

# Policy & Practice

## A Development Education Review

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# Editorial

## REFUGEE CRISIS OR HUMANITARIAN CRISIS?

**Eoin Devereux**

I warmly welcome the publication of this edition of *Policy and Practice* on the theme of ‘Development Education Perspectives on Migration’. In the so-called ‘Post-Truth’ world of fake news, disinformation, misinformation, entrenched borders, xenophobia, Islamophobia, increased hate crime and racism fuelled by New Right populism, it is *essential* that we have a strong counter-narrative concerning migration led by experts in the field of development education which is balanced and evidence based. While theorising about migration is a crucial aspect of what we do in an academic context, the development of models of good practice is, perhaps, even more important. Recent developments point to the need for the development education sector to: challenge mainstream media constructions concerning migration; promote media literacy (especially in second and third level education sectors) concerning media coverage of migration; and develop alternative media platforms that critique mainstream media assumptions and provide alternatives to the dominant or hegemonic perspectives in circulation. Above all else, as McMonagle argues in her article, we need to be developing greater levels of solidarity with refugees.

Anti-immigrant discourses are not just to be found in the sloganeering of New Right parties such as the UK Independence Party (UKIP), Front National or The Finns Party. Mainstream media coverage of events in the Mediterranean and elsewhere has tended to reproduce hegemonic understandings of migration that have done little to inform the public about the many complexities involved. I would go further and argue that the political economy of contemporary media ownership has resulted in coverage which is even more ill-informed and sensationalist than ever before. Indeed, the repeated use by the media and others of phrases like the ‘Refugee

Crisis’ or ‘Migrant Crisis’ rather than naming recent events as a *Humanitarian Crisis* is profoundly telling in itself. The lazy application of such labels masks more than it reveals and carries with it the implication that the ‘crisis’ is the fault of migrants themselves. More often than not, news reports emphasise how the movement of people will inevitably have a negative impact on ‘us’ in the developed West and are conspicuously silent on the geo-political and economic reasons *why* people are forced to flee from their homelands in the first place. A recurring theme in media coverage across Continental Europe is that of the tide/flood/influx of migrants who are routinely ‘othered’.

The abject failure by the media industries to explain migration in more critical and nuanced terms has a direct bearing on public knowledge and public responses to these issues. By public knowledge, I am referring to not only the reactions of policy makers and the politically powerful but also the everyday reactions and behaviours of ordinary citizens towards migrants. In creating and circulating a hegemonic discourse that is comforting for ‘us’, the art is often in the absence. How migration is understood and is explained has a direct bearing on public knowledge and public action or inaction. It impacts upon local political discourse and on policy responses.

The problematisation of migration, of course, is nothing new (see Haynes *et al* 2016). Research on the relationship between media discourse and public beliefs undertaken by Haynes, Devereux and Breen (2009) evidences how, in an Irish context, asylum seekers, refugees and the asylum system itself are portrayed as inherently lacking in legitimacy. Asylum seekers and refugees are constructed as a threat to the illusory and constructed homogeneity of national and local communities. They are represented as a moral and physical contaminant of the imagined Irish body. They are seen as an economic threat to the prosperity of the nation and individual Irish tax-payers and are viewed as a criminal element presenting a threat to the personal safety and private property of the ‘legitimate’ Irish. These depressing findings are underscored by Rounds 1 to 7 of the *European Social Survey* which contains compelling data on the relatively low levels of

willingness amongst the Irish public to accept migrants from poorer countries. Such findings reinforce the need for informed debate and reliable evidence based information in order to educate the wider public. It is for this reason that the various articles contained in this edition are particularly important. Taken as a whole, they do a number of important things. As a rule, they engage critically with migration and present us with practical suggestions which allow for initiatives to be taken at local level whether in the classroom or in the wider community.

The difficult job of challenging the many myths concerning migration is at the centre of Eten's paper. Using a World System's perspective, he expertly explains recent migration patterns and points to the ways in which the media routinely circulate myths and mis-understandings. He correctly points to the role that the development education sector can play in challenging these influential discourses. A re-framing of migration in terms of critical post-colonial theory has the potential to go a long way in terms of representing migratory flows in a more positive way.

Problematic media coverage of migrants is also a sub-theme in Golden and Cannon's paper. It provides us with an account of an innovative workshop which attempted to promote understanding and empathy of the migrant experience in Limerick City, Ireland. The authors used the 1916 commemorations and Ireland's own history of migration as a starting point. They demonstrate that representations of migrants matter in that they have a direct bearing on how migrants see themselves in a 'host' community. The duality in terms of identity is stressed. Many migrants exist between the worlds of their homeland and their host country, never quite belonging or fitting in anywhere. There are many practical lessons to be learned for the wider development education sector from this local research project.

Negative public discourses concerning migration have a direct bearing on the experiences of many migrants. The internalisation of negative beliefs may underlie the psychological pressures felt by migrants resulting in schizophrenia, depression, self-harm and drug/alcohol abuse. Tarusarira puts

the psychosocial dynamics of migration at the centre of his important paper. He shows how development education is well placed to allow a more positive relationship between migrants and the citizens of host countries.

The psychosocial aspects of migration are shown to be a two way street and better social relationships (and the smashing of barriers and stereotypes) between migrants and citizens can be facilitated by increasing the amount of social interactions made possible by associational life. Tarusarira's paper highlights the usefulness of the multi-faceted development education model 'Training for Transformation' which was created by Hope and Timmel (1984). Unlike traditional pedagogical approaches, the problem-based strategy as devised by Hope and Timmel (1984) actively promotes greater agency, reflection and consciousness raising.

The challenges posed by recent global migration patterns for the Higher Education Sector are examined by Avery and Said in their well-argued paper. Taking Syria as a case-study, the authors discuss how the long-term strategies of the Higher Education Sector should not only focus on the important task of integration, but also on the re-building of regions which have been afflicted by conflict. They argue that there is a need:

“...for refugee higher education, oriented towards the needs of future reconstruction, peacebuilding and economic recovery. This kind of capacity will also be needed to build a bridge between the Syrian diaspora and reconstruction efforts within Syria itself”.

The response of the Higher Education Sector cannot afford to be parochial and must respond therefore at a macro-level to the needs of those countries affected by war, famine and under-development. It is not only the Higher Education Sector which needs to respond in this way. McMonagle argues that Ireland can do more to bring about greater solidarity. Citing the creation of student scholarships and private sponsorship, she notes how community groups, the private sector and educational institutions have the capacity to

create new contexts which will allow for more positive experiences for refugees and their host countries.

To conclude, the displacement and movement of people is a key feature of globalisation. Given the inevitability of migration, it is essential that we respond in a fair and socially just manner. As the articles in this edition amply demonstrate, there are many positive and practical things that can be done in the realm of development education that can challenge pre-conceived notions and fears and foster greater solidarity between all of us as citizens of the world.

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**Eoin Devereux** is an Associate Professor in Sociology and Assistant Dean for Research in the Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences at University of Limerick, Ireland. He is the author of the academic best-seller *Understanding the Media* (3rd edition) (London: Sage, 2014). He is co-editor with Amanda Haynes, Martin Power, Aileen Dillane and James Carr of *Public and Political Discourses of Migration* (Rowman and Littlefield International: London, 2016). He has published extensively on media coverage of migration with Amanda Haynes and Michael Breen

# Focus

## MIGRATION AND PUBLIC POLICY IN A FRAGMENTING EUROPEAN UNION

**Gerard McCann**

**Abstract:** This article will assess the manner in which the principal of free movement within the European Union (EU), with particular reference to vulnerable people, has been re-construed since mid-2015 and the Mediterranean migrant crisis, and will suggest a role for public policy - including education - which will positively engage with the migrant experience. It will look at the migrant support framework as it has adapted to current geo-political changes and will reflect on how the treatment of refugees and asylum seekers has been dealt with through diverging policy interpretations and racial stereotyping. It will also review the changing system and policy architecture for the free movement of people with reference to the Geneva Convention on the Status of Refugees, the Stockholm Programme, the Dublin Protocol, the New York Declaration and the controversial March 2016 EU-Turkey action plan. The article will then reflect on the manner in which public policy within the EU needs to react to shifting mentalities regarding the recent flow of people, and suggests how the sensitive topic of forced migration - and the integration of the families and individuals who are subjected to this imposition - can be appropriately addressed through policy and institutional realignment (Lafleur and Stanek, 2017: 1-8; 215-224; Geddes and Scholten, 2016: 237-244).

**Key words:** European Union; Migration; Asylum-Seekers; Refugees; Free Movement; Policy Architecture; Education; Institutional Realignment.

### **The framework to date**

The movement of people has been a policy concern for the institutions of the EU since its inception. Indeed, discussions on the management of the flow of

people can be charted as far back as the seminal Messina Conference of June 1955. As the policy framework evolved two parallel issues came into play; labour shifts and accommodating those looking for protection (see Boswell and Geddes, 2011: 23-28). While internal labour recruitment policies have been under scrutiny since the West German ‘gastarbeiter’ scheme came under stress in spring 1973 with the unrestricted flow of Turkish workers, uncoordinated attempts by the member states of the EU to address the challenges of people seeking sanctuary from persecution, genocide or hunger, came to a head in the summer of 2015. Vulnerable civilians, forced to flee and being used as a weapon of war in a sweep of conflicts across the Middle East and Africa, brought forward humanitarian challenges not witnessed in Europe since the last months of the Second World War. One result of this changing scenario has been that the agencies managing public policy across the EU have been totally unprepared in mobilising or informing civil society of the urgent need to provide support for persecuted families and individuals.

With this recent migrant flow, the EU - precious of its principle of free movement - has been faced with a crisis of purpose unprecedented in its history. While internal movement had in the past been relatively functional for labour needs within the confines of the single market and for EU citizens, the additional complication of free movement for refuge has exposed a fundamental fault-line (Ortega and Peri, 2014: 231-235). Arguably, solutions that have been constructed to integrate, resettle or return those who have attempted to enter EU member states since the summer of 2015 have been disparate, damaging and complacent in the deaths of thousands of innocent people (IOM, May 2016). Furthermore, the problems that have arisen have placed the very concept of free movement, most visibly applied within the Schengen zone since June 1985, into question.

Jörg Dräger and Aart De Geus commented in their 2016 article on the crisis that the outcome of policy changes towards the movement of vulnerable people escaping war and crippling poverty, primarily, *must be beneficial for those moving, those hosting and for sustainable development in the country of origin* (2016: 9-10). This three-way matrix gives some idea of

the transnational scale of the problem and the deeply sensitive nature of the solutions needed. In the event, it was leadership that was missing in managing the 2015 migration of people, leaving an anti-migrant vacuum to be filled by populist, nationalistic and racist platforms. Beyond non-governmental organisations (NGOs) working directly with migrant issues, other sympathetic voices have been critical and in direct opposition to racist populist media and political sceptics. The innovative Vision Europe Summit in Lisbon in November 2016 concluded its deliberations with options for ‘a social justice response’ to the crisis, based on humanitarian policies, a ‘whole-of-society’ strategy and a concerted shift in social and state attitudes towards vulnerable people seeking integration into the apparent safety of Europe. This approach, along with others from academia and the development sector, anticipated profound implications for host societies, changes to political mentalities and substantial policy adaptation (see [www.fmreview.org](http://www.fmreview.org)). This emerging lobby in support of migrants aims to reignite the humanitarian response against what has been labelled the ‘securitisation’ of policy (Boswell and Geddes, 2011: 39; Papademetriou and Benton, 2016). The struggle, however, has only just begun and already it is an uphill battle.

The twenty-first century has witnessed the largest movement of people globally since the period immediately after fighting stopped at the close of the Second World War. According to the EU ‘Labour Force Survey’ of migrants, 12.7 per cent of EU residents aged 15-74 are foreign-born or have at least one foreign-born parent. The EU-28 is host to about one fifth of the world’s migrants according to estimates from ‘Migrating out of Poverty’ (DFID, 2017). By 2060, persons of all nationalities with at least one foreign-born parent are expected to account for close to one third of the EU-28 population. An even larger percentage of the actual work-force will be of foreign descent. In ‘normal’ circumstances - periods outside conflict with its resultant refugee flows - the net balance between the population and the labour force should remain stable within the European Union. Indeed, as noted in the June 2016 Eurostat projections: ‘Increases in the employment rate, especially for women, older workers and young people, are needed to

compensate for the expected decline of the working-age population (aged 20 to 64) by 4.3 million people by 2020' (European Commission, June 2016). That is, that many EU member states need migrants - internal or otherwise - to keep the economy on track for the purposes of sustained macro-economic development and to compliment the *Europe Strategy 2020* economic development programme.

Post-war, it was the Geneva Convention on the Status of Refugees that provided guidance for hosting vulnerable migrants, establishing 'protection regimes' for states managing the inflow of people from conflict zones. The Convention carries a warning from the history that is very poignant in 2017, particularly with the deepening of anti-migration sentiment and policies within a number of EU member states:

“Developments in international human rights law also reinforce the principle that the Convention be applied without discrimination as to sex, age, disability, sexuality, or other prohibited grounds of discrimination... Importantly, the Convention contains various safeguards against the expulsion of refugees. The principle of *nonrefoulement* is so fundamental that no reservations or derogations may be made to it. It provides that no one shall expel or return (“refouler”) a refugee against his or her will, in any manner whatsoever, to a territory where he or she fears threats to life or freedom” (UN, 1951: 3).

In a normal political and economic scenario German Chancellor Angela Merkel would have been prudent to permit a managed, relatively open, migration policy in the summer of 2015. It had worked successfully in the mid-1960s for the West German economy when one million Turkish ‘gastarbeiter’ were given entry, or in 2004 in the United Kingdom and Ireland, when over a million eastern European workers were given access to a burgeoning, albeit credit based, economic boom. However, EU migrant projection strategies have seemingly been only functional under relatively stable circumstances (Mayda, 2006: 510-11; Boeri and Brucker, 2005: 629-

635). The erratic migration flow of 2015 onwards was exceptional, with many driven by terror from their countries of origin to seek refuge, and European states were unprepared for the spike in immigration.

The point cannot be lost, however, that migrants can - as actors in development - be an immense source of socio-economic regeneration for home and host countries. This is confirmed, significantly, by the United Nations' *International Migration Report 2015*:

“Countries of destination can also benefit from migration. In countries of destination, migrants often fill critical labour shortages, create jobs as entrepreneurs, and contribute in terms of taxes and social security contributions. Migrants, as some of the most dynamic members of society, can also forge new paths in science, medicine and technology and enrich their host communities by promoting cultural diversity” (UN, 2015: 2; also see Stalker, 2001: 63-99).

This influence is apart from remittances going back to the country of origin, worth an estimated US \$436 billion in 2014, with an average annual increase of over 4.4 per cent per year. Important in this process of movement and integration is the principle set out in the Agenda for Sustainable Development, which highlights the positive contribution of migrants for accelerated economic growth and sustainable development. Indeed, registering the importance of the issue, migration and mobility are addressed in 4 of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (2015). High growth and development in its broadest sense cannot be secured without the movement of people. Ironically, this is the lesson of the economic success of the United States (US) and post-war Europe. The Agenda emphasises the point that international migration is ‘multi-dimensional’ in that it has development importance for the countries of origin, transit and the eventual destination, and - significantly - requires bespoke, targeted and humanitarian responses. On this, as the *International Migration Report 2015* noted: ‘International cooperation is critical to ensure safe, orderly and regular migration involving full respect for human rights and the humane treatment of migrants and

refugees' (UN, 2015: 2). This again comes back to the policy architecture and how this can be adapted for successful migrant integration.

In the EU, apart from some erratic flows of people in the 2004-2007 period after the accession of the Eastern states, the movement of people had not only stabilised, but had declined. In 2013 only 1.7 million people had entered the member states from third countries, while there was 1.7 million migrating internally. That is, more EU citizens were actually leaving Europe than coming in (EC, 2015: 36). In order to manage these circumstances, the EU had put in place a series of Directives designed to enhance labour supply through demographic shifts. The strategy can be seen as the rationale behind the main directives adopted in the area of immigration through this period, emanating from the October 1999 Tampere Council on freedom and security, and reflecting issues pertinent to an evolving policy on movement:

- Directive 2003/86/EC on *the right to family reunification*.
- Directive 2003/109/EC on *a long-term resident status for non-member nationals*.
- Directive 2004/114/EC on *the admission of students*.
- Directive 2005/71/EC for the facilitation of the *admission of researchers into the EU*.
- Directive 2008/115/EC for *returning illegally staying third-country nationals*.
- Directive 2009/50/EC concerning *the admission of highly skilled migrants*.

This framework was augmented by a number of agreements and initiatives targeted at the successful integration of new communities into member states of the Union. The approach also accommodated the global flow of vulnerable people through the 2005 Global Approach to Migration and

Mobility (GAMM), the overarching policy of the EU on external migration and asylum. Its four objectives were:

“better organising legal migration, and fostering well-managed mobility; preventing and combatting irregular migration, and eradicating trafficking in human beings; maximising the development impact of migration and mobility; promoting international protection, and enhancing the external dimension of asylum” (EC, 2005: 1).

### **Responding to crises**

Something, arguably, shifted in the EU understanding of migration from the 2010 period onwards, in large part to do with the need to confront recessionary economics. The management of policies linked to migration had become immensely disjointed after responsibility shifted during the Lisbon Treaty shuffle from the Directorate-General for Humanitarian Aid (ECHO) to a position that was more politically and strategically worrying (Boswell and Geddes, 2011: 39-43). In effect migration was to become a security issue. The Stockholm Programme - adopted by 27 EU heads of state and government in December 2009 - set out a series of principles for the ongoing development of European policies on justice and home affairs for the period up to 2015. It had a specific reference to migration. Significantly, its 5-year plan came from the Directorate-General for Justice and Home Affairs, adapted from initial proposals put forward by the European Commission. In effect, the policy was very obviously security driven. The European Parliament - an institution habitually aware of and vocal regarding humanitarian issues - was merely consulted on the proposals. The security fixated Council had the final say as to content. Consequently, policy intentions shifted somewhat from free movement, residency and humanitarian support, to justice and security. Migration-related issues were, post 2009, being extracted from the precedents of the Geneva Convention. This was being flagged up by observers and actors alike, such as the Danish Government, Statewatch and individual Commission personnel, who in March 2012 all reported that human rights were not being adequately

protected through the policy framework and GAMM in particular (Martin, 2012: 5).

In order to bring about the agreed changes, the European Commission introduced an action plan to implement Stockholm, demarcating an area of freedom, security and justice for Europe's citizens in 2010 (EC, COM (2010) 171 final). The plan set out a number of priority areas (giving some idea of the gravitation of the EU at that point) providing measures for: evaluating justice, freedom and security policies and mechanisms, training legal and security professionals as well as judicial and law enforcement authorities, new financial structures, public awareness-raising activities, and dialogue with civil society. Arguably the last two actions were to be neglected and remain under-resourced. Of Stockholm, Tony Bunyan, of Statewatch, commented that:

“The opening arguments use familiar concepts such as “*the duty to protect and project our values and defend our interests*” and to ensure that peoples’ “*rights are fully respected and their security provided*”. The problem is that while we can all agree on the “everlasting values” of freedom and privacy, the record of the EU is that it has put security before liberties and rights time and time again...” (Bunyan, 2010: 1).

With the civil war in Syria and North Africa in meltdown, and the enforced migration of millions of civilians towards Europe in the summer of 2015, the security drive of Stockholm could not cope with the humanitarian complexities of the situation. In attempts to cobble together a common policy the response was desperate, uncoordinated and increasingly disconnected. Confusion among the policy makers could be seen in the manner in which different countries reacted in wildly different ways, from building razor-wired fences and ‘containment camps’ to facilitating whole communities with innovative and generous support (for a comprehensive analysis of this breakdown in relations, see *Forced Migration Review*, January 2016).

The thousands of deaths of migrants seeking refuge in Europe throughout the summer of 2015 brought the policies into international focus and disrepute, and necessitated a panicked response that, arguably, further complicated an already frustrated policy base. As a consequence, *ad hoc* agreements were introduced and others adapted: the Dublin III Regulation on screening, fast-tracking or removing asylum seekers (EC, 19 July 2013), the United Nations' New York Declaration, of which the EU was a key player (UN, 19 December 2016), and the *European Agenda on Migration* (EC, 15 May 2015). All give an indication of the levels of disconnectedness, but all recognise that there has been a deepening humanitarian crisis that would, if not confronted, destabilise regions across the globe. Article 1.3 of the New York Declaration presented the crisis very clearly:

“We are witnessing in today’s world an unprecedented level of human mobility. More people than ever before live in a country other than the one where they were born. Migrants are present in all countries in the world. Most of them move without incident. In 2015 their number surpassed 244 million, growing at a rate faster than the world’s population. However, there are roughly 65 million forcibly displaced persons, including over 21 million refugees, 3 million asylum-seekers and over 40 million internally displaced persons.”

In the *European Agenda* migration management was deemed to be a shared responsibility, even though the dialogue alone caused an almost total breakdown in relations between increasingly restrictive authorities, such as Hungary, Poland and Slovakia, and other EU states, such as Sweden and Germany, which - for humanitarian motives - opened borders to refugees. Beyond the extremes, the urgency of hosting new communities was generally recognised among EU member states. A xenophobic Hungarian government and the Brexit warped United Kingdom which voted to leave the EU in June 2016, were notable exceptions and stood in total contrast to the generosity and humanity of countries such as Greece and Italy (see *The Guardian*, 12 March 2016). Also included in the Agenda’s policy adaptation were most of the countries of transit and, crucially, the countries of origin of migrants.

The hope, driven through the institutions and most member states, was that by combining both internal and external policies, the Agenda could provide a new, comprehensive approach which could enhance mutual trust and solidarity among EU member states and institutions. (EC, May 2015). In the meantime, those fleeing into and through Europe were met with widely differing interpretations of migrant policy, support and strategies for integration.

The most telling representation of the fragmenting nature of policy-making on the movement of people and migration within the EU came with the critical flow of immensely vulnerable Syrian refugees through the summer of 2016. The EU-Turkey Joint Action Plan, activated on 29 November 2015 and the 7 March 2016 EU-Turkey statement, gives some indication of the humanitarian vacuum that had been created. The very clauses are problematic: ‘Irregular migrants may be held in closed reception centres... Asylum seekers will be accommodated in open reception centres’. Furthermore:

“All new irregular migrants crossing from Turkey to the Greek islands as of 20 March 2016 will be returned to Turkey... For every Syrian being returned to Turkey from the Greek islands, another Syrian will be resettled to the EU... Turkey will take any necessary measures to prevent new sea or land routes for irregular migration opening from Turkey to the EU” (EC, December 2016).

By the 28 February 2016, Turkey’s caseload of asylum seekers was more than 200,000, with only 38,595 having received protection. Hungary and the Slovak Republic erected razor fencing to keep migrants out and countries across the EU began in line up to erect physical and political barriers to the movement of these highly vulnerable people – the UK’s Brexit referendum result on 23 June 2016 was one such political action.

### **Adapting migrant support**

Large-scale migration and cultural assimilation (interculturalism) are not new phenomena in the evolution of the EU. Past patterns have had a different

impact on the size and makeup of the population in most EU-28 member states, and they have contributed productively to a more cosmopolitan outlook among citizens. It is important to note that, while the scale of migration since 2004 has contributed to growing pressures on public services and political will, this must be set against the longitudinal, positive, social and economic benefits of such integration (Geddes and Scholten, 2016: 237-244; Cerna, 2013: 180-200; Stalker, 2001: 63-70). Furthermore, types of connectedness are important for intercultural development. For example, foreign ancestry and life choices bring a new sense of identity to those settling into a new country and to the host community. People who are arriving, particularly those who have been forced from their own countries, need social identification. Indeed, foreign ancestry is a major determinant of connectedness through friends and relatives, where links often continue with the country of origin. This determinant gives confidence to new communities. It also begs the question: how can public policy adapt to facilitate these determinants?

It is a perceived ‘strangeness’ that host communities find most challenging, where a confident culturally sensitive new community has settled in regions which may not have had a history of heterogeneity (see Schierup, Hansen and Castles, 2006). Interestingly also, new communities are more likely to be integrating through contact with other communities who are from abroad, people learning from other experiences. As Christina Boswell and Andrew Geddes point out in *Migration and Mobility in the European Union*, migration integration - including overcoming the perceived alienation of host communities - is closely linked to changes to public policies such as housing, health and education. Policy failures are where very visible sociological dislocation comes into play.

“Immigrant integration thus means different things in different places at different points of time. More usually, it is seen in its absence - that is, as the perceived failure of policy to secure immigrant integration that tends to be a salient public policy concern” (2011: 207).

Before the economic recession, EU member state commitment to implementing the policy goals of their economic development plan, *Europe Strategy 2020*, had begun to show results in the form of increasing employment opportunities for young people, women, older workers and new communities. When the recession hit, the first groups to be affected were younger people and migrant communities. Governments faced increasing difficulties in balancing support for families, consolidating budgets, and assisting young people and migrants in a shrinking labour market (Galgóczi, Leschke and Watt, 2016: 19). With the 2015 crisis and the resultant inflow of millions of third country nationals from warzones, there was an acceleration and expedient increase in migrants seeking support. This brought forward a number of unforeseen challenges, such as accommodating vast numbers of vulnerable people in destination cities into existing housing stock, health provision and education. These circumstances enforced the rationalisation of public services to facilitate such a diverse and complex range of new communities with complex needs (ODI, 2015). This new reality was not managed well by regional authorities across the EU or communicated effectively to host communities. The discourse around health and migration in the run up to the EU referendum in the UK showed this disconnection up very clearly.

With service provision needing investment, there was lax and late appreciation at policy making levels that this peculiar forced migration process was a result of turbulent times which needed decisive, sensitive, innovative and transnational leadership. The New York Declaration of 2016 - a full year after the crisis started - could not make the imperative clearer:

“Refugees and migrants who are in large movements must have comprehensive policy support, assistance and protection consistent with States’ obligations under international law. We also recall our obligations to respect their human rights and fundamental freedoms fully, and we stress their need to live their lives in safety and dignity. We pledge our support to those affected today as well as to

those who will be part of future large movements” (UN, 2016, Article 1.11).

The stark reality of the situation was that public and social policy was increasingly stressed across Europe and globally. Health, housing, education and welfare provision would need to be more flexible to cope with new demographic exigencies.

They knew it was coming and recognised the integration process in terms of a Europe shaped by social cohesion. In the action points of *Europe Strategy 2020*, it stated that migration will play an important role in the future to meet skills shortages ‘by favouring mobility across the EU’ (EC, 2010: 14). It goes on: ‘What is needed is a strategy to turn the EU into a smart, sustainable and inclusive economy delivering high levels of employment, productivity and social cohesion’ (EC, 2010: 10). The Eurostat ‘Migration Flows’ findings of March 2015 highlighted the need for a better understanding of the movement of people, building bridges and sharing knowledge as core features of European recovery. The Schengen Agreement itself was premised on a co-relation between economic growth and free movement. Indeed, in May 2013, the European Commission’s ‘EU Citizenship Report 2013’ stated that free movement increases social and cultural interaction between those living and working in the EU. Movement generates mutual economic benefits as internal obstacles are steadily removed. Educational institutions, as with other public sector institutions, have a role in facilitating successful intercultural understanding, removing the obstacles and providing opportunities for the enriching processes of integration (Lafleur and Stanek, 2017: 215-224). Arguably, this is where humanitarian intervention has its most effective impact. Such changes – a welcoming, migrant sensitive public sector - would assist in changing the migratory experience and facilitate adaptation within public institutions for more flexible environments that can accommodate social, demographic and labour shifts beneficial to new and host communities alike.

## **Development education and migration**

Education is a critical linchpin in the public sector and it is imperative that the schools' curriculum adapt to the new realities of migration. Within the fields of Development Education and Intercultural Education, in particular, teaching and learning for diversity and mutual understanding are crucial for building an integrated, peaceful and welcoming society (Hainmueller and Hiscox, 2007:183-185). It is the perceived 'strangeness' that host communities find most challenging, where a confident culturally sensitive new community has settled in regions which may not have had a history of heterogeneity. Interestingly also, new communities are more likely to be integrating through contact with other communities who are from abroad, people learning from other experiences. The assimilative imperative of this process can only come through public awareness and pedagogy. As Christina Boswell and Andrew Geddes point out in *Migration and Mobility in the European Union*, migration integration - including overcoming the perceived alienation of host communities - is closely linked to changes to public policies. Policy failures are where very visible sociological dislocation comes into play. 'Immigrant integration thus means different things in different places at different points of time. More usually, it is seen in its absence - that is, as the perceived failure of policy to secure immigrant integration that tends to be a salient public policy concern' (Boswell and Geddes, 2011: 207).

With service provision needing investment, there has been lax and late appreciation at policy making levels of the complexities of this current forced migration process. In this it needs assertive, innovative and transnational leadership. The New York Declaration - a full year after the crisis became evident - could not make the imperative clearer:

“Refugees and migrants who are in large movements must have comprehensive policy support, assistance and protection consistent with States' obligations under international law. We also recall our obligations to respect their human rights and fundamental freedoms fully, and we stress their need to live their lives in safety and

dignity. We pledge our support to those affected today as well as to those who will be part of future large movements” (UN, 2016, Article 1.11).

The stark reality of the situation has been that public policies need to be more flexible to cope with the new demographic exigencies. Taking this into education provision, the state obligation is stated clearly in the United Nations’ 2015 Sustainable Development Goal (4) on education, ensuring ‘inclusive and equitable quality education’ to ‘promote lifelong learning opportunities for all’. The ‘for all’ is important here. Without doubt, educational institutions and organisations across Europe have a crucial role in facilitating a positive migrant experience within both the labour market and regional social/cultural environments. Exemplary educational experiences for new communities can be seen and have been at the fore of integration through confronting stereotyping, discrimination and frustration at perceived opportunity deficits. Schools, colleges and universities are perfectly positioned to strengthen assimilation, facilitate intercultural activities, knowledge induction for employment and present narratives that can register the many positive experiences of migration, while making these institutions more relevant to the needs of a rapidly changing society. This is where a fresh look at Development Education and Intercultural Education comes into play and a conversation that has only just begun.

## **Conclusion**

Hannah Arendt wrote that discrimination against ‘others’ can be a weapon which can kill without any bloodshed. She sought refuge in the United States in the 1940s from the Nazis, and became an inspiration to many escaping oppression in the post-war world. Stripped back, the very idea of people fleeing war is about families and individuals seeking refuge, protection and ultimately peace. Questioning the very thought that we could stereotype or objectify people as ‘refugees’, Arendt poses the question that sanctuary can say more about those who host than those who arrive. Those who are forced to leave, for whatever reason - political, racial or economic - are in need of support and understanding at all levels. As with the people who were forced

to flee Europe in the 1940s, many today - again - are being presented with the same fate of exile, persecution or death. In the world today, where civil society and political leaders question the very concept of ‘refuge’, where is sanctuary to be found?

The ‘Geneva Convention on the Status of Refugees’ gives solid guidance on welcoming communities who are fleeing persecution. It calls for ‘protection’ for these people, for states to assist migrants into peaceful new lives. It carries a voice from the past that speaks very loudly in 2017 in Europe, urging people to listen to the experience of its own history. This Convention:

“contains various safeguards against the expulsion of refugees... It provides that no one shall expel or return a refugee against his or her will, in any manner whatsoever, to a territory where he or she fears threats to life or freedom” (UN, 1951).

The 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights is also resolutely clear on the treatment of vulnerable migrants. Article 14 states that: ‘Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution’. In this age of discrimination by the powerful against the powerless, actors in social development - such as those planning public services, educators and community activists - need to move to a humanitarian policy base, defend the vulnerable and utilise whatever resources that are available to ensure that society does not retreat again from its essential humanity. Stated simply, EU citizens need to circumvent the member state fixation with security controls and populism, to build a policy framework based on agendas of welcome and a positive integration experience. Education is central to this.

“Refugees driven from country to country represent the vanguard of their people - if they keep their identity... The comity of European peoples went to pieces when, and because, it allowed its weakest member to be excluded and persecuted” (Arendt, 1943: 119).

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**Gerard McCann** is a Senior Lecturer in International Studies at St Mary's University College, Queen's University Belfast. He is also responsible for College international programmes and is an Erasmus + Coordinator. He is a steering group member of the Development Studies Association Ireland (DSAI) and chair of trustees at Africa House (NI). Recent publications include *Lustration* (2016), *From the Local to the Global*, (with Stephen McCloskey, eds.) (2015), and *Ireland's Economic History* (2011).

# **EXPERIENCES, BARRIERS AND IDENTITY: THE DEVELOPMENT OF A WORKSHOP TO PROMOTE UNDERSTANDING OF AND EMPATHY FOR THE MIGRANT EXPERIENCE**

**Brigid Golden and Matt Cannon**

**Abstract:** This article explores the development of a workshop that was designed to provide participants with a safe space in which to explore and empathise with the experiences of migrants. In this case the Irish centenary commemorations (1916-2016) provided an opportunity to explore the links between the Irish experience with emigration in order to help the participants develop empathy for present-day migrants. The development of the workshop was based on a review and mapping exercise followed by focus groups which explored themes related to the experiences faced by migrants in Limerick, barriers to integration, and the role played by identity in framing perceptions for both migrants and the host community.

**Key words:** Intercultural Education; Migration; Development; Pedagogy; Workshop; Experiences; Barriers; Identity; Sequential Design; Narrative Enquiry.

## **Introduction**

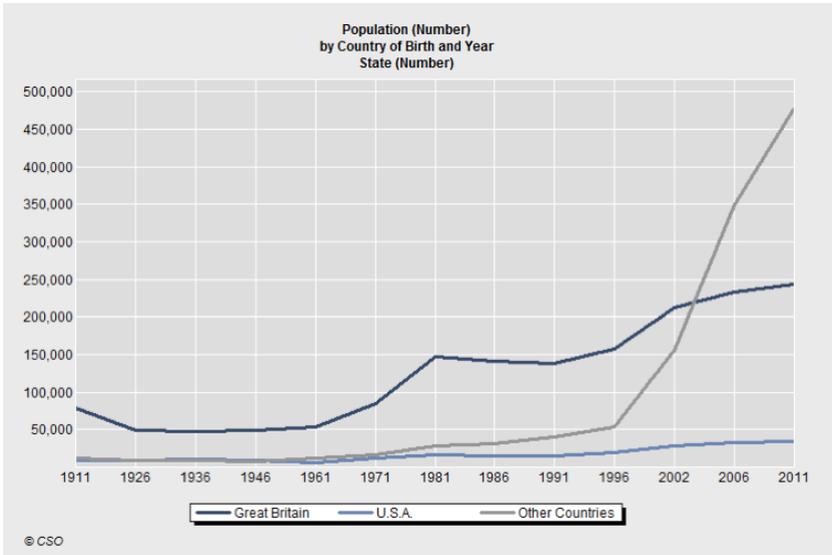
This article sets out the experiences of the authors in designing and delivering a workshop to raise awareness and empathy for the challenges faced by migrants while reflecting on the historical development of migration in Ireland. The opportunity to design a workshop was initially made possible through a call for research examining societal changes since 1916 as part of a series of tertiary level events marking one hundred years from the 1916 Easter rising in Ireland, a rebellion that represented the starting point for the establishment of the Irish Republic. A combination of quantitative mapping and qualitative focus groups provided a basis for the themes which would later be used in the workshop. The quantitative results will be outlined to form an introductory picture of the topic, then the overall methodology will be explained. This will be followed by an overview of the results from the

qualitative phase of the research. Finally, the article will explore how the workshop was designed and outline feedback from the workshop participants.

### **Quantitative look at migration in Ireland over one hundred years**

Phase one set out to capture a quantitative understanding of the period from 1916-2016. The timeframe revolved around the centenary following the 1916 Easter Rising, a rebellion against British rule in Ireland, which became a focus of national reflection, discussion and commemoration. However, data from 1911-2011 was utilised as this time-frame provided the closest census data to the centenary years. In addition, the quantitative review of migration in Ireland revealed that the measurement of emigration and immigration data does not always provide sufficient information to understand migration patterns (Gilmartin, 2012). Furthermore, examining historical changes in Irish migration is complicated by the fact that data collection has changed over time which is reflected in the changing categories of migrants. Nonetheless, this study has confirmed that migration in Ireland evolved over the one hundred year period to reflect a shift in migration flows resulting from political, economic and technological changes (Fitzgerald, 2016). Awareness of the historical record can provide a framework for more recent discussions regarding migration which tend to be framed around the arrival of migrants as a result of economic growth during the Celtic Tiger era - a period of rapid growth driven largely by inward investment from transnational corporations in the period 1995-2005 - and the expansion of the European Union (EU) (Gilmartin and White, 2008). The one hundred year review also provided an opportunity to examine Irish migration from a historical perspective thereby providing a framework for the focus groups and workshops.

**Figure 1. Migration in Ireland 1911 – 2011**



(Central Statistics Office [CSO], 2016).

In 1911, less than one per cent of the Irish population was born outside of Ireland, however, by 2011 this proportion had increased strongly to 11.2 per cent illustrating the importance of inward migration in recent times (CSO, 2016). This change relates to developments in modes of travel amplified by economic draws during the Celtic Tiger era and membership of the EU (Fanning, 2016). A focus more specifically on the city and county of Limerick gives a further insight into the recent migration trends. The 2011 census indicates that the migrant population of Limerick city represents 12.1 per cent (6,847 persons) of the city's total population (CSO, 2011). Persons of Polish nationality represent the largest minority group in Limerick city, comprising 4.5 per cent (2,572 persons) of the city's total population.

**Figure 2. Persons usually resident by place of birth and nationality in Limerick City**

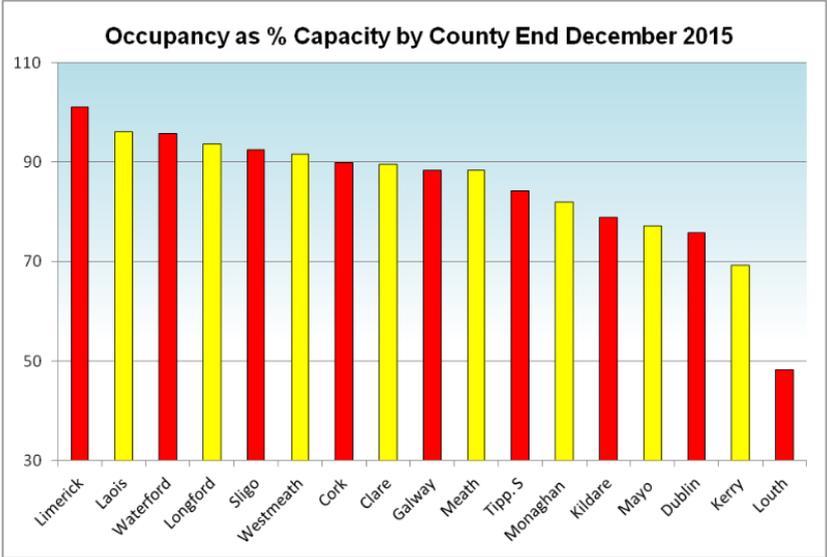
<b>Location</b>	<b>Birthplace</b>	<b>Nationality</b>
<b>Ireland</b>	47,943	48,859
<b>UK</b>	2,137	685
<b>Poland</b>	2,393	2,572
<b>Lithuania</b>	284	301
<b>Other EU 27</b>	1,386	1,414
<b>Rest of World</b>	2,378	1,875
<b>Not stated</b>	0	815
<b>Total</b>	56,521	56,521

(CSO Census, 2011).

Another significant indicator of cultural diversity in a region is language (Amit and Bar-Lev, 2015). This is evident in both the quantitative statistics on migration in Limerick and also came across strongly during the focus groups as a barrier to integration. The 2011 census reveals that a significant proportion of people living in Limerick city, 12.5 per cent (7,063 persons) speak languages other than English and Irish. The most widely spoken language in Limerick city other than English or Irish is Polish, with 2,450 speakers representing 4.3 per cent of the city’s population. A further 11,388 speakers of foreign languages reside in the county, bringing the total number of foreign language speakers to 18,451 persons. In the focus groups language was identified as a barrier to integration for participants who spoke of needing to adapt their language and accent in order to ‘fit-in’ in Irish society. The figures above may reflect this need to adopt spoken English as a tool to integrate into Irish society.

A review of migration in Ireland also highlights the role played by residential centres for asylum seekers, known in Ireland as Direct Provision centres, in creating and maintaining spatial and psychological barriers to integration (Smith, 2014). The impact of these centres is evident in Limerick and the surrounding area where approximately 400 asylum seekers live in state-sponsored accommodation centres (Reception Integration Agency, 2017). While statistically the number of Direct Provision residents is low relative to Polish residents, the asylum seeking population is highly visible due to media attention around the issue of asylum seeking and the location of the Direct Provision centres close to the city centre. As demonstrated in Figure 3, Limerick has the highest occupancy in Direct Provision as percentage of capacity of the centres.

**Figure 3. Occupancy in Direct Provision Centres as percentage Capacity**



(Reception Integration Agency, 2015).

In addition to the quantitative data which highlights the changes in population based on migration the historical narrative regarding migration

and the Irish identity provides further insight for workshop development. Outside of the one hundred year period being examined by this study it is important to note that emigrants also experienced vilification and were placed within the category of unwanted migrants following the Great Irish Famine – a period of mass emigration from Ireland from 1845-52 (Ross, 2003). These experiences of vilification which took place largely in the United States (US) and United Kingdom (UK) through images in the press and media stories is reminiscent of some current media stereotyping of a ‘migrant’ as someone unable to integrate.

Some recent media portrayals of migrants in Ireland are tinged with a sense of foreboding and threat (Devereux, Breen and Haynes, 2006). This can be seen in recent local media coverage such as the front page headline for the *Limerick Post* (2016): ‘Limerick asylum centre claims extremists have infiltrated the system’. This sense of threat is also evident in the Irish national media such as a recent *Irish Independent* article stating that the Irish government was ‘Planning to grant asylum to 20,000 un-vetted migrants’ (Ryan, 2016).

A review of the quantitative data and current literature within Limerick along with material produced by local non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and the Limerick Integration Working Group points to a common set of themes which relate to the migrant experience in Limerick (Doras Luimní, 2013; Limerick Integration Working Group 2010, 2013). The central themes which emerge are related to the perceived impact of migration on the changing population and the experiences of migrants integrating into Irish society (Feldman et al, 2008). These experiences include the perception that is often propagated by sections of the media that migration is a threat posed to the Irish worker who fears the migrant ‘taking our jobs’ or ‘threatening our way of life’ (Cross and Turner, 2006). In addition, migrant representative organisations, NGOs and the Irish government have documented the perceived barriers to integration experienced by migrants (Gilmartin, 2012; Limerick Integration Working Group, 2013). Migrants regularly face a crisis of identity where their

allegiance and identity lie somewhere between the home they left behind and their new community (Ralph and Staeheli, 2011). The recognition of the ‘themes’ of experiences, barriers and identity provided a framework for the focus groups and workshop discussed below.

## **Methodology**

While the aim of this research was the development of a workshop, the initial research which informed the workshop took the form of an ‘Explanatory Sequential Design’ (Creswell and Plano Clarke, 2011) involving two phases, beginning with a mapping exercise using online census data from the Central Statistics Office (CSO). This largely quantitative phase was followed by a qualitative exploration of the topic in a local context. During phase one, census figures from 1911-2011 and specialist census data produced for the aforementioned centenary following the Easter Rising by the CSO were examined to identify changing trends in place of birth of the Irish population.

Qualitative data was then collected during phase two of the research to enable the researchers to give context and a human perspective to the mapping. The use of a second qualitative phase to further explore initial quantitative results is advocated by Creswell et al (2003). This second phase was undertaken to capture the experiences of individuals who have been affected by migration in Limerick. Dóchas (2006: 4) maintains that when teaching or learning about situations it is essential to ‘ensure those whose situation is being represented have the opportunity to communicate their stories themselves’. Therefore, it was of paramount importance that when exploring the effects of migration, the voices of those directly affected by migration were listened to.

Focus group interviews were used to collect these stories and were guided by narrative methodologies (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000). Narrative inquiry methodologies are founded on the principal of mutual respect between the researcher and the participants, and acknowledge that participants in a study bring important knowledge and expertise with them (Stuhlmiller, 2001). Indeed, Patton (2002) posits that narrative analysis

champions the story itself; the interviewees' own life experiences. The researchers were firmly positioned toward the learners in this way.

In order to capture a representative sample of Limerick, the focus group included participants from both minority communities, including economic immigrants; refugees; asylum seekers and second generation immigrants, and also Irish participants with experience of emigration. Irish participants represented only two of ten participants. Participants for the focus groups were identified through a local NGO, Doras Luimní, which supports and promotes migrants' rights. Additionally, economic immigrants and Irish participants were identified through the personal networks of the researchers. Diversity focused group interviews are outlined by Patton (2015) as an opportunity to bring together people with diverse perspectives and experiences regarding a mutual issue to allow the interviewer to compare and contrast their perspectives as they interact. Focus groups were used in this instance to allow participants to interact with and react to opinions and experiences different from their own. Two focus groups took place with a duration of between 60 and 90 minutes. The aim of the focus groups was not to generate generalisable data pertaining to migration, but rather to capture the richness of real-life stories of people in Limerick affected by migration.

Both focus groups began with a simple introductory activity which allowed participants to introduce their own culture and personality to the group. Following this activity, the participants were made aware that the focus group would explore themes of experiences of migration, barriers to integration and their perceptions of the link between identity and migration. From here, participants were given the opportunity to speak about the links between the themes and their own lives. Following the focus groups, the sessions were transcribed and a thematic analysis of the interviews allowed further themes and patterns to emerge which permitted findings to be extrapolated for the workshop. Transcripts from audio recordings made of both focus groups were examined for cultural narratives while paying close attention to the stories which were treated as factually correct in keeping with what Silverman (2005: 154) outlines as the researcher 'in pursuit of a

different, “narrated” reality in which the “situated”, or locally produced, nature of accounts is to the fore’.

### **Focus group findings**

Overall the focus groups highlighted the fragility of social identity and the key importance of intergroup relationships for people in a new country or setting. The findings from the focus groups have been grouped under the three themes which emerged from the quantitative work.

#### Experiences of migration

From the outset of this research project, both researchers began with knowledge of racism and discrimination experienced by many immigrants in Ireland and expected to hear stories of struggle and even resentment (ENAR, 2016; Doras Luimní, 2013). However, a theme which ran throughout multiple participants’ personal narratives of their experiences of living in Ireland was their love of the country. In particular, one participant spoke about how he came to Ireland to earn money during the ‘Celtic Tiger’ era but when the recession hit he returned home, only to find that he missed Ireland and has now returned to make Ireland his long term home:

“during my living in Ireland I was decided I would actually like to stay here for longer or even for my life... when I was living here for 2/3 years, I went back to my country and I would say Ireland is a much more friendly country...when I moved to [home country] I feel the difference”.

Irish participants in the focus groups also spoke about their pleasure at returning home after living in other countries, or their strongly held desire to remain in Ireland at a time when large numbers of Irish people are emigrating to other countries to find work.

Despite the knowledge that high levels of discrimination exist in Ireland (ENAR, 2016), these narratives must be treated as factually correct statements reflective of these participants’ true experiences of living in Limerick. This highlights a tension between quantitative reports of racism

(Ibid) and the lived reality of people actively choosing to make Ireland their home. In contrast to participants' self-professed strong appreciation for life in Ireland, many of the same participants spoke about experiencing contrasting attitudes from Irish people dependent on their country of origin. Media headlines, literature (Yarris and Casteñeda, 2015) and participants' personal stories suggest that there is a widely-accepted cultural narrative regarding 'acceptable' and 'unacceptable' countries of origin for immigrants.

One woman, who is an Irish citizen and of African birth reported having been asked 'where did you get our passport?' highlighting that people felt she did not have the right to an Irish passport due to her racial and cultural background. This type of experience is broadly reflective of the trend toward racialised differences in Ireland where those who appear different or speak with a different accent are perceived to be not truly 'Irish' (Lentin and McVeigh, 2006). In contrast to this, other participants who were white reported being mistaken as Irish on a number of occasions. When these participants corrected people and told them their country of origin, they were often told it was of no consequence, that their country of origin was accepted easily in Ireland.

The contrast between these two narratives suggests that there may be a fragmented approach to immigrants within Irish society. Although many migrants enjoy living in Ireland, they still experience resistance from members of Irish society. Indeed, Devine (2013; 284) posits that migrants become valued (or not) for the contribution they can make to the country rather than their personal value. Indeed, he highlights a contrast between 'high-end' migrants who add to the talent pool and contribute to economic growth of the country in comparison to children who 'become potential liabilities and "risk" when their performance lowers that of the country nationally in comparative PISA scores'.

### Barriers to integration

When asked to speak about barriers they experienced as migrants, many participants spoke about the difficulties they experienced due to their

language use and accents. Many participants described changing their accent depending on who they were speaking to, or the colloquialisms which they use in their home country but which they consciously remove from conversations in Ireland. This theme speaks strongly to the feeling of discrimination experienced by many immigrants in Ireland who do not feel as though they can be themselves but must carve a new identity to present to Irish people.

One participant spoke extensively about the impact that this social pressure had on her life and the lengths she had gone to in order to feel a sense of belonging, stating that ‘I cut all Polish people out of my life, not because they didn't speak good English, I just did not want to speak Polish’. This participant consciously and systematically attempted to remove a part of her own identity in an attempt to create a connection with Irish society. Significantly this participant spoke Polish, the third most widely spoken language in Limerick after English and Irish, yet she still felt pressure to hide this part of her identity. We can suggest from this narrative that immigrants begin to notice certain terms and conditions they must meet in order to live and work and fully participate in Irish society.

Another recurring discussion was about Direct Provision for asylum seekers and the role this system played in building barriers between communities. A number of participants had personal experiences of living in Direct Provision and cited this system as a major barrier to their integration into Irish society. Due to the strict rules enforced on asylum seekers in Direct Provision, such as the inability to work or to study full time. In addition to minimal financial support, participants noted that integration into Irish society was almost impossible while living within the system due to the limited opportunities for meaningful engagement.

#### Role of identity for migrants

In addition to the confusion of experiencing both discrimination and welcome as a migrant, many participants described feeling as though they also had a split identity, never feeling fully Irish or fully a member of their

home country. One woman, who has been living in Ireland for a significant length of time outlined what it felt like for her:

“I would love to say I’m African for my identity but then that gets a bit more confusing because I’m Cameroonian and then ... because I have spent 13 years in Ireland and in Limerick, I would love to say I’m from Limerick but that in itself is very confusing, so I am neither here nor there.... I go back to Cameroon and I can’t fit in...The different stages of identity are so confusing for some of us immigrants”.

This feeling of confusion could be as a result of the participants’ perceptions of the extent to which they needed to alter their own identity in order to feel accepted in Ireland, as evidenced by their accounts in relation to language and accent. Alternatively, this may be explained by a sense of belonging to two different communities which do not appear to be compatible. Indeed, Irish participants who had returned to Ireland after a period living abroad described experiencing a similar sensation in other countries where they were sometimes the only Irish person surrounded by people who had only a stereotypical perception of what it means to be Irish.

The culturally defined narratives in these themes paint a picture of Limerick as a place where non-Irish cultures are welcomed, but only on certain terms, highlighting a resistance to personal change to accommodate others. This juxtaposition experienced by immigrants has led to a confusion of identity for many who are not sure where they belong or the extent to which they are willing to alter their own identity in order to fit in. We can suggest from these findings that although people in Limerick appear welcoming, there is a resistance to celebrating diversity which may be due to a lack of knowledge and understanding of other cultures and of specific issues faced by immigrants. Indeed, de Chickera et al (2016: 192) describe the dichotomy between those who view migration as ‘a universal, normal and positive reality with significant pluses for international development’ and those who view inward migration as ‘a negative trend, one that threatens

economic and political stability and established “ways of life”. This dichotomy of approaches to migrants was also experienced in Limerick by focus group participants.

## **Workshop**

Using the themes from the first stage of the research along with information from the focus groups, a workshop was developed to explore some of the changes happening in Limerick as a result of migration. The workshop was designed with the aim of creating a safe, non-judgmental space to teach about issues relating to migrant rights in Ireland. Although it was designed as a formula which could be adapted to teach about multiple issues relating to migration depending on the focus taken, the workshop being discussed here focused on Direct Provision and the process of seeking asylum in Ireland. This focus was taken as it represents a theme which was highlighted as a barrier to integration in both focus groups and literature. Everyday objects were used in the workshop to critically engage its participants in a manner similar to what Kitching (2011) described as an opportunity for teachers and students to deconstruct desirable and undesirable subjectivities by examining everyday, context-bound practices of identity.

The workshop had several intended outcomes for participants. These included the intention that participants would develop an awareness and understanding of issues relating to migrant rights; develop empathy with people living in Direct Provision in Ireland; challenge personally held stereotypes in relation to refugees and asylum seekers; analyse the use of language to describe people; and feel comfortable to ask questions relating to the issues covered. The teaching profession was used as a target audience due to the ‘ripple effect’ of teaching. The researchers felt that by encouraging and providing a space for teachers to engage with issues relating to migration, this would have a long term impact on the way society in general approaches these issues (Bryan, 2009).

The structured workshop follows three phases which include discovery and drawing conclusions; meeting the owner of the bag; and

reflection. During the first phase a bag is placed in the centre of a room and people are invited to remove and examine items from the bag and to use these items to begin to form a picture of the person who owns the bag. When participants have examined all the contents in the bag, the facilitator clarifies their chosen description of the owner using notes taken.

Phase two allows for participants to meet the owner of the bag, who is introduced through video. For this workshop a video was shown of a woman who lives in a Direct Provision centre in Limerick with her three children. On the video the woman talks about her personal experiences of being a migrant and the process of seeking asylum in Ireland through the themes of experiences, barriers and identity. The items from the bag are also shown and explained on the video.

The final reflection phase provides participants with space to voice their reactions and to ask any questions they have about the topic or specific issues raised by the video. The facilitator also highlights the language used during the discovery phase when participants were attempting to formulate a picture of the owner of the bag. At this stage, the facilitator can highlight any inappropriate language used. To conclude, the facilitator will draw comparisons between assumptions we make daily and stereotypes that we hold about entire groups of people, and offer conclusions on the links between assumptions, stereotypes and discriminatory actions.

At the time of writing this article, the workshop has been delivered three times including being piloted at the National SPHE (Social, Personal and Health Education) Conference with people working in different branches of the Irish education sector. The workshop has also been run as a training session for Amnesty International's 'Rights Sparks' workshop series (2017) with a group of primary school teachers. Thirdly, the workshop was run with a group of student teachers at Mary Immaculate College in Limerick. Although the workshop has been successfully delivered each time, differences in group dynamics in each case contributed to the flow of the workshop, where sometimes it ran smoothly with little need for intervention

and at other times required the facilitator to use prompt questions throughout the discovery phase.

At the SPHE conference some participants were able to discern the identity of the owner of the bag quite early on while others who were unfamiliar with Direct Provision were unsure. This created interesting dialogue between participants regarding their perceptions of refugees and asylum seekers in Ireland. For example, the inclusion of flyers for part time education courses and business cards from university lecturers led some participants to surmise that the owner of the bag was a student while others believed that the person could not have been accessing education as an asylum seeker. Once the video had been played which identified the owner of the bag and shed some light on the asylum seeking process in Ireland, the participants who had been unsure during the discovery phase asked many questions and spoke both of their empathy for people going through the process and their desire to involve themselves personally in action and volunteer work relating to Direct Provision.

During the session with the primary school teachers there was a clear consensus early on from all participants that the owner of the bag was an asylum seeker. However, when it came to discussing the finer details of the person's character this group made some false assumptions. In the bag there was a rubber bangle for the Samaritans, an organisation working on mental health issues with whom the owner of the bag volunteers using her own training in mental health care. The group, however, came to the conclusion that because they knew the person was an asylum seeker the person must have been accessing the services of the Samaritans for her own mental health needs. This group was confident in its idea of who an asylum seeker was and what their life must be like. During the reflection portion of the workshop, many participants commented on the many similarities between their own lives and that of the owner of the bag and how their common humanity had become lost in the picture they had of who an asylum seeker must be.

Working with student teachers posed unique challenges which were not present when working with the other two groups. The student teachers were initially uninterested in the bag and its contents unlike the other groups who had been fascinated from the outset. Where the first two groups carefully picked over every item in the bag the student teachers glanced over many items without examining them in any detail. The students also struggled to formulate workable suggestions as to who might have owned the bag. However, once the video was played the students' disinterest quickly turned to curiosity and to empathy. The students asked many questions on the realities of Direct Provision in Ireland and about the owner of the bag as a person. As with the group of teachers, the students also began to make links between their own lives and the life of the woman in the video. In all three cases the video helped to deepen participants' engagement with the issues. Although participants displayed differing levels of curiosity at the discovery phase, the video personalised the issue for all participants who were able to identify similarities between their own experiences and those being shared through the video.

Due to the positive feedback received following the three workshops, it would appear that the workshop met its aims. One participant outlined that 'the human element helps to develop a real sense of empathy and understanding of the realities' while many more participants indicated, both in written and verbal feedback, that they had learned a lot of new information about a topic they believed they were already familiar with. Participants in all three workshops asked large numbers of questions at the conclusion of the video which was a testament to the success of the safe space created through exploring a controversial issue in a non-threatening way. As this particular workshop has been run successfully three times, the researchers are now confident that it can be adapted to explore other issues of migration identified through focus groups. Future iterations of the workshop are likely to look at the life of someone who has migrated for economic reasons. This focus would allow the researchers to focus on language and accent as well as the concept of 'acceptable' and 'unacceptable' countries of origin for migrants; both of these themes emerged strongly from the focus

group interviews. Teachers who took part in the workshop indicated that they intended to create a workshop based on a child's experience of migration in order to use this workshop formula with their own class groups.

## **Conclusion**

This article has explored three core themes of experiences, barriers and identity which were used to frame research and a workshop designed to enhance our understanding of the topic of migration in Ireland. Although the categories of migrants have changed since 1916 the experiences of those migrants remains similar in regard to the emotional ties with their home country and the feeling of having an identity split between two locations. This continuity of experience is in contrast to the changing landscape through which migration occurs.

As was reflected throughout the research the overall portrayal and narrative regarding a 'migrant' has a direct impact on migrants themselves. The workshop provides a space for addressing some of these key themes in a safe environment. Although the topic of migration can often be a difficult one for people to relate to without their own experience, the focus on a real life individual provides a space for engaging on a more personal level with a topic which is often portrayed in the media as a 'migrant' or 'refugee' crisis.

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**Brigid Golden**, B.Ed, M.Ed, is a lecturer in Development Education, Intercultural Education and Global Citizenship Education in Mary Immaculate College, Limerick through the Development and Inter-Cultural Education (DICE) Project. Brigid is currently undertaking a PhD at the University of Glasgow and is looking at the development of critical thinking and a commitment to social justice in student teachers.

**Matt Cannon** (PhD) is lecturer at the Kemmy Business School, Course Leader for the MA in Social Care at Limerick Institute of Technology and Consultant Trainer in Intercultural Awareness. He previously worked for over 10 years in cross-community / cross-border conflict resolution as CEO of the Irish Peace Institute at the University of Limerick where he was responsible for managing the Institute's cross-border and cross-community reconciliation projects. He has also developed and delivered intercultural communication and conflict resolution workshops for the Council of Europe's Intercultural Cities Programme.

# THE ROLE OF DEVELOPMENT EDUCATION IN HIGHLIGHTING THE REALITIES AND CHALLENGING THE MYTHS OF MIGRATION FROM THE GLOBAL SOUTH TO THE GLOBAL NORTH

**Simon Eten**

**Abstract:** Though international migration is sometimes suggested as having the potential of propelling economic development and promoting multiculturalism in the world, there exists a certain ‘sedentary bias’ against the ‘irregular’ kind of international migrants. This is reflected in the increasing adoption of restrictive immigration policies by countries in the global North, as well as a discernible rise in anti-immigration attitudes among the populace of these countries. Many of these anti-migration attitudes are grounded in myths peddled by the media which feed into negative popular perceptions about immigration in the North. This article discusses how development education (DE) can challenge these myths and throw light on the realities of migration in the global South. From a world-systems’ perspective, the article goes on to explore how neoliberal globalisation and historical colonialism have contributed to creating the conditions that generate migrant flows from the global South to the North. Further situating the discussions within a DE discourse, the author uses critical and postcolonial theories to highlight how anti-immigration stereotypes and prejudice can be tackled in the global North.

**Key Words:** Migration; Immigration; Anti-migration; Colonialism; Globalisation; Development Education; Global South; Global North.

## **Introduction**

International migration has been part of human history for many millennia, but the accelerated processes of globalisation and its associated impacts in recent years has given it a boost (Awumbila et al., 2008; Castles et al., 2005; Czaika and de Haas, 2014). As a result, international migration is receiving heightened attention and debate in government and international

development policy circles, especially in the global North (Chetail, 2008). There is now evidence to suggest that South-South migration is becoming a force to reckon with (Crush and Ramachandran, 2010; Cenker, 2015; Nawyn, 2016), though the direction of international migratory flows has usually been thought of as a predominantly South-North occurrence (Castles, 2004). According to the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN-DESA):

“nearly two thirds of international migrants live in Europe (76 million) or Asia (75 million). North America hosted the third largest number of international migrants (54 million), followed by Africa (21 million), Latin America and the Caribbean (9 million) and Oceania (8 million)” (UN-DESA, 2016:1).

Yet one irony that seems to characterise international migration is that, the more prominence it assumes in development discourse as an enabler of economic development (UN-DESA, 2016), the more anti-immigration sentiment appears to grow in the global North. The indignation surrounding immigration in Northern countries (Thorbjørnsrud, 2015), is evident in the havoc that the issue appears to be wreaking on the European Union project, owing to the contributory role it played in Britain’s decision to leave the European Union (EU) by referendum in June 2016, a process better known as ‘Brexit’ (Curtice, 2016; Hakimi, 2016). Immigration has also been used as a springboard in political propaganda by populist and far-right politicians in efforts to win elections in Europe and North America (Greven, 2016).

Consequently, irregular migrants who often live in Northern countries without requisite residency permits, are among the most marginalised and vulnerable groups in those societies. They often face all kinds of human rights violations, discrimination and exploitation in the work place as well as incarceration and forceful repatriation back to the very danger they escaped in the first place, sometimes without regard to their legal refugee status (UN-DESA, 2016; Rwamatwara, 2005). Bakewell (2008) traces the anti-immigration attitudes towards this group to the colonial period, which he calls ‘sedentary bias’; the assumption that migration of the

poor and unskilled is a bad thing because they are a threat to development and should stay at home. The unwelcoming attitudes in some societies in the global North are often founded on myths, but also sometimes based on the negative realities that immigration appears to have on such societies. The myths include the loss of jobs to immigrants, insecurity seen in rising cases of terrorism, and a watering down of Western liberal values, among others (Castles, 2002; Cenker, 2015; Attinà, 2016). Even within some government policy circles in the North, immigration is perceived to be a bad thing. This is demonstrated in the increasing adoption of restrictive immigration policies, as well as development of aid packages directed to migrant-sending and transiting countries in the global South, intended to create better economic conditions that will minimise emigration from these countries (Castles, 2010). The assumptions that underlie these anti-immigration attitudes are held with little consideration of the complex push factors, embedded in the colonial histories and encounters of the countries of the global South, as well as the impact of the current ordering of the global capitalist economy.

This article looks at the issue of international migration under the lens of development education (DE) with the aim of challenging the myths often associated with immigration in the global North. DE as a field of study is arguably ‘the only strand of education that organises itself around North-South relations and therefore is located right in the middle of local-global processes and debates’ (Andreotti, 2007: 2). It is driven by a social justice agenda for the most marginalised and disenfranchised of the world (Skinner et al., 2013). In doing this, DE takes an historical and global view of development processes and points out how these processes impact on the lives of the marginalised and poor, while offering a vision of what a just, equal, and dignifying world should be like for all.

The article briefly discusses some contemporary realities of migration in the global South vis-à-vis the global North in terms of the scale of migration, and in the second section discusses a number of global economic and political drivers of international migration set within the neoliberal global order. Section three then analyses how the historical

epochs of the colonial era and slave trade have contributed to shaping migration from the South to the North. The last section looks at how DE in the field of educational practice and non-governmental organisation (NGO) campaign activities in the global North can challenge the myths around migrants and immigration. Though the broader discussions in the paper touch on the global South, specific references are made to sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East and North Africa regions.

### **The realities of migration in the global South**

Until recently, global research and policy on international migration has focused more on, and predominantly portrayed international migration as a South-North phenomenon, much to the neglect of South-South migration (Bakewell, 2009; Nawyn, 2016). One of the reasons for the lack of attention given to South-South migration in international migration research over the years has been the absence of reliable data on human mobility between countries of the South (Solimano, 2015). This situation is changing, however, as research on international migration points to South-South migration becoming dominant (Abel and Sander, 2014; Solimano, 2015; Nawyn, 2016). The facilitating factors that account for increased migration between countries of the global South, according to Solimano (2015:12) relate to ‘closer geographical proximity, cultural similarity and the existence of more open migration policies compared with the migration regimes prevailing in high income nations’. Geographical proximity in particular is an important facilitating factor as migration is noted to occur more between countries located within the same geographical region (UN, 2015). Furthermore, the inability of migrants in Southern countries to bear high costs associated with travelling to the North, as well as the desire to live in close proximity to their families also account for the increasing trends in South-South migration (Ozkul and Obeng-Odoom, 2013).

The rise in South-South migration notwithstanding, media reportage and popular opinion in the western world continue to hype and portray South-North migration in largely negative terms, constituting an ‘invasion’ of Europe and other parts of the global North by migrants from the global South

(de Haas, 2008; Beyer and Matthes, 2015). This negative portrayal feeds into anti-immigration attitudes in western democracies, as there is ample evidence to suggest that the majority of citizens in these countries are in favour of more restrictive immigration policies than current migration regimes enforce (Freeman et al., 2013; Thorbjørnsrud, 2015).

The notion of a large number of migrants from the global South ‘invading’ Europe, for example, is often linked to the portrayal of origin countries in the global South as places of ‘war and poverty’, which force people to flee in search of security and wellbeing in the North (de Haas, 2008). Though conflict and poverty drive some of the migration flows from the South, these do not constitute the sum of the causal factors that underlie migration from these areas. There is also ‘healthy’ migration between countries in sub-Saharan Africa, and even from most countries in the South to the North, driven by more positive factors such as trade, education, work and social factors such as marriage (Bakewell, 2009). It is instructive to note that, even for migration flows caused by conflict and war in southern countries, the bulk of such flows end up in neighbouring countries of the South. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) 2015 mid-year report: ‘Sub-Saharan Africa is host to the largest number of refugees (4.1 million), followed by Asia and Pacific (3.8 million), Europe (3.5 million), and the Middle East and North Africa (3.0 million)’ (UNHCR, 2015a).

The UNHCR has also reiterated the fact that about 86 percent of refugees are hosted by countries in the developing regions of the world (UNHCR, 2015b). Yet these countries in the South which host the majority of the refugee population around the world, lack the capacity and infrastructure to absorb large refugee populations into their countries. This has led to a situation where many refugees in these countries live in deplorable conditions, as attested by a UNHCR report which found that, ‘86% of Syrian refugees in Jordan and 70% in Lebanon are living below the poverty line’ (UNHCR; cited in Metcalfe-Hough, 2015: 3). Another report produced by the World Economic Forum confirms this fact by noting that,

‘Most forced migrants move to other developing countries, where social and governance systems may already be weak or likely to fail’ (World Economic Forum, 2016: 15). The report further notes that, according to UN estimates, the cost of housing Syrian refugees in Jordan is over seven percent of Jordanian Gross Domestic Product (GDP), revealing the toll that the Syrian refugee crisis has had on a neighbouring country in the global South.

The argument above is not intended to dismiss the fact that there has been a sharp increase in the numbers of migrants travelling from the global South to the North. The current refugee crisis in Europe as a result of the conflict in Syria and other conflicts in the Middle-East and North Africa is evidence of the magnitude of migratory flows into Europe. In 2015 alone, it was estimated that more than a million migrants and refugees crossed the Mediterranean into Europe (Hakimi, 2016). International migration, therefore, is a global phenomenon and part of the processes of globalisation, and the ‘undesirable’ forms of it, expressed in refugee movements not only affect the global North, but Southern countries too.

Whichever destinations migrants from the global South end up in, whether in neighbouring countries in the South or in the global North, one undisputable fact is that, their movement is driven by a multiplicity of factors grounded in historical and current global economic and political processes, as well as socio-cultural and ecological factors (Attinà, 2016; Bakewell, 2009). The next two sections look at how global and historical forces have contributed to shaping contemporary migration from the South to the North.

### **Neoliberalism and migration**

International migration by its very definition occurs across borders of different countries, but Castles (2004: 210-211) has suggested that, ‘Today, the most crucial borders are not between nation-states, but those between North and South’. Castles clarifies his assertion by noting that, as a political and social terminology, the North-South divide is used to represent the increasing disparities in economic, social, and political developments between two broad regions of the world. The global North is used to

designate the developed countries of North America, Western Europe, Japan and Oceania, while the global South represents the developing regions of Africa, Asia and Latin America. The disparities in development between these two broad regions, according to Castles, are generated partly by the increasing processes of globalisation, the persistence of which create the push factors that compel people to migrate from the global South to the North in search of better economic prospects, human security and personal liberty (ibid).

Generally, the impact of globalisation is felt in most parts of the world and in various spheres of human endeavour. In countries of the global South, globalisation can be credited with many important benefits: the opening up of developing countries to the gains of international trade; improved standards of living and life expectancy of people across the developing world; access to new technologies, skills and knowledge from the developed world; and access to markets in developed countries though limited, access to foreign aid which has brought with it many development projects (Stiglitz, 2003).

But a closer look at the processes of globalisation shows that the benefits of globalisation are sometimes overstated, given their harsh effects in the global South. Key elements of globalisation such as trade liberalisation and privatisation have often led to the marginalisation of the poor in the global South who mostly lack the capacity to compete for the benefits of open markets, whilst destroying the livelihoods of local farmers and fishermen (Guttal, 2007). Akokpari (2000: 81) has captured the impact of globalisation on farming in the developing world by noting that:

“Liberalisation and the expansion of the free market which are central doctrines of globalization, have also rendered farming, the predominant occupation of rural dwellers, an (a) non-competitive and a generally unattractive enterprise as imported agriculture products have become cheaper than the locally produced. This is in

turn a direct consequence of the ubiquitous de-subsidisation policies which affected agriculture inputs, including fertilisers”.

The rise of multinational corporations as part of the processes of globalisation has contributed to irregular migration. Globalisation with its neoliberal expansionist agenda has promoted the flourishing of multinational corporations and extended their reach and impact to the remotest parts of the globe (Guttal, 2007). As Wickramasekara (2009: 27) rightly observes, ‘The phenomenon of irregular migration is also traceable to outsourcing of productions operations under globalisations forces’. In developed countries, there has risen a group of ‘labour brokers’ who facilitate the movement of irregular migrants to Northern countries and outsource their labour to corporations and companies as business (ibid). In developing countries, these corporations, source, operate and thrive on cheap labour and in the process, out-compete local businesses and destroy the natural resource base of local economies (Ahiakpor, 1992).

A significant underlying factor for forced migration in the global South is armed conflict, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East and North Africa. This fact is underscored in a UNHCR report, which notes that: ‘In addition to the Syrian crisis, the outbreak of armed conflict or deterioration of ongoing ones in Afghanistan, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mali, Somalia, South Sudan and Ukraine, among others have contributed to prevailing trends’ in refugee crises (UNHCR, 2015a: 4).

The current immigration crises in Europe and North America can therefore be directly linked to ‘violence and civil wars in North Africa, the Middle East, and other parts of the Arab world and the stateless status of large areas of Africa’ (Attinà, 2016: 17). These armed conflicts and civil wars which contribute to the refugee drive to Europe and North America have their roots in a global political economy as part of a post-modern era, which allows the most powerful countries and international institutions in the world to interfere, influence and direct the political and economic affairs of

poorer and weaker states. Moore (2000:17) gives a description of post-modernism in relation to Africa to highlight some of the interesting ways that the neoliberal global order contributes to foment conflict and war in Africa:

“A world in which state boundaries are falling down, structural adjustment policies have deprived state-makers and nation builders of the means to forge coalitions and ameliorate threats from pretenders to power, warlords have better links with global corporations and more efficient tax collection agencies than do putative politicians, ‘retraditionalisation’ reinvents latent ethnic identities, armies are replaced by ostensibly clean mercenary organisations while other soldiers and rebels change identities daily (the Sierra Leonean term ‘sobel’ captures the confusion of the people terrorized by armed youths who may be soldiers by day and rebels by night), and NGOs do the jobs that used to be carried out by more formal organisations such as states and official international agencies”.

In protesting and resisting stringent immigration policies in the global North, immigrants have demonstrated a knowledge of how the global capitalist system and unfavourable development cooperation policies of Northern countries have contributed to create the conditions that force them to flee their home countries. A good case is the ‘Caravan Hunger Strike’ that migrants organised during a G7 Summit hosted in Cologne, Germany in 1999. The grim banner under which this demonstration was held was ‘We are here because you destroy our countries’ (Nyers, 2003:1081), which speaks volumes of how the failures of the international system and policies of Northern countries contribute to the migration flows from the South.

Globalisation therefore has been a huge facilitating factor for international migration, because globalisation itself involves the movement of goods, services and people across transnational borders. In this sense, there is a reinforcing relationship between globalisation and migration, with each acting to reinforce the other, leading to a process Munck (2008:1229) has called the ‘globalization of migration’. This not only involves economic globalisation, but also entails the movement of people along with their

cultures and ideas (Castles, 2002). With this understanding, the push back on international migration, especially within government circles in Northern countries, appears to be inconsistent with the tenets of an open world. This is what Munck meant when he observed that, ‘Migration exposes a central inconsistency in neoliberal globalization because if capital, money, information and knowledge should all flow freely across the globe, then why not people?’ (2008:1227).

### **How Africa’s colonial/slave history has shaped migration to the global North**

One of the lasting impacts of historical colonialism is that it established relations between the colonisers and the colonised (Amighetti and Nuti, 2016). These colonial relations flourished through migration to and from the colonies and the metropolises, and have persisted into modern times to give shape to the pattern of migration flows in Africa today (Amersfoort, 2008; Black et al, 2004 Castles, 2000). Migratory flows therefore follow the pattern of pre-existent historical and socio-economic links between originating and sending countries (Castles, 2000), coupled with other factors such as geographical nearness and economic prospects in destination countries (Amersfoort, 2008). As an illustration of how these colonial linkages work in sub-Saharan Africa, Black et al (2004:9) have noted that ‘Migration to Europe has traditionally followed old colonial linkages, with the bulk of West Africans in France coming from francophone countries, and those in the UK coming from Nigeria, Ghana, Gambia and Sierra Leone’. It should further be noted that the modern migration flows from francophone and anglophone sub-Saharan African countries to France and the UK respectively are also influenced by the convenience of language between these respective countries, made possible by the colonial connections.

The colonial project therefore thrived on movements between colonies and their metropolises in Europe and in the process produced ‘a multitude of mobilities across borders’ (Yeoh, 2003:373). In the current global order, these mobilities have continued and produced inequalities between the global South and North. The impact of colonialism on African

countries is not only seen in the patterns of African transnational migration today, but also in the underdevelopment and inequality that it produced (Said, 1989). Georgi and Schatral (2012:209) emphasise this point by noting that, 'today's inequality is the result of a history of conquest, colonialism and imperialism'.

The historical migration linkages even stretch back in time to the era of the slave trade under which Africans experienced a massive forced migration as part of the Trans-Atlantic slave trade. Under the arrangement of forced labour, Africans were made to work as domestic slaves, and in plantations and mines in the metropolises. The gains of the slave trade contributed to laying 'the foundation of the early development of the capitalist world economy...generating the profits that led to the great expansion of British capitalism and the financing of the Industrial Revolution' (Rwamatwara, 2005:178).

Within the framework of the past relations between countries of the global South and North established through the historical epochs of slave trade and colonial era, some authors (Amighetti and Nuti, 2016:541) have noted that 'the national identity of former colonizing nations cannot be understood in isolation from their ex-colonies'. Reasoning from this perspective and the role of the colonised in the development history of colonising nations, it is argued that postcolonial migrants should have the right of entry into their former colonising nations (ibid), based on the 'intertwining histories' the two share (Said, 1994).

### **The role of development education in challenging the myths associated with immigration in the global North**

The stereotypes associated with migrant communities in Western societies today is palpable, especially within conservatist governments, among some of their indigenous citizenry, populist media and far-right politicians (Boucher, 2008). The situation is particularly worrying in the case of the media, given the important role they play in public awareness raising and

sensitisation. A report produced by the Global Commission on International Migration has reiterated the fact that:

“In many countries around the world, the situation of migrants in society has been jeopardized by media stories that portray members of the migrant and minority populations in the worst possible light: as criminals, terrorists, and more generally as people who represent a threat to the established way of life” (GCIM, 2005:52).

Among the many myths that contribute to anti-immigration attitudes in Northern countries, a few notable ones are that, immigration undermines western identities and values, and leads to the clash of civilisations; immigration has a toll on the economies, and over-burdens the welfare systems of host countries; increasing unemployment in host countries as a result of loss of jobs to immigrants; immigrants are responsible for the increasing crime rates in host countries, including terrorism (Bianchi, Buonanno and Pinotti, 2012; Think Global, 2016; Attinà, 2016).

A close examination of any one of the above myths associated with immigration will reveal that they are founded on anecdotal evidence at best (Bove and Böhmelt, 2016), a situation where isolated incidences of these myths are used to generalise and justify anti-immigration attitudes. Taking the myth that immigration is responsible for high crime rates in host countries into consideration, as for example in cases of terrorism. Though a recent upsurge in terrorism cases are perhaps a confirmation of some of the fears that people in Western societies harbour, a close look at reported cases of terrorism shows that, most of these are perpetrated by individuals born in host countries or travel on different visas to host countries, and not refugees or immigrants (Nowrasteh, 2016). This fact is evident, for example, in a policy analysis on migration and terrorism produced by the Cato Institute which discovered that, in the United States:

“From 1975 through 2015 the chance of an American being murdered by a foreign-born terrorist was 1 in 3,609,709 in a year...the chance of an American being killed in a terrorist attack

committed by a refugee was 1 in 3.64 billion a year” (Nowrasteh, 2016: 2).

Most of the stereotypes that migrants face are founded on assumptions associated with incidence of terrorism, rise in unemployment, diminishing welfare opportunities for the citizenry of Northern countries, and other developments that can be linked to globalisation and the 2008 global financial crisis (Castles, 2002; Busch, 2010; Cenker, 2015; Attinà, 2016).

The development education sector has an important role to play in diffusing the prejudice and stereotypes that hang around migrant communities in the North. Though DE in the global North has over the years focused on campaigns on poverty and underdevelopment in the global South, some authors have been critical of its limited approach to charity and awareness raising, calling for more critical approaches (Andreotti, 2006; Bryan, 2011; Selby and Kagawa, 2011). Andreotti (2006), for example has made the case for Global Citizenship Education (GCE) to move from ‘soft’ to ‘critical’ forms, with the difference rooted in whether such citizenship education is grounded in critical and postcolonial considerations.

DE school learning activities and NGO campaign activities should therefore be underpinned by critical theory. In Andreotti’s (2006:49) view, critical theory has the potential of empowering people to reflect and understand the ‘epistemological and ontological assumptions’ that they often associate with others and themselves. Within a framework of critical citizenship education, learning and campaign activities should highlight the permeability of all cultures and citizenship beyond national polities. According to Edward Said (1989: 225), this approach to citizenship education has the potential of making people in destination countries, ‘see Others not as ontologically given but as historically constituted’, and furthermore give them the option to see cultures either ‘as zones of control or of abandonment, of recollection or of forgetting, of force or of dependence, of exclusiveness or of sharing, all taking place in the global history’. Said (1989: 225) further notes that the experiences of immigration and the

crossing of borders present an opportunity for people to conceive and construct new and varied narratives of citizenship that transcends narrow ethnocentrism, which can help ‘erode the exclusivist biases we so often ascribe to cultures, our own not least’. The stereotypes associated with migrants from the global South partly stem from a lack of appreciation of the historical and contemporary roots of the conditions that force migrants to move from their home countries, and therein lies the usefulness of post-colonial theory. A post-colonial lens on the issue of international migration is significant in its capacity to locate the root causes of migrant flight within the prism of the impacts of colonialism and neoliberal globalisation.

A key myth-making element around immigration in the North, usually peddled by the media, is the high and sometimes false numbers often associated with the influx of refugees and asylum seekers into Europe and North America (Think Global, 2016). These high figures which are often cited out of the context of global migration scales and patterns contribute to stoking fears among the general populace, since this usually creates the picture of migrants from the global South ‘invading’ Northern countries (de Haas, 2008). It is therefore important for DE campaign activities in the North to change perceptions around the actual numbers involved in immigration while also situating these numbers in the context of global migration flows.

The involvement of immigrants in DE campaign activities in Northern countries will go a long way to change the negative perceptions around them. DE campaign activities should provide the platform for immigrants to tell their own stories, while also using the profiles of prominent immigrants who have contributed positively to developing Northern societies to build trust between migrant and indigenous communities. An exemplary DE campaign which uses this approach is the ‘I am an immigrant’ campaign promoted by the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants (JCWI) which provided immigrants with a ‘voice to highlight the importance of their contribution to society and to demonstrate that they were part of the fabric of the British society’ (JCWI, 2016:8).

Another effective means of managing the migration crises is for the international system to work towards reducing global inequality between the global South and North (Castles, 2004). The DE sector through NGO activities should promote campaigns that focus on dismantling the structural and systemic causes of poverty in the global South that have links to neoliberal globalisation and development cooperation policies of Northern countries. Such advocacy activities should throw light on how the different manifestations of the neoliberal status quo are contributing to forced migration from the South (Tsimouris, 2014).

## **Conclusion**

A discovery of how the neoliberal global order contributes to the current international migration crises should not lead to a retreat from globalisation, since globalisation carries enormous benefits in its fold (Stiglitz, 2007). Such a realisation should not lead to a tightening of border controls or the institution of unfavourable immigration regimes which subject migrants to dehumanising conditions. An understanding of how the historical epochs of slavery and colonialism have contributed to shaping migration patterns and produced inequality today should not lead to aid packages directed at countries in the global South, meant to cause a cessation of migratory flows from these countries. These policy measures in Northern countries, as far as they have been implemented, have not achieved their desired results but instead resulted in more human suffering through trafficking and smuggling (de Haas, 2008; Rother, 2013; Sørensen, 2012).

This article has argued that migratory flows from the global South to North can positively impact on migrants and their host societies. A UN-DESA report on migration found that, ‘When supported by appropriate policies, migration can contribute to inclusive and sustainable economic growth and development in both home and host communities’ (UN-DESA, 2016:2). A coordinated effort is therefore required by both home and host countries in the pursuit of policies and programmes that do not solely focus on stopping migration from Southern countries, but that seek to develop the capabilities of people in home countries as well as migrants in destination

countries within a human rights framework (Preibisch et al., 2016). This will go a long way to guarantee a migration drive from the global South that is not precipitated by a situation of poverty, conflict and political persecution, but one that is motivated by a mutual interest to exchange labour, ideas and cultures in a world that has become increasingly inter-connected. This will no doubt minimise the negative fallouts that irregular migration in particular, is so closely associated with in the global North. In developing and implementing such policies and programmes, public education is vital in challenging the myths that are often associated with immigration in Northern countries, and development education / Critical Global Citizenship Education have a central role to play in this respect.

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**Simon Eten** delivers an Active Teaching and Learning/Information and Communications Technology (ICT) in Education project with a Civil Society Organisation in Ghana. He has a Masters in Development Education with Empowerment Studies, jointly ran by the University for Development Studies in Ghana and the University of Applied Sciences, Dusseldorf, Germany. His current research interest lies in how critical and active citizenship can be promoted through formal education in Africa.

E-mail: [etensimon@yahoo.com](mailto:etensimon@yahoo.com)

# Perspectives

## IN SOLVING REFUGEE ISSUES SOLIDARITY MUST COME FIRST

**Susan McMonagle\***

**Abstract:** With the number of people displaced globally at record levels, effective solutions to refugee issues – both for refugees and the communities that host them – are vital. A ‘business as usual approach’ will no longer suffice. Instead, collaborative solutions that ensure responsibility sharing and recognise the connection between displacement and development should be the way forward. The international community has made some strides in recognising this. With the adoption of the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development and the New York Declaration in September 2016, world leaders have agreed that refugees must be factored into all development plans. Solidarity with refugees and host states must be prioritised.

**Key Words:** Refugees; Asylum-seekers; Displaced Persons; New York Declaration; Solidarity; Legal Pathways; Responsibility Sharing; International Protection; Sustainable Development Goals; 2030 Agenda; Private Sponsorship; Resettlement; Relocation.

### Introduction

Refugees are arriving to the European Union in comparatively smaller numbers than they were in 2015. Although the numbers crossing the Mediterranean and Aegean Seas to Italy and Greece dropped from a high of one million in 2015 to 360,000 in 2016, the refugee crisis is far from over. People continue to flee in large numbers to other countries as refugees or within their home countries as internally displaced persons. To put it in context, more people fled to Uganda in 2016 than crossed the Mediterranean in the same year. In fact, 86 percent of the world’s 21 million refugees are living in developing countries (UNHCR, 2015a: 2). The situation in Europe is not a refugee or a numbers crisis, but is instead a crisis of solidarity. The one million people who reached Europe by sea in 2015 represent 0.2 percent

of Europe's population of 500 million. That figure that should be manageable for Europe and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has proposed solutions for EU countries to better manage refugee arrivals, ensure better protection in the future and show solidarity with refugees and communities hosting them (UNHCR, 2016).

The number of people displaced globally is at a record high and conditions continue to deteriorate for refugees in countries such as Lebanon, where 71 per cent of Syrian refugees now live below the poverty line, up from 49 per cent in 2014 (UNICEF, UNHCR and WFP, 2016: 2). Meanwhile, funding is difficult to secure for crises in regions such as sub-Saharan Africa, despite the continued generosity of several donors, including Irish Aid. South Sudan is now Africa's largest refugee crisis, with two million people displaced inside the country and a staggering 1.5 million people forced to cross into neighbouring countries, including Ethiopia, Uganda, Sudan, Kenya and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (Wachiaya, 2017). By early February 2017, over two million people were displaced within Yemen and yet only one per cent of the funding needs of UNHCR had been met.

An understanding of the reasons why people flee their homes is fundamental to any process that seeks to find solutions for refugees. The reasons for flight are obvious in situations of violence such as those experienced by thousands of residents in Syria's Aleppo in 2016. However, conflict is by no means the only reason for flight. The Syrian conflict has been ongoing since 2011, and yet it was not until 2015 that the European Union started to feel its effects more fully through increased arrivals. So why has it taken so long for people to make their way further afield and can anything be done to reduce their need to make such treacherous journeys?

This article will consider some of the reasons for onward flight, taking Lebanon as an example to demonstrate the impact of prolonged displacement on refugee communities. This will underscore the need for states to honour the commitments they made under the 2030 Agenda for

Sustainable Development and the New York Declaration to include refugees and displaced persons in development planning. This article will highlight how the Irish-led New York Declaration builds on the inclusive message of the 2030 Agenda and why it focuses on solidarity with refugees and their host communities. It also considers UNHCR's proposals for the EU to better manage refugee arrivals. Finally, it will be seen that it is not just up to states to show solidarity - individuals, civil society and the private sector must play a role in establishing legal pathways, such as private sponsorship, so that refugees can reach safety and rebuild their lives. This article will consider examples of such legal pathways, including Ireland's undertakings to date.

### **Displacement, poverty and onward flight**

Refugees are among the world's most vulnerable people. This does not mean that people must be poor or destitute to be a refugee – poverty is not in the refugee definition, which instead focuses on flight from persecution. Nonetheless, huge proportions of the world's refugees are living in developing countries and it is these countries that carry the lion's share of the burden of caring for them. As a result, some already strained national infrastructural, health and educational systems are put under further pressure by large-scale refugee arrivals. Moreover, opportunities to earn a living or gain an education for some refugee communities are fewer in developing countries than they might be elsewhere. Living in displacement over long periods of time takes its toll and can be a major driver of onward movement.

Consider Lebanon, a country that is about one seventh the size of Ireland but in 2010 had a similar population at 4.3 million (Worldometers, 2017). Lebanon now hosts over one million Syrian refugees (UNHCR, 2016a), as well as 450,000 Palestinian refugees and 22,000 refugees from other countries (UNICEF, UNHCR and WFP, 2016: 5). UNHCR's Global Trends Report 2015 showed that Lebanon topped the list as hosting the largest number of refugees in relation to its national population, with 183 refugees per 1,000 inhabitants (UNHCR, 2015a: 2). Its neighbour, Jordan, was ranked second in population density as it hosted 87 refugees per 1,000

inhabitants (Ibid). Another Syrian neighbour, Turkey, hosts the highest number of refugees in the world; a total of 2.9 million (UNHCR, 2017).

Since 2013, UNHCR, the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and the World Food Programme (WFP) have conducted an annual Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon (UNICEF, UNHCR and WFP, 2016: i). The 2016 VASyR report was published in December 2016. It collates data gathered through assessments conducted with 4,596 Syrian refugee households who were randomly selected from 26 districts across Lebanon. The assessments measured a broad range of issues facing Syrian refugees in Lebanon, including monthly rental costs, primary and secondary school attendance, special needs, food consumption, monthly earnings and use of cash assistance.

As already noted, the report revealed that 71 per cent of Syrian refugees in Lebanon now live below the poverty line, up from 49 per cent in 2014 (Ibid: 43). This clearly demonstrates that conditions are deteriorating and provides some insight into why refugees undertake life-endangering onward journeys such as those across the Aegean and Mediterranean Seas. The report provides many concerning insights, including that 93 per cent of the Syrian refugee population in Lebanon was estimated to live in some degree of food insecurity, while 30 per cent of working-age men reported a lack of employment in the month prior to the survey. For those who did find some work, underemployment due to insufficient hours was widespread. With regard to sanitary facilities, 23 per cent of Syrian refugees who were surveyed reported having no access to bathrooms, compared to 10 per cent in 2015, and 4 per cent of households share a bathroom with 15 people or more.<sup>1</sup> Access to education is very limited for many children with almost half (48 per cent) of the surveyed children of primary school age (6 to 14

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<sup>1</sup> For the purposes of VASyR report, bathroom refers to a room with a water source for washing (shower/ bathtub), while toilet refers to the receptacle for urination and defecation (UNICEF, UNHCR and WFP, 2016: 25).

years) not attending school. Statistics are even more worrying for secondary school aged children (15 to 17 years) of whom 84 per cent are out of school. Describing the many barriers to education for children, respondents included issues such as child labour, child marriage, the cost of education, no space in schools, and lack of legal residence (Ibid).

While Lebanon is shouldering a huge proportion of the Syrian refugee population, limits have been in place for some time for Syrian refugees with regard to accessing employment and securing legal residency. Until February 2017, Syrian refugees in Lebanon had to renew their legal residency every six months and pay an annual renewal fee of USD \$200 per person in the household older than 15 years. This changed in February 2017 when the General Security of Lebanon announced that payment of the residency fee for Syrian refugees who had registered with UNHCR before 2015 would no longer be required (Dubin and Marsi, 2017). While this is certainly a positive move that may ease financial pressures on some refugees, it does not apply to all, in particular those who are not registered with UNHCR. Syrians are also restricted employment-wise in Lebanon and are only permitted to work in the agricultural, construction, and environmental fields. Informal working situations and difficulties in renewing legal residency, for example, due to a lack of means to pay the renewal fee, mean that Syrians in Lebanon have been at an increased risk of being exploited in the workplace, working longer hours in more hazardous conditions for lower pay (Government of Lebanon and United Nations, 2017: 103).

With the Syrian conflict in its seventh year, families living in protracted displacement are feeling its severe impact. While the situation is by no means limited to Lebanon and can apply equally to the many families and individuals in Jordan, Turkey and beyond, the *Lebanon Crisis Response Plan 2017-2020* describes the situation well:

“The combination of lack of legal residency, limited self-support opportunities, compounded by depletion of resources including savings and assets has led to households resorting to negative coping

strategies including instances of begging, protracted debt, engagement of children in worst forms of child labour, and foregoing educational opportunities” (Government of Lebanon and United Nations, 2017: 117-118).

This points to a host community under pressure, and a refugee community for whom prospects are very slim. It goes some way to explaining why so many Syrians, in particular, have fled to Europe in search of a real chance to rebuild their lives. Between April 2011 and January 2015, just over 230,000 applications for asylum were made by Syrians in 37 European countries. In the two years since, over 650,000 Syrians have made applications for asylum in Europe (UNHCR, 2016b).

Since 2012, Ireland has provided over €70 million toward people affected by the Syrian conflict, the state’s largest ever response to any humanitarian crisis (Irish Aid, 2017). Ireland must be commended for its contributions, but always encouraged to think about what more can be done. But it is in the Irish-led UN Agreement on a global approach to helping refugees, which culminated in the *New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants* of September 2016, that Ireland showed how its support for multilateral solutions to the world’s problems can achieve significant results.

Adopted by 193 states, the New York Declaration (NY Declaration) connects development assistance with refugee issues, recognising the push factors that cause people to move, as well as the impact of displacement on host communities. However, it also highlights the necessity for states to provide more legal pathways for displaced people to reach safety. Legal pathways such as resettlement, visas and private sponsorship schemes are vital sources of life-saving assistance that bring refugees to safety and simultaneously ease the pressure on host states. Most importantly, the NY Declaration lays the groundwork for a Global Compact on Refugees in 2018, where states will have an opportunity to establish concrete measures to share the responsibility of hosting refugees more equitably.

## **A new global approach to displacement**

People who have fled conflict and persecution will often flee again from the poverty they may find themselves trapped in as displaced persons. While development organisations have been at the forefront of refugee and displacement crises for decades, it is highly significant that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development now explicitly refers to refugees and internally displaced persons in the 2030 Declaration (United Nations, 2015: para.23). Additionally, it is stated many times throughout the 2030 Agenda that the Sustainable Development Goals were drafted to ensure that ‘no one is left behind’ (Ibid: para.4). This underscores the fact that refugees and forcibly displaced people must be accounted for in states’ national development plans.

The NY Declaration represents the international community’s recognition that responsibility for displaced persons must be shared more equitably. Better development planning, targeted assistance and the provision of legal pathways are core means by which states can share the burden and offer greater opportunities to the displaced. Adopted by 193 state leaders through a UN General Assembly Resolution, the NY Declaration ‘marks a political commitment of unprecedented force and resonance ... It fills what has been a perennial gap in the international protection system – that of truly sharing responsibility for refugees’ (Grandi, 2016).

The NY Declaration sees states reaffirm the commitments already made under the 2030 Agenda to leave no one behind and it explicitly recognises the needs of refugees and migrants (NY Declaration 2016: paras.5 and 16). It refers to the vulnerabilities of refugees, of the need to protect them, to find safe legal pathways so as to save lives, and to protect people from exploitation. The NY Declaration acknowledges the necessity to address the root causes of refugee movements and the drivers that exacerbate movement (Ibid: para. 42). It also highlights the long-term repercussions of protracted refugee situations on host communities (Ibid: para.7).

The NY Declaration represents the first time that states have come together on such a large scale to reaffirm the rights of refugees and migrants.

In adopting the Declaration, states also agreed to work towards adopting a global compact on refugees and a global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration in 2018. The number of people who have been forced to flee their homes and the consequences of their flight are too serious to continue as before. Solidarity and responsibility-sharing are the core themes of the Declaration.

### **What can the EU do?**

At the regional level, UNHCR drew on the commitments that states made in adopting the 2030 Agenda and the NY Declaration when it proposed four ways in which the EU could better protect refugees and tackle global displacement crises. In December 2016, UNHCR released its paper *Better Protecting Refugees in the EU and Globally: UNHCR's proposals to rebuild trust through better management, partnership and solidarity*. The UN Refugee Agency presents four proposals for the EU to better manage the refugee situation and better protect refugees; they involve engagement by the EU beyond its borders, preparedness for arrivals, improved protection systems within member states, and better integration of refugees in the EU. The first of those actions, engagement by the EU beyond its borders, recommends that the EU expand and improve upon its development efforts, particularly in countries hosting large numbers of refugees. The goal of such engagement would be to improve conditions in host countries, thereby reducing the need for perilous onward journeys by refugees.

The UNHCR proposals are in line with the need for a new, integrated approach to development that is inclusive of displaced people, as enshrined in the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development and the NY Declaration. The proposals point to key ways in which EU states could alleviate refugee crises beyond its borders, for instance, by ensuring that any funding allocated towards humanitarian operations is targeted at assessment-based needs (UNHCR, 2016: para 1.2). Funding should be predictable, flexible and multi-year, as well as being delivered in close consultation with host countries. Easing earmarking of contributions and lifting some of the

cumbersome reporting requirements related to funding could also increase the efficacy of such funding (Ibid: para.1.2).

Noteworthy is the proposal to ‘integrate refugees into development planning and national service provision by host communities’ (Ibid: para.1.2). The aim of this approach would be to enable refugees to rebuild and get on with their lives, to reduce any reliance they have on aid and to lead them towards longer term solutions, beyond mere survival. Again, this builds on the 2030 Agenda’s demand that ‘no one is left behind’. Solidarity is a vital component of the NY Declaration and the UNHCR proposals to the EU. By incorporating refugee crises and their impact on host communities within national development plans, states can improve the living situation of refugee and host communities alike. This, in turn, may help to reduce dangerous onward movement.

In an effort to reduce the number of people crossing the sea from Turkey to Greece and also combat human-trafficking in the Aegean Sea, the Member States of the EU and Turkey published the joint EU-Turkey statement on 18 March 2016. It comprised various measures to manage the number of people taking to the sea to reach the EU, including the return to Turkey of people who crossed to the Greek islands after 20 March 2016 and did not claim asylum there. Additionally, for every Syrian returned to Turkey from the Greek islands, another Syrian would be resettled from Turkey to the EU in line with the UN Vulnerability Criteria (EU-Turkey Statement, 2016). The deal has been met with much criticism. UNHCR was clear at the time that safeguards must be in place in any such deal to ensure nobody is returned to where they could face harm and that asylum-seekers must have access to procedures and individual assessments (UNHCR, 2016c). The deal appears to have achieved one of its primary goals as the number of people travelling from Turkey to Greece by sea dropped from 151,000 in the first quarter of 2016, to 18,000 between 1 April and 31 October 2016. Almost a year since it was first implemented, 3,565 Syrians have been resettled from Turkey to EU countries and the European Commission stated on 2 March 2017 that Member States ‘have indicated they

plan to admit a further 34,000 Syrians from Turkey' (European Commission, 2017).

However, it is essential that legal pathways remain a route to safety and are not circumvented with the primary purpose of controlling migration. Conditions in Turkey and the availability of opportunities for refugees to rebuild their lives there will remain decisive in whether people continue to take to the sea or not. Critics of the EU-Turkey deal might consider what more can be done to address the situations that are leading so many refugees and migrants to continue to attempt the Aegean Sea crossing. It must be recalled that Turkey alone hosts 2.9 million refugees. Increased resettlement places both for Turkey and neighbouring countries are a vital way of sharing responsibility and removing the need for some people to make the dangerous sea crossing. Resettlement remains a durable solution for vulnerable refugees and more resettlement places are needed worldwide.

From the point of view of people choosing dangerous onward journeys, knowledge is vital in the decision-making process. Anyone considering land and sea crossings to Europe or elsewhere should be able to make an informed decision about what lies ahead. To highlight the dangers of sea crossings, in particular to Italy, UNHCR has created an online platform specifically for Somali and Eritrean communities in an effort to inform young people of what could face them in transit to Europe. Many people make the journey but often do not share their trauma with family and friends at home. The UNHCR resource, *Telling the Real Story* (2015b), records people's harrowing accounts of their journeys to Europe so that others at home can at least make informed decisions about attempting the journey. Their stories can also help the international community to understand those dangers and to underscore the importance of providing legal pathways.

### **Legal pathways – benefits for refugees and host countries**

It must be noted that, while often used in relation to refugees, the term 'burden' can be incorrectly or unfairly applied. Refugees can bring great

offerings to host countries – consider the contribution of refugees such as Albert Einstein. While studies have yet to come to a definitive answer, many point towards the potential long-term benefits that refugees can bring to host communities, not only through the humanitarian aid that is directed towards them but also through the labour and purchasing power they bring (International Rescue Committee, 2016). The NY Declaration acknowledges that ‘[d]iversity enriches every society and contributes to social cohesion’ (NY declaration: para. 14).

One of the most meaningful ways in which states can share responsibility for refugees and gain from their presence is by providing safe, legal pathways for them to reach the state and restart their lives. Countries neighbouring conflict and crises should not be the only ones assisting the displaced, for example, Uganda or Ethiopia in relation to South Sudan. As has been all too apparent in recent years, refugees will take enormous risks to reach safety and opportunity elsewhere, whether they do so by crossing from the Horn of Africa to the coast of Libya and on to Italy by boat, from Turkey to Greece and through the Balkans to Sweden, or by taking to boats in the Bay of Bengal to reach Malaysia and beyond.

Ireland has resettled over 760 Syrian and Iraqi refugees from Lebanon and Jordan since 2014 (Office for the Promotion of Migrant Integration, 2017). Resettlement is a UNHCR-led programme whereby states agree to admit refugees from another host country, generally granting them permanent residence. Ireland joined the UNHCR programme in 1998. The Irish government’s commitment of September 2015 to admit up to 4,000 people in need of protection includes 1,040 resettled refugees from Lebanon, over 600 of whom have already arrived in Ireland. All of the refugees who are resettled are deemed to be refugees by UNHCR and are among the most vulnerable according to specific criteria, for example female-headed households, survivors of violence and torture or medical cases. The number of people in need of resettlement, estimated at 1.2 million globally by UNHCR, far outstrips the number of places available (UNHCR, 2016d: 13).

The 4,000 people to be admitted to Ireland will also include asylum-seekers, the majority of whom are Syrian and currently in Greece. There is an allocation of places for asylum-seekers in Italy, but agreements on security screening are causing difficulties in getting the scheme underway (Stanton, 2016). These asylum-seeker arrivals fall under what is known as the Relocation programme, which is an effort by EU Member States to ease pressure on and show solidarity with Greece and Italy (European Commission, 2017a). Additionally, Ireland committed to host up to 200 unaccompanied children from France after the closure of the so-called Jungle Camp in Calais.

These are all positive initiatives, but UNHCR urges a focus on the most vulnerable cases, in particular children. The EU Relocation programme from Greece and Italy is restricted to people of nationalities that are most likely to need international protection, for example Syrians and Yemenis. At present, that means that young Afghan, Pakistani, Gambian, Egyptian, Nigerian and other asylum-seekers, in particular children who are alone and outside of France, cannot avail of any of these schemes to safely reach Ireland or other countries. UNHCR continuously reminds states of the needs of these vulnerable children, many of whom have experienced or are at risk of horrendous abuse, including forced prostitution, *en route* to and in Europe (UNICEF, 2017).

Other legal pathways exist beyond resettlement and relocation for states to consider. In Portugal, for example, the Global Platform for Syrian Students is a non-profit, multi-stakeholder organisation that is supported by the Portuguese government. It allows Syrian students to study in Portugal through an integrated ‘higher education care’ services package (Global Platform for Syrian Students). This provides a safe and legal route for a number of Syrian students to reach Portugal and resume their third level studies there. Not only does this student scholarship scheme provide them with opportunities to rebuild their lives, but if they are one day in a position to return home safely, they will do so with qualifications and skills to be used and shared.

Canada provides what is probably the best-known example of a private sponsorship scheme, which has been operating since the late 1970s. UNHCR estimates that 1.2 million refugees around the world are in need of resettlement because they do not have durable solutions in their country of asylum (UNHCR, 2016d). Private sponsorship schemes, along with government-supported resettlement, have huge potential to increase places available for vulnerable refugees and their families. Although there are numerous schemes across the country, taking various forms, the general structure of a scheme sees individuals, groups, faith-based organisations, community associations, educational institutions and others working independently or banding together to sponsor a refugee family. They commit to supporting the family for a period of about 12 months by covering rent, food, clothing, utility and other general costs, and assisting with integration into local services and communities, including linking the family with educational, health and employment services (Government of Canada, 2016). This is one of the primary examples of private citizens, NGOs and the private sector working together and with governments to find solutions for refugees and show solidarity with them as well as the countries that have been hosting them.

Just over 40,000 Syrian refugees have arrived in Canada since November 2015 through a variety of programmes, including 14,000 who were privately sponsored (Government of Canada, 2017). There is no set structure for such a scheme. Ireland ran a limited sponsorship scheme, the Syrian Humanitarian Admission Programme in 2014, through which 119 Syrians were granted permission to enter and temporarily reside in Ireland (Fitzgerald, 2016). The Canadian schemes see communities and the private sector joining together to alleviate pressure on host states and to give refugees greater opportunities and safety on a large scale. It is one example that NGOs and communities in Ireland could examine when looking for solutions for refugees.

Resettlement, family reunification, work or study visas and private sponsorship schemes are examples of legal pathways that are essential to

support refugees. They can reduce the burden on host countries by actively moving people out, decreasing pressure on strained resources and easing conditions for both the local and displaced communities that remain. Legal pathways are also a key way of reducing refugees' reliance on treacherous journeys across land and sea.

## **Conclusion**

Refugees must be central to development discussions and planning. The NY Declaration is clear on this, and the 2030 Agenda demands that 'no one is left behind'. If conditions in host countries are improved, refugees should have the opportunity to contribute even more to the local community and may be less likely to undertake dangerous onward movement. Mere survival is not enough; everyone deserves the opportunity to thrive. While hosting large refugee populations may be a strain on some national systems, inclusive development planning and responsibility sharing will reduce that strain. Refugees must have the opportunity to use their many skills and abilities and to contribute equally to society while rebuilding their lives.

If states take on a more equitable share of the displaced population, which they have committed to do in the NY Declaration, it will reduce pressure on the developing countries that are hosting the largest displaced populations. Burden sharing through legal pathways not only has the potential to benefit host countries, but offers refugees the chance to safely reach protection elsewhere. Countries like Ireland are doing a lot but can always do more, including by looking at student scholarship schemes and private sponsorship. The private sector, community groups and educational institutions have a chance to contribute significantly and to create places and homes for refugees, enriching society as they do so.

Many refugees express a desire to eventually return home. They do not flee by choice, but out of necessity. The resurgence of old conflict and the failure to resolve new ones means that the numbers returning home in recent years are low. That means it is vital that the international community fulfils the commitments it made in the 2030 Agenda and the NY Declaration

by assisting host communities and giving refugees more than survival prospects.

Consider the situations that people are facing to conclude that putting their lives in the hands of smugglers, cramped in trucks or in flimsy boats, is a better option than to remain where they are. The more that is done now, the better the future holds for both developed and developing host communities and refugees. And if, one day, refugees are able to safely return home, they may be able to use the skills and experience they had the opportunity to gain, sharing and using them to help rebuild homes and communities.

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**Susan McMonagle** is Associate Protection Officer (acting) at UNHCR Ireland. She holds a BA in Applied Languages (German & Spanish) and a MA in International Relations, both from Dublin City University. Her MA thesis examined the international refugee framework with regard to people displaced across international borders by environmental disasters. In 2015, Susan completed the Diploma in Legal Studies at the Honorable Society of King's Inns, where she is currently enrolled on the Barrister-at-Law Degree.

\*Any views expressed are the author's own.

# DEVELOPMENT EDUCATION AND THE PSYCHOSOCIAL DYNAMICS OF MIGRATION

**Joram Tarusarira**

**Abstract:** A positive response to migration requires a joint effort from both the migrants and citizens of the host countries. Migration, especially forced migration, engenders negative personal and socio-psychological impacts on refugees, asylum seekers and economic migrants. The traumatic experiences they encounter on the journey from their homelands to host countries cause helplessness, fear and dependency. On the other hand, citizens of the host countries often have a negative psychological disposition toward migrants. This has been more distinct with the increased flow of migrants and refugees into Europe following conflict, civil wars and economic inertia in Africa and the Middle East. For effective and positive migration governance, citizens of host countries need to transform their negative socio-psychological attitudes and dispositions towards migrants, and the migrants need to restore their confidence as well as increase trust with the host countries to facilitate social cohesion. Thus, both the host country citizens and the refugees require a cognitive, emotional and moral transformation. Support of migrants has mostly focused on how to integrate them into the host countries through social programmes, with less emphasis on the socio-psychological dimension at play involving the migrants themselves and the host country citizens. This article argues that development education, encompassing a philosophy of critical consciousness and transformative learning, is a strategic methodology to facilitate this transformation towards a public understanding of, and positive action on, migrant issues.

**Key words:** Development Education; Socio-psychological; Psychosocial; Migration Governance; Multiculturalism; Social Cohesion.

## **Introduction**

Conflict, civil wars and economic instability, mostly in Africa and the Middle East, have resulted in the increased flow of forced migrants and refugees into

Europe. Almost a million asylum applications were made in Europe in 2015 compared to 656,000 in 2014 (Parkinson, 2015). Forced migrants often encounter harsh conditions at state level, such as policies that attempt to distinguish between the so-called deserving and undeserving refugees through filtering practices and technologies at border posts and in the country. At the societal level the refugees are met with polar extremes of solidarity and of xenophobia (Zaman, 2017: 157). These experiences not only come with physical limitations but also negative psychological impacts. Thus, the disempowering psychosocial effects of the lived experiences of forced migrants - that is, refugees, asylum seekers and economic migrants, whose motives to migrate often comprise a complex mixture of political, environmental and economic factors - requires attention. This article discusses how the harsh conditions which migrants sometimes experience on their journeys or on arrival in host countries, compromise their agency resulting in the development of particular socio-psychological repertoires regarding their hosts. Socio-psychological repertoire refers to thoughts, feelings and behaviours, developed and shared by group members in relation to actual or imagined others (Kelman, 2008; Bar-Tal, 2000). Subsequently, the article proposes development education as a strategy that can be deployed to enhance migrants' agency to facilitate good relations between them and citizens of host countries within the broader scheme of effective migration governance. The article argues that it is not only the forced migrants who need a turnaround of psychosocial dispositions, but also citizens of host countries.

### **Institutional approach to migration governance**

International institutions such as the United Nations General Assembly, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, and United Nations Research Institute for Social Development put states and inter-states discussions and agreements at the centre of migration governance. For instance the United Nations General Assembly defines migration governance as 'the policies and programmes of individual countries, inter-state discussions and agreements, multilateral forums and consultative processes, the activities of international organisations, as well as relevant laws and

norms' (United Nations, 2013). Statist and legal laws and norms are emphasised. Inter-group relations between migrants and citizens of host countries are not prioritised as central for effective migration governance (Lukunka, 2011; Montgomery, 1996). Research on refugee lives has traditionally focused on hunger, shelter, and job security at the expense of the (socio-) psychological, cultural, and communal aspects of well-being (Lukunka, 2011). Yet psychological well-being, as Montgomery notes, determines refugee adaptability to new environments (Montgomery, 1996). Forced migrants often experience great trauma and socio-psychological strain due to the long journeys they often face, and from their encounters with citizens of host countries. On the other hand, citizens of host countries have particular socio-psychological dispositions based on problems that refugees are seen to pose for their host. This results in a deterioration of refugee-host relations or anti-refugee sentiments (Lawrie & van Damme, 2003). This is evidenced by comments which have become commonplace in current debates on migration governance worldwide, that migrants take locals' jobs and put pressure on public services (Chomsky, 2007).

For effective and positive migration governance, on the one hand, citizens and governments of host countries need to transform their attitudes towards, and perceptions of, migrants. On the other, migrants need to have their confidence restored so that they can assume greater control of their new situation. Much of the work with migrants, outside the political and legal processes, has been unidirectional, focusing on how to integrate them in the host countries through social programmes (Lant, 2017). There has been less focus on the socio-psychological dimension at play involving the migrants themselves and the host country citizens. A socio-psychological approach brings all stakeholders into critical engagement with each other. Development education's philosophy of critical consciousness together with the concept of transformative learning, is a strategic methodology to facilitate this transformation towards a public understanding of, and positive action on, migration governance (Freire, 2002; Cranton, 2005; Mezirow, 2002).

## **Trust and migration governance**

The current refugee ‘crisis’ in Europe, the largest since World War Two, has resulted in greater regulation of migration and enhanced security (Falk, 2017). The United States’ (US) ban on the immigration of citizens—subsequently overturned in the courts—from seven majority Muslim countries, namely Iran, Iraq, Sudan, Syria, Yemen, Somalia and Libya, by executive order by the 45<sup>th</sup> President of the US, Donald Trump, on 27 January 2017, is a case in point (The White House, 2017). Such developments have resulted in a growing belief that inward migration has divided rather than united societies, and in some cases, has become a security threat. The recent terrorist attacks and the continuing threats to Western countries by the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) seemingly justify questioning whether it still makes sense to remain hospitable as well as to trust migrants and refugees.

Social cohesion and effective governance is based on some form of societal trust. In this context forced migrants, the state and the citizens need to trust each other, because low trust societies may struggle to cooperate, which impedes mutual understanding. In such societies, neighbours, most often migrants, might be seen as a threat to the existing socio-economic and political systems. Trust, however, has to be facilitated. One way to do this is to increase contact between different communities through cross-community work. Cross-community outreach programmes, which encourage inter-communal dialogue and enhance cultural understanding, cultivate great respect, diminish fears and unite communities in a mutual acceptance of their common humanity (Hudson et al., 2007; Kidwai, Moore and FitzGibbon, 2014). Social trust, that is, the belief in the goodness or good intentions of others that they will not willingly or unwillingly cause any harm, is a key pillar towards empowering ‘the other’. Embedded in social trust is confidence in the good intentions of ‘the other’. Confidence in other people enables free engagement without fear or reservation. This implies on the one hand the expectation that one’s views or actions will be objectively considered and, on the other hand, the belief that they will receive the same in return—in short, civility and reciprocity. Trust can be primary (taken for

granted and unquestioned), or reflective and calculating. The former does not search for evidence of trustworthiness (e.g. trust in God) while the latter is conceptualised and rationalised, and progressively transformed into strategic and calculated forms (Marková, Linell and Gillespie, 2007: 19). We are interested in the latter type; trust as confidence in human qualities in role expectation and not faith, which is divinely, sanctioned confidence (Herbert, 2004: 87). This means reflective or calculative trust can be thought about, cultivated, facilitated, and is symbolically communicable. It is implicitly or explicitly present in interactions, relationships, and communication (Marková, Linell and Gillespie, 2007: 19). It grows gradually and is mediated by patience and time (Stevens, 2004: 135).

Associating with the ‘other’ facilitates social connections and cooperation, and by virtue of repeated interactions engenders trust among members (Anheier and Kendall, 2000: 11). Increased contact or associational life through various social programmes and activities has the potential to open up to the other and get to know them better, that is, knowing who they are, what their joys and worries are, what they believe in, how they give meaning to life cognitively, emotionally and morally. Thus, this trust is not baseless, unfounded or blind. As Parlevliet observes, associational life addresses relationships which are vital to unlocking positions of fear and suspicion which block systemic changes; it enhances participation by bringing communities together, and if institutionalised, formulates proposals for action in situations where there is tension and suspicion (Parlevliet, 2001: 2).

Increased contact, while it is not in itself a panacea, helps to deconstruct stereotypes about ‘the other’. Stereotypes are often applied to entire groups and identities. They are an inference drawn from the assignment of a person to a particular category; for instance the actions of one Muslim or Christian can be ascribed to all Muslims or Christians and vice-versa. This can serve an ideological function, which justifies the status quo or interests of the dominant or powerful (Brown, 2010: 72). Grouping people into one group overlooks that people have individual identities. Consequently, the potential for good or bad is deposited in a group. Thus to

be good or bad becomes contingent on the group one belongs to and not on his or her actions. Once a stereotype is formed, engagement with the person or people to whom it is ascribed will often be biased and/or prejudiced. The engagement will not interrogate and challenge axiomatic and normative claims. Stereotypes may, however, change in response to the disconfirming information (Brown, 2010: 105).

The desire to understand and recognise the other is strategically positioned to encourage refugees and migrants to engage with the values and culture of the host countries as well as to respect them. This guards against the creation of suburbs, such as the areas around Paris, where young migrants are isolated from the rest of society. More importantly this leads to recognition of the ‘other’, a move away from conceiving historically defined or inherited hierarchies as the sole provenance of social status, toward a notion of dignity more congruent with the ideals of a democratic society or polity, one that is more likely to confer political equality and a full or unimpaired civic status upon all its citizens (Taylor, 1994). This resonates with Butler’s interest in considering how existing norms allocate recognition differentially and what might be done to shift the very terms of recognisability in order to produce more radically democratic results (Butler, 2009: 6).

To make borders between people permeable, shared and complementary by stressing their reciprocal enrichment and the humanity of all, requires exposure to the ‘unknown’ other, and the challenging of myths and unfounded stories. This will allow the shedding of new light on both groups and the transformation of stereotypes (Bar-Tal and Teichmann, 2005). This process will transform culturally exclusive boxes and compartments and build bridges across different sections of society. Such a process has the potential to reverse negative socio-psychological attitudes and perceptions at both individual and community levels.

## **Negative socio-psychological repertoires and the imperative for change**

The negative socio-psychological repertoires between migrants and some citizens of host countries, especially those who feel their socio-economic and political security is threatened, could be unlocked through psychosocial methods. Unlocking negative socio-psychological attitudes and perceptions paves the way for trust. At the heart of the socio-psychological method is dialogue and reflexivity, which facilitate interpersonal engagement and an inner dialogue respectively. Reflexivity challenges migrants and the host citizens to have a nuanced conception of themselves and the other. As migrants enter a new country their identity qualitatively changes and this often requires a deconstruction and reconstruction of new identities. This process requires internal examination leading to external dialogue with citizens of the host countries and policy makers. One of the major obstacles to adapting to new environments is the lack of an internal reflexivity. The temptation is to externalise and project all the difficulties onto the 'other', thus stifling internal communication channels that suggest an internal variability or disharmony (Bar-On, 2006). Effective integration in a new environment consists of change of motivations, goals, beliefs, attitudes and emotions; in short, psychological changes. Psychological changes can take place through information processing, unfreezing, persuading, learning, reframing, recategorising and forming of new psychological repertoires (Bar-Tal and Bennink, 2004: 15).

To settle well in a new country, migrants require a form of reconciliation with themselves, and with the new community. The host country citizens also need to come to terms with the phenomenon of large numbers of new arrivals with different cultures sometimes negatively stereotyped. As Clegg notes, reconciliation with oneself and with others (in this case migrants and host citizens and vice-versa) is the highest aspiration of the human need for identity, belonging and community. It is expressed in holistic patterns of relating, that is: a) responding without resort to physical, verbal, or emotional violence; b) letting go of prejudiced or bigoted attitudes and beliefs; c) mitigating the divisive effects of core

beliefs which cannot be surrendered; d) recognising differences and seeking or creating common ground; e) dialoguing with the expectation of changing and being changed by others; f) promoting inclusive processes, language and participation; g) respecting self, others, and the natural world; h) challenging injustice and other destructive patterns of relating, dealing fairly with all; and i) reflecting critically on one's own and one's community's behaviour and calling to account oneself, one's community and others (Clegg, 2008).

Critical consciousness, a key element of development education, possesses the capacity to unlocking cognitive, emotional and moral perceptions. It allows people to analyse, pose questions, and take action on social, political, cultural and economic factors that influence and shape their lives. As Giroux asserts, critical consciousness is situated in a critical perspective that stresses the transformation of relations between the dominated and the dominant within the boundaries of specific historical contexts and concrete cultural settings (Giroux, 1983: 227). With reference to forced migration, it stresses the transformation of relations between migrants and citizens of host countries, with the latter being the dominant and the former being the dominated. Critical reflection on negative socio-psychological attitudes and perceptions will lead to critical action that develops a positive socio-psychological repertoire necessary for social cohesion. The role of the development educator is 'to enter into dialogue with the people around themes that speak to the concrete situations and lived experiences that inform their daily lives' (Giroux, 1983: 227). Transformative learning is conscientisation or consciousness raising, which aims to develop critical consciousness among individuals and groups (Mulura, 2005: 157; Freire, 2002).

### **Development education and transformative learning**

Forced migration creates a people with particular frames of reality and the world. These frames are created by the experience of the traumatic journey and the visions and illusions of the citizens of host countries, of which the latter have their own perception of migrants. However, most of the frames of

both migrants and citizens of host countries are facile and uncritically acquired but cannot be changed overnight. Transformative learning becomes a strategy to facilitate the required change because it is a process where previously uncritically assimilated assumptions, beliefs, values and perspectives are questioned and thereby become more open, permeable and better validated. It is a structural reimagination, reinterpreting and reorganisation of the way a person looks at him/herself. It is the process by which people transform their taken for granted frames of reference to make them more inclusive (Cranton, 2005; Mezirow, 2002).

Development education methodologies such as Training for Transformation (TfT) developed by Anne Hope and Sally Timmel (1984) can facilitate transformative learning and the development of critical consciousness because they go beyond technical knowledge and skills. They address both societal and personal feelings and needs. They employ participatory learning to encourage communities to start reflecting on their own experiences, critically reflect on their lives and analyse together the issues in question. Participants identify viable strategies to improve the situations they see as problems in their lives. The tools include small group discussions, brainstorming, role-plays and illustrations, listening and drawings. The methods and the materials are designed to stimulate interest, emotion and debate, including simulations, real life stories, newspaper articles, poetry and drama to broach issues which are discussed freely as well as those that are not (Leupold, 2004). These methods are problem-posing with the intention to spark reflection rather than pre-determined outcomes that are absolute and deterministic.

Problem-posing approaches are contrasted to ‘banking’ methods of education, where the teacher’s role is that of putting deposits of knowledge into the students’ heads (Freire, 2002). In the banking method, the students are supposed to give the ‘right answers’ in periodical criterion referenced tests (Peterson, 2003). The banking method in the case of migration would mean prescribing deterministic and teleological frameworks on how migrants should be treated without engaging them. This approach eschews engaging

all the stakeholders necessary for debate towards effective governance. The alternative approach proposed by Freire (2002) is a dialogical ‘problem-posing’ approach, whereby a number of parties, in this case facilitators, migrants, host country citizens and policy makers, discursively and hermeneutically engage in order to arrive at a mutual view of the world. Through the use of open-ended questions, the participants are encouraged to engage in critical thinking and begin to question the very foundation of their beliefs, attitudes and emotions. In the case of migrants and citizens of the host countries participatory methodologies would be positioned to facilitate reflection on forced migration experiences and (socio-) psychological attitudes, perceptions and stereotypes held by both parties. The process of raising the critical consciousness of migrants, policy-makers and citizens of host countries needs to be gendered. Thus, it is vital to take into consideration the learning needs of women, who are among the most affected by forced migration. To this end, in development education, Stalker (2005) recommends paying attention to ‘women’s learning’ understood as the understandings, knowledge and skills acquired by women.

### **Application to migration context**

Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) involved in development education can facilitate socio-psychological transformation by bringing together migrants, policy-makers and citizens of host countries in workshops and face-to-face meetings. In addition to meetings and workshops, collaborative activities between migrants and citizens of host countries can facilitate a change of negative or suspicious socio-psychological dispositions. Collaborative activities may create interdependence and foster common goals. Thus citizens of host countries and migrant communities can learn more about each other (Bar-Tal and Teichman, 2005). As aforementioned, exposure to disconfirming information is another way to deal with negative socio-psychological attitudes and perceptions. Uncritically received information is subjected to interrogation and scrutiny during joint activities. Meetings and workshops can take the form of cultural activities between citizens of host countries and migrant communities. Cultural activities allow

for learning about the other from a human cultural perspective. 'The other' is presented in a humane way with his or her needs, aspirations and concerns.

Such activities should not be an end in themselves, but should be understood as codes or problem-posing materials that open the way for exchange and analysis that facilitate transformative learning. Framed within the context of development education and psychosocial methods, exhibitions or any other form of artistic and cultural expression become instrumental in facilitating discussion and dialogue. Since cultural expressions express the needs, aspirations and concerns of parties involved, they form what Freire (2002: 96) calls generative themes, which are defined as 'the representation in language, of human visions, feelings, and attitudes toward reality. Themes are expressions of that reality. Themes have objective as well as subjective components since language and thought are always referred to reality' (Garcia, 1974: 125). Such themes act as generators, giving energy and focus to discussions for both the participants and the facilitators. Freire believed that educators must listen to and 'respect the particular view of the world held by students or participants or learners' (Freire, 2002: 95). Thus, NGOs and facilitators must enter the 'thematic universe'—the complex of their 'generative themes' of the migrant communities and citizens of host countries. Generative themes are a means to connect participants' personal experience to larger socio-economic and political patterns in society and the world in general. If a generative theme can be identified in their experiences, the theme will open up the situation for further thinking, investigation, and even collective action. Freire argues that 'generative themes' arise in situations that have become limited through socially- and economically-oppressive practices. He identifies 'limit situations' as the constellation of boundaries that constrain actions and thoughts and so prevent oppressed people from thinking and acting freely (Gillespie, n.d.). The situation of being a forced migrant with its negative impact is a limit situation, just as the situation of encountering a new people with a different culture is for the citizens of host countries. Generative themes have to do with issues about which people have strong feelings. They generate other themes and can generate new tasks, as well as actions. They are linked to emotions and thus

have the capacity to generate energy to engage and through engagement they increase understanding of the other. As Freire stated: 'The more active an attitude men and women take in regard to the exploration of their thematics, the more they deepen their critical awareness of reality and, in spelling out those thematics, take possession of that reality' (2002: 78).

## **Conclusion**

Effective migration governance is thus not a preserve of states and inter-states policies and agreements. The people affected have a role to play in the success or failure of the policies and agreements. Political processes that are not founded on or mediated by societal involvement are liable to failure. Poorly managed migration governance can be explosive. It can lead to harm, danger and insecurity such as social unrest, xenophobia and discrimination. To avoid such eventualities a socio-psychological perspective is imperative to facilitate change of attitudes between various stakeholders in migration governance including the migrants, state and non-state actors, individuals and the society at large. As has been demonstrated, transformation of perception and attitudes requires facilitation and it has been argued that development education, especially its emphasis on critical consciousness and transformative learning stand well-positioned for this task.

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**Joram Tarusarira** is Assistant Professor of Religion, Conflict and Peacebuilding at the University of Groningen in the Netherlands. He is also the Deputy Director of the Centre for Religion, Conflict and Public Domain at the same university. He

attained an MPhil in Reconciliation Studies from Trinity College Dublin (Belfast Campus), a Master of Adult Education from St Francis Xavier University, Canada and PhD from the Institute for African Studies at the University of Leipzig (Germany). He is former Head of Civic and Development Education at Silveira House–Jesuit Social Justice and Development Centre in Zimbabwe.

# HIGHER EDUCATION FOR REFUGEES: THE CASE OF SYRIA

**Helen Avery and Salam Said**

**Abstract:** The refugee crisis is also a crisis in education. While attention is frequently directed toward primary and secondary school levels, higher education is a strategic issue for refugees, both as individuals and for long term processes of post-conflict recovery and peacebuilding. Education prospects and content are drivers of onwards migration, but also affect economic structures on return. Higher education has the potential to support sustainable socio-economic development, but impacts will depend on which strategies are adopted and which types of capacity are prioritised. The article examines the issue of access to higher education for Syrian refugees, describing the situation in Lebanon in particular. Foreign interests can fuel sectarianism as well as creating economic structural dependencies. Both existing and possible future options supported by the international community are considered here, and discussed with respect to how they might affect opportunities for democratic and autonomous societal developments.

**Key words:** Higher Education; Refugee Education; Syrian Refugees; Radicalisation; Peacebuilding; Economic Dependency; Social Justice; Socio-economic Development.

## Introduction

‘We are facing the biggest refugee and displacement crisis of our time. Above all, this is not just a crisis of numbers; it is also a crisis of solidarity’ (United Nations High Commission for Refugees [UNHCR], 2015a: 5). This statement by the United Nations Secretary General, Ban Ki Moon, in August 2016 calling for global solidarity, points to the urgent need for an appropriate ‘action’ to find a durable solution for the rising numbers of ‘persons of concern’ who are mainly refugees, internally displaced persons (IDPs), asylum-seekers, returned refugees and stateless persons (UNHCR 2017). It also refers to the limited financial resources of the United Nations (UN) and

its high dependency on wealthy member states. The number of registered refugees grew from 1.7 million in 1955 to more than 21.3 million in 2016, while the number of ‘persons of concern’ amounted to 65.3 million in 2016 (UNHCR, 2016a; UNHCR, 2017). The main countries of origin of refugees in 2015 and 2016 were Syria, Afghanistan and Somalia, all countries which have experienced long-term conflicts (UNHCR, 2015a: 5; UNHCR, 2016a). However, the ongoing conflict in Syria ranks as the worst since the end of the Cold War (Gates et al., 2016).

Only 18 per cent of the world’s refugees are hosted in developed countries of the global North, while 82 per cent are hosted by countries in the global South (UNHCR, 2015a: 5). Social and economic impacts on host countries are considerable (UNHCR-UNDP, 2015; Awad, 2015; Zirack, 2016), and lack of sufficient humanitarian and development assistance may trigger a new set of crises, creating a self-perpetuating vicious circle of dependence and distress (Wazani, 2014, UNHCR-UNDP 2015; Awad, 2015, Zirack, 2016). With regard to the Middle East and North Africa, global responses have been severely questioned, and Awad (2015: 25) argues that they have contributed to the ‘fragility of nation-states in the Middle East’.

Various suggestions have been put forward by the UN to alleviate suffering and to overcome socio-economic challenges in the host countries. Such suggestions include resettlement and return programmes, while emphasis has been placed to differing degrees on self-reliance or integration in the host country (UNHCR, 2015a: 23). However, long term developments observed for previous waves of refugees suggest that efforts have so far proved insufficient to avoid continued or escalating crises in host countries. Examples include the deteriorating situation of Palestinian refugees in camps in Lebanon and Jordan since the 1960s, or the Dadaab camp in Kenya established in 1991 to provide refuge for people fleeing civil war in Somalia (Aljazeera, 2016b; Zolberg, Suhrke and Aguayo, 1989; Dryden-Peterson, 2016; Yeung, 2016). Strategic reflection on how to create more favourable conditions for countries affected by massive forced displacement is complicated by the fact that countries that organise and financially support

humanitarian and development efforts in the wake of armed conflict, may at the same time be contributing to such conflicts. Geopolitical agendas are pursued either directly by military intervention or, indirectly, through logistical support and arms deliveries to the parties in conflict (Selby and Tadros, 2016).

This article will discuss the significance of higher education (HE) for refugees in the context of the Syrian crisis. Constraints affecting access to education in Lebanon and other host countries are outlined, as well as some of the strategic choices to be confronted to avoid cycles of violence and increasing loss of autonomy in the long term.

### **Higher education for refugees: Educating for a shift in paradigm**

Among the arguments for prioritising higher education for refugees is the stabilisation of society by combatting radicalisation. We argue that, in the long term, ‘security’ cannot be achieved by military control and repression. Besides external interests that might - for religious, ideological, economic or geopolitical reasons - be financing radical groups in countries such as Syria or Iraq, the societal conditions for radicalisation in the Middle East often stem from a lack of hope. This hopelessness is often rooted in a lack of viable alternatives for the future in a context of political repression and rising socio-economic injustice. Turning the tide amounts to creating a basis for visions of hope and empowerment and, here, rhetoric is not enough: the perspectives for the future need to be credible. This involves creating a vibrant economy, serving real needs and creating sustainable livelihoods, as well as improving the environment and increasing future resilience in times of global turbulence. It also means stepping out of the paradigm of colonial dependence and subordination, collective humiliations, political repression and corrupt government or political-economic elites (Selby and Tadros, 2016). These processes require international efforts of solidarity, with agenda-setting determined by the people concerned.

There are three interrelated sets of issues that are fundamental for refugee higher education, which relate to the society-building and long-term

functions of higher education. Firstly, refugee HE needs to build capacity for addressing new and rapidly changing problems, in settings with a high degree of instability (Bryan, 2015; Munck et al, 2013). Secondly, these problems are situated at the level of society as a whole – they are massive in scale, cutting across sectors, institutions and national borders (Bryan, 2015; Dryden-Peterson, 2016). Thirdly, funding needs to be mobilised for the public good, addressing long-term challenges at a time when HE is increasingly tied to private sector interests and mechanisms of marketisation (Bryan, 2015; Morrow and Torres, 2000).

A fourth set of issues relates to the conditions of refugees as students and the often dire circumstances of their daily lives. In many cases, being a refugee means you have experienced violence and lived under humiliating conditions. Surviving day to day can be a challenge. Even those fortunate enough to escape the worst situations are affected by ongoing events within conflict zones. The fate of friends and family, as well as the constant feeling of uncertainty and insecurity, all create huge mental and emotional pressures. These are preconditions for radicalisation and extremism. Under such circumstances, HE has the potential to open a window beyond the conflict in the home country and the miserable situation in their refugee camp (UNHCR, 2015b).

Kirk and Sherab (2016) argue that HE will protect refugees against marginalisation and abuse, as well as enable them to support their communities in exile and contribute to the future development of their home countries. So, in this sense, HE can be considered as a ‘bridge between emergency response and sustainable development’ (Kirk and Sherab, 2016: 13). Importantly, also, the perspective that sees education as the realisation of individual aspirations (or as the societal challenge to provide education for a number of individuals) differs from the perspective of considering the educational needs of society and society-building. Thus, for instance, when individuals pay for higher education, it would typically be directed at enabling a personal career and socio-economic advancement that will eventually justify the money invested in studies.

Under a situation of massive destruction or protracted conflict, social reconciliation and reconstruction efforts need to be considered in terms of society-building, rather than simply re-establishing previous structures. In the case of Syria, a number of deficits existed pre-conflict, in educational capacity (Said, 2013). But as a result of the conflict, a new set of problems have been created most notably including the issues of radicalisation and polarisation. The demographic profile of different areas and of the country as a whole has changed as a result of the conflict (Eskaf, 2016; Picali, 2016), resulting from calculated changes to the ethnic, religious and political characteristics of different zones. Additionally, the future economy and institutions will need to function with fewer qualified people, as a consequence of massive brain drain as well as losing years of training and schooling (Deane, 2016).

Not only do societal institutions need to be established in a situation where resources will probably be scarce and society is fragmented, but these structures must be innovative and function adequately from the outset, to avoid a new cascade of destructive crises. Such innovation is not a luxury or an add-on. On the one hand, there is a likelihood that various aspects of existing institutions contributed to the dynamics of the conflict in the first place. But on the other, and importantly, the post-conflict situation will in itself demand new types of structures. A deep-reaching renewal of structures is further needed because the region - and indeed the planet - is in a period of rapid transition (Munck et al, 2013), with factors such as climate change contributing new pressures (Bryan, 2015). The impacts of rising food prices or changing weather patterns are particularly acute for vulnerable populations, and additional economic crises and unfair policies could cause extreme social volatility. According to a study by Barakat and Milton (2015: 1) higher education:

“...is able to act as a catalyst for the recovery of war-torn countries in the Arab world, not only by supplying the skills and knowledge needed to reconstruct shattered economic and physical infrastructure, but also by supporting the restoration of collapsed

governance systems and fostering social cohesion. As home to the strategically vital 18-25 age group, higher education can help shelter and protect an important subset of young men and women during crisis situations, maintaining their hopes in the future, and preventing them from being driven into the hands of violent groups”.

Against this background, refugee HE is not primarily a question of providing conventional schooling or training to a particular population living today under difficult circumstances (Dryden-Peterson, 2016), but rather reimagining education so it can support members of a society who have experienced a certain degree of violence and psychological trauma and who will in the future be facing a particular set of challenges. A wide range of technical and organisational capacities are required (Deane, 2016), alongside powerful peace-building strategies and a value system based on freedom, participation and democracy.

While attention needs to be devoted to HE sensitive to the immediate and urgent needs of refugees as students, the long-term effects of strategies for refugee HE must not be neglected. This implies a focus on HE above all as a question of local and regional autonomy in terms of the ability to set agendas (Hickling-Hudson, 2000). HE centred on the refugees’ own local context is further required, both to ensure sufficient understanding of the needs and interests of the local population, rather than foreign interests (Selby and Tadros, 2016). This is paramount so that reconstruction does not lead to subsequent positions of structural dependency, where economic development is driven by foreign commercial interests, while ensuing social and environmental costs are paid by international humanitarian agencies.

### **Strategies in refugee education for Syrians**

In a crisis such as the ongoing war in Syria, the demands are so vast and the resources so limited that it is difficult to know where to start. The urgency of the situation, as well as a humanitarian framing of the issues at stake, tends to place emphasis on immediate needs rather than long term developments

(Dryden-Peterson, 2016; Selby and Tadros, 2016). Higher education may in such contexts be seen as less fundamental and urgent than questions of survival. It could also be argued that individuals should finance studies themselves, since the educated are more likely to be earning higher salaries post-HE. But deprioritising HE for refugees and decentring it from the region has serious consequences. The policy increases brain drain on the one hand, and on the other, creates a ‘lost generation’ of young people (Deane, 2016).

As many reports emphasise, in the case of Syria, far too many young refugees are missing schooling today (London Progress Report, 2016). But more attention needs to be devoted to the ways in which education relates to livelihoods and future educational pathways. The type of education refugees can access today does not help them access decent jobs (Dryden-Peterson, 2016), particularly in view of various obstacles they face on the labour market in the host countries. In Lebanon and Jordan, for instance, Syrians are not allowed to work in a number of professions, and securing work permits is time consuming and expensive (Armstrong, 2016; Wazani, 2014: 103). Importantly, offering primary or even secondary education locally in the regional host countries is not enough, since as long as further education prospects are closed in the region, people are likely to seek a better future abroad.

University-aged Syrian refugees were estimated at 150,000 in 2016. At best, six per cent of these will have the opportunity to study at universities in the host countries or in so-called ‘third countries’ (Luo and Craddock, 2016), while the majority are barred from access to further educational pathways. These young people are likely to find themselves among the unskilled, illegal and underpaid labour force in the host countries, or become potential candidates for recruitment in regular or irregular armed forces (Barakat and Milton, 2015; Deane, 2016). Their motivation to work in harsh conditions, or to be involved in conflict, lies in earning money to fill the financial gap for their families and be independent of charity and aid. It is also based on the need to claim an identity, redefine their role in society and

do something to change their miserable status. In short, the socio-economic conditions under which the Syrian refugees in Lebanon and Jordan are living are well short of basic human dignity (Human Rights Watch, 2016; Jamjoom and Khalaf, 2015).

Refugee camps in Lebanon are illegal (although they exist in practice), while the camps in Jordan are described by refugees as akin to a large prison, since strict rules control the movement inside the camps and the infrastructure is poor (Barolini, 2016). Nonetheless, the majority of Syrian refugees in both Lebanon and Jordan are living outside regular camps and suffer high levels of discrimination from the local authorities and communities (Dahi 2014; Jamjoom and Khalaf, 2015). Lebanese apprehensions are no doubt coloured by the country's experience with Palestinian refugees, who became long-term camp residents living in dire conditions (Aljazeera, 2016a), and whose presence has served as a pretext for occupation and attacks. The tensions in Lebanon, in particular, can be understood in light of the close but complex historical relationships between Syrians and Lebanese. Today, low-paid Syrians are pushing down wages and competing for jobs with the poorest sections of Lebanese society (Oxfam, 2017). Lebanon's involvement in the conflict through Hezbollah's support for the Assad regime, on the one hand, and the Sunni community's support for the opposition on the other, has also exacerbated the effects of the conflict on all sides (Dahi, 2014; Khatib, 2014).

The HE situation of Syrian refugees in the region is largely dependent on higher education provision and the levels of socio-economic development in the host countries. Lebanon and Jordan suffer from serious socio-economic problems, such as unemployment, income inequality and social injustice (ILO, 2013, UNHCR-UNDP, 2015: 13-15). At the same time, both countries follow a neoliberal economic policy that tends to worsen problems rather than resolve them (Selby and Tadros, 2016). Private schools and universities for the wealthy have a long tradition in these countries, and elevated fees prevent access to HE for the children of domestic workers, farmers or low-income employees. Public education is under-funded and the

quality of provision was already deteriorating before the current crisis (Frayha, 2009: 1; Tabbaa, 2011).

While HE in Lebanon and Jordan remains out of reach for most refugees, opportunities outside the host countries of the region are not unproblematic. Studying abroad involves devoting a disproportionate amount of time, resources and energy, to meet formal entry requirements and overcome other obstacles. Another key higher education issue in third countries lies in the fact that, although the diaspora can perform valuable services in many ways - such as in the case of Ethiopia (Amazan, 2014) - it will not replace the need for local people with relevant educational attainment. Importantly, existing HE curricula in third countries help build capacity in society through the provision of training and skills but do not meet the present and future regional needs of the Middle East, and in particular the specific dimensions connected to post-conflict recovery and reconciliation processes.

### **The case of Syrians in Lebanon**

Before the Lebanese government closed its borders to Syrian refugees in January 2015, they could easily travel to Lebanon and get a visa on the border. There were nonetheless a number of obstacles to HE, particularly financial resources and required school or university documents (ILO, 2013). Refugees without secondary school leaving qualifications could not gain an equivalent Lebanese certificate, since Syrian students were not allowed to enrol in public schools until 2014. Today, Syrian children are allowed to attend public schools, but not together with Lebanese students and they are only allowed to attend evening shifts. Moreover, many cannot afford to go to school because they lack the money to cover transport and other costs (ILO, 2013; Interview with HN, a Syrian activist and expert on education for Syrian refugees in a Lebanon-based NGO, Berlin, 27 December 2016).

The cost of education is a major impediment to attending HE. Examination fees at the Ministry for Education and HE reach up to \$100 for secondary school leaving certificates and up to \$200 for Bachelor diplomas.

Student fees at Lebanese universities vary between \$600 at public and more than \$4,000 at private universities. After January 2015, access to HE became even more difficult, since universities started to ask for residency permits, which denied a large number of illegal refugees access to higher education. Obtaining residence permits is not only expensive, but the conditions that applicants need to meet are prohibitive. Legally enrolled students at universities get six month to one-year permits. Securing a permit extension is a time-consuming process, as it requires all the documents that were already provided for the first application (Interview with HN, 2017).

While some families try to provide a future for their children by migrating, or sending their children away alone, others invest in local education as a step to later pursue education abroad. Many humanitarian organisations and private schools stress English language skills, which can be seen as an approach aiming to facilitate further schooling abroad. Gaining competence to study in countries outside the region, however, is an inefficient and costly way to be educated, whether from the perspective of individuals or in considering the impact of resources invested by NGOs with a humanitarian or development agenda. Long years are lost in acquiring residency status, validating prior qualifications, learning foreign languages, and gaining social capital in the countries of study

For Syrian, as well as other war refugees, migration polices in Europe, generally aim at integrating the educated refugees in their own labour markets, rather than offering capacity-building training and supporting reconstruction of the home country of refugees (European Parliament, 2016). A mismatch of curricular content available abroad to regional conditions contributes to preventing the future return of an educated diaspora, as well as favouring less than optimal solutions when professionals do return to their communities, as in the case of Ethiopia (Amazan, 2014). Refugees also need to earn their living quickly, and their choice of education pathway will be influenced by their individual perceptions of future opportunities. The strategy of studying abroad thereby increases both short and long term dependence on foreign expertise, and reduces the capacity for strategic

reflection and agenda-setting locally. Additionally, the question of ‘localising’ knowledge and know-how gained during studies abroad is far from straightforward. Most knowledge is very tightly linked to specific technology, which in turn is linked to powerful companies that control these technologies.

At a societal level, consolidating a foreign-educated elite (Hickling-Hudson, 2000) can increase social divisions and distance the educated from concerns of the wider communities. Inversely, if HE curricula were centred on society-building and the needs of the community, social cohesion could be increased. Models for new forms of institutions, technologies and structures could be tested locally and refined. Importantly, when the educated are able to serve their own communities, the need for external support is reduced.

### **Current responses to refugees’ higher education needs**

Higher education directed towards refugees has not received as much attention as primary and secondary education, either from the humanitarian agencies or from donors (Barakat and Milton, 2015; Dryden-Peterson, 2016; Kirk and Sherab, 2016). The response to the lack of HE opportunities has generally speaking been limited to scholarship programmes, distance learning, providing e-learning platforms and some projects to found universities for refugees (Barakat and Milton, 2015: 6; Luo and Craddock, 2016). However, HE for refugees has increasingly come to the fore as a key issue since 2015 - one year after the large wave of young refugees travelling to Europe.

Higher education was expressed as a priority in the UNHCR 2012-2016 education strategy (UNHCR 2015c: 1), and several initiatives have emerged since. In the case of Syria, scholarship programmes have been expanded to cover larger numbers of students and provide HE opportunities at universities in Jordan, Turkey and Lebanon. In addition, many capacity-building and training courses have been announced for skilled Syrian refugees such as the Tahdir programme of Arab Reform Initiative 2017 (O’Keeffe and Pásztor, 2017). Capacity-building and HE as a contribution to

reconstruction in post-war Syria is becoming a mainstream topic in several international reports and press articles (Magaziner, 2015; UNHCR, 2016b; Gonzalez, 2017). Donor countries as well as international development and humanitarian organisations have made efforts to coordinate their activities related to higher education. These activities aim to support refugees to be independent, get decent employment in the host countries and become potential actors in the reconstruction of Syria (Lindsey, 2016). The foundation for refugee students (UAF), German Academic exchange services (DAAD), the Swedish Institute, the international NGO SPARK, the Albert Einstein German Academic Refugee Initiative (DAFI), as well as Al-Fanar, are some examples of the initiatives that deliver HE to Syrian refugees (Bollag, 2016; CAE-team, 2017).

Such initiatives solve the financial and administrative problems of many fortunate and well-qualified refugees, who secure these scholarships. However, they do not address the overall problem of interrupted schooling for young people who have not obtained secondary leaving qualifications. In 2015-16, only two per cent of Syrian refugees between 15-18 years were enrolled in the school system in Lebanon and only six per cent of refugees aged 14-17 years received secondary education in Jordan (Kirk and Sherab, 2016; London Progress Report, 2016). That means there are more than 150,000 students of HE-age in Jordan and Lebanon without a secondary leaving certificate, and who will not be able to take advantage of the HE opportunities outlined above. In addition, scholarship conditions to study in Europe or non-Arabic speaking countries are quite demanding for a refugee student, who has limited opportunities in the camps to improve English language skills or access e-learning programmes. Thus an additional challenge for an effective refugee HE strategy is to ensure that students with interrupted and inadequate secondary education can move on to further education (ILO, 2013: 17).

## **Practical challenges in developing refugee curricula for higher education**

Considering the gap between the scope of existing initiatives and the level of demand, we need to create a HE curriculum for capacity-building equal to the highly complex cross-sectoral issues and wide range of geographical and institutional settings pertaining to refugees. The underlying problem here is financing and legitimisation, considering that HE is typically institutionally supported and financed either by national or commercial actors. Another set of HE institutions in the Middle East have been established by foreign political actors, including the American, German and Islamic universities, as a part of their foreign policy or so-called ‘soft power’ (Nye, 2005). It is thus difficult to find actors who would be motivated to sponsor relevant HE for reconstruction and recovery of a country other than their own, unless they have commercial or political interests.

Collaboration across HE contexts in the global South facing similar post-conflict or development challenges is a possible strategy to address refugee education needs. But this is also not unproblematic, for a variety of reasons. Besides the issue of overall access to resources in contexts of post-conflict reconstruction, countries in the global South are themselves in positions of dependency towards stronger actors. The same types of quality criteria, accountability and assessment mechanisms are applied globally, as in the global North, leaving little space to establish relevant curricula. Access to international publications and databases is costly and therefore tends to be reduced in southern contexts. Communication and instruction mediums remain a concern, when collaborating across linguistic borders. Academic environments are not only under pressure from commercially or geopolitically motivated actors, but by local elites and bureaucracies, often beset by rival factions or ideologically and religiously motivated interests.

While Syria can draw on diverse perspectives and alliances that can potentially enrich intellectual development (Amazan, 2014), there is also a real risk that sectarian and political conflicts among foreign parties involved in the Syrian conflict may cascade into refugee communities educated in

different contexts, and obstruct future cooperation in the reconstruction phase. A number of Islamic education projects in particular are tied to the interests of Turkey, Iran, Saudi Arabia or the Gulf States. Under the circumstances, possible strategies include: 1) diversifying dependencies to increase autonomy; 2) working with global networks and NGOs; 3) working with institutions or HE departments which have a progressive agenda and may already be oriented towards such concerns; 4) developing networks of such HE environments to mutually increase capacity in areas of society-building competences; and 5) working with the diasporas.

Combining diversification and networking can reduce vulnerability and dependency. An additional advantage is that Syrian academics and wider society can benefit from inputs from a wider range of HE traditions, and more particularly traditions which allow the development of creativity and critical thinking skills. Advocates of internationalisation have long stressed the benefits of learning from other cultures and societal models, as well as opening enriching dialogues across cultures and contexts. International networks thus have considerable potential. At the same time, building new structures requires sustained attention and commitment over time, and that is challenging even within a given local context. These challenges multiply when involving multiple, geographically dispersed actors.

## **Conclusions**

While conflict represents the greatest direct cause of vast waves of refugees, poverty, economic crisis, political repression, social injustice and climate change have also been significant factors in displacing millions of people. Highly complex geopolitical and global economic forces thus contribute to creating and perpetuating intolerable life conditions for refugees. This implies that any response to the ongoing crisis needs to address the roots of the crisis, and long-term consequences of action that is taken. Strategies in this field notably need to consider in which ways action may stop the spiral of armed conflict, improve socio-economic development and contribute to stabilisation and de-radicalisation of societies.

Regardless of how the situation evolves, in the case of Syria, a large proportion of Syrians who fled the conflict will remain in other countries. Clearly, the main efforts of education - at primary, secondary or tertiary levels - are and will be oriented towards integration into host communities. But focus on these legitimate objectives should not detract attention from the long-term impact of HE strategies, and the need to build capacity that will benefit conflict-afflicted regions (Deane, 2016). There is thus a need for refugee higher education, oriented toward the needs of future reconstruction, peacebuilding, and economic recovery. This kind of capacity will also be needed to build a bridge between the Syrian diaspora and reconstruction efforts within Syria itself.

At the global level, HE strategies for refugees cannot be considered in isolation from the socio-economic context of the affected country and the host countries in the global South that bear the heaviest load of refugees. Therefore, HE strategies have to be well coordinated with other socio-economic development strategies in and for the regions. To find sustainable solutions, high coordination efforts are also required at a global level to deliver HE to refugees, and more generally, deliver relevant and equitable HE in the global South.

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**Helen Avery** is a researcher at the Centre for Middle Eastern Studies at Lund University in Sweden, and holds a PhD in Education. Her current research interest include refugee education and long term strategic thinking related to post-conflict recovery processes in the Middle East. She has previously worked on the rehabilitation of refugees in the context of international organisations.

**Salam Said** holds a PhD in International Economic Relations from the University of Bremen. Since 2009 she has lectured and researched on Arab Economies, Regional Economic Arab Integration and Political Economy of the Middle East at various German universities. Currently, she is working as a scientific

coordinator of the project 'For Socially Just Development in MENA', which is based in Tunis and funded by the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung.

# NEWS VERSUS NEWSFEED: THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION

**Emma Somers**

**Abstract:** Suas Educational Development has worked since its inception to engage third level students in Ireland in global citizenship education. This article focuses on some of the challenges of supporting young people in reflecting, learning and acting on global justice issues. In particular, it focuses on students' relationship with media and social media; on the influence that relationship may have on their critical skills, confidence and connections with their communities; and on the ways in which organisations such as Suas can help overcome these challenges.

**Key words:** Global Citizenship; Higher Education; Immigration; Diversity; Social Cohesion; Community; Media; Social Media; Metaliteracy.

## Introduction

Suas is an Irish-based international non-governmental organisation (INGO) whose mission is to transform the lives of children and young people through education. We deliver quality education programmes with partner schools in disadvantaged settings in Ireland and internationally. We also work with young people to educate and equip them as global citizens. Partnership, volunteering and mentoring opportunities are integrated into all aspects of our work, and over time we aim to collaborate with a wide range of agencies in Ireland and internationally to build a broad social movement committed to challenging injustice and inequality in education. Our latest strategic thinking brings into sharper focus the role of prejudice and discrimination in limiting a child's opportunities to realise their full potential. As such, we have committed that in all our work we will actively promote the right of children and young people in disadvantaged and marginalised settings to quality education and to live free of discrimination (with a particular focus on promoting gender equality and valuing diverse identities). Ultimately we want to see all children and young people valued equally.

Our Global Citizenship Programme aims to inspire, educate and engage young people as global citizens and foster collaboration on social change projects that promote educational and other opportunities for children and young people in disadvantaged settings. Since 2013, the 8x8 Festival has been one of the Global Citizenship Programme's key 'inspire' activities. With support from Suas staff, third level students design, develop and deliver this festival of film and photography. Last year, the 8x8 Festival was held on seven third level campuses across Ireland, spending a week at each one from October to November 2016, with an outdoor photo exhibition and learning events to accompany the films.

### **8x8 Festival**

From 2013 to 2015, the project was funded by the European Union and Irish Aid. In 2016, it was funded solely by Irish Aid. A range of people are involved in supporting the festival each year, including students and Suas student societies, staff on campus and Suas staff. For the 2016 festival, Suas recruited 20 student coordinators, who were the main points of contact on each campus. They worked together over the summer to first choose a theme for this year's festival and develop messaging around that theme. They then identified films to screen and images to display, and planned events on their campus, with each campus team working closely together on logistics, promotion and delivery of the festival.

The Global Citizenship Programme takes a 'stepped engagement' approach to delivery and the festival is a first step on this engagement ladder. Its aim is to cast the net out widely on campus to attract new students who may not normally have the opportunity to engage with global justice issues or who may not normally 'self-select' to attend such events. Students can take a few minutes to view the photo exhibition, or spend an hour or two attending an event during the festival. The idea is that they may then engage with other Suas activities, such as our Global Issues Course, our Ideas Collective, our international volunteering programme, or our mentoring programmes. While we face many challenges in supporting young people to reflect and act on global justice issues, 2016's 8x8 Festival highlighted in particular the

influence of social media and the impact it may have on students' critical skills, confidence and sense of connection to their wider communities. Before educating students on global issues, is it first necessary to help them understand their relationship with media and social media? And are we doing enough to create the spaces in which students can contextualise their learning through shared experiences with the communities they are discussing?

### **No two people have the same story**

In 2016, the 8x8 Festival student coordinators chose to focus on the global refugee crisis. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR, 2015) more than 65 million people – or one person in every 113 citizens – were displaced from their homes by conflict and persecution in 2015. It is the first time in the history of the United Nations (UN) that the threshold of 60 million has been crossed, making it the largest displacement of people since the Second World War. The students wanted to examine the myths and misconceptions that abound about this crisis.

While war reduces entire neighbourhoods to rubble, western media and politics increasingly reduce the communities left devastated by that violence to one word: migrants. It counts them in 'waves', 'floods' and 'swarms'. It defines them by stereotypes, which the students wanted to challenge. Even the framing of the situation as a 'refugee crisis' was something the students would come to question.

Drawing on resources from non-governmental organisations (NGOs) working on the ground with refugees and asylum seekers, and from trusted media outlets (e.g. *The Guardian* and *The New York Times*), we began to break down some of the most widespread stereotypes. These included the perception that Europe is facing a 'refugee crisis' of epic proportions; that most refugees coming to Europe are young, able-bodied men who pose a terrorist threat; that refugees are mostly economic migrants, who are happy to leave their home countries in search of prosperity; and that refugees are a drain on the economies of their host countries.

By reading more and talking to organisations such as the Irish Refugee Council, the students began to understand the dehumanising effect of reducing the lives of tens of millions of people to a single narrative. The main aims of the festival would be: to humanise refugee and migration issues through sharing personal stories; to challenge perceptions by debunking myths surrounding these issues; to include both local and global stories to show how the issues play out at home as well as overseas; and to encourage and inspire people to do something following the exhibition by providing them with channels through which they could directly support or show solidarity with refugees. In the end, the students chose a simple but powerful theme on which to base their film and photograph selections: ‘No Two People Have The Same Story’. The 20 images chosen for the outdoor exhibition were broken down into four parts to bring the viewer on a journey that would loosely follow that of a person seeking refuge. The first focused on ‘home’ and provided a perspective on the many and varied reasons why people flee their homes, from climate change and natural disasters to conflict and persecution. The second focused on ‘fleeing’ and highlighted the often perilous journeys men, women and children make to seek refuge beyond the borders of their own countries. The third, ‘arriving’, looked at the dehumanising conditions faced by millions of people living in camps and reception centres, while also highlighting the issue of separated families and the fact that the vast majority of refugees are hosted in developing countries that can ill-afford to provide for their needs. The final section, ‘new life’, told the stories of people who had been granted asylum, focusing on the potential for the future and the benefits of immigration to host countries.

Alongside the main exhibition, we ran a second, indoor exhibition, curated by one of the students, focused on a fishing community displaced by conflict in Colombia, which now faces huge environmental challenges to its way of life. We also screened three documentaries of varying lengths filmed at three different refugee camps: *Salam Neighbor* (2015), a feature-length film about people living in the UN-run Za’atari refugee camp in Jordan; *Transit Zone* (2015), a 40-minute film focusing on the experiences of a young man at the unofficial refugee camp in Calais; and *Refuge* (2016), a

nine-minute short filmed at the military-run Vasilika refugee camp in northern Greece. Informal supporting learning events included panel discussions, debates and talks, alongside which we ran classroom-based workshops on media, identity and diversity. The students also organised a photograph campaign on Facebook to show solidarity with refugees coming to Ireland. And at several campuses, students carried out direct action ‘installations’ to highlight barriers to education for young people living in Direct Provision, the controversial system by which the Irish government houses people seeking asylum (Quinn, 2016).

In total, across the seven campuses, an estimated 12,000 people engaged with the outdoor exhibition. About 1,400 people attended screenings and other supporting events. In feedback surveys, students said they found the festival ‘insightful’ and ‘eye-opening’, and appreciated the opportunity to ‘hear a different point of view than mainstream media’. They also reported feeling empowered to take action on the issue of immigration.

### **News versus newsfeed**

The festival’s learning events, and in particular workshops and debates with a media focus, highlighted the importance of unpacking the students’ relationship with media and social media in order to equip them with the skills and understanding they need to engage with global development issues. In discussions around media coverage, students often displayed a poor understanding of the roles of media and social media. It was clear that attendees were struggling to critically engage with the content they were consuming, mostly through social media. According to Reuters Institute (2016), social media has for the first time overtaken television as young people’s main source of news (Figure 1). In Ireland, 56 per cent of under 35’s use Facebook weekly for news – far exceeding the rate for the UK (41 per cent) and also ahead of that of the US (51 per cent).

**Figure 1. Top Social Networks** (used weekly for news)

NETWORK	Ireland		UK		US	
	ALL	U35s	ALL	U35s	ALL	U35s
Facebook	45%	56%	28%	41%	45%	51%
YouTube	17%	17%	12%	20%	19%	24%
Twitter	13%	15%	7%	11%	10%	15%
WhatsApp	7%	12%	3%	5%	4%	8%
LinkedIn	4%	4%	2%	3%	3%	3%

Source: Reuters Institute ‘Digital News Report’ (2016)

In keeping with these recent trends in news consumption, we found Facebook was by far the most popular medium for sourcing news among the students who engaged with our media workshops and discussions. It was seen by the majority as part of ‘the media’ and therefore presumed to uphold the same news values as more traditional media, regardless of the original source. There was a confused expectation from many that social media was responsible for reliably informing the public about global issues such as war and migration, rather than the user being responsible for seeking out that information from reliable sources. While some students were more aware of the need to ‘curate’ their Facebook feed and find reliable news sources, most showed little awareness of Facebook as a corporation for which they as users were the ‘product’. With more than a billion daily users, billions in ad revenue and billions in profits, Facebook has become the world’s most influential source of news. That influence extends not only to its billions of users, but also to the news organisations whose survival depends more and more on the social media giant. This raises concerns about the impact on the news agenda of a multibillion-dollar technology company with no commitment to media ethics or codes of conduct. It calls for greater

understanding of the influence of ‘news by algorithm’ and ‘echo chambers’ and the potential for bias – inherent (Manjoo, 2016) or otherwise (Nunez, 2016).

Research carried out recently by Stanford University (Wineburg, 2016: 4) found that ‘when it comes to evaluating information that flows through social media channels’, young people ‘are easily duped’ by misinformation. The report suggested students may be more likely to ‘focus more on the content of social media posts than on their sources’ (Ibid). According to the researchers, ‘Despite their fluency with social media, many students are unaware of basic conventions for indicating verified digital information’ (Ibid). In an era of fake news (Silverman, 2016), this is an issue of particular concern in the context of young people with relatively limited life experience, whose views and attitudes are potentially being shaped from an early age by such immersive media exposure. Ireland, for example, has one of the highest penetrations of smartphones in the world (RTE, 2016). Some 90 per cent of 18-24’s own or have access to a smartphone and almost 9 in 10 of them use their devices ‘always’ or ‘very often’ when using public transport, meeting friends, shopping or watching television (RTE, 2016).

When taken in tandem with the fact that most of the students we engaged with during the festival had limited if any connections with the communities they were discussing, the ability to recognise and seek out authentic voices on development issues is even more vital. The students were eager to connect with these communities and we encouraged them to contact groups in Ireland working with migrants and refugees. They seemed to innately recognise the value of meeting people with lived experience of the issues they were discussing, drawing huge motivation from these encounters. The complexity of the subject matter, which could silence them in more formal discussion settings, was removed in the humanity of meeting people who recounted their experience of fleeing their home countries, seeking asylum and trying to make a new life in Ireland.

## **Information overload**

Indeed, the inability to cope with the vast quantities of information being shared online is an issue not just for global citizenship education but for academia in general. According to Mackey and Jacobson, social media and online communities challenge traditional definitions of information literacy:

“As the number of information sources continues to increase, skills connected with determining the extent of information required for a particular search must be more finely honed. A sense of information overload or perhaps uncertainty about how to make choices among many options may cause researchers (especially novice searchers) to truncate or give up on the process of assessing how much information is needed, or to abrogate prior determination, basing decisions solely on results retrieved while searching” (2011: 10).

Possibly connected with this ‘information overload’, we found throughout the festival that students often lacked confidence to express their own opinions in talks, debates and discussions. While an element of this can be attributed to a general fear of public speaking and could be addressed by simple confidence-building interventions, there seemed to be a perception that their own experience, knowledge and sense of justice was inferior to what they saw as ‘expert opinion’. This went beyond respecting the experience of speakers: from both the coordinators and the student attendees, there was a sense of apprehension about getting involved with the discussion, even in smaller, more intimate settings. There seemed to be an expectation that they were there to listen, rather than to inquire or to express their own opinions and concerns. However, it did not seem to be born out of apathy, as the same students were interested in taking action, or indeed already had through their involvement in the festival.

## **The challenge**

All of these contribute to a sense of disconnect among young people and a lack of confidence in how they can or should engage with issues such as

immigration. And this is not just a challenge for global citizenship education but for education in general: it is crucial that young people are equipped with the modern critical skills needed to help them reflect on – rather than be disempowered by – the vast quantities of information at their fingertips. As the first step in engaging with our Global Citizenship Programme, the challenges for the next 8x8 Festival will be to jolt students into questioning their relationship with media and social media; to continue to challenge their assumptions and stereotypes; and, crucially, to create a space in which students can contextualise their learning through shared experiences with the communities they are discussing.

That need to ‘jolt’ presents both a challenge and an opportunity for the 8x8 Festival. The challenge is to find creative and interactive ways to make students think not just about development issues but about their consumption of information in general – and to do so with relatively light engagement through our outdoor exhibition. The opportunity is that by using a subject familiar to every student (as of June 2016, Ireland had 2.7 million Facebook users according to <http://www.internetworldstats.com/europa.htm#ie>) we may have greater potential to attract our target audience: new students who may not normally have the opportunity to engage with global justice issues or who may not normally ‘self-select’ to attend such events. By using our outdoor photo exhibition and supporting events to make students’ more critically aware of their interaction with social media, we can not only highlight the importance of questioning the information they are fed – and questioning their own stereotypes and assumptions – but also pique interest in development issues.

Likewise, the challenge to create a space in which students can contextualise their learning is also an opportunity. There is a clear need for more and diverse spaces – in social contexts as well as more formal educational settings – for students to connect with people with lived experiences of issues such as immigration, rather than passively taking in information. In an increasingly connected online world, communities seem to be living more disconnected and separated lives, something that can only

serve to foster a lack of empathy for and understanding of experiences beyond our own realities. The challenge, therefore, is not just to empower young people to take action but to enable them to share experiences that organically foster a sense of global citizenship. However, our experience with the 8x8 Festival would indicate an appetite for such experiences and therefore another opportunity to engage our target audience.

According to a 2014 marketing report by Bord Bia:

“In an always-on tech world, Millennials [22- to 30-year-olds] are looking for ways to forge deeper, more meaningful connections with the people who matter to them most... They want to create the space and time for real conversations, going out of their way to create occasions for proper bonding and catch-ups” (2014: 16)

The same report noted: ‘The buzz of doing something new fuels a sense of personal achievement as well as generating some easily sharable social currency’ (2014: 13). By facilitating that need for connection and discovery, the 8x8 Festival has the potential to not only attract those students who would not normally engage with global justice issues, but to create a space for conversation and enquiry that goes beyond passive listening. Watching a film is an informative and low-effort way to attract those students, but we need to reimagine our supporting events so that panel discussions become conversation salons, rigid debates become townhall-style meetings, and question and answer sessions become opportunities to socialise and share culture with new communities. To watch and listen is not enough. To like and share on social media is not enough. We have to empower students to take action, and that action may start with the simple act of meeting someone new in person or seeking out authentic new voices online.

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**Emma Somers** is the Public Engagement Project Manager with Suas Educational Development. Part of her role involves student engagement through initiatives such the 8x8 Festival. Emma has a Master's in Public Advocacy and Activism from NUI Galway and previously spent 10 years working in the media with publications such as *The Irish Times*, *The Sunday Tribune* and *Village Magazine*.

# THE ROLE OF ECONOMIC CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION IN ADVANCING GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP

**Jared Penner and Janita Sanderse**

**Abstract:** This article focuses on how to provide children and youth with the appropriate skills and capabilities required to create a more equal and sustainable world for future generations. It presents the concept of Economic Citizenship Education and the importance of combining financial, social and livelihoods education for the empowerment of children and youth throughout the world. Throughout the article, this concept is linked to Global Citizenship, Education for Sustainable Development, Development Education and the Sustainable Development Goals to show its importance to contemporary discourse on education and youth development. The reader is provided with examples of Economic Citizenship Education put in practice through government authorities and civil society organisations.

**Key words:** Economic Citizenship Education; Sustainable Development Goals; Child and Youth Finance International; Financial Literacy; Social Education; Global Citizenship.

## **Introduction**

Adversity and deprivation are experienced by millions of children around the world (UNICEF, 2016). These children are unable to build a sustainable livelihood because they lack many foundational skills and prospects of finding meaningful employment. They may also be working their way through school or financially supporting their families. Children and youth need to be provided with the appropriate capabilities and skills in addition to being offered control over their own finances in order to be able to thrive within the current economy (CYFI, 2016c: 9). Children and Youth Finance International (CYFI) follows the United Nations (UN) definition of ‘youth’ as those between the ages of 15 and 24 years, without prejudice to other definitions by UN member states. Children are defined as those under the age of 18 and a ‘young person’ as someone between the ages of 10-24.

This article discusses the role of finance in striving for a more equal and sustainable world for the next generation and argues that the combination of financial, social and livelihoods education is vital for successfully empowering children and youth. These educational components, and the concept of economic citizenship, are inextricably linked to the achievement of Global Citizenship and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Therefore, it is important that the concept and practice of Economic Citizenship Education (ECE) becomes part of the contemporary discourse on education and youth development.

### **Children and Youth Finance International**

Education in the field of global citizenship and sustainable development has been advocated for, researched and promoted by organisations such as Oxfam, United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) and others (UNICEF, 2012; Oxfam, 2015; UNESCO, 2015; UNESCO, 2016). CYFI opts for an approach that combines many of these educational frameworks but also offers the additional angle of finance and entrepreneurship. CYFI’s mission, and that of the Child and Youth Finance Movement is ‘to empower all children and youth worldwide by supporting them in realizing their potential as full economic citizens’ (CYFI, 2016c: 9) through financial inclusion as well as financial, social and livelihoods education. Currently there is a global focus on creating a savings culture, improving saving habits, and creating employment opportunities for young people. Consequently, financial capability and sustainable livelihoods for children has been a key focus of the agendas of national and regional authorities, civil society organisations, and financial institutions (Population Reference Bureau, 2013).

There are currently 1.8 billion young people in the world, representing 25 per cent of the global population, with 87 per cent of this youth population residing in developing countries. These figures are projected to increase in the coming years with both challenges and opportunities for youth development (UNCDF, 2013; UNFPA, 2014). The

challenges include the fact that, while children make up around a third of the global population, almost 47 per cent of those struggling to survive on less than \$1.25 a day are 18 years old or younger (Coalition of Partners Working to End Poverty, 2015). There are also 58 million children around the world that are not enrolled in school, which threatens their ability to sustain themselves in the future (World Bank, 2014).

Additionally, about 225 million youth, or 20 per cent of all youth in the developing world, are ‘NEET’ (i.e. not in education, employment or training) (UN Youth, 2014). The youth NEET rate for countries in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in 2014 stood at 18 per cent (ILO, 2016: 18), while the official global youth unemployment rate in 2015 was estimated at 13.1 per cent (ILO, 2015: 15). Within their economic and social environment, education plays a vital role in providing these young people with the financial, social and livelihood competences and opportunities needed to thrive and prosper. It is imperative that education delivers meaningful and useful skills to children and youth, and that it remains an integral part of their personal and professional development. If children acquire the skills and experiences of managing financial resources from an early age onward, it will enhance their awareness of financial risks, lower their economic vulnerability and allow them to make more responsible financial decisions (Whitebread and Bingham, 2013). In addition, the inclusion of social and citizenship education ensures that young people develop financial capabilities that are rooted in socially responsible attitudes and behaviours (CYFI, 2016c).

Despite the increased attention for the development of entrepreneurial and employability skills for children and youth by national and regional authorities, multilateral institutions, and civil society organisations, youth unemployment remains a leading problem facing governments around the world (ILO, 2016). In addition, the need for both a secure asset base and responsible financial management were reinforced by the recent financial crisis, in which children and youth proved to be a vulnerable age group that was far more likely than adults to be financially

excluded or prone to financial exploitation (Demirguc-Kunt, Klapper, Singer and van Oudheusden, 2015). Increasing the entrepreneurial and employability skills of children and youth, to enable them to secure sustainable livelihoods, is an essential aspect of financial inclusion and economic citizenship. Moreover, by improving social and livelihoods education for children and youth, socially and environmentally responsible behaviours are cultivated at an early age, encouraging more socially accountable and sustainable enterprise. The social education that complements financial and livelihoods education empowers youth and makes them aware of their own rights and responsibilities, as well as those of others. The impact of financial, social and livelihood education therefore not only reaches the lives of individuals but their whole community as well by encouraging new generations to become financially capable and grow up to be responsible investors, entrepreneurs and economic citizens.

### **Global Citizenship**

In a globalised world, individuals are becoming increasingly interconnected and are consequently experiencing wider conceptions of community and a common humanity. A globalised world ushers in the notion of Global Citizenship, which is defined as ‘awareness, caring, and embracing cultural diversity while promoting social justice and sustainability, coupled with a sense of responsibility to act’ (Reysen and Katzarska-Miller, 2013: 860). Similarly, UNESCO defines Global Citizenship as a ‘political, economic, social and cultural interdependency and interconnectedness between the local, the national and the global’ (UNESCO, 2014: 14). Oxfam sees a global citizen as someone who ‘is aware of the wider world’ and ‘works with others to make the world a more equitable and sustainable place’ and ‘takes responsibility for their actions’ (Oxfam, 2015: 5).

These definitions of Global Citizenship all contain a perspective in which citizenship demands that individuals not only take responsibility for their own actions but also for the world around them. Global citizens have an obligation to understand how the world works and to contribute to social and economic sustainability through active community engagement from local to

global levels (UNESCO, 2014: 14). Global Citizenship places greater responsibility for the world in the hands of ordinary citizens to ensure it becomes central to the political and economic development of society.

An increased interest in global citizenship has resulted in growing attention for education frameworks that build citizenship competencies, with the additional implications it has for policy, teaching and learning. According to UNESCO, Global Citizenship Education (GCE) ‘is a framing paradigm which encapsulates how education can develop the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes learners need for securing a world which is more just, peaceful, tolerant, inclusive, secure and sustainable’ (UNESCO, 2014: 9). GCE demonstrates that education is vital in understanding and solving global issues through various political, social, cultural, religious, economic and environmental viewpoints. GCE emphasises that developmental challenges are applicable to all countries and all people.

Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) is related to GCE, focusing on creative and constructive solutions to present and future global challenges which create more sustainable and resilient societies. As the lead agency in the promotion of ESD, UNESCO emphasises that ‘individuals and societies have to learn to live together and take responsible actions based on the understanding that action here and today can have implications for the lives and livelihoods of people in other parts of the world, as well as for future generations’ (UNESCO, 2014: 9). ESD advocates for new ways of learning about green economies and societies as part of Global Citizenship by focusing on key issues such as cultural diversity, climate change and biodiversity.

Development Education (DE) is also closely linked to GCE because it raises awareness of the rights and responsibilities of citizens to ensure a more just and equal world. DE ‘is an educational response to issues of development, human rights, justice and world citizenship’ (Regan, 2006: 6). According to Irish Aid, DE offers an educative perspective that focuses on international development and human rights everywhere. It promotes the

voices and viewpoints of those who are ‘excluded from an equal share in the benefits of human development internationally’ and creates the opportunity to reflect on ‘international roles and responsibilities with regard to issues of equality and justice in human development’ (Ibid: 6).

The goal of the Child and Youth Finance Movement is to empower children and youth so they can reach their potential as responsible and engaged economic citizens. Global Citizenship is interrelated with economic citizenship because they both emphasise the importance of awareness and responsibility for one’s actions at local, national and international levels. Economic citizenship entails ‘financial capability, awareness of social and economic rights, access to safe and appropriate financial services and quality financial, social, and livelihoods education’ (CYFI, 2016c: 12). Providing young people with economic and social environments that facilitate prosperity and equality, and the skills and competencies to thrive in them, positively impacts their lives as individuals and the communities in which they live.

Like GCE, ESD and DE, Economic Citizenship Education (ECE) is focused on global inclusion, awareness, respect and sustainability. However, it has a particular focus on financial capability and economic empowerment since full economic citizenship can improve economic and social well-being, reduce income and asset poverty, and lead to sustainable livelihoods for children and youth (CYFI, 2016b: 14). Social education, a central component of ECE, has the capacity to ‘improve some learning areas and build capabilities in present and future generations, allowing them to better understand, value and contribute to the world in which they live’ (CYFI, 2016a: 10). According to CYFI, social education is key to economic citizenship. Young people are more inclined to respect the rights of others, and are more willing to work towards positive social and economic outcomes, when they learn about rights and responsibilities because it promotes respect for diversity, peace, non-violence, empathy, and social and economic justice (CYFI, 2016a: 10).

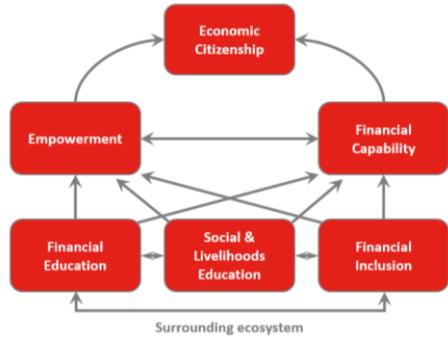
## **CYFI's Model of Economic Citizenship**

The current market economy requires economic citizens to possess financial knowledge, economic awareness and social agency, especially given its tendency to create gross social and economic inequalities. Full economic citizenship represents a comprehensive concept that encompasses a broader range of social and gender elements to complement prevailing economic norms, ensuring a more inclusive economic system for everyone. Economic citizenship is built on empowerment, inclusion and capability, which are concepts greatly enhanced by education. Empowerment is conceived to encompass social, economic and gender elements, involving a greater sense of confidence and freedom to participate effectively in the economy, the household and the wider community. This is the result of improved knowledge and skills, along with the tearing down of socio-economic barriers. In addition, financial capability encompasses access to finance and markets, as well as the ability to take advantage of economic opportunities. ECE can help disadvantaged people reach their full potential as economic citizens and eventually lead to reduced inequality and improved financial sustainability. All children and youth should have the opportunity to become better informed, capable and responsible economic citizens. However, there are many systematic barriers to education, financial inclusion and civic participation that prevent young people from achieving their full potential. To overcome this, systemic change is needed to foster greater economic citizenship from the local to the global level. Some of the essential building blocks of a model of economic citizenship can be seen in Figure 1.

**Figure 1. Child & Youth Finance International (CYFI) Model of Economic Citizenship (CYFI, 2016c).**

**Economic Citizenship**

- Reduced income and asset poverty;
- Economic and social engagement;
- Sustainable livelihoods;
- Economic and social well-being;
- Rights for and responsibilities to self, family, and others.



CYFI sees ECE as ‘a holistic approach to financial education, complementing it with a focus on life skills and livelihoods’ (CYFI, 2016b: 9) in which the most striking aspect of this educational approach is its social emphasis. The three main components of this model are: financial education, social/life skills education and livelihoods education. Financial education encompasses the ‘instruction and/or materials designed to increase financial knowledge and skills’ (CYFI, 2016c: 13). Social education is the ‘provision of knowledge and skills that improve individuals’ understanding and awareness of their rights and the rights of others’ (CYFI, 2016c: 13). This could also include environmental stewardship and sexual and reproductive health. Life skills are part of social education and entail problem solving, critical thinking, and interpersonal skills. Livelihood education improves one’s ability ‘to secure a sustainable livelihood through skills assessment and a balance between developing entrepreneurial and employability skills’ (CYFI, 2016c: 13). The content of these different components of ECE can be seen in the summarised table in Figure 2, with a suggested division along specific age segments.

**Figure 2. Economic Citizenship Education Learning Framework (Summary) (CYFI, 2016c).**

	<i>Financial education</i>	<i>Social education</i>	<i>Livelihoods education</i>
<b>Level 1</b> 0-5 years	Value of money, prices, savings, belongings	Emotions, consequences, health/safety, compassion	Career interests, professions, entrepreneurship, goals, initiative, problem-solving skills, teamwork, taking advice, avoiding hazards
<b>Level 2</b> 6-9 years	Needs and wants, savings plan, rewards, recognize banks and financial services	Children’s rights, responsibilities, respect for others, rules, listening skills	
<b>Level 3</b> 10-14 years	Informed consumer, short vs. long term planning, financial risks, effects of advertising	Express opinions, teamwork, research skills, appreciation for life-long learning	Vocations, opportunities, action plan, self-discipline, perseverance, communication
<b>Level 4</b> 15+ years	Negotiation skills, purchasing power, interest rates, financial crimes	Social justice, time management, relationships, leadership	Wages, capital needs, marketing, employability, coping with change, management skills

To ensure the awareness of social and financial matters, it is important to make sure that children and youth are financially included and are exposed to quality ECE. By empowering and engaging young people with this learning content, they are able to ‘lower the risk of exploitation and build a strong asset base, complemented by financial literacy, social values and entrepreneurial skills’ (CYFI, 2016a: 10). Social education, therefore, plays an important role in ‘steering children away from financial behaviours and attitudes that may negatively affect not only personal well-being but also that of the wider community’ (CYFI, 2016b: 22). It is important to emphasise social and livelihood issues alongside financial education. These issues could include the disparity between rich and poor, resource conflicts, the role of marketing and consumerism in modern society, the human and environmental impact of corporate irresponsibility, and the reality that moral behaviour and economic success are not mutually exclusive. The ultimate goal is to allow these children and youth to become more responsible and

engaged global economic citizens to create a more sustainable world with less inequality and injustice.

Both the individual and the local community play vital roles in addressing and contesting social, political and economic structures from the bottom up. This is why ECE can inform individuals and equip them with the skills that are necessary for contesting these structures, particularly in the financial and economic realm. This bottom up approach is a tactic that is adopted by many of the other educational frameworks covered in this article (GCE, ESD and DE). They all stress the importance of educating young people about prevailing political, economic and social structures, and the root causes of the problems affecting these structures. According to Remmele and Seeber:

“As long as for example, students are broadly aware of the existence of a financial crisis, but not of its background and almost no one recognizes any personal concern, a sound political reflection or civic engagement cannot be expected” (2012: 198).

These educational frameworks all emphasise the role of civic engagement in the fight against poverty and inequality through global citizenship, social entrepreneurship and community activism. However, as with any other type of education, ECE has its limitations. ECE will not be able to address the entire scope of injustice created by the market economy, nor will it provide a panacea for all the challenges facing global poverty, conflict and environmental degradation. Making children and youth aware of the world around them will not immediately challenge political, economic and social structures. However, a holistic approach to education that involves core elements of ECE is certainly a step in the right direction, cultivating the minds of future generations of economic and global citizens.

### **Economic Citizenship and the Sustainable Development Goals**

As economic citizenship relies on individuals and civil society organisations to affect positive change, institutional backup and government support is needed to advance the efforts of ordinary citizens. Governments have the

responsibility to provide regulations and laws that lead to ‘economic efficiency, personal moral integrity, and societal legitimacy’ (Schank and Lorch, 2014: 60). This top-down, multilateral approach to global and economic citizenship is represented by the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). All SDGs are both integrated and interdependent, balancing the three dimensions of sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. In the Sustainable Development Agenda 2030 there is a commitment to assuring that all vulnerable categories and different segments of society will be taken into account (CYFI, 2016a: 9).

Similar to the education frameworks that have been outlined in this article, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were introduced with the objective to reduce poverty and increase equality. They contained global development targets which were supposed to be reached in 2015. Although the MDGs led to improvements in several areas, like the reduction of poverty and increase in school enrolment, the targets failed to address the underlying causes of poverty and inequality. The Sustainable Development Agenda aims to go beyond the MDGs, stating that:

“alongside continuing development priorities such as poverty eradication, health, education, and food security and nutrition, the Agenda sets out a wide range of economic, social and environmental objectives. It also promises more peaceful and inclusive societies. It also, crucially, defines means of implementation” (UN General Assembly, 2015: 5).

ECE provides the kind of education that is useful in achieving multiple SDGs. According to CYFI, ‘quality ECE and appropriate financial services for children and youth around the world promote inclusive, sustainable development for this next generation of economic citizens’ (CYFI, 2016a: 13). This article will now show how ECE can be particularly useful in achieving SDGs 4, 5 and 8 and their sub-targets.

SDG 4 aims to achieve inclusive and equitable quality education. The sub-targets under SDG 4 aim to increase technical and soft skills in youth and adults so that they can find employment or become entrepreneurs. Social and financial education can bring improvements in functional literacy and numeracy. By understanding their rights and responsibilities, youth can be more aware of the importance of going to school, more likely to respect the rights of others and more likely to work together to build a better world. Youth are also more likely to demand accountability of their governments, and consider the impact of their actions on the environment and their communities. An important feature of ECE is the application of skills in addition to acquiring knowledge; children and youth learn to earn money ethically, sustainably and responsibly through either entrepreneurship or employment. These positive outcomes of financial education are supported by a range of recently conducted studies that were focused on the effects of financial and economic knowledge and behaviours amongst children and youth (O’Prey and Shepard, 2014; CYFI, 2016a).

SDG 5 focuses on achieving gender equality and empowerment. Financial education and inclusion are vital in ending discrimination against all women and girls around the world. The case studies of ECE in practice in the next section show that women and girls are able to take advantage of economic opportunities when they are equipped with the right skills and are provided access to finance. Financial education and inclusion, in combination with social and livelihood education, will lead to a better understanding among men and women of gender inequalities and women’s rights. When young men and boys are taught to respect gender diversity and appreciate social justice they will become less likely to discriminate against female counterparts in the future (CYFI, 2016a: 11).

SDG 8 promotes inclusive and sustainable economic growth. Financial inclusion stimulates savings among youth, allowing them to build assets and invest in their futures. In combination with social education, this results in self-improvement, self-efficacy, empathy, confidence and economic growth. In addition, inclusion and education ensures that young people are

better equipped for employment, entrepreneurship and investment opportunities. As discussed earlier, livelihoods education encourages the development of employability skills among children and youth which increases job opportunities and productivity. When their knowledge increases, young people are better able to ‘create sustainable livelihoods, stimulate entrepreneurial activity, and enhance their level of employability’ (CYFI, 2016a: 11).

### **Economic Citizenship Education in Practice**

Now that ECE has been placed within the contemporary discourse on citizenship and Development Education, this article will provide some examples of organisations advancing ECE for children and youth in different parts of the world. Aflatoun International has been active since 2005 building personal, interpersonal, financial, and entrepreneurial skills in children (aged 3-18 years) through social and financial education programmes in early childhood centres, primary schools and secondary schools (Aflatoun International, 2016: 5). Partners in the Aflatoun network annually reach 3.9 million children and youth in 120 countries through formal and informal education, with nearly 730,000 children saving nearly \$3.2 million in formal financial institutions (Aflatoun International, 2016: 7). Aflatoun’s curriculum resources focus on five core elements: 1) Personal Understanding and Exploration, 2) Rights and Responsibilities, 3) Savings and Spending, 4) Planning and Budgeting, and 5) Social and Financial Enterprise. Aflatoun and CYFI operate as sister organisations, with CYFI focusing on the national strategies and regulatory environments related to financial inclusion and education while Aflatoun focuses on ‘building the social and financial skills of children and youth on the ground’ (Aflatoun International, 2016: 20).

In Uganda, the Central Bank has started working together with key stakeholders to integrate financial, social and entrepreneurship education in schools. These stakeholders collaborate with the Private Education Development Network (PEDN) to promote youth empowerment by establishing entrepreneurial and business skills programmes in primary,

secondary and tertiary institutions in Uganda. The businesses set up during this initiative led to the development of skills around saving, planning, budgeting and income generation for students. Consequently, these students also increased their self-confidence and were able to develop a better sense of career-orientation. The programme led to community support in which it supported citizenship and social responsibility. All these outcomes are in line with the goals of Aflatoun and ECE in general: ‘Children are given opportunities to express themselves and to collaborate with peers to solve practical problems, build a financial enterprise, participate in democratic processes and create social change together’ (Aflatoun International, 2016: 20).

Peru also started revising its national curriculum for basic education in 2007 to ensure that all students learn and acquire certain competencies during their studies. Peru focused particularly on identity and autonomy, citizenship and entrepreneurship, where the capacities were ‘explicitly social and financial in nature’ (Aflatoun International, 2015: 29). The module for Citizenship was broken down into the following competencies: 1) living together democratically, 2) deliberate public affairs, 3) participate democratically, 4) construct historical interpretations, 5) act responsibly with respect to the environment, and 6) act responsibly with respect to economic resources. The last component on economic resources is comprised of three capabilities: 1) understanding the relations between various elements in the economic system, 2) being aware of one’s place in the economic system and 3) managing resources responsibly (Aflatoun International, 2015: 29).

Building Resources Across Communities (BRAC) has been active since the 1970s and is currently operating in eleven countries, adapting their programming models to local conditions. The main goal of the organisation is to empower people that live in poverty with a focus mostly on women and girls. Empowerment and Livelihood for Adolescents (ELA) is a network of clubs aimed at adolescent girls and is currently active in six countries. These clubs are an example of the kind of non-formal education girls can obtain through training in savings and credit facilities, life skills, and livelihoods. In

Uganda, they have set-up a special programme called Social and Financial Empowerment for Adolescents (SoFEA). In addition to social education on sexual and reproductive health, conflict resolution and child marriage, participants also receive financial education. Results show that their knowledge increased about pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV. BRAC found that this resulted in less girls having sex against their will. Not only did sexual and reproductive health outcomes improve significantly, the number of girls with a bank account and the number that saved on a regular basis increased exponentially. It was found that these courses (ELA and SoFEA) increased the likelihood of a girl being involved in at least one income-generating activity and increased engagement in self-employment activities (CYFI, 2016c: 20).

Another programme with an emphasis on gender is the Safe and Smart Savings for Vulnerable Adolescent girls led by the Population Council located in Kenya and Uganda. The Population Council carries out research to address critical health and development issues, provides information about HIV and empowers girls. Their programme has some similarities with those of BRAC, both providing financial and livelihood education and creating safe spaces for girls to come together. Safe and Smart Savings for Vulnerable Adolescent girls ensures financial inclusion by giving girls access to a savings account and the possibility to be mentored by their peers. Results show that participating girls had higher self-esteem, were more independent and had more success in acquiring financial skills. Because they were better informed they were also less likely to experience sexual harassment, exploitation and know more about HIV and contraception (Population Council, 2013).

## **Conclusion**

The political and economic decisions of world leaders today and tomorrow not only dictate the future of world economies but also the future sustainability of societies and the environment. It is therefore extremely important that these decisions are made in a holistic and responsible manner, balancing financial, social and environmental considerations. ECE is critical

to the development of global citizenship by creating an environment where children and youth are able to fully realise their social and economic potential and contribute to community development, without discrimination of any kind. These are the essential economic citizenship competencies that will provide the foundation for the next generation of political, business and social leaders.

In a world where poverty and inequality continue to be exacerbated by short-sighted, profit maximising policies and practices, the expansion of ECE can play a significant role in equipping young people with the skills and attitudes needed to be financially prudent, socially conscious and ethically responsible in business and relationships. However, improvements to the current market economy and political environment will require more than just the further exposure of young people to ECE through community initiatives and public school curricula. Regulatory policies, as well as greater adherence to socially and environmentally responsible practices within the corporate sector, are also central to the development of a more sustainable and ethical economic system. It is clear that pressing political and economic problems cannot be solved at the individual level alone and that greater systemic change is also needed to advance economic citizenship for all peoples, at the local, national and international level.

To attain full economic citizenship, children and youth should be enabled to access the knowledge and skills necessary to correctly manage these products, develop the capacity to build and sustain a livelihood, obtain the support needed for their entrepreneurial ventures and lay the foundation for making responsible and ethical financial and social decisions. While economic well-being and a sustainable livelihood are important outputs of financial capability, they should not come at the expense of social and environmental well-being. ECE should involve and encompass the collective good in both the short and long term, which is why a combination of top-down approaches, such as the SDGs, and bottom-up approaches, like grassroots civil society initiatives, is desired.

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**Jared Penner** has been involved in youth economic empowerment and educational programming for the past 10 years. He has managed projects in Africa, Asia and the Middle East, as well as numerous international working groups on integrated financial and educational services. He currently manages the Thought Leadership and Consultancy Department at Child and Youth Finance International (CYFI), advancing quality standards in Child and Youth Friendly Banking policy and practice and financial, social and livelihoods education through a global network of government authorities and youth serving organisations. He has coordinated numerous stakeholder meetings, workshops and conference sessions on curriculum development and educational programming for both formal and non-formal learning environments.

**Janita Sanderse** has a BA in Cultural Anthropology and Development Studies from the University of Leiden where she focused on globalisation, specialising in both gender and sexuality and business administration. She has also served on the board of her student association and the university's education committee. After her studies, she has interned at Child and Youth Finance International (CYFI) where she focused on Economic Citizenship Education and research into integrated financial and educational services for girls and young women. The internship has enabled her to combine her interests in culture, finance, gender and her dream to change the world. This has motivated her to continue her studies at Master's level.

# Viewpoint

## BREXIT, TRUMP AND DEVELOPMENT EDUCATION

**Stephen McCloskey**

**Abstract:** This article argues that the social and economic inequalities that have fed the growing popular disconnect with mainstream politics manifested by Brexit and the election of Donald Trump as United States president, demand more from education. It suggests that a wider adoption of the radical, participative, empowering and action-oriented development education approach to learning is needed to provide the kind of critical thinking required in today's world of 'alternative facts'. Greater support of coalface, community-based development education particularly in politically disconnected and economically marginalised areas could help to restore hope, confidence and agency to communities that have been seduced by a resurgent political right.

**Key words:** Brexit; Donald Trump; Development Education; Social and Economic Inequalities; Participative Learning; Empowerment.

### Introduction

The political systems on both sides of the Atlantic have been subjected to seismic quakes and perpetual uncertainty following Britain's decision to leave the European Union (EU) by referendum in June 2016 and the election of Donald Trump as president of the United States (US) in November. Political commentators have been left scratching their heads in determining how these events came to pass and what Brexit plus Trump actually means for us all. Brexit and Trump have been bracketed together in this debate because similar factors seem to have played a part in their outcomes. They include the mutually professed political affinity of Donald Trump and Nigel Farage, the dominant voice in the leave campaign during the referendum. Both are popular nationalists who made political capital from platforms that sought a reclamation of a perceived lost sovereignty and promotion of

protectionism to restore stalled economic lustre. They positioned themselves as outsiders shaking up the failed political establishment and appealed to communities in deindustrialised regions like Tyneside and Pennsylvania that felt abandoned by the political elite. The economist Thomas Piketty found evidence of this decline in the United States (US) with new research showing ‘that over the last 30 years the growth in the incomes of the bottom 50% has been zero, whereas incomes of the top 1% have grown 300%’ (Oxfam, 2017: 2). And in the UK, the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (2016) found in 2014-15 that 13.5 million people or 21 percent of the total population were living in low-income households; a proportion that has barely changed since 2002-03.

One of the most alarming social indicators of poverty in Britain has been the increased recourse to foodbanks by people on low income and benefits. The Trussell Trust (2016) reported that between April and September 2016 the number of three-day emergency food supplies distributed by foodbanks in the UK was 519,342 compared to 355,982 in the same period in 2013. Nearly one quarter of those who received food parcels in 2016 were on low incomes beset by problems such as ‘low pay, insecure work or rising costs’. What emerges from these statistics on poverty in the US and Britain are people struggling to reconcile stagnant wages with increasing costs for food, heating and other essentials like clothing. Meanwhile, at the other end of the economic scale we are witnessing the accumulation of grotesque amounts of wealth by the one percent; billionaires taking advantage of high yield investments and low tax havens. A report published in January 2017 by Oxfam found that ‘eight men own the same wealth as the 3.6 billion people who make up the poorest half of the world’ (Oxfam, 2017: 1). The report suggested that the ‘very design of our economies and the principles of our economics have taken us to this extreme, unsustainable and unjust point’. It clearly points to the fact that neoliberalism, the economic paradigm that underpins this social and economic polarisation, ‘wrongly assumes that wealth created at the top will “trickle down” to everyone else’ (Oxfam, 2017: 6).

## **Racism and Islamophobia**

Static incomes and high unemployment in communities cut adrift by the global economy and impacted by sunset traditional industries only partly explain the political traction of Farage and Trump. We can add to this toxic mix the spectre of racism, particularly but not exclusively directed at Muslims. Amid increasingly rancid posturing toward Islam, Trump vacillated during his election campaign from initially promising to ban all Muslims from entering the United States (US) to the ‘extreme vetting’ of immigrants (BBC, 2016). He also pledged that every single undocumented immigrant living in the US - of which there are 11.3m – ‘have to go’ (Ibid). Post-election the deportation threat has been narrowed somewhat to two to three million people who ‘are criminal and have criminal records, gang members, drug dealers’ (Gabbat, 2015). Mexican immigrants in particular have been described by Trump in appallingly racist terms. Mexico, he said, ‘are (sic) sending people that have lots of problems, and they are bringing those problems to us. They are bringing drugs, and bringing crime, and their rapists’ (Ibid).

The enduring image from the EU referendum debate in the UK was a poster unveiled by Farage’s United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP) just days before the vote that screamed ‘Breaking Point: the EU has failed us all’ (Safdar, 2016). It showed thousands of refugees in Slovenia in 2015 who had just crossed the border with Croatia and the obvious message to voters was that membership of the EU was exposing Britain to similar levels of immigration. Commenting on the poster at the time, journalist Anaella Safdar (2016) said:

“The image suggests that refugees are somehow to blame for financial issues in the United Kingdom and this is simply not the case. Framing the photo in this way turns the image into a piece of political propaganda. It fuels race-based discrimination and hatred”.

The poster’s strapline said to voters ‘We must break free of the EU and take back control of our borders’. The image and associated messaging suggested

that the UK was struggling to cope with a sharp spike in refugees that was placing public services at ‘breaking point’.

### **The realities of the refugee crisis**

The facts on refugees point to a different reality with the UN’s Refugee Agency estimating that nearly nine in ten of the world’s refugees are sheltered by developing countries not the EU (Refugee Council, 2016). In the first two weeks of November 2016 alone, more than 44,000 refugees from South Sudan arrived in Uganda which is greater than the total that arrived in Britain in all of 2016 (Ibid). The Refugee Council found that the UK had the sixth highest number of asylum applications in the EU in 2016 and was ranked 16<sup>th</sup> in terms of asylum applications per ‘head of resident population’. Between January and September 2016, Germany had received 781,000 asylum applications which towered over the UK total of 41,000 or just 3 percent of the EU total (Ibid). In a global context, the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR, 2015) reported that there were 65.3 million forcibly displaced people in 2015 with the majority of 68 percent hosted by countries in Africa and the Middle-East; just 6 percent were hosted in Europe. The top five hosting countries for displaced people are: Turkey (2.5m); Pakistan (1.6m); Lebanon (1.1m); Iran (979,400); and Ethiopia (736,400) (Ibid). It is therefore the countries least able to cope with large numbers of incoming refugees who host the majority and EU states, by contrast, host the smallest number. Britain, for example, has hosted just 4,414 Syrian refugees since the conflict began from a total of 4.8 million and promised to resettle 20,000 Syrian refugees by 2020 which is a paltry 4,000 a year (Refugee Council, 2016).

This is not to underplay genuine public concerns about migration or to ignore the spike in the number of migrants, particularly from countries in conflict such as Afghanistan and Syria, trying to make their way to Europe. Public services can be strained by new arrivals and communities may feel ill-equipped or even threatened by the location of migrants in their locality. But the reality of inward migration in Britain is often exaggerated both by the media and politicians. For example, by the end of September 2016, the

Refugee Council reported that Britain received just 29,246 asylum applications suggesting that comparatively few migrants are seeking safety there.

### **Spike in race crime**

But UKIP, like Trump in the US, has managed to configure migration in uniformly negative terms and peddled myths that resonated with many who voted to leave the EU. Migration has been used as a straw man by Trump and Farage to account for, at least in part, stagnating wages, the decline in public services and lack of decent jobs. This in turn has resulted in rising levels of hate crime and racism with ‘nearly 900 hate incidents’ reported within the 10 days following Trump's election on 8 November (Rifai, 2016). These incidents included ‘a spike in assaults, intimidation, and harassments towards ethnic and racial minorities, including children, women, and the LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual and Transgender) community’ (Ibid).

Similarly, in the month following the EU referendum there was a 41 percent increase in the number of racially or religiously aggravated crimes recorded by 31 police forces in England and Wales (Forster, 2016). This spike in racist attacks in the US and UK suggested that the perpetrators felt emboldened as if their views had somehow attained a level of credibility or even respectability as a result of Brexit and Donald Trump’s election. In assessing the impact of the alignment of economic stasis with negative political outpourings on migration, Oxfam suggested that:

“From Brexit to the success of Donald Trump’s presidential campaign, a worrying rise in racism and the widespread disillusionment with mainstream politics, there are increasing signs that more and more people in rich countries are no longer willing to tolerate the status quo. Why would they, when experience suggests that what it delivers is wage stagnation, insecure jobs and a widening gap between the haves and the have-nots? The challenge is to build a positive alternative – not one that increases divisions” (Oxfam, 2017: 2).

## **Development education**

Sales of George Orwell's classic dystopian novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949) have soared following the use of the term 'alternative facts' by a Trump advisor, Kellyanne Conway, in a public spat about the numbers that attended the presidential inauguration on 20 January (Bradner, 2017). The inauguration was overshadowed by a mass women's march against Trump in Washington DC the following day that was supported by 'sister' marches in cities across the US and around the world (Smith, 2017). These demonstrations appeared to easily eclipse the crowd that witnessed the inauguration and suggested that alternative facts were simply fiction (Ibid). In any event, this dispute over numbers told us that the Trump presidency will be characterised by a battle for the truth and development education could and should play a critical part in that engagement. Rooted in the revolutionary conception of education by the philosopher, practitioner and activist Paulo Freire, development education believes that active citizenship can result in social transformation and the eradication of inequality. Mostly supported by non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and government aid programmes, development education equips learners with the skills, values, knowledge and understanding needed to critically analyse problems and devise actions to address them.

As Irish Aid suggests development education 'empowers people to analyse, reflect on and challenge at a local and global level the root causes of global hunger, injustice, inequality and climate change; presenting multiple perspectives on global justice issues' (2017: 6). Development education rejects learning by rote and, instead, supports interactive, experiential learning that fosters action toward sustainability, justice and equality. A key component of the Freirean active learning methodology is the development of critical thinking skills of enquiry and demystification that reveal truth, support analysis and enable action. Education has a critical role to play in the battle for ideas around how we manage the world's natural resources, how we treat migrants, how we manage our economy and how we integrate with other cultures and societies. In his introduction to Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Richard Schull (1970: 16) said:

“Education either functions as an instrument that is used to facilitate the integration of the younger generation into the logic of the present system and bring about conformity to it, *or* it becomes ‘the practice of freedom’, the means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world”.

Development education is not a neutral process. It consciously sides with the marginalised, disempowered and dispossessed and argues for more just and equal social relations. The values, skills, attitudes and understanding underpinning development education need to become more firmly integrated into formal and informal education systems if we are to combat grossly distorted economic inequalities and the kind of poisonous social attitudes that manifested themselves during the EU referendum and presidential election.

### **Growing activism and resistance**

Before despairing of an inexorable drift toward the right in the UK and US that could further undermine already weakened government services and social protections, we should build on the popular markers of resistance already in train. They include: the mass mobilisation of women that trumped the crowd attending the new president’s inauguration; the throngs of volunteer attorneys and activists that flocked to American airports to offer assistance to refugees and citizens from the seven Muslim-majority countries banned by Trump from entering the US (Petz and Eltman, 2017); and in the UK, the 1.6 million people who signed a petition in support of scrapping or downgrading an invitation extended by British prime-minister Theresa May to Donald Trump for an official state visit (Mason, 2017). With executive orders that have included a temporary ban on refugees and construction of a wall along the US-Mexico border, Trump has simultaneously become a polarising president and galvaniser of resistance on a wider scale than ever could have been envisaged under Hillary Clinton, his Democratic challenger for the presidency. It is Trump’s extremism that potentially encompasses his downfall, particularly his debasing of many of the key values – compassion, social justice, respect – that many Americans hold dear.

Some commentators have found echoes of Brexit and Trump in the period of economic recession, racism and xenophobia in the 1930s that paved the way to fascism and war (Mason, 2016). This is probably a warning not to take too literally but does suggest how extreme neoliberal economics can dangerously distort social relations and attitudes in periods of steep decline. In this context, development education can become a critical point of resistance to the gross social and economic inequality that fed into the divisions manifested in the EU referendum and presidential election. It can also serve as a push factor, encouraging the kind of activism essential to creating an alternative global paradigm of development that is as just as it is sustainable.

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**Stephen McCloskey** is Director of the Centre for Global Education and editor of *Policy and Practice: A Development Education Review*, a bi-annual, open access journal available at: [www.developmenteducationreview.com](http://www.developmenteducationreview.com). He is editor (with Gerard McCann) of *From the Local to the Global: Key Issues in Development Studies* (Pluto Press, 2015).

# Resource reviews

## *EDUCATION, LEARNING AND THE TRANSFORMATION OF DEVELOPMENT*

### **Review by Su-ming Khoo**

Amy Skinner, Matt Baillie Smith, Eleanor Brown and Tobias Troll (eds.) (2016) *Education, Learning and the Transformation of Development*, Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge

The topics that this book tries to bring together: education, learning, development and the possibilities for transformative change are all inherently expansive, but are at the heart of this journal's aims and scope. The typical response to the expansiveness and complexity of this intersecting subject matter is to pin down and narrow definitions, and to choose to focus on specific practice settings. This book genuinely attempts to break the mould by treating education in a broader way, linking it to general societal processes of learning and transformation. Interested in how learning processes can facilitate alternative visions and practices of development, the contributions bypass existing mainstream schooling, to seriously consider the transformative potential of alternative educational approaches, models and practices of learning from citizen engagement and political struggles for voice and justice. Mainstream development approaches that focus on expanding formal schooling are not dismissed, however they are not the subject of this volume. The focus of this book is on educational practices and learning processes that tend to be regarded as somewhat marginal in development and educational studies, but directly address situations of social and political change.

The editors have structured this book very intentionally in three sections: 'rethinking education and development', 'education and development alternatives' and 'learning, agency and citizen engagement'.

Critical scholarly pieces by April Biccum and Jethro Pettit start off the first and last sections. The rest of the chapters and the entire central section on alternatives present experiential and practitioner perspectives. The kind of learning that is privileged and highlighted in this volume is what Helena Norberg-Hodge defines as ‘learning for life’. Biccum sets the scene for questioning transformative education and social change by foregrounding the question of how to think about the political subject and placing the political subject at the centre of the debates about both ‘development’ and ‘education’. Biccum historically grounds the rejection of injustice, and the emergence of critical thinking, civic participation and progressive social change in three movements: the anti-colonial activism and nationalism of the 1920s to 1960s; awareness-raising civil rights campaigns of the 1960s and 70s; and the ‘explosion’ of adjectival educations since the 1980s. Surprisingly, however, the feminist dimension is missing from this historical scene-setting. Personal and subjective development that can be aligned to democratic values, justice, activism and education have received considerable attention over the past decades. However, education and knowledge have been framed in an instrumental manner, oriented towards individual change for economic outcomes, rather than for collectively transformative social change.

Biccum’s excellent analysis presents education as an ‘ambivalent hinge in modernity’, linking the political subject with a social order that functions in a divided fashion: to attain both social control / reproduction and emancipation / transformation. This ambivalence works through different levels of institutions, states, economies and individuals. Liberalism, *the* central tradition of modern European political thought, contains contradictory ideas. Liberalism simultaneously supported and critiqued colonialism. Liberal thought and education reproduced and buttressed colonial administration, while also emphasising principles of freedom and self-governance, and espousing the belief in the educative and transformative role of civic action in developing both individual selves and society as a whole.

The rest of the chapters in this first section open out the question of rethinking development and education with different experiences from

FUNDAEC, a global network for rural, cultural and spiritual development originating in Colombia; a study on time spent in formal schooling versus participating in the community as its own ‘educational system’ in the Papua New Guinea highlands; and Norberg-Hodge’s deep critique of western schooling as a system of ‘civilizing’ transformation that develops scarcity and poverty, in contrast to an original condition of ‘uncivilized’ flourishing in the Himalayan region of Ladakh. These chapters overturn conventional assumptions about people’s educational futures and how different they might look if their lives and perspectives are not just somehow taken into account, but taken as the starting point. These three endogenous or ‘emic’ perspectives question the dominant assumption that ‘education’ is an external ‘good’ that people should unquestioningly adopt in its current, externally-given form. Mainstream ‘Western’ education detaches people’s education from their spiritual values, environment, livelihoods and communities and may lead to a loss of futures that might otherwise have maintained these aspects within education.

The central section on ‘development alternatives’ explores the possibilities and complexities of education within the alternative frames and marginalised spaces of ethno-development, community and adult education in Bolivia, Catalunya and Mozambique. These accounts help us to understand how marginalised groups can, through education, pursue a ‘quality of life’ that they have been allowed to define for themselves (Straubhaar, 104). In the Bolivian case, experiments in indigenous schooling have enabled learning in the context of political demands for indigenous autonomy and rights. Increased interest in ethno-development coincided with a broader interest in intercultural education particularly in the Andean region, and across Latin America generally. Indigenous education became politically contested as indigenous people struggled to secure territorial rights. Formal government support for a plurinational state and the autonomy accorded to indigenous people are contradicted by the state’s extractive economic policies. Does ethno-development offer an alternative development model? Successful indigenous education has equipped young leaders with the skills needed to enter the political arena, but the outcome often results in

indigenous leaders supporting economic modernisation projects. These sit in tension with communities opposing extractivism and seeking alternatives, for example in collective food sovereignty.

Roig and Crowther's chapter on an alternative adult school in Barcelona seeks to make a distinction between 'merely useful' and 'really useful' knowledge, arguing for 'radical practicality' as a route to social transformation (79). Jain and Akomolafe's chapter explores the 'wild world' of informal learning that exists outside the formal/non-formal educational structures. Our current ways of dealing with today's multidimensional crises are insufficient; education and development remain part of the crises. Alternatively, autonomy, creativity, interconnectedness and abundance might be seen as truly countercultural possibilities. They suggest that we need to dismantle and re-imagine development and education to rekindle our connections with land and people, decolonise ourselves from the self-limiting and harmful confines of development thinking. The discourses of development and education must themselves be stretched, in terms of what is said and allowed to be said, and must take responsibility for the possibilities that have been excluded.

The final section of the book connects learning with agency and citizen engagement. Jethro Pettit opens with a useful conceptual typology of three traditions: information or awareness raising, critical pedagogies and creative approaches that include the artistic, narrative and embodied learning processes. 'Civic habitus' describes the complex of socialised dispositions that constrain people's freedom. The pedagogical challenge for educators is to enact the kinds of curriculum, facilitation and learning that support citizens to become mindful of their civic habitus and able to transform it, with Pettit making a particular case for creative, imaginative and embodied approaches (137). Troll and Krause outline the transformative potential of development education, pointing to the need for questions of justice and sustainability to be addressed in a more systematic and inclusive fashion. Learning from research on civil society pioneers, they present three main options for development education – connecting to local power struggles, creating a

global movement for a global regime change and, most radical of all, searching for a radical new humanity. They make the case for a ‘new’ development education which returns to its radical roots to become a powerful tool for systemic and collective change. Helen Underhill calls for ‘development’ to be redefined and reconnected to education and learning for social justice. Underhill focuses on diasporic and migrant activists in Egypt as a lens for learning about power, agency and social justice. The Arab spring has changed these activists and their relationship to Egypt, and reconnected them to the people, and an imagined community, in ways that they perhaps could not have predicted.

This book is relatively rare in bridging the ‘worlds’ of development and development education. The problematic gulf between these two fields of theory and practice has long been observed in the pages of this journal, but it has rarely been successfully addressed in an integrated publication. The book is a long-term outcome of a development education project (DEEEP) within CONCORD - the European Confederation of Relief and Development NGOs (2017). It shows the strengths, complexities and intellectual, conceptual and political binds experienced by this grouping, but also by the development education sector and readership of this journal as a whole.

At the very outset, this volume refreshingly states its commitment to the role of learning in discourses and practices of development. This immediately marks out a space beyond the usual comfort zone of development education, by reaching out to forms of learning other than schooling, breaking out of the educational silos and ‘sectoralisation’ that are only too easy to get trapped within. Education, narrowly defined, is widely accepted as a tool for development. However, incremental changes within the mainstream paradigm seem a far less compelling pathway to transformation than broadly conceptualised education that readily takes on the role of challenging dominant conceptions and practices. ‘Development’ is definitely ripe for challenge: while measurement and evaluation have become increasingly sophisticated, human development concepts continue to evolve and critiques of post-colonialism, post-development and critical theory

around. Yet understandings of the relationships between education and development remain narrowly conceived and are frequently decontextualised (xx). In answer to this, this volume seeks to critically analyse the relationships between education and development, by documenting the extent to which formal, non-formal and informal learning processes in various contexts are facilitating the emergence of alternative visions and practices of development around the world. The book attempts to ‘reframe’ learning practices and processes in relation to broader struggles for justice, voice and development, complementing academic contributions with practitioner perspectives.

These alternative perspectives will nevertheless continue to be treated separately from the continued roll-out of ‘business-as-usual’ formal schooling. The latter remains an unavoidable necessity, given that 57 million children currently lack access to quality primary education. Yet it is also acknowledged that the mainstream schooling that is envisaged for those who lack it fails to respect cultural diversity or value indigenous knowledges. ‘Education For All’ (EFA, n.d.), for example, means ‘one-size-fits-all’ ideas of learning that are essentially imported from elsewhere. Mainstream development has become commodified, depoliticised and increasingly reliant on fundraising, charity and celebrity humanitarianism. Within this mainstream of development, education is associated with the policy rhetoric of poverty alleviation, and its practice is dominated by technicist forms of accountability, measurement and target setting. Within mainstream development, mainstream education continues to further the depoliticisation of development. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs, 2015) and EFA agendas have sailed through without internalising the critical debates about development. The relationship between mainstream development and education has therefore remained conceptually narrow and decontextualised.

Biccum considers the World Bank’s new interest in behavioural change and culture, signalled by the 2015 World Development Report. This promised a fresh approach and redesign of development to include norms, culture, and communication. However, it becomes clear that the turn to

communicative, educative, cultural and systemic methods is not oriented towards the production of critically aware political subjects, capable of creating progressive change (13). Instead, the vision narrowly seeks to nudge ‘behaviour changes’ and optimise individual economic choices in already given markets. The new emphasis on behaviourism and cost effectiveness actually serves to further entrench the ‘rational choice’ economic model, rooted in possessive individualism and overshadowed by the global realities of ever-increasing inequality.

The aim of transformational education is to raise the capacity of all people to engage politically to create the possibility for social change. How are we going to shift development from its preoccupation with economic reductionism, and move educational preoccupations from narrow questions of pedagogy and schooling to the broader goals of societal transformation? ‘Learning’ is not only about teachers’ job to teach, but the role of peers, communities and places. Skills can be acquired from a range of sources and experiences. Adult literacy is especially important for generating and enabling social inclusion. The purpose of lifelong learning is change and transformation – enabling a more cooperative and ecologically sound future.

In asking how we might move learning and transformation, this book has prioritised locally-developed and nonconformist forms of education, informal learning spaces and social experimentation. However, the thorny question remains: in bypassing institutionalised schooling and according priority to informal and alternative, are we denying the promise of mobility and globalised opportunity offered by mainstream conformity? This continuing bifurcation between the mainstream and the alternatives begs for more dialogue and interdisciplinary research to bridge the mainstream formal and alternative informal education sectors. It begs for greater crossover between the education and development specialists and for academia and civil society to collaboratively attempt to bridge the gaps.

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**Su-ming Khoo** is a Lecturer in the School of Political Science and Sociology at the National University of Ireland, Galway. Her research, teaching and publications are focused on human rights, public goods, development alternatives; human development and capability approaches; alternative economics; public activism, higher education, internationalisation and public scholarship.

## ***80-20: DEVELOPMENT IN AN UNEQUAL WORLD (7TH EDITION)***

### **Review by Thomas Spratt**

Tony Daly, Ciara Regan and Colm Regan (eds.) (2016) *80-20: Development in an Unequal World*, 7<sup>th</sup> edition, Bray: 80:20, Educating and Acting for a Better World and New Internationalist.

To a student teacher, picking up a high quality resource provides confidence that capturing the imaginations of their pupils is possible and the seventh edition of *80-20* certainly falls into this category. The book investigates inequalities and injustices in a manner that is accessible to a non-specialist in the area of international development. It offers a relevant and interesting context to all of the topics considered in this text, which is interspersed with facts, figures, cartoons and high quality images.

*80-20: Development in an Unequal World* is written by a worldwide group of authors and educationalists. The foreword by Senator Patrick Dodson, an Aboriginal leader, urges the reader to recognise and recover the fundamental principles of respect for the diversity and richness of various cultures worldwide with a view to improving people's understanding of our shared humanity. This introduction emboldens the reader and educator to use the book as a tool to enthuse future generations about topics such as human development, sustainability, justice, women's rights, international inequality, aid, education and ideas for positive social change. The book provides in-depth analysis of all these areas combined with very satisfying visual representations of the points being made that will benefit teachers and learners.

For an educator in training the book is something that you can dip into or read from cover to cover because of its flexibility to support research, course delivery or classroom practice. The authors provide a framework of key concepts, appropriate and recent statistics, and sharp insights that enlighten, kindle and inspire action. Usefully, the book provides a wealth of

onward referencing with suggested further reading, websites and areas for research. Therefore, from a teacher's perspective the resource is a sound starting point for embarking on lessons focused on the aforementioned areas.

The book does not have a specified set of aims or objectives but the editors advise readers that the resource can be considered a break from the prevailing 24-hour news cycles and hardening public indifference to images of suffering and injustice. The resource aims to inform movement and encourage momentum toward justice, equality and sustainability. *80-20: Development in an Unequal World* is offered as an exploration of the most central global issues and debates of our time that educators are urged to introduce into the classroom and as well as informal learning settings. The book endeavours to provide up-to-date data on pressing topics that have dominated the media's agenda of late but with more context, analysis and deeper learning. For example, Chapter Ten on 'migration' challenges popular myths and half-truths with hard data and facts. This approach has become increasingly relevant within the context of the popular discourse of 'fake news', 'alternative facts' and 'the post truth era'.

*80-20: Development in an Unequal World* is suitable for upper-secondary school and post-sixteen year olds, exploring issues within Geography, Economics and Global Citizenship. In Northern Ireland, the book will be particularly useful for teaching Global Citizenship and, at 'A Level' it will enhance the teaching of 'Geographies of Economic Development and Aid'. For example, Chapter Fourteen titled 'Debating Aid - Movement Beyond a Pantomime', provides an interesting stimulus for understanding the motives behind aid and its effectiveness, impact and value in development terms.

However, *80-20's* use should not be limited to the upper-secondary school; at Key Stage Three (KS3) (12-15 years) the visual elements could provide useful stimuli for lessons on development and environmental issues. For example, the chapter on climate change provides an 'Atlas of Pollution' comparing the carbon dioxide emissions of different countries. The topic of

climate change is widely taught at KS3 throughout Northern Ireland and use of this resource would help pupils understand how climate change and human development issues are intertwined.

80-20, however, is not written as a textbook that adheres to any particular examination board's specifications; the chapters can be used as 'stand-alone' pieces on specific aspects of development. Therefore, the book's strongest use within a school setting could be as a supplementary reference resource for students and teachers.

A particularly interesting chapter that will capture the imagination of pupils is 'Food is Power', which develops our understanding of how food has been used as a weapon of war. The chapter is introduced in a contemporary context, which is followed-up with a vividly described timeline of scorched earth tactics dating back to the Persian Empire and brought up-to-date with reference to food supply issues during the Israel-Palestine conflict. The chapter provides an interesting stimulus for discussion on what can be done to help those caught up in conflicts.

An area of development that is absent from the book is Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual and Transgender (LGBT) issues. When the United Nations decided to produce a set of global goals to end poverty and inequality by 2030, equality groups pushed for the rights of lesbian, gay, bi-sexual and trans-gender people to be taken into account. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were agreed in 2015 and endorsed by 193 governments on the basis that they apply to everybody, everywhere and will 'leave no one behind'. This attitude is especially important for LGBT people, who have been continually left behind by development initiatives. Discriminatory laws, projects that fail to acknowledge their specific needs and harmful social attitudes have all come together to hold LGBT people back. The effects of this are felt by LGBT people in all parts of the world and are manifested in lower incomes, deteriorating health, and less education, among other factors. Poverty as a whole will never truly be eradicated until this problem is directly addressed and it is important, therefore, that LGBT issues are more openly

discussed in classrooms to make pupils aware that discrimination has wider implications than they may know.

The book is particularly well suited to Geography teachers in providing information and perspectives that help develop pupils' critical thinking skills. The topics covered encompass a wide range of perspectives to challenge dominant thinking among governments and decision-makers on global justice and development issues. Use of the information provided will undoubtedly inform classroom debates and provide students with rich opportunities to deepen their understanding of complex development challenges. The resource will also enable learners to understand the role they can play in combatting the causes and consequences of global inequality.

**Thomas Spratt** is a Geography Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) student at Ulster University (Coleraine). He is a post-graduate with a Masters in Environmental Engineering. Since leaving university he has worked in the utility industry for five years before deciding to make a career move into the teaching profession.

## ***ACTIVISM AND AID: YOUNG CITIZENS' EXPERIENCES OF DEVELOPMENT AND DEMOCRACY IN TIMOR-LESTE***

### **Review by Paul Hainsworth**

Ann Wigglesworth (2016) *Activism and Aid: Young Citizens' Experiences of Development and Democracy in Timor-Leste*, Monash, Australia: Monash University Publishing.

Ann Wigglesworth's book is quite accessible to the reader. In only 146 pages, she manages to say a lot about the contemporary development of Timor-Leste, the 21<sup>st</sup> century's newest nation-state. An opening chapter provides a useful scene-setting context, taking the reader through a historical odyssey, in which the territory underwent Portuguese colonisation dating back to the early 16<sup>th</sup> century and a much more brutal Indonesian re-colonisation from 1974-1999. Thereafter, the book's focus is upon aid, activism, development and democracy in the post-conflict years. As such, then, the book is a modern study as the author becomes engaged with the territory having been in the right place at the right time to ground her research and observations. Subsequent chapters cover a range of key issues, tracing how the country develops and engages with its new-found self-determination. In particular, the emphases are upon some of the challenges that the emergent nation-state has faced: humanitarian aid; civil society emergence and growth; nation-state building; custom and tradition; youth conflict and urbanisation; gender; language identity; and participation in local development.

The book is a case study of Timor-Leste, but it has a wider, comparative appeal in that the themes explored have a resonance beyond the territory – themes such as the nature of international intervention and development, the role of active and participatory citizenship, the influence of donors, and the balance and imbalance between local and global non-governmental organisations (NGOs). According to the author, 'The experiences of Timor-Leste are not unique but, as a newly emerging nation in

the twenty-first century, Timor-Leste is a unique case study' (7). Wigglesworth is critical of the way in which – in post-conflict Timor-Leste - humanitarian aid has impacted upon the growth of civil society in the territory, depicting this process as a new invasion. In this respect, she points to the constraints of top-down donor requirements that served to undermine the role of grassroots activism – in effect turning local organisations into *de facto* service delivery partners. Thus, there was a 'lack of participation of East Timorese in the early overall humanitarian aid response' (38). As a result, the author notes a marginalisation of local NGOs and, for instance, the setting of unrealistic goals in the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), a process that might have been avoided via a more participatory community engagement and bottom-up approach. Again here, the book lambasts incorrect assumptions on high and 'donor-designed projects based on their own organisational priorities rather than those of the local organisations they aim to support' (40).

Moreover, the elected government is accused of going along with this scenario from the start of post-conflict, nation-state rebuilding and therefore contributing to an unhelpful gap between itself and civil society. Thereafter, the weak engagement between national policy making and the Timorese population is deemed to have continued to constrain development in the subsequent years. Without doubt too, development in the territory was seriously derailed in the 2006-08 years, when violence broke out in the capital, Dili, with resentments, poverty, unemployment, frustrations, and internal rivalries to the fore, as thousands of internally displaced persons retreated from the capital to nearby camps. Nonetheless, as Wigglesworth explains, Timor-Leste moved on somewhat from this crisis and some positives could be noted such as, for example, increasing oil revenues, addressing of veterans' pensions, conflict management as regards 2006-08 problems, better life expectancy, some infrastructural building progress, closure of IDP (Internally Displaced Persons) camps, better female representation in local government, enhanced national self-reliance (as donors retreated) and greater stability in the territory.

However, a key narrative throughout the book is the author's insistence that the Timorese people deserved better participation and say in their country's development. For instance, in Chapter 5 ['Participation in governance and local development'], she contends that 'every citizen has the right to participate in developments that affect them' (112). But, she argues, 'members of the population have little access to decision-making structures and the large poverty in rural areas is largely unchanged' (112). Again, the accusation is that decisions too often have been made about development in the country by people and institutions who/that do not really understand the nature of Timor-Leste. In short, top down Western models of development call the shots and in effect limit participation, meaningful consultation and the growth of civil society agency.

The book is skilfully written by an author combining NGO experiences, activist leanings and academic research skills. As a result, Wigglesworth has a lot to bring to the table: it's a well-rounded piece of work from someone who clearly has a grasp of (and sympathy for) the problems facing Timor-Leste in a post-conflict setting. Moreover, a bonus is the well-chosen, black and white, photographic input. There are photos of individuals, activists and individuals – i.e. Timorese featured in the book, and who are working on the ground on development issues in Timor-Leste. A potted summary comes with each photo, outlining their role and providing a personal touch to the narrative.

Overall, whilst pointing to the problems facing contemporary Timor-Leste, the author avoids any simplistic portrayal of the country as a failed state. Rather, the complexity of an emergent, post-conflict, post-colonial, nation-state is explored – an entity that has had to juggle with tradition and modernisation, ruralism and Dili-centred urbanisation, localism and globalism.

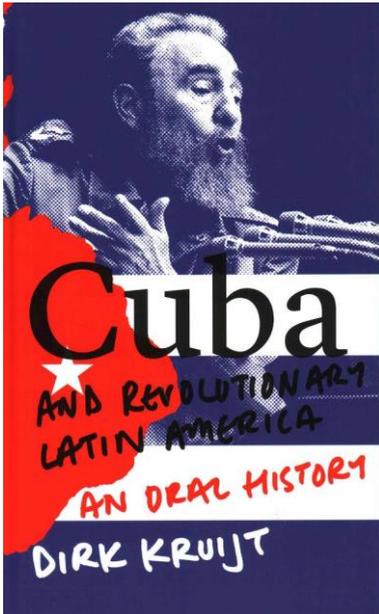
**Paul Hainsworth** is a political researcher and consultant. Formerly, he lectured in politics at Ulster University and also served as Amnesty International UK's Country Coordinator on Indonesia and East Timor (Timor-Leste). He has published his research widely and is the co-editor/contributor of *The East Timor Question: The Struggle for Independence from Indonesia* (London: I B. Tauris, 2000).

## *CUBA AND REVOLUTIONARY LATIN AMERICA: AN ORAL HISTORY*

### **Review by Stephen McCloskey**

Dirk Kruijt (2017) *Cuba and Revolutionary Latin America: An Oral History*, London: Zed Books.

This book was published a few months after the death of Fidel Castro on 25



November 2016 and, read in the context of his passing, represents a fine tribute to his considerable influence on Latin America society. The book is largely concerned with how a small island nation of 11 million people in the Caribbean, subjected to a devastating economic blockade for more than half a century, ‘came to be a referential country for nearly all Latin American revolutionary and post-revolutionary movements and insurgent generations’ (204). The remarkable story of the Cuban revolution and its hemispheric influence is told in part here first-hand by participants in what the author has demarcated as three distinct phases:

the ‘years of revolutionary fervour’ in the 1960s; the ‘mature years’ of the 1970s and 1980s as Cuba became more economically entwined with the Soviet Union and, yet, maintained a radical and independent foreign policy; and the ‘period of soft power’ from the 1990s to the present which begins with the implosion of the Soviet Union and the ‘Special Period’ of austerity and ends with the recent economic reforms that have expanded private enterprise and, at the same time, maintained the benefits of Cuba’s socialist system.

The oral history of Cuba and its relations with Latin America is based on 70 interviews conducted in Cuba and 20 interviews with former guerrilla representatives and peace negotiators in Colombia, El Salvador, Guatemala and Nicaragua. 30 interviewees were combatants from 1953 to 1962 who fought in the Sierra Maestra or were active in urban resistance groups. 24 interviewees were members of Departamento América, which ‘implemented Cuba’s policy with respect to the region, especially regarding the left and the armed left, Latin America’s rebels, guerrilleros and revolutionaries’ (3). The author also interviewed activists who joined Cuba’s literacy and health campaigns of the 1960s and supported the dissemination of revolution in Latin America, the Caribbean and southern Africa.

Given that Cuba’s revolutionary generation were born in the late 1920s, 1930s and 1940s and reaching the end of their lives, this project represents a valuable learning opportunity to gather first-hand recollections from those who helped to shape history in Cuba and the wider hemisphere.

### **Historical context**

The opening chapters provide a necessary historical context to the oral testimony that follows. This includes Cuba’s colonisation by Spain and the extended periods of insurgency in the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Revolutionary leaders, particularly José Martí, who gave his life to the war against the Spanish in 1895, were part of a strong legacy of struggle that greatly influenced the generations that followed. As Cuba was on the cusp of independence from Spain in 1898, the United States (US) intervened and controlled the island to 1959 either through direct military engagement or by proxy civil administrations and military dictatorships. This was a period when “[c]orruption, mismanagement, ‘gangsterism’, (*gangsterismo*, a Cuban slang term) and even control of student movements and trade unions, became ingredients of everyday politics’ (25).

US-backed dictator Fulgencio Batista dispensed with the pretences of democracy in 1952 when he staged a coup and ramped up oppression of students and political opposition. The insurgency movement in the 1950s

had both a rural and urban character with Fidel Castro's guerrilla force gathering support from the peasantry in the Sierra Maestra, Oriente Province, and the M 26-7 Movement leading an urban campaign mostly comprising students. They were inspired by an attack led by Castro on the Moncada Barracks in Santiago de Cuba on 26 July 1953 which resulted in his arrest and trial. Castro's famous written defence of the insurrection during his trial – *La Historia Me Absolvará* (History Will Absolve Me) - was essentially a political manifesto of 'nationalization and land reform' that informed the revolution that triumphed in 1959. The book argues that the insurgents were united by 'a common mindset: a fervent patriotism, strong anti-imperialist and anti-American feelings, pro-poor sympathies, and a conviction of urgency for social justice and social reform' (44).

### **Revolutionary origins**

In probing where the insurgents' 'revolutionary impetus came from?', the author found that:

“Nearly all veterans reckoned that their patriotic ideals were transmitted by their parents, grandparents and great grand-parents, and that their patriotism had been fostered by nationalistic teachers during their primary or secondary education” (45).

One of the interviewees, Ramiro Abreu, was like many of the peasants who joined Fidel in the Sierra Maestra, functionally illiterate because of irregular education. 'After 1959 he studied sociology and diplomacy; he now holds a doctorate in history' and became 'Cuba's liaison with the Central American revolutionaries' for 30 years (46). Luis Morejón was a shoeshine boy at the time of the revolution who became active with M 26-7 and after the revolution took a course in anti-aircraft artillery. He later became Vice-Director General of the important foreign liaison body the Cuban Institute for Friendship with the Peoples (Instituto Cubano de Amistad con los Pueblos [ICAP]).

The book also documents the experiences of female combatants and how the revolution shaped their lives. María Antonia Figueroa Araujo was

a female militant who rescued six *compáneros* from the Moncada Barracks attack and later became a member of M 26-7 as treasurer. She went on to become Superintendent of Education in Havana until her retirement. Another female guerrilla member, Consuelo Elba Álvarez, served in the Sierra Maestra and recalled a total female fighting force of 300. She was a courier and teacher and after the revolution became a journalist and television documentarist.

These accounts remind us of the empowering impact of revolution when there is a genuine unity of purpose between the leaders and the people. Paulo Freire recognised that ‘Fidel Castro and his comrades’ were an ‘eminently dialogical leadership group’ because they endured with the people and victory ‘would belong not to the leaders alone, but to the leaders *and* the people’ (Freire, 1970: 145-146). For Freire and the Cuban revolution, liberation from the dictatorship of Batista had a transformative effect toward a ‘fuller humanity’ that enabled them to survive the physical trials of oppression and poverty to achieve self-awareness, agency and autonomy.

### **Revolutionary Fervour**

The Socialist character of the revolution took shape immediately after the triumph of 1959: land reform was initiated, a social security system created, foreign enterprises expropriated, a national literacy campaign started, and discrimination on the basis of race and gender was outlawed. Banking, housing and salaries were also reviewed as a raft of new policies were announced and implemented. In December 1959, the Eisenhower administration approved ‘an action plan to overthrow Castro’ (66) thus initiating nearly 60 years of US aggression toward the Cuban revolution that has included direct military intervention, covert aggression and, above all, an economic and trading blockade designed to make the revolution unsustainable. Washington’s aggression forced Havana into closer diplomatic and economic relations with Moscow although never to the point that Cuba became a Russian vassal state. A recurring miscalculation by successive US administrations and Western powers was to regard Cuba as a

kind of Russian appendage in the Caribbean that would collapse after the Cold War.

In the 1960s, the influence of the Cuban revolution saw guerrilla movements emerge in nearly all Latin American countries as ‘they found hope in the creation and consolidation of a stable socialist economy and society’ (79). In most cases this influence was indirect and managed by Departamento América (DA) under the leadership of Manuel Piñeiro, a guerrilla *commandante* with the complete trust of Fidel. DA operated as ‘the liaison with the armed left and the monitoring instrument for Latin America’ (204). It is not within the compass of the book to address Cuba’s direct military engagement in Angola in the 1970s and 80s against the South Africa forces of apartheid which led Nelson Mandela to say that Cuba’s interventions ‘destroyed the myth of the invincibility of the white oppressor’ (Democracy Now, 2013).

In Latin America, Cuba’s role included the provision of training and guidance on the implementation of rural guerrilla focus points (*foquismo*) which were based on the idea that ‘revolutions can successfully start with a rural guerrilla force that will unite peasants against suppressive governments’ (81). In effect, this meant trying to replicate the strategy implemented in the Sierra Maestra and the book offers us a series of case studies where this was tried and failed despite Cuba’s assistance. Common failings were that: insurgent groups became splintered along ideological lines and personality differences; Soviet-oriented communist parties offered ‘tepid support’ to insurrections and the Soviet Union itself ‘was never a fervent devotee of guerrilla movements’ (120). Above all, the guerrilla movements were unable to win the trust of indigenous peoples that sometimes comprised 50 per cent of the total population and for the most part couldn’t speak Spanish. By contrast, the army was often the only state representative they knew and trusted, particularly army nurses and doctors. The rural *foquismo* did not stand up to practice and by the 1970s the political landscape was shifting with progressive social democracies beginning to emerge in Latin America and the Caribbean in countries such as Peru, Panama, Jamaica and Guyana.

## **The Mature Years**

The 1970s and 80s were ‘years of relative prosperity’ for Cuba as it became more economically dependent on the Soviet Union for oil, coal and other important resources while remaining a ‘mono-product (sugar) agricultural exporter’ (124). However, close economic ties did not mean that Cuba became a ‘dogmatic subscriber to Soviet politics’ (126) particularly in the area of foreign policy which Fidel Castro personally monitored in detail (127). The political winds in Latin America were shifting in the 1970s and 1980s toward Dependency Theory when ‘poverty, exclusion, social conflict and political violence were seen as the consequences of Latin America’s dependent integration into the capitalist world system’ (128). ICAP became a key institution in creating and maintaining new relationships with intellectuals, campaign groups, political movements and labour leaders. Three labour leaders who were regular guests in Cuba subsequently became presidents of their countries: Lula (Brazil), Morales (Bolivia) and Maduro (Venezuela).

In this period, Cuba operated ‘more pragmatically and explicitly emphasized the necessity of revolutionary unity’ (170). Whereas in the 1960s, Cuba advocated rural *foquismo* by supporting guerrilla movements, it now broadened its alliances to include an array of political actors urging the need for unity and pacts seeking the unification of ‘all revolutionary actors’ (170). This was also a period of growing influence for Cuba’s medical services sent to countries in need irrespective of their political stripes. Kruijt argues that Cuba’s offering itself as a place of refuge was ‘without a doubt the most laudable, selfless and generous contribution to all insurgent movements, highly regarded by all who received medical treatment and could convalesce on the island’ (171). By contrast with the period of severed diplomatic relations in the 1960s in the aftermath of the revolution, in the 1990s and early 2000s ‘all Latin American countries had established or renewed their diplomatic relations’ with Cuba (140).

## **Soft Power**

The collapse of the Soviet Union had a swift and devastating impact on the Cuban economy with Moscow's trade with the island dropping by 93 per cent between 1989 and 1993. This was compounded by Washington's passing of the Torricelli Bill in 1992 which tightened the US blockade. The revolutionary leadership reacted with the introduction of a 'Special Period in Peacetime' (179), a period of austerity in which the government 'prevented hunger and starvation by distributing packages of essential food and clothing' (179). Cuba survived this shock to the economic system by investing in tourism and securing foreign investment in joint venture companies which were jointly owned by the state and private sector. In 2006, Fidel transferred his powers to Raul Castro following a serious illness. Self-employment and micro-enterprises were introduced incrementally by Raul in a series of economic reforms and nickel came to replace sugar as the main export commodity. Cuba was also greatly assisted by the petro-dollars of Venezuela following the election of Hugo Chávez in 1998. Fidel never over-estimated the lasting influence of Cuba given its relative economic weakness in the hemisphere. He considered 'Cuba a revolutionary vanguard' always looking out for a country to take over the revolutionary baton. He found this political ally in Hugo Chávez and they forged a strong relationship based on a shared socialism and passion to wrest the hemisphere from the influence of Washington's hegemony. In return for subsidised Venezuelan oil, Cuba committed thousands of medical personnel to barrios and favelas in Venezuela as part of a programme known as 'oil for doctors'.

A large part of Cuba's 'soft power' diplomacy has involved the deployment of civilian missions in the form of medical and literacy teams overseas. Between 1959 and 2001, 156,000 Cubans worked as 'internationalists overseas as health professionals and educators', often in highly dangerous circumstances such as the Ebola outbreak in Haiti (190). There were 30,000 Cuban health personnel working overseas in 2007 alone and in 1998 Fidel launched a special medical school for Latin American students which had 3,000 graduates per annum by 2012 (190-91). Cuba assisted the establishment of medical schools in the Yemen and a raft of

Latin American countries including Venezuela thereby creating a more sustainable source of medical support at home.

Cuba's commitment to healthcare went further in 2004 when it launched 'Operation Miracle', co-financed by Venezuela, to cure cataract and other eye diseases and by 2015 it had 2.5 million beneficiaries (191). And, in terms of literacy, Cuba created a hugely successful anti-illiteracy methodology in 2000 which was standardised as an audio-visual campaign called *Yo, sí puedo* (Yes, I can) with adapted versions of the programme rolled out in thirty countries (192). As the author suggests: "Even in technical terms, Cuba's development aid is non-political, efficient, directly targeted at poor people, and based on the country's long experience in organising instant help" (210). It perplexes me that the international development non-governmental sector does not do more to learn from the highly effective Cuban health and literacy models, and the excellent work of the medical brigades that are regularly first on the scene and last to leave in disaster and emergency zones around the world.

### **Where next for Cuba?**

This book went to print before the death of Fidel Castro and the election of the highly volatile popular nationalist Donald Trump as President of the US in November 2016. Fidel had already overseen an uneventful transfer of power to Raul in 2006 and confined himself to written reflections on the revolution and global affairs in the state newspaper *Granma* until his death ten years later. Raul has announced his retirement in 2018 and, significantly, will be passing the baton to a younger generation not directly involved in the victory of the revolution in 1959. As the author suggests, Raul has proven to be an effective pragmatist in office with a programme of 'structural and conceptual reforms' that represented an 'updating of the model without abandoning socialism' (201). However, Cuba and the entire Latin American hemisphere was rocked by the death of Hugo Chávez in 2013 following a long battle with cancer just a year after he had won a third six-year presidential term. His successor, Nicola Maduro, has struggled to maintain the influence and achievements of the Bolivarian revolution and, like

Chávez, is confronted by a militant opposition supported by Washington. It is naïve of Kruijt to suggest that the US ‘played an ambiguous role in the coup against elected president Chávez’ in 2002 (212). Washington was very much on the side of the coup plotters then (Vulliamy, 2002) and Donald Trump has openly embraced the Venezuelan opposition today (Woody, 2017).

There is understandable concern in Havana that Trump may seek to reverse a political rapprochement reached during the Obama presidency when Cuba and the United States resumed diplomatic relations under the auspices of Pope Francis and the Vatican. This agreement stopped short of addressing a lifting of the US blockade and the return of Guantanamo Bay to Cuba which is occupied by the United States against the will of the Cuban people and famously used as a prison camp for the use of torture and rendition. These are crucial points of contention that need to be addressed in any future agreement with the US. Meanwhile, Cuba continues to play a positive diplomatic role in the hemisphere, particularly in helping to resolve the conflict in Colombia. In September 2016, following four years of intensive negotiations in Havana, the Colombian government signed a peace agreement with the FARC (Rebel Armed Forces of Colombia – People’s Army) ending the longest running conflict in the region that claimed a quarter of a million people (*Guardian*, 2016).

In summarising Cuba’s influence in the region, Kruijt suggests that:

“Cuba is a country with high political significance and a reputable history as a revolutionary and influential power house, and an indestructible reputation as development donor for the poor and the under privileged... it is without doubt the most important country in the Caribbean” (208).

This influence has been felt in the non-aligned movement of nations not under the sway of any specific power bloc and very much an initiative of the global South. Cuba has been one of the dominant voices in this movement for decades given its legacy of support in so many domains to countries

across the world. In pointing to the island's overarching goal going forward, Kruijt argues that:

“Cuba’s explicit policy is to maintain the benefits of the country’s socialist system; free and accessible education and public health, elementary provisions for all and public security ensuring a crime-free society, the four basic differences that distinguish Cuba from all other Latin and Caribbean nations” (211).

This is not a definitive history of Cuba as the stated aim was to focus on Cuba’s relations with countries in Latin America and, therefore, omits the Africa campaigns, and a detailed exploration of Havana’s economic policy and social programmes. However, it very usefully captures the first-hand recollections of key actors in the period leading up to the 1959 revolution, some of those involved in nurturing and maintaining Cuba’s support of insurgent groups in the 1960s, and a broader canvass of political actors in the 1970s and 1980s. It also pays full tribute to Cuba’s humanitarianism both to political actors in the region and to those in need across the world. It oddly pays scant regard to the United States and how it influenced relations within Latin America and directly impacted on individual countries by way of covert and overt interventions. The ‘Washington Consensus’, for example, became just as insidious and devastating a US policy as the use of military proxies and often went hand in hand with military force. However, what we have here is an always interesting political history of Latin America over the last fifty years, a fascinating analysis of guerrilla movements and how they operated, and a tremendous example of how political will and tenacity can surpass just about any form of aggression, setback and nefarious meddling. Third level students and teachers of Latin American politics, development studies and related disciplines will find this book a very welcome aid.

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**Stephen McCloskey** is Director of the Centre for Global Education and editor of *Policy and Practice: A Development Education Review*, a bi-annual, open access journal available at: [www.developmenteducationreview.com](http://www.developmenteducationreview.com). He is editor (with Gerard McCann) of *From the Local to the Global: Key Issues in Development Studies* (Pluto Press, 2015).