



**TOWARDS GOOD ACTIVE AGEING FOR ALL**  
**In a context of deep demographic change**  
**and dislocation**

**Report of the PASCAL & PIMA SIG**  
**on Learning in Later Life**

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# Foreword

PIMA\* on behalf of PASCAL\*\* set up a Special Interest Group (SIG) on Later Life Learning to examine the implications of demographic change with ageing populations. This report is the first main output of that SIG.

We are most grateful to the leading scholars from a range of countries who contributed to the report, and to Peter Kearns, and Denise Reghenzani-Kearns, who as SIG members edited the report and contributed to its ideas. The report has a number of antecedents. These include the work of the World Health Organization on active ageing including the 2015 World Report on Health and Ageing, the UK report by Tom Schuller and David Watson on the future of lifelong learning, and the work of the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning which established the Global Network of Learning Cities. These ideas have flowed to various places that are discussed in the report, including the splendid development of learning cities in East Asian countries.

This report followed the 15<sup>th</sup> PASCAL International Conference in Suwon in the Republic of Korea, held on 30 August-1 September 2018, and when learning in later life was a main theme at a PIMA seminar in Beijing on 3-4 September 2018. Both cities have shown leadership in finding innovative ways to foster learning in later life and to extend learning opportunities more widely. These ideas add to the longer established experience of Germany and Japan in building national networks of community learning centres, with the impressive stories of Volkshochschulen in Germany and Kominkan in Japan adding depth and experience to the approaches discussed in the report.

This important subject deserves widespread discussion, and rethinking traditional ideas about retirement and later life - and indeed approaches to learning throughout all stages of the life journey. We thank all those involved in the work of the SIG and others contributing to the report, and especially report co-editors Peter Kearns and Denise Reghenzani-Kearns, and look forward to the wider discussion of these questions which we hope will happen.

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*Chair*  
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Chris Duke  
*Secretary-General*  
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\*\* PASCAL International Observatory is a global alliance of researchers, policy analysts, decision makers and locally engaged practitioners from government, higher education, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and the private sector. PASCAL gives special emphasis to the role of social capital and lifelong learning in these processes, considering how sustainable economic, social and cultural development can be achieved to the benefit of the communities concerned.

\* PIMA, the PASCAL International Member Association, grew out of PASCAL. It is global network of experienced individual adult learning and education professionals, with an active interest especially in the different dimensions and contexts of lifelong, wide and deep learning. It supports and participates in the organisational activities of PASCAL and other bodies, in the interests of greater social, economic and ecological justice locally and globally.

## Executive Summary

A growing number of countries are confronted by the challenge of demographic change and ageing populations. These changes are most advanced in East Asia in Japan, Republic of Korea, China and Taiwan, so that the opportunities exist for other countries to learn from these experiences and responses.

Moreover, the demographic revolution is occurring at a time when revolutionary changes in digital technologies associated with artificial intelligence, robotics, and biotechnologies are starting to impact on society so that governments are facing the perplexing question of what kind of society will emerge: machine dominated or humanistic?

These revolutionary changes give a new significance to learning in later life, and pose the question for governments whether the changes should serve as a catalyst for policies for good active ageing for all in the framework of revitalising learning throughout the life-course in building a sustainable society. In this context, PASCAL and PIMA have collaborated in establishing a special interest group to address this question.

This report of the SIG adopts a societal life-course approach with learning and community relationships at the core of this report. We bring historical perspectives to the report and show how these relationships have progressed through several stages of development marked by the roles of community learning centres and later in the 20<sup>th</sup> century by the emergence of learning cities and neighbourhoods where these relationships are fostered at a city level, often then cascading down to districts and local neighbourhoods. There are signs that learning cities may be progressing to a further stage of development, and possibly community learning centres as well.

In exploring a conceptual and policy framework for learning in later life, we have gone back to the idea of active ageing developed by the World Health Organisation (WHO) in 2002 with pillars of participation, health, and security supporting this concept. In connecting learning and community in the context we discuss in this report, we have recognised the need for an ethical and moral framework that supports learning in later life while also contributing to good sustainable communities that build local and global consciousness and citizenship.

For this reason we have added inclusion, citizenship, happiness, and employability as further pillars relevant to both individual and community objectives.

In Part II of the report we give a number of cameo examples of good practice in the three thrusts we explore. These are community learning centres with Volkshochschulen in Germany, Kominkan in Japan, Senior Active Learning Centres in Taiwan and Neighbourhood Houses in Australia; dedicated institutions for seniors with the University of the Third Age in Singapore; and learning cities with examples from Suwon (Republic of Korea) Korea and Beijing (China). We also give examples from the UK and New Zealand as countries, like Singapore, that depend on civil society initiatives such as the U3A rather than government leadership.

The important societal role of networks of community learning centres in adapting to changing conditions is summed up in the paper on Kominkan in Japan where these institutions contribute to the stability of Japanese society in a time of dramatic change and which have become “the basis of a decentralized revitalization of Japanese society”. Japan’s efforts in progressing to Society 5.0 are underpinned by the important role of the Kominkan.

In Part III we return to the context discussed in the report with ageing populations and the looming challenge of the fourth industrial revolution, and provide some examples of ways of moving forward in response to these challenges. Life-course questions are addressed in the proposal for a fourfold category of stages in the adult life-course (18-25, 26-50, 51-75, 76+) which had been proposed in the Schuller and Watson report of the UK Inquiry into Lifelong Learning. The importance of integrating contributions from a range of stakeholders is a central theme with heritage learning and the role of cultural institutions given as an example of ways in which learning in later life can be enriched and deepened.

While much of the report explores learning and community relationships through several stages of development, the learning and health nexus has assumed particular importance following the 2015 WHO *World Report on Ageing and Health* which, like this SIG, also adopted a societal life-course approach with ageing viewed as “a rich new opportunity for both individuals and society”. As public health systems orientate to this societal approach, opportunities will arise for collaboration in empowering people to control their own lives, supported by communities, in adapting to changing conditions in the life-course.

Various interests identified by the WHO report are ones we share. These include the role of identity, relationships, bringing meaning and purpose to lives in the senior years, and happiness. There is much potential for collaboration in addressing such questions, such as collaboration between learning cities and healthy cities as has happened in Cork under its EcCoWell initiative with joint discussion of subjects such as mental health.

We give examples in Part III of progress in connecting learning, health, and community development such as the Cork EcCoWell initiative and the work of the Glasgow Centre for Sustainable, Healthy, Learning Cities and Neighbourhoods which has significant research funding to support collaborative research and capacity strengthening in the global south.

Overall, we have recognised the triple helix of learning, health, and community relationships as a priority in action towards good active ageing for all in a sustainable society.

The progression of learning and community relationships through several institutional stages has gone along with a broadening from local to global perspectives. As the UNESCO *Cork Call to Action for Learning Cities* reminds us, both are needed. While much has been achieved with the wave of 200 learning cities since 2015 joining the UNESCO GNLC (Global Network of Learning Cities), the situation around the world remains patchy with adult learning not seen as a priority in too many countries. The UK paper repeats the views of many in a call for “despair or hope”?

So will the challenge of ageing populations and the looming fourth industrial revolution serve as a catalyst for a general revitalisation of learning and community building in later life, as a step towards the universal learning society envisioned by the UNESCO Faure commission in 1972? The examples, and above all the progression of ideas, given in this report auger well for a further period of creative problem solving.

## KEY WORDS

Ageing Populations      Dislocation

Learning      Health      Community      Citizenship

Empowerment      Inclusion      Active Ageing      Transitions

## KEY POINTS

- The challenge of demographic change with ageing populations is occurring in an era of dislocation with the looming impact of the Fourth Industrial Revolution
- The conjuncture of the demographic and technological revolutions, along with other global shifts, should be addressed with policies and frameworks to sustain and enhance a human-centred empathic civilization in the machine-driven digital age
- The demographic revolution has progressed most in East Asia with insights and lessons available from the responses in these countries
- Learning in later life needs to be addressed in this context with the intermingling of individual and community objectives and strategies
- Community approaches to learning have progressed through several stages of development and stand at the threshold of a further stage
- Countries without networks of community learning centres or learning cities are disadvantaged in responding to the demographic revolution
- The triple-helix relationships of learning, health and community are central to good active ageing
- Learning in Later Life needs to build local and global consciousness and citizenship
- Heritage learning is important in building understanding and a sense of belonging in later life

## PART I — CONTEXT & CONCEPTUAL ASPECTS

### Context

The impact of demographic change with ageing populations in many countries has made it important that governments, and other stakeholders, return to the subject of learning in later life and find ways to enhance the contribution of learning and community building to good active ageing in sustainable communities.

Moreover, this demographic revolution is occurring at a time when revolutionary changes in digital technologies associated with artificial intelligence, robotics and bio-technologies are starting to impact on society so that governments face the perplexing question of the kind of society that will emerge - machine dominated or humanistic. This dilemma is enhanced by the questions of how to respond to climate change.

The founder and CEO of the World Economic Forum, Klaus Schwab, put the challenge in stark terms.

*The fourth industrial revolution has the potential to robotize humanity, and thus compromise our traditional sources of meaning – work, community, family, and identity. (Schwab, 114).*

Seniors have a particular stake in the outcome and should be active players in the transition to a different society. Demographic changes need to be addressed in this context.

The demographic changes have impacted most at this stage in East Asia with Japan, the Republic of Korea, and China most affected. Experience in these countries can provide useful guidance for countries where the impact will increase in coming years.

In this context, the PASCAL International Observatory and Friends of PASCAL (PIMA) have set up a Special Interest Group (SIG), chaired by Thomas Kuan (Singapore), to examine and report on learning in later life. This important subject was discussed at international meetings in Suwon South Korea and Beijing during August and September 2018, and then at Faro Portugal in October 2018. Members of the SIG participated in each of these meetings with one of the editors of this report leading this strand at the PASCAL Suwon International Conference.

The experience of these conferences confirmed the view that learning in later life must inevitably be considered in the context of the kind of society required to provide a good life for all in the emerging context of deep technological, economic, and social change. The dual dimensions of individual and society are intrinsically intertwined so that this report is focused on active ageing in a good society. While we see much merit in the concept of active ageing as developed by the World Health Organisation, our concern with the ethical and moral framework in a rapidly changing society led us to extend the concept to good active ageing to include these fundamental societal features that go beyond health. This is a report about ageing in a good society in a context of radical change and dislocation.

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## 1. Towards a conceptual and policy framework for good active ageing

Peter Kearns

The concept of active ageing was developed by the World Health Organisation (WHO) with three pillars supporting this concept. These pillars were: participation, health, and security. However, learning was not included in this concept as a separate foundation. While learning is relevant to each of these foundations for active ageing, and could be added as a further foundation, it is preferable to include learning in a broader approach that also takes account of ethical and moral foundations that are relevant in the emerging context of the fourth industrial revolution and demographic revolution, and the sustainability of communities in this context.

The WHO returned to the subject of health and ageing in its 2015 *World Report on Health and Ageing* which adopted a societal and life-course approach, this has much in common with the approach we advocate in this report. We return to the question of learning and health relationships in Part III where we advocate an approach framed around a triple helix of learning, health, and community.

We have termed this broader approach good active ageing. It adds learning, ethical and moral foundations to the three pillars of the initial WHO approach to active ageing. While the notion of healthy active ageing covers important dimensions of good ageing, we believe that certain necessary individual and community values should underpin policy in this phase of a good life. This approach was discussed by the learning in later life strand at the PASCAL Suwon conference based on my lead paper for this strand.

The need for a sound ethical and moral framework for a sustainable world order was set out in the 2015 UNESCO report *Rethinking Education*. This requirement assumes particular importance because of demographic change with ageing populations in the looming context of the fourth industrial revolution. As artificial intelligence and robotics impact on the economy and work, governments will face a broad spectrum of perplexing issues relating to such matters as decent work, quality of life, and the employability of people in this context of dramatic change. For this reason, we have included employability as a necessary foundation of good active ageing with many seniors choosing to work beyond traditional retiring ages, often in part time work.

### **Learning, ethical, & moral foundations**

The disruptive era of the emerging fourth industrial revolution with radical economic, technological and social changes requires that education, and other forms of learning, is based on sound ethical and moral foundations. This plea for a humanistic approach to education with an integrated approach based on “sound ethical and moral foundations” was reaffirmed by UNESCO in its 2015 report *Rethinking Education*. The humanistic values cited by UNESCO have been enunciated in a range of United Nations and UNESCO statements, and are reflected in the UN 2030 *Agenda for Sustainable Development*. The view that education should be transformative and contribute to a sustainable future has implications for learning in later life, as for all stages of the life course.

This approach of linking learning in later life with these fundamental values means that we see the need for a broad approach that connects education to objectives such as inclusion, citizenship, happiness that reflect these humanistic values played out in individual lives and in community development and sustainability at all levels. Harnessing learning to progress the achievement of the UN SDGs is an immediate objective. With each of the objectives we propose links to fundamental values such as human rights and dignity and social harmony in a diverse world.



These objectives need to be connected in an integrated approach, for it is clear that sustainable development requires integration.

The objectives we have chosen for learning in later life relate to our dual perspectives of individual and society. For example, while happiness is an appropriate objective for learning in later life for individuals, it is also a social objective for good communities. Active citizenship brings benefits to the individual in adding meaning and purpose to a life while it also contributes to social cohesion, resilience and harmony and the capacity of communities at all levels to progress towards a good sustainable future.

Adopting the dual perspective of individual and society, we have concluded that the following are the necessary foundations of good active ageing: happiness, inclusion, citizenship, fulfillment, and employability.

We propose adding these to the pillars of the WHO concept of active ageing that have inherent lifelong learning within.

**Happiness** has been seen as an attribute of good societies and lives from the ancient Greeks onwards. The emergence of the UN Sustainable Development Goals has focused attention on happiness as a goal and measure of social progress with annual world surveys of happiness now undertaken. This goal is particularly relevant to the senior years, in which there is often much to make for depression, isolation, loneliness and unhappiness. Disciplines such as positive psychology can contribute much to enhance good practice in this area.

**Citizenship** is fundamental to building a good sustainable world. This requires active citizenship with both local and global perspectives. Participation in local community projects can serve to build civic perspectives and global understanding and a necessary sense of empathy towards others. Seniors can contribute much from a lifetime of experience and can serve as community leaders in this necessary development.

**Inclusion** has long been an objective of lifelong learning policies. While progressing this objective is related to participation and citizenship; there are other issues, including discrimination and gender inequality that may need to be addressed. Understanding human rights needs to be brought into the culture of communities through learning and action.

**Fulfillment**, or learning to be, has been an objective of lifelong learning policy back to the UNESCO Faure (1972) and Delors (1996) reports. It should continue to be a prime objective of learning in later life so that learning continues to contribute to personal growth and satisfaction in an era of ageing populations.

**Employability** is a necessary objective for the reasons mentioned above with people now working later in life. The OECD recently gave the average retirement age for men as 72 with women a little lower. Fostering employability in the emerging era has implications for all sectors of education and training and policies for lifelong learning. Learning to learn should be seen as an essential competence to be pursued throughout life in changing conditions including the growing porous boundary between paid and unpaid work.

If a paradigm for good active ageing along these lines is agreed, the question then arises how we progress from the current situation towards such a vision. Part II of the report that follows gives a range of examples of current good practice, while Part III provides examples of ways of moving forward, particularly in progressing learning, health, and community objectives.

## PART II — GOOD PRACTICE EXAMPLES AND SOME ISSUES

Part II that follows provides ten examples of good practice in the provision of learning in later life in a number of contexts. While each of these approaches has brought benefits to large numbers of people, we also believe that the work of these institutions and programs can be extended in the looming context of demographic change and the fourth industrial revolution. We hope that this report will foster discussion of the present provision and the opportunities to enhance such provision for well-being and quality of life in ageing in a good society.

The ten examples below fall into several categories that provide a basis for discussion and analysis. Community Learning Centres (CLCs) have their roots in the folk high schools of the Scandinavian countries and are represented by *volkshochschulen* in Germany, *kominkan* in Japan, and neighbourhood houses in Australia. Other examples of CLCs are found in Asian countries such as Taiwan, Thailand, Bangladesh, Republic of Korea, Vietnam, Philippines and Mongolia.

These institutions are found under different names. They retain their origins in providing opportunities for learning throughout life and are not restricted to seniors. A key feature is the link made between learning and community so that these institutions can have a particular value in community building.

The University of the Third Age and Elder University examples show dedicated institutions meeting the needs of seniors. In some cases they are linked up to learning city initiatives so that the community connection is obtained in a different way to the CLC approach. Beijing provides an example of this with a community education and training network headed by a community college found in most neighbourhoods and with Elder Universities linked to community colleges.

The third approach illustrated in the case examples shows the influence of learning city and community initiatives. While the learning city is an old idea, the modern manifestation emerged from the work of OECD on lifelong learning and was given a boost by the European Union, PASCAL, and UNESCO. The UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities now has some 200 members following the First International Conference on Learning Cities held in Beijing in 2013.

Learning Cities have been active in the Republic of Korea with the Suwon Village Renaissance illustrating the possibilities for extending learning opportunities for seniors through a learning city initiative. The *Seoul 50+ Comprehensive Plan* illustrates how learning city ideas about integration and partnership can be applied in a city to extend learning opportunities, regardless of whether a city is a declared learning city.

The historical perspectives brought into Part II pose the question of where the current trends are taking us in the context discussed in the report. Some ways of moving forward are then taken up in Part III.

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### 2. Volkshochschulen in Germany

*Heribert Hinzen*

This is a short note on some specific aspects of the type of Volkshochschule that has evolved in Germany during the last 100 plus years. There are similarities to other forms of community-based adult education, both in Europe as well as in Asia, as with the Kominkan in Japan. It would be

interesting to put on a historical-comparative lens and look at their roots, developments, and turns in respect to structures, institutions, programs, activities and participants.

## History

The Volkshochschule (VHS), literally translated as the folkhighschool, more broadly as an adult education center, is an institution that provides a diverse range of learning opportunities throughout life, but especially for adults. It has similar traditions in other countries historically. Not only in the examples of the Nordic countries, but we should also see them in the context of workers' education, reading and study circles as well as university extension. In this respect they are part of the late enlightenment, today visible in strong components of citizenship education, and on the other hand of the industrial revolution, and thus seen in the context of employability and vocational training.

Of course there are also many differences and variations when comparing these community-based forms of adult education. One key element of the success story of the VHS was that it got strong support through the constitution of the first democracy in Germany after the end of WWI, and the collapse of the emperor system. The constitution of the Weimar Republic from 1919 has an article: "Adult education, including the Volkshochschule, should be supported from national, provincial, and community level." In that year the University and the VHS of Hamburg were founded and grounded in the same document.

There can be claimed a certain continuity and growth, however with a break during the Nazi period when they were banned, and with a different and diverse development during the period of a divided Germany. The reunification of the East and West of Germany in the early 1990s was based on the federal structure of the country bringing five new Länder (states, provinces) together with the eleven old ones, and a population of now about 80 million people. The VHS in each of the Länder built their own association (like Bavarian or Saxonian VHS Association), and those 16 Associations with their members comprise on the national level the Deutscher Volkshochschul-Verband (DVV).

## Today

The VHS have full statistical records for the last 55 years. They are collected by DIE, the German Institute for Adult Education – The Leibnitz Institute for Lifelong Learning (more via [www.die-bonn.de](http://www.die-bonn.de)). The most recent one is from 2016, all are part of the local structure of education and culture. Half are legal entities as associations, others are part of the municipality or act as not-for-profit companies. All receive funding via legislation on state level, support from local government, and fees of participants. More than 900 VHS with 3,000 sub-centers are situated in each village, town and city in Germany. The largest, by the way, is the VHS of Munich: the number of participants in the year 2016 reached 250,000 people.

All VHS together had more than 6 million participants in courses and another 3 million in lectures, excursions or study tours related to politics, languages, health, culture, and vocational skills. 42% of all participants are older than 50 years. 16% are older than 65 years, with a growth rate of 4.3% in the last decade. Those above 65 are especially coming for issues related to politics and environment, arts and culture, health and nutrition. Some older learners prefer to join interest groups while others join courses and lectures which are not related to specific generations.

Whereas the VHS structure is the largest within the system, or market, of adult education providers – it is not the only one. The Catholic and Protestant churches have their adult education associations, and so do the trade unions, the farmers associations, political foundations and

others. A look into the joint statistical reviews shows quite an interesting picture of communalities, similarities and differences between them; the most recent is also from the year 2016, and in respect to special offers for senior citizens they come up with 12% of such targeted courses with a diversity of forms and content to meet the learning interests of those in later life.

To understand the current situation in Germany even better it may be helpful to have a look at the figures which Prof. Schrader, Director of DIE, recently offered to a meeting of Directors of VHS in larger cities. An analysis of the statistics of the Federal Ministry of Education and Research show that in Germany about 3 million children are in kindergarten, 8 million in primary and secondary schools, 2.5 million in vocational training, and 3 million in colleges and universities; however in all sorts of adult education (general, civic, vocational, academic) combined there were 26.5 million people which shows the high importance of this sub-sector within the lifelong learning spectrum, and the relevance of the VHS contribution of about 9 million participants. This lifelong, lifewide and lifedep dimension calls for a high level of cooperation of all sub-sectors in education and training; and joint efforts with so many institutions in the social, economic and cultural sectors, like cities, companies, and museums.

### **Celebrations ahead**

Celebrating 100 Years of VHS will be a high level Event 2019 in Germany as many local VHS will be one hundred years old, while others are even older or some are younger. It will be celebrated de-centrally all across the country. However, the DVV is preparing for the major ceremonial event on 13 February 2019 in the Paul's Church in Frankfurt where the President of the Constitutional High Court will deliver the key note. A special stamp of the postal service to mark the occasion has been agreed by the Minister of Finance. See more via [www.dvv-vhs.de](http://www.dvv-vhs.de).

A major publication is under preparation where DVV and DIE are joining hands. A project team has selected 100 events and individual authors are writing respective stories to finally have a book on *Volkshochschule - 100 Years in 100 Stories*. In advance to this important year, the Editorial Board of the journal *Bildung und Erziehung* agreed early to have a thematic issue on 100 Years of Volkshochschule to discuss historical roots, provide evidence of developments, dig into urban as well as rural examples, and look into the future. This edition has just been printed, and is now distributed on the level of 2000 copies to all VHS, and representatives of Ministries, Parliaments, and other institutions in education and research. It is thus paving the way to prepare early to inform colleagues involved in adult education; in Germany, Europe and globally.

### **DVV International**

The Institute for International Cooperation of the German Adult Education, in short DVV International, was founded in 1969. We look therefore to a double jubilee – 100 Years of Volkshochschule and 50 Years of DVV International. This will be celebrated alongside the next Adult Education and Development Conference (AEDC) in May 2019 in Weimar.

This AEDC will specifically deal with adult education and learning within the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. During the last AEDC in 2017 in Tbilisi, Georgia a set of Key Messages on Adult Education/Community Learning Centers (AEC/CLC) where agreed upon, including: "Age and democracy: Children and youth should have the best education possible. However, adults make up the largest group in society, and adulthood is the longest period during life. AEC and CLC provide competencies, knowledge and skills for adults, even in later life".

A report on the outcomes of the conference is available from DVV International. In advance, an interesting collection of case studies "Adult education centers as a key to development –

challenges and success factors” was prepared and is distributed as part of the series on *International Perspectives in Adult Education* (see more via [www.dvv-international.de](http://www.dvv-international.de)).

DVV International is cooperating with some 200 partners in more than 30 countries through its regional and national offices. One of the activities is the support to local centers in adult education on three levels: interventions on the macro level as related to policy, legislation and financing; the meso level in dealing with the training of staff and infrastructural developments; to the micro level on the diversity of activities reflecting a variety of themes and courses for the different target groups including for those who are continuing their education and learning in later life.

### **Outlook**

Community-based adult education is an important component working towards a system of lifelong learning. Institutions of education, training and learning change in many respects in the age of globalisation and digitalisation. But, in as much as we believe in the importance of kindergarten, schools, vocational and higher education and struggle to support them as institutions, adult education needs an institutional back-up also. Policy, legislation and financing are required for each sub-sector of education. Only then VHS and other adult education centres can provide their professional services to those who want to continue their learning in later life.

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## **3. Kominkan: A new infrastructure of society in Japan**

*Atsushi MAKINO*

### **Social Education and Kominkan**

There is a system of social education in Japan that closely resembles the system of adult education and continuing education in the West.

Social education, as non-formal education, can go back to the original form of education; that is, teaching and inheriting traditions between generations or disciplines at home. But, as an institution, it has been developing along with the progress of the school education system.

In other words, social education has been playing a role in educating adults to understand the importance of disseminating school education more widely, educating the poor to incorporate them into the market as labour with purchasing power, encouraging economic development, and improving people's lives as well as the role of stabilising society while realising the necessity of national economic development.

It can be said that social education has been created as a system, which plays a part in promoting expansion and reproduction of the economy in a period of rapid increase of population in Japanese society. The Kominkan has been the main instrument for this purpose.

The Kominkan is an institution that has been conceived and popularised as a community facility for people and the revival and rebuilding of their hometowns, a society that was exhausted by World War II.

It was conceived in 1946, spread rapidly in Japan, with the number of about 19,000 facilities in the early 2000s. It is currently on a declining trend, but there are still about 12,400 Kominkans remaining which are legally prescribed.

In addition, over 100,000 facilities called residents' self-governed Kominkan have been opened and run by the local residents' autonomous organisations in the base level of the community.

Counting only Kominkans that are legally prescribed, there is one Kominkan in every 8,000 people; if the residents' self-governed Kominkans are counted, there is one Kominkan for every 1,000 people.

### **Brief History of Kominkan**

At the beginning, the Kominkan had the aim to rebuild the war-torn country, as a place to train people who love peace, and as a foundation of a peaceful and democratic country, a place where people gather and exchange information and ideas.

It has been conceived and popularised as a facility to create a new democratic and peaceful society from the grassroots.

The Kominkan was established by a notice from the secretary of the Ministry of Education, with all the administrative areas of the residents' lives involved.

In any small village in Japan where a Kominkan has been built, the residents use it to discuss issues in the community and possible solutions, they learn and exchange knowledge and practice to create a new hometown.

The Kominkan in the initial plan was a social education institution, a social entertainment institution, an industry promotion institution, a democratic training place, a village tearoom, a cultural exchange institution, and a next generation training institution in new hometowns.

Later, as Japanese society recovered and the economy developed, with people heading from rural areas to cities, and social divisions of labour proceeding, the Kominkan also changed its character and role from the comprehensive institution of local reconstruction to the institution that provided citizens opportunities for culture education.

Throughout the economic growth period, as all Japan urbanised, the Kominkan changed to a place of learning that provided courses on cultural liberties to citizens and residents rather than a comprehensive institution for rebuilding the community.

Therefore, the Kominkan was like a three-storey building. The first floor is a place where lonely residents of the city freely enter for exchanges, the second floor is a place where residents form groups and circles, learning freely, and the third floor offers opportunities for more advanced cultural learning. This is a place that citizens proceed to for advanced learning to solve social problems.

Even now, in Kominkans nationwide, 380 thousand courses have been established and used by over 200 million people a year. This means that every citizen in Japan uses Kominkan activities and courses more than twice each year.

### **Challenges that Kominkan faces and its new role**

Although Kominkans have developed this way, today we face new challenges. It has become necessary to create a new social system in an aged society with a high declining birth-rate and a shrinking population society that Japan is facing now.

According to predictions, the population of Japan which is currently about 127 million people will decrease to 97 million people in 2050, to 87 million people in 2060, to about 40 million by the end of the century. The aging rate now is 28 percent, this will reach to 33 percent in 2040, 42 percent in 2060.

In addition, it is said that dementia patients will be 10 percent of the total population in 2030, and those who will be in need of long-term care will reach 10 percent of the total population in 2050.

The expanding population, which is the premise of economic development so far, will be lost, and with the declining birth-rate and aging population, the great need for nursing care will increase significantly.

In the face of this situation, the Kominkan system is attracting attention again.

The Kominkan is needed now to change from the place of culture education, to the place where people in the local community once again gather, learn and exchange, conscious of regional tasks and challenges, to develop practical solutions, more specifically to help each other, because this is required to rebuild the local community, to manage their own lives, and to sustain the autonomy of people.

Today, the Kominkan system is contributing to the stability of Japanese society while strengthening its character as autonomous learning and town planning institutions in the most fundamental residents' organisation of Japanese society.

In this context, the residents themselves have become a leading part of society, to manage local communities autonomously, and acquire the joy of realising their own thoughts with others in concentrating creativity and ingenuity. In other words, it is strengthening its character as an institution which is becoming the basis of a decentralised revitalisation of Japanese society.

In Aya-cho, Miyazaki Prefecture, where the residents' practices in Kominkan have been very active, the local residents created a new workforce to improve their lives, support cultural exchanges and give parenting support, creating in this way a social infrastructure. As a result, it is known that the administrative burden for the state is extremely small.

In the city of Iida, Nagano Prefecture where Kominkan activities are also very active and residents' autonomy is deeply rooted, the residents are said to "do Kominkan". They themselves have played a leading role in community building.

In the same Nagano prefecture, in Matsumoto City there is one self-governed Kominkan for 80 inhabitants. Social welfare activities of the residents themselves are promoted, and safe and secure urban development has been propelled by the residents.

The Kominkan system in the era of lifelong learning which has entered the social stage where Japan's population shrinks, it is strengthening its character as a social infrastructure which creates the path to a new autonomy for residents through their Kominkan.

## 4. Australian Neighbourhood Houses and Centres

Tracey Ollis<sup>1</sup>

### **Establishment of Neighbourhood Houses: Role and rationale**

Neighbourhood Houses are located in every state and territory in Australia. They are generally small to medium sized organisations, community-managed, not-for-profit education sites offering formal and informal adult education programs and community development programs in local and supportive environments (Rooney 2011). Neighbourhood Houses are known by several different names, including Neighbourhood Learning Centres, Community Houses, and Living and Learning Centres. For the purposes of this paper, these places will be called Neighbourhood Houses.

There is some confusion about the first origins of Neighbourhood Houses in Australia. Some early commencement emerged through community collaboration and resident and community action centred in inner city Sydney in the early 1960's. The anti-development activism was concerned about job losses, speculative land development, changes to employment on the waterfront, change to working class housing in the inner-city areas. Also, the advent of the Australian Assistance Plan (AAP), initiated by the Whitlam Federal Government in 1973, provided funding for a range of community development and social services that would devolve the responsibility for decision making to regionally based committees and communities. Under the AAP, several Neighbourhood Houses received seed funding and employed community development workers.

### **Community development: Philosophy and practice**

Neighbourhood houses:

- have a broader reach than just the provision of adult education;
- are unique neighbourhood-based non-government organisations, founded on a strong commitment to community development and social justice;
- bring local communities together to initiate responses to local community and education needs;
- are influenced by the philosophy of community development; and
- seek to empower individuals and community by providing local community-based activities and adult education.

Their historical connection to anti-development activism and the women's movement have informed the community development philosophy and social change origins of the houses.

### **Adult learning in Neighbourhood Houses**

Along with community development practice, adult learning and adult learning programs are central to much of the work that occurs in Neighbourhood Houses. As adult education providers, Neighbourhood Houses comprise the largest single organisation type within the Adult Community Education (ACE) sector in Australia. They are important sites of formal and informal learning for people in local communities, including women, second chance learners, later life learners, learners with a disability, and people from CALD (Cultural and Linguistically Diverse) backgrounds. There is an extensive range of adult education programs provided in Neighbourhood Houses in Australia.

They are sites of formal learning and provide nationally recognised accredited qualifications, and pre-accredited courses such as general education, English as a second language, courses in hospitality and tourism, aged care, childcare and others. The choice of accredited courses offered

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<sup>1</sup> Ollis, T., Starr, K., Ryan, C. & Harrison, U. (2018 in press). "Learning across the lifespan: Lifelong learning in Neighbourhood Houses in Australia". *Australian Journal of Adult Learning* 58(3).



by the houses generally responds to the local employment needs in industry and also responds to skills shortages in areas of industry growth. Some Neighbourhood Houses have become Registered Training Organisations for these purposes. Formal learning is curriculum-based with specified outcomes, and conducted by a teacher for a specified period of time. A recent study in Victoria identified three groups of learners who participated in Neighbourhood Houses:

- Second Chance learners;
- Older or later life learners; or
- Adults who participated in personal interest learning.

Data from this research revealed that many of the learners in Neighbourhood Houses had the following characteristics and experiences:

- are early school leavers;
- face equity issues in terms of access to skill development, courses and learning opportunities (including access to computers), technology and the internet;
- often have negative perceptions of themselves as learners due to negative prior learning experiences;
- are assisted to build their confidence, develop new knowledge, skills and networks in order to become successful learners and workers;
- learn, but also volunteer in Neighbourhood Houses, gaining further skills and knowledge through social learning opportunities;
- successfully transition from education programs in Neighbourhood Houses into work and further education; and
- envisage a future in further formal learning, including acquiring higher education degrees.

### Scope, service provision and funding

There is no national program of collecting data on Neighbourhood Houses and their activities in Australia. Primarily because every Neighbourhood House is funded by their respective state or territory governments and the national peak body does not have any recurrent funding that would enable them to undertake national data collection. Further, data on Neighbourhood Houses is included in the ACE national data collection, listed broadly as community education providers, which does not differentiate between the type of ACE provider.

Victoria and NSW have the largest numbers of Neighbourhood Houses. The data from Victoria is comprehensive and far reaching, there is also data from their Adult Council of Further Education (ACFE) on adult community education and hard to reach learners. In 2011, the Association of Neighbourhood Houses and Learning Centres (ANHLC) conducted the first national survey of Neighbourhood Houses, the findings from this study revealed each week 320,000 people participate in Neighbourhood Houses with 21,300 people volunteering (ANHLC, 2011). The number of houses and Centres are listed below.

Table 1: Number of houses and centres in each state and Territory (ANHLC, 2011)

States	Reported number of Neighbourhood Houses & Centres	Number of survey responses
Australian Capital Territory	22	5
New South Wales	250	179
Northern Territory	Unclear	0

Queensland	162	34
South Australia	96	42
Tasmania	34	26
Victoria	380	222
Western Australia	72	30
Total	1016	538

Further, the survey found the geographical locations of the houses were comprised of 47 percent located in the metropolitan regions, 26 per cent were located in regional centers or large country towns and 27 percent located in rural or remote locations. The survey found women are the majority of users of Neighbourhood Houses with those aged between 45 & 64 years most highly represented, nine per cent of houses engage people on low incomes, socially isolated people or those at risk of social isolation in some way and with people with low levels of formal education and training. Neighbourhood Houses are local community organisations which provide education and training, recreation, health and wellbeing, arts and crafts, children’s activities, support programs, literacy mediation, access to computers and internet, childcare, gardening, employment support, drop-in, community markets, events and exhibitions, social enterprises, and Men’s Sheds.

#### **Their funding: what is the source of funding? Is it regarded as adequate?**

Most Neighbourhood Houses operate from a community management model, are not-for-profit, community-based organisations. They are linked through a federation model of state-wide peak organisations. Neighbourhood Houses are funded primarily through state and local government in Australia, some receive federal government funding, some are unfunded. Many are reliant on small grants and funding from philanthropic trusts, or income from membership fees (ANHLC, 2011). All of the state peak groups relate to the Australian Neighbourhood Houses Association (ANHCA) which is the national peak body for Neighbourhood Houses in this continent (see <http://www.anhca.asn.au/>).

#### **Later life learners in Neighbourhood houses and Centres**

It is commonly assumed that learners in later life are learning for personal fulfilment, socialisation and recreation purposes rather than employment related purposes. However, a recent study into later life learners in Neighbourhood Houses in Victoria, the state with the majority of Neighbourhood Houses, challenged this assumption. Instead, a multiplicity of reasons, including, but not limited to, personal interest, socialisation and employment, were motivators for later life learners’ participation in a broad range of learning activities, such as craft, art, healthy living, and other creative pursuits. There were many examples of later life learners seeking to increase their computer literacy, using iPads and smart phones to better communicate with friends and relatives, confidently use search engines and feel competent to use online facilities such as banking and social security. Some were continuing to build their English language skills to be able to engage more confidently with the world around them. The research describes these learners as later life learners but, for some, there was an element of learning to transition to new directions. The characteristics of this group of learners are:

- A diverse group of learners;
- Often, but not always, post-paid-work;
- Often, but not always, over 55 years of age; and
- Motivated to learn for a variety of reasons.

The data from the later life learners revealed that:

- Many had not completed secondary school;
- Some had goals to continue studying in higher education;
- Many developed supportive learning relationships and new friendships;
- Some had employment goals they were working towards;
- They learned both formally and informally in the space of the Neighbourhood House;
- All of the participants found the flexible learning environment of the house welcoming;
- Some gained further knowledge skills and expertise through volunteering; and
- Most were lifelong learners, they enjoyed learning and found it fulfilling.

In this study the motivations of the later life learners can be broadly described as; learning for life skills, learning for personal interest, learning for new directions, learning for active citizenship, learning for professional development, and learning for social engagement.

### **Are there ways in which their work could be strengthened in providing for learning in the stages of later life? Are there issues that need to be addressed?**

In Australia, we currently have no national data collection process for ACE and statewide data collection varies from state to state. This is primarily because Neighborhood Houses main funding sources are state and local governments. On a policy level, ACE needs greater recognition as the fourth sector of education in Australia, particularly for its work in adult learning across a lifespan, with second chance learners, early school leavers and older learners. Australia does not currently have a policy on lifelong learning and the last *Ministerial Statement* on adult learning occurred in 2008. Adult Learning Australia, the professional association for the sector, is arguing for greater recognition of ACE of which the Neighbourhood Houses sector is the largest provider, and declared 2018 the Year of Lifelong Learning in Australia.

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## **5. University of Third Age (U3A) as a resource for later life learning**

*Thomas Kuan*

What is U3A?

As the world population grows older, learning becomes more important everywhere, including in 'smart' societies in which 'artificial intelligence' dominates. But, not every older person has access to learning. In the 2017 GRALE III (*Third Global Report on Adult Learning and Education*) monitoring survey, only 13 countries gave priority to their "senior citizens/retired people (third-age) education" (see Annex below). As people are living longer with an additional "25 year life bonus", many third agers (from age 50 – 90+ years-old) participated in adult education centres, villages' centres, clan associations, senior/elders learning centres, community centres, resident associations and universities of the third age (U3As). This paper provides a brief introduction to networks of U3As, and the activities of a U3A in Singapore's urban landscape.

U3As or Universities of the Third Age are community-based learning centres where third agers share and learn from each other to achieve life fulfilment. Third agers made up of 900 million in 2015 (and growing to 1.4 billion by 2030; *World Population Ageing Report 2015*) and need learning as part of further careers, and for self-satisfaction. In today's Fourth Industrial Revolution era, U3As offer informal and non-formal learning hubs or spaces for communities to "share life experiences, skills and wisdom" with each other and with younger generations.

The original concept of U3A started in Toulouse, France in 1973 when learning was attached to a local university; today this model is popular in continental Europe. It led to the formation of AIUTA (*Association Internationale des Universités du Troisième Âge/International Association of Universities of the Third Age*).

The British approach, however, is that learning need not be attached to universities, and that learners can be teachers, and teachers be learners. This model of community learners, started in the 1980s, has been adopted by U3As in Asia and Africa. The British model of Universities of the Third Age (U3As) as autonomous self-help groups, not attached to institutes of higher learning, with minimum or no governmental support, is often championed by ordinary older adults rather than experts.

A brief account of U3A and its worldwide movement is as follows:

- 1) French Model – AIUTA (4,000 universities). Started in late 1973 and formed the AIUTA (*Association Internationale des Universités du Troisième Âge*), ([www.aiu3a.org](http://www.aiu3a.org));
- 2) British Model – over 1,000 U3As and 400,000 members in UK. Started in early 1980s ([www.u3a.org.uk](http://www.u3a.org.uk));
- 3) Chinese Model – 60,000 U3As and more than 7.0 million members (*Signpost Issue 208*). Started in 1980s, the China Association of Universities for the Aged (CAUA) is the umbrella of all elderly colleges in China;
- 4) Australia Model - started 1984. Today, it has about 300 U3As with about 100,000 members. U3A Alliance Australia is the national network of U3A groups in Australia ([www.u3aaa.org](http://www.u3aaa.org));
- 5) New Zealand Model - about 83 U3As ([www.u3a.nz](http://www.u3a.nz));
- 6) Indian Model – 129 registered senior citizens associations with 1.1 million members ([www.seniorcitizensdelhi.org](http://www.seniorcitizensdelhi.org));
- 7) Japan Model – 5 U3As (e.g. U3A-Osaka, Japan - [www.myu3a.org/groups/osaka.htm](http://www.myu3a.org/groups/osaka.htm));
- 8) Korea Model – 2-3 U3As (e.g. U3A AK Bundang started in 2017 – <https://cafe.naver.com/u3a>);
- 9) Thailand Model – 3-5 U3As, about 4,000 members. U3A-Thailand started in 2013, ([www.edu.chula.ac.th/u3athailand](http://www.edu.chula.ac.th/u3athailand)) and Silpakorn U3A-Thailand in 2017 ([www.su3a-thailand.com](http://www.su3a-thailand.com));
- 10) Singapore Model – 2 U3As. U 3<sup>rd</sup> Age started in 2012 and currently has more than 3,000 ‘members or Friends’. ([www.u3rdagesingapore.org](http://www.u3rdagesingapore.org) / [www.facebook.com/u3rdage](https://www.facebook.com/u3rdage)).
- 11) Other models are found in: Nepal, South Africa, Malaysia, and Indonesia,

Third Age learning is one big family, linked and e-linked by common platforms of active ageing activities contributing to eco-social landscapes, whether it is the French Model AIUTA (International Associations of UTAs) alliances, the British Model of U3As network, the Chinese community colleges, or other Asian learning centres, they are contactable on the internet. Newly formed U3As can be added onto the international portal ‘My U3A’ ([www.myu3a.org](http://www.myu3a.org)), managed by World U3A Services.

Today, U3As are communities of learners dedicated to the promotion of active ageing by participation in social activities. They combine the traditional community learning ‘spirit’ of sharing knowledge and information, and listening to others’ stories as a holistic activity, organised by older adults, and for older adults. It is a social manifestation of third agers finding meaning in shared learning through activities and community bonding. With more retiring baby boomers, social interactions are important for mental and physical wellbeing. As either physical or virtual

groups as U3As evolved into different models based on country concepts of active ageing, each promotes later life learning aspirations.

U3A is an international movement that has the following benefits:

1. U3A offers informal learning where learners are interdependent in learning together, and at same time each U3A is independent in its operations;
2. U3As are NGOs that offer opportunities to personalized learning on 'not what you should learn' but on 'what you like to learn';
3. U3A learners are autonomous learners seeking meaning in their life satisfaction;
4. Later life learning includes digital literacy to prevent 'digital divide' communities;
5. U3A is a learning hub to engage inclusive ageing learners for their sustainable development;
6. U3As can become important hubs/spaces to combat fake news, reduce waste, achieve harmonious living, and encourage intergenerational learning; and
7. U3As are depositories of indigenous knowledge that can contribute to the knowledge creation process.

### **A Study of an Asian U3A**

A U3A is set up according to the social, cultural and economic landscapes of its community. A study of a U3A in urban Singapore shows the quest for later life learning is strong among third agers who believe in volunteerism and the 'self-help' rule. Singapore, which has about 440,000 older adults or 13 percent of the population (*Population Trends* 2018, <https://www.sigstat.gov.sg>), will become one of the super-aged societies by 2026 (United Nations *World Population Prospects: The 2017 Revision*, <https://www.un.org/development/desa/publications/world-population-prospects-the-2017-revision.html>).

Since January 2016, the government in its effort to improve the skills of its population has implemented a skills development and lifelong learning grant known as 'SkillsFuture Credit' of US\$385 (S\$500) for all citizens from ages 25 to 90 years old. This is to nudge citizens to take ownership of learning ([www.skillsfuture.sg/Credit](http://www.skillsfuture.sg/Credit)) by subsidising skills development course fees from approved training centres.

The Singapore U<sup>3rd</sup> Age is a not-for-profit entity, set up in 2012 in Singapore. The government 'SkillsFuture Credit' policy has motivated third age citizens to take up leisure learning (even if not subsidised) by using their own money and self-help voluntary efforts. Lifelong learning activities have attracted more than 3,000 subscriber-names (called 'friends'), 80 percent of whom have attended and/or participated in organised activities. It has a non-fee paying membership, as it believes that friendship should not be based on just money, but balanced with relationships. Its vision is: 'Meaningful Living Through Lifelong Learning'.

Its mission embraces:

U<sup>3rd</sup> Age (University of the Third Age) encourages senior citizens to seek meaning in their life through lifelong learning and social networking. It is by sharing experiences and making friends – regardless of whether they are rich, highly educated, or had held high job positions – that happy and active ageing is achieved.

U<sup>3rd</sup> Age is an environment where respect for life as a learning journey is found –

making mistakes, missing opportunities, and learning to understand each other's wisdom and cultural values. It is also the place where café conversations on health care, wealth creation, and spiritual development are held. It is such activities that contribute to one's developmental learning.

U 3<sup>rd</sup> Age is a member of the U3A Asia Pacific Alliance which organised International U3A Conferences from 2010-2016 in collaboration with host countries. Currently, it is on the editorial team of the virtual *Signpost* e-Newsletter (<http://www.worldu3a.org/signpost>), which reaches out to all its members. U 3<sup>rd</sup> Age is connected internationally to U3As worldwide via messages and emails with AIUTA, and U3As in India, Thailand, Japan, Korea and others. It supports and assists in setting up U3As, particularly in ASEAN countries, and regularly receives overseas visitors to share learning activities.

Through its activities of positive and uplifting 'Peers-Learning-Platform' of SMS (Seniors-Meet-Seniors) discussions; retired and near-retirement third agers can share their legacies for families, friends and communities. These interactions also allow gratitude for what they have contributed, especially in their working life. Intergenerational bonding has allowed third agers to act as role-models promoting critical thinking and showing respect for others' culture to benefit children (including grandchildren), youths and young adults.

A sample of some SMS topics are: Introduction to Knowledge Café, The Gurteen Knowledge Café Tip Sheet, Discussion Selection of Future Topics, Volunteerism, Relationship Banking, End of Life, What Is Happiness?, Let's Talk About Dementia, The Language Every Body Speaks, Midlife – Hoax or Real, Establishing Relationships, Reminiscing, Share Good Reads, Successful Ageing Attitudes, Healthy Communication, 'Live, Don't Just Exist', The Golden Years – Loving It, What Is Consciousness?, Myths of Ageing, Who Am I When Nobody's Watching, Living A Purposeful Life After Retirement, What Is Love?, Who You Are, Really?, Giver Or Taker, Su3a Thailand, What Is Your Purpose in Later Life, Movies & Me, Lessons Learnt In Life, Dealing With Fear, How Wired Are We?, Retirement, to Singapore Stories.

Through its activities of Arts & Crafts, Guided Autobiography, Story Writings, Drama and Dances, Qigong Exercises, and 'Snakes and Ladders' Game (a mental wellness game), U 3<sup>rd</sup> A encourages lifelong learning and sparks third agers' passions to share their stories and life experiences to make a vibrant learning community.

## Conclusions

The UN Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) mandates that all learners acquire knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development and lifestyles. By that year, this author hopes that AI (Artificial Intelligence) will positively influence lifelong (including later life) learning. As older adults will form a huge population of about 1.4 billion by 2030 (*World Ageing Report*, 2015), it will be a powerful socio-eco mass for organised adult education and learning platforms. In mature economies, more older adults will be literate and retired (either formally or forced), and their increasing numbers find themselves with more time to catch up on their learning. Their wealth of life experiences, socio-eco and cultural-philosophical knowledge will help to balance stresses living in AI and robot-driven communities, for meaningful living.

As Western and Asian cultures have different concepts of active ageing (Richards, C., Makaphol, J. & Kuan, T., in press) it is therefore important to use tested concepts of U3A as a resource for later

life learning. Countries with rising older population growth, will need to ‘sound the alarm’ and prepare for a paradigm shift in older adult learning. Surprisingly, it is the youth and young adults today who want to do something for their countries’ ageing issues that will fit in with their indigenous learning centres and elderly colleges.

U3As as a resource can help link up existing learning hubs to give recognition to voluntary efforts and indigenous knowledge. For example, eight senior learning centres formed Su3a-Thailand in April 2018. This was formed and hosted by the Silpakorn University of the Third Age with a motto to learn new skills, share life experiences and nurture close relationships for living a good life, through learning.

U3As offer connectivity through exchange visits and sharing of each other’s social and cultural lives. It builds relationships with young adults and children through intergenerational activities. It provides learning hubs to counter boredom and lifeless idling or wasting one’s time. Through U3A activities, third agers can reflect on their ‘conscious ageing’ for self-developmental learning in digitalised landscapes.

## Annex

In the 2017 GRALE III (*Third Global Report on Adult Learning and Education [ALE]*) monitoring survey, only 13 countries gave priority to their “senior citizens/retired people third-age education” as one of their five target groups of potential learners in their national ALE policies.

Countries that give priority to third age / later life learning in their national policies.

1. Algeria,
2. **China,**
3. Cuba,
4. Lebanon,
5. Lithuania,
6. **Malaysia,**
7. Morocco,
8. **Nepal,**
9. Poland,
10. Russian Federation,
11. **Sri Lanka,**
12. **Thailand,**
13. Ukraine

TOTAL – 13 Countries (5 countries are in Asia, in bold above)  
Number of UNESCO Members: 195.

## 6. Towards the '100 Years Lifelong Learning City Suwon' : The Happiness Story of Homo-hundred

*Choi Un Shil*

Suwon has the potential to be a widely recognised global learning city by harnessing the power of learning towards building a sustainable, resilient city. With its global recognition, the city was awarded the 'UNESCO Learning City Award' in 2017. The city was designated as a child-friendly city by UNICEF, an age-friendly city by WHO, and a women-friendly city by Korea's Ministry of Gender.

The city's unique story of being a learning city comes from its long history of building a learning culture and harnessing its powerful high-tech potential for sustainable development. Suwon has dual faces of 'old and new' and 'slow but fast' due to the long history and also futuristic high-tech smart city. The historical City of Suwon was built by King Jeongjo 220 years ago as Korea's first planned city. In Suwon, we have a splendid wall surrounding the city called Hwaseong Fortress, which was designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1997. Suwon is also famous for being the home city of Samsung Electronics headquarters, a global IT leader super enterprise.

Efforts to multiply the number of learning venues were driven by the belief that a library, social or community learning centre should be no more than a '**5 Minute Walk**' from every citizen's home'. The city encourages citizens to adopt learning policies and to know the joy of learning. In Suwon, everyone can be a learner, and almost everyone is. With more than 790,000 learners in a city of 1.23 million, Suwon's Learning City strategy has dramatically increased the number of inhabitants participating in non-formal and informal learning activities. Between 2011 and 2016, the city more than doubled the number of people taking part in a variety of learning opportunities.

A leading philosophy of the city is '100 years lifelong learning city' according to the UNESCO's life-long, life wide, life deep, learning idea. The city adheres to the principle of 'learning from the cradle to the grave' in the era of long lives. As for the strategies to realise this idea, the city pursues any-time, any-where, any-one, any-how open learning for all citizens. Not merely quantitative increases in learning opportunities, priority is given to the qualitative values for 'joy of learning'. By promoting all citizens' participation in happiness-oriented learning and sharing their talents with each other, people of Suwon really enjoy learning throughout life. Currently, the city is running more than 8,500 learning programs in over 600 lifelong learning facilities.

### **Oriental Virtues Village School 'Hyang-Gyo (In Korean)'**

As the historical city of culture, by paying special attention to promoting informal classes centring on the humanities in general, and the city's historical heritage in particular, it is Suwon's aim to receive the title of 'Outstanding Humanities Specialized Destination' from the Republic of Korea.

In Suwon there are still many traditional oriental village humanity schools remaining, so called 'Hyang Gyo'. Loyalty to the country and respect for parents have been the most important virtues for Koreans. Hyang Gyo, a traditional village virtue/humanities school played a central role in promoting these oriental values. Hyang Gyo was established in 1281 to teach local students. The school still exists in Suwon and is giving citizens lessons about loyalty, respect for parents, and liberal arts.

Every Autumn, Suwon City hosts the Suwon Hwaseong Cultural Festival to celebrate the city's culture and history. During the Festival, the King Jeongjo Tomb Parade Re-enactment takes place in Seoul and Suwon, attracting 750,000 participants. In this way, we honour King Jeongjo's affection and respect for his father.



### **‘Whatever School’ for later life learning**

There are a variety of unique and innovative learning projects in the Suwon Learning City. One of the most widely known projects is ‘Whatever School’ (Morado Hakgyo, in Korean), particularly targeting retired senior citizens. The ‘Whatever School’ enables senior citizens to study whatever they like, adapting its program and curriculum to suit the needs and demands of the elderly. Senior learners can freely learn new things, communicate with their colleagues as classmates, or even plan a new business with the help of a ‘Second Chance New Job Creating Incubating Centre’.

This project focuses on group intelligence creating activities such as ‘Second Life Class’ for the retired and senior groups. It includes a field work factory program ‘Tortoise Art Craft’, free discussion buzz groups (‘Waggle Waggle Twitter Forum’), a monthly civic academy for a humanity discourse (‘Woldam’), a learning cafe, study circle and ‘human library’. One of the valuable characteristics of this project is self-organised and self-managed programs by the citizen, for the citizen, and of the citizen. Most of the participants are ordinary citizens. They are the real owner and leader of this project. The city just supports, motivates and facilitates participants to join. That is also one of the determining factors for success.

### **‘Whoever School’ - Anybody Can Teach and Learn**

One more brand project of the Suwon Learning City is ‘Whoever School’ (Nuguna Hakgyo in Korean). It is a citizen-led school where everybody is a teacher and everybody is a student. Whoever School is truly valuable because of the citizens’ active engagement is critical in realising the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Whoever School (Anyone School) is open to anyone who wishes to teach or learn. It encourages participation by enabling citizens to share their skills, and to engage with a huge variety of topics.

It’s not a formal education school, but the symbol of every citizens’ self-organized, self-managed voluntary learning community. They focus on inter-generational and cross-topical learning for all. They encourage participants to enable self and others to become both self-tutors and self-learners. Teachers and learners are ordinary people.

Anybody is welcomed to this extraordinary lifelong learning school as the teacher, coach, mentor, consultant and also at the same time as the learner. They participate in this interesting flipped learning course, as the honourable master not the simple guest or client. This project is also recognised as one of the best methods to resolve the issue of inequality in access to learning; creating jobs and improving senior citizens’ life skills and competencies for second chance employability.

### **‘A Never Ending Story’ for the Future Learning City**

The City of Suwon is revitalising itself with the weapon called ‘learning’. Suwon has striven to make all citizens happy from cradle to grave with its pool of strong learning resources and enlightened manpower policies. Suwon has taken giant steps towards realising its vision of becoming a city without illiteracy, and where learning is easily accessible to all. Suwon has facilitated the emergence of a comprehensive learning ecosystem across the city. The city has developed lifelong learning through variety of lifelong learning facilities, school and libraries as well as community learning centres. With the foundation of a ‘Whatever School’ for the later life of senior citizens, and ‘Whoever School’ for anybody, lifelong learning policies and resources benefit Suwon inhabitants throughout their whole lives.

This never ending story of the learning city Suwon will be continued. Suwon’s long parade towards being a learning city for life will go on and on. In the big picture, the city will continuously

fulfil the UNESCO global learning society vision and ideas realised through local actions. Suwon aspires to progress from a good to great learning city in a sustainable learning society.

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## 7. Despair or hope? Later life learning in the UK

*Alexandra Withnall*

The United Kingdom (UK) consists of four countries – England, Wales, Scotland and the province of Northern Ireland. Since 1999, a range of powers, including responsibility for education, have been transferred or devolved from central government in London to the Scottish Government, the National Assembly for Wales and the Northern Ireland Assembly (although for complex political reasons, the latter is currently suspended). Since the 1980s, neo-liberalism has been the dominant economic ideology in the UK, as elsewhere, resulting in a free market approach to policy making across the board. As a consequence of the global financial crisis of 2007-8, there has been a period of economic recession with austerity measures being introduced in 2008. Currently, the Conservative government is negotiating the UK's exit from membership of the 28-country European Union (EU), a move known as Brexit and which is predicted to have far-reaching consequences for various aspects of life.

There has never been an official policy on the provision of educational opportunities for older people in the UK but the Welsh, Scottish and Northern Irish governments have all produced policy documents relating to their older populations emphasising the need to keep people actively engaged in their communities as they grow older; having access to lifelong learning opportunities is particularly stressed in the Welsh document. However, in respect of adult learning in the UK generally, there has been a sharp drop in participation in formal education among the over-50s in recent years as much of the adult learning budget has been diverted into prescribed skills training and development in order to ensure that the workforce is a competitive one. The result has been the disappearance of much traditional adult education provision in centres, colleges and universities (although the University of Strathclyde in Scotland has maintained its ground-breaking provision of courses and classes for older people). In spite of the emphasis on further training for those already in the workforce, evidence suggests that older workers are largely excluded from such training opportunities and that participation anyway tends to decline with age especially where jobs are seen as monotonous and boring.

However, the news is not all bad. As more formal provision disappears, examples of more innovative learning activities for older people can be detected across the UK. The best-known example is that of the University of the Third Age (U3A) which now has over 1000 branches and more than 400,000 members nationally. The organisation is completely voluntary in that members use their knowledge and experience to teach and learn from each other. A wide variety of subjects are offered overall ranging from Classical Greek to Scottish Country Dancing, at very low cost. Participation in the U3A has been shown to provide a sustainable, positive approach to ageing built on its principles of skill sharing and group learning and as an antidote to loneliness in later life. More recently, the Men's Sheds movement, which had its origins in Australia, has also begun to make an impact in various parts of the UK. Men's Sheds offer their members (known as Shedders) the opportunity to pursue practical interests, to learn and share skills and knowledge whilst making social connections and developing new friendships.

Museums and galleries have also been investigating the ways in which they can engage older people in their activities. As an example, the Dulwich Picture Gallery in London has attempted to reach out to older isolated people through its *Prescription for Art* Programme. Its partnerships

with local doctors' surgeries have enabled GPs and nurses to refer older patients to the gallery where they are able to participate in creative workshops. The gallery also offers a programme called *Good Times: Art for Older People*, which has been shown to have positive physical, mental and social outcomes for participants as well as enriching their lives and the lives of families, carers and even gallery staff themselves. Museums and galleries elsewhere in the UK have begun to explore the different ways in which they might help older people reach their full potential, keep them vitally involved in their local communities and even promote their rights as they age. Some libraries and archives have also been active in offering learning opportunities to older people; some such organisations have investigated the possibilities of taking their activities out into the community to reach more isolated older people who would not usually visit such places. Sadly, severe financial constraints currently militate against this in some areas of the country, especially where funding for libraries has been largely withdrawn or is under threat.

It has been widely acknowledged that people over the age of 55 are less likely than younger generations to be online, although this will change over time as successive generations move into later life having been accustomed to using computers all their lives. Digital Unite is an independent organisation which initially worked across the UK to help people, and older people in particular, to use computers with confidence and to understand and use the Internet and other digital technology. Digital Unite has now developed a Digital Champions Network which assists organisations such as Housing Associations and charities to better equip their staff and volunteers to provide digital skills support to clients both in groups and in a one-to-one situation. Digital Champions have access to a range of courses that include essentials for engaging with older people and understanding the importance of 'digital fun' for them so that they can explore hobbies and interests as well as reconnecting with past interests and memories through confident use of the Internet.

A further development in the UK has been the expansion of intergenerational learning although the debate around generations can be complex in view of changes in family structures. Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland have all developed national legal frameworks for intergenerational learning opportunities; in England, the focus has been more on the development of local initiatives against a background of austerity. The emphasis is on learning together and on developing a culture of mutual respect among participants. A variety of providers may be involved; for example, Intergen is a charity that brings retired and other older adults into schools to work together with children and for different generations to share their skills and experiences as a way of strengthening communities.

More recently, there has been a very gradual growth of interest in offering learning opportunities to older people living in residential care. Operating on a small scale, Learning for the Fourth Age (L4A) is a not-for-profit company funded from various local and national sources including the National Lottery. Using trained volunteers, often local students, as one-to-one mentors, the objective is to help older people in care settings to follow up existing interests or to develop new ones taking into account their physical and mental capabilities. Overall, the aim is to show how education can be a tool for increasing confidence and well-being and to help residents develop a more positive outlook on life. An external evaluation of L4A's activities in 2013 demonstrated that the interventions experienced had made a significant difference in the lives of the older people interviewed.

These are just a few examples of current developments and various others could be identified but, of course, funding and sustainability are always problematic in a time of economic stringency. It may be that the development of on-line learning will offer further cost-effective possibilities

although, as yet, it is not known how many older people have taken part in some of the courses offered through such platforms as FutureLearn currently available in the UK.

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## 8. Aotearoa New Zealand

*Brian Findsen*

### **Learning in later life**

As for other Westernised countries, New Zealand has inherited many of its social institutions from the UK, including those related to (older) adult education. Hence, institutions such as Seniornet, the U3A movement and some community-based centres mirror those of the former historical home. Yet to epitomize providers of later life learning institutions in this country as solely derivative of Europe/UK would do a disservice to the now heavy influence of Asia-Pacific nations.

In consideration of whose responsibility it is to meet the learning needs of seniors (arbitrarily defined as 65+), Government has provided miniscule funding under Vote Education. As noted in other reports, civil society provides the backbone for provision, usually enhanced by the volunteering spirit of older New Zealanders, myself included. Despite privatization of education more generally, there has been relatively low engagement as yet by private providers, apart from education that might be offered coincidentally by retirement villages, which are increasing in numbers.

Older people in New Zealand, especially those of the middle-class women, tend to have multiple opportunities for advancement of their learning, ostensibly for expressive education. Hence, the strength of the U3A movement. There are very few agencies that have the provision of elder education as a primary objective such as the U3A. Rather, there are more agencies that provide opportunities in organisations that look to the holistic needs of older people and use education as a contributive mechanism to achieve their goals (see below).

In relation to themes of lifelong learning (Findsen & Formosa, 2011), the purpose of learning/education in later life in this country is still characterized by leisure-oriented activities. There is some awareness that older people have rights in terms of workplace education but this tends to be restricted to more enlightened employers. The potential for inter-generational learning in the labour force remains dormant. In terms of active citizenship, some agencies such as Age Concern NZ have programs to train and support older people's working with older people (peer learning) to sustain their social capital. In the sphere of social inclusion, the men's shed movement has made considerable strides to provide men with safe places to "hang-out", to make things and discuss life's issues. From a cultural perspective, Maori self-determination (*tino rangatiratanga*) has been manifested in the establishment of Maori- focused tertiary education (*whare wānānga*) but precious few older people in general, and Maori in particular, would think that universities might be suitable places to gain "really useful knowledge".

In the remainder of this report, I am highlighting the work of two parallel bi-cultural agencies, which deal with issues facing older people in Hamilton city where I live. Both agencies work in a holistic way so that learning/education is integrated into their operations.

### **Age Concern Hamilton**

I have been the President of Age Concern Hamilton for the past 2-3 years (recently relinquished) and a Council member for seven. The purpose of this agency is to enhance the quality of life (well-being) of elders. Education takes many forms: the training of volunteers for supportive services (shopping, visiting); in health promotion; a specific lifelong learning program; advocacy for older people; an inter-generational program; falls prevention; a radio program, and public seminars on local/national issues (e.g. housing, financial capability).

### **The Rauawaawa Kaumātua Charitable Trust (RKCT)**

In a different cultural context, the Rauawawawa Trust, conducted by Māori for Māori, also looks to enhance the well-being of *kaumātua* (Māori elders). This holistic approach includes services in health, social, educational and financial areas where the Trust works collaboratively with local stakeholders, including the influential Tainui tribe (*iwi*). Formerly supported by the Centre for Continuing Education at the University of Waikato, after cuts from the former Government to Adult and Community Education (ACE), the Trust has survived on voluntary labour. Importantly, its way of operating in pedagogy and curriculum reflects Māori aspirations, engendering leadership in the broader context of Māori determination. Activities include Māori language (*te reo*), songs, computer literacy, healthy nutrition, floral art, feather cloak-making and a host of others. A defining feature of this agency is that its focus is upon *kaumātua* - not youth, where most funding gets allocated.

The above exemplars illustrate how bi-culturalism is played out for older people in the Aotearoa New Zealand context. At a political level, the new Coalition Labour-Greens-NZ First Government is rapidly addressing social issues largely neglected by the previous heavily-neoliberal National-led Government. There is optimism that major social cleavages may be at least partially addressed at a national level.

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## **9. The case of Senior Active Learning Centres in Taiwan**

*Hsiu-Mei Tsai*

### **Introduction**

The issue of an ageing society has received intensive discussions in Taiwan for the past two decades. By 2018, the proportion of people over 65 years old has reached 14 percent of the population, which made Taiwan an aged society. With this trend of an ageing population in Taiwan, it has been considered one of the most rapidly ageing countries in the world. As coping strategies, the idea of active ageing and seniors' learning was adopted ten years ago. This led to the establishment of hundreds of Senior Active Learning Centres (SALC) in Taiwan.

The program of Senior Active Learning Centres became an important policy. According to a national survey of adult education, the percentage of old people participating in non-formal learning has increased, from 11 percent in 2008 to 22 percent in 2014. The program not only promoted seniors' learning, but also mobilised seniors to make contributions in their communities.

### **Policy background**

Confronting the trend of an ageing society, many scholars urged government to develop new policies towards the challenges facing our society. The Ministry of Education published a White Paper titled "*Toward the Aged Society: Policy in Education for Older Adults*" in 2006. It argued that human rights of the elderly should include learning opportunities for seniors based upon the

principles of respect, independence, dignity, and happiness. Subsequently, a program called “Senior Active Learning Centres (SALC)” was launched in 2008.

The Ministry of Education invited schools, colleges, civic groups, or municipal government to manage the SALCs in each township or district. The management unit should receive training in program development and teaching andragogy. There were 104 centres set up in 2008. The number of centres continues to grow under the strong support from central Government. There are 368 Senior Active Learning Centres now, in 2018.

Under the idea of “active ageing”, each SALC should prepare a vision and educational goals for the centre. The organizers also learn how to mobilise the resources in local communities. Each SALC needs to develop three types of courses:

- policy-related lectures, e.g. issues of an ageing society, gender equality, drug-abuse prevention, anti-suicide, family violence prevention etc.,;
- self-organized interest courses, e.g. healthy diet, exercise, singing, painting and handicrafts etc.;
- contribution and service activities, e.g. volunteer and service delivery in schools or communities.

For policy-related lectures, knowledge and information about the ageing society was required to be delivered to seniors. Learning new skills, e.g. internet and cellphone use, can connect seniors with contemporary society. For self-organised courses, each SALC can start programs, which meet seniors’ needs. Later, the organisers help seniors to continue their studies by themselves. Since the funding of SALC from government does not support the program the whole year round, senior learners can participate in self-organised programs to supplement government funded courses.

Another mission of the SALC is to organise senior learners to make contributions to the community, including helping older people and younger generations learn together. Some examples follow that show senior learners making contributions in communities, especially practices in promoting intergenerational relationships.

### 1. Seniors as volunteers

Seniors in SALCs are encouraged to make contributions to communities. After seniors learn some skills, they can organise volunteering work to help people in need. For example, a group of seniors in Chiayi County who learnt the traditional flute decided to perform in nursing homes. Another group of senior learners who learned drama in SALC in Tainan City decided to organise a drama group and performed the traditional wedding ceremony for students in elementary schools. The positive feedback from students was overwhelming.

### 2. Contributions in intergenerational learning

Development in generational learning also came from the movement in recognising the value of being a grandparent. For those SALCs managed by schools, programs that bring grandparents and school children together were carried out. Some SALCs even provide Intergenerational Summer Camps where senior people become the role models with traditional knowledge and skills in communities, and were well respected.

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## 10. The Seoul 50 Plus Foundation, Korea

*Un Shil Choi*

## **What is the Seoul 50 Plus Foundation?**

The Seoul Metropolitan Government recently enacted an ordinance on "supporting the production of life for the elderly". This refers to the "50+ generation" from the age of 50 to 64 and establishes the Seoul 50 Plus Foundation to support the 50+ generation. They account for 21.9% of the city's population with the 50 Plus Foundation now providing customised services for this generation by integrating policies for middle-aged people in fields such as employment, welfare, education, and counselling which up to now have been scattered across departments.

The Seoul Metropolitan Government is paying particular attention to their role in building social capital to solve social problems. Therefore, the Foundation aims to change the perception of the life of the elderly, and to improve the quality of life through a balanced lifestyle, and with social participation and the sharing of deep experiences.

In April 2016, the Seoul 50 Plus Foundation was established and held over three forums each year to share diverse international cases such as introducing the American Retirees Association (AARP), the New York City Senior Foundation's residential sharing program, and the activities of Encore.org. There are policy forums and workshops every year in the search for future directions and to establish related policies. The Foundation works on group support, public works projects, and fairs and festivals related to this generation. In 2018, the Foundation was selected as an example of an outstanding innovation in the public sector by the OECD.

The structure for the Foundation's operations consists of three levels. The Foundation serves as a control tower installing the '50 Plus Campus' which serves as a hub for the complex cultural space covered and operating the '50 Plus Centre', a community activity space for local communication and cultural exchanges. In this way, the Foundation plans to build six campuses and 19 centres across the Seoul metropolitan area by 2020.

## **What are the unique projects of the Foundation?**

### *Project I: '50 Plus Life School'*

The important aim of the 50+ generation is living-better not living-longer. The '50 Plus Life School' runs a diverse curriculum to look back on life so far for this generation and to change their perceptions and behaviours for the future. To this end, for the 50+ generation, now is the time to have life planning that includes non-financial preparations, such as leisure activities and health care, beyond financial planning. This has been the main focus so far. Planning starts with determining the purpose of life after retirement, and includes a plan to discover and practice the meaning of life. Lifelong learning is at the heart of this.

The Foundation's '50 Plus Life School' teaches by example. The School is a true school that develops the will to change life and the courage to meet new challenges. Many students say that the participatory classes create a desire to live a more active life and the willingness to change and live more positively. The School can create relationships that can have a good effect on people's lives. Students are led to dream about what they want to do together and create the courage to realise their dreams. Learning in the life school is conducted in various ways including a topic forum, field study, and a two-day workshop to redesign life and work, and then define the identity found. This involves transforming and re-establishing awareness of work, learning, and life style through new learning and relationships. Participants can continue their learning experiences through learning clubs in various fields such as cooking classes, housing, residences, community, tourism, travel, oriental classics and humanities.

### *Project II: 'Good Job 5060' – Encore job careers*

According to Seoul City statistics in 2015, the average age of retirement in Seoul is 53 years, and the time for re-employment is 10 months. 'Encore Career' is a project that allows 50+ generations to achieve personal accomplishment, income and social change in the second half of life. It is based on the idea that a customised policy that is different from the conventional welfare service concept is needed. Based on the experiences and expertise of the 50+ generation, the Seoul 50 Plus Foundation actively supports the establishment of a close support system, including education, mentoring, space support, and funds for founding businesses that contribute to social value creation. Especially popular is a program called '50+ Boram Jobs'. This is providing a platform for re-employment with a kind of social contribution type work that middle aged and senior citizens can participate in a total of 31 fields such as schools, villages, welfare facilities, and social enterprises.

In addition, various attempts have been made to find new jobs in the social economy and social venture companies by linking with private enterprises. In July 2018, the Foundation launched a project called 'Good Job 5060' along with the Ministry of Employment and Labor, Hyundai Motors and a private organisation named 'Sangsangwoori' (in Korean).

In November 2018, a 50+ forum was held to create a start-up ecosystem and find jobs. Despite the fact that many 50+ generations choose to start their own businesses as part of their retirement plans at a time when it is difficult to find good jobs after retirement, the survival rate of the 50+ generation jobs is only 18 percent over a five year period. Based on this awareness of the problem, the Seoul 50 Plus Foundation plans to establish a support system to help 50+ generations with expertise and experience find new jobs in the business sector, hold follow-up meetings to promote new job models, and create a base for finding various job models in connection with the curriculum of the Foundation.

### *Project III: Discovering 50 Plus Life - Leisure & Culture*

Leisure and hobbies are important factors in stimulating curiosity and constantly driving the further development of life. Therefore, even after retirement, hobbies, leisure, and cultural life must be active. For creating this generation's wellbeing in life and designing good leisure, the Foundation serves as a venue for discovering 50+ role models, supporting 50+ meetings and organisations, building a social consensus and building partnerships. The Foundation also provides a space that can fit together with peer groups and help designing the new daily life for 50+ generations who are separated from home and work. It supports diverse activities to create the new culture of the 50+ generation.

In particular, the annual 50+ Festival is a place where the 50+generation presents various activities, including cultural activities, so that more citizens can experience, sympathise with and plan life beyond 50 years. The festival is held with various programs such as 'The Life Counselling Centre' which helps people to think about this life transition period, the 'Job Library' for those looking for new work and activities, 'the Passion Club Room' where visitors can experience the activities of the 50+communities in person, 'the Community Playground' and 'the Community Broadcasting System' where busking performances and the festival story are held. Through the Festival, not only 50+ generations but other citizens also find new possibilities and ideas in their lives.

## **PART III – MOVING FORWARD**

In Part III we turn back to the context discussed in this report with ageing populations and the



looming challenge of the fourth industrial revolution to provide some examples of ways of moving forward in response to these challenges. While each of the examples selected illustrates an important dimension of good active ageing in this context, other examples could be selected in different contexts.

The examples selected are all relevant to the context and conceptual aspects discussed in Part I. They bring the challenge of finding ways to integrate such dimensions in the quest for good active ageing in just sustainable communities. These raise the question of locating later life learning in the broader framework of learning throughout life with Tom Schuller reviving the proposal for a framework with four stages with the consequent requirement of support for people in making the transitions between these stages.

In Part I we referred to the 2002 WHO policy framework for active ageing. The WHO later developed these ideas on ageing and health further in ways that bring more common interests with education and learning with the potential for partnership with mutual benefits.

These ideas are set out in the 2015 WHO *World Report on Ageing and Health*. Like the report of this Special Interest Group, the *Report* takes a societal and life-course approach to population ageing with ageing viewed as “a rich new opportunity for both individuals and societies” (WHO, 2015: vii-viii).

This approach brings with it a common interest in empowering people to adapt to changing circumstances with further common interests in subjects such as the role of identity, relationships, giving meaning and purpose to lives, and happiness. These interests align with the position we have taken in recognising that the dual dimensions of individual and society are intrinsically intertwined so that a framework of learning and community relationships is needed for good active ageing.

The WHO report places these requirements in a framework titled *Towards an age-friendly world*.

This objective has influenced initiatives taken by governments and cities around the world, such as a Queensland (Australia) policy: *An Age-friendly Community Action Plan*, although often learning is not included. The thrusts advocated by WHO are things adult educators would recognise as good education objectives for adults, indeed things that are endorsed by this report.

- Abilities to learn, grow, and make decisions.
- Ability to be mobile.
- Ability to build and maintain relationships.
- Ability to contribute.

There is a compelling case for education and learning resources discussed in this report to collaborate with colleagues from the health sector in developing approaches to progress these objectives together. This can occur on a Healthy City/Learning City basis as has happened in Cork under the city EcCoWell initiative.

While we have emphasized learning and community relationships in the institutions and initiatives discussed in Part I, in moving forward with values for a sustainable world, we wish to add a triple helix of learning, health, and community as an immediate priority. There is much scope for creative ideas in progressing to a further stage in learning and community relationships underpinned by these triple helix relationships. Recognising the wider benefits of learning is indicative of progress, as already illustrated in the paper by Denise Reghenzani-Kearns which points to initiatives such as the Glasgow Centre for Sustainable, Healthy, Learning Cities and

Neighbourhoods. Henrik Zipsane shows that heritage learning and the role of cultural institutions can contribute much to bring meaning, purpose and identity to older people. There is a challenge to embed these objectives in community approaches to learning, whether in community learning centres, leaning cities, or whatever forms may emerge in the future.

### **The East Asian way of moving forward**

China, along with Korea and Taiwan, has been a leader in the development of arrangements for lifelong learning and community education. These countries, with Japan, have also been the countries most hit to date by the demographic revolution so that their policy responses have a special relevance. China has played a key role in the development of learning city ideas with Beijing hosting the UNESCO First International Conference on Learning Cities in 2013, and with Chinese learning cities such as Shanghai, Beijing, Hangzhou demonstrating how learning city arrangements can be implemented in very large cities.

Further information on Beijing and Suwon as learning cities may be found in the UIL Learning City Case Studies. Beijing hosted a PIMA seminar on lifelong learning in September 2018 following the PASCAL Suwon conference with learning in later life one of the themes. A report on the seminar is available on the PASCAL website (<http://pascalobservatory.org/pascalnow/pascal-activities/news/report-pima-international-seminar-lifelong-learning-beijing-china-3>), including a visit to the Beijing Shijingshan Community College and its associated Elderly University.

The paper in Part III that follows, by Qing Xia and Dayong Yuan, comments on the promotion of community education in China. In addition, the paper by Thomas Kuan in Part II provides information on the extensive development of the Chinese model of the University of the Third Age with 60,000 U3As and more than 7 million members, and with the Chinese Association of Universities for the Aged (CAUA) the umbrella organisation for all elderly colleges and universities in China.

The systematic approach adopted by China, Korea, and Taiwan to promoting community education and lifelong learning offers insights and lessons for other countries confronted by the looming challenge of the demographic and technological revolutions. This merits widespread discussion in the search for ways to revitalise learning in later life, and lifelong learning for all.

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## **11. Managing transitions in later life**

*Tom Schuller*

### **Defining transitions**

Our lives are, inevitably, a mix of continuities and discontinuities. Human development is rarely a matter of passing smoothly from one stage to the next in a series of well-defined steps. One of the weaknesses of many models of life-course development is that they present patterns that do not reflect changes in the external environment, in particular in the labour market and in the demographic profile of the population. We need to understand better the major transitions in life, recognising that there is great diversity in how people accomplish them.

In *Learning Through Life*, the report of the Inquiry into the Future of Lifelong Learning, David Watson and I presented a fourfold category of stages in the adult lifecourse: 18-25, 26-50, 51-75

and 75+ (Schuller & Watson 2009). A primary goal in the use of such blatantly round numbers was to challenge conventional categories, particularly around older people.

The 25-year stretch of the Third Age category derived from the trends which were already clear then: towards more people staying longer in paid employment, but also with more extended transitions out of it as people moved into part-time jobs or self-employment. Building a framework with this as the chronological definition of the Third Age would bring a major shift in how data is gathered and presented, and therefore with the opportunities available to older people.

The dividing line between the third and fourth category is just as contentious as the others. The eminent social demographer Peter Laslett used to argue fiercely against any notion of a fourth age, on the grounds that it would stigmatise the final stage, condemning its occupants to a status of dependency and decline. His arguments retain some force, but the lengthening of lives makes a single Third Age category just too baggy. Yet where to draw the line is difficult. In *LTL* we chose 75 partly for numerical neatness, but also because we were more concerned with the relation between learning and work than with the link between learning and health.

### **Implications for learning**

Whether or not these dividing lines are accepted, what are the implications of the changing shape of the lifecourse for how we conceive of learning? How and when people manage the later transitions will be a function of their health, their relationship to employment and to unpaid work, and their personal and family circumstances – as well as their individual personality. I offer just three observations.

First, many people in the Third Age will be combining paid and unpaid work, in varying permutations. So the learning offered will have to cover employability and career guidance. There is a strong gender dimension here: women's career trajectories will often look different to men's, with later upturns as they resume career trajectories which may have been flattened by childcare responsibilities. The fact that women now outstrip men in terms of qualifications in every OECD country gives added urgency to this (Schuller 2017). Many Third Agers, men and women, will work part-time but it is important to recognise that they can still entertain serious career aspirations, even as they make the transition from full-time employment.

Secondly, health and wellbeing factors will play an increasing part. One function of education is to prevent, defer or compensate for some aspects of cognitive decline. We need further research and development work to inform the design of learning opportunities for older people, taking into account the kinds of cognitive and other changes that typically occur. At the same time, the social role of learning assumes greater importance. Adult learning provides both cognitive stimulation and social contact – two of the highest-ranking features in the index of well-being in old age.

Thirdly, we should be thinking about how learning can help us manage the final transition. When do we start 'dying'? When do we become 'terminally' ill? Who should be involved in the decisions surrounding the end of lives? Enabling people to explore their own feelings about mortality – their own and that of others - is just one aspect of this issue, with fascinating implications. Arguably it is a prime area for education – the ultimate arena where learning can help us exercise control over our lives, and where it can liberate us from psychological if not physical constraints.

## 12. Enhancing wellbeing in later life – impressions from ELOA conference 2018 in Faro

*Bernhard Schmidt-Hertha, Brian Findsen & Alex Withnall*

From 11 to 13 October 2018, more than 50 researchers in the field of learning in later life met in Faro (Portugal) to discuss the contribution of learning and education to the wellbeing of older adults. The conference held under the auspices of ELOA (the European network on Education and Learning of Older Adults) was organized by members of the University of Algarve and attended primarily by European and a few non-European researchers. It was particularly notable that many younger researchers have become interested in this field. Inspired by the presentations and the subsequent discussions, we try to sum up the complex relationship of learning, education and the well-being of older adults below.

While a relationship between education and wellbeing has been demonstrated by different studies during the last decades, more recent research provides a more differentiated picture of this association. Longitudinal data show that wellbeing has effects on the educational behaviour of older adults but conversely, adult education has the power to enhance wellbeing in later life. This impact is mediated by different factors such as a healthy and active lifestyle, social capital, self-confidence and optimism, but also by participation in relevant action. However, the effect of adult education on well-being might not be the same for all older adults and education cannot solve all the problems that might occur in later life pertinent to certain societal conditions. For example, there are older adults living under extremely precarious conditions with very poor financial and material resources. For them it is challenging simply to survive, and it is a highly relevant task for societies to ensure a decent existence for all older adults.

Beside these elementary needs, people want to be significant actors in their respective societies, to share their experiences and to develop their identities. Adult learning/education – whether formal, non-formal or informal – can contribute significantly to wellbeing and to assist older adults in their quest for individual fulfilment under certain conditions. Although not every educational activity is meaningful, it is possible to identify aspects of high-quality education for older adults that can help to bring about such outcomes.

- Adult education should provide an environment in which to build up meaningful relations. Intergenerational learning is just one approach trying to fulfil this need. Meaningful relations are based on trust, the belief that it is worth listening to each other and through the exchange of knowledge and experiences.
- Educational experiences should assist older learners to reflect on their own biographies with new ideas. Meaningful learning can only happen if what is learned is somehow related to the learners' lives; thus, adult learners can use their own lives as sources of relevant programme content.
- Learning cannot be reduced to cognitive processes alone but always happens on affective and social levels too. In this way the whole human body is involved in learning. For instance, it is important to incorporate the physical body, sexuality, disabilities and illness and there is still only a modicum of research work reflecting on these aspects related holistically to the human body.

Nevertheless, even if education in general has a positive effect on well-being, this is not necessarily always the case. Following the ancient cave allegory of Plato, one could understand education as something that could be painful and that may make people feel excluded from their social networks. In the long run, positive effects might dominate, but it is also important to recognise that education cannot (and might not) always contribute positively to learners'

wellbeing. Education has the potential initial processes for enhancing personal development and changing individuals' relations to themselves and to the world. But, building up new relationships usually entails losing some of the old ties and certainties in line with a risk society.

In general, it is important to be aware that education can make a substantial contribution to well-being, particularly in later life. However, much more than that, older adults' lifeworlds and wellbeing are determined significantly by the social and political decisions made by governments and through awareness of their needs within their social environment. With this in mind, adult learning/education cannot only focus on empowering older learners, but has to address policy makers as well as the whole of society to sensitise them to the needs of this often marginalized group. It is the experiences of poverty, social exclusion, and loneliness that are the most serious threats to wellbeing in later life and which can only partly be accommodated by effective adult learning/education.

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### 13. Achieving the wider benefits of learning

*Denise Reghenzani-Kearns*

Progressively, as the ageing demographic looms large, there has also been a growing recognition of the wider benefits of learning applying to the senior generations, as part of lifelong learning for all. Such wider benefits have been acknowledged as realising sociability, confidence, enriched environments, self-efficacy, autonomy, wellbeing, cognitive resilience to improved purpose in life. Learning is not solely what is perceived in educational institutions, it works for and across quality of life, welfare, health, family, civic activities to social and identity capital. Looking towards integrated and holistic ways of engaging those of latter years in new learning is a matter of urgency.

#### **PASCAL EcCoWell & Learning Neighbourhoods**

The EcCoWell concept and its program initiatives connect sectors such as health, environment, welfare and learning, supported by agencies responsible for community and local governance. This is an admirable framework for achieving the wider benefits of learning and draw from Ecology/Environment/Economy, Community/Culture/Heritage/Cohesion, Wellness/Wellbeing/

Health/Safety, and Lifelong Learning. The city of Cork adopted this approach in 2013 and has strengthened responses since to the local and global, as part of its learning city principles and initiatives which include their annual Lifelong Learning Festival, open to all. Please see project examples at: <http://eccowellcork.com/>.

The advent of activity as learning neighbourhoods has been another program innovation to bring wider benefits of learning to the local level for equitable accessibility, encompassing later agers as learners and volunteers. Taipei and Cork have been leaders in this development with a face-to-face exchange resulting in the attached overview of activities: [http://conference2016.pascalobservatory.org/sites/default/files/post-conference\\_meeting\\_report.pdf](http://conference2016.pascalobservatory.org/sites/default/files/post-conference_meeting_report.pdf). Current engagement in Cork with added expositions from Kuoshun District [Taipei] Harlem [New York] and Singapore), were outlined during the PASCAL International Conference at Suwon, 2018: [https://d14ujzb3m57xe.cloudfront.net/sites/default/files/eccowell2\\_report\\_suwon.pdf](https://d14ujzb3m57xe.cloudfront.net/sites/default/files/eccowell2_report_suwon.pdf).

International movements for healthy, safe, green, knowledge, world class, resilient to liveable cities are all embraced within the holistic approach of EcCoWell for learning through these domains.

## **UNESCO 2017 International Conference on Learning Cities & Active Ageing**

Endeavouring to find a pathway to blend learning city approaches with the UN Sustainable Goals, the UNESCO Institute of Lifelong Learning (at its 2017 international conference) endorsed a *Call to Action* that included “green, healthy, learning cities”. This has echoes of the EcCoWell platform and accepts its counterpart in the social determinants of health led by the World Health Organisation (WHO). Widespread research supports the deleterious effects of inequality on both health and education as with the positive correlation between better education and better health. When not pursuing learning in one’s own interests what ensues is cognitive debility and the loneliness/isolation of anomie.

Also, relevant in empowering ageing individuals and communities collectively through the wider benefits of learning are the introduction of the WHO (2015, 2007, 2002) Active Ageing model for an age-friendly society and its context for healthy ageing. The age-friendly process is intended to develop opportunities for greater health, participation and security for people. It was Kalache (2015) who amended his contribution to the initial model by adding lifelong learning as the fourth pillar in working towards actions for what he has termed: the longevity revolution. It is essential to what he has advocated as the “right to age well”. The 2015 WHO report identifies the complex aspect of good health enabling older people to “achieve things that are important to them”.

In adopting these approaches, some respondents have identified community education (accepted as part of the lifelong learning continuum) as an essential building block.

### **The Glasgow Centre for Healthy Learning Cities and Neighbourhoods**

A good example of integrated development that connects learning and health with sustainability ideas, in neighbourhoods, is provided by this Centre based at Glasgow University. With significant research funding, the Centre supports collaborative research and capacity strengthening in the Global South through partnership with a number of universities in Africa and Asia.

The project will produce insights into relationships between inequality, place, learning, health and quality of life, and the contribution of spirituality to sustainability. Like this report, the Centre has a keen interest in family and community relationships. The outcome of this research will add depth to ideas about the wider benefits of learning to healthy and sustainable neighbourhoods, with lifecourse development and social cohesion in a number of contexts.

### **Wider Benefits of Lifelong Learning**

Improving the quality of life of older adults is surely a goal of all policy/decision makers and practitioners in working with the more senior of our citizens. Delaying decline as we age is seen as being achieved through continuing to learn. This is addressed across the fields of neuro-science, health, wellbeing, happiness, exercise and educational interventions. Thus, the EcCoWell platform can be the springboard in providing a comprehensive response to the models cited above. The coping and action strategies that can be developed through lifelong learning fully are being well documented; from independent researchers, bodies such as the OECD, UNESCO, European Commission and international Centres or Institutes on Wider Benefits of Learning to Aging/Ageing. Major international studies drawn from such bodies were collated by Reghenzani-Kearns (2017).

Adapting and transforming through appropriate and targeted learning that interests those in their later years can achieve wellbeing, dignity and navigating transitions successfully. Such new expertise results in increases in self-maintenance, better engagement, mental acuity, personal growth, empowerment, stability and improved attitudes or behaviours that stave off decline. Are

these outcomes reason alone to support lifelong learning into the later years? After all, is not prevention better than the cure?

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## 14. Heritage Learning and the Role of Cultural Institutions<sup>2</sup>

Henrik Zipsane

Cultural Institutions in Europe, especially in northern and Western Europe, have responded to demographic and other challenges with initiatives in developing new roles, often directed at social engagement. Provision for older adults has been one of the significant areas for development since the 1970s.

Cultural history museums have redefined their role in this context. While these museums were usually established in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century as a product of popular nationalism, we have seen these objectives redefined in ways that enable them to flourish, not only in northern and Western Europe, but also in parts of Eastern Europe.

These initiatives have led to networks of cultural history museums that can be seen as paralleling and supporting the role of community learning centres in these areas, and perhaps leading to a broader and deeper concept of community learning in which heritage learning adds depth and historical roots to the other objectives of community learning.

A good example of these developments is provided by the work of the Nordic Centre for Heritage Learning and Creativity (NCK), a research entity that although located in Östersund, Sweden, is owned by a network of museums and archives in the Nordic and Baltic countries. The role of NCK provides a vehicle for this network of museums to share ideas and experience in building a contemporary shared concept of the role of museums and heritage learning in the modern world.

NCK has been alert to trends and issues in lifelong learning and so has been able to contribute to fresh ideas on heritage and cultural dimensions of learning throughout life in rapidly changing conditions. For example, in 2010, the Östersund Heritage Museum hosted the 10<sup>th</sup> PASCAL International Conference on Heritage, Regional Development and Social Cohesion. The report of the conference pointed to new directions for heritage learning.

The work of NCK has also been influenced by the UK report on *Learning Through Life* (Schuller & Watson, 2007), which stimulated interest in learning in later life in 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> stages of the life course. This has built interest in understanding the dynamics in traditional as well as new evolving approaches in the interaction between museums and older adults. This interest led to the Senior Citizen's Heritage Learning Initiative (SCHLI). The SCHLI was influenced by the focus of NCK on four dimensions of heritage learning: genealogy, oral history, volunteering, and reminiscences. These aspects are important in adding meaning and purpose to lives in the context of dislocation and change that threaten the values and beliefs of many older people.

The initiative was undertaken for the European Association of Regional and Local Authorities on Lifelong Learning (EARLALL), which set up a working group on lifelong learning and the ageing population. Sessions were conducted in a number of regions across Europe to examine key issues relevant to older people. These included health and wellbeing, social life, community participation, independence and security.

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<sup>2</sup> A good example of the power of heritage learning and culture is given in Part II in the account by Un Shil Choi of the development of Suwon as an innovative learning city over the last 100 years, building on the heritage and culture of the city.

An insight emerging from the seminars relating to the important role of museums, archives and local heritage associations was in identifying and using the transference of the individual and social experience of older adults. These lifetime competences developed by seniors through a lifetime of experience and biological development can contribute much to communities in the path to a sustainable learning society.

Memory organisations, such as museums and archives, can make a distinctive contribution to learning in later life so that arrangements are needed that enable this contribution to be harnessed along with insights emerging from the work of community learning centres and other learning spaces. Community learning ecosystems will gain depth and richness when arrangements are put in place so that this happens.

Heritage learning is an ideal field for self-directed learning by seniors that empowers the natural curiosity of people to understand their world and develop a civic responsibility for the preservation and furtherance of a living heritage. The growing of popularity of genealogy, oral history and volunteering in the work of these institutions points to the significance and value of this dimension of good learning in later life.

Museums are increasingly recognising that older adults are great assets for museums. They are people who by sharing their memories, time and enthusiasm enrich the sector and make our museums keep on learning. At the same time, participation by seniors in heritage learning can add meaning and purpose to their lives and to the richness of experience and identity of the communities they inhabit.

Cultural and heritage issues are increasingly significant in a world of mass migration leading to increased diversity in many countries. In this context, intercultural understanding, tolerance and cultural competence are necessary attributes of sustainable and cohesive communities in building a sense of community and shared identity. This makes for an important role for heritage learning and the cultural institutions in building a good sustainable future.

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## 15. How to promote community education in China

*Qing Xia & Dayong Yuan*

Building a learning society is a great need at present with the concepts of lifelong learning and community education as necessary pathways. In the era of the knowledge-based economy, only when citizens keep learning throughout their lives can they adapt themselves to social changes and keep pace with social progress. Learning is not only for employment, but also a way of survival in this context. At the same time, it is also a way for individuals to enjoy life and realise their rights and potential.

### **The Lifelong Education Concept and Community Education**

In 2001, for the first time, China advanced the educational goal of "building a lifelong education system" and linked it with the establishment of a learning city. Beijing is in the forefront of provinces, municipalities and autonomous regions in the implementation of the national policy of creating a learning society, with the goal of creating a "learning capital" for lifelong education promotion. China's community education objective has experienced a 30-year development process, which began in the 1980s, developed in the 1990s and was enriched in the early 21st century. In the process of development, it has experienced a rapid expansion and reflecting the community's demand for community education, as well as the government's priority for



community education. Nowadays, community education has entered an all-round development stage.

## **How to Promote Community Education with the Concept of Lifelong Education**

### *Establishment of an organisational structure*

The lifelong education system includes schools and other educational organisations outside the school. Speeding up the establishment and development of specialised organisations for lifelong education is of great significance for the rapid development of lifelong education. In Beijing, the state established open universities at the provincial, autonomous region and municipal level directly under the Central Government arrangements; community universities or community colleges at the district, county and municipal levels; and community schools at the street and township levels to serve as specialised institutions for implementing and promoting lifelong education. All kinds of lifelong education institutions at all levels obtain permission to run schools according to law, register them according to law, and carry out lifelong education activities within the scope of the approval obtained.

Community universities and community colleges at district level in big cities have been established. Lifelong education organisations and institutions serve as the second level, while community schools have become the most basic level of lifelong education organisations.

### *Setting up specialised positions*

Lifelong education arrangements conform to those of the other education sectors. Full-time administrative cadres and all kinds of teaching staff engaged in lifelong education who implement the post admission system obtain teacher qualification certificates. Citizens with special expertise can be employed as volunteer teachers. At the same time, the educational administrative departments set up subject evaluation groups for the full-time cadres and teachers engaged in community education and geriatric education in teachers' positions, and incorporate job evaluation of full-time cadres of teachers into the series of evaluation of relevant departments, so as to stimulate the enthusiasm and professionalism of lifelong educators.

### *Integration of resources and joint development*

Social, cultural and sports facilities such as libraries, art galleries and gymnasiums in cities and towns are generally included in the field of social education and are under the jurisdiction of educational administrative departments. These social, cultural and sports resources, as auxiliary facilities for carrying out lifelong education activities, can contribute to meeting social needs through sharing resources and through cultural exchanges. Results are displayed and contribute to the responsibility of promoting lifelong education activities.

### *Fiscal help in underdeveloped areas*

In some cities with good economic development, funds for lifelong education are invested according to the population, but mainly through local finance. In the less developed cities and towns, and in the most rural areas, there is almost no investment in these funds. The state should pay attention to the needs of disadvantaged groups in lifelong education, and ensure that every individual, rich or poor, has the opportunity to realise their potential. Whether the allocation of educational and learning resources can meet the interests and needs of the disadvantaged in society, and protect the right to education of the disadvantaged groups in society is a key question. In cases where there is almost no investment in lifelong education funds, governments at all levels should include lifelong education funds in the annual budget to ensure that the

investment is stable and achieves synchronous growth with economic development. Governments at all levels should shoulder these responsibilities.

### **Case Study of Chongwen Community College of Beijing**

Chongwen community is one of the 16 community colleges in Beijing established to deliver lifelong education. Fifteen years of practical activities under the ideas of lifelong learning have confirmed the role of community colleges. They construct lifelong learning service services for residents. Colleges doing this are recognised by society with community satisfaction.

One of its lifelong learning programs is “Art Program for Elderly Team Leaders”. Taking 17 streets of its district as the service object, Chongwen College opened a training course for elderly team leaders in the district. This has involved giving full play to the advantages of school art education resources. Over the past four years, elderly team leaders in the community have been trained, and two teaching outcome assessments have been held. Each assessment includes more than 10 selected programs. It not only shows the achievements of teachers and elderly students in teaching and learning in the past year, but also shows the marks of these elderly leaders for their communities. Another program is “Lecture for the Residents”.

The main way of learning is face-to-face teaching in class, taking into account the mobile phone APP and Wechat and other aids for teaching. According to the learning menu, learners can choose the courses and places for participating in learning. The construction of learning content is established through a questionnaire survey, personalised interviews and some additional interviews. Among the courses offered all the year round, include calligraphy, traditional Chinese painting, photography, computers, English and fitness.

### **Summary**

The sustainable development of the country is more and more closely related to the individual's education level. It is also the responsibility of the state and the government to promote the individual's lifelong education. From the beginning of this century, the policy has continued to support community education, which is reflected in the new definition of school modes and the emphasis on the learning community. Through practice and research, the establishment of specialised organisations at all levels to carry out lifelong education activities, to improve the training of lifelong educators, to integrate relevant educational resources such as social, cultural and sports, and to ensure the support and management of special financial investment, in their cumulative impact can promote the concept of lifelong education from a theoretical level to one where ongoing learning by the community becomes the foundation for improvement in the path towards a sustainable learning society.

### **For Further Information:**

1. Yang Dong. (2013). “Analysis and Reconstruction of the Definition of Community Education”, *Vocational Education Forum*, 33.
2. Wu Zunmin. (2011). “Historical Review and Prospect of Contemporary Community Education in China”, *Journal of Distance Education*, 3.
3. Guohua Nan. (2013). “Research on China's Lifelong Education Policy - An Analysis Based on Policy Text”. China Doctoral Dissertation Full Text Database, 10.
4. Huang Xin & Wu Zunmin. (2014). “Why China's Lifelong Education Law Is Difficult to Formulate: On the Legislative Thought and Framework of the National Lifelong Education Law”. *Research on Open Education*, 20146.

## 16. Harnessing learning cities and communities

Peter Kearns

While the idea of a learning city has a long history, the modern manifestation emerged from the work of OECD on lifelong learning, and was then promoted by the European Union, PASCAL, and others. Since 2013, the concept has been actively promoted by the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL) with some 200 cities now members of the Global Network of Learning Cities (GNLC) administered by UIL.

The First UNESCO International Conference on Learning Cities in Beijing in 2013 set a conceptual and policy framework for learning cities. However, the concept has continued to evolve and will continue to do so into the future discussed in this report. The contours of a new generation of learning cities are starting to appear.

Indications of creative development in learning cities, with more diversity in approaches, may be seen in the two volumes of case studies published by UIL in 2015 and 2017. For example, the case study for Beijing in Volume One and Suwon in Volume Two illustrate important themes in learning city development: the Beijing case showing how a learning city initiative in a very large city can cascade down through the district level to local communities, while the Suwon case study demonstrates how a comprehensive learning ecosystem incorporating all learning spaces can be built across the city to provide easy local access for all citizens.

Signs of this evolution were also evident in the *Cork Call to Action for Learning Cities* adopted by the Third UNESCO International Conference on Learning Cities held in Cork in September 2016. This statement incorporated the concept of integration in learning city development in the idea of green, healthy learning cities. This concept reflected the work of PASCAL since 2012 in developing the concept of EcCoWell as an approach to integrated development across sectors such as learning, health, environment, welfare, and culture.

The *Cork Call to Action* also added decent work and entrepreneurship to the framework initially decided at the Beijing conference in 2013. These objectives will undoubtedly become more important as the technologies of the fourth industrial revolution, such as artificial intelligence and robotics, impact with significant consequences for employment and social life as we have known it. Decent work will then be a big issue.

The agenda of the *Cork Call to Action* may be seen as a transition step towards a new generation of learning cities that will uphold humanistic values and aspirations in an era of deep technological and societal transformation. Objectives such as entrepreneurship, decent work, and integration reflected in the *Cork Call to Action* will no doubt be joined by other key objectives such as employability, as imperatives in humanistic responses to the era of the fourth industrial revolution.

Building an entrepreneurial learning culture, for social as well as economic reasons, will have central importance. It will be important that entrepreneurship is viewed in these terms as management guru Peter Drucker observed.

*What we need is an entrepreneurial society in which innovation and entrepreneurship are normal, steady, continuous ... so innovation and entrepreneurship have to become life-sustaining activity in our organizations, our economy, our society. (Drucker, 236)*

While this cluster of work related objectives such as decent work, employability, and entrepreneurship will likely define a key aspect of this new generation of learning cities, they will,

of necessity, be balanced by a learning, ethical, and moral framework along the lines discussed in this report.

Objectives such as inclusion, happiness, personal fulfillment and citizenship will be at the heart of the next generation of learning cities. How to blend and balance this cluster of objectives will be a stark challenge for cities and communities visioning their future as sustainable learning societies.

Learning in later life must inevitably be seen in this context of deep social change and creative responses by cities, governments, and communities of all kinds. The case examples and ideas discussed in this report bode well in testifying to the capacity of communities and their governments to respond to these challenges. The civil society role in local neighbourhoods will be increasingly important, supported by governments.

There are a few things that stand out from my personal experience to date over the past 20 years.

- Learning city partnerships will need to be broadened and deepened with a wider range of stakeholder partners.
- Relationships with schools will be more important than has often been the case up to now with schools building key competences and attributes, such as entrepreneurship, essential in this machine era of exponential change, and conducting community education.
- Universities will need to strengthen the social aspects of their work so that they produce graduates with a deep understanding of the changes in their world, and a capacity to adapt to these changes in sustainable ways, and continue learning throughout life.
- Local neighbourhoods will be more important in this context as the building blocks for sustainable learning cities with social coherence and capital, resilience, a shared identity and the capacity for creative responses to an ever changing world.
- Community learning centres, individually and in networks, will be a key resource in learning neighbourhoods with national and global links.
- Seniors have the life experience, time and relationships to be community leaders in this environment, learning in later life should prepare them for this role and deepen their involvement.
- However, intergenerational learning will be very important in this context with strategies needed to enable generations to learn together and pass on a living and growing humanistic heritage.

My vision, then, is of learning cities as interacting networks of local communities, often with the community learning centre as the hub, and with learning in later life fostered and revitalized in this environment. Some learning cities are heading in these directions while many community learning centres have long taken on such community roles. There is, accordingly, a convergence of objectives and experience that could be taken further, including in countries such as Australia where few learning cities exist so that little co-ordination of action at a local level takes place, and opportunities are wasted with costs to individuals and society as a whole.

While learning cities have taken deep roots in some parts of the world, such as East Asia, they have failed to penetrate the great cities of the West which seem more interested in smart city and resilient city ideas. Most members of the UNESCO GNLC are in Asia, South America, and Africa with few in Europe, North America, Australia and New Zealand. There is a case for more diversity in approaches, including options such as building learning cities as coalitions of community learning centres, and building learning cities from the grassroots up as partnerships of learning

neighbourhoods. Such approaches bring the power of local community relationships and identity, and have much value in good active ageing.

This issue can be illustrated in New York, which is often seen as a city of neighbourhoods, reflecting the flow of its immigrant history. This sense of heritage and community came to the fore in the conflict over development and the demolition of heritage buildings leading to New York's Historic District legislation, which protected declared Historic Districts. There are now over 100 declared Historic Districts in New York, with some 30 declared districts in Brooklyn alone. The option would seem to exist for a grassroots approach to New York as a learning city, building on declared Historic Districts and possibly involving one or more of the five boroughs of the city with partners such as the Project for Public Spaces due to its place-making interests, cultural institutions, learning spaces and others as partners. Such an approach is also relevant to other large Western cities such as Paris and London.

International communication and collaboration between learning cities and communities of all kinds will be a fundamental driver in this progress towards a good universal learning society, the vision of the UNESCO Faure Commission back in 1972. I wonder whether the challenge of learning in later life, in the context of demographic and deep technological change, can be a stimulus for further steps towards such a society?

## **In Conclusion**

This report has explored three lines of development in providing opportunities for learning in later life in a context of demographic change with ageing populations, and the advent of the fourth industrial revolution.

While community learning centres, dedicated learning facilities for seniors, and learning city initiatives have up to now generally been developed as separate approaches from their historical roots, we have observed signs of a convergence in some countries, in particular where strong learning city initiatives exist, that have the potential to be taken further. We comment further on this important question below.

There are perhaps grounds for taking the optimistic view that the challenge of the demographic and technological revolutions will serve as a catalyst to revitalise learning in later life, building on the foundations around the world we have observed in Part II of this report. Certainly this is needed.

Such a renaissance in learning in later life could serve as a stimulus for governments and all stakeholders to rethink their objectives and current position in lifelong learning, and in each of the sectors of education, in this era of deep societal change and challenge.

This will require stronger and more extensive partnerships with extensive connecting up so that there is holistic, integrated development rather than the segmented development that is common today. Some learning cities have pointed the way with such integrated development, particularly in East Asia where we have given examples from the Republic of Korea, Taiwan, and Beijing as a Chinese example.

While this development could lead to a new generation of learning cities, community learning centres and dedicated institutions for seniors will also benefit from this revitalised context.

Society 5.0, as named in Japan, urgently requires such connected thinking so that humanistic objectives are in the driving seat rather than machines and new technologies.

In this context, there is a need for a new paradigm to guide policies and strategies for learning in later life. We have set out our views in Part I of this report, building on the work of the World Health Organization in developing the concept of active ageing. While the pillars of the WHO approach of participation, health, and security should remain as foundations, we also believe that good active ageing, with lifelong learning and wellbeing (in the context we have addressed in this report), requires a learning, ethical, and moral framework that gives meaning and purpose to lives in a period of dislocation, and which contributes to a sustainable learning society. The later work of WHO on health and ageing provides further opportunities for collaboration.

For these reasons, we have added inclusion, citizenship, fulfillment, happiness, and employability to the pillars of the original WHO concept of active ageing.

The challenge will be to progress in these directions from the present situation we have observed in the countries reported by our authors. However, there are many promising initiatives as pathways to a better future so that we have set out in Part II a small selection of good practice and in Part III some ways of moving forward with values for a sustainable world. We would like to add to these, and will be grateful if comments and such examples are sent to the editors of this report, for a possible follow up report by this Special Interest Group on Later Life Learning.

There were various examples of co-ordinated networks of learning spaces developing in local communities to serve as learning ecosystems that provided easy access to learning opportunities throughout life. Henrik Zipsane shows that cultural institutions can play an important role in such networks with heritage learning having a particular value for seniors.

In some cases, the impact of the changes we have observed has been profound. Atsushi Makino, for example, has reported that the Kominkan in Japan is strengthening its character as an institution, thus becoming the basis of a decentralised revitalisation of Japanese society which he terms “a new infrastructure for society in Japan”. This at a time that the Japanese government is responding to the technological changes with its Society 5.0 initiative; putting society, not technology first. We have observed a similar deep impact in the Republic of Korea in Suwon led by an innovative learning city initiative.

As the demographic revolution with ageing populations impacts more deeply in other countries, in the looming context of the fourth industrial revolution, countries without the kind of social and learning infrastructure found in countries such as Germany, Japan, the Scandinavian countries and cities such as Suwon, Seoul, Beijing, and Taipei will be seriously disadvantaged in dealing with the social effects of these changes, with greater inequality and social dislocation the likely outcome.

While the impact of these demographic changes raises the question of learning in later life as an important policy question, the more fundamental issue relates to the need to rethink learning throughout the life course in the emerging context of deep social and economic change. Tom Schuller in his paper goes back to the conclusion of the UK Schuller and Watson report, *Learning Through Life*, for a lifelong learning structure of four stages with the third and fourth stages covering the period of later life we have discussed in this report. This raises a spectrum of issues for policy makers and practitioners in managing the transitions between these stages. Innovations and fresh ideas are needed.

In the introduction to this report, we cited the view of Schwab that the fourth industrial revolution has the potential to robotize humanity. While this may be the case, Schwab also raises the alternative view of the future, which has underpinned our approach to learning in later life.

*Or we can use the fourth industrial revolution (and we would add the demographic revolution) to lift humanity into a new collective and moral consciousness based on a shared sense of destiny. It is incumbent on us all to make sure that the latter is what happens.*

For this reason, we have seen the need to add an ethical and moral framework to our concept of good active ageing with the dual dimensions of individual and society intrinsically intertwined. This poses a challenge for adult education, and the other sectors, in moving in such directions but we have observed examples of good practice in enlightened learning cities around the world and no doubt in the work of community learning centres, although this information has been less available for our work.

Our observations overall suggest that we are entering a phase of transition to a new stage in the development of community learning centres and learning cities and communities, a more mindful stage with greater local and global consciousness, and with stronger and broader partnerships.

This perspective was reflected in the UNESCO *Cork Call to Action for Learning Cities* adopted by the UNESCO Third International Conference on Learning Cities in 2017.

*We aspire to build a mindful learning culture in our cities that fosters global consciousness and citizenship through local action to implement the SDGs.*

How to progress towards such a cultural change is the key issue raised by this report.

### **Revitalising learning and community together in progressing to a triple helix approach**

Perhaps the strongest message coming from this report is the need to revitalise learning and community together in the context discussed, with health objectives added so that triple helix relationships of learning, health, and community inspire and drive progress towards good active ageing for all in sustainable communities.

Most of the institutions discussed in this report from community learning centres, neighbourhood houses to learning cities and neighbourhoods share the common feature of connecting learning and community. The Volkshochschulen and Kominkan share this characteristic, with Volkshochschulen built on the experience of Scandinavian Folk High Schools established in the nineteenth century. Both institutions were established, in 1919 and 1946 respectively, in a period of national crises and dislocation. The learning city movement in the later twentieth century brought a further stage in this process of connecting learning and community at several levels.

The crises conditions of 1919 and 1946 in Germany and Japan have their counterpart in the present context of dislocation produced by a demographic revolution, the looming fourth industrial revolution, and shifts in values. A series of reports from *Bowling Alone* to *Falling Apart* have testified to the decline of community in the west accompanied by increased inequality. Learning in later life needs to be addressed in this context.

This challenge brings with it the imperative need to revitalise learning throughout life and community together as the path towards a good sustainable society. The learning city movement of recent years represents a second stage in connecting learning and community with some signs of transition to a further stage. The institutions discussed in this report have a broad spectrum of potential allies in connecting learning and community. These include the place-making movement, which has spread around the world from New York, environment groups, organisations committed to achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, and a range of other groups in civil society seeking a just, sustainable world. Other movements such as

the 100 Resilient Cities, supported by the Rockefeller Foundation, often fail to recognise the significance of social cohesion and learning in achieving resilient cities. Strengthening learning and community is a path to resilient cities, and needs to be addressed in overcoming a world of segmented development.

In this context, can a renaissance of local and global consciousness and citizenship be fostered, particularly in the west where community is most in decline? The learning city concept has taken root in East Asia and has led to a revitalisation of learning and community, building on social and cultural influences, as in the examples from Suwon (Republic of Korea), Beijing, and Taiwan that we give. Han and Makino in a 2013 article on learning cities in China, Korea, and Japan rightly described this as a community relations model. This is its strength.

We have included citizenship and inclusion as necessary twin supporting pillars in our concept of good active ageing. Community projects, such as those in Taipei and Cork as reported by Denise Reghenzani-Kearns, can contribute much over time in building a sustainable learning culture with a sense of identity, meaning, purpose, local and global consciousness, and citizenship.

In conclusion, here are three key messages in moving forward we wish to flag for discussion.

### **1. Learning from the East Asian experience**

The demographic revolution has impacted most in East Asia up to now. We have given examples of the responses from the Republic of Korea, Taiwan, Japan, and China. There are insights for policy development in other countries from the experience of these countries. They range from building on existing social and learning infrastructure as Japan has done in harnessing the *Kominkan*; establishing a new infrastructure as Taiwan has done with its network of Seniors Active Learning Centres (SALCs) supported by community colleges and universities; and establishing networks of learning cities as the catalyst in Korean and Chinese cities, such as Suwon, Beijing and Shanghai have done. In the case of China, the important role 60,000 U3As with more than 7 million members is supporting development.

We have pointed out that countries without such a social and learning infrastructure are likely to be seriously disadvantaged as the impact of the demographic revolution deepens. In some cases, such as Australia, the opportunity exists to upgrade an existing infrastructure with the networks of Neighbourhood Houses, which could be supported in strengthening their learning and community roles.

### **2. The significance of place and cultural influences**

Thomas Kuan reminds us that ideas on ageing differ in Asia and the West. The significance of place is also present in the work of the Glasgow Centre for Sustainable, Healthy, Learning Cities and Neighbourhoods, reported by Denise Reghenzani-Kearns. This is a key theme from this report, which gives significance to the role of heritage learning and cultural institutions in our approach to learning in later life, such as that documented by Henrik Zipsane. A clear insight from this report is the need for a more nuanced approach to learning in later life that takes account of place and culture. More regional meetings to share ideas are needed. There is much value in comparative insights, such as this report provides, in the search to connect local and global perspectives in good ways.

### **3. The triple helix of learning, health, and community**



While we have pointed to a number of ways of moving forward towards the vision presented in this report, the immediate priority should be to build on the common interests of WHO and health authorities and their education counterparts and find ways to progress the triple helix of learning, health, and community as a pathway to good active ageing for all in sustainable communities, underpinned by the ethical and moral values we have discussed. The dynamics of the learning city movement are starting to explore good ways of connecting learning and community with healthy living so that there are insights to be shared with communities around the world. Action in this area will be cost-effective for governments in building on and achieving the wider benefits of learning.

The flow of ideas between countries reported in this volume suggests that much can be achieved by strong international sharing of ideas and collaboration, which at times needs to cross traditional borders. This will continue to be important in addressing the big question raised by this report: whether the challenge posed by the demographic and technological revolutions will act as a catalyst to inspire new and stronger ways of connecting learning and community at all levels, nationally and internationally, as a further stage in the path towards a sustainable learning society, with learning opportunities for all throughout life?

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## **APPENDIX 1 — PASCAL POLICY REVIEW PAPERS**

A number of PASCAL Policy Review papers (PR) were prepared to support the ideas in this report, particularly the conceptual ideas on good active ageing set out in Part I of the report. These PRP papers are listed below. PASCAL PRs are short papers directed at key policy ideas in selected fields. They usually have an orientation to recent development and report key recent sources.

The following suite of PR papers were prepared by Peter Kearns to support the conceptual ideas brought into the lead paper for the strand of learning in later life at the 2018 PASCAL Suwon international conference and Part I of this report.

- PR 10 *[Developing holistic and integrated learning cities: Health and EcCoWell](http://pobs.cc/1ipnj)*, <http://pobs.cc/1ipnj>
- PR 14 *[Integrating happiness in sustainable learning cities](http://pobs.cc/1jhd2)*, <http://pobs.cc/1jhd2>
- PR 15 *[Building entrepreneurship in sustainable learning cities](http://pobs.cc/1jhie)*, <http://pobs.cc/1jhie>
- PR 16 *[Learning to be as the core of learning in later life](http://pobs.cc/1jhie)*, <http://pobs.cc/1jhie>

Other PR papers are relevant to the subject of this report. These include:

- PR 9 *[Learning Initiatives to Connect the Urban and Rural](http://pobs.cc/1i5u3)*, <http://pobs.cc/1i5u3>
- PR 11 *[Big Data, Lifelong Learning and Learning Cities: Promoting city-discourse on social inequalities in learning](http://pobs.cc/1iwpa)*, <http://pobs.cc/1iwpa>
- PR 13 *[Learning Later: responding to the evolving educational needs of older people](http://pobs.cc/1j523)*, <http://pobs.cc/1j523>
- PR 17 *[A benchmarking approach to understanding community engagement and learning cities](http://pobs.cc/1ka56)*, <http://pobs.cc/1ka56>

Many of the current set of PR papers have been translated into Korean and Mandarin to facilitate circulation in China and Korea. It is intended to complete the series of PR papers up to 20 within a book collection of the papers, to be published by the Korean National Institute for Lifelong Education (NILE) during 2019, in Korean and English. PR papers may be at present accessed at the PASCAL website as indicated above. In completing the series it is intended to add PR papers on Artificial intelligence and Future Skills, Social capital, and Place-making. These will also be translated into the above languages.