Development Education: Towards a re-conceptualisation

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Abstract

Development education emerged from the desire by governments with aid budgets and development non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to secure greater public understanding and support for international development. As a field of learning, development education became increasingly influenced by the thinking of Paulo Freire and allied to areas such as global education, global learning and global citizenship, has become a feature of education practice within a number of European countries. But this influence has been linked primarily to the work of NGOs. If development education and its related terms are to have any major educational influence there is a need to re-conceptualise the field with the context of a learning framework, the knowledge society and the impact of globalisation on education.

Keywords: *Development Education, Globalisation, Global Learning, Global Education, Education for Sustainable Development*

Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to discuss and reflect upon the progress that development education has made over the past thirty years, its specific rationale, and relationship to areas such as global education, global citizenship and global learning, as well as suggest a theoretical framework that recognises and builds on the practice of many non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

The world is in a very different place to when development education first emerged in the 1970s as a response to NGO's desire to secure public legitimacy for aid and development (McCollum, 1996; Harrison, 2008). Moreover in the UK the status and profile of development education, is also very different to the early 1990s when the Development Education Association (DEA) was formed and *Development Education: Global Perspectives in the Curriculum* was published (Osler, 1994).

Globalisation has had a major impact upon how people relate to the wider world. In the light of global changes and trends, what now should be the specific focus for development education? Is the term and concept itself outdated? Is there a need for a new approach to how people learn, understanding and engage with wider world issues? How does development education relate to other fields of study including areas such as geography for example? Or is it merely posing theoretical models that best summarises the range and wealth of existing practice?

The paper outlines how development education and its related concepts emerged, how they are perceived and used today, particularly by NGOs and addresses some of the issues raised from these questions. It suggests a potential framework for taking the

debates forward within the context of recognising the need for changes within both the practice of NGOs and the need to make connections to theories of globalisation, sustainable development, learning and post-colonialism.

Building on the work of a range of social and education theorists in areas related to globalisation, sustainable development and learning processes (Beck, 2000; Apple, Kenway and Singh, 2005; Gilbert, 2005; Scott and Gough, 2005) and recent debates on development education, global learning and global citizenship (Scheunpflug and Asbrand, 2005; Hertmeyer, 2008; Andreotti, 2007), this paper suggests there is a need to re-conceptualise development education.

Historical Context
Political support for development education
The term development education first emerged in the UK during the 1970s, in part in response to the growth of development and aid organisations and the decolonisation process, but also as Harrison (2006) has commented, through the influence of UNESCO and the United Nations, who in 1975 defined it as follows:

> Development education is concerned with issues of human rights, dignity, self-reliance, and social justice in both developed and developing countries. It is concerned with the causes of under-development and the promotion of an understanding of what is involved in development, of how different countries go about undertaking development, and of the reasons for and ways of achieving a new international economic and social order. (United Nations, 1975, quoted in Osler, 1994)

By the end of that decade the term had acquired a narrower meaning, as governments and NGOs engaged in the development sector sought public support and involvement. In the UK, the Labour government of that period created an advisory committee on development education; the emphasis of their interest and funding was to support 'those processes of thought and action which increase understanding of worldwide social, economic, and political conditions, particularly those which relate to, and are responsible for, under-development' (ODA, 1978).

During the 1980s, two broader influences began to have an impact on development education. The first was the thinking of Freire (1972) and his emphasis on participatory learning and the relationship between education and social change. Alongside this was the influence of what Harrison (2006) calls the 'globalist' approach through the World Studies Project led by Richardson and later Fisher and Hicks, and the work of Selby and Pike. This emphasis on an approach to learning about the world, rather than specifically about poverty, came to have considerable influence during this period (Richardson, 1976; Fisher and Hicks, 1985; Pike and Selby, 1988; Hicks, 1990, 2003).

Throughout the 1980s in the UK, and mirrored in other industrialised countries, such as the Netherlands, Sweden, and Canada, development education was perceived as being closely allied to social democratic politics and an overtly political agenda. Funding therefore became related to the political outlook of the government and as a consequence in the UK, development education, world studies and global education agendas came under political attack during the Thatcher government period of the 1980s and early 1990s (McCollum, 1996; Marshall, 2005b, Hicks, 2008).

Similar debates were also taking place in North America (Cronkhite, 2000) and it was only in countries such as the Netherlands and Sweden and in the European Commission that political support for development education grew during this period (Osler, 1994). As a result it was therefore left to NGOs to play the leading role in promoting and delivering development education, particularly within schools (Arnold, 1987; Sinclair, in Osler, 1994).

Despite these political difficulties, development education and its related fields of global education and global learning grew in terms of educational practice and increased support. By 2005, governments in Europe with very different social and political traditions such as Ireland, Austria, Germany, UK, Finland, Norway, Portugal and Slovakia were given significant funding to development education (Hoeck and Wegimont, 2003; North-South Centre, 2005, 2006).

However the rationale for supporting development education by some government ministries and NGOs has changed little over the past twenty years. In a number of countries, governments have seen development education practices as a form of obtaining public legitimation of their aid programmes. For example the European Commission in its funding for this area states:

> As part of the Commission's overall co-operation with European NGOs, actions to raise awareness of development issues are an integral part of its support to civil society participation in poverty-reduction strategies ... The overall objective for this type of action is to raise European public awareness about development problems in the developing countries and about problems in their relations with the industrialized world and to mobilize public support in Europe for development, for strategies and policies for poverty reduction as well as for actions benefiting the poorer sections of populations in developing countries.[1]

For NGOs, development education also emerged as a mechanism for securing public support and understanding of their development programmes and was, and in some cases still is, linked to either fundraising or campaigning agendas (Arnold, 1987). Whilst it could be argued that in the UK there is less emphasis on these themes than in some other European countries such as Sweden, it is still the 'bottom line argument' given as the rationale for funding. It could also be argued that in the case of particular NGOs in the UK, notably Christian Aid and Methodist Relief and Development Fund, learning has becoming increasingly secondary to awareness raising that links to supporting and engaging in campaigns.

Scheunpflug has suggested that a key element of much of existing development education practice has been the overestimation of the individual as an actor for social change. Linked to this, is there is a need to distinguish between a learning process and moral positioning or just seeing it as imparting a form of consciousness. The aim of education, Scheunpflug suggests should be to change the conditions in how people live together in the world and not just a change of peoples' minds (Scheunpflug, 1996, quoted in Hertmeyer, 2008).

Seitz had in the early 1990s in Germany suggested that as a field of learning, development education had not been successful. He further questioned the emphasis within much of the practice in development education on action and noting that a more

participatory approach would lead to increased understanding (quoted in Hertmeyer, 2008).

In reviewing the progress on development education over the past twenty years, McCollum (1996), Blum (2000), and Marshall (2005) have raised concerns regarding projects linked to supporting pre-determined agendas.

What has remained constant from the 1980s until recent initiatives in England, Germany and Finland, compared to say environmental education or even human rights education, has been the relatively low profile of development education within academic research and debate. Where there has been academic discussion on the role and nature of development education, it was either during the 1970s and 1980s when it was linked to perceptions and roles of government and NGOs (Lemaresquier, 1987; Brodhead, 1986; McCollum, 1996), or more recently in relation to debates on global citizenship (Marshall, 2005b; Osler and Vincent, 2002).

Osler's series of essays on Development Education (1994) provides an overview of Development Education across Europe. It is the only major publication in the UK over the last fifteen years that has specifically addressed the subject, although publications by Osler and Vincent (2002) and from a different perspective, Hicks and Holden (2007), and Steiner (1996) have made important contributions to the discourse on development education.

Global Education, Global Citizenship and Global Learning

The related themes of global education, global citizenship and global learning whilst having their own roots were in a part a conscious attempt to create an educational framework that moved beyond aid and development.

During the 1980s and 1990s the work of Pike and Selby (1988) saw global education as a way of seeing and understanding the world in a holistic and systematic way with a key concept being interdependence (Hicks, 2008). This is a different approach to global education from that promoted by the Council of Europe (O'Loughlin and Wegimont, 2002) and supported by Osler and Vincent (2002) who have seen global education as an umbrella term covering human rights, peace, development, environment and inter-cultural education and with the emphasis on 'opening people's minds to the realities of the world.'

Across a number of countries in Europe, and in North America, Australia and New Zealand, global education is more often the term used today rather than development education. The influences on the usage of the terms reflect the location of individuals and organisations. For example in Canada due in part to Pike and Selby spending much of their time there in the 1990s, global education in terms of a holistic form has remained dominant. The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education in promotion its Institute for Global Education states:

> Global education is a holistic paradigm of education predicated upon the interconnectedness of communities, lands and peoples, the interrelatedness of all social, cultural and natural phenomena, the interlocking nature of past, present and future and the complementary nature of the cognitive, affective, physical and spiritual dimensions of the human being ... Its scope encompasses the personal, the local, the regional and bioregional, the national and planetary. Congruent

with its precepts and principles, its methodology is experiential, interactive, learner-centered, democratic, convivial, participatory and change-oriented.[2]

Yet when the term is outlined in relation to the school curriculum, there is a closer linkage with traditional NGO approaches with the inclusion of a combination of development, human rights, peace and environmental education. Global education is seen as a lens or perspective through which curriculum material could be perceived (Clipsam, 2005).

In Europe however due to the influence of the Council of Europe's North-South Centre and the Global Education Network Europe (GENE), the term agreed at the Global Education Maastricht conference of 2002 has had a degree of influence in shaping policies (North-South Centre, 2005, 2006). For example across many countries in Europe there is a Global Education Week that takes as its framework:

– awareness of the wider world and of our own role as world citizens;

– attitudes of respect for diversity and intercultural communication skills;

– understanding of the causes and effects of major issues effecting the world;

– opportunities to take action to make the world a more just and sustainable place.[3]

This suggests a more activist model and one that is closer to the definitions of development education than that of the North American approach.

The term global citizenship has a number of differing origins including an interpretation of global social activism; a revival of interest in global governance; recognition of social mobility and complex cultural identities; a response to globalisation or more instrumentally within education; and to address inclusion of citizenship within the curriculum (Carter, 2001; Cogan and Derricott, 2000; Edwards and Gaventa, 2001; Heater, 2002; Mayo, 2005; Osler and Starkey, 2005).

Within the UK probably the leading academic writer in the area of global citizenship over the past decade has been Nigel Dower. His approach to the subject is from an ethical and moral perspective with an emphasis on social responsibility. He breaks down the status of being a global citizen to three elements: normative (about how humans should act); existential (relationship to the world); and aspirational (role in the future) (Dower, 2003).

This discourse has influenced a number of bodies in response to growing public interest in the wider world. In the context of the UK and education, probably the most influential has been Oxfam who first began using the term 'global citizen' in the late 1990s as a deliberate precursor to citizenship becoming a curriculum subject within schools.

Oxfam sees the global citizen as someone who:

– is aware of the wider world and has a sense of their own role as a world citizen;

– respects and values diversity;

– has an understanding of how the world works;

– is outraged by social injustice;

– participates in the community at a range of levels, from the local to the global;

– is willing to act to make the world a more equitable and sustainable place; and

– takes responsibility for their actions (Oxfam, 2006).

Hicks has suggested that this framework is little more than a re-branding of development education, being more user friendly and being in a position to make a connection particularly within England to the Citizenship curriculum (Hicks, 2008).

Other critics of the term global citizenship suggest that it is elitist, not grounded in realities of political systems and makes assumptions, usually by people in the North on behalf of the rest of the world, about best forms of global social change (Dobson and Valencia, 2005). Carter suggests that if the term is seen more as a form of opening up dialogue and debate and as a spectrum of theories and interpretations, then it can become the basis for a constructive discourse. Andreotti, for example makes a distinction between a 'soft' or passive form of global citizenship versus a 'hard' or more active form linked to notions of social justice and critical thinking (Andreotti, 2007).

Global learning as a term first emerged within Germany and Austria lead by Annette Scheunpflug. Central to her thesis is that the term 'global learning' is a pedagogical reaction to the development towards 'a world society' (Scheunpflug, 2008). To her social justice is key to global learning within the context of the challenge of globalisation and to develop a vision for a 'humanely formed world society' (Scheunpflug, 2008; Hertmeyer, 2008). Similar approaches have recently been taken by some NGOs in the UK, notably the West Midlands based network, TIDE in terms of seeing global learning as 'responding to contemporary events and education visions of the 21st century'. These visions were seen to value participation, a learner based curriculum, the idea that the next generation will make a difference.[4]

Whatever the differing interpretations and variations may exist around development education what cannot be denied is that there has been in the first decade of twenty first century a major expansion of funding, support and educational engagement with learning about global and development issues (Hoeck and Wegimont, 2003). Whilst some of this support has been influenced by events such as September 11 or response to climate change or through Make Poverty History, the continuing trend both in terms of the focus of funding and delivery is on awareness raising, learning and encouragement of action for change (O'Louhglin and Wegimont, 2002; DFID, 1998; Osler and Vincent, 2002).

Interpretations and Approaches
Moving Beyond NGO Practice

The discussions around development education and related terms could be left at saying that there is a body of practice with some relevance to society's educational needs today. It is suggested here however that development education has always aimed to be more ambitious than just learning about the wider world and has posed questions regarding the forms and processes of learning and the relationship between education, action and social change. Policy-makers may be using aspects of the rhetoric of development education, be it around global citizenship or living in an interdependent world, but what has not been discussed and developed is the potential for more theoretical reflections and debates. The terms development education, global education and global learning are not well known within broader educational discourses.

One response could be emphasising a phrase or appropriate terms to make the practice more accessible and understood. That is one direction that could be taken. As policy-makers begin to take up aspects of the rhetoric and language from development education, there is a danger of the basis of NGO practice being compromised or even lost. In Wales and England terms such as global dimension, global citizenship and education for sustainable development are now recognised within curriculum materials (DfES, 2005; QCA, 2007; Bourn, 2008a).

What is ever present in the UK and in a number of other industrialised countries is the need for education to recognise that:

–   global events have demonstrated that we live in an interdependent world;

–   globalisation impacts upon all our lives and the skills and competence to live and work in our global society could well be argued to be different that say 20 years ago;

–   the world is increasingly complex and to understand the impact of global issues on our lives requires knowledge and skills that are as yet not apparent within most programmes and curricula (DfES, 2005; Hicks and Holden, 2007; Hertmeyer, 2008; Bourn, 2008b).

One of the strengths of development education practice is the recognition of the need to go beyond merely the need for more knowledge and understanding about the wider world to having the skills and value base to be able to interpret the impact of the global society on the learner. McCloskey and McCann (2005), in reviewing definitions of development education have posed:

> Do we focus on methodology (active, participative, learning), the social and economic issues it addresses (trade, aid, conflict, etc.), the skills it engenders in learners (tolerance, respect, cultural awareness), the outcomes it intends (social justice and equality), the social relations in examines (between rich and poor), the educational sectors in which it operates (schools, youth groups), or the tools it employs (resources, training etc.)?

Where definitions and terms have changed, they have been done so to enable engagement within the dominant discourse rather than explicitly critique it. It could be noted that this is not necessarily problematic as education has always been one of the key societal sites of ideological debate and struggle (Apple, Kenway and Singh, 2005). Perhaps however, honesty has not been overt as to what and where development education should be located within these ideological debates.

For most NGO based networks across Europe, development education has been located within a discourse of moving from a learning process based on values of justice and solidarity to 'personal involvement and informed action'.[5] Within Ireland there has also been the added dimension of the importance of promoting the voices of those who are excluded and to provide an opportunity to link and compare development issues and challenges in Ireland with those elsewhere throughout the world.[6]

In the UK, through the evolution of various definitions from the DEA there has been a greater emphasis on understanding the links between people's own lives and those of people elsewhere in the world. There has also been an emphasis on promoting critical

thinking and challenging stereotypes but underpinning the motivation of many practitioners has been the development of 'skills, confidence and values base to enable them to secure changes in society at both a local and global level' (DEA, 2005).

What however does underpin these various definitions and approaches are a number of themes:

- emphasis on a process of learning from awareness to action;

- values of social justice and equity at the heart of the motivation for action;

- challenging dominant thinking about how poverty and development are perceived;

- importance of mutual learning North-South and consequent recognition of interdependence (Marshall, 2005b; McCollum, 1996; Regan and Sinclair, 2000; Bourn, 2003, 2008a and b; Blum, 2000).

Following Hicks (2008) it is suggested here that there is a need to move beyond an activist and funding driven framework. Marshall has suggested there needs to be a stronger focus on the process and form of learning, whether the debates are about a 'field' of learning (Marshall, 2005a), the relationship of learning to the role of civil society organisations or more widely, pedagogy of learning. It could be argued that as long as the debates about the role and nature of development education are framed within the needs of NGOs, then questions of awareness raising, activism and campaigning and funding will dominate.

Learning Terrain

Whilst the role of NGOs is crucial to the future debates on development education as Marshall (2005a), McCollum (1996) and Andreotti (2006) have stated there is a need to begin to locate the discourse within a broader pedagogical terrain. For example there is a perception that NGOs engaged in development education see their practice as a stimulus for social action and campaigning (Hicks, 2008). Yet there is little evidence that even using participatory learning methods and discussing global issues leads to social action. What has been shown from a far too limited range of research is that development education practices do appear to have enabled particularly young people to gain understanding and skills on global issues and a greater willingness to consider a range of perspectives (Steiner, 1995; Blum, 2000; Bourn and McCollum, 2001).

What is clear if one reviews the practice of a number of local and regionally development education organisations in the UK who are not influenced by campaigning or fund raising agendas, is that there are the elements of an approach that is based on processes of learning and encouraging critical thinking. TIDE for example refers to sharing values about the potential role of education in building a positive future and through a process of learning responding to global issues.[7] Global Education Derby states that they work with teachers, youth workers, and other educators

> to promote increased awareness of the importance of global citizenship in the lives of young people, and to offer opportunities for reflective, creative and innovative work that develop the themes of sustainable development within the policies and practices of the education system.[8]

The Centre based in Nottingham, MUNDI states that its mission is to promote through

> education, a critical awareness, understanding and knowledge of global development, citizenship and sustainability issues in order to enact change towards a more equitable sustainable world.[9]

There is then behind the practice of many of these local Centres an approach to education that is learner centred, critically reflective and with an emphasis on promoting change. Less clear however are the conceptual frameworks that underpin this practice.

Issues and Challenges for Today

In taking forward the thinking on development education the following areas need to be considered:

- impact of globalisation on education and learning both in terms of systems and the individual learner;
- forms in which people learn, experience and engage with the wider world;
- continuing influence of social and cultural heritage and complex nature of people's lives;
- challenges of the state of the planet and the role education plays in equipping people to understand, make sense of and actively engage with securing positive solutions.

Globalisation

Whilst many academics would agree that globalisation is about connections and linkages across the world, Giddens (1991) for example, suggests that globalisation could be defined as 'the intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa.' Harvey (2003) goes further and suggests that globalisation should be seen as being about the interdependence of societies on a world scale, the links that are and 'can be made globally between people, nations, organisations and communities.'

There have been major debates on the impact of globalisation on education and the need for all aspects of learning to be more international in outlook. Whilst much of the discourse has been around the economic impact of globalisation on education, there has been a recognition that globalisation raises some major new challenges for education and teacher education (Apple, Kenway and Singh, 2006; Burbules and Torres, 2000; Stromquist and Monkham, 2000). These include instant global access to information and knowledge (Kenway and Bullen, 2008), increased social mobility, contact and dialogue with people from a wide range of cultural backgrounds, the impact of events elsewhere in the world on what and how people learn in a specific locality, and above all the myriad cultural influences leading to challenges to one's own sense of identity and belonging, within a community (Ray, 2007; Nayak, 2003).

Beck, has noted that one of the main political responses to globalisation has been to build and develop the education and knowledge society. This he suggests has led to making training longer rather than shorter, and to loosening or doing away with links to a particular job or occupation, gearing instead to key qualifications that can be widely

used in practice. Beck goes on to suggest this should be seen not only in terms of 'flexibility' but also areas such 'as social competence, ability to work in a team, conflict resolution, understanding of other cultures, integrated thinking and a capacity to handle uncertainties and paradoxes of secondary modernity' (Beck, 2000, 137-8).

Beck notes that learning within the framework of globalisation also poses questions about where, what and how people learn. Part of the exciting dialectic of globalisation, he suggests, is that it replaces 'traditional lecturing societies with dialogic attentiveness and courage to disagree – people beginning to realise transnationalisation of uneventful education and curricula' (*Ibid.*, 138).

Education for whatever age group and wherever in the world needs to recognise the impact of globalisation and that we live in a global society. The challenge for development educationalists is to recognise that the inclusion of the term 'global' needs to be linked to critical thinking and dialogical learning.

Knowledge and a Learning Society

Linked to the debates around the impact of globalisation is the promotion of the 'knowledge society' and that key to the economic advancement of Western societies in the post-industrial age is the enhanced role of learning and skills. However, as Gilbert (2005) has suggested a knowledge society requires a move away from thinking about knowledge as an object and bodies of information to be absorbed, to processes and as a resource to enable people to engage in society.

If one looks at how people learn, experience and engage with global and development issues, they do so in a wide variety of forms. One can no longer talk about a linear process of learning (Jarvis, 2007) or that one form of experience inevitably leads to desire for more learning or action. There is evidence from research undertaken for VSO (Bourn, 2007) and visits to developing countries (Martin, 2007) that people come away with a passion for greater engagement in global and development issues. Learning about global and development issues is no longer, if it ever was, only about acquisition of information. It has to include reflections on experiences and perceptions on areas such poverty and re-thinking one's relationship to colonialism and differing cultures (Leonard, 2008), and to engage in notions of critical literacy that first emerged with Freire (1972).

People can access information about development and global issues themselves but this does not necessarily mean leading to a greater understanding of the complexities of the causes of poverty, sustainable development and influences of colonialism. The reviews of the impact of Make Poverty History (Darnton, 2006; Micklem, 2006) have demonstrated the limitations of celebrating major awareness campaigns as leading to a better informed and engaged public. The evidence from the evaluations of Make Poverty History demonstrates that whilst there is evidence of increased awareness of poverty issues it appears to be at a superficial level.

A key area that requires further research is the role of new technology, particularly within Western industrialised countries in how people make sense of the globalised world in which they are living (Apple, Kenway and Singh, 2005; Kenway and Bullen, 2008; Ray,

2007). For example to what extent does worldwide access to the internet create opportunities for learning about a range of perspectives and approaches and not result in a passive re-interpretation of dominant ideological thinking.

Many young people have adopted a world view in which the whole globe represents the key arena for social action (Mayo, 2005). From campaigns around Make Poverty History to Climate Change, young people are seen as being at the heart of such initiatives (Darnton, 2006; Micklem, 2006). However, as Ang (1990) argues, being active is not necessarily the same as being powerful, and this is particularly true in the context of globalisation. The rhetoric that might be associated with young people's citizenship in a global community generally does not match the reality. Young people are in one sense citizens of a global culture but at the same time struggle for a sense of acceptance in the societies in which they live.

Education and a Sustainable Future

Sustainable development is becoming the dominant discourse at many of the discussions on learning and understanding the wider world. The launch of the UN Decade on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) has given added momentum to these debates. A relevant question to the discourse on development education within the debates on ESD is the promotion of a concept of 'learning for' some prescribed better world. This relates to the challenge about the desire to promote a sense of urgency about the future of the planet and the role of education in addressing this concern (Scott and Gough, 2003). This discourse links to Oxfam's description of being a global citizenship, the 'sense of being outraged', the desire to play a positive role in society, and make an more equitable and sustainable world (Oxfam, 2006).

In response to the desire by many NGOs and some sustainable development theorists, Scott and Gough have stated that learning has to be at the heart of what we understand to be sustainable development education. Understanding sustainable development, they suggest, is complex and to many people it will seem impossible to achieve. They argue that sustainable development cannot possibly mean an 'end state' to be achieved because there are no end states. 'If sustainable development means anything it can only be a way of describing an adaptive approach to managing human-environmental co-evolution' (Scott and Gough, 2003, 253).

In developing the work Scott undertook with Gough, he has with Vare developed two typologies for ESD which they suggest should not be seen as opposites but complementary. Typology one promotes ESD as learning for sustainable development with the emphasis on promoting and facilitating change within the context of clearly defined goals and objectives; and the second is based on learning as sustainable development which emphasises the need to build capacity to think critically and to test and challenge existing and dominant ideas (Vare and Scott, 2007).

This means that whilst education for sustainable development needs to be part of the framework for making sense of the world in which people are living and will be living in the future, the emphasis needs to be related to the purpose of education. Sterling suggests there is a need for a 'reorientation' of education towards the concept of 'sustain-

able education' (Sterling, 2004). He poses that sustainability implies a change of purpose to education with the emphasis on 'systemic learning' as the basis for change in order to understand and engage with the world.

Behind the discourses on globalisation, knowledge society and sustainable development education is the recognition that learning within a global society necessitates a major re-think as to what and how people learn. Marquardt (quoted in Jameson, 2003, 6) suggests what is needed is a 'global mindset':

> People with global mindsets seek to continually expand their knowledge, have a highly developed conceptual capacity to deal with the complexity of global organisations, are extremely flexible, strive to be sensitive to cultural diversity, are able to undertake decisions with adequate information and have a strong capacity for reflection. A person with a global mindset thinks and sees the world globally, is open to exchanging ideas and concepts across borders ... The emphasis is placed on balancing global and local needs, and being able to operate cross functionally, cross divisionally, and cross culturally across the world.

Current Theories of Development Education and Global Learning

If one reflects on the work of Scheunpflug, Asbrand, Forghani-Arani and Hertmeyer within Germany and Austria and also Andreottti and her perspectives on critical thinking, then there are potential bases for the development of theories which make connections between the practice outlined earlier and the challenges of globalisation, knowledge society and sustainable development.

Key to the thinking of Scheunpflug for example is the recognition of the complex nature of global society and that learning about this society needs to be based on individuals coming to autonomous decisions based on independent judgement and freedom of thought (Scheunpflug and Asbrand, 2006; Scheunpflug, 2008).

Building on these perspectives, in Austria Forghan-Arani (2005) quoted in Hertmeyer (2008, 49), suggests that 'Global Learning' is a new, contemporary pedagogical orientation developed in the light of societal changes which are taking place globally.

> Global Learning is understood as an educational mandate for the promotion of mature world citizens who are aware of their responsibility and able to participate. It aims at the transfer of key qualifications and competencies to deal sensibly and effectively with the conditions of a global society, for the life of the individual as well as in the sense of social processes of change, in which also school – as part of the society – takes on a role.

Hertmeyer suggests the term is not a value free concept with 'worldwide social justice' forming its base regarding the content. Geographically it means 'the further development of the North-South perspective into a global perspective.' Hertmeyer (2008, 10) notes that:

> ...it deals with world development and the related core areas of politics, social issues, economics, culture, religion and human rights. It can help to make the rising complexity in the world accessible, and in its temporal dimension it broaches the issue of the speed of change in almost all socially relevant areas. It is not about the acquisition of new specialised knowledge in total, but about the ability to put knowledge into proper order and to experience it.

Andreotti (2006b; 2007) although coming from a very different root with connections to the thinking of Friere, emphasises the importance of critical literacy. Andreotti is a

Brazilian educator but whose most recent work has been focused within the UK, Irish and now New Zealand learning contexts. Central to her approach towards development education and the related terms of global education are post-colonial theory, literary studies on notions of 'first and third' worlds and debates in political and social relations to power, and notions of North-South relations that have emerged from the de-colonisation struggles.

As mentioned earlier, development education practice has historically been influenced by the work of Freire and challenging perceptions of colonial North-South relations. Andreotti recognises these traditions and movements but takes them forward by posing problems and questions in a form that questions notions of pre-determined outcomes. Postcolonial theory, Andreotti suggests is important for development education because it problematises representation of the Third World and notions of power, voice and inequality. It questions notions of development and visions of reality that are imposed as universal, it recognises the impact of colonialism, and questions traditional Eurocentric notions of charity and benevolence and related notions of romanticisation of the South (Andreotti, 2007).

A key element of Andreotti's approach is the notion of Freirean critical engagement and dialogue. She particularly questions how much of development education practice uncritically accepts 'Southern voices' and in the same way reduces notions of Northern perspectives as linked to ones of common humanity and helping the poor.

Secondly Andreotti in developing her notion of 'critical literacy' poses the need for the development educator to recognise the connections between language, power and knowledge. Key questions to pose, she suggests, are what are the assumptions informing this perspective and who decides what is real and in whose name?

Her thinking has been taken forward through two projects, Open Spaces for Dialogue and Enquiry (OSDE) and Through Other Eyes (TOE). Key to the OSDE approach is the opening up of space for enquiry to engage with complex processes and perspectives but in a form that recognises a range of approaches and views but also promotes critical reflection on the views of others.[10] TOE is particularly influenced by 'indigenous' understandings of development and posing a framework of moving from learning to unlearn to learning to listen, learning to learn and learning to reach out.[11]

Both initiatives have begun to have an influence in Europe and New Zealand. Key to this influence has been the application of theory to practice. OSDE and TOE are unusual examples of practice within development education because they are based on clear theoretical influences, notably the research and writings of Andreotti.

In taking forward a re-conceptualisation of development education, TOE and OSDE are important because they demonstrate the link between theory and practice and pose key questions linked to both the aims and purpose of this field of learning.

A Re-Conceptualisation

This paper has suggested that whilst there has been and there remains a wealth of NGO based practice that could come within the field of development education, there is a need to re-conceptualise it within a clearer learning framework and to be more explicit

in its linkages to debates on globalisation and world society, post colonialism, concepts of the knowledge society and sustainable development.

It is argued that development education as a field of education has a continuing value if it is seen not as learning about development issues but as a pedagogy of making connections between the individual and personal, from the local to the global, and which by its very nature, is transformative.

It needs to be seen as an approach to education that challenges dominant orthodoxy on education and perceptions about the world and enables the learner to look at issues and the world from a different place.

If development education and its related terms of global education, global citizenship and global learning are to pose questions about the why, the what and how of learning and understanding the world in which we live, it needs in the context of a global society take account of the impact of globalisation in all its facets and related influences of power and social justice. Finally it needs to take account that this learning requires an incorporation of notions of critical thinking and critical literacy, recognising range of perspectives and approaches and above all promoting notions of social empowerment. This means recognising that learning is not a natural consequence of awareness raising. Nor does it automatically or should be perceived as being directly linked to campaigning and social activism.

Development education also needs to recognise the importance of the development of concepts and skills to address complexity, difference and uncertainty and to challenge notions of fixed contents and pre-determined ideas of society. Linked to this are challenges of absorption and reproduction of received bodies of knowledge and forms of thinking and the need to recognise different perspectives and that positions and approaches will change following dialogue and debate. This means a recognition of the need to learn and understand different meanings and interpretations. (Bourn and Neal, 2008)

The relationship of these debates on development to wider debates on globalisation and sustainable development also need to be considered as an area of future debate and research.

Development education also by the very fields it encompasses does have an impact upon areas of knowledge, be it in history, geography, literature or the sciences. Yet its contribution to these disciplines has not been seriously addressed. This needs to be considered alongside the areas already covered in this paper because this is a way in which educational policy-makers will be able to see the broader learning reference to development education.

The practice of most of NGO located development education activities is determined by external funding. This means it is constantly faced with providing evidence to demonstrate impact and effectiveness of the particular project and programme supported. What is rarely discussed is that if one ignores aims and objectives of the project, one might question as to what did happen in terms of the learning, rather than finding evidence to support pre-determined outcomes and objectives.

Development education needs above all to be located in an approach to learning that is about reflection, sharing and testing new ideas, providing conceptual inputs and learning from practice and experience. It needs to move away from being a list of noble intentions and even a series of bodies of knowledge, skills and values to being an approach towards learning. This means that debates and discussions should be contested. There should be critical dialogue and debate and space for a range of voices, views and perspectives. It needs to recognise that education must move from uncritical to critical understanding, from personal to global being, from inaction to action and from static to development in its broadest sense. It moreover also needs to address questions of the form and processes of learning, the relationships between knowledge and personal experience and skills to engage in society.

There is above all a need for emerging discourse and more practice that pose questions about why, what and how people make sense of the world in which they are living and the nature and form of its transformative dynamic.

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Notes

1 http//ec.europa.eu/europeaid/projects/ong_ ed/ed_page_en.htm

2 http://www.oise.utoronto.ca/iige/about_iige. htm

3 http://www.radaeuropy.sk/swift_data/source/dokumenty/tlacove_spravy/2007_ii/GEW2007-ComRefDoc_en.pdf-, accessed May 20 2008

4 for details on the work of TIDE see http://www.tidec.org/Tide%7etalk/TTindex%20%5bdate%5d.html

5 for details on work of NGOs across Europe , see www.deeep.org

6 For details of work of NGOs and background to perspectives on development education in Ireland, see http://www.developmenteducation.ie

7 http://www.tidec.org/Aims/Tide%7e-aims.html

8 see www.globaleducationderby.org.uk

9 www.mundi.org.uk/what-is-mundi/index.html

10 see www.osdemethodology.org.uk

11 see www.throughothereyes.org.uk

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