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Learning global citizenship? Exploring connections between the local and the global

Marjorie Mayo, with John Gaventa and Alison Rooke

Abstract:

This article identifies historical connections between adult learning, popular education and the emergence of the public sphere in Europe, exploring potential implications for adult learning and community development, drawing upon research evaluating programmes to promote community-based learning *for* active citizenship in UK. The research findings illustrate the relevance of the global and indeed the regional levels, when addressing concerns with active citizenship, locally.

The article then moves on to examine experiences of global citizen advocacy coalitions, experiences from which participants have been drawing differing lessons *about* global citizenship. Finally, the conclusions raise questions about the scope for adult learning and community development in the current policy context, shaped so significantly by neo-liberal agendas. Social movements in general and popular education movements, more specifically, would seem to have vital roles to play, facilitating adult learning for critical democratic engagement with the structures of governance, locally and beyond, internationally.

Keywords: Local, Global, Adult Learning, Active Citizenship

Introduction

In order to provide some context for the consideration of recent discussions on globalisation and the contested notions of 'global civil society' and 'global citizenship' this article starts by identifying some of the historical connections between adult learning, popular education and the emergence of the public sphere in Europe. Having outlined some of the theoretical and conceptual challenges, in the contemporary context, the article moves on to explore potential implications for adult learning and community development. This section draws upon experiences of researching programmes to promote community-based learning *for* active citizenship in UK, using community development approaches, experiences that illustrate the relevance of the global and indeed the regional levels, when addressing concerns with active citizenship locally, within neighbourhoods and communities. This research was carried out with my colleague, Dr Alison Rooke, in close collaboration with the programme participants, as the article illustrates, subsequently.

Conversely, then, the article moves on again to examine experiences of citizen advocacy coalitions, linking the local with the national, the regional and the global, experiences from which participants have been drawing differing lessons *about* global citizenship. In this section, the article quotes from joint research with Professor John Gaventa at the Institute of Development

Studies, (research which formed part of a wider international programme of research into Citizen Engagements in a Globalising World¹).

Finally, the conclusions raise a number of questions about the scope for adult learning and community development in the current policy context, shaped so significantly by neo-liberal agendas, internationally and more locally. From the author's perspective, influenced by current debates on the provision of adult learning in Britain, there seem to be a number of implications for civil society organisations, including citizen advocacy coalitions, emphasising the importance of their continuing independence. Social movements in general and popular education movements, more specifically, would seem to have particularly vital roles to play, facilitating adult learning for critical democratic engagement with the structures of governance, locally and beyond, internationally.²

Adult learning, popular education and the emergence of the public sphere

In his recent book 'Knowledge is Power: the Rise and Fall of European Popular Educational movements, 1848-1939' (Steele, 2007) Tom Steele provides a wide ranging study of the theory and practice of popular adult education in Europe, from the Enlightenment through to the twentieth century

¹ This programme has been led by Professor John Gaventa, based at the Institute of Development Studies at University of Sussex.

² An earlier version of this paper was presented to the conference organised by ESREA on 'Local in Global: Adult Learning and Development' at the University of Lower Silesia, Wroclaw, Poland, 29-31 May 2008.

(Steele). Drawing upon Habermas, (Habermas, 1989) Steele traces the origins of the bourgeois public sphere, with the emergence of the political state, distinct from the monarchy and the aristocracy, underpinned by a market economy, unfettered by feudal obligations. Civil society emerged alongside the emergence of the capitalist market economy, then, with new spaces for literary and scientific societies, for example, part of wider interests in discourses of rationality and universality, from the Scientific Revolution and the Enlightenment.

Education was essential to opening up the public sphere, including more radical, popular versions of the public sphere, Steele argues, with demands for 'really useful knowledge', including examples from the Scottish Enlightenment, and the development of popular scientific education for artisans as early as 1727 (at the University of Glasgow) to illustrate his argument. Enlightenment ideas about the importance of rationality, science and the individual as citizen - ideas rooted although not determined by the development of capitalism and the rise of nationalism – spread across Europe. Steele traces the role of freemasonry, in particular, in promoting scientific study, as a key element in popular education.

Meanwhile, 'lower down the social scale' Steele charts the growth of the plebeian and proletarian public spheres, the development of the organised labour movement and the movement for political and independent working class education, together with the development of more agriculturally based models, including the residential model of the Folk High School, developed by

Grundtvig and others. As Steele's study demonstrates, capitalism developed in differing ways and at different paces, as did the development of the nation state (or the lack of a nation state despite popular struggles for national independence, as in parts of Eastern and Central Europe in the nineteenth century, for example), with widely differing patterns of adult and popular education, across Europe. He points to the view that Britain was seen as a model of class rapprochement, for instance, in contrast with the view that there were more radical models in France.

The point to be emphasised here is simply this, that the emergence of adult and popular education could be related to wider changes in economic, social and political relations, according to Steele, with the emergence of both bourgeois and plebeian forms of the public sphere. Whilst these developments took varying forms in differing contexts, Steele also draws attention to the degree of cross-fertilisation that was occurring, historically, as models of adult learning spread to and fro, within and across Europe and beyond (the adult residential model spreading, for example, from Scandinavia to Britain and North America, and back to Tanzania, for instance). This provides a backdrop for the exploration of more recent approaches, and more recent forms of cross-fertilisation, including the spread of participatory and emancipatory approaches such as those developed by Paulo Freire, Myles Horton and many others. As Steele concluded, popular education movements of the nineteenth and early twentieth century have been succeeded by more recent waves, as state provision expanded and new and/ or second-wave social movements emerged, 'involved in issues such as feminism, ecology,

peace, disability and currently Third World debt, anti-globalisation and anti-war' movements (Steele, 2007: 282).

Global civil society, global citizenship and learning for global / local citizenship?

The concept of globalisation has, of course, itself been contested, together with the notions of global civil society and global citizenship, with 'considerable debate as to the nature, extent and significance of globalisation' (Edwards and Usher, 2008.4). As Edwards and Usher have also pointed out, debates on globalisation have implications for the full range of contemporary and emerging curricular and pedagogical practices as well as for the discussion of new information technologies and their potential for space-time compression, blurring boundaries, including the boundaries between learners and teachers and boundaries between disciplines (Edwards and Usher, 2008). There is, though, insufficient space to explore these issues here. The discussion needs to focus more specifically upon the changing spaces for civil society and for active citizenship, in the context of the predominant influence of neo-liberal economic agendas, globally, (although these discussions will, inevitably, involve some recognition of the impact of globalisation on wider curricular and pedagogical practices too).

Just as adult learning and popular education movements developed in the context of changing social relationships and new forms of governance and

citizenship in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, so, it could be argued, new approaches to adult learning and popular education need to be developed in the rapidly changing context of the twenty first century. The global level has taken on additional significance, posing new challenges, as global forces increasingly evidently impact on citizens at the local level. Conversely, however, globalisation has been perceived to be offering new opportunities, opening up novel spaces for citizen engagement at international and regional levels. Spaces for consultation have been opened, for example, at the World Bank (although critics have also questioned the extent to which such spaces can be used to argue for alternative policies and programmes, rather than remaining confined within neo-liberal discourses). In summary, it has been suggested, transnational structures and institutions of governance have been emerging, shifting the balance of power away from the nation state (Rosenau, 2002). By implication, then, civil society needs to develop in more globalised ways, in response, strengthening citizens' consciousness of themselves, and their capacities to act effectively, as global citizens.

Others have pointed to the continuing significance of the national level (Keohane and Nye, 2000, Tarrow, 2005), pointing to the strategic role of the nation state and the importance of understanding the interactions between the local, the national, the regional and the global. As Scholte, for example, has demonstrated though, it is not so much a question of 'either' the local and the national 'or' the global, but of 'both' the local and the national 'and' the ways in which these interact with the global (Scholte, 2002) that sets the context for

discussions of active citizenship and learning in the twenty-first century. This is precisely the approach that will be explored further.

Meanwhile, the very notion of global citizenship has also been challenged. Critics have pointed to the level of fragmentation (Fiorini, 2000) suggesting that notions of global citizenship may be idealistic in the current context, representing aspirations for the future rather than present realities (Fox, 2005). And others have pointed to the challenges of building global civil society organisations and social movements that are both effective, internationally and democratically accountable, and rooted locally (Brown and Fox, 2000, Batliwala and Brown, 2006). Global engagement can enhance local participation – or distract from it. Local demands do not necessarily translate into global frames, nor do active citizens in the global South necessarily perceive themselves as being equally valued by coalition partners in the global North. What scope then for the development of forms of global citizenship that are both emancipatory and empowering? These are also issues that have emerged from one of the following case studies: the first being a study of community-based citizenship education in Britain with the second being a study which focuses upon the Global Campaign for Education, a coalition of citizens active globally as well as locally.

As these case studies illustrate, individuals, groups and organisations within communities can be supported through community development based approaches to adult learning, enabling them to develop the knowledge and skills to engage more effectively as active citizens, both locally and beyond. In

particular, as the first case study from Britain demonstrates, community-based approaches can enable new arrivals to engage as active citizens, whether they have arrived as international migrant workers from the Accession states such as Poland, or whether they have arrived in search of refuge from conflicts and/ or disasters, whether natural or man made (as in the case of civil wars and famines, for example). And most importantly, community-based approaches can engage with more established communities, including minority communities, challenging the causes of racism and xenophobia in the context of the so-called 'War on Terror', the politics of fear in the global North. These approaches demonstrate the scope for adult learning as part of strategies to promote increasing understanding and solidarity; aspects of global citizenship in the making?

The second case study, in contrast, illustrates some of the learning that can occur, when active citizens do engage in advocacy coalitions, operating at and between the local, national, regional and global levels. In this case too, the importance of the local emerges together with the importance of a community development approach. As this case study also illustrates, however, people derive differing lessons from their experiences, experiences and lessons that are shaped by wider structural factors and power relationships, internationally. As the concluding section argues, these wider forces continue to impact upon the provision of adult learning in the current context, influenced as this has been by the predominance of neo-liberal agendas more generally, shaping the curricula as well as the pedagogies to be provided. Learning can become increasingly packaged and commodified,

as Edwards and Usher argue, for example, and learner identities can become increasingly dislocated (Edwards and Usher, 2008). This makes it all the more important to develop and promote alternative approaches, it will be argued, sustained with support via civil society organisations and social movements, at different levels.

Learning *for* active citizenship in the context of globalisation

As Alison Rooke and I argued, in the Introduction to the report evaluating the British government's programme to promote Active Learning for Active Citizenship (ALAC), 'Citizenship has come centre stage as a public policy concern in Britain in recent years' (Mayo and Rooke, 2006. 4). The present government has been committed to developing strategies to transform citizens from passive recipients of public services to self-sustaining individuals, active as individuals and as members of communities, subjects with responsibilities as well as rights (Clarke, 2005). These strategies have been central to government agendas for the modernisation of public services (within the context of increasing marketisation as part of neo-liberal economic agendas) just as they have been central to political agendas, addressing the challenges of the so-called 'democratic deficit'. As the Final Report of the Advisory Group on Citizenship, the group which set the framework for citizenship education in schools concluded, there were 'worrying levels of apathy, ignorance and cynicism about public life' (DfEE, 1998.8). These concerns about the state of democracy in Britain have been widespread – although explanation for their causes have differed, the Power Commission

concluding, in 2006 that the problem had little if anything to do with apathy, and more to do with public scepticism as to whether those with the most power were actually prepared to listen to those with the least power (Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust, 2006).

Whilst these have been central themes in government policies in Britain, over the past decade, citizenship has, of course, been of concern more widely too, internationally. Around the globe, it has been argued, despite the spread of democratic forms of governance, as in so many parts of Latin America and Eastern and Central Europe, for example, the relationships between citizens and the institutions that affect their lives have been characterised by a growing crisis of legitimacy (Kabeer, 2005). Governments and international institutions have been concerned, then, to address this 'democratic deficit'. And they have been pressured to do so, with increasing challenges to meet the needs of the most deprived groups in society, locally and internationally, as demonstrated, for example, in the global campaign to 'Make Poverty History', the Global Campaign Against Poverty' (a campaign that was mobilising in Britain, around the G8 meeting in Scotland, during the period in which ALAC initiatives were being directly funded). There has, then, been increasing interest in conceptualising citizenship in wider terms, exploring the connections between the local, the national and the international levels

Active citizenship was being pursued, then, for a variety of reasons, and from varying theoretical and political perspectives. In the context of the continuing ascendance of neo-liberal approaches to development, rolling back the state

and shifting the emphasis of service provision from the public towards the private and not-for-profit (Third) sectors, active citizenship has been promoted, to encourage citizens to take increasing responsibility for their own and their families' and communities' health and welfare, as volunteers and activists in the Third Sector. Active citizenship has been promoted to off-set the dysfunctions of neo-liberal policy agendas. And conversely, active citizenship has been promoted in response to progressive demands from civil society organisations, including citizen advocacy coalitions and social movements, pressing for rights-based approaches to development, working for structural changes to promote equalities and social justice.

Before summarising the research findings about the ways in which ALAC initiatives actually promoted learning for active citizenship in the context of globalisation, it is important to note two further contextual factors, both of them international factors. The first of these was the changing nature and pace of migration. There is not the space here to discuss Britain's chequered policy responses to migration since the Second World War and even earlier, coloured as these have been, by Britain's imperialist past, and by racisms, past and present. (Craig, 2007). The point to emphasise here is simply this, that the arrival of a million or more migrants from the Accession States in recent years has posed a number of challenges. There have been challenges for migrant workers suffering exploitation and social exclusion, and challenges for established communities, including established minority communities. They have expressed fears that their rights may be undermined, if newcomers work longer hours, for lower wages, especially if these newcomers are also

believed to be competing for already under-resourced public services such as affordable housing. These fears have been exacerbated by the arrival of refugees and asylum seekers, although these have actually been diminishing in number, as the government has increasingly tightened controls, even affecting those seeking refuge because they have been displaced as a result of wars waged by Britain and its allies, as in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The second and related factor has been the so-called 'War on Terror', and the politics of fear, in Britain, following the events of 9/11 and the London bombings in July 2005. Again, without going into detail here, the point is simply to note the significance of these factors, fuelling popular anxieties, exacerbating conflicts within and between communities. The government's subsequent establishment of the Commission on Integration and Cohesion (COIC, reporting in 2007) illustrates the extent of public concern, here. Without in any way endorsing the Bush/ Blair approach to the so-called 'War on Terror', the fact that there have been such anxieties about community cohesion can scarcely be overlooked.

Active Learning for (global/ local) Active Citizenship

Active Learning for Active Citizenship was set up as a British government initiative to develop ways of promoting education for active citizenship, working through the voluntary and community sectors, building upon established good practice via seven regional hubs in South Yorkshire, the

West Midlands, Greater Manchester, the South West, Lincolnshire (East Midlands), London and Tees Valley (in order of their establishment as hubs between 2004 and 2006). These hubs worked in partnership with relevant networks and agencies including the Workers Education Association (WEA) and local universities, basing their work on values of social justice, participation, equality and diversity and co-operation, addressing people's own priorities, rooted in collective experiences. This was a participative, community development approach, drawing upon Freirian principles, starting, as Freire advocated, from people's own issues, learning together to develop critical understanding as the basis for transformative social action. The hubs provided a range of learning experiences, from formal courses, workshops and residentials, through to informal mentoring support and exchange visits, including visits to the European Commission in Brussels. The funding for the ALAC programme finished in 2006, although the hubs continue to collaborate via the Take Part network.

In summary, the outcomes from the ALAC programme have included the progress that over 1,300 learners made, many of them going on to further and higher education or some other form of accreditation. And, most importantly, in relation to citizenship agendas, ALAC participants were gaining the self-confidence, the knowledge and the skills to be more effective as active citizens, going on to become more active and effective as volunteers, community representatives and activists. For us as evaluators, committed to working in participative ways, in parallel, these latter outcomes were the most problematic to evaluate within the available timeframe, far more problematic

than the recording of the more individual outcomes, and the links between these and the wider outcomes. Individual's trajectories cannot be expected to be completed within the timeframes of such time-limited initiatives as ALAC.

Rather than provide further details of the findings in general, the key issues to be summarised here relate to the programme's work, linking local citizenship with broader regional and global dimensions. For example, in Lincolnshire, the hub identified the learning needs of migrant workers who were experiencing particular problems in accessing their rights. These problems were exacerbated due to language barriers, compounded by lack of information about how to access services, let alone how to enforce their legal rights in relation to employment and housing. There were particular challenges in reaching these groups, as a result of their geographical dispersal across rural areas and their round the clock shift work patterns, so the learning was provided in very flexible ways, with outreach, visiting temporary accommodation sites, for example, providing one-off learning engagements and workshops to meet these learning needs.

In the West Midlands, the hub focussed upon working with women, including, but not exclusively, Black and Minority Ethnic women, addressing issues of gender inequality, starting from their concerns with women's health issues. These sessions explored the learning that women needed, starting by valuing their own knowledge and skills, building confidence and self-esteem, moving on from the 'I' to the collective 'we', understanding formal structures and how to engage with them ' choosing where you want to be and finally knowing

where to go for what you need and how to get it'. This involved individual challenges, in terms of changing family relationships with partners and children, for example, through to the challenges of community engagement, moving on to learning about how to engage through national parliamentary structures and then on again to the European level, in Brussels.

In Greater Manchester, health issues and healthy living also provided examples of starting points for people's concerns. These and others were subsequently followed by the development of a partnership with the Centre for Conflict Learning Education, as people identified the need for learning about ways of addressing conflicts within and between communities. And this hub's work included support for the development of a Refugee's Charter, launched from the Town Hall to promote the rights of refugees in the area, here to illustrating the importance of linking the local with the international, in relation to learning for active citizenship.

The South Yorkshire hub had a particular focus upon the international dimensions of citizenship, providing courses on economic regeneration locally and within the European context, together with courses on migration and racism. Working in partnership with Northern College, an adult residential college, the hub organised teach-ins on 'Issues that Matter': Palestine, Asylum, Liberia and Roma in Europe (all issues with local as well as international dimensions as refugees and asylum seekers had arrived in the area, affected by such issues and conflicts). In addition, the South Yorkshire hub worked directly with established communities in the area to challenge

racism, including residentials on 'Combating racism'. The six month learning programme on migration and Europe included a study visit to a people's high school³ in Malmo, Sweden, a visit that included meetings with refugees and asylum seekers together with visits to adult education and community cohesion projects. There was, in addition, a study visit to the Civil College, in Hungary, with a particular focus upon citizenship education with and about Roma communities. And a group of learners went to Edinburgh, in the summer of 2005, to participate in events around the meeting on the G8 in Scotland, in support of the international campaign to Make Poverty History. The key point to emphasise here is this: that community-based learning for active citizenship was being organised to link local issues and experiences with their wider causes, working with newcomers AND with established communities to develop shared understandings and common solutions, in a spirit of mutual solidarity. Although the South Yorkshire ALAC programme funding ceased, along with the rest of the programme, the WEA and others have continued to promote active citizenship with programmes such as those developed by the 'Academy for Community Leadership' based upon similar approaches to solidarity, locally and beyond.

The evaluation identified a number of factors associated with the successes of these ALAC initiatives, factors that were included in the 'Learning Framework' that was developed to take the work forward, after the programme funding finished. Rather than developing a national curriculum (which the government

³ People's High Schools or 'Folk High Schools' have been developed in Scandinavia and elsewhere to provide adult learning, typically with an emphasis upon socially useful learning.

had originally envisaged as an outcome) ALAC opted for a less prescriptive approach, arguing that this would be more consistent with the Freirian principles underpinning the programme. So the Learning Framework was based upon a flexible community development based approach, provided through experiential learning in group settings, shaped by values of participation, co-operation, social justice and equality with diversity.

Through similarly participative approaches, the evaluation processes tracked the impact for individuals and their families, including:

- women's changing relationships with partners and children, as they became more confident and assertive, through to
- changing relationships with service providers
- changing relationships within and between communities and
- changing engagements with political processes, locally, nationally, in Europe and beyond.

Learning *from* active citizenship: The Global Campaign for Education: a unique coalition

The Global Campaign for Education (GCE) is a global coalition, campaigning for the Millennium Development Goal of Education for All - and more - because the GCE is also campaigning around the right for early years learning and for adult education, as well as for the right to primary education. Globally some 77 million children, disproportionately girls are still out of school

although the numbers have been falling, in part at least, in response to active campaigning. Locally GCE activists have been campaigning to get children into school, especially girls, and to improve the quality of provision, so that children stay in school, to complete their education. Meanwhile, nationally, regionally and internationally, GCE activists have been campaigning for the policies and resources to make the MDG of Education for All a reality in practice.

The GCE came together in 2000, building upon previous campaigning around the right to education at different levels, locally, nationally, regionally and internationally. The campaign brings together teachers and their trade unions (including their international federation, Education International) along with parents and other civil society organisations and activists as well as major international NGOs including ActionAid, Oxfam and Save the Children.

In addition to international advocacy/ lobbying (including via participation in the Fast Track Initiative of the World Bank – another example of new spaces being opened up for civil society, internationally) the GCE has active national coalitions campaigning at that level, backed by active campaigning at the local level too. One of their most visible activities takes place in the last week of April each year, when the Global Week of Action is organised - involving children and their teachers. Last year over seven and a half million activists were involved in more than 120 countries.

The project⁴ explored the ways in which citizen advocacy coalitions such as the GCE were linking citizens' actions at local, national, regional and international levels. Global campaigns face major challenges, as it has already been suggested, including the challenges involved in developing coalitions that are genuinely representative and democratically accountable as well as being effective internationally whilst maintaining their roots at national and local levels. Through case studies in India and Nigeria (key areas in terms of the numbers of children out of school, particularly girls) as well as via interviews with civil society organisations working internationally, the study of the GCE did identify ways in which citizen action at different levels could be mutually re-enforcing. In summary:

- Internationally including via the Fast Track Initiative, GCE has been campaigning for aid/ debt relief, and there has been some campaigning against controls on public spending, in response to pressure from international agencies, controls which have impacted upon the employment and retention of teachers.
- At regional levels, as in South Asia, for example, regional level campaigning has been used to put pressure on national governments to deliver their commitments on Education for All

⁴ This was a joint project with John Gaventa, within the wider research programme based at the Institute of Development Studies at the University of Sussex, addressing issues exploring Citizen Engagements in a Globalising World.

- National coalitions have kept up the pressure for constitutional reforms and for the resources to implement these reforms
- State level pressure has been essential too (as in India and Nigeria, both of which are federal states)
- And community level involvement has been vital, involving school students, their parents and teachers, campaigning to ensure that resources actually reach the schools and ensuring that children actually go to school and learn.

Being involved in citizen advocacy coalitions and social movements can provide significant learning opportunities, as it has already been suggested. Through involvement in the GCE, there have been opportunities to learn about global spaces and how to engage with these effectively. There have been opportunities to learn how to link the local, national, regional and international dimensions, working across sectors, building participation and democratic accountability from the bottom-up. Most importantly too, activists have reflected upon their learning about global citizenship itself. However tentative the notion of 'global citizenship' from the perspectives of academic researchers, active citizens have been glimpsing its possibilities, as they have been reflecting upon their own experiences, so far.

For example, an Indian, previously working for an international company, then working for an international NGO, explained that she had completely changed

her views. When working for a multi-national company, she had been 'connected with a global network but didn't feel very good about it' whereas she now felt very differently. This new sense of global involvement was, in her words 'very empowering'. A Nigerian activist made similar comments. Participating in a global campaign 'increases my confidence. There are people somewhere struggling with the same issues'. This was about 'solidarityrecognising that part of the solution lies outside my shores'.

As a trade unionist from the global North reflected, getting involved in campaigns builds 'interest, understanding and commitment amongst activists' and the 'very fact of being involved in GCE joint endeavours does change perceptions and increases members' sense of involvement' – 'this build solidarity'. An NGO professional reflected on how this had been personally educational, commenting that 'I've changed, going on to add that 'I've completely changed my sense of global community'. When people engage, it was suggested, 'they get a sense of community and find it very empowering'. These campaigns were creating 'genuine educational experiences which have completely changed people's understanding of power and of themselves as actors'. It would also 'change their understandings of North and South' it was suggested.

At this point, it would seem important to sound a cautionary note, however. 'I can't say that I feel like a global citizen', a very experienced activist and professional from Nigeria concluded. 'I feel like a second class citizen outside Nigeria We are made to feel that if you come from a developing country'.

So who is learning what from their experiences of global citizen advocacy coalitions? Activists do not necessarily draw the same conclusions at all from their experiences – and these experiences differ, depending upon positionality and context. This still leaves key questions to be addressed then, questions about how participants' reflections relate to the development of action strategies, to challenge the underlying causes of structural inequalities, globally as well as locally, in the current context.

Current challenges?

This brings the discussion back to starting point, the global context in which neo-liberal economic agendas continue to predominate, with increasing inequalities within and between localities, nation states and regions. In Britain, as elsewhere, there have been new spaces for active citizenship, and indeed for learning for and learning from active citizenship, both locally and beyond. Conversely, too, there have been increasing challenges, including particular challenges for community-based learning, as resources have been diverted towards employment related agendas, in the pursuit of global competitiveness in the 'knowledge economy' that is supposed to characterise the twenty-first century. In this context, following the Leitch Report in Britain, resources for initiatives such as ALAC have become increasingly problematic, as short-term initiatives come and go - despite the well-documented need for continuity and sustainability for community-based programmes to develop and flourish, over time. The National Institute for Adult and Continuing Education estimates that

there are well over one million, four hundred thousand fewer adult learners as a result of these policies.

Of course, as the case study of the Global Campaign for Education demonstrates, people can and do learn from their experiences as active citizens. Civil society organisations and social movements provide numerous examples to illustrate this. Our own University of the Third Age (U3A) is a case in point, a self-organised movement in which teachers are learners and learners teachers, as older sisters (and some older brothers) are literally 'doing it for themselves'. But even U3A benefits from support, such as support in kind, through access to accommodation at reasonable rates. The trade union movement in Britain similarly benefits from public resources, arguing that public resources are precisely that – resources to meet the needs of civil society in any case. Whilst only too well aware of the dangers of losing their independence, civil society organisations such as the trade union movement continue to argue for public resources to complement although not to supplant their own.

Meanwhile, in Britain, as elsewhere, increasing globalisation has also been associated with increasing movements of population (whether as economic migrants, refugees or asylum seekers, fleeing violence that has been causes and/ or literally fuelled from elsewhere, as a result of international arms trading). Whether or not Polish migrant workers are going home now, in particular, the more general point remains - that population movements can be expected to continue for the foreseeable future. As Robert Putnam has

suggested, in fact 'One of the most important challenges facing modern societies, and at the same time one of the most significant opportunities, is the increase in ethnic and social heterogeneityThe most certain prediction that we can make about almost any modern society is that it will be more diverse a generation from now than it is today' (Putnam, 2007, 137).

And finally, these changes are all taking place in a climate of increasing fear, associated with the so-called 'War on Terror'. Reflecting on this situation, in her book on 'Thinking Past Terror' Susan Buck-Morss argues that 'democracy on a global scale necessitates producing solidarity beyond and across the discursive terrains that determine our present identifications''to rethink the entire project of politics within the changed conditions of a global public sphere - and to do this democratically, as people who speak different languages, but whose goals are nevertheless the same: global peace, economic justice, legal equality, democratic participation, individual freedom, mutual respect' (Buck-Morss, 2003, 4-5). This might seem a useful starting point for further research, exploring the potential - and the challenges - for learning for active citizenship, locally and beyond.

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