Dear Friends and Colleagues of the IEDP,

We can't believe we are less than two months away from the end of the semester. IEDP students and faculty had a great time presenting at and attending the 2014 Comparative & International Educational Society conference, entitled "Revisioning Education for All" earlier this month. And IEDP is gearing up to help host the MOOCs for Development Conference April 10 & 11 at Penn, which you can read more about below.

Also below, find out more about our Program Director, Dr. Dan Wagner who we had a chance to interview between his world travels, check out some exciting speakers coming to talk later this Spring, and learn about our Alumni Interest, Sean Snyder, continuing his work with the OECD. As always, see the links on the side to read what we're talking about on Twitter and our other social media updates.

Warm Regards from Philadelphia,

Kara Doriani and Adam Saks
Co-Editors

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Left to right: Allison, Amy, Jiayue, and William enjoy a Moroccan dinner thanks to Maha at CIES

COMPARATIVE AND INTERNATIONAL EDUCATIONAL SOCIETY CONFERENCE, 2014

Around 20 students from the IEDP cohort traveled to Toronto, Canada to spend spring break at the CIES conference. Throughout the week, IEDP students attended sessions, met professionals from all sectors in the field of international educational development, with some even presenting their research at poster sessions and on panels. Students enjoyed learning about the work of different organizations, including some of our partners such as Room to Read, RTI, The Aga Khan Foundation, Molteno, World Vision, Save the Children, and many others.

IEDP represented the largest university contingent at the conference, with approximately 2 dozen (Master's and Ph.D) in attendance and 16 student presenters.

Twitter

IEDP has it in spades! RT @WhyDev: Why peer support is key to surviving humanitarian work
    gu.com/p/3nm6g/tw Us in @GdnGlobalDevPro
RT @EFAReport: More kids than ever in school, but disadvantaged left behind inc. millions of girls. New #Gender Report bit.ly/1mYsic6
On average, ~50% of grade 2 students in Kenya can't read a word. Take a deep breath & let that sink in. It's a big problem. #IEDPlectures
RT @UNICEFEducation: 5 Stories About Youth Taking the Lead to Improve Education: ow.ly/uQa9F #GESF
Congrats to @RoehrerC, our 400th follower! Thanks for following, everyone - we take the
Presentations

The second day of CIES in Toronto was a full of events, including a panel presentation on the use of technology in international development. IEDP alumnus Josh, current IEDP students Maha and Desmond, and PhD students Fatima and Nathan, spoke on "Opportunity at the Bottom of the Pyramid" with Dr. Daniel Wagner as discussant. The project feeds into the upcoming conference at Penn on the topic of MOOCs for Development (see the section below for more details about the conference).

IEDP students were engaged in a wide array of research prior to the conference, including ICT4D, immigrant experiences and brain drain, indigenous language education, early childhood development and gender equality.

Norma presenting on inequality of access to bilingual education for indigenous peoples.


IEDP Lecture Series

Benjamin Piper, Chief of Party, Senior Research Education Analyst
RTI International
IEDP students and guests heard from Dr. Piper about "Teaching and Teacher Change: Improving Outcomes at Scale from the Classroom in Sub-Saharan Africa." He spoke about RTI's implementation of the Primary Math and Reading (PRIMR) program in Kenya and its elements to address teacher change and decision-making in a low-cost, scalable program. Dr. Piper argued that reformers need to follow up with teachers in the classroom after professional development to ensure reform. He also advocated that reformers focus on the 60% of teachers who are unsure of reforms rather than the 40% that either accept or reject them. He argued that results help teachers believe in reforms.

PRIMR has been implemented in 1,381 schools in Kenya as part of a randomized control trial to determine how effective the reading and math interventions are. RTI has been working closely with the Ministry of Education, teachers, and administrators to improve reading fluency and math skills.

Upcoming IEDP Lectures

Carol McLaughlin, Research Director for Global Public Health
Penn Center for High Impact Philanthropy
Thursday, March 27, 2014

Masenny Dikotla, CEO
Molteno Institute
Wednesday, April 9, 2014

Nick Burnett, Managing Director
Results For Development
Thursday, April 24, 2014

Jeffrey Sachs, Director
The Earth Institute, Columbia University
Wednesday, April 30, 2014

@AmeenaGK Congrats on the Jackie Kirk Award! New insights and theoretically sound#Genderequality #CIES2014@IEDP_PennGS
IEDP students found ways to enjoy spring break in Toronto! Some highlights of the week included: dim sum in Chinatown, exploring downtown Toronto, and homemade couscous at the hostel. Pictured above, the cohort ended the trip with a stop at Niagara Falls on the drive back to Philadelphia.

MOOCs4D: Potential at the Bottom of the Pyramid

April 10 - 11, 2014

The Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) movement is expanding its capacity to meet the growing demand for educational and learning content worldwide. Many of the world's leading higher education institutions are attempting to enable access to high quality education for people around the world, including the disadvantaged and under-served. To date, however, the MOOC movement has paid insufficient attention to the reality of needs in the developing world.

The MOOCs4D International Invitational Conference will bring together scholars, policy makers, program officers, administrators, and technologists from the education and international development sectors. The main goal is to better understand the dynamics surrounding this situation, and deliberate solutions and action plans that will enable MOOCs to serve the development needs of resource-poor communities of learners--those at the "bottom of the pyramid."

Although some of the sessions are invitation-only, we invite you to attend the plenary sessions by registering at www.gse.upenn.edu/moocs4d/register.

Find out more about the conference at www.moocs4d.org.

Many IEDP students had opportunities to meet and even interview with our partner organizations while at CIES

Our Dr. Ameena Ghaffar-Kucher and her co-editor Lesley Bartlett were awarded the Jackie Kirk Outstanding Book award for their book, Refugees, Immigrants and Education in the Global South: Lives in Motion

Post-conference, students reported the benefits of networking practice, learning about the fieldwork of development organizations, presentation practice, delving into the current research, meeting professionals in the field, and hearing the discussions surrounding the post-2015 education agenda.
Faculty Spotlight:
A Conversation with Dr. Daniel Wagner

Professor of Education
UNESCO Chair in Learning and Literacy
Director of the International Educational Development Program
Director of the International Literacy Institute

Q: You've taken an intriguing career path, starting in operations research engineering (BS), to go into experimental psychology (MA) and then developmental psychology (PhD) before going into international educational development. Could you share with us about what factors influenced that trajectory, especially as to how they led to your work in literacy?

A: I started out in engineering and I think that a key turning point for me was when I went to work in the Peace Corps as an engineer after Cornell. I'd had international experience before, as an engineer in the UK and in the Netherlands. Going to Morocco changed my life in several ways: I learned to speak a couple languages (French and Arabic). Also, working in poor, rural areas made an impression on me. I became aware of the simplicity by which people live, as well as their generosity. I became committed to the idea that you can make a difference—that's a Peace Corps idea.

Coming home after my two years of service, my first paper (originally written for an undergraduate class) was published on the cover of Science magazine. I hadn't been a great undergraduate student but was intrigued in comparing the way in which humans and computers play chess. The title of the paper was "Cognitive Model of Problem Solving in Chess." This gave me an edge and some credibility starting out as a graduate student. A piece of advice for students: if you do good work, people will attribute smartness to you, and this makes a difference.

When I went to University of Michigan for experimental psychology, I quickly came up against a problem, which was that my professors wanted to reduce context and culture to ground zero in order to look at universal human processes. After a year and a half I started taking classes in anthropology because I was interested in seeing a picture bigger than that explained by the basic psychological science of perception, memory, and logic.

My second Michigan mentor advised that developmental psychology would allow me to view human development over the span of a whole life, with culture included. Thus, I moved into the study of how culture shapes the development of children and their thinking. So began my interest in human development and how that looks in different cultural contexts. I was interested in literacy as a bridge into broader global efforts to further human development. I also think that because it is so complex, literacy requires multiple perspectives, including social, scientific, practical, and cultural.

Q: As the field of literacy is being shaped for the future, what do you see as the biggest challenge facing professionals working in this area?

A: Here's a metaphor for it (as I've mentioned in class): when you've lost your keys, there is a tendency to focus where the lighting is good in the parking lot. You look where you see the light. Each of us is like that light—we only know so much. When approaching a given issue, we view it through the specific lens or tool that we have been trained in. Economists will see it one way; linguists will see it differently. I think that the struggle we have -as well as the joy of it-is to bring together these different positions in order to focus more light where the keys are, so to speak. I've been fortunate to be involved in initiatives that require a variety of disciplinary approaches-literacy, culture,
development, etc. As an academic, my own contribution is to foster that kind of thinking in students: to pay attention to the research and how that connects policy and practice.

Q: At the Comparative and International Education Society (CIES) conference this year in Toronto, you were on a panel discussing the divide between academia and practice in the development world. Could you share your thoughts on this subject?

A: Josh Muskin, who came to speak with us earlier in the year, opened up the panel (entitled "Schism in paradise") with a strong statement, that there is indeed a schism in CIES. He said that the people in universities do not pay enough attention to, or respect sufficiently, those who are working on the ground to improve the lives of others. The publishing world is guarded by academics who may act with a veiled disdain towards practitioners, while practitioners often feel that academics are "living in their own world." I tended to agree with him. To advance in academia, pressure is be placed on the academics to make them do what they do best: conceptualize, criticize, and publish their research. Yet for those who have the resources—such as UN other donor agencies—their job is to get money out of the door to the NGOs, who can spend the money on the ground. While there are people like Josh, who do tread the line between academia and practice (he received his Ph.D at Penn, and now works in the nonprofit world), there tends to be separation between research, practice, and policy. With the IEDP, we have tried to bridge that gap very intentionally. While coming from an academic setting, we take seriously the role of the practitioner. Our program is one of the only ones out there that has internship placement as we do, as well as the year-long course to prepare for fieldwork.

Dr. Daniel Wagner is the author/editor of more than 20 books and 140 publications, including books such as: Literacy: An International Handbook (1999); New Technologies for Literary and Adult Education" (2005); Monitoring and Evaluation of ICT in Education Projects: A Handbook for Developing Countries (2005); Learning and ICT: Supporting Out-of-School Youth and Adults (2006); and Smaller, quicker, cheaper: Improving learning indicators for developing countries (2011).

Recently his publications include: Learning first: A research agenda for improving learning in low-income countries (2012), and Gold Standard? The Use of Randomized Controlled Trials for International Educational Policy" (2014).

Alumni Interest
Sean Snyder
Since my graduation in December of last year, I have continued working with the OECD in Paris. I first interned with the OECD in the Centre for Educational Research and Innovation (CERI) during the summer of 2013. In that internship, I authored a working paper, which has since been published as OECD Working Paper No. 96. The research examined complexity theory and its possible applications in educational governance. During my time in Paris, I was also tasked with the logistical coordination of a conference at UNESCO headquarters. This conference hosted roughly 150 delegates from more than forty nations. Ultimately, this large event was a great success.

Recently, the OECD has asked me to return to work for them as a consultant. I hope to continue to delve into complexity and governance issues in education with the OECD.
This opportunity to work with the OECD is due to IEDP's ability to establish networks between its students and partnered organizations. I have my current position with the OECD in Paris entirely because of the IEDP program and its internship component.