

ENGAGE

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Supporting Access to Learning Worldwide

The
**STEVE
SINNOTT
FOUNDATION**

**"We must talk about
why it is worth investing
in educating girls."**

Sophie Walker, Women's Equality Party, UK

Foreword

Campaigning for access to universal primary education has, since its inception, been a core tenet of the Foundation.

This edition has an important focus on girls' education. Much more needs to be done to ensure it is a crucial component in enabling and guaranteeing equality. However pervading cultural expectations are responsible for huge inequalities in and barriers to girls' access to education.

In her forthright article Sophie Walker gives us some stark reminders of the facts and consequences of the current globally unequal educational opportunities for girls.

For example, according to UNESCO, two thirds of the world's 774 million illiterate people are female.

Yet looking closer, at home, Sophie argues cogently that, in 2016, much still needs to be done in the UK to change gender expectations and opportunities. It is no wonder then that such massive efforts are required globally. Effort is needed to guarantee a cultural sea change in the struggle to ensure not just equal access to education, but also meaningful opportunities afforded to girls within that provision.

Thank you for showing an interest in this edition of ENGAGE and the work of the Steve Sinnott Foundation.



Jerry Glazier

Chair, The Steve Sinnott Foundation



This magazine could not be published without its designers and printers at Paragraphics and at Ruskin Press. Their expertise and patience is extraordinary. They do not just do the business for us, they are friends of the Foundation and supporters of our work. Ongoing thanks to them.

Front page: Showcasing Education for All at the Notting Hill Carnival 2016

Grateful thanks to Gibson Blanc for the front page photo and to Dan Vernon for the Page 9 "OPINION" photo.

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ENGINE ROOMS FOR POSSIBILITY

The Women's Equality Party was founded in July 2015 as, in their own words, "a new collaborative force in British politics uniting people of all genders, diverse ages, backgrounds, ethnicities, beliefs and experiences in the shared determination to see women enjoy the same rights and opportunities as men so that all can flourish." **Sophie Walker** is its leader. Be inspired by what she writes.

I am forty-five years old and still when I think of school I feel anxious. My schooldays were not happy; bullying was a regular feature and getting good marks a constant concern. I didn't thrive; I survived. But I recognise the advantage my education offered me. One of the things I want to do with the education I received is to help all girls have the chance of an education.

Unfortunately we still have a job to do to make sure that all girls are offered that chance. It is appalling that in 2016 we still must make the most basic case: that girls should have an equal right to education. It's not enough to say that this is simply fair. If we want to be heard we still have to explain why it is the right thing to do. We must spell out the fact that teaching the 'other half' of the population boosts economies, cuts mortality and improves democratic growth. We must talk about why it is worth investing in educating girls; the impact of that output in terms of each woman's potential to earn and reduce her community's poverty; her improved likelihood of marrying later and having fewer children who in turn will be more likely to thrive.

Yet still, two-thirds of the world's 774 million illiterate people are female, says UNESCO.

It is 2016 and nowhere in the world do women enjoy full equality. The Women's Equality Party (WE) formed to push equality for women to the top of the UK political agenda, and to work with global partners to push equality for women to the top of the world's political agenda.

But improving education for girls doesn't just need to happen in developing countries. In the UK, 65 percent of those who are economically inactive are women; neither in education, skills or training. Because in the UK girls who are in school outperform boys in exams, we overlook the underlying problem of our education system. And that is this: we are feeding our children gendered expectations about their future lives and undermining our girls' ability to make progress. Women are occupationally segregated from men by an education system that encourages them to believe high-paid jobs in engineering and science are not suited to their gender. Instead we push them into caring and teaching and as a society value those jobs less. We invest in



infrastructure, not childcare and thus women drop out of the workforce to care for relatives. Meanwhile as a result of women's secondary status, sexual violence in schools is endemic. A recent UK report showed that almost a third of 16 to 18 year old girls experienced unwanted sexual touching in schools; 59 percent of girls aged 13-21 said they had faced some form of sexual harassment.

We must educate more girls. But we must also educate boys to understand why this matters. By focusing on equality in education as well as access to education we can give all our children equal chances. We can show boys as well as girls that caring for others does not make you weak. We can teach mutual respect in relationships. We can use our nurseries and schools as engine rooms for possibility, inspiring young women and men to achieve their full potential. We can free children from gendered expectations about the life they should lead. That's what WE will strive to achieve. So that everywhere girls can receive an education – without anyone still asking why.

GOOD TO SAY ABOUT MYSELF

Isata M Kamara is currently studying at the University of Makeni for her Masters in Development Studies. Isata wishes to continue her academic studies and she aims to work for a future where all girls are given the opportunity to realise their full potential.

The story of the African girl child in trying to achieve quality education has been so pathetic and appalling. My story, like that of many other African girls in the world of academia, started with severe challenges due to a culture that can and must be changed. It must be made friendly for personal, national and world wide contributions towards achieving sustainable development. Many of my friends who started schooling have been left out as a result of poverty, early marriage, early pregnancy, and even sexual harassment in learning institutions together with many other factors.

In the midst of all these challenges, I was able to acquire university education. It is good at this point to say a little about myself. I, Isata M. Kamara, was born and raised by a single parent in Freetown, the capital city of Sierra Leone. I grew up with my father who I was left with at one year six months old. As a result of that, my father decided to remarry another woman to help take care of me but she turned out to do the opposite by mistreating me. I was doing all the domestic work, had no schooling, no proper feeding and as I was lonely I later ran away.

A few years later, when I was on the street selling mangoes, I came across a teacher from EducAid who asked me if I would like to go to school. At first I denied that I would because I liked what I was doing and it gave me a lot of money which I used to take care of myself. But all of a sudden he succeeded in persuading me, so I started in the women's project class.

This is a class meant for dropout girls and women who have never set foot in a school door.

I tried my best by working towards achieving success. I was sent to Maronka Village in the Port Loko District to help in the girls' safe house which hosts a total of 60 girls. My role was to encourage them to develop self esteem, and confidence and to become strong beautiful Sierra Leonean women in the future. A year later, I got sponsorship to go to the University and study Development Studies. At first this was very challenging. I had to cope with making new friends and the studies as well. The allowance I was receiving was not enough to cover my food and my academic activities, but I tried my best and worked hard and completed the four year course.

It's my vision and passion to continue my academic study and in the near future contribute to the development and changing of the lives of other girls still facing the challenges I went through to realise my full potential. Education to me has not only meant being able to read and write, but to be aware of one's pride, dignity and respect as a human. The commitment of our political leaders to support the girl child's education is still low as FGM, early marriage, sexual harassment and other factors continue to add to the school dropout rate in our beloved nation. There is a slogan in our country, "If you educate a girl child, you educate a nation". This is absolutely true, as the few educated women in our country have made history. For instance Dr Christiana Thorpe conducted two credible and peaceful elections in 2007 and 2012 respectively and is now serving as the Deputy Minister for the Education Ministry. Our representative to the UN, Zainab Hawa Bangura, is another example of a Sierra Leonean woman who has achieved national and international recognition made possible because of education.



Education can reduce the rate of early marriage, FGM, sexual harassment and many other troubles faced by women, as because of it they will be in the position to make decisions that matter with regard to their well being, reproductive rights, etc and hold leaders accountable for their actions. Girl child empowerment is a key to success, and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

I therefore call on all meaningful citizens of the world to reach one girl child in Africa and save a generation, especially in Sierra Leone, a country known for abundant minerals but yet the citizens continue to become poorer every day. Support a girl child today and save a generation. Thank you, God bless you for reading this piece.

"HOW ON EARTH DID I GET HERE"

In 2002 **Dorothy Thornhill**, an ex teacher, became the first woman to be directly elected as mayor of the town of Watford in the UK, where the Foundation has its offices. In August 2015 she became Baroness Thornhill a member of the UK second Parliamentary chamber, the House of Lords.

We asked Dorothy to write her story of what education has meant to her. It's a story of a tough struggle, but one which proves Steve Sinnott's belief in education as the great liberator.

There is a yarn in my family that I was always destined to go into politics. I was born on General Election day 1955 depriving my mother of voting for the "handsome Mr Eden" who was expected to be the next Prime Minister. I was the daughter of a bus driver in Preston in England, the eldest of 5 children, brought up by my father following the "departure" of my mother when I was 10.

I struggled at school. I could not read at age 7 despite being said to be "the brightest girl in the school". Thankfully the infant school head was determined to get me the help I needed and a wonderful Mrs Hughes gave me one to one tuition. This was vital as we were about to be streamed (yes at age 7 going up to junior school) and I would be in the B stream unless I could read. That was thought of as a fate very definitely worse than death. It was a big deal. Your life chances flowed from there.

I enjoyed school and was good at most things except maths. The "11 plus", the test which used to decide which secondary school children went to, loomed large. It was supposed to diagnose children's different talents so that they could be "selected" for secondary education, but everybody thought of it as something which was "passed" or "failed". Once again my school stepped in, recognising that my father could not afford tuition to get me up to scratch for the test. The head teacher himself took me out of class and tutored me. The school had a reputation for high numbers passing the 11 plus but no-one in the B stream ever passed of course.



I "passed" and went to the more academic type of secondary school, a "grammar school".

I was very definitely a fish out of water socially. The grammar school was very middle class. No one in my neighbourhood went to my school. I lost friends. Becoming "posh" had alienated me from my neighbours. But in truth the vital importance of education hit home to me when I ran home clutching the piece of paper saying I had passed. It was to make a huge difference to my life. I'll be opposing each and every UK

government proposal now to go back to the days of selective secondary education.

My dad was ready for me to leave school at age 15 and contribute to the family finances. We were poor. We needed the money. I wanted to stay on to do my "O" level exams. Big rows followed. But then at a crucial moment for me the then Labour government raised the school leaving age to 16. I was a "ROSLA" girl. Hooray! A life line had been thrown. But for how long? The same problem was going to raise its head at 16.

After much agonising, I left home at 16. It was a grim period of my life in that I felt real despair. I had crossed a bridge from which there was no going back. The family repercussions last even until today.

But with three jobs (bingo caller, waitress, cleaner), I managed to attend sixth form and pass my Advanced level exams. It was by then no real surprise that I decided I wanted to be a teacher and eventually a teacher of children with learning difficulties.

Nor perhaps that I am passionate about UK local government. It was Lancashire County Council that "bent" the rules to give me a full grant after A levels to allow me to go straight to college.

So when I sat in the House of Lords last December, ready to do my maiden speech the thought that went through my mind was, "How on earth did I get here!" And the answer came back because you had teachers who cared about you and wanted you to succeed. My gratitude to them is beyond bounds.

But now I'm a law maker and a "person of influence". Perhaps the real pay back for me now is to work at a national, and international, level to make sure others get the chances they deserve.

EQUIPPING GIRLS AS HAITI'S FUTURE LEADERS

Lency Paul has taught English and Spanish for 12 years and is currently Secretary of Professional Development for La Confédération Nationale des Enseignants Haïtiens (CNEH)

As I ponder over this article, two things flash into my mind: the absence of female leaders in Haiti's Parliament, and the dire reality of domestic servants. I reviewed some statistics released by international and local agencies involved in education. Then I asked: "What if we offer more girls the chance to go to school?"

In the political sphere, it is unpleasant to observe such imbalance in terms of gender representation. Not a single woman is currently holding a seat in Parliament! Very few are elected to other offices. How can this be tackled? It is true that our political atmosphere is marred by never-ending disputes, but education can be useful. In fact, school is the ideal place where girls are equipped to become future leaders; they can make their first steps in decision making. That is where, with the support of teachers and the board, they learn to get involved in community life as 'executives' in classroom committees, and take actions for the common good.

This way, their self-confidence as well as their sense of responsibility and risk-taking are developed. At an older age, these girls will be more likely to run for public office.



As a result, when power positions are reached, they will work to reduce disparity and gender-based stereotypes that affect our society.

At the social level, domestic servitude is an issue that also needs to be addressed. It is a kind of modern slavery. Girls represent about two-thirds of domestic servants called *restavèk*, meaning literally 'to stay with'.

Poor rural parents often feel obliged to send their children to host families in Port-au-Prince, the capital city, in exchange for schooling, which is oftentimes illusory. In their new homes, their lives are a long, long journey.

Most of them will actually never attend class. The few who have this privilege are prevented from devoting enough time to their lessons and homework because of the long hours of everyday chores. Unfortunately, many of them will drop out without the basic skills.

These girls' futures, if urgent actions are not taken, are doomed to failure because they have been denied the right to education. So it is imperative to let *restavèk* access education so they are empowered to take care of themselves and their children later in adult life.

I strongly believe that educating more girls can help deal with the two challenges discussed above. If we want to overcome them, we need to encourage teenage girls to cultivate a risk-taking and decision-making mindset.

They must learn to move beyond the erroneous belief that they should be left out. We need more committed people in our trade unions and civil society who can stand up for accessible, quality public education for ALL.

Figures about girls' education throughout the world-- including my country-- are daunting. But as I wake up every day and rush into my all-girls classrooms, I see a glimmer of hope in their eyes. There is no doubt this hope is frail; however, with hard work it can be transformed into unbelievable opportunities for our people.

With education it need not happen again

Haiti's long struggle to recover from the earthquake of 2010 has suffered serious setback from the devastation caused by Hurricane Matthew. The "aid" agencies are working hard to provide immediate support. The Steve Sinnott Foundation's aim is longer term. Very soon we'll be opening the first of our Learning Resource Centres in Haiti and we've set up a special "Fund for Haiti" so that the Centre can help make an immediate difference and be sustainable way into the future. Please email to admin@stevesinnottfoundation.org.uk to find out how you can help.



IT WAS WITH A MISSION

Dr. Sakena Yacoobi is Founder and CEO of the Afghan Institute of Learning (AIL). AIL is a groundbreaking, grassroots organization, providing education, training, healthcare, legal assistance and emergency aid reaching 13 million Afghans since 1996. AIL is empowering women, children and communities to live harmoniously and peacefully. She has also established 4 private schools, a radio station and a hospital in Afghanistan. Born in Herat, Dr. Yacoobi earned a bachelor's degree from the University of the Pacific and master's in public health from Loma Linda University. She has received many honors and awards, including six honorary doctorates.

A Girl's Education: The Importance and Impact

What is the importance of a girl's education? Education is one of the most critical areas of empowerment for women and girls. My story may be different from others; however, the underlying issues remain the same. After years of fighting in Afghanistan, the country and its people were devastated when I began working in the Pakistan Afghan refugee camps. There were few schools; most women and children were illiterate. This was a serious issue. What people fail to realize is the positive impact on educating girls to both families and communities. It saddens me the discrimination against educating girls in many communities. This is ignorance. The power of education is priceless and a necessity in life. Through education, the minds of girls are opened. They learn critical-thinking skills, and those interested in political and social change discover it is an avenue to providing alternatives to the generally accepted beliefs and values of the power structure in their society.

When I founded the Afghan Institute of Learning (AIL) in 1995 it was with a mission – a mission to help address the problem of poor access for Afghan women and children to education and health services, their



subsequent inability to support their lives, and the impact of this lack of education and health on Afghan society. With offices in Kabul, Herat and Peshawar and a staff of 450, AIL's visionary programs have had a major impact in reconstructing education and health systems capable of reaching Afghan women and children. Since 1996, over 13 million Afghans have been direct beneficiaries of AIL education, training and health services; 70% of AIL's beneficiaries and staff are females. The education and development of these women and girls impact numerous phases in life both on a physical and mental level.

What are the visible impacts of a girl's education?

- Decreased infant and maternal deaths
- Decreased child marriages
- Better health and nutrition
- Increase in socioeconomic wellbeing
- Increase in community involvement

Education is key to a girl's future. The impacts mentioned above are a direct result of the training and education received. Knowledge in health care is essential as it has direct links to various aspects in life. In addition, interactive education and critical thinking skills empower women and girls to have a voice in human rights, women rights, leadership and peace.

A girl's education is not just about the individual; it is about the future of her family

and her community. An educated girl leads to a healthier family and a productive member of the community. An educated female population increases a country's productivity and fuels economic growth. Educated women tend to be healthier, work and earn more income, have fewer children, and provide better health care and education to their children. They gain critical thinking skills, information, and self-confidence to be a better parent, citizen and working member of society.

As I look to the future and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted by the UN and many countries, I am encouraged about how many more people and nations realize the importance of education for all (Goal 4) and the importance of gender equality and empowering women and girls (Goal 5). It is just as important that the education that is offered is of high quality and that it encourages wisdom, high moral character, core values and justice. In the years to come, I foresee that more and more girls around the world will finish secondary school and many will go on to university. As a result, there will be improved economic opportunities for women; women and their families will be healthier and there will be more women leaders. As our future leaderships shift to a balance in gender, we will see positive changes in our world situation as well. I believe that, as girls and women are more educated and become leaders, we will also have a more peaceful world.

UNKIND REGARDS

Stephanie Perrot describes herself as a retired humanitarian and development project manager with a passion for refugee and Roma rights. Here she tackles head on the problem of ensuring that children from marginalised backgrounds get equal access to quality education.

Assuming that it's almost universally accepted that girls' education is of utmost importance I wish to address an aspect of girls' education – providing an effective, enabling education for girls from disadvantaged, marginalised backgrounds. According to Minority Rights Group International the majority of children who are out of school worldwide are minority and indigenous children. So as we move to providing education for all girls we will be focusing on educating many more minority group children.

I have observed NGOs fund education projects which assume that their desired outcomes are simply achieved by providing teachers, a main stream curriculum, textbooks and teaching aids. I view this as simplistic when educating minority group girls, as education can be used to perpetuate and strengthen discrimination. Children who feel discriminated against, who see and hear the adult members of their community shunned and disparaged in a school setting are surely less likely to succeed academically.

In 2001 I was shocked when Serbian teachers in Kosovo, funded by a French NGO, refused to shake the hands of Roma kindergarten teachers visiting the Roma School they taught in. This happened in front of a class of Roma children. Similarly in Vietnam I received reports from Kinh (Viet) staff referring to the minority group Tay people they were working with as ignorant, dirty and backward. Do children learn well when they are regarded in this way by their teachers?

In New Zealand the study, Unconscious Bias and Education, reviewed existing research on Maori education and found the unconscious bias of teachers was affecting the performance of Maori students. It compared studies on African-Americans, who share a similar profile to Maori on a number of social measures. Report co-author Carla Houkamau said racial bias was more subtle in New Zealand but still

has a major impact on the success of Maori students. "These days racism is really socially unacceptable. It's very unusual for you to see examples of explicit racism. There's evidence that there's low expectations of Maori kids and what can start to happen is that the kids feel the teacher doesn't like them so much, they don't get as much attention. They start to withdraw and then it's a self-fulfilling prophecy."

In contrast in 2015 at Hawera Intermediate in New Zealand's North Island a class with a Maori teacher respecting certain Maori cultural values recorded 40 per cent of the Maori students making accelerated progress in reading, 82 per cent accelerated in writing and 98 per cent accelerated in maths. Many of the students who come into the class are several years behind education standards and accelerated progress helps them catch up by putting two years worth of learning in to one year. This year, two classes have been set up in this manner, and the children in it are thriving, said Dawn Mendes, who leads class 1.

For girls' education to be effective extensive study must be done on the effects of teacher ethnicity. This is not an issue that can be ignored or minimised. Finding teachers from minority groups will create challenges for funders but I believe this is an issue that must be further explored and addressed if we are to ensure that all girls are educated in a manner that improves their opportunities and leads to the successful outcomes funders are striving to achieve.



GIRLS' EDUCATION – TIME FOR ACTION

- Still 31 million girls of primary school age out of school. Of these 17 million are expected never to enter school. There are 4 million fewer boys than girls out of school.
- Three countries have over a million girls not in school: Nigeria, almost five and a half million, Pakistan, over three million, and Ethiopia, over one million.
- 34 million female adolescents are out of school, missing out on the chance to learn vital skills for work.
- Almost a quarter of young women aged 15-24 today (116 million) in developing countries have never completed primary school. Young women make up 58% of those not completing primary school.
- Two-thirds of the 774 million illiterate people in the world are female.

For this girl in Haiti, the chance of education has survived. It can be done.



OUR OPINION

The feminine side

It is shocking to admit that in 2016 on the subject of girls' education inequality still prevails. The articles in this edition of ENGAGE come from contributors across the world. There is a common thread throughout the writing. Each writer voices his or her concern over the struggle still faced by many girls the world over in their quest to be educated. The writers also explore and offer explanation as to why educating girls is not only fair and just but a vital necessity. At the Steve Sinnott Foundation we believe that access to education for every child, regardless of gender, is the only way to achieve equality. It is a fundamental human right.

The problem of restricted educational expectations for girls is not only experienced by girls and women in developing countries but also in the developed west. Gender roles are not innate at birth they are artificially constructed by society at large. Girls will underperform, drop out or follow 'traditional' career paths and boys will not question why this is so unless we educate both sexes to appreciate the importance of parity across the spectrum of education. We must move away from encouraging girls and boys to conform only to the roles historically ascribed to their gender. Each of us has a part to play in encouraging children to find their own place in the world. This requires children to develop critical thinking skills, to be unafraid of challenging the norm, to be supportive of each other and to appreciate the differences amongst them. Education affords children the confidence not to be satisfied with just fitting into someone else's pre-constructed box.

Men are frequently applauded for being in touch with their 'feminine side'. On the other hand, women who display what society considers male attributes, such as strength, tenacity and self belief, are often described as being 'strident and pushy'. To achieve equality women need to be educated and their voices heard and listened to. When looking at the question of girls' education, it's not enough merely to provide access if the dominant educational philosophies and culture remain masculine. Development provides opportunities to innovate and nowhere is this more important than in the education of girls. Developing countries should be encouraged to rethink for themselves an education culture which genuinely liberates female approaches to knowledge and learning, which defines success criteria for education in terms of women's values. In this respect, developing countries using the opportunity to innovate may become beacons of best practice from which the west could learn.

Local ownership of best practice development – the way the concept of universal human rights can best be realised.



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

RAISING FUNDS

From the beginning we've not just been about raising and giving money. We're about participation, helping, sharing and, as the title of this magazine shows, we're about engaging with the worldwide effort to secure Education for All. When it comes to raising funds, our supporters go walking across the Isle of Wight or, like Jo-Anne and Anoushka Rampling and Candi Otton, they swim the Serpentine in London's Hyde Park. The Denham Divas sing to raise money to fly a Sierra Leonean teacher to London and to pay for toilet facilities at our Resource Centre in Haiti. Hertfordshire Schools donate computers, a great team of volunteers helps to put on a fabulous display at London's Notting Hill Carnival and Debbie Smith runs the London Marathon. All these great people and many, many more are joining in, playing a part and making a difference. Huge thanks to them all.



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

With the opening of our first Learning Resource Centre in Haiti, the Foundation begins a new and exciting chapter. We aim for this to be the beginning of a connected worldwide network. There are lots of ways to be part of it.

- Donate, through our website at www.stevesinnottfoundation.org.uk or simply by texting **EDFA16 to 70070**
- Become a Friend of the Foundation with a regular **standing order** direct from the website or by downloading a form or requesting a form by email
- **Sign up your school** to be a Steve Sinnott Foundation Education for All Awareness school – download or request our resource pack
- Help with **teaching resources, lesson plans etc.** to be supplied to schools through the Resource Centres, starting first in Haiti
- Follow us on our **social network** platforms and contribute your ideas, schemes and plans – details on page 13
- Call and ask how you can get unused **computers, monitors, books** and other teaching equipment to schools in developing countries
- Join our **storytelling programme** and share tales of education around the world

and much more, whatever you can think of.

Right now we need to fill the places we have been allocated for the 2017 London Marathon and the Prudential RideLondon event. Runners and riders please get in touch.

The more we have, money, people, resources and ideas, the more we can achieve. Please join in and with us, ENGAGE.



CUTTING THE MUSTARD

It may seem odd that martial arts should be used to promote a spirit of brotherhood and unity. For **Francis Nwofor** it's not odd at all. THE DOJO UK is an organisation with three overarching aims: to identify social issues that cause disunity within a society; to use the principles, philosophy and fundamentals of the Martial Arts as a metaphor and tool for solving social concerns; to get young people involved in tackling social issues, whilst integrating with the older generation. Here Francis describes why, in his world, boys and girls must have equal rights to quality education.

I think it ironic that I, being a man, should be asked to write an article on the importance of educating girls. However, as I reflect on my life as an educator I see that the ratio of women/girls that I have either taught, instructed, coached, and/or mentored and in some cases am still teaching, instructing, coaching and/or mentoring outweighs that of men approximately 5:2. So it is what it is.

I find it interesting that most writings and discussions on women's and



girl's education talk about "the right to education for women and girls in the 21st century", as if this is some new learning and/or paradigm. This is rubbish!! Women and girls had the right to education, and a good one at that, the same time men and boys acquired it. The law of liberty, the law of freedom, the law of love gave both women (girls) and men (boys) this right. It is a right to be schooled, to be developed, to be transformed, to be perfected. It is the right to be educated.

An extract from the United Nations mission statement on the Status for Women, established in 1946, reads, "*to raise the status of women, irrespective of nationality, race, language or religion, to equality with men in all fields of human enterprise ...*", and in 1979 the UN General Assembly adopted The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

In this current era, we have had 70 years of talking in various forms, means and medium about this topic. We have had 37 years of different revivals. We know the subject matter. It has been talked about and around for a long time. What we must now discuss and bring to the fold, is the putting into effective practice the operational effectiveness of women and girls' education across the globe.

I'd like to make the point that to merely educate girls and women will not cut the mustard. The educational cornerstone of this operational effectiveness of women and girls education across the globe must be, and should lead to, the education of women leaders. Educated women in positional leadership within their communities are fundamental to bringing about a tipping point in the drive for sustained and continuous progress in girl education globally.

At TheDojo.Org.UK we believe that women in leadership, especially within their communities can change both the state and estate of girls and women in their locality and beyond. These women in leadership must be women that are erudite in their thinking, erudite in their emotional content, erudite in their choices, erudite in their attitude, erudite in their decision making and judgment, erudite in their self and erudite in collective consciousness and social advancement.

Let's face it, these types of women don't come about by accident or by chance. It is planned. They are carefully crafted. It is a consequence of having the opportunity to access quality education.

It all starts by valuing and esteeming as highly important and of prerequisite – girls' education.

PUT YOURSELF IN CHANDA'S SHOES

Girls Not Brides is a global partnership of more than 600 civil society organisations committed to ending child marriage and enabling girls to fulfil their potential. **Fiona Carr** is its Head of Communications

Chanda is from Rajasthan, India. She was engaged when just a few months old. Now she has reached puberty it is time for her to get married. Chanda's parents see their daughter as a financial burden because they have to pay for her to go to school. If she gets married these costs will end. She will be forced to leave school to look after her new husband and his family.

Put yourselves in Chanda's shoes. You are bright, you love going to school but marriage seems to be the only thing on your horizon. Any dreams or hopes you have for yourself are just that, dreams. Your worth in society is low. You are seen as a burden, a 'commodity' to be negotiated over, exchanged and shackled to a life not of your choosing.

Sounds horrific, doesn't it? Well this is the life 15 million girls face each year when they become child brides. Through my work I've met so many girls like Chanda who would dearly love the chance to complete their education, or in some cases, even go to school at all. These girls aspire to a life beyond doing household chores, caring for a husband and children when they themselves are still children; to have a job, learn a skill, earn some money, possibly travel and live in other parts of their country.

Each stage of education – primary, secondary, tertiary – is important; the first two are part of the essential building blocks of life, and lay the ground work for a better life; the third gives even greater options. Like Chanda, neither of my grandmothers, nor my mother, got to stay on in school beyond a certain age because their parents simply couldn't afford it. Ability and potential weren't the issue, money and opportunity were. Plus, if anyone were going to stay on, it would be their brothers, because they were worth the investment. Thankfully, the education system and society's perception girls and women in the UK had changed somewhat by the time I came along. Education changes lives. It's changed mine. It's given me confidence, knowledge, options and choices and I've had opportunities that girls and women in the generations before me could only dream about.

But for many millions of girls around the world, having an education remains a luxury not a right. According to the latest UN figures, girls are more likely than boys to be excluded from education and will never get the chance to learn to read and write in primary school. Currently 1 in 10 girls globally (approximately 32 million) are out of primary school



and 1 in 4 (approximately 98 million) out of secondary school. Yet education is critical to helping countries develop. It's also critical for helping girls stay out of marriage.

The longer a girl stays in school, the less likely she is to get married before 18 and she will have fewer, healthier children. As a result, those children have a better chance of staying healthy and breaking the cycle of poverty they were born into. With an education, a girl develops the confidence and skills to choose the future she wants; she has options. She can get a job and lift herself and her family out of poverty and she is more likely to invest in her children's education as well. An educated girl can make a greater contribution to her community and to her country. She can be a force for positive change in her society, raising the status of girls and women everywhere.

Quite simply, education is good for girls, good for communities and good for nations as a whole. It's the key to unlocking girls' potential.

SUPPORTING ACC WORLDWIDE – WI

The Steve Sinnott Foundation strongly advocates the use of communications technology to open new learning opportunities in developing countries – always to assist teachers, never to replace them. We've carried articles about this in earlier editions of ENGAGE and we're involved in a growing number of exciting projects. We've a few update stories to report.

Making a difference in Nigerian schools

A year ago, we reported on how 192 computers were being sent to Nigeria assisted by the UK National Union of Teachers headquarters, its Hertfordshire Division and the Steve Sinnott Foundation. Sam Makinde, the UK teacher whose determination brought the project to fruition, went to Nigeria during the UK schools summer break to check on progress. This is his report:

"The computers were delivered on time all intact and as scheduled. The project has captured not just the interest of the schools to which they were sent but also that of individual state commissioners and governments, colleges and universities and the nation's Minister of Education. They have been overwhelmed by the generosity of all the people and organisations that have been involved in sending the computers.

I was able to arrange ICT training for 25 schools involving 158 teachers. A self help group organised by the Progressive St. John's Old Student Association then asked me to chair their fund raising

event during which over 1 million Naira was raised. This money will now fund an e-project for their school and the Joint Admission Matriculating Board wants to have the school as one of their examination centres.

Having seen the hunger of Nigerian people for bringing modern innovation into their classrooms, it is my opinion that this is a venture worth contributing to. I would like to thank the London Black Teachers Network and the Steve Sinnott Foundation for their support, and especially the Hertfordshire National Union of Teachers for funding the shipping. With the help of the Foundation and that of the UK NUT we shall make a difference linking with Nigerian teachers. Yes, we can do it !"

Lots of organisations, including many schools, replace their computers long before their useful life is over. Don't let them go to waste. They can make a difference. It's not easy because, as Sam discovered, shipping is expensive – but let us know and we'll see what we can do.

Translating books in Ghanaian languages

The Big Book project is a partnership between Ghana Education Service, Educators International and the Steve Sinnott Foundation providing bilingual early-grade reading materials for Northern Region, Ghana.



Over 1,000 Big Books have already been transformed into usable bilingual books in both English and a Ghanaian language making highly creative use of a digital phone app and printer. Many have already been used in classrooms. Over 80 teachers have been trained to carry out the work.

This is Education for All Awareness in action. UK children from Hathaway Primary School in Ealing, West London have been writing and illustrating stories and sharing them with children in Ghana. The trained teachers have then translated the stories into local languages using the phone app and printers. Everyone concerned is sharing new skills, and learning and assisting literacy in Ghana.

There's a story-writing competition now



underway, inviting Ghana Education Service teachers to create new stories and materials, as bi- or tri-lingual editions in a range of languages. Local illustrators and in-country publishers will create and publish them as books. They will then be printed and distributed in hard copy and supplied electronically wherever suitable devices exist to receive them.

ESS TO LEARNING TH TECHNOLOGY

SSF sponsored team – runners up in Los Angeles

Earlier this year we helped to sponsor a team of four enterprising 16 year old students from one of our Education for All project schools, Stanborough School, to travel to Los Angeles to compete in an International Robotics Competition.

The team call themselves Shark Robotics.

Sahbi Benzid, Stanborough's curriculum leader in IT and computing reports:

"The team really felt the pressure when they saw their rival teams from

California. After a slow start, the boys went on an 8 match winning streak, which took them to the knockout stage. From this point they achieved an outstanding feat of reaching the final of the competition. They played a fantastic game, and ended up achieving 2nd place overall, continuing an amazing tradition of doing well at this international robotics competition.

So, well done to all the members of team Shark Robotics and a big thank you to our sponsors MBDA, Communicator, Academy Associates and the Steve Sinnott Foundation."

The Robotics work promotes the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Maths and Computer Science) subjects across the school, as students can take their learning beyond the classroom.

The Foundation will now be doing ongoing work with the Shark Robotics team to develop new ideas to support access to learning worldwide – with technology. Look out for the Robotics competition for primary schools in Hertfordshire next term.



New Social Media platforms

And we're doing it in house too. We're broadening our social media presence across all the most popular platforms giving a number of ways for you to be in touch with us. There's lots of info, material for download and links to video and podcasts all to help spread the word about Education for All – and a range of options to donate and share in our work.

As we're setting all this up, we'll really appreciate your "likes" and "follows" on the social media you use or, better still, all of them. Here's where to find us.

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

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

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

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

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

On Vimeo: <https://vimeo.com/stevesinnottfoundation>



Education Resource Centres – first in Haiti

When we chose Haiti for our first Education Resource Centre, we never imagined that the devastating effects on education of the 2010 earthquake would be repeated by Hurricane Matthew. As the hurricane



hit we wondered whether our Resource Centre building would survive it. It did, and not only has the building survived, the refurbishment programme is well on the way to completion. We expect the Centre to be opening whilst this edition of ENGAGE is in circulation. Now we must get it equipped and keep it equipped. So we need books, teaching materials, computers, monitors, all the things used for good teaching and learning.



These Resources Centres are our main long term project. We aim to set them up and connect them together all around the world. We've already scoped out the possibilities in Uganda and Nepal and we're in talks about Sierra Leone. We're looking for partners to establish them country by country. So please contact us if you can help.

UNESCO ASPnet

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

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

Schools are encouraged to devise their own projects with help and support from the UK National Coordinator and to link study themes into their curriculum. Schools are required to update the UK National Co-ordinator about their activities annually.

Benefits to schools can include:

- Raising the profile of the school in its community
- Increasing student attainment through a new learning experience



- Embedding UNESCO values into their school curriculum via citizenship, politics, history, geography and languages
- Extending students' knowledge of the United Nations and other international institutions. Model UN General Assemblies are encouraged
- Linking with schools in other countries through ASPnet
- Encouraging active global citizenship and broadening international understanding for students and teachers, so helping to build a better future for the planet.

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

Call for cyclists



We're also looking for cyclists – yes cyclists. We've been allocated two charity places for each of the 2017, 2018 and 2019 Prudential Ride London-Surrey 100 events. These are challenging events for serious cyclists to prove their worth – and raise funds for the Foundation in the process. Again please make contact and remember there are only two places available.

How to get in touch

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

FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S DESK

This year saw the 50th year celebration of the Notting Carnival in London. It deserves a special mention. It was a real privilege to be taking part and we were very excited. The opportunity to get the message out there that every child has the right to access quality education wherever they are or whatever their circumstances has been fantastic. So have all the children and young people who have made this project a reality.

25 children and young people presented "Education for All" in costume. The focus was on some of the countries in which the Foundation is currently working – Haiti, Sierra Leone, Nepal, Ghana and Uganda – with an emphasis on shared learning and gaining understanding of other cultures. To take part in activities that reflect the variety of experiences of education that people have in the UK and around the world was a truly sensory experience.

I would like to personally thank for their support Cocoyea, our costume designer Jean Prime, our team of volunteers and all the funders. Most importantly of all thanks to the children and young people who gave their time and energy.



Education for All, Uganda – in Carnival

Readers may remember our crowdfunding campaign to finance three animated films about the difference made by education under the title, "My Life Changed". We're now working on the final film and we will be launching them all in March 2017. We've taken longer over this than we originally planned because the project took off into something bigger than we first thought. It's important to us that we give people the opportunity to tell their own stories and in their own way. We have found it quite an emotional experience. We're looking forward to sharing it.

As write this, I have just been really enjoying taking part in the Why? Festival at the Southbank in London. This is an event which promotes the rights of children and young people. It was so interesting hearing all the young people's stories and thoughts about their rights and about social activism.

Stories mean a lot to us. They're so much part of education and we have a plan to share them around the world. We'll be sharing stories at the Black Teachers Conference of the UK National Union of

Teachers in November and watch out for the stories sent to us from a school in Devon in the UK. We're making them into a booklet.

Foundation supporters all over the place have also been singing our EFA campaign song A Better Place to Be. Check out the Grenadian version on our website. It's my favourite so far. Please do download the song, sing it, record it. Then send the recording to us and we'll share it with children across the world. Big thanks to Evadne Bygrave and Michael Fuller for producing a beautiful song for us.

I've been at lots of meetings promoting the Foundation's work and seeking partners. I was delighted to meet SchoolinaBag's founder Lucas Simon and find out about their important work. As I write, I'm preparing to deliver some "schoolinabags" to Haiti very soon. You can find out more about this organisation at www.schoolinabag.org.

I've also been doing a few radio and press interviews. It's so good that the Foundation's work is attracting this attention.

And close by our offices in Watford, we've been working closely on a sustainability plan with The Big Connect, Lloyds Bank Business Connectors and Hertfordshire University to look at how their Business Programme can support the Foundation next year.

Close by too, I joined a karate class with The Dojo UK, one of many events to raise awareness of This Girl Can in Hertfordshire. This is all about encouraging girls to take part in sport and get active. It was great fun, although a little taxing on my body.

And that brings me to the focus of this edition "Girls Education". I've been wondering how do we define what the success of the Sustainable Development Goal 4 would look like for girls' education. We had a discussion with some young people. These are a few ideas they came up with -

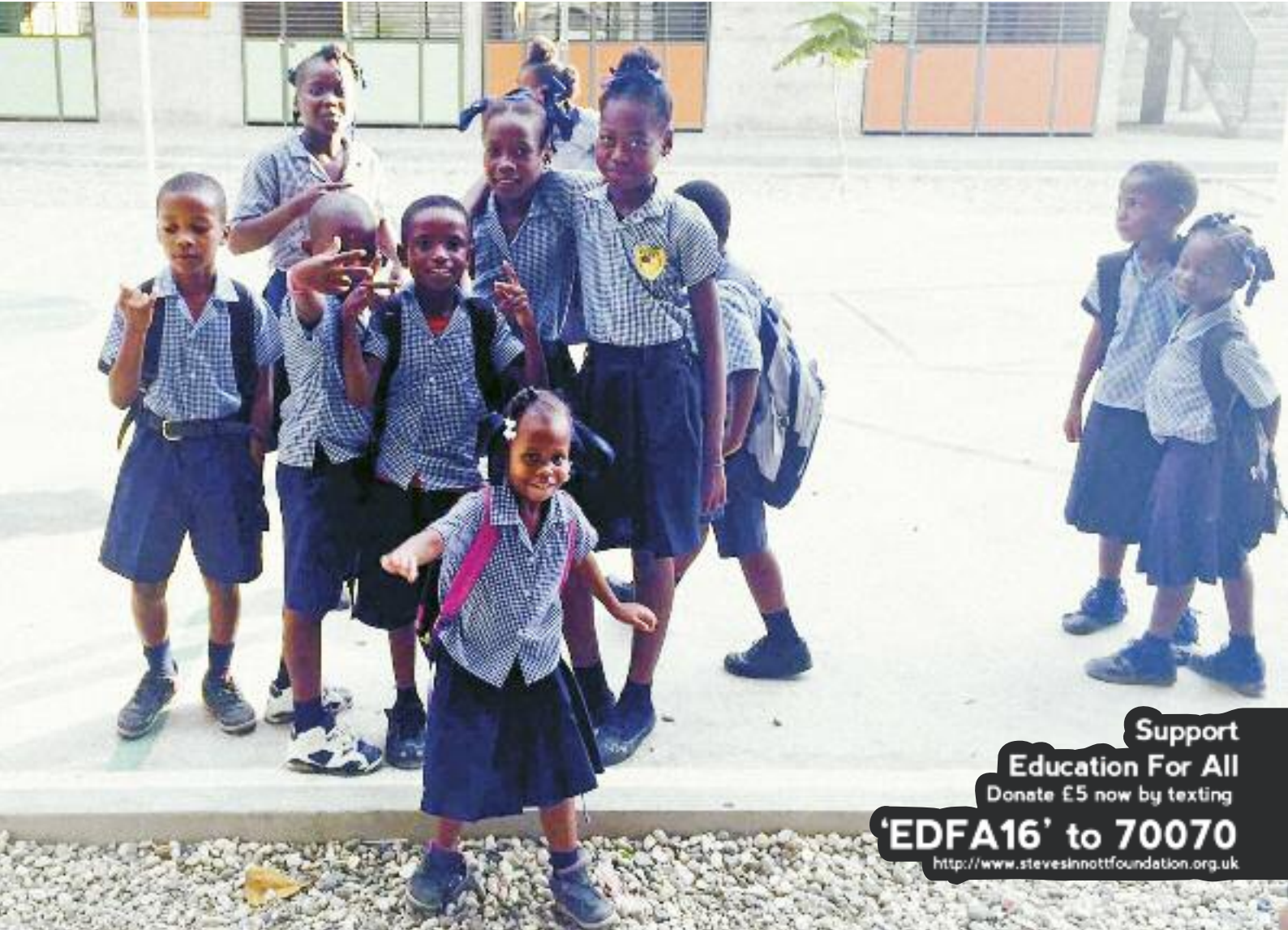
- More girls enrolling in school
- More girls completing school
- Fewer girls being forced into early marriage
- Fewer girls becoming pregnant
- A reduction in gender based violence
- Increased support for girls at a community level
- Increased support for girls education at a government level
- Increased government funding specifically to support access to education for girls.

They made me think. We have to ask why in this time of huge progress and change, of innovation and invention why do we need to have an international day of the girl? Why are we still campaigning for girls to go to school? It is surely a basic human right for everyone to have equal access to quality education, whether boy or girl, rich or poor or black or white. There should be less talking and more action.

My best wishes

Ann





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Donate £5 now by texting
'EDFA16' to 70070
<http://www.stevesinnottfoundation.org.uk>

"An educated population is the very foundation Haiti needs to rebuild. This is one foundation no hurricane can wash away" – Gordon Brown, UN Special Envoy for Global Education.

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