

# PIMA Bulletin No. 16

## CONTENTS

### 1. [Editorial](#)

**Chris Duke**

### 2. [Letters From...](#)

#### **Letter from Taiwan Yahui Fang**

Going to the basic building blocks for active citizenship. Self and Usness: mapping the identity of "community".

#### **Letter from Germany Heribert Hinzen**

Community-based ALE in global documents – and in the diverse realities of Asia and Europe

#### **Letter from Australia Francesca Beddie**

Fit-for-purpose tertiary education: influencing policy-making

### [Perspectives on: Indigenous People and Decolonisation](#)

#### **Brendan O'Dwyer**

What has happened to Aboriginal Affairs in Australia?

### [Perspectives on: Crises of LLL and Democracy\]](#)

#### **Letter from Macedonia Daniela Bavecandzi**

Democratising the Balkans through LLL

#### **Letter from Hungary Balázs Németh**

Civil Society and Democratic Stress - some Adult Learning and Education Responses

### 3. [Special Interest Groups](#)

#### **Thomas Kuan**

Later Life Learning in the CONFINTEA VI Mid-Term Review Conference

### 4. [Other News and Views](#)

#### **Alan Tuckett**

On awards and public recognition

### 5. [New PIMA Members](#)

DanielaBavecandzi

John Martin

### 6. [and PASCAL Business](#)

PASCAL 2018 Annual Conference

**Editorial Chris Duke**

What is ALE - adult learning and education - doing, and able to do, about a world order straining to manage; and with local communities that survive notwithstanding great distresses? What are 'we' learning? And who is learning what, for what purpose and to what ends, for and with whom? How, where and why is this effort working - or failing? What do fast-evolving mass media and fast-exploding social media do for and to our mass societies? How well do forcefully 'managerialised' universities - cathedrals of learning, knowledge, even wisdom - earn their keep? Not well in some places, to judge by torrents of criticism that many suffer.

The International Observatory PASCAL seeks to achieve desirable change through lifelong learning within the complex systems of modern societies and a global neoliberal economy. As the acronym implies - Place And Social Capital [later maybe amended to Society, Community] And [Lifelong] Learning – PASCAL has sought to *bring together* knowledge with practice (hence the 'Ands') and to *make connections* across perspectives and policy arenas where boxed-in thinking and box-in planning over-respect the boundaries of managerial convenience. PASCAL's current main priority is a clutch of activities to foster learning cities, and variants such as regions, communities and neighbourhoods – that is to say development in and perhaps of Place. It does this in hard-earned partnership especially with UNESCO through Hamburg-based UIL and the still new Global Learning Cities Network GLCN.

Is PASCAL fifteen years on able to make a special and distinctive contribution based in its foundational values and perspectives (a USP in now familiar language)? Is it a truly special and generative 'Observatory'? Like its free-range membership 'supporters' club' PIMA, it necessarily uses the language and terms, often also the framework of assumptions, that make public discourse possible.

In an attempt not to get trapped and thus impotent within a demonstrably failed dominant ideology and political-economic system, PASCAL created a Website facility named *Outside the Box* (OTB). This suffers the problem of many civil society attempts to foster dialogue and constructive alternatives. How to blog productively and avoid chronic degeneration into slogans, personal displays, and smart-ass epithets? How to create new ways of seeing and then acting that are not trapped inside reigning belief systems? And thence, how to help influence and change mass cultural and political behaviour?

Can PASCAL and PIMA connect their expertise and value-based alternatives still more closely with other NGOs having similar values and vision? Together we need to turn away from the dystopia towards which contemporary politics and culture incline. Can we with others rescue the language of meaning from the corruption of fake facts?

It is not simple. Any step out of neoliberal line, any irritating of power, fiscal-corporate or politico-dynastic, comes at a price. There are however ways, as Balazs Nemeth's frank and hopeful letter from Hungary suggests, to work locally, be honest, and achieve some good things. Yahui Fang shows how she and her colleagues work to such ends in East Asia. Daniela Bavkanzi shows another way in the Balkans.

In this *Bulletin*, as well as these different narratives sharing common purpose, we explore further democratic crisis as seen in different places, and ask where learning comes in. We also retain within this a special focus on post-colonial indigenous affairs, asking how dominant societies perceive and treat those who were here before them.

Indigenous people provide an albeit unchosen acid test of the health of working democracy and learning society. Do we treat them fairly and with respect? More fundamentally, are we able to see and value the worth and wisdom of diversity. Unique 'old knowledge' still and remarkably survives centuries of oppression and often genocide. I hope that we can extend this discussion to others beyond the 'classic' cultural colonisers and surviving colonised; beyond North America, Australia and New Zealand, to other continents and regions. Meanwhile we need to hear more from people who have been thus excluded or worse, yet somehow still live with hope.

If you are one of such people, or living open-eyed in one of those many other countries, please write to editor [chris.duke@rmit.edu.au](mailto:chris.duke@rmit.edu.au).

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**Yahui Fang** has been wrestling with issues of active rural citizenship experientially in the context of a particular district in Taiwan. This is a typical rural area that suffers brain drain as young people leave their village for better education and employment, though many villages maintain some community bonding in their own social structure within community. In Taiwan the agricultural sector generated the lowest average revenue compared with that of secondary and tertiary industries, as a result of previous industrial development policy. This is an example of regional challenge to empower rural areas to regenerate themselves through developing endogenous capabilities. **Editor**

**Yahui Fang** [yahui.fang@gmail.com](mailto:yahui.fang@gmail.com) **Letter from Taiwan**

**Going to the basic building blocks for active citizenship.  
Self and Usness: mapping the identity of "community".**

*Self and Usness: practice of female community practitioners* is the collective story of the efforts of eleven female community practitioners through accounts of their life and engagement in community.

Community work in the countryside has long been regarded by policy-makers in Taiwan as a tool for socio-economic development. Facing complex plural-issue situations with limited resources in community projects, organizations devoted to community construction in the

countryside try to develop cross-organization networking and collaboration to make up for the lack of resources needed to meet needs. It is a formula for sustainable action for improvement.

Community empowerment from the grassroots has been pushed for a long time in Ping Tung County in Southern Taiwan. It is the background to this research. This researcher explores microscopically “the lifelong learning network in community” and then the self-organized practitioners’ gathering which has been sustained for more than six years in Ping Tung County. She is trying to realize how actors engage into social practice; and especially how female community practitioners’ reflexive practices formulate their sense of community. The purpose of the research is to discover main organizers’ disciplinary paths from personal mastery towards seeking a shared vision through collaborating to establishing a community learning interface in the County.

The work is based on earlier research by the researcher in the roles of both ‘action researcher’ and ‘adult educator’. The case study explores that present experience more deeply, using interview and participant observation methods. Some practitioners even document their own life history and narratives. A total of eleven core female community workers are establishing a community learning interface, disclosing their process of becoming female community practitioners and their reflexive thinking in community practice. In bi-weekly learning circles these women discuss how they practised networking and collaboration, and what they experienced on the path from personal mastery toward shared vision during the period of establishing this community learning interface. In the end, the researcher cites social learning theory and a concept of communities of practice, and sketches the female practitioners’ path, including their construction of sense of community, their features and possible challenges, from concrete collaboration and co-learning in a community learning network.

We find that female community practitioners gain confirmatory mission for social revolution because of past experiences of engagement in society or community; but each has a different action frame of reference and characteristics. On the whole, individual personal mastery and social learning build and shape their work and work values, supporting them in achieving self-transformation through reflexive practices. On the way toward establishing a lifelong learning network interface through action, they developed a relationship similar to ‘community of practice’. According to the degree of engagement, the researcher sets out some stages of sense of community during the process, first bearing out the claim of community of practice through improving a sense of community, mutuality, shared repertoire and joint enterprise.

From this case study the researcher generalizes such influential challenges as ambiguous direction, latent competitive and cooperative relationship of resources, tempo constrained by business thinking and bureaucratic orientation, and the desideratum of a mental mode toward opened-minded discipline. The network creates special value by developing links between cognition and dialogue through a participatory approach to share practical leadership in shaping female local governance.

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**Letter from Germany Heribert Hinzen [hinzenh@hotmail.com](mailto:hinzenh@hotmail.com)**

## **Community-based ALE in global documents – and in the diverse realities of Asia and Europe**

Heribert Hinzen

Global documents are often the results of processes where Governments lead in decision-making. They represent commitments at different levels, binding or rather more recommending. The UN-related Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) call for “learning spaces and environments for non-formal and adult learning and education widely available, including networks of community learning centres and spaces and provision for access to IT resources as essential elements of lifelong learning”.

The Belem Framework for Action (BFA) which was agreed by the delegates to CONFINTEA VI stated that “we recognize that adult education represents a significant component of the lifelong learning process, which embraces a learning continuum ranging from formal to non-formal to informal learning”; and called for “creating multi-purpose community learning spaces and centres...”.

### ***Community-based ALE in Asia***

The CONFINTEA VI Asia-Pacific follow-up meeting took place in Korea in 2013, ending with an *Action Plan for Adult Learning and Education* which called for “promoting Community Learning Centres as a potential model; Carry out research / a survey on the wider benefits of learning and its effective promotion; Carry out cross-country impact research on CLCs”. This was then taken up by NILE, the National Institute of Lifelong Education, Republic of Korea, in cooperation with UNESCO Bangkok and UIL, as “Research on the Wider Benefits of Community Learning Centres” a project lasting from 2015 to 2017.

The project document included an earlier definition by UNESCO Bangkok: “A Community Learning Centre (CLC) is defined as an educational centre established to provide local citizens with a variety of educational opportunities. It is established and run by local citizens on the basis of support from government, NGOs and private companies.” Country reports were prepared and analyzed in a document called *The Wider Benefits of Community Learning Centres (CLCs) in Six Asian Countries*. (Duke, Hinzen 2016)

SEAMEO CELLL, the Center for Lifelong Learning of the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization, followed this with a regional project funded by UIL on *Developing a post-2015 ASEAN Lifelong Learning Agenda*, and proposed *the establishment of a MOOC-based learning system serving to host and deliver learning content for the ASEAN CLCs*. (Lam 2016) The document estimates that around 25,000 CLCs are serving a population of almost 600 million people.

DVV International has been supporting CLCs in Lao PDR for some time, and in recent years through a special project in Savannketh province called SCOPE (Strengthening the Capacities of Organisations for Poverty Eradication). It has components of building and running CLCs, training staff and teachers, and village, district and regional officers dealing

with education. Courses were started on vocational training, literacy and basic education, livelihood skills and other areas. Important side effects included addressing the problem that at the beginning of the project there was much UXO (Unexploded Ordnance) to clear from bombs and mines still remaining from the Indochina war. The project activities have now been filmed for advocacy work. (Chanthalanoh, Hinzen 2015)

Another interesting example of deeply grounded community-based ALE is the *Kominkan* movement in Japan. Started after World War II with support from Government, it was part of efforts to building a democratic society. In 2010 there were 390,495 courses at *Kominkan* at a local level, with more than 10 million participants of whom two-thirds were women. (Sato 2016) With such roots the *Kominkan* were an excellent partner for a conference on education for sustainable development which recommended to “urge governments, policy-makers, international agencies and private sectors to support *Kominkan* and CLC-based activities which tackle local, national, regional, and global challenges through ESD”. (Noguchi, Guevara, Yorozu 2015)

### *Community-based ALE in Europe*

There are numerous examples and a huge variety of community-based ALE opportunities throughout Europe, following their historical roots from earlier decades in some cases of the last century, or founded relatively recently in response to specific demands from societal developments like the system changes in Central and Eastern Europe.

With respect to history, University Extension, Grundtvig ‘Folkhighschools, Workers’ Education and Literacy and Basic Education Campaigns were important forerunners of CLC more than a century ago. One could analyse at least six different types of institutions: “Government owned centers: A top-down approach; CLCs owned by the municipality: VHS – with public support; Study circles: Self-organised learning and liberal education; Local associations as key actors; CLCs belonging to churches, trade unions; Networks of private providers“. (Gartenschlaeger 2014)

Let me briefly turn to the Volkshochschulen (VHS) which I regard as the German version of CLCs. With roots as mentioned above they have a long tradition. Many were founded in light of the first German democracy, the Weimarer Republic following World War I in 1919. In its constitution there is a clause that Government should on national and local levels support adult education, including the VHS. This tradition, purpose and achievements are well described, see DVV 2011.

The VHS are the largest provider of community-based ALE in Germany, with around 900 centers and 3,000 sub-centers, about 6 million participants in courses, with an additional 3 million in lectures, exhibitions, study tours, and excursions. Statistics available for the last fifty years analyse further the profile of institutions, programs and participants. The majority are in the age range between 25 and 65, and the number of older participants is growing. Among institutions there is a variety of legal entities: associations, parts of city administrations, and non-for-profit companies.

It will be interesting later really to compare community-based ALE in Asia and Europe, to look at similarities, communalities and differences. From what little we know already the diversity is huge (see Avramovska, M., Hirsch, E., Schmidt-Behlau, B. 2017). In 2017 an international conference in Georgia looked at *Adult Education Centers as a key to development – Responsibilities, Structures, and Benefits*, and concluded with Key Messages as a tool for advocacy. (DVV International 2017) Perhaps some such comparisons can be

included in 2019. There will be interesting occasions and opportunities as the German Volkshochschulen celebrate 100 years, and DVV International 50 years, of founding and grounding community-based work in adult education for development.

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In December 2016 PIMA Newsletter No 9 contained an article by Colin Flint called: *Messing up the neglected sector: England's failed provision for further education and lifelong learning in the tertiary years*. It was followed in No 11 by two further pieces: Colin Flint: *A New Industrial Education and Training Strategy for the UK*; and Gavin Moodie: *Vocational Education in Australia and Canada*. We return here to the theme of systemic failure to build an effective technical (FE or TAFE or College) sector with Francesca Beddie's Australian article. The theme is also touched on in Daniela Bavkanzi's Macedonian account below. Ed.

**Francesca Beddie** [fbeddie@makeyourpoint.com.au](mailto:fbeddie@makeyourpoint.com.au) **Letter from Australia**

### **Fit-for-purpose tertiary education: influencing policy-making**

The chief executive of the [Business Council of Australia](#), Jennifer Westacott, has been a prominent voice in the debates about tertiary education reform in Australia. She has given governments constant reminders about the need to revitalise vocational education.

The BCA's latest intervention has been to [propose](#) a new tertiary education system with five core components:

- **Putting the learner in charge** by giving every Australian a capped Lifelong Skills Account (LSA) that can be used to pay for courses at approved VET or HE provider over the person's lifetime. The account would consist of a subsidy and an LSA, and replace all existing loans and subsidies.
- **Better market information** so learners know what jobs are available, what they might earn, what courses are available, how much it will cost them, and their loan repayment schedule.
- **Maintaining the unique character** of each sector – VET as an industry-led sector based around competency-based training and applied learning, and HE in providing advanced qualifications, learning for the sake of learning, academic inquiry, and world-class research.
- **A shared governance model** clarifying the roles and responsibilities of each level of government and industry, and a new institution to manage LSAs and market information.
- **A culture of lifelong learning** that encourages people to use qualifications to build a strong foundation, and then dip in and out of short, accredited modules to effectively create their own 'credentials' that allow them to upskill and retrain throughout their lives.

Francesca Beddie made the following points in her [response](#) to the discussion paper:

- Before launching into reform of post-school education, we must ask some big questions:
  - are schools preparing students for successful tertiary pathways by imparting the fundamentals
  - what could make pathways into learning and work easier to navigate throughout life
  - do we need an expansion of higher education to meet demand or should we be creating different institutions and new mindsets about qualifications?
- The history of Australian tertiary education policy reveals some of the wicked problems confronting reform:



- insufficient diversity in the system
- obstacles to seamless pathways within the system
- competition for research dollars
- overly complex governance. (See Beddie, F, 2014, A differentiated model for tertiary education: past ideas, contemporary policy and future possibilities, National Vocational Education and Training Research Program research report, NCVET, Adelaide, <https://www.ncver.edu.au/publications/publications/all-publications/a-differentiated-model-for-tertiary-education-past-ideas,-contemporary-policy-and-future-possibilities>)

□ The current education debate pays lip service to lifelong learning but concentrates on initial and entry-level education and training. Business could help refocus the education effort on proactive reskilling, professional development and advanced learning not only for high flyers but for other employees.

□ Any system of learning accounts will require very close attention to the implementation. Recent experience in Australia casts doubt on the ability of the administration to design such a system. Fraud was a problem in the UK's short-lived Individual Learning Accounts. Career information, advice and guidance are also critical elements, with more emphasis required on the latter than on building information portals.

The consultations were being run by the [Nous group](#). Submissions closed on 19 January 2018.

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### **Perspectives on: Indigenous People and Decolonisation**

The Newsletter has included recent articles about indigenous people and cultures in Canada and New Zealand. This issue turns to Australia. We have been asking how colonising and post-colonial political systems and populations have treated indigenous people from the viewpoint of equal citizenship and cultural standing, and in terms of adult learning and education (ALE). We will if possible ask the same question in some other countries, and hear from indigenous leaders on the same subject.

In Australia it is depressing to see after an absence how poorly Aboriginal peoples and culture have fared: how little their tradition and current predicament concerns or even interests most people. Public compassion tends to be over abuse of children, and refugee immigrants. As a personal judgement, politics touching Aboriginal people are shameful. The Prime Minister's blunt rejection of the 2017 National Constitutional Convention *Uluru Statement* carrying unanimous Aboriginal support is one example.

Hope is stirred more by local civil society action: the country school teacher volunteer teaching some local language to Aboriginal and white kids; passionate political posters; the music of protest about de facto enslavement on remote settlements; the Australia Museum *Songlines* display explaining Dreamtime stories represented in desert dot art; the black elder telling groups of young kids traditional

stories like where the Kookaburra got its laugh. The bleakness of Aboriginal life is dramatically portrayed in Warwick Thornton's film *Sweet Country*. If culture and with it hope is to survive, it may be through the efforts of non-formal teaching and learning by volunteer and other cultural workers.

**Editor**

**Brendan O'Dwyer** [bodyer1942@gmail.com](mailto:bodyer1942@gmail.com)

### **What has happened to Aboriginal Affairs in Australia?**

In early February 2018, Federal Labor frontbencher and prominent Aboriginal spokesperson and activist Pat Dodson launched a blistering attack on the Prime Minister for leaving an indigenous event before it finished. Dodson said it showed contempt. He said that PM Malcolm Turnbull's move was an indication of the deafness of the Government to Aboriginal issues. The event was the announcement of the government-commissioned long awaited review on the progress over ten years of the Closing the Gap campaign.

The review report delivered a scathing critique of the attempts to reduce inequalities in health, education and employment between indigenous and non-indigenous Australians. The review stated "a revolving door of prime ministers, indigenous affairs ministers and senior bureaucrats have all but halted the steady progress hoped for by indigenous people. In recent times there had been extreme cuts, over \$530 million last year in indigenous affairs." Clearly the political mood has changed. A decade ago, hope ran high for a new beginning and a recommitment to closing the gap. Now people are puzzled why issues of concern to a tiny one per cent of the nation should matter to the majority in this the most multicultural nation on earth.

There was little attention given to the Closing the Gap report from the mainstream media. Over the last couple of years it seems as if Aboriginal issues have all but disappeared and there is little sympathetic interest shown by the public. One can indeed argue that the predominating mood is one of hostility. This was demonstrated by the public debate over Australia Day held on January 26, the anniversary of the first Europeans to land on Botany Bay, Sydney and the beginning of 'white Australia'.

Prominent Aboriginal leaders called for another day to celebrate being Australian; they saw January 26 as 'Invasion Day'. The outrage expressed in editorials and letters-to-the-editor showed little support for changing the date, and a good deal of hostility towards Aboriginal people with comments such as "Aboriginal people should be grateful that Australia was colonized by the British and not the French or the Japanese". Facebook comments were even more disparaging: 'what have they done to advance Australia'; 'stop whingeing and get off welfare'. It is clear that there has been a shift. Australian people are no longer listening to Aboriginal people or concerned with their issues.

On June 19 2017 the Uluru statement calling for a First Nations Voice and a Treaty was rejected outright by the Government. This came as a shock to Aboriginal people. The Uluru process involved thousands of indigenous peoples across Australia culminating in the Uluru Convention. This was the largest and most representative group of indigenous people ever assembled. They concluded with the unanimous position that there should be a

constitutionally endorsed indigenous voice in Parliament and that the First peoples should be given recognition in the Australian Constitution. The Government ignored this and said that the Australian people would not accept a change to the Constitution to recognize the First Peoples. Contrast this with the high level of commitment by many Australians over the last few decades to Aboriginal justice and the fight against racism.

What happened? How did these important issues fade into the background, to the extent that governments at both national and state level can now act with impunity and slash budgets and services to Aboriginal people?

There is a large body of research indicating that Australians have negative attitudes towards indigenous people; as an example there is widespread belief that governments are spending too much on Aboriginal people, who are lazy and will not work and do not deserve Government assistance. Such negative attitudes lead to high levels of depression and poor mental health outcomes for many Aboriginal people, as was explored by Anne Pedersen in the *Australian Psychology Journal* in 2004. There is substantial research into the effects of negative stereotypes on Aboriginal people.

Ignorance and misinformation are major contributors to public attitudes. Our schools could really help by providing courses on indigenous history and cultures; but sadly today little remains of the valiant attempts made twenty years ago to introduce students to Australian indigenous cultures.

There is however also hope: young Australians are more sympathetic to Aboriginal issues. An Australian Public Opinion Poll on Indigenous Issues conducted by the Australian National University (ANU) in March 2015 showed overwhelming support for constitutional recognition particularly amongst the young in metropolitan areas.

On the other hand, in the ANU Survey respondents were asked to decide on the two most important problems facing the nation. Only one per cent nominated indigenous affairs.

Other issues have in recent years taken front stage, issues such as the high cost of living, job security, refugees and asylum seekers, child abuse generally, the inadequacy of the aged pension and the high cost of housing. Policies are harder-edged and frequently short-sighted, politics are infected by me-first cynicism, the main efforts of social reformists incline elsewhere.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and activists need to monitor public opinion and find new ways to engage the Australian public as the apparent indifference and continuing ignorance of the mainstream media and the general public to indigenous Australians continue. Fifty years after crudely one-directional ‘assimilation’ – itself a successor to ‘smoothing the pillow of a dying race’ - gave way in policy rhetoric to ‘self-determination’ Aboriginal peoples remain margin-dwellers in their own land.

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After the turmoil of recent decades in the Balkans and the bloodshed that brought shame to ‘civilised’ Europe after two world ‘wars to end war’, new political nations were formed within a super-national UN and EU system attempting global governance. After over two decades one such country still waits to have its name agreed, thus having its membership of the EU unbarred. Here Daniela Bavecandzi writes about a new country whose name is contested by neighbouring Greece, and the role that ALE (adult learning and education) might play in building a new nation of active citizens. A new more liberal-left government may win reconciliation with its neighbour; but history and names – here Macedonia – run deep. Huge rallies in Athens and Thessaloniki show the depth of feeling and the power of history and symbols that continue to haunt, even dominate, many Europeans and their countries today. **Editor**

## **Letter from Skopje, Republic of Macedonia**

**Daniela Bavecandzi** [danyelabs@yahoo.com](mailto:danyelabs@yahoo.com)

### **Democratising the Balkans through LLL**

The author of these lines lives in the Republic of Macedonia, a south Balkan country bordering Greece, Bulgaria, Kosovo and Albania. It is a nice region of tasty fruit and veggies, good food and wine, and a region of very turbulent history and even such still in the present. And it is a region of ethnocentric ‘democracies’, bureaucracy and nepotism, weak institutional systems, and strong individuals and political parties.

Macedonia is not an exception. But it is the only country in this region, and in Europe, which has been in dispute over its constitutional and dawn-long name with one of its neighbours, despite being recognised under the same name by over other 120 countries in the world. The northern part of Greece is also known as Macedonia, hence the resistance to using this historic term. The United Nations meanwhile adheres to the cumbersome FYROM – Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

The name issue, mediated via the United Nations for over 20 years now, is expected to be resolved this year; but with trepidation by large numbers of its citizens. The newly elected Government last year [2017] ended a several-month political stalemate due to a massive phone-bugging scandal, the biggest the country’s history, resulting in leading party withdrawal after electoral defeat, and with as a notable exception the main ethnic minority party partner remaining in position, despite its leaders’ involvement in the bugging scandal.

As a former republic within ex-Yugoslavia, the Republic of Macedonia inherited a solid educational system which has been systematically eroded in the past 25 years of independence. It has been similar in some other ex-Yugoslav republics, as there were other priorities than education. Lack of quality control, the prevalence of ethnic issues over educational quality, as well as a desire to get rid of the ‘socialist context’ and ‘modernise’ quickly: all this has affected the education tradition and system, which gave way to instant, unsystematic and party politics-led reforms aimed only at increasing favourable voting outcomes.

This situation has affected adult education and lifelong learning, which in the ‘socialist times’ was budded from a network of workers universities with a modest range of VET courses. Even today, the concept of adult learning is traditionally hazy – understood as VET for those who need to requalify in crafts, and with no leisure or part-time education. Hence, lots of development and educational issues in society, and therefore opportunities, were missed or

wrongly treated. These included: bringing estranged ethnic groups closer by establishing language courses for communities; providing management skills training for the newly-appointed hence poorly skilled educational or institutional elites; or providing communities with learning that would refocus them away from the traditional work-home paradigm in the tough living and political environment that the new ‘capitalism’ brought.

How much LLL needs to be developed in Macedonia, and its importance for the society, became clear to this author only last year, in the process of managing an EU-funded project mandated to enhance LLL in the country through modernisation of the Adult Education system.

The country had 13 sadly depleted Workers’ Universities, understaffed, under-resourced, with a handful of courses mainly language and VET, and with no annual training plans. The several private AE service providers were operating on non-commercial bases, tapping only into symbolic resources released by the Central agency for employment for training only 5% of the myriads of unemployed. There was no link between the local businesses and the central Government analytical mechanisms in order to produce AE programmes needed for local businesses. There were not enough approved AE courses to satisfy the needs of businesses, and no registry of AE certificates. Municipalities, despite having the main responsibility for the obligatory secondary education of their citizens, have no mechanisms or expertise for developing or managing adult education and LLL concepts and practices at local level.

Hence the EU project had to raise awareness of the developmental potential of AE and LLL with central and local government structures, and fight the notion of adult education as being associated only with VET, in addition to improving the quality of adult education products and service providers, and suggesting quality assurance steps to ensure good AE products. Adult education providers and the AE governance institutions are well coordinated, and have EU norms to follow in AE.

Project expert teams gathered to produce, inter alia, the first ever LLL Strategy in the country, and to make sure the LLL strategy was also synchronised with a very overdue comprehensive education strategy 2020, and in a country of modest Adult education and LLL infrastructure. The project was delivered by an international (UK-German-Macedonian) consortium. The international experts included Chris Duke and Heribert Hinzen specifically for LLL, and were coordinated by key expert Mariana Matache. Their work brought the LLL strategy to the point of adoption by the Ministry of Education and Science in 2017 and its synchronisation with the Comprehensive Education 2016 – 2020 [no typos here, time always slips by on such projects!] in a surprisingly wide consultation process, under the remit of the new Minister of Education. The solidly featured Parliamentary hearing in November 2017 produced much feedback from a range of stakeholders. This gives reason to hope that the final consolidation of the Education strategy, and within it the much needed LLL reforms, will be taken up. The adoption by the Government is expected around mid-February 2018.

Much work remains to be done in implementing these strategic documents, getting the Republic of Macedonia on the road to becoming a learning society, and in enjoying the real benefits of adult education. Nonetheless, the basis of having an LLL strategy developed under solid experts is a good start. It promises interesting developments in future, especially if this start is replicated elsewhere in the Balkans region for the benefit of its citizens.

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Balázs Németh – [nemeth.balazs@feek.pte.hu](mailto:nemeth.balazs@feek.pte.hu)

## Civil Society and Democratic Stress - some Adult Learning and Education Responses



### Letter from Hungary

#### *Politics and education in Hungary*

It is relatively mild in Hungary with a temperature of plus 2-7 celsius degree midday and minus 3-7 only in the night. It means that ice-cold winter has not reached my country - except in the sense of undermining democratic and active citizenship through concentrated actions against non-pro-government or independent civil society groups opposing hegemonic steps toward for example the monopoly of press and media. Taking this head-on may not be possible, but there are other means of using Adult Learning and Education (ALE) to build more healthy democratic society and to enable more active citizenship both young and old.

The rules for national elections had already been changed through a radical reconfiguration of the Constitution entitled as “Basic Treaty”. Opposition parties have a huge challenge over how to perform well enough in the election campaign in order to gain some significant public support, since only the one-third of decided voters support the government, while the two-third of voters are the part of a huge iceberg of undecideds or those who will vote by not voting at all.

#### *The wider European context*

Issues of the European Union during the newly started Bulgarian Presidency of the European Council make things tougher. They indicate that the protracted process of negotiating to form an old-new coalition government in Germany has pulled back choices for quick solutions that might be implemented: in economic, fiscal and social policy matters; in defence, security focuses, and in the constraints of the migrant crisis. The uncertainties of forming a German government clearly signal a need for generation change in politics to address effectively the claims of new generations: those who want clear responses to social, economic and environmental challenges in place of irregular modes of political practice where tricky means manoeuvre within parliamentary rules to undermine viable democracy.

#### *Trends, needs, and setbacks in Hungary*

Back to Hungary, it seems that issues and trends around adult and lifelong learning (ALE) have slowly moved the adult society to recognise a need for the professional development of ALE to be able to respond to severe problems of rising early school-leaving rates, and the falling performance levels of adult learners. This latter is an expectation from PISA figures and PIAAC results generally follow the PISA trends. Hungary has just joined PIAAC and the

process of data collection was strictly closed down from professional HEI researchers while being processed by government officials within the National Statistical Office!

In the last 6 months, lifelong learning in Hungary has not changed dramatically. However the official figure for adult learning fell back one per cent (EC Education and Training Monitor 2017). The changed rate for adult learning participation is due to the closure of significant programmes supporting a second chance for education and training for undereducated or illiterate and functionally illiterate adults. These are people who need social integration, and turn towards labour through some secure forms of temporary employment in local government offices in maintenance or park, street and office, school and hospital cleaning services. That educational and training programme had been fairly successful; but while taking hundreds of adults into learning, it has had more limited success on the training side, yet helped significant numbers of adult to get salary and security for one or two years.

### *Older adults*

Another trend in adult learning and education is the expansion of senior academies as alternative forms of the *University of the third age*. In Hungary, more and more universities are opening services as part of their third mission. They offer a social engagement track for senior citizens towards specific education, training with credited programmes, counselling and community activities. Within these, citizens can signal their claims and interests in what they would like to hear about in lectures, seminars, or by means of visits to particular places of learning: libraries, museums, cultural centres, enterprises such as the local water company, power-station and its visitors' centre, Kodály Music Hall, Knowledge Centre, local brewery, etc.

Gerontagogy has become a research area for professionals in adult learning at universities in Hungary. Another dimension of academic level research and development is museum education for adults. Accordingly, a national Museum-Andragogy Society was already formed in 2010 to follow and form the trends amongst atypical visitors to museums where we need the three Cs of Children, Charming and Chairs to get museums entertaining groups of visitors with an intergenerational composition. Senior citizens take their children and grandchildren to such events and programmes to enjoy learning or to learn by doing, experimenting, discovering or relating.

### *Looking and planning ahead*

My city of Pécs received the UNESCO Global Learning City Award on 18 September 2017 at the Third International Conference of Global Learning Cities held in the City of Cork. Pécs has just started to plan and organise its second Learning Festival for 14-15 September 2018 in association with the University of Pécs and the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, UIL. We also organise a conference for UNESCO Global Learning Cities on the topic *Global Learning Cities and Culture Working Together* for 13<sup>th</sup> of September in order to reflect how and in what forms culture may help cities to raise participation and performance in lifelong learning of different generations individually and in collaborative forms.

*We will provide further information on those events via the PIMA Bulletin in coming months.*

References: [https://ec.europa.eu/education/sites/education/files/monitor2017-factsheet-hu\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/education/sites/education/files/monitor2017-factsheet-hu_en.pdf)

[https://ec.europa.eu/education/sites/education/files/monitor2017-hu\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/education/sites/education/files/monitor2017-hu_en.pdf)

See also Balazs Nemeth's *Letter from Hungary* in the PIMA Newsletter No 12 June 2017 **Ed.**

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### 3. Special Interest Group(s)

This article is reproduced from the December 2017 issue of ASPBAE's tri-annual newsletter, *Ed-lines*, by kind permission of its Editor. The full issue of Ed-lines can be accessed from [ASPBAE's website](#).

**Thomas Kuan** [kuanthomas@gmail.com](mailto:kuanthomas@gmail.com)

#### **Later Life Learning in the CONFINTEA VI Mid-Term Review Conference**

The recent CONFINTEA VI Mid-Term Review Conference in Suwon, Korea in October 2017 was well attended by NGOs and some governmental agencies from 50 countries. The Civil Society Forum issued a Statement that education and learning are crucial to all youth and older adults.

The later life learning of older adults is one of the emerging trends that has impact on future learning and education. The UN World Ageing Report (UN 2015) stated that older adults form a huge segment of the population, with about 901 million people aged 60 or over in 2015, and growing to 1.4 billion by 2030, which is only less than 14 years away. The data show that new human potential can be harnessed for Sustainable Development Goals by adding education to the life experiences of older adults.

Adult Learning and Education (ALE) for third age adults is already prominent and popular in the UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities, universities of the third age (U3As or UTAs in China), elder colleges and networks in USA, and informal learning spaces and institutions in many countries. Today's learning and education are influenced by internet and social media; in 13 years' time the new paradigm shift to embrace technology advances and artificial intelligence (AI) will be the norm. For older adults, abilities to manage AI intrusions into our social and cultural values are useful skills to share with youths and children. Will this result in a new understanding in profiling learners, especially older adults?

As economies grow, more adults will be forced out of jobs by robots, digitalisation, and trade wars. SDG 4 ('Ensure inclusive and equitable education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all') could recommend that policy-makers ensure timely access to correct information for older adults to chart their employment opportunities by unlearning and relearning. This could ensure equity employment for all.

My thanks to the mayors of Suwon and Osan Cities for hosting the Mid-Term-Review Conference and showcasing their older adults learning communities. Their models show that ALE for older adults can improve life satisfaction. As a good late friend mentioned, lifelong learning is like breathing; we need to breathe in order to live. And as stated in the Belem



Framework for Action (BFA), the continuous learning and development of adults is a prerequisite. Similarly, as we know that in an emergency inside a plane, oxygen masks are dropped for adults to put on before helping babies and young ones to put on theirs. I wonder if this may be another way for the ALE approach to harness potentials in older adults.

## 4. Other News and Views

A conference convened by the University for Wolverhampton on 16 February 2018 marked the 20th anniversary of the publication in the UK of *The Learning Age* and explored which initiatives worked then, as well as what is needed now. For details, see [bit.ly/LearningAge](http://bit.ly/LearningAge). Among the speakers was Sir Alan Tuckett who with Lord Blunkett who was the UK Secretary of State for Education and Employment between 1997 and 2001, published in the *Times Educational Supplement* (9 February 2018) a trenchant article: *Cast off the wet blanket smothering adult learning*. In summary it argued that the importance of lifelong education had been grasped, but what was lacking was any vision for the future. **Editor**

**Alan Tuckett** [alan.tuckett@gmail.com](mailto:alan.tuckett@gmail.com)

### **On awards and public recognition**

PIMA members will have seen that I was awarded a knighthood in the UK's New Year's Honours, and in a characteristically unexpected way, Chris Duke asked me to use the occasion to reflect on the function and value of awards. I agreed, with the same combination of embarrassment and pleasure that the award itself produced in me.

Since he asked me I have been reflecting on the similarities and differences between Adult Learners' Week awards, honorary degrees, and public honours. All three involve a degree of public theatre, whether that is kneeling down for your shoulders to be ritually touched with a sword; dressing up in an academic gown and hearing a version of your obituary read at a graduation ceremony, or watching a video of your learning journey, and then coming on stage at a grand public occasion in central London to receive an award as an outstanding adult learner.

One difference with Adult Learners' Week awards is that they are also awarded to groups, and I know I would have been much more comfortable in 1995, when I was given an OBE (other buggers' efforts?) if it had been awarded to NIACE (the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education), where I then worked. It isn't quite so easy to see the group this time, but one has to feel – a bit like Man of the Match awards - that you take it for the team, in this case for all the people who work to give adult learners the chance to transform their lives.

Goodness knows, adult learning needs any recognition going at present. Among the plethora of tweets I received following the announcement, the Marches Skills Network commented:

Strange the government honours someone for championing AL whilst they decimate it.

Another active tweeter, Teresa May who has a picture of the ruined shell of Brighton's long lamented West Pier on her twitter page, agreed:

I fail to see how yr knighthood does anything to improve situation for AdultEd; how does it replace adult learning provision lost over last decade; funding? Lost practitioners? Sorry – mere crumbs from the table.

I replied ‘I agree. But to reverse the mess we are in we have to take whatever opportunities come our way to highlight the value of the sector’, and in a reply to a second tweet added ‘Honours won’t change policy. Concerted and sustained collective advocacy will. But each of us must take what spaces come our way to highlight the issues’.

There was a vivid debate in the run-up to the first Adult Learners’ Week in 1992 on the issue of Outstanding Individual Awards. The ethos of adult education, it was argued, is collective – and singling out individuals would be not only invidious but also destructive of that ethos. In the end we persevered, arguing that the learners selected were emblematic of hundreds of thousands of other equally impressive learners. But it is individual stories that capture the imagination of the media and through them help to achieve the Week’s key goal of celebrating existing learners and through them encouraging other adults to take up learning. Scepticism about the value of awards led providers in Liverpool to refuse to nominate. By year two the quality of television coverage of the first year’s winners convinced them to change their minds.

When we were fighting the end of funding for community-based adult education in 1991, politician argued in Parliament that people didn’t want to pay for flower arranging on the taxes. We found a Brixton florist, formerly a merchant banker, who had undertaken industrial re-training through evening classes in flower arranging and had then hired half the class to work in his new shop. An article telling his story in the Independent had a dramatic effect. Just three weeks after the initial debate politicians were saying: ‘Of course we know that flower arranging can lead to floristry.’

Anyone who attends an awards ceremony for the Week, or sees mature students getting their award at a posh frock ceremony after their studies, knows the importance of celebration. I have always seen such occasions as part of the armoury of adult educators who having asked ‘who isn’t there?’ set about doing something about it. For adults motivation **IS** curriculum, and public celebration has its part to play.

And as for the knighthood, if it gives any impetus to recognition of the parlous state things have arrived at, in England at least, then that would be ok. More immediately, it led my brother-in-law to send me a plastic knight’s helmet, and close friends to collapse in helpless laughter at the idea. Anything that adds to merriment can’t be entirely bad!

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## 5 New PIMA Members

**Daniela Bavkandzi** ([danyelabs@yahoo.com](mailto:danyelabs@yahoo.com)) works in Skopje as a Macedonian staff member of the British Council there. Her major preoccupation in recent years has been working on a large EU-funded project to modernise the whole system of education in Macedonia and prepare it for entry to the European Union.

She describes her experience as setting-up the operations (processes and procedures, teams building, development and promotion), for this British Council operation in Macedonia, Kosovo and Albania, and managing the Macedonian education sector and its units (examinations, English, education & society) and their project and finance management. She has responsibility for stakeholder relationships management for business development purposes; marketing management including digital marketing; as well as projects pursuit, design, and project management including reporting.

Her primary focus is education, especially apropos the UK and Macedonian education systems, including VET, and most recently Lifelong Learning from the perspective of planning, projects design and implementation of reforms.

Her position and work require assisting numerous individuals and institutions in her country to fulfil their goals and progress plans by providing high quality focused information, consultancy, project or examination service delivery, thus helping in the modernisation of Balkan societies. Hence her interest in joining the Pascal International Member Association is to contribute to society-building for a better future at a wider level, and to expand her own knowledge base.

Daniela contributes a Letter from Macedonia to this issue of the Bulletin.

**John Martin** ([John.martin@latrobe.edu.au](mailto:John.martin@latrobe.edu.au)) is an Emeritus Professor at La Trobe University in Australia.

He has worked as a scholar-activist adult educator across five Australian universities from 1978 to the present time. His academic interests are in public policy and sub-national institutions, and in local and regional governance. As an emeritus professor he continues to undertake research and consulting work for state and local governments. He is widely networked and experienced as a consultant and organisation development expert especially in the arena of local and regional government.

His current international activity includes work annually with the Australia Awards Indonesia as well as with summer schools at the University of Science and Technology, Beijing. For John Pascal provides the opportunity to reflect on the processes we use to engage communities in their governance. How do we create the conversation that leads to sustainable and resilient communities? This is a never-ending challenge.

## 6. PIMA and PASCAL Business

PIMA business will be communicated to Members by means of a separate Newssheet from the President, and will refer in particular to the PIMA 2018 Annual General Meeting. *Editor*

[PASCAL 2018 Annual Conference](#)

**15th PASCAL Conference, Suwon, Korea - Call for Contributions and Preliminary Programme**

PASCAL Observatory is pleased to announce the first Call for Contributions and Preliminary Programme for the 15<sup>th</sup> PASCAL International Conference to be co-organised and hosted by the [Gyeonggi Do Provincial Institute for Lifelong Learning \(GILL\)](#) and [Ajou University](#) from **30 August -1 September at Suwon City, Republic of Korea**. The main theme of the Conference is “**Learning Cities, Learning Societies and the Sustainable Development Goals: Connecting Research, Policy and Practice**”.

**15<sup>TH</sup> PASCAL INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE**

HOSTED BY:

경기도평생교육진흥원  
Gyeonggi Do Provincial Institute for Lifelong Learning (GILL)

아주대학교  
Ajou University

PASCAL International Observatory

**Learning Cities, Learning Societies and the Sustainable Development Goals: Connecting Research, Policy and Practice**

학습도시, 학습사회 그리고 지속가능한 발전 목표:  
연구과 정책 그리고 실천의 연계

30 Aug - 1 Sept, 2018  
Suwon, Korea

This conference revisits the concept of learning cities and learning societies within the perspective of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), while keeping in focus the critical dimensions that are shaping, and are shaped by, our cities today. The SDGs provide a global framework that can guide learning, because these goals are a universal call to action - to end poverty, care for the planet, and ensure peace and equitable development, not just for the few, but committed to ‘no one left behind’.

**Shirley Walters** (South Africa) will speak on the main theme **Learning Cities and Societies** and the SDGs: Connecting Research, Policy and Practice drawing on her extensive experience in popular education and learning cities.

**Jose Roberto Guevara** (Australia/Philippines) will deliver the closing keynote weaving the different conference contributions and experiences in "**Glocalized**" Learning: Weaving Research, Policy and Practice.

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**Denise Reghenzani** [d\\_reghenzani@hotmail.com](mailto:d_reghenzani@hotmail.com)  
**Learning Cities Networks (LCN)**

Denise suggests that the Bulletin promote the PASCAL Learning Cities Networks (LCN), described as “an interactive policy-oriented groups of stakeholders within cities, sharing ideas and experience directed at innovative responses to the big issues confronting cities. LCN will build on insights and lessons derived from the [PASCAL International Exchanges](#) (PIE) program over three years from 2011 to 2013 with networks established in key areas for sustainable learning city development as identified through the PIE experience.

The networks include city administrators with the support of their CEOs and mayors, as well as academics and other stakeholders. They also seek to link with regional and national governments, business and labour organisations, and very importantly establish links with foundations. Networks will develop in flexible ways depending on the nature of participation of members with new sub-themes emerging, and with evolution of focus as new participants become involved. Networks are not mutually exclusive with some topics crossing from one to another.”

The intended outcomes are to define key characteristics for sustainable learning cities for the future. For more information please go to the PACAL Website at <http://lcn.pascalobservatory.org/>

### **The Networks**

- A. LEARNING CITIES: MEETING TODAY’S CHALLENGES FOR A BETTER FUTURE
  - B. *IMPLEMENTING AN ECCOWELL APPROACH FOR HOLISTIC DEVELOPMENT*
  - C. CONNECTING URBAN AND RURAL LEARNING INITIATIVES
  - D. HARNESSING CULTURAL POLICIES IN BUILDING SUSTAINABLE LEARNING CITIES
  - E. ADDRESSING DISADVANTAGE TO BUILD INCLUSIVE LEARNING CITIES
  - F. ENTREPRENEURIAL LEARNING CITIES
  - G. FAITH-BASED LEARNING CITY DEVELOPMENT
-