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The International Journal of Development Education and Global Learning

The International Journal of Development Education and Global Learning was founded at the Development Education Research Centre at the Institute of Education, University of London under its Director, Douglas Bourn, in October 2008. This new internationally refereed journal publishes the outcomes of research and current debates on development education and related concepts such as global learning, global education and global citizenship. It is published three times a year (October/February/June).

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The International Journal of Development Education and Global Learning Editorial

This third issue of the *International Journal of Development Education and Global Learning* deals with theoretical and empirical research in global learning. It reflects a number of debates that are current and ongoing in the field of development education and global learning. As these areas of discourse and practice enter what in some European countries is a fifth decade, we see issues emerging that relate to the deeper histories from which these emerging fields draw sustenance.

This includes issues regarding the relationship of theory and practice; regarding conceptual and pedagogical challenges in particular sectors; regarding history-writing and history-making; regarding perspective and results; regarding the need to move beyond calls for evaluation to critique evaluation models and provide research and theoretical frameworks; and regarding discourse and difference – all are currently topical, highly engaging, and reflected in the articles contained herein.

May 2009 witnessed the mid-term conference, in Bonn, of the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development. There are clear synergies between education for sustainable development (ESD), development education and global learning. The article in this volume from Matthias Barth and Marco Rieckmann, for example, documents a virtual seminar that provides direct North-South dialogue within the framework of education for sustainable development. Based on a clear analysis of the need to provide experience of dealing with global issues in the framework of intercultural dialogue, and in recognition that for most students direct exchange is beyond reach, the authors examine the learning outcomes of a virtual, e-learning exchange seminar. Both the perspective of the article and its conclusions provide much food for thought regarding the necessary intersection between global learning and ESD.

As global learning and development education in European countries moves from the margins to the mainstream, it is increasingly being recognised not as a privilege but as right. This right to access to quality education about the wider world in an increasing number of European countries means that there is now greater professional practice, more coordination, and increased reflection on the specificities of global learning in particular sectors, both formal and non-formal. In the third article in this volume, Momodou Sallah reflects on both conceptual and pedagogical approaches to global youth work in higher education in the UK. Specifically, the author reports on research into the conceptualisation of global youth work among higher education institutions training youth and community workers in the UK. The finding that this area over-relies on the particular commitment of individual lecturers is one that resonates in many sectors and countries in Europe; and the need for greater conceptual clarity is also not limited to global youth work. The author's research approach and focus on conceptual, pedagogical and knowledge constituents is one that might be replicated in other sectors.

For some years now the fields associated with development and global education and global learning have increasingly focused on the need for evaluation and improved quality¹. Since the Maastricht Congress in 2002, and through the London Conference in 2003, Brussels in 2005 and Helsinki in 2006, political impetus for increased provision of global education has been coupled with calls for improved quality and evaluation. This is now generally accepted. In 2009, the European Commission published an evaluation of 20 years of support for NGO development education². Alongside this there has been a conference in Prague, Czech Republic and in October 2009 another is being sponsored by this Journal at the National University of Ireland, Galway – both on the theme of evaluation³. The questions now become: what are the values underlying the evaluation models being chosen by (or foisted upon) development education and global learning? Are they appropriate? If not, how do practitioners, researchers and policymakers develop modes of evaluation that improve fruitfulness?

Reflection on the values behind evaluation models, and the search for more appropriate models, leads inevitably to a turn to theory. Development education and global learning have in the past been under-theorised; partly this has been an issue of resources, but partly also, perhaps, because of an anti-theoretical bias. This is changing however, as funders and movements recognise the need for adequate theory, and for developing theory from practice⁴. In the first article in this volume Gregor Lang-Wojtasik provides a theoretical contribution to the field from a German perspective. Drawing on the experience of training teachers in a German university, he engages in a detailed discourse and theoretical analysis of the vocabulary of difference. Through this analysis, he provides hints towards a structural model for education in a world society, and offers ideas for further research in the field.

We hope that the selection of articles to this volume help to open a wider horizon of reflection by combining empirical research, theoretical framing and innovative practice.

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May 2009

Thanks also to Nicole Blum from the Institute of Education for her assistance in editing this issue.

Douglas Bourn

Notes

1 See O'Loughlin, E and Wegimont, L. (2008) *Quality in Global Education: An Overview of Evaluation Policy and Practice*. Amsterdam: GENE.

2 Available at http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/where/worldwide/civil-society/documents/de-ar_evaluation_2008.pdf accessed 29/5/2009. A critical response to the Evaluation is also available from www.gene.eu.

3 See page 22 for further details about this conference.

4 This can be seen in the initiation of this Journal, and others such as *ZEP* in Germany and *Policy and Practice* in Ireland. It can be seen in the debates of NGOs and policy makers in the field. It can be seen in the strong conceptual dimension within some emerging national strategies on DE (see, for example, the Portuguese National Strategy, a draft of which is available at www.ipad.pt). And it can be seen in the slow but steady growth of academic institutions and chairs of global learning in universities in a number of European countries.