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Networking to improve Global Education in Europe. The genesis, lessons learnt and the future of the GENE network

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Liam Wegimont

Networking to improve Global Education in Europe

The genesis, lessons learnt and the future of the GENE network

Abstract: In this article the author reflects on the emergence and initial steps of the GENE (Global Education Network Europe)¹. Drawing lessons from the work to date, some principles from practice for networking and some future scenarios for the work of the network are suggested.

Introduction

At the heart of most good practice in global education is the notion that while people learn from experience, experience of the world as it is simply is not enough for good education. Good education must be always already realising a certain habit of irritation with the way the world is; in order that we might change things together towards a world more in keeping with what the French philosopher Paul Ricoeur terms "our own-most longings".

Debate rages amongst those of us who call ourselves development or global educators regarding the relative balance of our commitment to the educational process and the journey in freedom of our co-learners vis a vis our commitment to a world of greater justice. Thankfully, the history of educational thought is filled with reflection on such complex commitments and healthy tensions. We walk steeply uphill but in good company. And in this company, the notion of experience is crucial (Dewey 1997; 1916, chapter 11).

Our concern with experience as global or development educators means that we are concerned not only with learning from experience of the world as it is; but also with learning to experience a more inclusive and just world.

At a strategic level, any concern for the improvement of global education - its policies, practices, and strategies - must start with the experience already gained, with the storehouse of existing knowledge. All too often in the past, global and development education practice has been hampered in the achievement of quality by a failure to learn from existing, comparative practice. This means that valuable time, effort, energy and resources might have been wasted re-inventing the wheel. While I believe this criticism is more historical than

contemporary² - and we now see many examples of excellent learning from experience - this problematic was one of the motivating factors behinds the establishment of the GENE (Global Education Network Europe) initiative.

GENE is the European network of national organisations for support, funding and policy-making in the field of global or development education. Facilitated by the North-South Centre of the Council of Europe, it brings together structures from 12 countries, with combined annual budgets in excess of 45 million Euro. These organisations include Ministries of Foreign Affairs (Norway, Finland, Ireland); intermediary structures - such as NCDO (National Committee for International Co-operation and Sustainable Development) in the Netherlands, IPAD - Instituto Português de Apoio ao Desenvolvimento (Portuguese Institute for Development Assistance) in Portugal, KommEnt in Austria or InWent/Capacity Building International in Germany; and, exceptionally, research Institutes (Czech Republic), and NGOs (in those countries such as the UK where funding responsibility is partially devolved, or where NGOs or research insitiutes assist governments in developing structures).

In this paper I wish to

- outline the genesis of the idea of GENE and its initial start-up;
- reflect on the practice of networking as we have experienced it in GENE in order to:
- draw lessons from practice regarding the nature of networking; and finally
- propose a number of possible scenarios for the future of GENE.

The GENE Story: How it started

In this section I'd like to tell the story of GENE; like all communal stories it could be told from many perspectives; let me tell it from my own.

Some seven years ago, in the Summer of 1997, I was invited

by the North-South Centre of the Council of Europe to evaluate the Global Education and Youth programmes of the Centre. The work I witnessed was inspiring; but, as with all our work, with interesting perspectives for improved focus.

In particular, it struck me that one rich vein of work not yet fully tapped was the potential inherent in the structure of the North-South Centre - a part of an intergovernmental body, requiring the engagement of governments; but with a "quadrilogue" or four-part governance structure, involving governments, civil society, parliamentarians and local and regional authorities³. I had - along with many of my colleagues working as I did for development education and development NGOs - bemoaned what we perceived to be limited government engagement with the agendas we pursued. Here was an organisation established by governments to work not only with governments, but also with other necessary actors - to strengthen the common European commitment to global development education⁴.

Through further work with the Centre, and in particularly

For me, at the time looking from a national perspective, this was due to the fact that while national structures of this kind tend to be either housed within or largely funded by government departments, they also have a varying level of NGO involvement, ownership or control. The North-South Centre, with its peculiar blend of intergovernmental and NGO structure, might just do the job of initiating a process of multilateral networking, as it was completely congruent with the varied make-up but similar constituency of national structures.

Such a perspective was endorsed in the 1999 root and branch evaluation of the North-South Centre carried out by KommEnt, which clearly advised the governance structures of the Centre that it should concentrate on processes, bringing together key- decision makers in the fields of the Centre's competence. It was in this context that in late 2000 a proposal was launched which suggested that some other areas of work be de-prioritised and that a process of consultation be established in 2001 with a view to engaging in networking between existing and emerging structures of support for Glo-

through its Global Education Advisory Committee - I became increasingly convinced that the Centre should focus its energies on doing work that no one else could do with actors that were not being brought together by others - particularly governmental actors.

Meanwhile, as Chairperson of the Irish National Committee for Development Education (NCDE), it became increasingly clear to me that while in a number of countries in Europe structures had grown up for the support, funding and co-ordination of global development education - structures such as the NCDO in the Netherlands, KommEnt/Society for Communication and Development in Austria, the Swiss Foundation for Education and Development and the NCDE; and while some of these (particularly KommEnt and the Swiss Foundation for Education and Development) had engaged in bilateral learning; much of the time *they operated in splendid isolation*. There was little systematic multi-lateral learning going on.

Increasingly, informed by the groundbreaking work of Susanne Höck, and by conversations with her and with Helmuth Hartmeyer (then KommEnt, now the Austrian Development Agency), Ton Waarts (then head of NCDO), Henny Helmich, then OECD Development Centre, now NCDO); Doug Bourn (DEA-Development Education Association) and Eddie O'Loughlin (then Ireland Aid, now an independent consultant working also with the North-South Centre) it became clear that similar organisations and government ministries could learn from, and with, other similar organisations in Europe. The experience of growing a structure suitable for the national support, co-ordination and funding could be informed, enhanced and enlarged by learning from similar structures in different countries. Furthermore; it became clear that the North-South Centre, with its quadrilogue structure, was an ideal structure to start off such a process.

bal Education.

The Practice of Networking: Next steps

The GENE process began in 2001 and has seen a number of significant steps since then. They include *a process of consultation* with existing structures in early 2001; leading to the development of a concept paper taking account of the perspectives of the agencies involved. This process was *explicitly documentary*⁶ and involved building consensus through the development of an agreed text on the purpose of any potential networking process. It was also *practical but based on reflection and informed by theory*. It was clear from the outset that the networking process would only work if it had a clear practical value for the participants. Directors of such agencies tend to be busy people, and the national level agenda must take immediate and long-term priority. But it was also clear that the process should be informed by best available theory on the nature of networking and the benefits of networking⁷; and that there should be a space for theoretical reflection.

Finally, the process might not have worked were it not based on an open question - "What value would agencies see in such an initiative?" Here's what the consultation found: "*It is clear to the participating organisations that there is added value, even 'huge value' in this initiative. Added values at national level identified by participating organisations include:*

- Peer review;
- the opportunity for reflection and dialogue at a similar level, regarding similar issues;
- comparative learning regarding political role, policy-making, co-ordination, integration, funding mechanisms and

particular sector strategies;

- strengthening the European dimension;
- developing a common European agenda that builds on national realities;
- the opportunity to relate, via GENE, to larger political realities and structures - Council of Europe (COE), EU, OECD, World Bank, UN structures and processes."

An Initial Round-table on Multi-lateral networking facilitated by the North-South Centre, held in Strasbourg in June 2001 brought together initially a very limited number of the relevant organisations and agencies. These included KommEnt (Austria), the BMZ (Germany), NCDE (Ireland), NCDO (Netherlands), the Swiss Foundation for Education and Development, the DEA (UK) and the North-South Centre. During this initial Roundtable, the process began with a sharing of information on the participating structures. This information-sharing was structured to focus on the following aspects of the organisations in attendance: Brief History; role and mission; role of various players (government/NGOs/etc.); funding levels, funding policies; structures

So, it became clear from the start of the process that *a clear priority of the networking process involved sharing information* about the existing situation in participating countries. It was also clear from the onset that the networking process should begin to *identify common ground*, conceptually and in terms of policy priorities.

This first Roundtable also explicitly discussed *the purpose* of the GENE networking process, which, based on the prior consultation, was proposed by the North-South Centre of the Council of Europe to be two-fold:

1. To share experience and strategies among existing and emerging national structures, in order to inform best practice nationally and provide mutual support and learning.
2. To disseminate learning from the initial participating countries to other EU, and COE member states, so that structures subsequently emerging will learn from this experience, and so that, eventually, all COE countries might have national co-ordinating structures for the increase and improvement of GE.⁸

At this early stage in the process, there was some discussion regarding whether or not the network should be broadened out (as per 2 above) or whether it should be kept as something of a closed shop with existing organisations. A fear was expressed: should too many "emerging" structures or countries with potential for structures were brought into the process too early, it could dilute the experience-sharing potential of those countries where existing structures had already developed years, and in some cases decades, of experience. While appreciating this concern - and institutionalising this appreciation by limiting participation at first to those structures that fulfilled three out of five agreed membership criteria⁹ - nevertheless, it was the final consensus of the first meeting that there must be an outward-looking strategy also¹⁰.

Ensuing work has seen a balance emerge; with slow but sustainable growth from the initial six national structures (Austria, Germany, Ireland, Netherlands, Switzerland and the United Kingdom) being joined, slowly but surely, by four other member states of the Council (Norway, Finland, Portu-

gal, Czech Republic); and with observer participation by COE Observer member states U.S. and Japan. Discussions are ongoing with a further four member states of the Council with a view to joining the network in 2004.

Along with these issues of membership, scope and purpose, the Initial Roundtable also dealt with issues that have continued to concern the network. Firstly - and from the onset - *the issue of realistic results-based planning and a concern for useful product* led to the agreement that the GENE network should begin its work with a clearly defined and useful product - the first GENE study. This study - a comparative analysis for the structures of support in seven countries (Norway also becoming involved upon joining the network) - was a co-operative venture, but with the NSC and KommEnt¹¹ taking the lead in co-ordinating the process and editing the results. *This model - of lead agencies* within the network talking the lead on, co-ordinating, and working on behalf of the network to achieve results that all could own - *has proved fruitful for subsequent work.*

Another issue which emerged during the First Roundtable was the question of ownership - and explicitly "Why should the North-South Centre facilitate this?". Here's what the document discussed at the time had to say: *The North-South Centre is the convenor and initiator of this process. The process is based on the visions and dreams of some of the participating organisations; organisations that have been in discussion with the North-South Centre for some time in relation to the vision of GENE. One participating organisation asked the valid question "why the North-South Centre?" While others might see this as an academic question, as the North-South Centre has initiated the process; and others ask "why not?"; the North-South Centre proposes that an item on the role of the North-South Centre be dealt with on the agenda of our first meeting.*

While the North-South Centre has, since its inception, been the facilitator of the process, and acted as a hub for the networking; it is clear that the structure of the network has remained light; that the work has been focused on results and on the networking process, rather than on structures; and that, with the exception of the provision of a secretariat by the North-South Centre, the network is fairly self-sustaining, as both the development of, and the costs related to projects and to participation are largely met by the participating organisations.

A *Second Roundtable* of the network took place in *Amsterdam in February 2002*; at this meeting the subsequent practice - whereby participating organisations take turns to host the Roundtable - was established. This practice has led to further Roundtables of the network in Arrábida, Portugal, in June 2003, hosted by the North-South Centre and the Fundação Oriente (Orient Foundation) - an annual summer meeting takes place in Portugal; in London (September 2003) and in Salzburg (February 2004); along with an informal meeting of the network together with GE representatives from G-8 countries coinciding with the Maastricht Congress (November 2002) and hosted by BMZ (Germany). Roundtable seven is scheduled for November 2004 in Bern, Switzerland.

Processes and products

While it can be argued that too much of our language and the work it seeks to describe, to analyse and to imagine, in global and development education - and indeed in both education and in development - has been hijacked by a management-speak which derives from models of thought and action which might be counterproductive to our ultimate ends; nevertheless, sometimes such a language has deeper roots that can be reclaimed, and can also provide a short-hand for what we are about. Here, I use the shorthand to describe *the processes and the products* of the GENE networking to date.

In the GENE network, there has been a *clear commitment to process*. Each of the Roundtables mentioned above involves ownership by the members, with particular leadership by particular members of the network.

The agenda of each Roundtable is roughly divided in three. One third of the time is devoted to sharing the news and views at national level, with reports from national agencies taking priority on the agenda. This element of the process recognises properly the glaringly obvious truism that the real work of the members of the network does not take place at Round-tables, but is taking place between meetings at national level. This aspect of each meeting involves some hours of active listening and engagement. Without wanting to sound too misty-eyed about the process, it is here, I believe, that the most productive work gets done, as national agencies learn specifically, and in detail, of each others national contexts, plans, initiatives, strategies (national, sectoral, etc.) budgets, financing mechanisms, innovations, challenges. It enables national agencies to ask the question - *how do they do it elsewhere; and would something like that work in my national situation?* It also enables all organisations to gain a detailed overview of the situation of funding support and policy-making in the countries participating. This moment of the networking process also enables the sort of energy that unleashes people's creativity and builds solidarity. I have heard individuals new to the process, following this part of the process, say "funny thing is, working at a national level, you sometimes think that you're alone; here we see that many of the issues we're struggling with are similar".

A second section of the agenda of each Roundtable is devoted to common work. Some of the products of this work will be detailed below. A focus on the work achieved since previous meetings; and proposals for further progressing the work, is discussed. This common work - with originally six areas of work now reduced to five - is undertaken by lead agencies within the network. The work, while focused on particular objectives and results, is also process oriented, with lead agencies involving all other members of the network at key stages in the design, implementation and assessment of the work. For me, these areas of work, as well as being crucial to the improvement of global and development education in Europe, provide for the network what the US Feminist educator Letty Russell describes as "the third thing" in the learning relationship process (Russell 1986). Through the process of developing common projects, deeper relationships and common perspectives, as well as heated debate, diversity of perspective and schools of thought begin to emerge.

A third section of the agenda of each meeting is outward looking - focused on broader international processes to which GENE members can, through GENE or independently, relate, engage with, and work towards influencing. Whether it be forthcoming meetings of the G-8; the process of the UNESCO decade; or the OECD Pisa study 2009 on global literacy; GENE members can inform about, and develop together, strategies to influence more global agendas, through GENE.

This tripartite division of a meeting process - (1) focus on members and national level news; (2) focus on common projects; and (3) focus on the broader political picture - is not particularly innovative, and has been developed based on trial and error and the wisdom of those organisations chairing and hosting the meetings. But it seems to work well for GENE. What is less well-developed, and can be improved, is the inter-meeting process, which works well in terms of projects and products, but could be improved in terms of general communication and information-sharing.

Moving on to look at projects and products; GENE is engaged in a number of projects; these are:

- *Work Area 1 - Developing a public awareness campaign on European Global Citizens in the frame of the Millennium Development Goals:* This project is currently under development, led by the NCDO and the North-South Centre.

- *Work Area 2 - The GENE Studies: In 2003 GENE, led by Komment and the North-South Centre produced the first GENE study, being a comparative analysis of structures of funding and support in seven member states. This study will be updated annually.* GENE studies 2004 will include: (1) Development Cooperation Ireland and the North-South Centre will lead a study on "Global Education in Europe: roles and responsibilities of different Ministries". (2) DEA and the Swiss Foundation for Education and Development will lead a study on "Defining Global Education and its relationship to Education for Sustainable Development". In each case the development of the study follows a process: lead agencies developing draft terms of reference; circulation to GENE members for agreement; GENE members draft national situation analysis; lead agencies collate and edit including European level comparative analysis.

- *Work Area 3 - Evaluation and Quality in GE: Begun in 2002, and led by BMZ and InWent (Germany), the DEA (UK) and the North-South Centre, this project focused on sharing good practice and theory in evaluation in global education. This project has led to an Expert Seminar (Nuremberg, March 2003) and to the London Conference on Learning for a Global Society (London, September 2003); along with the (ongoing) development of a web-based resource on evaluation and quality in global education (available at: www.nscentre.org). In this process, the German government wisely delegated their leadership of the process to Professor Annette Scheunpflug of University Erlangen, Nuremberg, while the Development Education Association involved the Institute of Education, University of London. This model- of lead agencies identifying leading national experts - was highly fruitful.*

- *Work Area 4 - Engagement with other institutions and processes: Recently it has been agreed that GENE should keep a watching brief, and develop an engagement strategy, with each of the following institutions and processes, and*

that perhaps one GENE member might take responsibility for leading such work with: (1) E.U.; (2) Council of Europe initiatives; (3) OECD; (4) UNESCO - Decade for Education for Sustainable Development (ESD); (5) UNECE - ESD initiative; (6) G-8; (7) other regional structures (GENAP - the emerging Global Education Network Asia-Pacific; GE network USA).

- Work Area 5 - Sharing models of training: Many of the national agencies involved in GENE develop, or support the development, of training at various levels. This project shares detailed information regarding such training.

I will now move on to reflect on lessons learnt, before proposing some possible scenarios for the future.

Lessons Learnt

Based on the experience of the GENE network, reflected through the prism of theoretical commentary on the nature, purpose and practice of networking, I would like to suggest some lessons learnt.

A good place to start regarding theoretical reflection on the practice of networking is with Paul H. Engel, whose work on "The Social Organisation of Innovation" has informed the process of the development of GENE¹². According to Engel networking is "the process resulting from our conscious efforts to build relationships with each other to further the cause [...] [in this case of global development education]. Networks are the more or less formal, more or less durable patterns that emerge as a result of such efforts" (Engel 1995, p. 132). The strength of this definition lies both in the distinction between the process of *networking* (the verb) and the building of *a network* (the noun); and in the focus on relationships. Engel, following Padron, argues that creating sustainable networking requires willingness to be open-minded; confidence in one's own work and the learning to be gained from its success and failure; humility to understand the relativity of one's own stance in a plurality of perspectives.

Engel also suggests that networks go through stages;

1. a first embryonic, institutional infancy stage in which key "motivators" and "prime movers" facilitate ownership of the network by members, where in some cases prime movers and facilitators are the same people (Engel 1995, p. 138); followed by
2. a stage in which members develop, sometimes through protracted discussion, come to a common understanding of a shared purpose or mission; but which realises the immediate added value of the network for members;
3. a stage of consolidation.

Engel holds that perceptions of the added value of networks may be based on three differing but complementary emphases; the need to *upgrade* (i.e. to improve practice and theory through sharing of ideas and experiences); to *upstream* (i.e. to move closer to the source of problems, both in terms of analysis and in terms of strategic action) and the need to *upshift* (to shift the focus of activity and reflection,

for example, from the national to the European or the global level).

Finally, as anyone responsible for providing the hub of a networking process realises, almost from the outset, the hoary chestnut of "just how formal should this network/ing be?" invariably raises its head; to this question Engel provides a clearly commonsensical answer "*Arguing that networks should always remain informal is akin to saying that people should eat, but never build a kitchen*" (Engel 1995, p. 137)

I would like to suggest that, in terms of the development of the GENE network, that the North-South Centre acted as a facilitator or motivator of the process; and that its structure (intergovernmental but also with civil society governance) enabled it to facilitate the first steps of such a process in a credible way; but the prime movers in the process were the members, and in particular those members who saw the added value not only of *upgrading* (i.e. learning from each others experience to develop more effective national strategies) and of *upstreaming* (for example, through reflection on the need for greater coherence between national level funding vis a vis EU funding) but particularly of *upshifting* (for example, developing Europe-wide strategies or attempting to influence OECD, or G-8 policies).

If the first steps in moving from embryonic and informal networking to the establishment of a sustainable networking process involves facilitating common understanding vision and purpose, then the experience of GENE suggests that a number of sub-steps are required.

The GENE experience involved three:

- Systematic consultation with members to elicit perspectives on the purpose and shared vision;

Future scenarios¹⁵

It is my belief - and a commitment I share with the membership of the GENE network - that it will continue to grow, and that it will prove sustainable. I see a number of scenarios regarding growth, and a number of possible institutional set-ups that might support sustainability.

In terms of growth, to date growth of the network has been slow - in ones and twos - and this model of slow organic growth has worked well; ensuring that the strength, relationships and common vision between existing members is shared slowly with new members. This way of working seems to augur well for the future. At the same time, one challenge is the number of countries with excellent global education programmes and funding, which, due to the absence of national structures of support or funding, are not in membership of GENE. How can GENE assist in the development of such structures?

A further particular challenge in terms of growth include the enlargement of the European Union; and with it the enlargement in the number of European countries with a committed budget for overseas development, and also for global development education. The number of countries with the potential for co-ordinated funding policies and structures for global development education increases dramatically as a result. While the Czech republic has recently joined the GENE network, the possibility of up to nine new member states in quick succession will be a real challenge.

Sustainability of a network is not dependent on, but nonetheless is intimately related to, the institutional set-up. In terms of the GENE network, it is my view that without the motivator role of the North-South Centre the network would not exist. But that was the start of the story. The network has remained light, and effective, and sustainable, because it depends not on one member, but on all members. For this reason, I suggest that a number of possible future scenarios in terms of institutional set-up will need to be considered by the GENE network in the not too distant future:

1. The GENE secretariat and hub continues to be provided by the North-South Centre; with the model of other members acting as lead agencies for particular aspects of the work of the network.
2. The GENE secretariat and hub is housed in one of the bigger (and better resourced) national member agencies of the network, with secretariat provided by one or more members.
3. The establishment of a GENE "foundation" with secretariat and hub financed by members and other funders.

However, the real key to sustainability remains the relevance of the process, and the products it produces, to the work of the network. Feedback to date suggests that this is strong and growing. A recent newly nominated representative of an originating GENE network member shared something of the following perspective - "it's good to know that the issues that we're struggling with at national level; others are struggling with in other countries in Europe; and some have found solutions that we can adapt and use". This, perhaps, is the ultimate usefulness of the knowledge-focused network; not process, not product, but the solidarity of solutions and the solutions of solidarity.

- a documentary process - ensuring that the written word, and people's participation in the agreement of common words, concepts, and written commitments, was given ample space;
- achieving visible results together relatively quickly.

In relation to this latter step, I believe that the educational adage that "nothing succeeds like success" applies. While agreeing with Engel that "understanding of networks can never be reduced to the simple "production" logic so commonplace in institutional thinking today" (Engel 1995, p. 133); nevertheless, the experience of GENE suggests that the clear common production of agreed products resulting from commonly defined objectives serves to cement bonds of solidarity, of common purpose necessary to make a network sustainable¹³.

However, it should be stressed that the measurable output has been relatively modest - five roundtables of members to date; one international comparative study; one expert seminar; one international conference in 2002 and 2003; two further studies, one campaign, and a small web-based resource bank in preparation in 2004. The not so easily measurable effects include some of the upgrading measures mentioned above. The immeasurable¹⁴ effect is perhaps something for another paper.

I would suggest, using Engel stages, that the GENE network has moved quite rapidly (and in networking swiftness is no measure of sustainability) through an initial embryonic stage through a stage of common ownership of a joint agenda - and with a small but growing number of national structures (from an initial six existing structures in 2001 to 12 structures, agencies or line Ministries in 2004) sharing that agenda. Two questions remaining on the horizon - the question of growth, and the question of sustainability.

Annotations

- 1 GENE is the European network of national structures for the funding, support and co-ordination of global education.
- 2 For an overview of trends, including the trend towards greater co-ordination, see O'Loughlin/Wegimont 2003.
- 3 „the Global Education Programme needs to draw more on the strength and potential of the quadrilogue; to work [...] with those whom the Centre is in a unique position to influence, and to avoid working with others predominantly" Wegimont 1997, section 1.4.1.4).
- 4 The Centre has a dual mandate; in summary, to strengthen global education in Europe, and to strengthen policies of solidarity between Europe and the global South.
- 5 This initiative was undertaken in consultation with the Global Education and Youth team, Marcos Andrade, Muriel Julien and Miguel Silva; building on the inspiring work of predecessors such as Markus Adelsbach and Alessio Surian; and with the support of the Executive Director of the Centre, Jos Lemmers. It should be noted that the acronym GENE is attributed to a suggestion by Jos Lemmers. The process was inspired by the conversations with heads of agencies and representatives of Ministries mentioned above, particularly Doug Bourn, Helmuth Hartmeyer, Henny Helmich and Norbert Noisser.
- 6 Copies of the original concept paper (North-South-Centre 2001) are available from Miguel.silva@coe.int.
- 7 A summary document on networking was discussed during the first meeting of the network. It concluded with a summary of some applicable insights from the literature: „From those reflecting on *South-South partnerships* for policy influence, there are insights emerging regarding the contribution of the *dynamics of relative capacity to the success or failure of networks*. From those reflecting on *North-South partnerships* we can learn much about the *influence of power relationships in facilitating or impeding effective networking*. From those involved in, and reflecting on, *knowledge-based networking for sustainable development* (in sectors as varied as water, roads, agriculture, etc.) we can learn something of *practical tools for networking*. From reflection on the work of International NGO networks, and on the networking of Intergovernmental and International institutions, we can, perhaps, learn something important about the possibilities and pitfalls inherent in *international networking for nationally focused learning*. Finally, from the work of those reflecting on the practice of *ICT based networking*, we can learn something of the *dos and don'ts of electronic networking*, while reflection in the international business sector can provide us with some adaptable frameworks and models for the developing what, in recent business jargon, have come to be described as „*communities of practice*" (GENE 2001).
- 8 A subsequent Roundtable of the network added a third purpose: *To develop and pursue a common European agenda on strengthening global/development education*.
- 9 „Only those organisations fulfilling three out of the five following criteria be invited: National policy-making role; national co-ordinating role; national quality assurance/evaluation/training role; national funding role; multi-sectoral spread and responsibility" (North-South Centre 2001, p. 2).
- 10 The North-South Centre of the Council of Europe position is that there should be the possibility that all (45) member states of the Council might eventually participate.
- 11 KommEnt kindly provided the services of Susanne Höck, whose aforementioned work had been groundbreaking in this field. The GENE study „National Structures for the Organisation, Support and Funding of Development Education: A Comparative Analysis" is available at www.nscentre.org
- 12 I should also point out that we have had the honour of working with Paul Engel in 2002 during the preparation of the Maastricht Europe-wide Global Education Congress.
- 13 Of course, the product is not an end in itself; it is the essentially about the production of shared information, knowledge, ideas, strategies.
- 14 What is measurable should be measured; and what can be measurably improved should of course be measurably improved, but perhaps the immeasurable has seen too little decent press coverage recently. For an excellent exposition of the philosophical bases of the domination of the measurable in education: and an exploration of alternatives (Dunne 1993).
- 15 It should be pointed out that this personal musing in no way reflects the perspectives of the GENE network, of individual members, or of their governments; it is a personal reflection on possibilities.

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