

# Connecting Urban and Rural Learning Initiatives – Meeting Notes

Date: 22 June and 29 July 2021

## Summary

The fourth and fifth meetings of the Urban and Rural Learning Initiatives was a reflective session to determine further directions for the LCN.

## Attendees:

22 June 2021

Professor Norman Walzer, Professor Emeritus, Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs; USA; Professor Mike Osborne, Glasgow University, UK; Professor Idowu Biao, Université d'Abomey Calavi, BENIN, Cotonou; Dr Annalisa L Raymer, Lifelong Learning and Leadership, Cornell University, New York, USA; Professor Marius Venter, and Elana Swanepoel University of Johannesburg, South Africa; Ms Michele Murphy, Learning Region Coordinator, Derry City and Strabane Region Learning City, Ireland.

29 July 2021

Professor Norman Walzer, Professor Emeritus, Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs; USA; Professor Mike Osborne, Glasgow University, UK; Professor Idowu Biao, Université d'Abomey Calavi, BENIN, Cotonou; Professor Marius Venter, University of Johannesburg, Dr Margaret Sutherland, Glasgow University.

**Facilitator:** Dr. Leone Wheeler, Hon. CEO ALCN, Australia

**Apologies:** Noted.

## General Discussion:

22 July 2021

Discussion was based around a program that the LCN could undertake over the next year. It was agreed that the program should cater for academics and practitioners. An LCN should focus on an exchange of ideas that practitioners could utilize in their own communities. From a practitioner perspective it is important that if possible, anything that is offered in an urban location should also be adapted for a rural location. A query was made as to why the learning city movement was not adopted more by African cities. There were a couple of publishing opportunities that were identified and there was some discussion about possible webinars.

## Outcomes from the meeting that were discussed further on 29 July:

### A key question we asked ourselves at this meeting was:

*What are the key features/principles of learning cities and how do these features/ principles apply to rural learning initiatives?*

*Sub-questions are:*

- *How do these principles apply to African cities and rural communities? and*
- *Why don't African cities seem to take up the learning city idea?*

## How will we validate what we already know and apply these ideas to rural learning communities?

- 1) Write the briefing paper as outlined by Norman Walzer:
  - Prepare an article(s) for *Local Development and Society* that defines and describes Lifelong Learning principles with short discussions of several best practices around the world. This article could be co-authored by several team members so the writing burden would be light.
    - **Note:** Max Eastcott and Leone Wheeler are writing a Gwydir Learning Region case study for the AOSIS book series.
- 2) Follow up with a Webinar for Practitioners that tests these ideas. This could be one that is organised as part of an Australian Learning Communities Network professional development activity (date to be determined - September/October or a session for the Global Learning Festival in November)?
- 3) Contribute to a session at the Illinois State-wide conference in February 2022.

### 29 July 2021

The above ideas were further discussed. Professor Mike Osborne noted that regarding writing about lifelong learning principles that there was a wealth of knowledge about this subject on PASCAL which included Hot Topics and the following:

- 19 General Briefing Papers (some were originally called Policy Papers and un-numbered)
- 13 EcCoWell Papers
- 4 PASCAL International Exchange (PIE) Briefing Papers
- 15 Special Interest Group (SIG) Papers

(See also the attached paper). Mike will make a link final link available once he has indexed the documents.

Dr Leone Wheeler updated about the progress had been made on a case study of Gwydir Learning Region as a case study for the AOSIS book series (University of Johannesburg). While Professor Marius Venter updated on the book series.

Dr Leone Wheeler has been in discussions with colleagues from RMIT University about a possible Webinar for the Global Learning Festival about the topic *The Role of Universities in developing Learning Cities and Learning Communities*. It is proposed that this is a PASCAL event jointly run by RMIT and the Australian Learning Communities Network. Leone invited Professor Idowu Biao to be part of this webinar. Details to follow.

It was noted that the UK will host the 26th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26) at the Scottish Event Campus (SEC) in Glasgow on 31 October – 12 November 2021. The climate talks will bring together heads of state, climate experts and campaigners to agree coordinated action to tackle climate change.

There was some discussion about the Six Pillars of Economic Development Framework developed in South Africa. It was suggested that it would be useful for the Urban Rural LCN to host a webinar on this framework. There are several PhD students from the University of Johannesburg working with academic staff from the University of Glasgow on topics related to this economic development

framework and it was decided that once these students were ready the Urban-Rural LCN will host a Webinar so they are able to present their work.

**Outcomes:**

- Professor Norman Walzer to review Professor Mike Osborne papers with a view to publication.
- Dr Leone Wheeler to draft a webinar proposal for the GLF and send to Professor Idowu Biao for comment/approval.
- Dr Leone Wheeler and Mr. Max Eastcott working on a paper.
- Further Local Economic Framework Webinar – noted for future planning.

***Next Meeting***

Proposed date for the next meetings.

- **23 September – 9.30 pm AEST**
- **21 October – 9.30 pm AEST**