

EDITORIAL INTRODUCTION

Education for Democracy in the Post-Development Era: What Will the Curtain Reveal?

Across countries, students are open to less traditional forms of civic and political engagement such as collecting money for a charity and participating in non-violent protests or rallies. A small minority of students would be willing to participate in protest activities that would be illegal in most countries, such as blocking traffic or occupying buildings¹.

What does it mean to "educate" students for democracy? Are democratic principles a luxury only achieved after "modernization" and the transformation to capitalism? Do free citizens only exist in the free market and if not, are there other possibilities aside from those with the prefix "anti-" attached? Assuming one may arrive at the "genuinely unbiased" notion of democracy referred to in our call for papers for this issue, should education even necessarily be considered as the means to achieve it?

The task is complicated by contradictions, not least of which is the idea of pluralism, contained in a curriculum which implies that there is only one, "best" form of citizenship. In this sense the difference between education and indoctrination, is by no means obvious. A popular solution that has been documented is the determination of goals in terms "education for," with the best of intentions attached--diversity, tolerance, peace and human rights. As ideals, these may be inarguable, but as goals for education, are they achievable?

The authors whose articles are presented in the current issue of CICE, "Education for Democracy in the Post Development Era," have provided us a variety of perspectives which to consider these issues. Some describe social and political contexts democracy is conceptually almost unrecognizable in terms of the way in which we have come to understand it. Others alter the grounds of the argument altogether by introducing alternative approaches, which they argue are more universally applicable, such as Peace Education, or by insisting that democracy can no longer be conceived of as an exclusively national phenomenon, and should be approached from a more cosmopolitan framework.

In *Prospects of Educating for Democracy in Struggling Third Wave Regimes: The Case of Malawi*, Zikany Kaunda and Nancy Kendall refer to the weaknesses of present national and international conceptualizations of democracy and advocate for an alternative model, better suited to the Malawian context. Their model emphasizes normative and cultural aspects, as well as the important role that both formal and non-formal educational structures can play in providing a culturally acceptable program of education for democracy. Most importantly, their article refers to the question of whether or not the model of democracy created by the "developed" West, can be of any utility in places where these same countries have in the past behaved so undemocratically.

Writing from a similar perspective, Andrea Dyrness, in *Popular education and post-war democratization* "The case of PENNAT, Guatemala, argues that in Guatemala, education for democracy must also address the "culture of terror" and the "culture of fear" that the civil war has left behind. She asks whether education can help to achieve a national transition to democracy, while at the same time helping individuals and communities recover from the devastating effects of political violence and repression. Dyrness examines a specific NGO program, 'PENNAT,' (Programa Educativo del Niño, Niña y Adolescente Trabajador--Educational Program for Child and Adolescent Workers), which is explicitly oriented toward social change, based on a popular education philosophy that aims to empower the most excluded members of society. She concludes that in terms of both what it does, as well as who it serves, PENNAT makes a unique contribution to post-war democratization and to building a "culture of mutual respect and peace."

The possibility of revising popularly held notions of democracy, is hypothesized by Dale Snauwaert in *Cosmopolitan Democracy and Democratic Education*. Snauwaert argues that democracy can no longer be conceived of as exclusively a national phenomenon. He advocates in its place a more "cosmopolitan" conception of democracy, grounded in "universals" such as "moral equality" and "inherent dignity." Snauwaert underscores the relationship between education and democracy and argues in favor of a, "(...) democratic education grounded in the principle of humanity (...) devoted primarily to the cultivation of emphatic, respectful and wide-awake cosmopolitan citizens."

A similar stance of revisionism is present in Leonissa Ardizzone's *Towards global understanding: The transformative role of peace education*. Ardizzone writes that civic education, tolerance education, human rights education and education for democracy, are all actually components of a curriculum of Peace Education. Peace Education is education directed towards the creation of a culture of peace. By implication then, traditional approaches to civic education may be held partially accountable for global conflict in failing to promote critical thinking, intercultural understanding and "(...) a long history of structural violence within a global culture of war." According to both Ardizzone and Snauwaert, civic education must transcend national borders and prepare students for "global citizenship."

The future of education for democracy is a very important topic for the current CICE Editorial Board. Along with many of our readers, we hope to have a role in influencing that future. We hope that the discussion started in this issue will continue and contribute to educational goals for positive social change.

Notes

1. Torney-Purta, J., Lehmann, R., Oswald, H. and Schulz, W. (2001). *Citizenship and education in 28 countries: Civic knowledge and engagement at age 14* (p.176). Amsterdam, The Netherlands: The International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement.