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Contributions, Responses to news items and opinion pieces, other feedback and material for publication are always welcome. Please send to Chris Duke at: chris.duke@rmit.edu.au

1. Editorial

Chris Duke



“A social system has broken down... How I detest democracy. More and more I believe in benevolent autocracy...”

First written in 1947 the bloodied year of the Partition of India, this passage was quoted in a UK Newspaper article in 2017 which also addressed the role and influence of the media and the quest for popularity and attention.

Today there is concern about how well we manage and govern ourselves itself – the ‘crisis of Western democracy’, a recent Website OTB (Outside the Box) discussion theme. How serious is this ‘crisis of governance’ and effective democratic participation? What part does and might lifelong learning and citizenship education play?

We embrace democracy worldwide rather than privilege ‘the West’. Different democratic forms evolve in the fast-changing global village of the 21st century. Generally, autocracy, whether or not ‘benevolent’, appears to be winning: overtly in some countries, covertly in places like the US, the UK and France by abandoning unwritten norms. Political apathy and election abstention has become a problem for some countries and the aftermath of contested elections is violent in others. Young people seem to split between indifference to autocratic and oligarchic forms of governance and deeper commitment, maybe with violent direct action reminiscent of the late nineteen-sixties. Elsewhere Arab and other ‘Springs’ have turned to winter, meaning gaol or worse, for democratic activists.

Writing from Paris, PASCAL Board Chair Josef Konvitz opens this Newsletter on a perhaps unfashionably hopeful note – welcome when nuclear war is again on the global agenda – in taking a different look at the future. PIMA President Dorothy Lucardie then reviews aspirations for the Association over the two-year life of the new 2017 Committee. We then turn to the two Special Interest Groups now running on the SDGs and on Later Life Learning. Is it time also to look again at the role and contribution of higher education?

‘Letters from’ have become a regular Newsletter feature, from France, Canada and Australia, then Hungary to soon from further afield. In this ‘*Letter from...*’ Chris Brooks asks whether democracy can survive in the West, taking up correspondence started by the Editor and Nemeth Balazs on Democracy in June, and the threats that it faces. This opens a major theme for the Newsletter about something looming over active participative citizenship in many places. PASCAL like the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL) vigorously champions *learning cities*. Is the capacity for active democracy cascading down from an overwrought national – Nation State – level to cities with more locally based and supported elected mayors, as in the US and even the UK today? Across much of Asia a still more local level of learning and active community life is being development with the spread of community-led local learning centres – CLCs, in this or another name.

Responses to Chris Brooks’ letter and other views on ‘the crisis of democracy’ will follow in subsequent Newsletters. Members are invited to write to me with further comments and contributions.

Meanwhile the proposal canvassed by Nemeth Balazs in June, looking wider from Hungarian experience, may find its way to discussion at the civil society forum and the UNESCO CONFINTEA mid-term review in Suwon R of Korea, in late October.

There follows in this issue a field-based report from Taiwan by Yahui Fang: Planting seeds to transform self and the society with younger generation. PIMA Vice-President Shirley Walters, who is also the African Vice-President of the International Council for Adult Education, ICAE, then asks a question which is no doubt haunting adult and lifelong learning policy-makers and leaders in many poor and not so poor countries, including those working for the SDGs: has adult education fallen out of favour with funders? If so, why? We conclude with a reflection by the outstanding Adult Education and LLL innovator Martin Yarnit on a possible new start for LLL in the UK.

As part of the synergy and complementarity being developed between PIMA and the PASCAL Board, this two-monthly Newsletter offers mainly member views along with PIMA news. We invite readers to consult the PASCAL Website for more current news and events. The weekly news update provides more up-to-date information than we can here.

Please continue sending contributions for future newsletters to me at chris.duke@rmit.edu.au.

2. Another look towards the future

Josef Konvitz



Unemployment at 8-9% in urban regions but three times higher in some suburbs and rural areas, a national budget that has not been balanced in decades, three devastating terrorist attacks since January 2015: after Trump, after Brexit, would Le Pen win? The French, famous for being morose although living in a country so admired that it is visited by more tourists than any other in the world, nonetheless voted to elect a President who is a 39-year old pro-European committed to liberal values.

Marine Le Pen also promised to bring change – close borders, and perhaps eventually to leave the Euro. Her programme rested on the proposition that France cannot adapt fast enough to global change. Le Pen, together with Trump as well as populists in several European countries, proclaim that the decline of the West is irreversible but at least its worst effects can be contained by building walls of ideas, reinforced by walls against people. Le Pen is now seen as a loser; her movement is in total disarray.

France, it turns out, is a nation of optimists. A group of social scientists have released a study showing that regardless of income or professional category, people who were more pessimistic voted for Le Pen, and people who were more optimistic voted for Macron. In the cities, Macron won by anything from 70% at a low to 90% at a high. And it was the urban vote (combined with Brittany, the Atlantic/Loire and central France) that determined the outcome of the election.

In France, optimism is by no means an urban monopoly. By contrast, Trump did better than Obama in cities, and swept the suburbs in most metropolitan regions. The urban vote in the UK was swamped by votes for Brexit elsewhere. In Turkey, people in the big cities voted against changes to the office of the Presidency in the Constitution; the referendum passed on the votes of rural areas and small cities.

Why are some people optimistic? Why does cultural change in particular incline people toward pessimism? Cities are often depicted in apocalyptic terms, dysfunctional, vulnerable to attack, at

risk of catastrophes. Why should people living in cities be more optimistic? Do people in cities feel better equipped to cope with change – even though change is often more dramatic in cities than in rural areas? Some of this is a matter of formal education, but it also comes from the street and the family, from living in cities. We need to know more about how people learn emotional as well as cognitive and substantive skills in cities – down to the neighbourhood level – the skills that give them greater confidence in themselves, and greater trust in other people and especially strangers. City-building is about the future.

Often, values and principles become determinant in elections. And increasingly, cities are where the contest between competing visions of the future is fought.

Of course, we face unprecedented challenges. But calling everything a crisis doesn't help, and may in fact build support for populist nationalists who block reforms, limit the exercise of democratic rights, close borders. If we want collective solutions, tolerant societies, and sustainable cities, we need more optimists.

3. Message from the President of PIMA

Dorothy Lucardie



2017 has become a tumultuous year across the world, and life-long learning has never been more important for our families, community and societies. All PIMA members will be facing challenges and advocating for equity, fairness and a peaceful world. I hope that PIMA provides a conduit for members to connect with others, develop networks that can help in your work, and that you can contribute to help PIMA to address the issues emerging from a changing world.

The incoming PIMA Committee for 2017/2018 met for the first time in March 2017. PIMA has been established now for 2 years and the Committee

considered the aspirations for PIMA to achieve over the next 2 years. Those aspirations have been adopted by the Committee as a strategic agenda to guide our work and the development of the Association.

The first item on the strategic agenda is a focus on communications including the Newsletter, inter-member dialogue, cooperative use of the PASCAL website, the Outside the Box facility, and the development of web pages translated to and from Chinese. Chris Duke has been leading this focus, with Dayong Yuan and Thomas Kuan spearheading the web discussion and Chinese language proposal.

Special Interest Groups are the second focus of the agenda. Members will have seen over the past few months the establishment of an SIG focussing on the Sustainable Development Goals, led by Bruce Wilson; and a second SIG focussing on Later Life Learning, led by Thomas Kuan. A wide group of PIMA members are working in these SIGs, and I would like to express our thanks for their contribution to these initiatives. We are hopeful that other SIGs may be proposed and developed over the next 2 years. If members want to get involved or propose SIGs please contact Chris Duke or myself, dorothy.lucardie@bigpond.com.

Membership of SIG on Sustainable Development Goals

Bruce Wilson and Morgen Versteegen-Newton co-convenors (Australia); Jim Falk (Australia); Daniella Tilbury (Gibraltar); Heribert Hinzen (Germany); Pat Inman (USA); Peter Kearns (Australia), Kate Sankey (Scotland); Susie See (Malaysia); Shirley Walters (South Africa); and ex officio, Dorothy Lucardie and Chris Duke.

For the Membership of SIG on Later Life Learning see the list in the news item below.

Thirdly, the committee is keen to support gatherings of PIMA members in various locations across the world. We are aware that it is costly to travel, and hope to have meetings either focussed on particular themes or social occasions for member networking. So far, a meeting on the SDGs has been held in Melbourne in February, a meeting is planned in Paris in September at the OECD HE Stake-Holders' Forum, and a social meeting is planned in Pretoria* in October, prior to the PASCAL conference there. Planning for 2018 is underway to hold a PIMA conference in China. We also hope to hold a meeting in conjunction with the PASCAL conference in Korea. Please contact us for further information, and with suggestions for other such opportunistic gatherings.

Developing specific projects for PIMA and members is the fourth strand in the agenda. Proposals that the Committee is considering include: adult education country exchanges, developing PIMA country networks, and providing an editorial board to publish member papers online. These projects are on the drawing board, and other proposals are welcome from all members.

The fifth and sixth strands on the strategic agenda are internally focussed. Number five is to develop the PIMA infrastructure, including generating resources such as funding. The sixth is to ensure sound governance of the Association that includes meeting our obligations as an incorporated association.

*Pretoria Gathering. Shirley Walters and I would like to invite all PIMA members attending the PASCAL conference in Pretoria to a social gathering at the venue. Further details will be sent to all members by email. It would be great to catch up with as many people as possible.

Please find below the PIMA Committee for 2017/2018. Feel free to contact any of us to discuss the strategic focus of the Committee or any other issues.

Dorothy	Lucardie	PRESIDENT
Shirley	Walters	VICE PRESIDENT
Thomas	Kuan	TREASURER
Chris	Duke	SECRETARY-GENERAL
Chris	Brooks	MEMBER
Steve	Garlick	MEMBER
SoongHee	Han	MEMBER
Charlotte	Scarf	MEMBER
Susie	See	MEMBER BY COOPTION
Dayong	Yuan	MEMBER
Mary	Serafim	ADMIN OFFICER

4. Special Interest Groups

SIG on Sustainable Development Goals

The SDGs were the first SIG topic taken up by PIMA on behalf of the PASCAL Board, following the SIG on Public Sector Interface led by Ilpo Laitinen and featured with its fourth paper on the PASCAL

Website. Please note that Rajesh Tandon’s paper, *Making the Commitment: Contributions of Higher Education to SDGs*, which was featured in the PIMA June (No 12) Newsletter, is now available in full on the PASCAL Website.

Here PIMA Vice-President and SDG SIG member Shirley Walters writes about the SDGs.

The SDGs won’t be met without active citizens fortified with new knowledge

Shirley Walters



Outside a courthouse in Cape Town in South Africa demonstrators performed a short skit to draw attention to the dangers of a “secret nuclear deal” that could cost the country [more than a trillion rand](#) and [indebt citizens](#) for many decades to come, while no doubt enriching a handful of [well-connected elites](#).

The performers acted out well-known corruption scenarios, and then invited discussion among the protesting spectators.

A week later, the same performance, this time in a community hall, formed part of a popular education workshop where experts interacted with citizens, focusing on the pros and cons of nuclear, solar and wind energy. 75 people, young and old, participated enthusiastically. Most had never learnt about different sources of energy – despite the fact that energy prices and environmental concerns are very much their business.

The workshop was organised by the [Popular Education Programme](#) and the [South African Faith Community Environmental Institute](#). Both are part of a coalition of organisations united under the “StopCorruptNuclearSA” banner. It’s trying to stop the deal from being pushed through without proper citizen engagement and participation.

The initiative recognises the opportunity that the nuclear deal gives to engage large number of citizens in education, experimentation and debate about various energy scenarios. It aims, literally, to put power in the hands of the people.

It also shines an important light on the relationship between lifelong learning and its essential role in achieving the United Nation’s [Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#). The link is this: the SDGs are unlikely to be met without the active participation of ordinary people. But for that to happen, communities need to learn a range of new skills, understandings and attitudes. That can only happen if they’re in a constant cycle of learning – whatever their age.



Activists protest against South Africa’s proposed nuclear deal.
Source: EPA/Nic Bothma

Sustainable development is everyone's business

The UN has adopted 17 SDGs, each with specific targets to be achieved by 2030. The goal is “to end poverty, and ensure prosperity for all as part of a new sustainable development agenda”.

[Sustainable development](#) is about using the world's resources in a way that doesn't permanently destroy but regenerates them. It's about society consuming and producing in a way that recognises the world's limits.

The SDGs are contested. Some critics [argue](#) that sustainability can't be achieved without tackling capitalist growth – the fundamental cause of poverty and ecological crisis.

Whatever way you look at it energy issues are at the heart of the sustainable development question. This is reflected in [SDG 7](#), which aims to ensure access to “affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all”. The UN website states that:

Energy is central to nearly every major challenge and opportunity the world faces today. Be it for jobs, security, climate change, food production or increasing incomes, access to energy for all is essential.

Energy solutions profoundly affect the economy, politics and the environment - from agriculture to waste management, food security, sanitation, transport, housing, health, jobs and forms of governance.

These issues affect all citizens. And it is low-income communities and communities on the periphery that tend to be the most seriously affected by polluting and costly energy systems. They are, of course, the vast majority.

The fact is that citizens can't depend on governments alone to make the right decisions. The way that the South African government, along with other vested interests, is pushing for nuclear energy is a perfect example.

Of course, SDGs need to be engaged at the level of the UN agencies and governments. But it's essential that they are also engaged on the ground – by social movements and organisations of women, men, girls and boys across social class, age and geography. It's here that new knowledge is often created through participating actively in the struggles for social and environmental justice. As University of Pretoria professor Lorenzo Fioramonti argues in his book [Wellbeing Economy](#), “participatory governance is key to achieving sustainability and well-being”.

For this to work the majority of people need to be educated about energy options so that they can participate in decisions that affect their lives. But to be able to do this they need to be fully informed and engaged in the issues at hand, regardless of age or formal educational background.

This is consistent with [SDG 4](#), which stresses the need to:

Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.

Rethinking lifelong learning

The UN's commitment to lifelong learning certainly sounds hopeful, but the responses of governments and funders to similar commitments made in the UN's Millennium Development Goals were underwhelming. For the most part, lifelong learning has been understood in a very limited way. The focus has been on young people and anyone not at school, college or university is often discounted, unless they [pay for it themselves](#).

This means that the majority of citizens are left out. What this adds up to is that socio-economic relations will remain the same and the SDGs are unlikely to be met.

Instead, we need adult and popular education to be accepted as integral to lifelong learning and essential to the empowerment of local communities.

This can be achieved if more pressure is brought to bear on governments and funders to support, for example, mass [popular education programmes](#) in which experts and grassroots people of all ages engage actively on issues that matter.

SIG on Later Life Learning

Thomas Kuan

Our 'Older Adults' PIMA SIG is renamed *Later Life Learning* to reflect our conversations on community engagement in the education of older people. We are thankful to PASCAL for giving us 'virtual space' on their Website to hold discussions. Our **Terms of Reference** are:

1. To connect practitioners and researchers in later life learning to enable them to share their expertise and skills;
2. To generate ideas concerning ways to encourage more adults into later life learning;
3. To take into account the complexity of learning in later life by adopting a multi-disciplinary approach to include perspectives from e.g. educational research, psychology, gerontology, sociology, neuroscience and political science;
4. To incorporate comparative studies, especially those connected to social policies, whilst acknowledging demographic change and the heterogeneity of older population;
5. To hold an international symposium in 2018 with later life learning as one of the main themes;
6. To advocate for later life learning to be one of the foci of UN Agenda 2030;
7. To inform governments, longevity and seniors' associations of policy and strategies for action.

I am working on the translation of our SIG Later Life Learning into Chinese characters which will be of interest to scholars and practitioners who are more well-versed in the Chinese language. I hope our SIG can connect with them on sharing expertise and skills in later life learning.

Membership of SIG on Later Life Learning:

Thomas Kuan, Singapore (Convenor); Lawrence Tsui, Macao; Brian Findsen, NZ; Alexandra (Alex) Withnall, UK; Bernhard Schmidt-Hertha, Germany; Archanya Ratana-Ubol, Thailand; Sajjan Singh, India; Hsiu Mei Tsai, Taiwan; NamShun Kim, South Korea; Barry Golding, Australia; Brendan O'Dwyer, Australia; Dayong Yuan, China; Peter Kearns, Australia; Dennis Reghenzani-Kearns, Australia; Robin Webster, Australia; Xia Qing, Annie, China; Xiagmei Jia, China; David Instance, France; Dorothy Lucardie, Australia and Chris Duke, UK and France (observers).

Towards a SIG on Higher and Tertiary Education

PASCAL seeks not only to link the Social and Learning with Place but also to connect and cross-fertilise practice with theory: the world of scholarship with policy in practice. For about six years it conducted and sought to learn from processes of engaging universities with their regional communities while enhancing practice. That PASCAL universities and regional engagement project (PURE) straddled the global financial crisis (GFCs) and the jointly contributed resources of regions

and universities rapidly dried up. The follow-up PUMR project was wounded fatally from the outset for the same reason. There have been periodic discussions about launching a 'new-PURE' for the new era of austerity, competitive rankings, new managerialism and heightened competitiveness, tight M&E audit, all accompanying massive expansion of higher education systems. The literature of change and crisis especially for universities matches and has a longer life than that of the 'crisis of Western democracy'.

A question for PIMA with PASCAL now is whether to revisit this crucial and complex area: perhaps with a two-pronged initiative to explore the new world of HE policy from our interacting LLL, Place and Social perspectives, while field-testing new approaches in practical ways. If there is support for this, we need to hold in mind and reconcile several apparent tensions if not outright dichotomies. These include: national systems versus individual competitively ranked institutions; relatively homogeneous versus purposefully diversified systems; specifically higher, usually meaning university, versus universal post-secondary tertiary systems; internally speaking 'third stream/mission engagement management versus an all-encompassing approach where all 'R and T' is thus informed; and more obviously public versus private interest and good; and global versus regional, when the dominant criteria of the HE rankings industry heavily favour the global. The alternative is perhaps to trial some new PURE-style interventions, and simply to allow the 'HE debate' to permeate our work and discussion in general.

If you have views and ideas on this for PIMA and PASCAL please contribute, sending your thoughts to apparent PIMA Secretary-General at chris.duke@rmit.edu.au

5. Letters from...



Chris Brooks

Can democracy survive in the West?

In Alison Smith's wonderful novel *Autumn*, written just after Brexit, there is a conversation between mother and daughter about why Mum has stopped following the news:

"I am tired of the news. I am tired of the way it makes things spectacular that aren't, and deals so simplistically with what's truly appalling. I am tired of the vitriol. I am tired of the anger. I am tired of the meanness. I am tired of the selfishness. I am tired of how we're doing nothing to stop it"

Right or wrong, the sentiment is interesting because it reveals that people are turning off from the important connection with society that comes via the media. And of course we know that this sort of reaction took a majority of the British down the Brexit road. Yet doing things together with other countries - pooling sovereignty - was precisely the way we have been able to protect Western liberal democracy for the past sixty years.

The Newsletter correspondence started by Chris Duke and Nemeth Balazs on Democracy and the threats that it faces seeks to address the bigger picture and the deeper issues underlying this situation.

An inescapable trilemma

In 2006 Dani Rodrik helped us understand what he called the 'inescapable trilemma of the world economy'. He claims – in my view rightly - that democracy, national sovereignty and global economic integration are incompatible. You can combine any two of these elements but not have all three at

the same time. I guess his view was always the private 'Davos-man' view. This has already sacrificed liberal democracy on the high altar of globalized materialism.

What Rodrik shows is that Nation States in the era of globalization face a stark choice. They can pool sovereignty internationally so as to create the conditions to control the global market place. This seems a highly improbable option in a world of Trump, Brexit and rising nationalism. Another option is to retain sovereignty and make global economic integration the top priority, to the exclusion of all other domestic objectives. But that would hardly be democratic. Or you could - as the old OECD countries have done for the past sixty years, give up some measure of economic integration in the interests of sovereignty and democracy. This last option has basically been the western liberal model throughout that time.

But things are changing. First, twenty five years ago, after the fall of the Berlin Wall and in the era of Francis Fukuyama's silly book *The End of History* we were led to believe in the universal triumph of the western liberal democratic model. Yet it is clear that countries like China have rejected the democratic part of the equation. More recently we have seen the same movement in Turkey; and in different ways others are following the authoritarian model. Russia, Egypt, Venezuela and Hungary are a few examples. The most worrying threat to western style freedom and democracy has come however from within its heartland: Mr. Donald Trump's United States of America. Whilst he and his European friends have not caused the crisis in democracy we face, they are clear reflections of it. The demise of the middle class, the increased poverty and precariousness of the old working class, the rise and rise of a new underclass, have led to frightening regression of these groups' hopes and living standards. This has created a backlash of anti-immigrant, anti-foreigner, anti-other sentiments which are a hallmark of contemporary politics. Having given up on the politics of redistribution and class fairness in favour of identity politics centred on race, sexual orientation and gender, the liberal elite have given up on attempting to create a fair and just society for all. They have become obsessed by what Mark Lilla calls 'the pseudo-politics of self-regard'.

Today's real crisis

So today we find ourselves faced by a real crisis in western style liberal democracy when twenty-five years ago we were led to believe in the end of history. What can we do? The starting point must be to understand the problem as a whole; lest we imagine that the issues we hold dear to our hearts provide a response to the whole. Second we need to address the question of how, in the areas we hold dear to our hearts, we can make a positive impact in reducing and even perhaps mastering the crisis in democracy.

There are three issues which I would like to explore in the coming months, where life learning could clearly play an important role.

How do we educate citizens and future citizens to be vigilant? We need to help our societies tame the new media and their associated instruments of 'group-think'.

How do we impart and reinforce the idea of truth and truthfulness and how they help in questioning power? This takes us into the realm of time and perspective- how do we teach our societies to reason over time? Must the old order always be the reference point? How do you question without destroying? How do we reintroduce the values of contradiction and tolerance at the same time?

What response education?

How should we approach the question of power and regulation? We live in a world where at all levels we do not respect regulation but try to 'get away with it'. At the top, the new power elite of Google, Facebook, and Apple simply do not respect regulations but do get away with it. Can

education play a role in making our citizens aware of the abuse they suffer every day from these new tyrannies?

Cultural pessimism is rarely a helpful state of mind. But clearly we have reason to be worried. Let's try to assemble a coherent set of approaches to education and lifelong learning which will contribute to breathing hope back into liberal democracy.

What, please, are your reactions? Please write to chris.brooks@dbmail.com
cc chris.duke@rmit.edu.au

6. New Members

Two members of the new Later Life Learning SIG have also become members of PIMA. They are **Dr Bernhard Schmidt-Hertha, Germany**, and **Dr Tsai Hsui Mei, Taiwan**.



With a doctorate from Pennsylvania State University (USA) majoring in rural sociology, **Dr Tsai** has been teaching in National Chung Cheng University almost 30 years. Research interests cover community adult education, community colleges, community empowering, learning cities, and senior learning. Dr Tsai is also involved in many policy-related projects, helping public sector and civic groups in implementing the policy of lifelong learning, learning cities, community colleges, senior learning, and community empowerment. These are seen as foundations for a civil society, empowering, people to become active citizens, and working together to revive local history and identity. Lifelong learning and learning cities and see as enabling many adults, especially older adults, to participate in learning activities and enrich their lives and well-being. People learn to be active citizens and promote Taiwan to be a learning society.

Dr Schmidt-Hertha is a Professor in the Institute of Education at University of Tübingen in Germany, and Convenor of the European Society for Research on the Education of Adults (ESREA) network on Education and Learning of Older Adults (ELOA) which he started in 2009, aft studying educational research, psychology and sociology in Munich, where he finished his PhD in 2004. Currently he is working on the education and learning of older workers, the impact of education on the transition into retirement, and informal learning in later life. He is also interested in the field of professionalization of adult educators and in research on quality in higher education.

A third new member **Khau Huu Phuoc**, Vietnam, is the Manager of Research and Training, SEAMEO CELLL, the SE Asia Ministers of Education institution to promote lifelong learning in the SEAMEO countries and indeed throughout the wider ASEAN region where regional collaboration is fast strengthening. He played a key role in the project , *Towards a lifelong learning agenda in Southeast Asian countries*, initiated by SEAMEO CELLL and supported by the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning UIL in Hamburg. This project encourages the creation of Lifelong Learning policies and the exchange of good practice especially through SEAMEO CELLL in Hanoi. PIMA members Heribert Hinzen and Chris Duke played a part in this work, which was guided by the Director of SEAMEO CELLL, Mr Lam, another PIMA member. After graduating cum laude in Education at Ho Chi Minh City University in 1990, Mr Phuoc taught there until 2012, meanwhile taking his Master's in TESOL at the University of Canberra in 1999, and transferring to his present position in 2012, and shifting his interest to lifelong learning. He has led workshops on various aspects of CLC (Community Learning Centre) development at SEAMEO CELLL over a period of three years. He aims to help promote lifelong learning in Vietnam and the region through a positive, pertinent contribution to national and international activities. Mr Phuoc believes in education for sustainable development – and while working hard in maintaining a sane work-life balance with his young family.

7. Member News & Views

Reflecting on what PIMA might do and become, **Yahui Fang** writes from Taiwan: it would be good to have a strong perspective from Asia. According to my experience of the 'learning in the field project', more intimate connection and knowledge exchanges might be required. In Taiwan, universities are heading toward promoting social responsibilities (driven by government policy) as well as global connections. What this requires is devotion to professional community-building and local networks, so that global networks can provide positive social capital and public good to enrich local capacity. This is what I imagine a PIMA Asian Office might bring.

Planting seeds to transform self and the society with younger generation

Yahui Fang

"Learning in the field-Service Learning and Youth Social Engagement Manual" is going to be published at the end of August! Since 2016, the NCKU intra-collegial service learning team and Department of Teaching Affairs have been incubating collaboration to empower public engagement with and for youth with Oxfam HK and in collaboration with experienced practitioners in Vision Youth Action (VYA) and Global Action association. The project is called *"Learning in the Field: Service Learning and Youth Social Engagement Training Workshops and Manual Developments"*. It aims to empower school faculties and academic staff as well as non-profit organisation (NPO) practitioners to work collectively as a change catalyst to trigger social change on a community-society scale. This is the first NGO and Research University in Taiwan that co-learns and co-works in collective efforts to portray action, and provide narratives of outstanding organizations and project teams, through rigorous research process and nurturing a human touch.

There is common ground where the NGO and NCKU stand. We observed every year many youth workers and educators in universities, NGO and youth organizations work in volunteering and service learning activities. These entities are possible change catalysts. To support them to plan and carry out volunteering and service learning activities that can bring positive changes to both learners and the communities, NCKU would like to carry out this project, and to line up experienced practitioners in Taiwan, to provide in-depth focus groups and narrative activities to consolidate knowledge, experience and values, as well as gathering best practices and the enabling criteria in universities and NGOs in Taiwan.

Through diligent connections and creating dialogue in the past 10 months, public seminars were organized to spread the experience from university and junior high school faculty to self-organized student team. Together with two intensive and deep dialogues on documented case stories, consolidated knowledge was gradually documented. By early September, these documented personal stories and work methods are going to be published as a practical manual which can be shared with all educators and practitioners in Taiwan and Hong Kong for free. Also, a platform will be created for practitioners to exchange and learn from each other continuously.



Portraits on each case story

This *Learning in the field-Service Learning and Youth Social Engagement Manual* collected 7 different personal or team stories engaging in community work, from professional organizations like an Architects' firm devoted to bridging the needs of rural community and professional training human resources at university; young entrepreneurs started their social enterprise through course learning in graduate school, students self-organized to work together for rural disadvantaged elementary students, overseas volunteer program manager support young partners and equip them with the capacity to do service learning.

In section two, pathways to social change, the competence and literacy required and the working philosophy are analysed. We synthesized them, suggested an educational design process, and included 8 entry level and easy-to-use methods or tools for educators.

In order to make this manual more accessible, it will be uploaded as digital copy when the book is published. There will follow an educational design hands-on workshop for those who want to co-learn together. Keep track on our [Facebook page](#) for more information and a brief introduction to the project.

Has adult education fallen out of favour with funders? If so, why?

Shirley Walters

Adult education has been marginal in many education systems globally. For African adult educators within civil society, where governments have not invested much in adult education, the Nordic countries have historically been the most responsive, with organisations like German-based DVV and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) being amongst those who have kept the flames alive. However, over the years the Nordic countries have decreased their funding for adult education, and now word has it that the SDC is no longer to fund adult education. Why is this happening?

The UN's commitment to lifelong learning within the SDGs echoes to some degree the previous responses of governments and funders to similar commitments made in the UN's Millennium Development Goals. For the most part, lifelong learning has been understood in a very limited way. The focus has been on young people and anyone not at school, college or university is often discounted, as adult education is seen as a commodity to be bought and sold in the `open market`. There has been a reduction in public funding for adult learning. This means that the majority of citizens are left out.

Does the ever-decreasing public and philanthropic funding for adult learning and education reflect the hegemonic marketization of adult education? Is it a reflection of the prevalent `auditing culture`, where only that which can be counted and measured is worth funding, whereas often the results of adult education are dispersed and hard to enumerate? Does it reflect the move away from advocacy work to shorter term project orientation of funders? Is it a shift to understanding learning as an entirely individual activity? Is there a perception that there are limited resources; and that these must go to early childhood and youth education, particularly that relating to TVET?

At a time when there is increasing evidence of the efficacy of learning across the lifespan, and ever-rising need because of rapid technological changes, longer life expectancy, dramatic changes in living and working conditions through accelerated environmental shifts, and so on, why is there a retreat from support for adult learning and education from funders?

What do we, as a group of concerned adult learning and education scholars / activists / practitioners / advocates, do about it?