

# ENGAGE

ISSUE EIGHTEEN



**Supporting Access to Learning Worldwide**

The  
**STEVE  
SINNOTT  
FOUNDATION**

*"Those who exude hope and optimism generate the energy and stimulate the progress that we in education work for."*

*Steve Sinnott*



# Foreword

As this edition of ENGAGE is published we look forward to celebrating the first 10 years of the Steve Sinnott Foundation and doing so will cause us to reflect further on our purpose, values and activities.

Steve's unshakable commitment to the importance of global quality education has been at the heart of what has driven the focus of the Foundation over the last decade.

The Millennium Development Goals have now long gone with disappointment at missed targets. With the education focus replaced by the Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG4) the challenges for its achievement are substantial.

As David Evans lists in his article, the barriers to greater progress are clear. The Foundation, as it enters its second decade, will do all it can to ensure there is good progress towards the achievement of SDG4. We will enthusiastically join with others to expose inadequate commitment by governments to resource education while avoiding the involvement of privatisation and commercialisation. This goes hand in hand with the imperative of valuing all those professionals who are key to enable access to quality education become a reality for all.

**Jerry Glazier**

Chair, The Steve Sinnott Foundation



This magazine could not be published without its designers and printers at TP Graphics and at Ruskin Press.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: © Billy Jean Haiti*

If you would like to advertise in our next edition of ENGAGE  
please call us on **01923230208**  
or email **[ann.beatty@stevesinnottfoundation.org.uk](mailto:ann.beatty@stevesinnottfoundation.org.uk)**

To comment on this article, email  
[admin@stevesinnottfoundation.org.uk](mailto:admin@stevesinnottfoundation.org.uk)

## FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S DESK



This year we celebrate 10 years of the Steve Sinnott Foundation. The Foundation's aim is to build on the legacy of international work accomplished by Steve Sinnott in his lifetime.

Steve was a visionary leader who was deeply committed to Education for All. We believe that Steve would have been as proud of the Foundation's work over the last 10 years as we are. We will celebrate the work of the Foundation officially in September this year. In the meantime look out for our blog posts and follow us on social media for updates.

The aim of the Foundation is to work towards the achievement of the United Nations' sustainable development goal 4 (SDG 4) and we do that by working with educators on the ground to develop projects that support the provision of quality education and life-long learning. All the projects are sustainable, replicable and fit for purpose. We believe that the SDGs are only achievable by the provision of accessible and quality education. As David Edwards, points out on page 4 there are no cheap, quick fixes for quality education. Quality education requires political will, resources, time and most of all motivated and valued teachers. As funding for education continues to decrease we must continue to campaign for governments to increase their commitment.

We must also come together in partnership and continue to do our very best to support regions where they are facing real challenges such as lack of infrastructure, recovering from war or natural disaster or as always because of the lack of funding. In this issue we have focused on the achievement of the SDGs so far. We believe that education gives people choices and that the realisation of all of the SDGs is not achievable without accessible quality education for everyone. Check out the articles by Janet Mansal on page 5 and Book Aid on page 6 and the many other featured projects which we believe are doing excellent work on the ground to support the provision of and access to quality public education. It is with your vital support that the Foundation and these organisations are working to prevent exclusion, discrimination and segregation and make education a reality for all, not for the few.

Here is a selection of some exciting projects ongoing and planned for this year, which, without your support and investment would not be possible:

### Nepal

Work is well underway on the Learning Resource Centre in Nepal. Working in partnership with Manisha Nepal, this centre will enable teachers and the local community to access I.T., deliver training and develop teaching and learning resources. We would particularly like to thank The Canning Trust and Sunderland NEU as well as the family of the late Barrie Smith (former NUT Officer and teacher), for the legacy funding received in his name. We could not have achieved any of the work to date without the help of all of our valued supporters.

### The Gambia

We will be taking a delivery of 1000 books in May from Book Aid International to The Gambia Teachers Union (GTU). These books will be invaluable for the teachers to enhance their learning and teaching. They are all new, relevant to the Gambian context, recently published and would otherwise have been pulped as they are surplus to U.K. requirements. Book Aid are also providing librarian training for teachers as the library will be a vital resource for our third Learning Resource Centre, which is due to open later this year in Banjul.

### The Gambia and Sierra Leone – Sanitary Protection

We are investing in a training programme which teaches girls and women about menstrual health, how to take care of their bodies and to make their own sanitary pads.

These pads are locally made using locally sourced materials, affordable, sustainable, reusable and washable, yet long lasting, comfortable and very importantly eco-friendly.

To date this work has enabled nearly 60,000 girls to go to school and participate in daily life.

Periods must be part of the conversation around gender equality. As one of the male teachers in The Gambia who attended the training told us, "Women do not live in isolation, we all live together. I have a wife, daughter and sisters who I want to benefit from being able to live their lives with dignity and pride."

We are investing in girls' education by supporting girls to learn a skill that they will have for life, a skill which will enable them to manage their periods and their health with dignity and privacy.

The importance of the pilot was that we discovered that the materials and the hire of

training facilities are more expensive in some areas. The program was adapted to teach hand sewing where sewing machines are not available. We are continuously learning and adapting as we go along.

We learned that menstruation is seen as a scary subject, one that should be a secret, and it reminded me of the advice I received as a young girl when I started my periods: "don't tell any boys".

We think we are living in a modern world, but that is not the case when it comes to managing periods. Many of the issues faced by girls in The Gambia are recognisable here in the UK. On a recent visit to a British university we learned that some girls in the U.K cannot afford sanitary protection, and talking about the issue of periods is still taboo. Our challenge is to change that; let's talk about periods more and stop it being a secret shameful experience.

In my view, the best thing about the project is that not only are girls now able to go to school but that women are talking to each other. The General Secretary of the GTU, Marie Antoinette, has reached out to her sisters in Sierra Leone at the Sierra Leone Teachers Union (SLTU) to share the learning and replicate the work to support other girls to go to school. In our view this is development at its best, women working in solidarity!

### U.K Projects

#### UNESCO ASPnet Schools

The UNESCO Associated Schools Network is a global network of schools which educate for sustainable development allowing every human being to acquire knowledge, skills, attitudes and values necessary to shape a sustainable future. Founded in 1953, UNESCO ASPnet is a global network of over 10,000 schools and colleges in 182 countries. If you would like to join a global community of schools sharing innovation in education please contact the U.K National Co-ordinator at [ann.beatty@stevesinnottfoundation.org.uk](mailto:ann.beatty@stevesinnottfoundation.org.uk)

#### My Life Changed Storytelling Resource Pack

We have launched a Storytelling resource pack as a follow-on from our My Life Changed films. This is a real opportunity for global learning, learning about ourselves and others, gaining an understanding of our differences and more importantly our similarities and giving students and teachers the opportunity to voice their own story. I hope you will join us in sharing stories and learning what makes people around the world tick.





# TO AWAKEN JOY

Writing exclusively for ENGAGE

**David Edwards**, General Secretary of Education International, assesses progress on Sustainable Development Goal 4, the world's goal for education.

Steve Sinnott, a visionary leader of the NUT, deeply committed to international trade unionism and active in Education International, worked to fulfil the Millennium Development Goals. Ultimately, the MDG targets were missed despite some positive results.

Also internationally, in spearheading the formation of the Commonwealth Teachers' Group and the development of the Commonwealth Teacher Recruitment protocol, Steve demonstrated his belief in the collective power of teachers and their unions to defend and promote quality public education and the teaching profession.

Our worries about the slow progress on SDG 4 reflect not only our observations in the Secretariat. They are also based on discussions with member organisations, surveys, and debate in governance meetings. They reflect the need to fix what is wrong as rapidly as possible

There are already many obstacles to greater progress on SDG 4:

- Domestic funding for education remains too low. It has, in fact, decreased in real terms in many countries since 2015.
- Privatisation and commercialisation of education has expanded and intensified since the birth of the SDGs.
- Overall, the status of teachers is low. In some countries, it is declining.
- Protections of the rights to organise and bargain collectively are rarely in conformity with universal, international standards. The voice of teachers, expressed through their organisations, is often ignored. And, yet, who knows education better than those who are in the classrooms every day?
- Exclusionary practices, including costs, discrimination, segregation, lack of support, and irrelevant curricula often shut out those in marginalized groups and



undermine the equality function of education. Persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples, those in remote areas, ethnic and other minorities, the poor, women and girls, refugees and other displaced persons are too often left on the side of the road.

- "Reforms" to improve education quality are often misguided. They have been developed for easy measurement and focused on numeracy and literacy. Their assessments of student learning outcomes and teacher performance tend to improve neither quality nor performance. And, much of what education is about gets lost in the exercise; like vital competencies for life, for society, and for citizenship.
- Political interference has forced too many schools and teachers to use "alternative facts", distort content, teaching methods and policy priorities and interfere with professional autonomy and academic freedom.

Steve Sinnott saw education as "the great liberator". At its best, education is, indeed, an enabling right that contributes to the achievement of all the SDGs and helps

people take control of their futures and participate in their destinies rather than being innocent bystanders in their own lives.

The caring, healthy, and safe learning and teaching environments of our schools will never be spawned by commercial theories or techniques. Such market-inspired reforms do not work. They take the fun out of education. And, they compel many qualified teachers to escape rather than practice their professions.

There are no cheap, quick fixes for quality education. Government responsibility for achieving SDG 4 cannot be avoided by contracting it out. Quality education requires political will, resources, time, and, most of all, qualified, motivated, and valued teachers.

Liberating, transformative education is built on the wisdom of generations of educators. It should be recognised and privileged over the latest fashions or the interests of those who see education as a market rather than a mission.

Albert Einstein maintained that, "it is the supreme art of the teacher to awaken joy in creative expression and knowledge". Let us cherish that joy and build more decent societies and a better, fairer world on that passion for learning and teaching.

# A SANITARY LESSON

**Janet Mansal**, Gender Desk Officer at The Gambia Teachers Union has been personally involved in the sanitary project as a trainer. Here she describes its impact.

Achieving inclusive and quality education for all as sought by the UN's Sustainable Development Goals reaffirms the belief that education is one of the most powerful and proven vehicles for sustainable development.

It also aims to eliminate gender disparity.

Human rights are at the heart of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals. In the absence of human dignity we cannot drive sustainable development.

Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948 is the first international legal instrument that recognises education as a right. It is a not legally binding instrument but it has great political and moral scope. It represents the universal recognition that basic rights are inherent to all human beings, inalienable and equally applicable to everyone. It is at the heart of the United Nations system and has inspired the human rights treaties adopted since then.

The education of girls is a primary focus of development efforts in poor nations because female school achievement is believed to have long-lasting and far reaching economic effects.

However multiple factors work against girls' education in developing countries.

For instance, very little attention has been paid to critical issues like menstruation management that are vital for the retention of girls in school. Studies show that due to lack of proper materials for managing menstruation, a girl will miss an average of 48 days per year during her menstruation periods.

Our vision, therefore, is to free girls and women from the disruptions that menstruation brings to their lives through diverse solutions. In a typical poor Gambian family, where there is hardly enough money to cater for food, shelter and other basic needs, sanitary products are not a priority. The absence of appropriate sanitary materials to absorb menstrual flow does not only affect female's reproductive health but their acquisition of education.

Determined to tackle this widespread problem we found an innovative solution for menstrual hygiene through production of high quality reusable sanitary pads that are comfortable as well as environmentally and cost-friendly.

Providing reusable sanitary materials for girls was a life-changer for numerous reasons including hygiene, health, education and empowerment. Menstruation is considered among the highest rated factors for school dropout among girls in the Gambia, with 1 in 10 girls missing school due to lack of sanitary products or sanitation facilities in schools.

Absenteeism leads to poor academic performance, which eventually leads to the dropout rate of a sizeable number of girls from schools.



Interventions aimed at providing free and accessible reusable sanitary pads will go a long way in reversing the negative trend of girls' education, especially in the rural areas.

We explored the opportunity of making reusable and environmentally friendly sanitary pads for girls using double absorbent cotton cloth material.

The Gambia Teachers Union Status of Women's Committee, with funding and support from the Steve Sinnott Foundation, provided hands on training for home economics teachers countrywide on how to make reusable sanitary pads so as to improve girls' access to effective, sustainable, affordable, eco-friendly and safe menstruation products. One packet of the reusable pads is sufficient to meet the sanitary needs of a girl for over a year.

Interventions aimed at providing free and accessible reusable sanitary pads will go a long way in reversing the negative trend of girls' education especially in rural areas of the Gambia.





# THANKS TO THE BOOKS

Book Aid International has a mission to provide books, resources and training to support an environment in which reading for pleasure, study and lifelong learning can flourish. Head of Communications, **Emma Taylor**, describes how they work and their great achievements. The Foundation is currently partnering with BookAid to support teaching & learning experiences in The Gambia.

In recent years, there has been enormous progress in enrolling children in school. In 1990, just 52% of sub-Saharan African primary school age children attended school. In 2012, that number stood at 78%.<sup>1</sup>

But while enrolment is up, investment in educational resources for schools has not kept pace. In many classrooms, children have only an old textbook that they must share with their classmates – and all too often children are in school, but learning nothing. In sub-Saharan Africa, 88% of adolescents will enter adulthood without a basic proficiency in reading.<sup>2</sup>

There are many factors which contribute to this educational crisis – and one of them is a severe shortage of both text and reading books in schools.

Our charity, Book Aid International, provides around one million books around the world every year. All of the books we provide are brand new, and hundreds of thousands of those books reach schools around the world. The books we send for children range from picture books to teen non-fiction to phonics books to enriching subject books.



While we do not provide ministry of education recommended textbooks, these books support study and enrich children's learning.

In addition to providing books, we also work with schools across sub-Saharan Africa to create school libraries and encourage regular reading. In all of our school library creation programmes we provide a collection of brand-new books in English, a grant to purchase local books, funds to create a small school library and training for teachers in using books in the classroom. The results can be transformative.

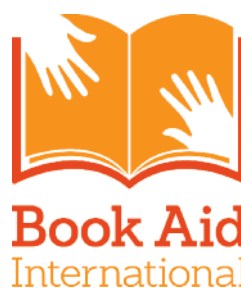
Our *Yes to Reading* project, run in partnership with the Africa Educational Trust (AET), supported children in 14 under-resourced primary schools in Laikipia County, Kenya by creating school libraries and training teachers. AET ran reading tests before and after the creation of libraries and found that the average number of words correctly read per minute increased by an average of 52%.

Our largest schools programme, *Inspiring Readers*, takes place across eight countries and aims to bring books into the classrooms of 250,000 African primary school pupils by 2020. To date, over 182,000 children have benefitted from the project, with 562 teachers trained and 234,000 books provided.

Almost without exception, Inspiring Readers schools report that pupils now read with greater confidence and perform better in other subjects as well. One head teacher in Malawi told us: *"The pass rate has improved. We have sent more children to secondary schools. In the past it was 30/40 children. Now it's 66. Most of the students that have gone to secondary school were the ones that were using this library."*

Teachers also told us that their classrooms are very different places thanks to the books and training they received. One Malawian teacher in Lilongwe told us: *"Having these books has really changed the way we teach. Now we bring in supplementary books. It brings variety to the learners. There is no variety in the textbooks."*

These results highlight the value of books in the classroom. Children who read broadly and have a variety of books at their disposal are more able to learn to read confidently and develop a love of reading that can help them succeed at every stage of their education. In short, access to books helps children receive the quality education they deserve.



To find out more about Book Aid International's work or get involved, visit <https://bookaid.org> or contact SSF CEO Ann Beatty on [admin@stevesinnottfoundation.org.uk](mailto:admin@stevesinnottfoundation.org.uk)

*The charity thanks Thomas Cook Children's Charity and players of People's Postcode Lottery for funding Inspiring Readers.*

(For more information see From CEO's Desk on page 3)

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/sustainable-development-goals/goal-4-quality-education.html>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.bbc.com/news/business-41388080>

# A SAFE AND WELCOMING PLACE FOR ALL



City of Sanctuary UK is an umbrella organisation which supports the development of a network of groups across the UK welcoming people seeking sanctuary. **Colleen Molloy**, National Development Officer for its Schools of Sanctuary project, describes how the organisation's awards promote global education in the UK and support people who have been forced to migrate to access quality education.

## City of Sanctuary Awards – providing a strategic tool to promote global education in the UK and support people who have been forced to migrate to access quality education.

All across the UK schools, universities and colleges are working to make their institutions welcoming places of safety for all. Over 200 schools and 9 universities across the UK have been recognised by the City of Sanctuary movement through the Sanctuary Award.

The award itself has three simple principles:-

- **Learn** about what it means to be seeking sanctuary and why people leave their countries of origin and seek safety in the UK
- **Embed**- take positive action to embed concepts of welcome, safety and inclusion to ensure equal access for refugees to quality learning opportunities
- **Share** the vision and achievements within the school /university and wider community to inspire others to promote the vision of sanctuary for all

One example among many of the schools across the UK to receive the Schools of Sanctuary award is Widden Primary School. Staff, pupils and the wider community have embraced the school's aim of making it a safe

and welcoming place for all, especially those seeking sanctuary.

A refugee mother with three children at the school said:

*"Our children are very happy in school and feel supported. My husband and I also come to Widden School to meet with other parents, learn English, share food and this has helped us to make new friends. Without the school I think it was going to take us much longer to connect with the rest of the community."*

In promoting Schools and Universities of Sanctuary awards, City of Sanctuary UK contributes to the SDG goal of ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promotes lifelong learning opportunities, especially for people seeking sanctuary who remain marginalised within the UK asylum process.

Daniel, a student at a University of Sanctuary told us

*"As a sanctuary scholar at the University of Winchester, equal access to education means recognising that my innate value does not change across borders and by welcoming people like myself, institutions say we are worth the highest forms of education. I also have the opportunity to be a student ambassador to encourage people from diverse*

backgrounds to overcome any barriers they face in accessing higher education. "

City of Sanctuary recognises the important role education plays in developing welcoming places for all, which are proud to offer sanctuary to people fleeing violence and persecution. Every day people are exposed to inaccurate reporting about why people seek safety in the UK; in working towards the award the schools and universities provide learning opportunities for children and young people to dispel myths and find out about asylum and refugee issues, especially by enabling refugee voices to be heard directly. People seeking sanctuary have shared their stories within schools and universities and are providing a lens through which to explore human rights, social justice, equality, inclusion and diversity with children and young people.

In addition to the actual awards process, we have developed 'Streams of Sanctuary'. By stream we mean the opportunity to bring professional practitioners within 'communities of practices or interests' together to embed the concepts of welcome, safety and inclusion within their institutions and connect with other interested individuals (including people seeking sanctuary), groups and organisations. In this respect our streams work is a collaborative process. For example, Oxfam and others, including some local authorities, also work with schools using the School of Sanctuary award. Our streams work builds professional networks, develops and shares resources and inspires professional practitioners to make a difference.

For more information see <https://cityofsanctuary.org/about/what-are-streams-of-sanctuary/>



# STILL MANY CHALLENGES

**Richard Bourne** is Adviser to the Ramphal Institute, a think-tank for development in the “Commonwealth of Nations”. He’s also a valued friend of the Steve Sinnott Foundation. Here Richard reflects on progress towards Education for All in Commonwealth countries with concerns for the future.

I find it hard to believe that it is a decade since Steve Sinnott died. His commitment to education, in the UK and the rest of the world, was unswerving and I got to know him for his support for a Commonwealth teachers’ conference in 1996, focusing on education and human rights. Including representatives from 27 Commonwealth teacher associations it agreed the Stoke Rochford Declaration which he, I and Christine Blower took to a Commonwealth Education Ministers’ Meeting in Botswana the following year. This was the origin of a Commonwealth Teachers’ Group within Educational International which has run special sessions at subsequent ministerial meetings, taking forward the campaigns for education for all and improved quality of education.

It therefore seems appropriate to see how the Commonwealth is measuring up to Sustainable Development Goal number 4, with its various subclauses. For several member countries failed to reach the targets set down in the preceding Millennium Development Goals. The Commonwealth Secretariat did produce a status report on the performance of its membership, in the run-up to the 20th meeting of Commonwealth Education Ministers in Fiji last year ( 2018 ). But this is not readily accessible on the Secretariat’s website.

However, in information provided for the Fiji meeting it is clear that some Commonwealth countries, and the Commonwealth as a whole, face significant challenges. While the number of out of school children at primary level has been dropping in India by over a million a year it is estimated that 17 million primary aged children and 16 million lower secondary aged children are out of school in the Commonwealth. According to Unicef roughly half of these out of school children can be accounted for by Pakistan alone, where 22.8 million children aged 5-16 are out of school – 44 per cent of the population of that age. In the province of Balochistan 78 per cent of girls are out of school.

Gender and regional disparities are still huge. In northern Nigeria, affected by the Boko Haram insurgency which is hostile to western education, literacy rates among women aged 15-24 are around 30 per cent, compared with some 90 per cent in the country’s southern states. What is concerning is that world-wide school attendance, which had improved dramatically between 1995 and 2005, then bottomed out and if anything has got slightly worse.

During the period of the Labour Government, 1997-2010, Steve Sinnott was a player in successful campaigns to persuade the United Kingdom

to put money into education for all, and to abolish school fees in the developing world. NGOs were assisted to campaign locally in a number of Commonwealth developing countries. After he left office the UN Secretary-General recruited Gordon Brown to be his ambassador to promote education and, in this role, Brown paid visits to Abuja and other Commonwealth capitals where targets have been missed.

In what is a worrying context it is not reassuring that the Commonwealth Secretariat, whose budgets have been cut, has only a miniscule education capability. The Commonwealth has announced various initiatives – a Commonwealth Education Hub, a Commonwealth Knowledge Alliance, a Commonwealth Education Ministers Action Group – but it is unclear that they are having much impact at ground level where poverty, prejudice and sometimes warfare continue to damage children’s lives. The wonders of the digital world, and the challenge of an overheating planet losing biodiversity very fast, require an educated citizenry in the 21st century.





# BREAKING THE CYCLE



World Bicycle Relief is mobilizing people through the power of bicycles, envisioning a world where distance is no longer a barrier to education and opportunity. **Allison Dufosse** is its CEO.

As cyclists, we choose our challenges. We don our lycra, wheel out the bike, and decide how far we shall go – we make distance our challenge. Time is then a limiting factor as to how far we can cycle. We are challenged by time and distance – but it is our CHOICE.

In many remote areas of the world, people are challenged by the barrier of both time and distance. They chase the sun from the moment it rises until it sets. So, time and distance is also their challenge – yet the choice is not theirs, for they have only ever walked. The provision of a simple, robust bicycle which is easy to maintain can totally change their world.

World Bicycle Relief is a global organisation which has provided over 470,000 robust and sustainable bicycles to students, healthcare workers, and other individuals in developing countries, providing a crucial resource to people for whom transportation options are limited. Our number-one goal is to see quality bicycle transportation as a legitimate economic empowerment tool for those who have walking as their only transportation option. With a special focus on girls, WBR plays a vital role in getting young women to school.

Education is the key to sustainable development, improving overall quality of life and securing a successful future. Despite achieving goals of gender equality in primary education, many countries continue to struggle in implementing it at all levels of education. An estimated 57 million children don't attend school, and more than half live in sub-Saharan Africa. Worldwide, over 100 million youth lack basic literacy skills, and most of them are female.

The United Nations' 'SDG4' aims to ensure inclusive, quality education for all and to promote lifelong learning. As with most development issues, a push for universal education particularly impacts girls. Throughout much of Africa, girls face more barriers to completing their education. Yet getting girls educated is essential to raising the socio-economic status of their communities. Not only are there enormous benefits in completing one's primary education, but girls who complete secondary education are six times less likely to marry as child-brides.

According to UNESCO, when girls receive an education, their opportunities for employment are greater. They are also more likely to close the gender pay gap as well as less likely to become pregnant as teens. Their chances of mortality during childbirth are lower. These are just some of the many benefits of educating girls. UNESCO's data also highlights that in poorer areas, girls are even less likely than boys to go to school. Thus, the system perpetuates itself, as girls not getting an education makes them more likely to be poor for the rest of their lives, and girls in poor families are less likely to get an education to begin with.

When we break this cycle, there will be long term benefits. The biggest barrier to girls receiving a consistent education is often the physical act of getting to the school. Tasked with many more unpaid responsibilities,



including collecting water and firewood, girls fall behind because of the cultural obstacles they face. In rural regions of the world, girls also face challenging, long walks to get to school after their household duties. Girls arrive to school tired if they even arrive at all.

Over the past ten years, World Bicycle Relief has mobilised students, especially girls, who face long, difficult journeys to school. We believe a simple, sturdy bicycle has the power to change lives. By giving a girl a way to get to school safely, you can empower her to stay in school and get her education, breaking the cycle of poverty with a bicycle.

The Sustainable Development Goals represent ambition built on women's progress. However, there is still much needed to ensure that women and girls around the world are able to move forward. With the help of our supporters, World Bicycle Relief is making an investment in girls. We are confident that the power of the bicycle can play an influential role in progress for girls and women in sub-Saharan Africa and around the world.

There are no limitations to what a girl student desires to achieve with the extra time and energy a bicycle can afford her. Before and after school, she has time to study. With this strong and reliable vehicle, she also has the power to transport water, food, and pedestrians. In her spare time, she can dream and achieve. The bicycle is a tool for empowering and mobilising her to follow her own path in life.

We believe in the Power of Bicycles! Do you?

[www.worldbicyclerelief.org](http://www.worldbicyclerelief.org)

To comment on this article, email  
[admin@stevesinnottfoundation.org.uk](mailto:admin@stevesinnottfoundation.org.uk)



# THE BIGGEST IMPACT

Former Secretary of State for International Development **Andrew Mitchell** M.P. reveals his passion and commitment for girls' education and his lifelong respect for teachers.

There are many ways to change our world for the better. Some speak up for Clean Water – something that would save countless children's lives everyday. There is no doubt that vaccinating all children in the poor world under the age of 5 would also be transformative. But for me, educating girls would have the biggest impact on the future of all of us.

In the Conservative Party, we learnt from our Project Umubano in Rwanda – which saw nearly 800 Conservatives take part in development projects in one of the poorest countries in the world. I spent two weeks teaching teachers of English from 8 in the morning until 5 at night. Whilst exhausting, it was also exhilarating and bolstered my life-long respect for those who teach, most especially in the development world where, devoid of many of the classroom assets we take for granted here in the UK, they educate the next generation of children. Who knows whether one of those young people in school today in Africa may be the person who discovers the cure for cancer or is destined to become a world leader?

Educating girls is a win-win achievement, a girl who's had the benefit of education is likely to marry later and not fall prey to the curse of early marriage. She is likely to educate her own children, she is likely to be economically active and above all boost the impact and respect which is held in her family, her local community and beyond. Thanks to girls' education we now see women in prominent elected positions in Afghanistan.

When I was the International Development Secretary, I set up the Girls' Education Challenge Fund (GECF). This taxpayer funded vehicle was designed to secure education for 1 million girls in the most difficult parts of the world – places where the state's education writ did not run and where brilliant NGOs, charities, philanthropic organisations and indeed the private sector could bring the miracle of education where it had not previously been. The fund has been a great success, typified by the work of CAMFED, the amazing Cambridge based UK charity which has found an extraordinarily successful formula for getting girls into



school and measuring the added value they achieve. For inspiration that will make your day, visit CAMFED online and see for yourself.

If you would like more information about this topic, please contact **Rt Hon Andrew Mitchell MP** at **020 7219 1799** or email at [andrew.mitchell.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:andrew.mitchell.mp@parliament.uk).

# WORLD AFRO DAY FOR ALL

**Michelle De Leon** is a TV Features Producer with over twenty years broadcasting experience. She's also the Founder/Director of World Afro Day. Here she explains the importance of embracing all children's physical attributes in order to achieve inclusivity and equality in schools and beyond.

Wherever you go in the world, education is seen as one of the most precious rights for all children so why would anyone be denied this, simply because of their hair?

Unfortunately, this is the case for many children of African descent. Their Afro hair is routinely considered unacceptable for school and is often labelled as extreme, exaggerated, distracting and untidy. Furthermore, pupils are also told that the natural hair, that they are born with, breaks school 'hair policies.' Yet these regulations were not written for them or based on their hair type. Some Headteachers, even go further to suggest that these uniform standards are preparing children for later life, which in a sense is true because they will also find this prejudice in the workplace. The problem is that these rules are European hair standards and this clash of cultures, often results in the exclusion of African children, physically as well as psychologically. Five-year-old, Josiah Sharpe responded to his recent mistreatment by saying: "I wish I wasn't black because the school doesn't like my hair this way."

World Afro Day® has been working since 2017 to challenge bias against Afro hair but sometimes it seems that things have to get worse before they can get better. 2018 was a bad year for hair discrimination, which culminated in the shocking case of the New Jersey student, whose locks were forcibly cut off so that he could compete in a wrestling match. Over 15 million people have watched this online and for many African people (and others), witnessing this



act was so brutal it made them cry. Hair bias has not yet been given the serious attention it deserves but it is one of the oldest forms of racial discrimination. The irony is that schools are the place, where history is taught but they are also the place, where history is repeated with ongoing 'hair identity theft' against children.

A global shift needs to happen in government thinking but also in schools; from the default position of one hair policy, that fits all. Clearly, Afro hair and straight hair are very different in their needs and grooming. Under law, schools accommodate the diversity of religious presentation with Sikh turbans, Muslim hijabs and Jewish Kippahs. Surely, the natural hair of African people should also be protected under race and freedom of belief because their hair is also "God-given."

The struggle for equality, in essence, must always engage all sections of society. If it is women's rights that you are fighting for, then you need to speak to men. If it is disabled rights? Then you need to speak to the able-bodied community so World Afro Day also needs to speak to people without Afro hair. My sincerest wish for 2019 is that

hair discrimination cases, would disappear but many children around the world, are still being cheated out of having a normal childhood. More than ever, change is needed now. World Afro Day® in schools is an opportunity to turn around negative attitudes towards Afro hair into a positive force for inclusion. The focal event, The Big Hair Assembly on 13 September 2019, unites children around the world in one giant, LIVE assembly. Special guests, like 10-year-old Celai West will educate the Educators and inspire all pupils to embrace Afro hair as equal and normal.

The World Afro Day (WAD) resource pack will give teachers an opportunity to fulfil their commitment under equality laws. February 2019 is the 20th Anniversary of the Macpherson Report, which made recommendations for Education to commit to cultural value and anti-racist policies. Worryingly, racism and the far right are rising globally so we need to move forward with vigour. World Afro Day® can help schools with a national and international strategy to add cultural diversity to the curriculum and eliminate racial discrimination.

Crucially, teachers and children of all ethnic backgrounds are benefiting from the WAD initiatives:

"During the interesting and exciting World Afro Day lesson, I learnt so much about Afro culture and it was an amazing experience. Everyone should be proud of who they are and what they look like because everyone is special in their own way."

Can one day, really change the world? We believe it can...World Afro Day® is celebrated annually on September 15th. For more information and to sign up to the Big Hair Assembly, please go to [www.worldafroday.com](http://www.worldafroday.com).



# GETTING THE WORLD BACK ON TRACK



**Joseph Nhan-O'Reilly** is Head of Education Policy & Advocacy at Save the Children and Director of Education at UNESCO U.K. Here he sets out a three-point plan to accelerate progress towards the achievement of SDG4.

In 2015, world leaders committed to Sustainable Development Goal 4, which calls for the provision of inclusive and equitable quality education for all by 2030.

Despite that commitment, 263 million children and young people are still out of school, and after a decade of progress, the number of primary-aged children not in school is going up, not down.

It's also clearer than ever that having access to school doesn't mean that children are actually learning.

In fact, new data show that a staggering 387 million children of primary school age will not achieve minimum proficiency levels in reading. Alarmingly two-thirds of the children who are not learning to read, some 262 million, are in school.

If current trends continue, only 1 out of 10 children in low-income countries will be on track to acquire basic secondary level skills by 2030. This is all a far cry from the ambition of SDG 4.

Next year marks the ten-year countdown to the deadline for achieving the SDGs including on education. If we have any chance of meeting the goals we need an ambitious plan to accelerate progress. It needs to prioritise three things:

## **1. Triple support to the children furthest behind**

When the SDGs were agreed governments also committed to 'reach the furthest behind first' and ensure that the targets would be met by all segments of society.

But around the world inequality is a major challenge to children accessing an education. For example, in Nigeria almost all of the country's richest children complete primary school but that figure falls to just twenty percent for the poorest children in Nigeria.

But this is sadly a global phenomenon. Of the 62 countries that are off track for achieving universal primary school completion, 55 will not see the gap between the poorest and the national average close this century.

Progress for children in the poorest households needs to more than triple to ensure all children complete primary school by 2030.

This year the Send My Friend to School coalition, of which the Steve Sinnott Foundation is an active member, is calling on the UK Government to Unlock Education for the children who are being left behind.

The Campaign's 'Unlocking Education for Everyone' sets out in impressive detail recommendations by which the UK could lead the world by investing more, and more equitably to ensure the promise of education for all is achieved by 2030.

## **2. Invest in teachers and teaching**

The world faces a massive teacher shortage which is particularly bad in remote regions and conflict zones, and in certain subject areas such as science and mathematics. By 2030, the demand for teachers in low- and lower-middle-income countries is projected to rise by 25%, and in low-income countries it will nearly double. In some countries, more than half of all new graduates would need to become teachers to fill the gap.

However, increasing the supply of teachers will not be enough. Many teachers in developing countries lack the skills and support to do their jobs well.

Given the centrality of teachers to delivering quality education for all a global initiative to significantly grow the teacher workforce and ensure teachers are adequately equipped to perform their crucial role is urgently needed.

## **3. Close the education financing gap**

A lack of funding to expand access and

improve the quality of education is central to turning this situation around and delivering the promises made via the SDGs.

The good news is that after years of neglect education financing is finally on the global agenda. Former British Prime Minister Gordon Brown and his International Commission on Financing Global Education Opportunity have been central to this shift.

The Commission's 'Learning Generation' report estimates that total spending on education will need to go from \$1.2 trillion per year in 2016 to \$3 trillion by 2030 across all low- and middle-income countries in order to deliver the SDG 4.

That's a big gap to fill but it can be done.

Most of the funding already comes from domestic sources and this needs to grow. This requires more support for countries to grow their tax base, invest more of in education and spend what they do invest more sensitively.

International development finance also has a crucial role to play in narrowing the gap. Support for aid is crucial especially in the UK where the commitment to spend 0.7% of GNI is under serious threat.

A higher proportion of aid should be allocated to education, the vast majority of which should be spent on basic education in the poorest countries. The UK is doing well on these fronts but needs to be both encouraged and held accountable.

There's no silver bullet that will deliver inclusive and equitable quality education for all by 2030. But ensuring that everything we do targets those who need it most, recruiting more teachers and providing them with the training and support to deliver meaningful learning opportunities to their student and that there's sufficient funding to ensure all this can happen are vital.

We can use these three principals to guide our action, both in the form of the practical support we provide to projects, including those that are run by organisations like the Steve Sinnott Foundation and by our active engagement as advocates for education for all wherever and whenever we can.

Wherever you go in the world, you find children with dreams for the future and parents invested in their success. We all share a responsibility to ensure that they have the opportunity to make the most of their talents and fulfil their potential.

# TELL IT AND THINK IT AND SPEAK IT AND BREATHE IT

**Mark Edwards** is one of the few environmental communicators to have personally witnessed the global issues that are defining the 21st century. Assignments for magazines, NGOs and United Nations agencies have taken him to over 100 countries. One of the most widely published photographers in the world, his pictures are collected and exhibited by museums and art galleries in Europe and the US. UNESCO ASPnet and the Steve Sinnott Foundation are excited to partner with Mark Edwards on the forthcoming exhibition.

July 1969. I got lost in the Sahara Desert. A Tuareg nomad rescued me and took me to his people. He rubbed two sticks together and made a fire. We had a cup of tea. Then he warmed the batteries in an old cassette player and turned it on. Bob Dylan sang "A Hard Rain's A-Gonna Fall".

Armstrong and Aldrin were on the Moon, planting an American flag in a lunar crater. Dylan provides the close up – the dark side of our planet and its people; "Sad forests", "Dead oceans", "Guns and sharp swords in the hands of young children."

I had the idea to illustrate each line of the song. Over the next 30 years I travelled to more than 100 countries to photograph our headlong collision with nature for magazines, NGOs and UN organizations. Line by line, Dylan's song came alive in the viewfinder of my camera.

Eventually Dylan's team saw it and gave me permission to make an exhibition and a book. It launched at the Eden Project in Cornwall in 2006 and went to UN Headquarters in New York and to over 200 large outdoor displays reaching some 15 million people in botanic gardens, city centres and universities on every continent.

In *Hard Rain*, every line of Dylan's poetic masterpiece, "A Hard Rain's a-Gonna Fall" is illustrated with a photograph that brings alive the problems defining our age; "Where the people are many and their hands are all empty/Where the pellets of poison are flooding their



waters/.../ Where hunger is ugly, where souls are forgotten."

At the end of the song Dylan asked: "What'll you do now...?"

It took governments and their people – or people and their governments – more than half a century to reply. But when it came the reply was radical. On 25th September 2015, 193 governments agreed to 17 global goals, which can be summed up as protecting the planet and ensuring dignified lives for all.

Meeting the SDGs will require spectacular global co-operation by governments and the active support of citizens.

We are now working on a new exhibition: *The Goals – A Manifesto for Survival*. It is designed to give school students a platform to encourage their political leaders to deliver the SDGs they signed up to.

The heart of the exhibition adopts the metaphor of a maze to animate the path toward a sustainable world. Art works by school students shown along the uncertain path through the maze illustrate life-style choices that underpin security for this and future generations.

Displays in the cul-de-sacs show how our problems will escalate if we continue with governance, business and living as usual.

Our partners are UNESCO's Associated Schools Network (ASPnet) and the UK Commission for UNESCO.

We are on the point of contacting schools to invite their students to take part in the exhibition. We will provide teachers' notes so you can bring alive the issues which will inspire your students to show the kind of life style changes we all need to make if we are to underpin security for their generation. I do hope UNESCO ASPnet schools from around the world will take a leading role in the project.



## The STEVE SINNOTT FOUNDATION

# RAISING FUNDS

Of course we need money for our work. Without your support none of our work supporting access to learning would be possible. A big thank you to each and every one of our supporters.

Here are a few examples of how our enthusiastic supporters help us to raise funds.

The Denham Divas have raised funds for musical instruments for Haiti and for sanitary protection provision in The Gambia and they are now enthusiastically singing their hearts out to raise funds for the Learning Resource Centre in Nepal.

St Lukes Church Women's Group, East Grinstead are supporting our sanitary protection campaign

Sunderland NEU have raised £2,000 for the Learning Resource Centre in Nepal and Warren Chambers is running the London Marathon this year. Warren has also joined bicycles with Leon Whitby to Ride 100 miles in the Prudential London Cycle Ride.

You can walk, skate, swim, bake cakes, tell jokes, host a karaoke event or a storytelling marathon, just read, cook, do some yoga, be silent, dress up, dress down, you name it you can do it to raise funds.

So there are lots ways to get involved and support our work. And it doesn't have to involve stamina.

You can be a regular supporter by becoming a Friend of the Foundation with a standing order completed on our website at [www.stevesinnottfoundation.org.uk](http://www.stevesinnottfoundation.org.uk) or by downloading a form from the website or requesting one by email or post.

You can also make single donations through 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.

**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.

**Sign up your school as a UNESCO ASPnet School member and be part of a global learning network of 10,000 schools in 182 countries.**

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

Please **follow us and like and share** our news with your friends on our **Social Media Platforms**

On Instagram: [ssfoundation](https://www.instagram.com/ssfoundation)

On Twitter: [SSFoundation](https://twitter.com/SSFoundation)

On Facebook: <http://facebook.com/stevesinnottfoundation>

On Tumblr: <http://stevesinnottfoundation.tumblr.com/>

On YouTube: <http://youtube.com/sinnottfoundation>

The STEVE SINNOTT FOUNDATION

## 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](http://www.stevesinnottfoundation.org.uk)  
or call us now on  
01923 230208

Virgin Money London Marathon  
#ReasonToRun



## STANDING ORDER MANDATE

Please complete and return to The Steve Sinnott Foundation, Arnold House,  
15 Clarendon Road, Watford WD17 1JR

Title:..... First name or initial(s):.....

Surname: .....

Address: .....

.....

..... Postcode: .....

Phone Number:..... Email:.....

I (we) plan to make this contribution in the form of:

☐ cheque ☐ standing order

I (we) pledge a total of £..... to be paid:

☐ now ☐ monthly ☐ quarterly ☐ yearly

To support the Steve Sinnott Foundation

Bank Name:.....

Bank Address:.....

.....

Account Name(s):.....

Account Number:.....

Sort Code:..... Start date:.....

Signature:..... Date:.....

Please pay the amount indicated above to:

HSBC, Payee Account name: The Steve Sinnott Foundation

Account Number: 22207052 Sort Code: 40-45-27

### CHARITY GIFT AID DECLARATION - MULTIPLE DONATION

Boost your donation by 25p of Gift Aid for every £1 you donate

Gift Aid is reclaimed by the charity from the tax you pay for the current tax year. Your address is needed to identify you as a current UK taxpayer. In order to Gift Aid your donation you must tick the box below:

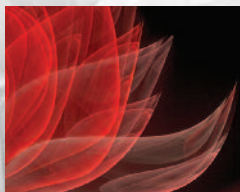
I want to Gift Aid my donation of £\_\_\_\_\_ and any donations I make in the future or have made in the past 4 years to: The Steve Sinnott Foundation I am a UK taxpayer and understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations in that tax year it is my responsibility to pay any difference. My Details: Title \_\_\_\_\_

First name or initial(s) \_\_\_\_\_ Surname: \_\_\_\_\_

Full Home address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Postcode \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Please notify the charity if you: want to cancel this declaration change your name or home address no longer pay sufficient tax on your income and/or capital gains If you pay Income Tax at the higher or additional rate and want to receive the additional tax relief due to you, you must include all your Gift Aid donations on your Self Assessment tax return or ask HM Revenue and Customs to adjust your tax code



The  
STEVE  
SINNOTT  
FOUNDATION

email: [admin@stevesinnottfoundation.org.uk](mailto:admin@stevesinnottfoundation.org.uk)  
telephone: 01923 230208

# JOIN US!

## BECOME A FRIEND

The Steve Sinnott Foundation runs projects in the UK, Sierra Leone, Haiti, Nepal, The Gambia, Ethiopia and Colombia.

For as little as £3 a month, you can become a Friend of the Foundation, support our work, receive our quarterly magazine and be the first to hear about the ways we are working to broaden access to education around the world.



The  
STEVE  
SINNOTT  
FOUNDATION

