iMPACT

Insights & Inspiration for Social Innovation

EDUCATION: Coloring Outside the Lines
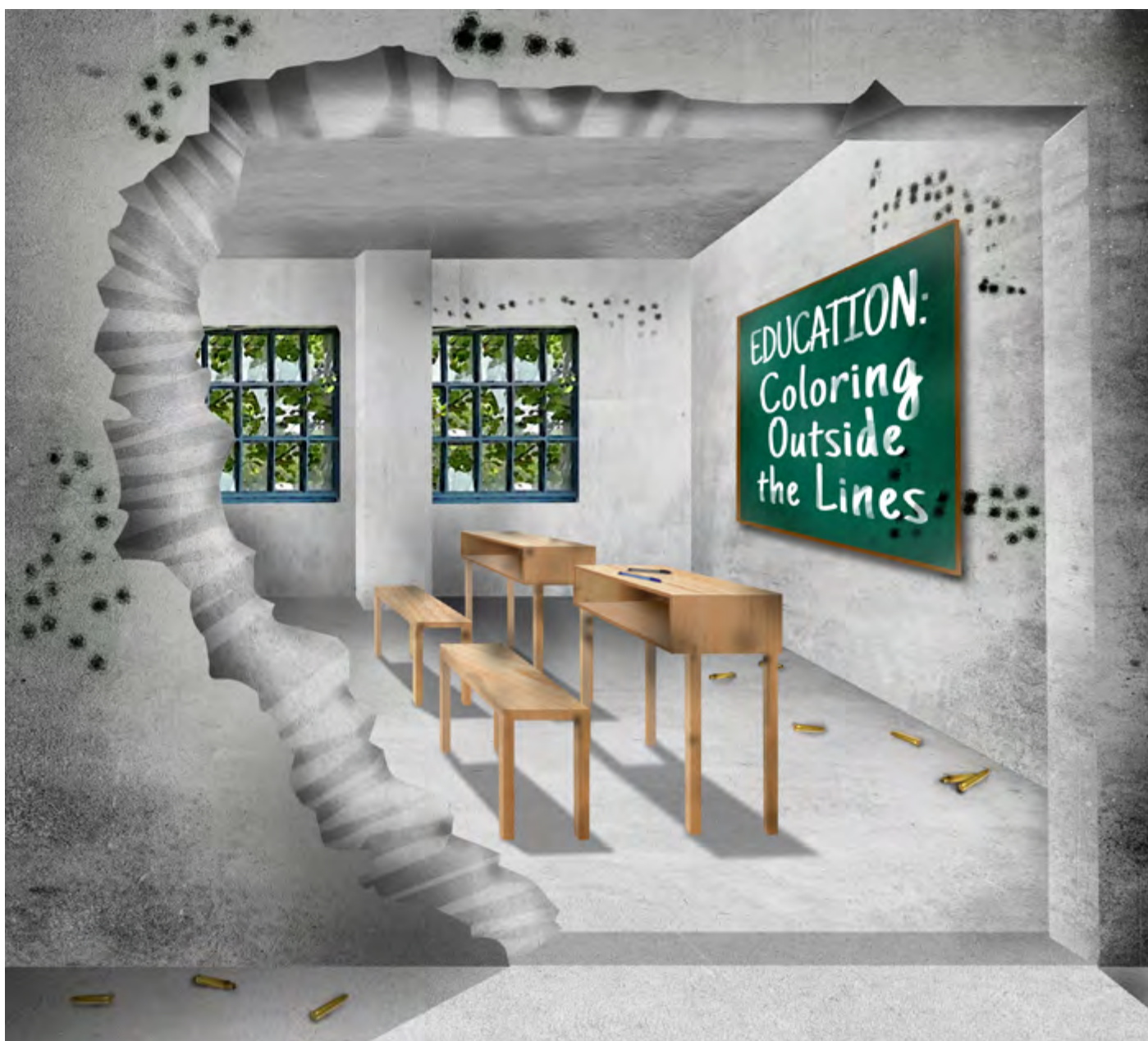
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Innovation for Inclusive Innovation (In_Pact) Asia Forum 2018
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Key Highlights

300+
Delegates of social innovators from all over Asia

30+
Global social innovation thought leaders and speakers

10+
Interactive learning streams to discover new strategies and exchange ideas.

Learning Streams

Design Thinking

Technology & Tools

Impact Investments

Cohesive Partnerships

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INNOVATION FOR INCLUSIVE IMPACT

2018

13 April 2018 | Friday
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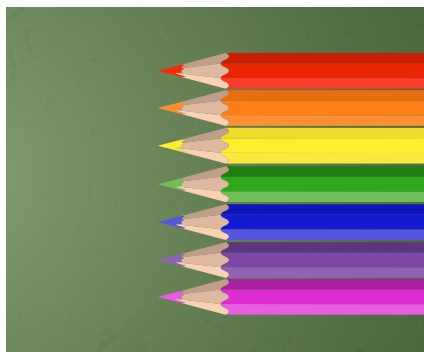Globe

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55 WE HAVE TO REVERSE OUR PRIORITY: YUHYUN PARK, DQ INSTITUTE

Yuhyun Park, CEO and founder of DQ Institute, presents the startling findings of the 2018 DQ Impact Report and talks to Meera Rajagopalan about possible solutions to the "cyber-risk pandemic" in children and the challenges in getting countries on board the DQ mission.

Editor's Note

Dear reader,

When I was a fourth grader in India, the distinction between education, learning, and development was rather clear. School was where you learnt and home was where you were fed. Schools did not talk about overall development; what they did was enable you to achieve that Holy Grail of Indian education in the 90s: admission to a good college. It didn't matter what the learning meant, like a password to a secret society; it only mattered that you got in.

With the new millennium, schools and homes both transformed into centres of learning-- experiential and otherwise. Learning itself underwent a sea change with the arrival of the internet, and schools and teachers, in many cases, are now mere facilitators in the classroom. Learning has moved beyond the classroom, permeating into every possible crevice that can contain a lesson.

Yet, with technology yet to realize its apparent destiny as the great leveller in education, inequities are magnified a thousand times.

Around 263 million children and youth are out of school, according to a 2016 UNESCO report, and these numbers have not seen much decline since 2012. There are fears that this might not take into account a large number of children who are enrolled in school, but just do not attend school or learn adequately. These children—many of whom live in areas riddled with conflict—need to be educated and it's not an easy ask. Our cover story will look at education in conflict zones—its relevance, challenges and solutions—with conversations around peace education rounding it off.

We hear from various organizations and people working on the ground: hyperlocal digital libraries, vocational education, health and reproductive education, inclusive education, and facets of education that are beyond the traditional K-12 and college circuit.

As we prepare for Industry 4.0, it becomes imperative that we look ahead and skill the world with an eye on the future. Education is only one part of the puzzle; enabling the systems surrounding education to ensure that it is an enriching experience of value is the larger challenge.

Warm regards,

Meera Rajagopalan
Managing editor

ERRATUM

In the article, "Plenty of Fish in the Sea" on page 26 of the iMPACT issue dated Jan-Mar 2018, the founder of RARE is mentioned as Paul Butler, who did not found RARE, although he started the Pride campaign, which is now the cornerstone of RARE's behaviour change initiatives. The founder of RARE is David Hill. Also, credit for the fish processing photo on page 29 goes to RARE, and not as mentioned. iMPACT regrets the error.

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Events

1 **Future of Information and Communication Conference (FICC 2018)**
Singapore | April 5-6

FICC 2018 aims to provide a forum for researchers across academia and industry to share latest research contributions in the field and discuss potential impact across industries.

2 **The 4th International Conference on Education**
Bangkok, Thailand | April 5-7

With the theme "Education: Sharing Knowledge, Building Dreams," the International Conference on Education, organized by the International Institute of Knowledge Management, will bring together academicians, professionals and industry experts to discuss future prospects in education.

3 **International Conference on Smart Grid and Energy (ICSGE 2018)**
Hong Kong | April 7-9

ICSGE 2018 will bring together experts, scholars, engineers and students to discuss new breakthroughs and hold discussions related to the smart grid and energy industry.

4 **Government Leadership Forum 2018**
Singapore | April 9-11

In association with the CIO Forum. the Government Leadership Forum 2018 will create a medium for government across Korea and Southeast Asia to discuss how digital transformation can help shape society.

5 **Innovation for Inclusive Impact (In_Pact) Asia Forum 2018**
Manila, Philippines | April 13

Organized by De La Salle-College of Saint Benilde's (DLS-CSB) Hub of Innovation for Inclusion (HiFi), the Asia Society for Social Improvement and Sustainable Transformation (ASSIST), and its flagship program DigiBayanihan (DB), InPact Asia Forum 2018 will gather a collective of social innovators across the Philippines and beyond, to propel change-making and inclusive innovation through the creative and collaborative power of digital technology.

6 **International Biomass Conference & Expo**
Georgia, USA | April 16-18

The International Biomass Conference & Expo will bring together current and future producers of biomass-derived power, fuels and chemicals with waste generators, energy crop growers, municipal leaders, utility executives and technology providers to discuss biomass energy and its effect on the environment industry.

7 **Seamless Asia 2018**
Singapore | May 3-4

Seamless Asia 2018 will gather 6,000 participants, 200 speakers, 200 sponsors and exhibitors from across 40 different countries to discuss how commerce can be conducted more seamlessly in the development and business sector.

8 **IE Expo China 2018**
Shanghai, China | May 3-5

IE Expo China 2018 serves as a platform for Chinese and international professionals in the environmental sector to develop businesses, exchange ideas and network.
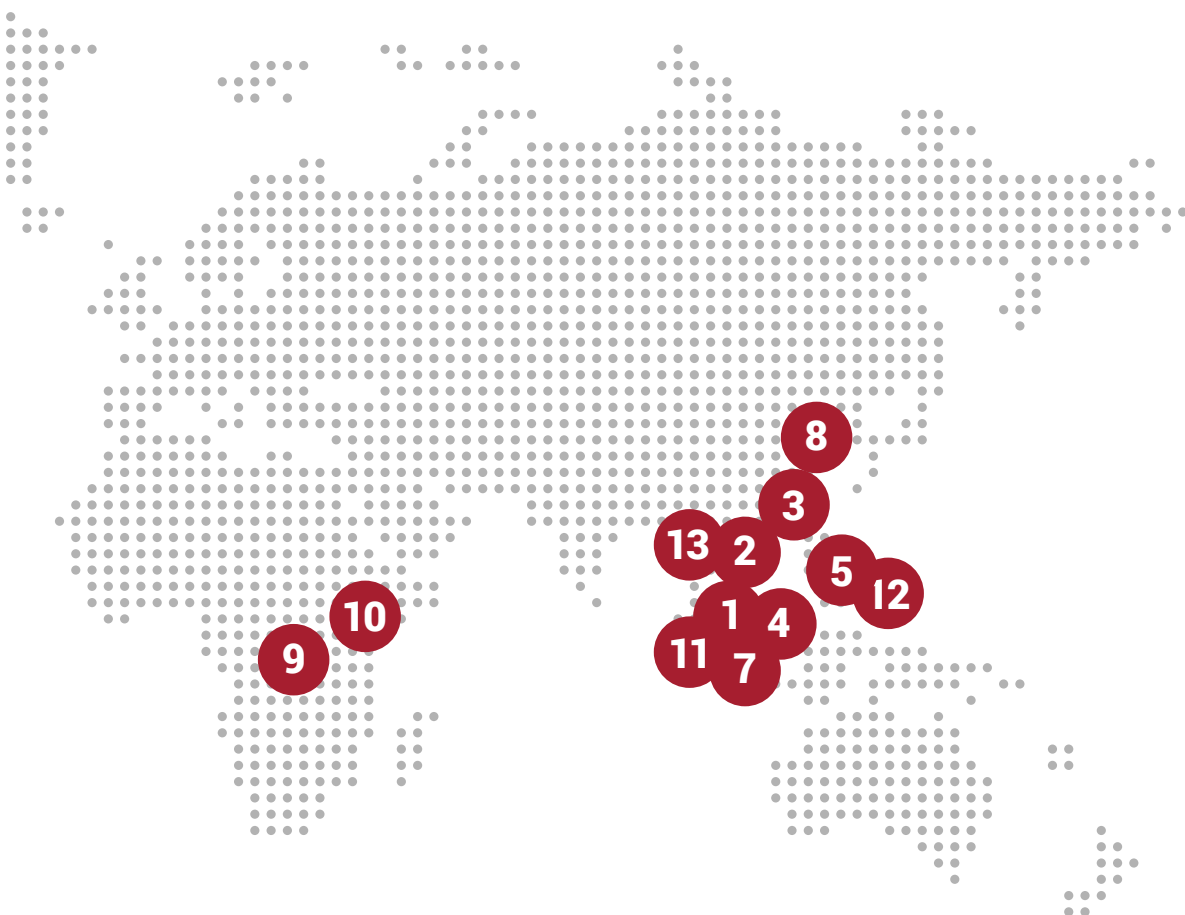
9 **10th ICT4D Conference**
Lusaka, Zambia | May 8-10

The 10th global ICT4D Conference will bring together public, private and civil society organizations to share how they are utilizing innovations in information and communications technology to increase the impact of humanitarian and development projects.

10 **Africa Climate Smart Agriculture Summit**
Nairobi, Kenya | May 15-16

The Africa Climate Smart Agriculture Summit will engage stakeholders, including regional governments and policy makers, private sector and research organizations, UN agencies and civil society, to tackle sustainable agricultural transformation and innovations in seed technology and soil and drought management in East Africa.

11 **AVPN Conference 2018**
Singapore | June 4-7

With the theme "Maximising Impact," the 2018 AVPN Conference reflects the importance of strategic, collaborative, and outcome-focused approaches to social investing. From philanthropy to impact investing, the conference will cover a range of impact areas and investment approaches.

12 **Asia Clean Energy Forum 2018**
Manila, Philippines | June 4-8

The Asia Clean Energy Forum (ACEF) 2018 aims to connect experts, stakeholders from governments, national and multinational banks, environmental regulators and development partners to share best practices in policy, technology and finance to meet the region's climate and energy security challenges.

13 **Aid & Development Asia Summit 2018**
Bangkok, Thailand | June 20-21

Hosted by the Aid and International Development Forum (AIDF), the Aid & Development Asia Summit 2018 will attract more than 250 leaders, decision-makers and professionals working toward Sustainable Development Goals in the region.

To include your event in this section, please email details of the event, in the format above, including website, if any, to **editor@asianngo.org**

English Banned in Primary Schools in Iran

Iran has officially banned the English language from being taught in primary schools—with the country's Supreme Leader dubbing it "cultural invasion".

While Persian is the country's official national language, English is a foreign language option for kids ages 12 to 14 in middle schools. However, some primary schools with students below that age group offer English classes. Private English language institutes also offer the language after school hours. Teaching English as an extra class outside of school is a violation under the country's education council rules.

"Teaching English in government and non-government primary schools in the official curriculum is against laws and regulations," said Mehdi Navid-Adham, head of the state-run High Education Council. While not confirmed yet, the directive is being attributed to the protests led by working-class Iranians on the unemployment, economic difficulties and the growing polarization between the upper classes of society and those below the poverty line.
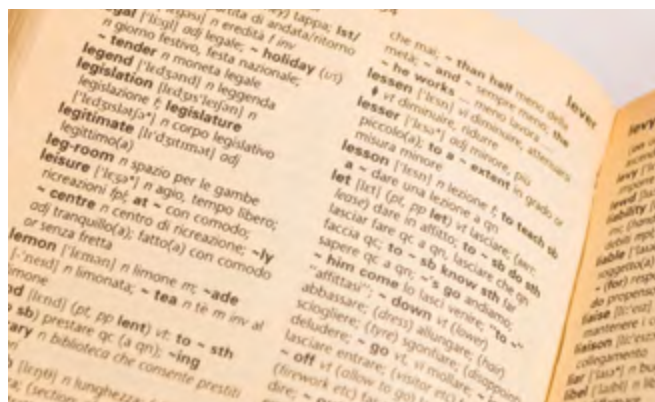
The Iranian government has expressed a strong interest in strengthening Persian and Iranian culture, and part of that strategy has manifested as a ban on English.

"This insistence on promoting the English language in our country is an unhealthy course of action. Of course, we should learn foreign languages, but foreign languages are not confined to the English language. The language of science is not only English. Why do they not specify other languages in school as language lessons? Why is there such an insistence?" Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Iran's supreme leader had said in a speech to teachers in 2016. ⓘ

National School Health Program Launched in the Philippines

The Department of Education (DepEd) in partnership with the Department of Health (DOH) launched "Oplan Kalusugan" also known as "OK sa DepEd Program", a nationwide education program that will help secure accessible health and dental care access to school children in the Philippines through comprehensive health programs.

Announced during the 2017 National Conference of DepEd Health Workers, attended by an estimated 1,100 DepEd health personnel, the new initiative will complement existing school health programs such as the Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) program, school-based feeding and immunization program, drug education campaign as well as deworming programs.

"This OK sa DepEd Program is a converging effort where health plans, policies, programs and activities are implemented to ensure that all schoolchildren are provided with basic primary health and dental care to allow them to attain their full educational potential," DepEd Secretary Leonor M. Briones Briones stated.

Bacolod will be the first city in the Philippines to adapt the Oplan Kalusugan program. OK sa DepEd program will see full implementation in July, school year (SY) 2018-2019 with assistance from several local government units (LGUs), and stakeholders at the local and national levels in the country.

"[Oplan Kalusugan] will ensure that all DepEd school health personnel and school children practice healthier behavior that they can do on their own, and get linked up with health providers and local government units (LGUs) for child and adolescent health services," Briones added. ⓘ

Sustainability Solutions from Children Picking Up STEAM

Devices that reuse recyclables and plastics to cool and filter air, and educational programs that create jobs and improve the economy, are just some of the proposals developed by high school students from the United States, Brazil, China, Korea, and Tunisia as they take on Samsung's challenge to come up with possible solutions toward Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Over a 10- week period, students teams from the U.S. partnered with their international counterparts to propose possible solutions for the various issues that they see in their respective communities as part of the Global Classroom STEAM challenge.

The students who attended this event were challenged by Samsung to use STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts, and math) skills to develop solutions to various sustainable development issues. With the use of a virtual classroom platform developed by IVECA, a non-profit organization that supports international collaborative learning, students at the event worked together to identify economic, environmental and social issues in their local communities, share perspectives, and construct their presentations.

"We wanted to give these students from around the world the opportunity to interact with their peers on issues that transcend their local communities," Ann Woo, senior director of corporate citizenship at Samsung Electronics America said. "The goal was to really challenge these students with the how—how can they be innovative in their thinking and use STEAM skills to overcome sustainable development challenges in their communities."

Each team in this event was represented by two schools, one from the United States and one from another country. For example, one team, represented by Ross High School's Butler Tech from the US and the Science Academy KAIST, from Korea addressed the "No Poverty" and "Zero Hunger" SDGs by proposing a website and an NGO that collects and distributes food.

All proposals developed by these teams will be presented in front of a panel of government leaders, non-governmental organizations, educators and corporate leaders in New York City. 🅘

Best for the World Awards Announced

A total of 846 businesses across 52 industries from 48 countries around the world were acknowledged in the "2017 Best for the World" honorees list for their overall social and environmental impact based on an independent, comprehensive assessment administered by the nonprofit organization, B Lab.

Some of the companies and corporations included in the list are environment consulting firm ClimateCare, American College of Healthcare Sciences (ACHS), Business Development Bank of Canada and legal services company, Montgomery & Hansen.

"These companies exemplify what it means for a business to be a good citizen and we're proud to recognize their achievement. Best for the World is the only list of businesses making the greatest positive impact that uses comprehensive, comparable, third-party-validated data about a company's social and environmental performance," Jay Coen Gilbert, co-founder of B Lab said.

B Lab's Best for the World list recognizes certified B corporations that garner high scores on the B Impact Assessment. The assessment evaluates a company's impact on its customers, workers, community and the environment. To be certified as a B corporation, companies and organizations must complete an assessment and have their answers verified by B Lab.

We all know that <u>water is life</u>, but if you've <u>never experienced [lack of it]</u> for yourself, you'll never realize how <u>hard basic survival</u> can be.

Mário Macilau
An award-winning photographer on water shortage in Mozambique.

It's <u>not</u> the number of schools, it's the <u>quality</u>, the <u>attitude</u>.

Zeba Hussain
Founder of the Mashal Schools in response to the education crisis in Pakistan despite the 220,000 schools across the country.

Girls are the future mothers of any society. Every girl that receives an education is **more likely to make education a priority for her children**. It's a ripple effect of positive change in the community and country.

Tariq Al Gurg
CEO of Dubai Cares, on the status of women in the education sector

People don't realize that <u>clothes</u> are part of what's <u>killing the world</u>.

Maria Angelica Torres Cruz
Fashion Marketing Student
Raffles College of Higher Education on Singapore's textile waste.

The decline in humanitarian aid for education is especially **bad news** because funds are needed more than ever. There are **more refugees now** than there have been since 1994; children make up half of those who have been forcibly displaced… These girls and boys face a disruption of their learning process at a critical time – **and the risk of a lifetime of disadvantage as a result.**

Pauline Rose
Director of the global monitoring report, on children's education in warzones

The development of **full artificial intelligence** could spell the **end of the human race**… It would take off on its own, and re-design itself at an ever increasing rate. **Humans, who are limited by slow biological evolution, couldn't compete, and would be superseded.**

Stephen Hawking
On the emergence of Artificial Intelligence

Violence in Schools

Youth violence is the **4th leading cause of death** in young people worldwide

Worldwide, **200,000 homicides** occur among the youth aged 10-29 each year

An estimated **246 million girls and boys** suffer from school-related violence every year.

Reasons for **Bullying**

25% Physical appearance

25% Ethnicity or national origin

Gender or sexual orientation **25%**

Others **25%**

30%	30%	30%	10%
No one	Friend or Sibling	Adults	Teacher
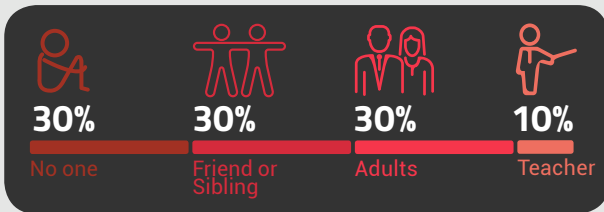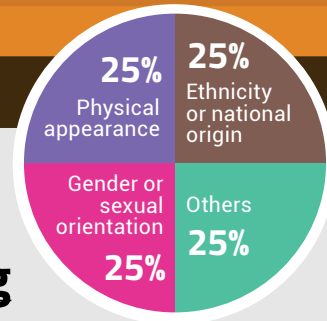
When **Bullied,** who do children tell?

CYBERBULLYING

Facts

90% of teens active on social media have **witnessed** cyberbullying

52% teens **reported** being cyber-bullied

40% of children say that they have been bullied online at **least once**

25% teens bullied repeatedly on **cell phones**

Effects

66% of teens that were cyberbullied **replied** to their cyberbully (*35% responded in person*)

25% had their cyberbullying situation result in a **face-to-face confrontation**

13% were concerned about **going to school the next day**

15% **skip school**, the equivalent of **3 million kids**

41% of teens say cyberbullying made them **feel depressed**

CYBERBULLYING by Social Media Sites

Social Media USAGE	EXPERIENCED Cyberbullying
75%	54%
66%	21%
43%	28%
36%	26%
24%	20%
24%	22%

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Sexuality 101: LGBT-Inclusive Sex Ed is the New Trend

Sex education brings to mind grotesque drawings of reproductive organs, perhaps intended to dissuade even the most ardent enthusiast from the act of sex! What it doesn't cover, most of the time, is sexuality.

All that is about to change, as countries like the United Kingdom propose comprehensive sex education in their curriculum, including LGBT sexuality, marking one of the major changes in sex education in two decades.

LGBT violence is still rampant in most schools and universities. The incessant discrimination from peers and families is pushing the suicide rate up among LGBT teens at an alarming rate. Could LGBT-inclusive education on sexuality be the answer?

"LGBT+ pupils are some of the most vulnerable and under-served pupils in the school system," said Peter Tatchell, human rights activist who has been campaigning LGBT+ rights for 40 years, in a letter to the Education Secretary. "They mostly lack affirmation of their identity and the provision of life-saving safer-sex advice. Nearly half suffer bullying, which can have negative knock-on effects, including truancy, academic under-achievement, depression, anxiety and self-harm."

With schools in UK being obliged to teach sex education, parents and teachers are now being called to discuss how LGBT issues can fit in the existing curriculum. Issues such as mental health of LGBT youth, teenage pregnancy as well as topics like pornography and sexting will be included in LGBT-inclusive sex education classes.

LGBT-inclusive sex education could also, in some cases, help parents understand their children's sexuality better. ⓘ
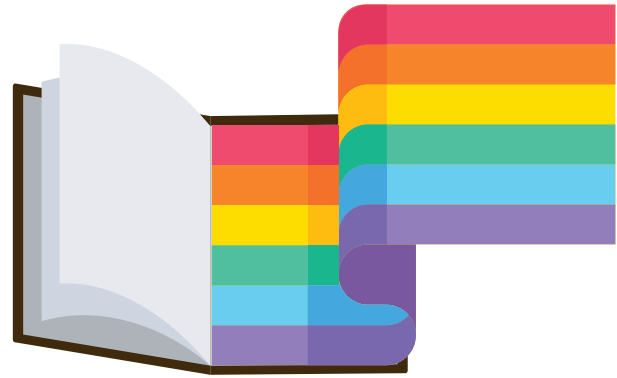
Fashion is in the Air

Pollution isn't even a topic of conversation any more—so inured are we to it. As the battle for clean air continues, how do we clean our once-blue skies? For designer Nikolas Bentel, it starts with revolutionary clothing.

A shirt that responds to changes in air quality is making waves not just in the fashion industry, but also in the eco-friendly scene. For Bentel and his line of clothing Aerochromics, it is about transforming the fashion industry to be more aware of climate change around the world.

For starters, this pollution-detecting apparel is made of cotton fortified with air sensors and colour-changing dyes composed of chemical salts that are sensitive to pollutants in the air. The shirt has different monochrome patterns that change depending on the pollutant present.

White polka dots on a black shirt indicate the presence of particle matter normally found in smog, haze and dust, while the inverse (black spots on white) indicates the presence of carbon monoxide. A coral-like pattern of white squiggles on a black shirt suggests radioactivity.

Bentel's line of shirts correspond to the Air Quality Index and an oxidation process from the colour-changing dyes prompts the shirt to change design when the air quality decline.

The colour-changing shirts not only help detect air changes in the environment, but also provide frequent travellers a quick look at the pollution level of their destinations. However, despite the positive outlook it promises, a hefty $500 price tag might prevent it from being a mass-market fashion statement.

Age No Bar in Village Schools

n the village of Shelari, about 26 miles (46 kilometres) away from Mumbai, in an eco-friendly hut amidst greenery sit 50 students, eager to learn the alphabet. It's like any other new-age co-ed school, except it's Sunday, and the students are seniors: between sixty and ninety years of age.

Following the success of his school for grandmothers, Ajibaichi Shala, launched on International Women's Day in 2016, award-winning teacher Yogendra Bangar, 42, launched AjiAjoba Shala (school for grandmothers and grandfathers) in his ancestral village in January this year. "More applications are coming in and we might have to increase the number of students," says Bangar.

In an age where education begins as early as two years, Bangar's school extends learning for life. In fact, the idea, says Bangar, is to help seniors have a happy, joyful life, while learning new things.

While the grandmother's school was for two hours a day, the co-ed school is a full-day Sunday affair. It does not just feature the alphabet and reading, there is time and space for a lot of banter, exchange of ideas, and activities including origami and weaving.

The schools also help the students shed some of their unhealthy practices: for instance, the grandmothers, all tobacco chewers, gave it up after a few months of school.

To those who are skeptical about funding for schools for older people, Bangar says, "This is worship of knowledge—there is no bar for learning." He also talks about unintended consequences: grandchildren and grandparents study together, and the younger ones are inspired by the grandparents.

What's next? Bangar is planning a Seniors Festival, where around two thousand seniors will come together to play and display traditional games, crafts, arts, song and dance. He also plans a Nature Farming Centre, where traditional methods of farming will be highlighted.

This section will feature interesting thought-provoking developments doing the rounds.
To suggest an addition to this section, email *editor@asianngo.org*

Mahindra's SMART Move

Tech Mahindra Foundation's initiative brings more than technical skills to their training programs. After ten years, the organization is now looking at legitimizing vocational education through its academies.

By Meera Rajagopalan

CHENNAI, INDIA—In a classroom at Chennai-based The Ma Foi Foundation, eighteen students, most of them women, are attending a class on banking, insurance and financial services, conducted by George Bernard. A slide on cheques is up. A couple of the students are engineers, following the trail of employment. "How many of you have seen a cheque?" Bernard asks, and only two do not raise their hands. He goes on to explain cheques and electronic funds transfers, peppering his lectures with jokes and interactions. Just outside the classroom are sheets of A4 paper stuck on a wall; resumes of young men and women who have landed jobs after completion of the course underway.

A few miles away, at a driver's training course at a nonprofit organization called SEESHA, V. Dhanalakshmi sits in front of a three-screen console and starts a virtual vehicle. She engages the first gear and an electronic voice says, in Tamil, "Now move to second gear," and she complies, using the dummy gear on her left. On one of the screens is a road, replete with traffic and greenery—the

first too predictable and the second too green, for them to be real—yet she proceeds cautiously. The console gives Dhanalakshmi, mother of two, good control of the vehicle when she takes a car out on the road, a skill she will find useful when she hopefully lands the coveted job of an airport cart driver.

Dhanalakshmi is one of 18,000 students who received vocational education in 2017-18 through Tech

Mahindra Foundation's (TMF) SMART (Skills for MARket Training) Centres, spread across 11 cities in India.

TMF supports partners, primarily NGOs, who train youth in courses that impart skills crucial to employability. In this vocational training potluck, the partner is responsible for developing the core course (driving; car mechanics; banking, financial services, and insurance, etc., as the case may be) and TMF, apart from funding the program, also brings a well-vetted module on three foundation skills: basic English, basic IT skills, and job readiness.

With 100 SMART centres across the country, TMF has come a long way in skilling and is now taking stock, in an attempt to do more: promote vocational training as a more formal and legitimate path of education, through its SMART academies.

India's Reach for the Stars

India has an ambitious target of skilling 400 million people (50 crore) by 2022 and several skill development initiatives have been launched or reenergized in the country.

However, a report released by the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship in 2015 also alludes to the gap in skilling: an expected shortfall of 274 million people in twenty-four selected sectors. A 2013 survey revealed that more than half the graduates in India are not employable, a number that is at 9 percent for engineering graduates. Therefore, vocational education seems like an obvious alternative education path.

However, vocational "training" is rarely considered "education." Chetan Kapoor, chief operating officer of Tech Mahindra Foundation, says vocational education is viewed as something that those who cannot get a college degree do. "What we realized is that there wasn't much of an awareness about skill development. Most kids who want to study further after school, go on to college. But a college education did not necessarily get you a job," he says.

TMF's six-month pre-launch analysis also threw up some interesting insights: skilling could occur at the workplace, but companies found it tougher to teach IT skills, English, and workplace etiquette. TMF saw the potential in developing modules that tackled just that with their standardized curriculum.

With standardization, the courses are easy for the trainers to pick up and teach. Detailed class notes give the trainer a

> **"The idea is that a young person can come in here and after the course, leave not just with the skills for a job, but also an attitude for life."**
>
> **Chetan Kapoor**
> Chief Operating Officer
> Tech Mahindra Foundation

roadmap for the course. However, as with most programs, some customization was required. For instance, students from Bangalore entered the program with better English than most other cities.

The SMART centres provide learning, both subject matter and basic social and job skills, as well as employment opportunities. With a 70% employment rate after completion of the courses, the program harvests the best capacities of both the NGO, in terms of community outreach and that of the foundation, in terms of industry contacts.

The onus on providing employability projections rests with the partner seeking support, and the roster of programs is constantly updated. For instance, a new program in e-publishing is soon to be launched, keeping in mind its burgeoning demand.

R. Jesuraj, associate manager, TMF Chennai, says, "We look to career-centred training, rather than just job-oriented training, and that makes a big difference." In fact, the foundation has recently veered away from jobs such as retail merchandising in favour of career options with more mobility prospects.

❝❝ What we envision for SMART is for it to be a model skill development program that anyone can emulate and replicate."

Chetan Kapoor
Chief Operating Officer
Tech Mahindra Foundation

Challenges Aplenty

Often, the challenge is beyond the curriculum. It veers into personal territory: attitude, emotional skills, and often, family issues.

"Many of the children who come here reflect very little on life and have no significant aim. The challenge is sometimes in simply getting them to stop and think," says Sherine David, regional manager, SEESHA, NGO partner for the driving and automobile mechanic courses.

It is toward this end that centres employ counsellors as well. Absenteeism, dropouts, and other factors are looked into seriously. Extra assistance is sometimes required, and TMF realizes the program is more than just the skill.

"The idea is that a young person can come in here and after the course, leave not just with the skills for a job, but also an attitude for life," says Kapoor.

Hundred centres and ten years on, the foundation is now taking stock. "What we envision for SMART is for it to be a model skill development program that anyone can emulate and replicate," says Kapoor.

The foundation looked to the next piece of the puzzle: many of the students had the potential to do better than the entry-level jobs the training prepared them for.

Toward that end, the first SMART Academy for Healthcare was inaugurated in New Delhi in 2016, offering two-year diploma courses certified by the Indian Medical Association, and shorter courses certified by the Healthcare Sector Skill Council. There are now two other SMART academies, in Mohali (healthcare) and Vishakapatnam (IT and Logistics). More are being planned, in an effort to create a sustained, professional vocational ecosystem as aa viable alternative to academic degrees. 🔴

Pull-Based Microlearning Can Push Up Education Indices

To avoid overload, focused, lifelong learning can be achieved by smaller pieces of information-on-demand, writes J.C.Sekar.

JC Sekar is the CEO and co-founder of AcuiZen Technologies, a Singapore-based company that is intuitively and innovatively tackling some of the critical challenges facing organizations today: Productivity, Quality and Conformity Risks. He can be reached at jc@acuizen.com

It is definitely a matter of concern that the world missed the Millennium Development Goal of Universal Primary Education by 2015. The number of out-of-school children of primary school age did decline globally from 99 million to 59 million between 2000 and 2013. However, progress has stalled since 2007. An alternate way to address the need for universal education might be to rephrase the question to: How do we empower those that did not have a chance to get a formal education, with continuing education? After all, in a world where the only constant is ambiguous change, the need of the hour is ongoing or lifelong learning.

The solution can perhaps be derived by looking at age-old traditions and coupling them with smart use of technology rather than replicating the industrial-age model of education that is the norm in schools and colleges today.

Allow me to elaborate.

The current education/training ecosystem today largely believes in a one-size-fits-all approach whereby all students are put through a common curriculum and evaluated through standardized testing – much like any industrial model. This was perhaps the right way to feed and foster the skills needed in the industrial ages, which, indeed has served its intended purpose. Urban dwellers may have had an edge here just because the formal education infrastructure was better developed in these areas.

Here are some flaws that come to mind when considering the current model of education:

- Sub-par educators who are disconnected from reality and adopt only a theoretical approach.
- Inattentive learners – perhaps distracted by technology / social media.
- Learning that does not stick and therefore cannot be applied in practice.
- Time lag between the provision of knowledge and the application of that knowledge in practice.
- Content that does not serve any practical purpose from the perspective of the learners.

In contrast, we need to examine how those that did not have access to the infrastructure, perhaps due to being in far-flung or peripheral areas, get their education. They perhaps assimilated knowledge from and by observing "mentors" and mostly by "doing". At a basic level, it could simply be a shepherd trained by his family on the most practical way to rear sheep.

With increased connectivity and the proliferation of the internet and smartphones, could we bring about a transformation in the process through which underserved populations get educated and provide them inclusive opportunities whilst preparing them to handle potential challenges due to increased automation/artificial intelligence?

The solution may lie in not "pushing" more knowledge to such individuals but a more nuanced approach of making available the right knowledge and enabling these individuals to "pull" such knowledge when needed and where needed. Microlearning may very well be the solution.

What Exactly is Microlearning?

As the name implies, microlearning is about providing knowledge in small chunks. Microlearning is best deployed at the point of need when an individual seeks information. It covers one learning objective and is modular in its format. In most cases, this is knowledge that is "pulled" by the learner because they need that knowledge for either satisfying intellectual curiosity or for undertaking a specific task/activity at that point in time. Such a pull-based system is likely to result in better knowledge retention because it stems from the learners need/interest in the knowledge.

If such microlearning can be coupled with a mechanism to enable learners to connect with experts, mentors or peers to get clarity on their doubts, it results in a down-to-earth and practical mechanism to learn and do, combining the best of old school and modern education systems.

Digital platforms enable us to take this from concept stage to reality. Rather than overburdening such underserved communities with an overdose of information, it would be more appropriate for educators to curate content in the form of microlearning modules and make it available to such communities through such platforms for offline access. Through a support mechanism for peer-based learning and digital mentoring, this learning experience can be further augmented.

A digital, community-augmented, microlearning platform could bring about a big change in the lives of those who were not fortunate enough to receive a formal education. We owe it to them.

> The solution may lie in not "pushing" more knowledge to such individuals but a more nuanced approach of making available the right knowledge and enabling these individuals to "pull" such knowledge when needed and where needed.

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Baby Steps To Sustainability

It might be time to consider activity kits on sustainability for pre-schoolers, and integrate the idea into their growth and learning pedagogies.

By Neharika Rajagopalan

I had never given much thought to how toddlers, who are generally shunted away from decision-making scenarios, can make a huge difference in transforming lives until recently, when my mother started her pre-school. I am constantly amazed by the clarity that her students, just two years old, display. Fun coupled with value-based learning has done wonders for them, and I have personally witnessed parents coming back with reviews of how their kids' behaviour has changed completely for the better.

The team at the Kids Campus International school reveals that toddlers are able to make informed choices if they are exposed to situations warranting their opinion. Lakshmi Gopal, an educator and expert on early childhood care spoke about the stages in a child's life, distinguished by their age: Laalavath, Thadaavath, and Mitraavath. Laalavath, the stage requiring love and are, typically until the child is five years old, seems to be the right stage to introduce concepts which the child can carry forward, and pass on to future generations.

The future of the world is one such worrying concept that we must necessarily pass on to future generations, chief among them the use of sustainable practices. Reports published by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) document best practices from across the world on the methods used to make children think along the lines of economic, environmental, and social sustainability.

A 2008 UNESCO report[1] states that learning for sustainable development was usually eschewed, perhaps because discussions around it are likely to be negative and therefore, inappropriate for young children. The report also enlists ways to overcome these challenges to find which are "positive, interesting and suitable for children." The World Organisation for Early Childhood Education's OMEP project in 2009-14 piloted a series of initiatives promoting early childhood education in practice,

[1]Pramling Samuelsson, I. and Kaga, Y. (2008). The Contribution of Early Childhood Education to a Sustainable Society. 1st ed. [ebook] Paris: UNESCO.

> ❝ Toddlers are like sponges, they absorb everything from their surrounding environment. A sustainability activity kit is a good idea, if it is a combination of different activities fostering physical involvement, emotional intelligence, and logical reasoning.”

Meenakshi Khanna
Education Consultant

concluding that financial feasibility, strong creative ideations, and most importantly, schools, caregivers teachers, and families willing to implement these initiatives are important factors in making these interventions successful.

Sustainable development has become the end goal of every country – therefore, introducing it to children as early as possible has never been more imperative in order to streamline kids' thinking toward creating a sustainable future world. As Zenobia Barlow, executive director, Center for Ecoliteracy (Post Carbon Institute), and one of the pioneers in creating models in schooling for sustainability puts it, "Children are born with a sense of wonder and an affinity for nature. Properly cultivated, these values can mature into ecological literacy, and eventually into sustainable patterns of living." Globally, there are many schools which promote environmentally sustainable practices in the school environment and also encourage children to implement these at home.

However, has there really been some thought on creating a focused activity kit around the concept of sustainability? Perhaps it is time to design and implement measures to ensure that sustainability is ingrained in the minds of toddlers, who are tomorrow's caretakers of the world.

Translating Idea Into Reality

Globally, teachers and caregivers are realising the value of variety in educating children. However, the triple bottom line of sustainability is something which only teenagers can fully begin to understand the value of, in the view of Meenakshi Khanna, an education consultant with experience in preschool education, children's literacy and language development. However, she says, toddlers can definitely be introduced to the concept so that they can start thinking along these lines. "Toddlers are like sponges," she says. "They absorb everything from their surrounding environment. A sustainability activity kit is a good idea, if it is a combination of different activities fostering physical involvement, emotional intelligence, and logical reasoning. The kit also needs to be as relatable and simple as possible, with aspects that include interaction with adults at home as well."

On a potential model to make this work, Khanna suggests a partnership between various stakeholders in the development sector, with a firm to facilitate the implementation, a reputed institution to endorse the idea, and a private company to provide the necessary financial/material support.

Takeaways for the Development Sector

The relevance of this idea in the development sector stems from the variety of benefits it would offer stakeholders who make the sector thrive. The State of the World (2010) report by World Watch underlines the importance of providing more resources to early childhood education for sustainability, which can be developed through a combination of cross-sectoral support and collaboration. The given graphic offers a snapshot of the key takeaways from this idea for the players concerned.

Private Sector	Government	Donors	Social Enterprise	Pre-schools
Visibility due to uniqueness of initiative; CSR investment opportunity	Acceleration towards long-term vision of sustainable development	Step towards achieving sustainable development goals in the long run	Creative ideations in the education area	Enhanced, interesting activity module for kids.

As these stakeholders and the entire world apply their minds to creating a sustainable lifestyle for the future using complex algorithms, it is important not to forget little steps like these, which change mind-sets in an invisible yet marked manner. ℹ

FROM PAPER TO THE BLACKBOARD:
Implementing Gender Inclusive Classroom Policies
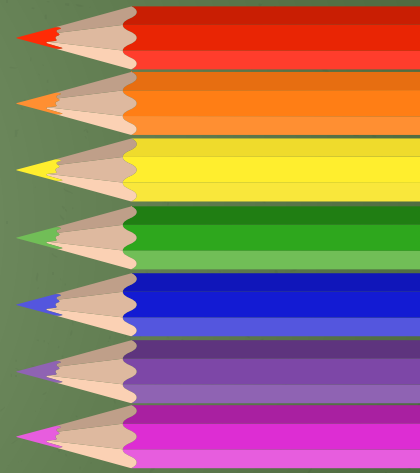
Real-world implementations of policy must include conversations around logistics and attitudes prevalent in the educational system, writes **Jan Gabriel Castañeda**.

Different Southeast Asian countries can have very different approaches to education. But when you home in on how these approaches respond to lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people and issues specifically, results are mixed.

At its best, there is ambiguity, and often genuine confusion about how such issues can be effectively addressed, keeping in mind the cultural particularities where such education takes place. At its worst, you find LGBT people being thrown out of classrooms and branded carriers of strange illnesses and heralded as the destructors of society's morals. So it is difficult to say where the region as a whole is going with the issue.

At least in the legal and policy context in the Philippines, we've seen some fair share of good news when it comes to LGBT people in the educational setting. Two things come to mind. First, the Anti-Bullying Act of 2013, which includes a clear prohibition on discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity. The second is the Department of Education's Gender-Responsive Basic Education Policy of 2017, which affirms these prohibitions and goes further by calling on programs and curricula that proactively respond to the root causes of discrimination. Both documents are good examples of moving in the right direction. Both documents are worth reading in full, but in theory, you now have in place two pillars of inclusivity – protection and promotion – within the educational setting.

On my on-and-off interactions with students, teachers, and administrators, and learning what being inclusive means to them, one lesson that is constantly reaffirmed is that nurturing diversity is good for everybody. Communities who protect and promote diversity are simply better off, and that is true as much in the classroom as out of it. And to see that we are now laying the groundwork, at least in terms of sexual orientation and gender identity, is a dream come true for many of us LGBT folk who grew up in a time when these discussions had no way of reaching us. It would have been nice to have learned about such things during those critical periods of my childhood in the places whose sole purpose was learning. It certainly would have saved all of us the trouble.

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But now theory needs to get its hands dirty, and even basic questions on implementation can be daunting. Two things also come to mind. First is the system of bureaucracy itself, with all its systemic inefficiencies and glitches. You see this in every government institution you care to look, our public education system among them. Second is the sort of work such policies entail, because the workload in schools is no joke. So it is not always apparent how compliance can be best achieved, because it may be seen as frivolity, compounding already tight schedules. I have personally heard LGBT-inclusive policies being described as precisely that: "frivolity", useless novelties, or some form of moral malaise. Unfortunately, those who were not reached by important conversations about gender and sexuality occasionally end up in places of authority, and carry that ignorance with them up the bureaucratic ladder.

So when theory gets its hands dirty, what exactly needs to be done? A popular analogy to help illustrate this is the use of restrooms, an issue which has frankly caused more problems than it's worth.

One school may opt to create an entirely new set of bathrooms specifically for "LGBT" or "Third Sex" as one sign put it. This is both problematic (because lumping all LGBT people together fails to appreciate the differences) and impractical (perhaps because plumbing is not easy to come by). It might also be another symbolic barrier that may run counter to the spirit of an LGBT-inclusive policy.

Another school may refurbish existing restrooms and designate them as gender-neutral, which may be a more practical option. But bathrooms do not function simply as bathrooms: they represent something of the values

> ❝❝ **What this real-world analogy illustrates is that we should consider how a policy might take various routes, and how concerns such as logistics and reception by the community should be points of serious reflection."**

carried by that institution, and we know from experience that implementing such policies has sometimes meant butting heads with these values. People may express reservations about sharing mirrors and urinals with people in a gender-neutral restroom.

Another school may choose to begin with institution-wide learning programs about the importance of inclusive environments, of which restrooms are one component, so that any changes would be received not as an intrusion upon one's values but as an important step to strengthening them. Such changes in values may even make changes in restrooms redundant, since nobody would bat an eyelid about who gets to use which toilet, which in my mind is the ideal scenario.

What this real-world analogy illustrates is that we should consider how a policy might take various routes, and how concerns such as logistics and reception by the community should be points of serious reflection. With curricula, one might ask: where and how can we best integrate sexual orientation and gender identity in our learning sessions? Or with counselling services: how much training does our staff need, and what needs specifically should we train them for? And what prejudices might be lurking in our hiring and retention protocols? LGBT-inclusive work happens on all levels. But with time and effort, we can make diversity happen, and we can save future generations the trouble. ⓘ

Jan Gabriel Castañeda is currently program associate at ASEAN SOGIE Caucus, a network of LGBTIQ human rights activists in Southeast Asia working towards the integration of sexual orientation and gender identity and expression into the broader human rights work in the region. He is also a member of the LGBT Psychology Special Interest Group of the Psychological Association of the Philippines.

Guns, Chalk and Blackboard

Educating children in conflict zones is a Herculean task, but one that requires urgent attention. While international and local organizations look for replicable, scalable solutions, it is apparent that one size does not fit all, writes **Meera Rajagopalan**

"The main challenge is the availability of qualified teachers," says Hassina Sherjan, founder of Aid Afghanistan for Education, "We're looking forward to being able to pay the teachers more." She's speaking from Kabul, the day militants attacked the Marshal Fahim Military Academy, on the outskirts of the city, killing 11 soldiers. Sherjan talks about the challenges of promoting education in a post-conflict scenario, and the adjective seems impossibly optimistic.

> Armed conflict can destroy a child's life before it has even begun. It robs children of their parents, their childhood, their health, their education and sometimes their own lives."
>
> UNICEF representative Vanessa Tobin

Afghan Children Read book distribution
The USAID Afghan Children Read project distributed 92,500 books and teacher guides to schools in Kabul and Herat provinces in 2017. Photo by Ali Dariosh Shirzad for USAID Afghan Children Read.

Photo by Amer Almohibany / AFP / Getty

However, it soon becomes obvious that optimism is one of the preconditions of working in education in conflict zones. Progress is excruciatingly slow, and to work in face of overwhelming opposition needs the kind of unbridled optimism that Sherjan seems to possess, as she accelerates learning for women, through twelve schools in six provinces, packing in twelve years of learning into eight, making up for lost time. Her organization has helped 2217 young women, who were not part of the system for years, graduate from high school.

Just over 2,600 kilometres southeast of Kabul lies Sukma, in the fourth-youngest state of India, Chhattisgarh, known for two things: its mineral-rich resources, and less positively and perhaps consequentially, its Naxal activity, a rather simplistic term given to the decades-old conflict between radical communists and Indian security forces, with hundreds of villages caught in the crossfire.

Amidst this landscape, Ashish Kumar Shrivastava and his Shiksharth team educate nearly 2,000 children in Grades 3-8 at a government residential school, using contextual learning and pedagogies that derive from their own communities. Shiksharth also runs several other educational programs including peace and science education programs, for children in the region.

Sherjan and Shrivastava represent a growing breed of development professionals who work with a deep understanding and respect for local communities, leading change from within.

While children who are categorized as refugees are physically removed from the conflict, often being able to access educational resources (albeit with own set of problems and concerns), children living in conflict zones are often boxed in by their situations.

It's a worldwide problem that requires close examination. According to a 2017 UNICEF report, approximately 27 million children are out of school worldwide because of conflict, a number that could rise, considering continued conflict around the globe.

Education Cannot Wait, a global fund to transform the delivery of education in emergencies, estimates that around 75 million children are caught up in conflict, or natural disasters, or even epidemics, which constitute visible crises. In an interview with Devex, Yasmine Sherif, director of ECW, said, of the scale of the problem,"… if you think about the fact that we have new eruptions of crises, wars are not slowing down but actually increasing by the year, you

> ❝ The existing teaching systems and education curricula are very competitive and there are sometimes no references to ideals of nonviolence. We try to understand the conflict and impart skills to our participants so they can analyse conflict and address the need and discuss a way out of the violence"

Leban Serto
Trainer Nonviolence and Peace Education
Centre For Peace Education

can expect this number [of children] to increase. Therefore we have to act now if we're going to meet their needs and make sure that we prevent crises in the future."

The 2019 Global Education Monitoring report will focus on migration and education, with a significant part of the report discussing forced migration, with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) estimating that 21.3 million children were forced into leaving their homes.

Schools and education are even more important during conflict, says Eileen St. George, director of education, conflict practice area, Creative Associates International, a Washington, D.C.-based organization that implements international development projects. Creative has worked in some of the most conflict-ridden areas in the world, including Afghanistan, Central America, Egypt, Iraq, Nigeria, South Sudan and Yemen.

Schools, St. George says, can provide a safety net for children,

giving them access to a safer space and helping them establish patterns of continuity and routine that gives them a sense of normalcy.

However, schools themselves are not immune from the attacks, as experience shows. Boko Haram, which kidnapped 276 girls from their school in 2014, has displaced more than 2.3 million people from their homes. Propaganda teams of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Ealam (LTTE) have been reported to set up recruitment near schools, and in northern Uganda, children have been directly kidnapped from classrooms and taken to military training camps.

It is a complex problem for which there is no magic bullet, but also one that needs immediate addressal. The consequences of not educating children are far-reaching. This creates a lost generation whose potential is not fulfilled, instead leading them on a path of conflict of violence, says St. George. "If children and youth are not provided education to equip them for the task that awaits them, a

Entering a Conflict Zone: Pointers

- **Be prepared for the long haul.** Sustainable change is very difficult in the short term.
- **Take time to get to know the community.** Even within a country, communities differ in various aspects.
- **Respect the space you are entering.**
- **Work with the community** and the government, where possible.
- **Conflict zones are complex moral spaces.** If you want to focus on your work, you might want to be practical and curb your activism. That does not mean throwing away your moral compass. You might want to set your level of tolerance.

With inputs from respondents

nation can end up with a vacuum of future leaders and nation builders," she adds.

Why is Education Not Attractive?

The problems plaguing education in conflict zones are many: lack of qualified resources and adequate infrastructure, administrative and community apathy, and access, to name just a few, the factors intertwining in myriad ways, like an impossibly knotted yarn of wool.

First, education is not considered a priority for people living in conflict zones. "Even today, schools are thought of as places where one can get a midday meal for children for free," says Shrivastava.

Nor can parents make the connection between education and their aspirations for their children. Attaullah Wahidyar, senior advisor to the Minister of Education in Afghanistan says that one of the major reasons why education is not given importance in conflict-ridden regions is the disconnect between the people's

expectation of education and what is given to them.

"Problems like access, quality, resources, etc. can be overcome if policy making in the education sector takes into consideration parental assumptions and expectations of the education system," he says. "In Afghanistan, to be a good Muslim is a social priority while employment, salary, etc. comes next if we can ensure that this social priority is rightly addressed by the education system and complemented by the required skills for the job market. Then people will surmount all obstacles and will send their children, both boys and girls, to school."

Shrivastava says this mismatch, in terms of policies, pedagogy and syllabus, is symptomatic of an uncaring administration that works from the top-down. "A conflict in their (children's) world is created by the State's failure to provide the services it is supposed to," he says.

Wahidyar agrees that it stems from inequality. "There are pockets

in the society that are not served by the government. They remain away from the mainstream, and disenfranchised." he says.

Whether it is the Sri Lankan conflict, Maoist insurgency, or North African conflict, it's a loss of belonging, brought about by years of unitarian policies, that create the ideal environment for conflict, which continues for years, impinging on every aspect of life, including its children's education.

Shiksharth's models provide the context that can help the child transition from the "known to the unknown": using festivals they know, in a language they can understand. Shiksharth's science experiments are designed using locally available materials: tomato water and lime juice, instead of commercial acids.

Myriad Problems

Working in the space is very tough— almost like an obstacle course. (See box on advice). Schools are, in many cases, non-existent or burned down.

Children don't enrol in school and when they do, they don't attend. When they do attend, they don't learn.

While the traditional model of reaching children has relied on training teachers on workable solutions, a few nagging issues persist. Teachers often leave for better opportunities, rapidly creating an untrained pool. Getting people to work in a rural area is difficult; in a conflict zone is almost impossible. Shrivastava has had trouble recruiting people for his project for myriad reasons: one of them being lack of internet services!

Sherjan agrees. "People moved away [from Afghanistan]. There is such a great need for qualified educated people here, and once that is set, students will follow." In the case of Afghanistan, the number of teachers had to be increased 10-fold, from a 2001 level of 20,000.

"We didn't have enough qualified teachers, to be honest. We're now trying to catch up and focus on the quality of the teachers," says Wahidyar.

Solutions: From Local to the Global

Solutions to the problem are easier on paper than they are on the ground.

While the Right to Education remains unaltered for children in conflict zones, protected by as many as nine articles of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the reporting mechanisms are "slow, even in times of peace, and in conflict, almost non-existent," according to a 2010 UNESCO paper, "The right to education for children in violent conflict."

The lacuna is not in the legal framework but in the implementation, which can be spotty at best and, in most cases, non-existent.

However, solutions can work, and many organizations have shown the way. Collaboration is key, and grassroots organizations and communities can make or break development programs.

Sherjan emphasizes working with the government, especially in the case of her country.

Left image
Nigeria – Education Crisis Response
In a non-formal learning center, beneficiaries of USAID's Education Crisis Response program. Though displaced by Boko Haram, these girls able to again attend school through the assistance of the USAID program, which Creative Associates International is implementing.

Right image
Nigeria Education Crisis Response community
Community engagement and leadership ensures continued support for IDP education after the Education Crisis Response program ends. Abdul Aliyu, District Head of Liji, in Gombe. Photo by David Snyder for USAID Education Crisis Response.

"It's generally very important to ensure that civil society organizations support the government. There might be a lot of corruption, but we must work together to overcome it all," she says. AAE has plans in place for a program to educate young men as well, in association with the Ministry of Education.

Creative International's Building Education Support Systems for Teachers project (BESST), funded by United States Agency for International Development (USAID), has helped train more than 50,000 teachers and principals, while also helping the Afghan Ministry of Education formulate nationwide policies.

"In general, Creative seeks locally owned, community-based solutions that lead to an opportunity to mainstream back into school," says St. George. Most of their programs are designed to elevate community engagement and monitoring. Creative's Northern Education Initiative, through an overarching program that brought together educators, parents, and the community, established Community Coalitions to support orphans and vulnerable children through established networks and institutions.

Shiksharth goes a step further: it has the community as the focus of learning, working on ways to incorporate the community, its wisdom, culture and customs into classrooms.

Not Just Academics
Working with kids in conflict zones is not just about academics, nor is it a single-organization work. In Borno, Nigeria, Creative trained more than 7,000 public school teachers in social-emotional learning techniques.

Children who have been exposed to violence are also very reticent and this

> " We have a long history, with lots of experiences and problems. Everything can happen only slowly. If we rush, then we have a problem."
>
> **Hassina Sherjan**
> Founder
> Aid Afghanistan for Education

leads to less interaction in classrooms, says Shrivastava.

In fact, during Shiksharth's free-flowing art session, forty-three of forty-five students had drawn an image of conflict (The others had drawn a village fair). "We realized, soon enough, that the children come with a lot of mental trauma and the first order of business would be to create an atmosphere of trust," says Shrivastava.

Helen Hanna, lecturer and international lead with the Institute of Childhood and Education with Leeds Trinity University, has worked extensively with children displaced from conflict zones in England and South Africa. She says that children from conflict zones who now study in these countries also have trouble with integrating socially, partly because they are often treated as "the other" and placed in separate designated spots in the classroom, many times at the back.

Peace, however, can be a tricky concept for children whose lives have always revolved around strife. Leban Serto, trainer for nonviolence and peace education at the Centre For Peace Education in Manipur, India, has been involved in peace training for decades. He says that it is important to understand and consciously include elements of peacebuilding in the

curriculum. "The existing teaching systems and education curricula are very competitive and there are sometimes no references to ideals of nonviolence," says Serto, who also stresses on the need to understand a conflict before proposing solutions.

"We try to understand the conflict and impart skills to our participants so they can analyse conflict and address the need and discuss a way out of the violence," he says.

It may take years for any efforts in conflict zones to show any real impact, while many international projects come with an expiry date.

Shrivastava, for instance, has just initiated processes to work with the communities, after five years in the region. Sherjan says the question that donors often ask her is about the end date of the project, and she is unable to give them that information, as it is really a lifelong project, perhaps

eventually integrated into the Ministry of Education.

Projects like Creative's aim to hand the reins over to the governments, local organizations and/or schools in the country they are working in, but the transition isn't always smooth. For one, the lack of aid may mean an inability to continue the project at the earlier level. What might also happen is a relapse into comfortable cultural routines that were simply paused during the period of the project.

"It's very complex," says Sherjan, "although international partners try to make it simple. We have a long history, with lots of experiences and problems. Everything can happen only slowly. If we rush, then we have a problem."

Added to that is the feeling among people like Wahidyar that education reform is only possible when the benefits of education are

aligned with people's aspirations. What works for Vietnam, in other words, might not work in Afghanistan.

Signs of positive change are spotty but encouraging. Afghanistan has been a beacon of hope, having increased the number of students in school dramatically, from around 800,000 students and 20,000 teachers in 2001 to 9.3 million students and 205,185 teachers last year. From no girls in school, Afghanistan's students now comprise 38% girls.

There have been unintended positive consequences of the same as well. "We are able to notice changed dynamics at home," says Sherjan. "Students who are also mothers come to us and tell us how their husbands have more respect for them. We are glad to be here, as part of the change." ⓘ

Peace Education Begins with Teacher Sensitization

It cannot be taught with lectures, instead should be integrated into the classroom environment, says **Chintan Girish Modi**

Chintan Girish Modi is a writer, educator and peacebuilder. He works with the Chennai-based non-profit Prajnya on their Education for Peace initiative. He is at peace.prajnya@gmail.com

Have you noticed that education is widely believed to be an uncontested indicator of development, whether you are talking to a policy wonk, a vegetable vendor, or a social entrepreneur? Unfortunately, the conversation about education is often too dominated by issues of access to make way for a rigorous consideration of quality.

We cannot afford to ignore the reality that skills in literacy and numeracy do not equip a person with the knowledge and disposition required to live peacefully in a globally connected world that is struggling with violent extremism. Going to school or completing a university education does not necessarily make a person appreciative of cultural diversity, or free of prejudices based on race and religion. It is not uncommon to read about people with college degrees being recruited to carry out terror attacks that result in mass murder.

This is where peace education comes into the picture. Though it seems like a new-fangled concept, it shares continuities with the work that families, communities, educational

> 66 **It would be unrealistic to expect all schools to carve out a separate slot in their timetable for peace education. A more pragmatic approach would be to integrate them into the culture of the educational institution."**

institutions, social movements and spiritual traditions have been doing for a long time. The National Focus Group Position Paper on Education for Peace published by India's National Council for Educational Research and Training in 2006 spells out that peace education involves "nurturing in students the social skills and outlook needed to live together in harmony," "reinforcing social justice," and "education as a catalyst for activating a democratic culture."

These objectives seem beautifully aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that lay out guidelines and targets to be adopted by all countries of the world by 2030. The SDGs emphasize quality education as well as peace, justice and strong institutions. They expect signatories to focus on education that promotes a culture of peace and non-violence, human rights, gender equality, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity. They call for an end to all forms of violence against children including abuse, exploitation, trafficking, and torture. They also uphold the rule of law and protection of fundamental freedoms, apart from advocating for capacity building to prevent violence and combat terrorism and crime.

How can these seemingly lofty ideals be brought into the classroom? It would be unrealistic to expect all schools to carve out a separate slot in their timetable for peace education. A more pragmatic approach would be to integrate them into the culture of the educational institution by encouraging respectful communication between all individuals, rewarding behaviour that stands up against discrimination, and creating opportunities to address contemporary issues that are polarizing in nature. It is also possible to approach subject content through the lens of the values outlined above so that students can engage with them in context.

Peace education cannot manifest into reality without pre-service teacher training and in-service professional development that begin with an introduction to peace education, followed by a deep dive into topics such as stereotyping, conflict resolution and non-violent communication. It is equally important to focus on the pedagogical approaches that foster creativity and invite participants to embrace challenge. Peace education would be terribly boring if done through the lecture method. What makes it come alive is a mix of hands-on activities,

games, theatre exercises, and audio-visual learning experiences that are followed by reflection and discussion.

Teachers are experts on their own classrooms, so it is disrespectful to talk down to them. What they need is some support in building a critical awareness of their own context and teaching practice, and thinking of ways in which they can model compassion, nurture dialogue, facilitate co-operation, draw in multiple perspectives, allow for democratic decision-making, include the excluded, resist hate speech, and offer alternatives to violence.

Peace education is not the responsibility of classroom teachers alone but also includes workshop facilitators, librarians, community workers, development professionals, policy makers, parents, and others who engage closely with children and young people in formal and informal learning spaces. They can learn from each other, share resources, collaborate, and grow stronger from being nourished by a community. Development can take place only if we invest time and energy into being better allies for a peaceful world. ⓘ

Education Beyond the Norm

This issue's photo feature looks at education that lies outside our conventional ideas of the term. While the word brings to mind a classroom, four walls, rows of desks on which perch unruly children trying to catch the teacher's attention, it is sometimes very different from that.

From an experiential classroom to computer education for seniors, these pictures expand our idea of education by challenging our assumptions.

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1 Part of a wall doubles up as the blackboard of an outdoor classroom in Bararumja Village, Nigeria.
Photo by Tanawat Likitkererat

2 In an Indian village, children learn through their community's vibrant arts, crafts and performances.
Photo by Shiksharth

3 Children learn through activities that use local materials—in this case, modelling using local clay.
Photo by Shiksharth

4 On a sidewalk in Manila, a homeless child has created her own Styrofoam desk.
Photo by Tanawat Likitkererat

5 Senior citizens enjoy learning about computers at a Philippine centre.
Photo by Rosena Roman

6 Young monks working on their assignments in Tak Province, Thailand.
Photo by Tanawat Likitkererat

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Minding the Mind

EDC helps students through various programs in education and livelihood and with its special programs on mental health, ensures all-round well-being, notes **Ian Jamotillo**.

According to the World Health Organization, an estimated 300 million people of all ages globally suffer from depression. However, most of us still overlook such conditions and the importance of mental health in our lives.

Improving mental health and preventing suicide are just two of the many initiatives of Education Development Center (EDC) which also focuses on out-of-school learning, youth development and substance abuse prevention and treatment. With a mission to improve learning around the world, EDC aims to expand mental health awareness through comprehensive education programs.

Founded in 1958, EDC is a non-profit organization that has been designing, implementing and evaluating programs in more than 80 countries to provide access to education, promote health, and expand economic opportunities across nations.

"EDC started 60 years ago with the aim of utilizing education towards global development. For the past decades, our work has expanded outside the United States particularly in Asia, where we are currently working in the Philippines, Indonesia, Thailand, Laos, Vietnam,

> **People find comfort in recognizing that someone is saying something they relate to, That's why I speak up. I don't hear a lot of people talking about their own experiences with violence, trauma, and mental health; even though I know they have something to say."**

Adam Swanston
Senior Prevention Specialist
SPRC, EDC

Cambodia and Myanmar," said Nancy Wallace, chief of party for MyDev, the Mindanao Youth for Development project, one of EDC's core projects in the Philippines that caters to out-of-school youth by introducing them to the workforce and to community development activities.

Known for its contributions in the field of science, mathematics and social sciences, EDC has become a pioneer in the use of technology such as interactive audio learning and enhancing health services in different countries.

In addition to literacy and basic education, EDC aims to improve mental health awareness. In the United States, for example, one in five adults, (equivalent to 43.8 million) experiences mental illness in a given year. Research also shows that adults with untreated mental illness face an increased risk of having chronic medical conditions and they die on average 25 years earlier than others.

"When we talk about mental health, we don't just focus on the impact of the disorders. We also talk about improving skills training and inclusion for people with mental health issues," said Rebecca Stoeckle, vice president, health and technology, EDC.

Among EDC's projects related to mental health is Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) Online Coach, a website that includes seventeen evidence-informed tools to help individuals manage the symptoms of stress and PTSD, often the result of serving in the military. The project aims to focus on war veterans from Iraq and Afghanistan, 20 percent of whom are affected by PTSD.

The EDC-operated Suicide Prevention Resource Center (SPRC) seeks to end suicide among teenagers and others, many of whom are dealing with untreated mental illnesses. Suicide is the 10th leading cause of death in the United States, claiming 40,000 lives each year. SPRC intends to provide practical assistance, training, and materials to increase knowledge and capability of professionals to serve people who are at risk of suicide.

"People find comfort in recognizing that someone is saying something they relate to," says EDC's Adam Swanston. "That's why I speak up. I don't hear a lot of people talking about their own experiences with violence, trauma, and mental health; even though I know they have something to say." Swanson, a suicide attempt survivor, is now senior prevention specialist at EDC's SPRC.

By its basic definition, education is a process of receiving or giving systematic instruction or knowledge, especially in a school and university. But for EDC, the goal is creating and testing learning experiences that lead to deep understanding and an ability to act thoughtfully. EDC works to build sound foundations in mental and physical health, in addition to literacy, science, and mathematics. ⬤

Learn more about
Education Development Center at
http://www.edc.org

Photo by Supriya Biswas (Ten Photos to Shake the World 2017)

Simple Math or Complex Equation?

Results-based financing in the education sector

Results-based financing is being touted as the next big thing in development. It is in line with the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (2005), which emphasizes managing projects to results.

Education has traditionally staved off the model, as results in education rarely follow a simple equation. In most cases where the need is dire , it is a complex interaction of many factors, which are not easy to reduce or predict outcomes for.

However, traditional modes of aid have not worked too well, either. In the face of decreasing international aid to education (it has remained stagnant since 2010), it becomes imperative to ensure best use of funds, as well as recognize local solutions. Results-based financing also gives a level of autonomy to the service provider, enabling them to create programs that best serve their beneficiaries.

The World Bank committed at the World Education Forum in 2015 to doubling results-based education lending to US$5 billion by 2020. The Asian Development Bank has, similarly, introduced a results-based lending model where 46 percent is earmarked for education-related projects.

As innovations such as impact bonds—which spread the risk to funders who are compensated if the results are met—make inroads, iMPACT takes a step back to discuss what results-based financing really means for education, from various perspectives.

Katie Malouf Bous
Senior Policy Advisor - Public Services, Oxfam International

"Risk of funding directed away from those who need it most."

Results-Based Financing (RBF) is increasingly popular among aid donors and multilateral agencies who are under pressure to justify their investments from their taxpayers and boards, and who want to see faster progress toward the SDGs. While the sense of urgency and the orientation toward results are important and appropriate, the means of getting there may not be.

There are serious concerns that the RBF approach deepens inequalities in access to quality education and undermines local ownership and accountability to citizens. As UNESCO's most recent Global Education Monitoring Report pointed out, ensuring "upwards accountability" of education systems to international donors risks supplanting the more crucial "downwards accountability" of governments and schools to their citizens, communities and parents. RBF risks becoming an overly simplistic reduction of a longer term democratic process, more likely to end in easier-to-achieve, less sustainable outputs and outcomes.

Perhaps most troubling, when funding is used to reward or punish schools based on test scores, RBF can cause funding to be directed away from high-poverty schools and districts that serve the most marginalized children, as socio-economic factors have a strong influence on learning outcomes. Rather than inject extra resources in high-need schools, RBF could starve them of funds, deepening and reinforcing existing systems of inequality, social segregation and stratification and undermining education's great promise as an equalizing force in society. This is especially the case where output-based aid approaches prioritize private schools – rather than build equitable and sustainable public education systems.

RBF can create perverse incentives that lead to other unintended consequences. For example, when education funding is linked to test scores it has resulted in schools cheating on test scores (as in the U.S.), cream-skimming or expulsion of undesirable students, as well as teaching-to-the-test and other classroom practices that undermine holistic learning.

Yet these concerns, and a very weak evidence base, donors are uncritically pushing ahead with RBF. For example, in 2015, the President of the World Bank announced a doubling of its results-based lending for education to US$5 billion by 2020.

Instead, donors would do better to align their resources with local education priorities and help governments build robust public education institutions, push for open budgets and the sharing of school data that is relevant to communities, and fund mechanisms for citizen oversight and community participation to demand high-quality and well-funded schools. These strategies are more likely to ensure that aid helps leverage quality education for all.

Louise Savell
Director, Social Finance UK

"Results-based financing increases autonomy for service providers"

Governments and donors spend billions on education in low and middle income countries each year but the link between this spending and outcomes – ensuring all children are in school and learning – is too often unclear. Numerous studies have shown that children leave school without basic skills and that increased funding for education does not necessarily lead to better outcomes.

New approaches are needed in education which strengthen the link between spend and outcomes, and demonstrate the value of investing in education. Social Finance has been

exploring results-based financing (RBF) as a way to build this link and improve the impact of education spending. While RBF has been more commonly used in other sectors, particularly health, the approach can work well to drive improvements in education access and quality too.

RBF for education can give service providers space to find local solutions. Traditional, input-based development funding assumes that it's possible to know upfront what works and how to take successful interventions to scale. Contracts tend to make it hard to change course if programmes do not have the intended effect. In reality, local needs vary and adaptation of even the most evidence-based approaches is needed to make sure

children access and stay in school, and are learning.

Because RBF contracts focus on outputs and outcomes, rather than inputs, space is freed up for local autonomy and adaptation. Indeed, the degree of contractual autonomy that service providers have is proving to be a key factor in determining how successful RBF projects are.

Of course RBF is not without risks and challenges. Contracts with service providers must be well designed and implemented to avoid perverse incentives and to ensure that the benefits of the approach are realised. If the financial risk to service providers is too great, or contracts require reporting against pre-defined inputs, their ability to innovate may actually be constrained.

Where providers are not able to take on the financing risk, impact bonds could be a solution: leveraging pre-financing from investors that assume some or all of the outcomes risk and are compensated if projects are successful.

Outcomes Funds for Education – as centres of funding and expertise around commissioning, contracting and evaluating RBF programmes in education – could have a game-changing effect on global education outcomes. More donor and government funding for outcomes-based approaches would enable the skills of private sector providers and investors to be harnessed to innovate, adapt and scale effective programmes to the benefit of children and young people across the world.

Anurag Behar
CEO, Azim Premji Foundation

"Dangerous to tie financing to results in complex systems like education"

At a very simple level, results-based financing should not be done. Not just that, I think it's potentially deeply damaging to the system. Both the processes and outcomes in education comprise such complex human interactions and concepts that they cannot be reduced to a simple measurement, without causing multiple levels of unintended consequences.

When this sort of reductionist results-based approach does not work even in relatively complex business roles —can you imagine this being applied to incentives of an HR role, for example—how can it possibly be done for a complex system such as education? Reduction of education into a few metrics can be very dangerous, and incentivizing their achievement even more so, as it might lead to

lopsided resource allocation and narrowing of efforts.

Not just financing, in education, tying anything, such as rewards, promotion to educational results, is problematic. The notion that learning outcomes should determine things —how much a teacher is paid, for instance—is dangerous. It leads to greater inequity, poorer quality, narrowing of curriculum, teaching to the test and corruption of the system.

Enablers such as infrastructure and availability of books can be measured and used for decisions on financing, and there is no conceptual issue with it. For instance, one could measure the number of toilets in a school, or the nutritional content of the meal students receive, provided that the entity is involved in providing the resources.

Working in the space of

education requires both patience and a deep understanding of the issues surrounding it. As more people enter the philanthropic space, their understandable desire is to ensure that their money is being put to good use. The likely disconnect is that their worldview is more mechanistic, one that implies a direct causal relationship between funding and impact. The truth of the world is that systems are often organic, complex, unique and human in nature, and reductivist logic may end up doing more harm than good. As told to iMPACT. ⓘ

IT TAKES A VILLAGE:
Hyperlocal Library Resources Show the Way

Tech-enabled libraries are not enough; collaboration between different stakeholders and communities imperative to delivering an enjoyable reading experience to every child, says **Suzanne Singh**.

What made Muhamadreza Bahadur extend his hands to StoryWeaver, an initiative with its roots in India, to translate stories to his mother tongue, Southern Kurdish, an endangered language? What motivates the volunteers of Book Dash to create new African storybooks that anyone can freely translate and distribute? What inspires Maharani Aulia to write dozens of stories and translate over a hundred titles from English to Bahasa Indonesian? What excites the people of Tamarind Tree to work tirelessly to democratize knowledge and technology for the benefit of tribal communities?

The Mother of All Tongues

In several post-colonial societies like India and Africa, English has retained the position of the "language of opportunity," while native languages have moved to second or third language status in classrooms (and have been kicked out of boardrooms)! Imagine the impact of this on a child who enters the alien environment of a school that attempts to teach her in English, a language she has little or no exposure to. The wide-eyed child who is innately curious and itching to learn and explore, is provided with a restrictive diet of learning in English with limited content in her mother tongue.

GEM report 2016 states, "In multi-ethnic societies, imposing a dominant language through a school system has frequently been a source of grievance linked to wider issues of social and cultural inequality." With as much as 40% of the global population not having access to education in a language they speak or understand, this issue of lack of linguistic diversity in children's books is a serious concern.

> **Weaving a brighter future for our children calls for a collaborative effort between various stakeholders to take stories to every child in their schools and communities."**

Limiting access to good quality, affordable story books in multiple languages hinders early acquisition of critically important reading and writing skills amongst children. Prioritizing equity and lifelong learning for all requires investment in learning resources in mother-tongue languages. Studies have also shown a link between bilingual programs and lower dropout rates along with higher test scores[1].

Hyperlocal Libraries: Your World, Your Books

One of the many ways of addressing the scarcity of quality children's literature in mother tongue languages is through the creation of delightful reading materials in local languages, set in local contexts. However, the children's book publishing industry is largely driven by demand-based economics, to the detriment of creating books for economically weaker groups, where the profit motive is low. Thus, creating a new model in publishing to address the literary inequities that exist globally—not enough children's books in not enough languages, with issues of poor access—is imperative. A model that combines the power of technology and collaboration can help solve this book drought.

Consider a unique innovative publishing model: a digital repository of multilingual stories for children that not only gives free and open access to reading resources, but also provides collaborative tools that allow users to adapt the content to their needs. This flexible content delivery model allows for multiple use cases including online reading, books being printed and used, providing content to other digital applications, and conversion into Braille books.

StoryWeaver is one such platform, featuring a stream of diverse, quality open-license content from publishers like Pratham Books, African Storybook Project, BookDash and Room to Read. This is also the base for further versioning and translation. With 7000 stories in 107 languages, it can act both as a large repository of multilingual content for children as well as a customized hyperlocal library based on language, reading level, age or theme/genre. By creating a participative framework, it catalyzes the creation of more content in mother tongue languages and provides greater degrees of inclusive access to it.

Collaboration is Key

Providing every child in the world with a book that he or she can read, understand and enjoy is the responsibility of the community, and cannot be resolved by one organization or individual. Weaving a brighter future for our children calls for a collaborative effort between various stakeholders to take stories to every child in their schools and communities.

It needs several entities to join hands—people like Muhamadreza and Maharani Aulia; organizations like The Asia Foundation which organizes events to create openly-licensed STEM books in local languages; initiatives such as BookShare, the world's largest online library of accessible e-books; and communities like Suchana, who develop supplementary reading material in Adivasi languages like Kora and Santali, where no children's literature existed earlier. And of course, it requires far-thinking policy makers to fight for inclusive language education policies.

Stitching together a tolerant, socially cohesive future for our children is a common global goal. This pursuit might find its answer in the creation of reading material that doesn't discriminate children, irrespective of their background or region.

Suzanne Singh has been associated with Pratham Books since its inception in 2004. She was the managing trustee of the organization from 2010 and has been chairperson since January 2014. She also serves on the boards of Akshara Foundation and United Way Bengaluru.

[1] https://www.unicef.org/cambodia/12633_17787.html

Leadership is for People Like You and Me: Coach Wouter

Mahatma Gandhi's words to his compatriots to "be the change you want to see" were revolutionary in his time. And they still are, especially for those who still believe that leadership is only for people with positions of authority in government, business and society. However, as times have changed, so has the understanding of what leadership means, who can be leaders, and how to lead in practice.

Known as an inspiring leadership trainer, Wouter Lincklaen Arriëns (Coach Wouter) started TransformationFirst.Asia in 2013 as a leadership practice based in Singapore. While his focus is on Asia, his clients come from around the world. Coach Wouter worked in development projects across Asia and has influenced positive change for over three decades.

After growing up in the Netherlands with a degree in tropical land and water management, he came to Asia in the early 1980s with a passion for bridging social divides by connecting people and facilitating collaboration.

He speaks with iMPACT's **Ian Jamotillo** on leadership in the twenty-first century, and its attendant promise and challenges.

iMPACT: Coach Wouter, why did you decide to become a coach and trainer?

Coach Wouter: Working in development projects with UNICEF, the Mekong River Commission, and the Asian Development Bank, I learned that it is not enough to understand the issues we deal with and then design more strategies, projects, and action plans. To actually get from A to B we need people with leadership abilities who can help us to do it. Most of the people I met did not have any leadership and communication training. As a result, many lacked the confidence and the skills to influence change. That's why I shifted my focus from technical issues to bringing out the best in people through leadership training and coaching. I wish I knew at age 30 what I am teaching about leadership now.

Why did you move to Asia?

I have always been attracted by the rich diversity of cultures in Asia and by the collaborative spirit of people in this part of the world. Learning by sharing experiences and working together is a perfect way for innovations to start. Leading positive change is not only about more technology and finance. It is about building on a holistic— and I would say even spiritual— understanding of life. That is where Asia has always led the way.

With millennials comprising most of today's population, what do you think sets them apart from the older generations in terms of leadership?

There is no doubt that millennials are at the cutting edge of the changes we need in this time. They combine

a "can-do" attitude for creative problem-solving with an understanding of the need for sustainability. Still, I hear a lot about the tensions between millennial managers and older executives. Creating new approaches for collaboration between them is an urgent challenge that needs both learning and unlearning. That is a priority in my training and coaching work.

Do youth today have an edge when it comes to leadership?

Young leaders have less "baggage" to unlearn, so they can grasp the need for new solutions more quickly. Some young leaders in their teens are already influencing global changes, like Melati and Isabel Wijsen with their Bye Bye Plastic Bags campaign that started in Bali. They also explained that youth is a mindset, which is good news for the rest of us, who still have big visions for change. We need a beginner's mind, as Zen master Shunryu Suzuki said.

How do you think leadership is empowering business to become sustainable?

We cannot see leadership as separate from people like you and me. What we need to do is to grow more leaders at all levels of the organizations. Then there is no limit to the changes we can influence for sustainability, because people want it, because it makes business sense, and because the costs of not complying to stricter regulations will become too high.

What do you think is the biggest challenge corporate businesses, organizations and non-profits face now?

I have heard many experts say that the biggest challenge lies in using more and smarter technology, big data, and artificial intelligence. While these are important, they also keep distracting businesses from investing in their most valuable resource, which is their staff. In top technology leader Google, none of their five keys for team success has to do with technology. All five are about people, trust, and collaboration. Investing more in people will reduce inefficiency, boost productivity in teams, and drive innovation. In most businesses today, however, staff engagement remains low and teams perform far below expectations. The biggest "bang for the buck" comes from investing in your staff and in collaborating more closely with partners, customers, and stakeholders.

Any advice or tips for emerging leaders, start-up businesses and new players in the development and business sector?

Remember how airlines tell you to put the oxygen mask on yourself before helping others? It's the same for leadership. You need to invest in expanding your own leadership skills first, and then you can grow more leaders around you, so that everyone can become a leader of positive change. 🛈

You can read more about Coach Wouter's work with executives and emerging leaders in Asia at www.transformationfirst.asia.
He welcomes your leadership questions—send them to coachwouter@transformationfirst.asia.

Leave Nothing But Footprints:
A Quick Guide to Sustainable Tourism

By iMPACT Staff

We've all seen the memes: a beach cove, the pristine aquablue waters shimmering in sunlight like stars on the water, and almost-white sand that feels like cotton beneath your feet, the picture labelled, "The Brochure." Next to it is another image, that of teeming crowds, like a waddle of penguins facing the sea, most of them looking at the scene through their phones, hoping to find that perfect picture that the brochure promised, labelled with the word "Reality," rendering the whole scene a heart-wrenching metaphor for life itself.

Something is clearly wrong with the picture and we chuckle, but come summer, we ache to visit places far away from "home" travelling thousands of miles to experience a world different from ours.

People are travelling like never before, and consequently, polluting like never before too. Accounting for approximately 5% of all global carbon emissions, travel and tourism is a significant contributor to climate change, with air travel causing the most emissions, followed by car travel.

Sustainable tourism is growing, as more people become aware of their own ecological footprint. While traditional "sustainable tourism" had the environment as its focus, it now includes social and cultural paradigms as well.

iMPACT takes a look at how one can travel responsibly and sustainably, while enjoying the sights and sounds that a destination has to offer the tourist. After all, it is one of the few areas where being sustainable is, most of the time, less expensive that following the unsustainable path!

1. **Travel slow:** While the plane is the fastest mode of transport, carbon emissions from air travel are rising in absolute terms, and they form the major chunk of emissions due to travel. If it's possible to take a train to your destination, do so.

2. **Research your destination and accommodation:** Look up your destination on sites such as Ethical Traveler, to know more about your destination. For instance, Oslob's whale shark watching has come under a lot of flak for the damage to the wildlife population, and it's possible to look for alternatives if you plan and research early on.

3. **Ask questions:** Does the hotel use solar power? Do they source local food? Do they employ young children? These are questions you might want to ask before you book your hotel.

4. **Plan to remain sustainable at the destination:** Very often, we consider a vacation time off from being sustainable as well. Resist that thought. Plan ahead like you would at home. Pack a few large tote bags and reusable water bottles, for instance.

5. **Shop local:** It might be interesting to check out familiar chains and labels, but shopping local helps artisans and small businesspeople with tourist money. Sample local food and local culture while being mindful. Similarly, for accommodation, homestays are usually locally-owned and help the local economy.

6. **Be sensitive:** Always ask for permission before photographing people. Remember to check local customs and act accordingly.

7. **Spread the word:** Most important, after you return from your trip, post your experiences, so that friends and family can be inspired to have a green clean holiday as well. 🛈

Ethical Traveler's The World's Ten Best Ethical Destinations (2018)

COMPARATIVE DEGREE:

The Case for Validating Vocational Education

If a country has to reap its economic dividend, the vocational education system needs an overhaul led by the government, says **Jainee Nathwani**.

Jainee Nathwani is a Senior Manager, Business Development, at Excelus Learning Solutions (a division of Quess Corp Limited). Prior to joining Excelus, Jainee was engaged in implementation of various projects in the social sector, particularly in skill development, livelihoods, education, and gender empowerment.

The facts of a growing skilling ecosystem across the globe, and specifically in India, are well known to professionals in the development sector. Be it the large number of skilled manpower requirements (estimates of over 100 million people in India by 2022), or the skill gaps identified across sectors/ regions; the skilling space in India has been constantly evolving.

However, this evolution is happening in a society that has traditionally given importance only to education. Getting a degree, followed by a post-graduate degree has been the set standard for youth to ensure a good job.

The skill development sector has still not reached these set benchmarks of aspiration nor rewards; the youth do not consider them valuable enough, nor does the industry. Added to the mix are the ever-changing industry dynamics where the focus has moved on to understanding Industry 4.0 and the future of jobs.

This begs us to pause and consider where we want to go, and the best way to get there.

While there has been significant action on improving access to education and training in India, the quality gap persists. There is evident mismatch in the demand for and availability of education or skills. For example, in India, 15% of those with a diploma or certificate are unemployed, compared to 25% of people with a graduate degree within the 18- to 29-year age group. However, in terms of sheer numbers, there are far greater number of options available in lower skilled roles, which is not an aspirational career.

The design of current skilling programs targets school dropouts or those with minimal educational qualifications—say, Grade 8 or Grade 10. At the end of the employment-linked skill development course, usually three to six months in duration, the youth does land a job, but due to lack of aspirations or required inputs, the course doesn't generate a career path for him. Consequently, the youth doesn't stick at that job for a long time. And that is an issue, and one that is not talked about very often.

At some point in their career, the lack of a proper educational qualification may become a hindrance to the vocational student's career growth, perhaps because the employer's mindset is also attuned to a college degree.

In order to address the qualitative and quantitative challenges of skilled

The youth of tomorrow, regardless of location, must be **future-ready**.

labour availability, the government must adopt an integrated approach to education. There is a pressing need to develop seamless pathways for skill development through formal education and vocational education. Allowing the workforce to undertake relevant skill development (formal or vocational) measures and providing multiple entry and exit options in the technical and education domain will be key to ensuring successful career growth and matching of industry demands. The well-known German dual system model has proved the potential and success of integrated education and skill training. The skilling ecosystem system's integration with the traditional educational system will pave a lifelong learning career path for the youth.

The concept of profile education at the upper-secondary level (the last two years of schooling, Grades 11 and 12) may also be introduced in schools, which would provide students the opportunity to study a chosen area in depth, usually one that would be related to their further study (TVET or academic). Schools could design their own profiles—science, socio-economics, humanities, and technology—or keep a general orientation curriculum. A similar approach is being undertaken by the Russian Federation wherein vocationalization of secondary schooling has been introduced within the framework of general educational reform.

In developing economies, where maximum employment is often in the informal sector, the concept of Industry 4.0 may seem too far-fetched. However, the youth of tomorrow, regardless of location, must be future-ready. Our youth need to learn the continuously changing skills of automation and robotics; and therefore the onus lies with the government to promote continuous learning with a focus on innovations in the ecosystem at every level of the work profile to ensure growth.

Finally, as we talk of providing employment and training to millions of people, separate skill development programs focussing entirely on development of entrepreneurs is necessary, with appropriate forward and backward linkages. ⓘ

Trevor Baylis

Trevor Graham Baylis, an English inventor known for his wind-up radio and pioneering sustainable design has peacefully passed away on March 5, 2018 at the age of 80.

Inspired by a television program on the spread of HIV/AIDS in Africa in 1991, Baylis realized the lack of life-saving information due to the rarity of electricity and batteries at that time. He then came up with an old-fashioned wind-up gramophone to solve the communication woes.

Baylis' wind-up radio used cheap, non-polluting batteries to ensure durability and sustainability. His invention, despite facing challenges like being turned down by manufacturers paved way for him to be awarded the BBC Design Award for Best Product and Best Design.

Some of his creations include devices that support people with disabilities like one-handed bottle openers and foot-operated scissors as well as electric shoes that charge mobile phones through walking.

In 2003, Baylis established his "Trevor Baylis Foundation" to encourage people develop new products and advise them on protecting their ideas. In 2011, he was involved with international aid and development community, AidEx where he served as an ambassador and judge for the Aid Innovation Challenge Award which seeks unique inventions impacting the delivery of aid.

Baylis' inventions are a testament on the importance of balancing social, ethical, environmental and economic ideas in the design process. Despite his death, his legacy towards tackling global issues through sustainable inventions will surely remain and will inspire people to create creative solutions that will make an impact to the world. ⓘ

Not Another Teen Mommy

Amina Evangelista Swanepoel's Roots of Health tackles Philippines' urgent problem of teenage pregnancy at its source, providing educational resources on reproductive health and much more, finds **Ian Jamotillo**.

In the Philippines, there are 24 babies born to teenage mothers every hour, or one every 2.5 minutes. According to the Philippine Statistics Authority, one out of ten Filipino girls aged 15-19 are already bearing their first child. While most countries in the world are looking at declining teenage pregnancies, it has increased in the Philippines. Teenage pregnancy has been disabling lives of young Filipino women, and it is a problem exacerbated by a lack of education and available resources.

Amina Evangelista Swanepoel and her organization, Roots of Health, are working toward changing all those statistics. Swanepoel was recently recognized by Ashoka as a 2017 Fellow for her work in women and youth empowerment.

Roots of Health has one goal—to end teenage pregnancy and lead young Filipino women toward a better life. Fuelled by a passion to educate women, Roots of Health aims to halt teenage pregnancy through comprehensive sex education while providing basic maternal health access to teenage mothers.

Two factors further complicate the issue: The Philippines is a deeply religious country (over 80 percent are Catholic) and the legal age of consent for sex is twelve, one of the lowest in the world. The country's Reproductive Health Law, with many positive aspects including better access to resources related to pregnancy and reproductive health, are mired in controversy.

Roots of Health, however, soldiers on. In fact, their headquarters are in the province of Palawan, widely regarded as one of the worst when it comes to reproductive health. Statistics reveal that 25 percent of pregnancies in the

capital of Puerto Princesa are teenage pregnancies. Last year, 18,000 women were given contraceptives.

The organization does not stop with providing contraceptives. In partnership with Philippines' Department of Education, Roots of Health aims to educate young girls on unwanted pregnancies by introducing comprehensive sex education in the school curriculums. According to Swanepoel, the sex education program should incorporate all aspects of sexuality from procreation to relationships.

"When we're talking about reproductive health, we just don't talk how a baby is made or how a contraceptive works. We talk about relationships, like what are the warning

signs that you may not be in a good one," Swanepoel says.

When talking to young people, they ask the young girls if they are able to talk to their partners about sex. "Because if you can't talk to each other about sex, you shouldn't be having it," she adds.

Besides promoting inclusive sex education, Roots of Health also trains barangay or district officials on passing ordinances related to contraceptive use. Roots of Health is also spearheading the allocation of budget to contraceptives, pre-natal vitamins and registration of women with high-risk pregnancy in PhilHealth, the government-owned universal health coverage.

It was a simple confession that paved the way for the birth of Roots of Health. When Swanepoel's

> ❝ If you can't talk to each other about sex, you shouldn't be having it."
>
> Amina Evangelista Swanepoel, Founding Executive Director of Roots of Health

mother Susan Evangelista was a professor at Palawan State University, she would often hear young girls admit to being pregnant.

"What frustrates her (my mother) is the fact that girls couldn't even tell her what happened. They couldn't say that they had sex, they would come up saying that their boyfriend came over and something happened and now they're pregnant," says Swanepoel.

The conservative and religious nature of the Philippines is preventing schools from adapting sex education wholeheartedly but Swanepoel believes that proper education is the only way to stop young girls from being pushed into unplanned motherhood.

According to Swanepoel, for the country to solve teenage pregnancy,

parents must embrace sex education to their child and should be age appropriate—ideally starting at first or second grade.

"You just answer their questions as simple and honest as you can. Most of the time, they're not looking for long explanations. They just want to know where the baby comes from," she says.

Roots of Health plans to soon expand to other provinces, and underserved areas by undertaking contraception mission trips where the team visits far-flung areas and provides contraceptives to young women. ⓘ

Roots of Health is at www.rootsofhealth.org

ADVICE TO SOCIAL PROJECTS

- It's always good to start small and go slow.
- It is important to know what exactly you are providing.
- Focus on monitoring and evaluation; find out what the base line is. You have to able to measure if anything has changed based on the programs you are implementing.

We Have to Reverse Our Priority

Yuhyun Park, DQ Institute

Yuhyun Park is a woman on a mission.

The CEO and founder of DQ Institute, Park has committed to ensure the safety of children online, no mean task, considering the results of the latest study by the institute. The 2018 DQ Impact Report, released in February, surveyed 38,000 children aged 8-12 years in 29 countries, and found that more than half of them were exposed to cyber-risks. Added with social media use, the cocktail becomes deadly: children who use social media spend around 39 hours per week online, and their cyber-risk is 20 percentage points higher than children who do not own mobile phones.

Speaking to iMPACT from Singapore, Park says the report is a wake-up call to realize the enormous danger that children are under. "We think, very benignly, that children will be okay, which is not the case," she says. A lot of education on this topic is ad hoc, and mostly prohibitory, which does not quite work, she says.

Park, a World Economic Forum Global Young Leader, Ashoka and Eisenhower Fellow, and recipient of two awards from UNESCO, and a doctoral degree holder in biostatistics from Harvard University, seems best placed to solve the threat that faces children today, and through the DQ Institute, the

Digital Citizen Identity
Ability to build and manage a healthy identity online and offline with integrity

Privacy Management
Ability to handle with discretion all personal information shared online to protect one's and others' privacy

Screen Time Management
Ability to manage one's screen time, multitasking, and engagement online with self-control

Critical Thinking
Ability to distinguish between true and false info, good and harmful content, and trustworthy and questionable contacts online

Cyberbullying Management
Ability to detect cyber-bullying situations and handle them wisely

Digital Footprints
Ability to understand the nature of digital footprints and their real-life consequences and to manage them responsibly

Cyber Security Management
Ability to protect one's data by creating strong passwords and to manage various cyber attacks

Digital Empathy
Ability to be empathetic towards one's own and others' needs and feelings online

DQ CITIZENSHIP

> ❝ Good leadership has to be mindful of not just connectivity but whether human beings are ready for the connectivity.❞

solution seems available. The DQ Institute is an international think tank committed to improving digital education, culture, and innovation. Its program for children enables them to gain "digital intelligence," the basis for safe and enriching experiences online.
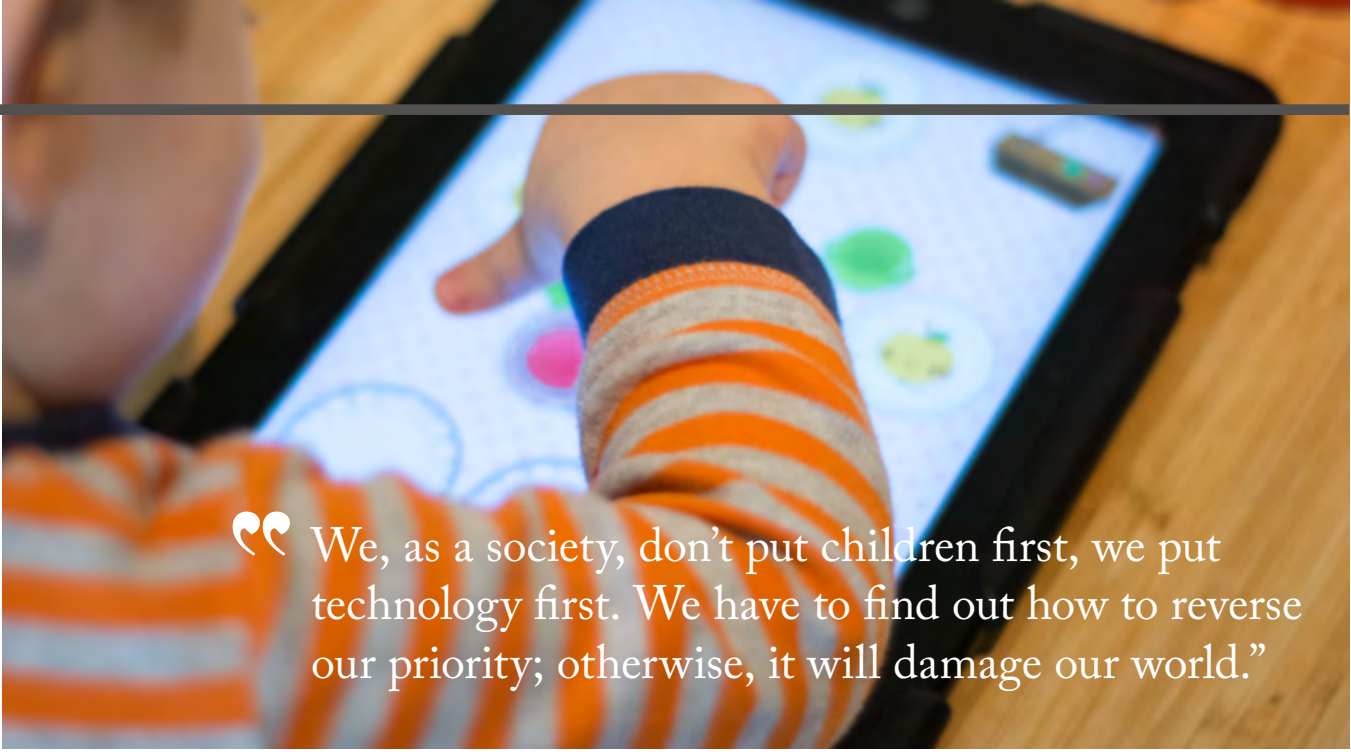
DQ Institute has its roots in Park's NGO, infollutionZERO, whose program iZ HERO, was a precursor to the current DQ program. Park's program received a shot in the arm in 2016, when the World Economic Forum partnered with infollutionZERO. In 2017, the program #DQEveryChild was launched and piloted in 30 countries.

In a freewheeling chat with **Meera Rajagopalan**, Park talks not just about what she dubs the "cyber-risk pandemic", but also about challenges in getting countries to think along the lines of cyber-security.

iMPACT: Ms. Park, how did this journey with digital quotient start? What about it made you explore it?

Yuhyun Park: About ten years ago, I started research on the topic of child safety online. I realized, at the time, that what was being passed off as individual cases, with people saying, "Oh, this child is addicted to the internet," was actually a societal change, an industrial change. I realized that empowering children is the most urgent thing, as shaping the industry was not possible, at least not easily. We also realized that the available programs were ad hoc, and that trainers were very few. It was as if the children received a cookie, instead of a full meal. The program was developed as a response to that, initially as part of my NGO, infollutionZERO, and later as DQ Institute, in partnership with the World Economic Forum.

> **We, as a society, don't put children first, we put technology first. We have to find out how to reverse our priority; otherwise, it will damage our world."**

Tell us a little bit about the framework.

The framework has been thoughtfully developed, with activities and gaming that will interest children.

The framework is basically divided into three levels of digital intelligence: digital citizenship, digital creativity and digital entrepreneurship. Eight digital skills have been identified which the initial citizenship program seeks to provide children (See graphic: Ed.).

Parents and teachers support the curriculum, which is largely student-led, and the learning is flipped. While there were no assessments available, we created universal standardized assessments. Through our portal, www.dqworldnet, a child could be anywhere—in any school in any country in the world, and they can get assessed in real time.

We would like to provide this solution to nations in a strategic way. What we would like to emphasize is that this is really an urgent issue and we have a short window to move on it. Whenever new technology moves in, children are targeted first. If we don't put in these principles in the concept stage, the children are in grave danger.

How do you work with countries who are at different levels of internet penetration? Does your strategy vary?

We've seen that in most countries, the difference is in the awareness of the leadership. Singapore, for example, understands the issue and wants to put out the academic research and understand it in a systematic way. However, in many countries, the focus is on development, and unfortunately, its effect is less of an issue. Leaders often tell me, "Let me have the connection first—we'll talk about this later." Then, they look for digital skills. The process, from study to policy, takes three to five years, by which time new technology has arrived.

Good leadership has to be mindful of not just connectivity but whether human beings are ready for the connectivity.

How do you work with your partners? Do their specific needs come into the picture?

We are very flexible, and work with partners on a one-on-one basis. Our focus is not making money. If we had any other agenda, we might not have been able to be so

flexible. Our focus is #DQEveryChild and our mission is clear.

We have, in fact, made many changes based on feedback from our partners. For example, in Australia, the school systems are federal and run by individual states and we made the program more modular.

Your task is not just about reaching the education to children; it's about letting people know there's a problem in the first place. How do you get the word out there that this is important and needs to be looked into?

Yes, we do have a daunting task ahead. The World Economic Forum has been a great megaphone for the work. Our partners help get the word out there as well. This is a responsibility of everyone: parents, teachers, national and global governments. We are, however, seeing a lot of interest in our work within the past year. I can confidently say that this is the highest quality program of its kind in the world, and the least expensive.

We, as a society, don't put children first, we put technology first. We have to find out how to reverse our priority; otherwise, it will damage our world. 🛑

For more information, please visit www.dqinstitute.org

GEAR SHIFT TO AUTOMATIC

Developing economies must consider an automation-pervasive future when redesigning skilling courses, writes ADB's **Stephen Groff**.

MANILA – A knitting factory in Bangladesh brings together the past, present, and future. On one floor, workers knit by hand. On another, people and machines do the work together. And on a third floor, there are only robots.

This building might seem like an anachronism, given the accepted wisdom that robots will replace humans in textiles and many other industries. But it is actually a savvy response to how the Fourth Industrial Revolution will likely play out in Asia. As is the case elsewhere, technological advances are rapidly transforming industries and economies, by blurring the boundaries between the physical, digital and biological worlds.

And yet much of Asia isn't ready for robots, for reasons that go beyond fears of mass unemployment. In 2014, China had just 11 robots per 10,000 employees in non-automotive industries, and just 213 per 10,000 employees on automotive assembly lines. That is hundreds fewer than in Japan, the United States or Germany.

Although China is closing the gap by increasing its spending on robots, poorer countries face significant barriers to adopting new technologies. Moreover, the region's lower wages give firms an incentive to retain human workers. At the factory in Bangladesh, human workers can step in if power outages or equipment failures knock the machines offline. At the same time, having a fully automated section allows production to continue if workers go on strike.

Conventional wisdom decrees that this dual-track approach isn't sustainable, and that low- to middle-skilled workers will eventually make way for robots. The International Labour Organization (ILO) has warned[1] that 56% of total employment in Cambodia, Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam is "at high risk of displacement due to technology over the next decade or two."

But these grim predictions ignore the fact that most jobs comprise a bundle of tasks, some of which cannot be automated. According to a

Stephen Groff is Asian Development Bank's vice-president for East Asia, Southeast Asia, and the Pacific.
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[1] http://www.ilo.org/actemp/lang--en/index.htm

Governments should ensure that TVET courses focus on more relevant skills, while remaining flexible so that students can study without sacrificing income.

2016 OECD study that breaks down occupations by task, only 9% of jobs on average across 21 OECD countries are really at risk. Street sweepers in developing countries are arguably less threatened by automation than their counterparts in developed countries, because their jobs are less mechanized and lower paid.

Still, robots are gaining a foothold in the region, particularly in economies such as China and South Korea. In 2015, robot sales in Asia increased by 19%[2] – the fourth record-breaking year in a row. When less-developed Asian countries eventually join the technology bandwagon, layoffs will inevitably ensue.

To soften the blow, governments urgently need to pursue labour-market reforms and overhaul their education systems, starting with technical and vocational education and training (TVET). Although TVET is becoming increasingly popular in Asia's developing economies, its quality is often poor. Governments should ensure that TVET courses focus on more relevant skills, while remaining flexible so that students can study without sacrificing income.

One option is to expand the availability of modular short courses, which take less time, train for specific tasks rather than entire jobs, and are more manageable for entrants who need, first and foremost, to earn money. In Myanmar, for example, the government has launched a pilot program to target the country's "missing million" students who drop out of school each year. The program offers short courses on welding and other skills needed to repair rural machinery.

Competency-based assessment systems could also be particularly useful, given Asia's large informal workforce. Programs offering skilled workers a chance to earn certifications based on their work experience would allow for, say, uncertified electricians to find formal employment in robotics.

The private sector can also help produce more graduates with job-ready skills. Asian countries should take a cue from India's National Skill Development Corporation, which works with private training firms to match skills curricula with industry needs. So far, India's program has helped train more than 63,000 people[3].

Furthermore, governments should offer subsidies or tax incentives to companies that invest in the skills that humans master better than machines, such as communication and negotiation. They will also have to adopt more flexible labour regulations, because firms won't hire skilled workers who cost too much. At the end of the day, Asia's developing countries need policies that support workers, rather than jobs. All parties can benefit from flexible contracts and lifelong learning and retraining opportunities.

Retraining is particularly important, because automation will create entirely new industries and occupations. The McKinsey Global Institute estimates[4] that automation could boost global productivity growth by 0.8-1.4% annually, generating large savings and performance gains for businesses. Improving access to training and certification would help countries capitalize on these advances and ensure more equitable growth, by giving workers the skills needed to handle the new jobs.

That outcome would be good for workers and for Asian economies. It would mean that businesses like the factory in Bangladesh could operate solely with robots, while its former workers would be gainfully employed elsewhere, most likely in jobs that don't even exist yet. ⓘ
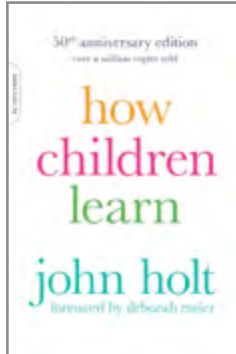
[2] https://ifr.org/ifr-press-releases/news/asien-installiert-70-prozent-mehr-industrie-roboter

[3] https://www.nsdcindia.org/industry-partnership-csr

[4] https://www.mckinsey.com/global-themes/digital-disruption/harnessing-automation-for-a-future-that-works

Six Books to Change Your Perspective on Education and Learning

How Children Learn (1967/Revised 1983)

By John Caldwell Holt

The book offers teachers and parents a deep insight into the nature of early learning while centering on Holt's interactions with young children and his observations on how they adapt to learning. There, he posits that children learn most effectively by their own motivation and on their own terms and that parents should provide information only as and when requested.
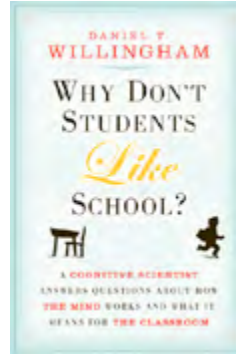
Why Don't Students Like School?: A Cognitive Scientist Answers Questions About How the Mind Works and What It Means for the Classroom (2009)

By Daniel T. Willingham

Cognitive Scientist Dan Willingham aims to help teachers improve their practice by explaining how they and their students think and learn. His book explains the importance of story, emotion, memory, context and routine in building knowledge and creating lasting learning experiences.
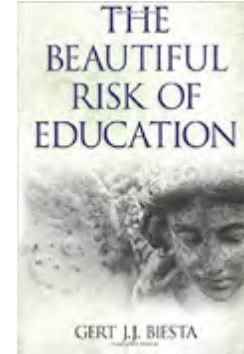
### The Beautiful Risk of Education (2014)

By Gert Biesta

Gert Biesta reveals the truth about education outside the comfort zone in the book, which puts forth seven key educational concepts: creativity, communication, teaching, learning, emancipation, democracy and virtuosity, and talks about how real education starts with a single risk.
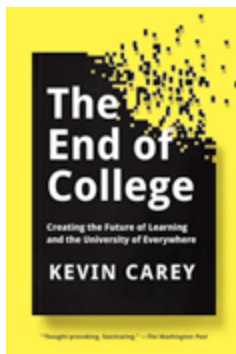
The End of College: Creating the Future of Learning and the University of Everywhere (2015)

By Kevin Carey

Kevin Carey, an education researcher and writer explores the future of education and how two trends—the rapidly increasing cost of college and the revolution in information technology—can alter the college experience around the world.
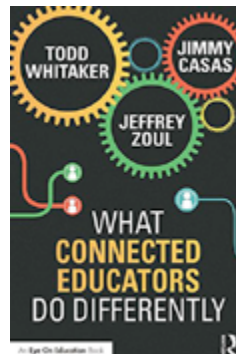
What Connected Educators Do Differently (2015)

By Todd Whitaker, Jeffrey Zoul, and Jimmy Casas

The book discusses the effect of technology such as social media and how educators can use it to build a strong network of professionals, leading to enhanced learning in classrooms.

Making Classrooms Better: 50 Practical Applications of Mind, Brain, and Education Science (2015)

By Tracey Tokuhama-Espinosa

The book details brain-based education science and current educational research to expand student learning outcomes such as creating an optimal classroom climate and maximizing metacognitive skill development.

BUILDING AND CROSSING BRIDGES

An excerpt from "Listening for Well-Being: Conversations with People Not Like Us" by **Arun Maira**

Hardcover: 216 pages
Publisher: Rupa Publications India (2017)

I n 1845, American philosopher Henry David Thoreau built himself a simple cabin beside Walden Pond in Massachusetts, so that he could retreat from the chatter of society into solitude and gather his own thoughts. He had only three chairs in his cabin. One, he said, was for solitude; two and three were for conversation and society respectively. On one, he could sit to read and write, and watch the trees turn golden in the autumn, the geese settle on the pond as winter approached, the flurry of snow outside, and the trees turn green again in the spring. Sitting on that chair, he could also listen to his own thoughts detached from others, while the seasons changed, undisturbed by him, outside.

RICHNESS AND REACH OF CONVERSATIONS

I would now like to introduce a conceptual map of conversations, which has two axes. Along the north-south, or vertical axis, I plot the 'richness' of conversations. Up on top are shallow conversations in which participants merely share data about their surroundings. Deep down are dialogues in which minds and hearts are connected.

Conversations are shallow when merely data is exchanged. 'It is raining outside.' 'India beat England in the cricket test match yesterday.' They go deeper when opinions are shared. 'I think it rains too much in England.' 'I think the English team is playing very poorly.' Our opinions begin to reveal our feelings. Conversations go even deeper when we begin to explain why we feel the way we do. 'I become very miserable when it rains so much.' 'I think the country is in bad shape when English teams keep losing in sports.' Deeper conversations invite explorations into participants' psyches and their histories: 'who they are' and 'where they are coming from'.

Along the east-west or horizontal axis, I plot the 'reach' of conversations—i.e. the number of participants in the conversation. At one end is a person in a conversation with his own mind—like Thoreau in his solitude. Further to the right are two, then three, and on the extreme right of the horizontal axis are millions of people in the world.

Shirley Turkle has used the metaphor of Thoreau's three chairs to explain how social media is weakening the fundamental structures required for good conversations in her book Reclaiming Conversations: The Power of Talk in a Digital Age. I will also use Thoreau's three chairs to explain the concepts of 'richness' and 'reach' in conversations to make a map of different types of conversations.

Thoreau, sitting on his chair beside the window, looking at the pond, and
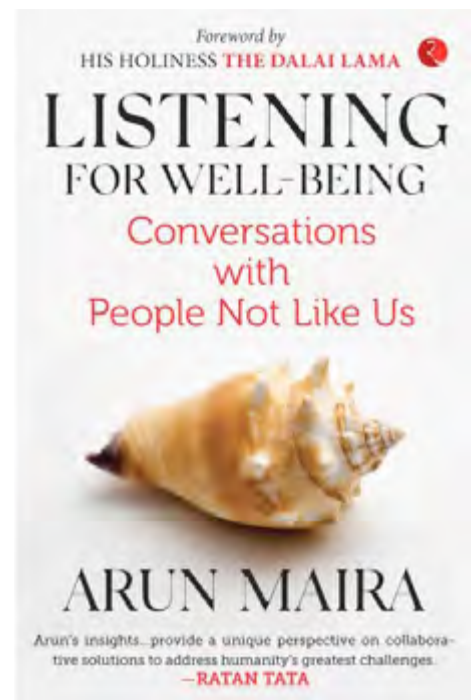
Arun Maira

There is a trade-off between the richness of conversations and their reach. Social media does give immense reach for conversations, in which millions, even billions, can be connected. However, social media is polluting the calm spaces we need for deep conversations.

THE QUALITY OF CONVERSATIONS
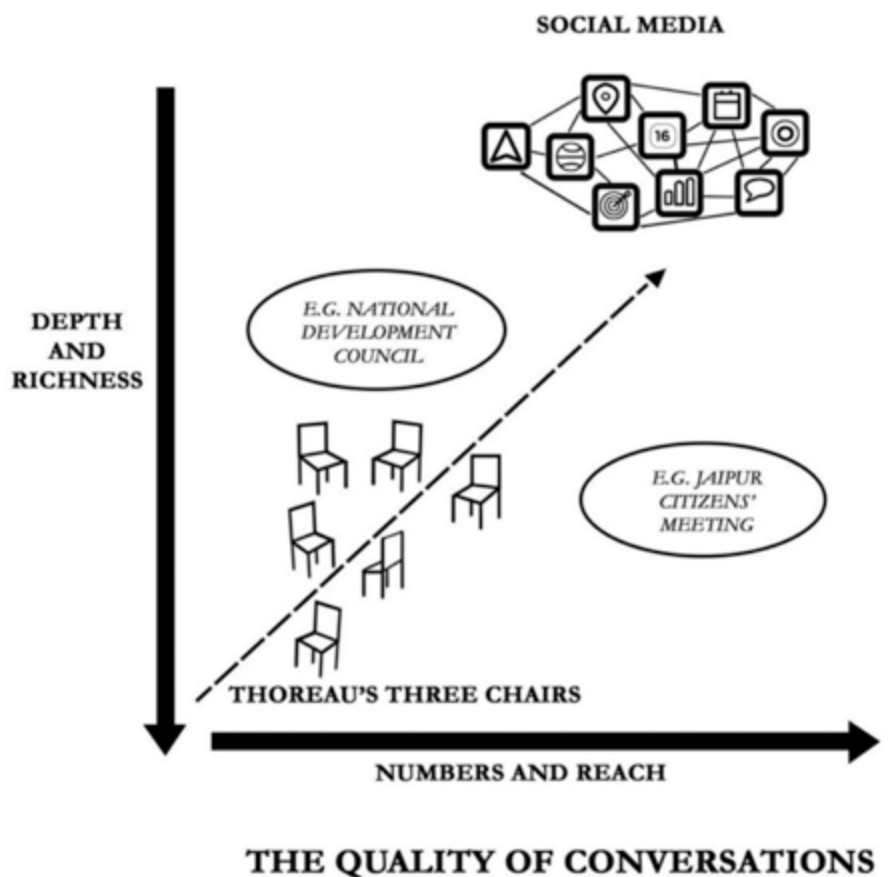
listening to his own thoughts, is at the bottom and left corner of the map. Nearby, at the bottom left corner of the map, are deep conversations on the three chairs in Thoreau's cabin. On the top right corner is the Internet, with billions of people connected and gigabytes of data floating around. Somewhere in the middle of the map, between the intimate conversations in Thoreau's cabin and the millions tweeting on the Internet, are the many meetings and seminars in which dozens and even hundreds of people gather to discuss something that matters to them. Conversations in some of these meetings, such as the meeting in Jaipur described earlier, have more depth than some others, such as the meetings of the NDC, also described earlier. Therefore, meetings designed like the Jaipur meeting would be deeper down in the map, closer to conversations on Thoreau's three chairs, than to the pro forma meetings of the NDC.

There is a trade-off between the richness of conversations and their reach. Social media does give immense reach for conversations, in which millions, even billions, can be connected. However, social media is polluting the calm spaces we need for deep conversations. The intrusion of tweets, images and messages from everywhere, with our 'always active' smartphones, even when we are alone, alters the structure of the conversations in our minds. We hear more data. We cannot listen to our own thoughts.

I indulged myself one evening, after a seminar in a dark conference room in a Mumbai hotel, to sit quietly in the roof- top restaurant for dinner, and watch the sunset fading over the Arabian Sea. A young man and woman sat on the table next to mine. Then another woman joined them. Thoreau's three chairs, I thought. Except that they had the Arabian Sea and a warm sunset outside, instead of Walden Pond and snow. The waiter lit a candle on their table, brought champagne in a bucket, and poured three flutes for them. They raised their champagne flutes, looked up from their smartphones for a few seconds at each other, said 'cheers', and quickly returned to their smartphones to find out what was happening in the world elsewhere. They didn't seem interested in what was happening in each other's hearts and minds. ⬤

Tomayto, Tomahto:
Ideas for Intercultural Learning

Educators must create classrooms with cultural diversity, and doing so need not be difficult, writes Julia Taleisnik, while offering five simple ideas for educators to achieve the same.

Every day, international, national and local news confront us with a world where intolerance, preconceptions, ignorance and fear of differences are on the rise. Violent attacks in Europe and Asia, the British vote to leave the European Union, and increased discrimination across the world all point to intolerance toward people "not like us."

Closer home, we encounter families who dress, eat, think or pray in a way we aren't used to. Children and teenagers, with their innate curiosity, ask who they are, why they act the way they do, and why these differences exist. Children may, in school, deride those who are different, and in the worst scenario, they may isolate or discriminate against students who come from different backgrounds, cultures or religions. Teachers and parents face such situations more and more frequently—and they must be ready to provide answers and take actions to address these challenging situations.

That's why educational institutions have a key role in developing intercultural and global competences of our students. These competences, explains Darla Deardoff, executive director of the Association of International Education Administrators, a U.S. professional organization based at Duke University, give individuals "the targeted knowledge, skills and attitudes that lead to visible behaviour and communication that are both effective and appropriate in intercultural interactions."

INTERCULTURAL LEARNING IN THE CLASSROOM

Many educators are passionate about intercultural learning, and some become AFS volunteers to learn more about this topic. Intercultural learning and global citizenship are interconnected, and they are both important for entire education systems because they can impact the entire learning ecosystem in myriad positive ways.

By using the existing resources and with a bit of creativity, teachers can incorporate elements of intercultural learning in their lessons. Here are five ideas to integrate intercultural learning in classrooms:

1. Explore what intercultural learning is all about.

Teachers can be change agents in schools that are open to integrating intercultural learning into their classrooms. This is not a cliché: on the contrary, a teacher who is really committed to the topic can make a strong impact on their students, one step at a time. Websites such as www.afs.org/education explore the idea and provide resources for the same. The websites of UNESCO and UNICEF are also great resources.

2. Use the news for reflection and debate in the classroom.

Global citizenship and intercultural competences are practiced every day – so you can start by facilitating discussions about the news to explore these topics. Look through social media or explore international and local news in other media outlets. Pick a news story, get thoroughly informed about the topic and create a list of questions relevant for your students to reflect on, respond to and propose change actions. For example, you can ask: What is this story about? What happened and why? Which values are being challenged? What do you think can be done to resolve this problem? With the right questions, even a subject that initially might seem distant can be seen as a common problem and inspire empathy in students.

3. Design engaging activities to transform the classroom.

Experiential learning works best if the learner finds it emotionally engaging. Activities that tackle intercultural and global citizenship education best should engage learners on the cognitive, emotional and behavioural levels. We in AFS agree with UNESCO's position that all students should understand key concepts, but they should also explore situations that focus on values and create a feeling of shared humanity, which will have a positive effect on their behaviour. Coming up with such situations in which students can reflect and experiment is a challenging task for the teacher, but it is also very rewarding.

4. Invite organizations with relevant competencies to facilitate an intercultural learning workshop

Organizations such as AFS have developed high quality workshops for students to learn about culture, diversity, stereotypes, and much more, from an experiential perspective. These workshops are facilitated by trained volunteers; they have clear educational goals; and can be adapted for different durations and local contexts.

5. Use the existing diversity in the classroom to learn about different cultures.

Diversity can be found in every classroom in the world. It can be a useful resource for teachers to teach culture and diversity and for students to get to know and relate to each other better, exploring what they have in common and ways in which they are different. By reflecting on the diversity within the classroom, students will become more conscious that they don't have to cross national borders to experience diversity.

Being creative and using the available resources is key, because there are plenty of ways to address this topic and make classrooms more intercultural. Exploring diversity within the classroom does not just make for interesting learning; it also paves the way for a more inclusive, resilient and positive learning environment.

Julia Taleisnik (@julitaleisnik) is a volunteer development director for AFS Argentina & Uruguay and an International Qualified Trainer for the AFS Intercultural Link Learning Program.

Eight Steps to a Kill-'er Donor Report

By Meera Rajagopalan

The end of the financial year can only mean one thing at non-profits: the heat transfers from the accounts department to the communications department (using the word loosely—it's usually one person).

You're called to the office of the head. No pressure, you're told, but the fate of the thousands of beneficiaries depends on the quality of the annual/donor report. Right. No pressure.

Fear not, for iMPACT has you covered.

STEP 1:
The Search

Who doesn't Google? Enter "best annual report <insert appropriate year>" or "Sample annual report template". If you're like most, the relevant links will already be in purple (yes, you/your predecessor looked at them just last year). After wading through reports with killer graphics and excellent design, save them all on the computer under the folder "Reference".

Feel accomplished and treat yourself to a cup of green tea. Surely, green means sustainable?

STEP 2:
The Visualization

This can be the next day. Open all the sample reports, and visualise the report. Call your go-to-designer (or if you're extremely lucky, your in-house designer) and mail across the sample reports. Wait for quote. Twiddle thumbs. Imagine receiving accolades and saying, magnanimously, "It was all teamwork!"

STEP 3:
The Reality

If you have an in-house designer: She calls you over, and looks at you pitifully Cannot be done, she says simply. Not in the timeframe you've given her. You haven't mentioned timelines yet, but that's just standard response.

If you are working with an external designer: An email arrives and even as you open it, your heart sinks. There are more digits in it than you imagined. Write back, deflated, "What can this budget buy me?" You will receive a sample that looks suspiciously like a Word document converted to a PDF. Lower your expectations and say, "OK."

STEP 4:
The Numbers

Now, the content. This includes facts and projects and financials and other voluntary disclosure, such as the lowest and highest paid staff member. (Statutory warning: The latter might cause heartburn.)

You will also need data: you will want to use cute infographics, but prepare yourself for pie charts and bar graphs, just in case.

Solicit data, which usually arrives from the field in a wide variety of formats: Word, Excel, captured images on a cell phone, recorded audio, tied on pigeon feet... you get the idea. Pass it all on to the graphic designer in the original format if you are brave. Else, transcribe everything to a standard format. A cup of caffeine is recommended. Green tea won't work here.

STEP 5:
The Testimonials

The next step is the most evocative part of the report: testimonials (really, there should be a better word for this, but "voices" sounds too other-worldly and "perspectives" seems to suggest a murkier side to the quote).

Call the person on location and ask him/her for testimonials. Send detailed guidelines and tips. Here's how a typical testimonial will look:

<Name without an initial, mostly nickname> is a student of 8th standard. He says he is very happy with the services provided by *<your organization>.* "I really like the activities of *<your organization>.* I thank *<name of person who is sending you the testimonial>* for his tireless work."

So, basically, visit the project(s).

STEP 6:
The Coalescence

Pull everything together. Make sure to have pitchers of caffeine on hand.

Label everything properly and send across little notes to the designer. At this point, say a prayer of thanks if you have an in-house person who does it for you, tantrums notwithstanding.

This is the calm before the storm, when you can attend to all the Facebook/Twitter posts you missed during your crazy annual report prep time.

Three design options may come in. One will be the obvious worst, so the other two will automatically look attractive. Choose one—doesn't matter anymore. Like vehicles in the rear-view mirror, the upcoming deadline is closer than it appears.

STEP 7:
The Review

The final design will arrive just in time. You might open it with some trepidation—that's normal. It looks okay, except you notice that all the photo captions are wrong. Infographics are pie charts (which means you allowed yourself to dream); the colours are too bright; the chosen images don't go with the text. All of a sudden, you feel the need to run away.

Breathe. Now would be a good time for green tea (it has its uses). Painstakingly note down all edits and send it back.

STEP 8:
Control+P

Just send it out to print. And wait for the sure dollars that this piece of communication will magically elicit. Saw an error? Just hope no one else did. A picture does not match? Rest assured that no one reads anything other than the Financials page anyway!

So, there you have it. A super-dupe-'er annual report in just eight simple steps! ⓘ

This column is purely for humour and does not represent any organization, current or past. Please send any brickbats, dollars, and alternatives to the word "testimonials" to the author at meera@asianngo.org

7 Things to Prep Before Launching a Crowdfunding Campaign

By iMPACT Staff
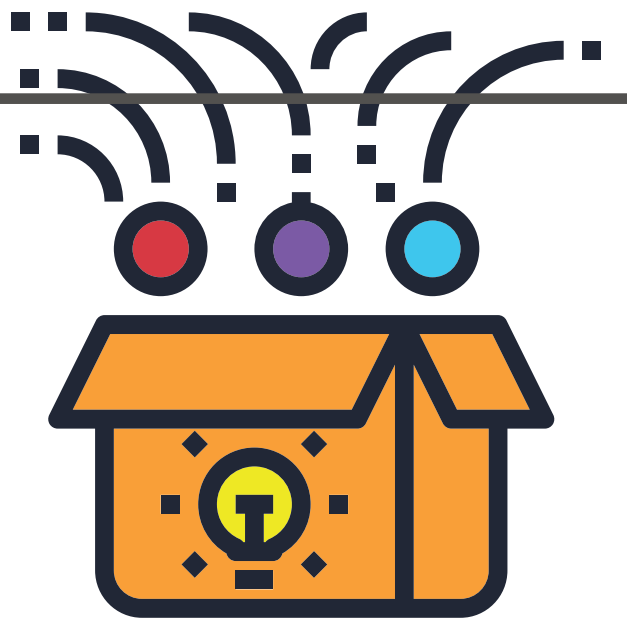
Crowdfunding is growing steadily, as more people want to be personally in touch with the people they donate to. The Technavio report, "Global Crowdfunding Market 2017-2021" estimates that this market will grow steadily at a compound annual growth rate of around 17% to 2021.

Fundly, a crowdfunding site for causes, businesses and nonprofits, estimates that the sector will grow to $300 billion by 2025. While this includes peer-to-peer, IPO and non-profit spend, it is clear the development sector is poised for growth over the next few years.

For a non-profit, crowdfunding for a cause can seem very attractive. After all, it's only a few clicks of the mouse, and the expectation is that money simply clangs in on its own. However, it does require a lot of planning and Fundly estimates that its most successful campaigns took about 11 days of planning. What might that planning entail? iMPACT has some ideas!

To create that perfect campaign, here are the ingredients that you need to prepare.

S: Zone in on the campaign specifics:

If you are fundraising for child nutrition, create a campaign for a particular event/activity. "Medical camp in Quang Nam province" rather than simply, "Improving child nutrition in Vietnam".

A: Get the detailed ask ready

Get the specifics of the ask down pat. If you want to raise funds for your social enterprise, attach a business plan. If it's for a birthday party at an orphanage, drill down to as much detail as possible (Cake/refreshments/entertainment estimates, for instance).

M: Collate media

Get relevant pictures and videos ready. Update pictures if they are from an earlier time.

R: Research your platforms

There are a plethora of crowdfunding options available. Do your research to see which one might suit your purposes best. Platforms are also a reflection of the funders. IndieGoGo attracts a lot of millennials wanting to fund creative and new ideas. Milaap in India is focused on social funding. Remember that cheapest is not always the best, nor is the costliest. Do a sample donation on the site and evaluate user experience.

O: Offer options

Remember that not everybody is comfortable donating online, nor might they want to spend on the processing fees. Consider creating an overall campaign, with several options for donations, to capitalize on momentum.

U: Decide on updates

Updating a donor on what has happened since they donated is a no-brainer; yet, it's amazing how many people fail to do so, simply because they wait for something substantial to report. It's good to have a planned update schedule, even if something is not complete. Simple pictures with captions will do, but it's important to keep in touch with the donors.

F: Keep the plan flexible

Sometimes, things go as planned and sometimes, better than planned! Keep a Plan B ready, in case either your campaign is not doing too well, or has raised the funds within the first few days itself! You can choose to up campaign efforts or create co-campaigns, depending on the case.

It's no coincidence that the acronym, rearranged, reads: FOR A SUM!

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