

**Creative approaches to staff development: Global Education in ITE in the Gambia.** (published Education 3 - 13 2007, Vol 35(20 pp 117-131)

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### **Abstract**

The elements of global education should be at the heart of all learning and teaching. In ITE we often protect 'our subject' in the belief that it should have more prominence in the curriculum and more teaching time in school. In this article a group of ITE tutors comment on their learning about global education and its inclusion in their subject following a study trip, with students and teachers, to The Gambia. A truly cross curricular strand develops and ideas within subjects are matched to key concepts of global education. An experiential model of tutor CPD evolves which includes personal challenge of values and attitudes.

### **Introduction**

"The global dimension incorporates the key concepts of global citizenship, conflict resolution, diversity, human rights, interdependence, social justice, sustainable development and values and perceptions. It explores the interconnections between the local and the global. It builds knowledge and understanding, as well as developing skills and attitudes." (DfID 2005 p1)

Student teachers annually participate in a short educational study visit to The Gambia, led by two University of Hertfordshire, School of Education tutors. One aim is to provide practical experience of the key concepts of the global dimension in an unfamiliar and challenging setting. A second aim is that this will encourage permeation of global education across the primary curriculum whatever the specialism of the students. To help students develop this in school teachers from partnership primary schools, including heads, special needs teachers and an adviser, participated in the 2005 visit. To facilitate creative staff development three extra School of Education tutors were also involved to strengthen the position of the global dimension across the ITE programme. It was intended they should disseminate the Gambia Global Education Experience within the School of Education.

In the Gambia all participants undertook a programme of small-group experiential fieldwork, designed to introduce them to a developing world culture, to help them begin to understand just what it is like to live in an economy much different from that in the south east of England. The hope is that this will impact on their teaching through developing a "*global perspective - an interest in social and environmental matters and an open-mindedness to listen to different voices, especially those of the disadvantaged and oppressed*" Steiner 1993 p3

### **Purpose of article**

This article explores, through the eyes of the tutors, the potentially transformative nature of this experience, personally and professionally. It aims to identify opportunities for learning within subject areas, but also to show how the challenging context of the visit led us to rediscover re-examine and re-understand our personal and professional values and beliefs. The analysis shows how such a visit could help primary teachers move from describing the visit in a content-led curriculum to one more concept-based, to move from small detail to using experiences to illustrate the big ideas of global education.

### **Key Concepts and indicators for the global dimension**

The key concepts identified in 'Developing the global dimension in the school curriculum' (DfES 1409-2005DOC-EN p8/9) underpin subject areas and help clarify what the global dimension means. These are highlighted at the outset of this article.

Another set of indicators has been developed by initial teacher trainers and development education practitioners to inform discussions on policy and practice for global perspectives in ITE, namely:

- "Education for an interdependent world
- Development of political literacy
- Values and attitudes
- Teaching and Learning
- Subject Knowledge
- Research and scholarship
- School Policy" (DEA 2003 p54)

These can also act as starting points for peers interested in integrating a global dimension into their institutions and courses.

The key concepts and indicators were shared with all trip members. Although the 'indicators' had been developed for ITE tutors they were

relevant to the whole group, however in this article most emphasis is placed on the concepts rather than the indicators. This evolved as co-authors personal choice throughout their writing.

### **The experiential fieldwork programme**

- All trip members, sub-divided into small groups, were set daily tasks designed to immerse them in the Gambian culture and daily way of life. Day 1: get a local/bush-taxi from near the hotel to the centre of the ex-colonial capital city, Banjul (about 6 miles), walk through the city, the market and along the beach, meet at a café;
- Day 2: in different groups visit the 'native' capital, Serrekunda, visit 5 specific places, barter for and buy two items before meeting together;
- Day 3: return to Serrekunda, change to a different bush-taxi route to visit Abuko, a nature reserve of preserved riverine forest.

Each day provided a substantial challenge in unfamiliar territory. Within this framework groups could follow their own agenda and research their own interests: some went to church, others to a hospital.

- Days 4-6: visits to a women's horticultural co-operative, a fish smoking and boat-building village, several contrasted compounds (homes), schools and industries, and an extended visit to a family in a village.

Daily briefings and de-briefings were essential.

Information based around themes such as education, children, water and religion was collected during the visit. Following the trip this data was used by trip members to make a multimedia CDROM. The CD was to be shared by all participants so our IT co-author designed software to make it accessible to all, for use in the classroom.

Each co-author had their own development agendas spanning their academic interests from Science to Early Years Education, Physical Education, ICT and Art & Creativity. Our own interests are based in Geography with a strong leaning toward Citizenship, Education for Sustainable Development and Global Education.

Co-authors each wrote their own cameo account, with global education in mind. They are deliberately quoted here, to preserve their individual voices, rather than being paraphrased. Their names are given, with permission, in case personal contact is desired. The authors ran the trip and evaluate the global education experience

### **The Multimedia Project: Eric Dell**

'Each group was asked to choose the focus of their project, for example, trade, housing, recycling and religion. While in the Gambia, each group member would collect digital resources in the form of video, photographs and audio clips which could then be woven into a PowerPoint presentation that could be used as a teaching resource in their classrooms. PowerPoint was chosen because it was easily available and the activity would enable the participants to develop their PowerPoint skills which could then be transferred to other uses of PowerPoint in their respective avenues of interest. Once all the individual multimedia projects had been completed, they were each placed on a single CD-ROM and linked together with the top level menu. Also included on the CD-ROM, was a photo gallery of focus based images taken by group members that could also be used as a teaching resource.

One of the advantages of multimedia is that it can be used as a tool to represent ideas through a multisensory approach. However, an important consideration is what educational value can be attributed to the artefact that has been produced? Has multimedia been used for its own sake? Will the teaching resource support meaningful learning? Answering these questions led to a lot of animated discussion - the multimedia project provided a focus for meaningful talk. Each group was using multimedia to "construct realities" (Jonassen et al, 2003). The student members of the groups had been taught that it is in the construction of multimedia artefacts that active, deep learning takes place rather than when multimedia artefacts are used to support teaching and learning (Jonassen et al, 2003). Putting this idea across to the other members of their group enabled the students to demonstrate their understanding of this view of learning especially when this view was challenged. Lehrer's five processes formed the framework of the artefacts: group members plan the artefact; access and transform information they have gathered into new knowledge; evaluate the artefact; revise it and then reflect on it (Lehrer, 1993). As a result all group members developed the following: project management skills, research skills, organisation and representation skills, presentation skills and reflection skills (Jonassen, 2006).

The adventure in the Gambia, the shared and often challenging experiences, the collaboration while planning and gathering digital media for the multimedia project together with assembling the artefact back at the University, led to the strengthening of the partnership between the University and its partnership schools. One of the benefits of being in

partnership with the University is that teachers and head teachers have the opportunity to take part in such trips. The completed multimedia artefacts become a valuable teaching resource for the student teachers and those schools represented on the trip and enables those teachers and students to speak and illustrate with first hand knowledge, understanding and passion about their global education experiences, hopefully enriching the education of primary children.'

In terms of the global education key concepts, the ICT exercise illustrated 'interdependence: appreciating the links between the lives of others and children's and young people's own lives' and 'conflict resolution: understanding the importance of dialogue, tolerance, respect and empathy', between participants and their Gambian contacts, and within and between groups of students and possibly staff. It particularly provided a context for exposing and challenging 'values and perceptions' of a shared experience of an unfamiliar environment and culture: 'developing multiple perspectives and new ways of seeing events, issues, problems and opinions', and 'understanding the power of the media in influencing perceptions, choices and lifestyles' ( all key concept references are to DfES 2005 pp 12-13) Transferring this to the classroom setting gives insight into the challenges primary children can encounter in, for example, a geographical distant locality study or a unit of RE work.

Using ICT in the context of The Gambia raises questions about another key concept, social justice, in particular 'recognising the impact of unequal power and access to resources' (DfES 2005, p 13). It is sobering to see at first hand the lack of electricity in homes and schools and realise the impact that the lack of access to the internet has on education. Values are also challenged by the sight of the ubiquitous mobile phones being collected by bicycle and taken away, often many miles, to be recharged.

### **Physical Education (PE).** Barry Paraskeva Costas.

'Although the NC encourages compartmentalised learning, I found it hard to separate and classify my experiences of The Gambia into subjects. The Primary Strategy has helped in allowing the possibility for 'blending' curriculum areas, but the distinction between *core & foundation* subjects is not helpful. [See for example Vygotsky's notion of the transferability of learning skills (1962), Bernstein's conceptualisation of 'weak classification' (1971), Bourdieu and Passeron's argument that 'curriculum'

can only ever represent a selection of skills and knowledge (1977,) or the concerns expressed by Moore and Klenowski (2003).] However, within these constraints my intention is to report the learning that took place in the context of Physical Education in what was truly a holistic learning experience.

Team work should transcend all aspects of education and PE is no exception. For example on a *macro* level, we could discuss team work in relation to PE teachers and their relationship with their Local Education Authority (LEA), or on a *micro* level, a school netball or football team. During the visit to The Gambia team work was absolutely everywhere. We were a team as a visiting party and the team included lecturers, teachers, head-teachers and student teachers. Team meetings were planned and executed with meticulous efficiency. Students, teachers and tutors worked well as mixed teams both in friendship and professional contexts. At the beginning of our visit the less travelled were often challenged but were supported by the more confident. However, by the end of the week teams of initially intimidated trip members were going out on their own, organising social functions and dealing with every situation that The Gambia had to offer.

We visited a working collective, where the women took responsibility for the growing, tending, harvesting, selling and distribution of local produce. This illustrated a distinctly different example of team work, where work was always hard, often laborious and always carried out in very hot and dry conditions. Moreover it was a unique and extremely successful initiative, especially when one reflects that The Gambia appears to be largely male dominated in terms of social structure and hierarchy. The cohesiveness and sense of belonging in this team was so evident in the way in which we were greeted on arrival and sent off at the end of the visit. Tools became instruments (watering-can drums) and work gave way to dance in which we were included. What a wonderful way to explore differing cultures through dance, art and music, and so easy to incorporate into a multi-cultural scheme of work.

Perhaps the area where I was forced to reflect most on team work was in the context of the power of the extended family, where in the family compounds a Muslim male could have up to four wives. Certainly different to western moral codes, there were examples where all family members appeared to accept and understand their roles in a hierarchy. As

functioning units and in terms of collective strength they seemed to be very successful.

Outdoor and Adventurous Activities (OAA) are often a neglected area of activity within the PE curriculum. Yet, it is an area of the curriculum which impacts on, and can relate to, *all* other curricular areas. So whilst the visit to The Gambia was all about experiential research in Africa, exploring and developing teaching resources in the context of Global education, it was also about history, geography, language, maths, music, culture, science, art, religion, information technology and about communicating, the very essence which underpins being human. A physical education in terms of the senses is always present. All the group experienced The Gambia through seeing it, hearing it, smelling it, and indeed *feeling* it, living it, a truly multi-sensory experience. As a model for promoting fieldwork, school journeys and exploring the great outdoors and in raising awareness of the benefits of such excursions, the visit was of outstanding value to all teams of people. This was especially helpful in the light of recent negative publicity OAA has suffered.

The visit included hiking, walking, aspects of orienteering, map-work and lots of problem solving. We took an array of PE resources which were left in local schools, including a parachute, cones and numerous sized balls. All the equipment was used in schools, affording an opportunity to teach, be taught, and share learning with children and our counter-parts in the Gambian schools.

My group focus was 'Children's Games', which varied from modified versions of football and volleyball, to games that local children had made up for themselves. These included versions of 'pitch and toss' using discarded bottle tops, and a kind of 'hoop 'n' stick', where an old wheel rim was rolled along the sandy streets with a stick. (UK, NC, 'create and make up' games. N.C. KS1 7c & KS2 7a)

Whilst cycling I visited Fajara war cemetery and was surprised that there were soldiers lying side by side from many different regiments. These included the Gambia Regiment, the Gold Coast Regiment and the West African Medical Corps. Here Christian and Muslim soldiers lie side by side, having given their lives for freedom and democracy, and *today*, we are virtually at war with each other. I cannot help but wonder what Leading Airman Samba Joof, or Gunner A.W.Harris would have made of it all? My cycling activity, exploring the local community, developed into a global education issue which must concern us all. It is hard to estimate

the value of fieldwork, indeed; "School trips can change lives. One in 10 (of the children surveyed) said that school trips had been a key factor in their choice of career." (Peacock, A. TES 10.02.06, p.1.) In terms of enthusing and inspiring our future teachers this trip changed lives and uncovered global education. '

With Barry Paraskeva Costas's acknowledgement that the visit was a 'truly holistic learning experience', and with the emphasis on 'teamwork', comes the recognition that most, if not all, of the key concepts of global education are exemplified. Aspects of 'social justice: understanding and valuing equal opportunities' and 'conflict resolution: developing skills of communication, advocacy, negotiation, compromise and collaboration' are recognised in the successful running of the women's horticultural cooperative. The whole visit illustrated the importance of 'human rights: valuing our common humanity, the meaning of universal human rights' and, on many occasions, 'interdependence: understanding how the world is a global community and what it means to be human'. The structure and cooperation of the compound and the extended family, sometimes with more than one wife, provides a case study in 'diversity: understanding the importance of respecting differences in culture, customs and traditions and how societies are organized and governed'. This also provides an interesting focus for discussion of the similarities and differences in family support networks in the UK and The Gambia, and equal opportunities. Identifying and describing instances of teamwork also identifies many 'triggers' for exploring issues of global education.

A powerful discussion topic amongst the students was the effect of leaving games equipment with some schools. This small gesture was an eye-opener and served as an introduction to the impact of the much wider question of aid and aid-dependency.

### ***Collateral Learning: Early Years Education:*** Lyn Trod

'In order to develop evidence-based practitioners, Early Years studies have to challenge the 'received wisdom' that dominates Early Years education, child rearing and child care. The experience of visiting families and homes in Gambia has given me lots of examples with which to challenge some of this 'received wisdom'. Early Years studies tend to focus on micro issues - one child, for instance - in the belief that understanding the development, learning and needs of one child gives insight into many other children. Consequently, I think that the



recognition of global issues and their impact on children across the world does not come easily to Early Years specialists. I found this new broader perspective challenging and stimulating in the following ways.

For me a hugely valuable feature of the Gambia trip was the exemplification of "cultural relativism" (Cook J, 1978) that it offers. I had thought that I was fully aware of the "cultural niche" (Super and Harkness, 2002) in which the UK and western developed world notions of child, children, the family, school, education and learning exists. I found that the immersion in Gambian life that the trip offered greatly developed my thinking and awareness of the complexities of such issues. The project focus on bringing back something meaningful as a teaching resource is an especially good one as it highlights issues of cultural relativism. Within three weeks of returning from the trip some colleagues have made great use of their photos and artifacts already e.g. Chapel Street Nursery in Luton held a Gambia week dominated by photographs of the school teddy in various poses in The Gambia. There were some moments of cognitive dissonance (Festinger 1957) when Gambians watched trip members taking these photographs and we watched the Gambians watching them.....

In addition there were many insights from the trip about environmental issues especially the interdependence of elements of the environment and the law of unintended consequences. Some inspired awe (and wonder) like the unique "silence" of the rain forest and the ingenuity of many Gambians. Others brought about a sickening guilt like the sweat-inducing nylon football shirts and other unsuitable ephemera Britain has donated (dumped?) here. Like many others I am involved in activities and fund-raising intended to support developing countries. The trip gave me a chance to ground some of my opinions in first hand experience. Another piece of key learning for me was that even well-meaning actions can have a very negative impact. There were several examples of this that were explained or were illustrated during our visits and meetings. Unintended consequences abound especially if you do not really understand the context in which you are operating. I also learned about the danger of a deficit approach to Africa. There is so much that is positive and enviable as well as some poverty and injustice.

The visit certainly developed my determination that education has a moral imperative. Several students commented on the way that the Gambians see education as the only way out of poverty. One said to me that it had made him realise just how important education is to people. This was from

a B.Ed student who had confided to me on the flight out to The Gambia that he was thinking of being something other than a teacher once he graduated. He has now secured his first teaching post. In the UK we talk a great deal about Children's Rights but we do not even want to get down to the details about what that means to many children, especially in developing African countries. One practical piece of learning that the visit has given me is into the practice of female genital mutilation. World Health Organisation (2000) teachers, nursery nurses, teaching assistants and child carers need to become as aware of this as health practitioners are in order to support children who return traumatised and injured from abroad or from a stay with relatives here in the UK. Conversations with Gambian contacts supplied some anecdotal evidence that education and contact with western culture represent a challenge to the practice of female genital mutilation which seems to be a cultural tradition perpetuated in the main by women themselves.

I was very pleased and humbled to understand and see for myself more about the reality of the slave trading triangle. It was a surprise to me that there was a culture of slave trading in West Africa well before western traders began to ship slaves to the Americas. The slave trading triangle is a key part of our history in the UK especially for African British people. Gambian children showed me carefully scribed exercise books eulogising Britain's role in fighting slavery. There are parts of this view of history of which we should be rightly proud e.g. the work of William Wilberforce, but I felt uncomfortable with much of it knowing how actively Britain engaged in slave trading and the economic benefits that we derived from it.

This was a rich and lasting experience for all of us in the manner of Dewey's (1938) "Collateral learning". He writes

"Perhaps the greatest of all pedagogical fallacies is the notion that a person learns only the particular thing that he is studying at the time. Collateral learning in the way of formation of enduring likes and dislikes may be and often is much more important than the spelling lesson or lesson in geography or history that is learned. For these attitudes are what fundamentally count in the future."

The wealth of collateral learning identified by Lyn Trodd extends well beyond the immediate field of Early Years education and provides many exemplars of the global education key concepts. Visiting families and homes and becoming familiar with family structure (and the traditions of

female circumcision) illustrate 'diversity: developing a sense of awe at the variety of peoples and environments around the world' and, as in PE, 'understanding the importance of respecting differences in culture, customs and traditions and how societies are organized and governed'. At a personal level 'values and perceptions: questioning and challenging assumptions and perceptions' were certainly addressed through meeting families and through considering the impact of aid. The family context also highlighted 'sustainable development: understanding the interconnections between the social, economic and environmental spheres'. 'Interdependence: understanding the impact of globalisation and that choices made have consequences at different levels, from personal to global' and 'understanding how actions, choices and decisions taken in the UK can impact positively or negatively on the quality of life of people in other countries' was exemplified by the apparent dumping of football shirts (by well-intentioned tourists?) and other 'inappropriate' aid. These examples also illustrate 'social justice: appreciating that actions have both intended and unintended consequences on people's lives and appreciating the importance of informed choices'. 'Social justice: recognising the impact of unequal power and access to resources' and 'understanding and valuing equal opportunities' is also pertinent in considering education in The Gambia and the legacy of slavery impinges on 'understanding how past injustices affect contemporary local and global politics'.

These encounters were powerful in the Gambia, but experience shows that they also lead to reflection on the situation nearer to home and a better understanding of western society, culture, economics and power.

**Science:** David E Quinn

'My unique remit was to consider the impact of the visit in terms of science education and to consider questions such as:

- How can the Gambian experience be used to enhance students' science education?
- What can I, as a tutor, take from the experience to inform work in developing the science ITE curriculum?
- Can the themes of global education, and more particularly, visits to developing countries, be used to support students learning how to teach science in primary schools?

My response to the Gambia experience informs my view of science and science education at quite a deep level. It would be very easy to choose one area of teaching content and bolt on a little global education element. For example, we don't currently include any lectures or topics on 'water'; so I could develop some tasks and ideas for teaching that will reflect the global dimension of water usage. However, I don't feel that this 'tokenistic' approach is adequate.

Just as feminist critics (Brickhouse, 2001) have questioned the nature of the 'received view' of science, claiming that science is gendered. I feel that traditional science (i.e. what is presented in the national curriculum as science) is probably very 'western' and certainly does not include an African perspective.

So, I'd like to review what we teach and how we teach it, exploring with colleagues our view of the nature of science, the inclusion of a global context that weaves through the whole curriculum (*built-in* rather than *bolt-on*) and so begin the process of enlarging science and how we approach it. Most of all, I think my experience confirms to me that science is a 'human activity', the choice of content and methods being determined by real people in a real context. The prevailing conception of science is historically derived from western thought following the Ancient Greek traditions and the empirical philosophy of the 17<sup>th</sup> Century. Once we recognise that this is the origin of science - that its history and philosophy are tied to particular historical contexts and specific individuals (Aristotle, Galileo, Newton, Darwin and Einstein come to mind) - then we can begin to consider alternative conceptions and develop a curriculum that encompasses human endeavour in a more inclusive way.

A few initial thoughts on this . . . instead of an operating paradigm for science knowledge being 'the physical world', we could look at human situations, starting with 'the physical world in relation to human need/activity/inter-relationships'. I think this is more than just saying we should consider 'applied science' as opposed to 'pure science': I think this is about looking at the actual epistemology of science - in two senses.

Firstly, the very basis of content inclusion could cease to be *is it about the physical world?* and become *is it about human inter-relationships in the physical world?*

Secondly, the criterion of demarcation for science/non-science could become *is it testable and are the outcomes of benefit to humanity?* instead of simply *is it testable?*

I think this suggested overhaul of the curriculum has two direct outcomes for my own practice:

While I will (inevitably) continue to cover the required elements of the national curriculum in lectures and workshops, I will endeavour to build in global perspectives, considering knowledge, skills and attitudes from the human perspective.

- I will endeavour to weave context-based starting points, themes and applications into all of the teaching examples I use, emphasising links between content, skills and, most importantly, learning.

Another dimension I am currently considering is the place of creativity in science education. This is alluded to in the introductory statements of the national science curriculum, with the acknowledgement that scientific knowledge is the result of creative thought, but very little is available to suggest how primary teachers should teach creativity in science. '

David Quinn's response to his third question is an implicit 'yes'. In focusing on human-physical relations he identifies as a particularly relevant global education key concept 'interdependence: understanding the influence that diverse cultures and ideas (. . . . technological and scientific) have on each other and appreciating the complexity of interdependence.' His selection of water as an illustrative topic embraces 'sustainable development: understanding the connections between social, economic and environmental spheres; considering probable and preferable futures and how to achieve the latter; and 'appreciating that economic development is only one aspect of quality of life'.

### **Washing Windows: Art and Creativity.** Sally Graham

'Before my first visit to The Gambia I had never visited Africa before. Driving on the new dual carriageway from Banjul airport for the first time I immediately realised that many of the things I would see would challenge my assumptions about this continent; proud women walking with children strapped to their backs and carrying heavy loads on their heads, colourful batiked fabrics, dusty roads with dilapidated vehicles, men

transporting goods with wheelbarrows, school children wearing western style uniforms.

I felt that nothing in my education had really prepared me for this. I had simply arrived in Africa with a suitcase of stereotyped images. This led me to question my own lifestyle and wonder how I had come to take so much for granted. So, as Alan Alde suggests 'begin challenging your own assumptions. Your assumptions are your windows on the world. Scrub them off every once in a while, or the light won't come in' (Alde 1980).

Due to their lack of money, most Gambians own few material goods. They also have much less access to services that I simply take for granted, for example a tap with running water, a cooker, a doctor or hospital in the vicinity. Yet most of the people I met appeared happy and proud of their lives and achievements. Having visited the Gambia several times now I have come to love the opportunity to spend time in a country where all the fripperies of life seem to have been stripped away and only the essence is visible. Life is clearly very hard, there is often little food and water and women know that few of the children they conceive will survive until adulthood. Yet people have time to talk, they smile and laugh a lot, they care for each other and they dance and make wonderful music and artwork.

Everywhere you go in The Gambia you can see beautiful things exquisitely made: vibrant and colourful batiks, carved wooden statues, tuned musical instruments, painted murals and much more. Art and creativity is everywhere. So as teacher educator I use my collection of artefacts and photographs as a starting point to engage students. Through raising questions that challenge assumptions I attempt to expand their thinking. I ask them: What is this object used for? Why has it been made of these resources? Where did the person who made it get the resources from? I encourage them to attempt to make some of these things themselves so as to understand the high level of skills often employed.

I want my students to be able to improve their understanding of their lives by making connections to global events. So how do they see the world through their windows and how much light is getting in? Cleaning windows can be hard and rather monotonous work but it's something we all need to do. My role is to give them the tools to do the job and show them how to let the sun shine in.'

Sally Graham's concern with stereotyping is a context for discussing 'values and perceptions: developing multiple perspectives and new ways of seeing events, issues, problems and opinions' as well as 'understanding that the values people hold shape their actions'. Art is relevant to 'global citizenship: understanding the roles of language, place, arts, religion in our own and others' identity'. Looking at artefacts different from those at home makes tangible 'diversity: understanding the impact of the environment on cultures, economies and societies' and leads into 'sustainable development: respecting each other' exemplified by the high skill-low tech nature of many artefacts, and 'appreciating the importance of sustainable resource use - rethink, reduce, repair, re-use, recycle - and obtaining materials from sustainably managed sources'. There are many examples of all these r's in the Gambia, of economic necessity because the country is so resource-poor.

### **Summary**

It seems like stating the obvious that none of us returned from the trip untouched by the experience. But what a wealth of thought provoking ideas across so much of the curriculum!

In the preparation seminars, to all trip members, we mention that they should expect to return with more questions than answers. When only spending a week in another culture the surface is barely scratched. The global education aim for us was to develop an understanding of the Gambian culture but as Alexander found when collecting data about Russian education, a Russian teacher observed "You will understand nothing about Russia until you have tried to live for a year on a Russian salary" (Alexander 2000 p3). In The Gambia this might mean living on a few pounds sterling a month, in a compound without running water and very basic, outside sanitation and cooking facilities. Yet children turn up at school in crisp, clean uniforms. We watched one mother iron a school dress with a flat iron filled with coals, straight out of Victorian Britain; and children who attend morning school often return home and pass the uniform on to a sibling for afternoon school. Even in such poverty, many schools charge fees and extra fees to borrow books from the library.

But all is not poverty and injustice as was stated above. What values and skills these people have. The value of education; children selling water in the market from the age of four to help families scrape together the fees; children walking miles on dusty, earth roads to classes; learning in three or more languages (the local language Mandinka and/or Wolof; English, the language of post colonial education; and Arabic, to read the Koran). Necessity may drive these values and skills but nothing is wasted. All aluminium is recycled into pots and pans in primitive workshops (Mackintosh, 2003). Plastic water bottles emptied by tourists or 'ex-pats' are collected and re-used for palm oil, medicines or other liquids; drinks cans that escape recycling are creatively reshaped into ashtrays for cafes; casings from white goods (from hotels) and car bonnets fabricated into beautifully decorated, secure, fire and waterproof boxes for personal papers and valuables. The creative ingenuity, high skill culture list is endless, but what powerful values and skills messages to our throw-away, value impoverished western society. And this paper makes no mention of the highly creative arts; the drum making and playing, the dancing, singing and fabric printing. What a global message when so many television images from developing countries are so negative.

We taught and we learned in several schools. Colleagues (and other trip members) got 'stuck in' to teaching with minimal resources, often outside, under an orange or mango tree. It may have been reading books (which we had brought with us), with children (and sometimes adults) or making photographic hand prints using the sunlight or organising PE games or teaching maths games or songs. We did some team teaching with Gambian teachers and we watched some lessons in unlit rooms with small unglazed windows. In one such room the teacher had been teaching geography. He had drawn two projections of the world onto what looked like wall paper. Beside this he had another hand-drawn political map of Africa and on the back wall of the classroom he has skilfully painted a map of The Gambia across the width of the room. And we complain if we can't download a map from the internet! His eyes lit up when we left him an inflatable globe. Alexander discusses the "values question... in any country" asserting "that the interaction of culture and pedagogy is not just critical to an understanding of public education, but also one of the keys to its success" (p100). I think we all returned with our eyes opened, values challenged and pedagogy strengthened.

It would be impossible to make a concluding statement with which we would all agree; one size will not fit all, so I will leave the penultimate



words to some of the comments from two students, taken from an anonymous questionnaire completed on the return journey.

What do you feel now having been to The Gambia?

- a) *Humbled! I also feel positive about what I have seen, despite the poverty. I have lots of experiences and knowledge to use in teaching.*
- b) *"My eyes have been opened to a different way of life, culture, living, education and traditional values. I feel more confident to be independent and support others"*

Did you expect this?

- a) *Yes and No. I thought I would find it sad, but I do not.*
- b) *" I did expect to have my views challenged and changed, but not on such a large scale"*

Our challenge, as teacher educators, is to construct our lectures, workshops and seminars so that Global Education is an integral part of our teaching and learning strategy, to open others' eyes, to be culturally more inclusive and to strengthen our subjects across the curriculum. We have identified, in this paper, how this can be done within our subject areas as starting points, and our ideas have been matched with the key concepts' statements for bringing the global dimension into the school curriculum through ITE. If, through our creative, experiential learning and professional development in The Gambia we are better qualified to lead informed Global Education debate, then maybe more experiences such as this should be supported throughout teacher education institutions.

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