

Report for the Australian Learning Community Network (ALCN) on the 2018 World Forum for Lifelong Learning in Korea combined with the 15th PASCAL International Conference held in Suwon, in the Gyeonggi Province – (Advancing Lifelong Learning) – 30 August until 1 September, 2018.

Dr. Leone Wheeler
UNESCO-UNEVOC Qatar Centre Research Fellow,
Office of Applied Research & Innovation, CNA-Q, Qatar

Introduction

The conference was attended by over 500 delegates including a large international delegation from many countries in Asia, North America, Europe and Australia. I accompanied a delegation from Al Wakra City in Qatar. The Qatar delegation were the only representatives from the Middle East.

The conference was co-organised and hosted by the [Gyeonggi Do Provincial Institute for Lifelong Learning \(GILL\)](#) and the Korean Academic Society for Lifelong Education from 30 August -1 September, 2018 in Suwon City, Gyeonggi Province.



Gyeonggi Province is a leader in Lifelong Learning Education in Korea, with the highest number of lifelong learning cities. The conference was also supported by the Korean National Institute for Lifelong Education, Korean National Commission for UNESCO, and the Korean Society for the Study of Lifelong Education.

Keynote Speakers

Professor Shirley Walters, University of Western Cape, South Africa and Professor HAN Soonghee, Seoul National University, Republic of Korea

The two keynote speakers on Day One were stimulating and raised a number of challenges, particularly in relation climate change, that for citizens of nations but within a global context, are becoming more urgent. This included

- The 4th Industrial Revolution is coming and we must learn to adapt.
- Resources are limited but we have unlimited human desire for more.
- We must stop being a throw away society.
- What about a no growth future?
- We must use our collective wisdom to create sustainable futures.

How can learning cities in Korea and elsewhere engage with these issues? It comes back to a lifelong learning orientation – individually, collectively, for organisations and society and it is lifelong, life-wide and life-deep. We must reinforce hope with scientific rigour.

To paraphrase Nelson Mandela *Learning is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.*

Sustaining Learning City Networks

The presentations following the keynotes were about sustaining learning city partnerships. The chair, Professor Roberta Piazza, PASCAL, European Co-Director, spoke about cities being the drivers of national and regional economies, but they are places of growing inequality. Learning cities provide a framework to cultivate and enable access, collaboration and co-operation among learning providers and stakeholders. Professor Heribert Hinzen, adult education, lifelong learning and sustainable development consultant gave examples from Germany, in particular, the Volkshochschulen (VHS) which is next year celebrating 100 years of community-based adult education and learning and contact Professor Hinzen if you would like to take part in the celebrations! I spoke on behalf of the Director of Al Wakra on '*The Journey of Al-Wakra Municipality to join the UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities*'. Sustainability is the key theme that Al Wakra is using to build its learning city framework. I also gave presented on vocational education and training and 21st Century skills based on a research project I am currently working on in Qatar.

A theoretical presentation was provided by Hyun Youngsup, Professor of Lifelong Learning at Kyungpook National University, Republic of Korea. Youngsup applied network theory to the construction of networks among lifelong learning institutions. Unsurprisingly, among other results he found that it was easier to establish networks among institutions of the same kind, but greater benefits arose from diversity and the sharing of infrastructure, but it was harder to do.

Lifelong Learning as the Key to Solving Community Problems.

Dorothy Lucardie, Chair of PIMA, reminded us about the UN Sustainability Goals 2030, particularly Sustainable Development Goal 4 on 'Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all' and also the *UN Global Campaign for Education* and the *CONFINTEA VI Mid Term Review 2017*. She reminded us about learning across the lifespan – lifelong, life-wide and life-deep; formal, non-formal and informal learning; learning across sectors; inclusion; women and trades; literacy.

Mr. Raul Valdes-Cortera, Senior Policy Advisor with UNESCO UIL called practitioners to action and reminded us we are now in year three of the UN Development Goals and only have 12 years to work towards achieving the targets. He said it was very important for projects and programmes that are happening at the local level. Connect the work you are doing locally to the global.

Other presentations regarding this theme came from Maria Liu Wong, Dean, City Seminary of New York, USA who linked spirituality to life-deep learning and Gumpanat Boriboon, a lecturer at Srinakharinwirot University, Thailand who reinforced the importance of valuing the treasure of local wisdom and to make sure we embed this into our lifelong learning work. Also, Kim Jinhwa, Professor, Dong-eu University, Republic of Korea, presented on '*Lifelong learning as the Big-Key to Solving Regional Problems in Korea*'. I liked the terms that Professor Jihwa introduced - 'the happy learning hall of the hometown village', 'knowledge citizens', 'happy learning centre', 'happiness learning village development', the 'learning village school' established in an apartment. The context was that four case studies were presented from communities in the Republic of Korea which have significant issues -for example, health, isolation of communities because of location, or lack of understanding of the Korean language.... Examples of practical lifelong learning strategies to address these issues were given. Professor Jihwa concludes 'Lifelong learning in the 21st century modern society serves as a big-solution to local problems'.

Learning in Later Life

The other sub-theme of the day was *Learning in Later Life*. This is a big issue in Korea and other countries in Europe and Asia because of the aging population. Peter Kearns, Australian international expert on learning cities, led this Panel and will be reporting on this through the PASCAL web site.

One item worth noting and following up on – Peter Kearns gave a very moving speech at the dinner in the evening about how the Delor’s Report – *Learning the Treasure Within* had a profound effect on his working life. I hope that he writes this speech down and shares it with people,

Excursions



Visit to the National Institute of Lifelong Learning (NILE)

Day 2 included opportunities to see Learning Cities in action. The morning included a visit to Unification Tower which was a profound experience for delegates. We had not imaged what it would be like to know that you family is on the other side of the river – in one place only 450 meters away, but you cannot see them. Your only hope is to look through binoculars?

During the day we also visited an English language school and were treated to a performance of Tarzan where actors demonstrated learning a language via the theme of Education through Innovation. My group visited PajuBook City – a city of publishers, designers, printing companies and bookstores. It is a city of culture, education, architecture and is based on sustainable principles. I was very impressed by the Forest of Wisdom – a book space full of donated books, where lots of exhibitions and lectures are held. This was followed by a presentation from the National Institute of Lifelong Learning to find out about the national lifelong learning framework, the learning credit system and the availability of online learning for citizens.



Forest of Wisdom. PajuBook City

The other group visited Osan City, a city of education where delegates were given a rock star welcome by adult learners who had turned out to greet them. Professor Mike Osborne reported that the enthusiasm was obvious and catchy and the pride of what people had done. He noted about one of the reasons Osan City established a learning city was because of a relatively low population. The local government wanted to attract people to the city and saw education as a way of attracting them.

Again, there were more concepts to think about – ‘people as schools’. I think this is like the concept we used in Hume City where we said everyone is a teacher. There was also the concept of a ‘learning salon’ – a three step process:

- 1) be a learner. Everyone enrolled in one program free,
- 2) to become a planner of learners,
- 3) to become a teacher or citizen teaching others.

The conference delegates were treated to a learning bus – that is, some of the presentations were actually given on the bus as you were driven to your next location. A novel idea for the presenters who had to use interactive methods to keep the audience engaged.

[Distinguished Scholars’ Lifelong Learning Forum](#)

An additional seminar was held at Ajou University. This was hosted us by Dr. Choi Un Shil, the hostess of the conference and Professor at Ajou University.

- Professor Chris Duke, Honorary Professor, Adult Education, RMIT University, spoke about the need to rethink what we mean by lifelong learning. Over the years there has been much debate and confusion about the term. What about an outward-looking Third Generation lifelong learning that can make a real difference?
- Peter Kearns, on behalf of PASCAL Observatory spoke about rethinking learning cities in the context of the Fourth Industrial Revolution and Deep Societal Transformation. One thing I learnt from this presentation was about Singapore’s use of 21st century competencies and outcomes.
- Professor Rob Marks, PASCAL International Observatory, spoke about the University and Older Adults: Promoting age friendly universities which are sustainable and open to all.

- Heribert Hinzen, Germany Honorary Fellow, UNESCO Institute of Lifelong Learning spoke about Local and Global Perspectives and Practices in Adult Education and Lifelong Learning.
- Professor Mike Osborne, University of Glasgow and PASCAL International Observatory, gave a presentation titled 'Are smart cities learning?' He noted it was interesting to review the web sites of cities that proclaim to be Smart Cities. Do they link to lifelong learning or education strategies? Very often they do not. However, he gave an example of Amsterdam Smart City – an exception where he noted echoes of learning city frameworks.
- Mr. Raul Valdes Coteria, from UNESCO UIL spoke about operationisation of lifelong learning. He gave an interesting example of lifelong learning monitoring - a lifelong learning index from the Institute of Adult Education in Singapore that would be worth following up on.
- Professor Ikseon Choi, the University of Georgia, USA, finished with a dynamic presentation on a problem-solving approach to lifelong learning. He demonstrated how he uses virtual reality to teach children about traffic safety. His team also uses VR to interest young people in STEM subjects.

The conference organisers did a great job of ensuring that that delegates had copies of all presentations (in English and Korean), so if you want to follow up on any ideas, let me know and I try to help.

Dr. Choi Un Shil reminded us we learnt a lot. She also quoted the old African proverb '**If you want to go fast, go alone, if you want to go far go together**'. It reminded me of the proverb we used as part of the Hume Global Learning Village – '**It takes a Village to Raise a Child**'.

Information about the programme is here:

<http://pascalobservatory.org/pascalnow/pascal-activities/events/15th-pascal-conference-collaboration-%E2%80%98985th-world-forum-lifelong-ed>

Leone Wheeler