

‘PLUGGING GAPS, TAKING ACTION’: CONCEPTIONS OF GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP IN GAP YEAR VOLUNTEERING

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Abstract: This paper presents ethnographic data from a third sector organisation in 2009, as it set up a development education programme to enhance its standard gap year volunteering experience. Beginning with returned British volunteers, the organisation aims to ‘cascade’ more elements of development education into their work so that the principles of international development are embedded into its organisational mission. The stated aim of the programme is to create a community of active global citizens by building on volunteers’ experience of working on development projects, improving their knowledge of international development goals and teaching them campaigning techniques to enable them to design their own ‘actions’ to promote international development.

The paper analyses the approaches of the programme, exploring the constraints and competing interests invested in the scheme by different actors and how these impact on the type of ‘global citizens’ that are crafted through this programme. By reflecting on how development issues are presented and taught to the volunteers, the paper explores what notion of global citizenship emerges in the organisation. As the programme is funded by the UK government, the auditing requirements are quantitatively focused. This concern with numbers shapes, unintentionally, the possibilities for what the programme can be. Due to these limits, the practices of citizenship that emerge from the programme result in individualised actions. These global citizens take on individual responsibility for social problems and global issues and seek to change their own behaviours, rather than reflecting on or tackling political, economic and structural causes collectively. In consequence, the programme represents another form of individual responsabilisation that has become common in the neoliberal political economy. This is at odds with the stated ethos and mission of the organisation, but symptomatic of the co-option of much of the third sector into neoliberal goals and aims.

Key words: Volunteering; voluntourism; neoliberalism; gap year.

The Department for International Development's Development Awareness Fund (DfID DAF) ran from 2006 to 2010 and provided funding to non-profit organisations for projects that raised public awareness and understanding of development issues outside the formal education system in the UK. In 2010, the coalition government scrapped this funding following a review (COI, 2011) which stated that while the authors felt that development education (DE) had an effect on reducing poverty, there was no quantifiable measure that proved it. The report explicitly stated that the decision about the fund was one of 'opinion and judgement and therefore a political decision' (2011: 5). John Hilary argues further that as development education programmes 'automatically' include an interrogation of neoliberal economic policies and their effects, the motivation for axing funding was to ensure that these critiques would not take place as the government pursued its own neoliberal austerity measures (2013: 10).

Development education is inherently a political matter because international development tackles how we organise and structure ourselves and distribute resources across the globe, through trade agreements, forms of governance and so on. The purpose of DE and the role of NGOs (non-governmental organisations) and charities in its design, framing and delivery is thus a contentious field. Questions have been raised about whose interests' DE serves, and whether in particular, it is critical enough of dominant political ideologies which perpetuate the conditions which cause and exacerbate global inequality and injustice (Bryan, 2011; Hilary, 2013; McCloskey, 2012). DE is accused of either 'falling in' with the neoliberal marketplace agenda, or being reluctant to offer critiques (Selby and Kagawa, 2011) or framing debates in simplistic forms that fail to increase public understanding of structural causes of poverty (Hilary, 2013). Calls from the academic field and from more radical parts of the third sector (Bagree, 2013; Hilary, 2013) demand that NGOs be more critical of neoliberal agendas. Selby and Kagawa offer some ideas as to why 'collusion' in ideological goals might be happening, suggesting that NGOs make compromises in the hope of a 'place at the table' that will

ultimately inform policy (2011: 17). Hilary (2013) argues that international NGOs gain more from their collaborations with the powerful than by challenging them, even if this does very little to change the status quo of global inequality.

This paper explores one of the DfID DAF projects where the demand for quantitative measures to prove its effectiveness ensure that this ‘automatic’ critique of neoliberalism was annulled. Instead, this programme, in its focus to ‘plug gaps’ in knowledge and encourage ‘action’ resulted in a form of DE-light. The programme was co-opted by neoliberal agendas rather than critiquing them. I show how the outcomes of a predilection for quantity over quality evaluations in the audit regime means that rather than raising development awareness, the programme acts as a form of governmentality, whereby individuals take action on their selves rather than engaging in collective social change.

This is symptomatic of the neoliberal agenda. Neoliberalism is not simply an ideology that informs policies that affect people’s lives; it operates in multiple ways through individuals, groups, policies and practices via diverse tactics. Allowing markets to function without restriction, and upholding the liberal promise of individual freedom, the doctrine rests on the premise that individual freedom coupled with private property rights, free markets and free trade best serve human progression and wellbeing. Government welfare provision is ‘rolled back’ in case it interferes with the workings of the market (Graeber, 2009: 81), with a combination of market-based institutions and NGOs stepping in to fill the void (Gledhill, 2004: 333).

As neoliberalism becomes ‘part of the fabric of our ways of thinking about and acting upon one another and ourselves’ (Barry, Osborne and Rose, 1996: 7), new techniques of governing citizens develop (Barry, Osborne and Rose, 1996; Biccum, 2007; Cruikshank, 1996; Hyatt, 2002; Lyon-Callo, 2008). In this paper, I look at an ethnographic example of creating ‘global citizens’ and how the system of numerical targets acts as one of these

techniques, prompting a form of citizenship that focuses on individualised action.

The concept of ‘global citizens’ – persons who feel a responsibility and affinity to the world as a whole, instead of, or in addition, to their nation-state – is closely associated with development education. As globalisation took root and became subject to critique as a force for exploitative capitalism and inequality, the idea of the global citizen emerged as a potential antidote that would harness the compression of time-space (Harvey, 1989) for good. However, global citizenship lacks coherence and definition, which raises the further question of how to go about creating such a phenomenon. This article explores, through empirical evidence, the early attempts of a British charity, Endeavour, to design and deliver a DE programme that seeks to produce a community of global citizens. It charts the internal debates within the organisation, documenting the concerns of an NGO at the front line of design and delivery and how they understand what they do. This scheme was funded by the DfID DAF before it was scrapped, and the article considers the external constraints that shaped the programme in particular ways, which in turn informed the practices of citizenship that emerged. I argue that the approach of the charity and the auditing requirements of the funder resulted in individualised practices of citizenship. The names used in the presentation of the research are pseudonyms.

Methodology

Set up in the 1980s, Endeavour was one of the first organisations to provide unskilled volunteering opportunities for young people. Personal development is one of its key objectives, even while it has branched out into other areas. I spent over a year with Endeavour in 2009-10 conducting anthropological ethnographic fieldwork in their head office in London and on their projects in Central America. As an anthropologist, I took on a participant observer role. In return for access, Endeavour requested that I contribute where possible, rather than being a ‘spare tyre’. Initially I worked in the charity’s London archive researching their past projects and then as a volunteer in administration and logistics while in Central America. After returning to London, I was asked

to support the Global Citizen programme by sourcing teaching resources. As I learnt more about the programme I became increasingly uncomfortable as I realised that it ultimately taught a version of international development that I disagreed with, masking the structural causes of poverty and simplifying development as an easy solution to poverty (Biccum, 2007; Ferguson, 1990; Green and Hulme, 2005).

The initial research design never intended to evaluate Endeavour's practice in terms of its effectiveness or impact; it was rather an exploration of how a gap year produced a particular form of personhood. However, working on a programme that I disagreed with without in some way evaluating practice would not be possible. Development has been described as anthropology's 'evil twin', inextricably and antagonistically linked to it (Ferguson, 2005). I am not what Lewis (2005: 472) describes as an 'antagonistic observer' with a 'basic hostility' for development ideas and motives, but nor am I wholly convinced that it is unquestionably a good thing either. Despite my own position of critique regarding international development, my research aims were to understand the concerns of this organisation and how the internal dimensions and external constraints influenced their practice and ideas. Thus, this article acknowledges the critiques of development and the particular form found in gap years and voluntourism, but seeks to set aside critique for its own sake in order to understand the factors at play as these forms are produced and carried out.

Gap years and voluntourism

Gap years are a largely distinct British phenomena, becoming increasingly popular elsewhere, and comprising a period outside of formal education or employment. The Longitudinal Study of Young People in England defined a gap year as the year preceding university, while the British Cohort Study identified any breaks in full-time education as a gap (Crawford, Cribb et al., 2012). Jones (2004) classified a gap year as any period between three months to two years, estimating that between 200,000 and 250,000 young people aged 16-19 took one. Unlike the negative connotation of 'NEET' (not in

employment, education, or training), gap years usually entail activities to enable personal growth.

Endeavour's gap year takes the form of overseas volunteering. Young people are with the charity for ten weeks and participate in three projects for three weeks each. This is a short period for each group, but Endeavour has long-term partnerships with NGOs in their host countries and has become more attuned to the principles of sustainable development. Though predominately British, volunteers come from all over the world, including from within the host countries. They attract many pre-university students, as well as graduates, but Endeavour also has several partnerships with youth organisations who work with disadvantaged young people.

Their programme is explicitly about personal development and these ideals are intimately connected with neoliberalism, but as I argue more comprehensively in my thesis, neoliberalism is not all pervasive. The model of personal development is rooted in connections to others, emphasising relationships and cognisance of an individual's impact upon others. Particular employees at Endeavour were keen to re-educate those volunteers who wanted to 'help the needy' in a paternalistic manner, seeking to show them the need for working in partnership as equals. Endeavour also expected that volunteers would make a difference in their home communities once they returned home to put into practice what they had learnt abroad. With the growth of other charities and businesses in an emerging gap year market throughout the 1990s and 2000s, differentiation became of particular importance for Endeavour. Endeavour's new global citizen programme was supposed to emphasise this latter aspect of the gap year, as well as function as part of their differentiation efforts.

The critiques of voluntourism include the reinforcement of colonialist stereotypes and a simplistic understanding of development issues, giving young people the view that they have the skills and right to be the 'solution' to the problems of the 'needy' Third World (Simpson, 2004, 2005). Simpson also highlights the tendency to construct poverty as absolute, only suffered by a

‘foreign other’ and the reliance on ‘culture’ to explain difference, which means these representations fail to acknowledge material – and I would add structural – inequalities (2004: 687–98). Other issues are the lack of acknowledgement on the part of volunteers of their own power and role in continued global inequality, and the lack of accounts from the communities where these projects take place (Griffin, 2004). The motivations of individuals span a wide spectrum, Sin (2009), for example, categorises volunteer motivations, showing how shorter-term volunteers may be more concerned with personal goals and growth, while longer term volunteers had a more altruistic desire to contribute. Lyons et al (2012) argue that though this form of travel has potential for global citizenship values, it is increasingly evident of its co-optation by neoliberal agendas.

The third sector does not operate in a vacuum, and the pervasiveness of neoliberalism is evident in much of the practice and ideas found in gap year volunteering. Endeavour is aware of the critiques of gap years and ‘voluntourism’, particularly with regard to the portrayal of gap year participants as drunken louts for whom volunteering is fashionable rather than meaningful (Barkham, 2006; Frean, 2006; Mirani, 2010; Roberts, 2004; Simpson, 2004; Tubb, 2006). In response, Endeavour is keen to style itself as a serious development organisation, rather than a travel agency for eco-tourists or voluntourism. While this does not annul these critiques, I will set these aside to focus on the processes by which they seek to do this, and show how this largely fails.

The programme’s aim is to ‘create a community of active global citizens’ by building on volunteers’ experience of working on development projects, improving their knowledge of international development goals and teaching them campaigning techniques to enable them to design their own ‘actions’ to promote international development. It is also part of Endeavour’s mission to carve an organisational identity based on sustainable development. This adds both a ‘unique selling point’ to their gap years, and opens up new strands of funding vital for ensuring the survival of the organisation.

The Global Citizen programme began with the returned British volunteers, with the next steps to ‘cascade’ more elements of development education into all areas of their work so that the principles of international development are embedded into its own organisational mission. This would primarily be delivered through weekend residential workshops. The form of DE-light that emerges from these workshops stems from the conceptualisation of knowledge as rooted in experience rather than a broader understanding of global structures and processes, and the definition of action as communicating to the greatest number of people possible.

Plugging gaps: Experience as knowledge

The workshop activities were designed on the premise that the volunteers ‘know’ about international development because they have experienced life abroad and volunteered on a development project. The trainers felt that all that was needed was to help the volunteers realise how the work they had done fitted into the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs); now superseded by the Sustainable Development Goals. As a quote from their website explains:

“Your direct experience of living and working with communities with limited access to basic services places you in an ideal position to communicate a deeper understanding of global inequality and injustice.”

This is part of Endeavour’s overall understanding of learning and education which is based on an experiential learning model – all their personal development activities are based on the premise that people learn things by doing them, and learning is enhanced if they can consciously acknowledge and evaluate what they are learning as or after they have done it. After a presentation on the MDGs, the volunteers were put into groups to discuss how the projects they had worked on ‘matched’ the MDG goals and indicators. Fitting a gravity water feed system, for instance, came under Goal 7 (Ensure Environmental Sustainability) and Target 10 aimed to halve, by 2015, the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation.

The volunteers had experienced what it is like to live without running water, and some were capable of describing this with passion. This supports the critique that these initiatives encourage unskilled young people to believe they can be the solution to the needs of the poor. Similarly, their positions of privilege, their ability to come home to hot showers and smart phones is left unacknowledged. The voices of those who live every day without water are mediated by the volunteers' own experience. The inherent contradiction is that, though the ethos of the charity is global interconnection, power relations are unexamined. In privileging volunteers' experiential knowledge of international development, a crucial aspect of DE – 'that the voices of the marginalised are heard' (Bourn, 2005: 55) – is forgotten. The focus on their direct experience is aimed at helping the young people feel empowered as advocates and agents of social change (though the efficacy of this is not self-evident), and to recognise that there is a higher cost if their experience is not linked to global structural inequalities and injustice and their causes. Discussions, for example, about the privatisation of water in some countries and the effects of this on communities were never broached. Instead, discussions focused on how their individual actions and choices in water use had implications elsewhere – for instance quoting the amount of water used in producing a beef burger. The focus ends up on the individual rather than the collective.

There was a fear and lack of confidence in tackling bigger issues and engaging the young people in more critical thinking. Endeavour's volunteers come from a range of educational backgrounds and levels of life experience. The coordinator of the programme, Fozhan, explained to me:

“The workshops get them to consider the issues they're working on [during the projects], the wider issue surrounding it and what they can do about it when they go back to the UK. It gives them a hook to what they can change at home, so they can take action and raise awareness. There's a perception that development is academic, that you need all this knowledge, and people are afraid to get it wrong ... I think we lose people if we go the academic route. People have

different knowledge backgrounds. Our approach is to take personal things, have conversations. They don't need to know definitions, they don't need to know about the IMF or World Bank, they don't need to be academic. On the weekends, there's been interest, but also some fears about talking about it. The point to get across is that they have witnessed development by going on Endeavour. They have an opinion, they've lived with communities. This is valid, they are able now to have a conversation.”

Questions about what development is, the global structures and bureaucracies involved in it, indeed any form of ‘academic knowledge’ are rejected here in favour of ‘experience’.

Taking action: Quantity over quality

The second day of the workshops focuses on what the volunteers can do with their ‘knowledge’. Action is defined in terms of reaching the maximum number of people with a simple ‘message’. Helen, one of the trainers told the volunteers:

“Day one of this weekend was all about plugging any gaps in your knowledge about development and global issues. Day two is going to be about action ... The aim is to think about what we're going to do about what we learnt yesterday. Acknowledging that we're only scratching the surface of these issues, how can you spread the development message, in a way that works for you. We don't want to be prescriptive here but it's important to think about what's effective.”

Activities include an introduction to campaigning on Twitter, including coming up with tweetable captions for photographs of their projects, and using an ‘impact matrix’ to assess the ‘effectiveness’ of actions and the ease of execution. Suggested actions range from starting a blog, to screening a film about a particular issue, to writing something for a local newspaper. They fall into two broad categories: organising an event at which people listen and watch a film or presentation or writing something that people could read and

distributing it through some form of media. The volunteers I spoke to raised concerns about their own level of knowledge about international development, and their lack of confidence in communicating these ideas to others. When this is raised with the trainers, they assure the volunteers that they have the necessary knowledge, and ask them to concentrate on assessing which would be the most ‘productive’ action ideas. The quality of engagements, the accuracy of information or nuance or depth is not considered.

Despite the fact that knowledge and understanding of international development is the main project output, and increased knowledge on the part of the volunteers is specified as an indicator, learning is not an action – it is not productive because it cannot be directly translated into the project’s monitoring and evaluation criteria. Learning is seen to have already happened through the volunteers’ experience, fortified by workshops and then completed, rather than a continual process. Volunteers ‘know’ about development because they have ‘done’ it. As Fozhan expressed it ‘they have witnessed development by going on Endeavour’.

For the Global Citizen programme, action is defined by whether it has a measurable output. Endeavour’s role is to teach their volunteers via the expeditions, and ‘embedded’ training before, during and after expeditions in the form of workshops or facilitated discussions and then volunteers should go and do ‘actions’ based on their improved knowledge and understanding. Reaching the greatest amount of people is key. This is represented by the methods Fozhan advocates: ‘Update your Facebook status, tweet!’ she urged. The type of actions suggested by the programme, and the skills it teaches, are orientated towards communications and raising awareness about development. As well as fitting into DfID’s funding criteria, there are further reasons for this emphasis. One is due to Fozhan and her worries about teaching international development and her perceptions of the volunteers. Fozhan has concerns about the volunteers’ capacity to understand development in what she termed an ‘abstract’ way. The programme also has more than one purpose to fulfil. Officially, the programme aims on the funding proposal were to:

“create a network of highly motivated, skilled and knowledgeable young people to promote awareness of international development issues including global interdependence and the role an individual can play in working towards issues such as poverty reduction.”

The CEO and fundraising team wanted the programme to keep alumni engaged with the charity, hoping for donations further down the line. Other objectives included that the volunteers would go on to do advocacy work at schools, which would raise awareness of development, but also advertise the quality of their experience *with* Endeavour. As stated previously, it was also hoped this would evidence Endeavour’s commitment to sustainable development as a ‘serious organisation’ which didn’t just provide gap year jaunts. Others within the organisation felt that this was the wrong direction for the charity, which should primarily be focused on supporting young people. The volunteers’ motivations were partly social, partly wanting to recapture their experiences as well as an interest in global issues. Navigating these multiple expectations for the programme was far from easy, and for Fozhan, a focus on practical actions are a way to keep all the volunteers engaged and to help them feel that the programme and international development is accessible. It also creates a clear purpose for people, annulling confusion over what they are supposed to do due to the lack of clarity concerning the concept of ‘global citizenship’. This results in a version of DE light, focused on ‘plugging gaps’ rather than critical thinking and actions that are easy to record.

The audit regime

The funding requirements also played a significant part in shaping the programmes objectives. Fozhan had to provide solid numerical data to DfID to fulfil the proposal audit categories every quarter and produce an annual report. Funding was reviewed every year, and projects that failed to reach targets would not receive continued funding. The funding provided the salaries for two and a half employees, and as I have explained, was part of several broader organisation goals. Meeting these targets therefore became a preoccupation for those on the funding team. Outcomes were measured by

indicators with specific numerical targets, as well as additional monthly monitoring and evaluation.

The original proposal for the funding states that the outcomes are to increase knowledge and understanding of international development issues. The core indicator is a questionnaire that utilises an understanding scale of core concepts: The Millennium Development Goals, Sustainable Development, Fair Trade, Global Poverty, Global Injustice, Global Interdependence. Before and after the workshops volunteers must self-evaluate their understanding from excellent to poor. Endeavour had to submit quarterly reports to DfID, but monitored themselves on a monthly basis. They record the awareness of key international development issues before and after volunteering, with the target of 95 percent of those surveyed to demonstrate an increase. They aimed to recruit forty-five ex-volunteers per year to carry out regular awareness activities, with the target of them engaging with 1,350 people a year. This meant each volunteer would need to reach thirty people, hence the focus on methods like Twitter that can reach a lot of people with very little effort. Over three years, they aim for 20,000 young people to visit the information on their webpages, Facebook page or online discussion groups. Note these targets say nothing about the quality of engagement, only the quantity. The workshops were designed on the basis of meeting these targets, rather than a consideration of the learning objectives.

Endeavour must prove continually that it is ‘hitting targets’ and ‘achieving goals’ or its funding will be rescinded. Audit has become part and parcel of neoliberal regimes (Pels, 2000: 135; Strathern, 2000: 3) across many sectors. As Shore and Wright (2000) show in the context of higher education in the UK, assessment of ‘teaching quality’ is more concerned with the production of evidence of concrete products than an academic’s ability to inspire students. Michael Power argues that auditing techniques demonstrate that:

“...what is being assured is the quality of the control systems rather than the quality of first order operations. In such a context

accountability is discharged by demonstrating the existence of such systems of control, not by demonstrating good teaching, caring, manufacturing or banking” (1994: 15).

Similarly, as Bryan (2011: 3) highlights, the neoliberal emphasis on ideals such as ‘performance, efficiency and accountability’ predominate in the development field. This concern means that indicators end up driving goals, rather than indicators being derived from the overarching development goals. As Unterhalter (2005) elaborates, the scope of targets such as the MDGs become flattened as the nuance and complexity of an issue such as gender equality is reduced to a measurable indicator. The ways in which indicators represent particular global issues can restrict policy interventions and thereby perpetuate the problem (Green 2006; Green and Hulme, 2005). In Endeavour’s case, the requirement for numerical evidence, to prove their performance and efficiency and be accountable to the funders, shapes the programme, and accordingly shapes the practices of citizenship that it encourages.

Strathern notes that audits are supposedly to ensure ‘good practice’, to be effective and explicit about what an organisation is doing. Actually, she argues, audit ‘creates organizations responsive to the auditing process’ (2006: 190). The concern becomes less about ‘good practice’ rather the ‘right practice’ – in this case, that specified by the audit criteria set by the DfID DAF. Shore and Wright argue, following Foucault, that while at first glance, the ‘transfer’ of auditing practices from the financial sector to other arenas may seem ‘dull, routine and bureaucratic’ these kinds of practices often have ‘profound effects on social life ... Audit technologies ... are not simply innocuously neutral, legal-rational practices ... they are agents for the creation of new kinds of subjectivity: self-managing individuals who render themselves auditable’ (2000: 57). This can be seen again in the conclusions of the review of the DfID DAF – though the authors felt it ‘likely’ that raising awareness of development did reduce poverty, the inability to ‘quantify the contribution’ meant the decision was founded on other grounds (COI, 2011: 4–5).

Individualised practices of citizenships

What emerged from my fieldwork was an emphasis on individually orientated activities, in contrast to the ethos of the charity that focus on interconnections and awareness of an individual's impact upon others around them. The final activity of the Global Citizen weekend best displays this emphasis on personal action. Fozhan explains to the volunteers that as they have completed the training weekend they are now Global Citizens and that it is time to make a pledge, to pick an action that they are going to carry out. Helen asks the group to read them out. Despite the emphasis over the weekend on reaching out to other people, most of the pledges refer to making small changes to their own, individual lives. A few examples are: buy fair-trade when available, turn the tap off while brushing my teeth or while soaping up in the shower, buy local produce instead of products flown in from other countries. One pair decides to make a film of different people's interpretations of development, but they are the only ones to suggest anything beyond making a change to their own individual existence, or to work as a team.

These Global Citizens take on individual responsibility for social problems and global issues and seek to change their own behaviours, rather than reflecting on or tackling political, economic and structural causes collectively – or even by seeking to tell others about their direct experience of development, as was hoped. This indicates that their experiential knowledge is less easily translated into social change. Similarly, forthcoming findings from research with primary and secondary school children also found that individualised actions, particularly regarding consumption were more common than other forms of engagement (Hunt and Cara, forthcoming). In consequence, the programme represents another form of individual responsabilisation that has become common in the neoliberal political economy. As April Biccum argues:

“The mobilization of development awareness in the UK attempts to produce a subjectivity particularly appropriate for a globalising world, that is, a ‘Global Citizen’ who advocates development under neoliberal terms ... Rather than signalling the success of global civil

society in making development an issue for national debate” (2007: 1112).

This is not the primary intention of the Global Citizen programme, rather it is how things ‘turn out’ (Ferguson, 1990: 19). Perhaps this a less than suprising outcome, given how neoliberalism has encroached into the third sector as NGOs have sought to become more professional. Despite this, the outcomes of the programme feel at odds with the larger ethos and mission of the organisation, and the experiences of the volunteers on their gap years, where teamwork and the collective goal had been paramount. Neoliberalism operates on a promise of individual freedoms in return for citizens taking on individual responsibility (Harvey, 2005). In this case, individual responsibility for ‘global issues’ means making changes to individuals’ own lives, to become personally accountable for their actions, to audit their own behaviour.

Conclusion

Endeavour’s programme would seem to fall foul of the critiques of DE presented in the introduction to this article. The way knowledge is conceptualised produces a form of DE light, focused on brief experiences that can translate into actions that can be easily recorded. The young people seem to struggle to engage with these and end up ‘taking action’ on themselves. Rather than simply offering another critique, this paper has sought to document how the internal concerns of the organisation have played a role in this. Endeavour’s desire to reposition their purpose, the fractures this caused and the difficulties of the volunteers’ diversity have been significant for the way the programme was run. Similarly, the external expectations from the funders also defined how action was conceived. Developing DE programmes that create the envisioned global citizens requires NGOs to recognise and acknowledge their role and the way they are conceptualising DE and global citizenship. I do not believe Endeavour’s failings in this area were intentional, rather that they did not see how their goals were being subsumed. The genuine belief and desire for these young people and the charity to make a difference in the world became unintentionally co-opted into supporting the neoliberal agenda. One means of challenging the neoliberal agenda would be to develop

new forms of evaluating DE that are not focused on quantifying learning and impact but instead rewards critical engagement, debate and an understanding of learning as an unceasing process.

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