

An Exploration of Development Education within the Irish Secondary School Curriculum

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Abstract

This research study examined the implementation of Development Education Policy in Irish Secondary Schools. Using qualitative methodology and thematic analysis current Development Education Policy in Ireland was viewed and was analysed and discussed through 5 teachers' experiences of Development Education across 3 secondary schools. Recommendations from organisations with a Development Education remit were assessed.

The possible implementations of these recommendations and policies were questioned in relation to the challenges identified by the teachers in this research. The 5 main themes as result of the interviews identified the main challenges throughout the research which was the overcrowded secondary school curriculum and the unidentified common definition of Development Education.

Confusion also arose across the similarities and differences within the Environmental Education, Education for Sustainability and Development Education.

Introduction

This research aims to question how Development Education is being carried out in Irish secondary schools focusing on how agencies promote or suggest the delivery of Development Education in Irish schools.

Current Development Education Policy will be examined through the framework of the UN Millennium Development Goals paying attention to the World Wise Global Schools Programme and its attempt at its policies implementation in Irish Secondary Schools.

This research will outline the various debates on the definition of Development Education and examine its differentiation with Environmental Education and Education for Sustainable development.



Method

This research used a qualitative approach with semi-structured interviews of 8 participants.

The 8 participants were chosen using criterion sampling of being teachers in secondary schools or from an organisation that was linked to Development Education.

The transcribed data from the interviews was thematic analysed through the software Nvivo 10 which discovered themes and patterns from the data.

Results

The results were divided into the different themes which emerged from the interviews namely: Development Education and its importance in Irish Secondary Schools, Resources, and Development Education through the Curriculum, Teacher Training and Charity Model of development education.

The themes were developed through the analysis of the interviews that were carried out as part of the study.

Discussion

The research results indicate There is confusion over the definition of Development Education, which emerges through the research results as including aspects of Environmental Education and Education for Sustainable Development.

The research proposes that a comparative study of how Development Education policy is implemented in different socioeconomic schools and areas could be investigated, such as the differences if any between Voluntary secondary schools, Vocational schools and community and comprehensive schools and this may identify different responses to Development Education.

This research indicates that Development Education needs to implement a more planned and rational approach which is comprehensive and gives guidelines for the schools and the agencies that promote Development Education.

References

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