

ENGAGE

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Supporting Access to Learning Worldwide

The
**STEVE
SINNOTT
FOUNDATION**

"We are truly inspired by the mission of the Steve Sinnott Foundation and are happy to have been able to contribute to crucial areas of their strategy."

Hertfordshire University Students 2017

Foreword

I hope you enjoy this edition of ENGAGE which contains a variety of thought provoking articles from some different viewpoints

Reflecting on recent global events whether caused by political change, conflict or extreme climate serve as reminders that they can have seriously damaging effects on populations and especially on the young and vulnerable. Consequential impacts on access to education can then profoundly impact on young people's opportunities and long term futures

It is these circumstance that highlight the additional and enormous challenge of plugging the global gaps and ensure the correct support is given to enable access to education for all. Often the nature of that access is still being driven from a colonial legacy perspective and with little regard to cultural relevance.

Working the Hertfordshire university the Foundation is embarking on an exciting revision of its strategy. The involvement of students and tutors is producing a rich symbiotic engagement that will both challenge and develop the future work of the Foundation.



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This magazine could not be published without its designers and printers at Paragraphics and at Ruskin Press.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.

Front page:
Library & Learning Resource Centre Haiti

TES subscribers can read the full version of Anthony Harmers's article here: <https://www.tes.com/news/tes-magazine/tes-magazine/community-learning-key-post-brex-it-brit-ain>. For the latest news and views about the FE sector, visit www.tes.com/fenews"

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LOOKING FORWARD WITH RENEWED ENTHUSIASM

Fred van Leeuwen has been General Secretary of Education International, the unifying body for teachers' organisations worldwide, since its formation in 1993. In this major article written for ENGAGE, Fred sets out EI's three point challenge to regain the impetus of sustainable development



Next year marks 25 years of Education International. It is the occasion to celebrate the past and look forward with renewed enthusiasm. The achievement of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, and especially Goal 4 on education, was a milestone for our organisation. Our efforts to advance the education agenda succeeded. This was only possible due to the ongoing and unwavering support of our 400 affiliate unions and their 32.5 million members around the world.

However, recent political developments seem to be slowing down the implementation of the development program adopted by the UN two years ago. The "My country first" approach, which some key countries seem to have taken, represents a shift from the very challenges the world united around only a short time ago.

Central to creating a positive future are schools. They are home to education ecosystems, because quality education is more than just teachers and pupils. Schools are communities made up of dedicated professionals, from teachers to the vast team of education support personnel. Together they make learning possible and help to instil moral and ethical foundations for future generations. To see that quality education plays a leading role in creating a sustainable future, Education International has developed three major components we believe are required to get back on track and away from nationalist tendencies.

First, education systems must be recognised as the drivers that ensure our children have the knowledge and the tools to not only navigate both an increasingly warming climate and shifting political landscape, but to grow-up with an appreciation of both the world around them and of their fellow citizens. Simply rewriting text books is not

enough. The success of any change to a curriculum comes down to the teacher's ability and freedom to integrate it into her lessons and make it meaningful for her students.

A major component for systemic change and sustainability is financing. Governments globally are not meeting their funding commitments to education, and where they do make investments, these benefit the privileged at the expense of the most marginalised, effectively widening inequalities. Without government funded, free quality education and highly qualified, well supported and remunerated teachers and education support personnel, there is no chance of every child and young person getting the education they deserve.

Second, educators must be given both the professional space and the tools to include sustainable development, human rights and global citizenship in their lessons, and be able to adapt them to and live these values in their classroom realities. It is not possible to make sustainable development central to

teaching if valuable planning and collaboration time is wasted on helping students achieve a score on a standardised math test. Teachers must be given the freedom to teach, and education must return to a holistic approach and away from the zero sum game of dollars and cents, freeing teachers from oppressive tests which force them to only teach what is tested.

Finally, Education International's third requirement to making education central to a sustainable future is to build the actual curriculum required to do it. This is going to require more than just adding a chapter to a text book, a single lesson to the year. We are tasked with rethinking the entire curricula in order to make sustainable development, within the guise of global citizenship education, a component of all subjects.

By choosing the right method we can encourage the agency of students – not just things being described to them, but rather help students take action and create the opportunity to get involved. This is how change becomes tangible.





A NEW FUND, INNOVATIVE PROPOSALS, CONTINUING CHALLENGES

Priti Patel, the UK's Secretary of State for International Development, describes for ENGAGE her government department's commitment to working with and through UK NGOs and announces the new Small Charities Challenge Fund.

In a world of serious threats to UK and global stability, through pandemics, diseases, international terrorism, poverty and human suffering, Britain's leadership on the world stage is more important than ever. Britain's leadership is the difference between hope and despair in many of the world's most desperate places. Britain's leadership through UK aid is a badge of hope across the world and a crucial part of our global influence.

UK aid is built upon the partnerships, the skills, the expertise and the commitment to defeat extreme poverty of the British Government, British people and the incredible NGOs and charities who are dedicated to ending the suffering of so many around the world. Britain boasts what is surely one of the most vibrant and diverse civil societies globally, with charities who are deeply respected for their courage and commitment. The Department for International Development (DFID) is working to harness the dynamism, dedication and values they bring.

This is not just limited to the bigger names. Britain has an extraordinary number of small, grassroots charities who are highly valued and trusted by their local communities. These organisations draw upon an army of dedicated volunteers – thousands of people up and down the country who are passionate about doing good in the world. These are often the organisations that make some of the most direct connections with the people we are trying to help. However, in the past, most of these smaller charities have not had the opportunity to work with DFID. Until now.

DFID has been running a fund called UK Aid Direct since 2014, and before that we had the Global Poverty Action Fund (GPAF), which was created in 2010.

UK Aid Direct is designed to support the UK's commitments to achieving the Global Goals. The Fund has already benefited more than 11 million people, with more than 140 grants across 34 different countries. It has helped people like Pavitra, who was a migrant labourer in Nepal, and struggling to care for her son with epilepsy. Through Carers Worldwide, an organisation that receives UK Aid Direct funding, Pavitra was given a goat, giving her the means to start her own livelihood, and settle in the village with her son, where she can better care for and support him. This support for carers is vital in making sure they don't become isolated, which carries a high risk of developing anxiety or depression and physical ailments, as a direct consequence of their caring responsibilities.

It has helped children with learning disabilities attend school in Ethiopia, something they otherwise might have struggled to do. Through an Exeter Ethiopia Link project supported by UK Aid Direct in Wollega, seven young deaf people were given support, enabling them



to pass their grade 10 exams. As a result of their successes, the students were accepted to preparatory school in Nekemte helping them to shape a brighter future.

The fund has benefited many more people like Pavitra and the children of Wollega. Between May 2016 and April 2017 UK Aid Direct grants reached more than 1.6 million marginalised and vulnerable people across 22 countries. This work has resulted in:

- More than 30,000 supply workers trained to provide basic services.
- Nearly 1.3 million beneficiaries with an increase in access to basic health, education, water, sanitation and hygiene services or agriculture.
- More than 1.4 million people implementing a positive behaviour change in communities where UK Aid Direct-funded organisations are active.

UK Aid Direct funding enables smaller national and international civil society organisations to work towards reducing poverty. Specifically, this is reaching the most marginalised and vulnerable populations, achieving the Global Goal to 'leave no one behind'.

However, our support to civil society doesn't end there. The Small Charities Challenge Fund (SCCF) was launched on 5 July 2017. The SCCF is tailored to the needs of small civil society organisations, allowing them to represent a wide range of interests in development from across the UK. It will support and encourage organisations to scale-up and increase the reach and efficiency of their projects.

This is the first time DFID has set up a fund dedicated purely to smaller charities and I'm looking forward to welcoming exciting and innovative proposal ideas that I know these small organisations will have.

We face some of the greatest development challenges of the last 100 years, and I am proud that through UK Aid Direct and the SCCF, we are using all the tools at our disposal in tackling them.

EDUCATION: A YEAR FOR ACTION, NOT TALK

Kate Osamor is shadow Secretary of State for International Development in the UK. This makes her currently the chief political spokesperson for the opposition in the UK Parliament. Writing exclusively for ENGAGE, she calls for the UK to step up and lead the way for education.

Everyone has had that moment when education flicked a switch in your head. A moment when it unlocked your confidence and self-belief. For me, it came studying international development at the University of East London (UEL). UEL understood that those students who had different life experience – holding down a job, or raising a family – also had something special to offer. They helped diagnose my dyslexia, and helped me realise that this didn't need to be an obstacle. I realised that coming from Haringey and knowing what it was like to survive on a minimum wage topped up with in-work benefits would help me speak up for others when I did gain a voice.

Education can be truly transformative, and is a fundamental human right. But there are countless other reasons why education is important. For every year a girl is educated, her future income increases on average by 10%. If every girl in the world went to school for 12 years, low and middle income countries would add \$92 billion per year to their economies. Educated girls are less likely to marry young or contract HIV, and more likely to become leaders in their communities. In fact, there are few smarter investments that a country can make.

Unfortunately, not everyone gets to have that lightbulb moment from education. As Shadow Secretary of State for International Development, I think constantly about the global gaps that remain. 260 million children around the world will not receive an education. 100 million girls cannot read a single sentence. One in five adolescent girls are out of school. Education curricula are too often low quality, reinforce gender norms, or train children for jobs that don't exist.

What can we do about it? Well, there are countless barriers preventing education. But one clear thing that we in the UK can do right now is to fund it properly. The funding gap is significant: public spending on education in low and middle income countries, it is estimated, will have to rise from \$1.2 trillion to \$3 trillion by 2030.

By investing heavily in public education, the UK has long inspired other countries to spend more domestic resources on their own education systems. We have traditionally stood at the front of the donor pack, and been justifiably proud to lead the way. But after the proportion of bilateral ODA spent on education peaked at 13.5% in 2013, it subsequently fell year on year to just 8.5% in 2015. There has also been recent controversy over DFID's funding for BRIDGE International low-fee schools. DFID's support for low-fee, private schools run by for-profit businesses risks excluding entire communities on the basis of their ability to pay, and exacerbating social inequality. But the hope is that this is the exception rather than the rule, and the truth is that the UK



has historically played a crucial global role in building public education systems in recent years. Education is a basic human right, not a commodity, and we must not dilute our commitment to free, public, education.

In early 2018, donor countries will gather to replenish the Global Partnership for Education (GPE), a highly effective fund that leverages domestic investment in education. Civil society groups are calling on the UK to pledge significantly to the GPE, to boost our bilateral aid spend on education to 15% (and at very least 10%), and to step up investment in the Education Cannot Wait (ECW) fund providing education in emergencies. G20 leaders echoed many of these calls in July in Hamburg, and Parliament's cross-party International Development Committee wrote to Priti Patel in April urging that DFID increases its spend on education.

In the coming months, the UK has both a rare opportunity and also a responsibility to reclaim its proud heritage as a global leader on education. The UK is under the microscope, and we will be judged in the coming months not by the words we speak, but ultimately by the scale of our commitment. We have a rare chance to step up and truly lead the way. We must now make sure we take it.



IN NEED OF A RADICAL TRANSFORMATION

The jury is still out on phonics, but it's generally accepted that it has its place. Sir Alasdair Macdonald visited Ghana with Educators International to find it working there – but something else more radical is needed.

Sir Alasdair Macdonald is formerly head of Morpeth School in East London. He chairs the New Visions for Education Group in the UK.

At the end of May, along with my partner, I visited Ghana to review a project, PhonicsGhana being implemented by Educators International in some primary schools in the north of the country around Tamale and Walewale. The project has its origins in the very low levels of literacy being achieved in Ghana, particularly in the north. Assessment is unreliable but recent data suggests that at the end of their 3rd year in primary school only 2% of pupils are achieving the required standard. The reasons for this are many – we frequently heard that in attempting to reach the Sustainable Development Goal of universal primary education, insufficient resources are available to provide the necessary quality in teacher education. Class size is an issue with 50 being a small class. The northern region is far from Accra and the more developed areas of Ghana and suffers as a result. Teaching is not well paid, the career structure is very limited and headteachers are basically paid the same as classroom teachers with little or no accountability. And buildings are very poor with inadequate resources for learning.

However despite all of this Educators International (EI) believe that significant improvement could be achieved by using a Phonics approach to literacy. Traditionally pupils are taught 'their alphabet' and then expected to use this to read. PhonicsGhana are working in a limited number of schools but are also assessing pupil attainment in a control group of schools. We were part of a visit to one of these control schools and it was little short of heart-breaking to see these lively, well behaved primary pupils, eager to learn, but having a learning experience that was very, very poor – off any scale that we would recognise. The pedagogy was what one might have expected to read about in a Dickens novel. Pupils with 3 years of education could not read three letter words such as 'but'. It would be easy to blame the teachers but they have had very limited, if any, training and, as already noted, pay levels are very low. One piece of research (although this may be apocryphal) found that in terms of family income and earning power education 'added' a negative value.

We visited several Project schools and although the teaching practice was variable we saw some very good teaching and the phonics approach was clearly enabling more pupils to reach and exceed the expected levels. In real terms this might still appear low but in comparison with the control schools the project schools were achieving up to ten times the level of their non-project counterparts after only 2 terms. More testing is currently taking place and there is an expectation that the results may show further improvement. From the outset



Educators International have been determined not to replicate the model which is sadly so prevalent in the big international projects found all over Africa, epitomised by expatriate 'experts' driving around in large very expensive 4-wheel drive vehicles.

EI are using appropriate technology in particular non-Smart phones and an amazing hand held printer that they have developed themselves which is used to create the essential randomised tests. Using Apps that can be downloaded on to any phone the teachers can access a whole phonics programme. This still requires training and we also took part in a 2 day Professional Development session. Again it would be wrong to suggest that all of this was going perfectly but it was clear that the pupils' experience in the project schools was significantly better than that of their peers in non-project schools.

EI are showing that learning can be better but the big question is how do you take this to scale. EI have only 5 staff and they are at capacity. If this excellent project is to have real impact it will have to be taken up by the national Ghana Education Service. Ghana needs to own it and ultimately provide the quality control. From our experience this will require major change. The structure for the administration of the education system is still heavily based on the former colonial model and it felt on the basis of our very brief visit to be in need of a radical transformation. EI completely recognise the need for this change and are actively engaging with government at all levels. All the children of Ghana deserve to benefit from this programme.

NEW BEGINNINGS

Dr. Fran Martin is Senior Lecturer in Education at the University of Exeter. Her work describes how the legacy of colonialism lives on in the approach to educational development. It's a 'prison of the mind' from which liberation is vital.

I am a white, western, middle-class, native English-speaking woman whose own formal education was in fee-paying independent schools. I have been working in the education field since 1980. The first thirteen years were in the English primary schools, the last twenty-four years have been in higher education.

I state this because these positions all afford me privileges that are not available to many others worldwide, whether they are living in the West or not. They have also made me blind to those privileges which, until my work started to take me to The Gambia and Southern India, I saw as the results of my own efforts.

The Matrix film was based on what might seem a preposterous premise – that life on earth is governed and manipulated by a hidden matrix. Politically, people in the film appear to be free to go about their everyday business, but in reality they are controlled by a group of 'sentient, malevolent machines' who dominate and monopolize everything for their own gain (humans as an energy source for the machines). Socially, the film divides people into two categories – those who live within the matrix and are oblivious to its existence, and those who live outside the matrix and fight for the freedom of all.

The film provides a useful analogy for what South American theorists Enrique Dussel and Ramón Grosfoguel call 'The Global Colonial Matrix'. Colonialism divided the world according to a binary logic of either/or, creating categories and then setting the boundaries for who belongs to a category or not. The central classification was racial, and biological / scientific arguments were used to place white Europeans as civilized, democratic, superior beings in contrast to black Africans, Asians, South Americans and indigenous peoples who were positioned as savage, lawless, inferior and in need of modernisation and civilisation by Europe. This binary classification was a mask for the exploitation of the Global South for European gain.

In the film, one of the characters describes the matrix as 'a prison for the mind'. This idea

is replicated in those who argue that, although former colonies are now politically independent, the legacy of colonialism lives on through a continued 'colonization of the mind'. In other words, the binary logic that was created to justify colonialism is a logic that not only still exists, but dominates how we 'see' the world.

Education has become monopolised by a single vision/ideology. This vision is one where education (and thus the pursuit of knowledge) is seen as a commodity that has economic value, that can be 'sold' to the consumer (parents, employers) and the excellence of which can be judged through the imposition of universal standards. We see the application of universal standards, for example, in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD) Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA). We also see them in the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The OECD and the UN aim to improve education standards and access to education respectively. However, this has unintended effects.

PISA measures educational effectiveness on the basis of three areas of the curriculum: maths, literacy and science. Firstly, one could argue that this is a narrow view of what counts as valuable curriculum knowledge. Secondly, when the results are analysed based on subject (see the OECD website <https://data.oecd.org/pisa/reading-performance-pisa.htm>), the higher performing countries are mostly in the Global North while the lower performing countries are in Africa, South America and Indonesia. When results are analysed for equity within country, European countries perform well for gender and class differences, but badly for immigrant students.

In both cases – differences in attainment by subject, and differences in attainment by citizenship status – it is the colonial 'other' that fares worst. I have argued elsewhere that this is the result of a fear of difference or



'otherness'; a fear that monopolises UK society and finds expression in the way in which the SDGs are interpreted, whose interpretations hold sway and the effect this has on those who are not white, European.

In the achievement of SDG1, for example, quality education is equated with schooling, and the dominant model of what counts as school is based on western/European idea. In my current work with colleagues in Canada we are exploring this through the lens of cultural relevance and decolonizing pedagogies (Pirbhai-Illich, Pete & Martin, 2017).

Returning to the metaphor in the film, the matrix is a prison for the mind. Breaking free from this prison means to become aware that it exists and to be born into a new consciousness that was initially unimaginable, and from which moment life will never be the same.

New beginnings suggests birth. In birth, there is no predetermined idea of who that young child might become. There is now an understanding that it can be harmful to have a pre-set idea of what a baby boy or a baby girl might become based purely on gender. Categories such as gender and race have become recognised for the social constructions that they are.

Second point: new does not mean a break from the past. It means a break from the shackles of the past. In the baby there are elements of both parents, but the particular mix that is there along with the socialisation and enculturation processes the child will experience will create someone entirely new and unique. Could new beginnings for education be based on such a premise?

Acknowledgements: I would like to acknowledge the scholarship of Dr Fatima Pirbhai-Illich, Dr Shauneen Pete and Dr Deborah Osberg and their contribution to the ideas in this article.



INVESTMENT PARTNERS

Traditionally, the 'private' sector has been divided between commercial enterprise and charitable work with a gulf between them in how the different organisations approach their work and secure their objectives. Charities are often described as 'the third sector'. Whilst there are advantages for not for profit organisations in having their own clear identity, there can be negative effects, particularly when we're talking about education. Compartmentalising the Steve Sinnott Foundation's work as 'charitable' leans towards the idea that promoting access to learning in the global south is itself a matter of charity. That's definitely not the Foundation's message. Education is an entitlement for those who access it and an investment for the benefit of us all.

That message was immediately understood at the UK's Hertfordshire University. There, they have a philosophy of creating 'transformational experiences' for their students and they look for partners with new and creative ideas.

So together with two strategy tutors at the University's Business School, the Foundation has been working on an innovative consultancy project bringing the Foundation together with students from across different University schools. The tutors, Jana Filosof and Rachelle Andrews, have for a while been keen to find a way to use the skills and experience of students at the university to support organisations in the third sector. They understand how beneficial can be the introduction of business skills into the methodology of not for profit organisations. The Steve Sinnott Foundation seemed to them to be just the right kind of partner. Working with Foundation CEO, Ann Beatty, the idea for the project took shape for them as students began competing for a place on the consulting team.

The project has given students an opportunity to work on a live business issue, and to develop their confidence and skills. It has been exciting for the Foundation's team to see how effective it can be to engage with the ideas and enthusiasm of students, and very encouraging to see how these 'business' students are not motivated to seek opportunities for personal gain so much as the chance to make a positive contribution to development and growth.

The first stage of the programme has been completed and now a number of second stage projects have been identified to work with other student groups. The project is proving to be, as we all hoped a 'win-win' situation for students and for the Foundation.

Here are a few of the students' perspectives on the consultancy project so far.

"We are all students at University of Hertfordshire. We have different cultures and backgrounds. Our team consisted of students offering a variety of areas of expertise, innovation and a unique hands-on approach to the process. Creativity, determination and cooperation were evident throughout.

As a team we effectively sought to identify the needs of the Steve Sinnott Foundation by conducting meetings which aimed to understand



the Foundation's position and aspirations. Based on information obtained from the meeting we brainstormed and explored various ideas and then did further research on the main topics. A draft of the main topics was then sent to the Foundation Directors for their approval and to identify which areas they wanted us to further explore."

Individual statements:

• Angie Lieu

This project was appealing to me because it presented an opportunity to enrich my knowledge and skillset for personal development. It has offered an intellectually challenging environment that enhanced creativity and allowed for highly motivated and ambitious individuals to come together and work as a team.

• Disovankiri Boun

Growing up in Cambodia, a developing country, I got to know the value of having proper education. Without scholarships and funds, I would not be who I am today. I personally believe that everyone should have equal access to education and that was the main reason why I joined this team – hoping not only to give back to society, but also to solve the educational problem.

• Laura Hannula

Despite other commitments, I decided to join the project as it seemed very interesting both personally and professionally. I have previously volunteered with international educational projects (marketing, fundraising etc.), and thought my previous experience would be useful and I could also learn a lot during the process.

• Marta Trabal Gaspar

Having studied International Business Management and, currently a Business Psychology MSc where I was introduced into a whole module on consultancy; I saw the project as an unique opportunity to put into practise my knowledge and challenge my problem-solving and creativity skills.

• Shakira Forde

As a MSc Business Psychology student, I thought it important to gain appropriate hands-on work experience that would complement my degree. This process was quite an intriguing one as it truly challenged me and allowed me to recognize and utilize my strengths whilst building upon weaknesses. I will forever be grateful for this opportunity and I thank SSF for the faith and trust they placed in us students during this consultancy process.

And their summary: **"We are truly inspired by the mission of SSF and are happy to have been able to contribute to crucial areas of their strategy."**

PROJECT UPDATES

Learning Resource Centres

We are delighted to tell you that the Learning Resource Centre is now open, the library has been well stocked, student teachers are taking ICT lessons 3 days a week and we have 100 teachers starting their Certificate in Teaching in October. There is still much more to be done, we have been working with the teachers to draw up a list of resources that will support their curriculum and coming up with ideas for sustainability in the longer term.

You will remember from the last edition that scoping has taken place in Uganda and Nepal, we are on track to open the next centre in Nepal in 2018. We are now scoping centres in Sierra Leone, Ethiopia and the Gambia this year. We are looking for partners to establish them country by country, so please contact us if you can help.

My Life Changed Films

We were delighted to premiere the My Life Changed Series of films in March this year at University College London. Peter McCann kindly hosted the event and our colleague Billy Jean came from Haiti to share his story in person. The films show the positive power of education and give people a voice to tell their own story. We have been working on a resource pack to go with the films and we had great fun at NUT Young Teachers Conference, in June, working on ideas for developing this.

Education for All

Our annual Education for All Awareness day took place on the 30th June and the focus this year has been on "sharing Stories" We really enjoyed hearing everyone's stories, it was great fun. We believe that giving people a platform to share their own story is invaluable in fostering understanding of others. Everyone has a story to tell and we want to share your stories across the world to reciprocate learning and understanding of the lives we live.

Sharing Stories

The Foundation's sharing stories project provides the opportunity for children and educators around the world to share with each other stories about their lives, folk tales, rhymes, songs and dances, personal stories about what education means to them. It's all about profiling the values and successes of education, celebrating knowledge and learning of every kind and at every level. In this project every participant is equal. Every child and young person involved, anywhere in the world, has something of value to share, to be respected and admired.

People need safe spaces to be able to feel confident enough to share stories. We have been giving people a platform to tell their story, with their own voice and we have been sharing these stories to reciprocate learning and foster solidarity across the world and to campaign for Education for All.

We invite you to tell your own story. You may tell your story through many mediums: Spoken word, poetry, song, drawing, drama, Braille, dance, photos, video or collage and send it to us at admin@stevesinnottfoundation.org.uk

RAISING FUNDS

Without our generous supporters we could not carry out this vital work to achieve Education for All. Here's a snapshot of our enthusiastic supporters.

The Denham Divas are now singing for musical instruments for Haiti, Sahbi Benzid and Stanborough school have developed robotics kits for Haiti too. Nefa Nessa ran the marathon, Colin Powesland and Steve Ryan cycled 100 miles, Ingrid Khedun and Anne swam the Serpentine and Cardiff NUT did a sponsored walk. Thank you all for your generosity, stamina and kindness.

Our great team of Volunteers and Associates are always busy behind the scenes, making things happen.

Huge thanks too to our teacher organisation supporters in the UK, their local associations and branches and their local officers.

There are many ways to get involved and support our work, it doesn't have to be about stamina.

Regular giving is the best way to support our work whilst we are on our journey to sustainability for each project and the Foundation. It is non-restricted funds which enable us to plan ahead, to enable us to direct funds to where they are needed at the right time. Especially recently when there has been so many tragic disasters, having funds that we can send immediately to support teachers and students has been vital. Just £20 a month will provide training for a teacher in Haiti to obtain their teacher training certificate.

Become a friend of the Foundation with a regular **standing order** direct from the website or by downloading a form or requesting a form by email or post.

Donate through our website at www.stevesinnottfoundation.org.uk or simply texting **EDFA 16 to 70070**

Sign up you school to become a Steve Sinnott Foundation Education for All Awareness school

Sign up your school to sing and record our Education for All campaign song "A Better Place to Be" download the song from our website

Help with **teaching resources, lesson plans** etc to be supplied to schools through the Resource Centres

Follow us on our **social network** platforms and contribute your ideas and share our posts to help spread the word – details below

Join our **storytelling programme** and share tales about the positive power of education around the world

And much more whatever you can think of.....

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BRINGING DOWN THE BARRIERS – 10 YEARS ON

In 2006/2007 Steve Sinnott led the publication by the UK National Union of Teachers of *Bringing Down the Barriers*. It was not only a major policy statement, it set out Steve's own personal commitment to a system of teaching and learning accessible to all and capable of achieving his vision of education as the great liberator.

Angela Rayner MP is the UK's 'shadow' Secretary of State for Education, the leading spokesperson for education currently on the opposition side in the UK Parliament. Her personal story, written by Angela exclusively for ENGAGE, sends a message of hope and optimism to young people around the world about how education offers new beginnings.

Education wasn't a priority for me growing up. Coming from a working-class background and a low-income family, school for me was where I went to see my mates and escape from my parents. My mum always tried her best but, as she couldn't read or write, she couldn't help me with homework or read stories to me to encourage me to read.

Ironically, I suppose, it was when I left school at sixteen without any formal qualifications that my real education began. I was pregnant with my first son and was bluntly told that I would amount to nothing. With no space in my parents' house, I was facing what may sound like a new beginning: a new baby, a new home, but it didn't feel that way to me. For me it very much felt like an ending: an ending of childhood, of my school life and, according to many people round me, an ending of any prospect I had for a meaningful future.

It was a Government sponsored Sure Start centre that gave me a new beginning, a new beginning for me and for my son. It was there that I learnt about the essentials of parenthood beyond providing clothing, food and shelter for your child. I learnt about the benefits of reading to my son, of cuddling him and letting him know how loved he was. It may seem like common sense but it was life-changing for me. It wasn't that I didn't love my son, just like it wasn't the case that my mum didn't love me; I just needed some guidance on the best way to care for him emotionally and mentally, as well as physically.

It was through the Sure Start centre that I began to rebuild my confidence and shortly after my son's birth, I decided to train as a home help carer. Adult education through my local college was a lifeline for me, giving me a second chance to get professional qualifications. It was there that I was able to get the qualifications I needed, whilst availing of the free childcare provided by Sure Start.

I eventually started to work for Stockport council in that capacity and it was as a result of the council's attempt to outsource its own home help that I joined the trade union, Unison. Within a few years I was the convenor for the entire north-west, representing over 200,000 workers. In 2015, I was elected the first woman Member of Parliament for Ashton-under-Lyne and was the first home help carer to be elected to Parliament. Within two years, I was elected, appointed to the



frontbench and became Shadow Secretary of State for Education.

Education and its ability to offer new beginnings is something I am enormously passionate about and I believe that everyone should have that opportunity to forge a new beginning through education. It is why I am so proud of my political party's pledge to establish a National Education Service. Based on the principles of another great Labour government achievement – the National Health Service – the NES would provide lifelong education services, from cradle to grave, free at the point of use.

Abolishing tuition fees for university and reinstating maintenance grants for low-income students are part of this vision, enabling young people from less well-off families to go to university and to stay at university.

Education can also give us the best start, which is why governments should properly fund Early Years services. We need to recognise that patterns of disadvantage are already evident by age two so early intervention is vital. Yet education isn't just for children and young people: the opportunity to return to education is one that every adult across the UK should have. Like me, there are millions of people who can forge a new beginning through education, and a lack of money shouldn't be a barrier to that.

I know first-hand of the power that education can have and a good education is something that everyone in this country should have a right to pursue. It can be the beginning of a new chapter in which everything changes.

PROPERLY FUNDED, AUTONOMOUS AND WELL-STAFFED

Kevin Courtney is Joint General Secretary of the National Education Union in the UK newly created by a merger of the UK's National Union of Teachers and the Association of Teachers and Lecturers. As he embarks on an exciting new beginning, Kevin sets out his vision. For him there's no place for private profit in securing the right to education.

Education is an essential part of every individual's development, and not only in the academic, ready-for-work way currently favoured by government in the UK and advocated for many countries in the global south. School is a place for socialisation, for learning the interpersonal skills that will come to define how a child exists within society. That is why a properly funded, autonomous and well-staffed school is so important. It isn't just about test results, it's about the future of all countries.

Without access to a fully funded education system with well-paid, fully-trained teachers at its heart, too many children and young people miss out on the essential skills of learning that can provide them with a better future. I am passionately committed to ensuring that every child has a safe, supportive classroom in which to develop academically, socially, and mentally, with the space to fail and the freedom to explore.

In many parts of the world, access to education is limited and in some

cases simply unavailable. This has opened the door to private sectors who see the \$4.4 trillion market and wring their hands with glee. These enterprising businesses present themselves as philanthropic, solely interested in seeing every child achieve a good education at an affordable price. If this is their goal, however, they need only look at independent evaluations to see how short they fall. We owe it to our brothers and sisters in Kenya, Uganda, and Liberia, and across the world, to stop education being run for the benefit of shareholders' profits.

We, alongside our sister education unions and civil society groups will continue to work towards achieving a free state education that is universally accessible in every community, both in the UK and abroad. This is vital for achieving quality education for all and a better world. While we focus on Sustainable Development Goal 4, *to ensure inclusive and quality education for all and promote lifelong learning*, it bears noting that education is the foundation of all of the SDGs. Without education, we have no doctors to ensure good health for all, no politicians to promote good governance, no scientists to fight climate change. Global development starts with inclusive, high-quality, free, state education for everyone. We have to remember education is a human right and a public good – for the good of learners and society. Surely in 2017 this is not too much to ask our countries' leaders.



COMMUNITIES BUILT ON HOPE FOR THE FUTURE

Accessing quality education is not only an issue for 'global south' countries. It's an issue for diverse communities everywhere, even in countries where resources are relatively plentiful.

And it's not an issue limited to children's learning. It's about adult education too.

Anthony Harmer is Chief Executive of ELATT in one of the UK's most deprived and diverse areas. He has experience and advice to offer.

We are living in uncertain times. How will we address the national skills gap in future. How will we ensure that our society continues to flourish as open and diverse ?

For inspiration, I like to look to the people living and working in my local area, Hackney in East London in the UK. Hackney is proud of its diversity – our residents say so in every survey they answer. Two fifths were born outside the UK. We have established African, Caribbean, Turkish and East European communities, plus more recent migrants from Western Europe, Australasia and the USA. The largest Charedi Jewish community in Europe lives alongside Christians, Muslims, people of all faiths and none. As a musician, I love that many of Hackney's sons and daughters have contributed to our nation's cultural scene – surely a product of our borough's multicultural melting pot.

Of course, not everything in Hackney is perfect. It's one of the most deprived areas in the UK, with distressingly high levels of child poverty, below average employment rates, and job growth concentrated in part-time and low-paid work. Yet in my work at East London Advanced Technology Training (ELATT), a charity that has spent over 30 years tackling worklessness and poverty in the local area, I see what people of all backgrounds can achieve when we give them the tools to succeed.

Take Salma, a market research professional who came to Hackney after being forced from her homeland by civil war. At first, Salma struggled to find work in London, so she enrolled on an English language course at ELATT. Alongside her course, she got volunteering experience, developed her employability skills with the support of our partners in the business sector and later progressed to an IT qualification. Now she's working as an office administrator and looking forward to building her family's future in London. Stories like Salma's make me proud to work in adult education and determined to share the knowledge we have developed in our sector.

I firmly believe our experience of working with adults to develop their skills in a diverse environment is the way forward.

I'm convinced that social integration is fundamental to improving our society. Genuine community and workplace diversity combats negative stereotypes and builds social cohesion. ELATT has worked with thousands of migrants and refugees, and with their involvement and passion we have seen communities positively transform.



To do that, we need to invest in an adult skills sector that takes a holistic approach to learning. That means a sector that harnesses the great variety of talents in our adult learners, one that is inter-disciplinary and multi-skilled, that takes learners out of the classroom and into the workplace or community. Whether for long term unemployed adults or new migrants and refugees, skills development and social integration run side-by-side. Like many voluntary sector providers, our model of integration includes English training, basic and vocational skills, and community volunteering for adults. We believe that equipping refugees and their children with a range of English, digital, technical and work skills is the best way to prepare them to participate in the global marketplace.

And one more thing – adult learning should be fun. When the inspectors from the UK's Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED) came to ELATT, they were struck by the down-to-earth humour of our teachers and learners. It's no accident that they picked up on this. Communities are built on positivity, on laughter and on hope for the future. Now, more than ever, we should remember that.

To comment on this article, email
admin@stevesinnottfoundation.org.uk

A PROSPEROUS, DEMOCRATIC AND DIGNIFIED FUTURE FOR SIERRA LEONE

The Steve Sinnott Foundation has twice partnered with EducAid Sierra Leone in teacher development programmes and plans are now being developed to establish a Foundation Learning Resource Centre Sierra Leone there.

Erin Northey is EducAid's Chief Executive. Her optimism and enthusiasm are inspirational.

The start of the school year has always been a magical time for me, whether I was a student or a teacher; it was always an energising time filled with possibility and the prospect of new beginnings. This year, as the CEO of EducAid Sierra Leone, I have been eagerly awaiting the start of the new school year more than ever before, in order to witness the transformational power of education in a new way.

At EducAid Sierra Leone, our vision is an ambitious one with everything we do working toward a democratic, dignified and prosperous Sierra Leone where poverty is eliminated by educated citizens. Helping to rebuild a nation is a daunting task. Where does an organisation or a nation begin when trying to build a prosperous, democratic and dignified future? Education.

Education was an early casualty of Sierra Leone's devastating civil war (1991-2002). No fewer than 1,800 schools were destroyed or closed, hundreds of teachers fled the country and thousands of children were denied access to basic education. The country is still struggling to rebuild schools, train teachers and reach vulnerable girls and boys who have yet to see, or rarely have seen, the inside of a classroom. It is not an overstatement to say a generation of students has been lost, damaging the ability of communities to evolve and develop.

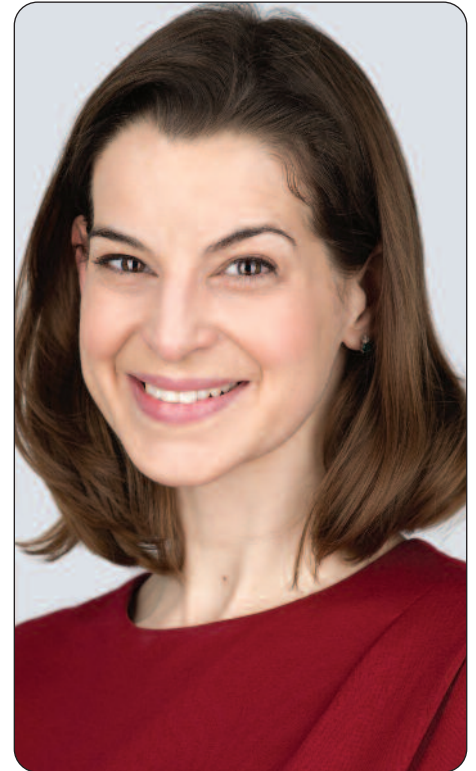
When thinking about education or the future, it is logical and obvious to focus on children. When those children in Sierra Leone lucky enough to have the opportunity to walk into a classroom, begin their educational journey, the responsibility for their learning is their own. They decide each

day to enter into that sacred contract bringing their full commitment to learning with their attendance, their behaviour and their effort. No one else can provide these things for them. This is the commitment they must make. Just last year, EducAid provided education for approximately 3,000 motivated, committed children who are the future of Sierra Leone. This is not enough.

Learning is dependent on teachers who understand, appreciate and know the material. Our students are incredible, but our teachers are what gives me the most hope that EducAid's vision of a democratic, dignified and prosperous Sierra Leone will be realised in my lifetime. One teacher has the power to inspire and affect many. I witnessed the power of teachers recently when visiting the Magbenteh Community School in a community ravaged by Ebola. The children at this school had struggled to get used to being in a classroom setting. I was warned that their behaviour was a bit different. What struck me most when visiting this school was how the pupils trust, respect and admire their teachers. How invested these teachers were in striving for excellence and new ways to inspire their pupils and present material. This is what makes everything possible and establishes a strong foundation for learning. I left confident that the rest will follow.

Reprioritising the training and development of teachers and redignifying the role of the teacher is essential if we are to truly move from aid to development. Teachers need to be given the tools to educate and inspire the next generation. EducAid's Quality Enhancement Programme works with communities in Sierra Leone to raise the standard of education with teacher training and also to establish a support network of teachers who can rely on one another going forward, empowering teachers to develop their craft, challenge their thinking and support one another in their continued development as professionals.

This is what excites me most. I have been so looking forward to seeing how this new generation of teachers establishes a



framework to transform not only their students, but Sierra Leone.

But after I wrote the first draft of this article we suffered another setback. The recent mudslide and flooding in Freetown took place near EducAid's Lumley school affecting staff and students. Many have lost everything. At the time of publication a number of EducAid students remain missing with 3 believed to be dead and 1 death confirmed. As a result of the generosity of individuals and the Steve Sinnott Foundation, EducAid has been able to support those individuals affected and make sure the school year begins on time as scheduled.

Yet my enthusiasm is undimmed. We're used to setbacks, and still keep our focus on what we know to be possible. The start of this school year will not just be a new beginning, but a testament to the resilience and commitment of EducAid's staff and students, as well as, the generosity of our supporters and partners.



BRIDGE OVER TROUBLED WATER

Evadne Bygrave writes songs. She wrote the Steve Sinnott Foundation's campaign song "A Better Place To Be" now being sung by children around the world to support access to learning.

She's also a teacher in London. She has her own memory of another song which fits her role as a provider of access to learning in troubled circumstances. Evadne is passionate about music. It is for her a universal learning tool.

I was never interested in school. I saw it as just a legal obligation and I couldn't wait to leave. It wasn't a bad experience, just very uneventful and boring. In fact, I don't even remember most of what I learnt at primary or secondary school level.

But I do remember my achievements; playing the lead role in the end of the junior school production and organising an international themed fashion and talent show during my time in sixth form. Unfortunately, I don't even recall any teachers that had an impact on my learning. But I remember the two who had an impact on my life.

Mr Starky from my primary school; he was just a lovely man who encouraged me to keep up with my piano lessons. Then there was Mrs White from secondary school. She was the wife of Snowy from the internationally famous rock band, Pink Floyd. She helped when I was going through a difficult time during adolescence, giving me some really positive and practical advice. She even invited a group of us to her home where we sang alongside Snowy, and his guitar, to 'Bridge over Troubled Water' and 'Brown Girl in the Ring'.

So why did I become a teacher?

I wanted to make a difference to the lives of the children in my community. This was partly inspired on my experience teaching whilst volunteering in Jamaica for a year. The children there had such a passion for learning though they had far less than many other children in the world. I wanted children to want to go to school, remember what they learnt in school and be passionate about education. I wanted every child, regardless of their background, race or religion to enjoy their time at school. It sounds like a bit of cliché, but it's still how I feel today after nearly sixteen years of teaching.

During my time as a teacher, I have taught children in some of the toughest schools in London, places where children look after each other because their parents have mental or substance abuse issues and find it difficult to be effective parents. As a result, the children take their anger and frustration out on the teachers; the very people who have their best interests at heart. I not only had to teach, but nurture, while finding



creative and effective ways to engage these vulnerable children in learning.

The reality of teaching is that children don't all learn in the same way and what might work for one child will not work for another. But I am passionate about music and in my experience it has been the universal learning tool for most children.

When I first started teaching, creative learning and performing arts played a major part in the curriculum and I took full advantage of this. In the first six years, I was drama, music coordinator and performing arts leader over 2 schools. I developed the curriculum across the schools to ensure the creative arts was featured in all lessons to maximise participation, engagement and enjoyment of all children regardless of ability, including SEN (special educational needs) and EAL (English as Additional Language) pupils.

Sixteen years on, I still teach, while writing songs to support the reading curriculum to engage children in one of the most important key skills they will ever learn. I now love learning and constantly looking for new and creative ways to teach. I want children, not just in the UK but all over the world, to have access to learning that enthuses and have them yearning for more. They should not have to wait until they become adults before they find the value and gratification that education has to offer. Learning is far too precious.

How to get in touch

Visit our website www.stevesinnottfoundation.org.uk for more information and regular updates. To find out how you can get involved in EFA Day or other activities contact Ann Beatty on ann.beatty@stevesinnottfoundation.org.uk

FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S DESK

Well, what a few months it has been since the last edition of ENGAGE. There has been much political mayhem, conflicts, floods, hurricanes and landslides across the world; we also experienced the tragedy of the Grenfell fire much closer to home.

At the Foundation we have been doing our best to support our colleagues and friends in these areas. It has given us pause for thought to reflect upon the impact of our work.

I still believe that education gives people choices, particularly when they are faced with changing circumstances beyond their control. When I was in Haiti recently after the second hurricane I was humbled at the resilience of our colleagues who were working on our Learning Resource Centre there despite having lost many friends, family and colleagues in the hurricane. We held workshops to develop resources and to discuss the future sustainability of the centre. I am very excited about the progress. We have 100 teachers starting their teaching certificate course on the 7th October.

The theme of this issue of ENGAGE is New Beginnings. This means different things to different people. It may be changing direction in your career and going back to learning in later life, it could be pursuing a life long passion which means pushing you outside your comfort zone and re-training, or, for some people, it could mean starting again from scratch because you have lost your home and everything you owned.

I recently heard Muzoon Al-Mellehan, Unicef's youngest Goodwill Ambassador, speak at an event. She talked about the challenges she faced as a refugee in Syria, of her time in refugee camps. She told us that education gave her hope. Muzoon has done a great deal to let the world know about what is happening in Syria but she has now gone on to campaign for all children across the world to access quality education and other basic human rights. I was inspired by

her call to action, "Change in education must start today as tomorrow is too late".

I have been privileged this year to hear the stories of many people overcoming challenges and recounting what education has meant for them. It has been an important part of our work that we give people a voice to tell their own story. We launched our "My Life Changed" films in March and they really brought home to me the positive power of education. We are continuing our "Sharing Stories" project over the next year. Please keep sending us your stories and sharing the positivity.

As part of our work giving people a voice to tell their own stories, we have played a pivotal role in the Steve Sinnott Young Ambassadors award this year. This award is part of the Send My Friend to School Campaign organised by the UK consortium of organisations under the Global Campaign for Education banner. In the past the award has enabled UK students to travel to a developing country and speak about their experiences on returning to the UK. The Foundation put forward a proposal to flip this around and we will be hosting 2 Young Ambassadors from the Gambia in late September. These Steve Sinnott Young Ambassadors will be campaigning here for UK investment in education and sharing what life is like in The Gambia with young people in the UK. They will then continue to campaign for Education for All after their return to The Gambia.

Despite progress there are still some 263 million children in the world who do not go to school. We are continuing to work towards the goal that all children, whatever their circumstances, will have access to education. I hope you will join us to help achieve this.



UNESCO ASPnet

The Steve Sinnott Foundation acts as the UK co-ordinator for the UNESCO Associated Schools Project Network. In this scheme, schools run projects working around one or more of the four ASPnet study themes:

1. The role of the United Nations System and World Concerns
2. Peace, Human Rights and Democracy
3. Intercultural Learning
4. Sustainable Development.

Schools are encouraged to devise their own projects with help and support from the UK National Coordinator and to link study themes into their curriculum.

Schools are required to update the UK National Co-ordinator about their activities annually.

Benefits to schools can include:

- Raising the profile of the school in its community
- Increasing student attainment through a new learning experience
- Embedding UNESCO values into their school curriculum via citizenship, politics, history, geography and languages
- Extending students' knowledge of the United Nations and other international



UNESCO Associated Schools

institutions. Model UN General Assemblies are encouraged.

- Linking with schools in other countries through ASPnet
- Encouraging active global citizenship and broadening international understanding for students and teachers, so helping to build a better future for the planet.

We've a special email contact for this. It's unescoasynet@stevesinnottfoundation.org.uk. To find out more about the scheme visit www.unesco.org.uk.

GET INVOLVED

Whether you're a cyclist, a runner, a swimmer, a speaker, an organiser, an educator or an idealist - there are so many ways to get involved with the work of the Steve Sinnott Foundation!

we're waiting for you at
www.stevesinnottfoundation.org.uk

or call us now on

01923 230208

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