

ENGAGE

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Supporting Access to Learning Worldwide

The
**STEVE
SINNOTT
FOUNDATION**

"Education is simply the soul of a
society as it passes from one
generation to another."

Samuel Langhorne Clemens (Mark Twain)



Foreword

It is timely that ACCESS is the theme of this edition of ENGAGE. The articles show a range of perspectives that starkly remind us of the barriers that exist for many just to access even the limited education provided. They demonstrate layers of inequality within the already unequal global provision of education.

The Foundation is proud to be associated with projects that enable access, enhance capacity and provision. However, we are fundamentally committed to ensuring that education is of quality that also comes with a political determination to properly fund and develop.

Equally, the Foundation is careful to ensure that due diligence is carried out on all its projects and engagements to ensure that its funds are only used to benefit those teachers and pupils to whom the project is directed.

As we enter the final year of the first decade of the 21st century we recognise the scale of the task ahead but we do so with a renewed determination to make a difference.

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This magazine could not be published without its designers and printers at Paragraphics and at Ruskin Press.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 cover: © Jay Gurung

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HOW MANY DOCTORATES DON'T EXIST?

Peter Kyle is the Member of the U.K. Parliament for the constituency of Hove in the south of England. Here is his own personal story of breaking down barriers to access the opportunities he believes everyone deserves.

For the first time there are more middle class people in the world than poor. One of the attributes of being middle class seems to be the ability to get systems and services to work in your favour, bend towards your needs.

But for too many people in Britain and beyond, public services aren't waiting with arms outstretched waiting to serve, they are doors that are slammed in the faces of those who need it the most.

For me this is personal.

I went to a state school in the coastal town of Bognor Regis on England's south coast. It was the 1980s and I really struggled. I only found out later in life, but I am acutely dyslexic. At the time my education authority didn't even recognise dyslexia so I was sent to a doctor who made me wear a weird wooden thing on my head for an hour in the evenings. Needless to say, it didn't help much.

I fell out of school with no usable qualifications and into a job I loved with a boss who gave me the mentorship I was crying out for. In my mid-twenties, she was the first person in my life to suggest I go to university. I'd never before even considered it, it hadn't even flickered across my mind.

So I applied to Sussex University, and was rejected. Of course I was – I didn't have the

qualifications I needed to even get to the start line when it comes to higher education. So at the age of 25 I returned to my old secondary school and started over. For a year I sat in class with teenagers and a year later passed the exams I needed. And then I was rejected again! It was my third attempt that finally broke open the doors for me.

Anita Roddick, co-founder of The Body Shop, was my mentor. She was the first person to really guide me through life. But Sussex University was first institution to play that role for me.

Seven years later I left, the first in my family to have an 'A' Level, a degree, and remarkably, a doctorate too. The world I re-entered was one with infinitely more possibilities.

These days I never forget what it took for me to break open the doors to education. When I look out at a group of people I ask myself, how many doctorates don't exist because young people didn't go back for a second chance? How many businesses aren't operating because someone gave up at the first rejection? And how many people from my background aren't MPs because they didn't persist?

The barriers I needed to break down to get an education, even in England, were immense. I know different but similar barriers exist the world over. We shouldn't rely on the



persistence of young people to overcome them, young people deserve better. They deserve a system that is hungry for students with the right aptitude and energy, regardless of background.

The squandered talent across our planet is a tragedy. People are out there with unimaginable gifts but don't have the key to unlock it. This simply must change and is my driving mission in politics. We owe it to millions of young people to get it right the first time, but to our global society too.

EDUCATION LEADS TO LIBERATION



Owain James, Director of the Kailash Satyarthi Children's Foundation in London, calls for an increase in 'political will' to ensure education for all is achieved.

To answer the question why education is important I just think about someone I know – a family member or a friend and ask how different their life would be without it? If they never learnt to read or write – what job would they do, how would they be able to take medicine or manage bills or look after their family? Without an education their whole future would be different, their whole experience of life would be different. If they were living in a country with little welfare support and no social security safety nets, how much harder would it be?

When it is whole communities or groups of young people that are denied a quality, appropriate education, the impact is catastrophic. For young women, every year of schooling missed increases the likelihood of early and forced marriage and entrenches inequality. It even decreases their future children's life expectancy. Yet if every girl in a community completes secondary school, it breaks the cycle of illiteracy forever as literate mothers do not bring up illiterate children. As Steve Sinnott himself told me – education is the great liberator. It is one of the best solutions to discrimination and inequality and can give every boy and girl at least a chance in life.

Universal Education is also better for all of us. When everyone is learning it boosts economic growth – more than paying for itself within a generation. It reduces inequality and conflict, enhances democracy and leads to a more stable future for all societies. All our children will have better future if the most marginalised young people are able to realise their right to a quality, free public education.

So the answer is clear on the importance of education for all but the crucial question is can it be achieved? The simple truth is yes if enough of us act. We have the solutions and tools to make it a reality – what we don't yet have is enough political will. Quite simply our society doesn't care enough about the lives of over one hundred million children who we share the planet with. As Nobel Peace Laureate Kailash Satyarthi puts it – if we can educate 9 out of 10 children in the world, it surely must be possible to educate the 1 out of 10 that are missing out.

This is why the work of the Global Campaign for Education (www.campaignforeducation.org) and the 100 million campaign (www.100million.org) is so important. If enough of us stand together and ensure that our voices are heard loud and clear, governments and decision-makers will be forced to listen. We must not let another generation of children live and die without access to schooling, we must achieve education for all.

We want to say a MASSIVE THANK YOU to all our supporters and donors. This year we have received 2 legacies and we have had people riding the Prudential 100, running, walking, sharing stories, baking cakes and running raffles to raise awareness of our work and raise funds.

Maybe you would like to become a friend of the Foundation for a regular monthly or a one off donation. If you do, tear off the back page and fill in your details now!

It doesn't matter how big or how small your support every pound makes a difference towards achieving Education for All.

A special thank you to all our supporters this year, we couldn't have done it without you. If you fancy a challenge to help us celebrate our 10 year anniversary in 2019, please get in touch and share your ideas with us.

Ann and all the team

"I CANNOT LEAVE YOU MONEY, BUT..."

Formerly General Secretary of the Association of Teachers and Lecturers, **Dr. Mary Boustead** is now Joint General Secretary of the UK's new teachers' organisation, the National Education Union. Here, writing exclusively for ENGAGE, Mary shares her personal commitment to children's education and its vital importance to a healthy society

Why is the education of children so important?

Education is the foundation of a nation's civilisation. Education provides the means by which nations invest in their most precious resource – their children and young people. Education enables nations to fulfil the key responsibility from one generation to the next – providing the means whereby children and young people acquire the knowledge and skills to become citizens in all the senses of that word, repaying to society what it has invested in them in their childhood.

Children have only one childhood. Adolescents get one shot at rejecting (whilst secretly being utterly reliant upon) society and all that adults have to offer. Children and young people need protection from the worst excesses of the vagaries of modern economies; the cycles of the ups and downs in the economic cycle and the mistakes made by their elders.

Adults enter into a covenant with the young. They tell them that whilst they are not able to decide what family they are born into, whether rich or poor, still as future citizens of the society, they will all receive an education which will equip them to become successful in their working and in their personal lives. As my father, a primary school head teacher, used to say to each of his eight children – I cannot leave you any money – but I can leave you with the means to earn and live a good life – I can ensure that you get a good education.

Nations which invest properly in their schools and colleges find the rewards reaped in higher productivity at work, and happier, more fulfilled citizens. Some stark statistics from the U.K. make this point clearly: Children and young people who miss out on education are far more likely to end up incarcerated. 85 per cent of all young people who come into contact with the UK's juvenile court system are functionally illiterate. So are 60 per cent of the prison population. Inmates have a 16 per cent chance of returning to prison if they receive literacy help – as opposed to 70% who return to prison if they get no help in learning to read.

So investment in education reaps rewards in individual lives and in a nation's productivity. Education enables societies to counter division and inequality. Education promotes the sense that 'we are all in it together'. When young people feel that they are not being invested in (either through their education, or through their hopes for the future) then societies become more unequal, more divided, more dysfunctional and less resilient.



On this measure (the measure of a good society) in the U.K. we are not doing well at all. Our children are more unhappy than ever before. The rate of children and young people's mental ill health is rising exponentially as anxiety and the loss of hope for the future affects young people's hopes and confidence for their future. It depresses their sense that, when they become adults, they will be able to have good work, secure jobs, own a home and be prepared well for a society where there will be few, if any, jobs for life as the age of automation, if not fully upon us now, approaches fast.

Investment in education enables children and young people to recognise that they are valued. They need well resourced schools and colleges, in good structural condition, with adequate resources and with well qualified teachers, to receive their birthright as a future citizen – which is the best that a nation can offer it future. The shame is, that education cuts take this future away from our young – and this is, as my devout Catholic father told me, without doubt, a great sin.



ACCESS DENIED? REACHING REFUGEES

Johnny Sattin, Loan Programme Officer at the U.K. charity RefuAid, shines a light on a problem not often appreciated and describes the solution his organisation provides.

RefuAid was set up in 2015 by Anna Jones and Tamsyn Brewster after a volunteer trip to Lesbos. For 18 months we worked on healthcare, housing and education programmes in Greece, but in 2017, as the situation evolved, we shifted our focus to issues facing refugees in the UK.

Many of the asylum seekers and refugees RefuAid supports had a career previously or were on track to pursue higher education. As refugees, access to education is one of the first things to be denied in their new community, mainly because of the language barrier. The government does offer language assistance, but classes are often only 4 hours per week and do not go up to the level needed to work in a professional environment or study at university.

As a result, despite being highly qualified, many refugees end up in 'survival' jobs in the service industry, or are unable to find any work. We don't believe that is fair. It is also a big loss for the UK not to use the wealth of experience and talent that refugees bring with them. In this instance, education – or re-education – offers a lifeline.

We identified three key barriers to access for refugees with leave to remain, trying to restart their life in the UK: finance and re-qualification, language tuition and specialist employment advice. Our solutions have proved both successful and sustainable.

We partner with British Council-accredited language schools to provide cost-effective language education for those who are seeking or have been granted asylum in the UK. The Programme provides up to 32 hours a week of intensive English language support, funding for the exams needed to access universities or employment, as well as travel expenses and course materials.

For R.M. from Syria, now studying medicine at Barts in London, 'the experience in Wimbledon School of English was... among the most influential and beneficial experiences of my life. I was very lucky to have been allocated a place in WSE. I guess this makes RefuAid even greater, as not only do you guys offer help with English courses, but you are doing so in the best schools.'

There are many reasons why education is so important for these people. Having a class to go to gives them a safe place, a structure and something to do. At school they can escape the label 'refugee' and just be a student like the rest of their classmates. Longer-term, the Language Programme allows people to access higher education and employment opportunities commensurate with their skills and

capability. And that, in turn, allows them to participate more fully in their new communities and ultimately contribute more to society. Language education stops them being held back long-term by their forced displacement.

In September 2017 RefuAid launched the first (and only) nationwide loan scheme for refugees. We offer interest-free loans of up to £10,000, for refugees with full rights to remain and work, to pay for UK accreditation, requalification or training. The aim, through education, is to enable them to return to employment in their prior professional fields. Loans are assessed on a character basis, harnessing the power of human relationships to provide lifelines to individuals who have no alternative access to credit.

A project that emerged in the absence of sustainable, practical and successful initiatives facilitating equal access to education for all has now begun to gain momentum. Our mantra is simple: access to education and employment promotes integration in communities across the UK. This is the only way to help refugee integration, and promote equal access to education more generally.



LET ALL CHILDREN HOP, SKIP AND JUMP

Ken Banks has spent his career working in global conservation and development, exploring the ways to use technology for social good. Ken who is now Head of Social Impact at London based technology company Yoti reflects on how access to education is instrumental in expanding horizons and how it should be the right of every child.

I first met Justice Kabango in August 1993. I was in northern Zambia on my first overseas aid trip, helping build teaching accommodation for a village school. In an attempt to keep his sons there, Justice held down three jobs after the death of his wife a couple of years earlier. He realised how critical an education was for them, and I admired the commitment to his children's future. We kept in touch after I left, and I regularly sent him money, paint and other materials (he was an accomplished artist). Less than two years later he passed away himself, and I inherited his dream of an education for his children, raising money to cover their school fees for the next few years. Thankfully they all made it through, and today they are thriving.

Recognising the importance of an education – among students, parents and teachers – has been a common theme throughout the three decades of my career in global development. Almost all of the children I've met have been desperate to learn, walking for miles to get to school if they had to. Their parents had gone the extra mile themselves, holding down multiple jobs and stretching finances in ways I could hardly fathom in order to make ends meet. More recently, during an assignment for CARE international in Malawi, I was reminded of the passion for education in places where it was likely the only route out of a life of hardship and struggle. Teachers worked against the odds with few resources and little salary in dilapidated school buildings, but they were there and doing what they could. It was an inspiring and depressing trip in equal measure. Education is hard in these places, for parents and teachers alike – but we know it's worth it.

As you can imagine things were very different

in Jersey where I grew up. Although I feel guilty about it now, like many of my friends my appreciation of and commitment to education was far lower despite it being handed to me on a plate. A challenging childhood didn't help, but mine was nothing compared to other children I've since met in places like Zambia, Malawi and beyond. On reflection the biggest challenge I had wasn't a reluctance to learn – I learnt a lot – but the fact that most of the things they measured at school were the things I was least good at. I was a creative child, good at writing and



poetry. And probably because of that my one abiding memory of school was a teacher called Kenneth King.

Mr. King was my English teacher at secondary school, most likely the single biggest influence on me throughout all of my years in school. And the reason he is held in such high esteem is that he simply believed in me, encouraged me, supported me. I don't remember a single thing he taught me that you might ask in an exam. But thanks to him, my writing (and love of writing) developed, making me a much more effective communicator in later life. My two published books are testament to that, and a testament to him and his belief in me.

The new beneficiaries of my passion for education are my children. Like me, they are surrounded by books, encouraged to ask impossible questions, taught that learning can – and should – be fun. I am not saying that our local primary school is the best. I know it has its fair share of funding and staffing problems. But the one thing that matters most to me is another thing the education establishment doesn't seem to measure. My children hop, skip and jump to school, smiles on their faces. They love school in ways that I never had the chance to, and for that I am grateful. But, of course, school is only one part of it. I will do my best to support my children as they learn the way society deems they should, but give them every opportunity as they develop out of it.

What a wonderful world we would live in if all children had the chance to access quality education, for them to 'hop, skip and jump' their way to school. To afford them the possibility of being effective communicators and helping them make sense of, and further develop their understanding of, the world around them. All children deserve this equality of opportunity. Imagine what benefits the world would reap if everyone did.



I CAN SEE THEIR CONFIDENCE SOAR EACH AND EVERY DAY – THAT’S INVALUABLE

Michael Stark (Trustee) and **Mandekh Hussein**, (Associate) are with Educators International, a UK organisation driven by a passionate belief that every child and young person in the world should get a decent education, including as an absolute minimum acquiring the ability to read, write and understand number.

Access to education was never simply a matter of gaining access to facilities in our case – but a matter of creating opportunity for growth, innovation and imagination for all involved. It was about breaking down barriers to learning English (a critical tool for opportunity in many countries) and in turn, actively supporting the development of a more equitable future.

In July of 2018 the Steve Sinnott Foundation joined Educators International on a fascinating visit to Colombia. The purpose was to continue the support of their active programme in Bogota and Barranquilla – called PhonicsByPhone. This community driven intervention involved training teachers in 33 Colombian schools to teach English more effectively through the use of technology and prescribed pedagogy.



So why English – doesn’t Colombia speak Spanish? Yes – but those people who speak only Spanish are at severe risk of being marginalised. English is a mandatory subject on Colombia’s national curriculum from the age of 7. Yet the vast majority of children get effectively no English lessons – because their teachers don’t speak English themselves! So at early years and primary level, in less wealthy schools, the cycle perpetuates itself. The better jobs, especially in commerce and tourism, require English. But in recent years, students learning quality English were the very wealthy (attending private and bilingual schools) – further embedding socio-economic divide. By its accessible nature, PhonicsByPhone in Colombia aims to disrupt this cycle by making English an accessible tool for further opportunities.

During this visit, Ann Beatty (Chief Executive) joined professional trainers from Educators International for a two-week visit to schools already part of the programme in two major Colombian cities: Bogota and Barranquilla. This was the first visit since the initial training in February and already, the impact that the programme has had on the students, the teachers and their families was evident. Not only were there stories of great successes and impressive results on the part of the students, but the teachers themselves, many who were learning English as they taught!

And while the photos over Whatsapp may have highlighted the incredible transformations within the classroom, it was in the visits to the schools and with the community that highlighted the impact that this programme had on all those involved. We met parents who supported their children learning phonics



through parent groups run in the school; teachers who would use the activity techniques to increase the confidence of children who have experienced trauma; and neighbouring schools passionate to learn from their peers in implementing this in their own schools! To date, we have over 700 students across 3 major cities (the other being Cartagena) led by passionate teachers determined to break this cycle of inequity – and we aren’t looking to stop!

PhonicsByPhone is a cost-effective and scalable programme that has proven capable of changing lives on a considerable scale. Importantly, it relies on local leaders to spearhead its success – which is arguably why this has worked so incredibly well in Colombia. Teachers, school directors, parents and community members have passionately taken ownership of this accessible tool in order to ensure that their children have a fighting chance in accessing greater number of opportunities in the future. From the pockets of the teachers, we will continue to ensure that education is the key to reducing (if not totally eliminating), inequity.

PLEDGING SUPPORT

Hertfordshire University Executive MBA students are giving valuable practical support to the Steve Sinnott Foundation and looking forward to a long term relationship.

As part of the Hertfordshire Executive MBA degree, when we were asked to support a community project, we were all in agreement that we wanted to support a non-profit sector organisation which is making a big difference. The Steve Sinnott Foundation caught our attention as an organisation with empowering and collaborative approaches to supporting international educational and social projects. We were all excited to get involved with this charity in an effort to make a difference. Our Project team is led by **Mr Venkat Narayanaswamy** who is a Consultant Obstetrician in Southend Hospital. Other members are –

Dr Godwin Simon, Consultant Physician,

Alain Nyama, Assistant Finance Director,

Jay Menon, Consultant Surgeon.

Oluwakemi Odubanjo, Ward Manager,

Osler Ward, at Basildon and Thurrock University Hospital,

Tendai Murowe and **Clare Williams** both at Hertfordshire County Council, and

Jide Kehinde working at King's College Hospital, London.

Coming from varied backgrounds with a wealth of experience and mixed skills set, we are confident that we can support some of the current needs of the Foundation. Ann Beatty, CEO of the Foundation told us about some of the challenges we could assist with and we thought about where we could be most effective.

We have agreed to design and implement a



suite of databases which will be GDPR compliant, to support the organisation to make the maximum use of their time and ensure data is managed effectively and efficiently. For example, we will design a database to manage and simplify the financial information for the organisation and a database to manage supporters' information and provide a mail merge facility so that the news letters which are sent out to over 5000 subscribers can be mailed with relative ease.

Our initial meeting with Ann Beatty, was very inspiring. We were moved by Ann's passion and her simplicity. We are determined to make Ann's life and her colleagues' lives easier. Ann told us that her team are passionate and committed but the lack of systems and the lack of funds to invest in the right technology are the fundamental need at this moment in time. The Foundation is taking on new projects

and areas of work, and it is essential to put the right systems in place so reporting can be accurate and simplified.

The project team also has plans to visit the charity's office in the near future and we hope that we can provide the technical know-how and help in other areas also. Our plan is to get to know the charity better and we feel that our association with the Steve Sinnott Foundation is going to continue following completion of our current MBA project. We hope that we can get involved with some of the current or future projects with the Foundation and help in our own little ways to make a big difference. Other students on the course are supporting work in local book shops, with therapeutic and counselling projects and other local enterprises set up to make a difference to vulnerable people or individuals whose needs are overlooked.

A KIND OF LIBERATION

Norma Rita Guillard Limonta is a Social Psychologist, Afrofeminist, Communicator and activist of the issues of racial discrimination and struggle against homophobia. An advisor to the Cuban Society of Psychology and a pioneer for education. Here is her inspiring account of meeting the challenges of bringing about change.

"Literacy" came to Cuba in 1961. It was the "Year of Education", the fulfilment of a dream of the Latin Americanist and teacher José Martí. Jose marked the road to Cuba's independence with his words where "Being educated is the only way to be free". What has been achieved is one of the greatest feats of the Cuban people.

Fidel Castro made his commitment to the fundamental reform of Cuba's education system in his plea of self defence during his trial following the attack on the Moncada Barracks in 1953. He promised to reward teachers who he described as "the soul of education" and he quoted Martí in support of his cause.

Cuba's army for education in those times was an army without weapons loaded with paper, pencils, books and lanterns carried by young people and teenagers. They were educators from the cities called on to carry to all the agricultural areas of Cuba the light and food of teaching. Their slogan was "Every man to come to earth has the right to be educated and then in payment the duty to contribute to the education of others."

I was aged 14 years. I was one of the 105,000 literacy girls and young women who wanted to participate in that great movement that moved so many young people to join the so-called "Conrado Benítez Brigade" and to become teachers.

I will never forget my experiences which began at the moment of filling out the form. Many of us suffered conflicts and difficulties over family disapproval because of our age and their fears of risk and separation. Also in those days we were having to deal with frequent US interference seeking to impede the projects of the Cuban revolution. Luckily my parents did not let themselves be influenced by these stories. They did not stand in the way of myself and my sister to join the program.

I spent my training in Varadero, Matanzas, a beach area of wonderful houses the like of

which I had never seen before. With my younger sister and friends from my neighbourhood we enjoyed entirely new experiences. Many of us had never been on a beach with the sand so fine and the sea so blue. Some of us did not even know how to swim. Together, we shared great emotions whilst we worked on gaining mastery of the literacy primer "Venceremos" and the instruction manual "Alfabetemos", which we were given together with notebooks and pencils.

Learning from teaching was a magical experience for us. As we began our new life, we were peasants. We had worked in the dark due to the lack of light, we had cleaned ourselves without baths in the house, we used to wake in the mornings ready to go to pick coffee. Our meals were whatever could find and our clothes were only those suitable for the kind of work we did and to avoid the bites of bugs and wasps, etc. Now we had to learn so many new things, new ways and new experiences.

I am from Santiago de Cuba, a city way out to the east of our island. My first placement was in the Finca L'expois in the area of Aguacate, near Ramón de las Yaguas, in Guantánamo, very far from my house and in the countryside. My sister was placed away from me. My mother visited her frequently but was unable to visit me.

The first days in the field were not good. I had been assigned to a nice house that had an electric plant and light all day, but when the people there saw that I was black, they did not want me and then I had to face a very hard reality without furniture or bathrooms and with limited meals. They placed me in the house of José María Pérez a Spaniard who lived with his wife Nora a black woman and three small children. It was a wooden house with a guano



roof, dirt floor and no electric light. I also felt the separation from my sister and from the new friends acquired in Varadero. The houses to which they were assigned were separated and distant from each other.

But we all worked to teach. We taught the meaning of words and the value of being, we gave the light of knowledge and our students responded to us with much more than that. They grew to become independent women and men. We learned how to create a society with knowledge and, as we did so, to develop ourselves in different environments and above all to put solidarity into practice.

Literacy was a kind of liberation that confronted me with new realities, knowledge that created strength. I left my home to travel many miles to face alone a challenge of a role of great responsibility. I was a young girl teaching adults. I did meet some resistance as I sought to change established habits and customs but I too learned a lot. I succeeded not only in giving literacy to seven people, but also, I had for myself the achievement of growing up in a difficult environment. I was able to lose many of my own fears. It was a lesson that serves me well even today.

LINGUISTICS' ROLE IN THE RIGHT TO EDUCATION

Professor Michel De Graff is Professor of Linguistics and Philosophy at Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Director of MIT-Haiti Initiative. The MIT – Haiti Initiative is a project funded by the National Science Foundation for the development and dissemination of active-learning resources and methods for science and mathematics in Haitian Creole (Kreyol)

In primary schools across the world, 40% of students must learn all academic subjects, including how to read, in a language that they do not speak fluently (1). Excluding students' native languages from the classroom leads to academic failure for hundreds of millions of children throughout the world (1), contributes to their communities' socio-economic underdevelopment (2), and violates their human rights (3).

Postcolonial communities in the Caribbean, Latin America, Africa, Asia and the Pacific are most likely to subject their students to instruction in a non-native language (4). This correlation is not an accident: The exclusion of noncolonial languages in education is one of the most insidious tools of classed based and geo political power struggles in colonial and postcolonial societies (5). In Haiti, for example, French is spoken fluently by no more than 5% of the population (6), whereas Kreyol is spoken by virtually everyone. Yet French is the primary language of formal education. This language barrier has handicapped generations of students who speak only Kreyol and has contributed to Haiti's status as one of three countries with the highest levels of inequity in the world (7).

Hawaii can serve as a model for a way forward. Hawaii has a successful language immersion program with high enrolment of indigenous children whose first language is Hawaiian (8). Through recent legislation that strengthens education in noncolonial languages (9), the United States is expanding language immersion and dual language education to include Native American and other minority languages (10). These models could be extended to communities worldwide. One crucial step is to develop high quality active learning methods and resources for teaching in every student's native language (11).

Access to education in all languages, including those of disadvantaged communities whose languages have been excluded in education, will allow everyone to 'enjoy the benefits of scientific progress and its application,' as provided by Article 15 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (12). To accomplish this goal, we need more research and international collaboration amongst linguists, scientists, mathematicians, engineers and educators. Together, we can work to include noncolonial languages in the design of high-quality educational resources that enhance active learning and are anchored in local culture and local needs. Academic and government leaders, as well as granting agencies and international organisations, can help encourage and fund such research and collaboration.

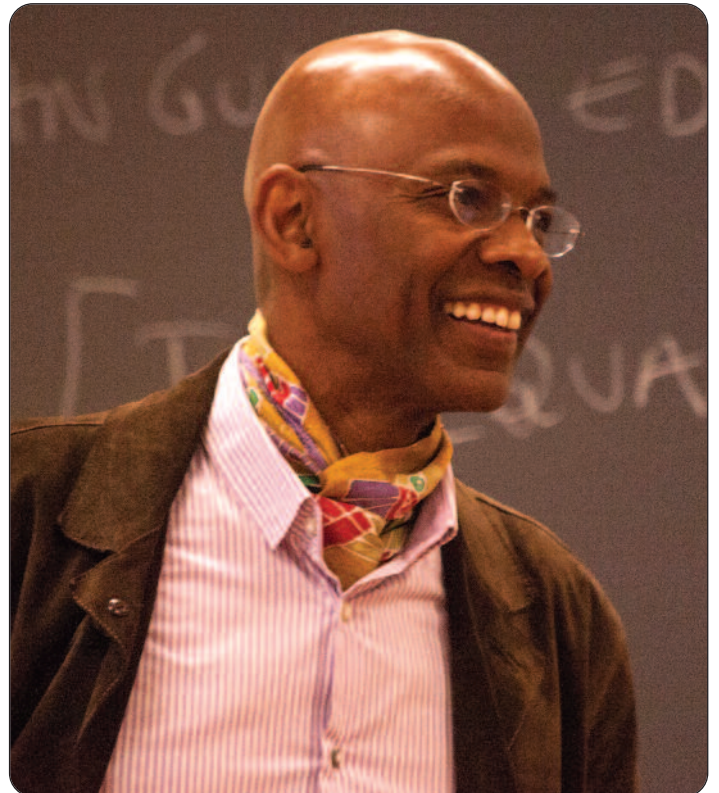


Photo by Dave Nelson

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FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S DESK

2018 has been another busy year for the Foundation and with 263 million children in the world still missing out on education there is lots more work to be done.

Many people around the world are having to make great sacrifices to send their children to school. Some change religion, some have to work away from their families for long periods, in order to earn a wage to enable them to pay school fees.

It is tragic that in this day and age education is not free and accessible to all. In Haiti for example, over 85% of the schools are private and do not always teach students to the local curriculum and certainly not in the local dialect.

If you are a girl child or have any special educational needs then these become further obstacles in the way of allowing access to learning. This should not be acceptable in today's world.

We are working with our partners on the ground to change this and make quality education more accessible to everyone.

Our purpose as an organisation is to promote the achievement of the UN's sustainable development goal for education by raising awareness and by supporting sustainable, replicable and fit for

purpose education projects. Our guiding principles are that education gives people an opportunity to take control of their own lives and the chance to make the most of life's opportunities, it allows self-understanding and self-awareness. In the words of the late Steve Sinnott, in whose name our organisation was established in 2009, we think of education as "the great liberator".



Access to education means different things to different people as you will read in the articles in this edition of ENGAGE. We believe, as Steve believed, that access to quality education should not be dependent on where you are born or who you are born to. Yet today, often this still is the case, despite the commitment of world leaders' to the Sustainable Development Goals, (SDG's).

Our Impact

In 2018, we have supported 325 teachers through the provision of teacher training in Haiti, The Gambia, Colombia and Sierra Leone and they in turn have impacted on 26,900 students accessing quality education.

A further 60,000 girls are benefiting from the sanitary protection programme and will be able to attend school every day.

What have we been doing?

Haiti – We are currently supporting 139 teachers in Port au Prince to achieve their teaching degree. With a partnership of the teacher unions CNEH and CSQ, together with Education International we have developed a learning resource centre. This houses a library containing books, musical instruments and science kits (donated by the Royal Academy of Engineering), a computer suite and is a space for teachers to develop teaching resources and share learning.

We are developing a literacy programme in Kreyol. As part of this project the teachers in Haiti provided the voiceover in Kreyol for the film *Maestra*. *Maestra* is a 29 minute documentary that explores the experience of nine women who, as young girls taught on the Cuban Literacy Campaign of 1961. They are looking forward to sharing the film widely in Haiti next year. You can read about the

importance of literacy in Cuba on page 10 and the importance of literacy and learning in a student's native tongue on page 11.

Catherine Murphy, the filmmaker responsible for *Maestra*, has allowed The Steve Sinnott Foundation to show the film in London to generate income for Haiti. If you would like to host a screening, please do get in touch.

The Gambia – We supported the provision of gender pedagogy training in the Gambia in June, where 42 teachers came together from different countries to share learning and develop their knowledge.

As teachers in The Gambia reported, girls are missing up to 48 days per year because of menstruation. We embarked on a sanitary protection project to ensure that girls can attend school every day. One hundred teachers have been trained in the production of locally made sanitary towels which are affordable, locally accessible, reusable, sustainable, comfortable and very importantly eco-friendly. The thing we are most proud of is that once the women and girls learn this skill, it is a skill for life. They can manage their menstruation with dignity into the future and it will not hinder a girl's schooling.

A Learning Resource Centre is now being scoped in the Gambia and the teachers are researching and costing the resources they will

need. They are keen to use radio to get vital messages and education to rural areas and support teachers who are isolated.

Sierra Leone – In partnership with Street Child, the Foundation has provided learning materials for The Right to Learn project. This project will support 5,000 vulnerable children in eastern Sierra Leone to go to school and also 3,750 families to set up businesses over the next three years.

Furthermore, we undertook teacher-training with our partners, Educators International in Colombia over this summer (see page 8). Read about the progress of our learning resource centre project in Nepal on page 13 and finally about our collaboration with Send My Friend to School on page 14. We hope you enjoy the update.

At the Foundation we are very proud of what we have been able to achieve so far this year in improving access to quality education together with our in-country partners. We hope that we can count on your continued support for our work, as your valuable backing and commitment to quality education for all the world's children is what powers us.

We wish all our partners, supporters, volunteers and readers a very restful Christmas break and a Happy New Year for 2019.

EXPANDING THE LEARNING RESOURCE CENTRE PROGRAMME

Working in close partnership with Manisha, the Steve Sinnott Foundation will soon be opening a Learning Resource Centre in Tansen, Nepal as our second centre after Haiti. Here we tell how the new centre will help reach more children and have a deep and lasting impact on teaching and learning.

Work has commenced on our latest Learning Resource Centre (LRC) in Nepal. Our partners on the Nepal project are Manisha UK and Manisha Nepal Palpa, collectively referred to as Manisha. A long term rental agreement on an excellent building has been signed and they will be converting and equipping it over the next 4 months, ready for a spring 2019 opening. The centre is in Tansen in the Palpa District of west Nepal. Manisha have operated in the region for 8 years, supporting 10 schools in poor rural communities. The centre will enhance the support given to those schools and broaden the reach of Manisha's activities, by making teacher and IT training available to a wider range of local schools. In addition, the LRC will make desperately needed child and adult literacy classes available to lower castes, who are often deprived of education. Manisha will run the centre for up to 5 years, when it will be handed over to the community as a self-sufficient, going concern.

The LRC building was recently built but left unused. It offers just what Manisha have been looking for: four good-sized classrooms, library and reading areas, kitchen and toilets. Two of the classrooms will be established as IT labs, one classroom will be established as a model classroom for teacher training and the fourth will be used as an arts and craft facility. The building has good outside space, which will be transformed into children's play and nature study areas.

The whole facility will be open 6 days a week, both daytime and evenings. This policy will allow for its use by local schools and teachers by day, to enhance their education. Having the centre open in the evenings, will allow time for adults and



children to use the facilities. Priority will be given to groups and lessons involving marginalised groups in the local community. Local schools and youth clubs will pay for use of the facility, which, over time will allow the centre to be self-sufficient of funding from Manisha.

Manisha trustee and long term volunteer in Tansen, Dan Wichmann said: "I'm incredibly excited to be working on this project. Not only we will be able to reach a lot more children than we could before but because we will be in the same place and here all year round we'll have a much deeper and longer lasting impact than visiting schools for a few days, when too often after we leave teachers fall back into old habits.

Ward Chairman Sagar Maharjan said: "This will be something totally new for our town and a unique opportunity for the children here." Manisha UK's Chairman, Steve Tonry,

explained: "Manisha was the name of the daughter of an ex-Gurkha soldier who, in 2008, asked for help to improve the schools of his daughter and friends. This led to the establishment of Manisha UK as a UK charity and, more recently, Manisha Nepal Palpa as a stand-alone NGO in Nepal". Although independent of each other, the two parts of "team Manisha" work to common goals on education, healthcare and sustainability in the poor rural communities around Palpa district. Steve went on to explain: "Manisha UK has worked with the Steve Sinnott Foundation for many years and establishing the LRC is the next logical step in the delivery model for Manisha's mission. Through the LRC, we will be able to deliver training on a year round basis, rather than only when our volunteer teachers are on secondment. Having a central, well-resourced facility, means greater consistency and enables better quality training to be delivered."

POWERFUL AND ARTICULATE VOICES

The Steve Sinnott Young Ambassadors award was established in Steve's memory and for several years it funded two young education campaigners from U.K. schools to travel to a country in the global south and report on their experiences back in the U.K. In 2017 on the Foundation's initiative the selection of the Ambassadors was reversed so as to bring the campaigners to the U.K. In 2018, they came from Zambia. Oxfam's **John McLaverty** reports on their visit.

Statistics never tell the whole story and are difficult to interpret. What truths do I take from numbers on a page saying that 70% of Zambia's young men and 58% of young women are literate? Or that the percentage of Zambian children out of school rises from 15% at primary level to 28% at secondary level?

https://www.epdc.org/sites/default/files/documents/EPDC%20NEP_Zambia.pdf

These bare numbers don't say much about the lived experiences of the girls and boys they aim to describe. Therefore, Send My Friend to School, partnered by the Steve Sinnott Foundation, invited two young people to visit the UK from Zambia, tell their stories, engage their peers and influence decision makers.

Oxfam's 'I Care About Her' project in Zambia has three aims which resonated strongly with Send My Friend to School's 2018 theme to 'Make School Safe.' The first is to improve the quality and safety of school buildings. The second is to improve water and sanitation facilities. Their absence or degradation is a barrier to attendance, particularly for girls. The third is to work directly with young people to improve the confidence of young women to assert their right to education and to build the solidarity of young men to support girls through school. What statistics don't describe is how the societal norms which exclude girls are frequently manifested as discriminatory

behaviour, bullying or comments by boys, men and even some girls. These can make school unwelcoming, uncomfortable or even dangerous for girls.

Following a selection process in Zambia we met the Steve Sinnott Young Ambassadors of 2018: Aquilla Mpundu, 17-years-old and head girl at Luansobe Community School and Nchimunya Jongolo 14-years-old from Choma Secondary School. They were accompanied by Elizabeth Zulu, headteacher of Luansobe Community School, and Twaambo Mutinta of Oxfam. The group had extensive experience of campaigning in Zambia. We were excited to learn from them and introduce them to Send My Friend to School's UK networks. Within 5 minutes of meeting the team at Heathrow Airport I knew that they were going to challenge, indeed overthrow, many of the stereotypes and misconceptions that people in the UK often have about education and growing up in the global south.

I felt the biggest surprise for many was the Young Ambassadors' passionate commitment to campaigning and telling their stories. For example, Aquilla told the moving account of a friend who became a child-mother while at school, and how she supported her friend's return to class in the face of reticence from family and hostility from some classmates. As a result, local attitudes towards child pregnancy and education began to shift, and school became more welcoming for young mothers.

Nchimunya often appeared surprised that young men he met had not done more to campaign and stand in solidarity with their sisters, mothers and aunties for greater equality. He challenged the gender inequalities he'd seen by referring to George Orwell's 'Animal Farm' and the notion that all are equal but some become more equal than others.

Taken together and added to millions of



others, their stories are the real-life experiences which will begin to shift Zambia's headline statistics and make education for all safer and more equitable.

The highlights of the visit for me were participating in the Labour and Conservative Party Conferences. Aquilla and Nchimunya switched effortlessly from grassroots campaigners to become compelling advocates. They just as confidently shared their stories with MPs as with school and community groups. I was particularly proud when Nchimunya grabbed a few moments to lobby DFID Secretary of State Penny Mordaunt on the floor of the Conservative Conference. This took massive confidence and quick thinking on his part.

So, what did the visit achieve? I believe it demonstrated to both UK school communities and MPs that young people in the global south have a powerful and articulate voice that is demanding social justice and rights. It is only correct that this voice is in the foreground of calls for change. Secondly the visit permitted Aquilla and Nchimunya to network, learn and campaign in solidarity with Send My Friend to School's UK-based youth. We often forget that there is much more uniting young people from diverse backgrounds than dividing them, and seeing all work effectively together was proof of this. Finally, and not least, the visit was further evidence for me that it's fine to trust young people, stand back and let them take the lead.

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