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The UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development: business as usual in the end

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An analysis of the literature supporting the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development and a sample of its key products suggests that it failed to acknowledge or challenge neoliberalism as a hegemonic force blocking transitions towards genuine sustainability. The authors argue that the rationale for the Decade was idealistic and that global education for sustainability citizenship provides a more realistic focus for such an initiative. They anchor such education in appropriate social theory, outline its four dimensions and use these to review four key products from the Decade, before suggesting remedial measures to render ESD a more effective vehicle for promoting democratic global governance and sustainability.

Keywords: DESD; neoliberalism; global citizenship; ecopedagogy; sustainability citizen

Introduction

In 2002, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution that called for a Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD 2005–2014). The ESD Section of UNESCO would act as the Secretariat for the DESD, offering oversight and advice and coordinating the efforts of member states, UN agencies and other groups. The Decade aimed 'to integrate the values inherent in sustainable development into all aspects of learning to encourage changes in behaviour that allow for a more sustainable and just society for all' (UNESCO 2005a).

Readers seeking an overview of DESD might consult the following documents: *The Decade at a Glance* (UNESCO 2005a); *The International Implementation Scheme for the Decade in Brief* (UNESCO 2005b); a mid-decade review (Wals 2009); *The Bonn Declaration* (UNESCO 2009); and the comprehensive report on DESD *Shaping the Education of Tomorrow* (Wals 2012). These documents suggest that the discourse guiding the Decade was essentially reformist acknowledging mounting global problems and suggesting that shifts in values, lifestyles and policy within prevailing forms of society, will be sufficient to put global society on a sustainable path. The 'basic vision of ESD is a world where everyone has the opportunity to benefit from education and learn the values, behaviour and lifestyles required for a sustainable future and for positive societal transformation' (DESD 2014). Yet,

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while there is adequate analysis of what such values, behaviour and lifestyles should involve (notably through the influence of *The Earth Charter* – see below), there is too little attention to power, politics and citizenship; the ways in which neoliberalism has made the adoption of sustainable behaviours and lifestyles less likely; what alternative forms of social and environmental relations (political economy) would aid their realization; and whether students should consider liberal and radical views of social change alongside the reformist, and sometimes idealist views reflected in the literature of DESD (Huckle 2012).

Our article starts with the case for a genuinely critical and transformative ESD as envisioned in the document *The Education We Need for the World We Want* (TEWN). In an attempt to anchor this vision in appropriate social theory, it then examines the emerging theory and practice of what we term global education for sustainability citizenship (GESC). Four dimensions of such education are outlined together with their implications for curriculum content and pedagogy at the level of secondary or high school students.

The focus then shifts to the UN and UNESCO and their potential to promote sustainable development and GESC. Our central argument is that the Decade represents 'business as usual in the end' since the majority of those who determined its rationale and developed educational projects and programmes under its umbrella failed through inadequate guidance, misplaced idealism or the censoring of more critical ideas and content, to face up to current global realities. This argument is supported by an analysis of four DESD publications that may influence school teachers and teacher educators working in the mature economies of the West. These are evaluated against the four dimensions of GESC considered earlier in the article, before a final section looks beyond the Decade to ways in which a more critical and transformative ESD may develop in the future.

The Education We Need for the World We Want

At the time of Rio+20 in 2012, a working group on education produced a paper, TEWN (Rio+20 Education Group 2012), for the People's Summit that ran in parallel with the official summit. The group's members included the International Council for Adult Education; the World Education Forum; the Latin American Council of Adult Education; and others representing the educational interests of civil society. The paper analysed the challenges posed by the global crisis; set out an educational agenda in response to these challenges; and commented on the likelihood that Rio+20 would adopt this agenda.

The authors regard the crisis as not only one of 'financial capital in its neoliberal phase' with its attendant economic, social and environmental impacts, but also one of 'greater magnitude' linked to prevailing forms of development and underdevelopment that lead to 'global exhaustion' and prompt social movements seeking radical alternatives. A key cause of the crisis is a global political order, in which there is 'no international democratic space for taking decisions on issues that are of global dimensions and (have) differential impacts at the local level', and, in which the interests of some states, corporations and banks, 'under the interests of capital', weaken the scope for 'multilateral, collective decision-making'. Faced with a crisis that denies basic human rights and increases environmental and social injustice, social movements around the world are reflecting and acting on new institutional forms of democracy and citizenship. They are rejecting the economic analysis of the

crisis adopted by multilateral financial organizations that leads to policies of structural adjustment, reduced public expenditure, cuts to welfare and austerity for the majority, and are demanding greater economic, political and cultural democracy. Central to these demands are new forms of global citizenship that offer the prospect of social and environmental justice for all.

Turning to education, the authors remind us that the global crisis is also a crisis of education. This continues to be restructured in most parts of the world to better reproduce workers, consumers and citizens who meet the needs of neoliberal capitalism. Educational institutions have largely given up 'training people capable of thinking about important political, environmental, economic and social issues of global order' and reflecting and acting on radical alternatives. There is an urgent need to restore a 'civic pedagogy' that 'rescues the notion of education as a human right' that can 'open the eyes to the democratization of societies', and 'train critical citizenship' in ways that 'establish bonds' with social movements. The critical understanding of 'contested meanings' or discourses is a central part of such education, as is the testing of knowledge through real or simulated involvement in issues facing communities variously affected by neoliberal globalization. What is needed is a 'critical and transformative education that respects human rights and those of the whole community of life to which humans belong, and specifically promotes the right to citizen participation in decision-making spaces' such as those that shape the prospects of more sustainable forms of development.

With regard to the Rio+20 summit, the authors of TEWN argue that along with other social movements, the education movement should defend education as a fundamental human right that is central to citizens' powers to transform current patterns of production, consumption and distribution in order to achieve greater environmental and social justice. They fear the summit will merely be 'an opportunity for 'greening the capitalist exit from the crisis', for 'humanizing it' and 'appealing to the social and environmental responsibility of companies'. Capitalism's responsibility for the crisis is likely to be 'erased' and opportunities to launch radically new ways of thinking and living based on a 'truly democratic social order' are likely to be overlooked.

Anchoring a critical and transformative ESD in appropriate social theory

If key causes of the global crisis are the prevailing geopolitical order and lack of global governance, together with a lack of 'civic pedagogy', as the authors of TEWN maintain, then global citizenship education should lie at the heart of an international initiative on ESD, such as DESD. This premise leads us to suggest combining the emerging theory and practice of sustainability or sustainable citizenship with that of ecopedagogy and global citizenship education. The resulting concept of GESC can offer an appropriate perspective from which to review the weaknesses of the Decade as revealed in some of its key products, and to suggest remedial measures.

Ecopedagogy (Gadotti 2008; Kahn 2008, 2010) combines the critical pedagogy of Paulo Freire with a future-orientated ecological politics, and involves teachers and students carrying out projects in the classroom and community that open spaces for dialogue that allows critical analysis of the discourses surrounding sustainability (OSDEM 2013). They cooperatively reflect on their understandings of the world, recognize false understandings (ideology and hegemony) and act to validate discourse that appears to offer a more truthful interpretation of reality and the ways in which it might be transformed (Hursh and Henderson 2011; Walsh 2009).

There are alternative approaches to global citizenship education and GESC as we outline it, draws on what Shultz (2007) terms radical and transformationalist approaches, and on cosmopolitan global education, environmental global education and global critical justice education as outlined by Gaudelli and Heilman (2009).

A sustainability citizen is one who displays 'pro-sustainability behaviour, in public and private, driven by a belief in fairness of the distribution of environmental goods, in participation, and in the co-creation of sustainability policy' (Dobson 2011, 10). Bullen and Whitehead (2005) explain that sustainable citizenship represents a paradigm for post industrial living that disrupts the spatial parameters and temporal scope of conventional citizenship and raises important questions about the material constitution of the citizen. It requires citizens to exercise responsibilities to distant people and places and past and future generations, and to commit themselves to ecologism (Smith 1998) to the extent that they are required to exercise care or stewardship for non-human nature. It enlarges the public sphere in which citizenship is conceived and practiced to include the environment; embraces the private sphere of citizens' lifestyles and consumption patterns; and is relational in the sense that it requires a keen awareness of the connections, which exist between social actions, economic practices and environmental processes.

Van Poeck, Vandenabeele, and Bruyninckx (2013) argue that while Jickling and Wals (2007) distinguish three approaches to ESD ('Big Brother ESD', 'Feel Good ESD' and 'Enabling Thought and Action'), the theory and practice of their favoured approach ('Enabling Thought and Action') would be strengthened by drawing on contemporary accounts of sustainable citizenship. These employ the concept of ecological footprints to suggest a post-cosmopolitan form of ecological citizenship (Dobson 2003); extend notions of liberal environmental citizenship by regarding citizenship as a site of struggle, where 'the limits of established rights are (re)defined and (re) affirmed' (Gilbert and Phillips 2003); and draw on civic republican approaches to citizenship to suggest that sustainability citizenship is a form of resistance citizenship existing within and as a corrective to unsustainable development (Barry 2005).

Van Poeck and her co-authors suggest the emerging multidimensional view of sustainability citizenship has potential to enrich ESD by providing insights into its overlapping scale, ethical, relational and political dimensions. While these dimensions might be labelled differently, we will follow their labelling and consider the dimensions with reference to GESC at the secondary or high school level.

Delivering GESC's four dimensions through ecopedagogy

The *scale dimension* of GESC can be considered foundational as it introduces students to global society and the ways in which personal and collective decisions have impacts on distant human and non-human others. Ecological footprints provide an appropriate starting point, encouraging students to consider issues of justice and the desirability of sustainability citizenship. They should learn about structures of power and the processes at work in the capitalist world economy; the rise of neoliberalism and its social, environmental and cultural impacts; and the contemporary 'crisis' and the need for more sustainable forms of development. Such development requires public/collective as well as private/individual actions, and students should recognize that a focus purely on individuals' values and lifestyles serves to depoliticize and privatize a very political and public issue, and thereby contributes to the reproduction of the status quo.

The *ethical dimension* requires students to recognize sustainability as a normative notion and to consider how such principles as those set out in the Earth Charter might enable the development of a global society based on respect for nature, universal human rights, economic justice and a culture of peace. Students should consider their own behaviour, and that of others, in relation of issues of justice/injustice; right/wrong; rights/obligations; and sustainability/unsustainability; as they engage with issues through values education strategies that pace their moral development. The impact of neoliberalism and associated individualization and financialization (Lapavitsas 2013) should be acknowledged, as once idealistic young people are now more inclined to think only of themselves and to evaluate everything in purely monetary terms. Case studies of individuals and communities who live in ways that reflect Earth Charter principles are clearly desirable.

The *relational dimension* focuses on the social construction of such concepts, as sustainability and citizenship, and requires students to understand that whilst there is widespread acceptance of Earth Charter principles amongst civil society organisations around the world, sustainability and citizenship can be based in other values and interests. They should be introduced to the notion of discourse as:

> a shared way of apprehending the world. Embedded in language, it enables those who subscribe to it to interpret bits of information and put them together into coherent stories or accounts. Each discourse rests on assumptions, judgements, and contentions that provide the basic terms for analysis, debates, agreements and disagreements, in the environmental area no less than elsewhere. (Dryzek 1997, 8)

Media education should enable students to appreciate that discourse pervades the home, classroom and community and shapes their understanding (along with our misunderstanding and ignorance) of global society, globalization, global governance and sustainable development. As far as older secondary/high school students are concerned, they should consider discourses of globalization such as those outlined by Held and McGrew (2002); environmental discourses as outlined by Dryzek (1997); the politics of sustainable development as mapped by Hopwood, Mellor, and O'Brien (2005); and the forms of democracy and sustainability citizenship that might give expression to Earth Charter principles. Links to social movements and school students in other parts of the world, via social media, should enable them to understand how concepts of sustainability and citizenship are changing under the influence of such movements, and how dialogue across space can engender global solidarity.

Finally, the *political dimension* focuses on issues of social and environmental justice first raised when considering ecological footprints. Students should explore issues of the environment and development in ways that reveal structural causes and consider reformist and radical solutions. The ideas and policies of governments, corporations, political parties, NGOs and social movements should be related to the discourses mentioned above, and real or simulated participation in real sustainability issues should be used to further develop the knowledge, skills and values that contribute to sustainable citizenship. Key to such citizenship are issues of global governance and the fact that there is no 'international democratic space', in which global citizens can co-determine more sustainable futures for their communities. Clearly students need to be introduced to the history of international governance (Mazower 2012), governance challenges in the wake of neoliberalism (Calhoun and Derluguian 2011) and the kinds of global democracy that may allow and encourage sustainability citizenship (Held 1996; Monbiot 2003; Smith and Pangsapa 2008).

Harris (2014) reminds us that neoliberal capitalism 'needs the big centralised state to clear its way and enforce its insanities'. Alongside new forms of democratic global governance, students should be introduced to new forms of localism and radical democracy, as being pioneered by social movement such as Occupy (Graeber 2013) and the Transition Movement (Hopkins 2013). Place-based pedagogies (Gruenewald and Smith 2008) thus contribute to the political dimension, allowing students to consider the social and ecological wellbeing of the places they inhabit, and their role in shaping and nurturing their identity.

The role of the UN and UNESCO in supporting global sustainability citizenship education

What prospect is there that the UN through its agency UNESCO, will promote GESC? Answering this question should start by recognizing that the UN General Assembly is an assembly of nation states, not an assembly of the world's citizens. It cannot represent their common interests in sustainable development because the interests of the most powerful states are closely aligned with those of global capital. In addition, the principle of state sovereignty, embedded within such agreements as the Rio Declaration (Elliott 1998), undermines agreement and action on such issues as climate change. Ultimate power lies with the five permanent members of the Security Council for by exercising their veto, they can overrule measures approved by the General Assembly and prevent reform of the UN constitution. Mazower (2012) reviews the changing fortunes of the UN within the recent history of global capitalism, while Park, Conca, and Finger (2008) attribute the failure of the 1992 Rio Earth Summit and its Agenda 21 to inadequate institutional support and economic resources; an improperly focussed vision that overlooked the needs of the poor; and the adoption of a model of development based on the institutionalization of incremental efficiency improvements or ecological modernization that failed to question capitalist industrialization (Park, Conca, and Finger 2008). The Rio+20 Summit in 2012 proved incapable of renewing the global agenda of sustainability politics as the authors of TEWN feared (EuroMemo Group 2013; Monbiot 2012). As a result, politicians and others, including proponents of ESD both within and outside UNESCO, now put increasing faith in the greening of capitalism or the green economy (Brand 2012; UNHLP 2013).

UNESCO is a specialized agency of the UN whose purpose is to contribute to peace and security by promoting international collaboration through education, science and culture in order to further universal respect for justice, the rule of law and human rights along with the fundamental freedom proclaimed in the UN Charter. Learning to Live Together (LTLT) is an ongoing UNESCO-supported educational framework, in which 'citizenship education in the twenty-first century can comfortably anchor itself' (UNESCO Bangkok 2014) that advocates pedagogy to foster, amongst other outcomes, sustainable development, social cohesion and dialogue amongst people. Two related global education initiatives led by UNESCO are Education for International Understanding (EIU) and DESD. Early in the Decade, UNESCO's then Director of the Division for the Promotion of Quality Education wrote an article linking global citizenship to the four key values identified in the DESD implementation scheme (Pigozzi 2006). Given UNESCO's recognition of the overlap of LTLT, EIU and DESD, it is somewhat surprising that global citizenship education has remained somewhat marginal to the literature of the Decade.

UNESCO and UNEP jointly held their first intergovernmental conference on environmental education (EE) in Tbilisi in 1977, which followed an international workshop on EE held in Belgrade, in 1975. Upon (re)reading the Tbilisi declaration and the Belgrade charter, it becomes clear that the language used almost 40 years ago was much more explicit than that associated with DESD, when referring to the global economic and political order and the need for change:

> Policies aimed at maximising economic output without regard to its consequences on society and on the resources available for improving the quality of life must be questioned. (UNESCO-UNEP 1975, 2)

> Environmental education has a role to play in developing a sense of responsibility and solidarity among countries and regions as the foundation for a new international order which will guarantee the conservation and improvement of the environment. (UNESCO-UNEP 1978, 25)

The countries of the South were at that time calling for a new international order, but the US subsequently subverted these calls and used the turn to neoliberalism to impose a new American international economic order using the IMF and structural adjustment in this process (Mazower 2012). With the shift to the right amongst global elites, and the associated attacks on democracy and socially critical education, critical forms of EE and later ESD were marginalised, and the focus increasingly shifted to values, behaviour and lifestyles, rather than power, politics and citizenship. This leads Selby and Kagawa to conclude that ESD is

> the latest and thickest manifestation of the 'closing circle' of policy-driven EE. Characterised by definitional haziness, a tendency to blur rather than lay bare inconsistencies and incompatibilities, and a cosy but ill considered association with the globalization agenda, the field has allowed the neoliberal marketplace worldview into the circle so the mainstream ESD tacitly embraces economic growth and an instrumentalist and managerial view of nature that goes hand in glove with an emphasis on the technical and tangible rather than the axiological and intangible (Selby and Kagawa 2010, 37 [also see Selby and Kagawa 2014]).

Consequently, it is not surprising that we find no references to Tbilisi or to EE in general within the history of ESD presented in the so-called abridged version of the last monitoring and evaluation report of the DESD (UNESCO 2012). Nor is it perhaps surprising that DESD staff excluded comments from some key informants from the final report (Wals 2012) during its editing, on the grounds of obtaining a geographically balanced range of sources. One such comment raised the impact of neoliberalism on government policy:

> No transformative approach has been allowed, just tweaking. Education remains a political ball. It continues to be ad hoc, small scale and without a clear mandate that [ESD] has to happen. Mainstream education won't do it unless they are told they have to. Mainstream education has been habituated to directives from government, so some ESD is under the radar if it is happening. Economic growth continues to dominate everything with little reflection about the values and thinking that got us to where we are today. (Unpublished quote from the UN DESD Global Monitoring Data Set, Key Informant Survey, Sustainable Schools Alliance, United Kingdom)

Analysing DESD products against GESC dimensions

Our argument that UNESCO has trimmed and tamed DESD so that it does not challenge neoliberalism and fails to develop GESC, can best be further advanced by

examining some of its key publications. We have selected four that can be considered to be aimed at teachers in the secondary/high school sector and those concerned with their professional education. We acknowledge that all of these were written or are available in English by authors, whose cultural backgrounds are perhaps too similar, and that ideally we should consider a greater range of more diverse sources. Nevertheless, the evaluation of these publications, against the four dimensions of GESC, raises some important issues.

> The ESD Lens. (UNESCO/Fien and Parker 2010, http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0019/001908/190898e.pdf)

The ESD Lens (ESDL) (Fien and Parker 2010) is a set of 13 review tools to enable policy-makers and practitioners to reorient education, particularly in the formal sector, towards sustainable development. An initiative of the DESD uses the lens metaphor to encourage users to 'look again with new eyes' at current educational provision. The review tools are grouped into four modules (planning and preparing the Lens review; reviewing national policy; reviewing quality learning outcomes; and reviewing practice) and are addressed to a variety of potential users.

The strengths and weaknesses of ESDL can be seen by considering the first two review tools that seek to build a common understanding of ESD and encourage integrative learning. Users are encouraged to view ESD in an integrated context and are provided with a short history of sustainable development together with a list of its sample concepts (UNESCO 2002). Neither the integrated context of ESD, nor the history of sustainable development is adequately related to real-world political economy. Users are given few insights into the structural causes of unsustainable development; the politics of sustainable development; and the contested meanings and significance of such concepts as global equity and justice or democracy and civic participation within different discourses. They are told that 'the industrial revolution introduced a model of growth and development that has led to mass exploitation of resources and degradation of life-support systems' (ibid, 17), and that global challenges 'require a re-orientation of economic thinking and practice and cultural change' (ibid, 18), but nowhere is there mention or analysis of global capitalism, associated forms of global governance or reformist and radical alternatives.

This neglect of the political dimension of ESD is compounded by review tool two. There are brief mentions of global citizenship and the capacity to envision alternatives in the introduction to integrative learning (ibid, 23), but the tool consists largely of a table outlining key curriculum knowledge, skills and attitudes and values under each of the four pillars of sustainable development (society, environment, economy and culture). The problem here is lack of detailed specification. Without further exploration and referencing, what are users to make of such content as: 'how societies work and change' (knowledge of society); 'knowledge of the relationship between environment, society, culture and economy, and its impacts on ecosystems and ecosystem services' (knowledge of environment); or 'different economic models' (knowledge of economy)? There is much in this table, and in other tools, that prompts attention to the ethical, scale and relational dimensions of ESD, but users deserve more realistic guidance on the politics of education and sustainable development and how this can best be accommodated within an ESD that fosters GESC.

> YouthXChange. (Loprieno et al. 2006/UNESCO-UNEP 2008 2nd edition, http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0015/001587/158700e.pdf)

YouthXchange (YXC) (Loprieno et al. 2006; UNESCO-UNEP 2008), is a training kit on sustainable lifestyles, developed by UNESCO and UNEP that encourages young people to reflect on their personal consumption behaviours, assumptions and experiences in ways that enable them to 'analyse global and personal patterns, causes and impacts of consumption and to unfold the ethical dimension of reducing the social and ecological impacts of human productive activities at global and local levels' (Heiss and Marras 2009, 182). It consists of: a website (http://www.youthx change.net/main/home.asp), a training manual translated into 18 languages, a project team and a network of partner organizations around the world. The website provides access to the manual and team and to curriculum resources arranged in nine 'rooms' than span three levels of consumption: individual; friends and family; and the community at large. A further three areas of the website provide utilities to aid learning, opportunities to participate in the project and links to YXC worldwide partners. Page 9 of the manual links YXC to the DESD claims that it is 'at the heart of this UN initiative'.

As regards, the dimension of scale YXC acknowledges that personal consumer decisions have widespread consequences and that the private and public spheres are linked, but it echoes neoliberalism in privileging private/individual actions over public/collective actions. It is stronger on the ethical dimension linking consumer behaviour to issues of social justice; acknowledging that sustainability is a normative notion; and providing rich material for values education. YXC has given attention to learning from and with communities elsewhere in the world (the relational dimension), but its focus on sustainable consumption within prevailing forms of political economy may limit real cross-cultural dialogue on alternative meanings of sustainability and citizenship.

As regards, the political dimension of GESC, YXC fails to link unsustainable consumption to the structures and processes that shape consumer capitalism and deprive many of environmental and social justice. The focus is on the role of the global consumer/citizen in persuading governments, regulatory institutions, NGOs and business to take action (see page 11), but the materials give little attention to barriers to change (the power of economic, political and cultural elites); the limitations of its dominant discourse of ecological modernization (Dryzek 1997; Warner 2010); and the economics and politics of radical alternatives. The social belonging room acknowledges that at 'local and global levels civil society is organising itself and networking to move towards a more tolerant and inclusive world', but the case studies in the 'citizens corner' fail to reflect the real breadth and vitality of global civil society or its record in opposing neoliberalism and urging new forms of consumption, citizenship and global governance (see for example Hopkins 2013; World Social Forum 2013).

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ESD: An expert review of processes and learning. (Tilbury 2011, http://unesdoc.une
sco.org/images/0019/001914/191442e.pdf)

The Expert Review of Processes and Learning (Tilbury 2011), a component of the
UN DESD's monitoring and evaluation scheme seeks clarification on: (a) commonly
accepted learning processes that are aligned with ESD and should be promoted
through ESD activities and (b) ESD and related learning opportunities that
contribute to sustainable development (Tilbury 2011).

From the review it is quite clear that the ethical dimension is rather weak, if not
absent, in most of the documents and cases reviewed. One case refers to 'inter-
generational justice/fairness; intra-generational justice/fairness; and fair relations
between humans and nature' (ibid, 82), but without providing much guidance as to
how to develop such justice/fairness.

With respect to the political dimension, the 13 case studies reviewed suggest 'a
wide range of contributions through ESD to economic, environmental, social
(including cultural) and educational change' (ibid, 9). However, in the documents
and cases reviewed political change does not appear to be emphasized. There are
references to 'empowerment' of change agents, 'capacity-building for economic
change', and, in one case, 'change of government' (ibid, 45), but such references
lack any critical analysis of: why things are the way they are, what keeps them from
changing, what kind of change or transition might be needed, and how to go about
making such change in practice. The report observes that '… increasingly, notions
of building social capital or capacity for "transition" feature prominently in the goals
of ESD programmes. The notion of "transition" considers the need for social
adaptation to address current and future socioeconomic and environmental realities'
(ibid, 45). This will prompt some readers to wonder why social adaptation is the
preferred mode of change, and why there is so much emphasis on personal
empowerment and agency, and so little attention to the power of collectives and
social movements to bring about change.

Box 4.3 on page 47–50 summarizes the key findings of the case study analysis
in terms of the contributions of ESD to economic change which unwillingly perhaps
takes current neoliberal principles and routines for granted, thereby essentially
affirming them. The box reveals an emphasis on improving resource efficiency,
reducing costs, employability and supporting local and regional economies, all of
which can be accommodated within current hegemonic neoliberalist economic mod-
els and principles. The box does identify 'new economic models' as a topic case
studies might allude to, yet only one of the 13 cases reviewed does so: Learning for
Social Entrepreneurship in Egypt (case 5.4). Clearly, even in this case a focus or
belief in financial competitiveness in itself is not challenged, but is rather seen as a
given that can be harmonized with social justice.

Finally, the review does show that many of the case studies seek to link the glo-
bal and the local in terms of how what happens elsewhere affects us, and how what
we do here affects people – mostly people … – elsewhere. But they do not seem to
challenge globalization as a homogenizing force steering humanity towards a singu-
lar perspective on what constitutes well-being (e.g. being a flexible worker, being
food secure, having purchasing power to purchase goods at any time of the day,
anywhere in the world). Instead, as one case illustrates, it is suggested that: '… strat-
egies [are] incorporated … to resist globalization's negative challenges and to take
advantage of its constructive potential to forge models of personal and communal

development based on lifestyles that are peaceful, democratic, and sustainable' (ibid, 87). At the same time the power of localization as illustrated by, for example, the emergence of transition towns seems to remain unnoticed in the documents and cases reviewed.

> Teaching a sustainable lifestyle with the Earth Charter. (Vilela de Araujo et al. 2005, http://www.earthcharter.nl/upload/cms/230_Teachers_guidebook.pdf)

The Earth Charter, first proposed at the Earth Summit in 1992 and launched in 2002 after widespread discussion and debate throughout global civil society, offers 16 principles for building a global society based on respect for nature; universal human rights; economic justice; and a culture of peace (Earth Charter Initiative 2013). Teaching a Sustainable Lifestyle with the Earth Charter (Vilela de Araujo et al. 2005) is a manual for basic education that focuses on dimensions of sustainable development that are not generally well covered in other DESD-related guidance documents: the ethical, spiritual, cultural and political dimensions. On page 5 it is stated that 'In order to achieve sustainable development, we must remember that … economic development does not take environmental impacts, social relationships or democratic processes into consideration.' This suggests there is a tension, if not an incompatibility, between these two developments (capitalist development and sustainable development), whereas most ESD documents appear to suggest that eco-logical modernization or the greening of capitalism can result in a balance between them (i.e. balancing People–Planet–Profit).

The manual appears to be critical of globalization and consumerism and the life-styles they engender. 'Latin American countries have lost some of their identity and roots, because they have underappreciated their own culture. Globalization has nota-bly exacerbated this phenomenon, as it tends to homogenize cultures and generate a loss of cultural identity' (ibid, 24). Becoming critical of globalization is an explicit learning goal, as is an ability to distinguish between development from a 'consumer-istic' point of view and development from a 'sustainable development' perspective, which according to the manual looks toward the future with care and respect and takes responsibility for the wise use of natural resources.

Questions relating to whether students should consider liberal and radical views of social change alongside the reformist and sometimes idealist views reflected in the literature of DESD, are not raised in the manual. Instead, students are invited to start their own organic garden, join a political party or participate in a range of other activities that may contribute to 'sustainable lifestyles'. Avoidance of political econ-omy and real alternatives is further illustrated by a list of easier-said-than-done actions people can take to 'avoid' the problems of climate change: avoid burning vegetation, decrease petroleum use, use clean technology and renewable energy, avoid deforestation, and 'use our cars less, because they produce contaminant gases which increase the greenhouse effect, acid rain and smog. Therefore, the less we use our cars, the healthier our planet' (ibid, 55).

As far as the scale dimension is concerned, the Earth Charter itself acknowledges that 'We are at once citizens of different nations and of one world in which the local and global are linked.' Principle 6c states that we need to 'Ensure that decision-making addresses the cumulative, long-term, indirect, long distance, and global con-sequences of human activities.' In the teaching with the Earth Chart manual, the scale dimension is addressed mainly by introducing Wackernagel's ecological footprint concept. Students are encouraged to explore their own lifestyles using this

concept. The ecological footprint can be seen as a valuable educational tool and as a way into the political dimension of SD, as long as the limitations of the tool are also acknowledged. As Lenzen and Muray (2003) note the tool does, for instance, not reveal where impacts really occur or unveil much about the nature and severity of lifestyle impacts. A critical use of the ecological footprint could unwillingly contribute to a false consciousness engendered by ideology and hegemony, while leaving existing structures of power intact.

Arguable, the Earth Charter itself places much emphasis on the relational dimension. However, the teaching manual to go along with the Earth Charter remains rather vague about how the advocated 'universal responsibility', 'human solidarity' and 'humility regarding the human place in nature' can be developed in practical ways in everyday life. As such the link between ethics and citizenship and guidance in the realization of counter hegemonic values in public life is rather weak.

Beyond DESD

Our analysis of these four products of DESD suggests that it amounted to 'business as usual in the end' as far as challenging neoliberalism and encouraging GESC are concerned. Given this weakness, what is the way forward? Firstly, we should acknowledge the potential for greater synergy between UNESCO's international education initiatives and the prospect that such events as the forum on global citizenship education, held in Bangkok in December 2013, may lead to GESC being given a stronger profile within UNESCO's advocacy and promotion of ESD. Those readers with influence within UNESCO may be able to advance this agenda. Latin-America was strongly represented in the working group that wrote TEWN and it is here, where the dual power of social movements and progressive political parties is pioneering new forms of sustainability citizenship (Guardiola-Rivera 2010) that we should perhaps look for inspiration and guidance on ecopedagogy and GESC.

Secondly we should acknowledge that while there are signs of recovery in the world economy, analysts predict 'a larger scale version of an Occupy Wall Street type movement will begin by the end of 2014' (Thibodeau 2013) largely because machines are replacing middle-class workers in high cost, specialized jobs, and the young are becoming a 'jilted generation' denied the jobs, housing and pensions their parents took for granted (Howker and Malik 2013). Protest continues to 'kick off' around the world (Mason 2013) and ESD can assist the transition from neoliberalism by giving the voices of protest a considered hearing within our curriculum and pedagogy. This will involve defending GESC and 'civic pedagogy' against those who continue to promote a neoliberal version of global citizenship education (Shultz 2007).

Thirdly, we should draw strength from a socially critical tradition in EE and ESD that continues to develop ecopedagogy using new insights provided by social theorists such as Harvey (2010), Castells (2012) and Wright (2010). Ultimately, global sustainability requires a directly elected world parliament that can hold international powers to account; give global citizens and opportunity to influence decisions; and accelerate the realization of Earth Charter principles (Monbiot 2003). There is much that GESC and a reformulated ESD might do to hasten its arrival.

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