



The
STEVE
SINNOTT
FOUNDATION

TWENTIETH EDITION

Engage



Changing Lives Through Education

"It would be easy to assume that education is our global priority....

After all, it is a country's greatest investment in the future. Education has a ripple effect on almost every aspect of development. An educated population is healthier, more productive, more peaceful, and more capable of tackling the great challenges facing our planet, including climate change. This effect is particularly powerful when we educate girls." Alice Albright

Jerry Glazier



FOREWORD

Welcome to our new style and online version of Engage 20.

Sadly, this edition is being published as we approach the peak of the Covid-19 pandemic.

This global emergency is having a profoundly negative effect on billions of people and will risk progress in the campaign for Education for All.

Global economic challenges, as a result of the pandemic, must not be used by nations as an excuse not to commit to drive up access to education. Global recovery will be extrinsically linked to the extension of quality education provision for all.

In these uncertain times the work of the Foundation will continue. We will also work hard to ensure that, in the post virus period, our efforts are fully focused on our key objective of support for the provision of education for the millions around the world who currently miss out.

Thank you for your continued, valued and crucial support.

From the Chief Executive's Desk

As the news and advice around coronavirus continues to evolve daily, we want to reassure you that we are closely monitoring the situation and its impact on the people and communities we work with.

With schools and projects in many countries now closing, we are, through our networks, seeking to mitigate the effects of this as far as is possible. It is our aim to ensure that the communities we work with have the support they need throughout this period, and can take up their places when schools and projects reopen.

We want to let you know that we are following Government advice and have put strict measures in place to protect our staff and everybody they come into contact with, both in the UK and overseas.

We are taking action to safeguard our partners: each of our projects has an action plan reflecting their context and relevant government advice. We have postponed all international travel and limited in-country travel to help protect everyone we work with as well as the wider community. As far as possible, we are sharing up-to-date World Health Organization (WHO) information and guidance through our networks in order to combat the spread of myths and misinformation.

Throughout this evolving crisis, we are fully focussed on providing continuity of support to those who need it most at any given time. Our priority now is how we keep everyone safe and children learning and we will keep you updated on any important developments.

This period of uncertainty coincided with the Foundation's work on refreshing our brand. We have just launched a new website, updated our social media channels and published this new look edition of Engage.

At the Foundation we believe that wider society has a role to educate everyone to appreciate and understand that opportunities and choices are available for all members of society. This encouragement is particularly important for girls and young women as they often fail



to rise to challenges and grasp opportunities, as they believe they are not up to tackling them. We hope you find the article on Page 8 by Dr Kathy Weston interesting as she explores this theme. On page 4 you can read why Alice Albright is urging us to 'mobilise resources and political will to get education back on track'. If you wish to learn more about the history of Haiti's quest to secure education for its people Lord Leslie Griffiths' piece on page 6 is illuminating. Our project manager in Haiti, Billy Jean, explains why morally, now is the time we must all stand and face our collective responsibility and work as one to make quality education for all a reality.

We hope you enjoy this edition of Engage and find the new website informative. Your feedback is greatly valued so that we can continue to improve our communications with you, our partners and supporters.

Thank you for the support that you have given to the Foundation from its beginning to now at this very difficult time for us all. We hope you and your loved ones keep well and safe. Please contact us and let us know if there is anything we can do to be of support to you in these exceptional circumstances ann.beatty@stevesinnottfoundation.org.uk.

We have been recruiting new Trustees and Ambassadors to strengthen our expertise and governance. We are very pleased to announce we now have 2 new trustees, an additional patron Harriet Thorpe (who will join our long-standing patron Lord Puttnam) and a team of ambassadors who are supporting our work and development as a Foundation going forward. You can find out more about Our Team by visiting our website: www.stevesinnottfoundation.org.uk

A huge thank you to all of the team who have worked hard to launch the new website and this issue of Engage, despite the challenges of Covid19.

Working together, winning together must be the approach we adopt to ensure the wellbeing of all.

Education is every child's number one priority; It should be ours as well

BY ALICE ALBRIGHT

CEO OF THE GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP FOR EDUCATION.

At the dawn of a new decade, we have just 10 years left to achieve the Agenda 2030. Yet millions of children around the world are not learning what they need to contribute to a more peaceful, prosperous and sustainable world. Unless we make transforming education systems our number one priority, we will be 80 years too late to achieve this goal.

In November 2019, I met a group of young South Sudanese refugees in a school on the outskirts of Kampala, Uganda. Haltingly, they told me about their experiences fleeing their homes and seeking refuge in a foreign place. When I asked them how they felt about being able to go to school again, though, their eyes brightened and out tumbled their hopes and dreams. Like millions of children and young people around the world, education is their number one priority for the future.

It would be easy to assume that education is our global priority, as well. After all, it is a country's greatest investment in the future. Education has a ripple effect on almost every aspect of development. An educated population is healthier, more productive, more peaceful, and more capable of tackling the great challenges facing our planet, including climate change. This effect is particularly powerful when we educate girls. If every girl in the world received 12 years of education, infant mortality would be cut in half, and the global economy would rise by as much as US \$30 trillion. In our interconnected world, these benefits know no borders or boundaries. Education is the cornerstone of a better future for us all.

So it's alarming that today, 260 million children are still not in school. It's even more alarming that millions of children who are in school are not learning. More than half the world's children are unable to read and understand a simple story by age 10. If we continue with business as usual, half the next generation won't have the skills they need to harness the opportunities of the 21st century. In fact, at current rates of progress, it will be 2111 – well into the 22nd century – by the time the poorest girls in the world can expect to complete 10 years of basic schooling. That's 80 years after the deadline to meet the Sustainable Development Goals expires.

We urgently need to recognise and prioritise the global learning crisis, and mobilise the resources and political will to get education back on track. Yet education is all but invisible on the world stage. Aid spending on education has been stagnant for nearly a decade, despite a global funding gap of \$39 billion. Clearly, that must change.

However, it's not just a case of investing more money, when business as usual is not working. That's why the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) supports governments to transform education at systems level, where the impact of change can reach all children.

We are uniquely placed to do this. As a partnership, we mobilize global expertise to identify solutions at country-level, tackle challenges holistically and reduce fragmentation. As a fund, we channel investments to where they will have a catalytic effect to improve learning – be it investing in teacher training, creating conditions for girls to get to and stay in school, distributing textbooks, or modernizing data to drive evidence-based decisions.

Our unique approach gets results. In our partner countries, 77 million more children are in school today than when we began in 2002, including 41 million girls. Our success demonstrates what we all know to be true: that only by working in partnership can we tackle the challenge ahead.

With the clock ticking for millions of children around the world, we need to stop investing in business as usual. GPE has long counted on the UK as a champion for global education, particularly for educating girls. Now more than ever, we need such leadership to make transforming education systems our number one priority for 2030. Millions of children cannot afford to wait an additional 80 years, and neither can we.



Let's Transform Our World For The Better

BY AUDREY OSLER

PROFESSOR OF CITIZENSHIP AND HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION, UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS, UK AND UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH-EASTERN NORWAY.

I specialise in education for citizenship and human rights, in both established democracies and post-conflict societies. This has led me to diverse places and regions, including sub-Saharan Africa; Aceh, Indonesia; Iraq-Kurdistan; and, most recently, Sri Lanka. Experience confirms my belief that education is key to the realisation of human rights and gender equality. UN Sustainable Development Goal 4, quality education, is central to the wider sustainability agenda. Without appropriate education many of the other goals are effectively non-starters.

The Sustainable Development Goals, agreed in 2015, are a set of aspirations with concrete targets. The first step in realising their ambitious agenda is to hold our governments to account. It's important to remember that they are not legally binding. They form an ambitious agenda to transform our world for the better by 2030. They are only likely to be realised if we, as citizens, working with others, including elected representatives, ensure our government and political leaders are held accountable both for these promises and for legally binding human rights obligations.

A second step in realising SDG 4 is to prompt an in-depth discussion about the meaning of an inclusive and equitable quality education. Much is made of the need to ensure adequate resources and teacher education. Clearly these are essential. But we also need to debate the aims and content of education. The near-universally ratified Convention on the Rights of the Child, along with the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, spell out the basis for a quality education. These agreed international standards propose curriculum aims. These include development of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and for the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations; respect for the child's cultural identity, language and values and other cultures and civilizations. A quality education must necessarily include human rights education and intercultural education. Equally, the curriculum should equip the learner with the skills to participate in society 'in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of sexes, and friendship among all peoples', and ensure social and environmental sustainability.



Some may question this agenda, arguing that universal primary education must, in the first instance, promote literacy and numeracy. Yet this isn't an either/or choice. We are living in dangerous times, with increased authoritarianism across the globe; a global climate emergency; and an increasing tendency for governments to deride international institutions, undermine democratic processes, avoid journalistic scrutiny, overlook human rights standards, and play to populist agendas that promote blind nationalism and xenophobia. The curriculum knowledge and skills outlined here are more necessary than ever, if we are to avoid global conflict.

A third step is to foster global solidarity and a stronger cosmopolitan outlook, not just among young learners but all citizens, including teachers. Even wealthy countries need international support and solidarity to address crises, as illustrated by the international response to Australia's devastating bush fires in 2019-20. Those who have lived under repressive regimes are often most acutely aware of the need for cosmopolitanism. The artist César Manrique, who lived in Franco's Spain, expressed this provocatively: 'I believe in humankind as a totality. I don't believe in religion, or in borders, or in nationalities, or in flags.' He went on to say:

We live on this planet for such a short space of time that each one of our steps should lead towards building the dreamed space of utopia more and more. Let us build it together. That is the only way of making it come true.

Citizenship action for government accountability, a deep discussion about a quality curriculum, together with a utopian cosmopolitan vision, offer a pathway towards greater social justice through education.

HAITI: Lessons From The Past Need To Be Learned

BY LORD GRIFFITHS OF BURRY PORT.

Leslie John Griffiths is a British Methodist Minister and Life Peer in the House of Lords. Here he sheds light on the history of a people determined from the birth of their country in 1804 to ensure education allows them to be liberated.

I'm delighted to make a small contribution to this journal and to honour the work of the Steve Sinnott Foundation. I became aware of the Foundation's work through my own work in and for the Caribbean Republic of Haiti. This brought me together with Ann Beatty and, hey presto, we found mutual points of interest and experience that led, without too much delay, to the invitation to write this piece.

Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG4) argues for sustainable development and accessible education for all. The trouble with these goals is that they allow us to imagine that they've only recently been formulated. Yet my whole life has been focused on this particular goal for half a century and in the poorest country in the Western hemisphere. And it had been a challenge for generations before that. Let me bring readers into the picture.

I'm a Methodist minister and my first appointment on leaving Cambridge was to Haiti. I found myself with responsibility for 48 rural communities spread across the southern peninsula of this, the first black republic in the world. Read William Wordsworth's astonishing sonnet for Toussaint Louverture to get the spirit of the people of this country at the moment of its birth in 1804. The communities I served were almost inaccessible, the people were largely illiterate, and I had no knowledge of the language they spoke.

President Pétion, an early head of state in Haiti, had invited the Methodist people of the United Kingdom to send missionaries with an expertise in education to help in the building of this new and struggling nation. Two men who'd been formed by the British and Foreign Schools' Society arrived in 1817 and opened a school on the monitorial principle. The President welcomed this development for, he wrote, "L'Education lève un homme à la dignité de son être (Education raises a person to their full dignity as a human being)." That aphorism was painted over the entry of all the Methodist schools that were built in the following years. It matches Steve Sinnott's description of education as "the great liberator."



In the 1920s, a remarkable Irish missionary named Ormonde McConnell recognised that the education on offer in Haiti was taught in French while the population at large spoke their local Kreyòl. He brought in internationally renowned linguistic experts and, for the very first time, developed an orthography for the local tongue. Soon, schools were being developed in the rural areas as well as in the towns and cities and pupils were being taught in their native language.

In the years I lived in Haiti (1970 – 1980), I had some responsibility for a nation-wide network of schools. For a number of years, I was deputy head of our prestigious Lycée in the capital city. The church, under the direction of Swiss educators, had developed an Institute for the training of rural teachers; it was thoroughly ecumenical and prepared teachers for the most remote communities in the land. They were to teach in both French and Kreyòl. Books were prepared on agriculture, hygiene, community development and such subjects. And in both languages. It was cutting edge pedagogy; the Institute is now almost 60 years old.

All of these developments were intended to offer an education to a population desperately in need of it. It was painful to hear a few months ago that, because of yet more political unrest, it had been impossible to re-open schools after the summer break in October 2019. Sadly, not long after being reopened, schools in Haiti, like many around the world, are once again closed due to the Covid 19 pandemic.

It has been so encouraging to learn that the Steve Sinnott Foundation has been working in Haiti for the last decade. It's my hope that we can find a way to bring its work into the same orbit as the work I've described above.

Education does indeed raise people to the very height of their human potential. This was the case from the beginning of Haiti's independent history. It remains true now. And it must surely be key to any future well-being towards which the people of Haiti and their friends around the world aspire.

Positive Periods, Girls And Education

BY SALIMATU S KOROMA

GENDER DESK OFFICER

SIERRA LEONE TEACHERS UNION (SLTU).

After a decade long civil war, Sierra Leone witnessed an unprecedented surge in school enrolment at both the primary and then the secondary levels.

Committed to the Education for All objectives, the Government of Sierra Leone, further encouraged access to school. The main task included reaching the out of school children and improving the quality of the learning environment and ultimately the learning outcomes. The needs of the poor, as well as the elimination of disparities between urban and rural areas and between boys and girls attending school was of paramount importance to all, including the Sierra Leone Teachers Union. We all know that menstruation can often be challenging for girls. Girls are very concerned about the problems of leaks, stains and odour during menstruation. These can have a negative impact and as such stop them from coming to school when they are unable to access adequate period products.

Many girls do not have a place to dispose of the readymade sanitary pads in their school toilets so they devise other strategies; some flush them or stay at home during their periods. The Government has established policies protecting girls' rights to education, although current education and health policies do not yet specifically address menstrual hygiene.

Research has shown that the onset of menstruation presents several challenges. Girls report experiencing stress, shame, embarrassment, confusion and fear due to a lack of knowledge and inability to manage menstrual flow or from being teased by peers. These challenges negatively impact girls' learning experiences and result in absenteeism, decreased school participation and falling behind in courses. Girls face these challenges due to poor menstruation related knowledge and insufficient access to menstrual materials.

I must first of all commend the Steve Sinnott Foundation for their initiative to address current deficits in girls' and adolescents' menstrual management through the Positive Periods Programme.

The three effective trainings of Home Economics teachers we

have conducted have focused on health and education and the making of reusable menstrual pads. In our experience we have found that the quality of modern menstrual pads available in Sierra Leone is not effective because they are not absorbent enough. They cannot absorb the leakage properly. I say this because I have experienced this for many years. I have never used any menstrual pad but modern menstrual pads. I always doubled them before going out to avoid embarrassment or shame in public. The pain and discomfort I experienced during these periods was unbearable.

Reusable pads have a cotton or towel liner that prevents any sticking or overflow. Even though they have no super absorbents, they capture and contain your flow. You feel comfortable when you have them on, and they do not leak. They are safe. Reusable pads are the best for girls and women as well as for the environment.



Cultivating Girls' Resilience

BY DR KATHY WESTON.

Kathy has over 15 years experience as a social researcher with a particular interest in parenting, education and family life. She currently works as a motivational speaker and is passionate about bridging the gap between academic research and parenting.

The number of out-of-school girls worldwide has dropped by 79 million in the last 20 years (UNICEF, 2020). Yet, as access to education improves around the world for girls and young women, we have another fight on our hands. There is a pressing need to recognise girls' resilience, sustain it and ensure that optimal conditions exist for girls to thrive emotionally, academically and in the digital world. We know that girls are generally less resilient than boys, and that their mental and emotional wellbeing is declining, with suicide the second leading cause of death among adolescent girls aged 15-19 worldwide (UNICEF).

In the UK, 30% of 15 year old girls experience high levels of emotional difficulties, as opposed to 18% of boys, and for girls, unlike boys, emotional problems increase with age (HBSC, 2020). Teen girls are struggling with their body image (only 49% of 15 year old girls think that their body is 'about the right size'), rising anxiety, perfectionism and the unique challenges that come with access to social media (OFCOM, 2020). They worry more than boys, and can struggle to communicate with parents, particularly with fathers. 50% of girls feel significant academic pressure (only 30% of boys feel the same) and girls are less likely to enjoy school. Girls also engage in fewer behaviours that promote health. There appear to be universal challenges associated with moving from girl to womanhood in the 21st Century.

Part and parcel of any educational programme worldwide, should be a focus on resilience. What does it mean to be resilient? It means being a 'thinking scientist' and staying curious. It means remaining flexible and open to others' perspectives. It means not repeating things that you know don't work, reframing challenge as opportunity and maintaining a sense of optimism, humour and hope about the future.

Cultivating positivity may seem challenging given the contexts that some young women find themselves in, but we need to aim high. All young people should understand that there is a proactive component in resilience. We decide if we are resilient; paying careful note to the times when we demonstrated it by overcoming difficulties and barriers.

Agency is important when cultivating resilience. Young women don't need other people to fix or mollycoddle them. They need to know that they have personal power and should strive to reach the multiple options, choices and opportunities available to them. Our role is to create pathways which enable them to do this. We must ensure that they are conscious of the family and community values that can psychologically anchor them, give them access to positive role models, give effective praise when they demonstrate resilience and provide them with opportunities to experience intellectual and physical challenge. Girls also need to be conscious of the threats to their own personal resilience. Self-awareness is key and should be facilitated by as supportive a network as possible. Behind every resilient girl, is someone saying "I believe in you, now give it a go!".



Sustainable Development and Teacher Training

BY JAIR RUIZ FLORES

TEACHER AT THE 'NORMAL SCHOOL OFL',
MEXICO.

Many issues arise throughout the world as a result of different climate conditions. The excessive heat, the lack of water, the overflow of waste materials and the weak local economy of the inhabitants of Chiautla de Tapia, Puebla, Mexico. Professor Luis Casarrubias Ibarra urges that, "actions that lead to a guarantee of care for the environment," are taken.

The Normal School is located in the south of the state of Puebla, Mexico. The climate is dry and warm which makes staying inside the classrooms unpleasant. Teachers and students therefore, have participated in management projects and secured an air conditioning system in all classrooms. This system led to excessive consumption of electricity and a huge and unsustainable expenditure for the institution. Currently, through the management of projects with state and federal educational authorities, resources have been obtained to acquire solar cells, which replace the consumption of electric energy with solar energy and have reduced spending by 95%. Likewise, a rainwater collection system has been generated. Rainfall is now stored in tanks that supply the needs of the institution, such as water services to toilets, plant maintenance and cleaning.

The use of paper for different academic and administrative activities has been minimized and it was decided to digitalise existing paper records.

Disposable plates, spoons, glasses, straws, bags etc have been replaced with reusable materials for food consumption in the school.

All of the initiatives outlined are intended to generate reflection on the part of the students (trainee teachers) to care for the environment and to maximise social welfare.



Garbage collection, campaigns and recycling deposits are being realised as a result of courses in the primary education degree curriculum. This includes the projects offered by the National Union of Education Workers (SNTE), and in particular the initiatives of teachers in training. As trainee teachers attending Normal School, come from different areas, consciousness of the need to promote sustainability is spreading and consequently so too is its development.

Our Normal School is the first in Mexico that has the solar cell system and is committed to taking care of the economy and the environment. We know that much more needs to be done. Lack of understanding, alongside the supply of necessary resources, needs to be addressed to ensure sustainable development impacts meaningfully on all our lives.

The teachers in training throughout the country are the army that can take programmes and projects of sustainable development to the farthest corners. The joy, initiative and enthusiasm of today's young teachers working together means that in the not too distant future they will undoubtedly stand alongside future generations, coordinating campaigns that will help to care for and sustain our planet.

Projects

Safeguarding

Stuart Cornish (Safeguarding Consultant) has been meeting with staff and started the Safeguarding Review. Stuart has been working alongside our Chief Executive reviewing all our policies on Whistleblowing and Safeguarding. The review is ensuring policies are up to date, include current best practice and are applicable to an organisation of our size and scope.

Covid 19 Resources

Overnight life has changed, across the world schools are closed, people are working from home where they can, people young and old are self-isolating. Who could have predicted how things would change; laptops, pyjamas and zoom calls for those who can and extremely difficult days for the marginalised. Some, do not have access to resources such as electricity, WiFi or money to buy food to stock their cupboards to enable self-isolating and social distancing.

Social media is awash with advice on things to do. We have been pulling together resources that we believe could be helpful, and not just resources but snippets of positivity to get us all through this too.



Nepal

The Learning Resource Centre in Nepal was being used by schools and the community on a daily basis up until March. The Denham Divas raised £321.40 for the transport costs for schools to attend sessions at the centre.

The Gambia Learning Resource Centre

Work has started on the Learning Resource Centre in The Gambia and the refurbishment works are complete. Book Aid has provided 1000 books, which the teachers and students are making good use of at this time. The next stage is to provide all the equipment and the teaching and learning resources. We hope we will get back on track and open the LRC in the autumn.



Haiti

Billy Jean has been continuing work on the Haitian Kreyòl literacy programme and the relocation of the Learning Resource Centre in Haiti. He joined the team to attend Haiti Earthquake Memorial events in London in January. Billy spoke about our work at a lecture given by Lord Griffiths of Burry Port at the House of Lords.

Positive Periods Programme

Across the world girls miss approximately 50 days a year due to menstruation. The Positive Periods programme is an initiative to support girls who are experiencing a natural bodily function each month to continue to be able to attend school every day. The Positive Periods Programme teaches women and girls how to make their own re-usable, recyclable and locally sourced menstrual pads, alongside health and wellbeing training.



Menstruation or periods as we know it, is called different names in different parts of the world, if it is actually mentioned at all. Mostly it is hushed up and ignored by society. We are privileged to be involved in a project that is promoting gender equality and allowing girls and women to attend school and participate in everyday life. We have named the programme Positive Periods as we want to provide positive solutions and take away the shame and negativity associated with menstruation. The latest trainings sessions took place in October 2019 and January 2020 in Sierra Leone and trained over 120 teachers and students. The next phase of this project to carry out the training in Malawi and Uganda was due in March but it has been postponed for now. This programme will be extended at the request of teachers and community members from the U.K., Ghana, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Guinea Bissau, Senegal Cambodia and Nepal.

Cuba

Our Chief Executive, Ann Beatty, attended the Universidad Conference 2020 in Havana at the invitation of the Cuban Teachers' Union, Sindicato Nacional de Trabajadores de la Educación, la Ciencia y el Deporte (SNTECD).

The Conference theme was Sustainable Development and we presented papers on My Life Changed - Storytelling and our Positive Periods Programme. Ann delivered training sessions on the Positive Periods Programme with teachers and university professors and we are delighted that the teachers will be able to share the Positive Periods Programme widely in Cuba.

Whilst in Havana she also delivered training to members of the Cuban Caribbean Association and other community groups on the Positive Periods Programme as well as visiting schools to share learning in her capacity as the UNESCO ASPnet UK Co-ordinator.

Our thanks to Gertrudis Simón Pineda (SNTECD Executive) for making this possible.



UNESCO ASPnet Schools Network

The Chief Executive attended the UNESCO Youth Conference in UAE from the 3rd to the 6th November to talk about UNESCO ASPnet U.K. best practice in Sustainable Development. Whilst she was there, she visited schools and facilitated storytelling sessions with students in Dubai and Abu Dhabi.

In December 2019, we hosted students and teachers from Russia who were participating in a Shakespeare Competition. They visited the Anglo European School and wrote and recited sonnets about London. The Chief Executive and teachers from the Anglo European School judged the competition and issued certificates to the winners.

A Huge Challenge Offering Immense Rewards

BY HELEN PORTER

HELEN IS A TEACHER AND EXECUTIVE

MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL EDUCATION UNION.

I feel enthused and motivated to make my contribution (however small) to Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4: Quality Education. 'Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.'

I am passionate about education and believe that an appropriate, inclusive and quality education allows children to develop the skills and thought processes that will enable them to become active citizens. This, in turn, will enable their communities to develop innovative solutions to their local problems. As they solve these problems, they will also contribute to our global effort to achieve sustainable development and tackle the most significant challenges that are currently facing humanity.

Education underpins all of the other SDGs and allows people to improve their lives and the lives of others. Statistics from the United Nations indicate that 262 million children and adolescents are currently out of school and are unable to access the most basic education. That is 20% of children between the ages of six and seventeen that are not attending school. Sadly, 617 million children and adolescents lack minimum proficiency in reading and mathematics, so have very limited access to technical

skills, self-study and vocational training. This will severely limit their career options and their potential contributions to society.

One of the major causes of limited quality education is the lack of trained and qualified teachers. More international cooperation is urgently needed to increase teacher training opportunities in developing countries. The poor condition of school buildings and facilities also contributes to the lack of quality education. Investment is needed to improve school buildings, so that all schools have electricity, clean water and sanitation. Some children arrive at school feeling too hungry, ill or exhausted to learn. So, it is essential that schools work closely with families and communities to enable learning opportunities for every child. We must continue to campaign to persuade governments to commit to funding education adequately, whilst highlighting the dangers and pitfalls of the privatisation of education.

When focusing on the 'inclusive and equitable' aspect of SDG4, it is clear that inclusivity and equity have not been achieved. Whilst major progress has been made in increasing the enrolment rates of girls in primary education during the last decade, few countries have achieved gender equality at all levels of education. We must continue to campaign and strive for gender equality in secondary, tertiary and higher education. Children with disabilities, living in poverty and those from ethnic minorities are less likely to benefit from a quality education. Much work is necessary to improve access to school buildings and facilities, so that schools are inclusive to children with disabilities. Specialist training of staff who educate and care for children with disabilities is essential to ensure that education can be fully inclusive to the most vulnerable children.

As a teacher of 35 years experience and with one eye on my retirement from teaching, I am looking for pathways to contribute to the successful realisation of SDG4. I am delighted to find that there are many interesting opportunities open to me. I have become a Friend of the Steve Sinnott Foundation, a UNICEF Children's Champion and am looking forward to two weeks volunteering at a school in Malawi with Mission Direct. I feel confident that my increased involvement and networking will lead to further opportunities and ideas. Raising awareness is always an excellent starting point. If everyone who feels passionate about educating the world's children, contributes in some small way, our many small efforts will accumulate and consolidate to ensure that SDG4 is realised by the close of the decade. The challenge is huge, but the rewards will be immense.

Children and young people are our future. Educated young people are empowered young people. They will be equipped with the skills and imagination that will enable them to contribute to sustainable growth and development.



Facing up to our Collective Responsibilities

BY BILLY JEAN

SSF PROJECT MANAGER, HAITI.

“A society grows great when old men plant trees in whose shade they know they shall never sit” – an ancient Greek proverb

Ordinarily we wake up every morning to continue our daily activities which preserve our lifestyle. The survival instinct is a shared affair, our self-esteem and the well-being of the people who are dear to us are the real factors that most often guide our actions and thoughts.

It is clear that the world around us is changing by leaps and giant steps. The generations that coexist in the contemporary world face the irreversible phenomenon that is globalization. Through this process, the national product, capital and labour markets become more tightly integrated across borders. There is therefore an influx of goods, services and people around the world. Production is internationalized and manpower is more available. So the world is experiencing great technical progress.

However, we all know that despite this progression, there are values which are attached to human dignity that we are eternally inseparable from. We cultivate those values in our family and in the world around us. They have a very close connection with education and culture. The feeling of being oneself, feeling loved, accepted and respected or the simple fact of not being invisible to the eyes of others; these are natural feelings felt by all.

Unfortunately, generations have inherited several obstacles that hinder common well-being in society that can be brought together under the term “discrimination”.

Normally we can consider the source of these stereotypes in relation to the social constructions which have been the work of people over the years.

According to arbitrary criteria, we categorize people as white or black, man or woman, expatriate or immigrant, beautiful or ugly, rich or poor etc ... So, prejudice presupposes first of all a perception that we have of certain categories, there are “us” and there are “them”. Thus, this way of categorizing “us” and “them” puts us in a situation of abstract separation in society.



Many of us are ready to defend until our last day, our homeland, our identity and the community to which we belong. We are concerned about leaving juicy economic legacies for our children. Few of us think of leaving a better society for them. It is in the face of this major challenge that we find ourselves today in the world. Now is no longer the time to try to provide individual solutions to common problems.

Threats such as climate change, utopian wars fought at the whim of heads of government, the endless fight against injustice to women around the world, famine in African countries whose subsoil is full of natural resources, the desperation that forces people to leave their country in search of a better life in an unknown world, the children who are expelled from their school because of frizzy hair and many other challenges are still present today.

It is very easy to feel too tiny and helpless to change these things. But I believe that everyone has a moral responsibility to no longer be a passive citizen or a mere observer of these things. It's a holy challenge. We cannot separate our destiny from the rest of the others. In truth, we are all in the same boat.

Education is one of the most effective means to remedy phenomena which are harmful to a society. It's a massive building tool. Striving for a global and equitable education is very important for economic development and the distribution of social justice in the world.

Social progress, which means that children from poor families must logically break free of the poverty in their genealogical chain, is closely linked to the opportunity of benefiting from a quality education.

Thus, it is the responsibility of each of us to contribute to this laudable cause in order to make a difference to an undeniable emergency still facing the world today.

Educating For The Modern Era And The Future

BY EINSTEIN KOFI NTIM.

Einstein is CEO at Global Startup Ecosystem one of the first digital accelerator education startups. He is a partner at Africa Future Fund investing in initiatives across Africa and the diaspora that leverage advanced technologies to "leapfrog" Africa's future. He has also launched tech summits across emerging markets in Haiti and Ghana.

Education fundamentally serves to illuminate and liberate, bring awareness to a situation, inform and transform one's perspective. Education provides a bright spot that spreads to illuminate and liberate in order to empower an individual to improve their environment, their community and lead to a transformation of his or her life. This has been our sole goal; to help people appreciate the very opportunities that lie at one's fingertips or understand that new ones can be created.

Data suggests that smartphone penetration continues to grow rapidly – within the next 4 years there will be an increase from a 60% mobile phone penetration to 95% even in low income nations. As it stands, many people across Haiti, Africa, India, the Caribbean, South America and many more places are unable to make ends meet but have smartphones which are often just used for basic entertainment such as social media. However, these smartphones can be used to learn new skills, conduct research, learn from diverse economies across the world and also to tap into the global market. These platforms also help to gain access to teachers, mentors and guides who can illuminate people's lives and educate for the future.

Education also provides the avenue to affect the moral wellbeing of people or individuals living in a country. Good education helps the individual to identify what is morally right and good for the complete development of humanity. This helps reduce the chances of civil wars and conflicts which occur as a result of the lack of, or because of, inadequate education.



Education transcends skills development and the provision for economic empowerment. It helps to reduce gender inequality, increases support for people in trauma or in need of mental health care. It also facilitates understanding and appreciation of entertainment, design, the arts and the like. Collectively this shows that by increasing an individual's ability to gain education, the illumination it provides raises that person's standard of living, joy and overall growth and development.

A lot of progress has been made towards achieving SDG 4 as globally as more people are literate across the board even in remote areas. However, the key area that has not been keenly addressed is the digital divide because of the rapid growth of technology and the dependence on technological proficiency in this modern age. This is why it is significant that in order to achieve SDG 4, education in technology has to be a key component. This will equip individuals with the requisite skills needed in most jobs.

That is why the building of strong tech hubs via the Haiti Tech Summit and Haiti Tech has led to such a rapid transformation in the lives of so many; the building of vital training mechanisms has served to liberate and enlighten people. Such a strong push towards building tech ecosystems and hubs across emerging markets has served to bring global thought leaders in technology and innovation to Haiti. This initiative and project helps train people in digital skills locally, whilst educating international leaders about the opportunities available in Haiti and its increasing readiness to be part of technological innovation worldwide.

Believing that education alone is not enough but rather the need for appropriate education which is relevant for context and time is one of the objectives of Haiti Tech Summit. This is why education around technology is paramount even for the basics of work. We have endeavoured to help teach people

across emerging markets and emerging communities ; the power of leveraging education in technology in order to build the appropriate skills. Haiti is proof of where many young people, people from very underprivileged backgrounds and even people with limited literacy, have been taught how to go on education platforms on their phones to do courses, how to do basic design work, how to research and how to provide services to a global market which can pay for such skills and service.

In a world where there is so much abundance, the missing link is how people can access the right information. This can be achieved through education, which helps people to learn. Leveraging technology helps provide high quality education and opportunities no matter which part of the country people or individuals find themselves. This provides a platform which can train teachers and they can also train the youth and pass on the information to them. The problem often is access to quality and appropriate education. The core mission for the Global Startup Ecosystem has been to increase access to people and through our digital platforms we have been able to train people across remote regions so long as they have access to a phone and connectivity. We saw with the global startup ecosystem that the best way of providing access to experts is through technology.

Within three years we have been able to help transform Haiti into one of the leading tech hubs and ecosystems of the Caribbean. Haiti

now has the largest programming and developer communities in the region who have been educated to code and build platforms, websites, applications and more that help empower people and enterprises in the region. The belief that education has to serve the young, the old and be appropriate for the modern day and the future has been a core driver for us. This belief is the biggest reason we have been able to achieve so much so quickly. We are collectively educating over 6000 people in Haiti alone with our programs around technology, promoting understanding of the future of work, helping them gain new skills to reduce the level of unemployment, increasing literacy, female recruitment, self-empowerment and access to a wider global audience to further increase the propensity of continuous learning.

We have found education to be a catalyst to solve issues across all the rest of the SDGs from economic empowerment, gender equality, health, poverty and much more. This has been witnessed firsthand by seeing how relevant education around technology and access to technology has led to the lives of many people in Haiti and across the world being transformed through the programs and access we tirelessly work to provide. It has been an uplifting journey seeing less privileged people have their lives liberated through education and those with resources have their world views focused on regions that have traditionally been relegated and not properly considered.

People Like Us

For over the last four and a half years members of the National Union of Teachers (NUT), and now the National Education Union (NEU), have taken delegations of educators to Northern France to support refugees living in the areas around Dunkirk and Calais. You can read below how a recent trip to Calais impacted upon three delegates from Warwickshire and Yorkshire.

I took my first trip to Calais on 2nd November 2019. It was an inspiring experience that quickly led to us collaborating to run a collection in my school and create resources for form time activities; to educate students about the refugee crisis and encourage them to support by donating items to Care4Calais. Not only has the opportunity to work with Care4Calais resulted in organising the whole school initiative at my school but it has also had an impact on my teaching. As an English teacher, I have been able to share my insights into the causes and results of the refugee crisis directly when teaching the Power and Conflict poems that are examined in GCSE English Literature. As Initial Teacher Training (ITT) Professional Mentor,

I have discussed my experiences in Calais with Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) trainees and they are also now keen to be involved.

Tracey, Warwickshire

I attended the Care4Calais trip with the NEU for the first time in April 2019. I had heard many things in the media and online about Calais. I'd heard about the conditions that people were living in and the denial of basic human rights experienced by hundreds, if not thousands of people. However, it is one thing to read numbers and statistics in the media and another completely to go and meet the very people who make up those statistics.

The trip to France was eye-opening to me, because I realised that the people in Calais are just like people in all parts of the world. Each one has their own hopes, dreams, goals, worries, fears about the future and the people they care about. Sitting down and hearing their stories about how they got to Calais are as inspiring as they are depressing. Struggling through

land and oceans to get to a place where they can see family, speak the language and have some form of normality away from the day-to-day living in squalor. When you know individual stories, it becomes more difficult to generalise and stereotype people. Stories are a common way that all humans have connected for centuries and when I found out about their sorrow, pain and determined hope, I could only think how the world would be different if these stories were known to a larger audience. This inspired me to become the Warwickshire NEU black members' representative and get more involved in the Stand Up To Racism campaigns and conferences.

In my teaching and in my school, I aim to retell stories and make people more aware of what is going on in Calais so they can become more knowledgeable about the situation. If they just read about numbers without hearing the stories of individuals who comprise those numbers, they could become desensitised to the migrants and the abuse of human rights that they are suffering. Going to Calais, made me realise I can do a lot to help spread the stories of the refugees and thereby become a more active citizen in working to change society for the better.

Anton, Warwickshire

I've always believed that all people fleeing dangerous and hostile countries should have the right to safe passage and the chance to create a life and home for themselves and their families. It seems an obvious and basic human right to me. I felt it was time to visit Calais and bear witness to the realities of the refugee crisis first hand and to help those in need. I have recently returned from my first trip there, where I volunteered with Care4Calais in their amazing and challenging work with refugees.

We distributed hundreds of winter coats to refugees living on an industrial estate. The queues were very long and the weather was incredibly windy and icy cold. Some didn't have coats, others no shoes and all were living outside in tents during the terrible storms. (That was if the authorities hadn't already aggressively cleared their tents).

I had the opportunity to greet each person, learn their name and chat briefly as they queued. To shake hands, smile, ask questions and even dance together in the wind and witness their amazing positivity and resilience despite the incredibly harsh conditions was absolutely life changing for me.

In addition to distributing coats and bags, we offered services such as barbering, sewing, bicycle mending, tea and coffee and a charging station. These distributions and services are a lifeline and wouldn't be possible without the commitment and dedication of volunteers like the many wonderful people I met during my trip.

It is critical and worthy work and I'm completely amazed by everyone involved. However, it is work that shouldn't need to be done in 2020. Therefore, we must continue to fight and campaign for the right of all people everywhere to have safe passage and a safe home.

Sarah Leeds

If you'd like to learn more about the refugee crisis, donate, or get involved, start by visiting the Care4Calais website: www.care4calais.org



Working Together – Winning Together

BY AMANDA MARTIN PRESIDENT OF THE
NATIONAL EDUCATION UNION.

The work of the Steve Sinnott Foundation began in 2009 to build upon the legacy left behind following Steve's death in 2008. Now, after 10 years' experience working in partnership with teachers and educators worldwide, the Foundation has secured its reputation in its own right. SSF projects are offering life changing experiences for many people across the world.

I am so proud of my association with the Foundation and of the fact that I worked with it from its very early days. When I first met Steve I was a young teacher. His calm, unifying and strong educational values really resonated with me. He encouraged and welcomed ideas and advocated trade unionism alongside the absolute need for social justice and fairness. However, it wasn't until I spoke at Steve's memorial service that I realised the true impact he had regarding education and solidarity not just in the UK but across the world.

In its quest to continue work imbued with Steve's values, the Foundation has at its heart the ethos of enabling and partnership. It ensures that while initial support is provided, those involved in the various projects are not dependent upon the Foundation. The aim for each project is that it can expand and thrive; that learning and successes can be shared. Every project involves working together to develop trust and ownership so that they are not only fit for purpose but are sustainable, locally owned, managed and valued.

The Foundation's key vision is working towards the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG4). It believes that quality education is the key to achieving all seventeen of the Sustainable Development Goals. The Foundation's commitment to gender equality is something I believe it should be proud of as it sits at the forefront of all its thinking. The vision that started with Steve has definitely been built upon and expanded by the Foundation. The work of SSF has impacted positively on so many lives.

The Positive Periods Project has captured the true power of collaboration between trade unions and the Foundation. To date it has enabled girls in The Gambia to be given the opportunity to change their lives through being able to attend school every school day throughout the month.



Teachers in The Gambia have shared their learning with Sierra Leonean teachers and they in turn are sharing learning and training with colleagues in Uganda and Malawi; educators in Cuba and Haiti are also involved in sharing this learning. This has not only meant the completion of one successful project but has, in fitting with Steve's philosophy, inspired, encouraged and empowered those involved to share their success - showing the real meaning of partnership and working together.

Despite some setbacks the Learning Resource Centres in Haiti and Nepal have put education at the centre of these communities and proven that education can make a difference.

All of these projects show the importance of education globally and the link with international solidarity that the Foundation continues to achieve.

As I complete my presidential year, I am reminded of the words of encouragement Steve was always willing to give and I know that through their work the Foundation continues to inspire that can-do attitude. Sadly, due to Covid19 there is no National Education Union (NEU) Annual Conference this year which is a shame because in writing my own speech I looked at the speech Steve gave when he was the National Union of Teachers (NUT) President. Words of unity, passion and solidarity resonated throughout and that's what would have resonated in my words too.

"Working together, winning together" is certainly a motto I live by, because together we can achieve so much more. Whether that be highlighting and striving to defeat inequality and hardship or actively involving others in projects that can make a difference and make the world a fair and equitable place.

Steve was taken too early from those he loved but through its ethos, aims and hard work the Foundation has ensured that one man's solidarity and love has touched, enhanced and improved so many more lives than he might have ever imagined.



Being Your Best Self

BY JUDE TISDALL.

Here Jude, a newly appointed SSF Ambassador, explains why she is passionate about engaging in the work of The Steve Sinnott Foundation.

I was recently invited to be an ambassador for the work of the Steve Sinnott Foundation (SSF). My initial introduction to the work of the Foundation was through my friend and neighbour Ann Beatty, who is its CEO.

One cold Sunday I offered to help Ann at a stall that was giving information on one of the current SSF projects, Positive Periods. Girls and young women can miss up to 50 days a year from school because they do not have any sanitary protection. There are many situations and conditions that exclude young women from education but until I became involved with the SSF this particular one had never crossed my mind. The amount of people that showed interest not only in that project, but other work of the Foundation, was exciting and heartening.

I then went along - again to help with a stall - to the International Solidarity Conference held March 2020 in central London. I met many people involved with enabling access to education worldwide. At the workshop given by Ann about the work of SSF I was excited by the support and enthusiasm from the audience. Lots of things were discussed, including practical ways of making education and learning accessible. One idea was to send bicycles to The Gambia and in the wonderful serendipitous way of the world, there was someone in the audience whose brother had an import business for bicycles and a repair shop in The Gambia! Within a very short time there was a conversation about the the cost of a bicycle (£85) and how we could roll out something across schools in the UK to sponsor a bike. There was a discussion about the number of bikes that could be provided and even discussion about an apprentice scheme where people could be trained to repair bikes, which in turn could create jobs. The immediate ideas and brainstorming about just this one thing that would enable physical access to a learning centre was amazing and inspiring.

My own background is as an educator and facilitator across a wide range of arts related programmes. I was deputy principal at one of the UK's leading drama schools for many years. My role included pastoral responsibility for students and staff. I contributed to the teaching programme on MA courses and developed degree courses at BA and MA level. Although semi-retired now, I act as a mentor for new graduates, helping to bridge the gap between education and employment. I run workshops around confidence and presentation skills. I am also an Alexander Technique tutor and I believe passionately in the power of education and learning, that is education in the very broadest sense. There are so many ways to learn and develop once the conditions are supportive and sustainable. So if I was to tease out what I meant by that I would say that to have access to learning in an atmosphere of support and understanding where there is no fear; no fear of it not being available tomorrow, no fear of not getting it right; to be in an atmosphere that is creative and structured and where there is an understanding that we all learn in different ways. To be rooted in your own place and space; in your own culture and in that environment to have the opportunity to develop the skills that allow you to be your best self.

I am excited to be part of the SSF family and look forward to being able to support their ongoing projects and help them develop new ones. Each project sharing the same purpose, this being to make education available to all and thereby empower young people around the world, especially young women and girls, to be their brilliant and best selves.

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