



What is the point of development education?

Bill Elgar takes advantage of 'lock down' to reflect on some core questions.

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Development Education aims to raise awareness and understanding of how global issues affect the everyday lives of individuals, communities and societies. It is about teaching and learning awareness of issues related to development, the environment and sustainability and understanding the personal, local, national and global significance of these issues.

What possible relevance can it have to the reformed Key Stage 3 curriculum in a 21st century UK heading towards splendid isolation?

Well for starters with the current virus, many of us in the UK are experiencing what it is like to live as a member of the "developing world" for the first time. **A lot of the certainties have gone.** How long will our jobs last? How much is our money worth? Can we afford to worry about the environment? Can we afford not to worry about the environment? How do we take advantage of the talents of our young people? Can we afford to pay for the upkeep of our settlements? Can we afford to take care of the vulnerable? Just when we (well some of us) thought we were seizing control, the forces of globalisation (albeit through an unseen virus and not the controlling hands of a multinational company or former colonialist) have decreed otherwise.

"Stay at home to save lives": Never before in recent memory in the UK has the link between acting locally to affect the global been so apparent. It got me thinking back to 1993 and an experience of a lifetime in Ghana, with like-minded Geography teachers as part of a Development Education Centre project. The idea, to bring the issues facing people in Ghana to life in a way that would make a UK child feel some connection with and care for the outcome socially, economically and environmentally. We learnt how vulnerable people were in places like Kumasi in central Ghana and Bolgotanga in the north where the arrival of the wet season determined everything. We tried to communicate how people attempted to take control of their own lives through, for example, the establishment of co-operatives or work with organisations such as Water Aid.

The fact that globalisation has taken a battering in recent months makes it more crucial that our statements of intent (the starting point for any conversation about the new curriculum) make clear **we are developing students who care, who can make connections and who reach decisions based on the weighing up of genuine evidence.**

Three books and a photo set resulted from the project. They were written into the geography curriculum of the time. There are many case studies, for example, the lesson bringing to life 17.5p in every £. This is what Ghana got from the whole chocolate making process: growing the cocoa beans, turning them into cocoa butter and shipping them to the UK. [This was the same percentage as VAT at the time.] The cocoa butter was made into chocolate just down the road from our schools at the then UK owned Cadbury factory in Bournville.



The story of Elizabeth, an iced water seller in Kumasi, the seasons game, the application of thematic maps to explain

the north south divide. All very exciting for those constructing a curriculum that must tick off all, or nearly all, of the KS3 National Curriculum content as well as the skills audit. The use of the compass rose to analyse photos, all building to a vision of two possible futures for Ghana and the impact of various decision makers in determining which one might be reached.

To my shame over the last 27 years a lot of that teaching had been forgotten, replaced by more pressing innovation, but one of a number of advantages of the 'lock down' has been the chance to reflect and remember.

When it comes to core values and a moral compass it is very often the connection with the individual, and the community and its needs that makes us care. **Re-read my introduction, shamelessly stolen from Leeds DEC, and ask yourself: Have you ever seen anything more relevant to the needs of a 21st century UK student?**



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