry of Information and Communications, is going to build a common platform for use by all education institutions in setting up and delivering courses (Tuoi Tre 2020). The platform will feature many communication-enhancing functions. Several companies in the private sector have offered similar platforms at low costs. The Ministerial Circular 10/2017/TT-BGDĐT (MOET 2017) stipulates regulations on distance higher education, and the yet-to-be-issued ministerial circular will mandate the integration of online teaching and learning into formal education curricula, coupled with the availability of infrastructure committed by internet service providers, and technical platforms to be launched soon. Most will be left in the hand of schools and teachers for the sustainability and efficacy of online courses.

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Digital equity and community solidarity during and after COVID-19 Suzanne Smythe

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COVID-19 is an efficient illuminator of our society's strengths and weaknesses; its progress accelerates in spaces of inequality and injustice.

There is a race among public health agencies at all levels to provide the timely, accurate information about COVID-19 that is essential to support physical distancing policies and to maintain quarantine and stay-at-home rules. New, ambitious, vital social programs and anti-poverty policies have emerged in an effort to patch a frayed social safety net, save lives and livelihoods during the crisis, and make it possible for people to comply with all-important physical distancing and social isolation.

Persistent digital inequalities threaten these objectives. Timely information, access to benefits and programs, and the transition to working or studying remotely require that Canadians have a high-speed Internet connection, a working digital device or phone, digital savviness and fluency in English or French. Yet those who are most at risk of

COVID-19 in terms of their health, personal security and livelihoods are also those least likely to be tapped into or able to afford the relatively steep cost of the mainstream Internet information channels that our institutions seem to take for granted. Overwhelmingly, these are Black, Indigenous, new immigrant, refugee, and other racialized and low-income communities.

Digital inequalities

Understandably, the [claim that 94% of British Columbians have access to the Internet](#) at home might instil confidence in our institutions that they can rely upon the Internet for COVID-19-related communications. But this figure was generated in a 2019 Statistics Canada Internet Use Survey that was carried out electronically, prompting [some groups to question the reliability of this data](#). Moreover, this figure neglects differences in Internet access across income, the digital literacy and language skills needed to participate online; and the fact that many families must [make financial sacrifices](#) to maintain an Internet connection, sacrifices they may no longer be able to make in these COVID-19 times. As [Nisa Malli](#) of the Brookfield Institute and [Laura Tribe](#) of OpenMedia have explained, the Internet is not as accessible as we might think.

Those of us who are accustomed to ubiquitous access to the Internet at home and work across multiple devices can lose sight of how others struggle to maintain connectivity. Although digital inequalities among students is not a new problem, it has come to the forefront as the British Columbia Canada Ministry of Education and school districts scramble to transition the Province's 575,000 school children to crisis remote teaching - we will not pretend that this will even approximate a systematic and planned version of online learning. The Canadian Radio and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) [found that](#) only 69% of Canadians in the 1st Income quintile (earning less than 33,000 annually) had access to the Internet at home in 2017 (CRTC, 2019) compared to 94.5% in the 5th Quintile (earning more than \$132,909 annually). Similarly, only 63% of Canadians in the 1st Income Quintile have access to a working home computer compared to 95% of those in the 5th Quintile. The quality and speed of Internet connectivity also matters; many British Columbians do not have access to Internet speeds [needed for most online activities](#), particularly in rural and remote areas. Digital inequality is a matter of income, and there are gross access inequalities on all measures of virtual communication. In the post-COVID-19 future, we need to have a conversation about the risks of entrusting vital Internet infrastructure to private interests.

Access to timely and accurate information

Efforts to mobilize British Columbians to 'flatten the curve' may be encouraging thus far, but they have been encumbered by a lack of appropriate materials in the multiple languages read and spoken in BC, and a lack of capacity among health and government agencies to reach British Columbians who live on the digital margins.

The BC Centre for Disease Control has [translated COVID-19 information](#) in Simplified and Traditional Chinese, Punjabi, Farsi, English and French. But refugee families and low-wage front-line essential workers also speak Arabic, Amharic, Tagalog, Vietnamese and Spanish and may or may not be literate in those languages. The helpful [811](#) service now offers information by phone in different languages, but people need to know about this service in order to access. Many are not. Low wage essential workers and Temporary Foreign Workers who engage in work that makes social distancing difficult if not impossible, have shared with outreach workers that they feel isolated and anxious

because they don't have the information, they need to protect themselves, their families and the public.

The traditional social networks in which information may have circulated have become frayed in these times of social distancing; to compensate, settlement and outreach workers who are still employed, along with many volunteers, spend their time interpreting and translating information such that people whose primary language is other than English or French can understand.

Access to services and benefits

Luckily, online applications for benefits are relatively straightforward, but the process is still a challenge for those who have traditionally relied upon librarians, adult English Second Language and literacy educators, settlement workers and advocates to make access to government services and information possible. For years now these community-based educators and advocates, many of whom work in non-profit agencies with shoe-string budgets, have assumed the role of proxy social service counters, helping adults to navigate their children's education, employment and government services. Tragically, many have now been [laid off](#). It could not be at a worse time. Those who remain are adopting inventive and intensive methods that blend old and new technologies across physical distancing.

These lifesaving efforts make physical distancing and social isolation possible, and bring into sharp relief ways in which community-based educators compensate for equity gaps in health, education and government services. Neighbourhood House, settlement and literacy workers are phoning learners and families to check-in and then to help to address a multitude of problems and worries. Artists are filling the information void with [street art](#) and information boards, the [Downtown Eastside Literacy Roundtable](#) transformed its literacy-friendly [LinkVan service app](#) into a COVID-19 information hub for residents and service providers in that community.

Learning from this moment

Canada needs an inclusive digital strategy designed for all its citizens rather than compensatory programs tacked around the edges. The [Connecting Families program](#) that offers low-cost Internet and devices to the lowest income, single-parent families should be expanded and publicly administered. Devices sitting in cupboards and drawers need to be remobilized among those at risk of COVID-19 infection, including homeless, precariously housed and older citizens and those working in low-wage essential services. We already have organizations fit to this task, though they have been immobilized during COVID-19. No one should be without a working device to connect to the Internet and a cell phone that is essential to maintaining social and information networks.

COVID-19 information needs to be presented in web and print-based formats designed for the full spectrum of languages and literacy needs in our communities. Adult literacy educators and settlement workers, skilled in the production of [clear language texts](#), can be vital collaborators with health, government services and school districts in this effort.

But as important as an inclusive digital infrastructure might be, it cannot replace face to face relationships, the caring phone call, and the contextualized learning strategies that

community-based educators and advocates are providing. Decisions about who has Internet and devices cannot be left to for-profit ISPs and 'the market'

The logic of digital government is that of efficiency. It assumes that providing rapid access to high-stakes information about health and social policies is best accomplished online. But as this COVID-19 moment is teaching us, focus on efficiency becomes dangerously inefficient when some people do not have the means to access this information; or when the information is not suited to the needs and lived realities of diverse communities. These problems flow from persistent digital inequalities, a shortage of health and government information published clearly in the multiple languages spoken in British Columbia; and a failure to recognize the crucial role that community-based educators and advocates play in filling in the gaps of a frayed and unequal information ecosystem. As the full extent of digital inequality becomes clear, so too does the value of 'old technologies' of relationship-based learning, care and solidarity.

The Role of Higher Education Institutions in Times of COVID-19: Learnings from India [Nayanika Guha](#)

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A total of 40 million people are currently involved in either teaching or enrolled in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in India. The COVID-19 pandemic has forced them to go digital, rapidly, to avoid a rupture in the learning and research functions of HEIs. However, continuing, and in some cases implementing, the community engagement and service function needs re-examination in such unprecedented times.

In India, HEIs have a history of community engagement, be it through the individual efforts of students and educators or the National Service Scheme (NSS) since its inauguration in 1969. The NSS provides an opportunity to the students of India to partake in community service projects led by the government to gain ground-level experience of community service (<https://nss.gov.in/nss-detail-page>). Beyond service-learning, HEIs can take up more ambitious, socially responsible action during and in the aftermath of the pandemic.

One of the immediate roles HEIs can play is that of being a source of accurate and reliable information. In the time of WhatsApp forwards and rampant misinformation, this is a crucial task to avoid widespread panic. Messages regarding health and hygiene, do's and don'ts, social distancing, and other related issues can be disseminated through students and educators in their communities. HEIs can also provide support in creating materials such as short videos or posters that can be shared by grassroots and community-based organisations. Further, as informal sector workers suddenly face unemployment and fall deeper into poverty, students and faculty can coordinate and facilitate the delivery of essential services, including food. They can support informal workers by helping them access government aid being delivered through the Public Distribution System (PDS) and direct cash transfers. This can be done by assisting them in filling out forms available digitally, helping them access bank accounts, and informing them about the most beneficial schemes available to them. In addition to this, HEIs can

also provide support in the form of helplines and counselling services to address the panic and fear caused by the pandemic and the isolation caused by the lockdown.

With India under lockdown (for almost six weeks at the time of writing this article), HEIs have come up with innovative ways of engaging students and communities. [Chhatrapati Shahu Ji Maharaj University](#), in Kanpur, has implemented a 'Vidhya Vani' program under which they have regular radio broadcasts that allow students in rural areas without internet access to continue their education. [Dayalbagh Education Institution](#), in Agra, has initiated an 'earn while you learn and learn while you earn' program. Students are engaged in work of their choices such as dairy, agriculture, cleaning, and security work, and in turn, their tuition is waived.

After the initial, immediate response, HEIs are going to be faced with challenges on how they can continue to provide support to the community in the aftermath of the pandemic. One way HEIs can do so is by incorporating a component of field study wherein students and faculty can monitor how the COVID-19 situation is playing out in their local communities. In doing so, they can carry out trans-disciplinary research after the crisis to understand the physical, mental, social and economic repercussions. They can partner with community-based organisations to conduct surveys to identify vulnerable families, and share the data with relevant authorities. Further, they can prepare long-term behaviour change communication material to help communities, especially the most vulnerable and marginalised, prepare for future crises. Finally, one significant issue that the pandemic has brought to the forefront is that local governance institutions in India need to be strengthened and equipped to deal with disasters. HEIs can provide training and support to build the capacities of these local institutions and their elected representatives for more effective disaster response in the future.

While the full impact of the COVID 19 pandemic is difficult to determine at this time, the public health and economic consequences are visible and grim. Inequalities among communities, across regions and between urban and rural areas in India have become stark. It is only through a socially responsible, community-based, participatory approach that HEIs can help reduce the long-term social and economic impacts of the pandemic that are yet to come.

This article has been adapted from the report on the webinar on Fostering Social Responsibility by Higher Educational Institutions: COVID 19 and Beyond, organised by [PRIA](#), [UNESCO Chair in Community Based Research and Social Responsibility in Higher Education](#), and Association of Indian Universities. The full report can be accessed [here](#).

DEVELOPING ACTIVIST ALE LEADERSHIP IN THAILAND

Dr Archanya Ratana-Ubol and Cambodian student Neak (Nick) Piseth worked together to produce this introduction. Following this, there are five short papers relating to the research of graduate students. Ed.

My Lifelong Academia with PIMA [Archanya Ratana-Ubol](#) and [Neak Piseth](#)

A plethora of issues are happening due to fast-paced changes in the digital era and the high impacts of globalization. As such, the outbreak of COVID-19 is one of the most threatening problems for us and all living things. It affects our working, living, travelling, and other habits.

Lifelong learning has played a crucial role in educating and keeping everyone's knowledge updated with the actual and authentic situation to deal with those unanticipated phenomena. As one of the adult educators and lifelong learners, I feel pleased that I am able to educate and assist my students in cultivating a lifelong learning attitude.

In the light of teaching lifelong education, facilitation and inspiration, certain skills are very crucial for me to help my students in their learning. As a result, I have introduced many teaching techniques. One of these is a *learning contract* concept, for students to bring their knowledge to apply in the real situation. For instance, at the beginning of the course, all students have to write their learning contracts regarding any particular topics which they are interested in, without any coercion. By doing so, everyone has a sense of ownership and commitment towards their study, since they can do what they love and choose.

As I am an optimistic person, I believe in the power of human beings, which means everyone can do great things. Hence, I always encourage my students to step out of their comfort zone and do something that challenges, with great love. To continue this initiative, PIMA is one of the best platforms for them to bring what they have learned and done from their learning contracts to put into reality, by writing a brief article to send to PIMA for editing and getting published in the bi-monthly Bulletin.

Moreover, everyone is so excited to take this golden opportunity to get their articles published as well as to enhance their English writing article skills. Notably, they feel that it is necessary and their obligation as lifelong learners to keep sharing and practising their knowledge and expertise with PIMA, and other distinguished scholars and adult educators. I would like to express my heartfelt `thank you`, PIMA, for establishing this excellent platform for us and everyone to have a chance to contribute our knowledge to better the world through the power of writing and sharing, as one said, "Sharing is Caring". Similarly, PIMA is doing this utopian thing to become an absolute dream in the future to come, so everyone can live together with a harmonious life, which aligns with one of four principles of lifelong learning.

Last but not least, I would like to invite everyone to join hands with PIMA: raise your voices to be heard as well as to ameliorate the impact of those pressing problems through the power of your writing and sharing. I and my present students - *Mr Neak Piseth, Mrs Leakna Orn, Mr Thanisorn Kasemsant Na Ayuttaya, Mrs Vichchuda Tuantranont, and Mr Dech-sri Nopas, Ms Natpaphat Worathanphasuk, Ms Harythai Jaturawatana, and Ms Chanikan Inprom* - hold a firm belief that it is a right for us to take immediate actions and measures to gain positive benefits for our society through joining with PIMA!

Community Participation in Community Learning Centers in the Kingdom of Cambodia: Framework and Current Issues of Community Participation [Neak Piseth](#)

Community Learning Centers (CLCs) were started under the supervision of the Department of Non-Formal Education (DNFE), in the Cambodian Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports in 1994 and supported by UNESCO (UNESCO 1999). A pilot project of CLCs under the support of UNESCO Bangkok was implemented from 1999 to 2001 (Bangkok U 2008). Furthermore, CLCs are considered by the Cambodian government as schools of non-formal education and informal education. It is where community people come to have access to training and learning activities, such as functional literacy, post-literacy, re-entry, life skills, income-generation, and health improvement programmes (MOEYS, 2014). However, many community learning centers are not yet active, and most of them are not able to perform and execute their functions. The main issue is community participation and engagement.

Based on the DNFE of the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sports, there are approximately 356 CLCs run by the Cambodian government and other relevant stakeholders (MOES 2018). On the other hand, only 296 centers can perform their functions and then with only small action (MOES 2018). This is mainly because of the lack of community participation and involvement. In a similar vein, according to Shaeffer (1994), there are seven elements of community participation based on the theory of the rungs of community participation: namely the mere use of services, involvement of resources, attending programs, consultation, partnership, implementation, and making the decisions (Shaeffer, S., 1994). The first three rungs (the mere use of services, involvement of resources, and attending programs) manifest inactive or low levels of participation. The other four rungs (consultation, partnership, implementation, and making a decision) demonstrate an active or high level of participation.

I conducted an interview with two Cambodian experts who are working in the field of non-formal education to understand the components and the current issues of community participation in community learning centers in Cambodia. As a result, the two experts have concluded that “there are eight components of community participation in community learning centers in the Cambodian context: utilizing services, resource mobilization, attending programs, diagnosing needs, planning programs, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, and decision-making” (Interview (2019)). In addition, the level of community participation is relatively low. Various issues to do with community participation in Cambodian CLCs which have emerged from the research are: unattractiveness of the programmes; the lack of trust and transparency; inadequacy of facilitators; families’ burdens; the limitation of their understanding about the impact of the centers; immigration; and conventional beliefs and culture.

Due to lack of community participation, community learning centers are quite inactive and lack human resources and finances. Community people are the primary people to mobilise resources in three ways: the contribution of finances; volunteering to serve the centers as facilitators and in organizing programmes and activities; and physical capital - land, materials, and facilities for the centers.

In a nutshell, community participation in CLCs in Cambodia is minimal in terms of the eight components of participation explained above, and there are many problems of community participation in the CLCs, as aforementioned, which make the centers less active and unsustainable. The Cambodian government and other related actors should have taken these issues into their account. Additionally, there should now be practical

mechanisms and guidelines to enhance community participation in the community learning centers, to assist them to be more active and sustainable.

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Developing and Sustaining the Lifelong Learning Community in Thailand: What are the Key Factors? [Jirattha Jarupisitthorn](#)

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The Learning Community is considered as a tool for solving particular problems and supporting professional development in the community or organisation. Currently, many studies point out the role of collaboration in professional learning. Learning communities bring together practitioners from different disciplines to discuss, reflect and collaborate on a topic of interest, and to act as an effective tool in professional development. In Thailand, there are learning communities established in several areas with different platforms: for instance, learning groups in organisations, communities of practices in local communities, professional learning communities in schools. Among these learning communities, there are some sustainable and effective lifelong learning communities where people solve problems by collaborating, learning and sharing members' experience together.

My own study was conducted qualitatively. Three learning communities were selected to represent best practices in developing lifelong learning communities for professional development: the Puparn Royal Development Study Centre; the Small and Micro-Community Enterprise Doichang Macadamia Nut; and the Teacher Professional Learning Community at Satit Pattana School.

Data were collected from the organisations' reports, non-participatory observation, informal interview and in-depth interview with key informants. Data were analysed

through content analysis and categorised in these components: (1) Main Goal (2) Community members (3) Learning Process and Characteristics (4) Internal and External Support (5) Operation Evaluation and (6) Building a Lifelong Learning Community Network.

I found similarities among the three case studies in establishing their own learning community for professional development, and keeping it running sustainably.

(1) Main Goal; ***Puparn Royal Development Study Centre*** is a learning and knowledge centre about agriculture, an integrated farming system and a sufficiency economy for people in surrounding villages including other related organisations. The ***Small and Micro-Community Enterprise Doichang Macadamia Nut*** would like to restore and preserve the forest area around Doichang community. Meanwhile, the goal of the ***Teacher Professional Learning Community at Satit Pattana School*** is to develop the teacher profession and support students' learning. Each case has its own goal, depending on context. However, the important thing is that the goal has to be shared with every member of the community to make sure that they are in the same direction.

(2) Community members: the three case studies show that the relationships between leaders and members in the community are very important. *Trust* is the key to collaboration.

(3) Learning Process and Characteristics: from the case studies, there might be some conflicts among members, but *Communication and Collaboration* are the best approach to overcome issues and to learn what are the best ways for their own communities. Let them have a chance to share knowledge, ideas and experience in a friendly atmosphere.

(4) Internal and External Support: the most mentioned supportive key is factors about people and their mental health. Internal and external support is not recognised as an active key component to drive the community learning.

(5) Operation Evaluation: analysing and evaluating results are important for reflection and to monitor changes in each case as well as being the basic data for revision for the next step of operating and managing a lifelong learning community.

(6) Building Lifelong Learning Community Network: a Lifelong Learning Network is a chance to share resources and expand collaboration among groups of people who have mutual interest, but before doing this the most vital thing is first to strengthen collaboration among members in the community.

This study indicated that developing a sustainable and effective lifelong learning community needed shared values and vision, quality leaders and members, Collaborative learning and reflective dialogue, and regular evaluation, are major factors. However internal and external support to the learning community network are considered as minor factors.

Changes in demographic and socio-economic dynamics affecting patterns in Thai Family Culture [Naradee Soratana](#)

The typical Thai family structure in the old days was an extended family pattern with members of several generations living together under the same roof. Parents, grandparents, cousins, relatives, and older siblings took care of the younger. But recently, family structures have been becoming more complex through rapid changes globally in families' surroundings, including Thailand. This article reviews modern family patterns in Thai family culture and the effects of changes in demographic and socio-economic dynamics.

Extended family patterns have been the most common household arrangement in Thai society for a long period of time. However, nuclear family growth has increasingly changed this to become the commonest household arrangement (rising to 52.4 % of all households over the period 1987-2015). Unfortunately, since 2015 this numbers has been reduced much further to now 26.6%. Rapid changes, with healthier and more long-living elderly members in the family, have made the extended family become instead the top household arrangement at 37% of all families (UNFPA, 2015).

The changes have been continuously focused on extended family patterns because there are more adults and the elderly, but fewer new-born members. However, modern extended families are different from the past, as granddaughters or grandsons live with grandparents. Neither mother nor father live in the household because of working conditions. According to *The State of Thailand's Population 2015: Features of Thai Families in the Era of Low Fertility and Longevity*, there are seven factors leading to changes in Thai family structures, as follows:

- 1) Low fertility: Thai people have fewer children,
- 2) Longevity: Thai people, especially women, live longer,
- 3) Changing Composition of the Thai Population: fewer children, more elderly, shrinking numbers of working age,
- 4) Migration: More people of working age migrate into urban areas,
- 5) Limited savings and social welfare,
- 6) More women are having higher education and entering into the workforce, and
- 7) Changing lifestyles (UNFPA, 2015).

Examining the family and economic development of Thailand, household debt in Thailand is seen as presently growing at a faster rate than economic growth. According to an article 'Household debt squeezing the nation', in *Bangkok Post*, the household debt problem in Thailand has reached the high level of 78% of GDP. This figure only includes debts to financial institutions. It does not include informal household loans. With this informal figure added it could be near to 100% of GDP. As a result, records of both the savings and debts of Thai households indicate that they are poorly prepared in terms of economic strength and stability (*Bangkok Post*, 2019).

Changes in demographic and socio-economic dynamics affect families' ways of life in Thai society as a whole. These changes challenge Thai families to keep their families operating, managing, and adapting through the difficulties that they are facing. According to research on Family strengths in the Thai context, the multi-cultural surroundings of Buddhism, Islam, Catholicism, other Christian, Hindu, and Chinese beliefs mixed and blended as one culture make perception of the uniqueness of Thai

culture positive. The result showed that the Thai culture of respect for the elderly, and closeness in family relationships are still however strong bonds for the family, enabling it to cope effectively with a crisis (Soratana, Ratana-Ubol, & Kimpee, 2019). These are the strengths of Thai family culture that are interesting for further review generally, and in respect of informal and family learning.

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Abandon hometown for Education? A case study from marginal people in Thailand **Likkhasit Putkhiao**

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The purpose of this research is to analyse the current state of education of marginal people in the community. The target group is Thai hill tribe people such as the Akha and Karen groups in Chiangmai province in the north of Thailand. Data were collected through in-depth interviewing of two groups of Thai hill tribe people purposefully selected as key informants. The interview content was used for data analysis.

Formerly 'education' was not alienated from the community where the home and religion play a primary role in providing education to the community. Therefore, knowledge of wisdom, culture and religion was transferred from generation to generation. Akha, for instance, instructs young blood about what is culture transmission through social activities, such as house-building, weddings, merit-making, and funerals.

However, the tide of Western civilization that flows in with the word 'school system' created central control, becoming part of the country's mainstream education that is structured and organized by the State. This type of education requires a centralized curriculum focusing on knowledge creation based on the larger community's external knowledge. Karen wisdom, for example, was not added to the school curriculum thus contributing to a decrease in the important role of local knowledge.

Thus we have the obstacle of formal education not connecting with the community's knowledge, neglecting local roots and culture. Modern education reduces the identity of learners and their immersion in the values of their community. In the Akha funeral, it is

believed that blowing a blow in effect carries the dead spirits to heaven. If there is no room for this in modern society's belief system a new generation is forced to make the choice. A bereaved Akha senior attributed their sorrow with their situation to the education system.

From this case it can be seen that national Thai-isation is a process opposed to diversifying; it seeks to make the people of the country more assimilated to the dominant culture. It, therefore, excludes some groups from the development trend, separating them in their culture from it. It denies them importance, and also excludes them from receiving the benefits of development equal to that of other groups of Thai people. They become underprivileged in terms of economic development: non-core groups marginalised by education.

Therefore, the school system decreases local education and community learning. It means reducing the important role of non-formal education and informal learning in the community. Thus, education is no longer a community tool to develop local people, and to facilitate the learning of their knowledge and culture from generation to generation. Instead, education is a tool of the state aiming for a population that has remained remarkably homogeneous.

Not only is the outcome of education no longer for the community; it is also a response to the economy. That is to say, it encourages people to leave their hometowns to look for a job in the capital, rather than developing their own community. This points to the fact that the lack of knowledge transfer between generations in the community means abandoning one's hometown.

The preliminary conclusion is that mainstream education that focuses on global knowledge rather than knowledge in the community is a cause of abandoning hometown. Nevertheless, marginal people accept the existence of the school system and suggest that the best learning is community knowledge along with global knowledge. We should, therefore, be considering that it is time to bring 'local knowledge' back to marginalised groups.

Happy Family, Happy Ageing: How museums can support lifelong learning in an ageing society [Ganigar Chen](#)

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An ageing society becomes an important issue for many countries. In 2017 in Thailand there were about 11.3 million people over 60 years old, which accounted for 17.11% of the total population. It is predicted that the country will become a fully-fledged ageing society in 2021. Consequences of being an aging society are not only labour shortage, a less productive economy, or reduced numbers of students and schools, but also higher demand on the health care system and health professionals.

In addition, what seems to affect individuals most is the fact that there is a generation gap between young people born in the digital age and the senior people who were born in calculator time. The current trend is also that young and old people have fewer chances to be together than before. As families become smaller in urban areas, it is hard

for the two or three generations of grandpa-mom-grandchild to understand each other's temper, behaviours and needs. The lack of empathy results in conflicts and difficulties when both generations have to be together because it is needed, such as when old people need care from the family, or young people have to stay with their grandparents.

Unfortunately, this issue is not normally discussed in school, and there is little chance that we can raise the topic for discussion openly and positively within the family. This is where museum exhibitions could provide a learning opportunity for family members, young and old. At the National Science Museum in Thailand, an exhibition called "Happy Family Happy Ageing" was developed three years ago to offer this lifelong learning opportunity. The exhibition aims at promoting empathy of young people towards the senior citizen, and at the same time to get the young generation and young adults to be aware of the upcoming changes that they will be facing, so being more aware and taking precautionary action to maintain a healthy body before their own time of ageing.

The exhibition communicated four key messages: what happens to body and mind when one ages; why it happens that way; how can we prepare to take care of ourselves to ensure we age well; and how we can take care of other older people so that we can live happily together.



The exhibition was interactive and experience-based by bringing the visitors to understand the facts of 'Inevitable Ageing', and then joining experiential exercises of being old, such as having blurred vision, hearing problems, memory challenges, unbalanced movement, moving arms and legs under difficulty, etc., through an area called *Ageing Playground*. Visitors could thus understand physical changes and emotional changes that would take place when one gets older,

making us realise that old people really could not perform their life as well as younger people, and that certain arrangement should be provided for healthy, quality living, such as enough light, hearing aids, hand-rails, a light sensor, and design for a wheelchair. The exhibition also showcased our body system that deteriorates and leads to several health function changes, such as urine and bladder, skull and teeth, knee and joint, and blood vessels. The young generation could then learn to prepare themselves for such changes by adopting good practices in their lifestyle, good eating habits with healthy food, having the right posture, and taking exercise.

In the final part of the exhibition, innovation and ageing-assisting equipment was introduced so that people become aware of the technology nowadays available to support ageing people. Hopefully, the exhibition will also inspire new technologists to create even better tools or equipment that will do their job for ageing people even better in the future. The exhibition has drawn great interest from a wide audience. This demonstrates support for an ageing society where senior citizen and young adults can both learn from this space.

OTHER THEMES AND ISSUES

The next article was written in Pécs-Hungary this March by Balázs Németh, Associate Professor in Adult Learning and Education at the University of Pécs. He looks at the ALE scene in his own country. It is followed by Heribert Hinzen's record of a meeting held in Pécs last year. This account takes us to a more reflective detailed discussion, too lengthy for this Bulletin, but can be found on the new PIMA Website, which extends into other important themes in the Bulletin: especially the impact of COVID-19 on 'community' and community learning, and the role and limitations of the remote communications-enabled virtually by the newer media. Ed

Hungarian adult and lifelong learning with ups and downs. Some contexts of the OECD's adult learning priorities [Balázs Németh](#)

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In the last two decades, Hungarian Adult Education has been relatively successful in moving participation in adult learning from an average of 3% to beyond 6% according to Eurostat and OECD surveys. However the OECD Dashboard on Adult Learning recently also reflects that the situation in Hungary is rather contradictory: meaning that some indicators reflect stronger concern upon the matter, while some others resonate clear difficulties calling for the use and implementation of complex policy measures.*

May I hereby indicate that policy concerns in Hungary face several obstacles to realise the joint and complex handling of adult and lifelong learning, since governmental focuses have reduced official narratives and policy interventions. These now serve only employability measures and vocational skills development, through a top-down approach instead of also the bottom-up dimension. This practice resulted in a very problematic situation for being able to easily demonstrate 'ups and downs' in the same country-specific system. It also means that one cannot consider my country either as a relatively developed or, in the other way round, a relatively under-developed one. Hungary has got some advances in the formation of vocational and labour market-based training programmes for adults, through direct investments in a new vocational and apprenticeship programme. This is as part of the Strategy for Industry 4.0, to incorporate vocational continuing education for adults. And that (only) is what the government is understanding about adult and lifelong learning.

The OECD Dashboard, reflecting the interdependency between some particularly important factors, highlights those priorities that are considered necessary to the process of developing adult and lifelong learning. That is not to move policy and practice towards using only some of them to improve participation and performance in adult learning. Those priorities are: i) urgency, ii) coverage, iii) inclusiveness, iv) flexibility and guidance, v) alignment with skill needs, vi) perceived training impact, and vii) financing.

Hungary, based on the figures of a relevant survey of OECD as an inter-governmental organisation, has scored with quite good results on urgency, on alignment with skills needs and on perceived training impact. But it scored very badly at coverage, at flexibility, and at guidance and financing. These latest three priorities as indicators well

reflect the fact that adult and lifelong learning has got a rather bad social and economic reputation: it is still mainly connected to the image or presumption of constraint, with negative implications, while the lack of flexibility and guidance echoes the dominance of top-down approaches and the limited skills of organisations and individuals to make effective use of free and autonomous structures and, consequently, a demand and claim for a helping hand.

Matters of financing would have to mean something obviously and painfully contradictory. Although the Hungarian government aims at accelerating and increasing VET-dominated adult learning and skills development, with limited or low-level financing, together with other missing financing tools, this will inevitably result in limited and stagnating results which pull back the output of the sector from its hoped-for or expected potential overall.

Let me just indicate something else here. This OECD Dashboard of priorities may indicate some of the aspects of an adult learning and lifelong learning system needing to change in a rather ill-formed setting. Some other missing indicators would also signal a system with severe difficulties and challenges which are not at all easy to turn towards hopeful directions or ways forward for expansion and development. Those missing items are RVA (Recognition – Validation and Accreditation), the quality development of adult learning professionals, guidance and counselling, non-vocational adult learning and monitoring of the sector. When one simply relates any of those aspects to the reality of Hungarian adult learning and education, it resonates with problems and constraints: for making a learner-centred system with bottom-up focus, on-going and real consultancies with economic stakeholders; and to turn adult and lifelong learning with a citizenship focus.

In this regard, emphasis on making learning cities and learning communities may be helpful to bridge vocational and non-vocational adult learning for the benefit of all. This is now very difficult in a country of centralised actions, over-dominating governmental approaches and narrow citizens' and professional NGOs' voices. I think that the right way to go, and the right scope, is to integrate, collect, share, and use voluntary actions; and have much more international professional partnerships in the region.

Let me urge the PASCAL Observatory, and other interested parties, to address such problems with direct calls; to encourage collaborative project-work; and to emphasize comparative work so as to understand more, with the involvement and help of higher education institutions and other distinguished research organisations and institutions.

Hungary, among many other countries, today is facing the huge challenge of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, tomorrow it can only be successful if there are skilled and educated lifelong learners to cope with new situations in both the social and the economic aspect, while respecting dignity, equity and equality amongst our citizens.

**OECD – Adult Learning Dashboard. Source:*

<http://www.oecd.org/els/emp/skills-and-work/adult-learning/dashboard.htm>

Learning and Living in Diverse Communities. Between Global and Local: Adult Learning and Communities Network [Heribert Hinzen](#)

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“Learning and Living in Diverse Communities” was the theme of the conference that took place in the House of Civic Communities in the city of Pécs, Hungary, in June 2019. It was the 11th conference which the specialized network on “Between Global and Local – Adult Learning and Communities” of the European Society on the Research for the Education of Adults (ESREA) has been organizing ever since 2006. PIMA Member and PASCAL Co-Director Balázs Nemeth was the host, and he is the Editor of an e-book which contains the manuscripts sent to him after a lively conference with rich presentations and discussions. We are now 10 months since the conference and we have the feeling that the “communities of today” are somewhat different from those that were widely researched and presented in Pécs. The e-book is a rich source, even in a comparative perspective of community-based face-to-face learning to the digital-communities that are gaining ground quickly in all sorts of educational institutions.

For more information about this volume, please go to the PIMA Website <https://pimamembers.wixsite.com/network> for further description of conference proceedings and the e-book. Here is a brief extract from that account where Heribert Hinzen reflects back:

“Today, at the time of writing this note in April 2020 we are all living in different communities. Our living communities have been reduced to pairs, or small families, staying together in flats or houses: none or very little coming together for communal, cultural, or sports events; travelling restricted, borders closed; jogging allowed in Paris only after 7.00 pm; museums, theatres, restaurants and much else shut down.

The COVID 19 Coronavirus is just a few months old. It already has such a deep impact on us which will be felt for many years to come, as also for what the Conference looked at by calling it “Learning and Living in Diverse Communities”. We should be happy to have this collection of manuscripts from presentations made last year during the BGL-ALC conference. Even if the organizers would choose the same title for the conference at the same time this year, the contributions, the discussions and therefore any subsequent collection would look quite different. Therefore let us be happy about this treasure: it will be a rich resource for any comparative study or historical comparison in the future....”

Demographic ageing and the triple helix [Tom Schuller](#)

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To each their own obsessions

People have always worried about where they are in their lives. This is just part of the continuous human obsession with growing up, or growing old, or not growing in any direction at all. Parents listen – sometimes - to adolescent children moaning about where their lives are going; and children, also sometimes, hear their parents complaining about the aches and pains of senescence. Some complaints are really serious, on a different

scale: we are in the midst of the 2020 Coronavirus emergency when not only are thousands dying prematurely but millions have been suddenly thrown into a previously unimaginable limbo, including many with apparently securely established careers.

The personal dramas, trivial or deadly serious, will always be with us. Beneath these what are the underlying tectonic plates, operating less audibly but with greater power – the trends that are cracking our models of the life course?

Fundamentally new demography

The primary one is demographic - the changing shape of the population, most evident in its ageing. For the individual, 'ageing' is what happens as they move along a chronological timeline. For a population, it means not just that people are living longer, but that there are more older people relative to younger age groups. This is the case wherever the line is drawn on when 'ageing' is taken to begin. We need to be very clear: the ageing of the population is not only about there being more old people. It embraces and affects every segment of the population; indeed the ageing of the population *redefines* every age group. In other words, ageing means that the whole balance of the population is shifting. So too are the relationships and interactions between the age groups.

Wherever you draw the 'old' line – at 65, 70, 80 or 85, all plausible candidates, with 67 as the current age in the UK at which people routinely become entitled to a state pension - the numbers of older people are growing: in absolute terms and as a proportion of the population as a whole. This brings in its train a whole set of demanding questions, to do with the quality of life, the management of death, the provision of services - health, social care and so on – and fiscal sustainability. But the elongation of the normal lifespan generates issues that go well beyond the very old, or even just older people. In forcing to the surface issues around *what it means to be old* it also compels attention to what is happening in the stages before that stage or status is reached.

The lengthening of the average lifespan means that there are more age-based layers to our society. So we have an upsurge in multi-generational families where more members of younger generations get to know their grandparents and even their great-grandparents. This is not only about the internal domain of warm family relations; grandparents now often play a central role in childcare, and without this many households could not function as economic units.

Outside the family sphere, the four-generational workplace is now common, with a labour force constituted by a wider diversity of colleagues than ever before, ideally bringing together a broad range of experience and skills. (What constitutes a 'generation' in the workplace is less clear than for families – not that it's always obvious even there, with reconstituted families producing varieties of family forms that confound simple models). Beyond work and family, there are more and more initiatives which seek to match up the needs of different age groups, for instance locating young adults within or near residential sites for older people, giving the former cheap accommodation in return for providing some assistance or just social interaction with the latter.

Which life-course for you?

The stretching of the population therefore re-sculptures and augments the multiple internal relationships that exist between several generations. But at the individual level,

the general ageing of the population also affects the way we locate ourselves in our own life-course. Grandiosely this might mean how we conceive of the timetable for our life's goals or ambitions. When ought I to have got to a certain level in my career? Can I take more time out – a second gap year, or time to bring up children before concentrating again on work? More prosaically, maybe, it will shape how we manage the general process of moving from one phase to another, from promising youth to realistic adult, from multi-tasking parent to serene Third Ager, from dependence to independence or vice-versa, and so on.

Of course, this is not a simple linear sequence; we do not slough off one role or persona and emerge transformed in a totally new one. Indeed one of the most interesting issues in life-course modelling is whether and how we can double back, in a non-linear fashion: you can't become a virgin again or literally go back to not being a parent, even though your children may leave the family home or, in terrible cases, die before you; but you can become a college student for the first time later in life, or do it for a second or third time, with or without abandoning other roles. Of course, it won't be the same as the first time around, even though some people would like it that way.

In short, the lengthening of the average lifespan affects most if not all of the categories we use to divide up the population along chronological lines. It renders some of them obsolete or visibly antiquated, others in need of marginal revision. But that process of category erosion is usually gradual, and the emergence of new ways of classifying people is often as slow as the tectonic movement that opened this discussion.

My kind of triple helix – and yours?

I'm writing a book about how we need new models for thinking about the life course in its full extension. I aim to do this partly by asking questions about the adequacy of our current vocabulary for talking about these ages and stages, and especially about the transitions between them; about the rituals and practices we use for marking the transitions; and about the policies we have for making them as successful and functional as they can be. But the core of the book, perhaps its only original component, is a particular image – or model, or metaphor - which I suggest for thinking about these shifting and diffuse processes: that of a triple helix.

The idea of a triple helix is simply an analogy with the famous DNA double helix. Instead of two strands winding round each other, the image is of three strands in the development of each human individual: the biological, the psychological and the socio-cultural. The individual's growth can be mapped along each of these strands discreetly, but the strands interact with each other the whole time. The central interest of the book is in those interactions, especially in how over time the relationships between these strands is changing and what issues and questions these changes throw up.

To make it manageable I'm focussing on just three of the many possible life- course transitions:

When do/did you become an adult?

When do/did you become old?

When do/did you start dying?

In all cases, I'm asking both for individuals' personal experience and for their perception of what happens more generally.

I'd be delighted to hear from you.

For more on the educational implications of demographic change, see my FETL paper [Leadership, Learning and Demographics](#): FETL (Further Education Trust for Leadership). 2019. Leadership, learning and demographics: the changing shape of the lifecourse and its implications for education. FETL.

COMING SHORTLY TO YOUR SCREENS:

Sustainable Development, Partnerships and Transformation: The EU and Asia-Pacific in an unpredictable world. [Debbie Long](#) and [Mary Johnson](#)

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Guest-editors of PIMA Bulletin No 31 July 2020 will present a snapshot of work being undertaken by members and associates of the Jean Monet EU SDG Network

Bringing together reports on current projects from a global network of scholars whose work focuses on the European Union and the UN SDGs (United Nations Sustainable Development Goals), the July special issue engages on-the-ground practice with innovative theory and current policy dialogues.

The SDGs are designed as an integrated global program of transformation. This Special Issue will begin by outlining some of the ways in which scholars are looking at the SDGs as a whole (rather than as individual goals); and some inherent tensions and contradictions between the overarching SDG agenda and the seventeen individual goals.

Issue #31 will explore the key foundational concepts of both sustainability and development, suggesting ways forward through the impasse of the “oxymoron of sustainable development” by critically examining the growth paradigm that underlies much development thinking. Especially in light of our COVID-19-impacted world, we will be exploring alternatives to business-as-usual, arguing that the business models of the mechanized and centralized world need to be replaced by those driven from distributed, networked, sustainable ways of thinking. Fundamental to making a transition to a distributed more sustainable world is collaboration and knowledge-sharing.

The strengths of *place-based learning* will be illustrated through a number of current case studies. Place-based learning builds on experience. It is not the transfer of knowledge and skills by expert to learner. Rather, it is an exchange of knowledge that respects local knowledge, cultural and societal norms. It is relational in practice and pursues equitable ways of engagement, social justice, and connectivity. Learning is viewed from the needs of the individuals and communities, rather than as technology transfer solutions. This requires individuals and communities to be involved as full partners in the design, delivery and evaluation of learning.

Fully engaged partnership, rather than top-down planning, priority-setting and implementation, requires new ways of thinking, new ways of working, and new ways of learning from each other. This special issue will bring you a variety of perspectives on global partnerships working towards transformation.

Contributors include Bruce Wilson, Mike Osborne, Chris Duke, Robbie Guevara, Mary Johnson, Sharif As-Saber, Emma Shorten, Serena Kelly, Mat Doidge, Martin Holland, Rachel England, Sophie Di Franceso-Mayot, Debbi Long, Chloe Ward, Maren Klein, Brad Davidson, Renzo Mori Jnr and Joana Correia. Guest Editors: Debbi Long & Mary Johnson



WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS OF PIMA

Professor Idowu Biao idowubiao2014@gmail.com

Idowu Biao works as a Professor of Lifelong Learning in the Faculté des Sciences Humaines et Sociales Université d'Abomey Calavi Cotonou, Benin, where he is developing a *Diplome Universitaire en Apprentissage tout au long de la vie* (Lifelong Learning as a General Education Course). As part of this process, an international bilingual conference on lifelong learning is being proposed for Cotonou in June 2021. Idowu returned to Benin after long service in numerous other African countries, also visiting for professional work in the USA and UK, especially Glasgow. He played a leadership role in ALE research and practice for many years at Gabarone, Botswana. Idowu speaks and works in French and English.

Fiona Boucher Fiona.boucher@scotlandslearning.org.uk

Edinburgh, Scotland

Fiona is CEO of Scotland's Learning Partnership, a national partnership between learners and providers working together to develop and deliver lifelong learning opportunities for the most disadvantaged. The Partnership has a strong interest in the rights of adult learners and believes that good learning advocates come from all walks of life. Fiona writes: 'I am passionate about making sure that the learners' voice is central to high-quality learning service development and policy-making and that their involvement should be central to our organisation's objectives'. The aim is for high inclusive in running a network of adult learning organisations and learners in Scotland who work together to promote and deliver adult learning in disadvantaged communities.

Chanikan Inprom Chanikaninprom@gmail.com

Ms Chanikan Inprom is a PhD student at the Department of Lifelong Learning, Chulalongkorn (Chula) University, Bangkok. She also lectures and organizes seminars on Lifelong Learning Skills for Leaders. She previously studied at Khon Kaen in Thailand and Massey in New Zealand, as well as for her TEFL Masters degree at Chula. She teaches in both Thai and ESL at Webster University, does community outreach work and fosters learning community via a Bangkok Webster Teacher Circle. For Chanikan, PIM

should assist her own learning in the professional development of teachers as lifelong learners,

Jirattha Jarupisitthorn *kaewjitha@gmail.com*

Ms Jirattha Jarupisitthorn is a PhD candidate, in the Department of Lifelong Education, Chulalongkorn University (Chula) in Thailand. Her university education was also at



Chula, with a B.Ed. and M.Ed. in Non-Formal Education. She then worked for 7 years with the EDUCA project and the annual congress for teacher professional development in Thailand as a Project Executive and Assistant Education Specialist, before going on to further study for PhD. Jirattha's areas of interest and research are collaborative learning, learning community and professional development. She also has a personal interest in informal learning in museums and other

learning spaces. At present Jirattha is working for her doctoral research on the Development of Lifelong Learning Community for the Professional Development of Non-Formal Education Teachers. She believes that this approach will enhance teaching quality, and benefit not only students' learning achievement but also the quality of education overall.



Dr Mary Johnson *mary.johnson@rmit.edu.au*

Mary Johnson is an RMIT Research Fellow located at the remote rural campus of RMIT University in Western Victoria, who has worked extensively in agriculture, natural resource management, rural education and community development. Her work focuses on community capacity-building, strategic partnerships and networks, working cross-culturally, and livelihood improvement. She is chief investigator for the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR)-funded Mindanao Agricultural Extension Project, an eight-year project exploring how community-based agricultural extension methods, developed in conflict vulnerable areas, can enhance smallholder farmer livelihoods. Together with Debbi Long, she will guest-edit the next (July 2020 No. 31) issue of this Bulletin (see Long & Johnson article above).

Vejapikul Lawan *vlawan@gmail.com*

Vejapikul has just graduated with a Doctoral Degree in Non-formal Education from Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok. For the past 10 years, she has been working with many NGOs on HIV/AIDS and other community issues. She has found that non-formal education can be best applied for community work to encourage people to work together and help each other to manage their own problems by learning from their own strengths and experiences. Vejapikul believes that non-formal education and lifelong learning are keys to apply for community work and that the PIMA network will help her to learn from best practices around the world.

Rebecca Lekoko rnlekoko@gmail.com

Professor Lekoko, Department of Lifelong Learning and Community Development, University of Botswana, was educated in Botswana, Canada and USA. She later graduated from Pennsylvania State University with a Doctor of Education in Adult Education, specializing in community development. In her position as a Professor of Adult Education, she specializes in Social Change and Community Empowerment. Her practices weave together diverse and pertinent issues pertaining to community development and lifelong learning, such as education for empowerment, social mobilization strategies and participatory approaches. She has published extensively, locally and internationally, and attended many conferences serving as a presenter, keynote speaker, chair of sessions and a discussant to the keynote speaker.

Debbi Long debbi.long@rmit.edu.au

Debbi is a health anthropologist working in the university sector. Her research interests include global health, health equity, the SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals) and Indigenous health and education. She is currently working as a Senior Research Fellow at the RMIT EU Centre, and as a lecturer at The Wollotuka Institute (the Indigenous unit at the University of Newcastle, Australia). Debbi is ideologically committed to the value of adult learning and lifelong learning as crucial components in the campaign for global equity.

Mongkondaw Ornwipa silpafriend@hotmail.com

Miss Mongkondaw Ornwipa is a masters graduate and doctoral student at Chulalongkorn University. As a student and business owner, she is keen to develop an intergenerational learning program to promote entrepreneurship competencies with the necessary guidelines, and the transfer of local wisdom in the area of handwoven loincloth. Thailand has problems with product management, and lack of knowledge transformation between generations. The baby-boomer generation are professional in hand-weaving and making high value of loincloth, Meanwhile, the new generation is good at marketing management. It would be valuable for both generations to combine and share their knowledge. This is what Mongkondaw wishes to assist, through her qualitative doctoral research.



Likkhasit Putkhiao likhasit.put@stou.ac.th / likkasitlpw@hotmail.com

Mr Likkhasit Putkhiao is a lecturer on lifelong learning in the Department of Non-Formal Education at Sukhothai Thammathirat Open University, Thailand. He studied B.Ed. in Lifelong Education at Silpakorn and M.Ed. in Non-formal Education at Chulalongkorn University, Thailand, where he is a PhD candidate (Non-formal

Education) looking at concepts for liberation through non-formal education. His interests and research are in education for liberation, and education for self-reliance aiming to liberate people with the knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes of their society. Both technical knowledge and local community knowledge, including information about self, community and social environment, are key factors in processes of liberation.

Steve Rubin submissions@pascalobservatory.org

Steve is the PASCAL Observatory Webmaster. He works with Professor Mike Osborne at the University of Glasgow where he also manages to CR&DALL Website led by Muir Houston, with which also PIMA enjoys close collaboration.

Naradee Soratana naradees@yahoo.com

Ms Naradee Soratana is a PhD student of Lifelong Education at Chulalongkorn University, Thailand. She studied for her prior degrees in the USA, and worked as an editor, and Managing Director of Fitness Magazine for 10 years. She has taught part-time at Bangkok University for 25 years, and currently conducts English for communication courses, courses to serve continuing education bachelor students at Dusit Technical College. Naradee is Advisor to the Committee of Parents and Teachers Association of Wattana Wittaya Academy in Thailand, she has served the Parental Support Group of the Parents and Teachers Association for 4 years. The volunteer work has an impact on real intergenerational learning situations, and activities involving children, parents and the elderly in the family, building strong families through lifelong learning. Naradee believes that her teaching and learning experience through volunteers is beneficial, and she would like to share ideas about intergenerational learning, family lifelong learning and related experiences through PIMA, learning more from other countries to serve Thai and international communities better.



Astrid von Kotze astridvonkotze@gmail.com

Cape Town, South Africa, is an activist in the Popular Education Programme working with organisations and people in poor and working-class communities in and around Cape Town. Until 2009, she was a professor of adult education and community development at University of KwaZulu Natal. She has been deeply involved in cultural activism, and has published widely on popular education, health and sustainable livelihood security.

Tracy Waddle tracy.waddell@scotlandlearning.org.uk

Edinburgh, Scotland

Tracy is Senior Development Officer in Scotland's Learning Partnership, Edinburgh, Scotland. She is an Adult Learning Practitioner supporting the role of Scotland's

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Learning Partnership to develop and deliver lifelong learning opportunities for the most disadvantaged in Scottish communities.

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