

Editorial

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Over the past decade the development education (DE) sector has undergone a process of change that has strengthened its policy framework and consolidated its shift from the periphery to the centre of mainstream education provision. In the mid-1990s, practitioners debated development education's position in mainstream delivery and its capacity to address key learning needs within formal and non-formal education. That debate seems far removed from today's more dynamic framework for delivery.

Since 1997, the British government has published three White Papers on international development that made explicit reference to the need for strengthened awareness raising across civil society and, in 2006, the Irish government published its first White Paper on international development. Note the similarities in the messages contained in their policy statements on development education. The British government says that 'Every child should be educated about development issues, so that they can understand the key global considerations which will shape their lives' (DFID White Paper, 1997). The Irish government's White Paper (2006) says that 'Every person in Ireland will have access to educational opportunities to be aware of and understand their rights and responsibilities as global citizens and their potential to effect change for a more just and equal world'.

The two governments have produced strategy plans to deliver on their White Paper targets that provide for more strategic interventions in the education system through inter-departmental dialogue and co-operation. They have also increased their financial support for development education to build capacity in the British and Irish sectors and create new opportunities for the professional development of practitioners. *The Changing Landscape of Development Education* is the theme of Issue 5 of *Policy and Practice* and reflects on some of the new developments in DE practice that have sprung from the changed policy environment.

DE and research

The Focus articles combine analysis of significant new initiatives toward research-based practice in DE with revealing insights into global issues that

have altered our perspectives on development – commerce in Fair Trade products and the emergence of popular movements and direct democracy in Latin America. Bourn and Khoo, Healy and Coate discuss the recent and rapid expansion of research activity in the DE sector in British and Irish contexts.

Bourn outlines the background and remit of an exciting new Department for International Development (DfID)-funded Development Education Research Centre at the Institute of Education in the University of London. He considers research to be central to the mainstreaming of development education in the tertiary sector but suggests that DE has had a limited academic profile at third level in the absence of an ‘independent research focus’ such as that found in citizenship or environment education. Bourn considers research in DE as essential in ‘strengthening public confidence in, and support for the fight against global poverty’ but is concerned with its ‘minimal academic profile’ which could impede momentum toward the continued mainstreaming of the sector. The new research centre will clearly have a pivotal role in ‘raising standards in educational attainment’ in DE.

Khoo, Healy and Coate approach the research debate from an Irish context and the establishment of a Development Education and Research Network (DERN) at the National University of Ireland, Galway, which aims to ‘enhance networking between researchers and academics interested in development issues’. Their article considers the challenges and tensions that have arisen between teaching activities and the expanding research sector.

Khoo, Healy and Coate suggest that ‘Proponents of DE as an emancipatory and humanistic educational project may be dismayed by the demands of the new research landscape and the instrumental view of knowledge embedded in the new research programmes’. With research funding becoming a dominant force for change in Irish tertiary education since the late 1990s Khoo *et al* ask how the ‘narrow instrumental’ approach to education found in ‘academic capitalism’ will co-exist and integrate with the more egalitarian and co-operative modes of working central to DE practice? This debate is timely as academics and practitioners alike will be developing new research projects to support and evaluate their practice.

Fair trade as development action

One of the key characteristics of DE practice is its capacity to engender public action toward social and economic justice, and a totemic flag-bearer of the action impulse in development is the Fairtrade mark. Development educators regularly employ Fairtrade in training workshops as a practical

example of how consumer power can support local economies in the developing world. However, Penson suggests that facile consumerist solutions may over-simplify the fair trade debate and preclude deeper investigations and actions around the factors that make fair trade necessary.

Penson draws upon research in Rwanda and Uganda to show why some African coffee producers are exiting the Fairtrade network and establishing locally managed alternative organizations. He concludes that Fairtrade has overall positive outcomes for developing countries but should be subject to critical debate and analysis ‘to ensure that the best possible outcome is attained’ for developing world producers.

Social change in Argentina

Sitrin presents an alternative vision of development from the streets of Argentina where she researched the impact of a national financial crisis in December 2001 that sparked social and economic upheaval, the mass mobilization of popular movements and the subsequent collapse of five governments in two weeks. Rather than aiming to seize power at a national level, the protestors created the green shoots of new social movements at a community level described as *horizontalidad* given their non-hierarchical structure and practice of direct democracy.

The new structures reject party politics and are principally concerned with local issues like health, land and education in a similar fashion to the Zapatista movement in Chiapas, Mexico and the landless movement in Brazil. These movements have transformed the development landscape in Latin America and enabled indigenous communities to set their own agenda for change which in turn has created an individual and collective freedom of thought and action. The reclaiming of national and communal autonomy across Latin America is a significant shift in the development landscape that educators can draw upon as positive examples of societal change.

Perspectives articles

The Perspectives articles in this issue reflect the full breadth of issues impacting on contemporary DE practice: from the relationship to other sectors of education like citizenship, community relations, human rights and humanitarian law to the portrayal of developing countries in print and television media. We also receive a call for DE to forge ‘an adequate theoretical framework to explain globalisation’ and engage learners in meaningful, strategic actions that will tackle persistent social and economic inequalities in the developing world.

Other perspectives on DE call for a contemplative re-examination of our contemporary practice in respect to issues like race, migration and identity in the context of enhanced social diversity and inward migration. While some development organisations have recently launched welcome initiatives toward establishing closer working links with black and minority ethnic and migrant communities, the sector could undoubtedly do more in this regard.

Although this issue of the journal is primarily concerned with the changing landscape of DE, Hainsworth reminds us that slavery has been a regrettably enduring contributor to social and economic inequalities both locally and internationally. He welcomes the opportunities afforded by the bicentenary of the abolition of the British slave trade to re-open the debate on contemporary forms of slavery.

In the review section we invited local educators to give us their thoughts on recent treatments of Africa on film from mainstream offerings like *The Constant Gardener* to *Bamako*, a film from Mali, in which the international financial institutions (IFIs) are put on trial in the courtyard of a house. The Viewpoint article considers the worrying trend of reduced support for DE among some of our leading development agencies and considers the implications of this trend for the sector. The Centre for Global Education welcomes a response to this article and the other contributions to Issue 5: please e-mail capacity@centreforglobaleducation.com.

Finally, I wish to pay tribute to Catherine Simmons, editor of *Policy and Practice*, who has moved on to a new position in Zambia. Catherine made an immense contribution in setting up the structures and processes that have underpinned the journal and made it an established part of the DE sector both locally and internationally. The Centre hopes to continue her good work in the current issue and those to come and wishes her well in her new post.