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## Global Learning within South-North School Encounters





Insights from Theory und Practice 2

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# **Global Learning within South-North School Encounters**

Contributions from the second symposium on Global Learning in Schools on  
May 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> 2016 in Kassel, Germany

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## Preface

School encounter journeys with partners from countries of the Global South have gained in significance in recent years. But how can school encounter journeys in the context of South-North school partnerships become places of Global Learning? What potential and which difficulties does the particular learning setting of South-North school exchanges involve?

In addressing such issues the Comenius Institute puts into practice its mission as a Protestant institute of educational research to discuss issues of Protestant formation and education from both academic and practical perspectives. According to Johann Amos Comenius (1592-1670) schools should serve as ‘*humanitatis officinae*’ (“forging-places of humanity”), in which girls and boys alike should be instructed in methods of world discovery with the aim of promoting humanity. This is also the objective of approaches of Global Learning.

The symposium on Global Learning in encounter journeys on May 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2016 was dedicated to discussions on how this vision of humanity – how Global Learning – can be implemented in the context of school partnership exchanges. The Competence Center on Global Learning in Schools (“Fachstelle GLIS”) at the Comenius Institute in Münster and the development policy school exchange program ENSA run by Engagement Global on behalf of the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) had invited attendees to participate in an exchange on issues surrounding Global Learning in school-related encounter journeys between North and South. The conference was designed as a “theory-practice conference” and brought together applied perspectives on Global Learning in this special setting. The conference contributions selected via a call for papers and a call for practice present scientific evidence and offer practical ideas on basic issues involving the design and implementation of school encounter journeys in global school partnerships. Subjects related to dealing with differences in power, the colonial past of the participating partner countries, and the challenging structures in the field of schools characterized the discussions at the conference.

This volume is intended as an expanded documentation of the conference. Its articles are excerpts regarding selected aspects of this discussion:

The first contribution by *Sonja Richter* summarizes the current debate on school encounter journeys and Global Learning. It describes five challenges that practitioners and scientists face regarding further development of such programs. The introductory theoretical article by *Annette Scheunpflug* addresses school encounter journeys from a scientific perspective. She discusses the contribution of South-North encounters to the concept of Global Citizenship Education. In dialogue with *Vanessa Andreotti* and through the documentation of *Rahime Diallo*’s keynote, two actors from the Global South take a critical look at Global Learning from a post-colonial perspective: How do we deal with our colonial backpack? *Susanne Krogull* and *Michael Weichbrodt* contribute empirical findings on Global Citizenship Education and on the transnational understanding among participants in encounter programs. *Dunja Zivanovic* closes the first part of this publication focusing on intercultural learning processes within encounter journeys.

The contributions from the practice take up similar subjects: *Harald Kleem*, *Johannah Nomatlou Mahlangu* and *Klaus Schilling* look at school development processes. In different case studies the authors show how encounter journeys between South and North can contribute to turning development policy issues into drivers of school development. *Lacina Yéo* takes a different focus on this subject. He views school partnerships in the context of cultural diplomacy. Using the example of the PASCH program in the Ivory Coast, he shows the potential as well as the challenges for cultural diplomatic exchange programs in Global Learning.

*Minnie Maisie Salanga* and *Uwe Berger* address challenges and chances of cooperation between non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and schools in designing and implementing school partnership journeys, from both South and North perspectives. The last contribution by *Claudia Schilling* reports on experiences from the perspective of a funding program, describing the practice approach taken by the ENSA development policy school exchange program.

For all of those who would rather watch than read, and for those who wish to know more about Global Learning within school encounters: At [www.fachstelle-glis.de/schoolpartnerships](http://www.fachstelle-glis.de/schoolpartnerships) you will find video recordings of all keynote addresses, presentations and posters.

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As editors of this volume and series, we wish to thank all contributors to the conference and this publication. We would also like to thank our cooperation partner Engagement Global and the development policy school exchange program ENSA . The Cooperation between Comenius Institute and ENSA enabled partners from the Global South to participate in the conference – some of them could be enlisted for an article in this publication.

It is our wish that school partnerships and encounter journeys create an environment for Global Learning and can contribute to the transformation of schools into “forging-places of humanity“ envisioned by Comenius.

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*The group of participants of the symposium on Global Learning in encounter journeys on May 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> 2016 in Kassel, Germany*





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# Global Learning in the Context of South-North Encounter Journeys: Challenges for the Future

Sonja Richter, Competence Center for Global Learning in Schools, Comenius Institute

In the process of becoming part of our daily life, globalization has enhanced the role of school partnerships between the Global South and the Global North. Initiating and maintaining partnerships frequently is accompanied by encounter journeys, which enable students to travel to foreign continents. The increase of those journeys cannot only be traced back to a generally growing global mobility but also to new possibilities of financial support for such journeys through governmental institutions.

Work on further improving on the quality of encounter journeys is still in its beginnings: Funding programs such as the Development Policy School Exchange Program ENSA at *Engagement Global gGmbH* or the funding line for encounter journeys within the domestic funding program of *Bread for the World – Protestant Development Service* (“Brot für die Welt – Evangelischer Entwicklungsdienst”) have contributed to the introduction of transferable standards for the implementation and accompaniment of school encounter journeys between South and North. A number of different issues have been raised regarding the effects and conceptualization of school encounter journeys in empirical and theoretical studies: Are the environments they create beneficial at all for Global Learning? Do participants really learn to understand and assess complex issues and to act accordingly, or are they merely strengthened in their stereotyped, racist attitudes? How can experiences gained during a brief encounter journey impact on existing school partnerships? Practice-related evaluation surveys (e.g. ENSA 2009) seem to prove positive effects; standards on the quality of encounter journeys (Krogull & Landesbrenner 2009) set guidelines for encounter journeys, and empirical studies from the research field on study exchanges (e.g. Thomas et al. 2009) and educational sciences (Krogull 2016) show the need of science-based findings.

There are critical voices particularly among proponents of postcolonial theory that organizers and funding institutions have to face alike. After all, funding largely derives from countries of the North, and on that account they draw up the concepts. Although the intention is to implement

the journey on a reciprocal basis, putting this into practice runs into difficulties under such conditions.

Implementers of school encounter journeys and their funding institutions are working intensively on the question of how encounter journeys can be effectively conceptualized and accompanied for the purpose of Global Learning in schools. In doing so their focus is on organizing the encounter on the principles of reciprocity in the light of colonial history. Based on the contributions to the second symposium on Global Learning in Schools<sup>1</sup> and against the background of the scientific discourse on this topic five major challenges can be identified. They reflect on the individual contributions in this publication and are explicated in the following:

## Arranging pedagogic accompaniment: “Train the Trainers”

Empirical insights and practical experience have shown that the manner of pedagogic accompaniment provided to international encounters can make an important contribution to the content and interpretation of learning processes during the encounter journey. As a rule, pedagogic accompaniment consists of a preparation phase involving a number of teaching units, extracurricular activities, an intensive preparatory seminar of several days as well as ongoing pedagogic accompaniment during the actual journey and a follow-up phase that can take on a number of forms. All components within the accompaniment center on the person’s own expectations and reflections on the experiences gained during the journey. The central challenge here lies not only in preparing the seminar for the participants but also in providing qualification to the accompanying teachers as well as to involved seminar trainers who do not necessarily have a school background. For

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1 The referred conference was entitled „Global Learning within School Encounter Journeys between South and North”, organized by the Competence Center on Global Learning in Schools („Fachstelle GLIS”), the Comenius Institute and the development policy school program ENSA and took place on May 2 and 3, 2016 in Kassel, Germany. Please find more information on [www.fachstelle-glis.de/schoolpartnerships](http://www.fachstelle-glis.de/schoolpartnerships).

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the conceptualization of encounter journeys that enable Global Learning...

- the accompanying teachers must be able to engage in critical self-reflection;
- both the accompanying teachers and the seminar trainers of teachers must undergo qualification measures that are conceptualized with science-based content and methods
- an exchange of experience on south-north school partnerships between schools in the North and in the South at both the student and the teacher level is required.

For the scientific disciplines involved the challenge lies in generating empirically founded knowledge around this particular learning setting: What kinds of learning processes do take place in the context of international encounters? What kind of impact can be achieved by specific methods of Global Learning in the accompanying seminars? How do teachers influence participants' learning processes in this setting?

### **Dealing with the “Colonial Backpack”**

Another major challenge is how to deal with the „colonial backpack“, i.e. the colonial past, which continues to impact on the relationships between South and North even in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Given this context, funding programs aspire to place encounter journeys between South and North in settings that are marked by critique of racism and power asymmetries and that embrace inclusion. In order to master this challenge both sides need to deconstruct their respective views on the relationship between the South and the North.

For organizing encounter journeys this implies...

- all persons involved in the encounter journey must be sensitized to stereotypes and racism through suitable measures;
- it is necessary to reflect on the different roles of participants on the one hand and accompanying teachers on the other;
- one returns to one's own values and traditions – a particular necessity for partners from the Global South;
- barriers to participation in encounter journeys are to be removed in both the South and the North.

### **A comprehensive and long-term effect: The “Whole School Approach”**

Encounter journeys in the context of school partnerships should have a comprehensive and long-term effect on the group of participants and beyond. The holistic integration

of individual learning experiences from encounter journeys according to the “whole school approach” constitutes a further challenge for encounter journeys that aim to foster Global Learning. The implementation of a specific project or topic can significantly contribute to building a partnership and ensuring long-term visibility (e.g. in the project's outcome). The project therefore should be prepared by the two partner schools together and carried out during their reciprocal visits. Similarly, the participant's ownership can be increased if participative elements are integrated in planning and implementing the encounter journey and the outcome of experiences be broadened. It has proved effective in practice, for example, to involve parents, the school administration, or a booster club.

Linking school-partnership topics with specific classroom contents and integrating such topics with other aspects of school life are further ways of providing structural anchorage to school partnerships and consolidating experiences from school encounters. This must be overseen and initiated by the teachers involved and as an essential requirement must include active students that play a shaping role in these activities. An example might be that they communicate their experiences to a wider audience.

### **The Role of NGOs in School Encounter Journeys**

In preparing school encounter journeys special attention must be paid to the cooperation with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that support school partnership work in terms of content and/or through funding. Support in initiating and building bilateral school partnerships can also be sought from civil society organizations that maintain long-standing international partnerships.

Any form of cooperation between school and non-school institutions requires both sides to clarify in general their respective roles and their expectations of each other. It is not uncommon for opinions to clash over the partners' respective roles. For example, some perspectives from NGOs claim that civil society should be a normative imperative in educational settings. On the other hand, there is an understanding of schools as the exclusive domain of the state in fulfilling its educational mandate, a mandate which in their view might conceivably be supplemented through educational activities of other organizations, but certainly not displaced. NGOs make a special contribution through Global Learning activities within schools – school partnerships between South and North are one instrument to implement contents and methods of Global Learning. In contrast to the priorities of school curricula, activities implemented by NGOs do not only focus on conveying competencies and knowledge to individuals. They do

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introduce specific social and political opinions into what might be called a regularized system. The challenge here lies in creating a fruitful cooperation between the different institutions involved (On the issue of cooperation between schools and NGOs see also: Richter & Brux 2015: Qualitätskriterien schulbezogener Bildungsarbeit Globalen Lernens).

### Linking Theory with Practice

The overarching challenge is to generate science-based knowledge that is needed to conceptualize school encounter journeys and especially the accompanying pedagogic program. Results of empirical field research and independent evaluation can provide cues for the further conceptual development of school encounter programs. Moreover, research results can serve to justify school encounter journeys and partnership work as instruments of Global Learning and therefore are an important component of funding applications.

To link theory with practice it is vital that research institutions, educational institutions and civil society stakeholders connect with each other. From working more closely together all sides involved would benefit: Empirical insights from science can help practitioners to reflect on their own approaches and to view those from a new perspective. Conversely, the real-life application of theoretical models can give researchers valuable cues for their further explorations.

Two essentials for creating networks of practitioners and scientists are suitable environments and joint projects. In this regard planning and carrying out evaluations together can be a good opportunity, for example. Closer cooperation would require a greater recognition of practical research in the academic realm. At the same time practical implementers must be willing to shift their perspective and review their work in response to ideas from outside.

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# Insights from Theory

## Encounter Journeys in the Context of North-South School Partnerships – A Contribution to Global Citizenship Education?

Annette Scheunpflug, Otto-Friedrich-University Bamberg

Encounter journeys have a good reputation. Rarely has so much money been spent on encounter journeys for young people as currently. Encounter journeys in the school context derive their legitimacy from an expected gain in learning with regard to understanding the world, a reduction of prejudices, and a resulting improvement in the use of foreign languages. The attainment of these three goals has been empirically investigated at the European level and well documented to a large extent. Thereby it also became clear that the reduction of prejudices and stereotypes is not so easily achieved, and that encounter journeys thus require a special learning setting (cf. in overview Danckwortt 1995).

In contrast to encounters in a European setting, the situation with encounter journeys in a North-South context is distinctly more complex. This involves not only people from two countries getting to know each other, but an understanding of world society and of over- and under-development. The existing mutual prejudices are defined not only by the history of two neighboring countries and the wars they have fought, but also through much more complex processes of colonialism and repression, of globalization, migration, world trade, conflict constellations, and political processes.

Under these conditions, how is an encounter journey<sup>1</sup> possible which meets pedagogical standards and contributes to a learning gain? This question is by no means trivial. The difficulty of outlining and answering it stands in odd contrast to the uniform enthusiasm with which encounter journeys and their touristic attractions are associated.

With this short article I will attempt to address the task of redefining the world-societal framework of this learning challenge. What characterizes the content of world-societal learning? What must be learned, and why is this difficult? Second, I will address the didactics associated with learning by encounter, and third, I will try to name theses on the

necessary minimum conditions to be reached so that the school's educational task can be at least expected to be achieved through encounters.

### 1. Learning World Citizenship

In encounter journeys with partner groups from the global South or North, the issue is not an understanding between peoples in the sense of the German-French youth exchange program, but the understanding of the complexity of development processes in the world society. What is the nature of this complexity?

Understanding the world society

The term "World Society" refers to Luhmann's systems theory and is used as a descriptive basic concept (cf. Luhmann 1997). Luhmann asserts that based on its character, modern society should be understood as a world society, since societal communication independent from world-societal contexts is no longer possible. It is his central thesis that today every society is world society because it is also part of a global context. Thus social reality becomes more complex. World society should not be understood as the sum of humanity or as a spatial or temporal unit, but rather as "the whole of all meaningful experience" (ibid, p. 153). World society is thus observable not as a world state or world organization, but only in the unique aspects of its cultures and societal diversity. In its abstract form, however, it has tangible effects on everyone.

In summary, one can see the challenges of world-societal learning as related to the perception of societal, ecological and economic relationships in a global context with the related perspective of global responsibility, the assessment of these relationships, and the culmination of this perception and assessment in concrete action (cf. Scheunpflug 2011a for further details). This means practicing an abstract form of sociality, i.e. abstract ethical norms which are not related to one's own experience, which involve reflection on the needs of others, though one may not know these others.

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<sup>1</sup> In the following text the term "encounter journey" is used descriptively, corresponding also to the terminology in the funding regulations, and is not normatively loaded in the sense of a corresponding encounter concept, for example that of Martin Buber.

### Learning to understand world society

These challenges related to abstract sociality are considerable for humans, who in some respects have changed little since the Stone Age. Humans are specialized, first, in their *spontaneous problem-solving capacity* in regard to experiences in their *surroundings* – and for the experiences in a globalized world society this is not particularly helpful. Humans have developed steadily in the direction of a capacity to successfully solve problems which are sensorily perceptible: the voles in the front yard are more important than the grasshoppers in Sudan; one's own sensorily perceptible rest and relaxation in Greece during a vacation is more important than the ozone hole caused by, among other things, airplane travel. Second, humans have an inborn tendency to differentiate between “*In-group*” and “*Out-group*”, we tend to be wary of strangers, and have tendencies towards xenophobia and racism. But at the same time humans also have a high capacity for abstract reflection which makes it possible to learn abstract sociality, to observe our own behavior, evaluate it critically, and to change it. Humans are capable of compensating for their natural tendency to limit their spontaneous problem-solving capacity to their immediate surroundings.

The function of encounter journeys: transcending the societal “immediate personal sphere”

Here, school encounter journeys can take on an important function. They are, in a sense, perceptible catalyzers for these abstract contexts; they enable an understanding of world society through concrete contacts. The objective is to analyze the multiple antagonistic relationships of power, powerlessness, poverty, wealth, racism, paternalism, self-perceived helplessness, superiority and subordination, and thus to overcome those attributions step by step. This facilitates mutual understanding and world-societal learning.

## 2. Learning through Encounters

In our research on school encounter journeys in a global North-South context we were able to show that, especially in school learning, the danger exists that the asymmetrical situation associated with school learning and the tendency in school to attribute achievements to the work of individuals has the potential to feed paternalism, racism and a reduced understanding of world society as a simple addition of “immediate personal spheres” – which can be equally seen among groups from the North and from the South (cf. Krogull & Scheunpflug 2013).

World-societal learning in school encounter journeys is thus doubly difficult: First, it requires learning to overcome the preference for one's immediate personal sphere, the

addition of the immediate personal sphere as well as the danger of stereotyping and to instead develop a world-societal understanding. Second, the school structures with their asymmetry between teachers and learners, and their structurally determined attribution of competences to personal willingness to work and to personal work itself, bring with them the risk that this asymmetry and orientation are also applied to the school encounter journey.

This leads to the conclusion that the widespread optimism which holds that the very occurrence of school encounter journeys alone contributes to world-societal learning should be seen critically. What kind of transformation is necessary on the journey and what didactics must accompany this transformation in order to guarantee as broad a learning spectrum as possible? (cf. overview Table 1).

Transforming one's perception of “the Other” – didactics of perspective change

Through encounter journeys, the view of the Other(s) should be modified and reflected upon to the effect that Alter is perceived by Ego in the way in which Alter sees itself or wishes to be seen. This requires a didactics of perspective change which always refers to the view of the Other and attempts to facilitate seeing the world through the eyes of the Other. This renders one's own preconceptions visible and takes one out of the personal comfort zone of implicitness, one step at a time.

Transformation of one's own origins – didactics of self-reflection

The dismantling of stereotypes and a changed view of the world bring about a reflection upon where I come from, what limits and constitutes my world, and an awakened perception of what lies beyond these borders. The question of what constitutes one's own identity in an increasingly globalized society is increasingly difficult to answer. In the global context identities develop ever more as hybrids, so that today identity represents an individual form of self-allocation beyond cultural attributions (cf. Scheunpflug 2011b). For this self-allocation young people need support (cf. Scheunpflug 2016), and an encounter journey can make a contribution toward learning to allocate oneself to a hybrid societal formation. This may be achieved through pedagogical forms of self-reflection, esthetical forms in writing, dancing, music or arts, and writing diaries or portfolios.



Transformation from the immediate personal sphere into the world society – didactics of abstract sociality  
 World society is an abstract form of sociality, whose specific qualities are, above all, recognizable in the specific interrelationships between spaces. This abstract sociality regarding rules, agreements and human rights conventions constrains activities in a different form than charity does. For that reason it is important to address abstract forms of sociality in the context of encounter journeys, and to integrate them in the learning process while at the same time observing the indoctrination ban of the Consensus of Beutelsbach (cf. BpB 2011).

Transformation of colonization into participation – didactics of empowerment

Especially through partnerships and the call for commitment in the South, the danger of the reproduction of racist and paternalistic attitudes emerges (cf. for example the criticism by Bendix and others 2013). School encounter journeys are no exception. In many ways school encounter journeys can repeat racism, bring about new forms of colonialization, and cement conditions of power and powerlessness. Precisely because the partners come from different economic contexts, the journeys themselves are often characterized by open or concealed power relationships. The reproduction of colonial or neocolonial relationships

is likely – to the same extent on both sides through feelings of superiority or subordination. This can be avoided by equal participation of all participants. This involves a didactics of empowerment, accompanied by a pedagogy of recognition and strengthening (cf. Scheunpflug and others 2012). From a pedagogical perspective it is about using the encounter journey as an occasion for participation in society with a global perspective both during and beyond the encounter journey.

Transformation of silence into communication – didactics of communication

Speech is not merely a linguistic program. Rather, it also expresses cultural assumptions, unquestioned norms and values. Enabling joint communication in encounter settings means giving learners the opportunity to try to understand each other’s language and to learn at least its most important forms, and to become sensitized to translations, to contextualization, and to the necessity of explanations.

### 3. Conclusion

These somewhat formal criteria and the didactic considerations may together constitute a framework for guiding reflection on practice examples and establishing a perspective for a didactically based preparation of encounter

Learning goal	Transformation	Didactics	Means of encouragement
Dismantling prejudices	Turning view of self to the Other(s)	Change of perspective	Getting to know other environments; reflection of the cultural dependence of one’s own perspective
Dismantling prejudices	From self-aggrandizing origins to transformational identity	Self-reflection	Support in self-allocation; esthetic expression forms, diary, writing
Understanding of world society	From immediate personal sphere to world society	Abstract sociality	Reflection on experience in political context
Ownership in world society	From colonization to participation	Empowerment	Recognition, participation opportunities
Ownership in world society	From silence to communication	Communication	Translation competence, politeness

Table 1: Transformational necessities and their didactics (Source: author’s own representation)

journeys. The journey itself is less important than the learning process which is intended to be promoted and enabled through the journey. Such a didactic form can only succeed, however, when certain minimal pedagogical standards are met. Krogull and Landes-Brenner (2009; also Krogull 2012) have described the following measures, among others, as essential: general integration of the journey in a long-term learning process, pedagogically competent accompaniment, preparation and follow-up to the trip, participation opportunities for the travelers in the journey itself, a thematic framing of the trip, regular reflection phases and evaluations, an appropriate group size and an appropriate trip duration. Particularly important are “reverse” journeys by the partner after a period of time, that is, a return visit by those who were visited.

At the same time we should think about this: the majority of students will not have the opportunity to make such an encounter journey. Thus we must ask how World Citizenship education can be enabled in the classroom, in other forms. Perhaps in the future, teachers will be the main target group for developmental encounter journeys, in order to make them multipliers of Global Learning.

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## Shouldering our Postcolonial Backpack or: A Different Vision of Education

*In Dialogue with Vanessa Andreotti, University of British Columbia*



**Vanessa Andreotti** (PhD) holds the Canada Research Chair in Race, Inequalities and Global Change at the University of British Columbia. She is also a Research Fellow at the University of Oulu, where she held the first and only European Chair in Global Education from 2010 to 2013. We had the pleasure to meet Vanessa Andreotti during a Germany-wide congress on Global Education in April 2016 in Bonn, Germany, after it had turned out that she would not be able to attend our symposium on Global Education in South-North School Partnerships in May 2016. In Bonn we talked about Postcolonial Theory, Critical Education and her different vision of education.

**Sonja Richter (SR):** Postcolonial Theory is based on historical patterns from the colonial era that are still in our minds. How can education help to eliminate those patterns which are always creating inequalities?

**Vanessa Andreotti (VA):** Postcolonial Theory focuses on the harm caused by both colonialism and imperialism. It draws attention to the harm caused by a single story of progress, development and human evolution that has been dominant in international relationships, the media and education. This story divides people between those who allegedly head humanity towards a modern future, and those who lag behind because they lack knowledge, intelligence or capacity. The force of the single story makes us forget that there are other forms of knowledge and existence apart from the ones we can imagine, and there are other possible futures beyond the one grounded on metropolitan consumerism and unending economic growth. However, postcolonial theory does not give us a template for solutions. Instead, it helps us ask different questions about how we should live together in the future. These questions are very important because they challenge our assumptions about the past, the present and the future. It asks us to question the knowledge we have received and taken for granted and invites us to get to the edge of what is possible for us to know, which is a space of great discomfort (as our familiar securities are shaken), but also of great possibility for new connections, relationships and deeper learning. These questions help us to look at harmful patterns that we have repeated in the past and that we are still repeating today, so that we can open up different possibilities for relationships, for co-existence, for the future. Postcolonial theory doesn't tell you how to do that, but it can help you to see the problems and contradictions in our dominant ways of thinking and relating to the world and invite us to interrupt our satisfaction with the form

of existence that we have inherited. Only when we have become disenchanted with the usual answers, we can start to want to imagine something radically different. This involves learning to walk together with others differently: knowing differently, thinking differently, relating differently and being in a different way.

**SR:** So when we as educators try to conceptualize educational settings that display inequalities a little bit more than others – for example in encounters between the North and the South – how can we conceptualize those educational settings to not provoke stereotypes?

**VA:** We are coming from a system of schooling that is based on Enlightenment ideas, on ideas of the Industrial Revolution and it is organized according to those ideas. This is not a system that prepares people to face the complexity, the uncertainty, the plurality of the world or to look at increasing levels of inequality. So we need to shift the ways we think about education in order to prepare young people to face a plural and non-defined world, a world that doesn't fit in any box, a world where people do not fit in boxes. It is also important to understand the force and violence of the boxes that do exist in our thinking and that are imposed on the world and on other people – we can't just wish them away. I think this is one of the greatest challenges for education. It goes back to the single story about progress, development and human evolution. How can we still believe in that story where a group of people is told that they are the leaders, that they have more knowledge, that they are developed while another group is told that they lack knowledge and education, that they are backward? The story is powerful both in the North and in the South, where many people believe they are themselves inferior and look up to the North for models, solutions and help, thinking that First World countries have achieved perfection – that there is no poverty, violence,



inequalities or discrimination in the North. This propaganda is very powerful. It sustains many industries and it is also now causing many problems as people seek the better life on the other side of the border. We need to start unpacking this story and ask ourselves: Who defines the direction of development? In whose name? For whose benefit? How come? And how can we imagine development, progress and evolution in different ways? So I think that's part of the challenge of preparing people to encounter each other on very different grounds.

**SR:** Educators within postcolonial or critical education claim that we have to act with political correctness. That we have to accept our colonial backpack. But – is it my fault what my ancestors did? Why do I as a young white man or woman have to take responsibility?

**VA:** The key issue here is that, although our education makes us feel we are independent and autonomous individuals, we are actually deeply connected to and dependent on each other and on the planet we live on. The ways that we are living today are based on patterns that have been established by other generations. For example, the wealth accumulated by our nation states (that pay for our welfare) is connected to past and present unjust practices. Our patterns of consumption depend on violent expropriation of different communities and unsustainable extraction of resources that jeopardize the possibilities for life for future generations. Even though we feel that we have nothing to do with the past, we still benefit from the structures that have been created and are maintained by the violence of colonialism and by imperialism and there are different approaches to how we relate to this. One approach is to say: Let's just create a policy and then sort it all out, let's just do the right thing and then things will be sorted. This is problematic as the policies themselves have a vested interest in protecting the wealth and privilege of those who create it. It is not easy to create a policy that goes against the economic interests of powerful nations and of corporations. My approach is very different. It emphasizes that although it does not feel like it, our existence is not defined by nation states, global capital or the single story. We are capable of existing differently, of desiring other futures, of learning from our mistakes, of existing differently on the planet. This involves understanding that we are complex individuals, with complicated histories and that humanity is very complex too. Generally, when we talk about humanity, we associate it with goodness, but actually humanity is a spectrum of things, inside each of us we have the potential to do terrible things and wonderful things. There are no "good people" and no "bad people", we are human, warts and all, and we are interconnected materially and non-materially. When we sense these connections, beyond the intellect, we will see that the violence we commit against

another is violence we commit against ourselves. This has nothing to do with political correctness.

Instead of turning our back to the harmful things that we are systemically complicit in, I think what education can do, and what the young white woman you mentioned can do is to model a way of being where we connect through our vulnerabilities, we connect through our collective pain, through our collective fragility, our brokenness. It is not about feeling good or being affirmed, being seen and looking good, but it is about actually going to the space of discomfort where we see that we are vulnerable, we are all on the same sinking ship (although we are trapped on different decks), and we need to change, otherwise it is going to be a disaster for the next generations.



*Sonja Richter in Dialogue with Vanessa Andreotti*

**SR:** Isn't it a lot about understanding, understanding ourselves and understanding the world?

**VA:** Yes, but it is understanding *differently*, which also involves understanding the limits of our understanding and sitting at the edge of knowing – knowing we cannot know and learning to relate to the world without forcing it into a box. As part of the Enlightenment legacy we have learned to relate to the world through a form of knowledge that is perceived as unlimited and all encompassing. Knowledge gives us security, predictability, a sense of stability and control. We are led to believe that there is no limit to knowing, but, most importantly, that we can only relate to what we "know". But there are other ways of relating to knowledge where knowledge, although still important, does not determine our existence or our ways of relating to each other. For example, ways of knowing that see ourselves not only as inter-connected with, but inter-woven in each other establish relationships between people and between people and the environment that are not dependent on knowledge, identity or understanding. The boxes we create for the world, for ourselves and for each other are generally used as walls that protect our perceived entitlements and that project our expectations onto the world, but, without throwing these boxes away, we could see them in a different light and create holes in the walls so that other possibilities for relationship can emerge –



relationships not based on certainties, on projections, or entitlements. In other words, we need to use our rationality to understand the mistakes of the past, to look at the difficult bits of our history, to see the harm that our lifestyle is creating for other communities and future generations. This is part of our intellectual accountability. But when we renew our relationship with each other and with the world, we need to sit at the limits of this understanding – at the point where we know we do not and cannot know – in order to surrender to different possibilities of relationship and of the future. The intellect cannot control the relational process; its function is related to discernment and wisdom in preventing us from getting stuck in reproducing things that are harmful to our collective wellbeing. When the intellect is used to control relationships, we expect others and the world to conform to our projections and to affirm our self-image: we want to feel good, to look good and to be seen as doing good and this is where people feel afraid of critique, blame, guilt and paralysis. In our relationships, we need to bracket the intellect to allow our bodies to re-wire connections and our sense of collective existence.

**SR:** A “whole body approach”.

**VA:** The whole body, yes.

**SR:** You are referring to an education that is “critical”. What exactly does that mean? Who is critical? Do I have to be critical as an educator? Or the students I am educating?

**VA:** Critical thinking in education is understood in many different ways. Some people think that it is problem solving, some think it is anti-bias. My approach is that critical thinking is about understanding and looking at recurrent mistakes of the past and of the present so that we can make only different mistakes in the future. That involves looking at different perspectives and the limits and gifts of different perspectives. We have to look at tensions, paradoxes and contradictions and power relations: Who decides in whose name for whose benefit and how come? Where do certain (powerful) perspectives come from? How can one think about an issue from another perspective differently? Education should help that we learn to expand our frames of reference and understand the implications of these frames. Only then we are able to take responsibility through the intellectual accountability that I am referring to. We have to take responsibility for the way we think and the way this thinking relates to how we live in the world. But, of course, I don’t believe that just changes in thinking are going to change everything – we also need a different way of feeling and relating. We have to relearn to sense very differently our connections between each other.

**SR:** And that not only in global education, that’s education in general, isn’t it? Thank you for that *different* vision of education.

## Postcolonial Perspectives on School Encounter Journeys

Rahime Diallo, VENROB e. V.

*The following article is a summary of the keynote address on a postcolonial perspective on school encounter journeys in the context of Global Learning given at the second symposium on Global Learning in Schools in Kassel on May 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2016.<sup>1, 2</sup>*

Rahime Diallo understands Global Learning as “Learning from One Another” and “Learning Together”. For developing strategies to solve global problems in all their complexity a joint participation by everyone is needed. He sees Global Learning as the only way to realize this kind of holistic approach.

Global Learning therefore finds itself in a field of tension between different stakeholders and perspectives – this appears within intercultural interaction and encounters between different actors in policy and practice. In these interactions it can be seen that topics are discussed in very different ways – depending on, for example, whether the group is exclusively made up of people of African identity or whether it has a mixed composition.

The cause of this is the historical burden one might refer to as the „Colonial Backpack“. The history of traumatic encounters between the Global North and the Global South remains un confronted and to this day continues to impede the partners’ interaction equally on both sides. A further shortcoming is that participation in educational activities within Global Learning is largely restricted to “socially privileged”, well-educated classes both in the Global North and Global South. This asymmetry reinforces the distorted perceptions that already exist of society and reality on the other side’s part of the world, and in doing so it impedes exchange and mutual understanding in intercultural encounters.

Rahime Diallo describes the general framework that governs intercultural encounters and interaction as follows:

- stereotypic images of the other side’s society, e.g. the European image of a deficit-ridden African society and the African image of a perfect European society;
- single-perspective views and concepts such as Eurocentric views on history or the concept of development (who is supposed to be developing?);

- regional disparities, e.g. in terms of financial resources or difficulty in obtaining visas;
- diverging political goals in carrying out exchange and encounter programs.

Based on belief categories of dominance and inferiority as they are, this general framework must be deconstructed and rebuilt before encounters and interaction can take place in a spirit of partnership. The “privileged stakeholders”, i.e. those of the Global North, are called upon to take a critical view of themselves and the society in which they live. Diallo describes two ways in which the givens of society may be questioned in the North and South. Stakeholders from the Global North should strive for a multi-perspective view, while those of the Global South should become aware (again) of their own assets.

He further describes the following contexts and ways in which these issues should be addressed:

- the socio-historical context: e.g. a critical analysis of the history of Europe and the USA; the writing of history from one’s own perspective and by dedicated historians from the respective country;
- the sociocultural context: e.g. critical reflections on scientific discourse, media and the arts; the return to life philosophies or ethical concepts such as Ubuntu;
- the sociopolitical and global political context: e.g. a critical analysis of EU trade policy, security policy and foreign policy;
- the socioeconomic context: e.g. a critical analysis of the theory of progress and growth from the sustainability perspective.

Recognizing one’s present role is no less difficult and painful for the stakeholders of the Global South than it is for those of the Global North. They must come to realize that their role in the world order as it is seen today is that of the underprivileged, inferior side. Rahime Diallo speaks of them in this connection as “disadvantaged stakeholders”. In an act of “mental emancipation” they must first free themselves of their colonial heritage and return to and/or embrace their precolonial and postcolonial values and norms in order to establish an identity by which they may become equal partners in the discourse. This emancipation of the Global South can only come about if it is witnessed and accompanied by the Global North.

1 The editors have dispensed with the grammatical indicators of reported speech in narrating the content of Rahime Diallo’s presentation. The article exclusively reports the lecturer’s own statements.

2 This summary was prepared with the assistance of Barbara Sawatzki and translated by Conrad Heckmann.



Concepts such as holism or identification with nature which have belonged to the knowledge and tradition of indigenous societies for centuries are today being taken up by modern societies, as can be seen, for example, in the practice of yoga. They also provide a basis for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In this way they also constitute an important source of Global Learning.

In conclusion of his presentation Rahime Diallo gave recommendations for action to implement and further develop Global Learning. First of all, the exchange of ideas for possible solutions and therefore needed competencies should be reciprocal. Educational approaches for the two regions should be developed *jointly*. Secondly, there is an urgent need for differentiation in the prevailing generalistic view of “the one Africa” and of the raising awareness of the continent’s diversity. Global Learning must strive to promote an earnest, self-critical, transparent and differentiated manner of communicating images of society while taking into account socially nonprivileged stakeholders. Finally, Diallo focused on the importance of having young people actively participate and play a shaping role in the implementation of Global Learning, for example, through intercultural encounter journeys.



**Rahime Diallo** works for VENROB e. V., the Diaspora Policy Institute (DPI), the project agency “Transkultur” and is also active in the National Network for Civil Society (Bundesnetzwerk Bürgerschaftliches Engagement – BBE).

# World Societal Learning through School Encounters?

## *Empirical Results of a Study on Encounter Journeys in the World-Societal North-South Context in Germany, Bolivia and Rwanda*

Susanne Krogull, Otto-Friedrich-University Bamberg

North-South encounters represent a growing field of practice in Global Learning, particularly as regards schools. Those who take part in an encounter journey within the framework of a school partnership in the world societal North-South context are usually pursuing a multiplicity of goals. Beyond the goals which are closely related to the school partnership – better mutual acquaintance and a strengthening of the school partnership – there is often a striving for the acquisition of intercultural competences, the dismantling of stereotypical thinking, and an understanding of globalization. The intention is for the contact to promote an understanding of world society in the global context. However, to date there has been little research in this area (e.g., Rostampour & Melzer 1999; Busse et al. 2000; Zeuschel 2002; Thomas et al. 2007) and no research which takes up the Southern perspective.

The aim of the study presented in this contribution, supported by the German Research Foundation, is to reconstruct young people's understanding of world society from the global North and South following such an encounter, in the world societal North-South context.

The term "world society" is used here in its systems theoretical sense (Luhmann 1997; cf. also Scheunpflug in this volume). In this sense, world society is understood as a worldwide communications context, into which every society is integrated. World society thus becomes a set of brackets which encloses all experiences: it is the "total spectrum of all meaningful experience" (Luhmann 1997, p. 153).

### Methodological approach

The sample in this study includes, in all, 19 groups of young people between the ages of 15 and 27 (as well as a control group of older adults) who came from Bolivia, Germany and Rwanda and traveled in the partner country in three to four-week encounter journeys. The data collection was conducted through group discussions (Loos & Schäffer 2008) 6 to 36 months after the encounter journey in the respective home countries, in the native language or lingua franca (Spanish, French, Kinyarwanda, German). The group discussions were transcribed in a rule-based procedure and evaluated with the documentary method. (Bohnsack 2014). Speaking in the terms of praxeological

knowledge sociology (Mannheim 1928/1964), to opt for the documentary method means to differentiate between two knowledge bases: communicative-generalized knowledge resides at the level of societal norms and values; it structures the actions of the participants at the semantic level. It can be explicated by the participants and can be observed in *what* the participants say. In contrast, conjunctive knowledge involves implicit orientation, which is not necessarily reflexively accessible to the participants, but which nonetheless defines their practical knowledge and can be referred to as habitus (Mannheim 1980; Bohnsack 2003). This action-defining knowledge can be seen in *how* a subject is discussed and/or what is thus *documented*. The documentary method permits access to action-defining knowledge. This knowledge in the individual groups was abstracted from the individual cases, and an ideal (Weber 1968) typology of "Understanding of World Society" was generated.

### Results: School typology of an understanding of world society

While all groups in the study are oriented to differences, some diversity can be seen in their organizational types (school, church, youth group) with regard to the following aspects: where differences are perceived, how the groups categorize them in general, and how the perceived differences are made fruitful for learning (cf. the comprehensive results of the study by Krogull, 2016). In the following, the entire typology will not be presented, but rather the type which, within the framework of a sociogenetic reflection, could be attributed to schools as an organizational category: *the understanding of world society in the mode of a proximity-oriented prioritization with learning as a means of stabilization through knowledge acquisition and experience*.

School groups perceive differences, above all, in their immediate personal sphere and in relation to it, in things which directly impact their everyday lives, e.g., the way to school, food, homework, but also the natural surroundings, insofar as it influences their daily routine (e.g., the time when the sun sets).



Rwandan Group “Malachite”, Passage: “Germany is different from Rwanda”, Z. 70-91<sup>1</sup>

Cw Even the German building style is different than in in Rwanda (.)  
 Aw LmhmJ  
 Cw because we use small bricks (.) while the Germans use (.) the large bricks  
 Aw There are many streets (.) that are large  
 Dw LmhmJ |  
 Cw Lmany there there was much move- movement because (.) we move (.) on foot  
 Aw LjaJ Lon footJ  
 Cw whereas they (.)everyone had the  
 Aw Lthere are many ( )  
 Cw means (.) of transportation (1) everyone drives  
 Bw Leveryone (1) has his car |  
 Aw Lhas his car has his bicycle J  
 Cw his bike (.) every family has a car but we(.)  
 Aw LreallyJ |  
 Bw Lbut we  
 Cw didn't know how one can (1) one can use  
 Aw Lthe feetJ | | |  
 Cw Lone can J Lsteer the bike @2@

These differences are described in dichotomies, e.g., black-white, poor-rich, developed-underdeveloped, but which ultimately all lead back to a North-South dichotomy. These dichotomies are represented as unhistorical and static, and have a clearly allocated value which transfers the dichotomies into a hierarchical relation: the North is superior to the South or the South is inferior to the North. With the help of the hierarchy dichotomies an order is created, which is based on upgrading and downgrading. In groups from the global North one sees paternalism, in groups from the global South, self-abasement with simultaneous upgrading of the North.

Rwandan Group “Larimar”, Passage “Experiences in Germany”, Z. 119-125

Bm [...] and for me the second was (.) to travel into a family (.) of the whites (.) we shared food at the same table (.) that is d- d the second thing that drove (?) me and (.) and (.) another thing in the lesson to go (.) you you sit with someone a German I a German a German the whole class belonged to Germans and I the Rwandan that is very good and is proud but sit down with I the the German friends (14)

These differences and these dichotomies are perceived as static, and few possibilities are seen for changing anything

<sup>1</sup> The line designations are based on the original transcripts in the respective languages.

about that. Instead, the perceived differences are stabilized through the acquisition of additional, experience-based knowledge which was accumulated during the journey. This knowledge is selectively assimilated such that it strengthens and stabilizes one’s own perspective, while irritations are ignored.

German Group “Smaragd”, Passage “Passing Knowledge Along”, Z. 763-771

Aw And now we brought the Bolivians (.) I mean the Bolivian exchange students yes also practically their poverty in their country somewhat closer, I think that is already a big step, (.) simply that th:ey agan: see the reality in their country agan, (.) in a developing country,so to speak (.) and yes,  
 Bw LAnd they will surely talk about that further (.) and that helps then too  
 Aw LyesJ

World society is seen by the school groups not from a societal perspective, but rather as an addition constructed of social proximities, which are contained in a hierarchical internal relation to one another. The encounter permits access to other proximities, but without producing a common, (world-)societal perspective.

### Consequences for world societal learning in school encounter journeys in the global North-South context

In view of these results, which show that in the school context – in spite of encounters in the global North-South context – a world societal perspective is not successfully developed, the question arises of how world societal learning can be stimulated in the context of school encounter journeys. One challenging circumstance is that schools, as a state institution (in Germany, in fact, a federal institution) do not open up an inherent global identity. Some related aspects of this issue (cf. also Krogull & Landesbrenner 2009):

- In order to develop a world-societal perspective, abstractive competence is required. From a learning theory perspective – in addition to a concrete commitment to practical projects – there appears to be good sense in situating learning in the sphere of abstract understanding.
- Even in the preparation phase of the journey, but above all during and after the journey, regular reflection units are needed, in which the concrete situation is abstractly viewed and the perspective is oriented to global relationships and connections. Thus overly demanding situations – and simultaneously, stereo-

typing and the development of prejudices – can be identified, and response options can be developed.

- This requires management teams for the travel groups which are appropriately trained for their leadership role in the special situations associated with North-South encounters.
- In such groups we see a convergence with the world society, integrated into participatory structures. Thus in the school context the question is: how can participation be strengthened to produce a democratic and societal perspective on the world?

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## Encounter Journeys in a Transnational World

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International encounter journeys, like all forms of international school and youth exchange programs, take place in the context of a transnational world. The participants live in societies which have complex global relationships to each other. In order to explain this, the theoretical background of transnationalization will be discussed. After a short look at an empirical project on the subject of long-term student exchange formats, the findings will be applied to short-term encounter journeys in the Global South and a connection to Global Learning be drawn.

### Societal transnationalization

The term *transnationalization* comes originally from migration research. The classic understanding of human migration involves a one-time, unidirectional movement through space. For those who had migrated there were (in the ideal concept) only two options, on the one hand “good” integration into the new society in which one had arrived, on the other hand the “bad” option: the emergence of parallel societies or the discontinuation of the migration effort, that is, return to the place of origin.

In the 1990s, increasing discomfort with this perspective emerged. Newer migration movements were characterized by substantially more back-and-forth movements through space, and by more contact with the society of origin. The term *transmigration* was created, describing a kind of life *between* two spaces. In the German-speaking region this was addressed, in particular, by the sociologist Ludger Pries (Pries 2008).

The background of these considerations was the increasing criticism – also in the social sciences – of nationally container thinking. The ideal concept of the national state assumes that a nation or a culture is closed within its own borders and blocked off from the outside like a container. In light of global interdependency, this idea no longer describes modern societies in an adequate way. According to Pries “the old dream of independently determining the destiny of one’s own ethnic group or national society within a distinct geographical area has become obsolete” (Pries 2008, p. 11).

While transmigration research tends to look more at movements between different societies, the political scientist Steffen Mau has turned his attention to changes

within our society. He sees an increase in contacts across national borders, in foreign travel and in friendships and relationships with persons from other countries as a kind of *societal transnationalization*. These phenomena come about not necessarily through the steady maintenance of connections, nor through uninterrupted mobility, but rather through the expansion of opportunities, and the mental implicitness of transnationality. He describes certain everyday activities and communication routes across borders as *transnational social practices* (Mau 2007, p. 53ff).

### International exchange as transnational social practice

International exchange journeys, too, are therefore a transnational social practice. A research project focussed on the format of long-term student exchange from this perspective (Weichbrodt 2014). 3,000 former participants in a one-year exchange program were questioned in an online survey, and qualitative guided interviews were carried out with 30 individuals. One result was that a higher degree of mobility is found among these: over 80 percent of them were in foreign countries again for a longer period later in life. It was further demonstrated that a normalization of transnational elements in everyday life is underway. Digital social media in particular are used intensively in order to stay in contact with persons in the “host country” (former host family or friends) or in other countries (often friends from other countries who were in the same host country at the same time). The former host country is also often visited. Thus on the one hand the exchange itself can be viewed as a transnational social practice, and on the other hand other practices evolve from it, such as medial contacts and visits.

Shorter periods of residency as well, like short-term encounter journeys, can be viewed from this theoretical perspective. However, in the classical encounter journey concept it is often the case that the exchange *between* cultures and nations is seen as paramount. An “immersion” in the foreign society is supposed to occur, and experiencing the differences is seen as central. These ideas are based on the classical concept of societies organized as nation-states. Cultures are basically seen as closed off and separated from each other.



This paper is intended as a plea that, in view of the ever stronger transnationalization of our world, encounter journeys in the Global South too should be conceived transnationally. After all, the encounter is not a “first contact” between two cultures; rather, many connections already exist between the two countries, including North-South partnerships. In the preparation phase these connections can be explored at the “society-at-large” level: by discussing with the participants e.g. international trade relations, former colonial dependencies or cooperative development projects. In particular, the classical themes of Global Learning can be addressed, such as human rights issues, sustainability, and intercultural learning. Beyond this, relationships can be initiated at the personal level, above all through the use of digital social media. Depending on the technical possibilities, this can involve sporadic e-mail contact, an exchange via services such as WhatsApp and Facebook, a video call via Skype or similar activities.

### From the “Single Story” to “Multiple Stories” through encounter journeys

In a widely-discussed article called “The Danger of a Single Story”, the Nigerian author Chimamanda Adichie also pointed out the danger of a single history (Adichie 2009). In our perception of other countries and cultures, in particular those in the Global South, we repeatedly see a problematic constriction. Through the repetition of a single story, colonial views and stereotypes are reinforced, such as the idea that many African countries are poor and underdeveloped. From the perspective of Global Learning, encounter journeys provide a perfect opportunity to break out of this “Single Story” narrative in favor of “Multiple Stories”. Through on-location encounters and intensive personal exchange, participants can develop an understanding of the diversity of society in the target location and of the individuality of their encounter partners. Important elements in this process are, of course, accompaniment and follow-up work. But social media contacts can also make an important contribution, especially when they occur in advance. When contacts are made in Facebook or other platforms before, during and after the trip, this alters the perception of the entire encounter. Furthermore, colonially rooted ideas are questioned: when the exchange partner is not seen as someone potentially in need of help, but rather as a Facebook friend, this can contribute to an encounter between equals.

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## Intercultural Learning in the Context of International School Exchanges: How to maximize the Learning Effects of Intercultural Encounters

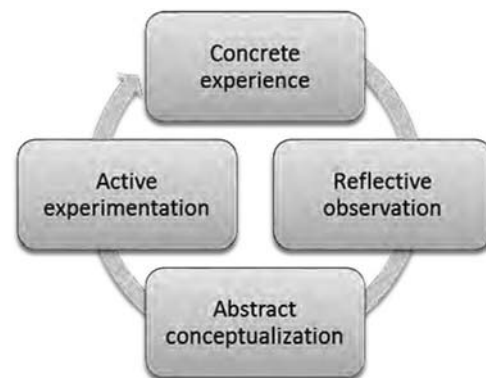
*Dunja Živanović, Belgrade University, European Federation for Intercultural Learning*

There are hardly any international student exchange programmes today which do not put intercultural learning as their top priority in the programme agenda. International student exchanges provide a platform for members of various cultural, religious and ethnic backgrounds to meet and in this contact develop knowledge, skills and attitudes that would make them global citizens, ready to study, live and work in the world characterized by growing interconnectedness and exposure to cultural diversity.

The belief that intercultural contact automatically results in effective intercultural learning is rarely questioned. It is often referred to as immersion hypothesis (Vande Berg et al. 2012), which means that by being immersed in another cultural environment students become more knowledgeable, open-minded, interculturally competent and less prejudiced. However, research results (e.g. Paige & Vande Berg 2012; Pedersen 2010) have challenged this belief, showing that intercultural learning in the context of student exchanges does not automatically happen as it is described in programmatic literature of exchange programmes – as a direct result of intercultural interaction. Findings suggest that it is not enough only to provide opportunities for intercultural contact, but that an intercultural experience needs systematic pedagogical guidance which would maximize its learning outcomes.

In order for experience to be transformed into knowledge, skills and attitudes, it needs to be coupled with reflection which would help the learners understand the experience and draw conclusions they would apply in future intercultural encounters. David Kolb (1984) has explained this process as an experiential learning cycle, which consists of four stages: concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation. A learning experience can start at any of these points but all stages are necessary for “creation of knowledge through transformation of experience”, as Kolb defines learning (1984: 38). If we translate this model into international student exchange practice, it means that students should first be prepared for the intercultural experience before the intercultural encounter, guided through the experience during the exchange, and given an opportunity to reflect upon the experience after the exchange, so that they would conceptualize and verbalize what they have learnt. Intercultural learning is seen as a never-ending process through which one’s intercultural awareness and

competence is upgraded while new experiences build upon previously acquired knowledge, skills and attitudes. This means that what students acquire through intercultural exchanges is not limited to a specific educational project; on the contrary, it should be transferable.



*Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle*

When it comes to educational material, there are a number of available resources that teachers and exchange organizers can use and adapt to their specific context, since exchange programmes differ when it comes to programme length, group size, participant age, etc. For example, the world’s oldest international student exchange organization AFS Intercultural Programs has developed a number of educational resources for designing, carrying out and debriefing intercultural experiences which translate educational concepts and approaches into practice of intercultural exchanges. Similarly, the Council of Europe has developed resources such as *The Autobiography of Intercultural Encounters and Intercultural Learning Training Kit*, which contain questions for reflection as well as concrete workshop proposals.

Prior to the exchange, teachers and facilitators should prepare students both for the specific experience and partner country reality. However, it is equally important that in addition to information on logistics and schedules, preparation includes more general topics such as concepts of culture, cultural differences and prejudice. When talking about culture, students’ attention should be drawn to *subjective culture* (Triandis 2002) or *lower-case culture*

(Bennett 1998) in contrast to *material culture* or *upper case Culture*. This means that students should understand that culture does not consist only of artifacts and aspects that are immediately visible, such as food or clothes, but that culture essentially is the lifestyle and worldview, and all the things that make the everyday life of members of a cultural community. To illustrate this, intercultural training materials often refer to the metaphor of culture iceberg, which shows that only a small part of a culture is explicit, while a much larger part is under the surface and not so easily visible. Bearing this complexity of culture in mind, an activity that can help students prepare how they would present their own culture to their guests or hosts is to work on a presentation of a specific aspect of their culture – for example how teenagers spend their free time or how families celebrate holidays. Such topics belong to the *lower-case culture* and refer to values and lifestyle, rather than a country's history or art. Another set of activities can help students prepare for an encounter with intercultural differences and potential culture shock. Such activities are popular simulation games such as Albatross, Bafa-Bafa, or the D Erdians, which do not engage students only intellectually but also emotionally.

During the exchange students can either individually or in teams be assigned a task to explore certain aspects of the host culture – for example, how the school system works and compare these aspects of host culture to their home culture. The output can be a video, paper, or presentation that students create to present their work. Host students can be assigned parallel tasks in order to bring their culture closer to the guests – for example, teach guests how to prepare some typical dishes or teach an introductory language lesson. Focus on these activities would always keep students aware that they are taking part in an educational programme, rather than just going on a trip to another country.

Following the exchange, participants should be given space for reflection so that they would analyse and process what they have learnt during the intercultural experience. Debriefing questions may include: What did you expect from the exchange? Did everything happen the way you expected or were you surprised at some points? What was the best point of the exchange experience? Were there any difficulties that you encountered? How did you deal with them? What were the biggest cultural differences that you observed? What were the most valuable learning points for you?

In addition to drawing attention to cultural issues and encouraging students to develop intercultural understanding, the proposed activities also require from students to generate some tangible output – student diaries, presentations, videos, etc. This enables programme organizers to

assess the effects that the exchange experience has had on students, and use the results of such analysis for further improvement in the quality of exchange programmes and enhancement of learning outcomes.

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# Insights from Practice

## A New Approach to Schools and North-South Cooperation

*Johanna Nomatlou Mahlangu, Golden Youth Club, and Harald Kleem, Peer Leader International*

We are in the fortunate position to have partners from a different continent. Over the last 10 years, peer-leaders – young people aged 12-25 from Germany and South Africa – have been working together under the umbrella of Peer Leader International, a German NGO with partners in 9 countries. We educate young people to take on leadership roles in the development of their communities, their region, their country, and in sustainable development. All teams have the same goals but work differently: In South Africa, peer-leaders are focused on providing orientation after school, encouraging cultural work and introducing young people to the concept of recycling. In Germany we are doing research on diversity and on the topic of inclusion; we also provide assistance to refugees and run a mobile snack bar with healthy food. In Brazil, the team cares about the Atlantic rain forest; in Bosnia, we work on eliminating stereotypes; in Tunisia, we try to build a democratic youth team, etc. From time to time, team representatives meet and exchange ideas and perspectives.



When they return back home, they have new energy and a global viewpoint. “Think globally, act locally” – that’s what the peer-leader teams are doing, and although our kids come from non-privileged backgrounds, they receive support from politicians and are contributing to sustainable development. One of our teams was part of the German delegation at the United Nations’ Rio+20 Conference; peers meet politicians at all levels; they create flash mobs; they

visit schools with the intent of organizing motivational workshops; they are invited to government ministries, conferences, and seminars. Step by step, we are creating the young leaders of tomorrow.

When we tried to include schools in our work, we encountered a number of issues:

1. There is no time for unexpected impulses. We want to enrich schools in peer-leader countries by going into classes. However, schools on both sides, in Ostrhauderfehn (Germany) and in Winterveldt (South Africa), had almost no time to meet with and include their guests, or to learn with and from us. We were told that “the governmental curriculum is filling all the gaps”. Does life no longer fit into the school curriculum?
2. Sometimes young students come up with new ideas during our school visits, but the teachers are unwilling to change their role: they see themselves as teachers and not as coaches. What happens when students come up with ideas for projects in our meetings? Is anyone willing to work with them, and not simply teach them?
3. It is a challenge to meet people from different continents and with difficult histories. We are not just friends who meet in the middle – we come from poor and rich societies, and we are part of a system that guarantees poverty for many and wealth only for some. Based on this background, we need to create and define our roles in these partnerships. And even if both sides understand the issues, what role should schools play in it? Shouldn’t we pick up on these differences and on our colonial history and talk about it? And yet, we still meet Germans who ask about lions and elephants, who think of Africa as a country and who want to donate money out of reflex. And we still encounter students in Africa who admire the Europeans because of their environmental standards.
4. Are we ready to act? We understand each other, we find a common position, but where is the space to work on these differences in schools? Where can we encourage young people to change things? Where is the training to

do that? Schools are still pretending to prepare kids for “later”, for life after school. We ask: When do schools prepare kids for participation? Schools are also part of life. Where are the possibilities to enrich life at school except at school parties?

This sounds very negative, and we mean it like that. Our experiences with schools have not been positive. Our peer-leaders – the very same persons who are treated as mere objects at school – understand that they are role models after school. They are VIPs: Very Important Peer-Leaders.

If schools don’t change as a whole, school partnerships are a waste of energy and money. We need schools that are ready to learn. You can pick and choose from any number of topics for a partnership: climate change, poverty, fair trade, refugees, democracy, wars and civil wars, corruption, the goals of education, nutrition, adolescence, and many others.

1. We need the whole school, the school as a system, in order to make better use of the opportunities we have to work on common topics in the North and South. We do not need islands in the system, small areas where students can play. We need space and close coordination with school subjects; we need the whole school morning; respect for a “culture of curiosity”, for kids who have questions and who are looking for challenges and adventures instead of bored participation. And above all, we need respect. For schools like that we need everyone to get involved: parents, teachers and students, we need school administrations and NGOs to work on topics, not just for play but to realize serious projects, including on sustainable development.



2. We need the whole “landscape of education”: the schools must open their doors for us to come in and to reach out to people and places of learning where one can collect the facts and where there is space for change. It takes a village to raise a child: without the village you risk to educate youngsters for life on a different planet.

3. We need more time: a simple meet & greet does not amount to cooperation. An international partnership must be developed through an ongoing process. We need patience to change attitudes; we need time to understand the Other – even more so if he or she is from a different continent.
4. We need a different understanding of teaching. We should trust the young generation to ask the questions they need to ask in order to understand and shape the future. The teacher should assist in this process, and not merely follow a governmental curriculum.
5. Acting means participating: Schools are part of life and not just a preparation for it. The school is a home where you feel comfortable and learn, and not a place where you feel like a stranger and that causes you to withdraw inside yourself. School should be a place where you can be someone; if you are nobody, your international partners will also be treated like that.

This approach to schooling is entirely new. As long as most schools are not willing to change, we NGOs have to be the new schools. However, the proper role of NGOs is to cooperate with schools, not to replace them. We are an additional system, which has to protect itself so as not to become traditional schools. Peer Leader International tries its best:

- We have partners all over the world and they enrich our work with youngsters. We need their perspectives in order to find better solutions than we have found so far. We need to find solutions for fair, peaceful and sustainable development.
- We are coaching and encouraging youngsters to take the lead, locally and globally. They learn to lead by contributing locally to life at school, to lessons, and projects.
- We work with the entire spectrum of our diverse society in order to reach everyone and not just a small target group. Young peer-leaders reach out to those who have dropped out of school and who avoid books and speeches. We connect learning with everyday life, so that poverty, for example, is not just a subject but a reality both in the classroom and in society.
- We do not have answers to all problems, but we offer a forum for those who ask questions. We accept those who are not satisfied with the answers others have found.

So, where to begin? The key is to rethink education:

- Rethink the purpose of education: We need to create knowledge and skills, not just certificates!



- Rethink the expected outcome: Active, motivated, tolerant, and engaged children are more important than millions of scientists who are unable to see the realities.
- Rethink structures: Subjects and time frames are just constructs, not laws. We should work with our communities on interdisciplinary projects and we should intervene if necessary.
- Rethink the purpose of international cooperation: A meeting is not a goal in itself – it is an instrument to reach goals such as education for a sustainable future and leadership training.
- Rethink the concept of partnerships: Let us see clearly the differences and structures that lead to an unfair society.

A healthy North-South cooperation requires better schools and a new approach to schooling. If NGOs want to avoid repairing the mistakes of schools and if young people and peer-leaders want to motivate their classmates, they need schools that support an active youth. At the moment communication is difficult between those inside the system and the “butterflies” outside the system. The culture is a different one and the goals seem to be different as well: surviving school is not quite the same as shaping the future. We will not be silent until schools in our neighborhoods start to rethink education and contribute to active citizenship and to a better future.



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## School Encounters as a Setting for Global Learning: A Dialogue Project on the Colonial History of Tanzania

Klaus Schilling, Humboldtschule Bad Homburg

The example of the study exchange between the Humboldtschule Bad Homburg (HUS) in Germany and the Mwanga High School (MHS) in Tanzania shall be used to discuss in practical terms the question of school encounters and their contribution to global learning in the field of Tanzanian-German colonial history. Since 2008, a total of six school encounter journeys (three times in Germany, three times in Tanzania) took place between the MHS and the HUS, partner schools since 1996. The latest three-week dialogue project intended to explore the realities and challenges of multi-religious societies was carried out in July 2016, and the counter-visit is scheduled for 2017. In 2012, 12 students from the senior classes of HUS and their teachers Inken Dietrich and Klaus Schilling traveled to the Tanzanian partner school. On the part of the MHS, the project was conducted by the history teacher Damas Mshana and by Mena Kengera, who later became the headmistress of the school. The title of the three-week dialogue project on the colonial history of Tanzania was "Collecting and Connecting Histories – Encounter and Dialogue". The program consisted of a didactic three-step course: 1) Learning history from each other, 2) Exploring historical sites and monuments together, 3) Creative transformation and shaping of experiences. The first week was dedicated to mutual acquaintance and to the exploration of the MHS boarding school. At the same time, various presentations by small groups of students on the history of Tanzania and Germany in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century took place. The students of the MHS presented, among other things, a talk on the pre-colonization structures in Tanzania and its colonization in the wake of Carl Peters as one of the most radical and brutal colonialists of the German Empire. The HUS students offered presentations on topics such as the German Empire under Bismarck and the Africa Conference in Berlin. Another MHS team discussed anti-colonial resistance of the Bushiri War (1888-1890), and also the course of the Maji Maji War against German colonialists, which cost the life of about 250 000 to 300 000 Tanzanian people between 1905 and 1908, according to today's estimates.

In the second week, the Tanzanian-German dialogue project group explored, under expert guidance, various places in Tanzania that were of particular importance during the colonial era, such as Bagamoyo and Dar es Salaam. In the

process, each student kept his or her own creative diary. After returning to the MHS, the different knowledge pools, impressions and experiences of the two previous weeks were transposed upon the walls of a classroom. In small mixed teams, presentation concepts were developed for each thematic focus, ranging from traveling together on the bus and the shared favorite songs, through colonial history, to the independence of Tanzania and the present challenges.

The Colonial History team designed its area using various images and quotations such as that of Julius Nyerere on the basic meaning of the Maji Maji War for Tanzania, as well as contemporary illustrations such as a drawing of the Berlin Africa Conference (1884/85) from a Tanzanian schoolbook and the artwork "Scramble for Africa" designed by Yinka Shonibare in 2003. This estranged image of decapitated decision-makers sitting at a table in African robes was connected by the students to three challenging questions, which opened the floor for discussion: "How would they have decided?", "Has there ever been a reparation for colonialism and slavery?", "Is it a forgotten past?"

The development and discussion of these questions is a key contribution of the dialogue project to the field of global learning. The resulting knowledge about German colonial history in Tanzania and the associated insights into the limitations of regular teaching on the topic (keyword "forgotten past") was only a first step in the knowledge gained by the HUS students.

The joint search for traces in concrete places of colonial history such as Bagamoyo, the first administrative seat of the German colonial power in East Africa, called not only for individual engagement but also for the development of, or at least a first step toward, a common attitude towards colonial history and its crimes. In particular, a shared ritual at the "hanging tree" monument for anti-colonial resistance fighters in Bagamoyo was deeply moving. The names of three Bushiri bin Salim's supporters who were executed by German colonialists in December 1889 were read out loud, and the students replied together to every name – Simba Mbili, Marera and Mbomboma – with the clear call "present!". Through this ritual, the previously nameless victims of history were conceived of as named persons, and the past was opened to our present through symbolic action.



The school encounter journey as an experience of global learning is characterized precisely by the fact that learning from and with each other can lead to a common attitude of solidarity and co-responsibility for the present through the mutual change of perspective. It is this opening up of perspectives that is visualized in the walls at which the students worked in the third week: these present not only the way to the independence of Tanzania, but also the Children's Rights Declaration, pinned to the wall in book form. With its commitment to nonviolence, the declaration also acts as a measure and guideline within the school.

Back at the HUS, the students reported about the journey and dialogue project on German-Tanzanian colonial history at a variety of occasions. These included i.a. presentations in many different classes and courses as well as a large evening event and various exhibitions, at which the creative travel diaries and photos were presented. Moreover, reports in the UNESCO project schools network as well as in different school committees of the HUS gave impulses for the teaching of history in the framework of global learning. The school encounter journey dedicated to colonial history, as well as the dialogue project on the East African diaspora in the Rhine-Main region back in 2013, underscores the importance of the "whole school approach" as defined by the fifth chapter of the new "Curriculum Framework: Education for Sustainable Development", which has been a result of the joint project of the Standing Conference of the German Ministers of Education and Culture (KMK) and the German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).

Only as a part of a living school culture and a vibrant school partnership can school encounters become a resonance space for school development dedicated to global learning. And only if it is a meeting space that transcends the usual power structures, dependencies and racisms, a dialogue project can construct a "third space" in Homi Bhabha's sense: a space of interrelating that includes the processes of encountering, translating and negotiating, so that opportunities open up for the new.

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*Vernissage of the Creative History Room*



*Dialogue Project Team „Collecting and Connecting Histories“*



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# Global Learning through German Cultural Diplomacy with the PASCH-Initiative: Experiences from Ivory Coast

Lacina Yéo, Félix Houphouët-Boigny University, Abidjan-Cocody, Ivory Coast

## Introduction

The goal of Global Learning is the recognition and promotion of cultural diversity. Cultural diplomacy thus functions as a tool in Global Learning. It is used both by public, state services (administrations, foreign ministries) and by non-governmental (independent national or international nonprofit and neutral organizations, individuals) and international organizations (UNESCO, European Union, etc.) with the objective of international understanding at the national and international level. By encouraging mutual understanding, trust and dialogue it is intended to create conditions for a lasting, peaceful partnership between peoples, cultures and nations. International school partnerships represent the starting point for global thinking and global action by interacting persons from various cultures, and should therefore be considered an important sector in international diplomacy.

German cultural diplomacy experienced a decidedly new emphasis in the Federal Republic after 1949: The antiquated “cultural imperialism” that had been discredited due to the nationalistic hubris of the Third Reich was replaced by the willingness to a real “cultural exchange” (H-Net 2016). The PASCH project was clearly conceived against this ideological background.

## The PASCH initiative as a subject of German cultural diplomacy

“PASCH” is a short form for “Partner Schools”; the initiative stands for “Schools: Partners for the Future”. It is a network of more than 1800 schools around the world with a particular connection to Germany, in which German Language study has an especially high curricular value. The Goethe-Institut supervises around 550 PASCH schools in the national educational systems of over 100 countries. The PASCH initiative was created in February 2008 by the German Foreign Ministry together with the Central Agency for German Schools Abroad (ZfA), the Goethe-Institut (GI), the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) and the German Pedagogic Exchange Service (PAD) of the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs. Four guiding principles define the focus of PASCH:

1. Perspectives through education
2. Broadening of horizons through multilingual abilities

3. Access to languages and education
4. Common approaches to future problems as an international learning community<sup>1</sup>

### The PASCH-Initiative in Ivory Coast: A Critical Assessment

In Ivory Coast, four secondary partner schools were selected for the PASCH project: the Lycée Moderne de Jeunes Filles Yopougon<sup>2</sup>, the Lycée Sainte Marie Cocody<sup>3</sup>, the Lycée Mamie Adjoua Yamoussoukro<sup>4</sup> and the Lycée Municipal Djibo Sounkalo Bouaké<sup>5</sup>.

#### Activities for learners and teachers:

The catalogue of activities includes both domestic and foreign activities. The activities feature German courses, advanced training seminars, foreign residencies (participation in the International Youth Parliament in Montevideo, Uruguay and in the Pan-African Comics Workshop in Heidelberg), recreational and travel programs (presentation of a 10-day PASCH Summer Camp in Sassandra, Ivory Coast) and diverse cultural activities (improvisational theater, puppet theater, comic production, German Language courses, advanced training seminars, hip-hop workshops, dramatic arts, painting, exhibitions, PASCH-Soccer) etc. (Dey Degnan, Jonas 2013: 52-56).

#### Opportunities and Challenges:

With PASCH, German-Ivorian cooperation in the area of schools was strengthened. The program encouraged, through modern didactic materials, the endowment of the selected Ivory Coast schools. Thus Germany’s school system provided an impulse for the Ivory Coast school system to open itself up. Indeed, the project made it possible for a (limited) number of Ivorian students and teachers to experience Germany and thus supported direct mutual

- 1 Description of the PASCH initiative: cf.: Goethe-Institut 2016.
- 2 Since 2008 this secondary school has been part of the PASCH-Initiative, which has had a very positive impact on the school.
- 3 The school enjoys an excellent reputation in Ivory Coast and recently celebrated its 50th anniversary. Since 2008 it has been part of the PASCH-Program, through which numerous motivational projects have been implemented.
- 4 The girls’ secondary school in Yamoussoukro has benefited since 2008 from the fruitful cooperation with the PASCH-Initiative. The school offers a dynamic and stimulating program of German language courses.
- 5 The secondary school, located in the country’s second largest city, has been part of the PASCH initiative since 2013.



acquaintance between young people and adults from Germany and the Ivory Coast. These schools function as instruments of bilateral German-Ivorian cultural diplomacy and understanding. The PASCH-Initiative also highlights multilateralism, an essential characteristic of Global Learning; the program supports cultural activities for learners both in Ivory Coast and in other countries. By making possible foreign trips for Ivorian students, teachers and school administrators, the project supports the expansion of the cultural horizons of its participants.

The PASCH-Program is facing the challenge of better supporting the network of former scholarship recipients. The Goethe-Institut needs, for example, an adequate databank on the former PASCH-Scholarship students. We still have little information about the whereabouts of the students following receipt of their secondary school diplomas.

## Conclusion

Beyond the bilateral intercultural dialogue between Germany and the Ivory Coast, the PASCH-Project inspires a multilateral, worldwide exchange between the Ivory Coast, Germany and other countries in Africa and the rest of the world. Thus PASCH functions as an instrument of German cultural diplomacy, which provides stimulus and moves participating parties to global thinking and global action. The selected schools may be called a German offering of model schools for Global Learning, although it is a pressing question whether PASCH may be perceived as a “one-sided” instrument of Global Learning, operated by Germany.

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# The Role of NGOs in South-North School Partnerships

*Minnie Maisie Salanga, San Miguel National High School, and Uwe Berger, Carpus e. V.*

## Introduction

Carpus e.V. has been involved in school partnerships between secondary schools in the region of Brandenburg/Germany and schools in the Philippines since 2007.<sup>1</sup> During those nine years of partnerships between various schools, four encounters took place in Germany and three in the Philippines. In total, 56 students from both countries, as well as seven Filipino teachers and five German teachers participated. This article is about our experiences, and especially the challenges of organizing South-North school partnerships between schools in the Philippines and in Germany, with a focus on the special role of NGOs.

## The Pitfalls of School Partnerships: Experiences in Germany and in the Philippines

Two German schools we had been working with quit their partnership with a school in the Philippines after only two years of school exchanges. The partnership was terminated although students and teachers liked the encounters very much and kept in touch with their Filipino partners.

## Fragile Support for Partnerships in Schools

We believe that the fragile support for partnerships in schools is the main problem in keeping up long-term partnerships. Often, a single teacher is responsible for managing every aspect of the school partnership: looking for funds, selecting and preparing students, keeping in contact with the partner school, organizing encounters, preparing workshop topics, dealing with parents and host families, and so on. This overburden easily results in an absence of the teacher. If no other teacher takes over the responsibility, the partnership may fall asleep. It is therefore important to put together a team of teachers

to share the work. We suggest involving new colleagues in the partnership every year.

In the Philippines there is another challenge to keep the team of teachers intact, because Filipino teachers benefit from the encounter through a promotion. Once they have travelled abroad, they will be promoted to a higher position. The downside effect is that the teacher might be transferred to another school which offers a higher position. We have seen it happen that one of the Filipino teachers in a partnership became the principal of a different school. Another teacher was offered to become a principal as well.

## High Organizational Effort

In the Philippines, teachers and students have to comply with the strict rules of the system. The preparation alone for travelling abroad takes a long time and is costly:

- Teachers have to apply for a travel permit and clearances from the Department of Education, which can take up to two months.
- Students have to apply for a travel clearance for minors from the Department of Social Welfare and Development, which takes about one month.
- The passport application at the Department of Foreign Affairs takes another month.
- Visa: Scheduling an appointment for a Schengen visa at the German Embassy in Manila takes up to three months. The German Embassy requires a personal appearance not only of the applicant, but also of both parents if the applicant is a minor (less than 18 years of age). Therefore the whole family might be required to fly to Manila and stay overnight, which is very costly.

As shown, it takes up to six months for Filipinos to secure all documents and visa before they can travel. This has implications for the project's schedule. The encounter in Germany has to take place in the second half of the year.

The high organizational effort is a hindrance for the German teachers as well. In the State of Brandenburg, almost every school maintains partnerships, the so-called "Erasmus+ projects" (formerly named Comenius-Projects), with schools in other EU countries. The encounters of these projects usually last only five days and require no prepara-

<sup>1</sup> In 2007, the German NGO Carpus initiated a school partnership between San Miguel National High School in Puerto Princesa City, Philippines, and the Gesamtschule Burg (Spreewald) in the State of Brandenburg, Germany. After two years, the Gesamtschule Burg backed out from the partnership and was replaced by the Max-Steenbeck-Gymnasium in Cottbus, Germany. Another two years later, that school backed out as well and transferred the partnership to the Emil-Fischer-Gymnasium in Schwarzeide, Germany. After having been a reliable partner for five years, the Emil-Fischer-Gymnasium is now about to sign a partnership agreement with San Miguel National High School.



tion or evaluation seminars. By contrast, the encounters in South-North school partnerships usually comprise a minimum of 14 program days plus travel days. Funding programs (such as ENSA) require intensive preparation and evaluation in seminars before and after the encounter. These seminars ensure a certain level of quality and should be continued!

Many of the South-North school partnerships tackle complex issues such as racism, colonialism, global (in) justice, and so on. But most teachers have little more knowledge on the topics than their own students. They need to research and learn as well, which makes them feel uncomfortable. Unlike the 100% EU-funded Erasmus+ projects, the encounters of South-North school partnerships are not fully funded. Funding programs only cover part of the project costs. Schools always need to ask for donations and look for external funds, and many teachers are discouraged by that alone.

### **Lack of Support by School Administration**

In addition to external factors, teachers are occasionally being discouraged by their own school management. Over the last few years, the Department of Education in the State of Brandenburg has had to deal with a high number of absent teachers due to long-term sickness. As a result, the number of class cancellations increased every year. The goal of the principals now is to reduce the number of cancelled classes at their schools. Therefore, teachers are not easily being excused from classes for extra-curricular activities like preparation or evaluation seminars. Despite the fact that the seminars are mandatory if the school was to receive funding, we have found that the school management did not allow their teachers to participate in these seminars. The school management even demands that the encounters take place in part during school holidays in order to avoid teacher absences.

The situation in the Philippines is similar. Here it is referred to as “principal empowerment,” which means everything depends on the will of the principal. The principal can decide whether the teachers who accompany the students during the encounter will be granted leave with or without pay. In all our encounters, the principal did not approve travel permits with pay. Therefore the Filipino teachers had to sacrifice one month’s salary while they accompanied their students during the encounter in Germany. Further, they had to look for a substitute teacher to take over their class during their absence. Teachers who are not employed by the national government but by the city government have no chance at all to take part in an encounter. Their contract is limited to one year only, with yearly renewal. The Department of Education does not issue travel permits for them, even though there are young

and motivated teachers among them who are interested in the partnership.

### **Low Funding for Schools in the Global South**

Maintaining a South-North school partnership depends heavily on German funds. In the Philippines there are very limited financial options for international school partnerships. Public funds are not available for this purpose. Private schools can ask the parents to pay all costs for travel and accommodation for their children. But families who send their children to public schools do not have the means to pay. The school might be able to access funds from a parent-teacher association to help participants in financing the costs of the visa application process at the German embassy and during preparation. For encounters that take place in the Philippines, the partner school can also solicit donations from politicians to finance some activities and ask the city government to provide free transportation for field trips. But there is no way to access funds to pay for flight tickets and accommodation in Germany. Due to the unequal nature of the funding situation in South-North school partnerships, we believe that the German partners have an obligation to access funds and to share them equally with their Filipino partners without overvaluing themselves. Perceptively it remains a big challenge to lobby for public funds from the Philippine Government for the implementation of international school partnerships.

### **NGOs as Bridge Builders**

In comparison to public schools and funders, which are often part of a complex administrative hierarchic system, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are more flexible because they are independent. Therefore, NGOs can be valuable partners for schools in South-North school partnerships. For NGOs it is easier to access funds than for schools. Many NGOs have been cooperating for many years with partner organizations in the Global South and are already experienced in Global Learning. They can help to lessen teachers’ workloads, too. Among the services which NGOs can offer to schools are:

- Preparing funding applications and settlements for encounters
- Accessing external funding and donations
- Proposing themes and topics for Global Learning for the encounters
- Organizing workshops and field trips for Global Learning during the encounters
- Finding speakers and resource persons for workshops
- Dealing with the embassy and support for visa-applications
- Translating documents

Ideally there should be an NGO in both countries assisting the local schools. Right now there is only one German NGO (Carpus e.V.) involved in our partnership, which means that we suffer from an imbalance of accompanying institutions at the local level. This places Carpus in a powerful role in our particular situation. An imbalance of funding and institutional support, provided by a single NGO based in the Global North, increases the risk of an abuse of power. If only one NGO is involved, it could be biased towards one of the schools. We therefore strongly recommend that any NGOs accompanying school partnerships reflect on their position of power, e.g. through a review of the diversity among their own staff. Are both perspectives (white and non-white, South and North) equally reflected within the NGO?

Currently we have to deal with the fact that there is no local NGO involved in our South-North school partnership in the Philippines. We hope to be able to find such an NGO in the future, which would certainly open new possibilities for the partnership and at the same time strengthen the position of our Filipino partners.



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## True Partner Relations in International School Partnerships? – *Experiences and Findings from the ENSA Program<sup>1</sup>*

Claudia Schilling, Engagement Global gGmbH

It has always been and remains the goal of the ENSA program<sup>2</sup> to support school partnerships and encounters between schoolchildren and teachers in the South and North “on an equal footing”. ENSA has been in existence for 10 years now and in the beginning we, like many other organizations, used this terminology.

It is widely known that there are a great many global and local imbalances that cause frustration among those involved in the ENSA program, the applicants in Germany, and those responsible for the projects in the Global South, so that we continue to seek new solutions.

Among the central challenges are, for example, unequal opportunities of getting visa and of travelling as well as the fact that there are few international exchange programs which are (or can be) financed by the governments of our partner organizations in the Global South. It quickly becomes clear that we cannot truly speak of encounters “on an equal footing”. Furthermore: the financing, which is almost completely in the hands of the applicants in Germany, results through its multiplicity of rules and regulations in very strong control from the German side. This includes regulations of funding amounts and funding periods, as well as stipulations regarding the use of the funds. As a result applicants and project directors in Germany often think that they are solely responsible. The preponderance of power on one side also manifests itself through less tangible and subtler but nonetheless very real issues. The question of which knowledge, which approaches and methods constitute the content in the history of ideas and the philosophical basis of the encounter is sometimes quickly and unconsciously decided according to the Northern partner’s view, or there is a desire on both sides to get off of this “slippery slope”. In terms of practical implementation this proves much more complicated than simply having the intention to work together “equally”.

The experience of the ENSA program within the context of this global and local imbalance leads to the following conclusions, which are relevant at all levels to the program’s design and implementation:

1. A real “equal footing” in South-North school partnerships is difficult to achieve – for a true partnership, a dawning of consciousness and attitude transformation are required.

A central starting point has always been a critical reflection and the addressing of global and local power structures, Europe’s colonial history, racism, and sensitivity to discrimination in international school exchanges. This involves asking ourselves how we can implement this perspective as regards content and structure in the shaping of the ENSA program and the supported partnerships. It includes an intensive look at subject areas and thought systems, such as racism, intersectionality<sup>3</sup> and inclusion, which often alters the entire goal-setting process of a school partnership and enriches its content.

We have developed and internalized certain stereotypic/discriminatory or attributive images of people, who, for various reasons, must struggle with far more social barriers in order to, for example, take part in international qualification measures. Through a long-term analysis of such images new perceptual spaces suddenly emerge involving joint and individual learning, which permit true encounters between humans. In the center of this process stands the intensive work on one’s own attitudes and on becoming conscious of privileges, position and responsibility in these global partnerships. An increasingly differentiated perception of reality and multiple perspectives produce in encounter projects a sensibility to the fact that *white* youth and young people of color have contrasting experiences in their respective partner nations and that, in some cases, protected spaces should be offered for the exchange of experiences. As a funding program we support a cautious discourse and encourage the awareness that, when it comes to addressing the German colonial history, schoolchildren from Namibia – for example – may know a story which is different than the one that white students in a German history class have learned.

1 Cf. on this: Alter Wein in neuen Schläuchen?! – Interview mit Claudia Schilling vom ENSA-Programm über Partnerschaftlichkeit. In: glocal e.V. (eds.): Das Märchen von der Augenhöhe.

2 ENSA is the development policy school exchange program of Engagement Global under the auspices of the BMZ (German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development). It supports the encounters and qualification of pupils, teachers and NGO representatives within the framework of school partnerships in Germany and various countries of Africa, Central and South America, Asia and Southeast Europe. ENSA supports journeys for incentive and settled partnerships both financially and content-wise. The program offers qualification and networking opportunities. More information at: <https://ensa.engagement-global.de/>

3 Intersectionality refers to the limitations imposed by various societal structures of power and discrimination, such as race, class, gender, body, and religion. A complete definition, plus in-depth content-related texts and methods, can be found at: <http://portal-intersektionalitaet.de/konzept/>

With our educational, information-imparting and sensitization work we attempt to support the project directors and participants in the development of what may be a new common language, in order to moderate in this process and enable a deeper interpersonal encounter.

2. A diverse range of stakeholders in the South and North should be involved in the cooperative program design in order to provide structural anchorage at all levels.

In all of our guidance documents there are numerous ideas which we propose to the participating players in school partnerships, in order to reach a level of true partnership. For example, we support only mutual encounters, i.e., it must be clearly visible that both “incomings<sup>4</sup>” and “out-goings<sup>5</sup>” with a long-term perspective are planned. Furthermore: ideally, all schoolchildren from the participating countries should work together to develop and establish the subjects of the encounters.

Our group of trainers has become much more diverse over the years, and currently consists to a large part of people with a migrant background or diasporic persons. These sometimes assume chief responsibility within the ENSA program for ensuring the structural anchorage of access points of Southern partners, or for the sensitization to “non-German-non-*white*” perspectives. With them, we go through and adapt the most commonly used methods so that these will work equally well for schoolchildren from the Global South. We are currently working with the trainers to gather “non-Western” methods, approaches, and content-related pedagogical techniques.

Yet another point which the Southern partners have repeatedly highlighted is the desire that it should not always be the financial contributions to the partnerships which are in focus: rather, the status of non-monetary factors such as expertise, scientific character, and pedagogical approaches, as opposed to the financial dominance of the North (Germany), should be enhanced and strengthened. Specifically this means placing more emphasis on Southern perspectives in the form of international seminars, evaluations, and representation by Southern partners in speaking positions, so that this is then recognized by German partners as a major new area of learning.

3. Challenges, goals and visions for school partnerships are defined by the local and global power structures which have developed historically. Consistent, diverse, inclusive and self-critical program development can be part of the solution.

The tasks, challenges, desires, and visions upon which we are working reflect to a great extent the colonial power structures which have been developed for more than 500

years – structures that we, and many other international exchange programs between South and North, operate in.

We consider it important to continually seek to understand anew this globally and locally bequeathed system, and to provide structural anchorage at all levels of the program for the analysis of interwoven discriminatory power relations in the long run. A mere juxtaposition of the various “-isms” does not get us any closer to the goal, just as analyses and concepts can only be part of the solution. Persons creating and implementing programs in both the South and the North should come together on an intellectual, emotional and physical level, to unlearn what has been learned and develop new, emancipatory knowledge. This also includes a further development of global learning, an educational approach from the Global North, which in terms of the history of ideas and methodically has, above all, grown from the experiences, needs, and challenges of Northern partners.

Furthermore, we face the challenge of how it is possible – as, for example, *white* co-workers in a *white* dominated organization – to act in this context on a long-term basis while remaining self-critical and alert, in the common knowledge that our field of endeavor is characterized by constant ambivalence and dilemmas.

In the long run, exchange programs which are created by governments or ministries in the Global South could be, as we see it, a step in the direction of true partnership. However, we can never take any of these steps alone. Together with a diverse group of partners, South and North, we must find paths to another way of co-existence on this planet.



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4 The encounter takes place in Germany.

5 The encounter takes place in the partner country.

# Global Learning in Schools

## Insights from Theory and Practice

Schools are pivotal for establishing Global Learning in the education system. The publication series *Global Learning in Schools – Impulses from Theory and Practice* presents opinions and practical examples around the focal issues addressed by the Competence Center on Global Learning in Schools (Fachstelle GLiS) at the Comenius Institute.

Volume 2 of the series is entitled *Global Learning within South-North School Encounters* and takes up the question of how school encounter journeys in the context of South-North school partnerships can be a setting for Global Learning: What potentials and difficulties present themselves in the special learning setting created through South-North school exchanges? What are the unique aspects of cooperation among stakeholders from within and outside the school context? The volume is a compilation of contributions presented at the second GLiS symposium in May 2016 on Global Learning in encounters within South-North school partnerships.

The volume contains practice-oriented and scientific contributions that illustrate the potentials and difficulties of this particular learning setting.

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