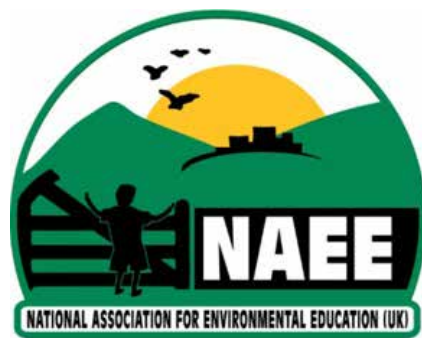




Environmental connections

Nina Hatch reflects on her experiences and introduces the student led 'Teach the Future'.

Nina is Chair of the Executive Committee of NAEF (National Association for Environmental Education). She is also Centre Manager/Teacher at Mount Pleasant School Farm, near Kings Norton, Birmingham.



* 'Thread of the Nile' is not yet available on the website. See Learning about Africa on page 10



The Covid 19 experience has opened up debates about connecting with nature, valuing the environment -- and thorough that the planet.

In the next issue of Elephant Times we plan to revisit the 'Bill Scott Challenge'. So we seek ideas, comments, articles about how to enhance the role of environmental awareness. We invited Nina to reflect on her experiences

In my view environmental and outdoor education has a crucial role in development and sustainable education.

While they have their differences **all** support teachers and students and raise awareness of issues relating to development, sustainability of life on this planet and the environment in its broadest sense. I actually find the biggest arguments are now between 'hard core' adventurous outdoor activity practitioners and those involved in environmental education. (EE)

My personal belief in the interaction between these non-statutory curriculum areas is partly thanks to my involvement with DEC /Tide~ projects. In 1988 I came to Birmingham to run Chapmans Hill School Farm. Owned by a Cadbury family trust it was run as an education unit on a working farm as part of Birmingham's Environmental and Outdoor Education Service. Significantly this later became the Outdoor Learning Service until its demise in 2014.

I was challenged by a global and ethnic diversity of pupils visiting the farm on school visits. Some young people from the city had closer links to farming and food production issues than school staff appreciated. So I visited the DEC to seek relevant educational resources.

The questioning, challenging approach of DEC became part of my teaching style and led to my collaboration on various projects. Most notable was the cross curricular **Thread of the Nile*** pack following a DEC study visit to Egypt. This was designed for Key Stage 2 teachers to make connections between the history and geography syllabus and global development issues.

Now I spend time with children in situations on a farm which enable them to gain first hand awareness of environmental issues that can be developed back in school. These are often aspects which would not occur to them in an indoor classroom. Before, during and after Covid-19 that is surely a justification for combining EE with learning outdoors? Lockdown has certainly resulted in a great deal of 'to do' materials to support teachers and parents who have started to appreciate the educational and wellbeing reasons for being outdoors.

NAEE describes environmental education as "about the environment, **for** (the preservation of) the environment and **in** the environment". That means introducing the world outside the classroom.

The last edition of the Elephant Times commented that the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were not designed as a curriculum tool. Yes, but one of NAEF's downloadable handbooks



provides school and NGO case studies and curriculum analysis suggesting how some SDGs can be incorporated into the curriculum. I would recommend taking a look at this.

As Paul Vare puts it in this publication:

"Organisations that work on sustainability issues sometimes struggle to find effective ways of framing issues so that they can connect to our busy lives. The SDGs can help us here, not by starting with a whole list of goals but by mapping the connections that start with you and me and lead to the wider concerns that organisations wish to raise."

For once we have set of international priorities that demonstrate that we really are all in it together."

Just before the emergence of Covid 19 escalating climate change was becoming a real global issue for many young people in and out of school. It took me back to Tide's 2008 leaflet [featured in the last Elephant Times p16.] As something resembling normal schooling is returning NAEF are supporting **Teach the Future**, a student-led campaign to re-purpose the education system around the climate and ecological problems that we face. Their research indicates that 68% of secondary age students want to learn more about the environment. One of their 'asks' is for the establishment of a government commissioned review into how formal education is preparing students for this crisis. Plenty of space for questioning issues there, so watch this space.....

One student from Teach the future, Sophie Price starts her blog: **Environmental and social justice are inextricably linked; it is as simple and complex as that. [Read on ...](#)**



WWW