Editorial

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Development education (DE) as a sector is relatively new and its integration into the formal, non-formal and tertiary education sectors is an ongoing process. For example, in the schools' curricula, development education continually seeks to develop footholds in the classroom through new programmes like civic, social and political education (CSPE) and citizenship education . In contrast to more accessible and understandable sectors like environmental education (EE) and education for sustainable development (ESD), development education must continuously strive to prove itself as a credible and important area of study. An important tool in this process of building the pedagogical value and academic standing of development education as a distinct, but essential component of education is research.

Successful and innovative research projects cement the credibilityof the sector and enhance academic access to the essential components of development education, particularly at third level. Research raises the status of DE in both the eyes of academic peers and those who resource research projects through grants and bursaries. It has been encouraging to note the increased success of academics and DE practitioners in securing research funding from government agencies such as Irish Aid, the Irish government's foreign assistance branch of the Department of Foreign Affairs, and the British government's Department for International Development (DfID).

The number of organisations and individuals competing for research funding is high and competition is stiff with new projects encompassing a range of sectors: community projects, youth organisations, primary and secondary education, curriculum development, tertiary education, initial teacher education (ITE), and continuing professional development (CPD). Many of these projects address a recurring theme in DE; how do we assess the value of our practice and its impact on learners. This challenge requires us to constantly revisit the monitoring and evaluation of our work to ensure that it captures the impact of our activities on target groups thus ensuring that we constantly improve our practice. The more effective we are in monitoring our work and successfully delivering DE projects, the more support the sector will garner from statutory and non-statutory agencies for future work.

There are many challenges confronting development educators in conducting research and sharing and implementing outcomes. First, we need to address the relationship between development education and other complementary educations, some of which may be in direct competition

for funds and resources. Second, we need to consider the role of statutory agencies and the private sector in commissioning research, particularly that which gravitates toward the needs of the market at the expenses of a wider set of values, skills and attitudes that can equip the learner for life in a more globalised society. Third, we need to continually assess the research methodologies that best monitor and evaluate the impact of DE. For example, how do we strengthen the support for teachers in successfully implementing DE in the classroom? What are the most effective resources for use in the classroom?

An additional problem confronted by development educators in research is that they are dealing with somewhat antiquated systems of learning and measuring outcomes. As evidenced in some of this issue's articles, many schools still view knowledge as something to be learned and collected, instead of seeing it as a process with which students can continually question the world in which they live. This product-orientated system is not compatible with our ever-changing global society that is continually influenced by cultural, social, economic and political forces often beyond our control. Development education enables us to understand these global forces as 'an educational process aimed at increasing awareness and understanding of the rapidly changing, interdependent and unequal world in which we live. It seeks to engage people in analysis, reflection and action for local and global citizenship and participation' (http://www.ideaonline.ie).

Development education research can support educators in strengthening their practice through a process involving reflection, analysis and action. However, a key challenge for the sector is ensuring that good research practice is effectively communicated within the sector and with practitioners in other related sectors. Research must be promoted and disseminated widely through publications like this journal both within the DE sector and in other adjectival disciplines. Research can broaden the DE constituency beyond its traditional base of practitioners into other areas of related practice. This will require allocating more resources and finances toward promotion and dissemination. Additionally, the sector should look towards umbrella organisations such as the Irish Development Education Association (IDEA) and the DEA, who are making significant strides to improve communication between DE and other sectors like higher education and the university sector.

Given the increasing levels of development education research commissioned in recent years and the challenges raised by this enhanced practice, Issue 7 of *Policy and Practice* has been allocated the theme of 'Development Education and Research'. This issue will showcase an array of qualitative and quantitative research, consider some of the challenges

confronted by those commissioning research, discuss issues arising from current trends in research practice and share research findings with fellow practitioners toward strengthening the DE sector's engagement with the research field.

In the first of five Focus articles, Matthias Fiedler delves into two equally important issues: increasing cultural diversity in the classroom; and the necessary implementation of a global and social justice perspective when educating children about the complexities of the world. He argues that these issues are closely intertwined, and that development education and intercultural education are important sectors in supporting educators to discuss global and local issues with due consideration to the various cultures being respresented in the classroom.

Su-ming Khoo and Orla Lehane address two scenarios that have emerged in the wake of Irish Higher Education Institutions' (HEIs) attempt to adapt their research and education activities in response to the complexities of globalisation. They express concern that institutions are more concerned with high ratings on global or national university rankings than of the quality of education provided to students. They suggest creating different standards of evaluation that measure success by contributions to a greater good, and further suggest that universities can play a significant role in creating more humane and sustainable futures using the tools of development education.

Maria Campbell and Niamh Hourigan present an interesting study that analyses the impact of institutional cultures on undergraduate development education programmes. They compare the perceptions, attitudes, beliefs and expectations of both students and teachers in each of the two programmes to assess how similar material was interpreted. They found that students absorbed and used the material in completely different ways depending on how they intended to use it, how well they knew their fellow students and teacher, what type of course it was a part of, etc. They also found that teachers related the material differently depending on the type of institutional culture in which they had initially studied. They suggest that an improved understanding of the effects of institutional cultures can better inform development education delivery at third level.

Doug Bourn looks at current debates and policies in the UK regarding young people, identity, and the effects of globalisation. He refers to a few pieces of research commissioned by the government that describe how young people are affected by globalisation and how schools and the curriculum need to adapt to this new multicultural society. He stresses the importance of teaching young people about the interrelated nature of the world and establishing a relationship between local experiences and global processes. He also takes into account the effects of increased cultural

diversity and the formation of identity in youth and how that should be taken into consideration when working with young people.

Audrey Bryan presents findings from a research project that analyses how development issues are depicted in recently produced textbooks aimed at lower secondary students in Ireland. She finds that development is presented in many contradictory ways, often within the same textbook. There are examples of development as charity, modernisationist views of linear socio-economic growth and instances where different cultures are presented through a narrow scope to show only destitution and poverty. She argues that to better engage with students, it is better to present issues through a post-colonial framework that will explain the complexities of development in a broader context.

The Perspectives articles offer a similarly wide array of research findings and recommendations. Mella Cusack presents the findings of a teacher survey that evaluated their interest in a senior cycle citizenship education course, provisionally titled politics and society, to follow the junior cycle civic, social and political education (CSPE) course. Hannu Takkula, Jukka Kangaslahti and Joseph Banks draw upon their experiences in the European Parliament to emphasise the need for strong communication and language skills to increase transcultural competence in our increasingly globalised and multicultural world. Demonstrating the growth and development of the sector, Sheila Dillon reviews 35 years of Trocaire's development education programmes with a view to future endeavours. In her article on contemporary European DE policies, Rilli Lappalainen discusses the European Consensus on Development and its implication for DE. In an example of using personal experiences to communicate development issues, Larry Swatuk reflects on his experiences living and working in Africa to help him develop a practical pedagogy for a new Environment and International Development programme at the University of Waterloo.

This issue aims to serve as a forum for sharing research findings in DE across the UK and Ireland. These case studies are not an exhaustive account of current research practice but signify the increasing level of work carried out in the DE sector. We hope that through this journal, other development education publications, and DE organisations, research from all areas of the world can be shared with colleagues, learned from and build upon.

Readers of *Policy and Practice* are encouraged to respond to any of the articles presented here and the issues they raise. If you have comments on any of the articles published in Issue 7, then please write to the editor: jenna@centreforglobaleducation.com.