

## EDITORIAL

### CATHERINE SIMMONS

This fourth issue of *Policy and Practice: a development education review* has **Voices from the Global South** as its theme. Practitioners working in development and development education from the Global North/South in Ireland and the UK have contributed their experiences and points of view on this topic. We have also asked practitioners working in the Global South to contribute their perspective on the theme.

“Voices from the Global South” is a phrase that covers a broad spectrum of ideas and draws attention to a number of issues for those working in development education. The articles in this issue touch on the understanding (or not) of the multiple realities of the Global South. They remind us that the Global South is not just one country, one person or one point of view; the very perception of the Global South as a single entity needs to be critically examined.

All three Focus articles consider how perceptions from the Global North affect the quality and nature of our interaction with those from the Global South, whether in Ireland or overseas. Simon Anholt addresses this on a global scale, examining how the overall image of a country can affect its ability to compete and engage with others in the world. He investigates the transformative process of how perceptions become ‘understandings’ of a place or culture. Michael Mahadeo and Joe McKinney also question the ‘truth’ of perceptions and the relationship between reality, stereotypes and generalisations of the Global South. By looking at the role of the media they explore the links between images and representations and how our perceptions translate into ‘truth’. One perception challenged by Abigail Fulbrook from Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO) is that volunteering is something done by ‘rich’ countries to ‘poor’ countries. However, she shows how this conception

is outdated, by presenting VSO's approach to Global South to Global South volunteering.

One issue emerging from the Perspectives section is the situation of migrant communities in Ireland and the UK. Here, authors give examples of the challenges and opportunities faced by development education practitioners around issues of migrant communities, integration and multiculturalism. Maya Picard from Highway to Health and Michael Brown from Development Media Workshop explore the value and effectiveness of film, images and personal stories as tools to effect attitudinal change. Here, the use of 'media' is seen as a powerful and positive instrument.

Vipin Chauhan and Jaya Graves urge practitioners to consider and act on the challenges involved in engaging in sustainable and equitable partnerships between development education organisations and those from the Global South and Black and Minority Ethnic diaspora communities. An associated theme addressed by Donald Manda and Evode Mukama, is how language and communication play an important role in development and development education. Again, they remind readers of the complexity of the multiple realities of the Global South. They argue that development education practitioners need to be aware of the effects of the post-colonial legacies of language as well as the impact of communication methodologies in the transfer of knowledge and learning.

Hearing and learning from the experience of Global South practitioners can be invaluable in broadening perspectives on development education and how it is understood in different contexts. The experience of those from the Global South now practising in the Global North also provides a unique view on development education and how the Irish development education sector can engage more effectively.

These articles all prompt us to question how the views and experience of those from the Global South are integrated into development education in Ireland. We must reflect on how development education practice is able to

incorporate a variety of Global South perspectives. To follow on from a point raised by Dier Tong in the 2006 *Dynamic Relations with the Global South* conference, practitioners must question whether and how equal value of the input of those from the Global South is translated into development education practice.

This issue demonstrates that the recognition and appreciation of the diversity of practitioners in the Global North, from whichever background and stage they are at, is an important goal. The authors share the aspiration that a vibrant Southern voice in development education should be recognised, celebrated and nurtured.

It is hoped that by challenging our perceptions and understanding of the complex realities of the Global South we can move closer to consolidating more of these vital voices.

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