

Does what goes around come around? – the late 20th century adult learning and education agenda today

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Introduction

This paper samples 14 *Convergence* numbers from 1976 to 2007, to half of which I contributed, for thought and action in those years, to ask how the field appears and echoes after fifty years of the International Council for Adult Education (ICAE). It considers the rise and diversification of adult learning and education (ALE) and lifelong learning (LLL) journals, the language used, and specifically the recent network NGO, PIMA, asking what they tell us about adult and popular education, and community learning.

2022 sees the 7th twelve-yearly global UNESCO Conference CONF VII**, as well as the 3rd analogous Higher Education Conference. Are we recircling and recycling? or building on a rising cycle of accumulated knowledge and capability? Australia scholar and lifelong activist in First Nations affairs, Peter Willis, once wrote of the laborious flight of the pelican as it circled, gradually gaining in height and so vision as it picked up favourable wind currents. Is this a good metaphor for today? Or do inhospitable downdraughts and rising turbulence in the 3rd decade of the 21st century keep us back in a holding pattern?

** The convention of naming the periodic world adult education events as CONF- was adopted midway through their history and carried back to the whole series. Events like the covid pandemic recently varied the period slightly. They took place first in Helsingor Denmark in 1949; then Montreal in 1960; Tokyo 1972; Paris 1985; Hamburg 1997; Belem in Brazil 2009; and this year, 2022, in Marrakech (or Marrakesh) Morocco.

A personal perspective

As I begin withdrawing from leadership of the PIMA international network and editing its bi-monthly Bulletin, which started as a Newsletter and is now approaching its 43 number, I turn increasingly to 'next generation' leadership, and to reflecting on

my own 'learning journey': but more centrally on the story of ALE, and especially popular and community education, during my lifetime. I have been a teacher of one kind or another since 1959-60, the oldest of four siblings 4 to 14 years my juniors, I thus experienced superior knowledge and skills, as well as heavy family responsibilities in and after World War II. This albeit spurious assumed life-wisdom and right to authority leaves its mark. It has taken decades fully to recognise shallowness of knowledge behind the privilege, which I lacked, and the age-place advantage of family. This is less autobiography than to say that formative early years leave a deep and well-nigh indelible imprint.

PIMA is young and quite free, whereas I and perhaps ALE too are burdened by age and memory. As a First Nations person, I would be Uncle Chris, an esteemed Tribal Elder. The same goes for ICAE, where I was in on its foundations and early years. In its short lifetime PIMA has evolved fast, including even in its full name. Growing out of its original parent body PASCAL, the teenage-turbulent PASCAL International Members Association span off in 2015, initially as a kind of supporters' club. (The initial pre-registration title Friends of PASCAL Association was passed over as the French pronunciation suggested the mistake of a faux pas).

Quite recently, PIMA segued across to a new identity via the new PIMA strapline of Promoting, Interrogating and Mobilising ALE. Perhaps covert evolutionary change is a characteristic of the ALE global network community – itself an echo and metaphor for societal evolution itself. PIMA and PASCAL are now part of a growing and I believe strengthening global network of civil society or non-governmental grassroots-focussed champions and practitioners of ALE, increasingly allied and collaborating via the slogan *We Are ALE*, agreed in 2021 as a five-year campaign.

Periodic anxieties?

Have we by words if less obviously in deeds, as a loosely networked global ALE 'community' walked the pathway signalled since 1972 by ICAE? This means engaging with the international governmental systems set up to keep peace and world order post-1945, while stretching from local community to the ultimate power of nation states combined; and influencing those with political power from the UN family of nations, the International Government Organisations (IGOs) to local community action groups, again seeking influential global engagement for civil society locally, this year through CONFINTEA VII?

I have twice experienced the downward side of the pelican in flight: watching idly from a window seat as we left KL Airport in Malaysia and circled for height to head for our destination, I was surprised to see us circling and the same landscape coming ever closer again, alarmingly so in the absence of words from the cockpit. All ended

well, back on the ground that we had left, but the sensation recurs occasionally in a lifetime of ALE.

The second time, in a light plane for four, crew included, we approached an outback Aboriginal community and tried to land as a strengthening cyclone blew in. After several drama-packed bounces we turned back to Darwin. The difference here was that we chatted with the crew of one and agreed with 'management' that discretion outweighed valour.

As once despised Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser advised 'life wasn't meant to be easy'. Change can be difficult but not impossible; it is essential when crisis piles on crisis in the real world outside the comfier home of ALE. There, set arrangements, rules, and half-realised assumptions may invite us to look inward rather than to the bewildering needy world out there.

The expanded literature of ALE

ICAE and the journal *Convergence* were born in an explosive yet more hopeful time for ALE and its multiplying journals worldwide, with more international discourse, collaboration, and emulation. I wrote for the first issue of the new UK journal, then *Studies in Adult Education* in 1969. My country of adoption, Australia, started *AJAE* a little earlier, at a time when multinational immigration was encouraged rather than made difficult. Regionally an *ASPBAE Journal* stuttered into life and was re-energised in the seventies. A similar story could be told in most continents, with richer countries somewhat ahead. Older print journals already existed in mainstream school and higher education, and suchlike areas as educational psychology and teacher training. Of particular interest to me was the German *DVV Adult Education and Development, AED*, which came from the State-supported Folk High School civil society movement *DVV*. *AED* was for and reached out to the 'post-colonial developing world', rather than inward to the mainstream more competitive and constrained world of proven and approved scholarship.

AED's short readable articles, neat cartoons and well-chosen pictures, published in three languages and sent free to all relevant regions and countries, pointed a different way forward. I loved one simple *AED* cartoon showing the meaning of modernisation and its trickle-down theory of development: resources flowing down through several levels for those in desperately needy local communities; down there just a few drips remained. The *PIMA Bulletin* was born in the very different era and mood of the 21st century a few years ago. It had this now sadly deceased model to reach back to in creating its own beliefs and attempts to reach out. *PIMA* is still exploring a best way of working in the modern cultural and media milieu; and especially how print media interact with other modes of communication and influence.

The times they are a-changing – big media changes

The world of publishing, including journals, has fast evolved in one lifetime: from an early explosion of hard copy and paperback borrow-or-buy journals, monographs, readers, handbooks and encyclopaedias to print or now to be read in e-form or on line; and from many usually small to medium recognised publishing houses to aggregation of the academic heartland by a small number of big powerful publishers which bought up smaller fry, at times keeping the old publishing house names, like many other global monopolistic financial powers.

The electronically driven management of this business output transfers most of the actual creation, quality control and production work to the sector (be it ALE, schools-based, higher, or other). With remarkable not to say gullible collusion this concentrates customers into big institutions and their libraries, and locks university and increasingly other interested parties into their policies, staff relations, conditions of job retention and service, status and so career prospects and success. A near-monopoly of staff appraisals and the institutional rankings industry have hardened into a largely closed academic system distancing academe from local community. For rankings as a new industry feeding notably off higher education (HE) see the prolific well-informed work of Ellen Hazelkorn, Director of the Higher Education Policy Research Unit (HEPRU), Dublin Institute of Technology, Ireland. On the wider stage, the venerable and esteemed economist Ross Gittins, recalling the 40-year-old work of Michael Porter, wrote in the *Sydney Morning Herald* that the new Labor Government needed to protect capitalism from the capitalists: market concentration reduces competition and negates the capacity of the capitalists' market to meet client needs (Gitten in the *SMH* Business section p.3, 18 June 2020).

There are however other forms of mainly electronic sharing that have multiplied, often with online access-only output, and self-publishing, backed by the extraordinary plethora and scale of social media discourse and influencing, which goes way out beyond academic publishing: a rich, exciting, hazardous barely monitored, much less regulated, and in an obvious sense highly democratic form of participatory discourse, echoed in some countries by highly participatory TV panel programmes for those able to take part, live and by immediate online input. Campaigning bodies, once established, can muster hundreds of thousands of signatures in a few hours and exercise popular awareness-raising as well as political influence. The popular and political power of academic publication, fragmented into a thousand specialised parts, may have peaked, turned inward, and receded into their many expert ghettos.

Note, partly as a result, the frequency with which the public media now consult individual scholars as authorities in many fields, and the social media that can count 'followers' in their hundreds or tens of thousands.

There remains space for professional and campaigning and sector periodicals like *Convergence* and the *PIMA Bulletin*, but their 'conditions of service' are critical. Their very existence may manifest breaking away from publishing rules and constraints, reaching wider and deeper into more diverse and local communities. They usually rely heavily on voluntary effort and so the civil society sector, perhaps with benefactors who do not exercise control. Celebrities, in turn a modern media product, may be enlisted as influencers. We now talk of culture wars - most often between 'left' and 'right'. These culture wars are for public opinion polls to which political parties are sensitive, and for a dominant narrative where security and stability battle those concerned by inequality especially of access, climate change and global warming, or simply quality of life.

Another new priority for global and local ALE communities, *Convergence* readers included, is 'fake news' and the intentional corruption of truth for gain. PIMA was born into this world, largely unknown in the 1970s when *Convergence* was born.

Convergence revisited and the PIMA Bulletin

On the other hand, we in ALE have our own truth-telling to confront, in ways highly relevant to community and community-based learning. We perpetually confuse the terms *education* and *learning* as if interchangeable, despite some stern signals to the contrary (Illich, 1971, Illich and Verne, 1981). ALE has been nibbled into by VET and TVET, adding vocational training as if different. Participatory action research can be an all but standalone both with and from regulated academic research, but in the heartland of scholarship-assisted community learning.

Two points stand out. First, albeit unintendedly, 'learning' displacing 'education', and so (ignorant) 'recipient' by (authoritative) 'provider'.

Second, there is a tendency as ALE has emerged and marked out its own space, to create catchy novel quotable words and expressions that in making a point give the creator an identity and reputation to stand out in a noisy time and place. This tendency has grown: as helpfully insightful observation and reflection, but increasingly also by dog-eat-dog competition in the ratings-afflicted higher education industry, where citations can influence positional ranking and so reputation.

The 20th century still optimistic years

ICAE was born into a time of democratic optimism: the first big and influential UNESCO Education study was Faure's *Learning to be* (UNESCO, 1972), certainly a champion for learning lifelong and life wide. The Council of Europe's *education*

permanente, when transcribed into English, fed Illich-like concerns about the imperialism of education as its own kingdom, and the diminution of learning. OECD's *recurrent education* was seen as a pathway to lifelong *learning*. All took it as given that adults could go on learning through life, a proposition itself not long established despite lingering scepticism, like 'climate change sceptics' in our present decade.

Since then, brain research has taken that question quite beyond dispute; but ongoing lack of care between 'education' and 'learning' carries its damage into our own discourse today. Today we face ideologically and politically fuelled 'fake news'. The urge to win citations is less sinister than massive disinformation campaigns, virtually unknown when *Convergence* first appeared, but none the less malign in its own way.

Do we see constructive development and change in what we say, think and therefore do in ALE as the twelve-yearly world 'flocking' now known as CONFINTEA VII takes place in Marrakesh in June 2022? Do we behave less like the progressively rising pelican, or more like a murmuration of starlings: dashing about together in incomprehensible harmony and at risk of being picked off by moving outside?

Convergence and ICAE

Going back over the early ICAE and *Convergence* years to refresh my memory, the historian in me was surprised to rediscover that the journal preceded the Council by several years. It was started by Roby Kidd in 1968 as editor of a publication of the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto. It became an ICAE journal when the Council was set up in early 1973 (Gayfer, 1983, Hall, 1992). In 1976 it was decided to rotate the editorship. Over the years the journal evolved and altered some details of its form as well as contents, for example carrying an 'Ensemble' of short newsletter-type items but altering little in its appearance and style.

The sample scanned here ran from 1976 to 1984 and 1992 to 2007, not long before publication ceased in 2010. As the main written outlet for the Council, its shifting forms of management naturally also reflected the Council's work and priorities. It was led by an evolving Management or Editorial Management Committee, Editorial Advisory Committees, one or more Editors, and five to ten members. Sometimes this body had a two-year term; at other times the term appeared to be open-ended, but apparently made little difference.

By 1992 the Editorial Committee had grown to 13 not including the Editor. With some turnover of editors, and several special issues spanning 2 or even 3 year-numbers, in its global spread, and 10 to 13 members year on year, it came to look more like other academic journals, with a largely sleeping Board or Advisory Panel of well-known ALE leaders who might add reputation rather than give active service. Sitting

alongside the list of ICAE VPs it stressed globalism rather than high academic credentials.

Council purpose, campaigns, and journal - fin de siècle and beyond

As the Editor described it looking back in 1992, when ICAE was created in 1973 'Convergence became the official flagship of the Council' (Yarmol-Frankel,1992). Two periodic reviews of *Convergence* were later published there, by Marg Gayfer in 1983, and Budd Hall in 1992.

'Flagship' was evident in terms of those responsible for it and often contributing articles, but it was far from a narrow mouthpiece. On occasion special issues were dedicated to Council's priorities and special programmes. Big global events including the Council's own conferences loomed large: the Council's significant Dar es Salaam and the 2nd Development Decade in 1976 (volume IX, numbers, numbers 2 and 4), Council's International Conference addressed by President Mitterrand in 1983 (XXI, 1), the ICAE China Symposium in 1984 (XVII, 3), others like the World Social Forum in 2003 (XXXVI 3 & 4), and workplace learning in 2004 (XXXVII 1). Another Special Issue (XL 3&4 in 2007) gave much attention to the upcoming CONFINTEA VI, in this respect reflecting a trend to work closely with and on UNESCO, especially to enhance the influence of the nongovernmental or civil society sector. This purpose can be seen writ large in the PIMA Bulletin, which recently devoted much space to input to and influence the 7th such global UNESCO event in June 2022.

Another subject that ICAE campaigned about in association with international development aid funds came from an ICAE conference in Washington in 1980 on International Aid and Poverty. Poverty, inequality, and access to opportunity have been abiding ALE themes throughout its history. ICAE. A poverty project (*Convergence* XII, 3, 1980, XVI, 1983). in the early eighties led to two Croom Helm monographs much later republished by Routledge. The later one, initially published through DVV, teased out attempts to address poverty and inequality by different strategies: 'top-down' or 'grassroots-driven' (Duke, ed.1985 and 2019, 1990 and 2019). This takes us directly to community-based action for development, or 'grassroots movements', and the more recent emergence of the Community Learning Centre (CLC), now a significant locality-based organisational form, alongside 'learning cities' another UNESCO-supported locality-based development strategy. PASCAL's acronym began with P for Place; locality was emerging as of central importance, though whether as mainly a convenient place for education and training, or as itself a learning organism, remained shadowy. Shrouded by casual drift between learning and education, the same applies to learning city and community.

Another example of *Convergence's* expressing an ICAE policy priority was the expression first credited to Chairman Mao that 'women hold up more than half the sky', reporting the ICAE women's project on the role and status of women and published by Bernard and Gayfer in *Convergence* in 1981. The women's movement has become a very prominent theme of contemporary life in mainstream society culture and narrative at large this century, as well as in ALE as reflected in the *PIMA Bulletin*.

Curiously, the editorial of a *Convergence* issue early this century (Cunningham, 2003) describes that issue as unintentionally primarily on women. Women were playing very active and public roles in the late 20th century, notably in the environment and the peace movement, grounded in local action as well as in writing since Rachel Carson's time (Carson 1962). Their status, roles, and contribution have become a major ALE as well as general societal and media theme, evidenced by the current *PIMA Bulletin* and interwoven with the crisis in global warming.

Women contributors gradually featured more strongly in early issues of *Convergence* and markedly more strongly in the *PIMA Bulletin*: not only as contributors but as an albeit still somewhat shrouded central theme. Following *PIMA Bulletin* No.38 on The SDGs, Climate Justice, No. 39 in November 2021 on the theme of Climate Justice and ALE was almost entirely written by women and brought out their central role especially in this arena. Understandably, climate and global warming featured little in the early days of ICAE compared with their prominence, at times dominance globally in public and political life and the media.

Like the covid pandemic from 2020, the new context of interwoven and interacting crises this decade caused the 'perfect storm'. Doubt or despair at the failure of political leadership to manage it, also brought on a crisis in 'western democracy' as well as weakened consensus over the world governance order heralded in the aftermath of the Second World as the UN system and other intergovernmental arrangements. In this context of unfamiliar turbulence and complexity, 'community' as well as adult and popular ALE acquired new meaning. The birthtime and context of *PIMA* differed utterly from that of ICAE, and with it went a sense of urgency thitherto lacking.

PIMA and its Bulletin - new kid on the block for tricky times

PIMA was the small barely legitimate spin-off from another 21st century international NGO or INGO (see the section above on 'A personal perspective') born in 2015. It was a small protest movement seeking more democratic transparency and more thinking Outside the Box (OTB). It relies entirely on voluntary effort. It has dabbled with the idea of putting a cash value on the considerable volunteered effort but instead is concentrating on widening active effort from the expanding network. Its other

unusual feature is insistence on old-fashioned democracy with regular elections for its small governing and management body (known as EXCO) and co-option to EXCO where there is evident need. In thus attempting to walk the walk as well as talk the talk, its strength and perhaps also weakness is flexibility and fluidity of motion: walking the road as it is built and trying out new ways as a small well-connected network, to share and collaborate, proselytize, and influence.

One fixed point however has been and remains a desire to see the growing world of ALE and lifelong learning (LLL) as an open system looking out to 'real-world' needs and problems rather than inward to lubricate itself as just yet another professional interest group. Seeing connections, joining up the dots, moving across disciplines, diversities, and specialisms: these are seen as necessities if the richly diverse ecosystem of the world and all its life forms, humans included, is to survive and prosper. Opening the many often competitive '-isms' includes working with all 'sectors' and all 'levels', from global to very local, and public, private, civil society, and today's many mixed models for management.

Its core principles and lack of firm 'house rules' gives it freedom to evolve, and the *Bulletin* as a bimonthly publication has evolved without inhibition. However, the underlying participatory and democratic urge means that the power of the local community is treated as central. It attempts to nurture and support grassroots community empowerment, pushing out scope and meaning beyond a convenient and familiar safe-feeling place (a community meeting venue in its diverse and multiple forms) to the far more ambitious notion that as a place of learning and not just instruction – education and training – *the community itself* enhances its collective understanding and capacity to act from its experience, and so to apply what is learned together and maybe to change.

In our wish to reach outward and downward, while not ignoring power and the layers of governance at the top, we in PIMA use the *Bulletin* as a main means to reach out as well as keep in touch among members. With the lifestyle and workstyle changes caused by covid, for example, we now weave together frequent collaboratively mounted webinars with the *Bulletin* and intersperse the bimonthly *Bulletin* with more frequent one-off mailing to members. The webinars are planned and co-hosted with other ALE bodies to increase immediate output and sharing and made available as stand-alone items.

Much of the output however is through other channels altogether, by individual PIMA members acting alone or in consort. A relevant example is the recent IRE paper on Community Learning Centres (CLCs) (Belete, Duke, Hinzen, Owusu-Boampong, Huu, 2022). Three of the five authors are PIMA EXCO members, as are two of the three authors of another recent paper where all three co-authors are PIMA

members (Duke, Hinzen, Sarazin, 2021). The CLCs paper is undoubtedly part of PIMA's effort to understand the potential of the community in ALE and LLL as indeed is the first number of *Convergence* reborn' where the first 7 of its 10 contributors are all PIMA members. This manifests the shared purpose and collaborative spirit which these two outlets share (*Convergence* 43, 1, 2022).

Not all is new and different with ICAE and ALE in the new century. A few key individuals from the early seventies on, and especially a little later, remain familiar today, whether as writing gurus or continuing activists. With that goes continuing commitment to key purposes over several decades. Yet, as a big OECD Education Conference early in the new century was entitled, it was already in 'a world utterly changed'. The 'Millennium bug' had precautionary steps taken, unlike the subsequent unexpected and real global financial crisis (GFC). Terms like perfect storm have become familiar; while 'don't let a good crisis go to waste' has lost resonance other than with those brokers for whom every crisis yields still greater profits. The space between the 'real economies' which made and did things and global financial markets widened; and the gulf between richer and poorest which had reduced in recent decades widened sharply again.

Communities, adult and popular education in the 2020s

I write as CONFINTEA VII opens in Marrakesh. The civil society sector is a lively participatory force, as has increasingly been the case in preparation for this and preceding such events. This time one of its Workshops is on Community Learning Centres or CLCs - preconditions and good practice.

We are often guilty of careless use and lack of discrimination between *individuals'* learning and instruction, education, and training, or even facilitation, of teachers and leaders, who are thereby seen as more capable, informed, and knowledgeable. We need to be alert to this, and to the fact that '*community learning*' is also subject to such different meanings and understandings. We must also ask about precondition *for* good practice; and about who and what is learning – just *individual participants* or also *the community* itself? There has been a whole literature about the *learning organisation* as a dimension of management theory, and not only in the business world (see for example Duke, 1992, 2002). The learning organisation can be an organism which itself learns and changes, as well as facilitating the learning of its members or workforce. The measure would be not the assessed skills and knowledge of individuals in the workforce but how the organisation visibly changes its behaviour (OB).

Terms and meanings familiar in community learning include motivation, empowerment, and ownership. Preconditions include how CLCs are created, managed, governed and led. Are they places where local people decide to put more

convenient arrangements together to make their purposeful meetings and interactions work better? - perhaps as they are closer and easier to get to, comfier and more sheltered from the weather, safe in time of possible unrest, welcoming rather than overly formal and austere? Places to chat and exchange about the things important to them in their lives?

Or are they arrangements made by authorities for the good of local people, so that they can gather and receive instruction, or facilitation, to become more educated, skilled, and useful, maybe also obedient citizens and workers, based on what authorities, usually but not always central government, consider they should receive? If so, and if people taking part are not interested in the subject-matter or attracted by the atmosphere, sense of ownership may be lacking and learning gains paltry.

Who determines curriculum if there are formal courses or sessions, makes the rules, seeks necessary resources, and sets the culture and environment? Among these are preconditions for success, or the source of atrophy. Different venues do matter. They may be shared multipurpose meeting rooms almost anywhere - in libraries or sport centres, workshops or at general and flexible 'polyvalent' locales which serve other purposes like union halls, religious premises, covered markets - anywhere that people find relaxed, accessible, and comfy enough to be at ease and learn.

In this sense the management of the CLC is crucial: trusted and chosen local leaders, respected elders of whichever gender; or authorities coming in from outside not by invitation but to supervise and assess; deciding what is to be done, what facilities and help may be sought. The title of the current IRE paper on CLCs holds a clue: 'development *in and by* communities' (Belete et al 2022). That paper finds 'low levels of participation in general, and more specifically so for vulnerable and excluded groups'.

What now for ALE?

Spontaneous locally created and self-directed local centres are not easily compatible with authoritarian regimes which practise highly centralised management and scrutiny. If they survive, they are prone to tight management surveillance and control. Centres inclined to practise participatory action research are likely to attract hostile attention I have long wondered about grassroots energies in what we now call CLCs, and the character of their identity: this implies close analysis not only of formal CLC governance arrangements but of how positions come to be filled, who sets the character and curriculum, and what this means for effective access and participation of all community interests.

This paper has called attention to clarity of terms. What taken-for-granted assumptions go into their use, such that we scarcely notice them? We may for example say 'ALE and LLL' but there is a world of difference between lifelong and adults, serious thinking is required across the whole lifespan, whether in the use of local centres or in general discourse. It is still uncommon, as is grounded research on how and where adults actually do learn. Still outstanding is the work of Konrad Elsdon, an unusual member of the British Inspectorate (HMI) as an adult education inspector: not just his 2001 NIACE publication (Elsdon et al 2001) but more especially his less well-known study of self-help groups (Elsdon et al 2000) which bears rereading and has new significance today.

When I first worked in university adult education, we were enjoined to study and contribute community-based education and community development, but on no account to practise doing it: such a no-go zone might lead to political entanglement. An influential professor of sociology at that time likened university scholarship to studying the ants in the anthill: on no account get involved with them. Not that there was no domestic or international politics at that time, but the tenets of 'western democracy' were rather taken as given, with an Iron Curtain and shared MAD (mutual assured destruction) to contain the USSR on the other side. Today the Foreign Affairs advice of countries listed unsafe to visit has greatly extended, and with it, countries where bolder meanings of 'CLC' may be silenced.

I ask in my title whether, like the pelican, what goes round comes around, and whether on a rising current. Given the many 2020s 'perfect storms', and talk of a 'new normal', we can look back to the days when ICAE was created out of a global UNESCO adult education congress. Climate catastrophe, breakdown of consensus and performance in global governance, and then the covid pandemic, combine to confirm that the old normal will not return. We can use history to learn from but not to return to, for all that old cultural and political systems like the English strive endlessly to go back to earlier times and relive the War, as in TV dramas. 'Khaki elections' have become more common as culture wars deepen and defeats become famous victories, even in 'safe democratic' places.

This sketch has shown strong continuity of values, sense of mission, and programme purposes, from the early days of ICAE to modern times when the PIMA network emerged, reinforced by the continuing presence of early ICAE champions like Hall and Tandon, OISE and DVV, Tuckett if no longer of NIACE. Sensitivity and aversion of gaze from the harsher world of politics have however also persisted, muting criticism of authoritarian regimes in most continents, to the point where even contact, much less deep collaboration, becomes all but unattainable. Even domestic conversation within democratic systems has suffered as 'cultural wars' deepen. Thus,

real-world crisis crowds in on shared ALE values and space. It feels that the circling pelican may be on a downward spiral, and dangerous land draws nearer.

The loose global ALE and now LLL networked community gathering for CONFINTEA VII, like the younger HE variant, may be at a critical point in terms of a prognosis for 'We are ALE'? The likely outcome will be a yet more lucid call for more resources, laws, and recognition as a key sector within Education; and in the context of the SDGs much higher cross-Goals recognition that ALE and LLL are essential, in themselves and for other Goals to be fully realised.

Every policy sector from 'defence' to 'social welfare' is say the same, but in louder voice. What if faith in the character, integrity, processes and policy outcomes of elected governments has faded too far: armed with 'big data' and other new media tools, where quality audit and assessment (QA) loses out on 'enhancement' (QE) to punitive measurement and control?

Back to 'community' and 'community learning', including CLCs. One lesson of covid lockdown has been the break-up of traditional multigenerational families, if not under the same roof, then in the same locality. Local self-help is replaced by remittance economies between and even within the larger national states. One discovery in countries familiar to me has been deeper understanding of neighbours and neighbourhood. Communities devastated by fire or flood stop waiting for government and do it for themselves. In Victoria Australia extreme wildfire destruction drove residents in one small town first onto the beach and later, to declare the Republic of Mallacoota, an echo of the old British film *Passport to Pimlico* (Ealing Studios, 1949). The Victorian community asserts that they, and not a remote central government, knows what is best done and how, not fly-in distant experts. The same is true for remote First Nation Northern Territory communities.

Back in Victoria, one of the finest examples of a 'learning town' was inspired by the late Ken Thompson. The Hume Global Learning Village (HGLV) in an economically rundown multicultural and immigrant community became a 'Learning City' lighthouse well before that system was created through the UIL UNESCO-led HGLV. It attracted public funds, and when these were withdrawn it all but collapsed before local people pulled together to do it themselves. State support thus led to near-fatal dependency.

Let us see what the outcomes of CONFINTEA VII are. PIMA plans to devote a Special Issue review number soon after, in September. If it is essentially more of the same, albeit spoken louder and clearer, it may also be seeking an 'old normal' that cannot be called back. The pelican may strive to fly higher but the places that it seeks to visit are gone.

In this sense too, our networked communities in the strange new fire, flood and pandemic world of the 2020s may benefit from revisiting the well-known work of Allen Tough (Tough,1991), and the less familiar work of Konrad Elsdon (Eldon, 2000, 2001). and reminding themselves how local communities can and do take charge of their own affairs, below the radar and out of sight of even the most intrusive regimes; looking to their inherited and new gifts, skills and resources rather than to tired perhaps short-lived nation states of disillusionment, with short-cycle closely bounded and limited drip-feeding. Then indeed we will realise that communities can indeed themselves learn; and that a very good crisis will not be going to waste.

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For an exhaustive list of pertinent references see the seven pages concluding Beleke et al 2002

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Does what goes around comes around? – the late 20th century adult learning and education agenda today

Chris Duke

Abstract

This paper compares agendas for the study, education, and training of adults, as influenced and shaped by the international scholarly, professional and locally community focused movement led by the international network ICAE. The journal *Convergence* was started by Roby Kidd an eminent innovator and leader, at OISE, Toronto, before ICAE was created out of the 3rd periodic UNESCO conferences held in Tokyo in 1972. These UNESCO conferences started in 1949 sought to connect and build on national bodies and 'big-region' associations from 1972, also the brainchild of Roby Kidd. ICAE quickly adopted *Convergence* as its flagship.

We compare the ICAE agenda as reflected in a selection of the what had become the ICAE Journal *Convergence* from its first 30 years, with the agenda, ambitions, and style of the new seven-year-old PIMA Bulletin, more unfettered, and explicitly committed to bringing about change, looking at ALE more from outside rather than as a relatively closed and inward-facing system. Committed to 'thinking outside the box', the Bulletin also looks squarely at the power for good and harm of modern mass and social media, and their ambiguity in terms of democracy and its failures.

Community Learning Centres or CLCs and learning cities emerge as significant developments, but failures of outward facing civil society empowerment mean that post-CONFINTEA VII action is still at most a work-in-progress where 'community learning' still too easily morphs into individual 'education' and 'training'. The analysis and questions are anchored in first-hand experience of the growing global ALE network from the early 1970s, and life and work in the UK and Australia, but also in Europe and North America, Asia and the Pacific, but equally relevant in all continental regions. It suggests using history to learn and do better, but not as a trap.

It explored how civil society movements anchored in ALE built on and were also somewhat framed by UNESCO and other post-World War Two bodies, extending its reach into the 'real world' of perfect storms and culture wars.

Keywords

Journal *Convergence*; adult learning and education; ICAE; CLC (community learning centers); PIMA Bulletin;

Est-ce qu'on récolte ce qu'on sème ? - l'apprentissage des adultes de la fin du 20^e siècle et l'agenda de l'éducation aujourd'hui

Chris Duke

Sommaire

Cet article compare les programmes d'études, d'éducation et de formation des adultes, tels qu'il sont été influencés et façonnés par le mouvement international académique, professionnel et communautaire dirigé par le réseau international CIEA. La revue *Convergence* a été lancée par Roby Kidd, un éminent innovateur et leader, à l'OISE de Toronto, avant que le CIEA ne soit créé à partir de la 3^e conférence périodique de l'UNESCO tenue à Tokyo en 1972. Ces conférences de l'UNESCO, qui ont débuté en 1949, ont cherché à connecter et à construire des organismes nationaux et des associations de "grandes régions" à partir de 1972, également fruit de l'imagination de Roby Kidd. Le CIEA a rapidement fait de *Convergence* son programme phare.

Nous comparons l'agenda du CIEA, tel qu'il est reflété dans une sélection de ce qui était devenu le *Journal du CIEA Convergence* au cours de ses 30 premières années, avec l'agenda, les ambitions et le style du nouveau *Bulletin PIMA*, créé il y a sept ans, plus libre et explicitement engagé dans le changement, considérant la formation professionnelle de l'extérieur plutôt que comme un système relativement fermé et tourné vers l'intérieur. S'engageant à « sortir des sentiers battus », le *Bulletin* examine également le pouvoir positif et négatif des médias de masse et sociaux modernes, ainsi que leur ambiguïté en termes de démocratie et de ses défaillances. Les centres d'apprentissage de proximité (CLC) et les villes apprenantes apparaissent comme des développements significatifs, mais les échecs de l'autonomisation de la société civile tournée vers l'extérieur signifient que l'action post-CONFINTEA VII est encore tout au plus un travail en cours où « l'apprentissage communautaire » se transforme encore trop facilement en « éducation » et « formation » individuelles.

L'analyse et les questions sont ancrées dans l'expérience de première main du réseau mondial ALE en pleine expansion depuis le début des années 1970, et dans la vie et le travail au Royaume-Uni et en Australie, mais aussi en Europe et en Amérique du Nord, en Asie et dans le Pacifique, mais tout aussi pertinentes dans toutes les régions continentales. Elle suggère d'utiliser l'histoire pour apprendre et faire mieux, mais pas comme un piège. Elle étudie la manière dont les mouvements de la société civile ancrés dans l'apprentissage et l'éducation des adultes s'appuient sur l'UNESCO et d'autres organismes de l'après-guerre et sont quelque peu encadrés par eux, étendant ainsi sa portée au « monde réel » des tempêtes parfaites et des guerres culturelles.

Mots-clés

Journal Convergence ; apprentissage et éducation des adultes ; ICAE ; CLC (centres d'apprentissage communautaires) ; *Bulletin PIMA*.

¿Dónde las dan, las toman? - La agenda actual de aprendizaje y educación de adultos de finales del siglo XX

Chris Duke

Resumen

Este documento compara las agendas para el estudio, la educación y la formación de adultos, influenciadas y moldeadas por el movimiento internacional académico, profesional y centrado en la comunidad local liderado por la red internacional ICAE. La revista *Convergence* fue iniciada por Roby Kidd, un eminente innovador y líder, en OISE, Toronto, antes de que se creara el ICAE a partir de la tercera conferencia periódica de la UNESCO celebrada en Tokio en 1972. Estas conferencias de la UNESCO que comenzaron en 1949 buscaban conectar y desarrollar organismos nacionales y asociaciones de 'grandes regiones' de 1972, también una creación de Roby Kidd. ICAE adoptó rápidamente *Convergence* como su buque insignia.

Comparamos la agenda del ICAE tal como se refleja en una selección de lo que se había convertido en el *Journal Convergence* del ICAE durante sus primeros 30 años, con la agenda, las ambiciones y el estilo del nuevo *Boletín PIMA* de siete años, más libre y explícitamente comprometido con la realización del cambio, considerando el ALE más desde afuera que como un sistema relativamente cerrado y orientado hacia adentro. Comprometido con "pensar fuera de lo normal", el *Boletín* también analiza directamente el poder para bien y para mal de las redes sociales y de masas modernas, y su ambigüedad en términos de democracia y sus fallas. Los Centros Comunitarios de Aprendizaje o CLC y las ciudades del aprendizaje emergen como desarrollos significativos, pero las fallas en el empoderamiento de la sociedad civil hacia el exterior significan que la acción posterior a CONFINTEA VII todavía es, como máximo, un trabajo en progreso donde el "aprendizaje comunitario" todavía se transforma con demasiada facilidad en "educación" y "capacitación" individual.

El análisis y las preguntas se basan en la experiencia de primera mano de la creciente red global ALE desde principios de la década de 1970, y la vida y el trabajo en el Reino Unido y Australia, pero también en Europa y América del Norte, Asia y el Pacífico, pero igualmente relevantes en todas las regiones continentales. Sugiere usar la historia para aprender y hacerlo mejor, pero no como una trampa. Explora cómo los movimientos de la sociedad civil anclados en el ALE se basan en la UNESCO y otros organismos posteriores a la Segunda Guerra Mundial y también están enmarcados por ellos, extendiendo su alcance al "mundo real" de tormentas perfectas y guerras culturales.

Palabras clave

Revista *Convergence*; aprendizaje y educación de adultos; ICAE; CLC (centros de aprendizaje comunitarios); *Boletín PIMA*.