Essential Learning

for everyone

IN THESE ISLANDS ~ Development ~ Human Rights ~ Education ~

civil society, world citizenship and the role of education

Acknowledgements

Essential learning for everyone

Raising the debate about civil society, world citizenship and the role of education

This document has been published as part of the work of the **Development Education Commission.**

Essential Learning challenges short term perspectives and the effects of fragmentation, and invites you to look afresh at the potential for core curriculum and common agendas.

It builds on the surveys carried out for the Commission in Scotland, Wales, England and Ireland [north and south]. The surveys, other documents, and the experience of the Commission members lead to considerable debate about the challenges for education posed by contemporary civil society and world citizenship.

Essential Learning seeks to involve you in that debate.

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Contributions from all members of the Commission but in particular:
Ian Barr, Tim Brighouse, Lalage Bown, Catherine Coxhead and John Huckle.

The Development Education Commission was set up by DEC [Birmingham] and 80:20 [Ireland] in partnership with the Human Rights Centre, University of Essex.

The Commission is made up of members from Scotland, Wales, England and Ireland [north and south], with a wide range of experiences pertinent to current debates about development education and human rights education.

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Supported by:

Alison Jolly - *Human Rights Centre, University of Essex, England, [1996-1997].*

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The members of the Commission are involved in their personal capacities.

The Development Education Commission

The Development Education Commission has been the focus for a creative process involving partners in Scotland, Wales, England and Ireland [north and south]. Key Commission meetings have been held in Dublin, Glasgow, Cardiff, Belfast and Birmingham. In each case those meetings also took the opportunity to involve others in dialogue about the particular situation in each jurisdiction.

For further information see:

❑ The **Consultative Document on Core Issues** [1998]. This featured a review of development education and human rights education in each of the jurisdictions and key points that the Commission sought feedback on.

❑ A document focusing on **Human Rights and Human Rights Education** [1999] which also highlights key issues; in particular the need for human rights to become more a part of our everyday living.

❑ The final r**eport of the Commission** [1999] which is in itself designed to stimulate further consultation.

In addition, the Commission are publishing two documents to explore the concepts of development and of human rights:

What is development? [1999]
What are human rights? [2000].

The project process has been supported by:

❑ **Cyfanfyd in Wales**

❑ **Development Education Association**

❑ **The Human Rights Centre, University of Essex**

❑ **IDEAS [International Development Education Association, Scotland]**

❑ **NCDE [National Committee for Development Education], Ireland**

❑ **The Network of Curriculum Units in Development Education, Ireland**

Introduction

Essential Learning shares some of the debates the Development Education Commission had about 'curriculum'. In the process of such debates it became increasingly clear that these 'curriculum' issues are about schools, but also that they are about youth and community, higher education, adult education, civil society organisations ... that they are for everyone.

The first two sections set the scene for the proposals. They take stock of major trends and the global context. Much has been achieved in development education and human rights education which provides a foundation on which to build. There is also a need for fresh thinking about the contemporary challenges facing education and the contribution that this work has to make. In this context the Commission observed a convergence of ideas and key questions generated from different sources and in each of the jurisdictions. It was also observed that many concerns with a local focus are recognising the impact of international dimensions and vice versa. For example, the emphasis Oxfam has recently given to seeing its work in the context of Citizenship. Another example is the British Government's endorsement of the UN 2015 targets in the DfID [Department for International Development] White Paper and the recognition in that, that development awareness is part of the dynamic of potential change, rather than a form of information giving/PR.

The concept of dispositions, their nature and role in the dynamic of change, emerged as a key idea in many of our debates. The discussion document *The Heart of the Matter*, produced by the Scottish Consultative Council on the Curriculum, provided the initial stimulus for these debates. As the work of the Commission evolved against the backdrop of changes in government in both islands, individual members were very involved in new initiatives focusing on devolution, reconciliation, multi-ethnic society, the curriculum, international development, citizenship, human rights legislation etc. This collective experience provided further focus for our interest in dispositions and for our concerns about the effects of fragmentation, some of which are described in section 2.

In the preface, Mary Robinson reminds us of the inter-dependence of issues highlighting, for example, the role of human rights in work on sustainable development, citizenship and peace. Understanding such inter-relationships are central, we would argue, to building a popular disposition to change. This idea underpins our proposals.

Firstly, proposals [in section 3] focus on the construction of learning opportunities and an appropriate 'curriculum'. To stimulate this debate we offer a core framework [pages 22/23] and draft proposals for each of the key elements: Dispositions, Ideas, Capabilities and Experiences [pages 24-27].

Secondly, proposals [in section 4] address the contribution that different areas of concern have made and the considerable work undertaken in education relating to development, human rights, sustainable development, peace, gender, culture and race. We have adopted the collective term 'adjectival educations' to describe this work [see page 19 and pages 32-35]. However, we highlight the need for a clearer vision of the common agenda between these educations, and the need to make the collective whole more accessible to practitioners and to all citizens. There is a need for creative work to move away from seeing these as fields competing with each other, or with the traditional subjects, for the 'curriculum'.

Finally, [in section 5] it is argued that there is a need for more thinking about strategic approaches. We advocate what we have described as a 'dispositions approach' and highlight opportunities for taking this debate further.

Essential learning for everyone

Raising the debate about civil society, world citizenship and the role of education

CONTENTS

This document seeks your involvement in responding to proposals from the Development Education Commission. [See page 41]

- *What are the opportunities for building common agendas?*
- *What do you think about a 'dispositions approach'?*
- *How should we generate more creative debate about strategies?*

Preface

I very much welcome this opportunity to address the many educators of Great Britain and Ireland through this valuable document, which aims to identify a core educational curriculum on social justice and each person's individual role in pursuing it.

As United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, I seek to promote a rights-based approach to global problems and issues. Human rights belong to each individual and stem, as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states, from the inherent "dignity and worth of the human person", the "foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world".

At the heart of the notions of sustainable development, global citizenship and peace we find human rights. Isn't sustainable development a comprehensive process directed towards the full realisation of all human rights and fundamental freedoms? Is not global citizenship about being a member of the universal community of human beings, all endowed with common rights? Is it not true that, without respect for human rights, peace cannot be achieved?

We must make it clear that by 'human rights', we mean the full set of guarantees which form the body of international human rights law; the whole spectrum of civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights, and the right to development. "All human rights are universal, indivisible, interdependent and inter-related. The international community must treat human rights globally in a fair manner, on the same footing, and with the same emphasis", as all countries stated during the World Conference on Human Rights in 1993.

I profoundly believe in the language of human rights, an idiom for all peoples. Universal human rights directly empower individuals and communities; they provide a unifying set of standards - a common normative system - for setting objectives, assessing possible actions and evaluating their impact. I would like to encourage all educators to use this forceful language.

By promoting human rights, we can help prevent conflicts based on poverty, discrimination and exclusion like those that continue to plague humanity and destroy decades of development efforts. By promoting human rights, we are investing in a just and humane future in which all persons will be valued and respected.

Relevant provisions of international instruments provide a definition of human rights education as training, dissemination and information efforts aimed at the building of a universal culture of human rights through the imparting of knowledge and skills and the moulding of attitudes. This entails the strengthening of respect of human rights and fundamental freedoms; the full development of the human personality and the sense of its dignity; the promotion of understanding, tolerance, gender equality and friendship among all nations, indigenous peoples and racial, national, ethnic, religious and linguistic groups; the enabling of all persons to participate effectively in a free society; and the furtherance of the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.

Human rights education is not an end in itself but it can constitute a powerful tool to greater ends. The fundamental role of human rights education is to empower individuals to defend their own rights and those of others.

Human rights education means learners and educators working together to translate the human rights language into knowledge, skills and behaviours. It means developing an understanding of the responsibility each individual has in making those rights a reality at the local, national and international levels. This is what global citizenship and global responsibility are about.

The United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education [1995-2004] provides us with a specific common framework in which governments, international organisations, non-governmental organisations, professional associations, all sectors of civil society and individuals can establish partnerships and concentrate efforts. The Plan of Action for the Decade, which I co-ordinate as High Commissioner, focuses in particular on stimulating and supporting national and local initiatives and sets out detailed objectives for the international community.

Last year, the Director-General of UNESCO and I wrote to all Heads of Government to encourage them to adopt comprehensive, effective and sustainable national plans of action for human rights education, in accordance with the *UN Guidelines for National Plans of Action for Human Rights Education* [UN document A/52/469/Add.1]. National plans should not be formulated in a *vacuum*; they should incorporate networks, experiences and programmes already in place, as exemplified by this document. Since both governmental and non-governmental institutions and organisations have important roles to play in ensuring that human rights are respected, national strategies should be developed and implemented by a creative mixture of such entities.

The study contained in the present document constitutes a valuable effort to establish a common ground for the various educational initiatives undertaken in Britain and Ireland. Further steps could include the strengthening of partnerships within the non-governmental sector and between government and civil society in order to take full advantage of existing resources and avoid duplication, and the development of coherent national and local strategies to address key priority areas.

The study provides one way for individuals and institutions to participate actively in achieving the objectives of the Decade. Human rights education is crucial to our greatest aspiration: the realisation of *all* human rights for all. Reaching this goal is our common and individual responsibility, and indeed our common and individual privilege. Success in this endeavour will depend entirely on the contribution each and every one of us will be willing to make.

Mary Robinson

United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

> *Just half a century ago, over 50 nations in Africa and Asia were ruled from London, Paris, Lisbon, Brussels or the Hague. Half a century ago, the National Party was about to introduce formal apartheid in South Africa. Half a century ago, communism ... was establishing itself across Europe and beginning its advance into many areas of the developing world. Half a century ago, women in France and Japan did not have the right to vote. And half a century ago, across much of the United States, a black person could neither vote, nor serve on a jury, nor occupy a bus seat if a white person was standing ... 50 years ago, only a small proportion of the world's people had a voice or a vote in the selection of those who governed them; today, the proportion has risen to between half and three quarters.*
>
> UNICEF [1995] **The State of the World's Children**

> *Many people have benefited from the rapid pace of social and economic change of recent years – but millions of others have not. Although no set of statistics can fully express the extent of contemporary human suffering, the following figures are disturbing enough:*
>
> ◊ *nearly one third of the population in developing countries lives in absolute poverty;*
>
> ◊ *malnutrition is holding back the physical and mental development of one child in three in the developing world;*
>
> ◊ *approximately 1.3 billion people in the developing world are denied access to even minimally adequate amounts of drinking water;*
>
> ◊ *in 1992, six million children under five years of age died of pneumonia or diarrhoea;*
>
> ◊ *there are now 23 million people classified as refugees, or living in refugee-like conditions;*
>
> ◊ *over the past decade, 80-90 million people were displaced by programmes to improve infrastructure [dams, roads, ports and so forth];*
>
> ◊ *since the second world war, 23 million people have been killed in the developing world as a result of war;*
>
> ◊ *the number of years that girls in developing countries spend at school is approximately half that of boys.*
>
> United Nations Research Institute for Social Development [1995] **States of Disarray**

... two contrasting views?

Setting the scene 1

The images projected in these two quotations, and the realities which underpin them, illustrate vividly the contradictory character of much recent international development. On one side are the life enhancing improvements which have literally transformed the daily lives and life chances of millions of people throughout the world. In human terms, these transformations are expressed in reduced infant mortality rates, reduced adult illiteracy, reduced absolute poverty, greatly improved life expectancy, increased enrolment in schools and improvement in basic health. Within the past thirty years, military dictatorships have declined and many countries have begun the transition towards democracy. Many of the most fundamental rights and freedoms, which citizens have a right to demand, have become enshrined in international conventions and agreements which increasing numbers of governments are signing up to. Countries throughout the world, especially some of the poorest states, have witnessed the strengthening of civil society.

The contrasting reality is equally clear – the hundreds of millions of people experiencing absolute poverty, the huge numbers of those [especially women] who remain constricted by illiteracy, the over 800 million people who regularly experience hunger, the growing number of refugees and, most fundamental of all, the growing gap between the world's rich and poor.   Gross violations of human rights abound, highlighted all the more by international agreements and the fact that governments have accepted them. The gap between the aspiration of all rights for all peoples and the reality on the ground remains huge. In the countries of Europe and here, in these islands, the twin realities of poverty and long-term unemployment have fostered an alienation which precludes democratic participation and mobilisation. This alienation especially affects increasing numbers of the young who feel little ownership of civil society.

> *The implications of globalisation have, therefore, been contradictory – on the one hand, disturbing signs of national disintegration, and on the other, new forms of international co-operation. Since the processes of globalisation are likely to intensify in the years ahead – making people's life chances even more interdependent – the world will have to choose which trends should predominate. The question is not whether there will be a global community, but what kind of global community it should be.*
>
> The United Nations Research Institute for Social Development captured this challenge in its report [1995] **States of Disarray: The social effects of globalisation**

At a time when the world is rapidly changing in terms of technology and communications, these conflicting realities threaten to foster a sense of powerlessness and confusion – people throughout the world are finding it increasingly difficult to identify opportunities to influence change.   This confusion is further aided by the fact that global communications are, despite their many advantages, increasing the focus of power ... in the richest states and in transnational companies.

Such issues present many challenges to education, especially here in Western Europe.

What should the role of education be in such circumstances?

How is education matching up to the challenges of world citizenship?

What is the role of civil society in learning about global democracy?

How does such an agenda relate to traditional concerns and approaches of life-long education?

What is happening in our homes, schools and communities and how are we measuring progress towards democracy, sustainability and equality for all?

These difficult questions lie at the heart of the work that is now needed. In the view of the Commission, education for world democracy, for human rights and for sustainable human development is no longer an option. Education has a central role to play, especially if we are to build a widespread understanding and ownership of this agenda.

Stated simply, we are presented with a profound challenge. If there is now an obvious and increasingly urgent need for greater co-operation and agreement at a global level, then there is also an imperative to develop and describe a 'new story' of the human condition and of where we are going in the future. Education around such a new story is not simply about what we teach but also about how and whom we teach.

Universal Declaration of Human Rights [1948 – preamble]

... every individual and every organ of society shall strive by teaching and education to promote respect for these rights and freedoms.

The challenges of education for world citizenship and democracy are not simply limited to thinking about the implications for schools. They equally have implications for planning adult education, for work in the community and for a wide range of areas of study in higher education.

Nor can these challenges, which have implications for society at large, be left to the education system; it has a role, maybe a pivotal role, but it can not itself undertake the project to build civil society. Evidence for support to the underlying principles and values at a policy level can be found in the fact that governments [and local authorities] have signed up to the major international conventions and instruments. This is not done cynically, but it is clear that insufficient attempts are made to translate these commitments into action within civil society.

World citizens ...

have the right to:

- *a secure life*

- *equitable treatment*

- *an opportunity to earn a fair living and provide for their own welfare*

- *the definition and preservation of their differences through peaceful means*

- *participation in governance at all levels*

- *free and fair petition for redress of gross injustices*

- *equal access to information*

- *equal access to the global commons*

share a responsibility to:

- *contribute to the common good*

- *consider the impact of actions on the security and welfare of others*

- *promote equity, including gender equity*

- *protect the interests of future generations by pursuing sustainable development and safeguarding the global commons*

- *preserve humanity's cultural and intellectual heritage*

- *be active participants in governance*

- *work to eliminate corruption*

Our Global Neighbourhood
Commission on Global Governance

> "
> Our young people must develop the competence, confidence and contacts which will secure their place and influence in an increasingly global society.
>
> The New Millennium demands that we develop international understanding, heighten awareness of Europe and the wider world, and strengthen the concept of world citizenship in our schools and colleges.
> "
>
> **Tony Blair, British Prime Minister [1998]**

> "
> The South's vision must also embrace a notion of what development ultimately signifies. In our view, development is a process which enables human beings to realise their potential, build self-confidence, and lead lives of dignity and fulfilment. It is a process which frees people from the fear of want and exploitation. It is a movement away from political, economic, or social oppression. Through development, political independence acquires its true significance. And it is a process of growth, a movement essentially springing from within the society that is developing.
> "
>
> from **The Challenge to the South: The Report of the South Commission** [1990] OUP

> "
> ... ecological breakdown and social inequality are intrinsically related to the dominant development paradigm which puts man against and above nature and women.
> "
>
> Vandana Shiva [1997] **Women in Nature, The Women, Gender and Development Reader**, Zed

> "
> In the 21st century military might will not guarantee us the influence ... to be real global players we will need the moral authority of acting and being seen to act as good international citizens ... wherever we are.
> "
>
> Mark Leonard, Foreign Policy Unit [BBC Radio 4]

What is your reaction to these ideas?

What does it tell you about your dispositions?

A disposition to change 2

The question *What is the heart of the matter?* generated much debate at Commission meetings. Dispositions became a key idea. This section shares some of those debates in order to provide a context for the proposals we make in sections 3, 4 and 5.

At the Commission meetings there was much consensus about the nature of the issues, but less about how to effectively stimulate the debate needed among policy makers and in civil society at large. The Commission started its work at a time when such debates almost seemed impossible, but the implications of government changes in both islands, the subsequent devolution process in Scotland and Wales, and the Good Friday Agreement [1998], all contributed to a change of climate. Each of the Commission members were significantly involved in new initiatives focusing on devolution, reconciliation, multi-ethnic society, the curriculum, international development, sustainable development, citizenship, human rights legislation, etc.

These initiatives brought new levels of information to our debates, and optimism about a more outward looking 'climate'. However, they also helped to clarify the need for work on longer term perspectives and popular engagement in the agenda.

To engage with the issues we had to work on our own understandings of the nature of contemporary social and environmental change; the structures and processes that could move us to a more just and sustainable world; and the potential contribution the many 'adjectival educations' could make to such transition. It required us to reflect on the role of education in promoting democracy, civil society and world citizenship which also led us to consider dispositions ... and the possible nature of a popular disposition to change.

> "
> As one member put it, we should be thinking in terms of
>
> ... a world of processes and contradictions rather than a world of objects and certainties ... a dynamic world to be created rather than a static world to be accepted.
> "
>
> John Huckle

Global literacy is not only about reading, interpreting and understanding the world. It is about 'writing' the world and about the dynamic of change. This requires critical citizenship informed by critical ideas. It requires skills in critical thinking.

It also requires an understanding of the global context of our local lives. An essential element is the need to build a popular awareness of the underlying commonality of the human experience anywhere in the world, North and South, East and West. This awareness of commonality would provide a better basis for understanding the many differences in that human experience, and in particular the nature of unjust divides and increasing inequalities.

Policymakers and practitioners alike are under much everyday pressure. There is a need to create opportunities to take time out and reflect on the issues and our own understandings, in the way that the Commission was able to. This is vital if we are going to move beyond initial assumptions about citizenship as the basis for new policy.

The evidence from various consultations set up by the Commission led to several debates about the nature of dispositions and their implications for the dynamic of both policy and learning strategies. We share our reflections about the concept ... and a list of dispositions which, with hindsight, contributed to the setting up of the Development Education Commission itself.

Dispositions

A disposition can be understood as 'an inclination or a tendency to see, experience, feel, think and react to the world, events, our environment and the people in it in particular ways'. A disposition is a way of being, of thinking and feeling. A disposition is a way of *being* that is at the heart of things, not just a way of behaving.

There could be a host of reasons for behaving in a particular way that might have nothing to do with what one may be actually disposed to think or feel, and it may well be that nothing can be deduced about a real disposition from the way an individual behaves. For example, it would be possible to be entirely ill-disposed to the idea of respect and caring for others, yet behave in ways that mis-represent the actual disposition held. This might be because it is advantageous in a particular context to do so, because of fear of the reactions of others, or because one is outnumbered, or because in a particular context it is socially unacceptable to do so.

Formal assessment procedures and interviews are good examples of situations where people will, for obvious reasons, strike attitudes that are at odds with their dispositions. Dispositions, therefore, are associated with *authenticity*, with genuine belief in, and engagement with, principles such as those the Development Education Commission has listed.

On the learning of dispositions: dispositions are less likely to be acquired through didactic processes than they are through modelling. If teachers want young people to have a robust disposition to respect and care for others, they might consider making their own such disposition more visible. Nevertheless, as rational beings, we should test our dispositions against our understanding of reality. Hence, there is a need for appropriate knowledge and understanding and arguments to support and validate our dispositions.

Dispositions

that contributed to setting up
the Development Education Commission

○ that there is widespread interest and engagement in an education response to the issues of justice, development and equality

○ that young people and those who work with them [eg teachers, youth and community workers] are positively disposed to opportunities to get involved in the challenges

○ that there are people in key positions willing to engage in, and already actively concerned about, the issues ... and recognise the need for extending participation and ownership of points for action

○ that there is added value in bringing together educators from both human rights and development education

○ that there is much to be gained by approaching the task comparatively, learning from each other [in our case from the different jurisdictions in "these islands"]

○ that there is a need to go beyond modern assumptions and ways of working ... and provide opportunities to think creatively about strategy

○ that creativity and impact will be maximised by sharing ideas and experiences from different fields [eg youth, adult education, schools, higher education, research]

○ **that change is possible**

How do we create a disposition to change?

The need to counter fragmentation

The Commission discussed the implications of fragmentation within networks, between the 'adjectival educations' and within institutions. There is a need to counter fragmentation. This, in turn, poses particular challenges to schools.

At the heart of the history of curriculum in these islands, is a model based on ideas, assumptions and structures in higher education. The subjects in schools and what is taught about them reflect that tradition; a tradition which also tends to assume that the key issue about learning is knowledge, and therefore the curriculum is about lists of contents to 'cover'. This also has wider implications for those who are included ... and those excluded.

The university terrain has massively expanded with whole new areas of knowledge and new understandings. There are also new ideas and understanding about the dynamic of learning itself. This expanded terrain no longer connects with the way schools structure subjects and the curriculum or popular assumptions about learning. Until the 1980s there was a move away from those boundaries. The move towards cross curricular thinking and planning was greater in some of the jurisdictions in these islands than others. In Northern Ireland for example, the National Curriculum, unlike in England and Wales, started with work on cross curricular themes before considering subjects.

The political drive for a National Curriculum in England and Wales was entangled with assumptions about the value of traditional divides. There have also been new questions about school education, for example, about whether or not it meets the educational needs of some, at the expense of others. Whether girls [or in other cases boys], or groups from ethnic minorities for example, are disadvantaged by the system. There are many other questions in the context of a growing concern from a variety of perspectives about social values ... and about change.

Change and potential change in schools also have to be seen in a context of change itself. A core educational need is our individual and collective ability to respond to the speed of change ... change in knowledge, change in what is possible and change in the nature of the decisions [individually and collectively] we have to make. There is a need for policy makers and politicians to be more open about the creativity needed; more open about the complexity of this situation, about the uncertainty and about the need to explore different areas of progress. And we need to be more open about related social, economic and political confusion.

This is not counter to the priorities of literacy, numeracy or the raising of standards but it does raise questions about the context in which these issues are important. It raises questions about the need to explore core values and to clarify processes about what particular fields [whether they be traditional subjects or the 'adjectival educations'] contribute to these values.

The argument is also one about effective learning. The issues of dignity, self esteem, social consciousness and identity have an integral role ... indeed they could be seen as the keystone ...
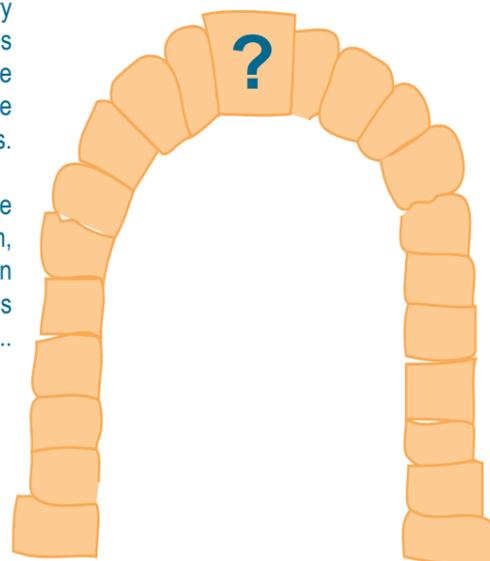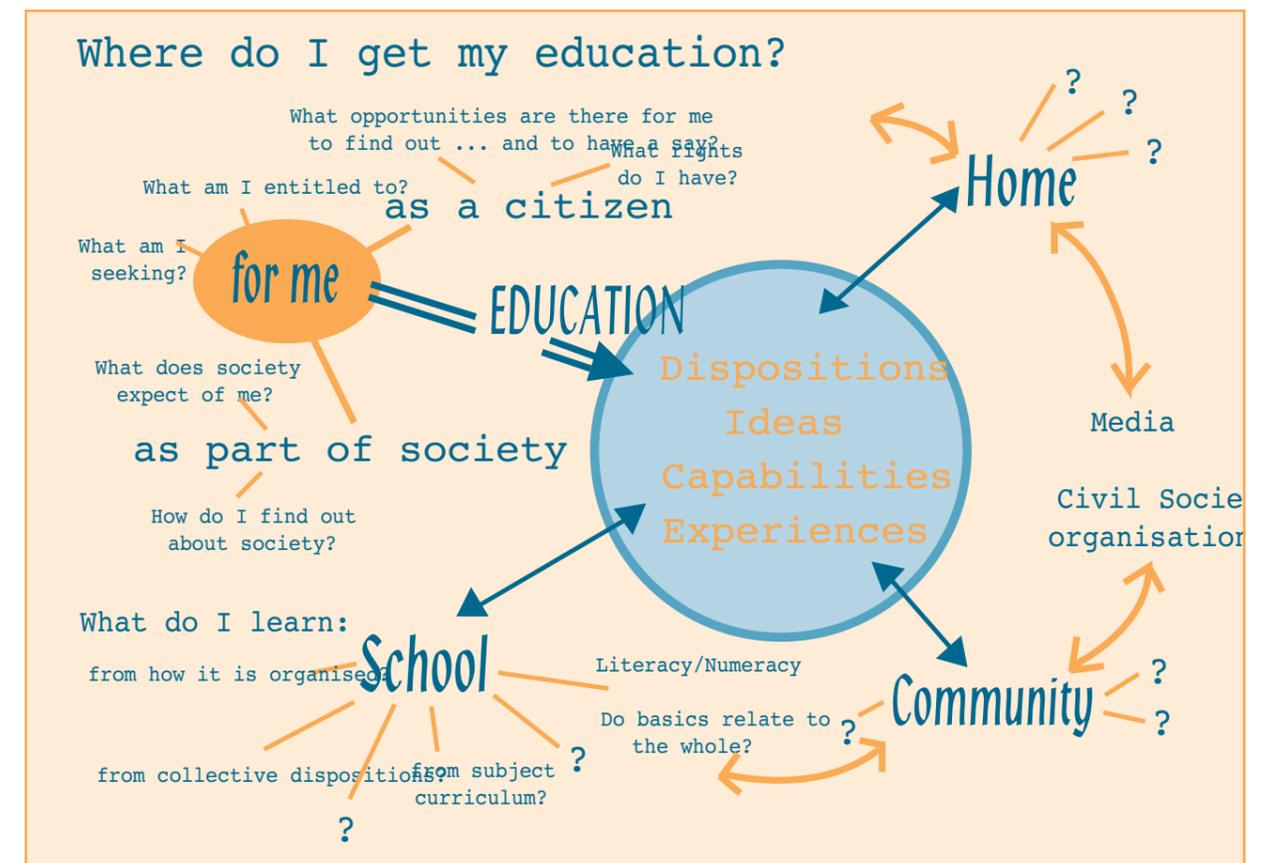
Analysis of curriculum has tended to be by subject and in terms of information and knowledge gained, skills acquired, concepts understood and attitudes and values encouraged. Most subject planners have been over-protective about the time needed and the unique nature of knowledge, skills and concepts involved for 'their' subject. They have been collegiate when it comes to 'values', preferring to see others, or the institution as a whole, dealing with such matters.

Learning, except for the transferring of information, usually involves stories/experiences followed by questions, either self-induced or prompted by others, and finally discussion and reflection. Citizenship, especially with its concern about values and attitudes, is particularly suitable to being learned through experience as well as story. Indeed, it is hard to see how the habits of citizenship can be acquired without taking part in a range of experiences which are likely to encourage the acquisition of essential habits of citizenship. Such experiences might profitably be set out in an explicit agreement or 'understanding' engaging learners, and in the case of young people, their parents.

Experience is therefore pivotal to the framework proposed. However, in addition to planning experiences we need to pay attention to other 'experiences of citizenship'; in particular those to do with the design and structure of institutions. What, for example, is the collective disposition of a school to the students or pupils, to parents ... or to teachers for that matter? What seems a simple proposition from the Crick Report has far reaching implications ...

> "
> *No child should leave primary school without some knowledge of the nature and value of democratic institutions.*
>
> Sir Bernard Crick, Chair of Government Initiative on Citizenship in England and Wales
> "

Where do I get my education?

What opportunities are there for me to find out ... and to have a say?

What am I entitled to?

What rights do I have?

as a citizen

What am I seeking?

for me

EDUCATION

What does society expect of me?

as part of society

How do I find out about society?

What do I learn:

from how it is organised

School

Literacy/Numeracy

Do basics relate to the whole?

from collective dispositions

from subject curriculum?

Dispositions
Ideas
Capabilities
Experiences

Home

Media

Civil Society organisations

Community

Our discussion drew on documentation and current debate in each of the jurisdictions. The Scottish Consultative Council document *The heart of the matter* provided a starting point. There was much interest in Civic, Social and Political Education [CSPE] introduced by the Irish Government.

"

At its core, the Programme aims to prepare students for active participatory citizenship. This is achieved through comprehensive exploration of the civic, social and political dimensions of their lives at a time when pupils are developing from dependent children into independent young adults. It should produce knowledgeable pupils who can explore, analyse and evaluate, who are skilled and practiced in moral and critical appraisal, and capable of making decisions and judgements through a reflective citizenship, based on human rights and social responsibilities.

"

In the introduction to *Sharing Our World*, which reports on a project in Northern Ireland, Catherine Coxhead, Chief Executive of the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment writes:

"

Meeting the challenge of development education does not require additions to the curriculum since much of the content is already there. It does require a shift in emphasis towards the values message which should underpin much of children's learning – a sense of obligation towards others, respect for the cultures and lifestyles of all people and a willingness to challenge inequality, racism, bias and ethnocentrism.

"

Case study from UNICEF *The State of the World's Children*, reminded us of the need for similar debates elsewhere. It also challenged us about assumptions that we can all too easily make about the relevance of school ...
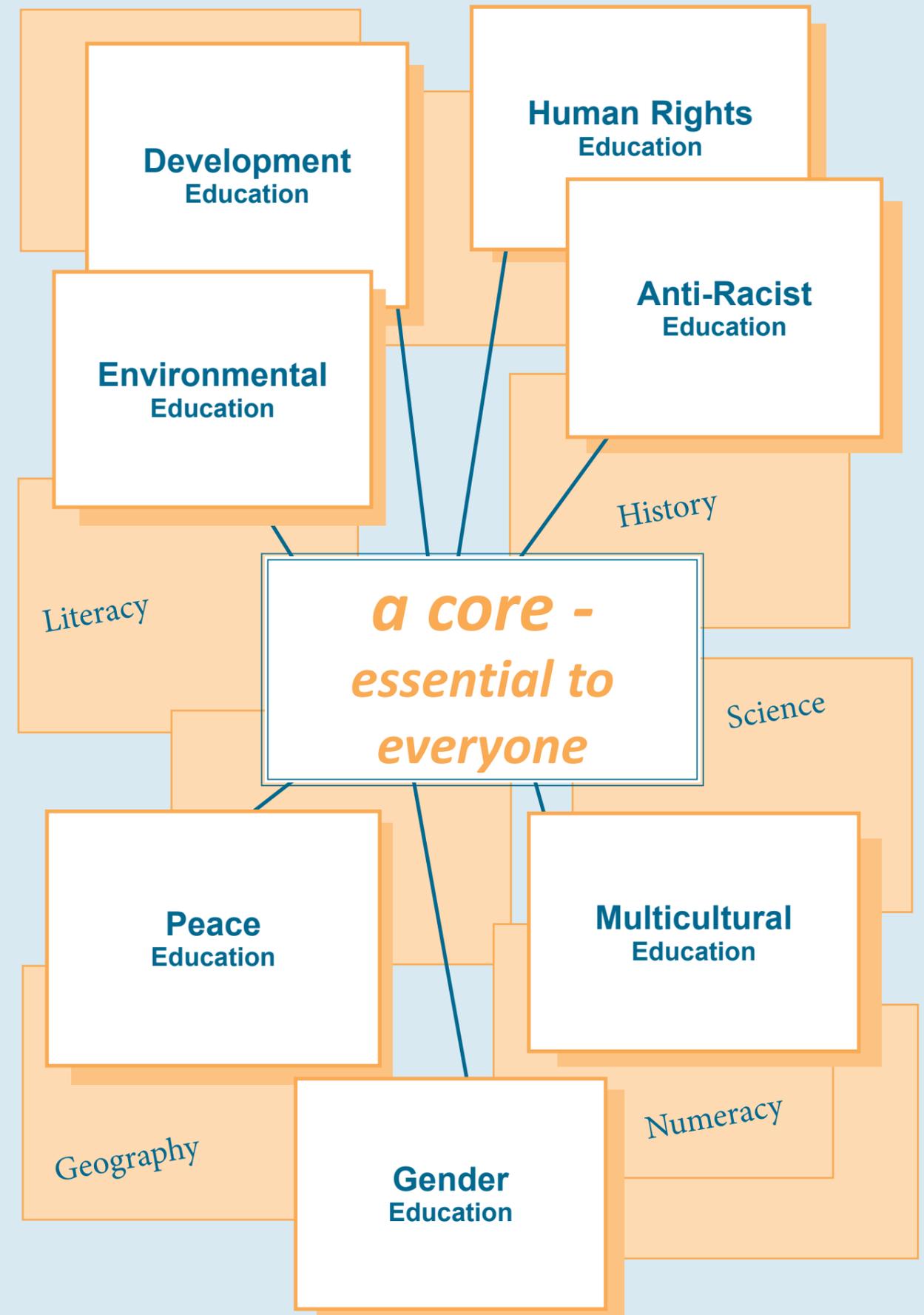
"

Taslima, age 13, began working in a garment factory when she was 9 years old. Now she would like very much to go to school to study Bangla, maths and English. If school expenses were provided, she says, it would be possible to attend classes in the morning and work in the afternoon.

The challenge for community organisations is to make schooling economically viable, attractive and relevant for working children and their families. Children also need to be taught general life skills and about their own rights, so that they understand child labour laws and what they mean in practice. "In school they do not teach us about our rights", says Lakshmi, from Kolkere in southern India. "We cannot wait until later to learn about them. To protect ourselves, we need that information right now."

"

The chart [opposite] highlights the need for a process of debate to engage those representing different interests and perspectives. It is an introduction to the next two sections which make the case for building a common agenda.

The "adjectival educations"

Development Education

Human Rights Education

Anti-Racist Education

Environmental Education

History

Literacy

a core - essential to everyone

Science

Peace Education

Multicultural Education

Geography

Numeracy

Gender Education

> " We must not dramatise the incompatibility of values - there is a great deal of broad agreement among people in different societies over long stretches of time about what is right and wrong, good and evil ... However, even when consensus is achieved there will be tensions. Principles will conflict and the reconciliation of these presents us with considerable challenges. Perhaps the best that can be done as a general rule is to maintain a precarious equilibrium that will prevent the occurrence of desperate situations, of intolerable choices - that is the first requirement for a decent society; one that we can always strive for, in the light of the limited range of our knowledge, and even of our imperfect understanding of individuals and societies. A certain humility in these matters is very necessary. "
>
> Isaiah Berlin **The Crooked Timber of Humanity**

> " The global system will change during the next forty years, because it will be physically forced to change. But if humanity waits until it is physically compelled to change, its options will be few indeed. None of them will be attractive. If it changes before it has to change, while it can still choose to change, it will not avoid suffering and crises, but it can be drawn through them by a realistic hope for a better world. "
>
> Herman E. Daly and John B. Cobb [1990] **For the Common Good;** *Redirecting the Economy towards Community, the Environment and a Sustainable Future*, London, Green Print

> " The exploration of development education across the two islands has been ambitious, exciting and ultimately, extremely rewarding. As a teacher involved in the Development Education Commission, I believe that the challenge for the teaching profession is to liberate itself from the perceived constraints of the curriculum, to reflect upon and genuinely debate the fundamental and essential purpose of education. As teachers we must continue to look at effective and coherent ways in which we can equip learners for informed, constructive and participatory citizenship. This is a daunting challenge but if we are dismissive of it, I feel we are doing a great disservice to the students in our care. "
>
> **Rita Chowdhury,** Inspector for Raising Achievement, Staffordshire

... the context for a framework?

Building a framework 3
Education for world citizenship & democracy

To enable wider debate the Commission constructed a core framework. It aims:

- ❑ to build on core **dispositions** and **values** which provide a basis for clarifying underlying principles ... and responding to change.

- ❑ to engage **ideas** and **understandings** and build **capabilities** and **skills** which are part of lifelong learning.

- ❑ to highlight essential **experiences** which motivate enquiry, stimulate creativity and provide a context for action.

Clearly such a framework has particular application in schools and other educational institutions, but it is also the basis for raising questions about a wide range of structures including business, trade unions, religious organisations, non-governmental organisations, community groups, the market, the media and the state itself. It is also the basis for questions about the relationship between civil society and 'education'.

> " Education at all stages must seek to promote the development of thinking, rounded and well-balanced human beings who have respect for self and for others and an empathetic understanding of their own and other traditions and cultures. "
>
> Northern Ireland Curriculum Council [1991] Education for Mutual Understanding Project

The imperative is to offer a foundation and a context for ethical decisions and behaviours which respect the nature of the interdependent world in which we live, which respect the rights of and dignity of others and thus incorporate implicitly an international perspective.
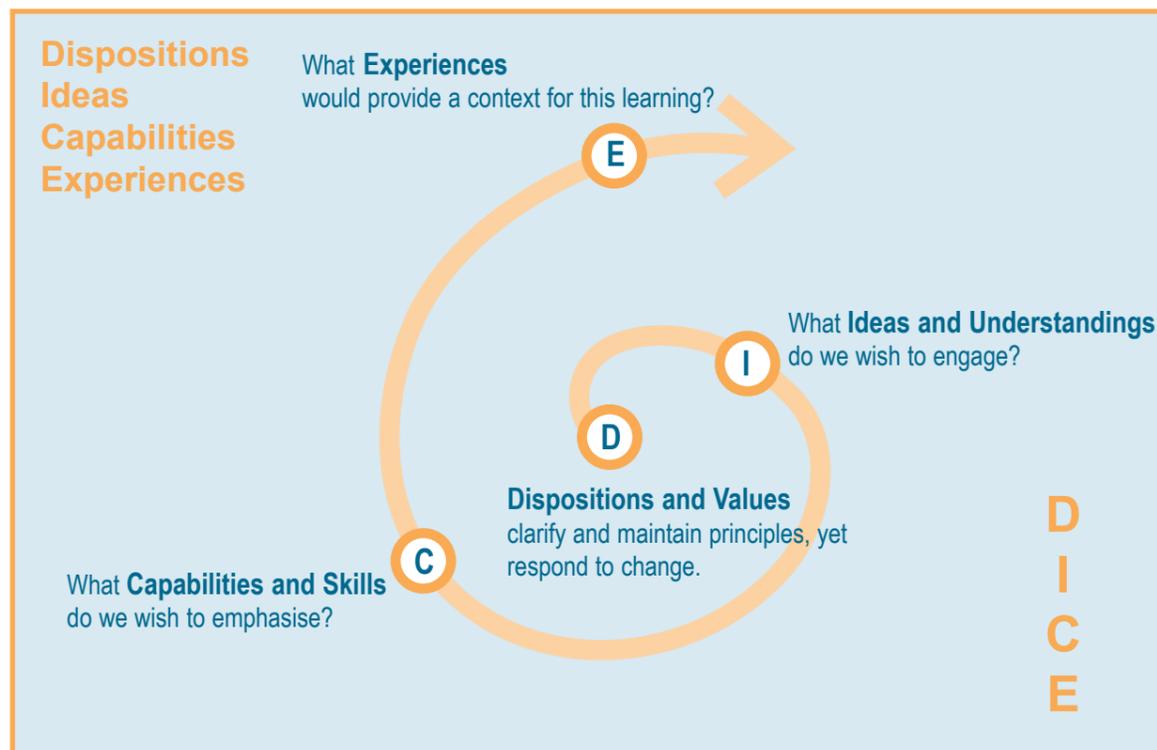
This is perhaps most adequately described as education for world citizenship and democracy. It is a process by which people, through *personal experience* and *shared knowledge*:

◊ gain experience of, develop and practice *dispositions* and *values* which are crucial to a just and democratic society and a sustainable world;

◊ engage with, develop and apply *ideas* and *understandings* which help explain the origins, diversity and dynamic nature of society, including the interactions between and among societies, cultures, individuals and environments;

◊ engage with, develop and practice *capabilities* and *skills* which enable investigation of society, discussion of issues, problem-tackling, decision-making, and working co-operatively with others;

◊ take *actions* that are illuminated and initiated by these ideas, values and skills and which might contribute to the achievement of a just and caring world.

The Commission is seeking to create a debate ... not to prescribe the detail of a framework. It proposes that such frameworks need to be integrated with 'local' initiatives such as the curriculum changes being developed in each of the jurisdictions.

We are however, advocating that such planning should take account of the four dimensions ... and that particular attention should be paid to:

❑ the need to be clearer about Dispositions and Values at a policy level and, in particular, institutions such as schools. This needs to be the focus of open debate, not left to the assumptions of tradition ... it therefore has to engage civil society at large. Institutions need to develop collective skills based on this awareness so as to maintain principles, yet respond to change. *How should this be done? What models should we build on?*

❑ the need to move away from knowledge-centred approaches. The scope of knowledge is rapidly increasing; young people need skills for lifelong learning. There is a need for everyone to have access to complex understandings which affect their everyday social, economic and political life. Many of the issues raised by sustainable development for example, are based on complex inter-relationships, yet they need to be made accessible to all. The creativity needed to engage with Agenda 21 however, requires more than 'knowing it'.

❑ the need to move away from the notion of using the education system to 'manufacture' pre-determined attitudes. The process has to be more dynamic and more inclusive. Young people need skills to respond to situations as they arise in their lifetime. Such situations are tending to grow in complexity and scale as we experience increasingly global economic, social and political systems; and as we understand more of the global nature of environmental systems.

❑ the need to think more creatively about the links between managed learning and the experiences of life [including learning institutions themselves] and how we increase access by offering more of an experiential framework for learning.

**Dispositions
Ideas
Capabilities
Experiences**

What **Experiences**
would provide a context for this learning?

E

What **Ideas and Understandings**
do we wish to engage?

I

D

Dispositions and Values
clarify and maintain principles, yet
respond to change.

C

What **Capabilities and Skills**
do we wish to emphasise?

**D
I
C
E**

Dispositions and Values

- **Respect for self**

- **Respect for others**

- **A sense of social responsibility**

- **A sense of belonging**

- **A commitment to learning**

- **An engagement with change**

Capabilities and Skills

- **Communication skills**

- **Critical reasoning and thinking skills**

- **Social skills**

- **Action skills**

Ideas and Understandings

- **The centrality of relationships**

- **The disparities in human living conditions**

- **The importance of technological and economic change**

- **The concepts of democracy, governance and citizenship**

- **Cultural identities, conflict and conciliation**

- **Rules, rights and responsibilities**

- **Gender identities**

- **Sustainable development and conservation**

Experiences and Actions

A stimulus for debate ...

Dispositions and Values

❏ **Respect for self**
In a just and democratic society respect for self is central to the flourishing of the well-being of both the individual and the wider community. Respecting oneself brings both the capacity to act autonomously and to be self-motivated. It is an essential pre-requisite to respect for others and concern about their concerns.

❏ **Respect for others**
In a pluralist democracy the disposition to respect and care for others is central to living interdependently. The positive relationships forged among individuals and groups are essential to the development of qualities such as co-operation, interdependence, and respect for a diversity of people and cultures which allows us to live and work in the realities of the world of today ... and the future.

❏ **A sense of social responsibility**
In a society geared to the general well-being of all, it is essential to develop a commitment to social responsibility based on the critical scrutiny of information and evidence within an awareness of power relationships, principles and traditions. Such a disposition to social responsibility should also entail a commitment to the sustainable use of the environment.

❏ **A sense of belonging**
World citizenship depends on a disposition to be part of the enterprise as a whole, a commitment to common purposes that goes beyond personal interests, a willingness to participate as an active citizen, engendered by an understanding of the world as a place where each individual feels valued and where both group and individual concerns and opinions are respected.

❏ **A commitment to learning**
In a world increasingly characterised by change and adaptation the need to have a disposition to learning, to making new connections and new meanings is fundamental.

This would also need commitment [by teachers and learners] to procedural values such as: willingness to adopt a critical stance towards information; willingness to give reasons why one holds a view or acts in a certain way, and to expect similar reasons from others; respect for evidence in holding and forming opinions; willingness to be open to the possibility of changing one's own attitudes and values in the light of evidence.

A stimulus for debate ...

Ideas and Understandings

❏ **of relationships and power**
• *of the ways in which power relationships shape people's lives, their civil, political and social rights and responsibilities, and their status as citizens.*
• *of the implications of an increasingly global and interdependent society; the nature of economic, social, cultural and political relationships and how they affect people.*

❏ **of technological change**
• *of the opportunities and difficulties of rapid change in international technology.*
• *of the danger that it will continue to benefit some, and disadvantage many, thus maintaining rather than reducing current inequalities.*

❏ **of the disparities in human living conditions**
• *of the continued existence of inequality at local and global scales.*
• *of different perspectives on such divides, the values base of these perspectives and the implications for popular understanding of the issues.*

❏ **of the concepts of democracy, governance and citizenship**
• *of democratic practices and procedures and the rights of citizens ... here and elsewhere.*
• *of the history of the struggle for democracy and the need to nurture it as well as seek change for it to be more inclusive.*
• *of ways in which global governance should/could develop.*

❏ **of cultural identities, conflict and conciliation**
• *of the concept of identity ... and its implications for individuals, communities and states and international co-operation.*
• *of the dangers of ethnocentricity and ways in which it fuels conflict and aggression.*
• *of different experiences of conciliation and the skills necessary to achieve it.*

❏ **of rights and responsibilities**
• *of the principles of equality, participation and democracy.*
• *of ways in which rights are matched with responsibilities and the implications of this locally and globally.*

❏ **of gender identities**
• *of the nature of discrimination and responses to it [including legal frameworks].*
• *of 'stories' which have been hidden from history because of gender discrimination.*
• *of the implications of gender issues for people's experiences ... here and elsewhere.*

❏ **of sustainable development**
• *of the impact of human action and inaction on the environment ... here and elsewhere.*
• *of the concept of responsibilities to future generations not yet born.*
• *of the global nature of natural environmental systems and our links to such systems.*
• *of proposals and experiences to improve sustainability.*

A stimulus for debate …

Capabilities & Skills

❑ **Communication Skills**
listening, discussion, oral presentation, debate, interviewing, writing for a purpose, defending a position. Ability to express one's own interests, beliefs and viewpoints through an appropriate medium. Ability to perceive and understand the interests, beliefs and viewpoints of others. Ability to exercise empathy.

❑ **Intellectual Skills**
researching and evaluating information and ideas, interpreting the media, identification of bias and prejudice, recognition of stereotypes and discrimination, organising information using concepts and ideas. Applying reasoning skills to problems and issues. Communicative competence across a range of media and uses of language. Ability to perceive the consequences of taking or not taking specific actions in a particular context.

❑ **Social Skills**
capacity for the development of satisfying and interactive human relations in different cultural and power contexts. Taking responsibility, making decisions, establishing democratic working relationships, sustaining dialogue within and across cultures.

❑ **Action Skills**
ability to participate in group decision-making and effectively engage in democratic action to try to influence and/or change social situations.

A stimulus for debate …

Experiences & Actions

Essential experiences which foster the development of dispositions, ideas, skills and actions should be a feature of all educational opportunities.

These include:
- *Working co-operatively*
- *Working independently*
- *Giving and receiving feedback*
- *Participation in decision-making*
- *Feeling valued*
- *Sharing responsibility*
- *Knowing a sense of achievement*
- *Making connections*

While learners should regularly experience many of these as part of their every-day work there should also be opportunities that offer experiences to be made real in contexts other than the classroom.

There should be real and/or simulated experiences of participation in decision-making and action in all four domains of power [economic, environmental, political, and cultural] ... at local, national, regional and global levels.

Such experiences could provide learners with theoretical and practical experience of many agents of governance eg: firms, trade unions, consumer campaigns, local government departments, the courts, national political parties, environmental protection agencies, development NGOs, media corporations etc.

Involvement in the institutions governance [eg through School Councils] should be cultivated as part of this experience.

We should also encourage opportunities for:

- *group residential experiences*

- *joint ventures to enable dialogue and debate focusing on issues in the context of the past, present and the future [in our own locality and further afield]*

- *taking responsibility [for others] in tasks undertaken on a regular basis in schools, home and the community*

- *using information communication technology [ICT] to extend global understandings.*

> *The objective of development education is to enable people to participate in the development of their community, their nation and the world as a whole. Such participation implies a critical awareness of local, national and international situations based on an understanding of the social, economic and political processes.*
>
> *Development education is concerned with issues of human rights, dignity, self-reliance and social justice in both developed and developing countries. It is concerned with the causes of under-development and the promotion of an understanding of what is involved in development, of how different countries go about undertaking development, and of the reasons for and ways of achieving a new international economic and social order.*
>
> United Nations definition of development education

> *... Effective global decision-making thus needs to build upon and influence decisions taken locally, nationally and regionally, and to draw upon the skills and resources of a diversity of people and institutions at many levels. It must build partnerships – networks of institutions and processes – that enable global actors to pool information, knowledge and capacities and to develop joint policies and practices on issues of common concern.*
>
> Commission on Global Governance, **Our Global Neighbourhood**

> *The fields of development and human rights as intellectual areas and as national and international engagements have grown up in separate universes. The need now is to bring them together. That requires an adequate theory that will support a common movement in defence of the core human rights inspiration ... the right of every individual to equal human dignity and the core inspiration of development ... the fulfilment of human potential. The expansion and deepening of democracy within all countries as well as the democratisation of the international order – is an essential parallel process for the forging of such a common movement.*
>
> *Background paper of the Development Education Commission* [1997]
> **Human Rights and Development**

... what should we be able to say in 10 years time?

Building a common agenda *4*

The Commission took stock of many aspects of development education; see for example, the *Consultative Document on Core Issues*.

One observation is the extent to which effective development education also relates to work that is evolved from other fields such as human rights, anti-racism, gender awareness etc. Another observation is that there is potential for building a common agenda which also enhances the separate concerns of each field.

In our discourse we felt that development education is:

❑ equally concerned with development processes at both local and global levels [it builds on an understanding of the underlying commonality of development processes in our own locality and those elsewhere in the world];

❑ not just about development <u>problems</u>, but also as much about potentials and possibilities;

❑ not about charity and welfare but about mutual understanding and solidarity;

❑ also about change ... and how it comes about and whose responsibility it is;

❑ about the role and responsibility for 'education' within this process.

Development education needs to draw on the work of other 'educations'. Development education has something to offer to 'the core' ... as do the other so called 'adjectival educations'. They each bring something distinctive, as outlined in the next few pages, but they also have much in common. This common agenda is at its most clear when priority is given to perspectives about educational needs [for example those of young people] rather than the interests of the particular movement. It is this priority we wish to advocate in seeking to build a common agenda and developing a basis for new thinking about an educational response to these issues.

The 'educations' that have evolved from a variety of social concerns and movements include human rights education, environmental education, education for sustainable development, gender education, multicultural education, anti-racist education and of course development education, to name but a few. The 'educations' have sought to influence educational programmes within schools, youth, adult and community organisations etc. Each of these 'educations' has its own history, roots, structures and organisations and each has, to varying degrees, been successful in highlighting and promoting its own emphasis.

While this has had the cumulative impact of raising general awareness within society at large, it has not been without its difficulties. With some exceptions [notably the issues of women's rights and, more arguably, environmental issues], the overall impact of these 'educations' has been limited and they remain marginal. For the most part, these 'educations' have remained isolated from each other, pursuing separate agendas, seeking access, influence and resources, but seldom forming effective strategic alliances. At the broadest political level, this may be inevitable with different emphasis, philosophy and politics influencing the movements that are in turn promoting such 'educations'. But, at an educational level, the fragmentation of approach has been debilitating.

This situation generated considerable concern and debate at the early meetings of the Development Education Commission. The key issues could be summarised:

1 There is a need to work creatively on a common agenda.

There is a danger that a 'profusion of adjectival educations' distract us from seeing the need for a core approach to education for world citizenship and democracy. Despite having much in common, too often the 'adjectival educations' are seen as being in competition ... as offering contradictory priorities.

Citizenship and democracy are too important to leave to chance. "If we trust that pupils will develop social literacy by picking up relevant learning from academic subjects, cross curricular elements, adjectival infusions and the hidden curriculum, we delude ourselves."

[John Huckle in Introductory Paper to Development Education Commission]

Such a process of seeking common agendas would also help in the move towards the idea that development education, human rights education etc <u>contribute</u> to education, rather than the mind set which sees education as something to make use of in delivering other objectives.

> *With the fogs of the Cold War lifting, ruin appears everywhere, and there is a suspicion that nature cannot be saved without saving democracy as well.*
>
> Tom Athanasiou [1997] **Slow Reckoning: Ecology of a Dying Planet**, Secker & Warburg

2 There is a need for better developed theory and for research.

Each of the 'adjectival educations' have evolved in their own way. Some are stronger on theory and weaker on practical application, others vice versa. Some have put more energy into writing up 'the thinking', others into teaching activities and materials. There is a need for each field to take stock of this ... and to identify effective strategies for theoretical work and thorough application to pedagogy and learning processes.

There is a need for thorough work on new paradigms which are not simply constructed by the joining together of education approaches, but by developing new analysis and new approaches to the contemporary challenges facing education.

> *... citizenship education has tended to function as a mode of ideological domination, bringing about acceptance of vast inequalities in wealth and power, shaping students to the demands of dominant groups nationally and internationally, and ignoring the current environmental depredation and degradation, rather than enhancing the capacity of learners to reconstruct their communities and societies according to principles of human sensitivity and reciprocity, social justice, wise environmental stewardship and greater economic equity.*
>
> James Lynch [1992] **Education for Citizenship in a Multi-cultural Society**, Cassell

3 There is a need for mature political debate.

There is a danger that we are not open about our confusions ... and about how we deal with complexity and the speed of change. There is a danger that we are not open about the nature of contested concepts such as 'development', 'citizenship' and even 'education'.

There is a danger that we present the 'adjectival educations' as if they make up a shopping list from which we choose. Debates about these 'educations' take place in isolation from each other and from thinking about education as a whole, yet we would argue they are pivotal to thinking about new paradigms.

We have an expectation that young people engage <u>all</u> these areas of social concern but how do we make these 'educations' accessible to them? We have similar expectations of teachers and others who take a lead role, but are such expectations reflected in the priorities for inservice or in the initial teacher training curriculum? What support is needed? How do we make sure that support is in itself creative?

The Commission took particular interest in the longstanding work on *Modern Studies* in Scotland, the initiative for *Civic, Social and Political Education* in Ireland, the *Learning for Mutual Understanding* initiative in Northern Ireland and the consultations set up by the *Advisory Group for Citizenship and the Teaching of Democracy in Schools* in England. Much could be gained by providing opportunities for both policy makers and practitioners to share these different, yet complementary, experiences.

New political structures resulting from the process of devolution in Scotland and Wales, the Good Friday Agreement in Ireland [north and south] and Regionalisation in England, could be used to provide a focus for new thinking about what collectively the 'adjectival educations' have to offer to the new identities and effective participation. There is also potential for similar work about our collective identity in "these islands" and in Europe.

> *The difficulties of the modern world will not be solved by surrendering politics, but only by the development and transformation of ⟨politics⟩ in ways that will enable us more effectively to shape and organise human life.*
> *We do not have the option of 'no politics'.*
>
> David Held [1997] **Models of Democracy**, Polity Press, Cambridge

4 There is a need for work on strategic approaches.
[This last theme is the focus for the final section of this publication.]

There is a need for proposals about making more effective use of existing energy and resources, about widening the debate, about encouraging creativity between different fields and about recognition of the contribution they collectively make to the very core of what education is about.

It is not about any one field making a claim for a central role, indeed it remains important [in terms of overall resources, energy and ideas] that each field continues to develop. There are, however, implications for styles of work if the central challenge is about engaging structures to take on such an agenda as part of their own [individual and institutional] mainstream thinking and priorities.

Features of DEVELOPMENT Education

- an explicit concern about the nature of development and under-development: how these are defined and 'measured'; debates about human development, gender, culture and environment and how these relate to traditional understandings of economic development; the challenge of 'pro-poor growth'.

- the 'Third World' dimension: an explicit focus on views and perspectives from Africa, Latin America and Asia, challenging the dominance of Eurocentric perspectives, exploring the writings and experiences of alternative commentators and organisations.

- roots in, and links to, the non-governmental development agencies: emphasising grassroots experiences and strategies; challenges to 'top-down' development models; highlighting the role and responsibilities of civil society in development; linking local and global experiences and challenges of development.

- strong links to overseas groups and projects: making use of links overseas with special emphasis on popular social movements; providing examples of alternative strategies and solutions; highlighting the need for greater inclusion of those usually marginalised from public or academic debates on development; highlighting the on-going reality of under-development etc.

- considerable experience of applying work on models of development to strategic approaches to education, awareness building and action for change.

Features of HUMAN RIGHTS Education

- an explicit concern with human rights, their definition, origins and implementation: exploring debates about the relationship between economic, political, social and cultural rights as well as those between rights and responsibilities; the role of governments and of civil society; how and where rights are abused or denied.

- focus on legally binding Declarations and Covenants: highlighting the origins and content of such agreements; when and where governments have signed up to them; how agreements are or are not implemented in policy; obstacles as well as opportunities for implementation.

- roots in, and links with, the legal profession and with third level institutions: emphasising the value and impact of legal approaches; the role of research and the need for structures and procedures to underpin human rights.

- the immediate relevance of human rights: human rights issues affect our daily lives, they impinge on all areas of human experience, they are relevant to all citizens in whatever part of the world they live.

- strong links with Eastern Europe which offer insights into those perspectives and experiences.

- human rights education places a premium on the establishment and monitoring of legal instruments and procedures which provide citizens and organisations with a framework for taking action.

Features of ENVIRONMENTAL AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT Education

- an explicit concern with issues relating to environment and to the interface between the bio-physical and social worlds; it emphasises the environmental costs of much of modern economic development and its legacy for the future; it challenges models and strategies which highlight the human dimension only.

- an explicit focus on the future and implications for action [or inaction] today: it strongly stresses the need and the opportunities for individual and social action; it highlights the variety of levels at which action is required – personal, community, state and international.

- a strong profile and acceptance as an issue amongst the public: environmental education has had considerable success in becoming 'mainstreamed'. This provides a useful opportunity to evaluate its successes and failures.

- an increasingly popular action agenda focused on youth: young people have been to the forefront. The agenda has direct relevance for them.

- a strong tradition of both theory and practice: environmental education has managed to creatively combine thinking and writing about issues with affirmative action for change.

- an ongoing awareness of a common agenda in different parts of the world as a result of the post Rio Conference Agenda 21.

Features of PEACE Education

- an explicit focus on issues of peace and conflict: the root causes of conflict; the nature and impact of different types of conflict; strategies and experiences for promoting peace and reconciliation; comparative experiences of both peace and conflict.

- strong roots within the Churches, faith groups and the pacifist tradition: peace studies and peace education both provide an opportunity for alliances between different social movements.

- skills and experience in mediation and conflict resolution: peace education has emphasised the need for practical skills in promoting and building alternatives to conflict. This pragmatic element is of considerable value to other areas of education.

- as with human rights education, peace education has strong links with the peace movement in Eastern Europe and the countries of the former Soviet Union. Such movements have formed a key element of civil society in the transition towards democracy.

- the spiritual dimension: as with environmental education, peace education has a strong emphasis on the spiritual dimension of social action with a focus on both the individual and society.

- considerable experience of engaging people in reconciliation and the building of civil society.

Features of
MULTICULTURAL
Education

- ■ an explicit focus on issues of culture and cultural identity: recognising the centrality of culture as a key lens through which development is interpreted and pursued by different cultures; challenging the 'Eurocentric' or 'Economistic' models of development; exploring and respecting local identity and culture in an age of internationalisation.

- ■ a commitment to explicitly valuing difference as a strength: highlighting the value of different histories and cultures; highlighting local priorities and needs rather than those of the market alone; valuing and celebrating difference and its contributions, and challenging negative stereotyping.

- ■ immediate relevance for multicultural societies: in societies which are, or are becoming, multicultural, an explicit focus on its value to society overall is an important dynamic of citizenship.

- ■ multicultural education places considerable emphasis on issues often neglected in other areas – eg a focus on arts, culture, language, literature and faith and their significance in terms of public participation.

Features of
GENDER
Education

- ■ an explicit focus on issues of gender and how these manifest themselves at a variety of levels within society; definitions and debates on the meaning of sexuality and its influence on other issues.

- ■ an explicit focus on the forgotten story of women's exclusion from history [herstory?] and an exploration of women's contribution to democracy, development, human rights.

- ■ an increasing focus on re-defining and exploring different gender roles in life, the family, the community and internationally; recognising and celebrating the value of both female and male and the strengths and weaknesses of both.

- ■ a recognition of gay rights and of the long history of persecution of gay people, as well as an appreciation of their contribution to popular rights worldwide.

- ■ a direct challenge to the dominance of certain models of social organisation based on the needs and interests of a dominant group of males.

Features of
ANTI-RACIST
Education

- ■ an explicit commitment to understanding issues of race, difference and commonality: exploring definitions and debates around issues of race; exploring the histories of different races and how they have become intertwined; challenging attitudes and theories of racial superiority and inferiority; challenging racist behaviour and promoting attitudes and structures to sustain tolerance.

- ■ a strong action component to oppose racist attitudes and behaviour: experience of practical actions to challenge intolerance; linking issues of racism to everyday life, to the media and to citizens' rights.

- ■ a strong tradition of exploring ethnocentrism: a major contribution of anti-racist education has been researching and highlighting the historical dominance of white perspectives and images originating in Europe and North America and offering alternative 'stories' such as that of Black Africa and the slave trade.

- ■ strong roots in and links with minority communities: anti-racist education offers an excellent opportunity for building alliances between different cultures within society around issues which affect all.

- ■ a growing basis in anti-discrimination legislation: the experience of lobbying for, and establishing, legal means of redress in regard to racism has much to offer other areas of education.

- ◆ *How could we be more creative about a common agenda?*

- ◆ *What are the dangers? How do we avoid them?*

- ◆ *How do we stimulate debate about the new paradigms that are emerging?*

- ◆ *What strategic alliances could be formed?*

- ◆ *What support do practitioners need to work on appropriate implementation?*

It is our experience that there is a clear political will across all jurisdictions in these islands to address a range of issues that are close to the development education and human rights education agenda. These issues include social inclusion, sustainable development, elimination of poverty and the concept of lifelong learning.

However, there is also an urgent need for organisations with an interest in these issues to develop policies and strategies that allow this political interest to be translated into effective action in terms that are consistent with particular contexts, eg:

- Schools meeting the educational needs of young people

- NGOs participating in the development of civil society

- Trade Unions enabling membership

- Companies and businesses wanting to develop progressive policies

- Universities providing relevant contexts for learning

The Commission therefore recommends that such organisations should develop policy commitments in response to the ideas highlighted in Essential Learning ~ for everyone.

It is, however, equally important that such policies are supported by strategic approaches that are:

❑ **inclusive -** meaning that an implication of having such policies is that all those involved have opportunities to contribute and participate in their formation and practice.

❑ **principled -** meaning that the central ideas within the policy are enacted and expressed in the activities and practices, and that the means by which decisions are reached are transparent.

❑ **pragmatic -** meaning that in the implementation of the policies, there will be a recognition of the need to seek complementarity with other aims and pressures. This will also increase feasibility by indirectly engaging additional resources.

❑ **built on existing strengths and practices -** meaning that by the use of audit or 'stock-taking' there is a clear sense of capacity, the need to further develop capacity and ways of gaining from the experiences of others.

❑ **able to support a multiplicity of activities and interpretations -** meaning that the policies must encourage creative interpretation and application.

❑ **supported by evaluation frameworks -** meaning that there are clearly understood and practicable methods of reflecting on a regular basis on the effectiveness of the policies and means of improving these.

A dispositions approach 5
and strategic opportunities

Essential Learning questions many current assumptions and in particular the fragmentation of approaches and the lack of emphasis on strategy. It proposes that dispositions [our understanding of their nature and their role in effective change] are key to thinking more clearly about strategy. The process proposed seeks structures that would enable dialogue, the building of common agendas and thinking about future strategies.

A disposition approach is advocated. This section highlights opportunities for creative work to implement such an approach and explores the implications for policy, planning and the building of partnerships.

A dispositions approach moves away from a deficit model of those with whom we work. It shares responsibility for change and acknowledges the need for creativity about what it means in practice.

For example ... by providing opportunities for people to clarify their own dispositions, consider other evidence and work on team values.

A dispositions approach seeks mutuality of interest and motivation. It seeks to integrate with, and offer added value to, a wide range of initiatives driven by other purposes. It therefore values those other purposes and is aware of the consequent pressures they bring to the people involved. In the process, an organisation therefore makes choices about priorities and where there is [and where there is not] potential for such mutuality.

For example ... there are many ways in which global dimensions and development perspectives can contribute to work on improving standards in education.

A dispositions approach has implications for both policy and practice, and for the nature of leadership [by both individuals and organisations]. There is a need to work on the basis of **sharing the challenges** rather than imposing solutions.

For example ... this is recognised by the DfID [Dept for International Development] White Paper. This outlines a new agenda for development co-operation in which development awareness is integral. The setting of targets for "eliminating world poverty" calls for a new popular disposition that such change is possible and seeks to engage people in that process.

A dispositions approach involves engaging structures and individuals in the process of change and recognising that there is a need for creativity at all levels to make change both appropriate and effective. But there is a fine line between this and 'dumping' [or being seen to dump] the issues on practitioners.

So, for example ... society should not leave the teasing out and resolution of these issues to schools and the education system without also providing opportunities within civil society at large to engage with the issues.

Strategic opportunities

Essential Learning has been designed to stimulate wider debate and engage people, and their organisations, in thinking through the issues and identifying their strategic opportunities. The proposals that follow are offered for anyone to take up.

1
We address the Development Education and Human Rights Education networks who have been partners involved in the Development Education Commission process [see page 3].

1 The networks should provide opportunities to make links between 'educations' and seek common ground in terms of principles and theory, and encourage practical joint ventures.

2 The networks should, in making such links, recognise the potential to strengthen development education or human rights education, and what it has to offer to the other 'educations'. The network should provide opportunities for reviewing the 'big picture' and to clarify the contribution the network and its members make to that picture, ie their contribution to education as a whole.

3 The networks should make an audit of current and projected regional geo-political change and explore ways to introduce global dimensions, development perspectives and human rights principles into the thinking about participation in these new structures.

As part of this we need to recognise that part of what defines a place is its relationship with other places. This provides an opportunity for global dimensions to be at the heart of popular local politics in the context of devolution and regionalisation debates. This is also vital to countering the new potential for increased xenophobia.

4 The networks should seek common frameworks, principles and standards for their members to 'sign up' to in order to improve the quality of work and the extent to which, collectively, membership engages and enables change <u>within</u> mainstream structures.

Such 'institutionalisation' is vital, but it should also be recognised that it has its dangers. Established systems have a tendency to absorb change rather than to take on its challenges. This has implications for new roles and styles of work for the membership of such networks [whether they are non-governmental organisations, civil society organisations or official bodies].

5 The networks should provide regular opportunities for members to share dispositions and ideas and to work hard on arguing out common values. [It is observed that all too often this operates at the level of assumptions and lowest common denominators.]

There is, for example, an issue about the ways in which some organisations construct 'texts' about other places and people [particularly those in the 'Third World'] to support their purposes, rather than to enable informed awareness. This is a question of standards, but it is observed that to date, networks have found it difficult to raise questions about such standards.

In a similar way, the networks seem to have had difficulties in enabling the effective sharing of views about strategic priorities. Indeed, it is observed that some of the major profile organisations continue to launch initiatives without even asking questions about whether their plans [however good the ideas] could be strategically counter productive.

2
There are opportunities for new networks. The Commission itself demonstrates the potential of well structured opportunities for comparative learning and joint creativity. It brought together people from each of the five jurisdictions, Scotland, Wales, England and Ireland [north south].

1 There are new opportunities for such work in the context of proposals for the Council of the Isles resulting from the Good Friday Agreement. This will also provide a focus for raising the debate about what is the role of "these islands" in the world. What is the identity of "these islands"? How do we create a sense of participation in "these islands"?

2 There is a need for existing networks [which tend to focus on particular jurisdictions] to extend their liaison with each other and provide a variety of opportunities for in-depth exchanges of ideas and experiences between members of the different networks.

3 There is a need for more effective liaison structures between the various official curriculum bodies and in turn, for them to provide opportunities for in-depth exchange of ideas and experiences between practitioners. This is particularly important in the context of new thinking about citizenship in each of the jurisdictions and in Europe as a whole.

4 There is a need for experimental work to demonstrate effective ways to use information communication technology [ICT] to enable creative exchanges in "these islands" and further afield. In addition to the culture of promotion and marketing, there is a need to enable critical thinking and creativity to be the focus of such networking. There is a danger that new technology reinforces, rather than challenges, existing dispositions and perspectives.

5 There is a need for local networks to provide a focus for working on the practical implications of developing an **'Entitlement to Essential Learning'**. As part of this there also needs to be work on teacher entitlement.

3
In each jurisdiction there are opportunities in the context of new thinking about:

1 International development co-operation

2 Human rights legislation

3 Sustainable development [and in particular Agenda 21]

4 Curriculum change [and in particular new ideas about citizenship]

5 Being a multi-ethnic society ... and living in peace

6 The building of new identities, participation and democracy [in the context of devolution, the Good Friday Agreement and Regionalisation]

7 The value of civil society ... and the need to build up its structures

Such change provides particular opportunities for raising debate about the value of global dimensions, development perspectives and human rights principles. This is particularly challenging because on the one hand, these dimensions are clearly vital and obvious, but on the other there is a strong likelihood that they will be overlooked or even ignored.

4 There are opportunities for comparative learning at an international level. The relationship between "these islands" has been described as a "microcosm of international misunderstanding". There is much to learn here, but not at the expense of that wider international understanding.

Many of the debates highlighted in *Essential Learning* have common ground elsewhere in Europe and throughout the world. There is a need to clarify the common education questions about citizenship, democracy and multiculturalism; and in doing this, to provide opportunities for more in-depth exchange of ideas and collective, creative thinking about education in the context of an **'Entitlement to Essential Learning'** The experience of 'Agenda 21' has demonstrated the local value of such common questions at a global level.

5 There are opportunities to respond to the conventions that governments have signed up to. Linked to these conventions are, existing commitments to education for democratic citizenship, environmental education and human rights education. Education has a central role in translating the principles of these 'instruments' into practical actions. These conventions include:

◊ International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights [1966] - *Ireland and UK*

◊ International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights [1966] - *Ireland and UK*

◊ International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination [1969] - *UK, Ireland [signed but not ratified]*

◊ Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide [1948] - *Ireland and UK*

◊ Convention on the Rights of the Child [1989] - *UK and Ireland*

◊ Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women [1979] - *UK and Ireland*

◊ Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment [1984] - *UK and Ireland*

◊ Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees [1951] - *UK and Ireland*

6 There is a need for the development of strategic approaches to planning that enable organisations [however large or small] to see the 'big picture' and to get a clearer perspective on their contribution to it. This may also help clarify longer term goals, the need for creativity in partnership with those responsible for the work in the longer term, and increase the quality of a more focused contribution.

Many organisations still avoid the strategic question by highlighting the emotional power of 'the good cause'. If, for example, development education is presented as part of 'the good cause' this can be counter to a strategy about creating a popular disposition to change ... or to the strategy of getting schools [and the education system] to understand their responsibilities for this work in terms of meeting the educational needs of young people.

This framework offers some key questions about a strategic approach to planning. It highlights the need to consider both strategic goals and plans for activities. They are complementary but quite distinct. This approach also engages a wide range of other actors, directly and indirectly, in strategic partnership.
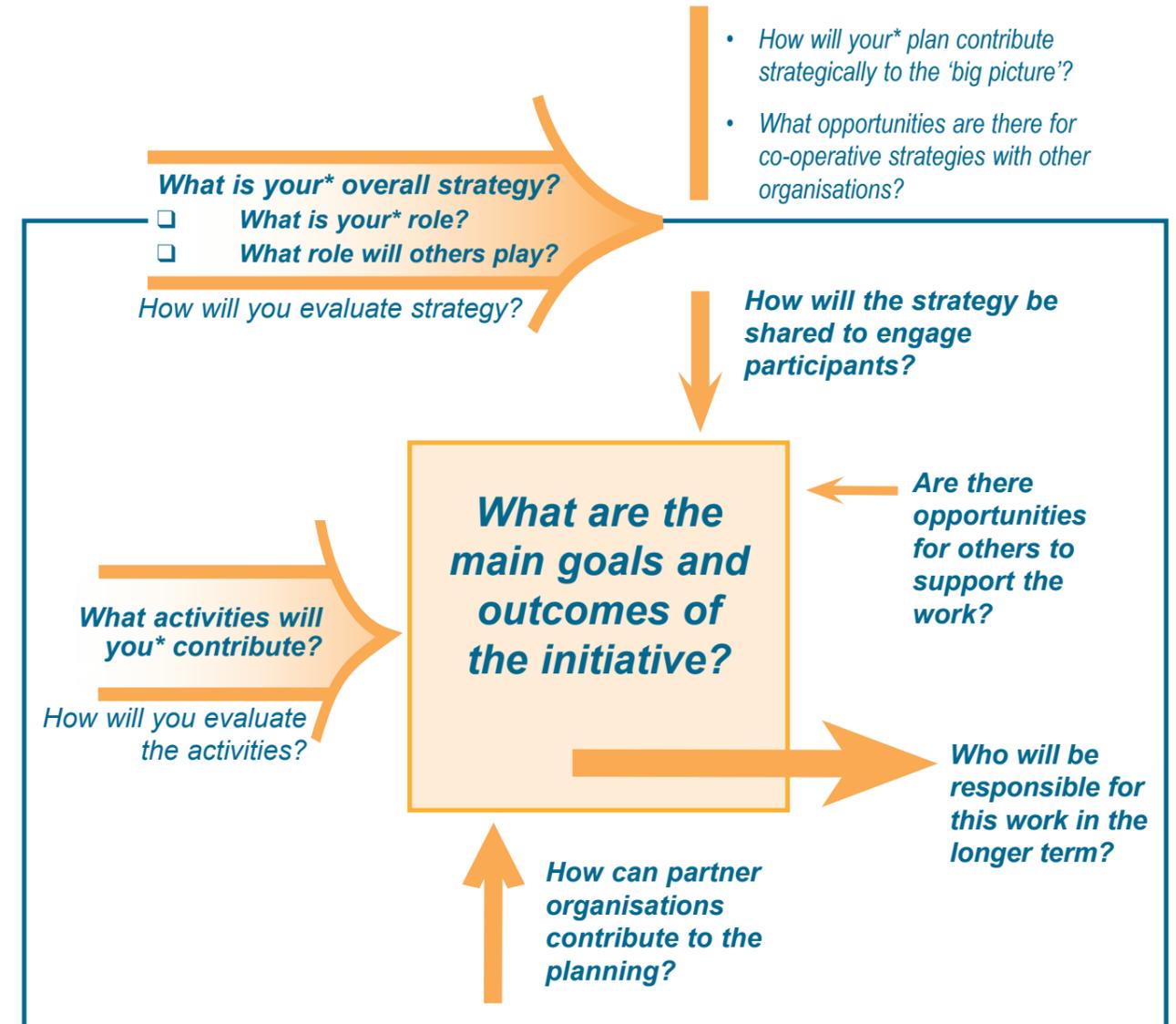
* refers to you ...
or an organisation as a whole.

7 The work of the Development Education Commission has to date been the focus of a consultation process. The publication of *Essential Learning* is designed to further stimulate that process. We would value feedback or news of your plans. We would also like to share what you are doing with others.

See website: **www.tidec.org** and select **Essential Learning** or contact us directly on email: **essential_learning@tidec.org**

Essential Learning has been published as part of the work of the Development Education Commission.

It seeks to involve you in a consultation about civil society, world citizenship and the role of education.

Essential Learning is for everyone. It debates strategies for change and advocates a 'dispositions approach'.

It offers proposals for a core curriculum framework, the building of common educational agendas and suggests opportunities for furthering work on global dimensions, development perspectives and human rights principles.

Such work has a pivotal role in new analysis and new approaches to the contemporary challenges facing education.

The Development Education Commission was set up and is supported jointly by Tide~DEC [Birmingham] and 80:20 Educating and Acting for a Better World [Ireland].