



CONNECTING UP IN A WORLD OF TURBULENT CHANGE

Report of the PASCAL EcCoWell Community Recovery Program

November 2020

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The point is that the increasing connectivity of the human race is advancing personal awareness of all the relationships that make up a complex and diverse world. A younger generation is beginning to view the world less as a storehouse of objects to expropriate and possess and more as a labyrinth of relationships to access.

How, then, will we choose to use our newfound relational consciousness? Interestingly, just as we are beginning to develop a relational sense of consciousness, we are beginning to understand the relational nature of the forces that govern life on this planet.

Rifkin, J. 2009.

The Empathetic Civilization: The race to global consciousness in a world in crisis

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Executive Summary

The PASCAL EcCoWell Community Recovery Program was conducted from March to October 2020 to test whether EcCoWell ideas on integration and partnership would have value in supporting community recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. Five learning cities, two learning neighbourhoods, and two universities participated in the program. Short profiles of participants are given in Appendix 1.

The EcCoWell concept was developed by PASCAL in 2012 in the context of the PASCAL Program on International Exchanges (PIE). EcCoWell was directed at integrating the strands of learning city development in a holistic and coherent way. The city of Cork was an international leader in EcCoWell development, along with Datong Taipei and the City Seminary in Harlem New York. All three participated in the Community Recovery Program. A series of seven briefing papers were prepared for the program. These ranged across subjects such as developing learning neighbourhoods, mental health and well being, environment policy and practice, and rethinking lifelong learning.

Participants in the program produced short reports in October on their planning for community recovery from the pandemic. These reports are set out in Part 2 of this paper. Insights gained from the program are set out in Part 3 of this paper in the following framework.

1. Supporting individual well-being in adjusting to on-going change.
2. Building resilient communities with social cohesion.
3. Promoting consciousness of global interdependence.
4. Harnessing technology to serve human purposes.
5. Implications for learning cities.
6. Connecting up for the further development of the EcCoWell concept

The program showed that there would be value in the further development of the EcCoWell concept in supporting learning cities in adjusting to changing conditions, particularly in development of psycho--social aspects of fostering well-being and empathy, along with global consciousness, in communities towards a sustainable future at a time of disruptive change

PART I - THE CONTEXT AND CHALLENGE

Peter Kearns

Learning cities are confronted by multiple challenges that require fresh thinking. While the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic is centre stage, the implications for employment and society overall of the technologies of the Fourth Industrial Revolution such as artificial intelligence and biotechnologies, climate change, and ageing populations in their cumulative impact and interactions make a world marked by dislocation, uncertainty, and turbulence. This is a context marked by simultaneous deep transformative trends (Schwab, 2018:221)

In this context, the PASCAL International Observatory has organised an EcCoWell Community Recovery Program with a small number of learning cities and neighbourhoods participating, supported by several universities, to share ideas on good approaches to recovery from the pandemic, while also taking steps towards a sustainable future. This report provides a summary of the outcomes of the program.

The EcCoWell approach

PASCAL developed the EcCoWell approach to learning city development in 2012 as a way of integrating the strands in city development for a more holistic approach. The Cork Learning City pioneered this approach which was reflected in the 2017 UNESCO Cork Call to Action on Learning Cities with its plea for green, healthy learning cities. A full account of the development of the EcCoWell approach up to 2018 may be found on http://cradall.org/sites/default/files/WP501_2019.pdf.

These relationships may be regarded as the initial stage in the development of the EcCoWell concept which highlighted the importance of learning, health, and environment relationships. This stage also gave prominence to local learning neighbourhoods with Cork, later joined by Limerick, again pioneering in piloting a number of learning neighbourhood projects.

The EcCoWell Community Recovery Program

This program ran from March to October 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic. To support the program, a series of Briefing Papers on important subjects were prepared each month and circulated to participants.

The Briefing Papers covered the following subjects.

BP1: Kearns, P. *Rethinking sustainable learning communities for extraordinary times.*

BP2: Kearns, P. *Building inclusive learning neighbourhoods.*

BP2: Kearns, P. & Lido, C. *Mental health and well-being.*

BP4: Wong, M. & Watson, C. *Engaging a “dream deferred”:* Arts, spirituality and transformative learning.

BP5: Connolly, B. *Harnessing environment policy and practice for a sustainable future.*

BP6: Kearns, P. *Sustainability: Six steps towards “recover better” from the COVID-19 pandemic*.

BP7: Schuller, T. Biao, I. & Osborne, M. *Rethinking lifelong learning in the changing life course*.

These Briefing Papers may be found on the PASCAL website.

The Briefing Papers are directed at taking EcCoWell ideas to a further stage of development. Subjects such as mental health and well-being, the role of the arts , spirituality, and transformative learning, preserving the environment, rethinking lifelong learning, and the important role of local neighbourhoods and relationships have been given a fresh prominence by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the other mega-transitions mentioned above.

The October reports and insights gained

Participants in the EcCoWell 2 Community Recovery Program produced short reports in October to provide an overview of their thinking on recovery from the pandemic. These reports are set out in Part 2 of this report with a summary of insights reflected in these reports given in Part 3 of this report.

The challenge of the wider context of change and dislocation

While the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic along with climate change, urbanisation, ageing populations, and technological change attract central attention, there have been a number of other important changes that need to be addressed in the search for a sustainable future. These include the decline in citizenship and social cohesion, growing inequality within and between countries, a decline in confidence of the capacity of governments to address the growing complexity of mega-problems, and overall the growth of more tribal, divided societies.

Because learning cities and neighbourhoods have the potential to address the spectrum of issues around the decline in citizenship and social cohesion, and make some contribution to growing inequality, I am making this my starting point in considering the contribution learning cities can make to “recover better” approaches, and to set a framework for the Part 2 and Part 3 reports and insights.

The crisis in citizenship, social cohesion, and growing inequality

Scholars as varied as Touraine, Morin, Putnam, and OECD have pointed to the crisis in citizenship and social cohesion, and with growing inequality, that threatens the viability of the present world order.

- *Caught between the globalized world of the economy and this cultural fragmentation, social and political institutions are losing their importance and capacity to act* (Touraine, 2001:246)
- *The inability of current thinking to conceive the world globally and its constituent parts* (Morin, 2001:202).

- *Americans are right to fear that the bonds of our communities have withered, and we are right to fear that this transformation has real costs (Putnam, 2000:403).*
- *Rising inequality within and between countries makes it clear that more must be done in order to make the next phase of globalisation work for all. This will require a new approach to economic policies, but also a new broad emphasis on social cohesion (OECD, 2016:10).*

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted these disturbing trends which must be addressed in recovery from the pandemic. There are deep unresolved tensions between economic globalisation and cultural isolation and fragmentation. Being both global and local at the same time is increasingly difficult.

Recovery from the pandemic presents a challenge in resolving and balancing global and local objectives. This is a particular objective of the EcCoWell learning city approach. Briefing papers prepared for the program have addressed a number of these issues requiring attention including local community objectives in learning neighbourhoods which can be seen as regenerative communities with a deep concern with mental health and well-being and building supportive communities.

The “recover better” path from the pandemic will require that some steps are taken towards a more sustainable future. Briefing papers prepared for the program have suggested some actions in such directions. However, each city and neighbourhood needs to determine its own path in the light of local conditions.

A world of perpetual transition

The recovery process will also require that we think of “normality” and transition in different ways. The complexity of the multiple challenges we face require that we rethink the concept of transition in life from several well-defined stages to a concept of perpetual transition (Goux:340). The longevity life in the era of the Fourth Industrial Revolution with the growing reach of artificial intelligence requires this imperative as a key challenge for individuals and their communities. The mental agility to change course, when this becomes essential, will become a key capability in the search for a sustainable future.

This capability was described by Maria Liu Wong and Connie Walters in a Briefing Paper for the program as “transformative learning”. Developing this capability will be a central challenge for education institutions, industry, and other stakeholders in building “recover better” pathways.

Grasping the connections between things and linking ideas in such a way as to give them coherence and relevance will be central to a sustainable future (Matsura, 2001:ix).

This will require taking EcCoWell ideas about integration and connecting up to a new level of development. The various Briefing Papers for the program suggest ways of doing this. However, finding ways of connecting up in your local context will require much creative thinking and innovation. Envisioning recovery from the pandemic, and taking initial steps towards this vision, provides an opportunity for this.

Rethinking the role and forms of lifelong learning in the various stages of the longevity life will be an important part of this envisioning a sustainable future process. The Briefing Paper by Schuller, Osborne, and Biao takes up this subject and provides some suggestions.

A new gloss on the learning to be concept, and on learning generally, is emerging from the multiple changes required in building a sustainable society with enhanced equality, social justice, and inclusion. Transformative learning will need to occur at individual and community levels with the interactions between individuals, community, and civil society functioning to build a sustainable society. Gratton and Scott called this process “perpetual transition”. Atushi Makino, in a paper reflecting deep changes in Japanese society, described the process in the following terms.

There, the process of creating “society” is “learning”, and the process of “learning” is also “society” itself. Only in that place, will social trust emerge. People will trust each other through the “movement” of “learning”, “society” will continue to be created in the new sustainable society, and people will continue to construct their own existence dynamically. In that place, people’s existence itself is “learning” and “society”. (Makino, 2020)

The papers that follow in Part 2 of this report provide a portrait of a range of responses to these questions. Part 3 then offers an overview of insights gained from these papers. However, we must emphasise that these papers can be read in different ways when the lens is on a particular city or community. For this reason, we regard this PASCAL EcCoWell recovery dialogue as an ongoing process of reimagining a more viable and just future, and taking some initial steps on this path.

PART 2 - PASCAL EcCoWell 2 COMMUNITY RECOVERY PROGRAM

PARTICIPANTS' REPORTS

Part 2 gives the reports from participants written during October/November at the end of the program. Participants were asked to have regard in their reports to six themes given at the start of the program in Briefing Paper 1, and to address any of these themes in their reports.

The themes were:

1. Strengthening community bonds and citizenship in learning neighbourhoods and addressing exclusion, including ways of keeping older people socially engaged.
2. Building further community learning strategies for health and well-being, with an initial focus on mental health.
3. Encouraging enterprise development and entrepreneurship in neighbourhoods.
4. Finding ways to promote digital learning for all age groups.
5. Action towards developing a green stimulus program for the post-coronavirus society and economy.
6. Harnessing cultural institutions and libraries in building a sustainable learning culture in the community.

Later briefing papers in the program raised other themes such as rethinking lifelong learning and adapting to the longevity society. These themes might also be reflected in some papers.

CITY OF WOLVERHAMPTON

Prepared by Karen Sahota, Natalie Lewis and Mary Mahoney on behalf of Wolverhampton City Learning Region and Wolverhampton Learning Communities Partners

Theme 2: Building further community learning strategies for health and well-being, with an initial focus on mental health.

Context

Wolverhampton is in the West Midlands region in the UK. The City of Wolverhampton has a population of almost 260,000. The city is diverse, one third of the city's population is from Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) groups and there are over 88 languages spoken. Before the Covid19 pandemic, Wolverhampton faced significant challenges linked to inequality, income levels, skills and health and well-being. Due to the effects of Covid19, these challenges are growing, with large numbers of residents in low skilled roles being made redundant, increasing number of benefits claimants, digital poverty including barriers to engagement and employment opportunities. In addition to this, are the health and well-being consequences of enforced isolation (health, education, psychological) and rapid rates of infection, causing a second national lockdown.

Wolverhampton is a member city of the UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities and is developing a learning city through the Wolverhampton City Learning Region initiative. It builds on the tradition of lifelong learning across the city. The Wolverhampton City Learning Region (WCLR) initiative is a partnership between the lead core partners: City of Wolverhampton Council, University of Wolverhampton, City of Wolverhampton College, Adult Education Wolverhampton, Wolverhampton Learning Platform and Wolverhampton Learning Communities, and a range of key organisations across Wolverhampton and surrounding areas. Whilst the intention is to put learning at the heart of the WCLR, the key intention of the initiative is not simply to position or prioritise learning per se but to focus on the means by which learning creates transformation to achieve economic and social development and growth. Wolverhampton has developed community learning strategies for health and well-being including a focus on mental health through Wolverhampton Learning Communities.

Wolverhampton Learning Communities

Aligned with the Wolverhampton City Learning Region initiative, Wolverhampton Learning Communities is a grassroots-led initiative established by Wolverhampton Learning Platform Community Interest Company (CIC) and the City of Wolverhampton Council in conjunction with other key voluntary and community sector (VCS) partners and education training providers, who work together to improve the city's response to supporting local residents and those who are socially excluded. This provides an integrated package of learning, skills and well-being activities that are tailored to the needs of the communities within the City of Wolverhampton. Wolverhampton Learning Communities is a partnership between City of Wolverhampton Council, voluntary and community providers, WEA – Adult Learning within

Reach, City of Wolverhampton College, Adult Education Wolverhampton and the University of Wolverhampton.

The Wolverhampton Learning Communities Offer is made up of five strands as follows:



The specific aim of the Wolverhampton Learning Communities Partnership is to improve the city's response to supporting people who live in the local communities to engage with learning in the community and access employment and skills services in order to facilitate their integration, skills development and capacity to make a personal contribution to flourishing communities and economic growth in Wolverhampton. The partnership is a network of voluntary and community sector learning providers working collaboratively with the City of Wolverhampton Council and key training, support and health providers to deliver learning, skills and employability services in community venues and neighbourhoods across the City of Wolverhampton.

The Partnership was established to find solutions and ensure adequate resourcing to support residents, particularly those who are furthest away from the labour market, to access learning, skills and employability services. In 2019 Wolverhampton Learning Communities won the Universities Association for Lifelong Learning (UALL) Innovation Award. This was a great recognition of the partnership work which has demonstrated that by working collaboratively it has been possible to ensure partners are sharing best practice and providing complementary services to provide local residents with a clear pathway to access all levels of quality learning in their local community.

The partnership offers a wide range of city-wide support to develop skills, access employment, training, and further and adult education progression opportunities, and tailored advice to ensure that barriers to support, learning and services are removed for Wolverhampton residents. Their activities are normally conducted at community venues across the city, but partners have had to readjust their engagement and delivery methods to meet the needs of residents during the outbreak of coronavirus and are working to ensure

community well-being during this challenging time and providing support for almost 1,000 residents on a weekly basis.

The Learning Communities Strategy Board has recently been established to build on the success of the partnership and focus on further opportunities for partnership working and strengthening connections into communities in these challenging times.

Mental Health and Well-being

The major strand of work for health and well-being targeted support includes the Mind@Work programme which has continued to be a powerful tool during the pandemic. Mental health conditions are one of the prevalent reasons for residents in Wolverhampton being dependent on health-related benefits and significantly disadvantages individuals in their attempts to gain or stay in employment. The Mind@Work programme has been developed through Wolverhampton Learning Communities to provide training, skills development, confidence building and employability skills to individuals who have experienced mental health issues as a barrier to employment. It has been running successfully since 2015 with three programmes per year (one each term) and usually supports 10 - 12 residents on each programme. The programme includes: well-being workshops & mental health assessment; 1-2-1 coaching & mentoring support; learning coping strategies; learning relaxation & meditation techniques in relation to work; and, employability skills development and sector awareness.

The Mind@Work programme was developed as a direct response to the needs identified by the city's Skills Team when co-ordinating community programmes to support unemployed people into work. A number of residents were identified through programme delivery as experiencing depression and anxiety as key barriers to finding work. As a result, a project was developed to support unemployed residents with anxiety or depression or other mental health impairments to get them ready for work. Detailed data was collected on the local population of people with mental health impairments and the trainers used had specific skills to assist this client group and provide a service responsive to it.

Factors such as unemployment, personal debt and cuts to welfare payments are known to increase the risk of mental disorders. Mental health is so broad and affects individuals in different ways. Consequently, the city's Skills Team piloted this scheme to scope the reaction and differences in the type of support required for those with mental health impairments and how this can differ from those who are experiencing other health-related problems. The Mind@Work programme offers bespoke customised training and support to individuals in moving closer to the job market. The programme also provides appropriate sign posting to additional provision during the programme and on completion of the programme.

The delivery of the Mind@Work programme and support for it includes a number of Wolverhampton Learning Communities partners including:

- **Workers Education Association** who focused on coping/relaxation strategies and other employability skills.

- **Wolverhampton Healthy Minds** who carried out a mental health assessment with all the residents and provided well-being workshops at intervals throughout the programme.
- **Department for Work and Pensions** who promoted the programme as an opportunity and organised for residents attending to receive transport expenses.
- **Skills Service** who provide on-going coaching & mentoring support when requested by residents.



Residents participating in the Mind@Work programme found the coaching and mentoring support available throughout the whole programme very useful as it helped them overcome any barriers experienced during the course and helped them to complete the programme successfully.

Overall the partner organisations felt that the programme was very well co-ordinated and delivered. This ensured that the majority of the residents completed the programme and gained positive outcomes.

A thorough recruitment process ensured that all the places on the programme were filled and the fact that it was promoted by the Department for Work and Pensions as an opportunity was very useful. Referrals are received from other city partners including the NHS and Healthy Minds.

Participants completed Confidence Measure & Feedback Forms with all respondents stating that, as a result of the programme, they felt more confident. In particular, they felt that they gained new skills and qualifications to improve their chances of finding work. Following the programme residents expressed increased confidence levels, a clearer understanding of services and how to access them. Participants have been able to progress onto voluntary work, further learning and / or further skills development programmes.

The programme now runs every term and is considered to be a positive progression for residents who have been long term carers for family members, are economically inactive or are moving from one form of benefit (Employment and Support Allowance) to one which focuses providing support for people into work (Jobs Seekers Allowance). The programme has been particularly successful in attracting participants as it is based in a comfortable community setting which is the first stepping stone to their next step.

Covid-19 response

Given the success of the programme, the Mind@Work programme has been adapted during the pandemic to continue to be delivered face-to-face using smaller cohorts (7 instead of 10-12), shorter sessions and social distancing restrictions. The content of the sessions has remained the same.

Learning Communities have other health and well-being related programmes which have been adapted during the pandemic. Two examples of programmes currently being delivered by partners include:

- Empowering Women: a blended learning programme for women only. This is being delivered by Aspiring Futures, a community organisation that supports women who may be experiencing barriers related to domestic violence, low or no confidence etc.
- Health@Work: a programme focused on residents who have a disability and delivered by Access to Business, a community organisation that specialises in supporting local residents onto positive pathways.

In addition, a city-wide cross-sectoral approach focused on community recovery has been established. *Relighting Our City: City of Wolverhampton Council Recovery Commitment* has been developed in partnership with more than 2,500 local people including residents, young people, the voluntary and community sector, council partners, employees, councillors and businesses. The 5 point plan identifies the key priority areas for the city:

- supporting people who need us most
- creating more opportunities for young people
- supporting our vital local businesses
- generating more jobs and learning opportunities
- stimulating vibrant high streets and communities.

As a result of this engagement, these will now be used as a framework for the Council and its partners to focus on recovery, enable the city to address key challenges and build on new opportunities.

Through the strengths of the Learning Communities partnership and its community learning strategies for health and well-being, Wolverhampton has been able to maintain a focus on support for residents during the pandemic. The success of its flagship programme and the model of community provision has meant that learning providers could make small changes to the programme to ensure that it continued to be available to residents locally. Through the broader partnerships with key agencies such as the Department for Work and Pensions, the City of Wolverhampton Council, especially the Public Health team, and NHS, the programme can continue to attract the residents who need it most during this challenging time. Their early work on evaluating and refining it mean that it was sufficiently agile to cope with the new challenges of the pandemic.

Ensuring sustainability of the programme is crucial going forward to enable it to continue to be responsive to the need of local residents who are experiencing ongoing and growing disadvantage resulting from/causing new mental health issues for people who are seeking to gain or stay in employment.

LEARNING LIMERICK

Yvonne Lane

Focus - Strengthening community bonds and citizenship in learning neighbourhoods and addressing exclusion, including ways of keeping older people engaged.

This report from the Learning Limerick Steering Group discusses developments on the theme of **'Strengthening community bonds and citizenship in learning neighbourhoods and addressing exclusion, including ways of keeping people engaged.'** It outlines a brief introduction to Learning Limerick, and focuses on key initiatives relating to the theme: the Limerick Lifelong Learning Festival; the Learning Ambassadors project and Limerick Learning Neighbourhoods, a pilot initiative in four Learning Neighbourhoods in Limerick City. The report highlights how these initiatives are helping to combat exclusion, including digital exclusion, and engage with older learners. It also shows how they can advance our key objective of reaching out to the broader County Limerick learning region and connect with our rural partners and learners.

The **Learning Limerick Steering Group** is a partnership forum that brings together sectoral networks and partnerships, and is committed to creating a culture of learning in Limerick. Led by the Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board, Limerick City and County Council, and PAUL Partnership, it is made up of statutory, local development, business, and community and voluntary sector partners that have a role in learning in Limerick. The original Limerick City of Learning Steering Group was established as a sub-committee of the Limerick City Development Board in 2003. The expansion of its membership in 2013 to include both City and County partners resulted in the name of the group being rebranded to **'Learning Limerick'**. This followed the amalgamation of Limerick City and County Councils that year. The Learning Limerick group's Strategic Plan – Helping to Grow Limerick as a Learning Region (2018 – 2022) positions learning at the centre of development planning in the Limerick region, in all communities, sectors and settings.

1. Limerick Lifelong learning Festival

The annual **Limerick Lifelong Learning Festival** promotes learning in all its forms, formal and informal activities and in all aspects of life. It has become an extremely effective way to connect with learners and event organisers right across Limerick City and County. At the core of the festival are area-based and interest-based networks, which have a particular focus on promoting inclusive learning, e.g. the Limerick Community Education Network (LCEN); Limerick Integration Working Group; Limerick Mental Health Association and Limerick Childcare Committee. The Festival gives these networks a focus for organising learning events, and provides members with networking opportunities to work together in running collaborative events. A key outcome is that links facilitated and made through the festival have continued after the festival, with many new projects commenced as a result of these collaborations. Learning Limerick also continues to work closely with its County Limerick partners in the delivery of the festival each year, including running events with the County Libraries, the two rural Local Development Companies West Limerick Resources and

Ballyhoura Development and our County partners in Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board. This ensures festival events and activities specifically target learners in County Limerick. For instance, holding several flagship Festival Launch events in the County has been key to our engagement with rural learners (e.g. launch events were held at the cultural venues of Lough Gur Heritage Centre; Foynes Flying Boat Museum and Adare Heritage Centre in County Limerick.)

The festival turned 10 in 2020, with its first Virtual Lifelong Learning Festival held in September 2020. Despite the challenges posed by COVID-19, the programme of over 80 online events was varied and accessible to all. It even allowed for other Learning Cities from around the world to participate in Limerick events and share their learning! The festival theme this year was **‘Celebrating and Building Learning Communities’**, celebrating the resilience of our local communities. Indeed, annual festival’s themes have always focused on promoting inclusion, such as ‘Bridging the Gap’ in 2019 and ‘Limerick Together for Equitable and Inclusive Learning’ in 2018. These themes anchor activities developed by our local partners and allow for promotional materials to be developed to promote essential messages to our communities.

In 2020, the flagship event for the festival was a webinar **‘Learning in a Changing Business World’**. It brought together speakers from different business sectors to discuss how they have responded to the current challenges presented by COVID-19. As part of the festival, the Digital Inclusion sub-group of SMART Limerick ran an **‘Exploring the Meaning and Experience of Digital Exclusion’** event. It included a Presentation of the group’s interim research findings, an important Limerick-based research that is being conducted and presented by the Tavistock Institute, London. There was also an event ran by the **PLACE-EE (Platforms for Ageing Community Engagement – Exchange and Enterprise)** project, of which Limerick City and County Council and the University of Ulster are key partners. This is another great example of collaboration between Learning Limerick and Derry Strabane Learning City-Region, and an opportunity to celebrate the Irish Learning Cities Day on 30th September. PLACE-EE has researched, collated and recorded important cultural heritage across four rural and isolated regions of Europe (Ireland, Northern Ireland, Iceland, and Sweden). In County Limerick, the project engaged with older people in a very meaningful way in the rural Newcastle West town, while also establishing links across rural communities.

Limerick Learning Ambassadors

The Learning Limerick **Learning Ambassadors** project commenced in 2019. The Ambassadors are Limerick people from all walks of life, united by a common interest in promoting, developing and celebrating learning, in all its forms, throughout Limerick City and County. They are welcoming, friendly and proud that Limerick is a Learning Region, are willing to share their experiences of formal and informal learning and happy to help others find opportunities for learning. The Ambassadors can spread the word and promote the idea of lifelong learning in their own communities, workplaces and neighbourhoods. They can help break down all sorts of barriers to learning as they share inspiring learning stories from their own lives or the lives of people in their families and communities. The group has discussed barriers to accessible learning such as the issues of transport and costs of transport for rural communities. The Learning Ambassadors are important as they can help put a friendly face on organisations involved with learning. There may be an opportunity to work

on more advocacy and outreach as part of this initiative. In November and December 2019, the Learning Ambassadors participated in a Story Exchange training project with Narrative 4, which developed their skills to 'tell their story'. The Narrative 4 training model develops empathy through sharing your story with your story partner and retelling your partner's story back to the group in their voice. Following this training, the Ambassadors told their own stories of lifelong learning on video interviews. They were interviewed on their stories and why they are passionate about being a Learning Ambassador. This series of recorded interviews are being launched in collaboration with the Lifelong Learning Festival 2020.

2. Limerick Learning Neighbourhoods

The **Limerick Community Education Network (LCEN)**, in collaboration with Learning Limerick, has established four **Learning Neighbourhoods** in Limerick. LCEN was introduced to the concept of learning neighbourhood following a presentation by Cork Learning City at a Learning Limerick event in 2017. There followed a study visit to Cork in 2018, meeting the community partners involved in Ballyphehane and Mayfield Learning Neighbourhoods, and learning about the approach in Cork of bringing the learning city concept to the neighbourhood level. Following further consultation and workshops, a Limerick Learning Neighbourhoods Steering Group was formed. This representative group agreed to explore the setting up of four Learning Neighbourhoods, in Northside, Southside, City Centre and St. Mary's, mirroring the long-established adult-education networks in Limerick City. Members of the Steering Group agreed to be the 'link/support' person with each of the four neighbourhoods. The design of the Limerick Learning Neighbourhoods logo was also chosen following an art competition held with local primary schools in the four neighbourhoods.

The four '**Limerick Learning Neighbourhoods**' were launched by LCEN during the Limerick Lifelong Learning Festival week in April 2019. The theme for Learning Neighbourhoods in 2019 was 'Who we are is where we are from'. LCEN sees learning neighbourhoods as an extension of its work by including everyone from the neighbourhood, businesses, groups and local people, as all kinds of learning takes place in all neighbourhoods. As well as guests from the communities and local agencies in Limerick, there were national and international guests in attendance at our launch from Learning Cities from the Irish Network of Learning Cities and Espoo, Finland; and representatives from the UNESCO Institute of Lifelong Learning. Some of the highlights at the launch event included the St. Mary's Men's' Shed Bodhrán players, the Northside 'Living Out Loud' Youth Group singers, and a video giving a snapshot of learning in the communities.

Since its launch in 2019, some successful initiatives have emerged as part of the Learning Neighbourhoods in Limerick, including a Music Café in Moyross and St. Mary's Learning Neighbourhood participation in their local parish festival and a community networking event. The City Centre Learning Neighbourhood ran a 'Brag & Borrow' event for sharing initiatives and the Southside Learning Neighbourhood ran a Readathon for the local schools together with community groups and an Open MIC event bringing young people and writers together. There are future plans for an intergenerational event, an Art Exhibition, a Local History Project and a Mapping of Learning Opportunities Project. Our Learning Neighbourhoods have also demonstrated tremendous resilience during the COVID-19 pandemic. During the first lockdown, groups worked on providing meals for older people,

delivering care packages, producing facemasks, running local neighbourhood bingo, a virtual music café event, connecting with learners through daily phone calls, and using online methods of connecting, e.g. PADLET, Zoom, WhatsApp groups etc.

As part of the Virtual Limerick Lifelong Learning Festival this year, and also to celebrate Irish Learning Cities Day 2020 on September 30th, a collaborative interactive Webinar was held by LCEN with Limerick and Cork Learning Neighbourhoods, entitled '**Learning Neighbourhood Reflections: Positive Local Actions During Challenging Times**'. Examples of good practice and ideas were shared to help with the ongoing development of our Learning Neighbourhoods. Some thoughts and reflections shared during the workshop on learning during COVID-19 included:

- Lockdown showed the strength and power of community spirit. Older and younger volunteers worked alongside each other during lockdown allowing for a greater appreciation for each other.
- While technology definitely does not replace face to face interaction, it has been hugely beneficial in allowing people to connect.
- Access to and the use of technology remains challenging, the digital divide is problematic.
- There can be some challenges and resistance to technology but role models from the older generations within the community proved to younger generations that it can be done.
- One approach was to use technologies with which people were already familiar so as not to exclude people; e.g. WhatsApp.
- Groups meeting on a fine day at the park with a coffee during good weather where possible.

Groups were also asked how they can continue to support Learning Neighbourhoods for the future:

- Face to face contact is key but we also need to use other innovative ways of connecting and getting the message out.
- Acknowledge that maintaining Learning Neighbourhoods needs commitment. It's important to acknowledge that the concept evolves along with the people that are involved and the resources available. Groups shouldn't feel under pressure to be very active at all times.
- Learning Neighbourhoods should review their work/ efforts annually to re-imagine what their Neighbourhood might look like for the following year; and bring people along with that vision.
- The appropriate physical space that allows for social distancing can allow many activities to continue; sharing of spaces between organisations within the community could also be considered
- Whatever technical supports are put in place for older generations should be made available to all. Young people can also experience difficulties, e.g. they can be self-conscious on screen.
- Talking to each other is very important. Connections can be made; resources can be shared as a result.

- Hybrid event involving online remote access along with venue(s) for small groups can facilitate those with limited digital skills or without access to technology.
- Open spaces and walking groups can be used more to bring people together. We cannot leave those who do not have the digital access/ skills behind.

The future is bright because of the connections we have made through Learning Neighbourhoods. We hope to continue the strong connection with our Cork Learning Neighbourhoods friends. We also hope in the future to expand our Learning Neighbourhoods initiative to involve our County Limerick partners by piloting the approach in one of our rural towns/villages. Our own reflections from Limerick Learning Neighbourhoods progress to date include the need to include all groups; *'you can start by working with whoever shows interest – others will follow!'*. It is important to ensure groups have a clear understanding of the concept, as many of our partners found it difficult in our initial stages to grasp the concept. It is worth putting time and effort into communicating the rationale and concept at the start to get buy in. There is a need to stress to groups that this is about collaboration and not competition. All ideas for the neighbourhood can be brainstormed and a check-in done with local people to gauge interest in a project. It is also advisable to start with small projects and encourage collaboration between groups.

This report from Limerick has explored how these Learning Limerick and Learning Neighbourhood initiatives are helping to combat exclusion, engage with older learners and how they help progress our key objective of reaching out to the broader learning region in County Limerick. The Lifelong Learning Festival has helped build up awareness and understanding of the value and benefits of learning throughout life in many contexts, both for individuals and communities in urban and rural Limerick. The links already formed through the festival and the related initiatives of the Learning Ambassadors and Learning Neighbourhoods are forming the basis of new opportunities for partnership development across the Learning Region. These partnerships undertake a range of lifelong learning initiatives during the year and are not solely connected with the annual Festival. These new and existing initiatives are contributing to the ongoing development of an inclusive and sustainable learning region for Limerick.

WYNDHAM LEARNING COMMUNITY

Jac Torres Gomez

Focus - Supporting Recovery for Learning Cities by Rethinking Shared Projects, Collaboration

Theme - Harnessing cultural institutions and libraries in building a sustainable learning culture in the community

EcCoWell2 - Supporting Recovery for Learning Cities by Rethinking Collaboration and Partnerships

Wyndham Learning Community

Are Learning Cities with strong empathetic and purposeful pre-existing partnerships better placed to face the challenges of 2020, than those without this type of partnership? UNESCO highlight that ‘partnerships are a key enabler for meeting global challenges and generating sustainable change and long-lasting impact’¹. For many learning cities like Wyndham, partnerships in various forms have been firmly embedded in learning city strategies and actions plans, particularly on a local level where regions have learning festivals². By working in partnerships, learning cities and their partners can leverage resources, expertise and competencies, in order to better achieve common development goals, visibility and impact for the communities they serve.

Wyndham City Council’s Learning Community Team³ has worked closely to harness partnerships with educational and cultural institutions and libraries for several years in order to build a sustainable learning culture in the community. Many of these partnerships are formal and guided by a partnership agreement or Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). Our partnership with our libraries is embedded in everything we do because our team has been purposefully placed within the Libraries unit at Council reflecting a key Council business goal. Indeed, Wyndham City Council acknowledges and proactively supports an understanding about the vital importance of libraries in underpinning and facilitating lifelong learning in the community.

A New Model of Partnerships Driven by Empathy

A partnership that supports solidarity during times of adversity and hardship; as well as in more favourable times of prosperity and peace, needs empathy and compassion as its foundation. Professor Fethi Mansouri, UNESCO Chairholder for Cultural Diversity and Social Justice UNESCO at Deakin University, Melbourne (Australia), indicates that the worldwide

¹ UNESCO 2020, Partnerships, retrieved online September 2020, <https://en.unesco.org/partnerships>

² Wyndham City Council 2018, Wyndham Learning Community Strategy 2018-2023, retrieved online September 2020: https://www.wyndham.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/2019-02/WCC_LearningStrategy_A4%20final%202019%20online.pdf

³ Wyndham City Council 2020, Learning Community, retrieved online September 2020: <https://www.wyndham.vic.gov.au/services/learning-community>

response to COVID-19 shows the power of considering new ways of creating solidarity in our collective responses, including through empathy and renewed partnerships⁴. Wyndham's Learning Community Team concurs with this wholeheartedly having seen this occur this year in our partnerships established during our COVID-19 response and recovery. Building on this, we have found that response and recovery occurs more profoundly when people within the partnership consciously use empathy and compassion to create and build that solidarity.

While it might sound counter-intuitive in today's professional and detached world to establish and view partnerships in this way, reconsidering the building of partnerships using this empathy model means that when adversity hits, those in this robust partnership are more likely to feel comfortable sharing their stressors and challenges in a timely manner. Sharing these challenges can ultimately save a partnership project. It also supports a better model of resilience and recovery when partners know they can be transparent in sharing their needs without the preconceptions and judgement of the other partners within the partnership. This is necessary at all stages of a partnership and allows the partnership to evolve authentically to achieve its shared goals. How, then, do we strengthen our partners' knowledge and understanding that showing empathy and vulnerability is not only ok, but a key element to supporting response and recovery in a crisis? We do it by leading by example.

The fact that an intrinsic part of the Learning Community team's 'business as usual' approach and a key outcome of our Learning Community Strategy is based on harnessing and maintaining robust partnerships means that when COVID-19 hit, we immediately applied this 'empathy' lens to our work. This ensured these partnerships remained strong, empathetic and authentic.

Thus, when something unexpected occurs such as a pandemic coupled with an opportunity to lead, such as in our Global Learning Festival⁵, we are prepared and able to respond much more proactively. We do this by tapping into those well-established, relevant and authentic partnerships so we can reduce the response time and acknowledge the immense opportunity to learn through the challenge of the crisis.

Empathy Partnership Model in Action – Global Learning Festival

Supporting the EcCoWell2 Community Recovery Program stage of 'rethinking' in 2020, and 'recovery' in 2021, we collaborated with neighbouring Melton City Council⁶ to create and co-lead the Global Learning Festival. This partnership project was intended to support unity, recovery, engagement, collaboration and partnerships that may not have occurred without the impact of COVID-19 on our lives and communities. Our secondary goal was to motivate and support resilience for our learning city partners, and also for ourselves.

⁴ Mansouri, F 2020, The Socio-Cultural Implications of COVID-19, retrieved online September 2020: <https://en.unesco.org/news/socio-cultural-implications-covid-19>

⁵ The Global Learning Festival was co-led by Melton City Council and Wyndham City Council, in partnership with 20 other learning cities, organisations and communities from across the world including the PASCAL International Observatory and members of the EcCoWell2 team. <https://www.globallearningfestival.com/>

⁶ Melton City Council 2020, Melton City Council, retrieved September 2020: <https://www.melton.vic.gov.au/Home>

Each of the Global Learning Festival partners we worked with came from different countries, cultural contexts and dynamics and were each at a different stage of their recovery process. For example, our partners that were running learning festivals, and had to postpone them due to the pandemic, came up with alternative ideas to rethink how to respond in this changing environment. Options included cancelling completely, rescheduling until restrictions eased, and even moving their whole festival to an online format. The interactions we facilitated with global partners as a part of our Global Learning Festival project supported the various learning cities and communities with their decision-making and rethinking process. Indeed, many of the learning festivals around the world incorporated shared ideas from their global colleagues because of this new collaborative platform we have created. This, in turn, created resilience through flexibility and a newly emerged support network of others on the same recovery and rethinking journey through this empathy partnership lens.

Harnessing Partnerships to Build Sustainable Learning Cultures

Our proactive harnessing of cultural institutions, schools, cities and public libraries in building a sustainable learning culture in the community for the Global Learning Festival was an enormous undertaking. Whilst an intended outcome was to support these groups to build a sustainable learning culture in their local community, a further outcome was also to create a culture of recognition in the worldwide community where we are all intrinsically connected in 2020 due to the pandemic. The pandemic was the catalyst for us to form longer, more profound and a higher number of partnerships wherever we could because we knew strength in numbers, with a focus on authentic support and partnerships, could shift how a learning community saw itself during, and in post recovery of; COVID-19. Diverse partners from different cultural contexts and institutions who were at different stages in their response and recovery provided a richness that we could not have predicted when we initiated this project. In fact, as highlighted by Lou Wong in her work in Harlem, USA⁷, cultural institutions should have a key role in all partnerships in order to promote this diversity. The UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning also determines that creating a diverse partnership membership, including from cultural institutions, can help to authentically “foster global consciousness and citizenship”⁸. This was certainly realised in our Global Learning Festival initiative through our empathy partnership model.

Empathy Partnerships to Support Healing and Transformation

The Global Learning Festival sought to enhance the healing and transformation of learning cities and organisations through a shared partnership model. It also stemmed from our wish for our partners to sustainably succeed despite the adversity facing them in 2020. As highlighted by Kearns⁹, one of the six steps towards sustainable recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic is prioritising supporting mental health and well-being. Our team understood

⁷ Lou Wong, M & Watson, C 2020, EcCoWell 2 Community Recovery Program Briefing Paper 4 Engaging a “Dream Deferred”: Arts, Spirituality and Transformative Learning in an EcCoWell2 Learning Neighbourhood Approach, retrieved online September 2020:

<https://pascalobservatory.org/sites/default/files/eccowellbp4.pdf>

⁸ UIL, 2017, Cork Call to Action for Learning Cities, retrieved online September 2020 from:

<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000260441>

⁹ Kearns, P 2020, EcCoWell 2 Community Recovery Program Briefing Paper 6: : Six steps towards 'recover better' from the COVID-19 pandemic, retrieved online September 2020 from:

<http://lcn.pascalobservatory.org/pascalnow/pascal-activities/news/eccowell-briefing-paper-6-sustainability-six-steps-towards-recover->

this as we proactively engaged with others in the Global Learning Festival in order to be a part of their success story, including their wellbeing and thriving mental health. Additionally, through specific partner event feedback surveys, we saw a positive impact on the mental health of community participants as they attended the individual events of our partners, showing a broader impact on community mental health. Our partners' wins and empowerment spurred us on to support others in this way, and truly highlighted to our team the power of reaching out to a partner during challenging times and offering an opportunity to showcase their brilliance at a time of uncertainty and fear.

Reducing Bureaucracy Supports Empathy

Our role as partnership brokers this year has been one of required diplomacy and kindness. We have needed to be quick responders, cultural wizards and openhearted in our ways of reaching out and connecting. It is these non-traditional partnerships where we purposefully minimised the classic bureaucracy of working within a government agency that has allowed us to bring resources together in non-traditional ways. And the catalyst for rethinking such partnerships in 2020? COVID-19. While operating in this non-conventional way as a local government may seem beyond the standard professional lens that learning city professionals generally operate within, the dynamic of such a broken and confronting year has called for a different understanding of what helps form a successful, durable and resilient partnership in the first place.

Ingredients for a Successful Partnership

Partnerships are important, and the fact that 'partnerships' are a standalone United Nations Sustainable Development Goal shows broad agreement that partnerships are needed for any profound and lasting change¹⁰. In terms of our partnerships for 2020, while we have used tools such as the Collective Impact Assessment Tool (CIAT) to measure how we are tracking in creating purposeful partnerships¹¹, what we have resolutely offered in our partnerships is harder to articulate.

But what is it exactly which makes up the 'magic' recipe of a good partnership? Is it about the diverse scope of champions involved and the energy they bring to a partnership? Is it the formality of a partnership agreement or MOU? Is it about the time that you put in to create and maintain the partnership, or is it something different? In 2020, we feel it has been a mix of these elements, with the addition of a huge amount of compassion and understanding. Understanding that yes, learning city programs and festivals will be delayed or even cancelled, teams may be redeployed, or people lose their jobs, people have been unwell (some affected by COVID-19 itself), others have lost loved ones. How can a partnership only take a professional stance when, in 2020, the personal has driven so much of the professional and the two can no longer be separated?

Start with Compassion and Empathy

¹⁰ United Nations 2020, Sustainable Development Goals – Global Partnerships, retrieved online September 2020, <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/globalpartnerships/>

¹¹ Torres-Gomez, J 2020, Measuring Partnerships in Learning Cities Initiatives Using Collective Impact, Wyndham City Council, retrieved online September 2020, <https://www.wyndham.vic.gov.au/measuring-partnerships-learning-cities-initiatives-using-collective-impact>

Before establishing the co-led project with Melton City Council, we took a moment to compassionately reflect and understand the impact of COVID-19 on our own Wyndham team, proposed activities and plans for the year and the best way forward to thrive as a unit both professionally and in our wellbeing personally. We then considered this same empathy lens for the Melton Learning City team to reflect if pitching to co-lead a project together at this time would enhance and empower them or add more stress at an already trying time. After all, what good is a partnership if partners, including co-leads, burn out before a project even begins?

This partnership wellbeing measurement must be applied in all our work both in 2020 and beyond to accurately see the capacity of the contributing partners, view this through a lens of compassion, and then plan the project accordingly. Do we always get it right? Absolutely not. However, going into a partnership with this lens certainly helps drive better results because we care about our partners and the outcome of our projects. But more specifically we care about the wellbeing and lives of the people that form those partnerships. A further point of good practice is to periodically consider the welfare of all partnership members during the project to ensure ongoing wellbeing.

Looking to the Future

People have been asking us, if we were to do the Global Learning Festival again, what we would do differently. While some have suggested a need to have had a longer lead time to plan and run such an event, others might say that it was only because of the short turnaround of this festival that such a positive response and final result ensued. That is to say, if we had not been in such a despairing mindset due to the state of the world in 2020, we may have been more cautious and calculating in engaging in some of the partnerships that we ended up developing. However, because of the nature of such a challenging year for so many of those we partnered with globally, we became 'yes' people. We knew that for us, and many others, this partnership would become our lifeline to recovery to creating a better world in the most empowering and humbling way.

On reflection, in order to create even stronger solidarity and connection within our partnerships in future annual Global Learning Festivals, we are likely to develop thematic areas to promote greater solidarity where members of the partnership can collectively relate their contribution to a theme. Themes such as 'addressing inclusion for vulnerable groups' or 'strengthening intergenerational connections' may foster sharing innovative ideas to encourage further engagement and broader cross-cultural and cross-generational partnerships post-festival.

Intergenerational and Intercultural Partnership Nexis

Empathy has many faces and contexts. The concept of compassionate partnerships can also be applied in promoting relationships across generations, such as for young people working with seniors in joint learning projects, or working with; and learning from, older people living in care institutions to add enhance their quality of life. As shared in the EcCoWell2 paper 7 by Schuller, Biao and Osborne, intergenerational partnerships also encourage simultaneous intergenerational and intercultural consciousness of global issues while enhancing empathy

across our communities on both local and broader levels¹². On reading this, we hope that our global partners from this event, as well as other broader partnerships such as our Council Sister Cities of Chiryu, Japan, Costa Mesa, California and Changzhou, China¹³, can see how we worked to create a model of empathy partnerships and the benefit of developing intercultural and intergenerational partnerships to create lasting change.

Who Can Be Catalysts to Establish These Partnerships?

What kind of organisations can serve as catalysts for creating compassionate partnerships? It is really around timing and capacity. During a crisis, not every partner has the capacity to initiate a big project while also taking a step back to cast a critical eye over the environment to see where the most support and 'care' is needed, and to then approach partners individually to ask them the best way to create this partnership and then also offer this targeted support. But every partner can, regardless of capacity, consciously adopt a compassionate lens when developing or being a member of new a partnership and consciously show empathy. And with all members working in such a way, empathy will become weaved within the very nature of how the partnership operates.

As we move from rethinking into recovery this year, we can proudly say we developed, led and supported thriving, empowered and dynamic partnerships and projects as a purposeful response and also pre-emption to this challenging year. Our diverse model of empathy partnerships allowed us, in our own small way, to proactively support learning cities and communities to contribute to building a better world.



¹² Schuller, T; Biao, I & Osborne, M 2020, EcCoWell 2 Briefing Paper Rethinking Lifelong Learning within Current Contexts of Time and Space, retrieved online September 2020, <http://pascalobservatory.org/pascalnow/pascal-activities/news/eccowell-2-briefing-paper-7-rethinking-lifelong-learning-within-cur>

¹³ Wyndham City Council 2020, Sister City Project, retrieved online September 2020, <https://www.wyndham.vic.gov.au/about-council/your-council/sister-city-project>

CORK LEARNING CITY

Denis Barrett and Willie McAuliffe

Themes:

- 1. Strengthening community bonds and citizenship in learning neighbourhoods and addressing exclusion, including ways of keeping older people socially engaged.*
- 2. Finding ways to promote digital learning for all age groups.*

Rethinking learning city and learning community responses to ‘a world of fast moving radical change’, in the context of Cork city we reflect on the challenges stated in Briefing Paper 1, *Rethinking Sustainable Learning Communities for Extraordinary Times*¹⁴:

While the effects of the coronavirus pandemic means that we need to rethink our world in all dimensions, (the) UNESCO call for action on knowledge, education, and learning is a good starting point as key aspects of building a sustainable world.

In the context of Cork city:

1. What can be learned from 2020?
2. What do we as a city community need to learn now?

This report is based on the perspectives of the authors, drawing on learning from a range of their roles in the city of Cork, and is not presented on behalf of any organisation that they are members of, or that they represent.

The reflections contained in this report include the following observations:

1. A framework for an integrated holistic response for sustainable development at community level that was established in Cork during 2020 as a means to co-ordinate a ground up response to the needs of vulnerable people during Covid-19 can be the basis for ongoing ground up flexible responses to other community needs.
2. The inter-agency cross sectoral approach that was applied during 2020 to respond to issues faced by citizens caused or exacerbated by Covid-19 can be a basis for an ongoing sustainable response to the ‘wicked problems’ faced by the city.

The context for inter-agency, holistic, sustainable city development in Cork

Integrated holistic city development is a strong and consistent feature of practice in Cork city over many years. Initiatives such as RAPID, and Cork City Development Board Report *Imagine Our Future 2002-2012*, and *Pure Cork the Local Economic and Community Plan 2016-2021* are examples of this approach.

The leadership group who formed EcCoWeLL Cork in 2012 were working in the context of a strong inter-agency culture and building on city-wide structures in keeping with Govt. Policy

¹⁴ Kearns, P. *Rethinking Sustainable Learning Communities for Extraordinary Times*, PASCAL EcCoWeLL 2 BP1 2020.

at that time. The story of the development of EcCoWeLL Cork is captured in the 2016 Eccowell Cork paper¹⁵.

As Peter Kearns' paper BP1 states: 'The city of Cork became the international leader in EcCoWeLL development with its status as a leading innovative learning city confirmed when Cork was invited by UNESCO to host the Third UNESCO International Conference on Learning Cities in 2017'.

The EcCoWeLL Cork leadership group was comprised of key link persons working with of a number of city-wide Networks, including the Lifelong Learning Festival, Cork Healthy Cities, Cork Environmental Forum, Cork Community Education Networks, Cork City Council Strategic Planning and Economic Development, Cork Opera House and Cork Learning City. The role played by strong networks in applying EcCoWeLL principles and in implementing integrated holistic city-wide development is outlined in the paper.

This leadership group of middle ranking representatives of mostly statutory agencies, developed a range of events and initiatives that tested and applied the EcCoWeLL principles, with the support of the Chief Executives of their various statutory organisations – Cork City Council, Cork Education and Training Board, Cork Institute of Technology, and the Health Service Executive.

Cork city response to Sustainable Development Goals and UNESCO *Cork Call to Action*

The 2015 UN Sustainable Development Goals supported by Governments worldwide have framed the approach in Cork to deliver integrated sustainable development for the city since then.

This approach to the indivisible SDGs is at the core of the outcome document of the 3rd UNESCO International Conference on Learning Cities whose theme was *Global Goals – Local Actions*. This UNESCO report 'Learning Cities and the SDGs'¹⁶ includes the Cork Call to Action and it explores how Learning Cities can implement the SDGs by using the three policy pillars below.

The policy pillars built into the Cork Call for Action "to build mindful learning cultures in our cities that foster global consciousness and citizenship through local action to implement the SDGs" (UIL 2017) have been the focus for learning city development since 2017. They include a call to develop Learning Cities that are:

- Active and Inclusive;
 - Green and Healthy;
- and that support
- Decent Work and Entrepreneurship.

¹⁵ Barrett, D. & Neylon, T. How Cork applied the EcCoWeLL approach to developing holistically as a learning city. Cork Learning City 2016

¹⁶ Learning Cities and the SDGs, UNESCO, UIL 2017

Cork has taken these themes to advance the approach for integrated holistic development across all initiatives since 2017.

The Global pandemic of 2020 brought new challenges, and new opportunities for the city's inter-agency, cross-sectoral and holistic approach to be applied to a co-ordinated community response to Covid-19.

The community response to Covid-19 in Cork

On March 27th 2020, following the announcement by the Taoiseach (Prime Minister) Leo Varadkar of a nationwide lockdown in response to rising Covid-19 cases, Cork City Council convened a meeting of an Inter Agency Group to consider formulating a strategy to respond to Covid-19 following a request from the Minister for Planning and Local Government. The main purpose of the meeting was to review one of the action areas identified under Action 4 of the National Action Plan which *'is to mobilise community coordination to collaborate in meeting the social care and other needs of 'at risk' and vulnerable groups'* in light of the new restrictions announced by an Taoiseach, where the Government, local authorities with community and voluntary groups and other public sector workers and the public are identified as key organisations. The meeting also sought a means to identify current services available and existing local initiatives being developed to respond to COVID-19 which will assist more vulnerable people at a community level. In Cork, the Learning City Co-ordinator (CLC Coordinator) was identified as role most appropriate to convene and co-ordinate this new Forum.

The action plan and tasks proposed to the forum by the CLC Coordinator were to:

- Identify and Record the range of community responses currently being provided to (a) avoid duplication and to (b) identify opportunities for provide further support to local efforts.
- Identify particular geographic areas and/or vulnerable groups where additional community supports may be needed and a strategy to respond.
- Lead the establishment of small Inter Agency Area based Community Response Teams, jointly local lead by two co-ordinators, with authority from Agency Senior Management.
- Task the Team Co-ordinators to identify where there are gaps, and how the most vulnerable can be reached at a local level, for example through targeted community contacts, through community structures, awareness campaigns, etc.
- Explore the need for a city centralised emergency number or similar facility.
- Identify measures to facilitate people in communities who wish to volunteer; including linking with Cork's Volunteer Centre.
- Define the nature of the supports that could be provided by community volunteers.
- Identify measures to encourage the relevant community structures such as Community Networks, Sports clubs, Community Associations, interagency teams to consider the needs of vulnerable people in their locality and to take appropriate and safe action.
- Communicate the most appropriate guidance and protocols that are available for community structures and volunteers to ensure that both volunteers and the general public are safeguarded.

- Agree unified communications and key messages from the Advisory Group, as far as practicable, in relation to external communications.

City wide community response to Forum membership

In line with the guidelines issued by government and adapted for local circumstances the Forum was facilitated by Cork City Council and membership included the following:

- Health Service Executive - Social Inclusion and Community Work Departments
- The Police Service - *An Garda Síochána*:
- The Postal Service - *An Post*:
- Cork Education and Training Board:
- Department of Employment and Social Protection - Community Welfare Service
- The Statutory Child and Family Agency - *TUSLA*
- Cork Age Friendly Network
- RAPID Programme
- Local Community Development Committee – Public Participation Network Members
- Cork Volunteer Centre
- Local Development Company – Cork City Partnership
- Voluntary Emergency Services: Red Cross/Civil Defence/Order of Malta/St Johns Ambulance
- Voluntary Sporting Organisations
- Citizen’s Information Service
- Migrant Forum
- Religious Leaders.

The Cork City Covid-19 Community Response Forum membership agreed the following objective and strategy:

Objective:

To translate city wide services and public sector organisations into locally flexible and responsive action oriented inter-agency teams.

Strategy:

1. Mapping of existing actions:
 - Undertake a quick audit of current City Council community actions in response to Covid-19 being delivered, to include current work streams in Cork City Council Community Services relevant to Covid-19 (e.g. Age Friendly, Social Inclusion) and gaps that need to be addressed;
2. Area based community response teams:
 - Divide the city area into defined local areas. Use the RAPID areas as an initial basis and build out to cover the full map of the city, including the suburb areas, (18 provisional areas were considered);
 - Identify the key service providers in each area;
 - Identify a small flexible team of 6 inter-agency and cross sectoral in each area, involving public services with local community voluntary and sporting bodies that can be repurposed;

- Nominate and request 2 people with excellent local knowledge and local contacts to jointly lead the co-ordination of the local core team;
- Identify a nominated representative from City Council, Health Service Executive, the Police Force, and the Child and Family Welfare Agency assigned to each local team to support and respond to requests;
- Identify the current services relevant to Covid-19 that the local providers are now in a position to provide – staff, venues, transport, communication networks, volunteer teams, other;
- List the identified ‘wrap around’ set of relevant services in each area that will support the work of the community response team and will respond to the requests channelled through the co-ordinators;
- Use the co-ordinators to send unified communications across all city areas;
- Review teams as appropriate and back fill team membership and co-ordinator roles as necessary;
- All work of teams to be co-ordinated by a central co-ordinating committee and reporting to the High Level Community Response Forum chaired by City Council.

In line with this approach, Area Based Teams were established in 16 areas of the city as defined in consultation with local leaders to build on local identity.

Learning Neighbourhoods and local Area Based Community Response Teams

The learning neighbourhoods are one of the strengths of Cork as a learning city and we recommend them as models for other cities. Limerick has taken on and applied the concept using the model developed in Cork built on the ideas and writings of Peter Kearns.

Six areas of Cork city have identified themselves as Learning Neighbourhoods as part of the city wide Programme co-ordinated by Cork Learning City partners, and lead by University College Cork. The Learning Neighbourhoods programme is a ground up, locally lead approach, based on the findings of a 2015 pilot, that built on Kearns’ work. Cork Learning Neighbourhoods are co-designed with local leaders that include members of Community-based Adult Education Networks that have been established in the city since 2002.

The leadership for Cork Learning Neighbourhoods has been provided by local networks, lead by Community Development Projects, Family Resource Centres, Youth Services, Schools, Community Associations and Early Years Education and Childcare Settings. These Networks were also the basis of the Area Based Community Response Teams in the six areas of the city that are Learning Neighbourhoods.

In the other ten areas of the city, other relevant local networks formed the core of the Covid-19 area response, for example the Youthwork Network, the local Community Association, or the RAPID Area Liaison team. As each area was empowered to create its own team, and was supported in its efforts by the organisations represented on the City Wide Forum, this approach was an empowering combination of Bottom-Up from the Area Based Teams, with Top-Down from the City wide Forum.

The Area Based Community Response Teams as examples of flexibility, agility, and sharing ideas

These Area Based Teams demonstrate the essence of the EcCoWell 2 Recovery Program in that they are based on flexibility in response to local needs, agility in adapting new ideas, and creativity through a process of building on shared ideas. The City wide Inter Agency and Cross-sectoral Community Response Forum provides both a means of securing relevant support by Statutory Agencies, and of working with these Agencies to implement new thinking and to co-create new sustainable solutions to the 'wicked' problems faced by the city.

City wide Community Response Forum Task Group - Bridging the Digital Divide in the context of Covid-19

Having identified that the digital divide was having increased effects on disadvantaged families and older people, and exacerbating digital exclusion, the Community Response Forum convened a series of scoping meetings to outline the needs around educational technology and communications technology needs with statutory educational, youth services and ICT support partners.

Following these meetings, issues experienced by two target groups have been agreed:

1. Families without appropriate access to digital devices to access online education
Strategy based on feedback from School Completion Programmes (SCPs) and Youth Services to date.
2. Older people without appropriate access to technology to connect with family and the relevant outside world online; Strategy will be based on feedback through Age Friendly Forum.

A range of solutions, including virtual solutions, were discussed through engagement of all partners, including the industry partners of it@cork and Dell technologies. Two solutions are currently being trialled in Learning Neighbourhoods with the support of the branch libraries in each area to achieve the scale of approximately 500+ devices across the city.

Reflections

In considering the questions posed in the introduction on context:

1. **What can be learned from 2020?**
2. **What do we as a city community need to learn now?**

The following are observations by the authors:

1. A framework for an integrated holistic response for sustainable development at community level that was established in Cork during 2020 as a means to co-ordinate a ground up response to the needs of vulnerable people during Covid-19 can be the basis for ongoing ground up flexible response to all community needs.
 - 1.1 The Area based Teams have been retained during the second wave in Autumn 2020 and refocussed on citizens needs.
 - 1.2 Cork City Council has committed to the Area Response Team infrastructure as a means of engaging with communities and co-designing sustainable innovative responses to local needs and issues.

2. The inter-agency cross sectoral approach that was applied during 2020 to respond to issues faced by citizens caused or exacerbated by Covid-19 can be a basis for an ongoing sustainable response to the ‘wicked problems’ faced by the city.

2.1 These can include tackling some of the themes below. The Digital Divide Group established by the Community Response Forum can be a base for tackling theme d. below:

- a. Strengthening community bonds and citizenship in learning neighbourhoods and addressing exclusion, including way of keeping older people socially engaged.
- b. Building further community learning strategies for health and well being, with an initial focus on mental health.
- c. Encouraging enterprise development and entrepreneurship neighbourhoods.
- d. Finding ways to promote digital learning for all age groups.
- e. Action towards developing a green stimulus program for the post-coronavirus society, and economy.
- f. Harnessing cultural institutions and libraries in building a sustainable learning culture in the community.

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CITY OF COTONOU, BENIN

Idowu Biao

Focus – Cotonou is a potential learning city in the context of learning cities in Africa.

Background Information

The city of Cotonou is the commercial capital of Benin. Benin is an African country which, like most African countries, is making its debut within the learning city/region epistemology and practice. From its emergence in 1992, the concept 'learning city' has been understood to imply one or all of four typologies of practice. These practices include the promotion of the statutory provision of education and training to city dwellers, the creation of a viable cultural and economic environment within the city, the ramping up of the city global competitiveness through linking lifelong learning with socio-economic activities and the promotion of the sustainability of the city (EURO local, Longworth, 1999; Walters, 2006; Kearns, 2012).

In Africa, the region of Western Cape (South Africa) and the cities of Lagos (Nigeria), Gaborone, (Botswana) Belet, Bafoussam and Mayo-Baleo (Cameroun) have so far been involved in the promotion of one or more of the afore discussed concepts of learning city. A review of the performance of these region and cities in 2013 concluded that learning city activities were yet to take hold on African soil because of five factors, including, absence of developed economies, lack of diversified occupational structures, non-existence of efficient labour markets, absence of developed communication systems and low occupational mobility (Biao, Esaete & Oonyu, 2013). These factors that were found to be absent in Africa, being usually available within technologically advanced societies, the question was asked whether it could therefore be concluded that learning city projects may then prosper only within technologically advanced societies of the world? The answer was and still is in the negative. Consequently, Biao *et al.* (2013) recommended a model of learning city promotion for Africa that would be supported by three objectives, namely, the conscientization of city dwellers, the facilitation of debate regarding rural-urban interlinkage and the development of a participatory approach to the management of African cities.

Beyond 2013, Volkmann (2020), has shown that, although Nairobi (Kenya) has added itself to the short list of major actors in learning city activities in Africa, and although the number of learning cities in Africa has grown beyond that reported in 2013, Africa still presents the shortest list of learning cities in the world.

Cotonou

Although Cotonou is said to be the commercial capital of Benin, all official institutions of government, save the national assembly and one ministry are located in Cotonou. Indeed, the presidency is located in Cotonou. In practical terms therefore, Cotonou does serve as administrative and political capital of Benin in addition to being the commercial capital of the country.

Cotonou is a recent candidate to learning city activities in Africa. During the course of the year 2020, it promoted a few activities, including participating in the September UIL/PASCAL Webinar on *the challenge of developing the role of TVET* and holding discussions with the Ministry of National Languages and Literacy with a view to working out partnerships.

UIL/PASCAL Webinar

This webinar took place on the 16th September 2020 and it was attended by both the primary contact, Idowu Biao and secondary contact, Fabien Adeyemi Farinan. The Webinar was used to present the main activity of Cotonou within the context of learning city. Consequently, the main presentation at the webinar centred around the **'FAIRE FAIRE'** learning programme.

- **What is 'FAIRE FAIRE'?**

'FAIRE FAIRE' is a work-oriented literacy programme. It teaches simultaneously

- ✓ One national language (reading, writing & numeracy in the mother tongue) and
- ✓ One skill (selected by learner)

- **Objectives of 'FAIRE FAIRE'**

'FAIRE FAIRE' aims to extend the success of literacy in national languages, the foundation of which was laid between 1972-90 during the Marxist-Leninist regime. Additionally, 'FAIRE FAIRE' aims to equip rural migrants into Cotonou with sellable skills (e.g. electrician, hair dressing, sewing, carpentry, etc.) so that these persons may be profitably engaged.

- **Teaching-Learning in 'FAIRE FAIRE' Training Centres in 2020**

Within the context of the triple life course speed conception referred to by Schuller, Biao & Osborne (2020) wherein the history of human life was divided into three time periods of *low-speed*, *fast-speed* and *faster-speed*, the 'FAIRE FAIRE' training centres acknowledged the latest speed period in which they operated. As such, in addition to regular teaching-learning, the discussion of COVID-19 was migrated into the centres' activities.

- **Current Challenges and Orientation**

As a result of a huge population of adolescents in Cotonou and because of limited resources and facilities, the focus of 'FAIRE FAIRE' is currently on adolescents living in Cotonou. Consequently, the needs of the older population are not being catered for. Additionally, little knowledge and only low capacities being available in the area of COVID-19, the best that could be shared about the pandemic was the set of protocols (wearing of mask, washing of hands and physical distancing) approved by Government. The discussion of these protocols failed to bear their fruits as numerous learners would not adhere to them. Fortunately, none of these learners has so far fallen seriously sick of COVID-19.

- **Achievements and Prospects**

In 2020, 'Faire Faire' training centres held 80 male and 60 female learners. It is believed that with the establishment of more 'FAIRE FAIRE' training centres in Cotonou, more participants would be trained.

Partnerships

The City of Cotonou entered into partnership with both the Ministry of National Languages and Literacy and the Centre for Research in Adult and Lifelong learning (CR&DALL) of the

University of Glasgow that has led into developing a research proposal entitled ‘Developing inclusive lifelong learning policies and practices in the Global South’. This proposal is currently being examined for possible funding by the Scottish **Global Challenges Research Funding**.

Priorities for the Future

In the near future, the focus of ‘FAIRE FAIRE’ and other learning programmes would shift to the City Council of Abomey Calavi (Mairie d’Abomey Calavi). Abomey Calavi is a new section of Cotonou that has now grown into a town of its own. It has become so sprawling and so heavily inhabited that Government has now moved in, to begin town management activities. In order to facilitate and coordinate its town management activities, Government has recently established the City Council of Abomey Calavi (Mairie d’Abomey Calavi). The focusing of future activities on this part of Cotonou aims to address the greater challenges that currently exist in that section of the City of Cotonou.

Additionally, learning programmes would be introduced that would cater to the needs of the Aged. A national policy for the Aged does exist in Benin. This policy was formulated in 2007 in recognition of the growing number of Beninese that had begun to live past the mature age of sixty (60) years. The objectives of this policy that is known in French as *la Politique Nationale du Vieillissement Actif [PNVA]* include:

- i. The promotion of health and wellbeing among the aged
- ii. The reduction of poverty among the aged population
- iii. Inclusion of the aged and
- iv. The amelioration of knowledge concerning the socio-economic needs and demographics by gender of the aged (Zinsou, 2009).

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DATONG, TAIPEI

Eugenia Chang

Focus – Building Taipei City as an Eco-City and Happy Farm

Facing the pandemic this year, even though Taiwan has effectively controlled the spread of COVID-19 in our communities and the campus was not closed, this pandemic has still confronted people here with the shadow of uncertainty. Taiwanese people, just like all the other people around the world, will face an even more challenging life because of the uncertainties which the pandemic will likely characterize in the future. However, the lifelong Learning in Taipei's communities continued in March as well. And people could also choose either to take a course at school or to have their learning online.

In other words, in Taiwan the Community Colleges in Taipei City support each citizen in our communities, and all the students receive unparalleled care in a safe, supportive, and diverse learning environment. We have been providing them with every possible opportunity for lifelong learning. One of the most valuable features of Datong Community College (DCC) is the advanced preparation for the future. Citizens in our college are offered with a balanced, quality curricular program which is to date and has resulted in learning the importance of mental health and well-being in the community recovery from this pandemic.

Regardless of the continuous influence of Covid-19 pandemic, 2020 indeed will be a landmark year for DCC and the community with the official link establishment in order to work together to response, recovery and resilience from this pandemic.

At the same time, the partnership of DCC and community has also proved a major step forward in terms of learning about this virus pandemic in the neighbourhood.

It is also very important for DCC to determine how innovative and effective strategies can be used in community learning programs to help people face the pandemic and to encourage them to recognize that the COVID-19 pandemic will have an enduring impact on lifelong learning outcomes around countries. DCC aims to mitigate this impact by continuing to provide learning courses in the community and facilitating dialogue regarding COVID-19 response and recovery. In terms of DCC itself, it is another step in the evolution of promoting EcCowell2 program and lifelong learning in Datong community.

Established in 2001, Datong Community College of Taipei City (DCC), has continued to promote lifelong learning in Datong District in order to encourage citizens to immerse in learning and build Datong District as a cultural, ecological, cohesive co-operative community. While we are coping with the challenge of these unprecedented challenges, one of the most valuable benefits of Datong Community College is the advanced preparation for the future. During this pandemic of COVID-19, citizens are provided with balanced, quality curricular programs, among which there are self-health management and digital learning especially designed for seniors. All these programs to date have resulted in strengthening the goals of lifelong learning for all citizens and enhancing their feeling of well-being.

Furthermore, Taipei's Community Colleges have long been a feature of lifelong learning for citizens and are deeply embedded in the social, cultural and economic ecosystems of their respective regions as well as having regional and international perspective.

Since 2010, Datong Community College has operated a learning city project in the neighbourhood where the values of lifelong learning for all is the theme of the regional sustainable development to help people reach their full potential in a life span of lifelong learning. This development has included applying EcCoWell principles in local neighbourhoods. The concept was developed by Professor Peter Kearns in 2012 following a visit to the Taipei learning city the previous year. The concept is based on an integrated holistic approach to build a sustainable learning city.

Base on practicing of EcCoWell project, Datong Community College has been working with local Rice Festival organizers in Kuoshun learning neighbourhood to develop a range of complimentary learning experiences for citizens. Since 2017, following up EcCoWell2 project based on EcCoWell principles, DCC has developed local actions through activities, lectures and workshops to extend and enhance learning in neighbourhoods, including two main initiatives: Eco-friendly farm experience for the next generation and knowledge of food traceability; Fostering entrepreneurship.

In doing so Datong Community College has enjoyed a long-standing partnership relationship with Datong neighbourhood —in executing the EcCoWell and EcCoWell2 project, a mutually beneficial arrangement destined to grow further with the establishment of community network. It also can be partners in providing support to people's well-being, especially for elderly and vulnerable people in the uncertainty of this virus pandemic period.

Overall, during a period of Covid-19 pandemic, which is both challenging and uncertain for people, Taipei City continues to grasp the helm of an Eco-city educational vessel and chart its careful course into an Eco-city's bright horizon. Taiwan has been fortunate to succeed in controlling the outbreak of coronavirus spread and working in an environment where active and participative partnership is the norm. And the continuous focus is on the relevance and professional standing of the individual public health awareness. This is driven by the spirit of solidarity of community and active engagement with the work of Eco-city, inclusive culture and sustainable community, especially in this extraordinary period.

In response to the Eco-city policies, since 2012, Datong Community College has been applying EcCoWell principles to local neighbourhoods and has become the main communication channel for issues related to the happy farm development. Furthermore, Datong Community College has collaborated with multiple governmental sectors to generate the implement plans and structures in communities.

On July 15, 2020 to promote a green stimulus program for the post-coronavirus communities and economy, Taipei City Government, Datong Community College and private sectors started working together to serve as a model for urban farming operations. Through working as a team, Taipei Eco-City Farm aims to prove that farming in urban environments is not only viable but greatly needed. These farms serve as areas to reconnect people of various cultures, backgrounds, and classes for fresher food in the city, and also to ensure that Eco-

City's motto of "growing great food, health and happiness in encouraging enterprise development and entrepreneurship neighbourhoods as below:

A. Taipei Eco-city as a Happy Farm Development Vision

The series of events related to the urban farming initiatives are kicked off by the public and private sectors. The end result of all the discussions surrounding the urban farming initiative are organized and consolidated into the "implementation for Taipei Eco-city as a Happy Farm" project, summarized as: "Transform Taipei into a greener and healthier urban farming ecological city where education, living quality, public health and well-being are emphasized."

B. Taipei Eco-city and happy Farm Result

As Eco-city farm has become increasingly intensively developed, urban farming is the channels for the public to come closer to the land, enjoy the nature and experience farming in communities. It indicates that urban farming is no longer a topic that only interests a small group of people but gains popularity and fondness of Taipei's citizens.

Implementing Eco-city as a Happy Farm project in Taipei is under the concept of sustainable development. Making use of idle space to promote urban farming activities in communities has been viewed as a tool to reduce carbon emission effects, conserve energy and reduce the heat island effects. Practicing urban farming is no just about learning urban farming, but it also increases the greenery area and further expands the ecological and biological diversity in Taipei city.

The governmental units that participated in Taipei's Eco-City as a Happy Farm project include Department of Education, Taipei Hakka Affairs Commission, Department of Urban Development, Department of Environmental Protection, Department of Health, Taipei City Hospital, Department of Land Administration, Department of Civil Affairs, the Public Works Department, Department of Civil Servant Development, Department of Social Affairs, Urban Regeneration Office, Department of Business Development, Department of Information and Tourism and the Research, Development and Evaluation Commission etc.

Taipei Eco-city as a Happy Farm has exploited land of 4 acres. The farm started with an outdoor small planting space in a highly residential area and now is known for its garden beds, and edible landscape. Happy Farm is like the farm "Certified Naturally Grown," which is a practice "**Designed for citizen participation in managing a model of an Eco-city farm and a happy farm in community**", and is expected to actualize a green stimulus program that focuses on mental health and well-being for all aged groups.

At the same time, regulating the land use is just one factor; Taipei Eco-City Farm also works to appeal to citizens with different culture backgrounds. Nearly 60 percent of the volunteers are Hakka speaking. The farm has an education and outreach coordinator who is fluent in Hakka language as the farms are located in areas which many locals call "Hakka farm." It attracts people's attention to address the cultural differences and reconnect people through food. It hopes to reach a broader audience in addressing exclusion and a sustainable learning culture in communities.

As farming techniques are different for urban agriculture, people in Taipei City can go through urban farming learning to understand and re-imagine what are the benefits to pursue an urban farming lifestyle. For example, extensive sprayers do not water the crops and tractors do not till the soil. A part of changing farming into urban spaces is adapting the growing practices as soil, water, and even temperatures are all different in the city. Taipei Eco-City as a Happy Farm works with these changes to provide non-pesticide, fresh sustainably grown produce to people in local community.

The reasons of implementing urban farming are to satisfy the publics' desire to grow their own vegetables. In other words, the implementation of Happy Farm is under the concepts that food system can enhance agricultural and food education through farming experiences.

And it also promotes the education of agriculture farming and safe food, ecosystem, and educates the public about food processing and ecosystem. "Hakka farm "is viewed as the classrooms to promote the idea of an Eco-City and a happy farm, participants can utilize their hands-on experiences to learn about healthy eating habits and different ingredients. It is to encourage citizens to develop a deeper connection with the foods they consume and become more aware of food safety and culinary practices in family life.

In addition to developing urban farming lands, sustained through Eco-City as a Happy Farm project and planned by related governmental units, schools and educational personnel should integrate agriculture planting into their educational curriculum and promote community engagement, digital websites learning. The results are as follows:

A. Taipei City's Greening and Ecology Education

- a. Include urban farming and cherish all the harvesting into educational curriculums to cultivate concept of conservation and healthy diet habits among students.
- b. Assist the public in urban farming and utilize edible landscape in order to cultivate a positive mindset about Eco-city as a Happy Farm.
- c. Encourage small and medium enterprises development in farm plan to combine fundamental education and urban farming concepts.

B. Happy Farm's LOHAS Lifestyle

- a. The Eco-city as a Happy Farm project hopes for the movement to be promoted in a bottom up fashion; through the urban farming experiences, the goal of sustainability development will be conveyed.
- b. The project allows people to farm, plant, harvest and to gain the experience the joy of being urban farmers. It also allows people to understand the hard work of rural farmers in order to develop a respectful attitude towards the environment, the food they consume, and realize the importance and preciousness of water and land resources.
- c. The implementation Structure and edible landscape developed through Taipei's Eco-city as a happy Farm project initiative promotes the aesthetic sense of the community and promotes healthier and LOHAS lifestyle.

C. Social and Community Connection

- a. The program of Eco-city as a Happy Farm in Taipei is developed to enhance neighbours' communication on a community level.
- b. It creates a sense of bonding experience, community care, sharing environment, communion, discussion culture, the learning of farming knowledge, and environment awareness.

In conclusion, Taipei Eco-City as a Happy Farm not only works to deliver food to vulnerable groups, but also provides resources such as planting training programs, nutrition-based workshops, the Beginner urban Farmer Training program, hosting composting classes, and beginner urban farmers learning. Furthermore, Taipei Eco-City Farm is a model for the future of urban farming, led by people who want to reconnect people and strengthen community bonds and citizenship in learning neighbourhoods for promoting a sense of inclusion with the elderly, different genders or ethnic groups, regardless of their culture and class. Through Taipei Eco-city as a Happy Farm project, the concepts behind urban farming are actualized in the lives of the public. It is not only just about planting and harvesting, but also about developing deeper emotional connections within communities.

Overall, this program is to encourage people to participate in activities in communities and improve their living quality during this challenging period. It allows citizens to build general understanding and unique attributes of each community through their personal engagements. Furthermore, it is a holistic initiative that includes social, communal, and organizational aspects. And it will strengthen the public's participation in the global ecological and sustainable development.

Photos of Building Taipei City as an Eco-City and Happy Farm



The development vision



The design and structure



Mayor Ko watches a compost demonstration with people from public and private sectors



Mayor Ko making eco-walls from waste wood for planting vegetables



Mayor Ko experiencing how physically-challenged seniors plant & water from a wheelchair



Making use of recycled pipes to collect rain-water and irrigate vegetables

**CITY SEMINARY OF NEW YORK / WALLS-ORTIZ GALLERY AND CENTER
HARLEM, NEW YORK**

Maria Liu Wong with Sarah Gerth van den Berg

Focus - Integrating Faith, the Arts, and Ecojustice in a Harlem EcCoWell2 Community Recovery Program

This report for the EcCoWell2 Community Recovery Program highlights the integrated, cross-sectoral work of the Walls-Ortiz Gallery and Center (WOGC) and neighbourhood partners in Harlem, New York, over the past year. Building on the July 2020 Pascal Policy Brief 4 (Liu Wong and Watson), which examined the opportunities and challenges involved in formulating an expanded understanding of EcCoWell with practical implications for community recovery and renewal, this report describes the *Justice Seedbed Project*, an eco-justice, faith, and arts initiative at the WOGC, seed-funded by the Luce Foundation through Drew University's Social Justice Leadership program. This work began in the summer of 2019 and has evolved during COVID-19 pandemic times until the present moment, to fulfill its purpose of *strengthening community bonds and social cohesion; raising civic awareness around eco-justice issues, the arts, and faith; and providing opportunities for lifelong learning for all ages*, engaging with cultural institutions such as our public library, the gallery, and community gardens. These endeavours are all important elements of implementing and sustaining a community recovery process, especially as the pandemic continues to impact our ability to gather in-person and hold larger gatherings.

As such, this report attends to possibilities raised and policy practice recommendations from the paper introduced earlier (Liu Wong and Watson, 2020). Some questions raised include: *What are the implications for policy and practice for an EcCoWell 2 Community Recovery process and program that recognizes a moment of reckoning and possibility - as we negotiate a pandemic, racial protest, and increasing climate change? How do we iterate this approach wisely in supporting the resilience of communities in a time of extraordinary challenge and opportunity? How can the potential for transformative learning for individuals and groups be fostered by integrating the arts, faith / spirituality, embodied knowing, and groundedness in place?*

While we may not be able to comprehensively answer all of these questions in this report, they are highlighted here to frame the lens through which we interpret and analyse this work. Due to the ongoing pandemic, we recognize what we were able to do until February 2020 is not possible now - at least, not in the same way. As such, we have had, in the past several months, an opportunity to explore and evolve iterations of this approach - in ways that are virtual yet connected, and on occasion, in-person following social distancing guidelines. In this report, we explore possibilities for linkages between faith / spirituality, the arts, the environment, and community resilience. We witness transformative learning - in small, incremental ways - at work in the midst of new and old relationships, where family, friends, and neighbours expand what it means to know themselves, each other, and the environment, and build a stronger, more resilient community.

Context

As an introduction to this work, the mission of the Walls-Ortiz Gallery and Center is to create a community space for interaction with art, for conversation, for telling stories, for visualizing and engaging faith, and for new questions and unexpected appreciations. It is the public engagement arm of City Seminary of New York, an intercultural Christian learning community.

The *Justice Seedbed Project* extended our Christian practice of hospitality at the WOGC in Central Harlem to a wider audience, emphasizing lifelong learning for all ages by cultivating community dialogue; deepening relationships with neighbours and organizational partners; and identifying and understanding the environmental issues affecting our neighbourhood. The project began with an exhibition in June and July of 2019 called *Planting for Peace*. As an exhibition of Harlem- and NYC-based artists working with ecology themes, the aim was to create the space and dialogical pivot points for community conversations around our local environmental concerns and the guiding questions for this project.

In the fall of 2019, the site of the Walls-Ortiz Gallery and Center was closed for future construction, and, without a physical home, we operated a “gallery on the move.” During this time, we partnered with local organizations, especially our neighbour Fresh Oils Ministry, the local public library, the local police precinct, nearby community gardens and environmental advocacy groups, and a day centre for adults with special needs, to continue pursuing the flourishing of the environment in our neighbourhood. We hosted workshops with seniors, youth, police and families, adults with disabilities, and local crafters that involved planting, art-making, sound-mapping, and crocheting around topics that might help us attend more closely to the natural world in our urban environment.

We also attended events held by local organizations committed to environmental justice and invited those organizations to educate our staff and learning communities. We had hoped to convene a working group from these various communities—artists, activist organizations, seminary and gallery staff, and neighbouring residents of the community—on environmental justice, but were unable to due to schedule coordination, and, later, the physical distancing constraints of the pandemic. However, through a three-pronged approach of a physical exhibition in the gallery space, workshop series with community partners, and intentional connections to environmental justice organizations, we explored and developed a grounded response to our questions:

- *How do we hear and respond to the environment’s call for care?*
- *How does the practice of being a good neighbour in Central Harlem extend to engaging with local ecological issues?*

Our core gallery team of six (three of whom live in the local community) became a form of a working group that we hope to expand.

What follows is a reflection on how our efforts responded to those questions and worked toward our goals of 1) cultivating community dialogue; 2) deepening relationships with neighbours and organizational partners; and 3) identifying and understanding the environmental issues affecting our neighbourhood. We gathered data from visitor feedback

forms at gallery events; staff reflections conducted at two intervals over the course of the grant period; and photographs from workshops, conversations, and events. The report concludes with reflections on the implications of this work for community resiliency and recovery going forward.

1. Cultivate community dialogue

The *Planting for Peace* exhibition featuring local artists lasted for five weeks in June - July 2019, and involved events geared toward cultivating community dialogue, including an opening artist panel and three community conversations. We engaged approximately 150 participants in these various events, and during our public visitor hours, we logged a total of 639 visitors. 132 were first-timers and 507 were returning visitors, indicating a consistent base of community participants who value the work and approach of the gallery.

Community conversations gathered local residents, passersby, visitors, artists, and families for discussions sparked by the artwork on view. One participant reflected on a sculpture made from tree branches, thinking about the creative potential of raw materials. Another reflection came from work made with discarded materials, leaves, and sticks strewn across sidewalks—where does this garbage that we scatter end up? How might we be more responsible?

In one community conversation, a food justice educator and activist from a neighbouring university led participants on a sound walk of a nearby park. As we walked, we took photos with disposable cameras, training ourselves to see the natural world bursting at the seams. As we got to the park, we engaged in mapping sounds around us, and when we returned, we mapped these onto a shared diagram of the park and blocks that we had walked.



Planting for Peace exhibition and community conversations (Summer 2019)

Other community conversations involved planting flowers and painting planter pots. One staff member shared the following reflection on how these small acts led to sense of agency, which could lead to an accumulation of justice:

One day as I was watering the recently planted flowers in the tree pits, an older gentleman walking by stopped to talk to me.

Neighbor: "Do you know the names of all of those plants and flowers?"

Me: "No, actually... I don't."

Neighbor: "I bet a lot of people in this neighbourhood don't know either. If you can find out and then label them, people walking by will learn their names too. Then they also become a part of the community."

So, we labelled them. My hope is that one day our neighbour walked by again and saw the labels, realizing that he had made a difference. And that passersby every day are able to benefit from the care given to the trees.

A simple observation and exchange on the street led to reflection and transformation, not only on the part of the staff member, but potentially for the neighbour who returned to find that he was heard and responded to. Community relationships are strengthened when we see and hear each other, and when we realize how learning can happen and slowly negotiate change, building stronger relationships and community resilience.

2. Deepen relationships with neighbours and organizational partnerships

In addition to the community conversations, we had two events geared toward intentionally deepening relationships with neighbours and organizational partners during the *Planting for Peace* exhibition in 2019: Senior and Youth Paint Day (in partnership with the local police precinct) and Tree Pit Planting Day. As the gallery went "on the move," while our physical space prepared for construction, we used the opportunity to reach out to more neighbours and organizations.

The following image and staff reflection point to the ongoing partnerships we cultivate to build resiliency, knowing that even while we are not able to meet in person, there is a desire to continue to work together to rebuild, restore, and re-imagine the future of our neighbourhood.



The image above, featuring a senior paint day co-organized with our local police precinct, epitomizes a glimpse of what we hoped this initiative would catalyze - building a shared connection in our neighbourhood amongst a diversity of peoples - seniors, youth, visitors, police, and our gallery as a third space for gathering. It was through art and the imagination

that we could bring life to this project and this conversation about the flourishing of our Harlem community - not only its people but the place itself, the earth, the concrete, the trees, and animal/insect life.

In the winter and spring of 2020, we began more sustained projects with community partners, while navigating our situation as a gallery without a physical location and then as a gallery during a pandemic. From November 2019 to February 2020, we offered monthly art workshops to adult day-residents of the Fisher Center at a branch of the New York Public Library (NYPL) in East Harlem. These workshops created a new organizational partnership with the NYPL and deepened our existing partnership with the Fisher Center. Seminary staff, Fisher Center participants, and library staff shared feelings of joy, meditation, and connection as they created art on the themes of air, wind, sun, land, and sky. While the pandemic brought our workshops to a pause, we have collected artwork that we hope to display either at the East 125th Street New York Public Library as previously planned or at another site.

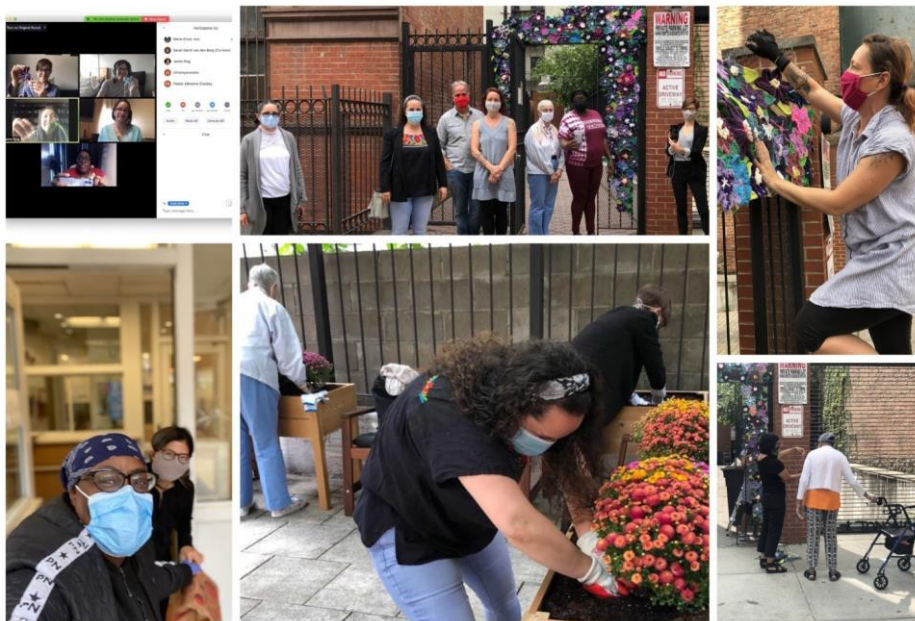
In the spring of 2020, we began a participatory craft project to beautify the backyard space of Fresh Oils Ministry, a space used for church programs, ESL classes, NA meetings, and other community functions. Working with a local yarn installation artist, we met weekly over Zoom to crochet clematis flowers for the installation from April through June 2020. The crocheted clematis vine was installed in early September 2020, and we celebrated on September 24, 2020, after cleaning up the backyard, purchasing outdoor benches and planters, and establishing the Fresh Oils Community Garden. During the installation, we encountered numerous neighbours who were interested in the vine project.



Fisher Day Center Art Workshops at East 125th St New York Public Library (Fall 2019/Winter 2020)

The community yarn project was an example of a creative iteration of the EcCoWell approach - bringing family, friends, and visitors from as far as India (via an Instagram invitation) together for virtual community conversations, learning not only technical skills (following a new crochet pattern) but sharing in life and listening to each other. News of other community projects—crocheted ear savers for healthcare workers and knit / crocheted THANK YOU banners—were shared, and there seemed to always be something new and unexpected to learn in those weekly sessions.

Community connections multiplied as a local Harlem “crafty ladies” group joined for the virtual sessions and neighbours of the garden stepped up to help unload plants, soil, and bulbs from a staff member’s car to the backyard area. During installation of the crocheted clematis vine, an impromptu crochet lesson happened on the sidewalk with a staff member and an appreciative neighbour, a member of a seminary alumna’s church.



Virtual yarn circles and in-person planting, Fresh Oils Community Garden (Spring/Fall 2020)

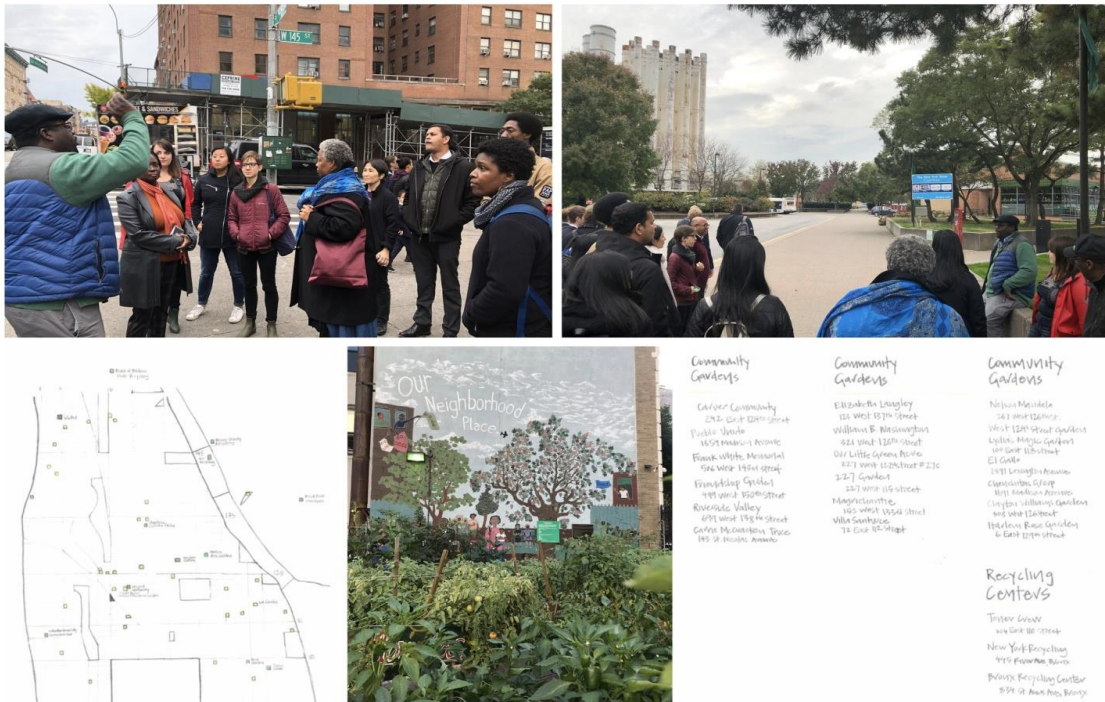
3. Identify and understand the environmental issues affecting our neighbourhood.

We sought to learn from local organizations who have been working toward ecojustice for decades. Our summer intern Zoe created a map of dozens of community gardens and green spaces in Harlem, making us aware of a whole network of ecologically active and concerned citizens. A team member attended a panel held at a community garden, Harlem Grown, in conjunction with the Harlem Emergency Network in fall 2019. Months later, we invited WeACT to lead an environmental justice tour as part of our Faith and the City conference. Participants learned about a fifty-year history of activism and policy change led by residents of Harlem in response to toxic waste plants and bus depots.

These connections helped to transform our own seminary practices as we hosted events pre-COVID, moving away from disposables and starting to collect vegetable and fruit scraps to compost. They also raised more explicit awareness of ecological practices in the planning and design of the building which will house our renovated gallery. These conversations were

not limited to staff, but extended out in community conversations and activities and built resiliency into our everyday practices.

Simple acts like planting flowers and recognizing the importance of community interaction together in these activities were a part of making connections between faith/spirituality, the arts, ecojustice and our city.



Getting to know and naming ecojustice efforts in Harlem (Summer/Fall 2019)

The following photo and staff reflection provide evidence of these connections:



Tree Pit Planting / Community Heroes Day (Summer 2019)

In Tree Pit Planting Day, done in partnership with a local teacher, students from the community and staff discussed how to be better caretakers of our environment and planet.

Artmaking, planting, and reading combined to make students aware of how our environment is impacted by garbage, pollutants, asthma, gas, and oxygen. At the same time, participants reported a sense of wonder.

Children participated alongside adults who also pitched in to help beautify the neighbourhood. Children felt pride as “community heroes.”

Conclusion

As we consider the connections between faith / spirituality, the arts, eco-justice and transformative learning, we return to some questions raised earlier:

What are the implications for policy and practice for an EcCoWell 2 Community Recovery process and program that recognizes a moment of reckoning and possibility - as we negotiate a pandemic, racial protest and increasingly tenuous climate change? We must continue to build on and deepen existing relationships and move toward different ways of engagement (when limited to virtual or socially distant in-person interaction). It is harder to feel connected in a COVID-19 world. However, it is through ongoing conversations that see and hear the issues and concerns of our neighbours - particularly those who are black and brown in our Harlem community - that we can move towards recovery and resilience together.

How do we iterate this approach wisely in supporting the resilience of communities in a time of extraordinary challenge and opportunity? It is with creativity and an openness to try new things that we continue to adapt how we answer and articulate the EcCoWell approach in Harlem. The evolution of the project moved us from an in-person gallery exhibition and walks around the city to gathering for a season as a virtual community. Recovery and renewal in Harlem will emerge in time as the gallery activities are able to find their place again, not only in hosting events at the Fresh Oils Community Garden, but on the street and other unexpected places of connection.

How can the potential for transformative learning for individuals and groups be fostered by integrating the arts, faith / spirituality, embodied knowing, and groundedness in place? Since the opening of the Fresh Oils Community Garden, we have moved into the next phase of our work - offering virtual art-making workshops twice a month for local neighbours, family, and friends, and are in the process of developing a call for socially-engaged artwork from Christian artists and educators in response to the pandemic. We anticipate the call will engage a group of New York City-based artists and others from around the US, and will form a community of practice, meeting monthly over Zoom to connect and stimulate creative practices that are grounded in community, faith, art, and the city - with the potential again for transformative learning at the individual and collective levels.

To conclude, ***how can community resilience be built by lifting the human spirit - defining purpose, making meaning, and generating connections while addressing emotive, embodied, spiritual and transformative aspects of what it means to be human in a more-than-human context?*** Making art, building community relationships, learning from those doing the work, sensing the city—this didn’t lead to “justice rolling down.” We feel it though, welling up from below and around us. It formed us as a team and institution. We’ve built

community partnerships, both with environmental activists and environmental artists, and have become conscious of and changed sustainability practices as an institution to be a better neighbour. We became most of all aware of the work yet to be done and how this complements our mission and calls us to contribute as a centre for theological learning to an integrated, holistic, community-based EcCoWell2 learning approach that promotes resilience during and after pandemic times, moving us all forward to a future of hope and justice.

Focus - There are a number of components of the work of the University of Glasgow that cohere with the principles of EcCoWell 2 and in this report, we illustrate one of our activities: the Centre for Sustainable, Healthy and Learning Cities and Neighbourhoods.

Centre for Sustainable, Healthy and Learning Cities and Neighbourhoods

At the Centre for Sustainable, Healthy and Learning Cities and Neighbourhoods ([SHLC](#)), funded via UK Research and Innovation ([UKRI](#)) as part of the UK Government's Global Challenges Research Fund ([GCRF](#)), we work to generate such understanding and evidence to tackle the challenges of social and economic unsustainability in fast-growing urban centres in Africa and Asia. To do so, we adopt a novel approach: instead of studying and/or comparing countries, we utilise an interdisciplinary, city- and neighbourhood-level lens to systematically investigate the complex connections and relationships between urban (SDG11), health (SDG3), and education (SDG4) challenges in neighbourhoods. A focus on these areas is completely congruent with EcCoWell, and indeed in our original proposal to UKRI, we made explicit reference to the work of PASCAL and the EcCoWell initiative.

Poverty in and unsustainability of urban areas in the Global South has been a major challenge to researchers and policy makers for a very long time. International and national urban policies still tend to operate at a very general level with policy makers having limited knowledge about the unequal distribution of opportunities, benefits, and harm within the urban population. Understanding of urbanisation is fragmented and research overwhelmingly focuses on conditions of slums at the expense of investigating specific local social, economic, and physical structures, and how they are changing, especially at the neighbourhood level.

It is our belief that sustainability, prosperity, and the resilience of cities, countries, and the world as a whole can only be achieved if we have a holistic and in-depth understanding of the complex issues we are dealing with, why they exist, and how they can be addressed effectively. We argue that such understanding should start with exploring such micro units as the neighbourhood: first, neighbourhood is the place where social policy is delivered, and second, it is the place that determines residents' exposure to peace and security vs violence and harm, prosperity vs poverty and destitution, and opportunities vs disadvantages. However, despite the emphasis of the [New Urban Agenda](#) of UN-Habitat on maximising the benefits and minimising the harms of urbanisation for all, there is a lack of evidence for action at the time when evidence-based and cost-effective interventions are desperately needed.

At [SHLC](#), we work to generate such understanding and evidence to tackle the challenges of social and economic unsustainability in fast-growing urban centres in Africa and Asia. To do so, we adopt a novel approach: instead of studying and/or comparing countries, we utilise an interdisciplinary, city- and neighbourhood-level lens to systematically investigate the

complex connections and relationships between urban (SDG11), health (SDG3), and education (SDG4) challenges in neighbourhoods. Unlike the majority of studies, we also made a decision to shift from studying large cities to studying and comparing two cities in each country: one major national city and one ‘typical’ regional city. This approach allows us to draw comparisons from several dimensions: within country and region, between countries and regions, and between different economic development levels and types of cities and neighbourhoods. Profiles of a number of the cities that we work with have been published in a special issue of [Environment and Urbanisation ASIA](#).

And we do not do it alone – for a more locally-driven, equitable, and effective approach, we formed an international consortium of nine [research partners](#) in eight countries: Bangladesh, China, India, the Philippines, Rwanda, South Africa, Tanzania, and the UK. Our team of experts comes from a range of different fields including urban studies, architecture, design and planning, demography, education, health, law, and more. To support our ambitious collaborative project that runs from 2017 to the end of 2021, we received funding via UK Research and Innovation ([UKRI](#)) as part of the UK Government’s Global Challenges Research Fund ([GCRF](#)).

To provide policy makers and planners with more localised, contextual, and specific responses to urban issues on the ground, we are working on three main packages:

1. Sustainable cities and communities: we analyse the underlying social and economic forces of urban development and the changing internal structure of cities to understand the different neighbourhoods.
2. Sustainable health and wellbeing: we assess the relationships between city and neighbourhood characteristics, health services, and the health and wellbeing of residents.
3. Inclusive and equitable quality education and learning: we assess the provision and outcomes of formal and non-formal educational facilities and services to understand how education and continuous learning can contribute not only to economic prosperity but also to improved quality of life in communities, health and wellbeing, city governance, civic participation, and other aspects of cultural and social development, especially in challenging circumstances.

While much of our work is still in progress, we have produced a number of outputs of various kinds for our education portfolio. These include an initial report that compares education progress in twelve cities in six countries we are working with, [Education policies, systems, and progress in Africa and Asia: a comparative analysis](#), has been prepared by our Research Fellows, Dr Yulia Nesterova and Dr Graeme Young, and a literature review on [Education policies and issues in developing countries](#) has been prepared by a former research fellow, Dr Carli Rowell. Many more of our publications are now in press or in preparation – see below for more information.

We have also started our engagement with the wider public, and we are working to increase the scope, variety, and quantity of such outputs. Our Co-Investigator, Prof. Mike Osborne, for example, gave an interview on [Learning Cities](#) to DVV International, our partners at Ifakara Health Institute (Tanzania) prepared a blogpost, [COVID-19 and Tanzania’s cities: why collaboration is key](#), for our website, and our research fellow Dr Yulia Nesterova wrote a

piece for *Impakter Magazine*, entitled [Schools out forever? Supporting resilient learning in the face of COVID-19](#). Our partners in Rwanda have made an important contribution to the UNESCO/PASCAL Observatory webinar series, [Learning Cities' COVID-19 recovery: from research to practice](#), reporting on the topic of the *challenge of measurement, planning and evaluation in learning cities in the city of Huye*, the recording of which can be found at this [link](#). In that event we heard from Co-Is Pierre Claver and Josephine Mwongeli, and the Mayor of Huye, Sebutege Ange.

Research is one of our two main goals. Our other core task is [strengthening capacity](#) of researchers, government officials, and policy makers across the world to ensure that we can build sustainable neighbourhoods and cities. Our capacity building activities include a small grants fund, a visiting research fellow programme, training workshops, knowledge exchange events, and other opportunities that help us strengthen research and organisational capacity, develop a new generation of multi-disciplinary urban researchers, establish a sustainable international network, and facilitate knowledge exchange between the UK and Global South countries. Knowledge exchange has also involved week-long partner meetings and visiting neighbourhoods to meet residents and officials in the cities where we are working.

We have some really exciting examples of such work to share. Amongst some 20 projects that we have funded is an interdisciplinary project exploring 'liveability' in Mongla and Noapara in south-western Bangladesh from the perspectives of residents, officials and stakeholders. The study explored how residents in each of these cities perceive their neighbourhood and what are their priorities in making their city liveable. The concept of liveability and its components of livelihoods and food security, utilities and transport, health and natural environment, education, housing, central and local government, safety and security and lastly social and leisure provide rich and complex insights into the daily life of cities and what is needed to create liveable, regional cities. This work was presented in a webinar, details of which can be found at this [link](#).

Publications

Ahmad, S., Baffoe, G., Bhandari, R., Young, G. and Osborne, M. (2021). 'Sustainable, healthy, learning cities and neighbourhoods'. In M. Venter et al. *Learning for a Better Future: Perspectives on Higher Education, Cities, Business and Civil Society*. Durbanville: AOSIS (in press).

Nesterova, Y. and Young, G. (2020) *Education policies, systems, and progress in Africa and Asia: a comparative analysis*. Available at <http://www.centreforsustainablecities.ac.uk/research/education-policies-systems-progress-africa-asia-comparative-analysis/> [Accessed 29 July 2020].

Nesterova, Y. and Capsada-Munsech, Q. (2021). *National and subnational approaches to regulating private technical and vocational education and training: comparative insights from Asia and Africa*. Paris: UNESCO Global Education Monitoring Report. (commissioned; in preparation).

Osborne, M. and Hernandez, S. (2020) *Sustainable learning cities: Inclusion, equity and lifelong learning*. Hamburg: UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning. (in press).

Rowell, C. (2020) *Education policies and issues in developing countries*. Available at <http://www.centreforsustainablecities.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Education-Policies-and-Issues-in-Developing-Countries-Literature-Review-April-2020.pdf>. [Accessed 29 July 2020].

Rowell, C. and Osborne, M. (2020) 'Beyond Schooling: Learning Cities and Adult Education in the Global South' in M. London (ed.) *Oxford Handbook of Lifelong Learning*, Second Edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Focus – Activities of Beijing Community Colleges¹⁷ in recovering from COVID-19

After great efforts, the city of Beijing effectively controlled the development of the COVID-19 pandemic from February 2020. Although the city experienced traumas in the shadow of the pandemic, the government sets strict policy rules to regulate every aspect of people's ordinary lives, such as the use of face mask in public areas and public transport system. Most schools, regardless of the education level, have been closed from March to August in Beijing, the schools follow the principle of “No Schooling but don't stop learning” with online teaching and distance learning.

The report “The 2007 Decision on promoting the building of Learning Cities in Beijing” illustrates that Beijing has a strong motivation to build a sustainable learning city, not only socio-economically but also culturally. In the context of building the learning city, helping citizens recovery from the pandemic emotionally and mentally, preparing them improve vocational skills for a possible recession, all this has become the social responsibility of Beijing community colleges. This paper selects two colleges as cases to illustrate community colleges' efforts and actions.

A. Beijing Agricultural Radio and Television School Changping Branch “Teaching in the Air” Program

Beijing agricultural radio and television school Changping Branch, is affiliated with Changping Community College. Built in 1983, the school has a primary focus on secondary, and higher vocational training especially provided to farmers. The school has been closed since March, in accordance with the policies adopted during pandemic, but carried on its “teaching in the air” program to help and instruct rural people and farmer trainees through learning and training at home.

The program is divided into three parts. The school enrolment of 750 students is divided into 19 Wechat¹⁸ groups. These are assigned a class adviser and technical assistance to help each Wechat group manage their courses. The school provides multiple online courses from the central agriculture radio and television school, and other administrative departments of agricultural courses. The available courses range across the prevention and control COVID-19, Spring vegetable and fruit tree planting, and many others. These courses are close to learners' daily life, and are easy to understand and to learn. According to the course arrangements, and the actual situation, the school regularly provides course resources and

¹⁷ A feature of the Beijing learning city is the important role of community colleges which facilitate access to learning in each of the districts of this mega-city. The Beijing Academy of Educational Sciences has monitored the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the work of community colleges. This report from the Academy comments on developments in two of the colleges during the pandemic. The strong performance of the colleges in both vocational and cultural subjects is illustrated by these cases.

¹⁸ This is a Chinese multi-purpose messaging, social media and mobile payment app developed by Tencent.

links to farmer-students twice or three times a week. As the last step, learners can share their results with their Wechat group at any time, and if they have any problems on certain courses, the teacher in charge will give feedback to the teacher who runs the course, in trying to meet the needs of the learners. The program mainly uses online live lectures, video applications and some Wechat Official Accounts to provide courses. “Intelligent Farm Cloud” applications are used as major teaching online platforms. These applications are easy to operate and have a rich agricultural content. Learners can select courses that they are interested in. Online live lectures are integrated in these applications. For example, “Fighting the pandemic, preserving Spring ploughing and promoting production” is an online live lecture given by Beijing Academy of Agricultural and Forestry Sciences, which includes techniques for management of Spring fruit trees to strawberry. It is a series for training from daily care to marketing modes.

B. Chaoyang Community College for Seniors “Fighting the COVID-19” Cloud Based Program

Chaoyang community college for seniors officially opened in 2016 with four major strands: in addition to Degree levels, viz. Music Performance (piano, dance, vocal), Painting (calligraphy, Chinese painting, western painting), Photography and English. The start of the pandemic coincided with the start of the new semester for senior students of the class 2020. The college initiated a “Fighting the COVID-19 Pandemic” cloud based program. The cloud is located in the colleges’ online platform, for cooperation with the Wechat group, and the Tencent online classroom education resources and courses.

In order to strengthen the learning enthusiasm of senior learners, the college developed a teaching model “B+2P” (Basic plus Parallel resources and Practice). If we take music as an example, a senior learner needs to understand basic staff and numbered musical notations, extend knowledge of the content of music to better understand the course, and practice to use the instrument as an outcome.

The college promotes a “three learning and two evaluation” which is in use through the whole of online teaching. “Three learning” mainly refers to online independent learning, live Q&A learning, WeChat small application interactive learning. “Two evaluation” refers to teacher and evaluating each other while students also evaluate each other.

An online exhibition of Painting and Calligraphy from senior learners was held by the college, which expressed their confidence and belief in the outcome of fighting COVID-19.

In conclusion, despite the strict school closure policy, Beijing community colleges searched for the ways to attract more learners and satisfy the learning needs of every learner, so that no one was left behind during this pandemic. Beijing, as the capital of China, is also a developed area, benefiting from the popularisation and information development of mobile phones and laptops. Community colleges can teach through applications using mobile phones and computers, but online teaching still faces the challenges faced by all education in adapting to turbulent change. As schools have continued to open since June, more community colleges implement innovative online and offline teaching models to deal with requirements in recovering from the pandemic.

PART 3 INSIGHTS and LESSONS: An Overview and Commentary

Peter Kearns

Ideas in the seven Briefing Papers were reflected in the October reports from participants in various ways. For the purpose of analysis, the insights gained from the Briefing Papers and participant October reports may be grouped in the following framework.

1. Supporting individual well-being in adjusting to on-going change.
2. Building resilient regenerative communities with strengthened social cohesion
3. Promoting understanding of global interdependence.
4. Harnessing technology to serve human purposes.
5. Implications for learning cities.
6. Connecting up with further development of the EcCoWell concept.

Participant October reports are set out in Part 2 of this paper. Briefing Papers may be found on the PASCAL website.

The insights and lessons I comment on below were conditioned by the nature of the participation in the program with most participants in Western Europe, Australia, and New York. While we would have liked more participation from cities in developing countries, the big picture trends discussed in this report are challenges that all communities will need to respond to at some stage so the insights discussed provide a set of ideas needing adaption to local conditions.

1. Supporting individual well-being in adjusting to on-going change

This was the primary finding from the program. While the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic enhanced existing problems discussed in Part 1, the emerging context of ageing populations, rampant technologies, and the continuing impact of urbanisation on both urban and rural areas pointed to imperatives that must be priorities for learning city development. At the same time, innovations in participating cities and neighbourhoods showed that good responses were available that could be developed further in supporting the resilience and well-being of people.

Briefing Papers prepared for the program pointed to the range of issues to be addressed. These included supporting mental health and well-being, rethinking lifelong learning for the longevity era, fostering transformative learning, and overall preparing people for a world of permanent transition (Gratton & Scott, 2017:), ageing populations, the likelihood of less work, and on-going digitisation impacts.

The thrusts of BP4 by Wong and Walters addressed these issues with their ideas on transformative learning that drew on spiritual and cultural resources, with the arts having a key role. Eugenia Wang in the Datong Taipei report showed how social entrepreneurship could be used to build social cohesion and resilience, while EcCoWell principles were applied in developing planning for an Eco-City and Happy Farm initiative. We discuss this further below.

The thrusts of these examples take us in the direction of a broader and deeper approach to learning and community building that ranges across contextual (including cognitive), emotional, spiritual, and physical dimensions (Schwab, 2016:107-111). Permanent transition in a longevity world (Gratton & Scott, 2017:16-17) requires transformative learning building on the transformative assets of people developed throughout life (Gratton & Scott: 92). These assets include the capabilities identified by the World Health Organization in its 2015 World Reports on Ageing and Health (WHO, 2015). OECD has also recognised the significance of “transformative competences” in its *Education 2030* report.

These were seen by OECD as:

- Creating new values;
- Reconciling tensions and values;
- Taking responsibility.

The Briefing Paper by Wong and Walters also pointed to the needs for a moral and ethical framework to guide action in supporting people in an age of turbulence and disruption. Schwab defined this challenge in the following terms.

The mind-boggling innovations triggered by the fourth industrial revolution, from biotechnology to AI are redefining what it means to be human. (Schwab, 2017:98).

One of the responses to these questions in the program was the interest taken in empathy and in developing empathic relationships between people in different countries.

A new model of partnership driven by empathy

This interest in empathy came out most strongly in the Wyndham report in what was termed “a new model of partnerships driven by empathy.” This was articulated in the following terms.

A partnership that supports solidarity during times of adversity and hardship, as well as in more favourable times of prosperity and peace, needs empathy and compassion as its foundation. (Gomez:1).

Wyndham cited Mansouri with his view “that the worldwide response to COVID-19 shows the power of considering new ways of creating solidarity in our collective responses, including through empathy and renewed partnerships” (Mansouri, 2020).

An empathic consciousness of the lives of others requires a leap of imagination so that partnerships driven by empathy are more likely to be ones that harness imagination towards creative outcomes. The outcomes of this program illustrate this relationship with Wyndham, for example, citing its initiative (in partnership with the Melton learning city) in inaugurating a Global Learning Festival, using the internet, at a time when conventional learning festivals had been put on hold because of the pandemic. We discuss this initiative in section 4 below.

It is unsurprising that the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic led to an increased interest in empathy, and related psycho-social aspects of life such as mental health and well -being,

and the emotional and spiritual dimensions of life. Connecting up these dimensions took some participants towards a broader empathic consciousness to underpin a sustainable recovery from the pandemic. Rifkin has observed that an empathic consciousness is a celebration of life with a critical role in sustaining people in times of crisis.

Empathy is the means by which we transcend ourselves, by exploring our relationships and connections with the awe of being. (Rifkin, 2009:169).

This interest in empathy gives a fresh perspective to the learning to be concept that underpinned the 1972 UNESCO Faure Commission report, and which also connects well with the idea of active ageing and living a sustainable longevity life at a time of turbulence and disruption.

Ciaramicoli and Kitchen (2000) in Rifken (2009), comment on the power of empathy in the following terms:

The transcendent impulse comes from a craving for connection, a yearning for relationship to something larger and more powerful than ourselves.

The importance of this quest for meaning and purpose was a clear insight of the 2018 PASCAL and PIMA SIG report on active ageing (Kearns & Reghenzani-Kearns, 2018). Reports from this program have taken these ideas further on aspects such as the Wyndham report model of partnerships driven by empathy, and new ways of using technology in supporting active ageing in building a society for all ages with more interaction between generations. These thrusts have been supported by recognition of emotional and spiritual aspects of this quest, as in the Wong and Walters Briefing Paper, which connect to ideas on mental health and well-being, one of the big themes of this report.

Altogether, connecting the cluster of empathy, imagination, emotional and spiritual aspects, transformative learning, and the role of the arts and culture in this broader and deeper concept of learning and well-being in a society experiencing radical change was one of the main insights from this program.

Learning cities making the leap to the emerging longevity society will benefit from activities that build imagination, empathy, creativity and spiritual and emotional dimensions of transformative learning. It will be interesting to see how far the new model of partnership with empathy articulated by Wyndham will take us.

A further insight into a stronger partnership model is provided by Wolverhampton where the comprehensive partnership arrangements flow across to business and economic development, government agencies, and vulnerable groups such as unemployed people. This approach, which connects partnership to governance arrangements, is discussed in section 2 below.

Recruiting non-learners

A further common theme in the reports was action taken to recruit non-learners and vulnerable groups into community initiatives. This has assumed increased significance with

the increase in mental health and well-being problems driven by the pandemic. While much of this action was driven by local action to strengthen neighbourhoods, as in Datong and Harlem, special initiatives were also taken.

A good example is provided by Limerick where a Learning Ambassadors program was initiated in 2019. The work of the Ambassadors was directed at breaking down barriers to learning and community participation. Activities included a Story Exchange project directed at building empathy through sharing your life story with a partner.

Learning Festivals have always served to draw people back to learning as the Cork experience shows (Kearns, Neylon, Lane & Osborne, 2013). The 2020 impetus towards virtual learning festivals as in the Wyndham and Limerick initiatives, points to the potential of developing the learning festival concept further as a useful approach to drawing non-learners back to learning and community.

The Harlem New York report, which is discussed in section 2 below, shows how the arts can be used in a community project directed at fostering a community dialogue to support inclusion objectives.

Meeting the needs of ageing populations

This theme was introduced late in the program through Briefing Paper 6 so that it is not surprising that few participants addressed this question in their reports. The paper produced for the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning was not available to participants (Kearns and Reghenzani-Kearns, 2020). However, it is clear that learning cities will need to give more attention to the needs of the longevity society with multiple transitions in the life course.

However, some participants appeared to be working towards a society for all ages with the needs of older people covered in the general approach. This was the vision set out in the Datong report on the Taipei Eco-City and Happy Farm initiative. Objectives involving well-being and happiness for all ages were brought into this initiative based around farming in an urban environment that they identify as involving “developing deeper emotional connections within communities” (Chang:6). There would be value in developing this approach further and assessing the outcomes. The Harlem report showed a similar whole of community approach to well-being.

The psycho-social perspectives brought into the program in supporting well-being were also reflected in the sections of this report that follow.

2. Building resilient regenerative communities with strengthened social cohesion

Strengthening learning neighbourhoods as resilient regenerative communities was the complementary insight that went along with the insights on individual well-being emerging from the program.

These thrusts included developing local and global consciousness and citizenship, supporting the mental health and well-being of community members, and taking steps to strengthen social cohesion. A particular insight was the concept of a new model of partnership, with the

empathy approach proposed by Wyndham as one option, and with the comprehensive partnership model of Wolverhampton offering an alternative approach. This has opened up rich areas for development. A related insight involved using the internet to foster global consciousness.

The broader and deeper approach to learning discussed above also flowed across to communities to strengthen social cohesion and resilience. The community projects discussed in the Harlem and Datong reports provide examples. Rodin has shown that social cohesion is an important factor in the resilience of communities in times of crisis resulting from bushfires, floods, pandemics, and other causes (Rodin, 2015)

The Briefing Papers for the program suggested the need for learning neighbourhoods to serve as regenerative communities with increased attention to the mental health and well being of their people. The reports from Datong, Harlem, Limerick, and Cork gave examples of ways in which this is happening. Linking spiritual and cultural aspects with transformative learning - including the important role of the arts - was brought out in the Harlem New York report, and in the Briefing Paper by Wong and Walters.

The Datong community college report showed how Taipei's greening and ecology education objectives had been brought into developing Taipei City as an Eco-City and Happy Farm. These initiatives reflected "another step in the evolution of promoting the EcCoWell2 program and lifelong learning in the Datong community" (Chang:1).

Developing inclusive learning neighbourhoods

A particular insight emerging from the program was the value of learning neighbourhood initiatives in addressing the psycho-social issues central to community recovery from the pandemic. This was shown in the reports from Datong, Harlem, Limerick, and Cork.

The human challenges resulting from the pandemic, and the other mega-challenges discussed in this report, such as the transition to a longevity era and the impact of the technologies of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, range across mental health and well-being, the need to foster empathy in societies with increasing fragmentation, and fostering consciousness of global interdependence.

Insights from the program pointed to the value of learning neighbourhoods as regenerative communities addressing these challenges. Cork and Limerick both have learning neighbourhoods and in September 2020 held a joint virtual workshop titled "Learning Neighbourhood Reflections: positive local actions during challenging times", to reflect on this experience.

Useful feedback from this event included:

- The lockdown had shown the strength and power of community spirit.
- Older and younger volunteers worked together alongside each other during the lockdown and there was a greater appreciation of each other as a result.
- Technology had been hugely beneficial in allowing people to connect during the lockdown including across geographic divides.

An important recommendation came out of this process that would benefit all learning neighbourhoods.

Learning Neighbourhoods should review their work/efforts annually to re-imagine what their Neighbourhood might look like for the following year; and bring people along with that vision. (Lane:5).

There would be much value if all learning neighbourhoods adopted this practice and shared the outcomes.

Makino links the growing importance of place to the transition to the multi-stage life in the emerging longevity society.

The main focus of the life of people which is changing to the multi-stage life is the “place” where everyday life happens, that is a community in which people interact with each other in face-to-face relationships. (Makino, 2020:16).

Learning neighbourhoods need to be further developed with this key role in mind in the transition to a technology-driven longevity society. Two evolving models are discussed below.

Adapting the Cork EcCoWell model to changing times

Cork has been an international leader in EcCoWell development since 2013. The integrated Cork development of green, healthy, learning cities carried over to the Third UNESCO International Conference on learning cities that Cork hosted in 2017, and was reflected in the *Cork Call to Action for Learning Cities* resulting from the conference.

The Cork EcCoWell experience reflects the citywide collaborative structures that evolved over many years, with the EcCoWell leadership group drawing on these networks.

This development served as a framework during 2020 for “ground-up” responses to the needs of vulnerable groups during the COVID-19 pandemic, and provided a basis for a flexible response to other community needs. This inter-agency, cross-sectoral approach will continue to evolve in addressing the problems confronting Cork in recovering from the pandemic.

The policy pillars built in to the 2017 EcCoWell *Cork Call to Action for Learning Cities* have guided Cork’s development as a learning city. However, the COVID-19 pandemic brought new challenges and new opportunities for Cork’s holistic approach. This included establishing a Community Response Forum with area-based Community Response Teams in every local area of the city. The Cork Learning City coordinator was seen as the appropriate person to convene and coordinate the new Forum. The Cork report lists the broad range of functions undertaken.

The area-based Community Response Teams were able to draw upon the experience of Cork in bringing local networks into the six learning neighbourhoods established. The Cork experience in responding to the pandemic shows how an EcCoWell learning city platform,

including learning neighbourhoods, can be adapted in responding to a crisis, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, with insights gained from the experience providing a basis for the further development of the Cork EcCoWell learning city approach.

The Wolverhampton partnership model

Further insights into a new model of partnership are provided by the strong partnership arrangements developed by Wolverhampton where the Wolverhampton City Learning Region initiative is supported by the Wolverhampton Learning Communities which associates a range of partners with a focus on supporting local residents who are socially excluded.

This provides an integrated package of learning, skills, and well-being and with key activities that are tailored to the needs of communities within the City of Wolverhampton. (Sahota, Lewis & Mahoney:1).

A feature of these partnership arrangements is that they flow across to employment, skills development and maintenance, mental health, and so support people to develop employability skills, confidence and well-being. The Mind@Work programme develops these objectives with a Wolverhampton Learning Communities Offer with five strands providing for progression beyond first steps (Ibid:2).

This broad reach across social and economic objectives is founded on the means by which learning creates transformation to achieve economic and social development and growth (Ibid:1).

The Wolverhampton partnership model through its comprehensive scope, its links to employment and economic development combined with social objectives such as mental and opportunity, points to a sustainable path in the transition to a technology-driven longevity society. This is one of the main insights gained from this EcCoWell programme.

The key role of community colleges and cultural institutions

This report followed up on the 2018 PASCAL & PIMA report on active ageing, in pointing to the key role of community colleges and local cultural institutions in building resilient communities that open access to learning opportunities for all. This role may be seen in the Datong, Harlem, and Beijing reports.

The Datong community college has innovated in the Datong district in fostering entrepreneurship while their report outlines the effort of the college in initiating an Eco-city and Happy Farm in Taipei City. In Harlem, the Walls-Ortiz Gallery and Center shows the potential of cultural institutions in building regenerative communities. Community colleges, established in each district of the Beijing learning city, have a key role in bringing the objectives of the learning city down to local communities, including supporting Elderly Universities. The report by the Beijing Academy of Educational Sciences describes the roles of two community colleges in the era of the COVID-19 pandemic. The important role of university institutions such as the Beijing Academy of Educational Sciences and Beijing Normal University in supporting the work of community colleges is a feature of the Beijing learning city development.

The expanded approach to learning discussed above suggests that cultural institutions and libraries should have an expanded role in future learning city development, as envisaged in the 2011 report of the PASCAL Östersund conference (Kearns, Kling, & Wistman [eds], 2011).

The Harlem report for the City Seminary of New York and the Wall-Ortez Center illustrates this potential in showing how the arts can be harnessed in a community project applying EcCoWell principles to build an inclusive learning neighbourhood. The Justice Seedbed project reported links the arts and environment to build community.

The Justice Seedbed project was directed at three objectives:

- cultivate community dialogue;
- deepen relationships with neighbours and organizational partnerships;
- identify and understand the environmental issues affecting the neighbourhood.

The various stages of this project made connections between faith/spirituality, the arts, eco-justice and the city (Wong & van den Berg:9) These were directed at “an integrated, holistic, EcCoWell 2 learning neighbourhood approach that promotes resilience during and after pandemic times, moving us forward to a future of hope and justice” (Ibid:11).

This project illustrates how the arts can be connected to spiritual and community objectives that are addressed in a process directed at understanding the local environment.

Connecting up in a world of permanent transition

These developments involving individual and community learning and building are taken up in the sections of this report that follow, particularly in the final section where they are discussed in the context of the further development of the EcCoWell concept in an era of permanent transition.

3. Promoting understanding of global interdependence

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the significance of global interdependence. With climate change, achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals, along with related aspects of economic development, the crucial significance of promoting understanding of global interdependence becomes clear.

The Briefing Paper by Schuller, Biao, and Osborne raised global interdependence as a necessary objective in the process of rethinking lifelong learning. The Briefing Paper by Bernadette Connolly showed the importance of harnessing environment policy and practice in achieving a sustainable future. Connolly reflected in her paper the OECD argument for an inclusive green recovery from the pandemic with a broader sense of well-being at its core.

The Datong report discusses the development of Taipei City as an Eco-city and Happy Farm drawing on innovations previously developed in Datong by the Datong community college. The need to foster global consciousness, as an underpinning of understanding global interdependence, was reflected in the Global Learning Festival led by the Wyndham and

Melton learning cities. This splendid initiative is discussed in section 4 below. The Limerick Virtual Learning Festival followed a similar path, pointing to the potential of Global Learning festivals in building global consciousness and empathy for people in other countries.

The interest in fostering empathy shown in several reports, especially the Wyndham report with its idea of a New Model of Partnership with Empathy, points to the role of an expanded empathic consciousness in building understanding of global interdependence. Rifkin (2009:575) notes such development in the following terms:

It is only by keeping that distinction in mind that empathic consciousness can continue to grow and become the psyche and social glue of global consciousness.

Makino also takes up the power on an imaginative empathic society in expanding local and global consciousness.

An imaginative empathic life is a creative life. There will be tolerance and acceptance and an enlarged consciousness that expands local and global dimensions.
(Makino 2020:11).

Systems thinking and understanding of networks can contribute much to building global consciousness. This idea lay behind the development of the Eco-city and Happy Farm initiative by Datong. These ideas should be built into learning city development, particularly in building understanding of environment systems.

The need to build a mindful learning culture in learning cities that promoted global consciousness and citizenship was a key theme in the 2009 UNESCO *Cork Call to Action for Learning Cities* adopted at the UNESCO Third International Conference on Learning Cities.

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

While this remains a priority need, the participant reports in this program show that some progress has been made in finding practical ways to address this objective. This points to the reality that developing local and global consciousness is even more important now than previously with the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change and environmental degradation and a raft of other economic and social issues joining implementing the SDGs as imperatives.

The emphasis on psycho-social issues in this report, linked to fostering empathy in communities, developing learning neighbourhoods as regenerative communities, and overall preparing for the transition to a technology-driven longevity society suggests that ways to promote the Cork Call to Action are under consideration in participating communities. Further innovative projects to build on these foundations are needed.

Overall, the October reports suggest that learning cities need to foster an understanding of global interdependence ranging across climate change, protecting the environment, supporting UN Sustainable Development Goals, and generally building a sense of empathy

towards other peoples and cultures. These ideas can be built on with further innovations suggested by the actions of participants in this program.

4. Harnessing technology to serve human purposes

The impact of the pandemic has given a boost to informal learning and technology-assisted learning in a range of contexts, including education institutions and business. This orientation is unlikely to disappear, so the question needs to be addressed of how technology can be used to support building community, fostering global consciousness, and overall contributing to a just sustainable world in a context of ever-growing technology influence.

The October reports showed that participants were thinking about using technology in new ways. A good example is provided by the initiative undertaken by the Wyndham and Melton learning cities to inaugurate a Global Learning Festival. The value of learning festivals, often linked to cultural activities, is well known. For example, a study showed how the Cork Learning Festival had grown year by year creating conditions for the Cork learning city to thrive (Kearns, Neylon, Lane & Osborne, 2013).

The Wyndham/Melton initiative built on this awareness, establishing a web site that could be used to create international links that could be used to discuss subjects brought into learning festivals. (Gomez:2-3). Experience with this initiative in 2020 has suggested how the program could be extended in future years. For example, contact with the State Library of Queensland led to information on the Festival being included in the State Library Newsletter that went to 120 public libraries across Queensland. This suggested that cultural institutions, such as libraries and museums, could have a more significant role in fostering learning and community building in cities and neighbourhoods.

Learning Limerick also conducted a Limerick Virtual Learning Festival in September 2020 with over 80 online events, and with international attendees from around the world participating (Lane:1). While the festival theme was “Celebrating and Building Learning Communities”, the flagship event for the festival was a webinar on “Learning in a Changing Business World”. Discussion of this important subject illustrated how technology can be used to broaden participation in learning city initiatives, including the critical requirement of stronger business participation.

Reports from McKinsey show how many business firms, especially the large corporations, are undertaking basic reviews of their core objectives in planning their post-pandemic future (Gast, Illanes, Probst & Schaniger, 2020). This aligns with a shift from shareholder capitalism to stakeholder capitalism advocated by the World Economic Forum in its *Davos Manifesto 2020*, so that it is very timely to consider how learning cities can build stronger and deeper partnership with business in supporting people in adjusting to the emerging longevity society in both work and social life. Maintaining skills and employability in this environment with ageing populations will be a core issue.

Bridging the digital divide

Both Cork and Limerick in their reports showed that bridging the digital divide was required in recovering from the pandemic. Cork reported that finding ways to promote digital learning for all ages groups was a priority. A range of approaches has been considered with two possible approaches currently being trialled in learning neighbourhoods, with the support of libraries in each case. The key role of libraries as delivery places was also brought out in the Australian “Tech Savvy Seniors” program with this initiative by a telco supported by libraries in several states.

Limerick in its learning neighbourhood development has recognised the use of technology for all age groups remains challenging, with the digital divide still existing. Role models are being used between generations to show what can be achieved. It is likely that the further development of learning neighbourhoods will frame this challenge for all age groups.

Harnessing technology with imagination

Overall, a key outcome of the pandemic has been an increase in imaginative ways of using technology to support learning in many contexts, including forging new partnerships which extend the range of learning experience, and which foster innovation. Examples include the Limerick experience in collaborating with Cork in reflecting on learning neighbourhood experience, the Global Learning Festival, and the Limerick experience with their PLACE-EE project which explored cultural heritage across four rural and isolated regions of Europe: Ireland, Northern Ireland, Iceland, Sweden (Lane:2).

Projects such as these have much value in fostering local and global consciousness, and empathy. These initiatives in the pandemic crisis of 2020 have set a pattern for a more imaginative and creative approach to building learning communities that are more connected, resilient, and sustainable. The reports have shown that such initiatives that involve local communities and person to person relationships have a particular value.

The technology challenge for learning cities

However, there is a darker side to technology with the growing impact of the new technologies of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, such as artificial intelligence and biotechnologies, on the economy and society. Whether computers emerge that have superintelligence (Bostrom, 2014; Tegmark, 2017), the lurking presence of such computers should send a warning that we need to accelerate the development of societies that are humanistic, empathic and compassionate, and resilient and sustainable. Schwab, the founder and CEO of the World Economic Forum describes this challenge in the following terms.

The fourth industrial revolution has the potential to robotize humanity, and thus compromise our traditional sources of meaning- work, community, family, identity. Or we can use the fourth industrial revolution to lift humanity into a new collective and moral consciousness based on a shared sense of destiny. It is incumbent on all of us to make sure that the later is what happens. (Schwab 2017: 2014-15).

So, master or servant? The technology challenge for learning cities could not have been better articulated. The Future of Life Institute puts the choice in stark terms.

Technology is giving life the potential to flourish as never before-or to self-destruct.
(Tegmark 2017:22).

5. Implications for Learning Cities

The EcCoWell2 Community Recovery Program was a small pilot program that built on insights gained from EcCoWell development since 2012 as an approach to integrated holistic development in cities and neighbourhoods.

A strength of the program has been the mix of learning cities, two innovative learning neighbourhoods, and the support of two universities – Glasgow and the Beijing Academy of Learning Sciences. The outcomes of the project have confirmed that there is much value in similar projects with such a mix of participation directed at innovation in exploring pathways for future development. The international Centre for Sustainable Healthy and Learning Cities and Neighbourhoods (SHLC) program which is discussed below shows a variant on this model.

A limitation of this program was that it did not have sufficient participation of cities and neighbourhoods in developing countries. Diversity is a key driver of creativity. The program confirmed the importance of local neighbourhoods as the foundation of sustainable learning cities at this stage of socio-economic and technological development. The turbulent conditions of the pandemic and its recovery are documenting the need for local communities as regenerative communities supporting individuals in difficult times, while also serving as springboards for enterprise and new ideas. Datong and Harlem both illustrate these roles in their step by step application of EcCoWell principles.

The importance of local institutions in fostering these developments was also a clear lesson of this program, and the earlier work of PASCAL on active ageing (Kearns & Reghenzani-Kearns [eds] 2018). The roles of community colleges and similar cultural institutions was demonstrated in Harlem, Datong, and Beijing, while the 2018 PASCAL/ PIMA report showed how local learning centres such as *kominkan* in Japan, *volkshochschulen* in Germany, and neighbourhood houses in Australia, and U3A type institutions everywhere, could have a key role in supporting people in difficult times and fostering learning throughout life (Kearns & Reghenzani-Kearns [eds]). The psych-social themes that were a major outcome of this program need to be carried over to the city level.

These are foundations that can be built on in strengthening the role of learning cities in this era of turbulence and disruption. Options include a collective reimagining a broadened agenda for lifelong learning and learning cities, some pilot projects with a similar mix to the EcCoWell 2 program but with more participation from developing countries, developing the university role in supporting local institutions in regional initiatives, as happens in Beijing at a city and district level.

The SHLC model

A significant innovation reported in this program has been the work of the Glasgow Centre for Sustainable Healthy and Learning Cities and Neighbourhoods which tackled the

challenges of social and economic unsustainability in fast-growing urban centres in Africa and Asia. This was a major initiative supported by government funding involving nine research partners in eight countries.

While the origins of this program may be found in EcCoWell principles, particularly in connecting learning and health and in the neighbourhood role, the program developed as a major innovation in cross-country development. The Glasgow university report describes the innovation in the following terms.

To do this, we adopted a novel approach: instead of studying and/or comparing countries, we utilise an interdisciplinary, city-and neighbourhood-level lens to systematically investigate the complex connections and relationships between urban (SDG11), health (SDG3) and education (SDG4) challenges in neighbourhoods. (Osborne & Nesterova: 1-2)

This interest in change at the neighbourhood level fits well with the general orientation of this program, and suggests that EcCoWell principles can be applied in both domestic and international contexts in coming to grips with the major challenges confronting cities everywhere. We comment in section 6 that follows on the complex connections and relationships that need to be understood in a context of permanent transition.

It seems likely that aspects of the SHLC model could be applied to networks of learning cities both within and across counties in the transition to a longevity society substantially driven by technology. The SHLC program runs until the end of 2011 so that the ultimate outcomes will offer much to future learning city development.

Towards a new approach to partnership

A key insight from this program has been the search for a new model of partnership, driven by empathy in the Wyndham and Melton approach, while the Wolverhampton approach shows how comprehensive partnership can bring social and economic objectives together in an integrated approach that points to the future in a turbulent world of permanent transition.

The need for empathy in recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic was an obvious aspect of this search. Various examples were given in participant reports that could be aspects of such a partnership model relevant to post-pandemic conditions. These include a stronger business role as partners, an enhanced use of technology to link countries across the world, and a new emphasis on psycho-social aspects of life after the pandemic.

It is likely that shifts such as these driven by an ever-increasing technology role will change substantially public health systems, and much of the conditions of working life in the transition to a technology-driven longevity society. The progressive emergence of a longevity society will require that the EcCoWell trio of healthy, green, learning cities should remain as a focus for learning cities, deepened by the aspects I have mentioned.

The need for a new approach to partnership has the support of OECD in its recent work on education and skills which argues for “a stimulus to c-creation and co-development process involving multiple stakeholders” Although learning cities have always had this aspiration,

new ways need to be found to bring this to reality, including stronger involvement of business in learning city and neighbourhood development.

There is a growing common interest between business, education sectors, and communities in the transition to a longevity society with its multiple life stages in place of the traditional three stage life. This will require fresh thinking and partnership in finding ways to maintain the skill level and employability of people in a rapidly changing world. Among other aspects, this will require revisiting the concept of a learning organisation to explore how a “learning organisation” should function with partnerships that sustain people in making transitions in multi-stage lives in the emerging longevity society.

The situation in Africa

The paper by Idowu Biao on Cotonou also looked at the broader question of the slow progress of learning cities in Africa. Biao went back to his 2013 paper on the role of learning cities in the rejuvenation of Africa. This potential has not yet been achieved. He noted that the needs of older people in Cotonou were not being met. This is an important issue as UN statistics show that while Africa has a relatively young population, this will change radically by 2050 with a 228.5 percent increase in the number of persons aged 60 and over. A critical need in African cities is to build societies for all ages in preparing for this change.

The power of regional networks in a world of permanent transition

The enhanced role of technology for education and learning in many contexts has been a feature of the COVID-19 pandemic, and has carried over to increased local and regional collaboration.

Examples in participant reports include the Wyndham and Melton partnership in the Global Learning Festival initiative, the collaboration of Limerick and Cork in a joint reflection on their learning neighbourhood experience, and the partnership of Learning Limerick and Derry Strathbane Learning City Region.

With the impact of the multiple mega revolutions discussed in this report- demographic, technology, urbanisation – there is a good case for strengthening local and regional collaboration in partnership action based on common interests in a world of rapid change. As noted above, the proportion of older people in African countries will increase significantly by 2050, with people moving from traditional three stage lives to multi stages with a number of transitions so that there are common interests in finding affordable ways to support people in this era of permanent transitions.

The situation in Africa requires particular attention, while developing countries overall will be most affected by on-going demographic change. Supporting local initiatives with international networks, as in the Glasgow SHLCN approach discussed above, has considerable merit. Insights from this program suggest that this should be a feature of learning cities and neighbourhoods in adapting to a world of permanent transition.

The examples reported in this program point to the power of regional networks in adding value to local efforts. A feature of the new model of partnerships articulated by Wyndham should be a broader range of partnerships, including with business. Business firms face

similar issues to cities and neighbourhoods in maintaining the knowledge and skill of their people in the post-pandemic world with calls to foster a broader mindset (Furr, 2020), and adapt to change through “bold learning at scale (Blackburn, La Burge, O’Toole & Schneider, 2020), and “finding new ways to humanize the digital experience” (Bello, Collins, Dreischmeir & Libarikam, 2020).

Limerick learning city recognised the need to develop partnership with business in the new business environment produced by the pandemic when they made the flagship event in the Virtual Learning Festival held in September 2020 “Learning in a Changing Business World.” This is a key requirement for the new model of partnership with empathy in the post-pandemic world advocated by Wyndham and Melton. This is a significant area for innovation by learning cities in the post-pandemic era.

6. Connecting up with the further development of the EcCoWell approach

Each of the key developments reported in the participant October reports could be incorporated in an updated concept of EcCoWell. These include a broader and deeper concept of transformative learning that ranges across cognitive, emotional, spiritual, and physical dimensions of learning, the boost to community that effective learning neighbourhoods can bring, a new approach to building stronger partnerships, and the strengthening of the psycho-social aspects of community development so that learning neighbourhoods serve as regenerative communities supporting their members in hard times.

Datong Taipei illustrates the evolution of EcCoWell ideas in a small community over some years. This development was given further shape in Taipei City as an Eco-City and Happy Farm in an initiative that ran across objectives such as learning, mental health, happiness and well-being, and stewardship of the environment.

While the EcCoWell concept in its initial development after 2012 was focussed on fostering integration through building cross-sectoral relations across areas such as learning, health, and environment, this program has shown the need for a broader concept of a learning community that ranges across psycho-social aspects of well-being and citizenship, along with initiatives that foster enterprise and which support skill development and employability throughout the longevity life, and new ways of rethinking lifelong learning in the emerging longevity society.

In order to clarify key aspects of such an approach, I have set out in Exhibit 1 over, an overview of some implications of this expanded concept of EcCoWell for core pillars of the 2017 UNESCO UIL Cork Call for Action on Learning Cities. These aspects, directed at integration and the holistic development of learning cities, were influenced by EcCoWell ideas developed through partnership between PASCAL and the Cork learning city.

This broader and deeper approach to building resilient sustainable communities through a holistic approach was well articulated by Senge, Sharmer, Jaworski & Flowers in the following terms:

Connectedness is the defining feature of the new worldview, connectedness between the “outer world” of manifest phenomenon and the “inner world” of lived experience, and, ultimately, connectedness among peoples and between humans and the larger world. (Senge et al 2004:188)

This view of connecting up fits well with the key themes emerging from this program: the psycho-social focus ranging across empathy, mental health and well-being, and a new approach to partnership and community, the importance of learning neighbourhoods as regenerative communities supporting people in times of crisis, and the environmental objectives brought into the program requiring both local and global consciousness.

Connecting between the “outer world” of policies and programs and the “inner world” of lived experience is necessary in building a resilient society able to withstand a crisis such as the Covid-19 pandemic, bushfires and more intense floods resulting from climate change, and the impact of new technologies on work. Better connecting of policies for urban and rural life is necessary in the transition to a longevity society driven by new technologies, and the continuing impact of urbanisation.

The need for better connections between generations in the transition to the longevity society is well illustrated by the EU project Connecting Generations. This project is directed at intergenerational education for social inclusion and solidarity, and was directed at the interaction of three concepts: lifelong learning, social inclusion, and intergenerational solidarity. This type of cross-sectoral connecting up will become much more common in the emerging era of permanent transition.

The broad concept of learning emerging from this program- with emotional, spiritual, physical, and cognitive dimensions- when linked to EcCoWell principles takes us in the direction of structural transformation of society required by the emerging longevity society. Re-creation, perhaps better expressed as co-creation - will be a feature of this society (Gratton & Scott:243-244).

Planning the “Recover Better” Approach

The United Nations through its Habitat agency has proposed two key objectives in fostering a “recover better” approach to recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. These are:

- New ways of designing the relationship between governments and private actors that puts public interest at the centre;
- A collective lucidity on the depth of global interdependence, and on the fact that the world is only as resilient as the least resilient country and person. (Sharif¹⁹, 2020).

These objectives fit well with the key themes emerging from this Program and should be seen as guidance for learning cities in take the “recover better” path.

¹⁹ Maimunah Sharif is the Executive Director of UN-Habitat and Under-Secretary-General United Nations. She made these comments at a joint ceremony with the Government of Singapore during which a MOU was signed between both parties in partnership to improve cities around the world. The Singapore Centre for Liveable Cities will work with UN-Habitat on this program.

In looking ahead in a changing society

We have explored in this report relationships between individuals and local communities in the process of social change towards a more technology and longevity driven society, with local learning neighbourhoods particularly important at this stage of transformation., but this is likely to change over time with more diverse relationships as Makino suggests with more “dynamic process of the formation and transformation of in society”. (Makino, 2020:19).

Makino describes the role of learning in this process of structural transformation of society in the following terms.

“Learning” as re-inventing oneself in a life with meaning and purpose (Makino:19).

As Gratton and Scott suggest, the various transitions people will face in the longevity life, with multiple stages, will require such a process of social change supporting people in making transitions. This is a re-creation of the longevity life (Gratton & Scott: 243-246).

Overall, the concept of EcCoWell emerging from this program is one where the original cross-sectoral approach to integration and holistic development has been expanded to a more complex, but deeper, concept of relationships that includes connecting between the “outer world of manifest phenomena” and “inner world of lived experience” in the dynamic transition to the longevity society. This orientation will drive the psycho-social concerns that we found in this program directed at mental health and well-being, empathy, local and global consciousness, stronger and more comprehensive partnerships, and the understanding and tolerance of other cultures in working towards a new approach to learning cities that supports reimagining the future of lifelong learning and building resilient and sustainable communities relevant to an era of permanent transition and turbulence.

PASCAL is most grateful for the contributions made by all participants, and the authors of briefing papers, at a time of major pressures resulting from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the adage that we should not waste a crisis is still relevant, so that PASCAL hopes that the ideas in this program will seed to greater things.

EXHIBIT 1

EcCoWell Development and the “Cork Call to Action for Learning Cities”

The 2017 UNESCO *Cork Call to Action for Learning Cities* was influenced by EcCoWell ideas on integrated holistic development which had been developed internationally through the partnership of Cork with PASCAL. This orientation was reflected in the *Cork Call to Action in building sustainable learning cities that are green, healthy, equitable, inclusive, entrepreneurial and capable of offering their citizens decent work opportunities*. The subsequent experience of EcCoWell development through the PASCAL Community Recovery Program puts a psycho-social gloss on key ideas in the *Cork Call to Action*. We have added technology to other pillars of the *Cork Call to Action*.

Learning - This should include transformative learning driven by the deep interactions of learning, health, environment, and community, and their interactions in fostering local and global consciousness. This will include the key role of transformative competences/assets and capabilities which interact through cognitive, emotional, spiritual, and physical dimensions. Empathy is a key transformative asset which develops along with openness to new experience in enhancing the well-being of people in the turbulent transition to a technology-driven longevity society.

Health - This should now include mental health and well-being. Learning cities should develop as communities of meaning which support mental health and well-being in all stages of the longevity life. Active ageing takes on a new meaning in the longevity life.

Environment - Environment policies and programs build local and global consciousness and citizenship, and add meaning to lives. A systems approach builds understanding of key relationships that build and maintain life. Recovery from the pandemic provides an opportunity to follow the path advocated by OECD of a green and inclusive recovery with broader well-being goals at its core.

Community - Driven by transformative learning and strengthening local and global consciousness, learning cities should be deeply interactive at the various levels of their development: neighbourhood, district, city, region. Local learning neighbourhoods are the foundation of sustainable learning cities where embedded strategies build connectedness between the “outer world” of varied phenomena and the “inner world” of lived experience in giving meaning to lives in the various stages of the longevity life. The Wyndham/Melton call for “a new model of partnership with empathy” should drive much of this development, while the Wolverhampton comprehensive partnership model illustrates how public and private sectors need to be brought together in progressing common interests and supporting vulnerable groups. Strengthening relations between business and learning communities at all levels is an important aspect of the new partnership model directed at supporting people, and maintaining their skills, employability, and sense of identity in the transition to a multi-stage life course. This will require rethinking the concept of a learning organisation in the post-pandemic era of multiple transitions including the change from shareholder capitalism to stakeholder capitalism advocated by the World Economic Forum in its *Davos Manifesto 2020*.

Technology - Learning technologies have an enhanced role in driving the new model of partnership with empathy and fostering innovations such as the Global Learning Festival. There would be much value if co-ordinated Global Learning Festivals were to spread around the world in fostering local and global consciousness and empathy in a context of permanent transition.

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APPENDIX 1 - Participants

Cork Learning City

Cork, the second largest city in Ireland, has been a leading learning city noted for its innovation in EcCoWell and other learning city developments. Cork was an early member of the PASCAL learning city program PIE, and in 2013 adopted the EcCoWell approach to integrated learning city development. In 2014 Cork City Council adopted the Beijing Declaration on Learning Cities, and in 2015 received the UNESCO Learning City Award for its promotion of lifelong learning. The Cork Learning City Festival has been a feature of Cork's development as a learning city. In 2017 Cork hosted the UNESCO Third International Conference on Learning Cities with the resulting Cork Call for Action on Learning Cities carrying over some ideas from Cork EcCoWell development in advocating "the building of sustainable learning cities that are green, healthy, equitable, inclusive, entrepreneurial". Cork has innovated in developing five learning neighbourhoods across the city. Cork continues as a leader in learning city development.

Contacts: Denis Barrett and Willie McAuliffe.

Wolverhampton City Learning Region

The city of Wolverhampton in the West Midlands of England is one of the ten fastest economies in the UK. The Wolverhampton City Learning Region is a partnership between the following core partners: University of Wolverhampton, City of Wolverhampton Council, City of Wolverhampton College, Adult Education Wolverhampton, Wolverhampton Learning Platform and Wolverhampton Learning Communities, and a range of other learning organisations. The Learning City Plan is encapsulated in the city's Vision for Education 2030: Shaping a City of Learning. The city has an integrated approach to lifelong learning, and in 2019 won the UALL Award for Innovation. Its holistic model for sustainable, community-based lifelong learning and skills development fits well the PASCAL EcCoWell2 approach.

Contacts: Karen Sahota, Natalie Lewis and Mary Mahoney

Wyndham Learning City

The city of Wyndham is located on the western edge of Melbourne, Victoria Australia near Geelong. Wyndham has experienced very fast population growth with considerable ethnic diversity with 42 per cent of the population born overseas. The Wyndham Learning City is a member of the UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities (GNLC) with its learning city development set out in the Wyndham Learning Community Strategy 2018-2022. This Strategy includes a targeted action plan highlighting 18 key actions including the annual Wyndham Learning City Festival. In 2017 Wyndham Kindergartens won the Improving Access and Participation in Early Living Award in recognition of the initiatives that included Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Programs and Practice in its learning community development. A number of programs are directed at access and equity objectives, including for People with Disability. The development includes alignment with the Smart Cities Initiative, and a strong focus on partnership to ensure change is long-term and sustainable. The Learning City initiative is aligned with the objectives of the Wyndham 2040 Vision which identifies areas for further development around community and lifelong learning.

Contacts: Diane Tabbagh and Jac Torres Gomez

Cotonou : A Would-be Learning City

Strategically located on the edge of the Bight of Benin, in the furthest southern section of Benin, Cotonou stands as the commercial capital city of Benin Republic. It is generally viewed as a fisherman's city as it sits on both a sea and a large lagoon within which fishing is practiced both as a livelihood activity, and as a hobby all year round. The ecological line (the balance among environment, vegetation and fauna) is broken as there exists only a negligible number of parks, woods and open recreational facilities in the city. Concrete buildings continue to spring up everyday even in the remotest sections of the city. While formal education is relatively well developed in the city, the concept of a *Learning City* (*Ville Apprenante* in French) is only now being accessed by city authorities and NGOs in Cotonou. Indeed the two most prominent City Councils (Marie de Cotonou and Marie d'Abomey Calavi) are about to communicate their intention to participate in the discussion of the concept of *Learning City* sometime in the first week of May 2020.

Contact: Idowu Biao

Learning Limerick

The Limerick learning city is a well established initiative in Ireland's third largest city (population 94,192) that in 2014 was designated Ireland's first City of Culture while in 2017 it received the UNESCO Learning City Award. Following the amalgamation of Limerick City Council and County, the initiative was rebranded as Learning Limerick. The Steering Group is a partnership forum that brings together sectoral networks and partnerships and is committed to building a culture of learning in Limerick. Limerick is close to Cork in the west of Ireland and is one of the constituent cities in the Cork-Limerick-Galway corridor with a population of one million people. The Learning Limerick group launched its Strategic Plan in 2018 called "Helping to Grow Limerick as a Learning Region, 2018-2022". The plan may be read on the Learning Limerick web site. Like Cork, Limerick has established some learning neighbourhoods.

Contact: Yvonne Lane

Harlem New York EcCoWell 2 Initiative

In the global city of New York where migration, economic development, and socio-cultural transition converge in Harlem: an area larger than many middle-sized cities. Here, City Seminary of New York and its community arts space, the Walls-Ortiz Gallery and Center (WOGC), have engaged in the work of faith, arts and place-based community engagement framed with the holistic EcCoWell learning neighbourhood approach since 2016. As a grassroots institution, the seminary (through the gallery) works with local organisations such as the police precinct, senior centres, public libraries and schools, non-profit organisations supporting youth and individuals with special needs, local artists and artisan entrepreneurs. The seminary offers an innovative model for how faith-based and educational institutions can contribute to the happiness and well-being for the people in their communities through life-long, life-wide, and life-deep learning, particularly as those communities experience the challenges of urbanisation and change.

Contacts: Maria Liu Wong and Connie Watson

Datong Community College

Datong is one of the community colleges established in 2001 in all districts of Taipei to promote lifelong learning, social stability, economic prosperity, and the self actualisation of people. The community colleges have been the strength of the Taipei Learning City, and have mobilized local communities for learning and building community. Datong Community College illustrates ways in which the college has innovated in building Datong, one of the old areas of Taipei, as a cultural, ecological, cohesive co-operative community. This development has included applying EcCoWell principles in local neighbourhoods, with the Kuoshun learning neighbourhood illustrating how a run-down ageing community can be revitalise through a cross-sectoral mix of policies and practices. Community projects such as Happy Farm and cultural festivals have been a feature.

Contact: Eugenia Chang

The University of Glasgow

The University of Glasgow is one of the world's top 100 universities, and the European centre of PASCAL. By continuing to invest in internationally excellent research and providing outstanding learning environments for talented students from all backgrounds, the university has a strong commitment to the city of Glasgow, notably demonstrated by the School of Education, which hosts PASCAL. The School of Education is one of the world's largest providers of university-level adult education, with an annual recruitment of 7,000 students at all levels from undergraduate to doctoral. The School hosts a dedicated Centre for Research and Development in Adult and Lifelong Learning (CRADALL), and is engaged in many research and development projects internationally, most notably the Centre for Sustainable, Healthy, Learning Cities and Neighbourhoods and the Urban Big Data Centre.

Contacts: Michael Osborne and Catherine Lido

Beijing Academy of Educational Sciences

The Beijing Academy of Educational Sciences is the largest education research institution in China. The Academy is affiliated with the Beijing Municipal Commission of Education, and comprises 14 institutes which focus on the study of different aspects of education. These cover fundamental education, higher education, vocational education and continuing education. The Institute of Lifelong Learning and Education for Sustainable Development is the part of the Academy most relevant to the EcCoWell2 Community Recovery Program. The Beijing learning city research centre is now located in this Institute which has the main responsibility for research and monitoring the Beijing learning city development.

Contact: Min Gui

PASCAL EcCoWell2 program

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