

REPORT of the STANDING CONFERENCE  
on TEACHER EDUCATION NORTH and  
SOUTH (SCoTENS) CONFERENCE: 'A  
CRITICAL ANALYSIS of NORTH-SOUTH  
EDUCATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS'

HELD at MARY IMMACULATE COLLEGE,  
LIMERICK on  
WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 30<sup>TH</sup> 2011.

## **SCOTENS REPORT – CONFERENCE ON NORTH-SOUTH EDUCATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS**

### **CONFERENCE AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

The conference entitled “A Critical Analysis of North-South Educational Partnerships in Development Contexts” took place in Mary Immaculate College (MIC), Limerick on Wednesday November 30th, 2011. MIC, along with St Mary’s University College, Belfast, secured funding to hold this conference from the Standing Conference on Teacher Education North and South (SCoTENS). The conference brought together Irish and international experts in the area of educational partnerships in a collective effort to assess and evaluate such partnerships and to consider how future planning and policy decisions, both nationally and internationally, may be improved. The conference also identified and itemised the key issues to be addressed within sustainable, mutually beneficial teacher education partnerships and considered how future planning and policy decisions nationally and internationally, in the realm of North-South educational partnerships, can be improved. The primary concerns of the conference therefore were to examine issues such as: the principles of partnership (focusing on a critique and evaluation of partnership modalities), partnerships in practice, and policy perspectives on North-South educational partnerships. The audience for the conference comprised of people from academia (particularly those specialised in development education), civil society, and non-governmental organisations with a strong commitment to development and development-related areas.

### **CONFERENCE COMMITTEE**

In June 2011 a Conference Advisory Board was established consisting of the following personnel: Prof Michael Healy and Prof Peadar Cremin (both MIC), Dr Peter Finn (St Mary’s, Belfast), Dr Jim Gleeson (University of Limerick), Andy Pollak (Centre for Cross Border Studies), Prof Jane Grimson (Trinity College, Dublin), Dr Goretti Nakabugo (University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban), and Dr Margo O’Sullivan (Ministry of Education and Sports, Uganda). The primary function of the Conference Advisory Board was to advise on the conference format, as well as speakers and discussants. Due to conflicting commitments of the Board members and the retirement of Prof Cremin, the Conference Advisory Board was unable to meet during the summer of 2011. In September 2011, Dr Ger Downes was appointed to the Conference Advisory Board and worked in tandem with Prof Michael Healy to devise a draft list of speakers and discussants as well as outlining the conference format. It was agreed to limit the conference to a one-day event to be held on the MIC campus which would involve eight internationally-renowned speakers and two discussants.

### **CONFERENCE SPEAKERS**

The following speakers were invited to present research papers at the conference:

- **Paula Nolan** of Irish Aid, who began her career in development cooperation with the International Red Cross in Cambodia. She joined Irish Aid in 2003 after which she worked in Lesotho and Mozambique, where she oversaw the implementation of Irish Aid’s programme of support to the education sector in both countries. Since 2007 Paula has been based in Limerick as Irish Aid’s Development Specialist in the Policy Planning and Effectiveness Section.

- **Dr Gerard McCann** of the Development Studies Department at the University of Zambia and the British Council's St Mary's - UNZA Partnership, who is Senior Lecturer in European Studies at St Mary's University College, Belfast. He has served as Chair of the Centre for Global Education in Belfast for seven years and specialises in the European Union's economic and development policies, EU policy in Ireland, and Development Education.
- **Peter McEvoy**, of Dublin City University who is also Project Manager for the Irish-African Partnership for Research Capacity Building, a grouping which brings together all of the Universities on the island of Ireland with partner universities in Africa. In his capacity as an independent development consultant and international project manager, Peter worked extensively on behalf of the European Commission, bilateral donors, missionary bodies and various NGOs. He also served with Irish Aid as in-country programme coordinator in Lesotho.
- **Dr John Oliphant**, who has been Rector of Lesotho College of Education (LCE) since 2000. Previously, he was director of Lesotho National Teachers Training College and worked as a high school deputy principal. He has a PhD from the University of Cape Town. As Rector of the LCE, Dr Oliphant has been extensively involved with the work of the Centre for Global Development through Education (CGDE), which contributes to poverty reduction by enhancing the quality of basic education through capacity building in teacher education in Africa, since its inception in 2007.
- **Mary Kerr** of St Patrick's College, Drumcondra is lead coordinator of the Zambia-Ireland Teacher Education Partnership (ZITEP) which consists of a partnership between teacher education colleges in Ireland and their counterparts in Zambia with the objective of improving the quality of initial teacher education in Zambia and influencing policy on teacher education. She previously worked in teacher education in Nigeria and as an advisor at the National Commission for Colleges of Education.
- **Dr Fran Martin & Lynne Wyness** (University of Exeter) are both currently working on a major Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) project entitled 'Global Partnerships as Sites for Mutual Learning' which investigates over a three-year period what teachers learn from study visit courses, and how they make use of what has been learnt back in their own educational settings. The initial findings of this project were presented at the conference.
- **Jonathan Harle** (Association of Commonwealth Universities, ACU) analyses international higher education policy and research at the ACU and focuses in particular on initiatives aimed at strengthening the research base in African universities. He co-runs the Publishers for Development initiative with the International Network for the Availability for Scientific Publications (INASP) and edits the Africa Desk which aims to encourage and support collaborative work between African and UK researchers
- **Prof Peadar Cremin** (Mary Immaculate College, Limerick) was President of MIC from 1999 to 2011. Prior to that, he had worked in the College's Education Department for more than 20 years. He has researched development and educational issues in Africa, in the Middle East and in Latin America. His doctoral research was on education sector reform in Tanzania. Prof Cremin was the inaugural chair of the development agency 80:20, Educating for a Better World. From 2002 to 2010, he was Chair of the Development Education Advisory Committee (DEAC) which advised

Ireland's Minister for Foreign Affairs on policy matters and on strategies for promotion of development education. He was also actively involved in establishing the Irish Aid Partnership for Research Capacity Building, the educational arm of which is based at Mary Immaculate College. He also actively supported the College's engagement with ZITEP.

## CONFERENCE SESSIONS

The conference proceedings were divided into four sessions for speakers, two sessions for discussants and a poster session by an MIC postgraduate researcher.

### **SESSION 1- 9.30am to 10.45am.**

The first session consisted of papers given by Paula Nolan of Irish Aid and Dr John Oliphant of the Lesotho College of Education. This session was chaired by Peadar King, whose company KMF Productions has produced a series of documentaries screened by RTE and other television networks over the last 5 years entitled 'What in the World?' **Paula Nolan's** keynote lecture was entitled 'North-South Education Partnerships: Delivering Better Quality Education for All', and consisted of an extensive exploration of the relevance of education in the run-up to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) end point of 2015. The importance of education as literally a life-and-death issue was highlighted in reference to the *Dakar Framework for Action on Education for All* of 2000. It was emphasised that the UNESCO's Education Counts document, the recent Brookings Institute Global Compact on Education, and the 2010 Lancet article on increased educational attainment and its effect on child mortality in 175 countries between 1970 and 2009<sup>1</sup> all highlighted how up to 171 million people could be lifted out of poverty if all students in low-income countries left school with basic reading skills; that an estimated 1.8 million children's lives in sub-Saharan Africa could be saved if their mothers had a secondary education; and that an extra year of female schooling would reduce fertility rates by 10%. A word of caution was struck by the assertion that school enrolment and attendance does not equate axiomatically to improved literacy and numeracy skills. It is important for policy makers, academics and practitioners not to confound school enrolment with quality. It was stressed that by some estimates approximately 200 million children who are in primary school are learning so little that they are struggling to read basic words. Quality of education, therefore, not simply levels of attendance and enrolment, must be the benchmark to measure whether children achieve a reasonable basic standard of education.

Additionally, the presentation examined the correlation between years spent by pupils in formal education and rates of contraction of HIV/AIDS in one of Irish Aid's partner countries, Uganda, from 1990 to 2002. It was clearly illustrated how infection rates declined fastest for those with the most education. For example, for those with no experience of formal education, rates of HIV/AIDS declined from 17% to just over 12% during this timescale; people who completed primary school saw their rates of HIV/AIDS contraction fall from 14% to just over 6% in the same timeframe; while for those who completed secondary education the incidence of infection decreased from 15% in 1990 to under 2% by 2002. There then followed an overview

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<sup>1</sup> Gakidou, E., Cowling, K., Lozano, R., Murray, C., 2010. 'Increased educational attainment and its effect on child mortality in 175 countries between 1970 and 2009: a systematic analysis', in *The Lancet*, September, Vol. 376, Issue 9745, Pages 959-974.

of the different types of partnerships used by Irish Aid, including those with national governments, civil society organisations and multilateral institutions, followed by an assessment of whether these partnerships work and which are the most successful, including an analysis of what Irish Aid's role is in making such partnerships effective, and how to measure such effectiveness. Moreover, an examination of Irish Aid's education policy looked at the efficacy of the agency's objectives such as strengthening national education systems, accelerating progress towards equitable access, and promoting significant improvements in quality. The principles upon which this policy is predicated are partnership, ownership, transparency, effectiveness, coherence and sustainability.

There then followed an assessment of Irish Aid's bilateral partnership with Mozambique and Global Partnerships, in particular the Global Partnership for Education (FTI), as well as the agency's civil society partnership. The latter involves Irish Aid working with communities to increase transparency and accountability in areas such as teacher absenteeism, the use of capitation grants and parent-teacher committees. A short overview of the Programme for Strategic Cooperation between Irish Aid and Higher Education and Research Institutes (PSC), including the Zambia-Ireland Teacher Education Programme (ZITEP) followed before the talk concluded by examining aid effectiveness and stressing that every project or programme has a minimum transaction cost – the more projects the higher the transaction cost. This means that high fragmentation diminished the effectiveness of educational partnerships. Minimisation of such transaction costs would ultimately lead to better and more effective partnerships and this is something which all those intending to become engaged in educational partnerships should be highly cognisant of before embarking on such ventures.

The presentation of **Dr John Oliphant** was entitled "The Southern Experience of the North-South Partnership in Teacher Education: The Case of the Lesotho College of Education". The paper began with an overview of North-South educational partnerships and highlighted how dealings in the area have been based on traditional donor-recipient relationships which bring together unequal players. The postcolonial experience and realities of the North and South lead to asymmetric relationships that make the 'partnership' element sound unrealistic. Citing the major study on North-South educational partnerships by Joel Samoff and Bedimi Carroll (2004: 71)<sup>2</sup>, the paper emphasised that academic partnerships 'have been and continue to be rooted in the assumptions, understandings and practices of foreign aid and must be understood in those terms as well'.

The paper illustrated how, as far back as 1980, the Report of the Independent Commission on International Development Issues chaired by former West German Chancellor, Willy Brandt, pointed to the need for dialogue between the global North and South in order to achieve their goals in a spirit of partnership and mutual interest rather than of inequality and charity. The paper went on to stress that the notion of a "North-South partnership" is an inherent paradox due to the innate resource and power asymmetries involved.

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<sup>2</sup> Samoff, J. and B. Carroll, 2004. 'The Promise of Partnership and Continuities of Dependence: External Support to Higher Education in Africa', in *African Studies Review*, vol. 47, no.1, pp. 67-199.

Additionally, the postcolonial experience and realities of the North and South make the notion of an actual 'partnership' sound unrealistic and it remains an elusive objective for policy makers and practitioners.

The discussion then turned to an assessment of the work of the partnership arrangement between southern and northern higher education institutions involved in teacher education, known as the Centre for Global Development through Education (CGDE). This multi-layered capacity building partnership involved thirteen Irish Third-level and two African institutions as well as the respective Ministries of Education in Uganda and Lesotho. The paper reported on, analysed and discussed the partnership from the point of view of one of the CGDE partners, namely the Lesotho College of Education (LCE). The key features and benefits of the CGDE summarised in this talk included the following: The project was largely demand driven, which is a facet of effective partnerships; The capacity building was in line with LCE's priorities in terms of strengthening access to quality teaching/learning, research capacity development, special education capacity development; The two research areas in the partnership were relevant to Lesotho's needs; The research design was collectively decided thereby ensuring collaboration and a pooling together of competencies; The Steering Committee of the CGDE was well represented by its Southern partners; The partnership had enriching and professional and institutional development benefits; and the CGDE budget and finances were transparent and flexible with both the northern and southern partners receiving reports of expenditures and being involved in budget allocation.

It was also highlighted however, that since improving educational quality is a long-term project, it is difficult to gauge results within a period of two or three years. Another problem with the project entailed the practice of paying Associate Coordinators, which, according to Dr Oliphant was problematic and created unsustainable expectations, while financial incentives to participants, such as researchers, were miscommunicated and in some instances unnecessary. One of the CGDE programmes known as The Teacher Education Exchange Programme (TEEP) was deemed to have been pitifully short-lived, while, overall, the benefits of the CGDE have not been as institutionalised as they would have been with greater attention paid to institutional commitment among the various partners.

With regard to future partnerships, the question was asked whether sustainability and scalability should be given more attention, while issues such as viability and legacy beyond the project duration should also be addressed. The issue of whether coordination in the South should be led by a northerner placed in the South, or be led by a southerner capacitated to coordinate the partnership project was also raised. Ultimately, the paper stressed that the purpose (and realism) of partnership and expectations must be clearly defined and must address inevitable questions raised by partners such as, "What's in this for us?" The paper concluded that overall, true educational partnerships are nurtured and developed, require constant adjustment and accommodation, mutual understanding and respect and are always in the process of development for the duration of their existence. More specifically, Lesotho College of Education as an institution and its staff have benefitted from the CGDE partnership process. For example, LCE's PhD candidates have the potential of strengthening the college in many areas after graduation, while the linkages and networks that have been built up, even at an individual level, will help lay the groundwork for future development activities and inter-institutional relationships.

## SESSION 2: 11.15AM – 12.30PM

The second session of the conference was facilitated by Dr Ger Downes, post-doctoral research fellow in global development and humanitarian affairs at Mary Immaculate College, Limerick. The first speaker in this section of the conference was **Peter McEvoy**, Project Manager of the Irish African Partnership for Research Capacity Building (IAPRCB), whose presentation entitled 'Past and Current Experiences of Higher Education Partnership Approaches' examined the changing approaches over the past quarter century, in Ireland and elsewhere in Europe, to higher education partnerships with Africa. One of the key principles enunciated in this presentation was that while a well-functioning and accessible system of Higher Education is not a sufficient condition for social and economic development, few would deny that it is a necessary one. The role and impact of higher education (HE) on development was also examined by noting the positive correlation between HE and life expectancy, earnings and income growth, and the contribution of HE to the reduction in infant mortality as well as to rates of relative and absolute poverty. Citing the World Bank/UNESCO Task Force on Higher Education & Society report on *Higher Education in Developing Countries: Peril and Promise* (2000), he declared that statistical analysis, case study, and common observation all point to the fundamental importance of higher education to development.

The work of the Dublin-based grouping HEDCO (Higher Education for Development Cooperation) which operated in Lesotho, Malawi, Jordan, Palestine, Philippines, South Africa, Tanzania and Zambia between 1978 and 2000 was then highlighted. The HEDCO partnership particularly played a prominent role in areas such as course development and curriculum design; the development of teaching programmes between universities and colleges in Africa and in Ireland; and in its research and consultancy for educational reform and policy development at the level of national ministries, curriculum and examinations councils. A short summation of the work of the Irish Africa Partnership for Research Capacity Building (IAPRCB), a consortium of Universities in Ireland and partner institutions in Tanzania, Uganda, Malawi and Mozambique ensued. The IAPRCB was initiated in 2008 and has raised fundamental questions about the partnership process, such as who pays, what the transaction costs of involvement are for Southern partners, what form of quality assurance is used to monitor the workings of the group, whether expectations of impact are inflated, how to mainstream global awareness and action into HE internationalisation strategies, and whether projects such as IAPRCB are dogged by short-termism, as well as communications and language difficulties. The talk ended with an invitation to heed the words of D.C. Korten, who enunciated in 1980, that ultimately, 'neither researcher, administrator nor villager is likely to achieve his or her potential for contribution to development until they join as partners in a mutual learning process, committed not to the search for magical blueprints, but to the building of new capacities for action'.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Korten, D.C., 1980. 'Community Organisation and Rural Development: A Learning Process Approach', in *Public Administration Review*, Vol. 40, No.5:, pp. 480-511

The presentation of **Mary Kerr**, coordinator of the Zambia-Ireland Teacher Education Partnership (ZITEP), examined the changing approaches to higher education partnerships with Africa in Ireland and elsewhere in Europe over the past quarter century. The topic was discussed against the background of the shifting perceptions of the merits of aid to higher education which have evolved over that time. This presentation was entitled 'Challenges to Agency Within an Intercultural Time-Bound Project' and began by asking a pertinent question which is common across the partnership spectrum, namely whether ostensible partnerships such as ZITEP are worthy of being categorised as 'partnerships' or should really be considered as 'projects' instead? The tensions between projects and partnerships were then outlined. Partnership, it was asserted, necessitates outcomes, agency, a long timeframe in which mutual trust is developed, should be self-organising, and involve mutual learning. Projects, by contrast, encompass outputs which are delivered within a short time-scale, and in which the learning objectives tend to be limited to one 'partner'.

ZITEP could best be described as a 'community of practice' which supports agency, builds capacity, and constructs relevant strategies through its activities such as exchange visits, inter-college meetings and collaborative research projects. Opportunities to further foster this 'community of practice' involve the decentralisation of the teacher education curriculum into colleges and the rapid development of information technology infrastructure between the community's respective 'partners'. Some of the challenges to the community of practice model were then outlined, such as the differences in institutional culture and organisational structures, and how participants are inclined to fall into the traditional roles of 'doing' or 'receiving' development. The impact of such challenges on ZITEP were then surmised as leading to a situation where deliverables were prioritised over process, lecturers were sidelined from decision making, and poor communication abounded. Additionally, the relationship between the 'partners' in ZITEP conformed to the "Rowlands Framework" model of a 'power over' rather than 'power with' scenario, whereby a relationship of domination and subordination prevailed, rather than a collective rapport where participants feel empowered by organising around a common purpose. Nevertheless, there were a number of successful items that emanated from ZITEP evidenced by testimonials from participants in Zambia. Some of the participants were praiseworthy of improvement in the quality of students' presentations and in how the use of group work as a teaching method had seen a radical improvement in student attendance and participation. Another stated that the improvement in the teaching of mathematics that derived from the partnership was a reason why their school had a pass rate of 99.7% in the 2010 exams unlike the previous year when the college pass rate barely reached 40%'

### **SESSION 3: 2.00PM – 3.15PM**

The conference's third session was chaired by Aoife Phelan, Research Optometrist of the Mozambique Eye Care Project at the National Optometry Centre, Dublin Institute of Technology. The second keynote lecture, entitled 'Strengthening Research in African Universities: Some Reflections on Policy, Partnerships and Politics', was presented by **Jonathan Harle** of the Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU). The presentation highlighted how, after many years of neglect, African higher education has, in the last decade, returned to the development agenda. Mindful of the dangers of generalising about such a diverse continent and a variegated higher education sector, the presentation attempted to provide an overview of recent developments in educational partnerships between higher education institutes in the global north and south. The talk began by emphasising that there has been a boon in the number of projects and initiatives in Africa over the last decade as multilateral and bilateral agencies have extended or renewed their engagement on that continent. Furthermore, new funders, such as private philanthropies, have recently initiated their own programmes throughout Africa. As the policy and donor world has rediscovered, many African universities and colleges are now able to access these sources of funding and consequently, have become more actively involved in supporting research, developing curricula and training students. Some northern universities have built on their long-standing links to their African counterparts (through, for example, centres of development research), while others have only recently entered the African environment. Notwithstanding that the language of partnership and collaboration has been central to much of this renewed engagement, such language is also problematic as the term 'partnership' means many things to many people. Nevertheless, its use has become so ubiquitous that it is now a condition of funding if any Northern agencies or organisations want to work in Africa.

The talk then went on to underline, how in recent years, there has been a flourishing in south-south partnerships as India and China have not only become significant donors to Africa, but are also increasingly involved in African education through initiatives such as the Action Plan of the Framework for Cooperation of the Africa-India Forum and the Forum on Africa-China Cooperation. Concomitantly, a surge in demand for higher education, driven by the successful expansion of primary and secondary education, has both radically altered the African higher education landscape and further entrenched the problems facing research on that continent. Many of the new universities which have been set up to cater for this demand are private, funded through student fees, and focused on more market-oriented subjects related to business and information technology. The more established public universities, hollowed out by years of under-funding, have been forced to diversify their income streams in the face of declining per capita government contributions. While research activity is growing again in many universities, strong cultures of research and scholarship, which are critical components in any university, are still not flourishing widely in Africa. The extensive range of initiatives undertaken by ACU which seek to strengthen such a research base was then listed. Informed by the ACU's wider work to support its African members, this section of the presentation drew upon a programme of activity initiated in conjunction with the British Academy which has, since 2006, sought to contribute to the renewal of African research.

One of the themes to emerge from this segment of the lecture was that collaboration between African universities and those in the UK and Ireland can be utilised to stimulate greater research output in Africa. However, it is necessary to ensure that partnerships between African universities and their counterparts in the global 'North' genuinely contribute to strengthening the institutional foundations and incentives which support and govern research. Furthermore, enabling and ensuring southern leadership and control over research design are essential prerequisites for partnership, but are often highly difficult to enact. For example, at one of the ACU's African partners, Kigali Independent University, faculty members who coordinating the research project between both institutions are also responsible for a large teaching load and are in some cases undertaking doctoral research. Such time and workload constraints make it problematic to devote sufficient attention to any partnership projects and initiatives. Additionally, it was pointed out that, as many African universities are not paragons of research output, this has also made it harder to benefit from research partnership: Partnerships (potentially) build capacity but also require inherent capacity among all parties involved before a feasible working relationship can ensue. Furthermore, the difficulty of enabling a true partnership is exacerbated by the lack of time spent in each others' universities, the high administrative burden, the need to coordinate so many donors and partners higher education institutes, and by the fact that research themes are far more likely to emanate from funders and from the Northern partners.

This keynote address ended by asking the pertinent questions that need to articulated when critically analysing North-South educational partnerships, namely, when we speak of 'best practice' whose practice are we referring to?; How can the partnership process strengthen research and build capacity? ; How can Southern frameworks and incentives be transformed to support research?; and what space is there for partnership and collaboration within Northern frameworks and incentives?

**Dr Gerard McCann**, director of the St Mary's University College, Belfast - University of Zambia partnership, then spoke on the theme of 'University partnerships as a stimulant for micro-development initiatives and social enterprise - the example of Northern Ireland and Zambia'. He presented an analysis of the outcomes of the St Mary's University College-University of Zambia partnership agreement, and outlined how, since 2003, St Mary's has been engaged in a progressive partnership arrangement with academics and NGOs in Zambia. These links were augmented further in 2005 when the initiative secured substantial funding from the UK's Department for International Development (DfID) to nurture this partnership further. The project encompassed academic exchanges, student visits, curriculum development and extensive networking between St Mary's and numerous organisations in the Zambian capital, Lusaka. Following on from this initiative the respective institutions created academic links which included research collaboration and the 'outworking' of NGO-university support. In 2008 this culminated in investment by the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) through the British Council and the Northern Ireland Department for Employment and Learning (NIDEL) in a partnership, entitled 'Knowledge transfer and the enhancement of business education connections'. This partnership has led to a more involved integration of working practices between key departments in St Mary's and the University of Zambia and has resulted in module adaptation, lecturer exchanges, a new joint certificate in business skills, and various research projects

among staff members of both institutions. Activities with the partnership have also included study visits with colleges and schools in Zambia, Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania and Malawi; staff participation in development and social economy projects; and working with Zambian small-to-medium enterprises in a number of educational, construction and enterprise projects.

The partnership culminated in an international symposium on economic development on Sub-Saharan Africa held in the University of Zambia's Commonwealth Centre which attracted representatives from universities across Sub-Saharan Africa as well as Zambian political, business and NGO representatives. At the symposium, debate centred on the overall impact of the project and whether the partnership had acted as a stimulant for micro-development initiatives and social enterprise. Specifically, the role of micro development strategies and their contribution to the generation of pro-poor economic growth and quality employment through integrated programmes for the development of micro and small enterprises which focus on socio-economic development was discussed. It emerged that beneficiaries from the project included those participating students in Zambia who were able to gain access to materials, specialists, and ongoing support around the issues of employability and entrepreneurship within the context of the regional economy. The impact of the initiative was visible both regionally and nationally, with graduates acquiring an opportunity to use their newly acquired business skills. Other beneficiaries of the project included regional, community and business leaders who were given access to both local and international specialists in order to enhance their respective business practices, while staff at the University of Zambia benefitted from the availability of resources and a forum for the development of skills in teaching and learning in the areas of employability and entrepreneurialism.

The outcomes of this project included: Participants becoming familiar with issues relevant to employability, such as the social economy and the business environment in Zambia; The institutional partners understanding the significant role students and university business links can play in generating economic development opportunities; and a knowledge transfer that will assist Zambian academics, students and local partners in maximizing indigenous and international opportunities. Overall, the effectiveness of micro-development, which has been pioneered by the International Labour Organization (ILO) as an extension of micro-financing principals and as a practical way of engaging with the complexities of effective development in Sub-Saharan Africa, was further underlined by the relative success of the St Mary's-UNZA partnership agreement.

#### **SESSION 4: 3.45PM – 5.00PM**

The final session of the conference was facilitated by Patsy Toland, development education coordinator of Self Help Africa. The first presentation in this section was given by **Prof Peadar Cremin** and scrutinised the issues of 'partnership, practice and pretence'. He emphasised how in recent decades the principle of partnership has been a key idea in the development literature and is in fact enshrined in the Millennium Development Goals (Goal No. 8: "Develop a global partnership for development"). His talk aimed to challenge what he termed the 'cosy consensus' surrounding the principle of partnership and to highlight how genuine partnership is likely to continue to be a chimera of development, given the great imbalances in power relationships between the global North and South. The image of a chimera was chosen as an allegory for the partnership process given that this figure of Greek lore is a mythological or unreal creature of the imagination, a mere fantasy and/or delusion

This presentation began by outlining the spectacular rise of the partnership principle since the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the OECD adopted a policy statement entitled 'Development Partnerships in the new Global Context' in 1995. The OECD's approach, principle and strategy were endorsed by the G7 leaders at their June 1996 summit in Lyons and also by UNESCO's International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century later that year. The rise of partnership as a principle of development was galvanised further when the United Nations Fund for International Partnerships (UNFIP) was established in March 1998 as a vehicle for promoting a cross-sectoral partnership approach.

In practice, however, the partnership principle has proven to be rather problematic. Different groupings ascribe different meanings to the term 'partnership' and relationships between institutions have been complicated by issues such as: Who takes the lead role in the process?; Who has ownership and control?; What degree of accountability exists?; Can North-South partnerships truly prevail given the high asymmetries of resources involved?; and to what extent do donors reserve the right to demand that their vision, policy, programmes or principles are respected? The potentially positive features of partnership such as collaboration, allowing local actors take the lead in development initiatives, and finding new ways of engaging with partners at many different levels in a society rather than simply with central government, were also underscored throughout the presentation. Ultimately, however, it was asserted that genuine partnership continues to be a chimera of development.

The last contributors to the conference, **Dr Fran Martin** and **Lynne Wyness** of the University of Exeter, spoke on the topic of 'Global Partnerships as Sites for Mutual Learning'. Their paper presented an overview of a three-year research project 'Global Partnerships as Sites for Mutual Learning: Teachers' Professional Development through Study Visits', which has been funded by the UK Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC). This research draws primarily on post-colonial theory, which has been used to interrogate the issues of power, control, and identity that have arisen due to the international nature of this research, and gives equal weight to the experiences of participants in both Northern and Southern contexts. This study has sought to discover what teachers learn about development issues from North-South study visits, and how this knowledge informs their understanding of, and practice in, global partnerships.

The presenters began their paper by noting that since the start of this century increasing numbers of teachers are taking part in study visits to countries in the global South. A variety of different types of experience exist, from one and two year stints with the likes of Voluntary Service Overseas, through to visits to partner schools, to short-term study visits. All of these offer very different experiences, depending on their purpose. Study visits have become increasingly popular due to both the growing number of schools that are developing North-South school partnerships and/or links and to the internationalisation of higher education. The intended aims of such visits may include: Increasing teachers' knowledge and understandings of development and global issues and deconstructing their own worldviews in relation to these; Providing participants with an opportunity for intercultural learning; Dismantling negative stereotypes about people and places in the global South; Enabling participants to become active global citizens who have the skills to become successful in an increasingly diverse world; and developing an ethical engagement with others. Many assume that a deeper understanding of development and global issues can be effectively achieved through such 'cultural exposure'.

The research questions which underpinned their project were then outlined by both presenters. The primary research question in the research was: 'What impact do two North-South study visits in Gambia and India respectively have on teachers' understanding of development issues and how does this inform their understanding of, and practice in, global partnerships?' The sub-research questions included the following: How have the two North-South partnerships undertaken in their study developed and what context do they provide for educational study visits?; What do teachers from both North and South learn about development and global issues from their involvement in study visits?; What are the key factors that prompt any changes in knowledges and beliefs?; and How does this learning inform their practice over time?

The presenters then outlined the research methodology upon which their research was based. This involved (i) a Participatory Approach which attempts to ensure a voice for all partners in the research and to embody the principle of the right of people being researched to influence how the findings are portrayed; (ii) an Intercultural Learning Approach, which entails the involvement of local researchers in Gambia and Southern India. This approach enables intercultural, mutual learning to take place between northern and southern researchers in the same way as takes place between northern and southern teachers involved in the study visits; (iii) an Ethnographic Approach, which has involved the researchers taking on the dual roles of participant researcher and observer to examine what UK teachers learn from the course about global and development issues. Alongside this they conducted more in-depth research with five participants from each course, through a series of interviews (pre, during and post-visit). Their learning is therefore mirroring the learning of the other course participants; and (iv) due to the research design and methodology the research team is engaged in the transformative learning process alongside the participants. As well as keeping research diaries, the research team is actively collaborating with southern researchers, which entails engaging in research conversations and learning from differences in approaches to research across the countries involved in the project.

The preeminent challenges that they have encountered in this project are that the values of each partnership are sometimes conflicting; building and sustaining relationships with the four organisations

involved in the project is sometimes problematic, as is building in dissemination from the beginning of the research. Towards the end of their paper, the researchers summarised what had been learned to date over the course of the project. They underlined that preparatory and post-visit phases are necessary if learning is to be maximised; that learning is a relational, dialogic venture, so preparatory phases need to consider southern perspectives and the impact on southern people, their communities and organisations; and that reflective sessions, facilitated by differently knowledgeable others are essential. Additionally, they cited the work of American academic Merry Merryfield (2000)<sup>4</sup>, who found that experiences alone did not make a global educator. Depending on the nature of, and relationship between power, identity and experience, different meanings can be ascribed to the same experiences by different educators. Crucial to what Merryfield termed a 'decolonisation of the mind', therefore, was time to reflect on and deconstruct previously held assumptions about the world.

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<sup>4</sup> Merryfield, M., 2000, 'Why aren't teachers being prepared to teach for diversity, equity, and global interconnectedness?: A study of lived experiences in the making of multicultural and global educators', in *Teaching and Teacher Education*, No. 16, pp. 429–443.