



Pascal
International

PIMA Newsletter No. 11

April 2017

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1. Editorial

Chris Duke



'Outside the Box', the heading used to invite new thinking on the PASCAL Website, feels out of date in 2017. After the American Presidential Election, the UK referendum vote to leave the European Union, and all that has followed both events, everything is outside the box of the hitherto taken for granted. How much better are we getting at handling the new uncertainty, and the new discourse about alternative facts and fake news? Who creates and controls the discourse? How do we make our voices heard and heeded? What really are the potential – and the limits – of the social media, faced with such manifestations of corporate power, lobbyist influence, and opinion-making by the older media and interests using new technologies and the power of 'big data'?

We need, in PASCAL, PIMA and this Newsletter, to think how to communicate more effectively among ourselves, and more influentially to share and disseminate our principles and understandings about what social and economic change is desirable, and how it can be advanced. Faced with what in OTB was called the crisis of Western democracy, PIMA tries to keep attention in two directions and bring them together: the real crises of the 'real world out there'; and our professional needs and interests as 'public intellectuals' reading and analysing from a lifelong learning, place, and social capital and social dynamics perspective. This includes how to engage in scholarship, teaching participatory action research (PAR) and undertake community and regional development in partnership with others.

Along with the regular information and other features, this Newsletter looks at two special issues, one wider-world, the other to do with the education system. Two articles consider higher and tertiary including especially technical education in national and social context; the other three look at Europe and the EU crisis from different perspectives. These 'letters from' may become a regular feature, with other regions coming in to play and different subjects addressed from time to time.

As to communication and partnership more immediately, an arrangement with the PASCAL Website and Board facilitates accessing past and contributing to present Newsletters more easily. In future each Newsletter will be promoted by means of some extract or comment from one or more subject there, and linked to the full issue which is subsequently also available with earlier Numbers in the Website archives. PASCAL Board members automatically received the full issue soon after it goes to the PIMA membership.

This Newsletter follows the PIMA AGM in February and sixth meeting of the PIMA Governing Committee, the first of its new two-year membership. One third of the membership is new (one from Europe, two from East and SE Asia). Shirley Walters succeeds Peter Welsh as the new Vice-President. Peter's contribution and service is warmly acknowledged; he remains an active PASCAL and PIMA member, as does Hans Schuetze, whose long service to the PASCAL Board, Advisory Council and PIMA matches Peter's. Both will remain strong and innovative leaders.

The new Treasurer is Thomas Kuan, Singapore, whose other role within PIMA is as convenor of an emergent new PASCAL and PIMA Special Interest Group on Older Adults featured below. Here is the abstract of a paper which he has just drafted: The Global Education 2030 Agenda's expanded scope includes early childhood, youth and adult literacy but no clear indicators for older adults who now constitute a huge population mass. Older adults learn differently because of their work and life

experiences, and will prefer peer-learning environments where networking becomes part of their development learning. Today, they are generally healthier, have more free time, and are grouping into communities for their informal later-life learning. Older adults *need to be inclusive in education to prevent digital divide, and ensure their own sustainability*. Communities will benefit from a literate older population who understand regional cultural diversity.

On behalf of the Committee, I hope you enjoy this and other items featured in the Newsletter. Please continue sending contributions for future issues to me at chris.duke@rmit.edu.au.

2. PIMA Committee News

General Business

The extended, vigorous and productive character of the new Committee's first meeting, reviewing what had been achieved, analysis of the President's 'aspirations' paper, and setting direction for the new biennium, reflected the growing confidence and focus of PIMA and its nearly 100 members. In particular new Committee member Dayong Yuan from Beijing explained several ways in which he hopes to draw Chinese colleagues into closer involvement in both PASCAL and PIMA. He and new Treasurer Thomas Kuan (Singapore) have undertaken to report back on several new ideas for PIMA activity, giving effect to some of the aspirations discussed for the network. This includes a possible PIMA Website (partly depending on how effective future collaboration proves) and possible translation into Chinese of all or some of the Newsletter materials, and PIMA events and co-badged events in China.

The Secretary-General was charged with exploring possibilities for further PASCAL and Website collaboration. A brain-storming short-cycle Communications Working Party was suggested to come up with new ideas and the use of more different media. Any member interested in this is invited please to write now to chris.duke@rmit.edu.au He was also asked to explore with relevant partners whether and how PIMA might expedite the continuous and effective activity of the Big Tent, where it has been an active partner, so that momentum is sustained and more impact is achieved.

Other agenda items included the present and several planned future SIGs (see also below in this Newsletter, particularly on Older Adults), country exchanges, publications, and the circulation of papers and drafts among PIMA members. It was decided in principle to arrange at least a small symposium in China in 2018. In general it was agreed that PIMA should continue to be light and flexible, with minimal business structure and short-lived task groups for specific needs.

Older Adults Special Interest Group

A recent note to those approached explained the wish 'the set up a Special Interest Group (or SIG) to do with Lifelong Learning and Older Adults, as resolved by the PIMA governing committee recently. This will be the 2nd such SIG. the first, now running, is on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Lifelong Learning.' The 6th PIMA Committee meeting gave support to the creation of an Initial Working Group leading to this SIG on an important and growing subject. This is how the idea was floated:

The context and the big picture – policy issues

There have been huge changes relevant to older adults in demography in most societies in recent times; these are becoming still more marked. Most societies are ageing, especially the economically more advanced. The proportion of the population past retirement age and 'economically inactive' is rising. One response is to raise the age of retirement of those in employment. The self-employed,

maybe a majority in some traditional societies, carry on as long as possible, so there is not the same social impact and policy question.

In most modern societies there are big problems with rising pension, health care and social service budgets. Pensions may be reduced after delaying retirement, as people live and draw pensions for longer. More old people live alone (women more often than men). Migration within and between nations for economic, political and refugee safety reasons means that multi-generation families and groups are less common. People leave families, and familiar neighbourhoods, where they have an identity, and support from extended families and the neighbouring local civil society community.

People may lose a sense of identity after retiring. Life may seem purposeless even to the point of causing suicide. Ageism is often commoner in societies with high mobility, and large numbers of retired, 'economically inactive' socially isolated people unknown among their neighbours. This is especially a problem in fast-growing mega-cities, but not only there. As the cost of health care and social welfare support rises to levels that governments consider 'unaffordable', the anticipation and then fact of advanced old age is for many a time of fear, distress and loneliness.

So there are big policy issues that need radical examination. Different countries respond in different ways. Some look ahead, others are slow to react and invest in new social and physical infrastructure, recruitment and training. A longer-term approach to the new demography can differ from acting directly for old people themselves. In 2016 Germany opened its doors to large numbers of refugees, as its home-grown population is in decline. China has recently changed its long-time one-child policy to allow two, so that larger new generations can be added to the workforce.

Local civil society action

2030, the end-date of the SDG Education Agenda, is already less than 15 years away, and awareness must be created for older adults education for their sustainably development. Interest in PIMA and PASCAL may be less in policies and more in what can be done locally via educational provision and indirect learning support to empower older adults and enrich their lives: directly through classes and courses, indirectly by nurturing different social and human relationships and support systems in local communities. Some governments recognise the political and economic as well as social benefit that comes from an active and caring civil society. Such work is characterised by the old adult education movement in some countries; and most obviously and perhaps successfully by U3A, the University of the Third Age. Why has this been so widely adopted in many countries? How similar is it in content, courses and success, from one country and region to another? Which social and income groups get involved and who misses out?

The good character and decency of 'ordinary people's culture', and the support that comes from helping out neighbours and people in a wider locality who can get together to pursue common interests and meet shared needs, may represent very large savings especially in health and welfare budgets. It may therefore attract some government support, while relying mainly on voluntary community self-help. As people retire into many more years of active life, we may expect to see civil society take on an increasing part of the kind of communalism and social support that many older people want and need. A PIMA older adults Interest Group, while focusing on and helping to make local community action more successful and still get drawn into policy issues. The extraordinary spread of social media with new information technology facilities nowadays bring these two much together more.

If this interests you, please write now to Thomas Kuan kuanthomas@gmail.com, copied to chris.duke@rmit.edu.au. The Group has yet to take shape and start work. It will take whatever direction its members choose, do now is the time to sign up and help decide.

Dr Thomas Kuan has agreed to convene the group at least initially; the following possible members have been approached and those in bold have so far agreed in principle to take part: **Dr Brian Findsen, New Zealand; Dr Barry Golding, Australia;** Professor Nanshun Kim, South Korea; **Dr Thomas Kuan, Singapore (Convenor); Professor Archanya Ratana-Ubol, Thailand; Professor Hsiu Mei Tsai, Taiwan; Brendan O'Dwyer, Australia;** Dr Sajjan Singh, India; **Lawrence Tsui, Macao; Dr Alex Withnall, UK; Professor Bernhard Schmidt-Hertha, Germany.**

Dr Kuan has indicated as one possible theme for the SIG to pursue is Chinese approaches and experience. He is also thinking about 'U3A and its role in adult education in building, fostering and understanding diversity'. (U3A stands for 'university of the 3rd age', and has been a learning model for many older adults).



3. New Members

Brian Findsen

Brian is Professor of (Adult) Education at the University of Waikato in his home country New Zealand, and President of Age Concern Hamilton. He has worked in the field of adult and continuing education for over 30 years, primarily in New Zealand but also in Glasgow, Scotland, from 2004-2008. His main research interests include older adults' learning, the sociology of adult education, social equity issues, and international adult education.

Alexandra Withnall

Alex was keynote speaker in the recent Getting of Wisdom conferences held in Australia and New Zealand on older adults, including in Ballarat Victoria. She has long been a scholar-activist in the field of older adults, especially through the former England and Wales National Institute for Adult Continuing Education (NIACE), and also as a Visiting Fellow at the University of Warwick. Alex has developed extensive contacts across the globe, notably in Australia, New Zealand, Taiwan and Canada, and given invited lectures in a range of countries. Recently she contributed to an enquiry into the Future of Ageing by Foresight based in the Government Office for Science in the UK. She is a former Chair of the UK Association for Education and Ageing.

In warmly welcoming these colleagues we remind ourselves of the importance of a good balance as between different regions, genders, ages, interests and passions. Please help to achieve this in advising the PIMA President Dorothy.lucardie@big.pond.com and Sec-Gen chris.duke@rmit.edu.au of individuals who might be invited into membership.

4. Member News

Members honoured by UIL in SDG Context

ON 28 Sept 2016, the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning UIL held a 'Think-tank meeting' on lifelong learning in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the subject of PIMA's first Special Interest Group or SIG. At the same time and in addition, the UIL Meeting conferred a **UIL Honorary Fellow Certificate** to 'six distinguished personalities who have made extra-ordinary contributions to

UIL's field of work in lifelong learning, adult and continuing education, literacy and non-formal basic education'.

These [7 in fact] are Ms Maria Lourdes Almazan Khan, **Leona English**, **Heribert Hinzen**, Raafat Radwan, Kjell Rubenson, **Alan Tuckett and Shirley Walters**. The four highlighted are PIMA Members, including new Vice-President Shirley Walters. Warmest PIMA congratulations on this well-deserved recognition from the world's leading inter-governmental LLL Organisation.

In his speech at the conferral ceremony, UIL Director Arne Carlsen told the Honorary Fellows: *'Your contribution has made a remarkable difference in shaping the work of UIL over the years. All of you have, in your own ways, touched the lives of many people and helped create more understanding and awareness of lifelong learning. We are honoured that you continue to share your knowledge and expertise with UIL and the world.'*

5. Resources

The SDGs, and Publications from DVV International

Heribert Hinzen

(National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement www.publicengagement.ac.uk)

Working for a National Strategy on Lifelong Learning for Macedonia required Chris Duke and myself to take a global perspective, notably referring and contributing to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Several of the latest international documents that helped to inform our work include the SDGs, and the Education 2030 Agenda with the overarching goal 4: "Ensure equitable and inclusive quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all".

Recent publications coming from DVV International were especially useful, and may be of interest to PIMA members because they have a strong focus for readers in the field of policy and practice, and are more closely related to adult learning and education. Here are a few examples from the two series of *Adult Education and Development (AED)*, and *International Perspectives in Adult Education (IPE)*:

- ◆ *Global Citizenship Education* is the theme of *AED 82*, taking up target 4.7 of the SDGs, with a number of conceptual and practical examples from across the regions.
- ◆ *Skills and Competencies* is the theme of *AED 83*, discussing a cross-cutting issue of all the education targets, and enlarging the scope into knowledge, attitudes and values.
- ◆ *Agenda 2030 – Education and Lifelong Learning in the Sustainable Development Goals* is the theme of *IPE 75*. It has a set of eight articles looking at literacy, civil society, monitoring, and global learning.
- ◆ *Digital Adult Education – A Key to Global Development?* is the theme of *IPE 73*. It has a set of nine articles coming from several regions, and attempts at providing examples and experiences from digitalization.

All these materials and more are available at:

<https://www.dvv-international.de/en/adult-education-and-development/>

<https://www.dvv-international.de/en/materials/international-perspectives-in-adult-education-ipe/>

Also lists of all previous issues can be downloaded. For those who prefer printed editions, these can be ordered online also.

New Journal: *Research for All*

Research for All is a new journal and we are very keen to welcome your contributions to it. The journal is for anyone, working inside or outside universities, who is committed to seeing research make a difference in society. See: <http://ingentaconnect.com/content/ioep/rfa>



Engagement *with* research goes further than participation *in* it. Engaged individuals and communities initiate, advise, challenge or collaborate with researchers. Their involvement is always active and they have a crucial influence on the conduct of the research – on its design or methods, products, dissemination or use. *Research for All* focuses on research that involves universities and communities, services or industries working together. Contributors and readers are from both inside and outside of higher education. They include researchers, policymakers, managers, practitioners, community-based organisations, schools, businesses and the intermediaries who bring these people together. The journal aims to raise the quality of engaged research by stimulating discussion about the effectiveness of engagement with researchers, research outcomes and processes.

This open-access, peer-reviewed journal is sponsored by the UCL Institute of Education and the National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement. This joint venture models the principles of public engagement in research through its editorial advisory board and associate editors who are drawn from within and beyond higher education. It is published by IOE Press.

The journal opens in fine (PIMA) form and introduces the new term epistemicide into our lexicon, in the first paper in the first volume: Decolonization of knowledge, epistemicide, participatory research and higher education, by PIMA members **Budd Hall** and **Rajesh Tandon** ([Research for All](#), Volume 1, Number 1, 30 January 2017, pp. 6-19(14)).

As the Abstract explains: This article raises questions about what the word 'knowledge' refers to. Drawn from some 40 years of collaborative work on knowledge democracy, the authors suggest that higher education institutions today are working with a very small part of the extensive and diverse knowledge systems in the world. Following from de Sousa Santos, they illustrate how Western knowledge has been engaged in epistemicide, or the killing of other knowledge systems. Community-based participatory research is about knowledge as an action strategy for change and about the rendering visible of the excluded knowledges of our remarkable planet. Knowledge stories, theoretical dimensions of knowledge democracy and the evolution of community-based participatory research partnerships are highlighted.

6. Letters from...

The idea of regular 'letters from' is copied from a brilliant half-century of regular 'letters from America' by broadcaster (now we would say blogger) Alistair Cooke. *Newsletter No 10* contained a *Letter from France* by new Committee member Chris Brooks. There it was written that:

'The idea is to trial a regular section of 'letters from' several places where PIMA has an active interest... Other 'letters from' will centre... on lifelong learning... If this proves to be of interest we may widen in successive issues, initially perhaps to Canada and Australia, with a view to drawing in

other major regions in turn.... note the LLL implications of the state of affairs now reached in many European countries and also USA for what many... judge to reveal an alarming failure of community education and lifelong learning.'

If you would like to contribute, please send your *letter to* chris.duke@rmit.edu.au.

Chris Brooks' previous letter reflected on the French Presidential Election now upon us in April, raising questions about the place of lifelong learning in the civil societies of stressed Western democracies, many of which are taking us 'out of the box' and into an unknown.

Even before this Newsletter is assembled we have another Referendum: over the leadership of Turkey by President Erdogan. What place will what form of national LLL have played here? Perhaps our next Newsletter can include a Letter from Turkey?

Meanwhile we continue the practice. The immediate focus, of these 'Letters from', remains changes in Europe, including Brexit, asking what our PASCAL approach and understanding have something to say. Outside the Box (OTB) earlier asked but did not answer about, 'the crisis in Western democracy'. Since then that crisis has deepened.

Letter from France, Chris Brooks **The French malaise**

After living here 37 years and with French nationality I am still perceived very much as a foreigner. Even in cosmopolitan Paris the community is very inward-looking; or at least my generation is. Young people seem different - less aware of nationality and less reticent about 'foreigners'. Outside Paris is another world, where politeness, tradition and simplicity are still the norm. The speed of things may be slower but the quality of life is higher, and people want to keep it that way. There is little desire for change; in its extreme there is a desire to reverse the change of the past forty years. Alain Juppe in declining to stand for President, captured the importance of this election brilliantly: *Our country is ill. Resistant to reforms that it knows are necessary, angry with its political elites but susceptible to demagogic promises, it is experiencing today a terrible crisis of confidence.*

Juppe seems to have got it about right in just thirty words. Like De Gaulle, who jokingly asked how it was possible to rule a country with 340 types of cheese, he knows how difficult making change is in France. More seriously he knew that the country went from moments of great national pride with unity and coherence to moments of self-doubt and even despair. Today the system is paralysed, the political elite fearful of the voters and in considerable part responsible for the crisis that France finds itself in today.

I try here to set out what I see as the major problems the country faces, other than those faced by every other developed country.

Elitism and the elite are a problem. They are educated in a remarkably similar manner; think very much in the same way; talk almost exclusively between themselves; tend all to live in Paris, and often believe they have a sort of divine right to rule. Their families were often advisors to Louis XIV, to Napoleon, to the leaders of the third, fourth and fifth Republic. For a country which claims three revolutions in the past two centuries this may seem strange. But the French revolutions were all corporatist: they changed who was in power but little else.

If France is to change and rediscover her self-confidence this must change. A few dramatic changes might help. The physical presence of the Government should be broken up around the country. Two

major Ministries for each region of France including the Minister and his cabinet would stop the conspiracy between the business, academic and government elites always and only talking with each other. Second, the integration of the higher education system into a Unified University System with an end to Les Grandes Ecoles. Third, reform of the basic education system to concentrate on the bottom fifty per cent of students and end separating children and young people into categories on the basis of out-of-date and narrow intellectual criteria. Fourth, reform Parliament to ensure constituencies of interest. Artisans, skilled and semi-skilled workers, farmers, professionals, business people, etc must be represented in minimum percentages. Fifth, serious control over conflict and traffic of interest, with these issues treated as criminal matters carrying automatic prison sentences.

France must accept that it is not a *Grand Nation*. France is a wonderful country and a diverse nation with many regional cultures unified by a common language. But the idea of *greatness*, which is constantly shoved down people's throats, is dangerous. France is a middle-sized country with some influence in Europe, but it is not Europe.

As in many other developed countries rude and selfish behaviour are becoming the norm. The worst culprits are the affluent middle classes of all ages. Behaviour on the streets makes no regard for others, whether old, handicapped, very young, in a pram etc. We need to control the density of building construction; more and more people living in less and less space leads to undesirable changes in behaviour. A policy which combats urban density and encourages more balanced spatial development is critical. Hence the proposal to disperse the location of the government machine made earlier.

Second, introduce compulsory social service both for young people and retired people. There is much to do, but a people's militia of young and the old together could be a force for change and a way of giving power back to the people. Thirdly, a profound reform of the education system could encourage collective behaviour and working together. Others with much experience of education policies and practice can surely help here.

Reward Innovation and Encourage Change

There is much discussion in the election about redistribution of income and wealth. That is more than reasonable, but most of the propositions are based on a different distribution of existing income and wealth. France has not done badly in terms of income distribution over recent decades, but is far too cautious about innovation and entrepreneurship. Not just in the domain of private business but in all walks of life: schools, health, farming, public administration, the justice system etc. The Republic has been captured by corporatist interests, from banking lobbies to teaching unions to electricity workers to judges. The instruments and institutions of the society which were set up to make progress for all have been taken over by the groups who work and control them.

The French Government needs to provide VFM (value for money) to its population. It does not. There is much debate about the size of the public sector. Some want it larger, some smaller, some want it free of European legislation. None of these propositions tackle the underlying malaise. The French State is costly and does not give the sort and quality of service that French people expect.

I have tried to look at issues which are specific to France at the moment: issues which have led to the growth of extremism in French politics, to the frustration and despair which now threaten the country with disintegration. There are other important issues, but these are for a bigger audience than the French electorate. The issue here is as much one of cultural and attitudinal change as about specific policies.

Editor: this was written before the Presidential election. The result may be known before readers ponder the analysis. Macron is young and inexperienced but he brings hope and faith about the future, he brings confidence and has captured the enthusiasm of the young and the old alike. He is the only candidate to inspire confidence across different age groups and social classes. But he will have to build a parliamentary majority and not get captured by the old political regimes. This will be an immense task. As you may guess the only chance I see for France is Macron, even though he is close to the existing elite who hang to power in an almost pathological manner.



Letter from Germany, Hans Schuetze

Annotations on two Martins presently top of the news in Germany

Germany is holding a couple of regional elections during Spring and Summer this year, and then federal elections in the Fall. Main antagonists will be Angela Merkel (dubbed Mutti i.e. 'Mum' by the media) and Martin Schulz, until three months ago the president of the European Parliament. So whoever will win, there will be no danger of a D-EXIT even if the populist Right can expect to receive some 12 percent of the vote.

The Social Democratic Party (SPD) has just elected Martin Schulz its new leader with 100 percent of the vote at the Berlin Parteitag (Delegates' Meeting) three days ago - a rare election result. Hopes are high (but I think somewhat unrealistic since Mutti Merkel is quite popular for her long experience, calm stewardship and lack of vanity) that he will beat Merkel in September.

Martin Schulz's mantra is 'social justice'. So far he has said little specific about what that means exactly except that he is determined to roll back some of Gerhard Schröder's labor market reforms - which is popular with the trade unions. One other policy one can probably expect from the electoral platform of the SPD will be some form of Guaranteed Income for everybody.

The other Martin, Martin Luther, is no contemporary but very much remembered this year, not just in Germany. It is 500 years ago that he nailed his 95 odd theses against the Catholic Church of Wittenberg, a small university town where he was a professor of theology. Not only was he a courageous man, but he has left his marks on Germany and on Europe in many ways not just on the Church. Most impressive perhaps and certainly most instrumental in unifying the many German tribes and fiefdoms was that he unified and created a common German language in order to write a translation of the bible that people only halfway literate could read for themselves - arguably one of his lasting accomplishments!

Whether the contemporary Martin is of the same calibre and will have a similar impact remains to be seen, but even a fraction of what Luther did for enlightenment and modern views on many things that we take for granted now or rather need still to accomplish, including equal rights for women, would be welcome in Germany.



Letter from Australia, Bruce Wilson

Since the second World War, Australians have been adept at reading the prevailing winds in global relations and then setting sail to position themselves as best as possible. Having been entwined with British interests for more than 150 years, we readily settled waves of post-war migrants from southern Europe, and linked our security interests with the United States, albeit in defeat in the Vietnam War. When Britain joined the Common Market, our sense of outrage, of further dislocation from the alma mater, was heard across 12,000 miles. That was around the time that Australians became aware that Asia was an interesting place, and China suddenly moved into centre stage as a new, 'not quite', best friend.

Now the winds have shifted again, and become more turbulent than ever. Brexit calls into question the future of Europe, while the rhetoric of 'Global Britain' offers the promise of a revitalised Anglosphere with England at its heart. The election of President Trump alongside an unrepentant Putin leaves China, the largest Communist nation, not the United States or the United Kingdom, as the world's strongest advocate of globalisation. It was Xi Jinping who said the following at Davos in March:

"With the rise of populism, protectionism, and nativism, the world has come to a historic crossroad where one road leads to war, poverty, confrontation and domination while the other road leads to peace, development, cooperation and win-win solutions," (*World Economic Forum* 2017).

What on earth is happening in the world? Australians watch all of this with detached yet eager interest. They wonder what Brexit will mean, not so much for themselves (although some folk are keen to know), but for British people themselves. Have they really shot themselves in the foot, or is it the beginning of a new golden age? Will the European Union (EU) hold together, or will the voices of the conservative dispossessed win out? Can Marine Le Pen, sometimes seen as the inspiration for our own Pauline Hanson, really overthrow French common sense?

We are not sure whether we can read the new winds confidently yet. Are they indeed new winds, or is it just a passing maelstrom to be endured? Another sign of the climate disruption that excessive reliance on fossil fuels is driving? Either way, Australia will seek to steer a course pragmatically, albeit guided by some sense of principle, of fairness. We shall seek preferential trade agreements with both the EU and the UK. We will continue to pin faith in the US to protect us from pillagers, yet trade with China will continue to be vital. And to the best of our resources, we shall feed the world, at least at the right price.

Amidst all this confusion, a few things are becoming clear:

1. The future of the EU is crucial to global well-being. Europe's history of conflict has prompted the most remarkable effort to build international goodwill and shared purpose amidst cultural diversity that we have yet seen. The EU is unique for its commitment to an explicit set of values and the cause of global peace.
2. Australia can play a more important role in easing global tensions than might be recognised in the UK and Europe. We are the world's 12th largest economy, ready to do business with anybody, but relatively invisible in global affairs. Australian diplomats prefer to work behind the scenes, and can be very effective. Perhaps it is however time for Australia to exercise stronger leadership than it hitherto has.
3. One of the extraordinary developments of the last 40 years has been the collapse of time and space. Events in any part of the world can now be seen and heard anywhere else in the world in real time. This could be a great virtue, collapsing differences also in creed, economic circumstance and colour, also conquering the hitherto chronic Australian problem of 'tyranny of distance'. Yet so far, its effect seems to be the opposite, adding to fear and uncertainty about how we should act or respond to new developments. We need to learn how this capability can be turned to advantage, to become part of the solution rather than adding to the problem.

7. Higher and Tertiary Education

PIMA may shortly create a third Special Interest Group on the subject of Universities, or perhaps, rather, the changing and widening Higher Education System. The term *Tertiary* may best fit the

educational phase and mission of institutions for post-secondary schooling, merging into full adult life.

Meanwhile this section of the Newsletter focuses on one important element of the subject: **the non-university Tertiary sector**, called, variously and in different languages, College, TAFE (for technical and further), FE and VET for vocational education and training. Where 'university' begins and ends is not an agreed matter. Its traditions may be powerfully influential, perhaps conservative in effect, but the direction and scope of the sector is another matter. Are our changing post-school systems fit for a post-school lifelong learning system for learning societies?

In Macedonia, a new country in the Balkan region of SE Europe building on its Yugoslavian administrative heritage, the universities are not yet clearly seen as part of a lifelong learning system; the term 'open university' refers to a workers' learning heritage analogous to the Workers Educational Association (WEA) in an old Anglo tradition. In other places universities are seen as vital to equitable access and opportunity, whether on ground of citizen equity or to enrich the nation's economic 'HR' or human resources pool.

Post-secondary options and the neglect of the vocational

The UK by virtue of its imperial history and the continuing international advantage bestowed by the English language enjoys disproportionate influence, along with the US influence that comes from size and wealth also. Quite other ways exist in other traditions and may emerge from new experiences today.

In the UK as yet another HE reform bill was being considered FE guru Professor Alison Wolf, now also a House of Lords Peer, spoke late in 2016, as reported in *Times Higher Education*, of England' need to create high-prestige, two-year technical qualifications rather than allowing universities to dominate the whole scene to an extent unparalleled in the world... if we don't have higher technical qualifications then nobody is ever going to want to do anything other than increasingly watered down academic qualifications at a higher cost to the public purse.

Wolf sees universities as not the best place for higher technical qualifications, not being close to local labour markets; yet they dominate the scene and their incentives are always to offer three-year degrees at maximum fees.' 'In my opinion that is not only economically inefficient but it also means you don't get these technical degree qualifications which, for example, Germany and the Netherlands have... I don't know anywhere in the world that is as 'one-size-fits-all' as we are. We are absolutely extraordinary. All our universities do everything and all we have are universities.'

Here we follow a thread from England through to two old Commonwealth countries. Future issues may look wider. In *PIMA Newsletter No. 9*, Colin Flint wrote about 'messing up the neglected sector: England's failed provision for further education and lifelong learning in the tertiary years'. Here he provides further comment on a moving but not improving UK, and here specifically English, further education (FE) scene, FE being the main vehicle to launch young people on a chosen vocational career outside (and socially speaking) below the main 'senior professions'.

There follows a similarly cold-eyed, if less passionately and personally involved, analysis by a formidably capable observer, Gavin Moodie, who worked as a senior policy and analyst advisor to Vice-Chancellors in two dual-sector Melbourne universities. 'Dual sectors' are truly tertiary HEIs in that their students straddle the technical-higher divide and teach from early return-to-learn to post-doctoral studies. Gavin now lives in Toronto and works as an Adjunct Professor in the Department of Leadership, Higher, and Adult Education in OISE, University of Toronto, while remaining an Adjunct Professor of Education at RMIT University.

A New Industrial Education and Training Strategy for the UK. Here we go again.

Colin Flint

The Institute for Government, a highly regarded independent organisation dedicated to the examination of the effectiveness of government, recently published a report titled “All Change”. It examines three policy areas which have experienced near-constant upheaval: further education, regional governance and industrial policy. In illustration, the report states that in the last 30 years there have been 28 major pieces of legislation relating to FE, led by 48 different secretaries of state. (I worked in further education through most of them.)

We have recently heard details of the 29th. It may be good: it certainly is necessary. It is occasioned by a sense of desperation, arising from the belated recognition that Britain is seriously under-skilled – we rank 26th out of 30 advanced countries, according to OECD – and that we are choosing to make it worse by choosing to leave the EU.

This oil-tanker is not going to be turned round overnight. There is a long and inglorious history to overcome. Vocational education has never been a high priority amongst Britain’s ruling classes, nor indeed amongst its middle classes, who knew where they were with A levels but believed things like BTECs and NVQs were for other people’s children. Are they about to be seduced by T levels?

There have been odd moments in the past where something seemed to be heading in the right directions. Various Secretaries of State, and the occasional Prime Minister, have made soothing even stirring noises. I heard Kenneth Baker at his most emollient in 1989; Ken Clarke looked good, and was approachable and instrumental in setting up the Further Education Funding Council (FEFC) in 1992; John Major sounded enthusiastic in a speech to college Principals in 1993. But, even with the early Tony Blair (“education, education, education”) and people like David Blunkett and Alan Johnson at the relevant Department, there has never been visionary and consistent policy. And with some incumbents - British readers may remember the dreadful John Patten - Gillian Shepherd, Ruth Kelly, right down to Michael Gove, the sector was never going to take centre stage.

Back in 1989, I wrote to Mrs Thatcher at Downing Street (and received a signed reply which I intend to auction at the next Conservative Party conference). My subject was the 1989 Skills Olympics, held that year at the Birmingham National Exhibition Centre. Mrs T had attended the Awards ceremony at which the UK had won one gold medal, in Men’s Hairdressing. We also got silver medals in Ladies’ Hairdressing and Ladies Dressmaking. The big winners were Korea, Taiwan, Austria, Switzerland, Japan and Germany.

In my letter, I politely expressed my regret that Mrs T made no mention of the role of FE in improving the country’s training record. I concluded thus:

“Mrs Thatcher, it is my sincere belief that the British FE system, properly promoted and supported, and working in close relationship with business and industry, can do substantially more to help us achieve what we all want: a post-compulsory education and training system that can lead the world - and win more gold medals at the Skills Olympics.” A bit earnest, but I was younger then.

I had a nice reply – interested to read your views – applaud your commitment – like you, want to see this country at the top – our full encouragement - Yours sincerely Mrs T. I’m sure she meant it and there were those signs in the 1990s that were encouraging but they have never been consistently followed through. The dead but ever-present hand of a class-based education system has never been seriously challenged.

The Skills Olympics is now known as Worldskills. A bi-annual jamboree now attracts many more countries. In 2012 it was held in Leipzig. The UK won two gold medals, in Bricklaying and Cabinet-making. Korea, Switzerland, Taiwan, Japan, Brazil, Austria and Germany were the leading nations. In 2015 it was in Sao Paolo and Britain won three, in Cabinet-making, Plumbing and Beauty Therapy. Top nations were Brazil, Korea, Taiwan, China (new entry) and Japan.

Congratulations to those young people who won medals, to all competitors and to all of those who work for and support the event. Britain is improving, though not conspicuously in subject areas which are likely to drive the 21st century world economies. The white hot heat of the technological revolution, to recall another long gone Prime Minister, it is not.

So, it is good that it has been recognised that there is a serious skills shortage, the more urgent because of Brexit (though, hypocritically, we are still seeking to recruit doctors from Portugal and nurses from wherever we can get them, because the National Health Service is in meltdown).

Since 2010 the Further Education system has seen funding reductions of over 20%. Colleges have been closed or merged. Opportunities for young people, and adult returners are very significantly reduced. Over a million adult learners have been lost since 2010 as courses have been forced to close. The sector is seriously underfunded and inadequately supported.

One of the 'Ten Pillars' of the government's new industrial strategy says 'we will build a proper system of technical education'. We used to have one. In truth it was never as good as it deserved to be because it was never centre stage and there has never been a coherent educational vision that encompassed all aptitudes and all attitudes. The FE system has always been second class in the minds of policy-makers who have never been near it.

We will see if the 29th initiative works better than the previous 28. If, as appears, it is designed only for 16-19 year olds, it will again fail many thousands. I cannot see how the vast range of 13,000 technical qualifications can be swept up into 15 new courses, and provide the necessary entry points for all the different levels, abilities, aptitudes that FE used to provide. Meanwhile, most secondary schools are now facing real-time cuts, and we press ahead with new grammar schools. I hope for the best, but I'm not holding my breath.

Vocational education in Australia and Canada – unfortunately the twain may meet

Gavin Moodie

Australia and Canada, similar in many ways, have differed markedly over the last 2 decades in vocational education. Those differences may be narrowing, which would greatly diminish much of Canada's college education and prolong Australia's degraded vocational education.

The Australian competency movement and the market mechanism

In the late 1990s Australia followed England's lead in basing its vocational education on narrowly defined job competencies, called national vocational qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, and training packages in Australia. Governments sought to relate vocational qualifications more closely to jobs. This manifestly failed. Only 37% of Australian vocational graduates in 2011 were employed in the occupation for which they were ostensibly trained. That low match has been consistent for years, yet Australian governments persist in imposing training packages on vocational education.

Since the 2000s Australian governments have also sought to make vocational education more flexible, more responsive to employers' needs and more efficient, again by introducing a series of

measures to change the supply of vocational education. Governments systematically excluded educational institutions and educationalists from designing training packages and hence the qualifications they offer, to replace what they called 'provider capture' with 'industry [employer] led' vocational education.

Next, Australian governments are greatly cutting funding for vocational education but have made it available to private for-profit providers. Details vary between States, but at its most extreme the same greatly reduced funding has been made available equally to public and private colleges.

Thirdly, the Australian Government made income contingent loans available to students studying diplomas and above at any approved public or private college. The loans are 'income contingent' since they are repayable only when the borrower's annual income exceeds \$54,869 (USA \$41,842, €38,528, £33,323).

These Australian vocational income contingent loans are similar to higher education income contingent loans in Australia, England, Aotearoa New Zealand and elsewhere, but with one crucial difference. While the fees for higher education income contingent loans are capped in those countries, they have until recently been uncapped in Australian vocational education. So colleges could and did charge very high fees which few including students believed were likely to be repaid because so few vocational graduates earn above the repayment threshold.

Because Australian vocational qualifications are based on demonstrating job competencies however and whenever acquired, there is no minimum duration specified, no minimum educational facilities and indeed no minimum educational provision. So private colleges could, did, and probably still do award qualifications for maximum fees and minimal education.

The Australian Government recently introduced changes to cut and hopefully end the resulting extensive waste of public funds, scams, rorts and in some cases frauds which became national scandals from 2011. But in the meantime public vocational colleges have been greatly weakened and trust in vocational qualifications has been seriously eroded. However, no Australian government has replaced the market as a mechanism for allocating public funds for vocational education which has so weakened vocational education institutions, and no government has done more than tinker with the competency-based education which makes vocational education of such unreliable quality.

Canada – and its larger neighbour

Canadian vocational education is in a radically different position. In Anglophone north America there is a distinction between 'collegiate' study offered by community colleges which is considered part of higher education and thus potentially transferrable to university; and 'vocational', 'technical', 'occupational', 'career' or 'terminal' study which is more closely related to work. Collegiate education typically leads to an associate degree or a diploma of 2 years' duration, at least some of which may be transferred to a 4 year baccalaureate. 'Occupational' education typically leads to a certificate, short diploma or an applied associate degree.

From a review of arrangements in 2004 I found that 24 of 50 USA States had separate organisational arrangements for collegiate education and occupational education. For example, in Texas occupational education is offered by the Texas State Technical College's 10 campuses, which are organised separately from the State's 50 public community college districts.

In the USA in 2014 some 94% of enrolments in 2 year institutions were in public colleges, while 81% of enrolments in less than 2 year institutions were in private for profit institutions. Unfortunately there is no similar data for Canada, but there is a similar split between mostly public school and two-year vocational education and mostly private for-profit less than two-year post-secondary vocational

education in the biggest mostly English-speaking Canadian Provinces of Ontario, British Columbia and Alberta.

In Canada collegiate education is of very high quality, has deservedly high public standing, and despite the claims of its advocates, is funded well in comparison to collegiate education in Australia, the UK and many USA states. But occupational education offered by private for-profit colleges in Canada is of much more mixed quality and public standing.

The Canadian federal government has long been involved in occupational education to retrain unemployed workers and to develop the workforce as part of general national economic policy. Its 2017 budget delivered in March had major sections on innovation which included 'Investing in skills innovation'. This includes the establishment of a new organization 'to support skills development and measurement in Canada'. This organization will:

- ◆ Identify the skills sought and required by Canadian employers.
- ◆ Explore new and innovative approaches to skills development.
- ◆ Share information and analysis to help inform future skills investments and programming.

The new body is being established on the recommendation of the federal government's Advisory Council on Economic Growth whose report was released in February 2017. The government and its advisory council note that 'The rise of contract and temporary work challenges our understanding of what it means to be fully employed' and suggest that job security may be further risked by future technological change and in particular by automation.

New trends and unwelcome convergence

One of the Canadian Government's responses to changes in the organisation of work is to give federally regulated employees the right to request more flexible work arrangements. But most of its responses to precarious employment is not to change or even seek to influence the changing demand for occupational education. Canadian employers have cut their annual investment in learning and development by over 40% in the past 20 years, and employers have made similar cuts to their workforce development in Australia, the UK and the USA. One dot point in the Canadian government's budget is to 'Increase business investments in training' but it offers no elaboration.

Rather, on the advice of its Advisory Council, the Canadian government concentrates on changing the supply of occupational education. The Advisory Council's proposal seems to lead to micro-credentialing or awarding digital badges as they are commonly known. The advisory council proposes that Canada responds to the atomisation of work by atomising occupational education into 'employee skill sets and competencies' which would encourage further fragmenting work into short term and narrow jobs. In such jobs, economic uncertainty is further transferred to workers, and more of the costs of preparing for those jobs are transferred to students and the public.

The Advisory Council on Economic Growth apparently wants to reduce the distinction between occupational and collegiate education. This would make Canadian vocational education more like Australian vocational education, which does not distinguish between occupational and collegiate vocational education. The Canadian Council's enthusiasm for 'employee skill sets and competencies' reflects Australian vocational education's competency-based vocational education and Australian employers' wish to further fragment vocational qualifications into 'skills sets' which would require little investment to acquire, but which would have correspondingly narrower and briefer application.

How to respond?

This poses Canadian educationalists with a difficult policy and pragmatic issue. There is clearly a social need which education may fill. But the destination suggested by the Advisory Council's

proposal risks making at least parts of education more specific in time, place and orientation to meet employers' immediate needs, which erodes the broader and longer benefits that the best education offers.

This poses Canadian educationalists with a difficult policy and pragmatic issue. There is clearly a social need which education may fill. But the destination suggested by the Advisory Council's proposal risks making at least parts of education more specific in time, place and orientation to meet employers' immediate needs. This would compromise employers' longer and medium term interests for their short term benefit and would erode the broader and longer benefits that the best education offers.

One response would be to just resist and hopefully reverse the atomisation and degradation of work and its preparation entailed by basing policy on 'employee skill sets and competencies'. But the better approach is to develop a program for responding to perceived needs and government priorities in ways which are likely to strengthen occupations and their preparation. This may mean developing forms of more occupationally oriented college education which do not undermine colleges' strengths as institutions.

8. Other Views and Opinions

India's **PRIA founding President, Rajesh Tandon**, has been elected to the governing body of the global universities engagement network **Talloires**. Given that PRIA is not a university, this is a remarkable recognition of the rising importance of civil society. Here, from Rajesh's most recent regular PRIA (Participatory Research in Asia) *Random Reflections*, are two items of interest to PIMA readers:

'The national government of Canada has a full-time Minister for Democratic Institutions. This is a unique portfolio in the parliamentary cabinet system anywhere in the world. This Minister is expected to focus on reforms and renewal of various institutions, primarily at national level, that make formal democracy work in Canada. The tradition of having a minister in the national cabinet of Canada to focus on renewal of democracy began in 2003. The main focus of the mandate of this minister in the new government is to improve the quality of participation of MPs in the legislative affairs of parliament and quality of functioning of its various committees. How much we need that in many parliamentary democracies, including India's?' and another, poignant when religion, fanaticism and xenophobia converge in popular minds in many wealthy countries, ignoring economics, youth unemployment and alienation alike form fear of refugee mobility:

'In many societies, a major part of [the] service sector economy comprises religious services. A visit to Chitrakoot in Bundelkhand region makes this phenomenon very visible. Nearly twenty million religious tourists come to this town annually. From direct religious services of prayers and worship to support industry of transport, guest houses, religious gifts and holy food, the economy of Chitrakoot is booming, despite official apathy towards basic infrastructure. However, local youth do not seem to be interested in participating in and contributing to this economy. The local educational institutions and skill training centres do not focus on preparing them for employment and entrepreneurship in the economic eco-system of Chitrakoot. Imagine hundreds of such economic centres in the country, as all religions flourish in India?'

For universities all global challenges are local

Budd Hall, Rajesh Tandon's UNESCO Co-Chair of Community-Based Research and Social Responsibility in Higher Education, writes with two colleagues as a lead entry in the globally wide-read (No. 452, 24 March 2017) *University World News*:

Higher education, particularly public higher education, like all other human institutions is a space of contestation. Almost without exception the leaders and contributors to educational life, to the business world, to politics, to science and the arts are products of our higher education institutions.

The global middle classes see universities as the required preparatory step for their children to enter a world of work. Society recognises universities as the main managers of the official knowledge production process. The market calls on universities to prepare flexible professionals for the global economic process.

However, deep societal and global challenges also reach out to higher education institutions for a response. Indigenous peoples and others call for decolonising and-or indigenising higher education. Climate change demands that higher education become more effective in the teaching and learning of what is needed for the survival of the planet. In a world of violence there are calls for universities to play a more intentional role in the reduction of violence against women, religious intolerance, nuclear proliferation and inequality.

The public university struggles to respond to demands that it serve both the private and the public good. Universities are simultaneously called on to become more active players in their communities and regions, while at the same time they are responding to being pulled in global directions by the phenomena of global competition, as most commonly experienced by the higher education ranking systems.

But the global and the local are not oppositional aspirations. It is false to suggest that if a university robustly contributes to addressing needs locally that it will stagnate or fall in the global ranking game. Similarly, if a highly ranked university begins to engage locally in some powerful new ways, that does not mean that it will fall in rankings.

The phrase, 'locally relevant and internationally significant', captures a spirit where excellence and engagement are synergistic partners with international quality and visibility..."

The article concludes with these proposals for action: A review of innovations in local-global curriculum changes in various parts of the world suggests that the following actions would be helpful in accelerating institutional change:

- ◆ Support the expansion of community engaged learning so that all students have an opportunity for well-supported reflective action learning in community and social movement contexts.
- ◆ Create community university engagement offices or similar organisational structures that bring the engagement mission greater impact and better integration of research and teaching.
- ◆ Increase interdisciplinary opportunities for teaching and learning linked to critical global issues such as those expressed by the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.
- ◆ Support the development of community-based curriculum development jointly between academics and community organisations.
- ◆ Create problem- or issue-focused teaching and learning centres or institutes that cut across disciplinary boundaries.
- ◆ The article draws from their contribution to the Global University Network for Innovation (GUNI) Sixth [Higher Education in the World Report](#), itself a massive new resource of relevant HE ideas and information.

9. Events and Networking Opportunities

- ◆ Cork Ireland, 3rd International Global Learning Cities Network (GLCN) September 2017
 - ◆ OECD Higher Education Stakeholder Forum 21-22 September, OECD Paris 2017 (where there may also be a concurrent PIMA workshop)
 - ◆ Higher Education Reform (HER2017) Enhancing Performance and Productivity in Higher Education, Hiroshima University 26-28 September 2017 iwher2017@hiroshima.ac.jp
 - ◆ PASCAL Annual Conference, Kruger Park South Africa, October 2017 (see PASCAL Website for information and registration both on the Conference, and about 'the Pre-Conference Tour which should be an experience in its own right, offering a unique insight into what is really happening in the cities and rural areas in our region of Africa'.)
 - ◆ UNESCO CONFINTEA Mid-Term Review, Suwon South Korea, October 2017.
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Contributions Responses to news items and opinion pieces, other feedback and material for publication are always welcome. Please send to Chris Duke at: chris.duke@rmit.edu.au