

# Resource reviews

## *DEVELOPMENT EDUCATION IN THEORY AND PRACTICE: AN EDUCATOR'S RESOURCE*

### **Review by Douglas Bourn**

Michal Cenker, Louiza Hadjivasiliou, Patrick Marren and Niamh Rooney (eds.) (2016) *Development Education in Theory and Practice: An Educator's Resource*, UNIDEV-NGO Support Centre (Cyprus), Pontis Foundation (Slovakia), Kimmage Development Studies Centre (Ireland).

Educational resources related to the themes of development education and for third level or higher education activities are rare. The vast majority of educational materials produced in the field of development education are aimed at formal education and schools and, whilst some can be adapted for work, say, with university academics and students, having one that specifically focuses on this sector is welcome. This publication has come out of a Europe Aid funded project led by organisations in Cyprus, Ireland and Slovakia. The publication is based around twelve themes, each with a conceptual piece followed by activities outlining methods for teaching the theme. The themes include a general introduction to development education and global citizenship education followed by topics such as poverty, inequality, governance, migration, sustainable development, climate change, food, health, human rights and civil society activism.

Whilst the publication has some value to any academic or student interested in applying development education approaches to higher education, it has serious shortcomings and reflects perhaps a lack of understanding about, and evidence gained, from those working in the sector. The shortcomings and problems with the publication can be seen in the lack of clarity as to who it is aimed at within higher education. The themes identified reflect a traditional approach towards development. However

Eilish Dillon in her valuable introductory piece reflects on the relationship between development education and development studies. She rightly notes that development studies tends to operate within an accepted norm of the development discourse whereas development education does not. She rightly criticises much of development studies teaching as based on a ‘banking style of education’ but what is not clear from her piece or from others is what is different about a development education approach.

There are numerous examples of a development education pedagogical approach in higher education, particularly in areas such as engineering and health (Bourn and Neal, 2008; Willott et al., 2012) but they are not referred to within this publication. In defence of the publication, in many European countries, learning about development issues is only an emerging subject within higher education and there has been a call for publications and resources that aim directly to address knowledge about development themes. This can be seen not only in the teaching tools but also the conceptual pieces that accompany them. For example, the chapter on poverty, whilst providing some valuable data on absolute and relative poverty, could be found in many articles and publications. What would have been more useful for higher education audiences would have been to look at how poverty is perceived and is relevant to areas of learning. The topic is presented as about ‘poverty in distant places’ and not in terms of its social and educational relevance to students.

Development education can make an important contribution to higher education if it is seen as a pedagogical approach that encourages critical reflection, looking at the world through different viewpoints, making connections between local and global issues and, above all, recognising that many professional disciplines such as engineering, law, health, education and architecture are global and can only be effectively taught by recognising the impact of globalisation and global issues to their subject area. In this publication there are some useful activities including discussions on different interpretations of the terms development, sustainable development and climate change. But they have been produced in too prescriptive a format

through a very structured educational process with timings against each activity. Above all what the publication lacks is any clear sense of how an academic or even someone within a university with a staff development remit would use such a publication. There is a lot of literature on what global citizenship means to higher education (Jones, 2010; Lewin, 2009; Schattle, 2008; Shiel, 2007), yet, I see no evidence of engagement with these debates in this publication.

What these publications refer to is how concepts like global citizenship or global perspectives are part of the language and practices of many universities around the world and can be used as a way of critiquing dominant assumptions about human development and global forces. As Shultz (2010: 19) has noted, ‘using global citizenship as a platform to resist institutional structures’ can provide ‘educators with discursive and pedagogical space to engage the immensely complex issues related to global knowledge and learning’. What many in higher education who are sympathetic to the traditions and practices emanating from development education are looking for are educational materials that question dominant Western discourses, that promote ethical and social justice, and above all demonstrate approaches towards teaching and learning that recognise and respond to the needs, outlooks and interests of their diverse student base.

These themes are recognised by academics from the countries involved with producing this publication. For example, Svitacova and Mravcova (2014) in reviewing the implementation of development education themes within their university in Slovakia, note the importance of promoting ‘global dimensions’ in a range of subjects and that it should be seen as interdisciplinary and not as a separate subject. So how does this publication compare with such other resources as 80:20’s (Regan, 2012) excellent and popular resource on development? I may well use some of the ideas within some of the activities outlined in the publication for discussions with students who are interested in making connections between themes such as global citizenship to their subject but only in terms of using examples of specific bodies of knowledge or a particular pedagogical approach.

The publication reflects the challenges within higher education of the relationship between development studies and development education. Academics responsible for teaching development studies themes might find some of the activities in here useful particularly where there are approaches that are not lecturer-led. The ‘Prisoner’s Dilemma’ activity and role play in Section 5 on Local and Global Governance is one example of this. But unless there is a broader staff development section aimed at academics, say, in development studies as an example that poses different forms of teaching and learning, promoting a range of theories and approaches, lecturers will pick and choose some activities but not necessarily engage with the intended themes promoted in the publication.

For academics in other disciplines or those engaged in more interdisciplinary studies, again, there are likely to be specific activities that could prove useful. The teaching tools on education in a globalised world for example do pose some questions for debate such as critical thinking, self-awareness and open-mindedness to difference, action and participation. What was needed was for these themes to be much more central to the entire publication.

## **References**

Bourn, D and Neal, I (2008) *The Global Engineer*, London: Engineers Against Poverty.

Jones, E (ed.) (2010) *Internationalisation and the Student Voice*, New York: Routledge.

Lewin, R (ed.) (2009) *The Handbook of Practice and Research in Study Abroad: Higher Education and the Quest for Global Citizenship*, New York: Routledge.

Regan, C (ed.) (2012) *80:20: Development in an Unequal World*, 6<sup>th</sup> edition, Bray: 80:20.

Schattle, H (2008) *The Practices of Global Citizenship*, Maryland, USA: Rowman & Littlefield.

Shiel, C (2007) 'Developing and embedding global perspectives across the university' in S Marshal (ed.) *Strategic Leadership of Change in Higher Education*, London and New York: Routledge.

Shultz, L (2010) 'What Do We Ask of Global Citizenship? A Study of Global Citizenship Education in a Canadian University', *International Journal of Development Education and Global Learning*, Vol. 3, No. 1, pp. 5-22.

Svitacova, E and Mravcova, A (2014) 'Implementation of Global Development Education into the Curriculum at the Faculty of Economics and Management', *International Journal of Development Education and Global Learning*, Vol. 6, No. 2, pp.43-62.

Willott, C, Blum, N, Burch, W, Page, B and Rowson, M (2012) *The Global Doctor*, London: UCL and Institute of Education.

**Douglas Bourn** is the Director of the Development Education Research Centre, Institute of Education, University College London and editor of the *International Journal of Development Education and Global Learning*. His most recent publication is *The Theory and Practice of Development Education: A Pedagogy for Global Social Justice* (Routledge, 2015). Douglas is actively involved in the DFID funded Global Learning Programme for England. E-mail: [d.bourn@ioe.ac.uk](mailto:d.bourn@ioe.ac.uk).