

von Jonathan Gatzter angesprochenen Teilnehmer/inne/n aus dem Bereich der beruflichen Bildung seien auch Teilnehmer/-innen aus der Region Ostdeutschland aber auch Migrant/inn/en oder Menschen mit Behinderungen im weltwärts-Programm wenig vertreten. Als Mitglied der Steuerungsgruppe des Folgeprozesses der Evaluierung zeigte er sich erfreut, dass viele der anfänglichen Kritikpunkte am Programm aufgenommen wurden. So wird das Motto „Lernen durch tatkräftiges Helfen“ entfallen. Damit wird die Erwartung verbunden, dass sich die Freiwilligen von Anfang an stärker auf den Charakter des Freiwilligendienstes als entwicklungspolitischen Lerndienst fokussieren. Auch eine Arbeitsgruppe „Reverse“ berate mittlerweile Konzepte, wie die Aufnahme von Freiwilligen aus den Partnerländern für entwicklungspolitische Freiwilligendienste in Deutschland aussehen könne. Dass über dieses Thema nun endlich mit dem BMZ beraten werde, sei letztendlich auch eine Wirkung des Programms, denn neben den am Programm beteiligten Organisationen hatten zuletzt viele Rückkehrer/-innen Initiativen für kleine Reverse-Programme gestartet. Kingsley Nii-Addy zeigte sich sehr erfreut, dass diese Forderung nunmehr aufgenommen wurde. Er ergänzte aber, dass er sich für die Partnerorganisationen wünsche, mehr in die Gestaltung des weltwärts-Programms einbezogen zu werden. Kristina

Kontzi von der Berliner Organisation global, verstärkte Nii-Addys Kritikpunkt mit der Einschätzung, dass sich in der fehlenden Mitbestimmung Strukturen manifestieren, in denen koloniale Machtstrukturen fortwirken. Wer Grundlagendokumente wie die weltwärts-Richtlinie, aber auch die Entscheidungsstrukturen des Programms oder die Seminararbeit anschau, treffe immer wieder auf solche Fortwirkungen. Sie sehe zwar durchaus einen beginnenden Prozess der Sensibilisierung im Feld der Programmarbeit, es müsse sich aber auf gesellschaftlicher Ebene etwas ändern.

Jan Wenzel resümierte aus Sicht der Stiftung Nord-Süd-Brücken, dass in den entwicklungspolitischen Freiwilligendiensten viele Potentiale für die entwicklungspolitische Szene in der Region liegen. Insgesamt seien Entsendeorganisationen und Organisationen der entwicklungspolitischen Inlandsarbeit gefordert im Bereich der Rückkehrer/-innenarbeit noch stärker zusammen zu arbeiten. Insgesamt sei es aber erfreulich, dass seit der Evaluation an vielen Schwachstellen gearbeitet werde. Daran zeige sich, dass das Programm nicht nur ein Lerndienst für die Freiwilligen, sondern für alle beteiligten Akteure sei.

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## Rising to the Challenge

### Development Education in an Changing Local and Global Landscape

#### Introduction

The development education sector in Ireland and Britain has undergone profound change over the past few years resulting from policy reviews and the very challenging economic climate in which practitioners are working. Given this difficult environment for educators, the Centre for Global Education, a development non-governmental organisation based in Belfast, decided to address these challenges head-on in a conference titled ‘Rising to the Challenge: Development education in a changing local and global landscape’. These challenges faced by the sector include demonstrating the impact of development education (DE) practice on learners at a time when ‘value for money’ is becoming an increasingly prevalent determinant of expenditure on development co-operation including education. Evaluating the impact of our practice on learners is a particular challenge for development educators given the difficulty in measuring attitudinal change in the short 1-3 year timeframe of projects that support most DE practice at present. Moreover, reduced budgets in a period of austerity can limit the resources available for monitoring and evaluation work. The next section discusses how we debated these issues in the context of the conference.

#### Conference Programme

The Centre sought a balanced programme that combined expert inputs with opportunities for discussion. The keynote address,

titled ‘Realising our Potential’, was delivered by Bobby McCormack, a lecturer in Dundalk Institute of Technology and also the Director of Development Perspectives, an NGO involved in DE and overseas development partnerships. In his keynote, Bobby explored some of the key challenges confronting the sector, particularly in demonstrating the impact of our practice on target groups. He signposted how the sector can move forward in this context and examined the new opportunities that have arisen for development educators to engage with local audiences on global issues. These opportunities include the global financial crisis and the knowledge and expertise that development NGOs can bring to the debate on how we can create more sustainable models of economic development. Bobby also talked about the sector maximising the opportunities presented by engaging with the media on development issues and creating new methods for sustaining our work through social enterprises rooted in grassroots practice. He also proposed that the sector in Ireland continue its advocacy work with the Irish government on policy and funding. It was an inspiring address based on optimism and real possibilities for change which encouraged a very positive debate with participants.

The conference then moved into a panel discussion titled ‘Is Development Education Making a Difference at Local and Global Levels?’ This session considered some of the challenges, opportunities and benefits related to the delivery of development education that connects the local to the global. The panellists

considered how we can successfully deliver global issues at a local level and, at the same time, make connections between local and global agendas. With growing calls from within the development education sector for educators to adjust their focus to local as well as global issues, the conference heard from four practitioners from contrasting backgrounds and sectors on how they have delivered effective development education at a local level.

After lunch the conference offered three workshops that presented a valuable opportunity for participants to reflect on the morning's proceedings and discuss in greater detail some of the issues addressed by the keynote speech and panel discussion. The first workshop titled 'Extending our reach beyond the development education sector' focused on the challenges and opportunities involved in pushing the work of development educators outside of the sector's comfort zone. More specifically, the discussion centred around the theme of entrepreneurship as a possible means of broadening the reach of DE, harnessing innovation, collaboration, and becoming more self-sustaining as a sector. The group discussed technological advances and their implications for DE, particularly in the context of a more globalised and interdependent world. The potential role of media in advancing the goals of development education was also discussed, particularly the importance of 'new media'. While, participants acknowledged the significant barriers to cooperation with the business community, they felt that an exploration of new opportunities may be worthwhile and necessary in the prevailing economic climate.

The second workshop was called 'Soft versus Critical approaches to development education: Are the three Fs enough or do we need to change our approach?' The three Fs are fun, fundraising and fasting and their associated 'soft' approach to getting DE messages across which the group agreed were inadequate in exploring DE in sufficient complexity. The group devised a number of possible ways to strengthen DE practice with the first being that the sector could only improve if it was prepared to question its effectiveness and recognise its failings; only then would it be possible for development educators to make incremental improvements to their work. Secondly, it was recognised that a frank conversation between development educators and fundraisers was urgently needed in order to bring the two areas of work closer together. Thirdly, the group suggested that development educators eschew DE 'jargon' and attempt to mainstream DE values across both the formal and informal education sectors.

The third workshop was titled 'From the local to the global' and argued that the local-global dialectic was the dominant theme of the conference. Participants argued that it is useful to recognise the importance of individuals' knowledge in a given field, for example, the wealth of knowledge and experience of fishermen in Ireland and their counterparts in the global South. This presents just one of many opportunities to connect the local to the global. Similarly, health, working conditions and the environment all offer gateways to a better common understanding of issues which are 'local' in their own contexts, but ultimately global in their parallels and importance. The group argued that part of a development educator's remit is to identify developmental problems in their own community and address them head-on. Only then can true empowerment and social change be achieved on a global scale.

The final session of the conference was the plenary which combined two innovative methods for summarising the day and

capturing the learning from the event. The first was Playback Theatre which provided a creative, humorous, upbeat, and entertaining way to present the ideas generated during the conference. This involved two actors improvising scenes based on the conference debate and it worked by validating participants' experiences and showing them that their ideas have been heard and understood, and are being responded to creatively. The second methodology was graphic harvesting which is also known as graphic facilitation, graphic recording or scribing. This involves representing ideas, viewpoints and debates in the form of graphics and in the conference plenary it was used to visually outline the journey of the day and its main outcomes. The graphic was drawn by Eimear McNally, a development educator who expertly composited the main issues and questions arising from the keynote address, panel discussion and workshops in a most innovative and attractive format.

### Conclusion

The feedback from participants who attended the conference was extremely positive with the only criticism related to some activities running over their allotted length. Typical of the feedback from participants was this comment:

"Overall this was an excellent conference and the venue provided such a warm and comfortable space for the inspirational speakers to engage those in attendance. The graphic harvesting was such a great addition – something I'd never seen before" (CGE 2012, 25).

Clearly, the problems of the DE sector will not be resolved with one event and conferences always have their limitations as one-off activities. However, the Centre for Global Education is offering a three-stranded capacity-building package to the sector and each activity – the conference, workshops and journal – are mutually reinforcing. For example, graphic harvesting was the subject of a one day workshop and was subsequently included in the conference. Also, journal articles have been written by contributors to the conference and featured in the delivery of the workshops.

While the DE sector is arguably facing its most challenging period at present as a result of the global economic downturn, a rapidly changing policy environment and reduced financial support, the Centre's conference suggested that there is enough innovation, optimism and resolve among development practitioners to sustain itself in this changing landscape. The sector needs to adapt to the realities of the current policy and funding scenario and find new ways to sustain its work that make it less dependent on government support and less vulnerable to changes in government policy. The CGE conference was only the beginning of a dialogue that will hopefully result in a more independent, robust and sustainable development education sector.

### References

Centre for Global Education, 'Rising to the Challenge: Development Education is a Changing Local and Global Landscape: A Report on the Centre for Global Education Annual Conference 2012', Centre for Global Education: Belfast, is available at: <https://docs.google.com/a/centreforglobaleducation.com/file/d/0B7vQnKs7j7zZzR5bWU3NVhTQVc5OFhrUGpyLUxKUQ/edit#>, [accessed 7 August 2012].

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