

## Editorial

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In this issue, the authors examine education for social justice in a variety of educational settings: from social movements, through youth work to higher education. There are some key themes that emerge. The articles question our understanding of global citizenship education, focusing on the value of the cognitive and emotional challenge of encountering different worldviews, either through lived experience in social movements, or through the formal curriculum. The articles also examine pedagogical approaches and initiatives and how they facilitate greater understanding of global issues such as poverty, and develop in learners a greater social justice orientation. There is a strong sense throughout the issue of the urgency of providing more critical approaches to global citizenship education, in all its guises, particularly given the political upheavals in different parts of the world, the increasing inequalities globally and within societies, and resulting narratives about 'the Other' that are gaining prominence.

Helen Underhill tackles the question of how educators and activists respond to an increase in populism, combined with increases in inequalities around the world, taking the specific case of diasporic Egyptian activists engaged in social movements with differing stories and experiences of Egypt's revolutionary struggle. Her thinking draws on global citizenship education, which she reframes as a social movement, and Mouffe's (2005) theory of agonistic pluralism, which involves a conceptualization of relationships that accepts conflict as inevitable and necessary within democracy. She sees global citizenship education (GCE) and social movements as both involving cognitive disruption. Her analysis of data from interviews with 28 UK-based activists illustrates the opportunities for learning and unlearning that occur when different perspectives on struggle are encountered. She documents the emotionally and cognitively unsettling experiences of the activists, the uncovering of their essentialized narrations about each other and the recognition of the need to reflect critically on the complexity of issues and experiences. Through this article, she challenges us to see education for global citizenship as more about dissensus than consensus.

Eleanor Brown and Laura Nicklin also offer us a challenge in their article on a project engaging young people through the medium of hip-hop. Not only does it offer a counter narrative to pervading images of the art form, but also to perceptions of 'marginalized' young people. The project aimed to develop critical consciousness (Freire, 1972), as well as provide the young people with opportunities for action and sharing their ideas in the wider community. Using critical pedagogy as a frame for analysis, they examined data gathered over three years, including project reports, interviews, field notes and feedback from participants. They show that social and global issues formed the content of sessions. In terms of pedagogy, they identify the creation of safe spaces, collaborative dialogue and examples of creative and experiential learning as important. The participants valued the peer relationships they developed, the development of skills, and enjoyment of the activities. Participants also gained a greater understanding of injustice, with some becoming more politically engaged.

The authors argue that using informal spaces with creative learning experiences can have positive outcomes for young people in the development of pro-social behaviours and engagement with social issues, leaving them more confident and equipped to affect change.

Linda Clarke and Lesley Abbott are concerned with children's understanding of issues such as poverty, in the context of increasingly polarized debates globally and nationally about who belongs and who is an outsider. They take as their research context the UK Global Learning Programme (GLP 2013–18) as implemented in Northern Ireland, which included an emphasis on the development in schools of a social justice mindset rather than a charity mentality. Through small group interviews with pupils in six primary schools, they find that the children have gained an understanding of inequality and its causes, both at home and overseas. The children also demonstrate empathy and compassion, and a strong sense of the unfairness of inequality, but their proposed actions are still rooted in fundraising and charity. Overall, the authors conclude that there are signs of a 'fledgling understanding of social justice', which coexist with a more charity mentality linked to a desire to help. They point to the challenge for teachers in working with these two orientations and the importance of continuing to nurture pupils' development in the current political climate.

Simon Eten Angyagre and Albert Kojo Quanioo's article asks similar questions about education and its role in developing a more critical stance towards notions of global citizenship through an analysis of the social studies curriculum for secondary education in Ghana. This analysis includes an examination of the syllabus, as well as interviews with teachers and students. They conclude that there are major limitations in the current curriculum in relation to more critical approaches. As well as outlining some of the wider challenges in the education system which affect the implementation of the social studies curriculum, they also recommend a global focus with a local relevance, through consideration of concepts such as Ubuntu and other pre-colonial approaches to education. They argue this could provide an indigenous perspective on global citizenship within the curriculum. They also tackle the question of pedagogy, arguing again for a more critical approach that asks questions about the impact of globalization and colonial history on current developments. Such an approach, they contend, would give space for critical engagement without creating additional topics in an already overloaded curriculum.

Anna-Leena Riitaoja, Hanna Posti-Ahokas and Hille Janhonen-Abuquah turn their attention to higher education and an initiative to promote North–South–South collaboration. The authors argue strongly that higher education should offer possibilities for social transformation, rather than maintenance of dominant perspectives and paradigms. In order to understand whether this can be achieved through greater epistemological awareness of alternative perspectives, they examine a course in qualitative research methods organized by five universities from Tanzania, South Africa, Ghana and Finland, which aimed to develop understandings of quality education (Sustainable Development Goal 4, SDG4) by considering approaches with contextual and cultural relevance. The initiative was based on culturally responsive education (CRE), which involves drawing on culturally diverse experiences and perspectives. The course included a variety of activities as well as a one-week intensive course attended by participants from all five universities. Using online qualitative questionnaire data, the authors find evidence that participants saw connections between qualitative research approaches and cultural responsiveness. The authors also offer a reflexive critique of using dominant research paradigms to investigate the value of alternative perspectives and offer valuable insights into the challenges of CRE. They conclude

that there are limitations with the concept and approach. Participants tended to think of cultural diversity and difference, particularly in terms of nationality. There were also few opportunities to consider the role of structure in inequality, meaning issues such as power and race were not tackled explicitly. They argue for more emphasis on critical epistemological stances, particularly in examining the theoretical perspectives used. They also point out that using international collaboration to improve educational quality and epistemological awareness and attempting to move from 'educational tourism and cultural comparisons' to more collaborative approaches to learning cannot be achieved quickly.

### **Articles in this issue of the *International Journal of Development Education and Global Learning***

- Angyagre, S.E. and Quainoo, A.K. (2019) 'What are the critical dimensions in Ghana's senior high school social studies curriculum? Under the lens of a critical global citizenship education framework'. *International Journal of Development Education and Global Learning*, 11 (2), 142–58.
- Brown, E.J. and Nicklin, L.L. (2019) 'Spitting rhymes and changing minds: Global youth work through hip-hop'. *International Journal of Development Education and Global Learning*, 11 (2), 159–74.
- Clarke, L. and Abbott, L. (2019) 'Seeking equilibrium between a social justice and a charity stance towards global learning among Northern Ireland pupils'. *International Journal of Development Education and Global Learning*, 11 (2), 175–88.
- Riitaoja, A.-L., Posti-Ahokas, H. and Janhonen-Abuquah, H. (2019) 'North–South–South collaboration as a context for collaborative learning and thinking with alternative knowledges'. *International Journal of Development Education and Global Learning*, 11 (2), 189–203.
- Underhill, H. (2019) 'Agonistic possibilities for global unlearning: Constraints to learning within global citizenship education and social movements'. *International Journal of Development Education and Global Learning*, 11 (2), 204–18.