Welcome to the fall 2006 edition of the quarterly newsletter for the Comparative, International and Development Education Centre at OISE/UT. As ever, the newsletter highlights a CIDE faculty member and gives an update on students and their research activities. On the final page you will see a list of seminars and workshops being sponsored by CIDE: we encourage you to attend! This academic year brings a new and much larger cohort of students to CIDE: close to 60 students are entering our collaborative graduate degree program this September. Let’s all try to welcome them with the warmth and enthusiasm that are part of the CIDE tradition.

Please email us your news, event, honours and publications for our next newsletter, in January 2007. Happy academic year.

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Interpreting Stephen Anderson, CIDE Faculty

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How did you come to join the OISE/CIDEC family?

I first came to OISE to pursue my PhD studies in 1981, in the Sociology in Education department. I wanted to study and work with Michael Fullan and Kenneth Leithwood. They were leaders in the field of educational change and for me it was an honour and privilege to work with them. After graduating I joined the former Faculty of Education of the University of Toronto (FEUT) in 1988. When FEUT merged with OISE in 1996 I joined the Department of Sociology & Equity Studies in Education. I transferred to the Educational Administration Program and the International Centre for Educational Change in the Department of Theory and Policy Studies in Education about 2001. I began doing international work in 1994 in South Asia, East Africa and the U.S. About this time, I joined the CIDEC community and program. I spend 50% of my classroom time teaching School and Society in the pre-service teacher education program, and the other 50% in the graduate program. My graduate teaching focuses on school improvement and teacher development policy, processes and outcomes.

What are your research interests?

My research interest is ‘educational change’, with an emphasis on policy and program development, implementation, and evaluation. Since I started out in the field, there have been a number of shifts in the focus of my research and scholarship. First it was the implementation of innovations and new programs in schools. This shifted to whole school improvement, and now it is more system or district reform and improvement, rather than individual schools. I have done research at the provincial (Ontario) and national levels in Canada, and I have been involved in 3 major projects in the US since 1996 (my current study focuses on leadership and student learning in 9 states and 45 school districts). Since 1994 I have been professionally involved with the Aga Khan University and Aga Khan Foundation’s school improvement and teacher development initiatives in Pakistan and East Africa, part of which involves joint research.

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I have heard interesting stories about the unforeseen challenges that confront researchers in the field. No-one forewarned me about Mother Nature however, and in my planning and preparations to embark on field work in Jamaica, I overlooked the obvious.

Jamaica is situated to the west of the Caribbean Basin, and the region ranks among the most disaster-prone in the world. It is a seismically active area with a long history of earthquakes, and annual encounters with hurricanes. I arrived on June 5, 2005 and everything looked perfect. When Tropical Storm Arlene formed in the southwest Caribbean on June 9, the event went largely unnoticed. On June 12, Jamaica was affected by a small earthquake measuring 5.1 on the Richter scale. There were no casualties and only three houses were destroyed and about twelve houses damaged. I paid scant attention to the incident and hardly missed a beat. Up to that point, the significance of it being the start of the Atlantic hurricane season did not sink in and the predictions about it being a busy season fell on deaf (dare I say ‘focused’) ears. That is, until July 7, when hurricane Dennis came charging into the Caribbean and passed between Jamaica and Haiti to become the strongest Atlantic storm on record. Dennis was the fourth named storm and the first hurricane of what later became the busiest season in recorded history. At least seventy one deaths were attributed to Dennis but none were in Jamaica although there was significant flooding and infrastructure damage. It was the precursor of what was to follow, where every existing record of the hurricane season was shattered. Eight days later, hurricane Emily broke Dennis’s record. Emily was responsible for four deaths in Jamaica, before making landfall on the Yucatan Peninsula.

In the end, Jamaica, as always, survived the season, calculated the damage, and made plans to mitigate the impact on the economy. It is in this vein of resiliency that I completed my field work, thanks to the cooperation of my research participants, and returned to OISE to carry on my PhD journey and work to complete my thesis.
Stephen Anderson in Pakistan

Steve Anderson recently spent three weeks in Pakistan collaborating with colleagues from the Aga Khan University Institute for Educational Development (AKU-IED) on the development of a book based on a joint research study of improving schools associated with AKU-IED. He delivered a talk on “Sustainability and School Improvement” to a Karachi-based Association of Professional Development Teachers, and conducted a three day School Improvement Seminar for 40 change agents from both government and independent school systems at the AKU-IED Professional Development Centre North (PDCN), in Gilgit, regional administrative centre of Pakistan’s Northern Areas. The PDCN operates like a field centre of AKU-IED, with a Director (OISE/UT CTL graduate Dr. Mola Dad Shafa) and a team of professional development officers, and has been in operation for about eight years. The accompanying poem was written by one of the course participants from an NGO school system at Steve’s School Improvement seminar. The poem (translated from Urdu) pays homage to the work of the PDCN and the professional development opportunities it provides to educators throughout this region of Pakistan.

Poem in the Honor of Dr. Anderson

1. O PDCN, you made me pleasantly surprised as you aroused my sleeping feelings and, as a result of which, my heart has waken up.
2. O PDCN, I didn’t have enough courage to speak before I visited you. But I feel that you equipped me with the skills of speech and oratory agent I have visited you.
3. O PDCN, we thought earlier that we had the freedom (and did things according to our own wisdom and perception); however, now you have made us (question our own perceptions) and fight with ourselves.
4. Despite having many skills I was unaware of my skills. O PDCN, you developed the barren land (of our goals and mind) such that there are colourful flowers in that land.
5. O PDCN, you invited the (knowledge) and ideologies of North America to Gilgit (PDCN) and you gave us the pleasant surprise (by sharing this knowledge with us).
6. Although I had gone to visit the deserts many times in my life. Visiting you (O PDCN), this time has been a source of astonishment for me.
7. O PDCN, before your establishment), we were like scattered deer in the mountains (of the Northern Areas). You united us and taught us how to be good human beings.
8. O Anderson, we express our deep gratitude to you because (with your rich knowledge) you made all our difficult and challenging questions easy.
9. If the generosities (and blessings) of Mola Dad continue, possibly all our challenges would be converted into solutions and successes.

(Ali Mohammad, Director USWA schools Northern Areas)
My thesis research is on the understudied phenomenon of emerging private authority as new proactive and key players in educational policy. The overall aim of the research is to understand why and how Microsoft Corporation through its Partners in Learning (PiL) program is reconstructing a new identity and role for itself as a legitimate expert authority in mass systems of education. The study is situated within the fields of educational policy, business and international relations. I am conducting a historical and organizational analysis of the global Microsoft PiL program coordinated in Redmond, USA and will be traveling in the coming months to collect data to conduct two country case studies in South Africa and a second country yet to be confirmed. In order to get a better practical understanding of how corporations are participating in education, I attended the 1st International Conference on Information Communication Technology, Education and Training held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia from May 24 to 26, 2006. The conference brought together stakeholders including transnational corporations, international organizations and government engaged in the planning and implementation of technology supported learning and training on the African continent. The conference website address is: http://www.elearning-africa.com/

Zahra Bhanji, Ph.D Candidate

Jennifer Baldwin, Ph.D Graduate
I’m very happy to say that I have recently been accepted for a position in Vietnam with the World University Service of Canada. I’ve been hired to go train Primary Teacher Trainers in instructional techniques. It’s a pretty exciting opportunity and I will have a chance to travel around the country working at different universities training teacher trainers. I am certain that I will be able to apply to this position some of the concepts and theories I learned through CIDE classes. I think the job is very closely related to my MRP topic (cultural knowledges and teacher education in development). I couldn’t ask for a better, or more interest-relevant opportunity. A huge thank you! This is just one of the best things that has happened to me.

Carly (Caroline) Manion, Ph.D. Candidate
I have been awarded an IDRC Doctoral Research Award for my proposal entitled: “The politics and practices of gender equity in education policy information: Religion and the secular state in The Gambia.”

Malini Sivasubramaniam, Ph.D Candidate
I have been awarded the IDRC doctoral research fellowship to carry out fieldwork in Kenya for my dissertation: “Gender, social capital and parental involvement in the governance of non-formal schools in Kenya: Implications for policy reforms and equitable access”.

Kirk Perris and Sameena Eidoo
The 22nd CESE Conference (Europe) took place in Granada, Spain, July 2006. This year’s theme was Changing knowledge and education: communities, information societies and mobilities. Kirk Perris and Sameena Eidoo represented CIDEC. Kirk presented a paper titled, “Social mobility through open education: The open university systems in the emerging powers of India and China”; and, Sameena presented, “The Organization of the Islamic Conference and the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization: Governance, social cohesion and education in the transnational Muslim community”. The Lauwers Lecture, delivered by John W. Meyer, Professor of Sociology and (by courtesy) Education Emeritus at Stanford University, The 2008 CESE (Europe) will be in Athens, Greece.
Workshop and Seminar Series — Fall Term 2006

Room 7-105, CIDE “Smart Room”
All sessions are 11:30-1pm unless otherwise noted

Monday September 25 (4-6 pm)
ORIENTATION and Potluck

Monday October 2
“A Discussion of Comparative International Education for Sustainability: Canada, Lithuania, and Sweden”
Kate Moss: Doctoral student, CTL

Monday October 16
“Implications of the World Trade Organisation for the Education Policy Process”
Terence Frater: Doctoral student, AECP

Friday October 20 (10-12 noon followed by lunch)
“Test-driven accountability and the good school: what we value and what works -- Germany and the USA.”
Professor Heinrich Mintrop, University of California, Berkeley

Monday October 30
“Social Difference and Education: Challenges and Possibilities of African Education.”
Professor George Dei, Chair, SESE

Monday November 13 (2 presentations)
“Gender, equity and education policy: Religion and the secular state in The Gambia”
Caroline Manion: Doctoral student, SESE

“Everything that you ever wanted to know about civil society in Tanzanian education but couldn’t find in the books.”
Megan Haggerty: Masters student, AECP

Friday November 24
“North-South Politics in a Changing Global Environment”
Professor Jean-Philippe Thérien, Professeur titulaire
Département de Science Politique Université de Montréal

Monday November 27
Professor Shahrzad Mojab and Nadeen Elkassem
Organizing Women or Women Organizing? War, ‘Reconstruction’ and Women’s NGOs