Reconceptualising global education from the grassroots: *the lived experiences of practitioners*

by Amy Skinner and Matt Baillie Smith

DEEEP
citizens'
Empowerment
for
Global
Justice

CONCORD
European NGO confederation
for relief and development
Confédération européenne des ONG
d'urgence et de développement

*DEEEP is a **project of the DARE Forum of CONCORD**, the European Development NGO confederation. As facilitator of the European **development education** sector, DEEEP and the CONCORD DARE Forum aim to be a driver for new transformative approaches to development and education through working towards systemic change and active global citizenship.*

*We believe that **research has a vital role to play in promoting innovation within the field of education**. We adopt a participatory, cross-sectoral approach to our research which enables us to explore a range of different perspectives and approaches to change. We regularly publish reports and articles with academics and practitioners that stimulate innovative thinking about new paradigms for development and education based on global justice. Our publications target development education practitioners and academics, civil society organisations and anyone interested in education and social change.*

We are producing a range of publications under three different categories:

EXPLORATION

- This collection explores new ways of weaving development education into the daily practice of various stakeholders.
- The publications aim to reach a broader audience such as civil society organisations or active citizens, who are interested in global justice and global citizenship and are seeking inspiration to put these concepts into practice.
- 1. *"Barefoot Guide n°4 - Exploring the real work of social change"* by The Barefoot Guide Connection
- 2. *"Mission impossible? Creating a monitoring framework for Education for Global Citizenship"* by Amy Skinner in the VHS – DVV International Journal *"Adult Education and Development"*, n°82, 2015.
- 3. *"Transformational communications for global justice. Reframing Toolkit"* by PIRC and DEEEP
- 4. *"The Space Between Stories: Final Evaluation of DEEEP4 by its Critical Friend"* by Johannes Krause

REFLECTION

- This collection provides a space to present and reflect on new lines of thinking within the field of development education. The publications are personal, provocative pieces intended to inspire further debate and discussion on a particular theme. Our thinkpieces target predominantly development education practitioners and researchers, as well as anyone interested in the transformative potential of education and learning.
- 1. *"The stories we tell ourselves"* by Rene Suša
- 2. *"Transformation - Reflections on theory and practice of system change"* by Johannes Krause – Translated by Janna Bruins, UN Volunteer
- 3. *"From the aims to the achievements of development education: stumbling blocks on the way to political transformation"* by Barbara Riek – Translated by Janna Bruins, UN Volunteer

RESEARCH

- This collection provides research reports and publications which help to contribute to innovation in development education theory and practice. They act as a tool to stimulate greater critical reflection and learning amongst the development education community.
- 1. *"Development Education and Education in International Development Policy: Raising Quality through Critical Pedagogy and Global Skills"* by Amy Skinner, Nicole Blum and Douglas Bourn in International Development Policy.
- 2. *"Catalysing the 'Shadow Spaces': Challenging Development Discourse from within the DEEEP Project"* by Amy Skinner and Tobias Troll in Policy & Practice.
- 3. *"Journeys to Citizen Engagement: Action Research with Development Education Practitioners in Portugal, Cyprus and Greece"* co-written by Amy Skinner and Sandra Oliveira with contributions from Kerstin Wittig-Fergeson and Gerasimos Kouvaras.
- 4. *"International Volunteering and Development – Learning to be a Global Citizen"* co-written by Amy Skinner, Dr Eleanor Brown, Mark Griffiths, Kristina Kontzi and Maria Koleth in Voluntaris Journal.
- 5. *"Monitoring education for global citizenship: a contribution to debate"* by Harm-Jan Fricke and Cathryn Gathercole with contributions from Amy Skinner.
- 6. *"Reconceptualising global education from the grassroots: the lived experiences of practitioners"* by Amy Skinner and Matt Baillie Smith

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Amy Skinner
DEEEP4 Research Coordinator, Belgium

Matt Baillie Smith
Professor of International Development, Northumbria University, UK

To contact the authors of this report please email: matt.baillie-smith@northumbria.ac.uk

CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE

Research and policy prescription on Global Education (GE)[1] to date has largely focused on the content of GE, its impacts, on normative accounts of what GE 'should' be, and, relatedly, on highly critical accounts of what GE has 'become' (e.g. Bourne 2003, Andreotti 2006, Bryan 2011, Martin and Griffiths 2012, Baillie Smith 2013). These emphases often reflect the growing professionalization and mainstreaming of GE and the need to provide 'evidence' to support policy advocacy as well as practice. They also reflect the challenges of fully capturing the impacts of GE, as well as the ongoing problem of defining what it is or should be (Baillie Smith 2013).

The voices and experiences of those 'doing the doing' have often been absent, or been addressed in the service of understanding the content, or commenting on the politics and institutional contexts of GE. There has been limited engagement with the ways the practice of GE is embodied in the people who practice it in its myriad ways in often challenging financial, institutional and political circumstances. Despite the emphasis on the relationship between the personal and the political that underscores much GE practice and rhetoric, what this means for those producing GE has often been absent. This means we lack a significant body of work on the micro politics and everyday realities of doing GE and what it means to be a GE practitioner. In this respect, we have not managed to develop an understanding of the subjectivities and professional identities that shape and are shaped by GE, making it harder to move concepts of GE forward as practice responds to changing realities on the ground.

Indeed, as GE has been mainstreamed, and pan European structures developed, processes of accreditation and qualification developed, and transnational learning and networks expanded, there are a growing number of individuals who are, or might label themselves as, GE practitioners. Whilst the practices of these individuals are critically important to the present and future of GE, we know little about what their professional lives are like beyond the sharing of anecdotes and 'common knowledges' that circulate through GE networks, conferences and collaborations. For this reason, this research explores what it is like to *do* global education, how practitioners translate theory into practice in response to the changing world around them, and how this affects them and their practice.

There has been a growing recognition of the importance of capturing the voices of activists as a way of understanding the realities of development (e.g. Bebbington and Kothari 2006, Yarrow 2008, Baillie Smith and Jenkins 2012). These accounts provide an antidote to top down and elite constructed accounts of what development is or should be. This has revealed important new knowledges, and highlighted how power can operate to marginalise particular actors and practices (Baillie Smith and Jenkins 2011). This research draws on these approaches and positions, placing the voices of practitioners centre stage and in doing so, challenging narratives of GE that privilege funder and policy maker perspectives on 'content', 'what works' and what are deemed to be successful projects or programmes. It also recognises the hierarchies within GE, and the ways particular actors and individuals' views and ideas are privileged. Listening systematically to how diverse practitioners talk about their professional lives provides a lens on the contemporary realities of GE as experienced by those ensuring its survival and continued innovation against often considerable odds. Such a perspective is essential both to understanding GE today, but also ensuring a wide group of stakeholders understand the constraints and opportunities of developing it in the future.

This research therefore aims to conceptualise and reflect on our understanding of GE in a way that is practice-led and rooted in practitioners' experiences. We argue that the strategies practitioners use to negotiate the institutional and conceptual challenges of GE should be more systematically engaged with and central to our understanding of GE, and provide critical lessons for how practitioners can be supported, but also how we can understand the GE that results.

---

1   This research engages with educators who define their practice in variety of ways, including 'development education', 'global education' and 'global citizenship' education. For the sake of brevity, we use 'global education' here to encompass this range of approaches and not as a term that replaces any of them.

We offer three key arguments:

1. We need to pay greater attention to what it means to be a GE practitioner and to the ways GE is embodied in professional lives often defined by various forms of precariousness.

2. The professional identity of GE practitioners needs to be understood as increasingly 'in-between' and 'hybrid', reflecting the mainstreaming and professionalization of GE, its more radical political histories and the new political and educational spaces being opened up by austerity politics, new resistances to neoliberalism and the changing aid and development landscape.

3. GE practices reflect the interweaving of political and theoretically informed positions with the improvisations, resilience and coping strategies of GE practitioners as they negotiate the changing global development landscape and specific GE contexts in which they work.

This report is not an academic paper. It foregrounds the voices of practitioners and seeks to encourage debates amongst a mainly practitioner audience, over situating the issues in wider academic debates. It suggests that understanding GE in these ways provokes questions about how we conceptualise GE and how GE practitioners are supported. It is divided into three sections: Doing Global Education; the Contexts of Global Education Practice; Resilient Practitioners.

2. METHODOLOGY

This research is the result of an academic- practitioner collaboration and a desire to co-produce research to-gether. Our initial guiding research question was "How do GE practitioners and organisations (re)define what they do in response to the changing world around them and what implications does this have for how we conceptualise and understand GE?" We aimed to explore this question through gaining an understanding of the changing realities and challenges of doing GE by:

- bringing out the personal and emotional side of 'doing GE' from practitioners, enabling them to share frustrations, challenges and successes of their everyday work in trying to foster change
- enabling practitioners themselves to define what influences their everyday practice of GE and how this affects how they understand and talk about what they are doing

After producing an initial Terms of Reference we engaged a small advisory group composed of 3 practitioners from the DARE forum[2] research working group (or affiliated members). The advisory group members helped to identify participants for interview and provided feedback on the final draft report. The broader research working group of the DARE forum also provided support and ideas for dissemination during the DARE forum bi-annual meetings.

Interviews were conducted by the researchers via Skype with 16 GE practitioners from 15 different countries: 9 from Europe, 4 from Asia, 1 from North America, 1 from South America, 1 from Africa. We also received diaries from a two-week work period from 5 of the practitioners. In order to ensure anonymity of the respondents, we have used the following pseudonyms and listed the countries in which each of them is working.

Aesha: India
Alexandre: Belgium
Ben: Ireland
Edda: Greece
Eiko: Japan
Harriet: Ireland
Ishani: South Africa
Karen: UK
Lauren: Canada
Marie: France
Martha: Brazil
Mayi: Philippines
Sabine: Germany
Tatana: Czech Republic.

Participants were selected on the basis that they:

- have been involved in global education/development education/education for sustainable development/ global citizenship education/ popular education for at least 5 years[3]
- a large part of their work is the direct delivery of educational activities (facilitating workshops with learners/ delivering teacher training/facilitating community education projects)

2   The Development Awareness Raising and Education Forum (DARE) is one of the core-working groups of CONCORD, the European Confederation of Development and Relief NGOs.
3   Given the varying terminology used around the world, we approached practitioners aligning themselves with one of these educations for change.

Given that the target group of DEEEP's work is the civil society sector working on global education issues, we focused on including GE practitioners from small NGOs or community organisations, as opposed to the formal education sector itself. This is not to say that voices of teachers, professional educators or adult education tutors are not important, but the limited scope of this study and the diversity already present in defining the field itself, meant that we wanted to try and ensure a common background amongst our interviewees.

The interviews were transcribed by a group of UN volunteers and the transcripts were then analysed, core themes drawn out and written up into a concise report by the two researchers, with one round of feedback from the steering group members.

We do not claim representativeness given the scale and sampling strategy, and nor was it within the scope of this research to analyse the specific contexts of each interviewee. Instead, the data provides an opportunity to make preliminary connections and offer insights into GE as it is being experienced by GE practitioners in diverse settings in 2015.

3. DOING GLOBAL EDUCATION

There is no such thing as a standard profile of a global education practitioner. Individuals bring their own life experiences, influences, personal interests and beliefs to bear on their practice which inevitably leads to a diversity of manifestations of global education itself.

The practitioners involved in this research are all currently working in small NGOs or community organisations, but come from various backgrounds such as social work, community development and education, youth work, international development, adult education as well as the formal education sector (several used to be school teachers, and several are also still teaching in universities). Most of their organisations are funded by the development aid departments of government ministries, rather than education ministries. These practitioners work with a range of target groups, from primary and secondary school students, to university students and adults, carrying out global education projects related to specific global themes, or wider community building initiatives supporting active citizenship and participation.

Many GE practitioners come from an activist background and have been, or are still, involved in local or global social movements. They have various influences and role models ranging from individual educationalists or activists to large and small scale social movements (past and present). What appears to be cross-cutting amongst practitioners is that they come to this work with a drive to foster change through the means of education.

Emotions and change

This passion and motivation to contribute to a better world when confronted with the reality of the often under-resourced, understaffed and precarious nature of the work, leads to a swirl of conflicting emotions - passion, frustration, happiness, anxiety, anger and exhaustion, experienced concurrently and simultaneously. Although we could argue that GE is what happens in spite of these emotions and frustrations, this writes out the role of emotion and contestation in shaping what GE is (Humble 2012). Whilst research has identified the growing neoliberal professionalization and de-politicisation of GE (e.g. Bryan 2011), there is a risk that this particular narrative underplays the agency, and emotional agency, of GE practitioners and the ways they seek to 'work the spaces of neoliberalism' (Bondi and Laurie 2005, Griffiths 2014). The following data show the importance of emotion and feeling produced by and through this 'work' and what results in terms of professional identity, with implications for the welfare and working life of GE practitioners and for what GE actually is.

At the heart of how GE practitioners define their work are feelings about change. Practitioners' passion and inspiration particularly stems from seeing change amongst learners. Seeing change is a need, a motivating force and an incentive for practitioners. According to Ben: "*it's about seeing what you believe in coming to fruition*". A range of practitioners commented that the high points of their work are the emotional rewards of seeing people change their thinking or perspectives on the world. This creates a feeling of immense fulfilment and satisfaction and provides new motivation during low and frustrating points. It is also a personal reward: seeing change in others changes you too as a practitioner and recharges your batteries to maintain the energy required for the job. As Alexandre stated:

> *I can see the impact of my job. I can see how people change with my eyes. I meet people and I see at once that they are changing the way they think about the world and they are changing their way of being a citizen. That's what gives me the energy to follow and carry on... them changing is like a gift for me, so I really appreciate that.*

Given ambiguities in the kind of change that GE is increasingly tasked with, and the challenges of measuring the changes that GE produces, practitioners' feelings about and commitments to change are a key part of how practitioners define 'success'.

Alongside these highpoints, practitioners feel anxiety about the processes that can enable change, such as the

burden of responsibility of holding a safe space for transformative learning. Such spaces involve enabling learners to share and challenge deeply-rooted perspectives and as Harriet stated, to ensure that people leave with "*a positive experience, not feeling that they've been put down or traumatised*". But facilitators experience a sense of vulnerability as they open spaces for the unknown to emerge. According to Ishani, part of this relates to the fact that "*what you're setting up in terms of the learning is that I don't know! I don't have all the answers! I just have questions – lots of questions to ask you, and let's just work it out.*"

Additionally, there is a 'burden of awareness' linked to being a GE practitioner due to the gravity of many of the issues addressed in this kind of education. As Karen stated,

> I heard a really good analogy a few weeks ago from Mike Berners Lee who wrote The Burning Question which is about fossil fuels. I went to one of his talks and he said [within the context of climate change], 'Understanding about this stuff is like one of those gates that you go through in a supermarket, where you can go in, but once you go in you cannot go back out of it again.' So you know, once you've started having a critical perspective on politics, on banking, on power relations, you can't ever un-see that. And it's quite exhausting a lot of the time, but then connecting with other people who share that but still feel optimistic is very, very energising.

Indeed, for many, dedicating energy to GE is a way of pro-actively acting upon and countering both personal and widely spread feelings of despair and hopelessness. Martha termed it as a "*pedagogy of hope*". GE work can produce anxiety but also is a kind of therapy to deal with this burden themselves and also to help restore hope and resilience in others. As Martha emphasised:

> we are creating connections where we are hand-in-hand with each other both locally and globally... if we are together, we will be hopeful and will be able to build positive scenarios, hopeful scenarios for our children... I think we are preparing people to survive this crisis, and to build another world that we want.

In a similar vein, Edda felt that her work provides her with the energy she needs to counter feelings of desperation:

> It motivates me to go on a lot, to think of new projects, to design new activities, to find out what it is that students or young people need to gain this perspective of global solidarity, of thinking towards justice, of not being desperate - because a lot of youth is desperate nowadays - especially in Greece.

Precariousness

These hopes, frustrations and challenges need to be situated within the context of often reduced but increasingly prescriptive and short term funding. Practitioners work for the short- term as it is difficult to plan ahead given that the financial landscape is continuously changing. This means it can be hard to take real strategic decisions and embed a strong sense of focus and direction in the work. Practitioners also expressed concern that the ad-hoc nature of workshops or projects with learners hinders the transformative potential of GE, meaning that success for a donor – such as a number of workshops – doesn't correspond to the feeling of success that comes through change. This may reflect a mismatch between the emotional and embodied nature of GE work and its growing professionalization and formalisation.

However, the examples above highlight how GE practitioners' desire for change, the 'risks' and rewards of particular strategies, and the need to negotiate emotionally intense global debates and transformations, make GE work intrinsically contingent and unsettling. The data then reveal an emotional precariousness of GE that cannot be reduced to an account of funding challenges or changing state pressures. Paying attention to the ways institutional and auditing requirements relate to the hopes and risks of GE practitioners, is an important part of understanding what it means to be a GE practitioner. This means we need to avoid over privileging the agency of donors and develop our understanding of the improvisation, subversion and re-working by practitioners, as central to GE. This is not without risks at different levels – donors may be uncomfortable with a less prescribed and predictable GE. Celebrating practitioners' commitment and creativity can also risk obscuring the extra hours they might put in in order to produce a GE that they believe in.

The high level of commitment to their work and values means that many practitioners tend to respond to their precariousness and desire for change by putting in extra hours for free. Bringing and investing so much of themselves into their work naturally makes the work personal and emotional. This is especially the case in between projects or funding phases in order to continue carrying out what they have started, as Edda clearly stated:

> ...I was doing it from my own expenses, let's say... people get to know you, and the work that you're doing, and even though in periods we didn't have funded projects, professors were calling me or sending emails asking me to come to their schools because they're doing a project on Fair Trade and they would like to have some people who are working on that in their school. I cannot say no because I have no project right now on that. Of course, it's something I will do no matter the funding.

People feel committed and connected emotionally to the issues and the people that they are working with, and making a clear split between professional and personal lives is not straightforward, something also documented in relation to civil society activism in other contexts (e.g. Baillie Smith and Jenkins 2012). As Karen stated:

> that split between personal and professional is a bit of an artificial one for me, really... if I want to be delivering work that is good enough, I put in the hours in my own time...And I think doing work which you feel is really valuable and is really rewarding is a double-edged sword on its own, because you're more than likely to work yourself too hard, basically...And most people who I know who have been involved in work like this, who have gone through cycles- everybody has at least one memory of being at rock bottom when it comes to the futility of it or the, "I'm trying so hard to change something and nobody is listening!"

This difficulty in drawing a line between work and private life is further complicated by the multiple identities and roles that practitioners often work across, and the lack of a commonly agreed idea of what the GE practitioner is. Many practitioners do not only consider themselves to be educators, but also activists, and the working for 'free' and around the edges of donor prescriptions could be understood as reinforcing a kind of 'activist' identity.

Activist educators?

For some being an activist and educator is one and the same, whereas for others these are two separate things. Illustrating this ambiguity, Edda pointed out how others see her job, "*some people believe I'm...involved with some issues about Fair Trade, ethical consumerism... so these activist things. And some people are thinking that I am an educator, but not exactly an educator.*" For Alexandre, the two need to go hand in hand "*For me just giving education is not a solution. We really need to take a position... take action.*" This then raises questions about practitioners' individual and collective identity which is an ongoing tension in the field of GE. Am I an activist, an educator, or an activist educator? Or am I an activist in my own time and an educator professionally? Are we both and if so, how do and should our dual or multiple identities impact our work?

Negotiating these tensions is a key part of being a GE practitioner, with some believing that GE is inherently political and is about "educating activists" while others talking more about GE being an open space for discussion and sharing with no pre-determined outcomes. This unresolved dilemma may result in 'voluntary' activism within their role as an educator- as Alexandre explained:

> We are receiving money to do education, we are not receiving money to make lobbying, to make advocacy, or to take direct action by ourselves. But we decide to do it as volunteers ...It is not because we are receiving money to do education that [my organisation] cannot beside that take a position and take action because it is what we are asking people to do so we have to do it too.

Juggling roles

GE practitioners therefore have multiple, hybrid roles either in the same job, or through combining several different jobs and voluntary work which they constantly need to work across. Apart from actually carrying out the direct educational work (planning and delivering workshops, training courses etc.) most practitioners are also managing one or more projects, and several even manage an entire organisation and team of staff. On top of this, many also

do additional freelance work or voluntary work (either as an integral part of their main development education job) or in addition to it in a more activist capacity through being engaged in local movements, community action groups etc. Most practitioners therefore have to multi-task and on top of actual practice, this involves a lot of time-consuming administrative work related to project reporting and securing funding, as well as working under pressure to deliver particular outputs and results.

Trying to juggle these tasks can be frustrating and results in practitioners feeling they lack time for the important stuff and what they feel is the most rewarding part of the job- the actual practice. As Karen stated:

> *My practice isn't as good as it could be or should be...because of the pressures associated with organisational viability... We're doing so much on so little that you may not have the time to plan or follow up on a session properly, or really focus on relationships with people... I'm not as good as I could be given organisational circumstances.*

As Ben concluded, for many practitioners it is a case of "*doing the fire brigade action in lots of different areas rather than being very focused on where a long term gain will come from.*"

The data we have collected reveal the ways the emotions, frustrations and contradictions of GE need to be placed more centrally in accounts of what GE actually is. This means paying attention to GE practitioners' experiences, the meanings they give to them, and how this connects to the wider GE context. It also means paying greater attention to the agency of practitioners as they negotiate and contest, being careful not to see GE in terms of policy prescription. GE is produced through practitioners' negotiation of ambiguities about their role, shaped but not determined by donor demands, as well as the wider institutional and geopolitical contexts within which GE is practiced and the changes these are bringing to GE. It is to these that we turn in the next section.

4. THE CONTEXTS OF GLOBAL LEARNING PRACTICE

Conceptual and institutional uncertainties increasingly characterise GE work, shaped not only by personal and donor demands, but the ways these connect to wider global transformations. This is not to say that GE practitioners' lives are simply a product of these, and we would argue that it is important to understand how big debates and contestations within GE are also informed by the ways in which GE 'work' is understood. This section explores some of the factors that practitioners identify as shaping why the work is like it is, and how they connect GE to wider social and political change.

Global education and change

Across the data there are mixed views on whether the purpose of GE is to open space for discussion and debate to mobilise new knowledge (Baillie Smith 2013) or whether it should be working to more pre-determined change outcomes. Practitioner responses indicated a range of views on this, from creating *"an educational process to escort people to commit ourselves to collective and political actions…"* towards *"a big transition"* (Alexandre), to *"transmitting your firm beliefs and convictions in a very creative and involving way for the others"* (Edda) to *"creating and nurturing spaces for learning"* (Aesha) where *"everyone in the training can bring his or her knowledge so we can build a common knowledge"* (Marie). This indicates various understandings of GE: as having a clear change outcome (a 'big transition'); as being a chance to transmit certain perspectives and beliefs from facilitator to learners; or as opening spaces to allow change to emerge organically. As well as raising questions about the coherence of GE – and whether such coherence is desirable or possible given the diverse contexts through which it emerges, as discussed later – it also challenges the idea that GE can be defined within reference to a kind of shared pedagogy.

In all of this, it is unclear as to what the politics of the GE practitioner is and how openly they are prepared to or able to acknowledge their own perspective and beliefs in their practice. All practitioners we interviewed defined themselves as politically left wing and anti-neoliberal and personally acknowledge this as a strong influence on their work (and the reason why they came to work in this field in the first place). Whilst practitioners acknowledged their biases, perspectives and the fact that they don't believe education can ever be neutral, there is a lot of ambiguity around how to deal with the tensions of being truly open to all views and opinions, yet trying to guide learners towards a certain change direction, without always being explicit about that.

There does seem to be a widening line of thought that GE is not directly about changing the world or changing peoples' behaviour but rather that through providing space for people to get to know themselves, each other and the world around them, you create the opportunity for change to occur. This is both a powerful pedgogy but can also help in the negotiation of some of the tensions outlined above. By providing the opportunity to question, to discuss, to share views and perspectives, and to develop common goals, you empower people to realise their voice is important and they *"have the power to play a role in society"* (Eiko). As Karen noted:

> we had a conversation about this sort of thing a few months ago, which was exactly about what is our theory of change? Why are we doing what we're doing? We want to change behaviour- actually do we? Do we all feel comfortable with that being our mission? I'm not really sure. So the way that we would articulate it internally now is more like we are creating a vision of a different future, or an alternative way of viewing how now could be, and inviting people to try that out with us. We can't force anybody to change in any particular way. All you can provide is an opportunity for experiencing differently.

This presents a difficulty when, as noted earlier, people changing is so central to how many people defined 'success'. In a sense, what is critical here are the ambiguities and the capacity for movement around aims and objectives. As Alexandre pointed out:

> …each time someone come to see me at the end of a workshop to share his feelings and sharing the connections

he made between the presentation and his own reflections or his concrete reality and also telling that it's helping him to go further in his projects... I'm convinced I'm doing the right thing... Education is the shadow work of social change

That it can be seen as 'shadow work' is reflected in practitioners' difficulty in publicly defining their practice. Descriptions of what they do as GE practitioners are highly fluid and dependent on their personal biographies, context and who they are talking to. Most of the practitioners dread the question 'can you describe to me what you do?', with many stating that they find it frustrating that they have still not managed to explain it adequately to their close friends and family:

It's quite vague- there isn't really a way of um, of saying it in a way that people go, "Ah yes, that's what it is!" It's not like I'm a nurse or you know, I'm an airline pilot...so you kind of package it depending on who you're talking to (Karen)

As Marie added, *"you have to accept that we need time to explain what it is because it is a lot of things actually... Global education is at the crossroads of many things."*

Unsurprisingly perhaps, practitioners feel there is also a lot of misunderstanding about GE not only within the general public but also within related sectors. As Ben stated: *"I would say that development education and global education isn't taken that seriously within the broader development landscape and that sometimes I think is very frustrating."* Many practitioners also mentioned that they feel people often tend to perceive them as naïve ideal-ists: as Martha mentioned, *"the thing of working for building global citizenship in Brazil, sometimes people look down at it, because it is considered a utopia"* whilst others perceive it as being "politically correct", according to Harriet.

Many of the practitioners said that they didn't realise they were doing GE until it was labelled as such elsewhere and they were brought into the ever-expanding sector of 'global education practitioners'. They thus don't neces-sarily perceive themselves as a GE practitioner until they are given that label or title through their job. As Karen outlined:

...we don't recruit people who come from an education background- we recruit those associated things. So one of our team members was an outdoor, environmental practitioner, and another one of our team members has worked in creativity education, he's a Buddhist, he's lived in a Buddhist centre most of his life and he's a Buddhist teacher- so you know, everybody brings a different thing that they add to what then becomes our collective practice.

This reveals the diverse foundations and constitution of GE practice, something that is perhaps made easier by the fact that there is no global education textbook that requires particular backgrounds and qualifications, as Karen said:

I can't sit down and go "here are the answers to what global education is about," so if you're expecting to sud-denly feel like you've graduated in this, it's never going to happen. So that's one of things, is the fact that it's not a practice, is it? It's just a bunch of things that you're constantly finding your way around.

In this comment, we can again see the importance of negotiation and improvisation to what GE is. But this is not something that all see as positive. Some practitioners felt that the global education sector could benefit from a more standardised framework, as Sabine noted:

I really think in Germany, we would need standard criteria for what is development education and who can say I am a global educator and that maybe have to have a certificate for it, and a process to develop certain standards that everybody agrees on...

GE is thus seen as working for or enhancing the capacity for change, directly or indirectly at multiple levels and through various approaches. Because there is no set or agreed upon theory of change or even definition of GE, each practitioner tends to carve out their own practice which corresponds to their personal understanding and

experiences of what they are doing, as well as the specific contexts in which they practice. However, if practitioners are not clear as to their theories of change or the levels at which they are working, it can lead to frustration or feelings of futility. The 'spaces' they work and the ambiguities that arise can be both positive and negative.

Such a position highlights the long-standing tension at the heart of GE and its mainstreaming and professionalization. Our research suggests that the focus on this dimension of GE risks obscuring a far more contested and complex reality, of GE practitioners negotiating and improvising, with their work best understood as inherently 'in between', rather than failing to fit. However, that 'in between'-ness, its crossing of sectors and bringing in of people with diverse backgrounds and positions becomes a problem if standardised definitions are sought. Critical to this are the specific contexts in which GE is located, and the ways the histories and presents of those places shape GE. Labels and vocabularies differ, so creating a clearly defined category or community of global educators is not straightforward. In this sense, there is a risk that real differences can sometimes be smoothed over in order to create a sense of coherence. This is significant as there is growing recognition of common ground between educators in global South and North, and attempts to build a global community of GE linked to local and transnational social movement activism (Troll and Consolo 2015). Our data reveal significant differences in emphasis between GE in different parts of the world, and the ways this can underpin flows and co-productions of knowledge.

Geographies of global education

Given the 'in-between-ness', cross-cutting nature of global education work and the multiple educational and activist perspectives and approaches that can come under its remit, there is clearly a great diversity in approaches across the globe. A particular difference can be seen in terms of geographical focus of the work, and differing emphases put on local, regional, trans-local or global dimensions with implications for how we imagine and conceptualise the nascent GE community beyond the national level.

For example, in some countries or languages the term "global" can be perceived negatively. Martha said that in her country *"global is linked with globalisation"*; as being pro-globalisation. Indeed, Aesha said rather than the term "global or "regional", she preferred to see her educational work as "trans-local":

> the work that I am doing is more of hosting trans-local dialogues on common issues of the region... because the community groups that I work with in my capacity building work, relate better when they understand that the groups from other areas also have their local reality which has some similarities and some differences with their own...Regional becomes a little remote for them to understand but when it is trans-local... it's much better to understand and relate to.

Interestingly, all of the practitioners from countries in the global South felt very strongly that global learning must be rooted in local communities and their needs. This no doubt partly reflects the fact that global South interviewees principally worked in non-formal and adult education. But at the same time, our sampling strategy was based on who identifies themselves as part of the broad GE community and on networks and contacts helping to identify appropriate practitioners within the sector in each country. Aesha in India puts emphasis on the fact that:

> every person's or every community's experiences are very significant and those need to be shared and there's so much learning from them to live collaboratively and also to better understand our realities and also change our own life and the life of our communities.

Whereas, for example, Lauren in Canada sees GE as being about:

> moving beyond our responsibilities as citizens within our own countries which we are familiar with – having your own rights and responsibilities as a citizen being realized in your nation, into responsibilities across borders that in the world or global community we have to think of our rights and responsibilities globally.

Indeed in the global North, and perhaps reflecting longer histories of global 'benevolence' and intervention (Jefferess 2008, Baillie Smith forthcoming), global education practice appears to be more about global responsibili-

ties and linking local and global issues, without necessarily a clear focus on the local level. As Harriet mentioned:

> *I've met a significant number of people in development education who have quite a different perspective on the local and maybe not a great analysis of poverty and inequality locally...It's not that the local is invisible but that it's sort of perceived in a different way. It's kind of about what are you doing here that impacts over there?*

Interestingly, amongst some European global education practitioners there appears to be a slight fear of too much of a focus on the local level and a concern to ensure that the 'global' perspective is always present. This is in contrast to practitioners who are focused more on the community level, who feel that these global links naturally develop once learners have a strong sense of what is going on in their local community, and local environment. Ishani in South Africa feels very strongly that one of the primary purposes of GE should be to create a sense of belonging, a sense of place and identity:

> *you cannot access the global without a strong understanding of the local...People define it quite differently, but for me it's about a sense of belonging, and if we cannot get an idea of how young people can really be able to have that sense of belonging first strongly in their local space, they will never be able to reach out and grasp what's happening around them. So it's really about that sense of belonging, that sense of what they have to contribute in their present context, and that swells. So that's a huge part of the definition for me. Let's work with the local economy, you've got to be there at the local very strongly, and then the rest happens, you know. The links appear.*

Practitioners from the South thus appeared more inclined to practice an emancipatory, needs-based learning, often focused on marginalised groups, and focused on community development, whereas practitioners in the North tend to have a "toolkit" with which to teach about 'global' issues. Alexandre talks about this as "*the difference between transmittive approach and emancipatory approach*" and that many organisations in the North are in the middle of these two approaches, even though they may like to work with a more emancipatory, needs- based approach. Learning programmes are often more structured around using different tools to demonstrate different problems or issues in the world. For example, in his organisation they use the issue of food as a way to speak about and problematize globalisation, but rather than using the 'food tool', he would prefer to start from the interests of the learners themselves and work "*on injustice that people really feel*" as an entry point.

Indeed, Ishani felt that curriculum or structured learning programmes can be more of a hindrance than a help, as "*actually what made more sense was to connect people with who they are and what they're seeing and what they're thinking and what their experience of the world is*" and by doing that you can "*access something much more robust*". Indeed, many practitioners in Europe, when asked what they would like to change in their practice, expressed the desire to "*be even more responsive to the needs of the groups*" (Edda) they are working with; as Harriet said, "*you've just got to engage with the world and with what's really going on for people and that's a path to actual change, to meaningful change.*"

Our data and wider discussion in the GE sector do reveal that the short term nature of projects and funding, and the need to demonstrate impact, hinders the application of this needs- based approach in much formal global education practice in Europe. Indeed, the transformational potential of GE is severely undermined with such short term, one-off workshop programmes, as noted by many practitioners, especially those working with the formal education sector. This is not to say that such reporting requirements are absent from the global South, but to recognise disparities in scholarship on GE in different parts of the world. However, there is insufficient space to fully explore the differences between South and North identified here, rooted as they are in complex and specific histories of education and civil society in particular places.

Our data do reveal some shifts in the contrasts between South and North with a more local level focus gaining ground in the global North. People have become increasingly aware that development issues are not only faced by so called 'developing countries' but the same issues are being faced all over the world, in the traditional 'donor countries' too, as detailed below.

GE, austerity and change

GE practitioners identified a changing sense of solidarity and place after the economic crisis and consequent austerity measures which is impacting on the nature of global education work, serving to 'bring GE home' as well as more easily make connections to other parts of the world, through experiences of austerity, debt, poverty and inequality:

> …I think there's beginning to be a general shift around. It's not just about development over there it's about development here it's about how we live and our model of development…before the crash I certainly came across people who didn't believe there was poverty here…I guess because they're looking at parts of the world where they're looking at extreme poverty and so on but they didn't maybe believe in the concept of relative poverty or disadvantage and the impacts that that can have on people…But I think that's changed since the crash and the imposition of austerity… (Harriet)

It is also leading to a greater focus and connection to what is going on locally per se:

> [Our organisation] is the only organisation dealing with Fair Trade in Greece and… you know when poverty hits your door then you realise how interdependent things are in the world. So let's say the movements of solidarity have helped somehow the organisation, like the scope of the organisation, in supporting… in being supported by more people on one hand. On the other hand also, this solidarity is somehow sometimes getting a focus on the local, so this is a double challenge. Yeah the solidarity movement has grown, but on the other hand some people are still only getting interested in how local poverty or local producers or local children will have a better life… it is changing somehow the way I am communicating things in the sense that I am always finding and communicating the links between the local and the global, that maybe in the past I wasn't so much into doing (Edda).

Alexandre pointed out that their GE no longer focuses solely on developing solidarity with those in the South but on solidarity with those locally who are facing similar problems created by an unfair global capitalist system: "we are obliged to start also with the rights violation that people here in Europe are facing and then make connection between those violations and these issues happening in South Countries". Similarly Eiko in Japan, said that in the 1990s global education was more about poverty in other countries and what people in Japan can do to show solidarity with people in other countries by 'thinking globally and acting locally':

> but now we should do both, you know- act locally and also act globally. And also think and act in both. So you can't just say poverty only exists in developing countries, it is happening in Japan. So we kind of look at these issues- at the beginning it was more like global issues, but now we started a lot of work in Japan. We have lots of development issues here.

Paradoxically, the economic crisis and the rise of austerity can be seen to present both an opportunity and a challenge for GE practitioners. On the one hand, the crisis has made it easier to connect with development/global issues at the local level, as well as to make real local to global connections on issues such as debt, poverty etc. As Harriet mentioned:

> it's probably opened up possibilities in the practice for connecting with what's been going on for people and it's just given it an urgency I suppose. Because people are experiencing things that people in the global South have been experiencing for a long time. You know structural adjustment and things like that. So it's sort of created a point of connection.

But on the other hand, austerity can be seen to be closing down spaces for GE. This can be through a growing insularity fostered by growing insecurity and poverty, through the cutting of funding to GE and narrowing of what kinds of education are valued and supported – as, according to Harriet, there has been "a huge shift to more of a market orientation" which "has squeezed out the space for critical education…" This means that practically there is a financial challenge in actually making use of opportunities presented by austerity. As Ben noted:

> I think there's a lot of things that have happened that have helped development education get a foothold in to more main stream discussions- because of the kind of public reaction to things, so when people have been pro-

testing about a lot of things, they have given us real opportunities to say, well, that's the kind of thing that we do...
while at the same time not necessarily have the resources to optimize that chance.

However, several practitioners raised the question that perhaps austerity is actually an opportunity to break away from institutionalised funding and dependency on state support, and to be more free in what they are doing, as Harriet concluded:

I think it's an opportunity to not rely on public subsidies and will give us an opportunity to be more radical and
more coherent, and not doing only education, but doing education and taking action, and link both jobs.

All of these experiences, thoughts and feelings discussed in the above two sections, serve to define the landscape on which GE work is shaped and played out. As GE practitioners work with diverse constituencies as well as other practitioners, they are constantly working and re-working some of the key ways in which GE is formally understood, creating more vernacular versions which are flexible, but which also contain and embody the tensions between versions and their own politics and positions as employees. We might even say that it is these processes of contestation and negotiation that best characterise what GE is, particularly in a context of fractured and uneven state funding, changes to the aid and development landscape and social movement resistance to neoliberalism and austerity.

5. RESILIENT PRACTITIONERS

We can perhaps helpfully understand what GE is or can become, by paying attention to the ways practitioners negotiate these tensions from often highly precarious positions. GE practitioners' passion and emotions are at the centre of what they do; GE is an embodied practice, but this often goes unacknowledged, as does the resilience which is a key characteristic of people working in the sector. Practitioners build up strong armour for dealing with the emotional highs and lows, ambiguities and precariousness, as well as the blurring of the personal and professional.

Doing so not only helps us understand some of the why of GE in ways that goes beyond blaming funders and states, but also helps us identify key sites for the renewal and enhancement of GE in ways that acknowledge the agencies and activities of the people who deliver GE. We can begin to understand GE in terms of the improvisations and creativities of GE practitioners, and how these are interwoven with practitioners' biographies and values, and the historical and current political, institutional and funding situations of their specific contexts. This is not to over-romanticise 'coping strategies', or to idealise them – they are also produced through the tensions and issues outlined above - but to see them as key points in the ongoing struggles to deliver and enhance GE and make sure it stays relevant. Furthermore, this complicates how we might conceptualise key tenets of GE, forcing us to acknowledge the mix of factors that produce them.

Paradoxically the sector tends to prioritise structures and institutions over 'emotions'- we tend to talk about the 'sector', and not the people that make that sector what it is. Marie talked about how it would help her strengthen her practice by having more space for emotions, saying, "*sometimes I feel like I work at a really intellectual level, but not on the emotional level enough".* Ben felt that the people behind the practice and their emotions don't get spoken about much, stating:

> *the missing piece is very much that people are the driving forces behind all of these entities whether they are organizations or networks or institutions, and that without those individual people working really hard, doing the best that they can, what would those organizations or institutions or networks look like? I think they would be much the poorer for it and I think sometimes the recognition of the individual involvement is missing a lot.*

There is a sense of 'don't let it get to you' when dealing with rejected funding applications etc as Sabine said "*I don't want to give you the impression that it somehow really pulls me down because well we are used to it and we manage*". There is an ability to distance yourself from it, and to take a more philosophical approach that "*it's okay, it's not the right time for it but it's time will come kind of thing*" according to Ben, adding that:

> *I have to have a kind of well of resilience… I think internally to work within this area. And I think that's the sustaining piece …I think that you've got to really believe in what you are doing ….otherwise I don't think you would be involved in it for that long and I think it would be the case that burnout would come more easily…but just in the sense of continuing to go back to the weld in trying to do it again and again and again and that resilience I think needs to be kind of recognized and it doesn't come that easily, I don't think. I think it comes from first of all the passion and then possibly a support network that you either build up for yourself or it's there in some way anyway*

This data reveals the importance of paying more attention to the range of strategies that practitioners use to be resilient as they negotiate change, emotional highs and lows and frequent marginalisation in the development and education sectors.

Building and feeling part of a community

An important part of GE practitioners' work is building connections and feeling part of a community or communities, both nationally, trans-locally and globally. Global education work is done collaboratively; the team, the collective and the community are very important as is collective intelligence and inspiration. Connecting with others

serves to inspire and energise practitioners to keep going and not give up. As Martha stated, *"Hope is born of the connections we are able to make with each other, both locally and globally."* We can understand the networks and connections as a mix of commitments to forms of transnational and more collective politics, as well as being about surviving and thriving as a practitioner.

Many practitioners mentioned that an integral part of their work is to create connections and find common ground across sectors within their *own* country (locally and nationally) in order to create a stronger global education community. For example, Harriet has focused on linking development education and community education which has led to a *"group that's very strong and very broad and has had an ongoing process at trying to look at a vision for what we'd like to see within adults in community education and community work generally in terms of development education…"*

International connections are also important as it makes practitioners realise they are part of something bigger, *"a global force"*, *"a global current"* or *"being part of a very positive, powerful planetary force"* as Martha stated, and connecting with others in different places helps practitioners to contextualise their local work.

Practitioners mentioned that many organisations are doing global education without knowing it and are therefore not connecting with others and becoming part of a community. Martha wants to strengthen global education approaches by creating:

> connections between all these organisations, and make them understand that it does not matter the name- *"global education"*, *"education for global citizenship"*, *"education for peace"*, *"education for sustainability"*- but all these kinds of educations are contributing to make citizens to overcome barriers, to become more able to communicate with people from different backgrounds, different ethnicities, different cultures…

However, whilst there may be nationally and regionally based global education 'communities' – which is not the same as formal representative bodies - there is no formal structure behind a worldwide community or network for global educators. The practitioners we spoke to tended to align themselves to various activist communities working on a range of global issues, as opposed to specifically on education. Individual practitioners thus feel part of a variety of different communities related to their personal backgrounds, interests and interpretation of their GE work, and one GE practitioners' 'community' may be very different from another. The fact that there is no formally constituted global practitioner support structure or community of practice specifically for global educators per se, means that some practitioners however *don't* feel that they are part of a community. For example Sabine noted, *"What I was missing all the years and what I think could be a great chance is if we could concentrate on development and ideas of global education in a worldwide direction with people from the south"*.

How GE communities beyond the nation are imagined or experienced is very varied, shaped by a mix of histories of transnational connection, national capacities and networks as well as the kinds of communities that are imagined as desirable or possible. In addition, for those who feel there is already a well-developed global education sector in their country, this is not to say that it is all harmonious. For example, there can be elements of competition within the community. As Ben pointed out, *"I think there is a distinct lack of partnership or solidarity within some of our work…I think there is a lot of competition that doesn't necessarily need to be there. Much more kind of like funding-led competition…"* In the context of the professionalisation and formalisation of GE, the 'community' can become an expression of a particular iteration of GE, ruling some people in and others out.

Consequently, the meaning of the GE community cannot be assumed; it is part of the strategic repertoire used by practitioners for diverse ends at different moments, constituted not only through shared values but also the need to collaborate for funding. This is not to deny its significance to the politics of GE, but to recognise its constitution through the tensions and challenges we have discussed so far.

Idealist-realism; Realist-idealism

Many practitioners mentioned that over the time they have been involved in global education, they have moved

on from an initial idealism towards a more pragmatic approach to change, all the while keeping the same hope, belief and passion. Several practitioners talked about how they have become more tempered about what they are doing, saying they have "softened up" and are less "black and white". As Lauren mentioned:

> I find myself swinging almost backwards now. 10 years ago, I would have taken a strict solidarity social justice approach as a college student, be on the street protesting, you know like 'don't buy that shirt because it was made in a sweatshop'.... Of course, now I work with a variety of people and am not in my bubble of social justice college students – I see the value in a charitable approach when it is needed, and getting the opportunity to see the motivations of people and recognize that just because motivations may be different from yours, doesn't mean it is wrong. Most people are motivated by good and it is good to take small steps and make sure we are doing no harm as we are doing good. I work with a lot of people who say no to all kinds of charity – and that everything is harmful when you do that, and I like to navigate my way. I would like to say I've softened up a little bit.

With time, a sense of realist idealism seems to appear amongst practitioners. GE then evolves through these individual biographies in ways that cannot be reduced to the impact of neoliberal professionalization or funding constraints, although this is not to say they are not connected to the transitions. Practitioners talk about recognising the importance of small, everyday actions, of "small revolutions" and local level change rather than "trying to build a dream society" (Alexandre) or expect through global education to lead a global revolution. As Karen added:

> The idea that my whole mission my whole purpose on this planet is to save the world, and change people and blah blah blah…I think that's just part of a myth, part of a narrative…It's almost kind of egotistical if you think you've got a mission to change the world, because nobody can…I've kind of come to a bit of resolution that if the circle of my agency is only as big as it is, then there is no point in my getting so distraught about the things that I can't change. All I can do is live a life, I guess the word authenticity would spring to mind…It's almost a kind of, yeah I'm doing what I can and I'm living life in the way that I think if everybody tried to do that, then it would solve our problems. I can't make everybody do that, all I can do is do it myself.

The subject of ego brought up in this comment raises interesting questions about the extent to which GE practitioners are motivated by ego and the extent to which it contributes to the disappointment they may feel when the influence of their work is not as great as they may have imagined. We might see this as both central to practitioners' rationale for doing GE, but that it also risks undermining some of the more participatory and democratic dimensions of GE.

Indeed, a key theme in this is the ways practitioners note how they construct a narrower imagined sphere of influence and become more realistic about the role of education in change. This could be seen as a way of dealing with the contradictions listed earlier, and consequent emotional turmoil. Rather than having the burden of the whole world on their shoulders and trying to change as much as possible, they start to recognise and reconcile themselves with their own agency and place, and take comfort in that. As Ishani put it, "*my primary space of influence is as an educator. That's my space for activism…and so in some ways when it comes to some of those bigger conversations you almost need somebody else to come in and take the baton.*" As Karen said, the positive feedback she received from a teacher training course and the realisation that she is actually changing the world simply by providing "*a brand new way for one person to engage with the rest of the world and themselves*" made her aware of and content with her circle of agency as an educator.

This connects to the dilemmas about professional identity, and ways of surviving the tensions and dilemmas of working in between different political positions; the struggle of being 'in between'. As Ishani said:

> I've realised that I should not try and be everything, my space for activism is as an educator, and you don't have to be an educator and an amazing grassroots activist and an amazing this and that and the other. You play your part, you play your part solidly and trust that. That in itself has a ripple effect. So I'm much more focused about the areas in which I know that I have offerings to give and kind of much less easy to self-flagellate around the other stuff. One can feel I should be doing this, I should be doing that, but just focus, focus, focus.

Here we can see again how an understanding and practice of GE has emerged through someone's biography and their development of a strategy for being effective but also surviving emotionally. We can also see conceptualisations of GE in terms of avoiding pre-determined change as being more than just a sign of de-politicisation; taking this approach can dovetail with containing expectations which have professional and personal costs as well as with changing personal politics. Trusting and believing in others and handing over to them is a key part of this, as Sabine emphasised:

> I don't want to convince people to do this or that well. I just want to support people and then they can decide on their own, how deep they go into development or development education. I don't feel responsible for what they do in the end. I just support them and give them a basis and knowledge and possibilities to judge what they want to do in the future and then opportunities to act and then I am happy to sit. I don't want to see what is the impact on society. I have this vision of the impact on society in my mind, but – I want nothing to do with it actually, because I believe in the strength of the people – that is one key thing.

Personal transformation – maintaining a constant learning journey

The transformations and realisations that practitioners talk about do not exist in a vacuum. There appears to be a very strong intrinsic motivation amongst practitioners to keep learning, reflecting, innovating and improving practice, despite limited structured professional development. Practitioners have a strong sense of their own learning journey, which is ongoing and manifests itself in continuous reflection, "*a commitment to the practice and to being constantly trying to develop and improve it.*" (Harriet).

An inherent part of reflecting on and transforming your practice is about self-transformation and self-realisation. As Mayi from the Philippines stated "*I need to change and keep changing*", adding that "*in order to be able to change society- I mean you are part of the society- I need to change myself as well.*" This was echoed by Marie in France:

> We often hear that we live in an individualistic world. Sometimes I don't really agree. I think we should be more individualistic but not in a selfish way...but to focus on changing yourself, before focussing on the others. I feel like if we don't do that we miss the point, or we miss the essential...change is a very inner process. It means challenging and deconstructing your personal beliefs, frameworks of thought, and sometimes your education in a way...

This ability to embrace personal as well as professional change leads to a dynamic and ever-changing practice of GE that comes through the negotiations and re-workings we have discussed, as well as through constant personal reflection and learning. The inherent linkages between personal and professional change are another indication of the difficulty in drawing lines between work and personal lives in the sector. Thus, being a global education practitioner means being on a transformative learning journey, as Ishani emphasised:

> Participants have ...opened me up to parts of myself...In terms of facilitation, you step up there, you're so aware of the insecurities that you have and they're reflected, and... it's always a mirror. So what ways have I opened up? I think I've become much more rooted, much more grounded, I'm much more trusting of my own voice and my own intuition. Much more clear about what it is that I can offer and what it is that perhaps I need to work on. It's really a greater sense of self and a journey, a journey that will never end but I'm completely indebted to all of these young people who walked through my mind.

As Karen pointed out, "*I think one of the biggest challenges is living in this constant sense of uncertainty... I think since I've been in this field, I've been more changing my mind regularly than feeling certain about anything ...at least once a week I come across something, whether it's something I've said, or I've seen, or heard, which makes me change my mind about things*".

The commitment to learning and self-transformation can not only produce further uncertainty, but is also what might be referred to as professional development in other settings. Given the low wages and limited funding, these forms of learning are often improvised and self-directed, and can exact an emotional toll. They can also

create new expectations, both personally and of organisations, as Karen noted:

> *...the other thing connected with global education not being 'a thing' is that internally, we have lots of conversations about what it should be, what it could be. Is it about changing the world? Is it about changing other people? Or is it about changing yourself? Is it about one of those things and all of those things at once?*

Indeed, Tatana felt that the *"question of change and transformation was often the crucial aspect that decided whether you keep on working for a certain organisation or not."* Whilst organisational change can be about the need to fine-tune the message and the content we're offering, it can also reflect deep processes of personal learning, emotional survival strategies and the desire to effect change, alongside the pressures to deliver in line with outcome driven donor demands.

6. CONCLUSION

The voices and experiences of practitioners captured in this research raise some important questions around how we understand and conceptualise global education. The research reveals how GE is constantly being shaped and re-shaped as practitioners negotiate its tensions and contradictions and the changing local and global contexts within which they locate their practice. In particular, we have shown how important it is to 'write in' and fore-ground the emotions associated with this, especially in terms of the ambiguity around GE's change agendas.

In section two we located these processes of negotiation in the context of changing geopolitics, austerity and the emerging geographies of GE. We revealed how, in line with much global education practice in the global South, there appears to be an increasing interest amongst practitioners in Europe to implement a more emancipatory form of GE; to move away from a 'toolkit' or issues-based approach to GE to one which is more responsive to the immediate needs and interests of learners and communities in their specific local contexts.

In the final section, we focused attention on the ways practitioners both produce and negotiate the 'in-between-ness' of GE – its location between explicitly political and pre-determined goals and commitments to enabling participants to make their own decisions, and its embodiment in professional identities that are often hybrid, moving between activism, voluntarism and more professional roles - and the resultant contingencies and dynamism. We highlight the resilience of GE practitioners, their spheres of influence in terms of change and show how the strategies they use to work effectively reflect a coming together of both survival needs and pedagogical histories and values.

This raises important and difficult questions, both around the practice itself, but also the kind of support offered to practitioners which could be developed for and within the GE practitioner community, especially in terms of spaces to discuss and share emotions and feelings associated with the practice. That many of the respondents in this research highlighted their appreciation of a chance to talk openly and be listened to during the research interviews, suggests their voices remain too marginal. Is there a need for more structured support or more informal forums to better enable practitioners voices to be heard and taken into account when shaping GE policies and funding programmes?

Our findings reveal the need to pay greater attention to the agencies and subjectivities of GE practitioners in trying to understand GE's presents and futures. GE is an embodied practice, which reflects and is shaped by the dynamically evolving knowledges, emotions, creativities and coping strategies of the GE practitioners themselves. If we want to ensure that broader understandings of GE reflect realities on the ground, we must make sure that practitioner voices are brought to the forefront within GE policy making processes and future research.

REFERENCES

- Andreotti, V. (2006). "Soft versus critical global citizenship education." Policy and Practice. A Development Education Review 9: 40 - 51.

- Arnold, S. (1988). "Constrained crusaders? British charities and development education." Development Policy Review 6: 183 - 209.

- Baillie Smith M. (2013) 'Opening address: The changing development landscape and new development paradigms: the end of development education or a chance to find its voice?'. DEEEP Conference: Global Justice Through Global Citizenship: the Role of Global Education and Public Awareness, Brussels, November 23rd. Available at: www.mattbailliesmith.com/talks

- Baillie Smith, M. (2013). "Public imaginaries of development and complex subjectivities: the challenge for development studies." Canadian Journal of Development Studies/Revue canadienne d'études du développement 34(3): 400-415.

- Baillie Smith, M. (forthcoming). Global citizenship and development: from benevolence to global justice? In J. Grugel and D. Hammett (eds) The Palgrave Handbook of International Development. London, Palgrave.

- Baillie Smith, M. and K. Jenkins (2011). "Disconnections and Exclusions: Professionalisation, cosmopolitanism and (GEobal?) civil society." Global Networks 11(2): 160 - 179.

- Baillie Smith, M. and K. Jenkins (2012). "Existing at the Interface: Indian NGO Activists as Strategic Cosmopolitans." Antipode 44(3): 640-662.

- Bebbington, A. and U. Kothari (2006). "Transnational Development Networks." Environment and Planning A 36: 849-866.

- Bondi, L. and N. Laurie (2005). "Introduction. Special Issue: Working the Spaces of Neoliberalism" Antipode 37(3): 393 - 401.

- Bourne, D. (2003). "Towards a theory of development education." The Development Education Journal 10(1): 3 - 6.

- Bryan, A. (2011). "Another cog in the anti-politics machine? The 'de-clawing' of development education." Policy & Practice: A Development Education Review, 12: 1 - 14.

- Griffiths, M. (2014). "I've got goose bumps just talking about it!: Affective life on neoliberalized volunteering programmes." Tourist Studies: 1- 17.

- Humble, D. (2012). ""This isn't getting easier": Valuing emotion in development research"" Emotion, Space and Society 5: 78 - 85.

- Jefferess, D. (2008). "Global citizenship and the cultural politics of benvolence." Critical Literacy 2(1): 27 - 36.

- Martin, F. and H. Griffiths (2012). "Power and representation: A postcolonial reading of Global partnerships and teacher development through North—South study visits." British Educational Research Journal 38(6): 907-927.

- Troll, T. and Consolo, O. (2015). "The Road Beyond Tunis: A worldwide system change community towards sustainable, peaceful, democratic, more equal and solidary societies". Available at: http://deeep.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/GlobalConference2015_Report_final.pdf [accessed 26.11.2015]

- Yarrow, T. (2008). "Life/History: Personal narratives of development amongst NGO workers and activists in Ghana." Africa 78(3): 334-358.

ANNEXES

ANNEX 1. INTERVIEW GUIDE

Opening questions/themes:

1. How long have you been working within the GEobal education field?

2. What made you want to work in this field?

3. What do you do within your organisation?

4. How long have you been in this role?

5. If you met someone who had never heard of GEobal education, how would you explain to them what you do?

Emotions

1. Could you describe how you feel about the work you do?

2. Can you recall a time when you felt really alive and energised by your work?

   a. What were the factors that contributed to this?

   b. How did this experience impact on you- both personally and professionally?

3. Have you experienced any low points in the work you do?

   a. What were the factors that contributed to this?

   b. How did this impact on you-both personally and professionally?

4. How do you think your work is understood by others?

5. What do you feel is the most important thing that you do? Why is this significant to you?

Change

1. Can you tell us about some of the influences that shape your work?

   a. Which people or which events have had the most profound impact on your work?

2. Have you yourself changed since you started working in this role? If yes, how and what has changed in you?

3. Do you think your organisation has coped with or is coping with any particular changes at the moment?

The future

1. Are there things you would like to change about what you do?

2. What do you think will be the biggest challenges for you and your work in the coming years?

3. What do you think are the biggest opportunities for your work?

4. What do you think the future of your kind of work will be?

ANNEX 2. GLOBAL EDUCATION PRACTITIONER DIARY

This diary is designed to capture what your life as an education practitioner is like over a two week period. It will only be shared with the project researchers and any information from it used in subsequent reports will be anonymised.

Each day is divided into three sections: Activities; Thoughts and Ideas; Feelings.

In asking you to write about **Activities** we would like you to tell us about the things you have done that day. This could include things that have taken up very little time, as well as those that have taken a lot of time. It would be helpful if you can explain why you have chosen to discuss or mention these particular things.

In asking you to write about **Thoughts and Ideas**, we would like you to tell us about some of the things you have been thinking about or ideas you have had during the course of the day. It would be helpful if you can explain why you have chosen to discuss or mention these particular things.

In asking you to write about **Feelings** we would like you tell us about some of your feelings and emotions. It would be helpful if you can explain why you have felt particular ways about things.

There is also space to offer your **Reflections** on what you have written about your activities, thoughts and feelings. In this section, you can write anything you like about what you have written, or about any other things you think are relevant.

We would like you to write as much as you have time for under these headings for each day. This may vary from day to day, and there is no expectation or requirement about how much you write.

You can complete the diary electronically or print it out and write it by hand.

If you have any questions before you start or as you complete the diary, you can contact: amy.skinner@concordeurope.org.

Thank you for taking the time to do this for the research. Please complete the information below when you start the diary.

Name: ....

Start date: ....

Why did you choose these two weeks to complete the diary? ....

DAY 1 – date: .... **day:** ....

Activities:
Thoughts and ideas:
Feelings:
Reflections:

European NGO confederation
for relief and development

CONCORD

Confédération européenne des ONG
d'urgence et de développement

development awareness raising & education

DEEEP

citizens'
Empowerment
for
Global
Justice

ENGAGE WITH US ON :

www.deeep.org

f deeep.project
t deeep_project

*DEEEP is a project co-funded
by the European Union.*