Editorial

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Introduction

The international development sector continually aims to raise public awareness about important development issues. Governments and organisations regularly seek to mobilise the public to support campaigns toward policy change or respond to an emergency disaster in the developing world through a fundraising appeal. Issue 8 of *Policy and Practice* explores the sometimes uneasy relationship between public awareness and development education, and how these sectors can work more closely to complement their approaches to development. It identifies some potential benefits that could arise from greater collaboration between the sectors and challenges that sometimes impede stronger linkages between development educators and campaigners.

Public awareness work

Public awareness work carried out in the development sector varies widely, and different aspects should be identified before examining the possibilities for collaboration with development education. First, activities linked to campaigns normally aim to create public awareness around a sustained, long-term organisational goal like gender equality and climate change or a multi-agency campaign like Make Poverty History. Second, work revolving around emergency situations seeks to engender immediate and large-scale public responses to crises such as conflicts and natural disasters. Third, operational activities of international development agencies, together with development education, resource production, policy development and overseas development work, aim to support the campaigns and fundraising.

To respond to large-scale emergencies in the UK, leading development agencies fundraise through a Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC) 'to launch and co-ordinate responses to major disasters overseas' (http://www.dec.org.uk). In addition, development agencies have annual campaigns, such as Christian Aid Week and Trócaire's Lenten Campaign, or specific issues on which they will base their general fundraising work. Fundraising work is clearly linked to public awareness as agencies need to inform the public about the issues, countries or situations which form the

basis of their appeals. However, it is important to distinguish this aspect of public awareness work from development education. If a development worker (fundraiser, education officer or campaigns worker) delivers a talk in a school with a view to raising funds from pupils or launching a fundraising appeal, that activity should not be described as development education.

Fundraising talks or seminars tend to describe agency activities in a specific country or region, outline the need for financial support and suggest how this support could bring about change in the developing country. These events are often one-off workshops or 'talks' rather than a deeper, shared form of learning. Development education on the other hand offers a sustained engagement with learners to explore the underpinning causes of poverty and inequality in the developing world through active learning methods that bring the learners' experiences into the teaching process. Development education aims to result in informed local action based on a global consciousness to bring about social justice and equality. The importance of this pedagogical approach is its capacity to engage the learner with global justice issues over the long-term rather than elicit a short-term (sometimes emotionally-driven) response that can equate development with financial aid.

The funding-driven approach to education may well raise funds for important causes and may ultimately lead to a deeper engagement with development issues through sustained contact with development agencies in a school or youth organisation. However, it is important that public awareness work aimed at fundraising is not described as, or confused with, development education. This distinction is important in recognizing the contribution made by development non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to development education. If development agencies consider education activities toward fundraising as development education then they will include these activities in their development education budgets. This distinction becomes increasingly important at a time when support for development education from government and non-governmental sources is under serious threat.

More significant is the pedagogical distance between the aims and outcomes of fundraising activities and development education, and the need to demarcate these areas of activity. Thus, public awareness activities aimed at fundraising can create tensions within the development sector and do not offer potential for collaboration. However, public awareness work supporting campaigns and advocacy plays a more active and sustained role in educating the public on development issues and this is considered in the next section.

Public awareness and campaigns

Public awareness in the context of campaigns has the capacity to mobilise large numbers of people in response to a specific issue or a raft of related global justice issues like trade, aid and debt through inter-agency and sectoral campaigns like Make Poverty History (http://www.makepovertyhistory.org). Methods used in public awareness campaigns range from billboards and press adverts to campaign packs and DVDs. Campaigns can span a period of years like Make Poverty History or a matter of a few weeks, but have shared goals: bringing to public attention a development issue (landmines, child soldiers, HIV) or platform of issues; outlining the causes of the problem highlighted and the impact on people in the developing world; suggesting how individuals and communities can help address the issue through specified actions; outlining the potential outcomes of these actions for developing countries and within the country where the campaign is launched; and providing supporting information like web sites and information packs. Campaigns can focus on development policies at a national level, such as Ireland's overseas development aid (ODA) budget, or at an international level, such as global trade rules.

Campaigns can also address under-development or human rights situations in specific countries or regions. For example, one of the most successful single-issue campaigns in Ireland was that launched in 1992 by the East Timor Ireland Solidarity Campaign (ETISC). The campaign played a hugely influential role in moving Irish government policy toward supporting an end to the occupation of East Timor (now Timor Leste) by Indonesia. Ireland significantly contributed to the diplomatic pressure on Indonesia that helped to bring about Timor Leste's independence in 1999 (http://www.freedom.tp/ireland/etisc/ethistory.htm).

Indeed, Ireland has a proud tradition of championing human rights, conflict, trade justice and equality issues in the context of the developing world through campaigns and advocacy work. Many of these campaigns are driven by single-issue groups though far from being isolated or disconnected from the wider development sector, they mostly share similar values and a social justice perspective in their concept of development. They are also effective movements for social change playing a positive role in public education and drawing the attention of important issues to a wider audience that often fall below the mainstream media's radar. Campaign groups usually commit to one issue or country for the duration of the campaign, and while long-term objectives can be difficult to achieve as they are often dependent on wider global factors, they still play an important public awareness role.

Thus the main agents of public awareness through campaigns

and advocacy in the development sector are single-issue campaign groups, development agencies and multi-agency coalitions operating at national and international levels to achieve policy goals and effect public pressure on state and inter-state organisations like the European Union. They are also increasingly directing their campaigns at international financial institutions (IFIs) like the World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Trade Organisation (WTO) which have controversially assumed increasing control of global governance in vital financial areas. The next section considers the advantages in strengthening the relationship between public awareness in the realm of campaigns and advocacy and the development education sector.

Public awareness and development education

Development education and public awareness campaigns share the following: they both seek to raise public consciousness of global issues; they seek to mobilise the public to act on these issues; they ultimately aim to create social justice, equality and protection of human rights; and they both often seek to achieve these goals is through policy change in local and/or global contexts. Yet there are also important distinctions in how these sectors operate. Campaigns tend to be blunt instruments borne of the necessity of reaching a wide audience often within a limited timescale. Development education however normally works with specific sectors (teachers, youth, third level) on the basis of long-term projects or ongoing core organisational activities that facilitate a more reflective, analytical, experiential and interactive learning process. Campaigns therefore have a broader reach and can generate the kind of mass public response that is beyond development education.

On the debit side, the public momentum generated by campaigns often dissipates very quickly and campaigners often fail to sustain the engagement of their audience. This was the case with the Make Poverty History campaign which climaxed with a massive demonstration and related events coinciding with the G8 (Group of eight leading industrialised nations of the northern hemisphere) summit held in Gleneagles, Scotland in July 2005. An estimated 225,000 people attended a rally in Edinburgh on 2 July with high profile, Band Aid-like concerts held in ten countries around the world on the same day (http://www.makepovertyhistory.org/2005/index. shtml). The outcomes of the campaign, which focused on trade justice, dropping the debt and increased, more effective aid, were contested as was the decision to end the campaign on 31 January 2006.

Although a new civil society movement called the Global Call

to Action against Poverty (GCAP: http://www.whiteband.org) has strived to pick up the campaigning mantle of Make Poverty History, nothing approximating the popular mobilisation of July 2005 has since been realised. The coalition of NGOs that organised Make Poverty History was undoubtedly successful in persuading the public that action was needed on the core campaigning issues. But they seemed less successful at deepening this engagement beyond participation in the campaigning events. This perhaps suggests that a development education strand to the campaign with an inherent learning strategy for supporting discussion and identifying actions organised by the learners themselves could have ensured a more enduring impact.

Development education, for its part, could learn from the communication strategies employed by campaigners to target their audiences. The sector remains small and needs to broaden its audiences within civil society beyond traditional sectors like schools and youth. Development education needs to build links with important sectors like business, trade unions, faith groups and minority ethnic groups that are often missing from 'deved' activities and constituents. The sector also needs to build alliances with other 'educations' that share similar values and goals like interculturalism, human rights, environment education and sustainable development (Fiedler, 2008). These alliances are important if the sector is to strengthen its research profile and academic standing in the tertiary sector (see Khoo *et al.*; Bourn, 2007) which is needed to create new learning opportunities in international development at third level.

Conclusion

Thus, development education and campaigners can learn from each other in how to engage and sustain the public's involvement in development issues. They can share promotional strategies used to target the public and learning methods needed to probe issues beyond a slogan or a sound bite. Getting the public onto the streets can often be the easy part of a campaign. Keeping them involved and networked within a shared learning environment can be a considerable challenge for NGOs with limited and often timebound resources. Clearly, an important part of the public awareness strategy is collaboration between campaigners and development educators at the planning stage of their activities. This is probably best facilitated within development networks and development agencies that manage both campaigning and educational activities. It is important that these networks recognise and respect the need to separate fundraising from education and promote public awareness work that offers a sustained engagement

with learners that debates and helps to address the underpinning causes of poverty and inequality.

Articles

The Focus articles in this issue include a timely assessment by Denis O'Hearn of Nobel laureate Amartya Sen's much lauded text *Development as Freedom* ten years on from its publication. The central thesis of Sen's book is that freedom is both the primary end and principal means of development. O'Hearn argues that this approach to development is not just misguided, but potentially dangerous, given Sen's 'basic assumptions about the nature of people and his lack of a feasible prescription for reaching his stated goals'. O'Hearn particularly challenges Sen's notion that 'the achievement of development is dependent on the free agency of people', a controversial assertion 'usually given by economists to cut back on public expenditures' like health and education. Given Sen's lofty reputation and near universal acclaim, O'Hearn's critique of *Development as Freedom* offers an important alternative perspective on this text at a time of heightened interest in how we approach development in the current global financial crisis.

Michael Mahadeo contrasts the contribution of the formal and informal education sectors toward raising public awareness. Using primary research and case studies in both sectors, Mahadeo concludes that the structural constraints of the formal sector, particularly in tertiary education, make it less flexible and innovative in strengthening public awareness of development issues. The informal sector in areas such as community education can create a more radical and participative learning environment that can integrate communities into a wider dynamic of local and global interconnectedness. Mahadeo suggests that the formal sector could benefit from the introduction of more flexible and learner-friendly methodologies in its public awareness work.

Perspectives articles continue the focus on the interrelatedness of development education and public awareness. Third World Debt is an issue that straddles both the development education and campaigning sectors and provides a useful vantage point for considering how the sectors can work together in mutually supportive ways. Nessa Ní Chasaide discusses at what point development education and campaigning approaches intertwine and how the non-governmental sector can strike the 'right balance' between education and action. Lucy Hill and Johnny Sheehan describe the One World Week events in Ireland and Europe as a model of good practice for youth-led awareness raising. Son Gyoh outlines structural barriers limiting the ability of actors in Ireland from the global South from engaging in

mainstream development education. Frank Flood and Barbara Wilson look at the new Irish Aid Volunteering and Information Centre as an important step to increasing public awareness about Overseas Development Assistance and the work of Irish Aid. Jessica Carson describes how to use arts as a learning and communication methodology for youth through her work at the Mayfield Arts Centre. Claire Hanna reviews the Building Unity Through Diversity project that brought art installations and talks to a number of cities throughout Ireland.

A recent seminar organised by the Centre for Global Education titled *Campaigning and Development Education: Friends or Foes?* (Dublin, 23 February 2009) drew a high level of participation from the development NGO and trade justice sectors. The seminar clearly tapped into an issue which has enormous interest in the sector and elicits strong views. The Centre for Global Education therefore hopes that this issue of *Policy and Practice* will enhance the debate on this relationship and provoke further discussion among and between campaigners and educators.

Readers of *Policy and Practice* are encouraged to respond to any of the articles presented here and the issues they raise. If you have any comments on any of the articles published in Issue 8, please write to the editor: jenna@centreforglobaleducation.com

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