



**Rethinking Development in an
Age of Scarcity and Uncertainty**
New Values, Voices and Alliances
for Increased Resilience



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**Reflexive Approaches to Development Education:
'Knowledge Based Advocacy'**

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Abstract

This paper relates to current concerns in Development Education (DE) around the nature of public understanding and engagement with global justice issues in the UK, beyond the increase in public awareness. It relates enthusiasm and activism to the (revision of) prevailing worldview of the learner and examines approaches and processes to knowledge and learning that enable the active involvement of the learner in both processes. The paper has its origins in a doctorate thesis in which I apply Social Learning theories in building a conceptual link between formal educational approaches to DE and NGDO advocacy as a practice domain for Social Learning. It develops a concept of knowledge based advocacy framed on nongovernmental development organisation (NGDO) advocacy activity as domains for generating new knowledge, a space for making meaning and building alliances for social action.

Wenger's Communities of practice and Mezirow's Transformative Learning are applied as a hybrid theory in exploring NGDO advocacy as virtual practice communities and domains for pluralism in knowledge and learning that enable self reflection and the transformation of learner's worldview. Knowledge based advocacy (KBA) refers to the knowledge constructed through the interaction of learners in negotiating meanings from NGDO advocacy activity. It supports learners to become more involved in the knowledge process and the ownership of the agenda for social change. The concept is linked to new modes of research based NGDO advocacy and interactive internet spaces for public awareness and action. Knowledge based advocacy as a concept responds to; the new demands of a knowledge society (where different sources of knowledge is accommodated), the current gap between learning and action and the gap between theory and policy discourses. It is therefore concerned with exploring opportunities that provide greater space for the synthesis of different levels of DE discourses, where knowledge for education and advocacy is co constructed from the diverse locations of learners rather than the values of NGDO.

The paper highlights the importance of interrogating the values that define current NGDO educational activity, in particular- 'how NGOs know?' 'What values informs the content of knowledge and who is involved?' This is with a view of improving the practices of NGOs as knowledge and learning domains. The paper also relates knowledge pluralism to notions of 'cognitive justice' on the need for an 'integrative paradigm shift' from knowledge hierarchies to knowledge circles that privilege other (southern) voices and the flourishing of diverse forms of knowledge.

Background

There has been growing concern on the impact of Development education and awareness raising (DEAR) programmes within OECD countries, particularly around the nature of public engagement and level of understanding of global justice issues. This conference is itself an example of the continuing efforts within the European DEAR framework to explore ways of increasing public enthusiasm and activism on global development challenge as well as proffer inclusive approaches to knowledge and learning. This paper therefore concerns approaches to DE that enable the active involvement of the learner in the process of knowledge construction and meaning making. It examines the challenges in current approaches to learning in the field of global Development and citizenship education in providing the space and competence for learner activism beyond an increase in public awareness.

The paper has its origins in an ongoing doctorate thesis in which I explore conceptual links between theories of social learning, approaches to formal educational in DE and activism/NGDO advocacy in developing a plural and participatory learning environment. The thesis develops a concept of knowledge based advocacy framed on nongovernmental development organisation (NGDO) advocacy as a domain for generating new knowledge and a space for reflexivity in negotiating meaning through critical reflections and shared encounters with lived experience. The doctoral thesis proceeds from an analysis of intellectual discourses of DE theory and practice in providing the basis for applying theories of social learning. The scope of this paper is however limited to analysing how theories of social learning help in understanding NGDO advocacy as a knowledge domain and a description of the hybrid theory adopted in developing the concept of knowledge based advocacy (KBA) as a framework for learning that deepens public understanding and engagement with global justice issues.

Introduction

The paper starts with an overview on how current approaches to DE knowledge and learning are defined by dominant knowledge hierarchies and 'expert' institutions, where knowledge is constructed from a 'single northern' perspective and compressed into units of educational activity removed from lived experience. It also describes how current forms of awareness raising campaigns in non formal settings are predetermined within the silos of dominant 'knowing' platforms with marginal input from the learner in negotiating meanings. The paper outlines the potentials of advocacy in framing values and perceptions, while noting the nuanced distinction between campaigning and advocacy in social learning. The paper poses critical questions around approaches to learning which allows for the integration of formal and non formal learning that enable the 'knower' participate in the construction of knowledge.

The paper proposes knowledge based advocacy as a framework for the plural construction of knowledge, where encounters with new knowledge affords the learner a deeper understanding in motivating action on injustices in current forms of global interdependence. In this paper, I have chosen to open the boundaries in my analysis, beyond its original limitations in the doctoral research to UK and Ireland to include a European dimension through the work of the DEEEP (Developing European Engagement for the Eradication of global Poverty) . The paper concludes by arguing for the conceptualisation of DE as a 'system of knowledge' (knowledge in activity) than the current attempts to present it as a 'body of knowledge'.

'Dominant knowledge sources' and the constrain of a single perspective

Although the debate around how knowledge is generated in Development education (DE) has been an area of interest in academic discourse for over a decade now, it has only received superficial attention in praxis. Stephen Arnold's 1987 article on the constraints of UK nongovernmental development organisation (NGDO) and DE was seminal in stimulating further academic debates that examine how knowledge in development education was dominated by well established NGOs such as Oxfam and CAFOD¹. NGDOs in the UK have worked in concert with 'northern' educational structures in defining and producing the knowledge used in both formal and non formal arenas of development education (DE)². Arnold also noted the contradictions and tension between NGDO educational and

¹ Arnold, S.(1987) Constrained crusaders: NGOs and DE in the UK, occasional paper, IOE, University of London

² McCollum, A. (1996)

charity fundraising agendas as an indication of the need to reflect on the processes of knowledge produced within the silos of conflicting internal goals. With the introduction of DE in the UK national curriculum in 1997, the debates began to shift towards examining the practices of UK NGOs in knowledge generation around the values and goals that informed knowledge production.³

Smith highlighted the importance of understanding how DE is generated at micro level and argued the need to interrogate the way meaning was negotiated that reflect the perspective of the learner⁴. Recognising the perspective of the learner in the knowledge and learning process implied the location of DE in the epistemology of social constructivism, where knowledge is conceived as co-constructed from multiple sources. Within this formulation therefore, learning is perceived as deriving from social encounters with lived experience. Learning is also seen as distinct from education, with the former crossing new frontiers in its accommodation of diverse cultural readings.

Venessa Andreotti's post colonial critique of DE knowledge process was important in questioning the dominance of northern knowledge systems. It went further to interrogate the way the Global South was portrayed in DE educational materials, particularly the Universalist interpretation of development process in the global south⁵. The post colonial critique also highlighted the contradictions in current forms of knowledge generation within DE when measured against the wider values of its ultimate objective. The ideas of 'plural epistemology' (multiple perspectives) outlined by Andreotti emphasised the centrality of negotiated meanings as a key feature of learning in the 21 century knowledge society⁶. These analyses converge with Catherine Hoppers proposition for 'cognitive justice', a concept that proposes 'knowledge circles' as an alternative to 'knowledge hierarchies'. Of particular relevance to social theories of learning explored in this paper is Freire's work in adult learning that recognise the importance of prior experience and the dialectics of political, social and cultural contexts in making meaning. The conceptualisation of the process of 'learning' as distinct from 'education' is best captured in Freire's work which describes education as 'the narrative character of teacher- learner relationship', where students are fed with narratives detached from real life experience⁷. Freire's challenge of traditional didactic approach to education that privilege dominant sources of knowledge raised questions on the role of education in increasing the critical consciousness of the learner and capacity to motivate social action.

As noted earlier, the issue of dominant knowledge is not confined to formal education but also in the non formal campaigning and advocacy activities aimed at raising awareness on global inequalities. These strategies are usually viewed by funders as adopting prescriptive approaches where actors and learners are given little opportunity for reflective discourse in making their own choices or decisions on 'how to know', 'what to do' and when to do. There is also a growing debate on the extent to which traditional education provide the learner the competence of critical reflection and the dangers of getting trapped in a non transitive state of worldview, where learners accumulate knowledge but remain inactive, detached and disengaged. This has consequences for both the ownership of activism and sustained actor enthusiasm on global development issues. There is therefore a need in DE to adopt approaches to knowledge and learning that provide the space for the learner to be more involved in meaning making and constructing the knowledge they

³ Hillhorst (2003:6); Mosse,(2005) cited in Matt Smith 2004

⁴ Smith, M.(2004:pp5-6)

⁵ Andreotti, (2006a)

⁶ (Andreotti, 2008:54).

⁷ Freire (1970a:52)

need to experience a revision or transformation of worldview. This is even more important today when put in the context of user driven learning technologies available to the learner in self directed 'knowing'. The question then is, what approaches to learning provide the space for learners to be actively involved in the knowledge and learning process that also enables the interface of the formal and non formal learning DE arenas?

Social Learning, Critical Pedagogy and Education for Sustainable Development

This paper propose social theories of learning as the approach to knowledge and learning that offers the learner wider space to actively participate in the process of 'knowing' and the opportunity to reflect on their worldviews. The term 'Social Learning' conceals the wide diversity in its interpretation and approach, as Social Learning can be applied in a range of contexts such as learning in formal and informal settings⁸. Within the scope of this paper however, social learning is examined in the context of human learning that takes place in a setting where diverse interest, norms, values and constructions of reality intersect⁹. Social Learning has also been defined as 'learning that occurs in groups, communities, networks and social systems that operate in new, unexpected, uncertain and unpredictable circumstances linked to social action'¹⁰. The ecological sustainability perspective to Social Learning as outlined by O'Riordan (1995:4) and Woodhill (2002:323 in Wals) also propose Social Learning as 'a process by which society democratically adapts its core institutions to cope with human society and ecological change in ways that will optimise the collective well-being of current and future generation'¹¹. These definitions relate with the notions of diversity in knowledge sources and have their origin in the UNESCO education for sustainable development (ESD) which accords recognition to indigenous forms of knowledge and learning that are experiential and problem solving.¹²

The social theories explored in this paper are Wenger's social theory of learning which he calls Communities of Practice and Mezirow's Transformative theory. Although these theories have been developed and practiced in the United States of America since the early 1980s, they relate with European traditions of Ecological sustainability which has its origin in the UNSECO education for sustainable development. This approach to learning lays emphasis on participation, reflection, negotiation and action as mechanisms for learning for sustainable development¹³. It is important to note the distinction between the social theory of learning explored in this research and that inaugurated by Albert Bandura. While Bandura's social theory is based on observational learning, Etienne Wenger's social theory of learning relates learning to social participation. Wenger's social theory of learning relates learning to social practice which refers to an "encompassing process of active participation in the practices of social communities and the identities constructed in that process"¹⁴. The Ecological worldview paradigm relates to the conscious identification of ecological sustainability as leading towards greater understanding of global connectivity and the need for integrated action. The converging concepts of interaction, participation and negotiation relate the

⁸ Glasser, (2007) in Arjen

⁹ Arjen Wals, (2007:p8)., Social Learning: Toward a More Sustainable World, The Netherlands, pp. 35-61.

¹⁰ Wildemeersch (1995:33).

¹¹ (Wals, 2007:38).

¹² (www.UNESCO.org/education/tlsf/) published 2006

¹³ (Loeber, Van Mierlo et al,2007 cited in Glasser, 2007;)

¹⁴ (Wenger as cited in Illeris, 2009: 210)

Ecological paradigm to the theory of social learning. The ecological worldview has also been described as a 'living system' and a theory in practice grounded in ecological sustainability.¹⁵

Social theories of learning have strong resonance with the philosophy of critical pedagogy, an educational concept that promote practices in teaching and learning aimed at raising the consciousness of the learner around unjust social conditions¹⁶. Critical pedagogy is also particularly concerned with reconfiguring the traditional teacher/student relationship where the teacher is the active transmitter of knowledge and the student, a passive recipient. The rejection in critical pedagogy of notions of the 'expert teacher' and grand narratives also relate with social theories of learning. Freire's traditions of education as self liberation further explain critical pedagogy as an educational journey in which the learner undergoes a perspective transformation of worldview from 'false consciousness' to a state of 'critical transitivity' characterised by depth in 'interpretation of problems and openness to revision.'¹⁷ More recently, critical pedagogy has been applied in engaging the inequalities inherent in globalisation as well as the discourses on learning, participation and social change. The Ecological paradigm relates to the conscious identification with ecological sustainability as leading towards greater understanding of global connectivity and need for integrative action that aligns with the principles and practices of social learning. Perhaps more instructive is the converging concepts of interaction, participation and negotiation Glasser mentioned as fundamental to the process of social learning. The ecological worldview has also been described as a 'living system', a theory in practice framed on the intentional identification of ecology as 'an ontological dimension' of perceiving social action¹⁸.

While Communities of Practice (CoP) relate with the Ecological sustainability analysis, it focuses more on the environment of learning that accommodates different categories of learners and assumes that such participation influence and is influenced by what we do, our identity and how we interpret what we know (ibid). There are also converging concepts in these theories that enable a better understanding of social learning as a theory in action. Some of these concepts include for examples, frames of reference, meaning schemes, perspective transformation and disorienting dilemma. The first two refers to the way we make meaning and the last two refers to encounters that influence or trigger a revision in worldview¹⁹. CoP is framed on three integrating components Wenger proposed as necessary to qualify a domain as a learning community of practice. These components consist: a *Domain*; an area of shared enquiry and shared interest, *Community*; a network of people with shared belonging and *Practice*; a knowledge repertoire -tools, stories, documents, shared experience. The interface of these components enables the construction of new knowledge and the negotiation of meanings in which participation results in recognisable competence. 'Communities of Practice' (CoP) is situated between learning theories that give primacy to social structures and the agency of everyday lived experience²⁰. CoP therefore enables practitioners 'take collective responsibility for managing the knowledge they need' but also emphasising the role of a mentor (ibid). This theory extends the concept of Social practice to virtual communities on the internet in negotiating meanings and developing social capital for an active civil society. CoP also puts individual learning firmly in the

¹⁵ Sterling, 2007:67).

¹⁶ (Giroux, 1994:30)

¹⁷ Freire, 1970:60-62; 1974b:14).

¹⁸ Sterling, 2007:67

¹⁹ Mezirow,(2008) and Wenger

²⁰ (Wenger 1998:13)

domain of social practice, emphasising the centrality of interaction and social participation between people with a common interest and diverse experience.²¹

Mezirow's theory of Transformative learning on the other hand has influences of Freire's conscientisation. Transformative learning is used here to address aspects pertaining to individual dispositions in the learning processes²². The interrogation of one's own tacit assumptions and those of others is, according to Mezirow, an important mode of making meaning (ibid). Much of the guiding principles of transformative learning that optimize conditions for independent learning converge with social constructivism where learners negotiate meaning. Transformative learning therefore has epistemological implications for the concept of KBA in its proposition of the optimal conditions for learning to include 'presence of the other' the tension between prior and new knowledge and a mentoring community which relates to CoP.²³ Within this proposition therefore, Mezirow transformative learning can be understood as the process of 'using prior interpretation to construe a new or revised interpretation of one's experience' in constructing new knowledge²⁴.

The connection is made between key elements of advocacy such as solidarity, empathy, alliances, applied research and Mezirow's concept of participation, meaning schemes, frame of reference and perspective transformation. This link is examined in understanding NGDO advocacy knowledge processes as social practice and a space learners encounter 'disorienting dilemma', the phenomenal personal experience Mezirow attributes to trigger perspective transformation in individuals. Mezirow's definition of the theory of Transformative learning as 'a metacognitive process by which mind sets and assumptions are reassessed and transformed to be reflective and more inclusive'²⁵ provides the framework and the starting point for engaging and applying the theory to this research. While Wenger's social practice explains the learning process in quite a different way to Mezirow's transformative learning, the point of intersection is the assumption that learners come with prior experience and the emphasis on a knowledge driven iterative process of re-learning through participation and the link between the concept of 'reification' in communities of practice and Mezirow's 'perspective transformation'²⁶.

STLT²⁷ Hybrid theory: reflexive pedagogy

Wenger's communities of practice and Mezirow's transformative learning, both tend to share complementarities that converge around 'social participation', 'interaction' and 'accurate information' as foundation for knowledge. The table below shows an ideal profile of the unique but mutually complementary elements and values both theories share as a hybrid theory that enable the generation of knowledge from below and the exposure of the learner to new and diverse knowledge sources. The distance between the two learning theories is arguably in the dimension of process, where Wenger focused on learning linked to social practice and Mezirow on the individuality and unique experience of each learner as member of a practice community.

²¹ (www.ewenger.com/theory)

²² Mezirow, pp. 91-92 in Illeris)

²³ Mezirow, 2000)

²⁴ (Mezirow, 2000:5)

²⁵ (Mezirow, 2009:103)

²⁶ Wenger, (1998:88)*Wenger describes Reification as a source of remembering and forgetting which yields to a memory imprint that compels us to renegotiate the meaning (Wenger, 1998).It relates with Mezirow's 'frame of reference'

²⁷ STLT: Social and transformative learning theory

Table 1 below shows complementing values and converging concepts between CoP and Transformative learning theory that explain how one theory supports the other in terms of process and objective. Notable are the assumptions of the prior experience that each learner brings to reflective discourse and the presence of ‘otherness’

Hybrid theory: Complementarities in processes and conditions for learning: Table1

Transformative learning Epistemological dimension	Communities of practice Ontological dimension
Reflective discourse, dialogue Voice for full participation Emotional maturity and empathy Multiple perspectives /openness Free from coercion Ability to assess objectively/maturity Self directed learning Disorienting dilemma Meaning schemes and frames of reference Technology of the self Accurate information for meaning making Questioning /challenging dominant ideologies lifelong learning Presence of the other Mentoring community	Negotiation, mutual engagement Participation as practice Solidarity/alliance, shared goals Diverse communities of practice Voluntary membership of practice community Ability to negotiate new meanings Self identity /identity (re)formation Discontinuity and continuity Reification Lifelong learning Understanding distributive function of power Strategic relevance of enquiry domain Interface of formal and informal structures Accurate information as foundation for knowledge

After Mezirow, 2000 pp.3-13; Welch, 1990; Wenger, 1998 pp.226-227

Communities of Practice relates with the assumption in ‘knowledge based advocacy’ (KBA) as a practice domain, a centre for knowledge triangulation and a converging point for global alliances that provide access to resources for enhanced participation. It also expose learners to learning trajectories they can identify with, one that increases the incentive to know and the competency to act on transformed perspective (Wenger,1998 p.10).²⁸

Ecological sustainability arguably offers a more sophisticated analysis of social learning at both a conceptual and practical level in its classification of social learning under two broad categories of Passive and Active learning. These categories expose the diversity and nuanced distinction between spheres, levels and approaches to social learning. Glasser provides useful insights to the salient dimensions of social learning in his two schema analysis of Passive and Active social learning. He linked Passive social learning to cognitive learning on existing knowledge not requiring negotiated input from the knower²⁹. Passive social learning is uncritical and embraces the values and encoded assumptions in the knowledge transferred. Active learning on the other hand refers to a dialogical and conscious interactive process between the knower and the more knowledgeable other and questions existing assumptions. In terms of qualitative output and competency, active learning differs from passive learning in that the former supports multiple loop learning in its interrogation of

²⁸ Wenger and Jean Lave inaugurated the apprenticeship model where the concept of legitimate peripheral participation was conceived. The apprenticeship depicted the student/mentor master/novice relationship to one of acquired competency and a transformation in practice (Wenger, 1998).

²⁹ Glasser 2007:49-52

existing assumptions beyond the expansion of knowledge.³⁰ Glasser described co learning as supporting change in three fundamental areas of- critical engagement with existing knowledge, knowledge generation and the application of new knowledge to policy and everyday life³¹. These discourses prompt the need to examine the position of the learner in current approaches to UK global development education in relation to knowledge generation. An initial interpretation would be that while DE approaches relate with active social learning, its current practices falls in non hierarchical learning where encoded assumptions are only partially questioned and limited to an 'awareness of the issues'.

The literature on Ecological sustainability perspective to social learning places significant importance on the domain in which learning occurs with epistemological implications for how knowledge is constructed and how this process may enable the transformation of worldviews. It also has implications for how learners may act in alliance to bring about change through action and discourse practice. The principal elements of critical reflection and participatory reification in both theories aim at a transformation in the perspective of the learner that relate to competencies for independent action³².

Whereas communities of practice address the needs of those in a practicing community such as members of advocacy groups, transformative learning provides for the individuality of learners and has stronger elements of cognitive learning³³. The similarity in the core concepts of these theories indicates a convergence in the grounding of both theories in the epistemology of social constructivism, with CoP as the environment for interaction and transformative theory as the process of interrogating individual assumptions. The hybrid of Wenger's Communities of practice³⁴ and Mezirow's transformative learning theory provide a unique theoretical basis for exploring NGDO advocacy websites as a domain for plural knowledge and learning that enable self reflection and transformation of learner's worldview³⁵.

Links with indigenous (non western) learning theories

Merriam et al (2008) enquiry into non western learning theories provides important insights into the link between social learning theories examined here and diverse modes of learning in non western societies that usually occur in non- formal settings. This link is uniquely important to KBA in two ways, first, the accommodation of other sources of knowledge and secondly, the link made with Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) approaches to learning. According to Merriam, non western theories recognise that learning is more than formal schooling and knowledge more than abstract cognition³⁶. She identified communal, informal and holistic learning as the three most researched non western learning theories and argued they collectively emphasise experience, solidarity, interaction and collective communal goal setting. Although non western theories do not offer a cohesive body of theory, they offer a system of knowledge that find philosophical expressions in Freirean traditions of learning framed on lived experience.

³⁰ (Argyris and Schon, 1996)

³¹ Glasser(2007:51)

³² (Wenger, 1998:pp12-13; Mezirow, 2000; 1991

³³ (Mezirow, 2009:92 in Illeris)

³⁴ (www.ewenger.com/theory/)

³⁵ Mezirow, J and Associates (2000)

³⁶ Merriam et al, (2008)

Within the framing of KBA however, Freire's work is important in the privilege it gives solidarity. The concept of solidarity is therefore examined within the context of the strategic shift in approaches to development advocacy linked to social learning and knowledge construction. Solidarity is therefore engaged here as an adjective and a verb in order to explore its strategic meanings and influence on development education in a multicultural setting and within the context of Black and minority ethnic and Latin America Solidarity movements in the UK and Ireland³⁷. This supports the proposition that social learning in its various forms relate with knowledge processes in diverse global societies where dominant ideas can be subjected to revision by new knowledge and re-negotiated meanings. A major criticism of non western theories of learning is that they are difficult to assess in western educational context. However, there is also an increasing recognition within educational discourse that learning also occurs outside formal setting and that approaches such as drama and storytelling help the social learner move from a cognitive understanding to a consciousness of lived experience.³⁸ There is a relationship between these approaches and Freire's critique of the abstract and detached nature of formal education from lived experience in which he argued that learning should be seen as covering beyond traditional education to social and societal dimensions³⁹.

NGDO Advocacy and social action

This paper adopts a definition of NGDO as formal, independent non profit organisations that operate at national /international level for the purpose of the welfare of disadvantaged communities, education or environmental advocacy⁴⁰. I have also adopted the term nongovernmental development organisation (NGDO) in the research to reflect a specific category of NGOs engaged in development advocacy activity. In applying this definition therefore, grass root and single issue based NGOs are included only to the extent that they constitute a network organisation for the former. These categories of NGDO would have the potential to influence corporations, government and the media and have over the years increasingly gained relevance in national and international decision making processes such as accredited status in policy related conferences and regional/ global summits⁴¹. It is also recognised that NGDOs exist in a variety of sizes, nature and scope and therefore, cannot be treated as a homogenous group.⁴² This paper examines in a normative way, the concept of 'NGDO advocacy' as a single concept than the very broad field of development NGDO and the concept of advocacy work for two reasons. Firstly, the limited scope of this paper does not permit a detailed analysis of the complex and contested issue of NGDOs and advocacy as social practice. Secondly, is the distinction the paper makes between campaigning and new modes of advocacy explored for the KBA concept. NGDO advocacy activities are generally identified as falling under three broad frameworks; the provision of service (welfare), education and engaging in policy advocacy⁴³. This paper is mainly concerned with the last two functions:- education (practices around knowledge production) and use of evidential knowledge in advocating social change.

³⁷ Solidarity is understood in the work of Latin America development education in Ireland as alliance, empathy and support for a socially just cause' (Merriam and Kim Sek 2008 pp.71-81).

³⁸ Barret, 2005

³⁹ Illeris, 2009; Freire, 1970 pp 52-62

⁴⁰ Stromquist, 1998; Brown and Moore2001; Martens, 2001)

⁴¹ Jordan and Van Tuiji 2000:2051

⁴² Ginsburg, 1998:1 cited in Tilt, 2008).

⁴³ Ibid cited in Tilt, 2008:4

Advocacy emerged as a tool for development awareness from the strategic shift in NGDO focus from a charity orientation to a philosophy of conscientization in challenging the root causes of global inequality.⁴⁴ Rugendyke suggestion that the realisation that ‘humanitarian charity projects will not of themselves bring about sustainable change in the structures that perpetuate poverty and injustice’ served as a major catalyst in the escalation of NGO advocacy from the late 1980s.⁴⁵ This supports the conceptualisation of advocacy as a means by which communities express choice, share information/knowledge and negotiate meanings for strategic policy level influence. By the 1990s NGO advocacy programmes aimed at directly influencing mainstream public policy on global development and societal learning had emerged as a global phenomenon⁴⁶. The thinking among NGOs was that effort to change the policy environment should be informed by a resolve to achieve tangible improvement in the lives of those in poverty⁴⁷.

This thinking converged with other local and international factors that led to emergence of development education as an NGDO strategic approach to increasing public awareness on development⁴⁸. In the earlier stage however, such educational strategies appeared only partially linked with advocacy as a joined up systematic approach to action learning on development issues. This gap between advocacy and educational approaches was further widened by official funding policy guidelines which critiqued the absence of an educational principle (pedagogical approach) to advocacy⁴⁹. This arguably detached the ‘knowledge’ from solidarity, the collective action platform of DE and an important domain for learners to contribute in the knowledge system in building skills and competencies for social action. In developing the concept of knowledge based advocacy (KBA), this paper makes a distinction between two ideal type categories of advocacy work identified by Advocacy resource exchange (ARX), a UK based advocacy research and training organisation as, ‘Systems advocacy’ and ‘Policy issue advocacy’ or Case work Advocacy⁵⁰. These ideal types relate to the scope and strategies adopted in advocacy work. The ‘System advocacy’ would involve more long term strategic action targeted at broad social changes usually across geographical boundaries, while the later relate to more local issues pursued within the remit of a given polity.

In spite of these distinctions, there is tacit congruence of purpose and reciprocity in learning loops between the two levels of advocacy as social issues would usually manifest a local to global dimension. Both forms of advocacy are complementary and a means to redressing power imbalances between social settings and a process of ‘using information strategically to change policies that affect lives of disadvantaged people⁵¹. Campaigning like lobbying is a subset of advocacy and constitutes a mode of strategic action in both levels of advocacy. However, campaigning can be argued to have potentially differentiated and uncertain impact in terms of learning and where actors are not involved in the knowledge that informs a specific campaign. Like 2005 ‘Make Poverty History’ campaign which is considered one of the most successful in awareness raising on aid, debt relief and trade in the UK for example, the sustained impact on public enthusiasm has remained questionable if not unclear. Unlike advocacy built on sustained solidarity, Campaigns tend to remain epochs in the

⁴⁴ Eade, D (2002) ‘Preface’, in D. Eade (ed), Development and Advocacy, Oxford: Oxfam

⁴⁵ Rugendyke, B (2007:7-8)

⁴⁶ Eade, 2002; Gish et al 2005; Musaka et al 2005)

⁴⁷ McCollum, 1996; Smith, 2004

⁴⁸ Arnold, 1987

⁴⁹ www.irish.gov.ie/grants

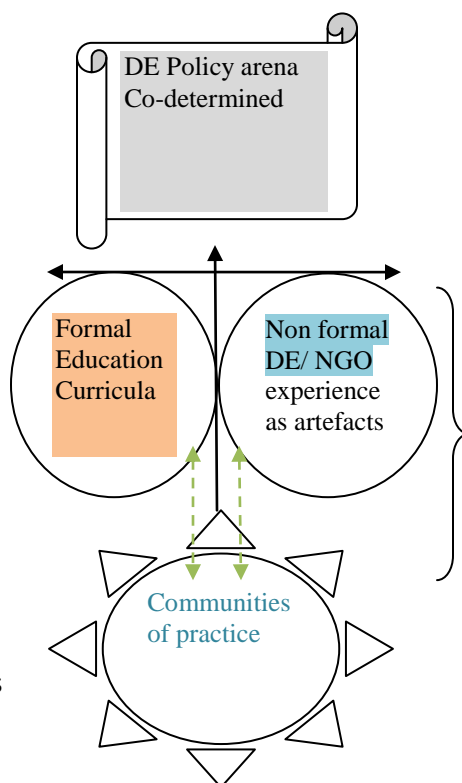
⁵⁰ (Advocacy in action 2003). www.cid.org.nz/training/advocacy.pdf

⁵¹ (<http://www.advocacyresource.org.uk/>).

vanguard for social change. However, there is increasing use of NGDO advocacy in Australia and New Zealand for example, to influence policy change through dialogue and public tours where evidential knowledge is used to lobby broad social policy changes on disadvantaged communities⁵². Still, there remains the challenge for NGDO to improve their practices around learner and actor participation in knowledge construction that improve ownership and internalisation of knowledge gained in sustaining public enthusiasm. The defining characteristics of the two Advocacy approaches are central in understanding the application of social and transformative learning theories proposed in Knowledge based advocacy and provides the basis for identifying System advocacy as the ideal type practice that support NGDO as a learning domain and an interactive space for knowledge construction.

Knowledge based advocacy (KBA)

KBA refers to the knowledge co-constructed through the interaction of learners in negotiating meanings. It is knowledge which acquisition deepens learners understanding of lived experience of the 'other'. KBA is a learning environment that explores how learners can become more involved in the knowledge process and in the ownership of the agenda for social change. The concept is linked to new modes of evidence based NGDO advocacy activity and interactive internet spaces that enable learners to participate in knowledge construction as well as a synthesis of different levels of DE discourses. The conceptual diagram below offers an initial conceptualisation of the synergy of formal and non- formal learning and the synthesis of the multiple discourse arenas that lend to a system of knowledge in DE. It also illustrates the complex interface of discourses between practice domains and the formal and non-formal arenas of DE.



Axis of dialectical Discourse and policy Synthesis

Fig1

KBA discourse scale

The confluence of Social and transformative theories

⁵² Wateraid (2003:48)

As represented in the conceptual diagram figure 1, the two sectors in circles show formal education that support reflection and non-formal learning supporting action framed on solidarity. The horizontal arrow that runs across the two sectors indicate the ideal intersection between formal and the non formal learning domains and the resulting open spaces for interrogation and expansion of meanings. The vertical arrow shows the reflexive flow of values, experience and enquiry from practicing communities to institutional structures in formal and non-formal settings.

The KBA framework highlights the importance of interrogating the values that define NGDO educational activities, in particular- 'how NGDOs know?' 'What values inform the content of knowledge and who is involved?' with a view of improving the practices of NGDOs as knowledge and learning domains. It also relates knowledge pluralism to notions of 'cognitive justice' proposed by Hoppers on the need for a fundamental 'integrative paradigm shift' from knowledge hierarchies to knowledge circles that privilege other (southern) voices and the flourishing of diverse forms of knowledge.⁵³ KBA is therefore a response to the changing profile of the 21st Century learner and the need in DE to recognise and adjust to the needs of a knowledge society⁵⁴. It can indeed be argued that Freire's critical pedagogy may also have been influenced by non western traditions of learning which are indigenous, having socially evolved outside western intellectual influences and practiced over time among societies in Africa, Asia, Latin America and indigenous tribes of North America . This supports the argument that social learning in its various forms relate with knowledge processes in diverse global societies where dominant ideas can be subjected to revision by new knowledge and re-negotiated meanings. It is however important to acknowledge the weaknesses of current NGDO advocacy practices as knowledge domains, especially where the content and nature of knowledge is defined by the values of a single epistemological narrative. KBA provides the opportunity to achieve cognitive justice as a basic principle of knowledge generation in DE and a means to leverage the voices of societies excluded from dominant processes of knowledge production and centres of global resource allocation.

Knowledge based advocacy as domain for global meanings

As sated earlier, the concept of knowledge based advocacy is linked to new modes of development NGO advocacy publications and interactive internet spaces aimed at raising public awareness, enhancing knowledge and a framework for discourse synthesis between policy and praxis of DE. Forms of advocacy that involve knowledge exchange and access to policy discourse arenas have evolved in countries like Australia, New Zealand and the Philippines where some organisations are adopting more discursive approaches to engaging policy structures⁵⁵. The Centre for international development New Zealand (CID) (Resource kit 2003, see <http://www.cid.org.nz/>) has also promoted similar ideas adopted by the Global women in politics and Wateraid. The concept of KBA proposed in this paper is therefore framed around the peculiar features of System/Citizenship advocacy which works from the principle of evidence based knowledge. System advocacy lays a great emphasis on the promotion of new values, knowledge processes, broad based alliance, perspective change and altruism⁵⁶.

⁵³ Hoppers, C. (2008:8) *Lifelong learning in Africa: Lessons, Experiences and opportunities from Cultural and cognitive justice* for presentation at UNESCO 21st Century on lifelong learning for all 2008 FOR/2008/SP/2

⁵⁴ Gilbert, 2005; Andreotti, 2010

⁵⁵ (Rugendyke, 2007

⁵⁶ BOND, 1999; 1973; Wateraid, 2003

The basis for its application to DE rests in the number of development NGOs in the UK and Ireland such as Oxfam, People and Planet, and Trocaire that engage in development communication. These organisations maintain advocacy and interactive blogs in their websites where researched publications on development issues such as debt crisis, unfair trade, bio fuel farming, food security and other issues of global injustices can be accessed by 'global learners'. Knowledge based advocacy (KBA) as a concept attempts to respond to; new demands of the knowledge society where learners learn from diverse sources, the current gap between learning and action as well as the distance between learned competencies and policy discourses. It is therefore concerned with exploring opportunities that provide greater space for reflective discourse and approaches to DE and global learning (GL) where knowledge in activity is co constructed with the active participation of the learner than knowledge produced on NGOs values and perspective. The concept of KBA also draws currency from the visibility, influence and activity of advocacy NGOs in major UN conferences, parliamentary studies and international enquiries.⁵⁷

As outlined above, this paper attempts to build a theoretical link between transformative learning and the systematic use of research dissemination by NGO advocacy as a mode of social learning and intervention referred here as knowledge based advocacy. It also relates with new approaches to advocacy where innovative shifts from campaign and lobbying to community and parliamentary awareness tour groups in communicating research to policy makers on practical development issues⁵⁸. KBA is framed on the way evidence has been built into advocacy work and the manner in which knowledge from participatory research is disseminated and diffused through social interactive network forums as internet social networks.

The major contribution of the KBA framework is in making the link between learning, knowledge and social action. The first link between knowledge and learning is important in that the learner is allowed to decide what knowledge they need to fulfil their motivation to learn. It also inspires the learner to seek new knowledge by trying to make meaning of new perspectives shared by other actors who may be more knowledgeable or negotiating meaning from evidential information (foundation for knowledge) provided in the learning domain. KBA also provide an open space for exchange of lived experiences that provide the 'disorienting dilemma' for perspective change, where there is an assumption that the learners perspective needs to be interrogated and revised in order to experience an open and transformed worldview. The connection between learning and action would therefore reside in the changed worldview of the learner and the opportunities available to them to take action or to increase activism on social justice issues. These opportunities still provided by the KBA framework would reside in the ability of learners to engage in a discourse arena where policy makers are influenced by discourse modalities informed by the new meanings negotiated within 'these global communities of practice'. It is important to mention here that action is seen beyond charity donations and the support for development cooperation budgets, but stimulating the political will to effect whole policy changes directed at injustices and inequalities around global development and interdependence.

Below is a conceptual diagram illustrating the points of intersection between the hybrid social learning theory and KBA as an environment of **reflexive pedagogy** in which knowledge and learning is conceived as a process in the continuum and a plural knowledge system that is in constant flux with

⁵⁷ Smillie, 1995:229-30

⁵⁸ (Rugendyke, 2007)

new and changing information from below and above. This concept diagram represents the plural foundations of knowledge based advocacy and its openness to new knowledge and NGDO advocacy internet sites as a 'knowledge convening domain', illustrating how KBA provide learner access to policy discourses.

Reflexive pedagogy

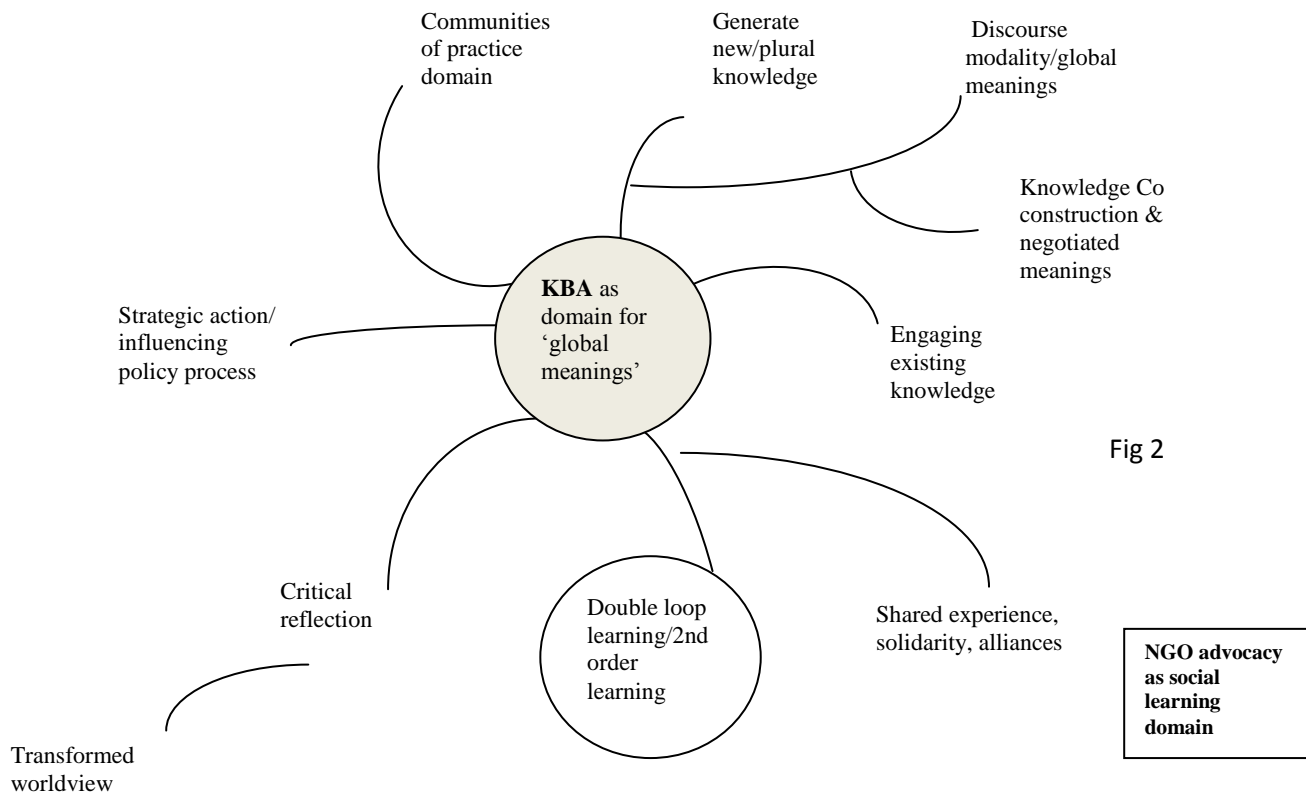


Fig 2

The model is a conceptual framework to be further developed on the links between learning and action where the concept of Andragogy and self directed learning is used to interrogate the assumption that learning in DE occurs primarily through pedagogical processes as implied in DE policy funding guidelines⁵⁹. The link is also made between social and transformative learning theories and learner's prior experience in negotiating meanings⁶⁰. KBA addresses issues around NGDO advocacy as convening spaces for 'disorienting dilemma'⁶¹, a concept in transformative learning that explains how new knowledge could trigger a revision of perspective, what Freire referred to as the

⁵⁹ (www.irish.gov.ie/grants; DEA, 2005

⁶⁰ .(Eade, 2000; Knowles, 2005).

⁶¹ 'Disorienting dilemma' is a concept in Mezirow's transformative learning theory that refers to *phenomenal personal experience thought to trigger perspective transformation in individuals* (Mezirow, J. 2009)

state of 'critical transitivity'⁶². Like with all approaches to learning and education aimed at specific objectives and competencies, the issue of evaluation also poses a challenge to KBA. This issue is seen as an area for further research as it is outside the scope of this paper. However some lines for brainstorming in terms of evaluation are offered with a caution that not even the didactic pedagogical processes can guarantee expected outcomes in other educational endeavours.

Three main areas for consideration include:

The level of discourse synthesis that manifests in influence on development and education policy; secondly, an adaptation of participatory value chain analysis in NGDO advocacy around pluralism in knowledge practices and thirdly, the level of learner/public activism- how, what, where and when of activism (This is an area of current doctoral research interest in DERC, University of London) .

DE as a system of knowledge

Finally, the paper argues the need for practitioners to begin to conceptualise DE as a system of knowledge rather than efforts within academic and educational policy arena to promote DE as a body of knowledge. A body of knowledge would imply knowledge founded on a coherent theoretical foundation and disenable boundaries even where they intersect with other disciplines. There are therefore ontological and epistemological implications for the conceptualisation of DE under these labels. The major distinction in the two concepts being that DE has its origins in praxis than abstract knowledge. It is contingent and its essence and values contested and culturally situated and not framed on disenable nomenclatures as with other academic disciplines. It also occupies ambivalent spaces in the theories of other disciplines and draws from multiple fields like; education, development, sociology economics, politics and psychology. It is incommensurable to expect a cohesive body of knowledge that is temporal and contingent to evolve from all these diversity of fields.

A system of knowledge would therefore recognise the legitimate spaces for other forms of knowing not understood or known by dominant knowledge systems, one that permits knowledge from below but accommodating and integrating knowledge from above in negotiating new 'global meaning'. This gives essence to the notion of a global civil society in generating consensual values aimed at sustainable livelihoods. A system of knowledge in DE also implies a continuum in critical reflection on knowledge that we encounter and the interrogation of our positioning and relationship with the structures that sustain the dominance of one society over another and the structures that determine the allocation and distribution of global resources and opportunities in an interdependent world.

⁶² (Freire, 1974:14).

Conclusion

The paper explores the link between the level and nature of public perception of global development issues with public enthusiasm and activism on global justice issues. It argues that current approaches to knowledge and learning in DE does not provide the necessary space that enable greater depth in learner understanding and engagement with global development issues. It proposes social learning as offering the opportunities and domain for the greater participation of learners in negotiating meaning and decentralising the existing global knowledge hierarchy that respond to the needs of the 21st century knowledge society. It critiques current knowledge generation in DE as dominated by a 'single perspective' that reduce lived experience into abstract units of educational activities with implications for learning aimed at critical reflection.

The paper develops a hybrid social learning theory aimed at improving the practices of NGDO advocacy internet activity as a domain of learning and knowledge construction that meets the need of the independent learner in the journey to a revision of worldview. It proposes the synthesis of discourses from different 'knowers' as a discursive form of social action in influencing policy, and new knowledge as a motivating factor for those unfamiliar with global issues. The paper proposed knowledge based advocacy as a domain for globally negotiated meanings that support the evolution of a global narrative on global development challenge and a basis for building alliances for global action.

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