Higher Education as (G)local Infrastructure for Sustainable and Inclusive Futures

Postgraduate professional learning, critical pedagogy, and socio-institutional resilience

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PROBLEM

Global commitments do not automatically become local practice.

Global frameworks, including the Sustainable Development Goals (United Nations General Assembly, 2015), position inclusive, equitable and high-quality education as central to sustainable development. Yet these ambitions do not translate straightforwardly into everyday educational practice.

Inclusion is interpreted and enacted within particular national, institutional and professional contexts, shaped by policy, resources, cultural assumptions, local histories, and competing definitions of educational success.

As a result, educators may be expected to deliver global aspirations for equity and inclusion without sufficient space to critically examine what these commitments mean within their own settings.

The challenge is to create the conditions in which global agendas can be questioned, interpreted, and adapted meaningfully into local contexts.

CONTEXT

Programme: MA SEND & Inclusion
Location: UK & International Distance Learning
Reach: ≈80 educators in over 20 countries

This poster is informed by the leadership of a UK-based Master's degree in SEND & Inclusion. The programme brings together educators from around the world to develop their theoretical and knowledge and applied skills in inclusive pedagogy.

While students share a commitment to inclusive education, they work within markedly different:

- political;
- legistaltive;
- institutional;
- material;
- and cultural contexts.

These contexts shape not only how disability and inclusion are understood, but also what educators can safely name, question, or advocate for in their professional settings.

For some, legislation and policy may provide a framework for challenging exclusion; for others, restrictive legal, political or institutional conditions can limit what may be said about identity, rights, and inequality. Critical engagement therefore cannot be assumed to look the same everywhere. It must attend to questions of power, risk, voice, and professional accountability on the (g)local level.

Rather than positioning UK-based knowledge as universally applicable, the programme operates as a site of (g)local capacity-building, where global conversations about inclusive education are critically interpreted and translated into situated professional judgement and practice.

HIGHER EDUCATION AS (G)LOCAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Global Commitments
Global agendas articulate aspirations for:
inclusion ▪ equity ▪ rights ▪ quality ▪ sustainability

Higher Education as (G)local Infrastructure
Critical engagement with theory, policy, practice, and educators' lived contexts.

question assumptions	engage across difference	connect theory and practice	adapt ethically in context
Whose knowledge, values, and definitions of inclusion are being centred?	Learn with educators across diverse cultural, legal, and intitutional contexts.	Use critical concepts to make sense of complex professional realities.	Develop context-responsive judgement about what can be said, done, and advocated for.

Situated Professional Practice
Context-responsive judgement, adaptation, and ethically informed action

practice-informed insights circulate, challenge, and reshape global discourse

Critical analysis, dialogue, and reflexivity

Higher education can function as (g)local infrastructure: a transnational space through which global commitments to inclusion are brought into critical conversation with educators' situated realities.

Rather than transferring fixed models of "best practice", postgraduate professional learning supports educators to interrogate assumptions, engage with theory and policy, learn across difference, and adapt ideas in relation to local legal, cultural, institutional, and material conditions.

This builds capacity not only to enact inclusion, but to question how inclusion is defined, whose knowledge is privileged, and what ethical action is possible in context.

GLOBAL GOALS - LOCAL PRACTICE

Postgraduate professional learning can help to build the institutional and professional capacities needed to translate global commitments into sustainable, inclusive educational practice, thereby strengthening the conditions for sustainable futures.

PEDAGOGICAL MECHANISMS

The programme's pedagogical approach is designed to move beyond the transmission of knowledge, supporting learners to critically examine, reflect on, and respond to the complexities of inclusive practice in a range of global contexts.

Criticality

Criticality is embedded across the programme and developed explicitly through *EPDM09: Introduction to Criticality,* supporting learners to interrogate assumptions, power, and dominant definitions of inclusion.

Reflective Dialogue

Structured spaces are created for reflection through dialogue, including assessment and feedback practices that invite learners to revisit and extend their thinking beyond taught sessions.

Reflexive Praxis

Learners are supported to connect reflection and action by examining how their positionality, values and professional roles shape practice through more conscious action within relations of power.

Context-Sensitive Adaptation

Learners are supported to make ethically informed decisions about how inclusive principles can be interpreted, adapted and enacted within the possibilities and constraints of their own settings.

Together, these mechanisms support learners to develop critical professional judgement and sustain inclusive educational practice.

SUSTAINABILITY REFRAMING

This poster reframes sustainability as socio-institutional resilience: the ongoing capacity of educators and institutions to sustain inclusive practice while responding ethically to changing social, political and cultural contexts.

Socio-institutional resilience is strengthened through:

- **Institutional capacity** - leadership, policy, resources, and organisational cultures that enable inclusion.
- **Professional capacity** - criticality, reflexive praxis, and professional judgement.
- **Inclusive practice** - equity and belonging in everyday educational settings.

Higher education therefore contributes to sustainable futures not only by developing individual professionals, but by strengthening the capacities through which inclusive education can be continually interpreted, negotiated and renewed across diverse (g)local contexts.

Higher education is (g)local infrastructure

Postgraduate professional learning is (g)local infrastructure for building the capacities needed to sustain inclusive education.

Educators are development actors

Educators are development actors, translating global commitments into ethically informed and context-responsive inclusive practice.

Socio-institutional resilience

Socio-institutional resilience enables inclusive education to adapt, endure, and respond ethically to changing contexts.

EADI-IOB CONFERENCE
SHAPING SUSTAINABLE FUTURES
GLOBAL CHALLENGES, (G)LOCAL SOLUTIONS?
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