

## PASCAL International Observatory 2013 Conference

### Local communities in the sustainable and healthy learning city neighbourhood and community, partnership and learning

Organised by the EU Centre at RMIT in Hong Kong, 18-20 November 2013  
with fieldwork to test approaches in different Hong Kong settings on 19 November

Decades-old environmental and resource challenges now combine with persisting global financial and economic crisis to make 'the end of growth' a new and fearful nightmare – acknowledged by some, denied by others. How to build futures for all that are economically viable, socially cohesive, culturally inclusive and environmentally constructive?

Cities have become the primary site in which these challenges and the associated debates are being played out. In the emergent and powerful economies of East Asia, city leaders seek solutions via new 'learning city' approaches; meanwhile, in the western economies, their leaders are looking beyond stalled previous learning city initiatives yet recognising the importance of knowledge and capability in building balanced economy, society and environment.

This first PASCAL Conference to be held in Asia draws on the PASCAL International Exchanges Project, PIE to examine the direction, capacity and governance of cities. It is planned in partnership with the host Hong Kong Institute of Education and RMIT's European Union Centre, with regional bodies such as ACUPEN, ASPBAE and EAFA. Other partners include the Hong Kong UNEVOC Centre.

The Conference will focus on present and future action, mainly within neighbourhood communities and in cities. Exploring how good practice can be adopted and adapted between different regions, cultures and traditions represents a crucial opportunity. This will be tested by the Conference and its aftermath.

The meeting is planned to connect with the work of UNESCO and the UNESCO Institute of Lifelong Learning, UIL which with China will launch the Global Learning Cities Network (GLCN) in Beijing late in 2013.

- ❖ Can integrated effort and partnership within and between sectors, organisations and urban centres lead to a viable and sustainable future for the urban majority who now inhabit the planet?
- ❖ How can city administrations, voluntary bodies, business and universities work together to overcome the multiple crises facing us and develop healthy cities that can survive and self-improve?
- ❖ How do cities really learn? How does devolution really work, and where? How can local responsibility and wisdom be engaged to meet global and national ecological and economic priorities? How is high-level intent translated into practical action?

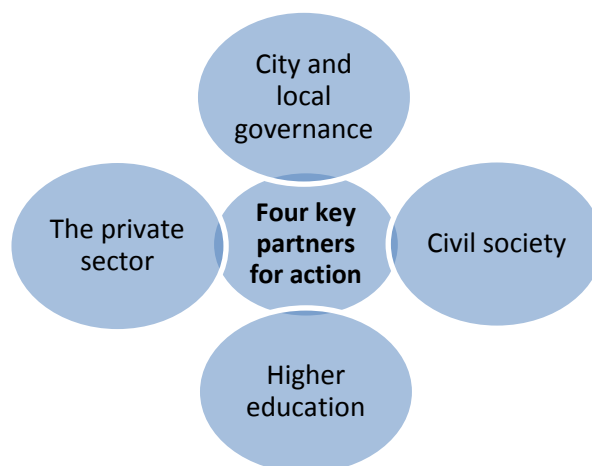
These questions are vital to the health and survival of people in towns and cities -especially in the multiplying mega-cities growing up in all continents.

## Conference structure

### Four key arenas for action



### Four key partners for action



This will be a practically oriented dialogue between older OECD and EU approaches and those of East Asia and other non-EU regions. It will explore tensions, connections and syntheses between:

- ❖ Central policies and local action;
- ❖ Economic growth and balance social development;
- ❖ Short-cycle problem-solving and long-term action to contain and reduce global warming as aspirations and economic activity in the non-OECD world continue to outstrip those of the Old West.

Another vital dialogue is between central administrations, city and more local government, where trust and devolution come hard here, as also across public, private, academic and civil society sectors. Even within unitary administrations cross-sector collaboration between departments and portfolios often fails.

[Information will soon be available on how to submit a proposal for a Conference Proceedings Contribution as well as details of fees, costs, travel and accommodation](#)

## Outline schedule

### **Day 1 18 November**

#### **Morning**

**Plenary sessions 1 and 2** including panels welcome and opening; key conference themes and issues

#### **Afternoon**

**Four parallel theme sessions 3 and 4:** Economic, Green, Health, Social the place and contribution of city governance, civil society, HE, the private sector in each of these

#### **Evening**

Convivial conference dinner

### **Day 2 19 November**

**Four parallel theme full-day working sessions session 5**

Economic, Green, Health, Social - Cases, issues, applications

followed by Harbour cruise

### **Day 3 20 November**

#### **Morning**

**Plenary sessions 6 and 7**

Review and reports of work on the four themes, and of the key tensions

#### **Afternoon**

**Plenary sessions 8 and 9**

Synthesis global-local – collaboration for sustainability

summing up and looking forward