



Foundations come together around “Learning for Well-being”

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The vision of “Learning for Well-being” aims at realising the unique and full potential of children through the development of their mental, emotional, physical and spiritual aspects in relation to self, others and the environment. It means children can develop holistically, in diverse environments that support well-being for all. Children who are nurtured and grow in this way are far more likely to nurture and take care of themselves, other people, and the environment, which will make all the difference in how they live as individuals and in their shared environments. Well-being is of central importance to human life.

With this powerful vision as its focus, the Learning for Well-being Consortium of Foundations in Europe helps support this concept for societies across the globe, in partnership with other stakeholders. The Consortium was established by a group of foundations convened by the Universal Education Foundation (UEF) in 2009.

Well-being is increasingly on policy agendas, partly due to the disquieting observation that increasing wealth in Western societies (though still very unevenly distributed) has not led to happy, flourishing lives. Foundations are acutely conscious of enormous inequalities between North and South, as well as societal, economic and environmental challenges that call for profound changes to our mindsets, attitudes and practices. In recent years, identifying and measuring well-being has become a prominent theme for organisations such as the OECD, UNICEF, the EU and other international players. Promot-

ing the “well-being of its peoples” is one of the aims of the EU Treaty.

Focussing attention on the well-being of children and young people is especially important because they are vulnerable, have special needs that differ from those of adults, and their voices are not easily heard, especially in our over-communicated society. Childhood is an important part of life, not merely preparation for adulthood. Too often children have restricted opportunities to engage in shaping their own learning environments, together with the adults that care for them. Nurturing their capacities to take responsibility for their own well-being and respond to the challenges of the 21st century is a big responsibility for all of us.

The vision of the Consortium builds on key international references that, taken together, give a definition of “Learning for Well-being”

that is holistic and gets to the heart of what it is to be human. We refer to the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) because it emphasises children’s rights to achieve their full potential and participate in decisions that affect their lives. Our vision reflects the “four pillars of learning” defined in the 1996 report to UNESCO by



Consortium session on 1 June 2010 in Brussels during Children and Youth Day.

the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century, entitled "Learning: the Treasure Within" – learning to know, learning to do, learning to be and learning to live together. It supports the World Health Organization definition that, "Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, not merely the absence of disease or infirmity." The vision "Learning for Well-being" also supports the Council of Europe's platform for achieving social cohesion through "well-being for all".

Establishing the Consortium

Starting in 2006, a number of foundations convened by UEF, which developed this vision for worldwide application, started meeting around this topic at the EFC's conferences. These organisations decided they wanted to work more together, which led to workshops in Paris and Berlin in 2008. To understand better how the participating foundations were all contributing to children's well-being, a survey of 12 foundations in Europe and the Middle East was undertaken prior to the Berlin workshop.

The Consortium was officially established in 2009 with strong support of the EFC, and was guided by Raymond Georis, Chair of UEF, who has supported so many innovative ventures by foundations. The founding group, who are members of the EFC, come from different European countries and work with children and youth in different contexts: Bertelsmann Stiftung, Evens Foundation, Freudenberg Stiftung, Guerrand-Hermès Foundation for Peace, Robert Bosch Stiftung and UEF. The Consortium's Chair is Daniel Kropf of UEF, and the Vice-Chair is Corinne Evens of the Evens Foundation.



Bertelsmann Stiftung's "Anschub" programme for good and healthy schools.

What does the Consortium do?

These foundations have come together to inspire and engage policy-makers and all stakeholders in Europe to listen more to children and young people; to invest in safe, happy and flourishing childhoods; and to take on more initiatives to make learning environments more conducive to well-being. The Consortium, in cooperation with Eurochild and the EFC's Children and Youth Group, organised the Children and Youth Day on 1 June 2010 in Brussels during the EFC's Foundation Week. At the event, the Consortium led a session on learning for well-being.



Guerrand-Hermès Foundation for Peace supports the Lewes New School, encouraging children to find their own spirit.

The main goal of the "Learning for Well-being movement" is to ensure that education and health lead to well-being. It emphasises the need for a change in mindsets and particularly a fundamental paradigm shift in the way we educate and care for children and young people.

To make headway we need to reach a tipping point working with a critical mass of partners from different sectors and organisations, with children and young people, and with the active support of the media, communities and families. It's imperative to create a culture of engaging children and young people as change agents in transforming their learning environments. Increasing the number of foundations that support this vision through their programmes is also critical.

Though well-being is increasingly present in European policy-making at all levels, recent work by the Consortium reinforces the observation that there is insufficient common understanding about what we



How the Evens Foundation programme the 'Playing Pond' created a splash!

mean by well-being. In response, we will focus our energies in the coming year on the following two major areas:

"Learning for Well-being" Policy Glossary

Based on the valuable policy-making tool, "European Perspectives on Global Health; A Policy Glossary", which was published in 2006 and supported by the EFC and some of its members, including UEF, Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, the Nuffield Trust and the Stiftelsen Riksbankens Jubileumsfond, we decided to launch a similar endeavour to develop a policy glossary for learning for well-being. Ilona Kickbusch, Director of the Global Health Programme at the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies in Geneva, led the first process and has been commissioned to author this policy glossary.

The glossary, which aims to provide conceptual understanding for policy-makers in Europe, will focus across sectors such as health, mental health, social affairs, and education, among others; draw on state-of-the-art and multidisciplinary research on well-being; and, crucially, will propose principles for policies and ideas about how



Universal Education Foundation's "Elham" programme in Palestine includes "The Greenhouse", a pioneering initiative to realise students' innate potential.

to make it happen. This work has received a grant from Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian. After a comment period, we hope to launch the final version in the early summer of 2011, both in Brussels and at the 2011 EFC Annual General Assembly (AGA) and Conference in Portugal.

“Learning for Well-being” Conference

In 2011 the Consortium will hold an agenda-setting conference in Brussels,

organised with young people, to support the “Learning for Well-being” vision and discuss the policy glossary. It will involve European and international institutions, national governments, foundations, business, research institutions and NGOs.

We are developing a charter for adoption by the conference as a declaration of common understanding of what is required for the diverse learning environments of chil-

dren and young people to be more conducive to their well-being.

www.eiesp.org/site/pages/view/60-learning-for-well-being-consortium.html

How Consortium members are promoting “Learning for Well-being”

Bertelsmann Stiftung

The Anshub programme (“good and healthy schools”), which aims at shaping healthy learning environments in schools, is implemented at 6 of the 16 regional Ministries of Education in Germany, through mixed public and private partnerships. Anshub links health and education, carrying out health interventions to achieve long-lasting improvement in the quality of education and learning, within an overall context of school development. Indicators of success include aspects of the learning and teaching process; leadership and management; and the school climate and culture.

www.bertelsmann-stiftung.de

Evens Foundation

The Playing Ponds, a toy library initiative for early childhood development and family well-being, supports parents and their young children in their neighbourhoods. Parents, often from immigrant families, meet in a space where their children can make friends and play together. Parents meet other parents, develop better language skills and build friendships, as well as their self-confidence about parenting. Children make friends through the interaction with other children and parents appreciate the space for their children to play together with carefully selected toys.

www.evensfoundation.be

Freudenberg Stiftung

The “one square mile” education initiative aims to improve the quality of children’s learning in a disadvantaged neighbour-

hood where Freudenberg has worked with an elementary school for ten years to create a strong prototype for quality education in schools with socially-disadvantaged pupils. The initiative aims to give pupils better life skills and ensure a better transition to grammar schools. It focusses on increased parental involvement in partnerships which contribute to a measurable improvement of learning and an improved development of children’s potential.

www.freudenbergstiftung.de

Guerrand-Hermès Foundation for Peace

GHFP supports initiatives in schools that encourage a proactive attitude towards learning, fostering a love of learning and autonomy as well as imagination, a sense of wonder and joy in discovery. The approach encourages children to find their own spirit and develop a sense of community, cultivating appreciation of and respect for others. The Lewes New School is developing an approach to learning using an open curriculum, conversation-based teaching in mixed-age classes, with a “no rewards, no punishment” approach, and the encouragement of parental involvement.

www.ghfp.org

Robert Bosch Stiftung

In 2006, Bosch and the Heidehof Foundation launched the German School Award (Der Deutsche Schulpreis) in cooperation with the weekly “Stern” and the public broadcasting network ARD to honour outstanding schools. The winners receive a

national accolade – 7 schools are endowed with 230,000 euros. The German School Award programme includes an academy for quality improvement in schools, which documents, disseminates and replicates good educational practices. Transfer of good practice and exchange is supported through scholarships for teachers, networking conferences and seminars, or through funds to groups of schools to develop innovative concepts.

www.bosch-stiftung.de

Universal Education Foundation

Elham Palestine is how UEF is making “learning for well-being” a reality. It’s a national programme (Gaza & West Bank) aiming at improving the physical, mental, psychological and social well-being of Palestinian children and youth, enhancing their learning environments to make them more conducive to the children’s well-being. It identifies, supports and disseminates innovative practices that make a difference and is supported by a multi-stakeholder partnership of government ministries (education, health, welfare, youth and sport), UNWRA, business, foundations, NGOs and many local structures. The programme nurtures entrepreneurship in the educational community, based on a belief in the capacity of local communities to make a difference in their own lives and to stimulate systemic change.

www.learningforwellbeing.org

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