

*Lead Article for International Adult Education Issue of Adult Learning*

**Fascinating Stories and Perspectives on International Adult Education**

**By John A. Henschke, Ed. D.**

**Past President – AAACE**

**Past Chair – Commission on International  
Adult Education (CIAE)**

**Member – International Adult and  
Continuing Education Hall of  
Fame (IACEHOF)**

**In recent years International Adult Education has emerged increasingly as a prominent force on the adult education horizon. Although many adult educators have been conducting adult education programs for numerous decades around the world, the Commission on International Adult Education [CIAE] (formerly the International Unit) of the American Association for Adult and Continuing Education [AAACE] has been a most important catalyst for raising awareness and interest in International Adult Education – stretching around the globe to help adults learn in various cultures, contexts and countries.**

**The *seven* articles in this International Adult Education Theme Issue of *Adult Learning* [our journal of theory and practice], each draws upon a group of authors who share their experiences and a broad spectrum of active engagement in facilitating adult learning through a multiplicity of adult education programs. Come with us on a delightful trip as we *criss-cross the globe!***

**In the *first* article, Roger Morris, from way ‘down under’ in Australia, reflects on his numerous significant international adult education encounters. He has done this during a 30 year period of time to overcome what some call ‘the tyranny of distance’ that separates Australia from some other parts of the world: Asia, North America, Europe, and the Pacific. Roger has been deeply involved with the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], and the International Council of Adult Education [ICAE].**

**In the *second* article, Gretchen T. Bersch from Alaska describes in very glowing terms how her grandmother and parents (because of their energetic, adventurous and visionary penchant for travel) stirred and inspired in her a lifelong interest in international work. As a consequence, Gretchen figuratively built a bridge over the Bering Strait to Magadan, Russia [in far Eastern Siberia], and poignantly describes the work she has done with them since the iron curtain fell in 1988 between Russia and Alaska; helping destitute people in that region where daily life is a challenge often filled with unimaginable sadness.**

In the *third* article, Peggy Gabo Ntseane from Botswana in Southern Africa, tells of her excitement for international adult education, arising from Setwana Proverbs: 'we learn from one another', and 'a bag of locust can be lifted if we all lift it'. Combining the cultural socialization and indigenous learning models of collective learning with the individualized learning models of the USA, helped her focus her adult education work on the function of spearheading global social justice.

Article *four* takes us to the Peoples' Republic of China with Qi SUN. She developed her major interest in international adult education through the Scientific Research Institute of International and Comparative Education (SRIICE) at Beijing Normal University and its connections with Russia, Eastern Europe, France, Germany, Japan, USA, UK, Canada, Australia, and UNESCO. She emphasizes and is grateful for the numerous international adult education affiliations afforded to her as a consequence of her being multilingual. She translated for many groups.

The *fifth* article whisks us to Greece and its rich culture, the launching pad from which Marcie Boucouvalas blossomed into a true internationalist, by traveling to numerous countries, and hosting in the Washington DC area, a multiplicity of adult education delegations and visitors to the USA. Marcie focuses on the communication of people between languages and culture as contributing to a 'way of being' with others around the world. This 'way of being' also includes identity, paradox, integration and resonance.

*Sixth*, Rosemary Closson transports us to many places in Africa and delves into the very practical matters of helping people learn how to purify water, store vegetables, become adept at reading, sustain human rights, be Anti-HIV, care for orphans, live ethically, exemplify management practices, raise funds, and build internal capacity. Rosemary shares insights that emerged for her regarding the power of non-formal education to profoundly change adult lives and the future of nations.

*Seventh*, brings us back to the USA where John Henschke shares his experience of how travel and adult education merged for him into a major emphasis in international adult education [AE] and human resource development [HRD]. This was all guided by his ideas about andragogy – the art and science of helping adults learn, and he ultimately became involved in researching its international foundation. Working with adult learners from 84 countries, and conducting programs in 14 countries with adult educators [his most intensive and extensive being in Brazil], has been a 'top-notch' exhilarating experience in John's AE and HRD career.

Join us on our 'magic carpet' as we move rapidly around the world. Then consider how you may also become thoroughly engaged in International Adult Education.