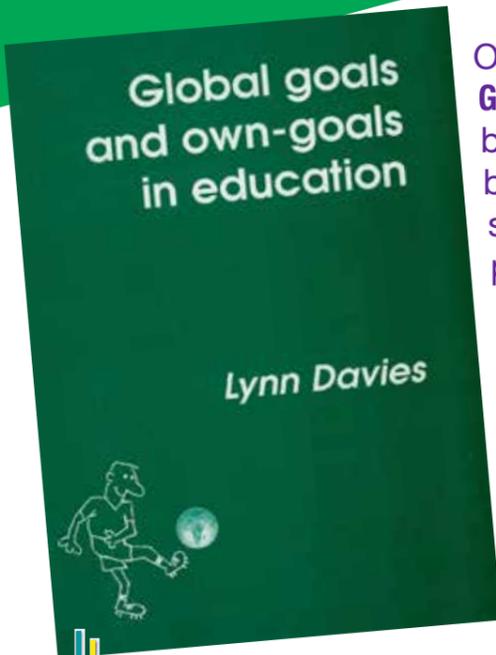


Global Goals & Own Goals ...

Lynn Davies



Over 20 years ago, in 1998, I gave a lecture called 'Global Goals and Own-Goals in Education', afterwards published by Tide~ with wonderful cartoons. I thought it would be intriguing to revisit the themes in that lecture to see what had changed, to do a stock take. In that period we have not been short of goals, drawn up constantly by the international agencies, for education to contribute to sustainable development, economic recovery, climate change, conflict transformation and indeed everything from gender equality to world peace.

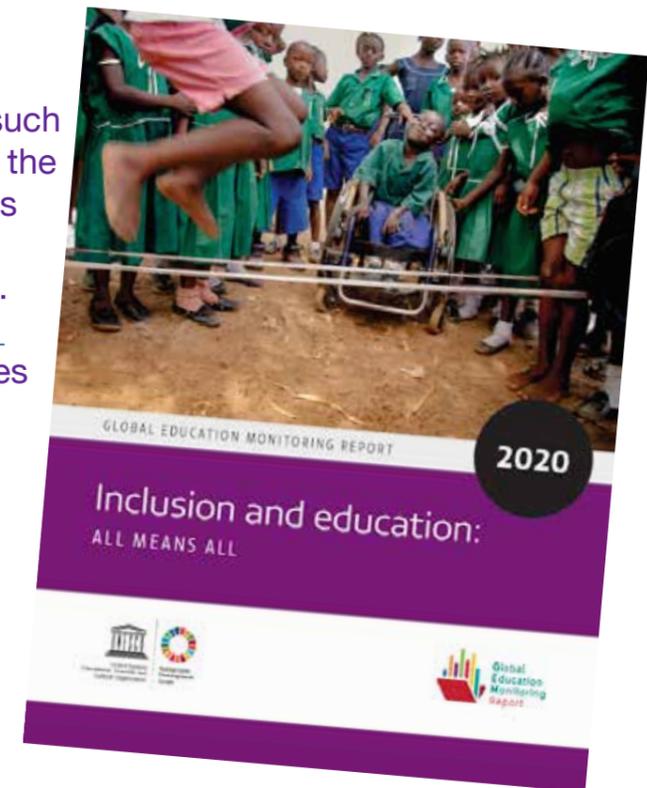
But in that lecture I identified 8 own goals, areas where education was not only not making a contribution but was positively harmful.

These were:

- ❑ Institutional violence (corporal punishment, ritual humiliations)
- ❑ Military and religious training (unquestioning obedience to authority through the 'defence' curriculum and/or presentation of the supernatural as fact)
- ❑ Schools as strangely non-adult places (with arcane rules, & no equal rights)
- ❑ Teacher deviance (corruption, absenteeism, sexual harassment)
- ❑ Reproduction of inequality (class, gender, ethnicity)
- ❑ League tables between schools and countries (emphasising competition rather than collaboration)
- ❑ Exclusive national curriculum (a silence not just on minority culture but important areas of learning such as political and legal education)
- ❑ Schools as anachronisms in a modern age

There has been progress on some of these areas. Gender inequality is still shocking in some countries, but declining. Movements such as Black Lives Matter has drawn attention to the colonial curriculum. With technology, schools are less anachronistic, and ironically Covid has pointed up alternative modes of learning. However, the 2020 [Global Education Monitoring Report](#) found that 40% of the poorest countries failed to support learners at risk during the Covid crisis. Only 10% have laws to ensure full inclusion in education.

It is difficult to get up-to-date figures on teacher and school deviance - by definition this is always underground. But [Pat Thomson's 2020 research on corruption in education](#) provides 3,800 examples of bad practice, mainly from England but also from other countries where market forces have been injected into public services; she tells a story of nepotism, fraud and cheating. This is not just wasting money on schools that never open, but horrendous ongoing costs of successive private finance initiatives (PFIs), and the way schools are pitched against each other for survival.



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She has worked in the area of education and conflict, and for the last 15 years specifically in education, extremism and security.

As Director of CIER [Centre for International Education] she worked on several Tide~-initiatives, not least the [West Midlands Commission on Global Citizenship](#)





Increased competition not just forces corruption, but generates the growing market in private tutoring across the world, the 'shadow' education system, expanding in the UK as elsewhere, again reinforcing inequalities of wealth and privilege.

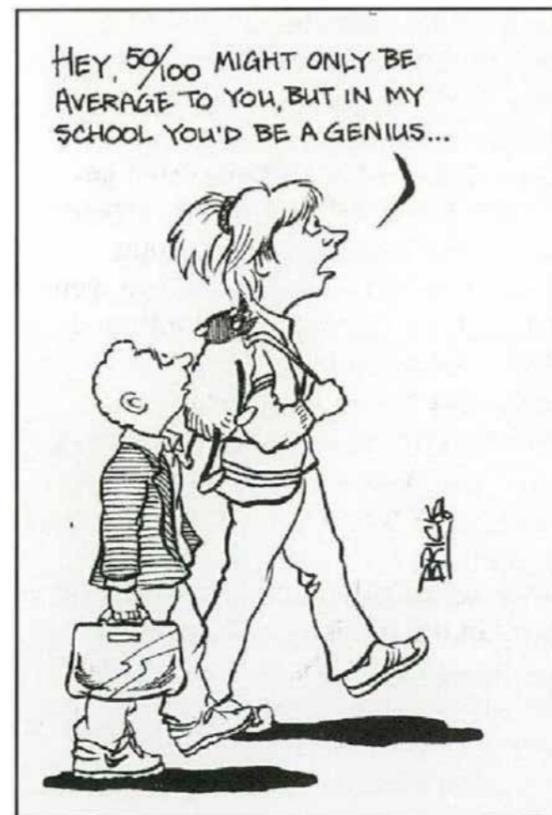
Competition and exam systems still drive rigid ideas of what children need to know, focussing on content rather than learning to learn, with an obsession with maths rather than health, on memory rather than political understanding. It is my contention that if we in UK had had decent critical political education, if we hadn't believed Boris's lies, we wouldn't have had Brexit.

Yet the area where there is the least global progress is that of violence and extremism. Yes, more are dying from Covid than terrorism but we will have a vaccine. It will get better. But Islamist and far right terrorism and violence show no signs of getting better, merely morphing into different shapes.

Covid is not man made. But violence is. It is possible that schools are becoming less violent places, although the 2020 [Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children](#) report reveals that corporal punishment is legally prohibited in schools in 128 countries but allowed in 69 (35%).

This means that in over one third of the world's schools, it is acceptable to beat children - even if illegal to beat other adults.

Tackling violence is something that we can do now and try to assess results.



Our work in the social enterprise [ConnectFutures](#) involves training and research around the areas of extremism, exploitation and violence.

We work with students, teachers and other professionals through programmes on radicalisation, knife crime and contextual safeguarding. We estimate we've reached 96,000 young people to date.

Our essential work on critical thinking and fake news covers both religious indoctrination and grooming – and shows the links between them.

We do not moralise, but do try to tackle the normalisation of violence, the acceptance of brutality as means to an end, as the only way to keep safe. We show how manipulation occurs, whether on line or face to face, and do not shy from showing graphic material from extremist groups.

In contextual safeguarding programmes we work with teachers to examine the dangers in their own locality, the actual gangs and county lines that operate there, and what would be warning signs in young people in the language and slang they use - and in the questions they ask.

In one session on violence with young people, one lad asked us: **'What is a safe place to stab someone?'** We have to work with the reality of young people's lives to try to convince that violence is never safe. And that there are alternative ways of securing our world.



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Creating Change Together



A website worth a visit

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