



The
STEVE
SINNOTT
FOUNDATION

TWENTY EIGHTH EDITION

Engage



Your Legacy is every life you touch

Maya Angelou

Jerry Glazier



FOREWORD

The Steve Sinnott Foundation is now 15 years old and we can reflect on our many challenges and achievements.

Sadly, global security and stability have not progressed as well as we hoped in 2009.

Current conflicts are creating bigger barriers to progress, taking away resources and deflecting the focus on improvements in educational opportunities

However, celebrating achievements through sustainable partnerships provides real hope for the future.

The Foundation maintains the strongest possible commitment to the achievement of quality education for all.

In this edition of Engage we celebrate the positive work undertaken in 2023.

On behalf of the Foundation Trustees a very big thank you to all who have played such a tangible part in our achievements in 2023 and over the last 15 years, which we hope will continue for many years to come.

JERRY GLAZIER
Chair of Trustees

From the Chief Executive's Desk

Welcome to our 28th edition of engage. We recently surveyed our readers and they requested more articles about the Foundation's work. We hope that you will enjoy reading the contributions from our partners in this issue.

The Steve Sinnott Foundation is now in its 15th year of operation. We are really proud of the partnerships we have developed and the work that we have successfully undertaken to support the achievement of SDG4 to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote life-long learning for all.

We hope that Steve Sinnott would also be proud of his legacy. Steve was General Secretary of the National Union of Teachers (NUT) now named the National Education Union (NEU). The Foundation was set up in memory of Steve's international work and it has gone from strength to strength. The hard work and commitment of all our partners, sponsors and donors, has allowed us to develop our model of working where reciprocal learning and sustainability are key.

We cannot become complacent about access to education, especially girls' education. There is still much more work to do, to achieve Education for All and the results of the recent G7 Global Objectives Report on Girls Education makes for sobering reading. [Click here for the report.](#) This report, which tracks global progress on educating girls, lays bare the scale of the continuing challenge to crack the global learning crisis. Send My Friend to School set out the challenges of education in crises and how we can all support them to campaign for the right to education for every child (see page 12).

For many of our partners everyday life is a challenge; there is the current violent situation in Haiti. Despite these pressures, it was a joy to attend a zoom meeting with everyone in Haiti this month and hear all their good news and feel their resilience and passion for learning and living life to the full. The literacy programme and the Learning Resource Centre are still providing a much needed resource for people in Haiti during this very unpredictable time. Digital connection is crucial to educators and you can read some interesting thoughts on this topic from Paulette Wilson on page 7.

We have worked progressively on the issues that have arisen out of violence and in particular gender based violence (GBV). Our work globally, through the positive periods programme, has led to women creating safe spaces to talk about GBV. We have worked with some of our partners and ambassadors to develop a new resource. We have launched two resources, one for Primary aged pupils and one for Secondary students. Building Healthy Relationships is a resource for educators to think about how to have conversations around topics which are causing our young people stress and anxiety.

Through this work we aim for the building of communities that demonstrate empathy and embrace global inclusivity and mutual



respect. Preparing our young people for a lifetime of meaningful contributions to the world around them. You can find these on our resources page: <https://www.stevesinnottfoundation.org.uk/resources>



CPD sessions for educators will be held in April and May, dates and times will be advertised on our social media channels.

resource will be adapted in each space and evolve as it needs to. Most importantly we hope that it enables teachers to support young people to thrive.

Sustainability is key to our model of operation and our success. One of the questions we always ask is how can we support you to achieve? Read about our impact in 2023 on page 9 and with project reports from our partners on the ground on pages 8 and 10.

I hope that you enjoy hearing about the innovative work that is taking place across the globe in this issue. We are grateful for all your support and we hope that you will continue to support us as we grow our partnerships to achieve Education for All Children everywhere.

Reflecting on Challenges Old and New

BY MARY SINNOTT

As we celebrate 15 years of The Steve Sinnott Foundation and our many achievements, it can be difficult to forget the numerous ill effects from the past year.

2023 was indeed a time of much sorrow and anguish. Across the globe, we have suffered many natural disasters with the year-end bringing flooding, hurricanes and wildfires which serve as a reminder of the true power of nature and that we can, and must, act to limit the climate crisis. Humankind too have added to the canvas of disaster, waging wars with tragic and unimaginable consequences. Wars that continue to wreak havoc across the world; take innocent lives without prejudice; pit governments against governments; nations against nations and, importantly, erode and work to destroy and eliminate care, tolerance, understanding and common humanity for our fellow men and women. The worldwide recession has worked to compound the grief and anguish felt by many because of a lack of political honesty from world leaders at times and, more urgently, the inability to feed and look after their families properly.

We have seen angst and mental health problems grow both in relation to societal and personal issues. Worldwide malaise has far-reaching effects. However, we should not forget to observe that good too has had a role in our lives. Climate change is being

taken more seriously; there have been some welcome medical breakthroughs in treating diseases such as Cancer and Alzheimer's; more countries broke down barriers around sexuality and gender and the rise of renewable energy is gathering pace.

We at the Steve Sinnott Foundation hold fast to the belief held by our eponym that working together we can win or achieve together. Education is paramount to enable us all to make informed decisions and choices, to allow for meaningful dialogue and to foster finding solutions to the problems we face. Quality education should be available for all not just the few to ensure equity and justice prevails worldwide. Let us work together to dispel disparity in education as we move through 2024 and build upon the work the Foundation has carried out with our partners across the globe so far.

Steve Sinnott once said:

"There are some things that should never be left to chance in life and striving to achieve quality education for all of the world's children is one."

In 2024 this holds truer than ever.

Remember to check out our blog on the website for regular updates and more detailed information. The best way to keep up to date with our project work is to follow us on our social media channels and our blog.

www.stevesinnottfoundation.org.uk/blog
twitter.com/ssfoundation
en-gb.facebook.com/sinnottfoundation
www.instagram.com/ssfoundation_

Biography

Mary Sinnott is a Founding Director of the Steve Sinnott Foundation. She began her career as a primary teacher in Preston in 1991 and retired from teaching in 2010.

Following Steve's death, she wanted to continue and build upon Steve's legacy in striving to ensure that all children everywhere could access a quality education.

Much of Mary's time is divided between her family and the Foundation. She also enjoys reading and travelling with friends when she can.



The power of stories in discovering where you are really from

BY AUDREY OSLER

'Where are you really from?'

'Where are you really from?' I've faced this question more times than I care to recall. A new acquaintance is dissatisfied with your first answer and presses for details of your ethnicity, family history and more. Why do they need to know all this? You are being made to feel that you don't really belong. Who you think you are is seemingly irrelevant.

A shared past?

In recent years, the British Empire has moved from being a rarely discussed part of our shared history to the centre of controversy about what it means to be British. Social media feeds suggest those who critique the past are disloyal, even traitorous! This is ironic, since history is reinterpreted in every generation; historians are constantly reviewing evidence. It may be because most of us educated in British schools in recent decades learned very little about this episode of history. Before World War Two, children celebrated Empire Day by dressing and parading in fancy costumes. But post-war, as former colonial territories struggled for independence, the celebrations were quietly dropped. My schooling skated over the topic of empire and certainly didn't link it to Britain's Industrial Revolution. Why? It wasn't a question of curriculum space, for we covered the Tudors and Stuarts innumerable times.

The power of stories

Fortunately, I was raised in a family of storytellers, learning at an early age there are many sides to every story. My mother and maternal grandparents were migrants, each moving several times across oceans. In 2018, I spent a few days in Chennai, India - the former city of Madras that my grandparents left 100 years earlier - on my way to work in Sri Lanka. During this trip I realised that my family stories, retold in each place, despite war and upheaval, were very special. I decided to write a family-orientated story of empire, that would include women's stories. I resolved to visit each of the places where they settled - Chennai, Sarawak, and Singapore - all once part of the British Empire.

Then the pandemic hit, and unable to travel, I was forced to time travel. It was tricky, with libraries and archives shut for many months, but miraculously, in 2021 I came across a letter written in 1817 by my great- great- great-grandfather in Madras. In it, he tells his story, that of a Tamil boy, captured and enslaved by the East India Company, who in 1789 found himself destitute on the streets of London, and who eventually worked his passage back to India. He worked as butler to a European family and in his free time provided schooling for the poorest people of Madras.



What we share

The Steve Sinnott Foundation believes education gives people the opportunity to make the most of their lives and opportunities. My three-times great-grandfather, William Roberts, held a similar vision of the power of education to change lives. The project he founded in seventeenth century Madras lives on today and is witness to his vision. My book *Where are you from? No, where are you really from?* recounts William's story and doesn't shy away from the devastating impacts of empire, but it is also one of hope and happiness. I include stories of children's lives, and of romantic love against the odds. It's a story of a mixed-heritage Anglo-Indian family over six generations. I believe in the power of stories to change lives and to look afresh at our commonalities and differences. This is more important today than ever, in the face of war, destruction and disrespect for civilian lives. I invite you, the reader, to reconsider: where are you really from?

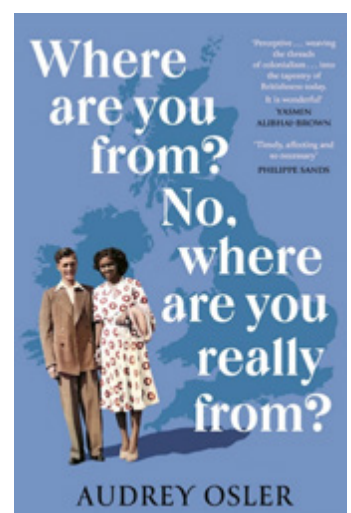
Biography

Audrey Osler is Professor Emerita of Citizenship and Human Rights Education at the University of Leeds, founding Editor-in-Chief of *Human Rights Education Review*, and co-Chair of the *International Association for Human Rights Education (IAHRE)*. Audrey is a patron of the Steve Sinnott Foundation. Her latest book, *Where are you from? No, where are you really from?* is published by Virago.

Book launch

You are warmly invited to join me for my book launch 'Where are you from? No, where are you really from?' On Sunday 24 March 2.30 in Central London, St James Piccadilly. I'll be in conversation with Yasmin Alibhai Brown.

Register for your free ticket here: https://urldefense.proofpoint.com/v2/url?u=https-3A_www.eventbrite.co.uk_e_where-2Dare-2Dyou-2Dreally-2Dfrom-2Dtickets-2D850696595417-3Faff-3Ddoddtcreator



Building a Brighter Future: Ensuring Sustainable Education and Equity for All

BY JORDEN BIRCH

In today's rapidly changing world, ensuring sustainable futures for all is a crucial goal that requires a collective effort from individuals, communities, and governments worldwide. Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG4) focuses on quality education for all, emphasizing the importance of access to education that meets everyone's individual needs. To achieve this goal, we must address key issues such as gender and racial equity, defining quality education, overcoming obstacles, seizing global opportunities, and making necessary changes for a better future.

In my experience as a classroom teacher and STEM lead for my school, providing access to education that caters to everyone's individual needs is essential for sustainable development. For example, when organising external trips or extracurricular activities we focus on offering opportunities to underrepresented groups such as Pupil Premium students and students with special educational needs and disabilities. Recently we hosted a family STEM event evening for these key cohorts. By providing inclusive and equitable education, we can empower individuals to reach their full potential and contribute positively to society.

Gender and racial equity are fundamental aspects of ensuring education for all. By promoting diversity and inclusivity in educational settings, we can create a more equitable society where everyone has equal opportunities to learn and grow. This involves challenging stereotypes, promoting cultural awareness, and fostering a sense of belonging for all individuals, regardless of their background. During my role as regional lead for the Connecting STEM Teachers programme with the Royal Academy of Engineering I developed a Women in Welding programme with Lincoln Electric: global leaders in their field. The event gave girls in my region the opportunity to develop their welding skills and meet female role models to inspire them into a very underrepresented field. From this we now have a group of girls who have done work experience with Lincoln Electric and are now pursuing apprenticeships in welding.

Quality education is not just about academic achievement but also about holistic development. It encompasses critical thinking, creativity, communication skills, and social-

emotional learning. However, achieving quality education faces obstacles such as inadequate funding, outdated curricula, and lack of teacher training. As a CPD Lead Facilitator for STEM Learning I have led and developed CPD for teachers with a focus on embedding careers into the curriculum. Overcoming these challenges requires investment in education infrastructure, curriculum reform, and professional development for educators.

Global connectivity offers vast opportunities for collaboration and knowledge sharing in the field of education. Through my role as Chief Operating Officer (COO) of STEMunity I have recently supported the Jamaican government with embedding STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Maths) education into the national curriculum and connecting them with other ministries of education. By leveraging technology and digital platforms, we can connect students and educators from different parts of the world, fostering cross-cultural understanding and promoting global citizenship. This interconnectedness opens doors for innovative teaching methods, research collaborations, and cultural exchanges that enrich the educational experience.

To create a better future for all, we must prioritize education as a catalyst for sustainable development. This involves making changes at individual, institutional, and policy levels to ensure equal access, promote diversity, and foster inclusive learning environments. By working together towards these common goals, we can build a brighter future where education is a transformative force for positive change.

Biography

Jorden Birch is a secondary science teacher and Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) lead with over 10 years' experience. As part of her role as a teacher coordinator for the Connecting Stem Teachers (CST) programme with the Royal Academy of Engineering, Jorden has developed a large network of collaborating STEM teachers and industry professionals. Jorden is a Continuing Professional Development (CPD) facilitator for STEM Learning and a STEM mentor as part of the WIPRO programme. She also has experience developing international curriculum resources.



Bridging Futures: #BeMedigitalinclusion and Sustainable Education for All

BY PAULETTE WATSON

In an era where technology and sustainability intersect, the concept of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) emerges as a beacon of hope, guiding us towards a future where environmental, social, and economic well-being are in harmony. ESD empowers learners with the knowledge, skills, and values necessary to forge a sustainable world. It prompts us to ponder: how can we ensure sustainable futures for all, guarantee equitable access to education, and overcome barriers to quality learning?

The path to sustainable futures is paved by initiatives like the global #BeMedigitalinclusion program, a testament to the power of collaboration and innovation. Through 12 weeks of mentoring, industry leaders unite with young global majority women and girls from marginalised communities, illuminating the importance of inclusivity in education. This program not only equips participants with valuable digital skills but also fosters a sense of empowerment and belonging.

Looking ahead, the upcoming #BeMedigitalinclusion sustainable tech event for young people on 11 October 2024 in London promises to further the discourse on digital accessibility. This event aims to

showcase the transformative impact of technology on education, emphasising how digital tools can democratise learning and open doors to opportunities previously out of reach.

My recent book, "She DISRUPTS: A Black Woman's Journey in STEM & AI Industries," delves into the critical role of education in shaping a sustainable future. Drawing from personal experiences, it underscores the urgency of starting with education to dismantle systemic barriers and promote gender and racial equity. The narrative is a clarion call to acknowledge the untapped potential within marginalised groups and the indispensable contributions they can make towards achieving Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG4).

Quality education, as we define it, transcends traditional metrics; it is inclusive, equitable, and adaptive to the needs of a diverse learner base. However, obstacles such as inadequate resources, socio-economic disparities, and cultural biases persist, hindering our collective journey towards educational excellence. Overcoming these challenges requires a concerted effort from governments, educational institutions, and communities to reimagine and reform the educational landscape.

The global connectivity facilitated by digital platforms presents unparalleled opportunities for cross-cultural collaboration and learning. By leveraging technology, we can create a more interconnected world where knowledge and best practices are shared freely, paving the way for innovative solutions to emerge.

In conclusion, the journey towards a sustainable future is intertwined with our commitment to inclusive and quality education. Through initiatives like the #BeMedigitalinclusion program and events that spotlight sustainable technologies, we are forging a path where everyone has the opportunity to contribute to and benefit from a sustainable world. "She DISRUPTS" serves as a reminder that education is the foundation upon which we will build a more equitable, resilient, and sustainable future. Let us embrace the changes necessary to ensure that this vision becomes a reality for all.

Biography

Paulette is leading the #BeMedigitalinclusion program to raise one million global majority women and girls' aspirations in STEM | AI | Web 3 related careers by 2030. She is the author of *She DISRUPTS*, a black woman's journey in STEM and AI industries. She is a judge for Women in Electronics UK and Global Caribbean Awards - category Best in Technology and Innovation.



Project Updates

Here are some of the highlights of the past 6 months. Remember to check out our blog on the website for regular updates and more detailed information. The best way to keep up to date with our project work is to follow us on our social media channels and our blog.

<https://www.stevesinnottfoundation.org.uk/blog>

<https://twitter.com/ssfoundation>

<https://en-gb.facebook.com/sinnottfoundation>

https://www.instagram.com/ssfoundation_

Engagement in the climate change project in five communities in Sierra Leone

The climate change project, started in December 2023, is funded by the Steve Sinnott Foundation UK, and implemented by Gender Equality and Development for Social Action (GEDSA).

It focuses on supporting women engaged in agriculture to boost their skills in farming, health, climate change and adult literacy. It supports them in groups to improve their farming skills and reduce the cutting down of trees for charcoal burning and sticks selling.

The project has engaged a total of fifty women in five communities, comprising ten per group. Even though there is a focus on agriculture in the Implementing Strategy, there is also a weekly session of adult literacy and basic numeracy lessons for the cohort. This supplementary learning adheres to SDG4 'Quality Education for All' by extending and building upon all necessary skills needed for success.

During the selection of the beneficiaries, stakeholder engagement was carried out in all five communities including chiefs, mammy queens, youth leaders, religious leaders and other elderly members. The communities the current engagement is being carried out in are; Mathinka 1, Mathinka 2, Makal, Magbonto and Magbema all in the Makarie Chiefdom, Bombali District in the Northern Province of Sierra Leone.

The direct beneficiaries are women serving as breadwinners, some are widows, single mothers and others divorced women. Indirectly the literacy and numeracy classes will provide clear understanding on how to monitor the progress of their children in schools and ensure they don't allow them, especially the girls, to be forced into early marriages.

Mentorship sessions are provided during the classes by the staff and volunteers. For the parents, the education of girls is strongly encouraged in part of the update sessions of their classes.

Keen attention is given to the Sustainable Development Goals and how this project can contribute to reducing climate change and support the education of women, their families and the wider community. Research shows that if women are educated, they are more likely to send children to school and this has a direct impact on the future of the young people in this community now and for future generations.

Education for All is a focus of this programme. The success of 100% participation so far has been due in part to the women developing the programme themselves; and being clear about what is important for them to prioritise in their learning in order to improve their livelihoods and the future of their families.

Isata M Kamara is the contact and coordinator of Gender Equality and Development for Social Action (GEDSA).



Makal Women's Group



Mathinka 1 Engagement session with stakeholders



Engagement at Magbema Community in the selection process

Foundation Projects 2023

2023 was a successful year, supported by you.
Here are some of the highlights:

The **Learning Resource Centres** and **Digital Classrooms** are delivering excellent learning and development for educators, students and their wider communities in Haiti, The Gambia and Sierra Leone.

Positive Periods Programme has reached **150,000 women and girls** in Cuba, Guinea Bissau, Haiti and Sierra Leone this year.

The Prevention of Gender Based Violence Programme has reached **450 educators** in Cape Verde, The Gambia, Guinea Bissau and Senegal.

Youth Ambassador Programme supported **200 young people** in Cuba, The Gambia and Sierra Leone.

Counselling Skills for **270 educators** delivered in The Gambia

SEN Awareness workshops for **250 educators** in The Gambia and Sierra Leone.

Kreyol Literacy Programme for **180 learners** in Haiti.

A further **50 bicycles delivered** to students in rural villages to support them to travel to school safely.



From a union leader to a real changemaker:

A teacher union leaders' journey to combating absenteeism amongst girls through sustained menstrual health solutions in Ghana schools

BY REBECCA OCRAN ABAIDOO

Governments and society in general focus on the seemingly big and more conspicuous issues when it comes to eliminating all forms of discrimination in education, but lurking behind these issues is a silent barrier that is preventing many young girls from taking full advantage of the free compulsory education being offered by the government of Ghana.

In the bustling classrooms of Ghanaian schools, menstruation and its associated stigma and lack of access to proper menstrual health solutions is causing lots of adolescent girls to absent themselves from schools during that time of the month thereby losing very important learning time. When one looks at the cumulative loss of learning hours over a period of a year and even throughout the school going age of the girl, it becomes more evident that the girl is at a disadvantage if she doesn't have access to period products.

I was hit by this reality when I chanced upon some girls chatting. I heard how some of them used papers from discarded cement paper bags and iced water rubbers etc. as pads. I was not only shocked but began to imagine how unhealthy this was and the possibility of infections. I started to dig deeper into the issue and realized that girls absents themselves from school was the least of the consequences; some girls get pregnant in their bid to access money from boys or men to purchase period pads.

One period pad in Ghana costs more than the daily minimum wage thereby making it very expensive for most families to be able to buy pads for their girls. Determined to make a difference, I began looking for a solution that would enable girls to manage their periods with dignity and ease; allowing them to attend school regularly was the way to go.

Linking up with the Steve Sinnott Foundation through the General Secretary of the Gambian Teachers Union (Mrs. Antoinette Corr) has been a breath of fresh air. The support from the foundation has helped to put our ideas into action and has given the girls confidence that they can have their periods and go to school at the same time.

NAGRAT, with the help of The Steve Sinnott Foundation, set out to teach female teachers and girls in Ho (Volta region of Ghana) about menstrual health, learn to make re-usable period pads and talk safely about school related gender base violence (SRGBV), but we got more than that. The experience has ignited a fire in us as union leaders to give as much attention to the needs of the learners (especially girls) as we do for our colleagues.

As I write this article, I am reflecting on all that could have gone wrong for me when I was a young girl having come face to face with the reality of our girls today.

The team was pleasantly surprised at the immediate impact of our intervention on the participants and the rippling effect it would have on them, their siblings, neighbours and future children. As we talked with the girls and answered their numerous questions three comments in particular caused me to think and to reflect.

- "Why is this not taught in school"
- "My mother will be happy to see this because she will not have to credit pads for me again".
- "I wish all the girls in my class were here".

The team invited teachers and students from ten schools but from the second day twenty-one schools were participating. This gives a clear indication of the widespread need for this intervention and obviously how important it is to reach out to other communities. The second and third day of training witnessed the participants' unwillingness to go on breaks because they were so engrossed in the sessions.

As I conclude this write up, I am thinking about what we could have achieved if we had stepped into this much earlier bearing in mind the powerful effect that teachers have on their learners.

Bigraphy

Rebecca Ocran Abaidoo is the Gender coordinator (National Association of Graduate Teachers) Ghana, has been a teacher since 1997, and a union leader at regional and national levels since 2009.



Giving voice to the differently-abled for education equity

BY MOMODOU BAKA DEM

In the pursuit of a just and equitable society, one of the paramount pillars is ensuring that every individual, regardless of their abilities or disabilities, has access to quality education. Yet, for the differently-abled community, this fundamental right often remains elusive. In a world where barriers persist, education equity emerges as a powerful tool to amplify their voices, dismantle prejudices, and foster inclusive environments.

Historically, society has constructed numerous barriers that impede the educational journey of differently-abled individuals. Physical barriers, such as inaccessible infrastructure, and socio-cultural barriers, including stigmatisation and discrimination, have long hindered their access to education. Moreover, a lack of specialised resources and trained personnel further exacerbates the challenges they face. However, education equity seeks to dismantle these barriers by advocating for inclusive policies, accommodations, and support systems that cater to the diverse needs of every learner.

Education is not merely about acquiring knowledge; it is a transformative force that empowers individuals to realise their full potential. For the differently-abled, education serves as a pathway to independence, self-advocacy, and societal inclusion. By receiving quality education tailored to their needs, they gain the skills, confidence, and resources necessary to navigate the complexities of life and contribute meaningfully to their communities. Moreover, education instills a sense of dignity and self-worth, challenging the prevalent narratives of pity and marginalisation.

Central to the concept of education equity is the creation of inclusive environments that embrace diversity and celebrate differences. Inclusive education goes beyond mere integration; it entails restructuring educational practices, curricula, and attitudes to accommodate the unique abilities of all learners. By fostering environments where differently-abled students are valued, respected, and supported, schools not only enhance academic outcomes but also cultivate empathy, compassion, and understanding among all students. Inclusive education benefits not only the individual but also society at large by nurturing a culture of acceptance and solidarity.



Realising education equity for the differently-abled requires concerted efforts at both the grassroots and policy levels. Advocacy plays a crucial role in raising awareness, challenging stereotypes, and mobilising resources to address the systemic barriers they face. Furthermore, governments and educational institutions must enact and enforce policies that safeguard the rights of differently-abled individuals, ensuring equal access to education, reasonable accommodations, and specialised support services. By prioritising education equity in policy agendas, societies can create more inclusive and equitable educational landscapes.

Education equity is not a mere aspiration but a moral imperative, especially for the differently-abled community. By embracing inclusive practices, fostering supportive environments, and championing advocacy and policy reforms, we can empower them to thrive academically, socially, and professionally. Education equity is not just about giving them a seat at the table; it's about amplifying their voices, affirming their rights, and recognising their inherent dignity and worth. As we strive towards building a more inclusive society, let us recognise education as the cornerstone of empowerment and the voice of the differently-abled.

Biography

Momodou is Youth Programme Officer for The Gambia Teachers' Union (GTU).

Education in Emergencies: Securing the future of SDG4 amidst global crises

BY REBEKAH LUCKING

We have just six years left to deliver on the 2030 agenda for sustainable development, including SDG4. But in recent years, the world has witnessed sudden disruptions depriving millions of children of their learning opportunities. Whether due to conflict, climate change or COVID-19, 224 million school-aged children⁽¹⁾ globally urgently need educational support due to crises. When emergencies hit, leaders and decision makers are faced with an overwhelming number of competing needs that can often obscure the life-saving, and life-protecting nature of education, and remains one of the least funded humanitarian areas. Protection and prioritisation of education in emergencies is essential to advance education for sustainable development and the realisation of SDG4.

There is a record need for international support at a time when emergencies such as the wars in Ukraine, Gaza and Sudan, and climate emergencies, such as those recovering from severe tropical storm Cyclone Freddy in South and East Africa, are having huge impacts on education. These challenges are exacerbated by inadequate preparedness to address hazards. Emergencies can also deepen existing inequalities, disproportionately affecting those who are most marginalised and experiencing multiple, intersecting and complex challenges such as gender discrimination, poverty, disability, or displacement. These children are most likely to be excluded from education before, during and after an emergency occurs.⁽²⁾

Despite the scale of the challenges, progress is within reach. By prioritising inclusive and resilient education systems, investing in preparedness and honouring commitments to protect children's learning during emergencies, we can pave the way for sustainable development. As the UK and the international community confront the unprecedented scale of threats facing children's education, now is the time to act decisively and ensure that every child, no matter their circumstances, has the opportunity to learn and thrive.

Send My Friend to School (SMFTS) is the UK civil society coalition of international development NGOs, teachers' unions and charities, bringing together young people, politicians, teachers, civil society and the media in joint campaigning to demand a quality, inclusive education for all children across the globe. We are part of the wider Global Campaign for Education (GCE) movement, based in almost 100 countries around the world.⁽³⁾ This year, the Let My Friends Learn campaign⁽⁴⁾ urges the UK Government to ensure that every child, everywhere has their learning protected during emergencies: key to a sustainable future.



Send My Friend to School Campaign Champion, Jess (14) from Croxley Danes School states: *"We need to hold the government to account to make sure they fulfil their promises, and ensure that no child is denied the right to an education because of emergencies. We need our leaders to speak out and support other countries- as they should not have to face these challenges alone".*

We are asking the UK government to take action from the UK on the following areas to ensure that no child is denied the right to education in times of emergencies:

1. **PREPARE:** Strengthen preparedness and anticipatory action in education systems.
2. **PROTECT:** Ensure children are safe, protected and learning during an emergency.
3. **INVEST:** Rapidly scale up financing for Education in Emergencies and global education resilience strengthening.
4. **ACT:** Provide global leadership to protect children's right to education in emergencies.

As the clock ticks towards the 2030 agenda, the urgency is clear. We need to act now to secure the future of every child's education, ensuring they have the opportunity to learn, thrive, and build a sustainable future.

Biography

Bekah is the Campaign Manager at Send My Friend to School, the UK's coalition of INGOs, charities, teachers unions, young people, politicians and the media who come together to campaign for the right of every child in the world to access a quality and inclusive education. Bekah worked previously as a secondary school English teacher, before moving into programme management and refugee campaigning in the UK and Greece. She holds a Masters degree in Education, Gender and International Development from the Institute of Education at UCL. Bekah has a particular interest in meaningful youth participation in policy and campaigning.

(1)<https://www.educationcannotwait.org/news-stories/press-releases/number-crisis-impacted-children-in-need-education-support-rises>

(2)<https://sendmyfriend.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Let-My-Friends-Learn-EiE-policy-report.pdf>

(3)<https://campaignforeducation.org/en/>

(4)<https://sendmyfriend.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Let-My-Friends-Learn-EiE-policy-report.pdf>

Education for Sustainable Development: A Step Change

BY FELICIA JACKSON

The challenges of climate change, finite resources and their unequal distribution are well understood. The science provides us with facts, and the technological solutions to change the ways things are done already exist. So why is there a gap between what we know needs to be done, and implementing change?

Science is critical and fundamental but only part of the picture. Education for sustainable development means giving children the right to ask questions. It is only with a questioning mindset that we will develop the critical thinking necessary to make progress and adapt.

The Learn2Think Foundation was set up in 2016 to empower young people to be creative, independent and compassionate thinkers. We do this by encouraging children to ask their own questions so that they can gain alternate perspectives, engage and 'own' their curiosity and give up the need to be right and see the 'other' as wrong. Developing this approach to thinking deeply about the larger questions in life equips children with the tools, not simply to challenge the status quo, but to prepare them for a rapidly changing world.

Creative - Imaginative; not following the status quo; flexible; courageous.

Independent - Feeling like they can make a difference; empowered; autonomous.

Compassionate - Seeing other points of view and recognising different possibly competing needs.

Our Programmes

The Questioning Project was designed to encourage both independent and collaborative learning, as well as the exploration of different perspectives. By encouraging new approaches to questions, this free programme helps embed pupil generated questioning within day-to-day teaching.

Our other key initiative is Tolerance Day, a free annual programme, under the patronage of UNESCO, of specially designed and curated, curriculum linked lessons and fun activities to help children understand and practice tolerance as a foundation for their individual world view.

ESD Resources

We have partnered with Earthday.org to promote climate literacy and build a knowledge base in schools.

The L2T Climate Quiz: 'So You Think You Know About Climate Change?' challenges common misunderstandings about climate change.

A critical thinking workshop, 'The Knotty Tree Problem', for ages 9-13yrs. Four interest groups present their case as to why an ancient tree needs to be preserved or cut down depending on each group's individual needs. Children learn about the complexities of 'wicked' problems like climate change when 'perfect' solutions are neither obvious nor indeed ever possible and how creativity and communication, together with tolerant attitudes can drive a better result for everyone. This is not "win or lose" but rather about achieving fairer outcomes.

Biography

Felicia Jackson is the chair of the Learn2Think Foundation. Founding Editor of Sustainable Growth Voice, co-host of sustainability podcast Shaken Not Burned and current contributor to Forbes.com. She was a member of the UNEP Technical Expert Panel developing a methodology for targets and indicators for Sustainable Development Goal 17.7.1 and teaches at SOAS, University.



UNESCO ASPnet schools' contribution to the UK

BY SAARAH RAHMAN

The Foundation has been working in partnership with UNESCO since 2015 and Ann Beatty our CEO is the UNESCO ASPnet Co-ordinator in the UK. There are 145 schools in the programme and Coventry City is currently supporting all schools in the city with the opportunity of accreditation. In January, Warwick University and Coventry City Council hosted an event at the House of Commons to celebrate UNESCO ASPnet schools' contribution to the UK.

Saarah Rahman who helped organise the event, is currently studying at the University of Warwick in her final year, reading politics and international studies. Saarah shares her thoughts on ASPnet and her personal journey in education.

I believe that being a part of UNESCO ASPNET and the Hidden Heroes project will help to lift hundreds of schoolchildren out of educational deprivation. This is an issue that I have personally grown up with my entire life. Educational deprivation is a very personal topic for me, as someone who originates from Tower Hamlets and as a British Bangladeshi Muslim, I am already socially and economically hindered.

I went to your average underperforming state school, where I was never able to take part in programmes which helped to improve my confidence and critical thinking skills, as well as deepen my awareness of the world around me. I was always stuck in a bubble at school, believing that students like me would never be able to leave Tower Hamlets; that my whole life would only start and end here, in this small pocket of London.

From not having a laptop until I was seventeen and being on Free School Meals when I was younger, I have faced the brunt of deprivation in education. It was when I got into The University of Warwick that I realised the deprivation gap between me and my classmates was much greater than it seemed.

My classmates had opportunities to take part in initiatives such as Model UN at school, Pupil Parliament, and so many other extracurriculars that they had at their disposal, because of the type of funding their school during sixth form and secondary had received. Meanwhile, I had to scout for my extracurricular opportunities during school, alongside the challenge that they had to be free.

The disparity gap is prominent in who runs for execs or higher student positions, and the common denominator between these types of students is they had leadership positions and extracurriculars handed to them during their time in compulsory education. They were given the confidence at an

early age to apply for these roles inside and outside of the University, which will ultimately lead to them being in a better position to take up opportunities.

This is why I am a massive advocate for initiatives such as UNESCO ASPnet, because giving young people the confidence to explore social issues alongside critical thinking skills, will boost their confidence in academic and non-academic settings.

Working-class, underprivileged students are always in competition with students who have been given the resources to enrich their education throughout their lives, which shows in their confidence in applying for and receiving opportunities throughout their time inside and outside of higher education.

Hopefully, with initiatives such as Hidden Heroes and UNESCO, we finally give underprivileged students the stepping stones they need to get out of their comfort zone and take up opportunities.

To find out more about UNESCO ASPnet in the U.K. and how your school can join, visit <https://www.stevesinnottfoundation.org.uk/unesco-aspnet>



Your Legacy is every life you touch

Maya Angelou



Legacies

At the Foundation, we are united by one belief: that every child should have the opportunity of a quality education. Legacies or gifts in wills give us the funds we need to help us reach the most vulnerable children across the world and allow them the Gift of Education.

One of the most powerful ways that you can help us make a difference is by leaving a gift in your will. By doing so, you are not only supporting today's children to access education but leaving a lasting legacy for future generations.

If you would like to find out how to leave a legacy of the Gift of Education in your will, please email admin@stevesinnottfoundation.org.uk today.

What can you do to support our work?

There are lots of ways you can support our work.

You might enjoy hosting storytelling events, film nights or a sponsored walk, run or silence. We would love to hear your ideas too.

<https://www.stevesinnottfoundation.org.uk/fundraise>. Get in touch with us at admin@stevesinnottfoundation.org.uk and we will be very happy to support you.

Thank you to all who have donated time, energy and funding to support the work of the Foundation.

<https://www.justgiving.com/tssf>



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