



11th PASCAL International Observatory Conference

Organised by The EU Centre at RMIT and hosted by The Hong Kong Institute of Education, the 11th PASCAL International Observatory Conference will take place in Hong Kong, 18-20 November 2013 with fieldwork to test approaches in different Hong Kong settings on 19 November

Cities Learning Together - Local Communities in the Sustainable and Healthy Learning City

- Can integrated effort and partnership within and between sectors, organisations and urban centres lead to a viable and sustainable future for the urban majority who now inhabit the planet?
- How can city administrations, voluntary bodies, business and universities work together to overcome the multiple crises facing us and develop healthy cities that can survive and self-improve?
- Does city learning really matter? How do cities really learn? How can we create learning spaces and processes that encourage people to learn and plan consciously as groups linking up with other learner-actors across all sectors and institutions in the city? How and where does devolution really work? How can local responsibility and wisdom be engaged to meet global and national ecological and economic priorities? How is high-level intent translated into practical action?
- What is the role of local communities and neighbourhoods in addressing the big issues confronting cities?

These questions are vital to the health and survival of people in towns and cities -especially in the multiplying mega-cities growing up in all continents.

Decades-old environmental and resource challenges now combine with persisting global financial and economic crises to make 'the end of growth' a new and fearful nightmare – acknowledged by some, denied by others. What do we mean by learning cities, community, and cross-sector partnership in this high-risk world? How to build futures for all that are economically viable, socially cohesive, culturally inclusive and environmentally constructive?

Cities have become the primary site in which these challenges and the associated debates are being played out. In the emergent and powerful economies of East Asia, some world-leading cities seek solutions via new 'learning city' approaches; meanwhile in western economies **some city leaders are looking beyond earlier learning city initiatives**, recognising the importance of knowledge and capability in balancing economic and social goals with environmental protection. The Conference targets all city and business leaders, as well as non-government organisations and academics who believe that these are crucial issues for cities in the next twenty years.

This Conference

In the spirit of learning partnerships, the European Union Centre at RMIT is very pleased to organise this conference in conjunction with PASCAL and in partnership with the host, Hong Kong Institute of Education, and with CITYNET, the Society for Participatory Research in Action (PRIA), the Hong Kong United Nations Education and Vocational Training Centre (UNEVOC), the Asia Pacific Universities Community Engagement Network (APUCEN), the Asia South Pacific Association for Basic and Adult Education (ASPBAE) and the East Asian Forum for Adult Education (EAFAE). *Please see our Sponsors section*

This Conference, PASCAL's first in Asia, draws on the PASCAL International Exchanges Project (PIE), which has shared insights from learning cities from five continents, and explored a number of themes arising from the cities' stories. It connects with the work of Unesco and the Unesco Institute of Lifelong Learning, UIL which with China will launch the Global Learning Cities Network (GLCN) in Beijing on 20-21 October 2013.

The Conference will focus on present and future action, mainly within local neighbourhoods in big cities, to build green, safe, healthy, communities which are economically viable and sustainable. It will be structured so that there are interactive sessions on Days 1 and 3, and opportunities for field investigations in Hong Kong on Day 2. A separate Call for Contributions to the Conference is available on the conference websites hosted by the EU Centre, Pascal International Observatory, and the Hong Kong Institute of Education.

What works in different contexts around the world and why? What can be adopted and adapted between different regions, cultures and traditions, especially East and West, in this the 'Asian century'?

This will be a practically-oriented dialogue between European Union and older OECD approaches and those of East Asia and other non-EU regions.

It will explore tensions, connections and syntheses between:

- Central policies and administration, and local, collaborative action, involving public, private, academic and civil society sectors;
- Economic growth and balanced social development;
- Short-cycle problem-solving and long-term action to contain and reduce global warming as aspirations and economic activity in the non-OECD world continue to outstrip those of the old West.

The success of the conference will be measured by the growth in instances of cities engaging to learn from each other in pursuit of resolving key challenges.

Source URL: <http://conference.pascalobservatory.org/pascal-conference-2013>

