

Why words matter: Deconstructing the discourses of development education practitioners in development NGOs in Portugal

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Abstract

Considering discursive transitions in development education, we discuss the main findings of a qualitative study with practitioners in Portuguese development non-governmental organizations, based on semi-structured in-depth interviews. Our goal was to understand practitioners' accounts of their field of action and the discursive transition between development and (global) citizenship. The research provides new information about the Portuguese situation and contributes to the reconceptualization debate. The analysis reinforces the complexity of the field, connected to its focus on processes, and its highly organic, personal and multidimensional nature. It also depicts a nuanced understanding of terms and an increasing identification with global citizenship education as an umbrella term for practitioners' action and an alternative to the North–South and development narratives attributed to development education.

Keywords: development education; global citizenship education; development NGOs; NGDOs; Portugal

Introduction

In Portugal, as in other European countries, development education is facing a discursive transition from the domain of development to (global) citizenship education. Both terms coexist, despite a reduced understanding of what this transition actually implies (Mannion *et al.*, 2011; Pereira, 2016). Several authors argue for the need for investment at the theoretical and conceptual levels, so as to understand what is at stake in the predominant terminology and to reconceptualize it (Andreotti, 2006; Bourn, 2008, 2015; Odora Hoppers, 2015; Krause, 2016). Diverse terminologies are in use, such as global education and global citizenship education, but for the purposes of this work, whenever references are made to the field in general (e.g. by research participants), the term 'development education' is used, regardless of original terminology. In fact, the use of such diverse terminologies brings challenges to a still poorly demarcated area (Andreotti, 2006; Bourn, 2015; Calvo, 2017). These challenges can also be understood against the internal complexity of development education in the realm of non-governmental organizations (NGOs): as a multidimensional construct, rooted in and (apparently) progressively driving out the world of development (Krause, 2016). Without adopting a positioning for or against development education, we argue that understanding how development is located in practitioners' discourse is part of the conceptual puzzle. This argument finds support in the quest for looking at development education beyond the 'aid industry' (Krause, 2016), as well as breaking the

Global North focus where it has been almost exclusively located (Bourn, 2015; Odora Hoppers, 2015). Calvo (2017: 24) even claims that this change would result in 'creating a global citizenship that knows how to deal with the new context of globalization and act critically within it, facing up to the different processes of exclusion'.

On another level, it also finds an echo in the literature emphasizing the need to reconfigure the role of these organizations (Opoku-Mensah, 2007; Hulme, 2008), notably in education (Fowler, 2000a, 2000b). Practitioners working in development NGOs (NGDOs) have been considered privileged informants about the field in several European countries (e.g. Marshall, 2005; Brown, 2013; Skinner and Baillie Smith, 2015; Kuleta-Hulboj, 2016). Nevertheless, research is still scarce, and more evidence is necessary regarding how practitioners conceive this terminological coexistence and transition, and what meanings are embedded in the terms currently in use. This is the main goal of this paper, which presents and discusses the findings of a qualitative research study with development education practitioners from seven NGDOs within the Portuguese context, based on semi-structured in-depth interviews, conducted between February and May 2017. Organizations were selected against a set of criteria, through which we attempted to grasp the nuances in the Portuguese NGDO landscape.

Assuming that a critical and situated understanding of practitioners' thoughts is a relevant strategy for approaching development education as (the starting) concept, the interview script comprised: (1) personal and professional pathways; (2) the current and prospective situation of development education in the organization; and (3) the perceived meaning of the concept of development education and other terminologies, in particular global citizenship education because of its predominance as a term in Portugal (IPAD, 2009; Pereira, 2016). This paper focuses on the way these practitioners conceived development education in the scope of NGDOs, bearing in mind the discursive transition to global citizenship education, encompassing the following discussions: (1) how practitioners define what they do in this field, regardless of the terminology used; (2) perceptions of the terminological shift; (3) substantial differences between terms; and (4) preferred terminology. We also provide preliminary input on *loci* ascribed to development and global citizenship education. The word *loci* is used here in a metaphorical sense to assemble meanings that seem to somehow translate the idea of 'places' around which the field is referred or attained.

The analysis is supported methodologically by 'thematic analysis' (Braun and Clarke, 2006), and theoretically by the contributions of several scholars about development education (e.g. Andreotti, 2006, 2011, 2016; Bourn, 2008, 2015), and critical perspectives on NGDOs' nature and role (Fowler, 2000a, 2000b; Opoku-Mensah, 2007; Hulme, 2008). Our analysis contributes to an understanding and problematizing of development and global citizenship education in NGDOs in Portugal, thereby adding to the empirical research about European countries (Marshall, 2005; Brown, 2013; Skinner and Baillie Smith, 2015; Kuleta-Hulboj, 2016) and fostering cross-cultural readings of the field.

Grounding meanings, locating discourses

Analysing the trajectory of development education in the last decades, Bourn (2008: 5) considers that 'to have any major educational influence there is a need to reconceptualize the field with the context of a learning framework, the knowledge society and the impact of globalisation on education'. Such efforts need to overcome surface and address foundational issues. As Odora Hoppers (2015: 89) discusses, 'we have to start "rethinking thinking" itself from the constitutive rules: how paradigms are made; how rules are policed; how the architecture of modern institutions is fashioned to make

them behave the way they do'. In fact, the concepts of development education are various and seem to be connected to different stakeholders and their definitions (Troll and Krause, 2016). This terminological profusion has been considered challenging, particularly because of unclear understandings of the deep meanings associated with the terms (Bourn, 2015): do different terms equal conceptual diversity? And do diverse concepts translate into significant differences in practice? Several scholars claim terminological clarification is structural to the field: on one hand, to acquaint and comprehend intrinsic meanings around educating *within* global perspectives; on the other, to foster a solid growth of the educational thinking and theory, without which the field will be unable to have self-determination (Andreotti, 2006; Bourn, 2015). Regarding reconceptualization efforts, Bourn (2015: 36) draws attention to the importance of analysing the *locus* of conceptual changes in place, as 'the question that needs to be posed is: to what extent are they a conscious reconfiguring of the debates and issues, responding to external influences; or a conscious break with how development education was perceived?'

In the last decade, there has been an increase in research that, ultimately, intends to deconstruct meanings around the field, namely grasping NGOs' realities and the views of development education practitioners, in several European countries (e.g. Marshall, 2005; Brown, 2013; Skinner and Baillie Smith, 2015; Kuleta-Hulboj, 2016). More investment on research with this orientation is necessary as:

... the voices and experiences of those 'doing the doing' have often been absent ... There has been limited engagement with the ways the practice of GE [global education] is embodied in the people who practice it in its myriad ways in often challenging financial, institutional and political circumstances ... we lack a significant body of work on the micro politics and everyday realities of doing GE and what it means to be a GE practitioner ... an understanding of the subjectivities and professional identities that shape and are shaped by GE, making it harder to move concepts of GE forward as practice responds to changing realities on the ground (Skinner and Baillie Smith, 2015: 8).

The entering of global citizen(ship) into the field's vocabulary seems to have triggered special attention from scholars. Such attempts at understanding are especially relevant since these terms are quite disseminated among practitioners, despite the fact that they host diverse and even conflicting meanings (Davies *et al.*, 2005; Shultz, 2007; Oxley and Morris, 2013; Yemini, 2017). As Shultz (2007: 257) notes, 'educators include global citizenship goals in recognition that citizens need to be engaged in issues and actions beyond their local context. How this engagement is viewed determines what type of global citizen is created in the process.' This is also consistent with the need for a thorough and situated understanding of practitioners' accounts on development education, where their 'professional identity [is] increasingly "in-between" and "hybrid"' but is also personally implicated (Skinner and Baillie Smith, 2015: 9).

For example, Andreotti (2011, 2016) proposes three discursive orientations crossing the field of development education: *liberal-humanist*, *technicist-neoliberal* and *postcolonial*. These perspectives are mutually communicant and can be seen as spectrums with different poles of intensity, across which discourses can be located. Efforts around this conceptual clarification also took place at the political level, as a support to devising strategic orientations for the field in several European countries, namely in the work of the Global Education Network Europe (Hartmeyer and Wegimont, 2016).

Perspectives, approaches and roles in a (changing and demanding) multidimensional construct

Development education has assumed different configurations across time (Bourn, 2015; Troll and Krause, 2016). In Europe, it is common to distinguish three main approaches: *awareness-raising*, *global education* and *life skills* (Krause, 2010). Awareness-raising is mainly informative, and focuses on disseminating information regarding Global South countries' issues, policies and realities, to communicate and inform public opinion, with a top-down perspective. Global education is centred on 'local-global interdependence ... stimulates critical understanding of development, environmental, human rights, intercultural, peace issues, and one's own responsibility within a globally interdependent world ... changing attitudes and behaviours and promoting engagement and advocacy for global social justice and sustainability' (Krause, 2010: 7). It aims for personal and social transformation (rather than just knowledge) to promote responsible action and is clearly within a globalization mindset (and not strictly on the North–South axis). Closely related but with a slightly different emphasis is the enhancement of life skills, aimed at promoting processes that support learners' ability to decide on and articulate issues in both local and global spheres. It focuses on critical thinking and the development of competences needed for such adaptation, in a constructivist systemic perspective.

Despite evident differences in the main orientations within each approach, Krause (2010: 7) stresses that they are 'neither clear-cut nor complete nor exhaustive. They are ideal types – in reality, mostly mixed forms occur.' A study by Rajacic and colleagues (2010) analysed 268 projects in development education and awareness-raising that were funded by the European Commission, as part of a public consultation on the situation of development education in Europe's member states, as requested by the Commission. This is the most recent synthesis of Europe's situation identified (Lappalainen, 2010; Troll and Krause, 2016). In this study, Rajacic *et al.* (2010a: 119) distinguish between *campaigning and advocacy*, and *global learning*. The first is more sporadic and results-oriented, and aims at a 'change in individual behaviour or institutional/corporate policies' through political activism. The second gathers meanings conceived in global education and life skills, under a constructivist, process-oriented approach. Thus, it envisions developing 'personal skills and competencies ... essential for enabling people to live a meaningful life and to be responsible members and agents of change in their local communities and in the interdependent world society'.

The wide stage of performance and the spectrum of functions attributed to or expected from development education becomes evident: inform and raise awareness; promote a change in attitudes and behaviour towards understanding and respect for diversity and solidarity; contribute to the comprehension of global issues and their interdependencies; and guide informed self-reflection, decision-making and active participation, fostering democracy (Argibay and Celorio, 2005; Bourn, 2015; Krause, 2010, 2016; Rajacic *et al.*, 2010b; Troll and Krause, 2016). In sum, 'most stakeholders would agree that a key aim ... has been to make complex global connections understandable and to enable people to act responsibly in a highly interdependent, globalised world' (Troll and Krause, 2016: 143).

In fact, these elements also show that development education is a *multidimensional* construct in its essence, with pedagogical, political, cultural and ethical dimensions (Argibay *et al.*, 2009; IPAD, 2009; Fricke *et al.*, 2015; Calvo, 2017). The pedagogical dimension is related to development education's practices conceived as paths for social transformation, often in line with the assumptions of

critical and transformative education (Brown, 2013; Skinner *et al.*, 2013; Fricke *et al.*, 2015). The political dimension is inherent to development education, as it intends to foster 'active and responsible political participation in the construction of fully democratic societies' (Argibay *et al.*, 2009: 51). The cultural dimension is evidenced in the recognition and preservation of different cultural identities (in the broadest sense). Being assumedly 'an ideological and non neutral education' (Argibay *et al.*, 2009: 53), development education involves approaches with a strong commitment to ethics and values. Common values openly stated include: dialogue; respect for the environment, identities and diversities; a systemic vision of the world; and the primacy of common good, social justice, solidarity or equity (Argibay *et al.*, 2009; IPAD, 2009; Bourn, 2015).

Nevertheless, this ideological device can also be misleading, if indoctrination or a reinforcement of a neo-colonial mindset is endorsed (Andreotti, 2006, 2011; Brown, 2013; Calvo, 2017). Multidimensionality is also conveyed in the mobilization and articulation of attitudes, cognitions and behaviours, scales (individual to global), and temporalities – motivated by current challenges, although anchored in the past, and aspiring a future-oriented impact. Additionally, the personal implication of practitioners themselves is an important part of such complexity as 'individuals bring their own life experiences, influences, personal interests and beliefs to bear on their practice which inevitably leads to a diversity of manifestations of global education itself'. This causes difficulties in drawing lines between work and personal lives' (Skinner and Baillie Smith, 2015: 12 and 25).

Development as legacy

NGDOs working in development education are strongly (often predominantly) enrolled on international development (e.g. via development cooperation), thus representing an important volume of financing and resource allocation in many countries (Calvo, 2017). Several authors in NGO literature agree that 'NGOs have been slow to ... change their relationships and escape the aid chain' (Hulme, 2008: 342). This quest for reconfiguration (Opoku-Mensah, 2007) also involves concerns with the role of NGDOs in education (Fowler, 2000a, 2000b). Considering the specific case of development education, there are signs of discomfort regarding its roots in the development world. Krause (2016: 155) discusses core arguments on the need to unlink development education from the 'aid industry', to which it is 'trapped', raising four motives for why such interlinking is problematic. First, he claims, development is 'out-dated', from the point of view of political and global economy architecture; second, it 'lacks effectiveness and relevance', with its failure in tackling global poverty and addressing 'relevant questions' that demand significant (non-invested) structural changes. Third, Krause claims that 'development assistance is paternalistic'. Relying on hierarchical divisions, it still embodies the 'legacy of colonialism', with the exception of counter-narrative attempts. Finally, focusing on endless growth and resource consumption, 'development destroys the planet' (Krause, 2016: 149–59). Therefore, remaining focused on development can have a preclusive effect, as:

... strong institutional ties with the aid sector can prevent Global Education from unfolding its full progressive potential. As an appendix to development co-operation ... [it] is too often reduced to a legitimation function. This contradicts the character and the critical purpose of Global Education (Krause, 2016: 155).

Moreover, Troll and Krause (2016: 144) refer to an agreement 'that traditional notions of "North" and "South" associated with "powerful givers" and "grateful receivers"

... and the bare promotion of aid are an outdated rationale for development education'. Overcoming the North–South narrative is thus critical to development education as a concept (Calvo, 2017). The geographical quest across discourses is, in fact, a matter of unbalanced power, meaning that 'actors in the geopolitical arena act out discourses that are strongly geographical in nature, making geographical discourse itself a form of power' (Odora Hoppers, 2015: 91). Another sign of this is the scarce evidence about development education in the Global South, connected to the fact that it 'has been historically constructed by Northern-based organizations for their own constituency, to develop learning and understanding about the South' (Bourn, 2015: 41).

The Portuguese context

In Portugal, development education has been promoted for about 40 years, mostly by NGOs and with financial support from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in close cooperation with the Portuguese Platform of NGOs. This is the main sectorial actor in the field of development and development education, and includes a Development Education Interest Group. Since 2005, there is a national grant scheme for development education in NGOs, to which organizations can apply on a yearly basis. Also relevant is the existence of a national policy for the field – the Portuguese Strategy for Development Education 2010–2015 (IPAD, 2009; O'Loughlin and Wegimont, 2014). The Strategy, promoted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Education, and subscribed to by several public and civil society organizations, has recently been externally evaluated (Costa *et al.*, 2017), and a second cycle is currently under preparation. This document has been of paramount importance for several reasons, namely the attention paid to conceptual challenges. In fact, an important conceptual debate was promoted in 2009 during the preparation of the Strategy. Regarding the choice of terms, for institutional recognition reasons, development education was decided upon, although there was an emphasis on global citizenship education (Pereira, 2016), as visible in the Strategy's overall aim: 'Promoting global citizenship through learning processes and by raising awareness of development related issues among Portuguese society, in a context of growing interdependence, and focusing on actions leading to social change' (IPAD, 2009: 28). This issue remains, however, and is open to debate, as we will see. As an example, the Development Education Interest Group of the Portuguese Platform of NGOs aims to further this debate in their activity plan for 2017–2018. Another important point to bear in mind is the reduced presence of development education (globally speaking) in Portuguese higher education (O'Loughlin and Wegimont, 2014; IPAD, 2009), in terms of training on offer and research.

In our view, the field is in a particularly interesting (and transitional) moment, which can have a positive impact on such debates. First, the Strategy 2010–2015 focused on different types of actors, and non-exclusively on the non-governmental sector. It targeted, for instance, higher education institutions, with positive (yet initial) effects on the promotion of development education in this sector (Costa *et al.*, 2017). Second, the forthcoming second cycle of this dedicated public policy is a sign of political investment in this field. And, finally, there is the fact that the most recent public policy regarding citizenship education in schools, approved by the government in 2017, the National Strategy for Citizenship Education (GTEC, 2017), also includes development education-related issues and reference documents. Among its sources, this document included the *Development Education Guidelines* (Torres *et al.*, 2016), for preschool, basic and secondary education. The Guidelines are jointly authored by actors from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Education and NGOs.

There is even a curricular subject named Citizenship and Development (currently in pilot testing in about 240 schools). These steps add social relevance to the area, but also generate new layers of interpretation and complexity.

The present work contributes to a problematized understanding of the terminological debate, depicting possible themes related to the tensions in existing discourses about development education and global citizenship education among practitioners in NGOs.

Methodological options

We conducted a qualitative study, guided by two general research questions:

- How do development education practitioners working in Portugal in NGOs understand the terminological profusion and the discursive transition happening between development and global citizenship?
- Which discursive orientations regarding development education (generally speaking) can be identified, and which meanings integrate them?

The study was based on in-depth interviews (Gubrium and Holstein, 2002; Rapley, 2007) with seven development or global citizenship education practitioners, indicated by the organizations invited to participate. These organizations illustrate the diversity of NGOs operating in the field, based on the following criteria: different lengths of existence; religious and non-religious affiliation; existence of a development education team; and belonging to the Portuguese Platform of NGOs. We aimed for a situated understanding of practitioners' views on development and global citizenship education, focusing on the way they define what they do, bearing the discursive transition in mind.

Due to the lack of qualitative accounts on the Portuguese situation, the interview emerged as particularly beneficial for exploring non-expected themes potentially relevant to understanding practitioners' views about the field. Thus, we focused on: (1) how practitioners define what they do in their organization, regardless of terminology; (2) their vision about the terminological shift in place; (3) substantial differences between terms; and (4) preferred terminology. These elements were contextualized by a set of questions regarding interviewees' professional and personal background, and relevant factors within their organization having an impact on the field. Participants were explicitly asked to consent to participate in the research, and were informed of the potential uses of the research material and the option to withdraw consent if and whenever they wanted; the interviews were fully transcribed and sent to participants for validation of the contents.

The final interviews were analysed using thematic analysis as proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006), a method that has previously been applied to development education-related issues (e.g. Niens and Reilly, 2012; Lehtomäki *et al.*, 2016). Thematic analysis is aimed at 'identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data' (Braun and Clarke, 2006: 79) and can be used descriptively, by identifying semantic themes, or aim for problematization, searching non-surface (latent) themes. These approaches can be adopted separately or in combination (i.e. identifying semantic and latent themes in the same analysis), provided that this decision is made clear along the process. Thematic analysis was considered adequate for understanding a subject poorly explored, due to its flexibility, suitability for different datasets, the types and extent of analysis, and its compatibility with various theoretical-epistemological assumptions – an asset for a theme crossed by several knowledge fields and struggling with meanings. We conducted a data-driven analysis for the purpose of understanding

the discourses' complexity beyond previous theoretical frameworks. In this sense, the resultant thematic map, here only partially depicted, expresses semantic and latent themes crossing practitioners' discourses.

At the time, interviewees worked as project managers, and the majority were also in charge of coordinating the area in their organizations. The group of interviewees comprised five women and two men, with ages ranging between 30 and 50 years. Most of them have great experience in the field (between 10 and 18 years), usually acquired in their current organization. They were mostly trained in social sciences and humanities, as primary background, with development-related issues as additional education. The majority of NGOs also work in development cooperation, and in some cases this was the organization's predominant area of activity. This reflects the current scenario of Portuguese-financed development education actors (O'Loughlin and Wegimont, 2014). The following analysis is organized around the themes prompted by the issues above and other related content throughout the dialogues and illustrated by a selection of expressive extracts and the respective thematic map (see Figure 1).

Looking at terms: Reflections and understandings of development education in between global citizenship education

In this section, we start by giving a general account of the debate around the terminological transition, why practitioners find that debating such change is relevant, and what substantial differences, if any, the term 'global citizenship education' offers over 'development education'. Since, in most cases, more than one term is used by the same professional and organization, we then move on to analyse how practitioners define their field of action regardless of the specific terms adopted to label it. The extracts from interviewees are identified by participant number (P1 etc.), with M or F for male or female, plus age.

Different or alike: How change is perceived or why words matter

Interviewees recognize the urgency of a terminological debate among Portuguese NGOs working in the field. In fact, some acknowledge the lack of a solid discussion around the meanings and implications of the transition, at the national level and sometimes even within organizations, despite the change already in place. That discussion is also relevant because diverse understandings coexist even when using the same terms, as one of the participants describes:

It's very important ... to see what to host under development education, among organizations, because I think there are ... I wouldn't say that there are as many definitions as organizations, but ... there is a lot of 'noise' in our conversations as well, because when we speak about DE we don't necessarily mean the same (P1, M, 47).

In other contexts, there are similar signs of ambiguity among practitioners' discourses (e.g. Spain or the UK; see Brown, 2013; Fricke *et al.*, 2015; Marshall, 2005). We believe that, at least at the European level, this awareness suggests an openness from practitioners and their organizations to (self-)reflect about the field in a broader way, beyond their daily work. Perhaps, this is also motivated by a struggle in the field for self-determination, where language is given an important role, but further research is needed on this particular issue. The majority of participants seem to believe that substantial differences between the terms exist, asserting their (and their organizations') identification with the idea of global citizenship, rather than development (education).

However, the idea of ‘difference’ itself has diverse meanings. As the next excerpts exemplify, development education and global citizenship education can be seen as distinct and/or complementary approaches (e.g. P6 and P2), and global citizenship education as an upgraded version of development education, more adjusted to contemporary language and agendas (P7):

Some argue we should continue to speak of development education, because one thing doesn’t exclude the other. Others that we should ... move into a global citizenship orientation ... we [at the NGDO] are still in this limbo (P6, F, 39).

I think that GCE [global citizenship education] isn’t an improved DE [development education], I really do. I think DE is DE, GCE is GCE. There’s good and bad DE, good and bad GCE (P2, M, 40).

Some institutions understand it as being an upgrade, like ‘the next phase’, and not something substantially different (P7, F, 35).

According to practitioners, the main reasons why the change in terms is necessary seem to relate to development education’s inherent fragilities, connected to its roots and its limitations in considering current reality, and also expressing the main differences that global citizenship education offers when compared with development education in their opinion (see Figure 1).

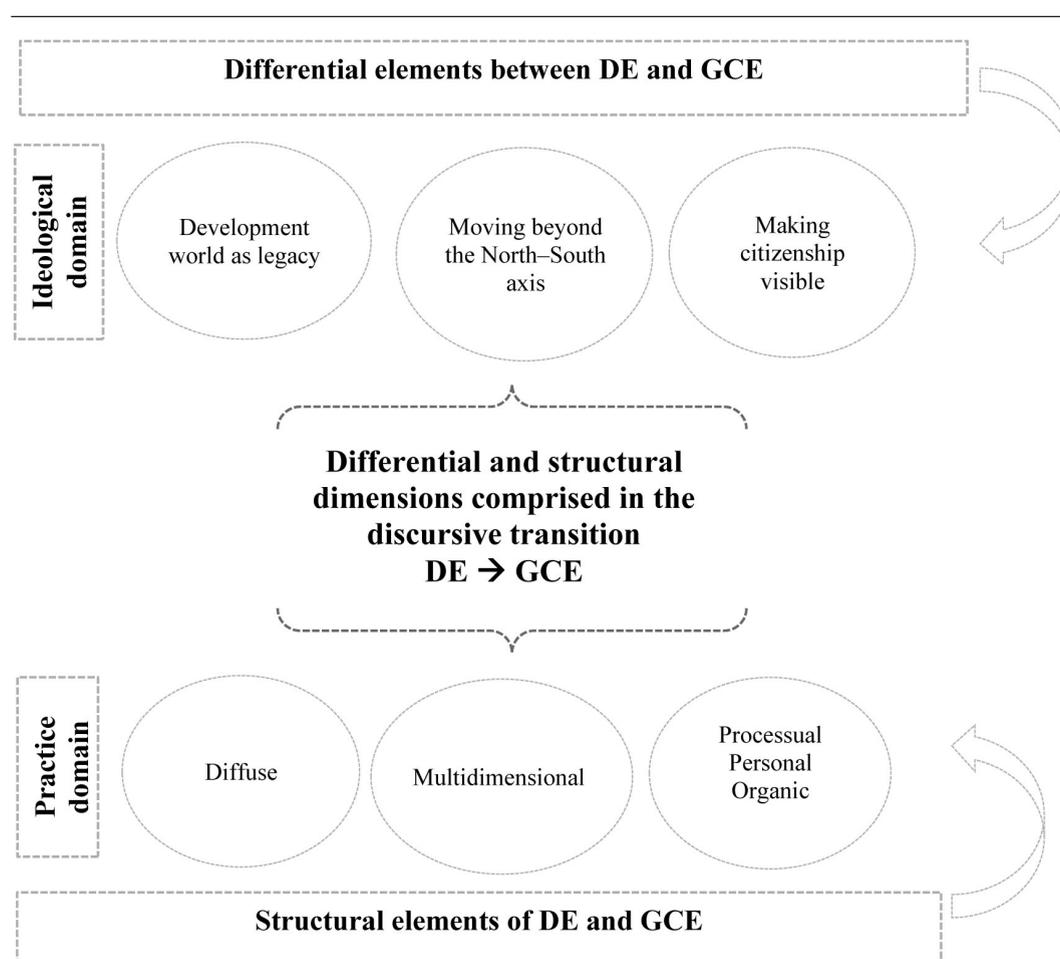


Figure 1: Discursive transition: differences and meanings beyond terms – thematic map

First, development education was born in the development world, thus suffering its tensions and contradictions, particularly in terms of what concerns (sometimes questionable) international development intervention or the (paternalistic, vertical logic of) Official Development Assistance (ODA), as some mention (P1, P3). Adding to this, development education within that world emerged and still remains confined to a certain subaltern *locus* – a somewhat marginal role and place, both in policies at the European level and even in many NGOs (P1), as evidenced:

I distinguish [development education and global citizenship education] especially on the idea that development education is directly related to cooperation, and the development world that, no matter how many 'twists and turns', is the world of mainstream, the world of the current economic and financial system ... Is a very Eurocentric thing ... almost like a monopoly of NGOs ... even because of financing. Global citizenship education I think goes beyond that ... it has a freedom that development education doesn't, because it was not born from that framework ... It is born from a freer reflection, much more shared at the universal level ... and it's free from these development chains, and thus it can ... question all this world ... Development education does it, but it's a marginal thing (P3, M, 40).

European Union is still in a line of 'development education is to generate consensus among the European population to accept ODA'. And this creates an openness to accept an allocation of funding to developing countries, in a very instrumental perspective of DE ... that in fact puts ODA, cooperation, above DE. We find this type of asymmetries here in many organizations (P1, M, 47).

The discomfort with the 'aid industry' (Krause, 2016) and, by consequence, the need for the sector's reconfiguration discussed previously, is echoed in these arguments. In fact, some participants highlight the potential of global citizenship education as a new framework, precisely because of the 'disconnection' to the world of aid. However, at least in the Portuguese case, it should be noted that in the majority of discourses very positive references were made to governmental key players in development education policy (e.g. the Camões Institute at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, also in charge of ODA), even though no question was asked on such matters. Among the aspects mentioned by practitioners are the good existing relations, the quality of the support provided to NGOs, and the openness to the global citizenship framework.

But nonetheless, one can question whether the (likely) attempt at self-determination is being done despite of or because of the development world. Moreover, there is an unquestionable tension on the table, which is certainly having an impact on the conceptual debate and preventing it from going further: in Portugal, as in the majority of European countries, if this disconnection from aid was to become a reality today, in practical terms this would make NGOs' work in this field unviable, as the main source of financing is development-related (O'Loughlin and Wegimont, 2014). We find it significant that, despite being aware of such an implication, the majority of practitioners positioned themselves as pro-global citizenship education.

However, it is worth noticing that some interviewees also mentioned that their organization fosters the bridging between development education and international cooperation, which, although rare among organizations in Portugal, is seen as mutually beneficial:

Our connection to and a long-lasting work ... in development cooperation also feeds our work in development education. The opposite also happens ... in Portugal, or at the European level, there's a big fragmentation ... very few institutional 'bridges' [between both areas] (P1, M, 47).

In the last years, we've been trying – and we think this is something positive – to connect [development education] to the work in cooperation ... this [bridging work] is rare among organizations (P6, F, 39).

Furthering the analysis of the 'changing nature of NGOs and their roles [in development] to emerge' (Opoku-Mensah, 2007: 21) can perhaps add an important angle to a comprehensive understanding of these different perspectives.

A second difference that global citizenship education represents is related to the need for a designation that is more in keeping with contemporary global reality, beyond the North–South framework with which many participants perceived development education to be intertwined (see Figure 1). In fact, some describe the enlargement of the *geographical* scope of global citizenship education as an important distinctive feature when compared with development education:

At the European level it's becoming more common to speak of global citizenship education, in the sense that we live in an interdependent world ... and therefore, it's not the Northern countries that will be educated to something; we all have to ... we speak mostly of global citizenship education, because it seems to us more comprehensive, integrative, and less centred in the vision we [Europeans] have of others ... to educate for a development that we think it should go that way ... when we [in the NGDO] speak of global citizenship education, we don't speak of it only in Portugal ... In Angola, Mozambique, Guinea Bissau we can work issues of global citizenship education (P6, F, 39).

We have to overcome this logic of ... actions developed by citizens at the European level, that later will have an impact elsewhere ... It's increasingly important the global citizenship logic: also citizens or civil society organizations ... stakeholders in developing countries ... from the Global South, that can and should also promote this awareness for global citizenship ... in order to happen the empowerment of the civil society within this Global South in these issues, and not only actions developed at the European level (P2, F, 43).

This geographical extension to contexts associated with the Global South, voiced by participants, can perhaps be understood as a relocation of power, in the sense earlier described by Odora Hoppers (2015). If so, it can embed a significant transformative potential in terms of what global citizenship education can do to educate citizens from all latitudes in questioning current global inequalities; and also, the assumption that those most affected by these challenges are a vital part of their resolution. In this sense, one can also argue that, despite the discomfort with the development world, the bridging with development cooperation initiatives (for instance), in a horizontal equitable logic in terms of the internal arrangements of NGDOs' work and their relation with other actors, can offer an interesting ground for making those new geographies a reality.

A third line of argument expressed by practitioners is the need for a terminology that is clearer and more expressive as far as the *exercise of citizenship* is concerned,

more than the instrumental and informative role many participants associated with development education:

I fit my perception in global citizenship education, because it has to do with becoming aware that you, as citizen of the world, have rights, but also a very strong set of duties ... your responsibility is beyond your family or neighbourhood, or country, to be much wider (P7, F, 35).

If we want to communicate with public ... to have people, the citizen ... more engaged, there must be a concrete definition; otherwise, people get confused and lost amidst so many concepts ... For us, global citizenship is the big umbrella encompassing ... all the other adjectival educations, because all of them want to promote a global citizen (P2, F, 43).

As I advocate it, [global citizenship education] is really a need of action (P5, F, 44).

The citizenship-related vocabulary contained in these excerpts and widely used throughout the interviews (e.g. responsible citizen; civic participation; the citizen as consumer) also exemplifies the link to global citizenship education.

Despite a great identification with the idea of global citizenship, some participants referred to the potential implications of abandoning development education as core term:

Several reflections have to be done, because if we stop speaking of development education ... we speak of it because financing agencies also do ... it will open many cleavages ... and different visions between organizations, but I think it's necessary to assume that this will happen ... plurality can be a good thing (P2, F, 43).

[This transition] is not only a matter of institutional option, but what it represents politically at the national ... and even international level ... It's not an easy-breath situation ... because this kind of options links or unlinks you from certain agendas, discussions, circles of reflection ... and of course, ultimately, financing (P7, F, 35).

Therefore, the implications mostly relate to the potential loss of financing, jeopardizing NGOs' future, a common concern for all interviewees. Some also envision possible ruptures: internally within the community of DE's actors in Portugal, questioning NGOs' identity, and externally, in other words by being disconnected from development education-related policies and agendas. The ongoing debate and further research should consider them too.

Beyond the label: How practitioners define what they are and do

One of the questions asked was how interviewees would explain what they do as development education practitioners, regardless of the preferred terminology. This was aimed at identifying elements connected to professional identity, potentially useful for the research focus (see Figure 1). Several participants found it difficult to explain what they do as development education professionals, which appears connected with the diffuse and complex nature of their subject, as is made clear by the following quotes:

It's much more diffuse [compared with development cooperation] ... what and about do we work when working on it [in development education]? (P1, M, 47)

My family after all this time, still doesn't understand quite well what I do ... What I usually say, as well as my colleagues ... we try to save the world ... we do projects ... awareness actions, campaigning ... with several publics and target groups ... to make this a better world, fairer and more sustainable ... We go to schools, we deliver training, but we are not teachers, we also train teachers. We train local authorities' staff ... unions ... we do a lot, but at the same time, when we try to concretize, it's a bit more complex, because, in practice, this translates ... in what? We provide follow-up, we coach, we do awareness campaigns, we go to the streets or try to establish contacts, talks and meetings with decision-makers to foster change (P2, F, 43).

An interesting remark on the explanations provided is that, often, interviewees from NGOs that also promote development cooperation or who have past experiences as cooperation agents themselves, tend to define what they do as development education practitioners by comparing their work with that development cooperation sector. Cooperation was, by contrast to development education, defined in positive terms: easier to explain and communicate with public, more concrete, with higher grants, more socially and institutionally recognized and valued. The fact that this is visible in the discourses of development education practitioners can be read as symptomatic of a certain fragility in the field, and the need for self-determination as well.

Moreover, usually, interviewees based their explanation of what they do on tasks, concrete themes, or functions of development education (in the sense earlier described in the theoretical contextualization), rather than on professional categories; only one participant presented as an educator. Also worth noticing is the fact that, despite the preference for global citizenship education as a term, the language used by the participants to describe what they do is anchored in examples common to development education (e.g. campaigning). Descriptions also include a motivational or inspirational role: being thought-provocative, raising awareness (sometimes, referred to 'awakening') (e.g. P7), and showing alternative lifestyle and consumption options, based on which positive changes are encouraged to happen in those they work with (e.g. P4, P7):

Above all, I try to ... raise awareness and capacity for themes that are increasingly transversal, and global with different target groups ... a capacitation for looking at the world in the most possible complete way, valuing transversal values ... a critical analysis of the world and a more conscious involvement (P4, F, 27).

For me ... it's awakening people's consciousness for ... global challenges, meaning, social and economic inequalities, environmental issues, human rights. Bottom-line, I work for people to gain conscience that *this* [global issues and inequalities] exists and expresses differently in different parts of the world. Then, after that, raise awareness to act ... It's really about assuming behaviours in their life against processes that feed those inequalities (P7, F, 35).

Half of the group highlighted that their role (and by extension the role of development education) is not to impose or 'convert' others, as exemplified by P2:

It's not about walking with a sacred book preaching, but to demonstrate that ... if we keep on the current consumption standards ... life-styles,

this won't be sustainable for much longer ... we try to demonstrate there is another way, people can make a difference ... small gestures in our routines ... that have a big impact. But: the final decision, wanting to change or not, is always up to the person (P2, F, 43).

Participants were asked to provide a personal definition of the term with which they most identify. The way definitions were provided led us to an interpretation of development education (generally speaking) as *process*, *organic* and *personal* (see Figure 1). First, the majority of interviewees defined it as a *process* that, being educational, requires an expanded timeframe beyond (and is conflictive with) the external financing logic in place:

It's a process ... of gaining conscience ... through a support structure – in the sense that it does not happen naturally ... – of the challenges of living in a global world ... it takes time, and it has to ... Normally, projects, grants ... only allow for small teams, in a short timeframe (P7, F, 35).

It's a process. There is no product ... For us, every time is a new process ... It depends on people, contexts, realities, experiences. We are always adapting and changing it ... We look at projects as part of processes (P3, M, 40).

This processual nature is also well expressed by practitioners from other countries, European and non-European (Skinner and Baillie Smith, 2015). For several participants in our study, the constructivist nature of the field was underlined. Some also expressed a critique of the growing of an instrumental-technical vision among several NGOs, concerned with the *how-to-do*, as exemplified:

We see many [development or global citizenship education] practices where simply, dynamics are putted like beads in a necklace ... something very joyful, ludic, but that doesn't propose an educational path. So, these approaches are quite instrumental, satisfying for the ones doing them, because we know they work ... Basically, what we are seeing: between instrumental and actually transformative approaches ... in a way, the latter is destined to be minority. The question is: it can be minority and influent (P1, M, 47).

Such processes aim to provide tools for an informed knowledge and decoding of the reality, and upon that, generate substantive transformation, both personal and social, that is assumed to be value-driven (e.g. P3, P1):

[Development or global citizenship education] is an inner understanding and transformation ... We orient it for the values we explicitly stand for ... Working towards social transformation without an explicit ethical base, per se, doesn't make sense to us (P3, M, 40).

First, working towards the ability to decode the reality where we evolve ... of growing complexity ... can be seen through many angles ... Then, the attempt to convey fundamental values we believe in, namely, social justice, respect for cultures, as pillars for a global citizenship ... and generate commitment (P1, M, 47).

This ethical account is quite present throughout all the interviews. Part of the complexity of development education referred to by practitioners might be connected to that

motivational-inspirational drive and the values informing it. In fact, and although none of the practitioners in our study stated it as tensional, conflicts can occur between adopting an openly value-driven stance (common in their discourses), on the one hand, and the conscious avoidance of indoctrination (expressed by some) on the other. In what way do practitioners actually 'draw the line' between both? How do they handle potential conflicts of values and which strategies do they use to prevent indoctrination while doing development education? How do practitioners manage their personal values and beliefs in practice? Is there a different positioning when it comes to communicate personal and organizational values, as, for instance, Brown (2013) signals for UK and Spanish practitioners? These questions can be of use in furthering the understanding of the risks of indoctrination mentioned by several scholars (Andreotti, 2006, 2011; Calvo, 2017).

Second, we consider that definitions provided by participants present development education as an *organic* construct. In the first place, in the sense that it is a living object, shaped by external societal challenges and acting upon them. But also because 'shape is content', meaning that methodologies and themes are also mutually implicated, as some practitioners commented (e.g. P1, P3). Therefore, the reflection about development education is constitutive of the (intrinsically complex) work *per se*:

One cannot work in development education without thinking development education as such ... because we consider it something dynamic, that needs to be re-thought, re-evaluated ... from the conceptual but also from the practices and methodologies points of view (P1, M, 47).

We are constantly working this [development education], reading this, talking about this, positioning ourselves, reflecting, and that's quite demanding ... I think that methodologically is super demanding ... implementing learning processes aimed at such level of transformation (P3, M, 40).

Moreover, in this field values (are expected to) embody goals and vice versa, in the sense that aiming to promote respect for different cultures (as a goal) will likely also imply respect for cultures (as a working value and practice).

In relation to the professional definition, an interesting third and last aspect often mentioned was the highly *personal* nature of this field (see Figure 1). In fact, it deeply implicates those participating in development education work (the numerous references to decision-making and transformation express this) and practitioners promoting this – in their life, beyond the professional scope (e.g. P2, P3) – and is highly relational. Some note:

This is challenging not only at the organizations level ... but also at the personal individual level, that we are confronted in our way of being and acting as consumers ... If we are advocating for a certain cause, we have to be coherent with it ... to be an example ... otherwise, we are easily put into question ... [development education] is a way of being, more than a way of acting ... is something in my DNA (P2, F, 43).

It is personally a very demanding area, connected to the search for coherence ... and if you really get involved, think and work on things, you don't deliver training about inequalities and poverty and then leave it ...

You go home and take that with you, that weight, and you think of yourself, your life, others (P3, M, 40).

The demanding side of development education appears to be a common feature among NGOs' practitioners in other countries as well, as stated in the work of Skinner and Baillie Smith (2015) mentioned earlier. Considering the elements discussed, we argue that the inner complexity of the sector makes the practitioner a decisive figure in the actual development education that end-beneficiaries will experience (Shultz, 2007). In this sense, it might also be important to invest in understanding practitioners' reflexive and knowledge production processes, as well as their representations on and options towards coherence – so extensively mentioned, despite not being asked about in our study.

Concluding remarks

The current reflection has been based on the findings of a qualitative study with development and global citizenship education practitioners working in Portuguese NGOs, to understand their views on various subjects that we believed to be interconnected with the terminological debate. The study consisted of in-depth semi-structured interviews with seven practitioners, analysed through thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Although the overall analysis combines deductive and inductive options, the elements discussed in this paper mostly reflect the inductive perspective, where non-expected, mostly latent themes have been identified in the practitioners' discourse. Considering a discursive transition taking place (from development education to global citizenship education), our starting point was the search for a contextualized interpretation of practitioners' thoughts around the conceptual debate and terminological profusion, centred on (eventual differences between) development education and global citizenship education, the predominant expressions used in Portugal. We tried to understand the practitioners' general views on how they define themselves as professionals, and the field, regardless of their preferred terms. This provided us with interesting accounts on the diffuse and complex nature of the subject, valuable in terms of reconceptualization and problematization of the terms. We understood development education as being multidimensional by nature, tensional by legacy.

The search for participants' views on the conceptual profusion led us to the different-versus-equal cornerstone. The evidence gathered presented us with three lines of argument that, in practitioners' voices, indicate the existence of substantive differences in terminology, and a preference by most participants for the term 'global citizenship education'. One is the link to the development world, earlier presented as critical. Issues like the marginal role and place of development education, both in policies and even in many NGOs, and the resistance to accept the field as destined to serve official aid, were common – a tension well covered in the literature (Krause, 2010, 2016; Bourn, 2015; Calvo, 2017).

Second, and alongside this, the geography of development education appeared inadequate to the current reality and aspirations. There was a clear critique of the North–South narrative traditionally endorsed by development education and the geopolitical forces that it invests and disinvests (Andreotti, 2011; Odora Hoppers, 2015; Calvo, 2017). This was one of the most consensual arguments in favour of the terminological change that, in all cases, emerged without being asked. Several references to the weight of institutional factors in the field, made by practitioners during the interviews, suggest these arguments are expressive signs of the changes that NGOs are already facing or

being pushed into. In this sense, our findings also point out that terminological changes might unveil the field as willing for self-determination, autonomy and a solid identity, in which, at least for some practitioners, a certain detachment from the development language and logics can be an important step.

Lastly, global citizenship education differs from development education in respect of citizenship. Participants stated that their focus is on citizenship, understood as integrating local and global spheres, and so expected the terminology itself to communicate this explicitly. Despite the considerable debate around global citizenship (Davies *et al.*, 2005; Shultz, 2007; Oxley and Morris, 2013; Yemini, 2017), this also resonates with other ongoing discussions, namely of promoting a development education 'global citizens' movement' (Troll and Krause, 2016: 154).

Even though institutional forces (Pereira, 2016) and 'tactical reasons' (Bourn, 2015) have to be considered in terminological choices in Portugal, this research pinpoints intrinsic reasons why words are changing. In fact, looking at arguments provided by participants on why global citizenship education is, for many, a preferable term to describe their work, it seems that the *locus* of conceptual change is both 'responding to external influences' and 'a conscious break with how development education [is] perceived' (Bourn, 2015: 36). In a nutshell, words matter. In fact, at least in terms of ideology, the majority of participants seem to conceive both expressions as fundamentally different. Therefore, designations are not empty but actually decisive in the process of translating a renewed narrative for the field. More than the core concerns or values, differences appear to relate more to the roots and wings of each term: development education viewed as (European) development *policy*, global citizenship education perceived as (global) educational *response*. The discomfort evidenced seems to be more directed to development education's original rationale (e.g. serving international development, an instrument to justify ODA) and some current rules (e.g. the fact that small NGOs are not allowed to apply directly for European funding, due to its strict criteria), than the importance attributed to development education (as distinct from global citizenship education) or even the appreciation of governmental key players. Nevertheless, words also seem to matter in the affirmation and consolidation of the field, on upholding an identifiable way of educating in the light of a global, fast-changing reality.

Additionally, our findings suggest we have to pay attention to differences embedded in terms and their nuances, and on a more global narrative around how practitioners define themselves as professionals and what they do beyond labels – the 'micro politics and everyday realities of doing GE', as Skinner and Baillie Smith (2015: 8) assert. We also found several links with the multidimensionality of development and global citizenship education, as discussed earlier, and with valid approaches and roles recognized by the field in practitioners' discourses.

Finally, a synthesis informed by our data allowed us to interpret development education (generally speaking) as *process*, *organic* and *personal*. Participants defined it as process, instead of product, which appeared connected with the transformative goals of development education. The difficulties recognized in conducting those processes cannot ignore the financial struggle NGOs commonly face, with actions framed by the 'projectization' imperative (Fowler, 2000b) and marked by 'NGOization' processes (Lang, 2013). The concerns with instrumental instead of transformative approaches, oriented to the search for 'toolkits' (Skinner and Baillie Smith, 2015), lacking a consistent pedagogic model (Bourn, 2008; Calvo, 2017), grounded in 'soft' forms of action (Andreotti, 2006, 2011, 2016), can also be interpreted in this light. This conflicts particularly with the organic nature described, as development education is

immersed in complex global issues, constantly requiring practitioners' adaptation, meta-reflection and the 'critical thinking' so extensively referred to (Brown, 2013; Bourn, 2015). It also signals the personal nature that development education assumes, heavily implicating end-users and practitioners, in personal terms, bringing the search for coherence to their daily realities. These results are consistent with literature on the importance of considering the personal implication of the field (Skinner and Baillie Smith, 2015).

The present work could benefit from widening the discussion at the European scale, mapping possible substantive distinctions and meanings on issues discussed here with professionals from different countries, and also among other types of development education actors (e.g. teachers). It could also be enriched by analysing practices in order to understand if such distinctions between terms remain at the discursive level, or, by contrast, actually translate into significantly different practices.

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