

PREFACE: THE POLICY ENVIRONMENT FOR DEVELOPMENT EDUCATION

Issue 31 of *Policy and Practice: A Development Education* is based on a collaborative call for articles by four European journals focused on development education (DE) and global learning (GL):

- [*International Journal of Development Education and Global Learning*](#) – Editor: Clare Bentall (UCL Institute of Education, UK) Issue 12.2, Dec 2020.
- [*Policy and Practice: A Development Education Review*](#) – Editor: Stephen McCloskey (Centre for Global Education, Belfast, Ireland) Issue 31, Autumn 2020.
- [*Sinergias: Educational Dialogues for Social Change*](#) – Members of the editorial board: La Salete Coelho and Jorge Cardoso (University of Porto and Fundação Gonçalo da Silveira, Portugal) Issue 11, Dec 2020.
- [*ZEP: Journal of International Research and Development Education*](#) – Editor: Caroline Rau (University of Bamberg, Germany) Issue 43, No. 4, Dec 2020.

The four journals are publishing articles based on a collaborative call for contributors on the theme of *The Policy Environment for Development Education*. The call aimed to generate articles on how educators respond to both the national and global policy environment for DE. Together the journals aim to provide a collective perspective to contribute to this debate, through research articles, opinion and practitioner pieces.

The global context provides the backdrop for this focus on the policy environment for development education. Currently, we are facing a climate emergency threatening a mass extinction of biodiversity and social upheaval for people on the frontline of global warming. In some contexts, scepticism towards the urgency of climate change is leading to the exploitation rather than

protection of the environment. In contrast, a global mass movement, initiated by school children, is demanding action. The Maastricht Declaration of 2002 on Global Learning places ‘greater justice, equity and human rights for all’ at its heart. Yet the social component of sustainability threatens to be overlooked in educational policy and practice. More recently, the COVID 19 pandemic and the likelihood of a long term global economic recession present additional challenges, and international progress on reducing global poverty is very far from being achieved, according to the United Nations Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights, Philip Alston.

Globally, the dominant policy paradigm for development education’s response to these global issues is found in the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, adopted by United Nations Member States in 2015, to provide ‘a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future’. Development educators have seized upon SDG 4.7, with its aim to ‘ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development’, as a policy impetus for the sector both locally and internationally. However, policy environments for development education and global learning are under strain. For example, within the European Union, funding for Hub 4 on Global Citizenship Education in Concord, the collaborative network of NGOs across Europe, is threatened.

Given these challenges there is a need to examine critically the interrelationship between this policy environment and the work of development education and global learning educators to carry out their mission of achieving global social justice. We hope that the four special issues of the journals will support this debate on policy and enhance development education practice through these challenging times.