

ENGAGE

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ISSUE FOUR

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Education and international development – a fresh perspective from the Foundation

Project Nepal, one year on

Special feature – gender equality in education, investing in girls

Get involved with the Foundation's work – School fundraising and much more !



Photo: DISHA SOCIAL ORGANISATION, INDIA

Education for all: a fairer future

The STEVE SINNOTT FOUNDATION

Vision:

To secure primary education by 2015 for each one of the 66 million children who are out of school across the world

Foreword

In this fourth edition of *ENGAGE* the theme is very much about the challenge, within the Millennium Development Goal2, of getting access to education for girls. There are a staggering 24 million girls out of education in Africa alone. In Guatemala of 78,000 children who do not attend school 70% are girls and in India 40% of girls under 14 are not in school. Counteracting the fear of the progressive effects that education has for girls and women in traditional communities and repressive regimes remains key to ensuring that education is the great liberator.

The Steve Sinnott Foundation continues to make good progress with its Nepal schools project which has been enhanced with the twinning of Nepalese schools with eight UK schools. This has resulted in positive communication between schools and fundraising to support the project.

An exciting new project is now under way bringing Sierra Leonean teachers to London in the autumn for a week's intensive work with our Education Team. We hope this innovative approach, together with their visits to EducAid supporter schools in the UK, will, upon their return to Sierra Leone, enable the teachers to share what they have learned and experienced widely.

All this work is only possible through the generosity of time, resource and money so freely given by our growing band of supporters. On behalf of the Directors I would wish to record our grateful thanks.

Please take time to visit the Foundation website at www.stevesinnottfoundation.org.uk for the latest information about our work and the online community. Support the Foundation, spread the word and help it grow promoting Education for All.



A handwritten signature in white ink that reads "Jerry Glazier."

Jerry Glazier
Chair, The Steve Sinnott Foundation

This magazine could not be published without its designers and printers at Paragraphics and at Ruskin Press. Their expertise and patience is extraordinary. They do not just do the business for us, they are friends of the Foundation and supporters of our work. Ongoing thanks to them.

Visit the discussion forum at
www.stevesinnottfoundation.org.uk to comment on this article

GET INVOLVED

The Steve Sinnott Foundation works with several schools in the UK, spreading awareness about the Millennium Development Goals for Education, promoting global citizenship and involving staff and students with our work. Write to **Sam Tiwari** at sam.tiwari@stevesinnottfoundation.org.uk if you would like to get involved with our global movement for education and we will send you a copy of our fundraising flyer.



Boys on a 3k run at West Derby School, Liverpool.



Cake bake and sale of children's artwork organised by Pleasant Street Primary School, Liverpool.





A NEW DEAL FOR GLOBAL EDUCATION

Coincident with the publication of this issue of ENGAGE, we're announcing a major new project in partnership with our colleagues from EducAid, Sierra Leone. Supported again by the Teachers Group Educational Trust, we'll be bringing Sierra Leonean teachers to London for a week's intensive work with our Education Team. After they leave us, they will be visiting EducAid supporter schools around the UK and then returning to Sierra Leone to share what they have learned and experienced with their colleagues over a wide area.



We've been asked why we're bringing these teachers to London rather than send people out to Sierra Leone. Indeed our application for funding to one of the major UK project funders was turned down because of the way round we have chosen to do this. We are very clear about our reasons and they are part of a much wider debate about what needs to be done to achieve the Millennium Development Goals for education.

Legally we're a charity - but we've never been comfortable with the idea that what we are promoting, the goal of securing education for all, can ever be charity. Education is a right of every child, and for those who provide and pay for it, it is an investment in the future of the societies to which those children, as adults, will belong. It is not a privilege to be paid for

Foundation Director Graham Clayton sets out the Foundation's challenge to convention in promoting the Millennium Development Goals

out of left over change in the pockets of the wealthy world. The 'west' achieved much of its wealth from the spoils of its exploitation and abuse of Africa and Asia and its people. It is fanciful to suggest that it is the duty of the west now, apologetically, to give it all back, but those who have the wisdom to take a long term view of the positive evolution of the world's social economy, must now see that investment in the education MDGs is not only to repair past misdeeds but is in everyone's interest.

Steve Sinnott himself often spoke of the children he met in Africa and Asia who could not understand the idea of truancy, who could not imagine not wanting to go to school, not wanting education. This we believe is the reality of Africa, South Asia and the countries of South America now eager to be seen for their spirit and determination to share in all the benefits which in the past have been denied to them. The provision of 'aid' remains vitally important because there are clearly places in the world where poverty offers only despair, but it is not enough now that our heartstrings should be tugged by images of stomach bloated starving children wept over by TV and film celebrities. Yes we have a responsibility to 'aid', but we have also a responsibility to invest.

The Prime Minister has spoken of 'trade not aid'. In fact he was misreported. He actually said 'trade as well as aid'. Though we do not align ourselves without question with the cruelties of some forms of 'trade', we know that David Cameron

has made a point with which more and more people are engaging across the political spectrum. A Senegalese observer, speaking recently on UK national radio said that aid alone, and the resultant corruption that this can foster in the hands of some, is not the right way for the peoples of Africa to be freed from the vicious cycle of poverty. We have to realise that the developing world does not want the exploitative colonialism of the past replaced by charitable imperialism.

So in our Sierra Leone project we have decided to bring Africa to the West not send the West to Africa to lend a hand. Miriam Mason-Sesay of EducAid tells us that the Sierra Leonean teachers are going to have a life changing experience because they are going to be able to see that they can be self confident, independent decision-makers for their own futures, an experience which they have not had the opportunity previously to encounter.

We'll let you know how it works.



This article has been endorsed by all the Foundation Directors

CLASSROOMS FOR KENYA: A MODEL FOR DEVELOPMENT

In 2006, a small group of staff and students at the Weald School raised money and travelled to Kenya, helping build permanent classrooms in four schools. The project has now flourished to 11 schools, raising £ 150,000 to date and building 26 permanent and safe classrooms. Project initiator **Malcolm Peppiatt** writes about the inspiration behind the project, the achievements in the last 5 years and their aspirations for the future.

Classrooms for Kenya was established by staff at The Weald School following an inspiring visit by three staff members and seven students to Western Kenya in 2006. It was set up specifically to help improve the future educational prospects of students in rural Kenya through the provision of safer learning environments.

An appeal was launched in September 2006 to raise £50,000 to replace the mud walled classrooms in four schools with 8 brick built ones. One of the schools, Lumuli, had been scheduled for closure because of its dilapidated and unsafe condition but this proposal was abandoned once the government found out that a school in the UK had taken an interest so saving the students an extra two hours travel each day. In July 2007, 23 students and 4 staff funded themselves to go to Kenya to help build the new classrooms.



The scheme took off. Further fundraising during 2008 and 2009 enabled 4 more double classrooms to be built in July/August 2009. On 31 July 2009 the Right Honourable Kalonzo Stephen Musyoka, Vice President of Kenya officially and symbolically opened the first 4 double classrooms we had helped to build at Lumuli attracting a lot of attention from press and media attention and in Parliament.

This summer, 69 students and 11 staff have been in Kenya building another 5 double classrooms in 5 different schools. In addition to funding themselves, students and staff have made a commitment to raise £250 towards the building fund. Any additional funds they raise then go towards the high cost of their own travel.

To date we have raised £150,000 to build 26 classrooms in 11 schools. The fundraising activities have enabled our students to develop a wide range of skills in teamwork, time management, and organisational, business and marketing, entrepreneurial and creative skills as well as raising their self confidence. The visits to Kenya have provided life-changing experiences. The local economy benefits hugely with extra business for food and building materials suppliers and work in the schools.

We now have forty schools in the Trans Nzoia West District applying for classrooms



to be built and we anticipate at least to double this over the next 2 – 3 years. We want future generations of Weald students to participate with more of the costs offset from fundraising. We aim to take a group of 40 students each year.

We can build good quality double classrooms for 1,000,000 Kenyan Shillings - £7,500 at the current exchange rate. We aim to build a minimum of 10 double classrooms per year.

In 2006 the thing that inspired us most was the Kenyan students' commitment to getting an education. They believe 'Education is Power'. Classrooms for Kenya is equally committed to doing all it can to enable, through the provision of safer and better equipped classrooms, young Kenyans, whether they be 4yrs or 22yrs, to get the best education possible.

Together with Classrooms for Kenya, the Steve Sinnott Foundation is developing an online model for use by schools to assist classroom building around the world.



COMMUNITY IMPACT

By November 2011, we will be one year into Project Nepal. Despite challenging socio-political and geographical circumstances in Nepal, the project has achieved most of the goals set last year. **Mahendra Man Shakya**, Chairperson of Manisha Child Welfare Foundation Nepal, explains how community participation and simple yet strong administration has led to successful outcomes

Namaste! Since 2003, MCWFN has had a major impact in improving children's lives and education by developing community schools, using volunteer support for education, first aid and medical care. We have also been running small projects to provide clean drinking water and toilets and developing eco-tourism in the villages in east and west Nepal, where our 16 project schools are located. This work helps develop both the schools and the communities.

MCWFN has been very fortunate in establishing many volunteer friends in the UK, some of whom wanted to provide even more help by founding a UK based charity, Manisha UK, to assist with volunteer recruitment and fundraising for MCWFN.

It was very exciting for me and the schools and communities when the Steve Sinnott Foundation partnered with us for a major rebuilding & extension project at three schools in the Palpa district. Project Palpa is providing excellent educational opportunity to the most deprived children in Palpa. One of the schools, Pipaldanda, is being totally rebuilt and extended to be a 3-storey building. When finished, it will be a model in Nepal, showcasing the commitment of SSF, Manisha UK and MCWFN to changing the lives of some of the poorest communities in Nepal.

Since November 2010, MCWFN team has been very busy meeting and negotiating to bring positive outcomes from the schools, villages, communities and district government to carry out the project effectively and efficiently, on time and

within budget. Deliverables of the project at each school also include: Mid-day meal for the children, funding for two teachers, laptop PC and new furniture. All three schools will now have sufficient classrooms for all children. Each school will also have a medical room and a kitchen in which to prepare the mid-day meals.

Simultaneous management of three projects is very challenging in the mountain villages. MCWFN has very good relationships with members of Manisha UK, village communities, mothers groups, youth groups, council offices, volunteers and individuals in Nepal, who are always ready to help and support us. Most of our volunteers are from the UK, warmly welcomed and looked after in Nepal

MCWFN Team works closely with community, school, children, teachers and villagers. Their views are incorporated in everything that we do. We have developed a unique participatory system in which the community has a significant stake in the management of the schools. We put the needs of the community and the children before everything else; we have very carefully allocated the available resources for the betterment of schools and the community without wasting anything on big offices or fancy Jeeps.

Together, we are doing a tremendous job in Nepal. Along with three schools in Palpa, the Steve Sinnott Foundation is now also investing in a new school in the Gurkha district. Project Gurkha will soon start to improve Batase School in Gurkha district, providing much needed

renovation of the school building and a safety barrier alongside a walkway between first floor classrooms.

But these projects are not the only good news. Now we have eight UK schools twinned with Nepalese schools. The UK school children are communicating with their twinned schools, which encourages the Nepalese children to use their English skills, and some UK schools are also fund raising for urgently needed supplies and minor projects at their twinned school.

I would like to give my thanks to the UK members of the Steve Sinnott Foundation and Manisha UK. In Nepal, my thanks to MCWFN volunteer helpers; volunteer photographers, village community groups, mothers groups, schoolteachers and community youth groups. Finally, my special thanks to Steve Tonry, Will Thomas and Andy Langman of Manisha UK, who are making successes possible for Manisha Child Welfare Foundation Nepal (MCWFN).

Thank you and please follow our progress at www.mcwfnepal-uk.org



SAFETY, SECURITY AND EDUCATION: THE MARONKA GIRLS PROJECT

EducAid started free secondary schools in Sierra Leone in 2001, right after the decade long civil war. With a brilliant track record of efficient schools and successful students, EducAid still grapples with the problems of low enrolment and low aspiration of girls. **Rev Mark Wallace** describes their new project to create a safe living and learning environment for girls in Maronka.

In the UK we are used to seeing statistics showing girls outperforming boys at school. In many parts of the world things are quite different. In Sierra Leone, one of the world's poorest countries, it is common for girls to be denied access even to primary education. Many adults there would consider educating young women to be a waste of time. This goes alongside attitudes towards domestic



violence and abuse of women which have been generations out of date compared to those in Western Europe.

EducAid Sierra Leone is a British charity which has run the only completely free schools in Sierra Leone since 2001. In 2007 they launched 'The Women's Project'. Faced with only a small number of girls enrolling in their schools, and who often failed the admission exams on arrival, the Project encouraged girls of any educational standard to enrol. Regular tests began to promote girls into the charity's schools. Over its four years, over two hundred girls have joined the schools via the Women's Project.

The next step was the formation of the 'Girl Power Group', to promote better achievement at school through improving self esteem, raising expectations, understanding women's rights and combating social and family pressures. This has begun to make a real impact.

Now, in September 2011, EducAid is opening its first Girls' Safe House in Maronka. Building on the success of their primary school there, the Safe House will be a home where love and respect are the norm for the young girls who live there. It will provide a place to stay for girls attending the school, extending its provision beyond the immediate area to those who would currently be unable to travel there. It will be a safe place emotionally, physically and spiritually; a



home where girls can learn to be strong, confident and capable women, able to take their place in twenty-first-century Sierra Leonean society.

Initially there will be thirty residents of the Safe House, which has been built from scratch by a local team. Ann Beatty, a volunteer from the UK, has committed to getting the project started, and will spend six months at Maronka from September. A blog has been charting the progress of the preparations and EducAid's legion of school- and church-based supporters have been buying books, clothes, games and materials from an online wish-list. Ann will take as much as she can out to Sierra Leone when she goes.

Even in these credit-crunched times, it's amazing how far your money can go. Just £10 pays for a girl's accommodation, education and food for a whole month. £40 pays for a little girl's starter kit: her own box-seat with toiletries, stationery, bedding and crockery. This work continues EducAid's aim of transforming lives one by one, empowering and enabling Sierra Leonean children to make a difference in their society.

For more information visit
www.educaid.org.uk.



EDUCATING GIRLS, ERADICATING POVERTY IN RURAL AFRICA

Vicky Anning takes us through CAMFED's inspirational journey of educating more than a million girls in rural Africa

Twenty years ago, Camfed's founder Ann Cotton travelled to Zimbabwe to investigate why girls' school enrolment in rural areas across the country was so

low. What she found surprised her. Contrary to the common assumption that families weren't sending girls to school for cultural reasons, Ann discovered poverty was the main obstacle. Families couldn't afford to buy books or pay school fees for all their children, so they had to choose who would receive an education. Girls were rarely chosen. The reason was simple: Boys had a better chance of getting a paid job after graduation.

Ann returned home to Cambridge, determined to find a way to help girls go to school in Zimbabwe. In the first year, she raised enough funds to support 32 girls in their studies.

Since Camfed was formally launched in 1993, 1,451,600 children have benefitted from the charity's work in some of the poorest rural communities across Ghana, Malawi, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Young women who have been supported through school by Camfed have gone on to become doctors, lawyers, teachers and businesswomen.

Camfed's programme provides girls with everything they need to stay on at secondary school: uniforms, shoes, stationery and books, school and examination fees, and when necessary, boarding expenses so they don't have to walk miles to and from school each day. Through a network of Camfed-trained female teacher mentors, these girls are also fully supported both emotionally and academically throughout their studies.

Today, there are 24 million girls out of school across Africa. Without the opportunity of education, their future is bleak. An educated young woman, on the other hand, will earn up to 25 per cent more income, she is three times less likely to contract HIV/AIDS, and she will have a smaller, healthier family.

The young women Camfed has supported through school are now helping to maximize the impact of Camfed's programme

as volunteers and mentors. They are also supporting, on average, 2.5 non-family members through school. Over the past 18 years, these young women have helped 161,300 children through their own philanthropic and community initiatives – setting in motion a virtuous cycle of change that is breaking the chain of poverty in rural Africa.

Camfed alumnae are confident young women whose voices are being heard on a global stage. Last year, one of the young women Camfed has supported through school – Abigail Kaindu (pictured) – was chosen to represent Zambia at President Obama's Inaugural Forum with Young African Leaders in Washington, DC.

"It was an honour to be in a room with President Obama, sharing our ideas!" said Abigail. "He presented us with a challenge: He said Africa's youth have the energy and the vision to create a better future. And he's right. No one understands Africa's challenges the way we do. We are living them, and we have the skills to develop solutions."

Camfed believes that young women like Abigail have the potential to lead their own communities out of poverty – if only that potential is unlocked. As Abigail said, "Without education, I would be nowhere. Education has made everything possible for me."

Find out more about Camfed's work at www.camfed.org



THE SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT STEP

Former BBC education correspondent Kim Catcheside assesses conventional attitudes towards girls' education and calls for a challenge to systematic exploitation of women and girls.

Educating its girls is arguably the single most important step that any developing nation can take to further economic and political progress. In this issue devoted as it is to the education of girls around the world, other contributors have drawn on research showing that educating women has a major effect on GDP, reduces the size of families, has a revolutionary impact the survival rates of mothers in child birth and their babies, reduces violent and abuse against women and children and prevents the spread of HIV and AIDS. It is clear that the effects of educating girls are progressive. Yet it is estimated that around 60% of the children not in primary education around the world are girls and many of those enrolled in primary school are prevented from learning because they are forced to miss school to deal with domestic duties.

So why haven't governments around the world done more to educate their girls? Lack of cash is clearly the major factor developing countries, especially in Africa. But a shortage of money to invest doesn't explain the failure of governments in the emerging economies to act. In India two out of every five women cannot read or write and forty per cent of Indian girls under 14 are not at school. Even in China, a study by University of Nottingham found significant inequalities in the education of girls and boys once compulsory schooling is finished at 9. ('Why Do Girls

in Rural China Have Lower School Enrolment?' World Development Vol 34 (9), pages 1639-1653, by Lina Song, Simon Appleton and John Knight,)

I would argue that the most significant obstacle to educating girls in many developing and emerging countries is because traditional communities and repressive regimes are threatened by the progressive effects doing so. It strikes at the heart of paternalism because boys brought up by educated and questioning mothers are more likely to respect women and their rights and support political change as adults.

I was privileged to chair the World Education Forum in London in January, where the minister for education in Afghanistan, Farooq Wardak told the UK's Times Educational Supplement that a "cultural change" meant the Taliban were "no more opposing girls' education". His words were met with scepticism by women MPs in Afghanistan who pointed out that girls' schools had remained closed in six Pashtun-dominated districts and were only open in two Hazara-dominated districts. Their doubts were confirmed in May when the Taliban murdered the head teacher of a girls' school near the Afghan capital. It is clear that small gains made by girls and women will be the first victims of a US and UK troop withdrawal, proof that enlightenment cannot be imposed at the end of a gun.



While researching for this article, I was outraged to read the story of an Afghan teacher known only as Rauf. <http://www.theage.com.au/national/lives-dogged-by-poverty-danger-and-uncertainty-the-struggle-continues-for-tam-pas-returnees-20110819-1j22q.html>

He has been on the run for ten years, in effect under a sentence of death for teaching girls to read. Yet he has so far been unable to seek asylum. If we in the democratic west really value the rights of women then asylum should be automatic in the case of teachers such as Rauf. I would go further and call upon governments to offer automatic asylum to women who succeed in fleeing from the Taliban and other regimes who practice the systematic abuse of women.



GENDER, CONFLICT & EDUCATION

Prof Jagdish Gundara stresses the importance of girls' education in conflict and post-conflict situations.

There is an enormous range of violence against women & girls in a number of societies, including democratic and so-called developed states. The acceptance of any form of violence is not only a negation of the human rights of women but of children's rights under the Convention of the Rights of the Child.

Violence and war is a major barrier to education and gender parity in education. At the same time, in war torn countries, education is playing an important role by providing a basis for stability for children and adults traumatised by conflict and displacement. Schools can provide life-saving information on landmines, HIV/AIDS prevention and health care and attending school can help to lessen the chances of children being recruited into gangs and as child soldiers or be sexually or economically exploited. Education can provide essential life and cognitive skills and education for post-war reconstruction.

When women in Darfur were asked what they wanted for their daughters' futures, the overwhelming response was education and one of them said: 'If we are educated, we learn to fight with the pen, not with the sword.'

Without minimum standards of quality education the period of post-conflict

reconstruction becomes problematic. This is not only an issue in Asia or Africa but also in countries in Europe e.g. Kosovo and Bosnia. Child mortality in Bangladesh is five times greater amongst children whose mothers have no education than amongst mothers who have seven or more years of education. In war torn places the situation is even worse. In Somalia girls dropped out of school as it became dangerous to travel to attend schools.

Hence the issue of safe accessibility to safe schools is also a critical factor. Distance education using broadcast materials, recorded media programmes and packaged materials 'school-in-a-box' can provide an answer in some cases. In the short term learning and teaching in mini-neighbourhood safe centres, or secret schools at homes as education goes underground provide some safety for girls and women, teachers and learners. This however, is no long term solution because in situations of chaos the school can provide a state of normalcy.

There is another international dimension to this issue - the violence carried out against those involved in education, whether they are students, teachers, trade unionists, administrators and officials. In many conflict situations people and institutions involved in education are considered legitimate targets of war. For example, in Afghanistan in 2006 militants are alleged to have killed 85 students and teachers and destroyed 187 schools; in Columbia,

on average 42 teachers are murdered every year; in the Democratic Republic of Congo in 2003 in Djugu, 211 schools of 228 schools were destroyed and it is estimated that 30,000 children were taking part in combat or attached to armed groups. Amongst many collapsed states there are large numbers of girls and women who are victimised and the grounds for this include different factors: political, military, ideological, sectarian, ethnic, and religious reasons.

Education for All and Millennium Development Goals cannot be met if the situation in many states is further thwarted by violence and wars. International sanctions which use Human Rights Conventions and the Conventions of the Rights of the Child need to be invoked and given more teeth, so that these international measures can be firmly applied at local and national levels. Teachers and children's rights also need to be defended by the International Labour Office instruments where teachers as workers are violated and violations against children worse than child labour also take place.

Finally, there is also a need to create a Convention to make schools safe from violence and international bodies like ILO, UNICEF, UNESCO have a fundamental role in making this happen.

Prof Jagdish Gundara is Emeritus Professor at the Institute of Education and UNESCO Chair in intercultural studies and teacher education, University of London.

FROM COMMITMENT TO RESULTS: GIRLS' RIGHT TO EDUCATION

Dr. Kishore Singh

Women and girls constitute the majority of those who remain deprived of education. This constitutes a limitation on achieving gender parity in access to quality basic education which is central to the Education for All agenda. Prospects of attaining Millennium Development Goal 3 by 2015 for gender parity in education at all levels and empowering women are similarly bleak.

The daunting challenge is how to bridge this gap between commitments and reality? This calls for greater emphasis on fulfillment of State obligations for realizing women's and girls' fundamental right to education without discrimination or exclusion.

Girls' right to education

The right to education is an internationally recognized right. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) establishes everyone's right to education. Free and compulsory primary education is an inalienable right of every child - boys and girls alike - under almost all international human rights conventions.

Women's and girls' right to education - both as entitlement and as empowerment - is established by the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). The Convention lays down the obligations of the States Parties to "take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in order to ensure to them equal rights with men in the field of education" (article 10).

A human rights framework

Educating women and girls should, à priori, be viewed as a human rights imperative. A human rights framework is pivotal in the struggle against multiple forms of discrimination from which women and girls in vulnerable and marginalized situations suffer. This imparts added strength to the work of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), as a follow up to the Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action (1995), while recognizing the importance of education and training of women and girls. Moreover, this provides synergy to protective and promotional actions by the new UN Entity for Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women - UN Women. Besides, this could be the driving force behind grass roots approaches to gender equality and women's empowerment, embraced by the African Women's Decade (2010-2020).

Intensifying normative action

Intensifying normative action in line with UNESCO's Convention against Discrimination in Education is necessary for bringing about de facto equality of opportunities for women and girls throughout the education system. Steps should be taken to prioritize efforts to ensure equal access of girls and young women to all levels of education, including through temporary special measures by giving incentives to parents and scholarships to girl students, as the CEDAW-Committee has often recommended. It is indeed important to devise legal mechanisms, notably in the context of poverty reduction strategies,



for ensuring that girls fully enjoy their right to education - a right which is not only a human right in itself but also essential for the exercise of all other human rights.

National legislation

Elaboration of national legislation on the right to quality education of women and girls in line with international legal obligations would be a significant way forward in promoting normative action at national level. This would give concrete shape to the human rights framework and provide firm grounds in accelerating progress towards the MDG 3, mentioned above. Supporting "legislative developments" is central to the Ministerial Declaration at the 2010 High-Level Segment of ECOSOC. Empowering women and girls through education should be a priority concern, if they are to become "agents of change."

'JUST GIVE US A CHANCE'

Sam Tiwari, Project Manager, Steve Sinnott Foundation

It was the summer of 1997 and I was in high school, volunteering for a 'street theatre' group. The group used to create awareness about important social issues through folk media such as street plays. That summer, we were working on a short play about the story of a girl who was not allowed to go to school while her brother did.

This character was played by a little girl called Salima, from a nearby village, whose excellent performance made the play very popular. Often, congratulating her on that, we would get a nonchalant answer, "Its not very different from my real life".

Since the play had to give a positive message in the end, the girl starts going to school after her parents understand that she as much has a right to education as her brother. On the other hand, our real life Salima went back to household chores and selling vegetables in the market. It just didn't seem right.

Our theatre group decided to talk to her parents. After endless meetings and conversations, they agreed to enrol her in a nearby education centre run by a charity, free of cost.

I got in touch with a friend from that old theatre group a few years ago and catching up on old times, we simultaneously expressed the curiosity to find out about Salima, expecting that she might be married. We were able to locate her parents in the old village (a fast growing town now) and we certainly did not find her there, not because she was married but because she was studying Physics at a top college in Delhi University, in 2007. She is now studying for her Master's degree from the coveted Indian Institute of Technology in New Delhi.

A small story from a small village in India is the story of millions of girls across the world that may never get the opportunity to realise their potential. There are numerous obstacles that need addressing to ensure gender parity in education. Socio – cultural beliefs in many societies restrict the role of women to domestic work and reproduction hence their education is considered a financial waste. Education in many countries is also expensive and faced with a choice, parents would rather send their sons to school. Even where education is free, girls face hazardous journeys to school, lack of sanitation facilities, violence, neglect and also, in some instances, discrimination in schools.

There are several arguments for girls' education. According to the Global Campaign for Education's recent policy

report, the gender gap in education costs the global economy some \$92 billion per year. The economic case of investing in girls' education for achieving growth, fairness and dignity across the world is indeed a convincing one, especially in the context of conflicting aid and investment priorities tied to measurable outcomes. However, I also believe that equality of opportunity in education is a basic human right, irrespective of outcomes, for both boys and girls and that investing in women and girls is inherently valuable in its own right.

Only four years remaining until 2015; millions of girls in the world are still out of school. Either we ignore this massive violation of girls' rights or we could make sure that this systemic discrimination ends right here and girls are free to choose who they want to be, just like Salima did.



Photo: Disha Social Organisation, India

EDUCATION = OPPORTUNITY

The winners of the Steve Sinnott Young Global Ambassadors Award 2011, **Navdeep Bual** and **Yasir Yeahia** from Seven Kings School in Essex, write about their experiences in Guatemala and call upon the international community to step up the movement to achieve Education for All.

In December 2010 we applied for a National Competition which ended up changing our lives. Little did we know we would be named the winners of the Steve Sinnott Young Global Ambassadors Award and travel to Guatemala for a week! We are honoured and privileged to be a part of the campaign and we are so dedicated to it because education has had such a huge impact upon us and our families and we truly believe education equals opportunity.

We travelled to Guatemala from 12th – 19th February 2011 to investigate the barriers to education in the country and we spent the week with street children, politicians and charity workers.



It's difficult to say exactly what the bigger barrier was because they are all interlinked. We learned some shocking facts about Guatemala such as: it is the most dangerous country in world that is not in a war zone, it has the fourth highest rate of chronic malnutrition in the world and is also very vulnerable to climate change. The sheer poverty was a complete shock to us and opened our eyes to the problems children face purely because of where they were born.

We saw the stark difference in the standard of living between our lives and those of the children we met. Out of the 78,000 children that do not attend school, 70% are girls. 2/3 of indigenous women are illiterate and consider early employment a better option than education. We were deeply shocked by this injustice. However we quickly realised that deeply entrenched attitudes were not going to change overnight and that they were rooted in poverty and the desperate need to earn a living.

Without education, countries such as Guatemala cannot develop and move forward, which is why we wish for the international community to step up the campaign for education because it could do so much for girls and development. It is the 'root' out of poverty and it needs to be planted first, firmly beneath the ground for it to blossom into something remarkable. As young global ambassadors we urge people to join the campaign to ensure education for all, thereby allowing equality of opportunity for all the world's children.



Photo: Global Campaign for Education UK

Our experiences, the people we met and the things we saw will stay with us forever. We will use our experiences to help highlight the urgent need for the international community to step up the campaign for education and by doing so, ensuring education for generations of children.

When reflecting back on our week in Guatemala we realised just what we had: family and friends to meet us at the airport, a car to drive us home, a roof over our heads, food on the table and the opportunity to walk to school on Monday without fear of attack or rape. What we saw in Guatemala made us realise that this is not a reality for many children there. Something must be done.

The idea that where you are born determines what you become is something which deeply concerns us both. It is education that leads to social mobility and there is no excuse for the global community not to provide universal access to primary education. We said it at the start and we will shout it from the top of our voices until we are heard; it is education that equals opportunity.



WORKING TOGETHER,



James Bawa, Chief Executive, Teachers Building Society presents the cheque to Graham Clayton, Foundation Director at the TES School Awards Ceremony held in July 2011



The Guston Primary School in Kent raised £139 for the Foundation by organising a Pyjama day at school. They are also sending lots of stationery to their partner school.



The Soroptimist International Club of Castleford, Normanton & District is proud to support the Steve Sinnott Foundation.

The Steve Sinnott Foundation has moved from strength to strength in the last two years. Our online community now has more than 800 members and hosts over 125 Millennium Development Goals Education Projects. Our field project in Nepal has secured quality education for 400 children and continues to grow. We have established eight partnerships between Nepalese and UK Schools. We are supporting an ambitious programme for training Sierra Leonean teachers. We are also looking forward to developing a classroom building initiative described elsewhere in this edition.

Much of our success is owed to the generous support received in the past two years from teacher associations, businesses, community groups, trust funds, school communities, individual teachers and pupils and many others around the world.

We thank all our supporters and we hope that more and more people will join our worldwide movement to secure quality education for 66 million children in the world who are out of school.



Sam Tiwari, Foundation Project Manager, speaks at the NUT Headquarters on World Teachers Day, October 2010. The NUT and its Associations across England & Wales have been very generous in supporting the Foundation through donations and spreading the word about our work.



Our partner schools in the UK have done some fabulous fundraising for the Foundation, along with great curricular exchange with our project schools in Nepal. West Derby School in Liverpool, raised £1230 for the Steve Sinnott Foundation by holding several fundraising events.



Gemoraw Kassa, Coordinator of The National Teachers Association in Ethiopia (Formerly the Ethiopian Teachers Association) with Foundation Director Mary Sinnott at the Ethiopian Community Centre event 2009.

WINNING TOGETHER



An event organised by the Ethiopian Community in London in 2009, to celebrate Steve Sinnott's life. Steve worked closely with the Ethiopian Teachers' Association in the defence of their rights and played a key role in the release of its President, Dr. Taye Woldesmiat, in 2002. Our Ethiopian friends have stood with the Foundation since it was established and continue support our cause.



At NUT Headquarters on World Teachers Day 2010. From left – Jo Bourne, Head of Profession for Education at DFID, Fred van Leeuwen, General Secretary of Education International, Kevin Courtney, Deputy General Secretary of the NUT, Sam Tiwari, Foundation Project Manager, Samidha Garg, Principal Officer NUT (Race equality and International relations), Gill Goodswen, NUT President 2010 and Nicola Cadbury, Coordinator Global Campaign for Education UK.

**To see the full list of our supporters go to
www.stevesinnottfoundation.org.uk**



Sam Tiwari receives the cheque from Tom at the assembly at West Derby School.

"Teacher Support Network is delighted to be a supporter of the Steve Sinnott Foundation." Julian Stanley, Chief Executive

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Street to School

Street Dance for Change

Shine online and help support the UK's neglected children

Around the world, insurance company Aviva teams up with charities and organisations which help children living and working on the streets. Through their Street to School programme, they aim to help 500,000 street children get back in to education or training by 2015 and in the UK, have partnered with Railway Children.

Railway Children fights for vulnerable children who live alone at risk on the streets, where they suffer abuse and exploitation. In the UK, society often denies their existence. These children run away or are forced to leave homes where they suffer poverty, violence, abuse and neglect. They find themselves living on the streets because there is nowhere else to go and no one left to turn to. The problems they face on the streets are often even worse than those they endured at home.

Raising funds and awareness for Railway Children's work in the UK, Street Dance for Change is an innovative digital campaign that uses hard hitting messaging to raise awareness of the issue of young runaways, whilst encouraging mass participation among young people to help other young people.

In support of the campaign, dance sensation and *Britain's Got Talent* winners Diversity have produced a short video of a street

dance routine – and they're calling on young people to help make it a viral hit. All they need to do is Like or Share our Street Dance for Change video on Facebook or YouTube.

And that's not the only way they can get involved. For youngsters aged 13 and above who reckon they've got a few fancy moves, there's the chance to upload a homemade street dance video of their own. By recording their own 30-second video and sharing it with their friends, not only will Aviva donate £2 to Railway Children every time it's viewed, the most viewed videos will be shortlisted for a chance to win tickets to Diversity's 2012 tour and meet Diversity themselves*.

This is a great chance for young people to help people of their own age, and to have some fun along the way. So come on – it's time to move those dancing feet!

Watch Diversity's street dance video
or upload your own at
www.streetdanceforchange.com



Street
to School



*Terms and Conditions apply, please see Aviva UK's Facebook page for more details

CWLLK0582 03.2011

aviva-street-to-school.co.uk