

## ***Cities Learning Together: the PIE Experience***

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This paper draws on insights from the stimulus papers prepared for cities participating in the PASCAL International Exchanges that relate to the main themes of the Pascal Hong Kong conference. All papers may be read on the PIE web site (<http://pie.pascalobservatory.org>)

### **Cities Learning Together**

PIE was inaugurated in January 2011 to provide for on-line exchanges of information and experience between cities around the world. PIE is experimental in testing the potential of the Internet for exchanges between cities. At present 20 cities are involved in PIE. These cities are: Glasgow, Cork, Limerick, Kaunas, Bari, Bielefeld, Dar es Salaam, Dakar, Kampala, Addis Ababa, Gaborone, Beijing, Shanghai, Hong Kong, Iida, Gwang Myeong, Seoul, Sydney, Hume Global Learning Village, Vancouver. Information on the authors of papers is available on the PIE web site.

#### **I. Local communities**

*Shanghai, Beijing, Iida, Sydney, Gwang Myeong,  
Seoul, Limerick*

*The initial cities included in the PIE exchanges were small and medium sized cities so that local communities did not emerge as a significant issue. However, the addition of papers on very large cities, Shanghai and Beijing, to the PIE exchanges focussed attention on the role of local communities in cities.*

#### **Shanghai**

*Jian Huang (2013), East China Normal University, Towards the Learning Society: Experience and reflections from Shanghai*

*In 1999 Shanghai Municipal Government took initial steps to establish a policy framework for lifelong learning and building a learning society, and in 2006 policy guidelines were issued for constructing a Learning City (p4).*

*During the process of promoting the learning city, the concept of lifelong learning as a borrowed idea gradually gained broad recognition from government, industry, and public, and was considered to be the guideline for educational reform and social development (p3).*

As a very large city of 23 million, policies were needed to drive the reforms in Shanghai's 18 districts and counties. For this purpose, community education institutions were established in neighbourhoods funded by the district governments.

*These are the important life-classrooms for the ordinary citizens, especially the aged and the non-natives (p5).*

Many activities were undertaken in neighbourhoods, such as the Week of Lifelong Learning for All, to embed learning in the lives of citizens.

*It is the most important inner motivation for building a learning society that the general public establishes the idea and envisions lifelong learning as a way of living. (p7).*

Development of Shanghai as a responsive learning city has evolved as needs and priorities have shifted.

*In Shanghai, the orientation of learning value is changing in accordance with the development phases of building a learning society (p10).*

This has been a broad development effort addressing social, cultural, and economic objectives.

*The achievement of building a learning society should not only reflect the aspects of the economic miracle, but more importantly also reflect shaping the city's spirit, improving life quality for all, and gaining overall social development (p.12).*

Objectives have gone beyond individual learning, with local communities seen in the context of the overall social vision of the reforms.

*In the third phase, as influenced by the idea of building a harmonious society, the government has paid great attention to the various social contradictions and provided more learning chances and resources for the disadvantaged groups (p.10).*

There is further comment on cultural change and building a learning culture below.

## **Beijing**

*Dayong Yuan (2012), Beijing Academy of Educational Sciences, Towards the Learning City of Beijing: Policy and Strategy*

*Li Chen (2013), Beijing Normal University, Introduction to Research on Adult Lifelong Learning Competencies in Beijing*

Beijing, like Shanghai, has been concerned to drive its learning city reforms down to individual neighbourhoods and streets. The administrative districts and counties of the city have played a key role as mediators between neighbourhoods and the City Government. Like Shanghai, lifelong learning is seen as a way of life.

*Everyone should be able to study anywhere at any time, and the majority of residents will regard learning as a way of life (Yuan, p8).*

Building cohesive communities is a priority objective:

*The construction of a learning city will give priority to a harmonious culture, promoting and ensuring Beijing's position as the role model of the harmonious socialist society (Yuan, p9).*

Achievements of districts, neighbourhoods, and organisations are recognised and honoured as role models.

*At present the city has selected the Beijing Engineering Group Company and 53 other enterprises, Deshing Street of Xicheng District and 16 other streets ... as the advanced units in the creation of learning organisations (Yuan, p5).*

Beijing has built research into the development of Beijing as a learning city with the Beijing Institute for the Learning Society undertaking this role.

*The ultimate aim of constructing and developing a learning society is to promote human development, and the improvement of individuals' comprehensive competencies as the characterisation of human development ... to achieve the dual purpose of personal and social progress (Chen, p1).*

## **Iida**

*Atsushi Makino (2012), University of Tokyo, Quiet Dynamism of Local Communities – Restructuring of grass roots municipalities and lifelong learning in Japan.*

Atsushi Makino provides an overview of shifts in Japanese policy for lifelong learning in the light of structural changes in Japanese society with economic and demographic change. These changes have brought into focus the role of local communities with lifelong learning as a policy for social integration. Makino explores these developments in the Japanese city of Iida located in the Nagoya Prefecture.

*We learn through this examination that, in the local community, the learning activities of residents are bringing a quiet dynamism to community management (p2).*

Government policy for decentralisation with a shift away from an industrial society has emphasised the role of lifelong learning and building self-managed, dynamic local communities.

*What the government is doing instead is to mobilise residents to participate in local management under the slogans of decentralisation, lifelong learning and self-responsibility (p5).*

Lifelong learning has gained enhanced importance as a policy for social integration with the community as a mediator between individuals and society in an enriched on-going process.

*This also means that local communities themselves are transmuted into dynamic ever-changing networks of people, that is, a mechanism that keeps its equilibrium as a dynamic process ... It is the possibility of building local communities as a process that keeps producing new values based on mutual relationships with others ... (p.10).*

*Multi-layered, closely woven human networks of mutual concern and attention, and the sense of trust and security enhanced by such an environment will transmute local communities into a more dynamic, more productive economic process (p.*

Makino discussed the roles of the components in this “quiet dynamism” of local communities, including *kominkan* (local community centres), *jichikai* (neighbourhood associations), and the process of “doing *bunkan*”. This dynamic system of relationships has personal, social, cultural, and economic benefits.

*In other words, when people keep regenerating their selves in their relationship with others, and changing themselves, there grows a cycle that links economy, welfare, and culture together and supports people’s lives in their existence (p23).*

*Theoretically, this kind of development of lifelong learning based on local community will modify the way society is structured from a society based on distribution to a society based on regeneration. What kind of politics and administration will such a theoretical strategy bring about (p24)?*

## **Sydney**

*Kate Read (2013), City of Sydney Council, City of Sydney Stimulus Paper*

The City of Sydney has been innovative in connecting local community development to its strategic policy for Sustainable Sydney 2030. Local action plans have been developed for the villages of Sydney linked to the Sustainable Sydney 2030 plan.

*The City of Sydney Council’s work programs are guided by our long term strategic plan Sustainable Sydney 2030. Sustainable Sydney 2030 is a set of goals we have set for our city to help make it as green, global, and connected as possible by 2030 (p1).*

*In 2005-06 we developed Local Action Plans (LAPS) in consultation with our communities to honour our City of Villages commitment. Most LAPS projects are underway or complete, including new facilities, parks and street improvements (p2).*

*2030 in Your Village will deliver 10 new community-based action plans that translate Sustainable Sydney 2030 at a local level. The project will:*

- *report back to the community on the largely completed Local Action Plan Strategy 2007-2010;*

- *invite the community to work with us on new locally based action plans that translate Sustainable Sydney 2030 at a local level, and*
- *encourage the community to think about ways they can partner with us on the “2030 journey” – the vision will only happen with energy, participation and involvement of all of us (p2).*

## **Gwang Myeong**

*Don Min Choi (2013), Sang-je University, Gwang Myeong Stimulus Paper*

This paper illustrates how networking brings in a wide range of organisations which are able to impact on individuals in local communities. The Korean Government has been active in supporting learning city development.

*The Lifelong Learning Community Centre formed a networking consultative group to lead the transformation to a lifelong learning city with interactive networking with lifelong learning organizations. The group includes 141 institutions or groups which consist of regional citizen centers, social welfare and cultural facilities, youth organizations and facilities, schools and citizen social groups. The lifelong learning network consultative group was divided into 5 different regions for efficient promotion in conducting many specific projects (p3).*

## **Seoul**

*Jeongyun Lee (2013), University of Tokyo, Seoul Stimulus Paper*

Seoul demonstrates how local communities are identified in large cities for intensive activities in developing a learning city.

*Seven communities of Seoul were designated for the lifelong learning cities project that the Korean government began in 2001, and these communities have been working in the development of a lifelong learning city. Also, in order to improve the citizens’ quality of life through developing and supporting high-quality Lifelong Education projects, Seoul has been publicly offering education projects, holding announcement campaigns and giving awards for excellent examples since 2010 (p2).*

## **II. Disadvantage and Exclusion**

*Hume, Cork, Bielefeld, Shanghai, Dar es Salaam,  
Gaborone, Kampala, Addis Ababa, Hong Kong*

Combating exclusion and providing opportunities for all to reach their potential as active members and contributors to local communities is central to achieving sustainable and successful learning cities.

Learning cities have been fundamentally about providing learning opportunities for all throughout life from their inception, so that a body of experience and strategies to provide opportunities and inclusion has been built up. More recently, progress in monitoring and assessing learning advantage and disadvantage in communities has led to further advances in strategies for inclusion. PIE cities demonstrate a spectrum of approaches while also highlighting the enormous issues that remain to be addressed in many parts of the world.

### **Hume Global Learning Village**

*Peter Kearns (2011), HGLV Advisory Board, Hume Global Learning Village*

The Hume Global Learning Village was established by Hume City Council in 2003 in northern Melbourne in an urban-rural fringe with considerable ethnic diversity and disadvantage. Its success over ten years demonstrates the importance of values in sustaining such initiatives. While several other districts of Melbourne (Melton, Brimbank) have active learning community initiatives, Melbourne also illustrates the problem of achieving a cohesive learning city initiative in a city the size of Melbourne with divided municipal authorities.

*The Hume Global Learning Village illustrates the key role of a local government council in fostering and supporting a vision of an inclusive learning community that integrates social, economic, and cultural development in a diverse community with considerable disadvantage ... The Global Learning Village had its origins a decade ago in the action of Hume City Council in establishing a Safe City Task Force and adopting a Social Justice Charter and Bill of Rights (p1).*

The Village has developed with three-year strategic plans and a long-term vision for 2030.

*A learning vision for Hume was built into the Hume City Council Plan for 2030, directed at widening lifelong learning opportunities, addressing disadvantage, enhancing quality of life, and fostering inclusion in the community (p1).*

### **Cork**

*Tina Neylon (2012), Co-ordinator Cork Lifelong Learning Festival. Cork Stimulus Paper*

Cork has given a high profile to lifelong learning for all by conducting a very successful Lifelong Learning Festival annually for the past ten years. In 2013, the Festival had 500 events located across the city. The Festival has links to action to address disadvantage through Community Education Networks in disadvantaged areas of the city and RAPID program areas which integrate services locally.

*The City of Cork Vocational Education Committee organises and funds community education. It has set up ten community education networks in the disadvantaged (RAPID) areas of the city (p2).*

*Since its inception, the Festival has provided integration and inclusiveness (p.3).*

## **Bielefeld**

*Georgia Schönemann (2012), City of Bielefeld, Bielefeld Stimulus Paper*  
*Bildungsburo der Stadt Bielefeld (2013), Study Report 2012 – Strains on Education*

Bielefeld is a medium sized city in the north of Germany with an industrial past. Action in Bielefeld in addressing disadvantage in education and learning outcomes reflects advances in assessment of the learning condition of cities and local communities within cities. Progress in assessment is based on advances made by the former Canadian Council on Learning with its Comparative Learning Index which was applied across Canada for 5 years up to 2010 and then adopted in Europe under the European Lifelong Learning Indicators (ELLI) project and implemented in Bielefeld in its Learning Report 2011 which identified the most disadvantaged communities within Bielefeld. Bielefeld has followed up with several pilot projects in the most disadvantaged communities identified.

*In its Study Report 2012 the City of Bielefeld examined these correlations in order to find starting points for steering municipal education policy in a differentiated way depending on the social area (Bildungsburo der Stadt Bielefeld, p2).*

## **Dar es Salaam**

*Abel Ishumi & Mpoki Mwaikokesya,(2011), University of Dar es Salaam,, Dar es Salaam Stimulus Paper*

*In recent years, the African continent has witnessed exponential urbanisation, with sprouting towns and cities not only because of natural population growth but also as many people, especially young men and women, move away from rural to urban areas in search of employment, the good life and self-betterment. The process has, in most cases, found cities unprepared for such a rapid growth (p1).*

## **Kampala City**

*Joseph Oonyu & Josephine Esaete (2012), Makerere University, Kampala City Stimulus Paper*

*As a result, the living environment of the urban poor in the city is deplorable with poor sanitation, inadequate housing, poorly managed solid and human wastes, increased water pollution and reduction in ecological services (p1).*

## **Gaborone**

*Chadzemulqa Molebatsi (2012), University of Botswana, Gaborone Stimulus Paper*

*Gaborone is currently one of the fastest growing cities in the world. Like other cities in developing countries, the growth of Gaborone is accompanied by major challenges that include traffic congestion, inadequate housing, shortage of land, and urban decay (p1).*

### **Addis Ababa**

*Ezana Amdework (2013), Addis Ababa University, Stimulus Paper on Addis Ababa*

*According to the UN-HABITAT (2011), 80 percent of Addis Ababa is a slum with 70 per cent of this comprising government owned rental housing. (p3)*

### **Hong Kong**

*Rupert Maclean & Ada Lai (2011), Hong Kong Institute of Education, Hong Kong Stimulus Paper*

*The social welfare system is based on low public expenditure, piecemeal, pragmatic and ad hoc welfare policies and limited commitment to the notion of welfare as a right of citizenship (p1).*

*A society without an effective government programme to reskill, retrain or reequip the poor and immigrants to adapt to a knowledge-based service economy will find social problems abound and poverty becomes chronic (p2).*

### **III. Heritage and Culture**

*Dakar, Östersund, Glasgow, Shanghai*

One of the insights emerging from the PIE experience has been the significance of heritage and culture in giving spirit, vitality and identity to communities, and contributing to their quality of life and sustainability.

### **Dakar**

*Lamine Kane (2011), Independent Research Consultant, Dakar Stimulus Paper*

*Among all these influences, culture seems to me the most determinant and decisive factor that finally models and gives to education system their souls and life. Education and culture are then closely linked to one another ... The current Senegalese Non Formal Education System seems to be build on these basic traditional and cultural standards (p1).*

*It is these diverse and dynamic social groupings that now constitute well organised civil society organisations where people meet, discuss, exchange and find solutions to their own problems. In these groupings, people learn from one another, individuals are teaching groups and vice-versa (p1).*

### **Östersund**

*Peter Kearns, Sofia Kling, & Christina Wistman (Ed.) (2011), Heritage, Regional Development and Social Cohesion.*

The PASCAL International Conference in Ostersund Sweden was hosted by the County Museum of Jamtland and explored the connections between heritage, regional development, and social cohesion. The conference demonstrated the important role of open air museums in the rural areas of Sweden. The Nordic Centre for Heritage Learning in Ostersund is currently co-ordinating a European Commission funded study involving a network of open air museums across Europe. Cultural development has been brought into PIE as a major theme. hk

*Cultural and heritage issues are increasingly significant in a world of mass migration and rampant urbanisation, leading to increased diversity in many communities. In this context, intercultural understanding, tolerance, and cultural competence are necessary attributes of sustainable and cohesive learning communities in building a sense of community and shared identity (p11).*

## **Glasgow**

*Janice Lane (2011), Glasgow Museums, Glasgow Stimulus Paper: Cultural institutions as arenas for lifelong learning*

*Mark O'Neill (2011), Glasgow Life, Museum Access – Welfare of Social Justice?*

Glasgow illustrates how cultural policies can be used and embedded as agents for social change in a city with considerable disadvantage. In doing this, Glasgow has built on its inheritance from the civic museum movement.

*These fundamental elements of the civic museum movement – learning linked with civic ideals and economic development: creating model citizens by inspiring and educating – continued and is still evident today ... In order to be effective arenas for learning , museums must be learning institutions able to adapt and change. (Lane p2).*

*Being part of Glasgow Life, we are strategically linked to the community planning framework and objectives (Lane p3).*

*Glasgow Museums, with the rest of Glasgow Life is developing an understanding of how culture contributes to health and wellbeing ... the evidence suggests that regular participation in culture is a separate variable which contributes measurably to longevity (Lane p4).*

The Glasgow PIE paper elaborates on the concept of a social justice approach to the role of museums, articulated by O'Neill in a keynote address at the PASCAL Östersund conference:

*The aim of this article is to think through the idea of the core business of museums. To structure this material I divide museums into three types – the Elite, the Welfare, and the Social Justice models (O'Neill p15).*

## **Shanghai**

*Jian Huang (2013), East China Normal University, Towards a Learning Society: Experience and reflections from Shanghai*

*It (Shanghai) celebrates the convergence of Chinese and Western cultures on a daily basis, and witnesses the dramatic and complicated changes in individual lifestyles and social values (p3).*

#### **IV Sustainable and Healthy Learning City**

*EcCoWell, Kaunas, Cork*

The conceptual case for integrating learning, health, environment, and cultural objectives was set out in the PASCAL EcCoWell paper in early 2012. A few cities participating in PIE have recognised this imperative, in particular Cork, but PASCAL looks to the November 2013 Hong Kong conference to identify ways in which the EcCoWell principles can be much more widely applied in building sustainable and healthy learning cities.

##### **EcCoWell**

*Peter Kearns (2012), Co-director of PIE, Living and Learning in Sustainable Opportunity Cities*

The EcCoWell paper may be read on the PIE web site (<http://.pie.pascalobservatory.org>). A short summary of the paper has been prepared for the Hong Kong conference and may be found among the conference papers.

##### **Kaunas**

*Palmira Juceviciene (2011), Kaunas University of Technology, Kaunas Stimulus Paper*

Policy for the development of Kaunas in Lithuania across all sectors has recognised the need to integrate a social, environmental, health and economic aspects of the city:

*The social interests of actors are realised, and co-operation and a learning culture is developed: the city is a community-based city, a city that is sensitive to individuals and their families, an intellectual and educational city: a city of culture...*

*The economic interests of actors are fulfilled, the city is an entrepreneurial and high value-added producing city, a city promoting opportunities...*

*The environmental interests of actors are satisfied, the city is an environmentally friendly city, a healthy city, a safe city...*

*An interaction between all the above-mentioned preconditions takes place; the city is intelligent and innovative, and by being so, confirms the high qualities of the city (p2).*

##### **Cork**

Cork has sought to find ways to implement the EcCoWell principles and convened a seminar during the March 2013 Lifelong Learning Festival to examine this question with a follow up International Seminar set for September 2013 on the subject *Cities for the Future : Learning*

*from the Global to the Local*. A short report on the March 2013 seminar is available on the PIE web site.

## **V. On the Threshold**

The initial phase of PIE development during 2011-2013, which is reflected above, has been exploratory in testing the potential of the Internet in fostering exchanges of ideas and information in building inclusive learning cities. The Hong Kong conference in November 2013 will mark the conclusion of this phase of development, and set an agenda for a further stage of more holistic and integrated development of sustainable, healthy, and successful learning cities. Other PIE Events during the year, including the Cork International Seminar, will contribute to this objective.

Much of value has been gained from PIE exchanges during 2011-2013 with a growing number of cities in a diverse range of situations participating. The extracts set out above reflect some of the insights gained. All stimulus papers may be read on the PIE website to gain a more complete understanding of this experience.

The exchanges have demonstrated the growing importance of local communities in cities as many cities have grown exponentially in size with the on-going impact of a rampant urbanisation in a globalised world of shifting relationships.

The experience of Shanghai and Beijing suggests that the learning city model can be successfully applied in megacities as large as 23 million. The model evident in these cities- provides a framework for policy integration across the city , with the Administrative Districts performing an important mediating role in connecting local communities (streets, towns) to the strategic development of the city as a whole.

This model accords with the views of the urbanist Jane Jacobs who suggests that neighbourhoods in cities may be seen as the city as a whole, street neighbourhoods, and districts of sub-city size. She asserts that the three kinds of neighbourhood supplement each other “in a complex fashion” with all three kinds necessary. The experience of Shanghai and Beijing illustrates this approach well with the Administrative District serving as a connector between local development in streets and towns and the city level of governance.

On the other hand, the approach adopted by Sydney City Council, in a much smaller city area, illustrates interactive relationships between the ten urban villages of the city and strategic planning for the city as a whole and provides further insights into the development of local communities.

The extracts set out above have been grouped for convenience into Local Communities, Disadvantage and Exclusion, Heritage and Culture, and Sustainable Healthy Learning Cities sections. In reality, each of these areas interconnect with policy for sustainable learning cities and need to have regard to each area. The agenda for the PASCAL Hong Kong conference offers

a more complete vision of the things that need to be addressed in building inclusive, sustainable, and healthy learning cities.

### **PIE Futures – Towards a Vision for Learning Cities 2020**

If Hong Kong is regarded as the conclusion of the initial stage of PIE development, with the Hong Kong agenda pointing to features of a subsequent more structured stage of development, what might be involved in the post-Hong Kong PIE agenda?

As a basis for discussion at the conference, the following objectives are suggested as possible items in a post-Hong Kong PIE agenda. Elaboration of each of these objectives may be seen in the *PIE Futures – Towards a Vision for Learning Cities 2020* paper on the PIE web site. Cities involved in PIE have been consulted on this paper with their comments taken into account in this list. A section of the PIE web site designated *Learning Cities 2020* may be accessed for blog comments in the months leading up to the Hong Kong conference.

1. **Building EcCoWell cities** Implementation of holistic and integrated approaches to learning city development that reflect the EcCoWell principles and which include environment, health, economic, social, cultural, and educational objectives.
2. **LoGoCo cities.** Achieving cities that are fundamentally Local, Global, and Connected in their orientation and development.
3. **Extending PIE.** Extension of participation in PIE to regions, such as South Asia and Oceania, with little or no learning city development.
4. **Needs of least developed countries.** Development of approaches to building inclusive and sustainable learning cities adapted to the needs of cities in the least developed countries.
5. **Regional collaboration.** Development of practical arrangements for regional collaboration between learning cities in Africa, and possibly other regions.
6. **Sharing ideas and experience.** Development of on-going arrangements for sharing information, new ideas and experience with the UNESCO International Platform for Learning Cities and the Educating Cities Secretariat.
7. **Extending learning cities to regions.** Innovations in extending learning city initiatives to surrounding regions with involvement of local communities.
8. **Reviewing progress.** In order to review progress in the PIE agenda decided for the period after 2013, a PASCAL conference should be convened for this purpose in 2016.

## References

All stimulus papers may be read on the PIE web site <http://pie.pascalobservatory.org>

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