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A Southern perspective on the South/North Educational Linking Process (S/NELP). Early stage analysis from Zanzibar. **FINAL**

## **A Southern Perspective on The South/North Educational Linking process (S/NELP). Early stage analysis from Zanzibar.**

### **Introduction**

This paper is intended to review four aspects of my doctoral research; its accompanying conference presentation will only touch on the final theme, but resulting discussions from my presentation at the December 2011 IOE internal symposium “Education and Development” and the January 2012 national conference “Development and Development Education”, held at IOE and organised by the Development Education Research Centre, inform an extended postscript to this final version of the 2012 paper. The December 2011 symposium slideshow (and accompanying paper) shared some lessons from relationships between mainland Tanzanian schools and UK; the January 2012 seminar referred only to lessons from Zanzibar.

The constituent themes have been selected to stimulate critical engagement with my research; it is in response to the role of 'critical friends' that I have reached this point in my research journey. Whilst from the first theme, theoretical perspectives it might appear that I am starting at the 'very beginning' the dilemma of establishing my theoretical stance is an ongoing struggle; it a challenge which I seek to address within an academic discipline, Development Education, that I suggest also faces an identity predicament (Bourn, 2011; Ellis, 2010; Marshall, 2005; Scheunpflug, 2008). The four themes are:

1. My theoretical stance.
2. A summary of the research methodology adopted.
3. Initial findings from Zanzibari primary data- as yet unreported.
4. Issues raised by International partnerships

Themes one and two are intended to inform those who are particularly interested in the process of this academic research, including perhaps those contemplating embarking on a personal doctoral research journey. The first section, my theoretical stance, sets out four theoretical perspectives; it would be convenient if my research fitted one. A broader approach is the point of view I have taken. One critical friend commented on a previous draft of my thesis chapter entitled: "Theoretical Perspectives" that while I had "obviously done a considerable amount of reading and got your (sic) head around some pretty advanced theory" I needed to make the connections more clearly between the theories and my 'big research questions'. The first section of this paper addresses that critique.

Section 2 presents a summary of the qualitative methodology that I have adopted.

Section 3 refers to the early dissemination of findings from Zanzibar, Tanzania, also explored in an accompanying PowerPoint slideshow presentation, looking particularly at the impact of International partnerships for young people. It presents findings from school students, who took part in a focus group in Makunduchi Secondary School and adult interview responses from a selection of teachers and other adults, including a local Zanzibari district education officer. It illustrates how the **S/NELP** can contribute to **Development Goals** and learning about Development in schools.

Section 4 outlines some issues raised by research informants in the **South** and IOE MA students who have participated in the distance learning module 'North South Education Partnerships' over the last two academic years, 2009-2011. This has been one of the few places where there has been discussion on postcolonialism (PC) and intercultural education (ICE). MA students who have explored how these two theoretical perspectives relate to International Partnerships, as a requirement of these studies, have informed this paper. The opportunity to expand upon interpretations of PC and ICE from a Southern perspective is apposite to my research since it focuses on views from the global South.

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Sections 1 and 2 are in essence identical to those first presented in December 2011, at the IOE internal symposium entitled: "Education and Development".

## Section 1 My theoretical stance:

Four theoretical strands: development education (DE), postcolonialism, intercultural education and critical pedagogical discourse provide the major underpinning theory for my research. I suggest that succinctly describing DE is challenging; like the UK government policy promoting DE it has evolved considerably since 1990. This quotation is used here to identify its key features:

*Development education is about:  
enabling people to understand the links between their own lives and those of people throughout the world;  
increasing understanding of the global economic, social and political environmental forces which shape our lives*  
(Bourn, 2006)

Frequently topics explored through DE are taught in schools through the medium of geography teaching (Disney, 2007; Scoffham, 2007; Pickering, 2008). In participating schools DE themes may feature in the S/NELP. Funding from the UK's Department for International Development (DfID) for the S/NELP, through its Global Schools Partnerships programme (DGSP) is granted to support linking on the basis that Development Education features in these relationships. DE is "an approach to learning that leads to a greater understanding of (global) inequalities, of why they exist and what can be done about them"<sup>1</sup>; learners explore how global issues, such as poverty, affect their lives. The discipline challenges stereotypes, encourages independent thinking and seeks to "help people develop the practical skills and confidence" to bring about positive change<sup>2</sup>.

'Postcolonialism' examines the legacies that colonisation (and more recently globalisation) has had on the coloniser and the colonised; it tends to be highly critical of international relationships and agendas, such as Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) and Aid transfers (Blum and Bourn, 2009). The S/NELP represents one such international relationship; it may also demonstrate 'Aid transfers' (see Section 4).

ICE arises from studies of cultures working alongside one another, often studying how the South and the North encounter one another. This is a theoretical framework that is possibly more accessible in schools (Egan, 2010) than postcolonialism (Burr, 2008). ICE encourages 'learning about' different cultures. It can provide accessible outcomes for teachers and students in International relationships between schools. It could form the initial impetus for schools in the **South** to create a relationship with those in **Northern** schools (and their local communities).

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.gn.apc.org/network/humanities-education-centre-global-footprints>

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.ioe.ac.uk/study/MMAGEO\\_07.html](http://www.ioe.ac.uk/study/MMAGEO_07.html);  
<http://journals.academia.edu/InternationalJournalOfDevelopmentEducationAndGlobalLearning>

Critical pedagogical discourse encourages the exploration of issues and tensions that can emerge in the S/NELP. A school's relationship with a school (or schools) in a contrasting part of the world can enable teachers, students and other observers to engage with difficult, challenging aspects of the S/NELP and sometimes resolve them (Price, 2010; O'Neill, 2011; Regester, 2011). All S/NELP parties should be able to question ensuing outcomes, but frequently 'student voice' is ignored. Section 3 of this paper establishes a vehicle for student voice. Enabling young people and adults to air issues should promote 'deep learning' (Andreotti, 2007) and 'thick description' (Geertz, 1973; Ryle, 1968), with outcomes contributing to a skills base including a blend of intra- and inter-personal qualities. These lie at the heart of critical pedagogies, such as critical literacy and methodologies devised by teams of academics which promote their use in schools and other educational establishments, including Open Spaces for Dialogue and Enquiry (OSDE) and Through Other Eyes (TOE).

To assist the reader's understanding of how these four theoretical strands are interlinked I have created a pictorial representation, Figure 1.

**Figure 1**  
**The S/NELP braid: 4 theoretical strands or lenses – a visual representation**



4 strands of DE, PC, ICE and critical pedagogical discourse; to a casual observer not all four are immediately evident, yet it is the tensions between them that create this research's theoretical strength.

Leonard (2011) Adapted from: 4-strand braid (making) (Doit101.com)

These four strands inform the four main areas of my research, which constitute my research sub-questions. Each relates directly to questions asked in interviews and student focus groups:

1. How important is the S/NELP to participants in Southern schools?
2. How does the S/NELP affect adults and students in schools and local communities in the South?
3. How does participation in the S/NELP contribute to understanding of Development Education?
4. What are Southern 'recipes' for successful S/N Educational linking relationships?

Figure 2 summarises how supporting literature relates to these four research sub-questions

Figure 2

How my research sub-questions relate to supporting theoretical strands

Research Sub-Questions	Development Education (DE)	Postcolonialism (PC)	Intercultural Education (ICE)	Critical pedagogical discourse
How important is the S/NELP to participants in Southern schools?	<p>DE seeks to promote educational initiatives in which learners gain an understanding of global issues; this may result in action for change. A DE approach to learning stresses the increasing interdependence between N and S.</p> <p>The S/NELP may be viewed as an important agent of increasing interdependence. It could facilitate exploration of global issues at a local scale; it might result in individual and corporate action for change.</p>	<p>PC authors note that <b>Southern</b> voices have often been unheard, unvoiced or suppressed. PC questions Western/<b>Northern</b> hegemony.</p> <p>PC challenges suppression of <b>Southern</b> voices; Southern voices are actively sought here. If these then appear to promote Western hegemony this would be disputed from a PC critique.</p>	<p>ICE encourages people from different cultures to learn about one another's values, beliefs and practices. Those in the <b>South</b> may be less familiar with the evaluation of educational initiatives than those in the <b>North</b>.</p> <p>Questioning the importance of an International relationship may be a new cultural practice in the <b>South</b>. There may be dissonance between Southern and Northern parties' views on the importance of a S/NELP.</p>	<p>This theory encourages the exploration of a range of perspectives. Conflict and dissonance are supported in this stance.</p> <p>This approach would support evaluation of the S/NELP from a range of actors or research informants.</p>
How does the S/NELP affect adults and students in schools and local communities in the South?	<p>Some definitions of DE would oppose effects identified as 'charitable' outcomes.</p> <p>Some effects could demonstrate a range of DE practices; some effects could lead to personal "action for a better world".</p>	<p>Effects on students could lead to a "West knows best" view; adults in <b>Southern</b> schools could adopt a dependent role in their relations with <b>Northern</b> partners.</p> <p>Effects in <b>Southern</b> communities could promote an Aid agenda; the charitable aspects of such projects would be decried from a PC critique.</p>	<p>Outcomes for those in schools could contribute to awareness of cultural practices (and people) that would not occur without the S/NELP.</p> <p>Some outcomes could spread beyond <b>Southern</b> schools into local communities.</p> <p>Some <b>Northern</b> cultural practices could conflict with those familiar to <b>Southern</b> research actors and others in these International partnerships.</p>	<p>Effects on participants could be supported by analysis using pedagogies such as critical literacy.</p> <p>Participants could be introduced to a methodology such as OSDE, which seeks to promote critical literacy and independent thinking.</p> <p>Students and teachers in <b>Southern</b> schools could contribute to new teaching materials for use in methodologies promoting these pedagogies, such as the OSDE and TOE projects.</p>

Research Sub-Questions	Development Education (DE)	Postcolonialism (PC)	Intercultural Education (ICE)	Critical pedagogical discourse
How does participation in the S/NELP contribute to understanding of Development Education?	DE could be addressed through activities within a S/NEL relationship. <b>Southern</b> students and teachers may increase their grasp of the DE canon through participation in school links.	PC supports aspects of DE; this could be evident in the S/NELP.  Injustices, which persist between <b>N</b> and <b>S</b> , could be explored within schools' relationships in the S/NELP.	ICE can underpin the ethos of the S/NELP. Challenging cultural stereotypes could feature in such International Partnerships.	This type of pedagogy has increasingly typified DE.  Some evidence may be found in <b>Southern</b> schools and communities for its application in the S/NELP.
What are <b>Southern</b> 'recipes' for successful S/N Educational linking relationships?  <i>'Recipes' are thought of as sets of recommendations leading to International relationships regarded as successful by those in the South.</i>  <i>Indicative 'success' characteristics may include: reciprocity, equality, inclusion and sustainability. Whole school participation may feature. (See Fricke, 2006 and Leonard, 2010)</i>	DE encourages developments in which individuals may take action for change.  While DE within some S/NELP may be promoted to justify some initiatives in schools, <b>Southern</b> voices might suggest alternative applications of the phenomena of these relationships.  Action for change could result in advice to fellow <b>Southern</b> institutions, which is contrary to some DE purists' aspirations.  Evidence may emerge from the <b>South</b> that the S/NELP does not promote DE agenda.  As a result of the S/NELP some DE agenda may be challenged (reciprocity, equality, sustainability, global partnerships for development)	<b>Western/Northern</b> assessments of these International relationships might dominate in evaluative exercises; PC would decry such domination.  <b>Southern</b> actors may be uncomfortable with their role when asked to assess successes, failures or issues. The task to carry out such critical analysis may be viewed as another <b>Northern</b> agenda.  Good practice examples could be generated and shared with <b>S</b> and <b>N</b> audiences. PC would encourage an airing of <b>Southern</b> views and equality of power in relations between <b>N</b> and <b>S</b> .	ICE could acknowledge a range of means of assessing the S/NELP-different cultural practices to achieve an intended 'picture' could facilitate this exercise.  <b>Southern</b> schools could offer a range of analyses to other <b>Southern</b> schools and <b>Northern</b> 'partners' in the S/NELP.  Cultural practices in the <b>South</b> could offer new means to carry out evaluative exercises.	Unpicking the difficult, challenging, controversial, dissonant range of views sought through application of critical pedagogical discourse could allow previously unvoiced analyses to be aired.  A methodology such as OSDE could facilitate the questioning process. Its recommended six stages or procedures (Stimulus; informed thinking; reflexive questioning; group dialogue questioning; responsible choices and debriefing) could facilitate 'critical engagement' with the S/NELP. The adoption of such procedures could stimulate attempts "to understand the different perspectives (and the assumptions that inform them and their implications), in a continuous and challenging reflective exercise" (Martins, 2011).

Leonard (2011)

## Section 2 Summary of research methodology

The methodology for this research uses a Case Study approach. The mixed methods adopted are largely qualitative; drawing principally on semi-structured interviews, pupil focus groups and artefact recording.

The research reported in this paper took place over an extended period, from November 2005-October 2010. During this time I carried out visits to five African communities, visiting eleven schools; a kindergarten (pre-primary), three primary schools (aged 5-13), a specialist school for the blind and six secondary schools (aged 13+). In Ghana I spent a period of 8 days in two communities, Tortibo a rural village and Odumase-Krobo an urban “township”, both in the Eastern region. In Uganda I spent five days at Nakigo Senior Secondary School (SSS) in Iganga, in Southern Uganda, near the border with Kenya, also visiting Kisiki College Namatumba, and three days at the Stephen Jota Children’s Centre (SJCC), in Greater Kampala, the capital. In Tanzania I spent two weeks, visiting three secondary schools, a specialist school for the blind and a primary school; the major part of this data was collected at Makunduchi Secondary School in Zanzibar, which celebrated 20 years of its relationship with its Northern partner, Aston school, Rotherham, in the summer of 2010. My week spent in Makunduchi, collecting my data on this particular example of an International Partnership, took place in April 2010, prior to both this anniversary and the school’s celebration of its centenary.

**Figure 3 Case study mixed method approach**

Adapted from Andrew Pollard - Figure 3.1<sup>3</sup> A typology of enquiry methods

Studying	Looking	Listening	Asking
Consulting research documents, reviews and data bases	Lesson observations in Ugandan primary school and Tanzanian secondary school	Audio-recording of semi-structured interviews	Interviewing- semi-structured interviews
Reviewing archival evidence of performance	Gap year diary analysis, pupils’ diary or journal analysis during Visitor Exchanges	Audio-recording of pupil focus group (PFG) interviews	Personal constructs from students on the IOE’s NSEP online MA module
Reading research findings	Photography of physical artefacts in situ		Concept mapping
Reading professional publications	Photography of murals, signage and physical infrastructure		Checklists
	Photography of evidence of performance		Written responses to a UK undergraduate’s questionnaire

Leonard (2011)

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.rtweb.info/index2.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=347&pop=1&page=0&Itemid=120](http://www.rtweb.info/index2.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=347&pop=1&page=0&Itemid=120)



The case study strategy for my doctoral research has relied heavily on semi-structured interviews with teaching staff, focus groups of students whose schools had Northern links, and interviews with other adults. Ministry of Education officials were interviewed in Kampala, Uganda and Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. Across the three countries four pupil focus groups (PFGs) were carried out, three in secondary schools and one in a primary school.

### **Section 3 Initial findings from Zanzibari primary data**

The analysis of responses from those interviewed in Tanzania, is ongoing. I hope to combine my findings from Uganda and Tanzania in my final thesis, but that aspect of my work is still subject to considerable “cognitive housekeeping” (Moon, 2004) this year. The PowerPoint slideshow accompanying this paper reports on three aspects of the Aston-Makunduchi Partnership in Zanzibar: all are subsumed within my second research sub-question: How does the S/NELP affect adults and students in schools and local communities?

1. What are the effects in schools, both positive and negative, of engagement in the S/NELP?
2. What are the effects beyond schools, in local communities, when a Zanzibari secondary school engages in the S/NELP?
3. How does engagement in the S/NELP contribute to Development Goals and Learning about Development in schools?

In Makunduchi Secondary school (MSS) a PFG involved six students all in the top year group, four boys and two girls; they had been asked by their Headteacher to assist my research and all stayed on in school at the end of a school day to do this. Ten adults also took part in semi-structured interviews, although originally a larger sample of respondents had been intended, planned and agreed; again male and female respondents took part. Within the adult sample at least four people might be viewed as ‘gatekeepers’, the Head teacher, the District Education officer and two Linking coordinators of the Aston-Makunduchi partnership, the present incumbent and a former post-holder, who has also served as the District Education officer. Additionally since the current District Education officer is a former Head teacher at MSS I suggest his participation in this research is crucial. Those adults taking part also represented members of the school staff with varying service in the school and varying engagement in the process of the S/NELP. Some had taken part in hosting visitors from Aston; others had participated in Visitor Exchanges by visiting Rotherham. The Head teacher’s assistance in deriving this sample was key.

The oft-unheard voices of students contribute several of the quotations selected on this occasion. *(See also PowerPoint slideshow)*

#### **Section 4 Issues raised by how International Partnerships contribute to Development Goals and Learning about Development in schools.**

The opportunities which participation in International partnerships create for those in schools and their local communities, some of which have been reported in this paper’s accompanying PowerPoint slideshow, can in turn create issues which can disturb and lead to often unintended negative effects. In my research methodology I have sought to create a means of such issues being identified, although others have noted that this too may result in new challenges. Ring (2011) highlighted this as follows:

*It is such that “by expressing critical opinions” people are able to project more power (and so claim more ownership) and the other side that is less comfortable voicing criticism can appear as losing this power*

The two major issues, which have emerged from initial analysis of my Zanzibari findings echo some of those reported by authors who have commented upon other International partnerships (Burr, 2008; Disney, 2007; Martin and Griffiths, 2010; Pickering, 2008) not just those between secondary schools across the global divide. Perhaps what makes my research different is that these findings only voice Southern views. Major issues emerging relate to funding, sustainability, and unequal power relationships, and the depth of understanding - or lack of it - that develops as a result of taking part in International Partnerships, such as the S/NELP. These are reviewed in this final part of the paper. Depth of understanding refers here only to how much is known to those engaged in the Aston-Makunduchi partnership.

Several questions were raised in Makunduchi and reported in the January 2012 slideshow; how these relate to the two major issues explored in this section is shown in this table:

**Figure 4**  
**How major emerging issues in the supporting literature relate to questions from Zanzibar**

<b>Major issue reported in the literature</b>	<b>Questions raised in Zanzibar</b>
Funding, sustainability, and unequal power relationships	Who takes part in Visits? Is the cost effectiveness of S/NELP projects evaluated? When cultural clashes occur whose values dominate? Is new expertise created in Zanzibar increasing local inequalities? Is ongoing support for activities and developments within the S/NELP adequate? How can a dependency culture be challenged within these International partnerships?
Depth of understanding	Is the cost effectiveness of S/NELP projects evaluated? Who takes part in Visits? Is outdated or outmoded technology transferred within the S/NELP? How can misunderstanding and breakdown in communication be addressed?

(Leonard 2012)

## Funding, sustainability, and unequal power relationships

A concern about implications derived from the funding or charitable engagement is highlighted by recent MA students on the IOE's N/SEP module (Egan, 2010; Price, 2010; Regester, 2011; Ring, 2011). Griffiths (2011) too, in the three-year ESRC-funded project, "Partnerships for Mutual Learning"<sup>4</sup>, noted something similar in a quote from a study visit participant:

*Previous to attending the course, I thought that participation in fundraising activities such as red nose day and Sports relief were okay as long as the children learned about the children they were 'helping' and saw them as real individuals. Now, even though I still think, on a one to one basis, reaching out to help someone less 'fortunate' than ourselves is commendable, unless it is handled sensitively, all it does is reaffirm the children's original belief that everyone in the developing world is 'poor' and in need of help because they are unable to help themselves (i.e. the danger of the single story<sup>5</sup>). It doesn't ...challenge the deep-seated injustice that has led to the situation in the first place.*

*(Presenter's notes to slide 10)*

As shown in Figure 2, the effects in Southern communities could promote an Aid agenda; the charitable aspects of such projects are decried from a PC critique. Dobson (2009), a postcolonialist, argued that acts grounded on 'moral obligation' are easily withdrawn and both increase the vulnerability of the recipient and reproduce paternalistic power relations. When the S/NELP includes humanitarian interventions, between the global North and South, the same could be true in schools or their local communities. The reasons for the ending of a S/NELP may relate to a range of factors, but withdrawal of funding from a paternalistic Northern partner is one (Regester, 2011). Whilst advocating that, "One of the larger global goals of DE is to ensure that development is not pro-rich, monopolised and manipulated. Rather, it should be participatory involving people and communities at the grassroots level", Kumar (2008, p43) and other DE authors who promote action for change may confront the reality in a S/NELP of participants offering aid, assistance and action, the "3As" that I have referred to, whether they are parties in the South or the North (Leonard, 2010).

My research in my pilot study, for example, has shown that schools in Ghana, as part of a multi-party S/NELP, now assist one another, and a local village community, through action and aid which has led to capacity building, upskilling of adults and outreach by urban secondary school teachers and pupils in a rural kindergarten and primary school (Leonard, 2009; 2010). While this meets Kumar's DE goals (Kumar, *op cit*) I have acquired little evidence so far that suggests the mechanism that led to the initial inequalities has been addressed. It could be argued that it is not the role of schools to engage in such initiatives; Martin did so when I reported my initial research findings from Ghana and Uganda (Leonard, 2010). My retort then and now is that in the absence of other efforts to address such gaps or 'deficits' then rather than hold back such developments perhaps the S/NELP should do so. A Canadian academic from the Ghanaian

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<sup>4</sup> <http://education.exeter.ac.uk/projects.php?id=451>

<http://education.exeter.ac.uk/projects.php?id=450>

<http://education.exeter.ac.uk/projects.php?id=486>

<sup>5</sup> [http://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda\\_adichie\\_the\\_danger\\_of\\_a\\_single\\_story.html](http://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story.html)

diaspora wrote this, in reply to my query to him about the 'charitable' donation of equipment from Canadian universities to Ghanaian educational institutions:

*While I am skeptical (sic) about foreign aid to Africa, since much of it tends to be palliative, merely touching the symptoms rather than root causes of the continent's problems, donations of books and computers are exceptions. They are worthwhile investments in human development; the appropriate books and relevant technology can empower and pave the road to self-empowerment and self-reliance... twin problems of irrelevance and environmental hazard ha(ve) exercised my mind for a very long time, but until African governments can set their priorities right and invest in appropriate technologies and create and, at least, assemble their own computers, I am afraid, this is where we must go for now.* (Quist-Adade, 2009)

This response from a male student in my Zanzibari PFG indicates that something similar was true in Makunduchi:

*There is few Internet within our school. So, it is very difficult for people, or for students to go there in order or to teach, in order to study, within the school, because a lot of students they don't know how. How we, I mean among of them is me, we don't know how to use that Internet, so it is very difficult to go there to, in order to search many topics. Maybe gold leaf... yeah, the previous year, within there is Form 4 who leave, that year, they go there and they are taught by teacher Kinole, about gold leaf electroscopes. So, he goes there and he finds within the Internet: this is a gold leaf, this is a metal strip. This is a metal strip. But, ...The Internet is very few, so it is difficult for students to go there and a lot of students who were failed, due to a lack of Internet. So knowledge, good knowledge from the Internet, we are not given from our teachers, this is because our teachers were failed to deal us with that Internet. So, it is better to gain more, to gain much Internet, many, many Internet, in order to be maybe to be stable with our subjects.*

(PFG, S, 263-275)

*Aston helped us to build this building (the staffroom complex). So, previously the school was very poor in building, that is all the building. But now there is; there is suitable buildings for many teaching as teachers. Secondly, secondly, they help us to give us the tools, such as computer, television and other books. So that books, we are maybe going to discuss, to discuss may be in the library. You may go to loans and just leave it; otherwise you can go within the Internet maybe to search somethings through.*

(PFG, S, 14-20)

Several other Makunduchi respondents also commented upon similar benefits gained in the school and its local community, which relate to the students, teachers and local residents subsequently gaining access to the advantages of taking part in a globalised world.

*In addition, our teachers have benefited from various teachers, including there is a lot of teachers who have visits to there... So, that is very important for our teachers, because when they go there they study something about it and when they came here they maybe they modify. How, how this is, maybe? This is very important, this is [hard] for me maybe, this teaching is very important. So, they know what I am going to teach and what I am not. I don't suppose to teach students, so that education from London is very important for teaching in Europe; and so, you are teaching in Africa, because in Africa there is less science and technology.*

(PFG, S, 161-169)

*People from Aston, helped in the hospital in Makunduchi. I think last year, we had so many teachers. Like, Mr Macdonalds and Andy; they went to the hospital of Makunduchi so as to see instruments. Also, so, I think for the whole of the Makunduchi area, I think that whole of the community of Makunduchi will benefit about it.*

(PFG, M, 325-329)

The importance of technology transfers, which can develop International relationships as a result and boost academic performance judged against Tanzanian national educational standards, (allowing a school link to grow into something far more important than partnership) is expressed here by the Head teacher at Makunduchi Secondary School:

*Sometimes they (students) receive learning materials, the teaching and learning materials from Aston that our government sometimes could not achieve to give us, because of its economical conditions. So, when they (Aston) see that we miss something in these materials they give us freely; and they are, of course, beneficial. I have an experience of the micro-chemistry materials, which they gave us in 1995. We used it these materials, and we found the improvement in chemistry; people could answer their examinations well. And, at that time, we took the number 2 position in the national results, due to the effect of these materials, so, of course, they gain, they enjoy it and they improve their learning power. We found their improvement in their examination results, nationally*  
(MAK, 21-28)

Sustainable development is an aspect of both the process of Development and is an MDG in its own right (MDG 7); this quote from a volunteer teacher at MSS, who is also both a former linking coordinator and District Education Officer, indicates that in this example of an International Partnership there is evidence of aspirational action to promote Education for Sustainable Development (ESD):

*Concerning sustainable development here actually, we have started, for example maybe after two months time here we are hoping to inaugurate or celebrate the 100 years of Makunduchi School and 20 years of establishing our link... what we want is sustainable development, which means that we can create or make something here which will be still useful by years after. So for Aston I think we have started with one of the blocks there which I would say it is going to be sustainable for use. Maybe in case of any problem maybe it will be a question of the roof. We are also trying now to renew our school here, so this one, and modifying, making some of the changes there on the areas, so this is also one of the things which is dealing with the sustainable development, which Aston here is trying its best to give us the support, and also some ideas whereby from those ideas we can create something sustainable but also very interesting.*  
(K, PST, p2)

While some might argue that views presented above demonstrate an unchallenged Western hegemony the reality faced in Makunduchi and Zanzibar is that globalisation does often promote Western values as desirable. A critical discourse theoretical approach would promote discussion not just of the benefits for example of technology transfer from N to S, but perhaps also discussion of appropriate adaptations; this is what has been attempted in this partnership. The development of the 'micro-chemistry' materials is an example of that. (Ash and Severs, 2004). The growth of ecotourism in Zanzibar, for example, could be presented as an alternative sustainable alternative to the mass tourism model experienced in other Southern states. The development of new curriculum materials to teach about local Zanzibari conflict resolution traditions could offer the same: an alternative Southern response to this Global Dimension concept, Western models representing only one approach amongst many. An intercultural education theoretical stance too would offer insights here.

In Makunduchi both the exceptions which Quist-Adade (2009, *op cit*) spoke about, donations of books and computers, are in evidence; not just benefiting those in the school, adults and

students, but those in the local community. This is the case since others beyond MSS use the ICT facility and its library; the argument that this Northern resource transfer to MSS could widen local existing disparities is therefore not apparent. However, a criticism, raised by some S/NELP naysayers is; the provision of technology must be 'appropriate', as Quist-Adade argued (*op cit*) and serviceable at affordable local prices. The costings of such 'aid, assistance and action' should include ongoing support (including maintenance, consumables and service arrangements). This aspect therefore is also relevant in the second major issue, depth of understanding; if a partnership engages in resource transfer in a manner that is not sustainable in the long term I suggest such developments should be questioned.

### Depth of understanding

The "Partnerships for Mutual Learning" project (Martin and Griffiths, 2010) investigates two global partnerships between the UK and two Southern countries, India and the Gambia. It focuses on "what teachers learn from study visit courses, and how they make use of what has been learnt back in their own educational settings<sup>6</sup>". It however seeks to give equal weight to the learning of those in the North and the South, my research focuses solely on those in the South. Martin and Griffiths (*op cit.*) have also noted that funding and power relations within the N/S collaborative relationships that they have investigated can replicate a dependency culture between the parties, resembling colonialist interactions.

Is the depth of understanding about activities and projects between Aston and Makunduchi within their International Partnership replicating a dependency culture or does it indicate that the parties are working towards a Global Partnership for Development (MDG8), facilitating a depth of learning to emerge and addressing complexity? These quotations show that, although aspects of Andreotti's 'soft citizenship' may emerge (2006) for some, for others there is evidence of a critical discourse that promotes something different:

*They see the differences between the environmental conditions, where that way they learn and the others from England, they learn. So, they decide their attitudes towards learning; what should they be after completing their education periods. So, anyhow, there is an advanced awareness of the importance of education, because they make their goal: "I want to learn very hard, in order to go to England"; that's the agreement. What we call, the missions, they make their missions. Their visions; so, they improve their visions. Instead of maybe getting to form 4 and that is enough and they increase their what we call, their area of studying. And they say: "Oh, I will not be at form 4, but I want to take a degree. And this degree should be from UK". (MAK, 36-45)*

The students' aspirations to stay on in full time education, perhaps even studying at an HEI in the UK does not infer that Zanzibar will lose their youth to the West; it does however indicate that the linking process stimulates competition for educational success and excellence.

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<sup>6</sup> <http://education.exeter.ac.uk/projects.php?id=450>

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A Southern perspective on the South/North Educational Linking Process (S/NELP). Early stage analysis from Zanzibar. **FINAL**

The predominant stance is one of a discourse between S and N in which the parties feel able to raise difficulties, issues and problems, so that the goals aspired to in the Central Bureau's 1998 linking criteria are evidenced:

*A North-South link between schools in the UK and Africa, Asia, Latin America or the Caribbean, is a partnership which is long-term, fully reciprocal, and embedded in the curriculum*

These goals, of long-term, fully reciprocal relationships, embedded in school curricula, are still espoused in the current DGSP International partnerships programme and by other exponents of international relationships between schools, including the UK One World Linking Association (UKOWLA). An intercultural education theoretical approach would support this comment about the beginnings of the S/NELP:

*Putting people of different cultures is very difficult at the beginning, because the cultures may be diverse, in their developing days for example. You know putting together there are very many things which combine concerning religious, behaviours and economic or educational then these things. It needs much patience to sustain it. Because, you may feel that I am doing this for the benefit of my friend, while you are annoying your friend, at the same time. So, your friend who is annoyed should be patient, should tolerate all what is happening, and then slowly changing it into, for two. We, for example, at the beginning of going to England, there were many things which were not good for us and then when they come here there were some things are not good for them.*  
(MAK, 375-384)

Without a relationship in which criticism can be voiced I suggest that there is an inherent risk that the participating schools may end their link, so that it cannot grow to become a partnership, or something more. For some that could be sufficient; the parties work together and then separate; for others perhaps a breakdown in communication could stifle progress beyond linking? Asked about possible problems caused for students who have experienced what the North has to 'offer', upon their return to Zanzibar, their Head teacher responded:

*It may cause (problems), but when it happens we get the way to compromise and solution, because when they come back here, then we put down the groups and discuss about what they have seen there and give them the way, how can we also get there.*  
(MAK, 252-255)

*So, instead of being disappointed, they get the morality of what they are to do and that is why even our results are becoming better and better. Because they compare themselves, that: oh, this is not enough, we have to be so and so and so. So, before going to visit our friends in England, our result to go to Form V, that is Advanced Level, was one student or two children in a year, but now we are going to twenty children and twenty five students. So, of course this is being encouraged by the differences which they find when they go there. Even ladies now, I think that two years results, they were matching between boys and girls. Like last year's children, we got twenty five children to go to Form V; twenty three? Thirteen of them were girls and twelve boys. So, I think this is an improvement.*  
(MAK, 261-270)

I have argued in other work (Bourn and Leonard, 2009; Leonard, 2010) that to aid the development of 'deep' learning, encouraging what Geertz has referred to as 'thick description' (1973) a methodology such as Open Spaces for Dialogue and Enquiry (OSDE) or Through Other Eyes (TOE) could be utilized; their underpinning critical literacy approach supports the ideals in this OSDE quote:

*Addressing complexity, understanding interdependence and learning to question and use different modes of thinking may help learners see themselves as integral to the picture they are trying to change (both as part of the problem and the solution) and prevent the reproduction of mechanisms that generate or maintain the problems that are addressed<sup>7</sup>.*

If not perhaps Andreotti's 'soft citizenship' will emerge instead (2006, *op cit*), such that problems of unequal power relationships between North and South, are maintained, or perhaps exacerbated. These OSDE ideals arguably underpin much Development Education. If a linking relationship adopts a methodology such as OSDE or TOE this could facilitate a depth of understanding which could challenge unreliable stereotypes, rather than maintain them and help adults and students to "prevent the reproduction of mechanisms that generate or maintain the problems that are addressed" through links and partnerships.

**Figure 5**

**Contributions of the Aston-Makunduchi Partnership to Development Goals and learning about Development**

<b>Development goals</b>	<b>Learning about development</b>
<p><b>Physical infrastructure:</b> examination hall and teachers' room and administrative block in new buildings. 'School house' in Makunduchi village, to accommodate visitors from the partnership and others, including those on gap placements.</p> <p><b>Resourcing in school:</b> Enhanced provision of schools' resources: text books, technical equipment (e.g. ICT equipment), New teaching materials jointly created by teachers from MSS and Aston, including models and micro-chemistry method (Ash and Severs, 2004) and laboratory equipment in science.</p> <p><b>Resourcing beyond school:</b> Cottage hospital gains inputs from medics from Rotherham.</p>	<p><b>Social Justice &amp; Human rights</b> issues explored- such as gender equality in education. Clubs and assemblies promote this understanding at MSS.</p> <p><b>Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)</b> promoted- initiatives such as the school building developments and grounds at MSS.</p> <p><b>Values and Perceptions:</b> Stereotypes and misconceptions explored by MSS pupils and teachers. Visitor Exchanges allow discussions between students and teachers from South and North. Debriefing of MSS students following visits to Rotherham addresses unreliable stereotypes of UK and the North.</p>
<p><b>Capacity building:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Trading in local craft products from Makunduchi and other local villages, to finance the partnership and its projects.</li> <li>2. Educational aspirations of students boosted.</li> <li>3. Spoken English fluency improved.</li> <li>4. ICT skills amongst school students, teachers and locals using the MSS ICT suite.</li> <li>5. CPD for teachers, especially those engaged in Visitor Exchanges or on placements and academic studies in UK.</li> </ol>	<p><b>Global Citizenship and Interdependence:</b> Three A's in evidence: '<b>Active participation</b>', '<b>Aid</b>' and '<b>Assistance</b>' - MSS teachers assist teachers at other local Zanzibari schools, as part of civil society/civic engagement. Promotion of school linking and sharing of subject expertise in Zanzibar. Curricular projects explore Zanzibari tourist developments; used in geography at S and N ends of the International Partnership.</p> <p><b>Diversity:</b> face-to-face contact between S/NELP parties during Visitor Exchanges, both as hosts in Zanzibar and as participants in visits to Rotherham.</p>

(Leonard 2012)

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.osdemethodology.org.uk/developmenteducation.html>



## Conclusion:

My early stage analysis of findings from research carried out in Makunduchi, of the Aston-Makunduchi Partnership's effects in the Zanzibari school and its local community suggests that while some issues have ensued the overall assessment from adults and students is that their experiences are positive. The relationship has matured successfully, over a period of 20 years, such that this adult respondent, a former Headteacher at MSS claimed of the International partnership between Makunduchi Secondary School and Aston Comprehensive School in Rotherham:

*So this is, I can say, more than School sisters or School partnership and for example this year, we hope to receive more than 100 from Aston and Rotherham, to share or to celebrate the century of our school. So this is more than School Partnership, I think I can say. (W, 25-27)*

## Recommendations:

1. 'Southern' voices should be heard when International Partnerships are evaluated.
2. The voices sought in this research relate to 'Southern' guidance about effective Linking relationships. Southern views on the S/NELP should be disseminated to 'Southern' schools, governmental and NGO funding agencies and the wider audience interested in International partnerships. The Northern parties engaged in similar International Partnerships might also find these contributions helpful.

## Implications for the future:

1. 'Southern' teachers may seek out associated CPD opportunities in the S/NELP; some of these may be provided by NGOs which promote International Partnerships.
2. More 'Southern' participants may visit their Northern partners; alternatively some may curtail their expenditure on such overseas Visitor Exchanges, preferring instead to direct funds within their relationships to other activities and developments.
3. Some 'Southern' and Northern teachers may adopt methodologies such as OSDE in their practice.
4. New teaching and learning resources created within International Partnerships could be disseminated for wider use in the 'North' and the 'South', in schools and other educational establishments.
5. Critics who question the underlying motivations of participants in International Partnerships and some postcolonialist thinkers may remain opposed to the S/NELP.

## EXTENDED POSTSCRIPT

Several queries were raised by delegates at the December 2011 IOE "Education and Development" symposium and in discussions following the January 2012 seminar "Contribution of International Partnerships to Development Goals". Most fall broadly into the theme 'Funding, sustainability, and unequal power relationships'. I contend, like the interwoven

strands of my theoretical perspectives that these are also intimately, intricately and inseparably enmeshed, as part of dependency. The main part of what follows is an elaboration of these three aspects of the S/NELP: Funding, sustainability, and unequal power relationships.

Another query from delegates related to 'Dissemination of research findings'. This is addressed in the final part of this postscript, within my conclusions.

### **Funding, sustainability and unequal power relationships**

Questions posed about the Aston-Makunduchi partnership included: "How is the partnership funded?" "What did it cost?" and "Who paid?" At the time I responded that while I had not sought such financial data I had obtained a report by Makunduchi Secondary School (MSS) detailing its intended school redevelopment plans. The quotation from the former Linking coordinator about ESD, cited in Section 4 (page 12) suggests that the schools in this S/NELP regard an investment in physical infrastructure at MSS as part of these schools' Global Partnership for Development (MDG8). Indeed perhaps it is partly as a result of financial commitments made between the parties that the notion of Education for sustainable development (MDG7) is demonstrated. This 'model' of linking is not without its critics. This is shown in analysis from Egan, who led DfID's Global Schools Partnerships programme (DGSP) from 2003 -2010. In stark language he described it as:

The type of regressive model that perpetuates unequal and neo- colonial relationships. This model inevitably accentuates the problem of the Southern school being the grateful and uncritical recipient of a Northern benefactor, and takes the focus away from learning and education and back towards charity and aid.  
(Leonard, 2008, p85)

However this 'model' is actively adopted by the NGO Link Community Development (LCD), which supports links between UK and Ugandan schools; LCD work in close association with the Ugandan Ministry of Education. Edge et al's review of the now defunct PLAN School Linking Programme (SLP) had noted the same (2009a), in a case study of a small Malawian public, mixed secondary school:

The community has also benefited from the school infrastructure. Members of the community use classrooms for conducting development meetings as well as religious functions. Moreover students perform school linking activities such as drama which have sensitized the community on HIV/AIDS and other global issues

(Edge et al, *op cit* p17 and p97)

Furthermore the participants at this school also recommended that, 'PLAN should put in place an elaborate exit strategy to sustain activities initiated by the SLP' (Edge et al, *op cit* p98) apparently supporting Dobson's fears (2006) about a dependency culture being created in the S/NELP. This NGO had launched its SLP in 2007, linking Malawian, Kenyan and Sierra Leonean schools with UK schools. UK schools made a:

Contribution of £600 to the programme, of which £200 is used for the School Improvement Plans (SIP) in the linked country. The remainder pays for the cost of the programme, the Plan School Linking Coordinators and the materials provided<sup>8</sup>.

Edge et al's research (2009a) was conducted prior to this NGO's decision to cease its SLP engagement. In a section which reviewed 'finance and support from their partner schools', entitled 'Funding received' the authors identified "consistent and significant growth for the 'funding received' questions between year 1 and 2" (*ibid*, p21); I infer that this is in addition to the £200. PLAN withdrew from the S/NELP at the end of 2011.

Among the UK Development Education Centre (DEC) network GlosDEC promoted this model (Leonard, 2008; Whitehead, 2006). By 'investing' financially in the education of those in the South the parties contributed towards the long-term sustainability of their S/NEL relationship. My data collection in Ghana, Uganda and mainland Tanzania has included other examples of this linking 'model'; Edge et al (2008; 2009a; 2009b) also identify similar developments.

My research at MSS does not suggest that respondents see themselves as recipients of 'charity and aid'; adults rather view 'learning and education' as paramount. Exchanging gifts between 'friends' promotes teaching and learning in the North and the South. The Southern school providing artefacts to assist Northern colleagues in their classrooms, such as examples of locally produced craft materials (and vice versa) while teacher collaboration has led to the partnership's integration into several of Aston's schemes of work (Leonard, 2004) across a range of curriculum areas. I also question Egan's implicit criticism that gratitude is a bad thing. As a teacher I am grateful for the opportunity to take part in mutual observation; that does not make me beholden to the observer (nor I suggest would a teacher I observe perceive it in that way). Furthermore, my interview responses at MSS negate the suggestion that Southern schools are 'uncritical recipients'. This comment regarding early developments in the Aston-Makunduchi partnership demonstrates the antithesis of Egan's claim: "There were many things which were not good for us" (MAK).

A criticism of recent large-scale evaluations, including the funded DfID (Edge et al, 2008 and 2009b), Hirst's review (2009) and the independent NFER report (2011), which mainly investigated links within the DGSP programme, is that they contain minimal criticism of the S/NELP. Promised follow-up small-scale case studies from the Edge teams' work (2009b) may yet address this criticism.

In contrast to those large-scale reviews these quotations, from PLAN's SLP in a Sierra Leonean government-assisted secondary school for girls, refute implications that Southern schools are beholden, uncritical, dependent participants of a donor culture:

Communication is not satisfactory- only one letter written every half term and there were just three letters in one year. What is more, students have not received any replies from their friends

(Edge et al, 2009a p84)

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<sup>8</sup> <http://www.plan-uk.org/resources/documents/42633/> Last accessed 2 February 2012

Students want more time to be spent on computer training. They do not appreciate the 'once and for all' exposure to the computers (ibid p85)

This school's decision to form its partnership 'was made by the government through the Ministry of Education and PLAN' (ibid, p84).

The funding of a S/NELP relationship is an aspect, which perhaps Mark Poston's 'Three Es': effectiveness, efficiency and economy (i.e. value for money) would prove very complex and difficult to resolve (January 2012 conference plenary: "Measuring Impact of Development Education"). Poston is the Team Leader for DfID's outreach work in the UK. If S/NELP participants, to use the language of Economics, enjoyed access to 'perfect information' then having jointly agreed on the way forward within a relationship perhaps all three could be achieved. I suggest that sometimes the three may conflict; enjoying a serviceable teachers' room and administrative block, for example, has provided an effective Teaching and Learning resource at MSS (see Figure 5). How 'transparent' the process was in securing its construction, how economic it will prove to be in the long-term (it suffers from large cracks) I do not know. Without the resource the day-to-day challenge of providing an effective educational environment would have been very difficult; whose values matter? A Northern government funded educational project would demand its own criteria be applied, if a school development project were in process. This applied for example in school building projects under the now defunct "Building Schools for the Future" (BSF) UK initiative, clearly designed to be an example of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD). Poston suggested that his '3 Es' would underpin future assessment of DfID-funded Development Education initiatives, such as the forthcoming global learning project. MSS and Aston's evaluative criteria for their S/NELP may differ from Poston's. Furthermore some aspects of a S/NELP may prove difficult or even impossible to 'evaluate'; for example, the development of international friendships and professional pairings of teachers, or boosted self-esteem and raised morale of students, teachers and members of a school's local community; or heightened aspirations of females to challenge gender inequalities and empower women (MDG3).

If the Aston-Makunduchi partnership sets their criteria, for developments at both ends, then I suggest that they should be the final arbiters. My understanding is that the School Committee at MSS determines future developments that include the partnership and the school's improvement plan (SIP), in consultation with those in Aston. I do not know if this information is made public: I do not believe that the ITE provider which employs me in the UK shares its SIP publicly outside the institution, although it was a key document in the recent Ofsted Inspection process of the programme which I work for. (Nor am I privy to funding decisions made in the school where I teach; although those relating to major infrastructure developments are shared with the school community)

I do know that accounts, which I presented when taking part in recent Visitor Exchanges with a Chinese school, were not shared with our Chinese partner; nor was such transparency sought. Each school's paying for all visitors' activities in the 'host' country sufficed. This is a very different process to that practised the first time that I engaged in such a S/NELP arrangement, when a joint fund was created for all activities and 360° transparency was assured. No grants

were sought from Northern government-funded agencies, such as the British Council, in either case.

Since the major cost of Visitor Exchanges in a S/NELP is the international airfares then means to subsidise such exchanges, agreed within a partnership, could be found to even out the real price differential for the two parties (perhaps based on equivalence of teachers' salaries). Of the six African school case studies in Edge et al's Year 2 report for PLAN (2009a), in a primary and a secondary school in Kenya and Sierra Leone, and two secondary schools in Malawi, Visitor Exchanges were cited as ways of improving their S/NELP in all of them; some of these included students. For the Malawian primary school the report's authors noted, "The school leadership and teachers regard this as the best way of improving the partnership... which could afford both learners and teachers an opportunity to learn from their colleagues" (*ibid*, p80).

In the past the Aston-Makunduchi partnership had adopted its own trading arrangements, selling local Zanzibari craft items in the North, to fund the Southern party's visits to Rotherham; I believe this arrangement is currently in abeyance. The same could be true for other projects and their associated expenses in the S/NELP. This member of MSS's Linking Committee mooted funding for ICT training, to allow in-school support at MSS for the maintenance of equipment acquired in the partnership:

It is more better maybe instead of putting a lot of money to take about fifteen people from Makunduchi to England, instead maybe take only two people, but when they go there maybe they must learn maybe how to maintain, to make maintenance for the computers or how to do. It means how to do something which is going to be used here and providing knowledge for other people. (SH, 107-112)

Then, our computer will [have] longer life; because whenever it is broken someone can maintain it instead. But now, that is, whenever it is broken, it is gone. So, there are a number of computers have been here; but now there is nothing. Because whenever it is broken no one can deal with it. (SH, 118-121)

Future detailed analysis of MSS interviews will refer to other suggested alternative expenditure within the partnership, including CPD and capacity building for teachers.

A criticism of the current funding arrangement for DGSP Curriculum projects is that they are short-term and the Northern party is accountable for agreed expenditure; this arrangement replicates colonialist relationships, reiterates unequal power relationships and conspires against sustainability. This apparent lack of long-term financial commitment to the S/NELP was raised by the January seminar audience as a major concern; one which delegates had hoped to raise with DfID's Mark Poston in the day's plenary session. 'In country' British Council staff on the DGSP programme expressed similar concerns (Regester, 2011; Thakwalakwa, 2012<sup>9</sup>). While it is hoped that schools can develop their own alternative sources of finance to take their place, three years may prove too short a time to achieve this. To decry all fund-raising initiatives outright, as recommended in the European Development Education Monitoring Report, (Krause, 2010) and the Soesterberg Declaration (LSO, 2000) is to stifle the ability of those

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[http://www.gecongress2012.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=81%3AAcreditacoes&catid=3%3Ahighlights&Itemid=46&lang=en](http://www.gecongress2012.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=81%3AAcreditacoes&catid=3%3Ahighlights&Itemid=46&lang=en) Last accessed 2/02/12

engaged in the S/NELP to maintain, develop and grow their relationship. Ruth Najda, the British Council's Global Education Adviser, acknowledged this during the January seminar; Ruth is also the contact for DGSP cited by the UK's TDA<sup>10</sup>. I maintain, like LCD and Whitehead (2006), of GlosDEC, that commitments of resources (sometimes financial) are physical manifestations of Sustainable Development values, which lie at the core of Development Education.

My worry, expressed in earlier work on this theme (2010) is about holding back sustainable outcomes, such as those identified at MSS (and in other Southern schools where my data has been collected) if concerns about a risk of dependency emerging overrule the introduction of S/NELP developments. In the Aston-Makunduchi S/NELP the aspect of unequal power relationships is one which is addressed through the joint decision making process this partnership practises, 20 years into working together. What I cannot answer are questions posed by Amott, "How is the partnership funded?" or by HDP22, "What did it cost?" and "Who paid? Is the danger rather if a Southern school's sole reason for engagement in the S/NELP is the potential resource gain? Postcolonialists would justifiably use this as evidence for the recreation of neo-colonial relationships. The dilemma in an S/NELP is that differing values and perceptions between the parties if unquestioningly accepted, rather than challenged, (which critical discourse seeks) might then recreate or embed unequal power relationships. Seeking equity in the S/NELP does not require that the parties are identical; it would be foolish to suggest this. An aspiration to global partnership for development (MDG8) brings S/NELP participants closer, closing some material gaps between the North and the South. The opportunities to explore cultural and material differences between the parties may lie at the heart of why the schools formed their links in the first place.

In my thesis I hope to present financial data based on MSS's 2010 SIP projects and seek responses to these three as yet answered questions regarding funding. Many projects have taken place since 1990, in the schools now participating within the Aston-Makunduchi S/NELP umbrella, contributing to several schools' improvement plans. While DGSP funding, such as Curriculum grants promote projects over a period of 3 years, in Zanzibar Aston-Makunduchi participants take a long-term view. The 2010 20-year anniversary fêted the sustainability of this relationship; I did not raise the issue of an exit strategy from this S/NELP in my interviews in Zanzibar. While this partnership has made applications for British Council funding in the past (Leonard, 2004) this relationship has evolved a variety of means to ensure its financial viability and to engage other schools and villages on the island in long-term relationships with the UK.

Another aspect of unequal power relationships was raised in Leggs' queries (2011) to me about how students perceive the contributions made by Aston teachers when they visit MSS. Her concerns related to potential negative impacts; she asked if they felt as a result that their own teachers 'lack' or assumed that the Northern practitioners 'know best'. Collaboration between professionals, particularly between reflective practitioners, I suggest is rather one of sharing good practice. To achieve the dissemination of this, at whatever stage a teacher has reached in

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<https://cpdsearch.tda.gov.uk/ProviderDetail.aspx?e=fQCguFY5tkxMPLJe5K8JwTwyEGOdYIeHbu44tAmp2dZ/aFxUQ10zcA> Last accessed 1/02/12

their careers, teachers exchange, swap and adapt resources, strategies and ideas, for how to engage learners, experiment and hopefully reflect on the subsequent outcomes, in their own context. Education theorists, to structure such analysis, have derived several models of critical reflection (Brookfield, 1995; Kolb, 1994; Moon, 2004; Tripp, 1993). Within a S/NELP such reflection may extend to other aspects of education beyond teaching, including leadership development of staff and students and students' development of inter and intra-personal skills. Adults' pastoral skills too may benefit.

Openness to external resources, including receptiveness to outside expertise and assistance is not a phenomenon that is unique to a Southern school engaged in a S/NELP. DERC, based at IOE, for example, and the DEC network, provide such CPD for a variety of UK educational institutions keen to integrate a Global Dimension into curricula. I would not infer therefore, that if MSS teachers collaborate and share their teaching load with Aston colleagues there is a Western hegemony dominating; rather, that the professionals concerned work as equals, keen to promote effective learning for students and teachers. Edge et al's research team (2009a) recommended 'an advocacy strategy to regularly share success stories' through monthly newsletters (*ibid*, p30) disseminated to all schools on PLAN's SLP, inferring that these reflections could benefit the 375 schools participating in the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of its programme, which included 72 in Kenya, 50 in Malawi and 55 in Sierra Leone (*ibid*, p9). I am not aware of whether this recommendation was adopted in the 3<sup>rd</sup> year of PLAN's SLP programme (Edge et al, 2010 and 2011).

## Conclusions

Regrettably after the January 2012 seminar discussions were brief and my PowerPoint presentation had not progressed beyond the identification of eight 'negative or complicated, complex' effects of the S/NELP highlighted in MSS. Only cursory elaboration of how to mitigate these had been possible.

This postscript has explored three of these, **funding, sustainability and unequal power relationships**, which I argue could be embraced within the theme of **dependency**. To then imply that these are easily addressed or resolved would be simplistic and far removed from the critical discourse, which underpins and permeates my research methodology. As I wrote in the comments elaborating upon Figure 1, it is in the exploration of the conflicts and dilemmas between the four strands of my theoretical approach that the strength of this research is achieved. I heed too Disney's warnings from 2004<sup>11</sup>:

We cannot afford to dismantle some stereotypes and replace them with others. School linking projects can provide images of real people in real places but it is still possible to select the aspects of the surrounding locality with which we feel comfortable to deal. There are no simple solutions to this problem but grappling with the issues has to be a central focus in any school-linking project.

At this stage in my research journey I do not offer advice based on my research experience of the S/NELP. Rather, what I have sought to do is to create a research methodology that allows

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<sup>11</sup> [http://www.geography.org.uk/download/GA\\_EYPPRRActionResearch3Disney.pdf](http://www.geography.org.uk/download/GA_EYPPRRActionResearch3Disney.pdf) Last accessed 2/02/12

those in the South to disseminate theirs, to present a Southern perspective on the S/NELP. To this end I hope that this paper and my earlier papers and presentations based on my data collection in Ghana, Uganda and Tanzania, and the range of supporting literature and commentaries that they have shared, voice Southern views of this phenomenon. In each instance the context is unique. Should fellow Southern schools contemplating engagement in the S/NELP then discern similarities with their particular contexts perhaps such lessons could help to promote new successful relationships in the future?

Edge et al (2008; 2009a; 2009b) have referred to 'high momentum' partnerships; not all Southern schools might seek to achieve this status. It is hoped too that by the dissemination of these findings agencies which promote relationships between the global South and North may hear what Southern adults and students whose schools and communities presently experience the S/NELP have shared in my pupil focus groups and semi-structured interviews.

I do not intend that this research should fall into the picture identified in Tooley and Darby's 1998 critique of Educational research, 'The picture emerged of researchers doing their research largely in a vacuum, unnoticed and unheeded by anyone else'<sup>12</sup>. Neither should it demonstrate David Hargreaves' 1996 criticisms of being remote from educational practice or of indifferent quality.

This quotation from a fellow geographer, ITE lecturer and researcher (Catling, 1999<sup>13</sup>) writing in the context of raising achievement in primary geography, summarises my aspirations for my continuing research journey exploring "Southern perspectives on the S/NELP":

The importance of good quality research is that it can identify effective approaches that improve practice. Shared through publications read by teachers, this benefits children's learning directly, laying the foundation for an evidence-based approach to primary geography teaching. Using research enhances the understanding and knowledge on which teachers draw in their day-to-day planning and teaching of geography and provides the basis for secure and well-judged decisions about directions and activities in the classroom.

I contend that such benefits can accrue across a range of curriculum areas which are taught in linked schools, although in some, due to the differences in the resource provision between North and South perhaps their transferability would be limited (for example in ICT, Design and Technology or Food Technology).

## **Future developments**

In my final thesis I hope to also include unedited responses from Southern adult participants, in response to my analysis. I will seek to share my final research findings as widely as possible, taking full advantage of the means of dissemination available in 2012; through multi-media, including possibly hosting its supporting transcripts on a website. To date some attempts to negate Tooley and Darby's 1998 complaint about unheeded, unnoticed educational research

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<sup>12</sup> [http://www.bera.ac.uk/files/2008/12/tooley\\_1998.pdf](http://www.bera.ac.uk/files/2008/12/tooley_1998.pdf) Last accessed 2/02/12

<sup>13</sup> [http://www.geography.org.uk/download/GA\\_EYPPRRActionResearchCatling.pdf](http://www.geography.org.uk/download/GA_EYPPRRActionResearchCatling.pdf) Last accessed 2/02/12



have been rebuffed, most notably in my ongoing efforts to persuade those on the planning teams for the BBC's World Service that this field research could be of interest to a radio audience that extends to the UK and Africa. I am particularly keen that this medium presents a low-cost opportunity for Southern voices to be heard, especially those of the students who took part in my focus groups. The lesson learnt was that this might have proved possible if I had consulted interested production teams prior to carrying out the interviews, but that after the event the 'reversion' audio material (and supporting transcripts) would not be. This is how the producer of the BBC World Service's "One Planet" series had responded:

We hardly ever use material which has been gathered for purposes other than journalism, as radio journalism requires quite a different approach to what is recorded, the questions asked, etc, than field research. Had we been able to discuss this with you before your trip we could have talked about ways we might have been able to make this work for us, but after the fact it's difficult to reversion audio that wasn't recorded for broadcast into a radio feature. (Burns, 2012)

Should others considering similar field research heed this advice then perhaps the Southern voices which they amass on audio could indeed be broadcast to a wider audience? Other media opportunities such as the BBC's 'School Report' initiative could enable pupils in linked schools to create pupil-friendly resources allowing teachers in schools to also share their learning from linking; this media avenue would not enable S/NELP academic researchers to share their findings (Hills, 2012).

### **Exit strategies**

It would be pertinent to instigate a longitudinal study of African schools whose links with UK schools had developed with the support of the PLAN NGO between 2007 and December 2011, to ascertain how many of these are maintained from 2012 and if an exit strategy had been instituted, prior to PLAN's withdrawal from its SLP.

"The Global School Partnerships (GSP) programme has awarded final grants to schools, but will continue to provide support and advice to schools completing their grant activity until March 2013.

The Department for International Development (DFID) is committed to continuing support for school linking beyond the closure of GSP and is currently looking at how this can be done to ensure a high quality service to schools that also represents value for money for the UK taxpayer".<sup>14</sup>

Writing in April 2012, after DfID announced the closure of its much larger DGSP programme, with effect from April 2013, I suggest that the longevity of the S/NELP following the expiry of awards from its grants programme also urgently merits research to isolate effective 'exit strategies'. Effective strategies, should allow the parties involved to put in place financial arrangements facilitating a link's evolution into something more, or, as appropriate, agree how a S/NELP would end, without acrimony, or a dependency culture emerging, or some participants feeling that they have been used and then discarded by their 'partners'.

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<sup>14</sup> <http://www.dfid.gov.uk/Get-Involved/In-your-school/global-school-partnerships/about-gsp>

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