SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT GOALS

DIGITALIZATION AND THE
GLOBAL EDUCATION AGENDA

TRAUMA-INFORMED APPROACHES
TO GLOBAL POLITICAL EVENTS

Queen's
UNIVERSITY

THE
Knowledge Forum

Queen's Faculty of Education

2024

GLOBAL
EDUCATION

In this issue

A Note from the Editors

IT IS SUCH A THRILL WHEN SUBMISSIONS
start to stream into *The Knowledge Forum*'s
inbox. Every year it is an honour to read
about the ideas, theories, and classroom
experiences of our graduate students,
instructors, researchers, and alumni
across the globe.

When we set this year's theme as
global education, we hoped to hear
from our community members making
an impact in education across the world
– and we were not disappointed.
Our contributors reflect on the UN's
Sustainable Development Goals, they
bring their experience teaching in
schools around the world, and they
explore the history and theories of edu-
cation. The articles in this issue ask us to
think critically about learning and make
connections with ideas and practices
outside of our local spaces.

Now in its sixth year, *The Knowledge
Forum* continues to be a place to share
our knowledge and experiences with our
Queen's education community. We are
always looking for students and alumni
interested in working with us as contrib-
uting editors and we want to hear your
ideas and feedback. Email us at knowl-
edgeforum@queensu.ca.

Let's Talk about Digitalization and the Global Education Agenda

By Ikeoluwapo B. Baruwa

Ikeoluwapo B. Baruwa holds a BEd in Adult Education and Political Science, and MEd in Philosophy of Education from the University of Ibadan. With the reality that inclusive education evokes positive influences on the experiences of a learner as a being qua being, and the unceasing commitment to teaching, research, and community service globally, Ikeoluwapo has been involved in a series of letters on education. Ikeoluwapo's research interrogates the points of intersection of philosophies and policies as they relate to the promotion of Education for All (EFA).

DIGITALIZATION AND THE GLOBAL EDUCATION AGENDA

Education can be described as a public good required for the transition of a child throughout life. This is sufficient for the promulgation of several international laws and global campaigns recognizing it as a basic human right for all. Among the international laws are the 1948 Universal Declaration on Human Rights, the 1966 International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, and the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child (Global Campaign for Education, n.d.). The global education campaigns include the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and Education for All (EFA).

The global education agenda, which is the focus of this article, is more or less a broad coalition of national heads, international organizations, bi-lateral agencies, civil society groups, and development agencies (such as the World Bank, and the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) aimed at bringing about transformative outcomes in the education sector) (Dakar Framework for Action, 2000). This is evident in goal four of the Sustainable Development Agenda, "to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all," which remains the impetus behind the other sixteen SDGs and instrumental in preparing the populace for changing society (Williams and Ginsburg, 2012, 3). The 2030 global education agenda stresses quality education as a common good in a learning society, in which knowledge shared in higher institutions should transcend innovations, peaceful coexistence, employability, and solutions for communities. It further recognizes equitable access and guards against a new source of power subsumed in inequalities and divides among the countries in the world (Williams and Ginsburg, 2012, 3).

Seemingly, digitalization has permeated every sector of society, including the education sector. It constitutes new technologies as new types of literacies that every human being must acquire to function as a member of any society. These technologies are no longer "just add-ons but occupy the very centre of those forms and practices of communication and representation that are crucial in our new times" (Alhumaid, 2019, 14).

Digital devices such as iPads, tablets, phones, and computers have reconfigured the pedagogic process. The aim of education in the contemporary world has transcended that of a literate to that of a functional society. Dewey rightly posited that:

...a mobile and changing society that is full of channels for the distribution of a change occurring anywhere must see to it that its members are educated to personal initiative and adaptability. Otherwise, they will be overwhelmed by the changes in which they are caught and whose significance or connections they do not perceive (357).

Though Dewey raises concerns about the potency of education requiring its users to be receptive to the dynamic events as they unfold in a changing world, something tenable is the discord that comes with the changing societies. The reality of being a global phenomenon does not spare the education sector since classroom pedagogies, skills, and discussions are now centred on digitalization, globalization, and virtual interactions, among other related terminologies.

The emergence of technology could be described as an infiltrating force that has contributed significantly to the growth of nations and individuals; however, I argue

in this article that these evolving technologies also have their shortcomings. Freire seems to be in the right direction in that humanization is that of humankind's central problem that takes an inescapable concern (Freire, 1996). The relationships between humans and machines or technologies are shifting, and the differences are becoming blurred. Students are now confronted with the reality of digitizing texts at the expense of printed texts.

The problems I noted are that several discussions in the literature solely aim at how digitalization can be infused into the teaching-learning process with no epistemic or ethical considerations of technology on human subjects, and (2) how the field of education is widely subsumed in the perspective that technology is mostly positive and beneficial to the students, teachers, and pedagogical practice, a case of technophilia. The ultimate goal of the global education agenda is to ensure an equitable and inclusive learning society where students can flourish. However, while the imports of technologies in education may be unavoidable in the 21st century, I argue that there are epistemic and ethical implications that may be overlooked in the literature.

The education system, being peculiarly a human affair, is now witnessing a form of aloneness or withdrawal of the young ones from society's web of interaction, into which education is meant to induct them. More so, the teacher-student relationship could be seriously threatened if machines in the mode of artificial

intelligence are overly dependent on them as aids. Teachers may be forced to act as content designers and not as content creators. Technology could also create more barriers and inequalities, increase isolation, dehumanize individuals, and distort social relations. The education system, without some precautions as regards the inclusion of technologies, might jettison the normative role of education in instilling essential values in the learners. This, ultimately, might reduce human-human or teacher-student contact and, inevitably, lead to a standardization of education that was once frowned upon.

The acceptance of technologies might jeopardize and pose several risks to the efforts of educators and policymakers. The risk of over-standardization may also become a quagmire when technologies become distant, costly, and less accountable and responsive in the educational system. It is incontestable that global culture may transcend the education system to a state where robots act as humans – a state of blinded giants, where people have no direction and act as objects. The growing pace at which the inclusion of technologies becomes the new normal in the present education system therefore calls for an interrogation, especially in its global promotion, bearing in mind that education is, after all, a human affair.

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Reflections on Sustainable Development Goal 4: Quality Education

By Sheri Henderson

IF WE ARE TO BUILD SUSTAINABLE societies, quality education matters and that education must "ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all", according to Sustainable Development Goal 4 (United Nations, n.d.).

One positive outcome of the COVID-19 pandemic is that we now know beyond a doubt that access to quality education can be ubiquitous: learning can take place anywhere, anytime where open and unrestricted access to the internet and a digital device exists. The world had to move online as we were universally affected by COVID-19. Education went

virtual to ensure some sort of student learning at all levels – from pre-school aged children to adults – could continue. I recall meeting my last writing class on the evening of March 12, 2020, and telling them I suspected we might not meet again, showing them once more how to navigate the Learning Management System (LMS) before we parted. At that point, using an LMS was still new and sometimes confusing to these first-year International students: with COVID-19 lockdowns, we all had to become skilled users of technology and improve our digital fluency almost overnight, a cause of significant anxiety for many

Sheri Henderson has been a grateful guest in communities on four continents where she has been blessed to meet and work with people of over 100 nationalities. Recognized in 2019 as one of Queen's Faculty of Education's top 50 in 50 educators, Sheri holds a BA (Hons.) and B.Ed. from Queen's and a MSc from Aston University. She teaches with the Thames Valley DSB at Montcalm SS and with TVDVA, the board's Virtual Academy and has taught Writing at King's University College at Western for the past five years.

students and faculty. Having spent over a dozen years teaching in the UAE Armed Forces and at the Higher Colleges of Technology, I have to admit that I welcomed being able to return to using digital tools and a virtual learning environment.

Unfortunately, the pivot to online instruction during the pandemic exposed significant inequity as we learned just how much of a digital divide exists in societies around the world, including Canada. Access to technology – devices and reliable internet – made learning accessible to some but not all students: these economic disparities effectively derail the successful achievement of SDG 4: Quality Education. We are halfway through the 2030 Agenda and global access to education as a human right, as envisioned 75 years ago in Article 26 of the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights, still escapes too many.

Following a period of "emergency remote learning" early in the pandemic, it became crystal clear that virtual learning experiences appealed to many students and instructors. Online courses transcended geographic borders and time zones, bringing educational opportunities to learners who may be physically situated on the other side of the world or just next door. Digital course delivery

transformed access to education and training opportunities by eliminating some traditional barriers to studying – be they commute time, care duties, or work schedules – and improved the accessibility accommodations for people with disabilities – visible, invisible, continuous or episodic – that affect many individuals, including students, instructors, and other educational professionals. Ultimately, if institutions continue to support the creation of innovative virtual learning pathways and credentials which allow for transnational participation, their reach moves from local to global. With SDG 4's vision to "ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all: inarguably, one clear way to achieve this goal is through the digitalization of learning to provide global educational opportunities. Andreas Schleicher, Director for Education and Skills for the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), notes that "Digitalization and globalization have connected people, cities, countries, and continents in ways that vastly increase our individual and collective potential" (Tiven, M. B., Fuchs, E. R., Bazari, A., Wilhelm, M., & Snodgrass, G.). Digitalized learning has transformed education by expanding the possibilities of access to quality learning beyond one's

geographic setting; virtual learning transcends traditional physical borders to allow for the development of transnational learning communities. I studied in traditional settings in Canada and Germany, but continuing my education while residing overseas was only possible online. Long before the pandemic, Aston University in the UK was a leader in developing transnational education. Shifting its delivery of well-respected programs from distance to digital in the early 2000s, Aston successfully attracted students situated around the world. By eliminating the barriers of geography and national borders, Aston extended its degrees to multinational students, resulting in a rich, linguistically, and culturally diverse, transnational group of alumni. Soon thereafter, Queen's Faculty of Education also introduced online Additional Qualifications courses using D2L which allow me to keep current in my professional Ontario teacher education from my home in the UAE.

Computer-assisted learning makes us far better equipped to provide learning that is accessible and designed with the universal needs of all in mind. Being able to caption and/or provide audio-visual content which includes transcripts or uses described video can enhance learning for all students, not just those with

specific needs. For many individuals, online courses support social and emotional learning as well as physical needs where traditional learning environments may cause anxiety or are potentially physically harmful. Asynchronous courses in particular are often transformative for learners; I have seen students who were silent in a classroom become engaged, active participants in asynchronous course activities. As an instructor, I am far better able to meet the learning needs of my students when we have regular access to reliable technology so I can blend my instruction. From anecdotal observations over the last two decades, I know that we can use technology effectively and I know it is possible to build social presence and connect to learners, inviting them to engage with the content, with their peers and with me. Online, many students are more likely to reach out for help than would

ordinarily in class. I can select materials that are linguistically and culturally relevant and which are inclusive and reflect the pluricultural diversity of an international society.

In the UAE, I was used to collaborating with multinational colleagues located on 17 campuses around the country. Our collaborations were necessarily remote yet our physical distance did not hinder our ability to connect and build social presence in our computer-mediated communications, sharing ideas and blending best practices from international pedagogies in our work. Reaching a consensus and co-creating content for our courses through our various linguistically and culturally diverse lenses, we were able to prepare our students to learn about and be able to interact with the wider world. In my online classes teaching students at King's University College at Western who are studying from their homes in China in both synchronous and asynchronous remote settings, I've been able to develop relationships, by sharing my own lived experiences being an outsider in a new culture as a transnational student and educator who can relate to the ups and downs of navigating new ways of learning, especially adapting to ways of learning in the Canadian context: this allows me to reassure my students that this transition is a natural part of the transnational learning experience and part of becoming culturally agile. It also provides me with fascinating insights into other educational systems as I mentor my students.

Social media and mobile devices have incredible potential to extend opportunities and make learning truly accessible. Messaging platforms such as WhatsApp

let us be globally connected. Thanks to my Emirati students, I've been using WhatsApp for over a decade as it has been the "go-to" communication tool for people in Europe, Africa, the Middle East, South America and much of Asia for years – frankly, everywhere but North America. When I repatriated to Canada in 2018, only my international students knew about WhatsApp, but it's safe to say that's certainly not the case in 2023. WhatsApp facilitates global communication by enabling people who are separated geographically to keep in touch via the internet; it offers opportunities for sharing ideas and building relationships through group chats, be they for families, school classes or workplaces all at no cost, provided one has a smartphone and internet access via cellular data or Wi-Fi connection. WhatsApp allows me to communicate and respond in real time across continents, time zones, and languages, giving me instant access to people I care about and events that affect them.

If we can collectively commit to providing access to the internet for every population, if nations that have the resources agree to reach out to developing societies with support, then I believe we can ensure a future world where quality education is a given, and which can be distributed digitally around the globe, bringing us closer together in the blink of an eye. It's what our world needs, and the future our children deserve.

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A Better Here: The Power of Youth Imagination to Create a Better World

By Jerri Jerreat

Jerri Jerreat's writing, from Anishinaabe & Haudenosaunee territory, appears in *Fairlight Books short stories, Fictive Dreams, Grist/Fix: Imagine 2200 Climate Fiction, Flyway: Journal of Writing& Environment, Onyx Publications (1st Place), Alluvian, Every Day Fiction, Feminine Collective, Yale Review Online, The New Quarterly, The Penmen Review, Glass&Gardens Solarpunk Winters, Solarpunk Summers, Allium Journal of Poetry & Prose*, and in a new anthology, "*Solarpunk Creatures*," (World Weaver Press, 2024.) She has an op-ed online in On Spec, an article in *ETFO Voice Magazine*, "From Fear to Empowerment" and learns so much from youth she mentors through YouthImaginetheFuture.com

The YIF slideshow, festival toolkit, and advice is free from youthimaginethefuture.com/

FROM GLACIER FIELDS TO CORAL REEFS, prairies to densely populated coastlines, we are facing the effects of Climate Change. How can an educator help if not actually teaching Environmental Science?

The UN's Sustainability Development Goals (SDGs) give us a guideline that supercedes our regional curricula. The 17 SDGs fit well into elementary, secondary school and beyond, covering rights we need: food, clean water, education, equal rights, medicine, clean energy, sustainable communities, climate action, biodiversity on land and in water, peace, and justice.

Social justice education is on the rise. Climate Education, however, is lacking. In Ontario, we teach recycling, and compare the pros and cons of renewable versus non-renewable energy in elementary years. I was recently sent colouring books for students that included the wonders of gas, oil and nuclear energy as part of a "balanced" energy program.

That's nonsense. Why, in this era of hurricanes, droughts, wildfires and floods, are we debating whether or not fossil fuels could possibly be good for us?

Be brave. Be radical.

Lakehead and Simon Fraser Universities are documenting the rise of Climate Anxiety among our youth. Your students are going to live in a world with peace or conflict, with a worsening Climate Crisis or with communities working together to live sustainably. Students need to hear that there are solutions right now,

e.g., that countries around the world are using wind, solar and water-powered electricity in innovative and large-scale ways, successfully.

To this end, I founded, *Youth Imagine the Future: a Festival of Writing and Art (YIF)* with Nikki Alward, in 2022, Kingston. I created a slideshow of solutions. There are wind farms on land and on water, rooftop turbines, river and wave turbines, traditional solar panels and new ones being developed from vegetable waste. William Kamkwamba built a wind turbine with old bicycle parts in Malawi at age 14. Bangladesh villages are using solar panels now to create all their electricity in small microgrids, neighbours helping neighbours. Vermont is following suit! Cold Climate Heat Pumps that transfer air around to heat and cool buildings are right here in Canada, with no fossil fuel burned at all. In Stockholm and London, U.K., the body heat of commuters is heating neighbourhoods. These are just a few examples.

I brought this slideshow into grades 7-12. After students saw and discussed the ideas, I invited them to do the hard work: imagining a better future. Here. They wrote. They sketched. They shared.

Some teachers used our YIF workshop to jumpstart projects in geography or science. Others encouraged their students

to create art or a short story in their better future and submit them to our festival. We knocked on doors for gift certificates to honour them. Queen's Faculty of Education was our first sponsor and the Kingston Community Credit Union soon offered $500 for the top two submissions. We were thrilled.

One art piece was a diorama of Kingston heritage buildings, with additions to make them multi-family, greenhouses on balconies and roofs, solar panels, and urban farming on the lawn. Another was a brilliant painting of four coins from the future to celebrate 100 years of rewilding, 40 years of fresh drinking water, 30 years of world-class addiction care, and 25 years of zero carbon emissions. This year's winner showed the artist looking inside a large book where we saw mixed agriculture with wind turbines, and beyond, a city skyline with a giant tree in the centre to represent urban re-greening. The short stories were riveting, sweet, and funny, all set in hopeful futures.

We had no idea how to run a festival, but we're learning. (Spoiler: it's a lot of work.) However, we ended up creating something needed: a place where our youth are encouraged to think about real problems, consider real solutions, and have a voice. They did the work, happily. We honoured many.

Educators everywhere could use this sort of method. Show a slideshow of inspiring solutions used around the world. (Feel free to use ours.) Ask the students to consider problems in their neighbourhood or region. Ask them to brainstorm solutions, to collaborate. Imagine how the future would look if their solutions were implemented. Insist on improved social justice in their futures. Have them describe a scene, the downtown "street," or attractive multi-family housing.

Then let them create.

We invited art and short story writing, (optimistic Climate Fiction is a genre called "Solarpunk[1].") You could allow any form of expression: a dance; a play, a song, music, video, film, poetry. They could knit or sew their ideas.

> Young people are creative thinkers and dreamers. We need to encourage their imagination and invite them into an authentic conversation about the future.

Provincial curriculum is political and not always up to date. The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals are better guidelines.

We can meet some SDGs if we consider regenerative farming over factory farms. We can protect and restore biodiversity with messy hedgerows through mixed farms, not tilling but nourishing the soil. Community food gardens can spread across parks, lawns, and rooftops for pollinators and food security. Edmonton is a shining example of community food gardens. Calgary rocks indoor vertical farms downtown. Montréal is the star of "sponge parks," small wetlands protecting the city from extreme storms. Toronto has a green roof bylaw for large roofs that we all need, and Germany has green roofs often topped with solar panels. India, The Netherlands and Kingston, Ontario are planting Miyawaki forests to lower urban temperatures, buffer storms, and restore ecological corridors. Jamaica, India, Australia and others are growing coral reefs and mangrove forests, replanting with care, a painstaking process from laboratories to oceans.

The point is, we can do it.

Young people are creative thinkers and dreamers. We need to encourage their imagination and invite them into an authentic conversation about the future.

In your teaching, be brave. Be real. Your students' imagined futures will uplift you.

[1] onspec.ca/why-we-need-solarpunk-stories

Global Experience is Global Wisdom: An Application of the Emergent Learning Theory

By Garth Nichols

Garth Nichols (he/him/his), the Vice Principal of Experiential Education & Innovation at Havergal College in Toronto, is a seasoned educational leader with a strong commitment to transformative global programming. Responsible for Experiential Education, including international experiences and Truth and Reconciliation at Havergal, Garth has a focus on unlocking innovation for student learning and the faculty experience. He sits on the Board of the Independent Schools Experiential Educator's Network, a global not for profit committed to supporting and upskilling educators to make experiential education a transformational experience for all students. While attending Queen's, he took part in a year-long exchange to the University of Edinburgh and is still very grateful and fond of his time there.

IN THE EARLY 2010S, DR. MARYLIN TAYLOR developed the Emergent Theory of Learning to help understand how we learn and gain wisdom. She writes:

Each time we are confronted with the unfamiliar, we make a profound choice. We either engage in exploring and learning from what we have encountered or try to secure ourselves inside familiar territory. The option we choose at one point in time tends to predispose us to repeat it the next time. As we accumulate a preponderance of one of these choices over the other, we define our lives and who we become in essential ways. Our actions are shaped by how we understand ourselves and our world, so how we learn, or not, very significantly shapes our own and others' lives. These choices and actions also ultimately contribute to the texture of our world, which, in turn, presents us with further challenges (Taylor, 2011).

Through this framework we can deepen our understanding of the impact of global education experiences in disrupting traditional learning and sparking new pathways of learning and gaining wisdom, regard-less of our age.

At Havergal College, our Global Experience Program worked in partnership with Crescent School, and with the organization Alive Outdoors[2], to offer an excursion to The Kingdom of Bhutan in March of 2023. Seven students from Havergal and four from Crescent School participated, along with myself, two other trip leaders, and Alive Outdoors staff. We met four times leading up to departure to build risk containers, grow cultural knowledge, and develop ethical travel skills and strategies. Each session was designed to prepare us for the unfamiliar, into which we would adventure for two weeks. Through the lens of Emergent Learning Theory, these sessions were adequate in ensuring that students and trip leaders alike had the disposition to be more curious than judgmental while away. However, once in the Kingdom of Bhutan, we were thrust into what Dr. Taylor calls, The Disorientation Phase. The altitude, the food, the language, and the cultural mores were surprising, and being thrust into such unfamiliarity – culturally and physically – triggered "... the discovery that our conceptual map does not relate to the current territory" (Taylor, 2011). We reflected that the geography, altitude, and the language

[2] https://www.aliveoutdoors.com/

barrier made some of us feel isolated and far away from our comfort zone, and the ability to predict what would happen next.

In this phase, we were becoming aware of our unconscious incompetence and did not know expectations, shared language or mores. Dr. Taylor describes this moment of awareness as having, "... just stepped onto the bridge, losing our footing on one side and not yet having planted ourselves on the other" (Taylor, 2011). Our trip leaders and guides played a critical role of trusted others to make the unfamiliar and uncomfortable less so. The role of our trusted others evolved over the course of our excursion and, toward the end of the trip, came to the fore when we learned about the Divine Madman, a llama who was very untraditional and is honoured across the Kingdom of Bhutan through various representations of the phallus. As we entered the village of Chimi Lhakhang, where the Temple of the Divine Madmen is located, we were confronted with overt images of the phallus in souvenir shops, painted on the buildings, and even being blessed by a llama holding one. This was indeed unfamiliar. One student responded to the uncomfortable laughter and questions with: "C'mon, guys, this is just our

worldview coming up against a worldview that we don't get, don't understand. We need to respect this and wonder about it, not laugh at it." This denotes a shift into the second phase of Emergent Learning: The Exploration Zone, where learners are reframing their experiences.

In her work, Dr. Taylor explains, "The way out of the [Disorientation Phase] comes first in a moment of reconnection, specifically a moment of affirmation by a person significant to us in the setting because we have attributed credibility and authority to him or her." We turned to our Bhutanese guide, Galay, to learn more. With him, we explored the history, meaning, and cultural significance of the Divine Madman and of the phallus. We explored the temple of the Divine Madman with solemnity and respect. In Dr. Taylor's work, she leans into Buddhism, the religion and organizing principles of the Kingdom of Bhutan: "From a Buddhist perspective, Eleanor Rosch speaks of 'primary knowing' in a similar way: 'Such knowing is open rather than determinate, and a sense of unconditional value, rather than conditional usefulness.'" (Taylor, 2011) We were beginning to integrate our experiences into the lived understanding and mental models. This leads to the Transformation Phase of Emergent Learning Theory.

Dr. Taylor describes this next phase as: "Suddenly, we become reoriented to a new intellectual position; the 'repositioning' makes it possible for one to apprehend the new pattern that makes sense of the particulars." (Taylor, 2011) These reflective sessions and dialogue between students and our guides were collective inquiry and relational inquiry, where they could let go of our need for certainty, past experiences and future expectations, and listen to a new world of possibilities as a result of their experience and discussions with others from different worldviews. This was the beginning of acquiring wisdom (Taylor, 2011).

Once returned to Canada, at Havergal College we conducted sessions of "Transference" where students and faculty alike consider the story they can tell themselves and others about their excursion: solidification of our transformation. Knowing that others have not been to Bhutan, and have not experienced what we had, how can we relate and relay this to others? What is the story we now telling ourselves about who we are because of this experience? This Transference maps onto the final phase of Emergent Learning: The Equilibrium. Dr. Taylor writes that once we have passed through the first three phases: "We have returned to a period of psychic quiescence with a new and more expansive perspective with which to understand our world, at least until we meet our next perspective challenge" (Taylor, 2011). Time will cause these experiences to be told and retold by all on this excursion, and no doubt we will continue to pick up on different details of our experiences and their significance will shift our thinking further. The power of global learning is in this phase: we will all look back and continue to reflect on our experiences and see them through different lenses as we all continue to grow and mature. Our global learning project to Bhutan is something that we return to that will continue to cause us to know more about ourselves and our place in the world.

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Who is at the Table? The Challenge of 'Special Education' in International Offshore Schools

By Rebecca Stroud, PhD

for teachers (UNESCO, 2016). How does this growth affect the Canadian educational landscape? First, teachers trained in Canada enjoy a favourable reputation globally and are eagerly recruited by ISs. Both IS teachers and recruiters have reported leadership and advancement opportunities occur quickly and generously upon joining an IS (personal communications, ongoing; Stroud Stasel, 2022). Second, many IS graduates pursue higher education in one of: the UK, the USA, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, requiring that higher education in Canada develop culturally responsive approaches to inclusive education. Informal conversations with IS leaders and teacher recruiters have indicated that Canadian teachers are flexible, good team players, and well-trained (personal communications, ongoing). However, the demand became dire a decade ago, evidenced by Brummitt and Keeling's (2013) claim that "the [IS] candidate pool isn't expanding quickly enough" (p. 33). In the past decade, the number of IS students served and the IS workforce has increased by over 50% (ISC Research, 2018, 2023a, 2023b), which has significant implications for IS sustainability. If trends continue, workforce migration could implicate a teacher precariat that would impact both public and private systems and likely affect countries from the global south most severely since remuneration is a motivating factor for relocation choice.

Many of the terms that I use are contested, including international school (IS) and special education. A simple IS definition is an English-medium school in a country with a primary language other than English and that adopts externally accredited curricula (e.g., Cambridge, IB, Ontario). Special education refers to programs including the acquisition of physical resources, professional training and practices, and human resource allocations, to support students with known or probable learning disabilities. This term has been critiqued for its deficit lens with some scholars advocating for the use of inclusive education instead.

My study on the experiences of expatriate educators while working at ISs overseas engaged educators comprising three cohorts: teachers, school counselors, and school leaders. The study focused upon educators' lived experiences with acculturation, a process that includes embodied personal and professional adjustments that one must make while sojourning abroad to thrive in a host country on a prolonged, temporary basis. I theorized that the IS is a policyscape-rich environment on account of the transnational and transcultural nature of the policymakers and staffed educators, and frequently similar cultural diversity among its students. The *policyscape* is a metaphorical landscape where policies from differing origins, replete with diverse ideologies and politics, collide and cause policy contradictions or gaps. Such collisions can create novel and improved ways of doing things at the school. The 17 participants spoke of four policyscape manifestations, of which I focus here on one: the policyscape of special education at an IS. This was the most discussed policyscape experience, and also one that exacerbated acculturative stress (Berry, 2006) significantly, especially among the teacher cohort.

K-12 AND HIGHER EDUCATION IN BOTH public and private sectors are racing to globalise. Educational hubs, school districts, and individual schools all seek ways to expand offerings, promising a high-quality education promoting global citizenry. Initially monikered as *international mindedness*, the concept gave nascence to the international schooling movement (Stroud Stasel, 2021). International schools (ISs) have seen unprecedented growth in the past decade (Brummitt & Keeling, 2013); ISC Research, 2018, 2023b), creating an enormous demand

All participants who shared their experiences noted cultural pushback to the westernized concept of special education, with reports from the educators that many of the parents and guardians did not share the values or the methods that the educators subscribed to...

This policyscape manifestation included participants' encounters with supporting students with known or probable special needs. While 4 of 17 educators identified as non-western, all of them had completed their higher education training at anglo-western universities. Furthermore, the externally accredited curricula followed at the 11 ISs where the 17 educators worked all included an anglo-western orientation. This contrasts with the students, the vast majority whose cultural identities were from countries in the Middle East, Southeast and East Asia. All participants who shared their experiences noted cultural pushback to the westernized concept of special education, with reports from the educators that many of the parents and guardians did not share the values or the methods that the educators subscribed to, as a matter of policy or as a matter of professional opinion.

These findings therefore demonstrate a need to engage broader stakeholder groups when examining the needs of learners who are enrolled at international schools. A cleavage in perspectives was noted between the teacher cohort and the leader cohort. While all three cohorts experienced heightened acculturative stress, the counselors experienced the most anxiety pertaining to hypothetical situations involving a fear of dire impacts to the students in face of the lack of or inappropriate supports. One counselor enacted a *midnight run* – a term for expatriate failure that results in the individual's secretive and sudden departure from school and host country – which she attributed to this issue. The teachers feared professional reprisal should they deviate from their school's policy, or, in absence of leadership direction, should they draw from their anglo-western professional training. The leaders experienced the least amount of acculturative stress, noting they had access to supports that teachers didn't, such as access to local mentorship at high levels of school leadership that could help them appreciate and understand local ideological, political, and personal influences and desires. This led the leaders to enact courageous principled action (Worline & Quinn, 2003), or transformative leadership (Shields, 2019) whereby ethics guide a leader's actions even if it means deviating from policy. The leaders here chose professional judgment that deviated from formal policy to meet an individual student's needs as they best saw fit. Yet, the teachers and counselors lacked the agency and guidance for ethically transgressing policy to support a student, fearing reprisal, including contract termination.

What comes next? My next study will investigate how special education policies are framed, articulated, and enacted at international schools. Research and practices to develop culturally responsive inclusive education in ISs, public schools, and higher education in Canada are needed to learn about diverging experiences and philosophical dissonances. It will be important to learn how students, their parents, and guardians' beliefs about inclusive education can be enacted with student flourishing in mind.
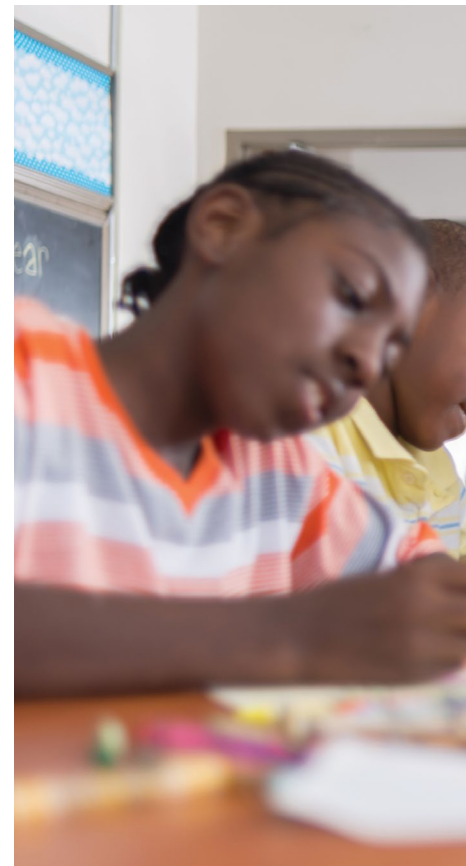
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Rebecca Stroud, PhD is a postdoctoral fellow, a certified K-12 teacher, a researcher of educational policy, leadership, and comparative and international education, and an adjunct assistant professor at Queen's University. Her postdoc work involves four comparative and international studies: two focusing on policies and programs to prevent youth homelessness, and tw xo focusing on phenomena at international schools including the policyscape of 'special education' and how service learning is understood and enacted. Rebecca's past research projects included: programs for at-risk youth, factors for new teacher induction and mentoring, early-career teaching, school leadership, and educator acculturation while living and working overseas. Rebecca writes poetry and short works of fiction, and she enjoys spending time outdoors and traveling.

Resilience of Canadian International Schools in China

By Nian Zhu

Dr. Nian Zhu, Continuing Teacher Education instructor at the Faculty of Education, Queen's University, nian.zhu@queensu.ca. Nian is proud of his first-hand experience working with some of the best teachers and school administrators in the Canadian international schools in China. He also taught and was a k-12 school administrator in Canada for nearly 30 years.

THERE ARE CURRENTLY WELL OVER A hundred Canadian international schools (k-12) in China. While some typically follow Canadian curriculum and are regularly inspected by a Canadian provincial Ministry of Education for status compliance, others have evolved in a wholistic western standards mainly from Britain and America. For Chinese students, choosing a Canadian international school is to avoid taking part in the torturous *Gaokau* (University Entrance Exams) and directly get accepted by universities around the globe with an internationally recognized grade 12 diploma. Maple Leaf Education System (MLES) is one of such choices for them. The MLES alone operates over one hundred schools in China and southeast Asia. This article first provides a brief description of current status and services of Canadian international schools in China, then followed by a presentation of the challenges today and, finally, the author takes a futuristic view of these schools in the coming years, largely based on his involvement in teaching a few graduate courses for teachers and administrators at the MLES as a Faculty Associate with Royal Roads University in Victoria.

Although the infrastructure of Canadian international schools in China is top-notch, certified Canadian teachers are often in short supply. In fact, all Canadian international schools remain in a constant demand for teachers who can teach both Canadian and international curricula. In

high schools, teachers who can teach IB (International Baccalaureate) courses are often offered a better salary package. So, it is common to see many Canadian international schools having employed teachers from other English-speaking countries such as Australia, New Zealand, the U.S., and even Singapore. The reason for teacher shortages has always been multifold, but mainly because of a short-term commitment by teachers, comparatively low salary from school, as well as challenges living in a new cultural environment. With room and board on

campus, students come from various sources, from children of expats and diplomats in China, to children of well-to-do families in the country. Despite ever higher standards and stricter rules required by the government, more Canadian international schools are still being built under the banner of Maple Leaf schools. This trend may continue in the years to come largely due to the popularity of Canadian icons.

China is a large country with millions of high school graduates every year. A great many have strong interest in Canadian higher education, and thousands of Chinese students are accepted by Canadian universities each year. Nevertheless, challenges faced by those international schools still exist in many ways. For example, the pursuit of academic excellence among students can go sideways, resulting in high anxiety and stress, even suicide. Although students do not worry about taking part in *Gaukao*, there are still plenty of things that worry them and, more often than not, cause psychological involution (*Nèijuan*, a Chinese phrase referring to internal conflicts and pressure without solutions), for example, getting accepted by an intended Canadian university. At school level, maintaining

student enrollment and attracting honor roll students can be a daunting task for administrators simply because of the "need" for higher ranking through various competitions at provincial, national and even international levels. The latest data has shown the total number of international schools has surpassed the demand in some major cities. School administrators have to keep teacher's motivation high for quality education and competition against other schools. However, this is not an easy task at all, because the demands from the parents can be different. For new teachers coming to a different environment, it takes time to settle in, get to know the students and curricula, as well as their colleagues. Besides, the amount of time to be devoted to meetings, tutoring, professional development, and after school activities is far more than what teachers usually do in Canada. Therefore, the pressure for academic excellence alone is not only felt by students, but also staff although this situation at any international school is still twice better when compared with a public school. Another challenge is the diverse students who come not only from China, but all over the world. Teachers have to take consideration of their culture

and customs as they teach. Finally, the lack of state funding has hindered the assessment of students with special needs. For example, formal diagnosis of learning disability is completely non-existent in both international and public schools.

Despite all challenges and changes, Canadian international schools will continue growing and flourishing. China is a highly competitive country and its education is particularly so. One of the notable things many Canadian international schools have done is to broaden their capacity by offering curricular standards from both Britain and America. This is not only for the purpose of keeping a steady enrollment, but also providing more choices for students to attend universities in different countries. MLES is one example which has adapted to such changes. A set of new curricula has been fully designed and recently recognized by both Cognia and UK ENIC, two of the authoritative organizations in setting and evaluating k-12 education standards in the world. It is important to note that students at Canadian schools are hard-working and competitive, mainly due to clear goals for their future education. To overcome teacher shortages, online courses may be part of the solution in the future. Finally, their parents love Canada's international image, and would prefer to send their children to Canadian universities. So, Canadian international schools are usually their first stepping stone. Without a doubt, the benefits, opportunities as well as challenges coexist now and will remain so in the future.

Canadian offshore schools will continue playing an important role in international education across the Pacific. With a collaborative approach from dedicated staff with a focus on student best interest, Canadian international schools in China will continue enjoying a bright future for the years and decades to come.

Alternative Education's Resistance to the Standards Movement[3]

By Peter J. Glinos

THE PAST COUPLE DECADES HAVE witnessed the rise of the standards movement in education, a push by governments around the world to standardized educational expectations and assessments. This global push has often led to a rise of government power at the federal or provincial (state) level at the expense of municipal educational institutions. This article discusses the features of this global movement and the resistance it faces by educators in the Alternative Education Resource Organization (AERO), a "primary hub" of alternative educators around the world. This historical analysis relies on *The AERO-Gramme Newsletter* and *The Education Revolution*, AERO's official publications between 1989 to 2011. In these documents historians gain an insight into the ideas, policies, and actions of AERO's members at the time.

Background on Alternative Education and AERO

So, who are these alternative educators in AERO? The genesis of the contemporary alternative education movement can be traced back to the 1960s when disillusioned educators engaged with highly innovative practices that departed from the contemporary standards of practice such as: a focus on open inquiry-based learning; student-teacher learning contracts; gradeless classrooms; self-paced learning; giving students and teachers the ability to vote on school policy; and caring for the needs of the learner beyond just academic concerns.[4]

These unconventional pedagogues helped initiate the rise of the open schools movement within the public system, which instituted more humanistic and holistic conceptions of pedagogy familiar to educators today.[5] Many of these radical educators identified themselves as *alternatives* to mainstream public schooling, teacher-centered education, or the traditionally elitist pedagogies of the time.[6] Over the course of the 1990's, educators from around the world who identified with these ideals coalesced into the AERO network.

Like an island of misfit toys, the organization functioned as a global forum for unconventional educators who did not fit the increasingly standardized education system of their homelands. These educators ranged from public school educators who assisted at-risk youth; teachers of specialty public school programs; outdoor educators; associations of Waldorf, Montessori, and Reggio Emilia schools; unconventional private schools; homeschool resource centers; to democratic free schoolers.

What is the Standards Movement?

By the 1980s, neoconservatives within the United States had proclaimed that the American public education system was in a state of "crisis."[7] The solution? To use the newly established federal Department of Education to establish a uniform set of education standards and assessments.[8] The American "Standards Movement" had begun.

The Standards Movement can be characterized by an emphasis on outcomes-based education that can be measured by the implementation of standardized testing. But how did these governments capture the unique value

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[3] This essay is using Chicago Style, the standard for historians that the author I would like to honour.

[4] CherylM Lange and SandraJ. Sletten, "Alternative Education: A Brief History Research Synthesis," 01 2002, 8–12.

[5] Richard Neumann, "The Alternative Schools Movement Goes Public," in *Sixties Legacy: A History of the Public Alternative Schools Movement*, 1967-2001 (P. Lang, 2003), 105–6.

[6] Neumann, 125–26.

[7] Sylvia L. Mendez, Monica S. Yoo, and John L. Rury, "A Brief History of Public Education in the United States," in *The Wiley Handbook of School Choice*, ed. Robert A. Fox and Nina K. Buchanan, 1st ed. (Wiley, 2017), 21, https://doi.org/10.1002/9781119082361.ch1.

[8] Mendez, Yoo, and Rury, 21.

In the standards movement, an emphasis was placed on creating a common set of educational standards that could be assessed by standardized tests and school inspectors.

of each educational program in a standardized assessment? In short, it was impossible, and they were unable to do so. This was something alternative educators were keenly aware of. Many of these programs helped at-risk youth, like young mothers or students deemed behaviorally unruly by conventional schools, who would have otherwise dropped out of the public system.

At first glance, the lower test scores of such alternative schools and programs would be lower than their traditional counterparts, but does this delegitimize the services they provide? Of course not, their self-described goals and success criteria vary considerably from what standardized tests are trying to measure. Take the arts, academic, or vocational specialty programs, which aim to have

students master a niche discipline. Their assessments are not equivalent to the metrics of a standardized assessment. Moreover, cultural-linguistic or religious schools, whose focus is on preserving, promoting, and learning about specific cultural identities face the same conundrum.

In the standards movement, an emphasis was placed on creating a common set of educational standards that could be assessed by standardized tests and school inspectors. To achieve this, a "back-to-basics" approach was promoted, stripping away curricular nuance in favor of lessons that were "taught to the test."[9] But what determined which disciplines counted as the "basic" subjects?

The reforms were framed as preparing students for the increasingly technologi-

cal and competitive global marketplace, thereby defining "basics" as those subjects that best served the economic interests of the nation.[10] This worked to increasingly subordinate the education system under the direction of the federal government.[11] Students who struggled to achieve these standards (either because of disinterest or other difficulties) were "referred"[11] to remedial programs, where they would be further streamed away from their fellow students.[12] Members of the AERO's international network noticed the rise of similar reforms, and together worked to resist the centralization of national power over education.

Resistance to the Standards Movement

In 2000, the Office of Standards in Education (Ofsted) threatened to close Summerhill School for lack of "efficient and suitable instruction."[13] Now Summerhill was not just a school, it was a symbol of student freedom amongst alternative educators. At Summerhill classes were not compulsory, and policy and disciplinary decisions were made via whole-school meetings where both students and staff each received a vote.

AERO quickly rallied to the school's defense, encouraging educators to write to the Secretary of State for Education and Employment, the Rt. Honorable David Blunkett, as well as arranging the next International Democratic Education Conference (IDEC) to be hosted at the school.[14] This brought democratic school educators, and other alternative educators, to Summerhill in its time of need. Eventually Summerhill won their case. After asking the judge if they could borrow a courtroom in London's Royal Courts Justice for one of their meetings, the school voted to accept the settlement proposed by Ofsted.[15]

The following year in the United States, AERO's members helped organize and participate in protests against No Child Left Behind (2001), as well as local "action groups" focused on resisting similar reforms.[16] The bipartisan bill tied federal financed rewards and punishments to the standardized test scores of public schools.[17] Alternative schools and programs within the USA reported being punished for deviating from back-to-basics education and the formal curriculum. These pedagogues continue to resist the push to control and homogenize education at the local level.

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[10] Neumann, 198–200.

[11] Mendez, Yoo, and Rury, "A Brief History of Public Education in the United States," 21–23.

[12] Richard Neumann, "Toward a System of Diversified, High-Quality Education: 1973-1979," in Sixties Legacy: A History of the Public Alternative Schools Movement, 1967-2001 (P. Lang, 2003), 133.

[13] AERO, "Issue #27 After Columbine," Summer 1999, 10, http://www.educationrevolution.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/AERO_EdRev27.pdf.

[14] An interesting note is that the school reported having test scores than the national average. AERO, 49–50; AERO, "Issue #28 IDEC at Summerhill," Fall 1999, 1, http://www.educationrevolution.org/AERO_EdRev28.pdf.

[15] AERO, "Issue #29 Summerhill Court Victory," Spring 2000, 5, http://www.educationrevolution.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/AERO_EdRev29.pdf.

[16] AERO, "Issue #32 Special Changing Schools Section," Spring/Summer 2001, 6, http://www.educationrevolution.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/AERO_EdRev32.pdf.

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This Help Will Never End

By Steven McWilliams & Karen Burkett

Steven McWilliams is a Scotsman currently studying for an MSc (TESOL) and has been teaching English since attaining his CELTA in 2007. From his early career teaching in private European language institutes to his current position as Educational Developer and Student Advisor with Queen's School of English, he has always fostered a love for the English language. He is deeply grateful for the opportunity that teaching students from all over the world has given him to broaden his worldview and connect him with a multitude of different cultures.

Karen Burkett has been working within the field of English language education since she taught English in Japan in the late 1990s. She has served as Director of the School of English at Queen's University since 2019. She has been pursuing her PhD in Educational Leadership since 2021. She champions those who identify as learners at their core, those who embrace their vulnerability and have the courage to try new things, learn new things, and see things in a new way. Creating a community of belonging amongst diverse individuals is what sustains her and drives her work as a leader.

FOR MORE THAN 80 YEARS, QUEEN'S School of English (QSoE) has had a key role in the University's global engagement and has welcomed students from all over the world to help them reach their goals, whether that be simply improving their English, or as part of their pathway to degree studies. International students are at the heart of who we are and what we do. Since finding our home in the Faculty of Education in 2014, QSoE has blossomed in the dynamic environment of Duncan MacArthur Hall, and has hosted BEd students for their Alt-Prac opportunities and partnered with several Faculties at Queen's to provide international student support. The pandemic was extremely difficult for the international education sector and further exposed and deepened the inequity and wealth gap domestically and globally. QSoE emerged from this time with a renewed commitment to reciprocity. Besides our free 6-week online English course and upcoming free online English test, QSoE has extended its outreach efforts by establishing partnerships with ISKA (Immigrant Services Kingston and Area) and KEYS (Kingston Employment and Youth Services). These two local Kingston community organizations offer support to newcomers to Canada, and especially refugees who have moved to the area. ISKA and KEYS are doing tremendous work in the community, and to support their missions, QSoE offers full tuition

awards to a candidate they each recommend three times per year for up to three semesters of study.

Recently, one such recommended student, Raed Khashba, more usually known as Roy, expressed a desire to share the story of how he came to Canada as a refugee. He started by giving a talk to the teaching and administrative staff of QSoE. Roy told us of how he was living in Syria when civil war broke out. By 2016,
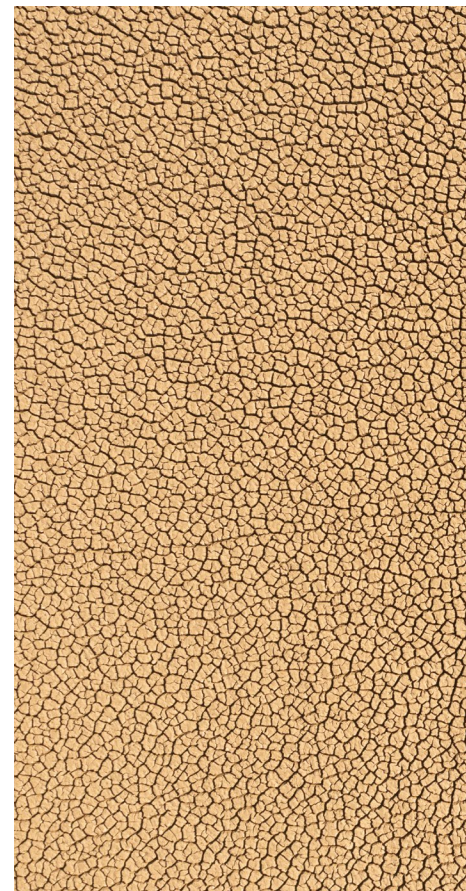
his family had become so concerned for their children's safety that they told them to flee the country. Roy walked north to Türkiye, and from there travelled in an overcrowded dinghy to Greece where he was put in a refugee camp. For six years, Roy waited for confirmation that his application for asylum had been granted; however, this time was not spent idly. Roy learned English and Spanish from aid workers in the camps, and in doing so he was able to help other people in the camps as an interpreter and volunteer — roles which were rewarding, but compounded his own trauma at having fled his home.

Roy concluded his presentation by saying "This help will never end." That is, that he wishes to spread his story and raise awareness and help for people who are in a similar situation to the one he was in and 'pay forward' the help he received. He wanted to do this so that Canadians could really understand the plight of refugees and be moved to provide more help and support to them. This article represents one of our efforts to help him share his incredible story,

and what follows is a summarized Q&A with him.

Why did you decide to leave Syria?
The war was becoming more and more dangerous – I lost hearing in one ear due to a bomb exploding – and it seemed that I would be conscripted. I don't want to kill people, and so I knew I had to leave.

What did you leave behind?
I left my country. I left my family. I left my friends, my people. I was training to be a [springboard] diver and I had to leave my hopes and dreams behind.

When were you the most scared during your trip?
When I was on the sea between Türkiye and Greece. I honestly didn't know if I would be alive. We were 65 people in an inflatable dinghy with a small motor and midway in the journey, the boat ran out of gas. We had heard that Turkish boats would shoot at refugee boats crossing the sea, and so when the Turkish authorities came, we started to get scared. However, the Greek authorities arrived just a few

minutes later and, since we had made it to Greek waters, towed us to a Greek island. I couldn't help thinking about how cold the water was, and, even though I swim well, I knew that people around me would have drowned.

Were there times that you felt hopeful at the refugee camps?
I stayed in two camps in Greece. The first camp I stayed in was terrible. The second one was an improvement, but was still dangerous and I had my possessions stolen a few times. Despite this, I was still able to find some joy, too. I met a lot of people, and I was able to keep up with my diving practice from the cliffs of the island.

How did you come to Canada?
I met a Canadian lady who suggested that I could apply for asylum. Canada has a very good reputation in the camps and my friends told me that if I had the chance to go, then I should. I had to wait for 3.5 years for my application to be approved and processed, and during that time I worked on improving myself and helping others.

How did you help others?
On the island, I helped children learn to swim. My dad was a coach and lifeguard. I volunteered with teenagers and was able to encourage them to positivity and to keep active and engaged with themselves and their community. Once I learned enough English, I was able to interpret and translate for others. I would visit banks, hospitals, and police stations with people to translate and help them access local services.

We hope that sharing Roy's story supports his dream that his help will never end and that you, as a reader, feel moved to act. We suggest reaching out to your local immigration service organizations to donate your time and/ or resources. For more information about Roy or to learn more about this and other QSoE initiatives aimed at reciprocity, please reach out to us, qsoe@queensu.ca.

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– Malala Yousafzai

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