The STEVE SINNOTT FOUNDATION

THIRTY SECOND EDITION

Engage

The importance of education in times of crisis

"Education breeds confidence. Confidence breeds hope. Hope breeds peace."

CONFUCIUS

FOREWORD

Welcome to edition 32 of Engage. In future it is anticipated that Engage will now be published once a year, in the Spring.

Sadly, this publication of Engage coincides with the current Middle East conflict and its consequences with yet more damaging global instability. Wars, wherever they are conducted, will always result in devastation of communities, countries and regions. However, it is arguable that their impact will be most profound and long lasting on the youngest in society. Articles included in this edition explore the importance of quality education for all and its beneficial impact on understanding, on hope and on peace.

Thank you for reading this edition of Engage and your continued support of the Steve Sinnott Foundation.

JERRY GLAZIER
Chair of Trustees

From the Chief Executive's desk

As this, the first edition of our now annual magazine goes to print, I am attending the Commission on the Status of Women in New York. You can read more about this important event on page 17.

This edition of Engage is looking at the importance of education in times of crisis. We are presently facing a multi-level crisis, in terms of politics, climate change, the global economy and equitable access to education and human rights for all sectors of society.

I have been advocating for equitable rights for all women and girls for most of my life and working for The Steve Sinnott Foundation has given me the amazing opportunity of seeing progress in this area but there is still much to be done.

Gender based violence is not solely a woman's issue it is an area the whole of society needs to address, as the effects are far reaching in every community. At the Foundation we have been working with boys and men to address the issue of preventing gender based violence for future generations. We share the stories of two young boys in this edition: Joenty on page 9 and Ricardino on page 11. I urge you to read them and consider supporting this vital work.

The articles on the Hands Up project and the importance of Holocaust education remind us all of the importance of sharing experiences with young people so that they may understand the values of tolerance and mutual understanding and inspire them to change their futures and the futures of others.

As Ed Harlow reminds us on page 4 education is vital in times of conflict and unrest.

One of our patrons, Dr Nira Chamberlain, shares his personal thoughts on creating equitable education.

I urge you all to enter the UNESCO ASPnet Seeds of Hope for a Better Future competition (details on page 19). In this time of uncertainty creative expression is a must for each and every one of us and our students.

Thank you to everyone who supports the Foundation's work.

The Transformative Power of Education

BY ED HARLOW – NEU PRESIDENT (1ST JANUARY 2026 – 31ST DECEMBER 2026)

Ed has been a secondary music teacher and head of department at Highgate Wood School in London for nearly 20 years. Elected to the National Executive in 2021, and as Junior Vice-President in 2024, he has helped shape policy, taking a particular interest in restoring the arts and creative subjects in the Curriculum.

I have always been a believer in the transformative power of education. Education can never be seen solely as a didactic pursuit. It is in many ways an act of love. Helping children to carve out their own place in the world and to understand the complexities of culture, society, history, and anthropology.

Education becomes especially vital in times of conflict and unrest. When societies are divided by violence, political instability, or deep social tensions, education offers one of the most powerful tools for rebuilding communities and creating a more peaceful future. Schools are not only places where children learn academic subjects; they must be environments where values, perspectives, and skills are formed. In periods of crisis, the role of education expands beyond knowledge transmission to include fostering tolerance and equipping them with critical thinking skills that allow them to navigate complex realities.

One of the most important functions of education during conflict is the promotion of tolerance and mutual understanding. Conflict often arises from fear, misunderstanding, and deeply rooted prejudices between groups. When children grow up hearing only one narrative about others, divisions can become stronger over time. Education can counteract this by exposing students to different cultures, histories, and viewpoints. Through inclusive curricula and classroom discussions, children can learn that diversity is not a threat but a natural and valuable part of human society. Teaching empathy and respect helps young people see beyond stereotypes and recognise the shared humanity in others. In the long term, these attitudes can reduce the likelihood that future generations will repeat cycles of hostility.

We can see in conflict zones now that there is often a parallel battle in schools for control of the narrative. Arguments over textbooks in Palestine, for example, are longstanding with different cultural interpretations of certain themes or even individual words or pictures being used to justify political ends.

Conflict can create feelings of fear, confusion, and powerlessness, particularly for young people. Schools can provide a sense of stability and normality when much of life feels unpredictable. In addition to this emotional support, education helps students understand the social, political, and historical forces shaping their circumstances. By learning about how societies function, how conflicts arise, and how they can be resolved, children gain a clearer sense of their role as members of a community and as citizens. This understanding empowers them to imagine a future beyond the conflict they are experiencing and to see themselves as participants in rebuilding their societies.

Another key aspect of education in times of unrest is the development of critical thinking skills. In environments marked by propaganda, misinformation, and polarised narratives, the ability to evaluate information carefully becomes essential. This is especially vital in the modern world with the proliferation of social media, citizen journalism, and algorithms which are designed to reinforce and amplify the worldview of the user or to promote violent or extreme material. Children and young people who learn how to question sources, analyse arguments, and consider multiple perspectives are far less likely to be manipulated by extremist ideologies or false information. Critical thinking allows individuals to move beyond simplistic explanations and to recognise the complexity of social and political issues. This skill is crucial not only for personal decision-making but also for the health of democracy.

Furthermore, critical thinking encourages dialogue rather than division. When students learn to examine ideas thoughtfully and listen to differing opinions, they become more capable of engaging in constructive discussions. This ability is particularly important in post-conflict societies where reconciliation and cooperation are necessary for long-term peace. Instead of reacting with hostility to disagreement, educated individuals are more likely to seek understanding and compromise.

We must build education systems with this in mind. Many curricula and systems have focussed on standards and testing to the detriment of true critical thinking. With the rapid onset of AI and the proliferation of algorithm-driven information access, it is more vital than ever that critical thinking, media literacy, social skills, and dialogue are placed at the heart of education and schools. While education alone cannot resolve every conflict, it lays the intellectual and moral foundations that make lasting peace possible. Investing in education during difficult times is not only an investment in individual development but also in the stability and future of entire communities.

How do we Ensure Education is Inclusive and Reaches Marginalised Groups?

BY PROFESSOR NIRA CHAMBERLAIN OBE

FIMA FORS CSci PhD HonDSc DUniv
1st AtkinsRéalis Technical Fellow for Mathematical Modelling
AtkinsRéalis, Six Mathematical Doctorates.
Mathematics Professor. Founder of the Black Heroes of Mathematics Conference. Science Communicator

Growing up in 1970s and 80s Britain, son of Jamaican immigrants, all I cared about was mathematics, mathematics and mathematics. I didn't see the need for black role models; all I cared about was numbers. Then I reached teenage years, the opportunity to enter the educational community was not the same for people of my colour. I was being directed to become a boxer not a mathematician. A generation later my son was being pushed in the direction of singing, not a career in STEM. My story is not unique and there are many other marginalised groups.
Creating an education system that genuinely includes marginalised groups isn't just a moral imperative — it's a practical one. When people are excluded, societies lose talent, creativity, and economic potential.

So what can be done? Here are seven starters for ten:

1. Remove Barriers to Access
Many marginalised learners are excluded long before they reach a classroom.
Key Strategies:

- Eliminate financial barriers: scholarships, free school meals, subsidised transport, no-fee schooling.
- Provide flexible learning options: evening classes, community-based learning, mobile schools for nomadic groups.
- Invest in infrastructure: safe buildings, accessible facilities for disabled learners, reliable internet in rural areas.

2. Make Learning Culturally Relevant
Education becomes inclusive when learners see themselves reflected in it.
What this looks like:

- Curriculum that includes diverse histories, languages, and perspectives.
- Teaching materials that avoid stereotypes and represent all groups.
- Community involvement in designing educational programs.
- Don't just consider the marginalised groups at certain special events but all year round.

3. Train and Support Teachers
Teachers are the frontline of inclusion.
Effective Approaches:

- Training in inclusive pedagogy and unconscious bias.
- Recruiting teachers from marginalised communities.
- Providing classroom assistants or specialists (e.g., sign language interpreters).
- Get teachers to be seconded in diverse areas, so they can grow to learn and appreciate different cultures.

4. Use Technology Thoughtfully
Technology can widen access — or deepen inequality if used poorly.
Inclusive Uses of Technology:

- Low-bandwidth digital learning tools for remote areas.
- Assistive technologies for learners with disabilities.
- Online platforms that allow flexible pacing and personalised learning.
- Keep Libraries open so that marginalised communities can access the digital world.

5. Strengthen Policies and Accountability
Inclusion doesn't happen by accident; it needs structure. I have written a paper called treating EDI as a Science Problem. It introduces Chamberlain's Law that states this
"If all things are equal what numbers do we expect to see?"
On this basis we should be able to consider things such as

- Anti-discrimination laws in education.
- Data collection on who is being left out and why.
- Funding formulas that allocate more resources to disadvantaged schools.

6. Engage Families and Communities
There are examples where marginalised groups distrust institutions for good historical reasons. These are some of the ways to build trust:

- Community-led outreach programs.
- Parent education initiatives.
- Schools partnering with local leaders, NGOs, and cultural organisations.
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7. Support Learners Beyond Academics
Barriers to education are often social, emotional, or economic.
Holistic support:

- Mental health services.
- School meals and health checks.
- Safe transport and anti-bullying programs.

In conclusion, these points are not comprehensive or exhaustive. However, it is a benefit to us all when education is for all.

Educate Girls

BY SAFEENA HUSAIN

A social impact leader, Safeena Husain is the Founder of Educate Girls, an Indian non-profit that partners with communities to mobilise volunteers and government resources for girls' education in some of India's most underserved and remote regions.

In 2023, she became the first Indian woman to be honoured with the WISE Prize for Education for her transformative work in advancing gender equity through education. In 2024, she was awarded an honorary doctorate by the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE). In 2025, she led Educate Girls to a historic milestone, becoming the first Indian non-profit to receive the Ramon Magsaysay Award, widely regarded as Asia's equivalent of the Nobel Prize, thereby cementing her place as one of the world's most impactful social entrepreneurs.

Under Safeena's leadership, Educate Girls has pioneered innovative models that harness the power of community volunteering, most notably through its Team Balika network of over 23,000 community champions who have helped enrol over 2 million out-of-school girls and improve learning outcomes for more than 2.4 million children since its inception. She also spearheaded the world's first Development Impact Bond in education and led the organisation to become Asia's first TED Audacious Project.

Drawing on her lived experience, Safeena brings a deep understanding of the challenges faced by marginalised communities. Her vision for the next decade is to empower 10 million learners through scalable, community-driven solutions grounded in volunteerism, participation, and equity.

"I have never met a girl who said to me I want to stay at home. I want to graze the cattle. I want to look after my siblings. I want to be a child bride. Every single girl I meet wants to go to school."
Safeena Husain, Founder, Educate Girls

Every last girl may want to go to school, but we know that a desire and an aspiration are not always enough. Deep in rural India, society doesn't always support a girl's education. Household chores, child marriage, restricted movement outside the house and patriarchy all stand in the way. The system also lets girls down -- secondary schools can be far away and re-enrolling after leaving education can be very difficult.

Educate Girls UK was founded in 2016 with a mission to work with local organisations in some of the world's most vulnerable communities, to find and support girls back into education. We identified Educate Girls (FEGG), an ambitious Indian NGO in Rajasthan and decided to start by backing their vision of every girl in school. Since commencing work in 2007, FEGG has supported over 2 million girls to enrol into government schools and improve their learning by creating a movement of over 23,000 gender champions who have reached the girls the system might have left behind. The Indian government too has introduced enabling policies (Right to Education Act was passed in 2009) and made huge progress in improving delivery and systems. India has near universal enrolment in the primary years with many more girls in school than before the Right to Education Act came into being. Our funding and advocacy support here in the UK and Europe has made a difference.

But there still remains a persistent problem in the most marginalised villages in India, and beyond. Millions of women and adolescent girls forced to drop out of school have never returned. Without having passed even Grade 10 (similar to GCSEs in the UK), their life chances are now severely hampered. Further education is a distant dream; skilling programmes inaccessible; even loans to start a small business are all out of reach.

As the world aspires to improve the quality of education we cheer on from the side lines. At Educate Girls UK, we want to be supporting the enrolment of girls into systems that deliver the very best foundational literacy and numeracy and equip young people for the 21st century with all its challenges. But, an additional priority for us, right now, is to give the support that girls who have fallen out of the system need, to pass their 10th and 12th grades. We want to see girls given a second chance at securing this aspiration and indeed this basic human right.

In the next ten years we will work to support partners like Educate Girls (FEGG) in India who have set themselves a goal to ensure 10 million learners get that second chance. Even if they are already married and have children, cannot access physical schools, live in the most remote villages, or have demands on their time so they can't attend school full-time, we will ensure that girls get to study, are supported to access learning and complete their secondary education.

India is incredibly well placed to demonstrate solutions to some of the world's most intractable problems given its size and ability to innovate at scale, indeed it has the largest public education system in the world. In supporting Educate Girls (FEGG) in India to scale their work in partnership with the government, we are convinced that we can learn and then share what works for girls and, in turn as a grant maker and advocate in the UK, work for girls everywhere. At decision making tables across the world we want to ensure the importance and potential of educating girls is seen and heard. This is a problem we only have to solve once as an educated girl will likely become a mother who will educate her children.

Educate Girls in India is demonstrating solutions that work at scale which could have resonance beyond India's borders – there are nearly half a million girls who are not in employment or education even here in the UK. Our work at Educate Girls UK is to change the life of girls so they can go on to change the world for girls everywhere.

Educate Girls (FEGG), was recently recognized as the first organisation in India to receive the prestigious Ramon Magsaysay Award (often hailed as Asia's Nobel Peace Prize) and the remarkable story of the organisation's evolution is told in Safeena's new book Every Last Girl: A Journey to Educate India's Forgotten Daughters.

Shaping Education Through the Lens of Identity

BY SHAHNAZ AKHTER

Associate Director is based in the Department of Politics and International Studies at the University of Warwick, where she works in widening participation and outreach. Her work focuses on creating meaningful pathways for school-aged students from underrepresented backgrounds to engage with higher education, civic life, and global learning.

On a recent trip to Pakistan, I was struck by two contrasting images. In one, school children moved through the chaos of Rawalpindi's streets, their journey interrupted by traffic, by cows being walked through the road, by the everyday disorder of the city. In another, young children carried heavy bags for street vendors who give them employment; their labour, part of the same urban rhythm but pointing to very different futures.

Access to education, as is often referenced in this magazine, is not universal. I reference Pakistan not only because of these scenes, but because it is closely linked to my heritage and identity. Reflecting on what education means, and how I interact with it, has been central to my academic journey. Coming from a family where my parents were not formally educated, education has provided me with opportunities that were not previously available to them. This experience shaped my decision to work in widening participation in the Department of Politics and International Studies at the University of Warwick.

One of the projects we developed was the Colonial Hangover Project, designed to explore the everyday legacies of colonialism. The project aimed not only to give school-aged students the confidence to speak back to a curriculum that often remains silent on their histories, but also to create opportunities for experiences they might otherwise not have access to because of their backgrounds.

It was through the Colonial Hangover Project that we enabled students to speak at the Colonial Legacies conference held at Coventry Cathedral. Students from across Coventry spoke about their heritage, produced art, and sang gospel songs reflecting their experiences as young people whose families are linked to British history through empire. They spoke about local histories, including the grave of enslaved child Myrtilla, about South Asian heritage, and about the ways colonial hierarchies have shaped relationships between communities, including the persistence of anti-Blackness within some South Asian communities. Over 400 students came together during the day to celebrate their heritage and to speak within the cathedral.

Building on this momentum, the work sparked a wider ambition: to ensure that all schools, particularly those in areas of high deprivation such as Coventry, could access sustained opportunities rather than one-off interventions. This led to a drive to connect schools to the UNESCO ASPnet Schools Network, widening access to global learning while embedding students within an international community committed to peace, cultural understanding, and social justice. For a city shaped by post-industrial decline and uneven educational outcomes, this connection mattered. It enabled students to see their local experiences as part of a wider global story.

Alongside this, we drew on the Hidden Heroes campaign led by Preet Gill and Tom Tugendhat, encouraging students to identify and celebrate their own heroes within their families and communities. This created pathways for young people to speak in the UK Parliament, bringing together local heritage, global networks, and civic voice. Together, these strands reflected a shared commitment: widening participation not only in education, but in belonging and representation.

The Prevention of Gender Based Violence Programme has reached **2,161 educators** in Cape Verde, The Gambia, Ghana, Haiti, Nepal, Sierra Leone and South Africa

The Positive Periods Programme has reached **70,000 women and girls** in Ghana, Haiti, Nepal

Over 500,000 students and educators benefitted from access to **digital classrooms** and **Learning Resource Centres** in The Gambia, Haiti and Nepal

Kreyol Literacy Programme for **200 learners** in Haiti

The Youth Ambassador Programme supported **78 young people** in The Gambia

SEN Awareness Workshops for **152 educators** in Sierra Leone

Counselling Skills for **80 educators** delivered in The Gambia

A further **40 bicycles delivered** to students in rural villages to support them to travel safely to school

What Does It Mean to Be a Boy in Today's World?

BY JOENTY NGOMA
CULTURAL HIGH SCHOOL
SOUTH AFRICA (GRADE 11)

What does it mean to be a boy in today's world?

Is it to be watched, managed, expected to fail before you even begin, or is it to be shaped, trusted, and taught how to carry dignity without dropping it?

That question followed me off the bus at the Dignity Defenders camp.

The air was thick with uncertainty. Boys from different schools stood in long, uneven lines, gripping oversized bags under a sun that felt far too awake for how unsure we all were. One by one, police officers searched through our belongings at the gate. No introductions. No explanations. Just hands in bags, eyes scanning for what might go wrong.

The message landed quietly but firmly: we were not trusted.

At first, it stung. I looked around at the boys beside me, some nervous, some joking too loudly, some silent, and none of them looked like criminals or threats. They looked like boys carrying more than just clothes: expectations, pressure, unfinished childhoods. And yet, here we were, treated as potential problems before we were given the chance to be people.

Still, honesty matters. An all-boys camp does sound like something that could collapse into chaos if left unchecked. In a world already strained by conflict and unrest, caution becomes a reflex. That gate, uncomfortable as it was, became the first lesson: when society loses trust, control rushes in to fill the gap.

What followed, however, was not control, it was education in its most human form.

We were separated from friends, gently but deliberately, nudged into unfamiliar conversations. We slept in shared dormitories; bunk beds stacked like unspoken agreements to coexist. Slowly, the tension softened. The space began to feel less like a holding area and more like a classroom without walls.

One speaker, calm and sharply articulate, spoke about substance abuse. When he revealed that he was a former drug addict, the room shifted; not because of shock, but because of contrast. He did not look broken. He looked rebuilt. His story dismantled the idea that one mistake writes an entire future. It reminded us that education is not about erasing the past but understanding it well enough to move forward.

Later, a boy raised his hand and admitted he used substances to cope with stress at home. There was a brief, fragile silence. Then someone asked, "Why?". That single question cracked something open. Suddenly, drugs were no longer the headline; pressure, pain, and survival were. Education, in that moment, did not judge. It listened.

We learned how to defend dignity, physically, legally, and emotionally. We learned what to do when it is threatened, how to protect ourselves and others, and how to act instead of freeze. These were not academic lessons. They were tools for a world that does not always play fair.

Near the end of the camp, chess appeared, almost casually, disguised as a fun competition. What began as a game slowly unfolded into a lesson. We were encouraged to play, to compete, to enjoy it, but also to think. Each move demanded patience. Every decision carried a consequence that could not be taken back. It was no longer just about winning, but about understanding that rushing the present often sabotages the future. When the competition ended, the strongest players were rewarded with mini chessboards. Receiving my first chessboard felt symbolic, a small object carrying a quiet reminder that life, like chess, rewards those who think beyond their next move.

By the end of the camp, something had shifted. My idea of masculinity no longer revolved around strength or silence, but awareness. Education, I realised, is what teaches us how not to become what the world fears we already are.

In times of unrest, education is not a luxury; it is a stabiliser; a compass. As Steve Sinnott called it, 'the great liberator.' And for a group of boys who were once searched at a gate, it became the reason we walked out trusted, not by authority, but by ourselves.

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Our Students Stories Matter

BY STEFANI TIERI GEORGES

Programme and Strategy Manager Sonje Ayiti, Limonade Haiti.

In the words of Sydney J. Harris, "The whole purpose of education is to turn mirrors into windows."

Few stories illustrate this truth more clearly than that of Ricardinio, a resilient young boy whose life was reshaped by learning, creativity, and compassionate support. Ricardinio is a displaced child living with HIV who once called the streets of Port au Prince home. When armed gangs overtook his neighbourhood, he was forced to flee, leaving behind everything familiar. The trauma of displacement, coupled with the daily realities of managing a chronic illness, left him navigating fear, uncertainty, and isolation.

Everything changed when he gained access to the Resource Learning Centre at Cima Community School of Hope based in Limonade, Haïti. Within its safe walls, Ricardinio found stability, encouragement, and a sense of belonging that had been missing for far too long. The centre became more than a place of academic support; it became a catalyst for his healing. There, he discovered a surprising and transformative passion: drawing. What began as a quiet pastime soon unfolded into a powerful means of expression. Art offered him peace where chaos once lived, and possibility where hope had been fading. With guidance from mentors and access to materials he had never had before, Ricardinio started to see a future shaped not by loss, but by talent and imagination.

Ricardinio learned to sew, paint and a new language, English. He made the outfit he is wearing in the photo below for a recent fashion show.

His journey reminds us that for many young people, particularly those facing profound health or social challenges, that education is far more than curriculum. It is a lifeline to identity, purpose, and renewed hope. When a learning space nurtures the whole child, it turns windows toward new horizons, ensuring that even in the most difficult circumstances, every learner can envision a brighter future.

SONJE AYITI
Remember Haiti

The STEVE SINNOTT FOUNDATION

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The 8 Stages of Domestic Homicide

As part of our ongoing work on the prevention of gender based violence, we were pleased, that in February of this year, Rosie Lewis from the University of Hertfordshire hosted a webinar for the Foundation on Identifying Stalking and The 8 Stages of Domestic Homicide (Homicide Timeline).

The Homicide Timeline developed by Dr. Jane Monckton Smith, is set out below and maps the progression of abusive, coercive, and controlling relationships towards murder.

This framework is designed to help professionals and the public identify high-risk situations and intervene before a homicide occurs, shifting the view from "crimes of passion" to a predictable, planned process.

- **Stage 1: Pre-relationship History** The perpetrator has a history of stalking or abuse, often showing a pattern of controlling behaviour with previous partners.
- **Stage 2: Relationship Development (The "Whirlwind")** The relationship moves very quickly from the initial meeting to becoming serious and intense.
- **Stage 3: Coercive Control** The relationship is dominated by the perpetrator, who controls the victim's life and behaviour.
- **Stage 4: Trigger** An event threatens the perpetrator's control, such as a planned separation, financial issues, or illness.
- **Stage 5: Escalation** Controlling behaviour increases in intensity or frequency, including stalking, threats of suicide, or increased violence.
- **Stage 6: Change in Thinking** The perpetrator changes their mindset, deciding that the situation is unforgivable, often feeling rejected, humiliated, or vengeful.
- **Stage 7: Planning** The perpetrator actively prepares for homicide, such as buying a weapon, stalking the victim, or establishing a timeline.
- **Stage 8: Homicide** The homicide is committed, which may include suicide of the perpetrator.

At the Foundation we believe that building healthy relationships starts with education and at an early age. We have developed resources for Primary and Secondary students which can be accessed here - **www.stevesinnottfoundation.org.uk/resources**

Sonje Ayiti Prevention of Gender Based Violence Programme (GBV)

BY GABIE AUREL

The Steve Sinnott Foundation, as a staunch advocate to combat GBV, support Sonje Ayiti to conduct a series of activities for 3 months in partnership with local mental health Youth Organisation BEHCARE – "Be Human Care": humanizing care. As part of the Integrated Programme for Community Awareness, Prevention, and Support for Victims of Gender-Based Violence , a series of activities are being organised to raise community awareness and strengthen the protection, dignity, wellness, and recovery of affected individuals.

This initiative aims to:

Prevent gender-based violence
Raise community awareness
Provide tailored support to those affected

Awareness campaigns, training sessions, and support groups are implemented in schools, churches, and other local institutions to foster a safer and more respectful environment for all.

Every action counts in fostering strength, hope, and renewal within each person.

We follow up with well-being therapy sessions for all of the women who take part in the programme.

The Importance of Holocaust Education in Schools

BY HEDI ARGENT

Hedi and her parents came to England as refugees from Austria in 1939. Hedi spent most of her working life in Social Work specialising in the adoption of older children and children with disabilities. She has written and edited more than twenty books on the subject and is still working and speaking in schools about the Holocaust and what it means to be a refugee. Hedi has recently written her own story and has donated the royalties from her book sales to the Foundation. She is also an ambassador for the Foundation.

The aim of Holocaust education should never be to introduce young people to the details of the horrors of the Holocaust, but to help them to understand how it could happen: what led up to it, and to recognise how conspiracy theories, fake news and disinformation lead to prejudice. And how prejudice leads to racism – and when racism is allowed to flourish, then there is no limit to what can happen.

I give talks mainly to students in Year 6 who are in the last class of primary school. They are good listeners and generally uninhibited about interacting and asking searching questions. Some talks inevitably have to be on Zoom because of unmanageable distances, but there is an advantage because several schools can participate and I have spoken to as many as 500 children in one session. With a bit of technical luck, I can see them and they can see me as well as PowerPoint illustrations.

I talk about my own experiences as a child and how my cousin and I became the targets of racism and learned how antisemitism, surely the oldest form of racism, felt as well as what it meant. Our stories had very different outcomes: I was lucky and survived. I came to England with my parents. We discuss what refugees may bring with them and what and who they must leave behind and how that may feel. I encourage them to listen to others' stories and to tell their own – we all have stories to tell and they help us to welcome strangers, not to fear them.

My cousin was not lucky. He was one of six million who were not lucky.

The children and I explore together what 6,000,000 means. We stand and I tell them that the late Chief Rabbi of the UK, Lord Jonathan Sachs, once worked out that if we stood for just one minute to commemorate each of the 6,000,000 we would be standing in this place for 11 years and 4 months.

We talk about who can do such things? and I stress that there are no bad people but only people who do bad things. I give examples of kindness: a child who played with me when the other children and teachers in my school shunned me and called me names, a man in the Nazi party, who knew and saved my father when he was arrested, and a doctor who took me to hospital, where Jews were not allowed, when I nearly lost a finger.

Eli Wiesel, an author, who witnessed the worst terrors of the Holocaust as a child in the camps, once said that when we tell our stories, we share the responsibility of being a witness and when enough of us become witnesses we may never let it happen again.

Conflict and Education

BY ANDY HARVEY

National Officer, Educational Institute of Scotland

Small children play contentedly side by side. From time to time, a toy is snatched, a child is pushed, a whine of protest arises. The teacher's voice is steady and encouraging: use your words, not your hands; wait your turn. There will be an emotional meltdown at some point, but soothing adult words settle it quickly. Upstairs a clutch of nine-year-olds hover over a maths problem. One girl insists she knows a quicker way that she learned on social media; her friend is adamant they must stick to the method they were taught. The teacher looks on approvingly. In a nearby room, a child dabs their eyes with a tissue while a teacher speaks softly and leans in close, offering reassurance. Meanwhile, in the hall, the older children are debating government spending on overseas aid. It's getting heated. They speak their mind and defend their views passionately: what they have heard people say, what they have seen online. The teacher intervenes, pointing to the ground rules projected on the wall: think before you speak, your words can hurt others. A pause, and then the debate surges back to life.

Schools are not, and have never been, conflict-free zones: they are shaped by the pressures and tensions that exist in their communities. Besides their schoolbag, children carry the weight of personal trauma, family conflict, poverty and a kaleidoscope of influences, good and bad, through the school gates each day.

Teachers and other school staff are also inscribed in conflict, as they confront the challenges of poor wellbeing, inequality and harmful social attitudes, with increasingly constrained resources. Of course, school education itself is the subject of conflict. Access to free universal education for all children has rarely been simply granted; it has been struggled for over time, and for some children remains precarious or denied altogether.

But the vignettes above reveal the powerful role education can play in a world bedeviled by conflict. Children in the Early Years Setting are learning life's first lessons: to share resources, to respect others' space and belongings, to negotiate and to regulate emotions. The older children might be frustrated by rules that do not suit themselves personally, and others may easily forget them in the heat of the moment, but there is a collective appreciation of why the rules exist, and an understanding that the world extends beyond our own thoughts and interests and that empathy, compassion and respect are key to personal realisation and to group harmony.

None of this happens by accident. It is the result of consistent, structured, professional teaching, reinforced by a nurturing homelife. It depends on adults setting boundaries with children, modelling respect, building emotional literacy, helping children understand consequences of actions and stepping in when things go wrong. What looks effortless from the outside is the outcome of daily effort. It has so much more chance of success when it is well-resourced.

In Scotland, we have a curriculum that aspires for children to be successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors, and responsible citizens. Despite its imperfections in implementation, it is a powerful declaration that education must be about more than academic attainment: it's about nurturing and shaping the people who will have to confront challenges - personal, social, and global - which previous generations could barely have imagined.

In the past year, the Educational Institute of Scotland (EIS) has collaborated with partners to develop tools for teachers to counter the effects on children of online hate. We have also supported a key project to tackle misogynistic attitudes and behaviours which are perpetuated among young people by online content and algorithms. Alongside the development of our Education for Peace policy, EIS members have engaged in the strengthening of Scotland's Learning for Sustainability strategy to enhance the way our children relate to each other and to the natural world around them.

All of this is important work in addressing conflict. However, we should never forget the criticality of the learning and teaching that goes on every day, and the importance of resourcing it properly in our nursery classes, our primary, secondary and special schools. In a world scarred by conflict, this is the quiet and healing work of hope.

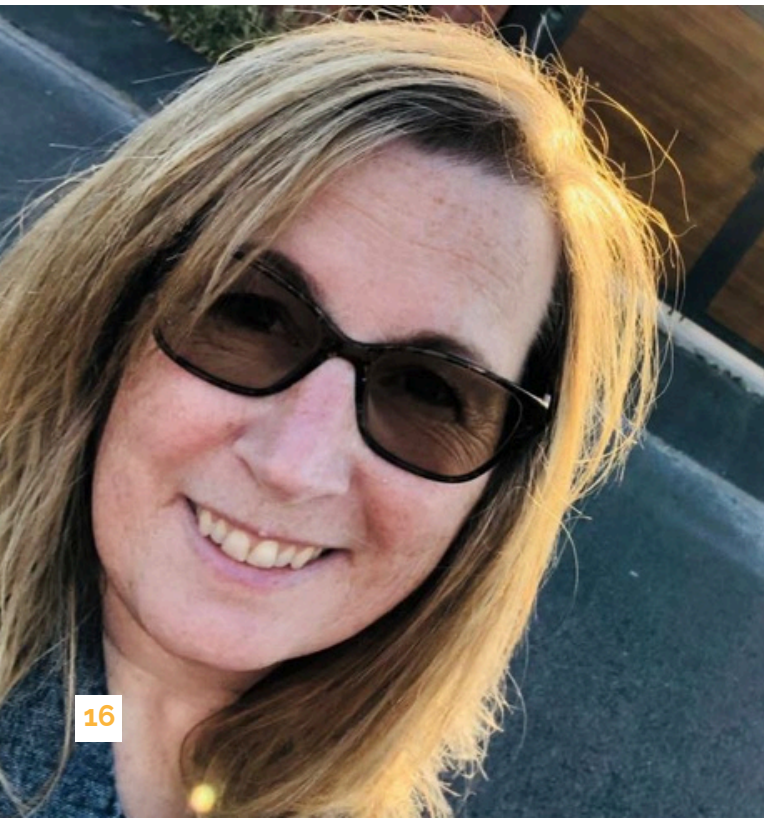
I heard it said today by a friend that “You learn a language best when you use it to speak and write about things that are important to you.”

BY SUSAN PIPER

Susan Piper is currently an ESOL teacher in Oldham, Greater Manchester and has worked in education for over 30 years. She is also a volunteer for the Hands Up Project and is International Solidarity Officer and President of her NEU district. She believes in quality education for all and aims to make her lessons creative and inclusive so that effective language learning can take place.

This summed up to me about why I volunteer for the Hands Up Project. HUP is a charity trust which, through its network of volunteers, connects children around the world with young people in Palestine. By means of online interaction, drama and storytelling activities, it enables the use of creativity and self-expression to promote mutual understanding, personal growth, and the development of English language skills.
I joined HUP in 2020 during COVID. After going to Palestine in 2017, I wanted to get more involved in working with Palestinian children in schools. HUP gave me the opportunity to link up with schools in the West Bank and Gaza.

Every week I'd tell them stories from all over the world, then we'd discuss it, play games and I'd get them to retell it. Sometimes we would work from their coursebook English for Palestine' in mutual team teaching sessions with their teacher.



The simple act of telling a story became much more than entertainment. It became connection, healing, and a bridge to the world beyond their immediate reality to help them improve their language skills, and to give them a platform to speak about their lives in a language that connects them to people everywhere.

I loved it, every week, seeing their smiling faces on the screen and building long lasting friendships with their teachers. I even went to Gaza in 2023 and met some of the kids I'd only seen on Zoom. It was a beautiful experience and something I will never forget.

As hostilities escalated I lost contact with everyone. I thought about where the kids were and what had happened to them.As I watched schools being bombed, universities flattened and people killed in their thousands I thought about where the kids I'd met were and what was happening to them. I kept in contact with many of the teachers I knew and heard daily news of displacement, destruction, hunger and bombing.

Recently I've started to link up again with children in Gaza and it feels wonderful to be back helping them learn after being denied an education for over two years.
Connecting with children in Palestine is more than just words**.** When a child in Palestine confidently tells their story to someone on the other side of the world bridges are built, empathy grows, and the world gains a fuller picture of childhood in contexts far from peace and privilege.

My work with these children is rooted in the belief that education and voice are inseparable. Through storytelling and English language learning, I witness children not just learning new vocabulary, but reclaiming their narratives, believing in their potential, and finding human connection in a world they perceive has abandoned them.
And more than anything, this work reminds us all that children — everywhere — deserve to learn, to speak, and to be heard.

Links to HUP information, books and resources
The Hands Up Project

UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) New York March 2026

A SNAPSHOT BY ANN BEATTY

I joined thousands of women from around the world at the United Nations for the 70th session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW).

The Commission has convened annually for 70 years and traditionally takes place each March at the United Nations Headquarters in New York, bringing together governments, civil society organisations and activists to advance gender equality and the rights of women and girls worldwide.

As a member of Soroptimists International Great Britain and Ireland (*SIGBI*) I joined their delegation, which is a member of the UK Civil Society Women's Alliance (UKCSWA). The Alliance is an umbrella body comprising over 500 organisations and individuals across the UK. It works to promote and protect the rights of women and girls, both in the UK and globally, with a particular focus on the full implementation of international legal instruments to which the UK is a signatory. Collectively, its members represent millions of women and girls and address the full range of issues affecting their lives. The Alliance celebrates its strong relationship with civil society, particularly in championing the voices and experiences of women and girls.

This year's priority themes at CSW were "Access to Justice" and "Women in Decision-Making." Delegates explored the barriers women and girls face in seeking justice, as well as strategies to increase women's leadership and representation at all levels.

There were hundreds of events taking place across New York City and I participated in events daily looking at the impact of education on all women' s and girls' lives. Below is a snapshot of some of my meetings.

I met with the Minister for Women, Baroness Smith and Uma Kumaran U.K. MP, who chaired an event on Education, Entrepreneurship and Justice at the Baha'i International Centre (BIC) where I was part of a working group looking at the barriers young people face when trying to access education and find possible solutions.

I attended a side event, "Knowledge is Power: Education as the First Step to Justice for Women and Girls", at the Permanent Mission of Ireland to the United Nations where I heard from a panel of experts exploring the powerful connection between education and access to justice. This highlighted policy actions, partnerships and evidence-based approaches aligned with the CSW70 priority theme and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); notably SDGs 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions).

I was honoured to attend a CSW parallel event hosted by Isa Buencamino of Wow (*Women of The World Coaching)* and Ivanna Dela Torre, founder of *Herrd*. I was an expert voice on a panel looking at Women's Leadership and Access to Justice. There were three fishbowl panels where the audience joined the table and discussed a topic. One topic was Women's Barriers to Economic Participation.

Education as a First Step to Justice Hosted by the Permanent Mission of Ireland in collaboration with Soroptimist International and Graduate Women International, this event focused on formal, non-formal, and vocational education as a foundation for legal empowerment and access to justice.

I took the opportunity to connect with other women working collectively to improve the lives of all women and girls globally. It was inspiring to listen to many speakers including Antonio Guterres, Secretary General of the United Nations, who encouraged us all to continue to work on the challenges to achieving gender equity for all women and girls.

One of our SSF Ambassadors, Helen Porter, also attended the conference as part of the *SIGBI delegation*. She said, " I was fascinated to learn that for young widows in sub–Saharan Africa their number one concern is that their children remain in school. The poverty brought on by widowhood often prevents this. Keeping their children in school reduces child marriage and the risk of terrorist recruitment. "

"Share your knowledge and remember a small drop of information can cause a ripple and may even cause a wave." Berthe De Vos Neven Director of Advocacy Soroptimist International

Sweeta Azimi and Salamatu Braimah Mahamah

Education for Hope in Volatile, Uncertain, Complex and Ambiguous Times

BY LAURA GRIFFIN

As a new member of the UK National Commission for UNESCO board, Laura has started to re-engage with the work of UNESCO ASPnet in the UK. She is looking forward to supporting the 'Seeds of Hope for a Better Future', project that brings together ASPnet schools in the UK and beyond in collective action for peace, sustainability, intercultural learning and heritage.

https://unesco.org.uk/about/expert-network/non-executive-directors/laura-griffin

'In a single hour vast tracts of shaded woodland became a jumble of torn trees and upturned soil, exposed to the glare of the summer sun. Such land-clearing events are rare, but forests exhibit remarkable resilience in the face of disaster. I'm told that the Chinese character for 'catastrophe' is the same as that which represents the word 'opportunity'. And, the blowdown, while catastrophic, presented opportunities for many species.' (Wall Kimmerer, 2003: 89).

In the context of a volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous world (Stein, 2021) what kinds of education for hope might support children's and young people's critical engagement in local and global issues?

In the spirit of exploring the possibilities of hope further, this short article focuses on the area of global citizenship and sustainability-related education. It will briefly open by sharing commonalities across pedagogical approaches that take up the concept and act of hope more critically, and close by offering reflective questions for educators, with suggestions for further reading.

Perhaps it is a kind of hope that is grounded in the present, in future reimagining(s), in ethical solidarity, and an acknowledgement of our deep entanglement with the living metabolism of planet earth[1] our singular home (UNESCO, 2021); a hope that engages with complex root causes and lived realities of multiple overlapping crises in critically reflexive and contextually relevant ways.

As McCloskey notes, 'Hope can fire our collective imagination and critical consciousness as a mainspring to activism and intervention in the world.' (2025: 3).

Commonalities across critical pedagogical approaches to *hope* include:

- Acknowledging the context of a 'seamless single story of progress, development and human evolution' (Andreotti, V.D.O., 2021b
- Relating to social and ecological justice and the wellbeing of people and planet
- Using participatory, action-orientated and inquiry-based learning processes
- Exploring diverse worldviews and perspectives
- Practising grounding in the present with opening up possibilities for change (relational, embodied, response-able[2])
- Experiencing 'struggle' in different forms (dialogical, self-reflexive, open-ended)
- Engaging individual and collective agency, action and activism
- Looking for lifelong and life-wide learning and unlearning.

Source: Andreotti, V. 2021a & 2021b., Atif, A. (2025)., Bourn, D. 2021., Bryan. A. and Mochizuki,Y., 2024., Giroux, H.A. 2025., Meade, E. 2025.

Whilst engaging in the concept and act of hope more critically reflect upon:

- What kinds of education for hope might you explore further and why?
- How might you provide generative spaces for engaging in diverse worldviews and perspectives?
- In what ways can you facilitate individual and collective agency?
- How might you support learners' practice grounding in the present in order to relate differently?
- In what ways can you support learners in navigating complex root causes and lived realities of local and global issues?

As Chief Ninawa Hini Kui affirms, 'The future depends much less on the images we project ahead than on our capacity to repair relations and build relationships differently in the present.' (Andreotti et al, 2023: 73.

An invitation for further reading:

Transformative Learning for a Sustainable Future.
d'Abreu, C., Belgeonne, C., Bourn, D. and Hatley, J. (2025) 'Transformative Learning for a Sustainable Future'. DERC Research Paper 24. London: UCL Institute of Education.

Hospicing Modernity: facing humanity's wrongs and the implications for social activism.
Machado de Oliveira Andreotti, V. (2021a) 'Hospicing Modernity: facing humanity's wrongs and the implications for social activism', London: Penguin Random House.

Development Education and Hope.
McCloskey, S. (2025). (ed) 'Development Education and Hope'. 'Policy and Practice: A Development Education Review', Vol. 41, Autumn. Centre for Global Education, Belfast.

Link to and download the full reference list here: **LINK**

1 See 'Co-sensing with Radical Tenderness', in Machado de Oliveira Andreotti. 2021a
2 See 'Crossing Borders' in 2 Depth Education "Depth Education and the Possibility of GCE Otherwise, 2021b.

SEEDS OF HOPE

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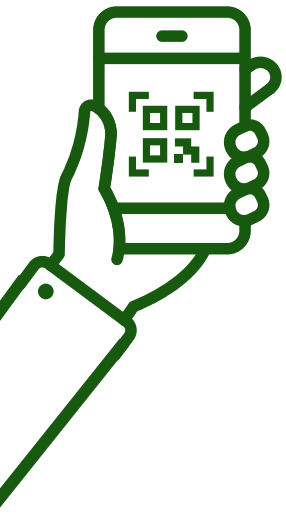

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ENTRY FORM

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2025 AWARD SHOW

Our aim is for young people around the world to work on transformative arts and culture for peace projects, which convey the importance of living more peacefully and sustainably with nature, ourselves, and our planet.

The initiative will demonstrate that peace can prove to be stronger than conflict and division and illustrate that form acorns mighty oak trees do grow. Individual creative elements can be shared and combined to produce creative group outcomes by young global citizens, which can benefit wider communities.

Give voice to our young people – the future belongs to them and their ideas about how we can achieve the ASPnet Goals matter and can support the international community effectively by creating opportunities from the challenges which lie ahead.

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.
www.stevesinnottfoundation.org.uk/fundraise

You can write a FREE Will
www.octopuslegacy.com/will/start/welcome

You could become a **Friend of the Foundation** by setting up a monthly donation.
www.stevesinnottfoundation.org.uk/donate

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Thank you to all who have donated time,
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