



Learning for Well-being Consortium

Learning for Well-being Consortium of Foundations in Europe

*On the 1st of June, during the European Foundation Centre's 'Foundation Week' (www.efc.be), the **Learning for Well-being Consortium of Foundations in Europe** joined forces with the EFC Children and Youth Funders Group and Eurochild to organize a full-day event dedicated to **children and youth**. It consisted of three consecutive sessions focusing on different aspects of children's rights, participation and learning for well-being. As well as debates, there was a networking lunch where foundations could showcase their work with children and youth.*

You can read below a report on the session organized in the afternoon by the Consortium attended by about 45 representatives of foundations and their partners, government, NGOs and researchers.



Session organized by the: **Learning for Well-being Consortium of Foundations in Europe**

Why is 'learning for well-being' crucial in giving children and young people the capacities to take responsibility for their own well-being and to respond to the challenges of the 21st century?

During the session, the Consortium presented and discussed with the participants its vision and the first stages of its work. Some current programs of the member foundations, that are making children's and young people's diverse environments more conducive to their learning for well-being, were presented as illustrations of on-going work. The session ended with a short discussion about the ways other foundations and partners can participate in creating a movement towards 'learning for well-being'.

BertelsmannStiftung



What is the Learning for Well-being Consortium? What does it stand for?

Setting the scene, Daniel Kropf (UEF and Chair of the Consortium) and Corinne Evens (Evens Foundation and Vice-Chair of the Consortium) welcomed the participants and presented the Consortium, its history, how the foundations came together and the vision that they have adopted.

The **Learning for Well-being** movement emphasizes the need for paradigm changes, moving from standard educational approaches towards child-centered learning, from a focus on treating disease to one on well-being and from an over-concentration on developing the mind to valuing wholeness. To reach a tipping point we need to work with a critical mass of partners from multi stakeholder organizations, with children and young people, with the active support of media, ICT, communities and families so that the purpose education and health becomes the creation of well-being. (See Annex for PPT presentation). A leaflet presenting the Consortium was distributed.

Policy glossary: Learning for Well-being

The Consortium has launched a major project to develop a “policy glossary”, i.e. a conceptual and strategic framework to provide the basis of a common language for policy-makers at all levels in Europe, and to help create a shift in mindsets & practices. It is designed to reflect the state-of-the-art in knowledge & current multidisciplinary research (with a view to stimulating more transdisciplinary research), it will include principles for policy-making at different levels and suggest ideas about ‘making it happen’. The Consortium has commissioned Professor Ilona Kickbusch (<http://www.ilonakickbusch.com/home/index.shtml>) as the author. The first draft will be reviewed by a group of invited experts and the second draft by a broader group of stakeholders.

The presentation made by Garrett Thomson (Guerrand-Hermès Foundation for Peace) and Jean Gordon (Secretariat of the Consortium) underlined that one purpose of the session was to promote an inclusive, participatory process that becomes as important as the end result. (See Annex for PPT presentation). Participants were invited to say how they would like to participate and contribute to the Glossary.



In response to initial questions for clarification about the audiences, including a sample of case studies, how it will be launched and how it will be tested, consortium partners clarified that the primary audience is policy makers in Europe, in all the different sectors that have a bearing on children's lives, whether at EU, member state or local levels. The glossary will include some case studies, as relevant to different sections. It is to be launched in the early summer of 2011 probably both in Brussels during the first Learning for Well-being Forum as well as at the next EFC conference in Portugal as the work is supported by a grant from the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation. Testing will come after through working closely with policy- and decision-makers.

In the discussion that followed, a number of interesting issues were raised:

- It is important to consult young people in the development of the glossary. This can be done by contacting networks of youth organizations or institutions that work directly with young people.
- A background, stocktaking study undertaken by the Consortium demonstrates that considerable work is needed on developing indicators of 'personal perception'.
- Perhaps the terms 'child-centred' and 'child-focused' should be replaced with 'child-sensitive', as the former two imply putting someone at the centre and someone else on the periphery. We should think rather in terms of plurality.
- We should make explicit the meaning of a 'rich' child, meaning all their potentialities.
- It is important to exchange experiences and learning from countries and regions outside Europe as well, in order to benefit from international examples.
- Case-studies could be presented of how the well-being framework has been developed and put into practice, such as through the Elham program in Palestine.
- There is a discussion about whether the policy glossary should precede the establishment of 'learning for well-being' indicators or *vice versa*?
- Is it possible to *measure* well-being? Perhaps 'assess' is more applicable.
- Well-being is currently a term at 'surface-entry' that has economic & social policy connotations. We have to be sensitive to the economic case so it is important that, in the testing phase, policy-makers can be challenged regarding service provision. For early childhood, we should also involve the world of business.
- As an example of working with different groups to build an inclusive approach, the idea of organizing a 'Learning for Well-being' youth conference, to which youth leaders would be invited in order to showcase their work towards well-being, was briefly presented. A parallel objective would be to help them understand the well-being framework and ask them to help develop the Learning for Well-being movement.

Showcasing of foundations' initiatives

Following this discussion four of the member foundations (Evens Foundation, Bertelsmann Stiftung, Guerrand-Hermès Foundation for Peace and Universal Education Foundation) presented examples of their work focusing on how the initiative assisted children and young people to improve their well-being. The Freudenberg Foundation had presented one of their programs in the session organized by the Children and Youth Funders group in the morning and the Robert Bosch Foundation organised a session the following day.



Evens Foundation

- Maud Aguirre and Sofie Verlinden presented their toy libraries initiative for early childhood development and family well-being, called the Playing Ponds. They support parents and their young children in their neighborhood so that parents, often from immigrant families, can come together in a place where their children play together and they can meet each other and have discussions about concrete issues related to bringing up children, learn diverse ways of being with their children and playing with them and also benefit from on-site Counselors. Through the interactions, parents develop better language skills and appreciate the space for their children to play together and for them to build friendships with other parents and self-confidence. Participants at the session expressed their appreciation for this program and asked whether the local authorities had not tried to replicate it, which they had done but without success. (See Annex for PPT presentation).

Bertelsmann Stiftung

- Rüdiger Bockhorst and Peter Paulus presented the *Anschub* program, aimed at shaping healthy learning environments in schools. The *Anschub* program (“good and healthy schools”) is now implemented at national, regional and school levels. It is implemented by six out of the sixteen regional Ministries of Education in Germany through mixed public and private partnerships

and it links health and education by carrying out health interventions based on scientifically proven facts in order to achieve a long-lasting improvement of the educational and learning quality within the overall context of school development. Indicators of success include different aspects of the learning and teaching process; leadership and management; as well as the school climate and culture. Participants at the session asked about the difference between health and well-being, and how health contributed to good education. It was debated whether health is a promoter of a more comprehensive goal of well-being. (See Annex for PPT presentation).



Guerrand-Hermès Foundation for Peace

- Scherto Gill and Garrett Thomson presented their work on nurturing children’s well-being in two schools in Columbia and one in England. The presentation emphasized the importance of a caring culture, autonomy and parental involvement with a focus on educating the whole child, encouraging children to find their own spirit, a sense of community and cultivating values such as appreciating and respecting each other within a proactive attitude towards learning. They described the learning approach in the Lewes New School with its open curriculum, conversation-based teaching, mixed-age classes, adults modeling roles, parental involvement and no rewards or punishment. Several participants were touched by the way in which these learning environments foster a caring, loving and participatory atmosphere among students promoting their well-being. One participant referred to similar inspiring education initiatives in Sweden and other parts of Scandinavia. (See Annex for PPT presentation).

Universal Education Foundation

- Marwan Awartani presented the Elham Process in Palestine, a nation-wide program that aims at improving the well-being of children and making their learning environments more conducive to their well-being. He spoke about Elham’s work in stimulating partnership initiatives for systemic change, and shared examples of school environments where initiatives

were undertaken by teachers and pupils towards their well being. Elham is taking a holistic approach in terms of well being and the school environment focusing on the quality of human relationships, teaching and learning, psychosocial well being and engaging children and youth as active partners. The program is nurturing a culture of initiative within the educational community based on a belief in the capacity of local communities to make a difference in their own lives. The first call for nominations exceeded all expectations with 791 nominations of which 40 were selected for recognition by an adult and a youth panel. (See Annex for PPT presentation).

The final part of the session was a brief general discussion. Participants felt that the work of the Consortium is highly important as it is promoting systemic change so the Consortium needs to have a clear, shared narrative in order to bring others to join this movement. To reach a tipping point we need to bring on board many different organizations from diverse sectors of society. The importance of the Consortium working with young people was underlined.



At the close of the session, participants were invited to contact the Consortium if they are interested in contributing to this work on the Policy Glossary and the Learning for Well-being Forum which will be organised in 2011.

This short report is being sent to all the participants and will be posted on the webpage of the Consortium (<http://www.eiesp.org/site/pages/view/60-learning-for-well-being-consortium.html>)

If you would like more information, would like to meet us for a more in-depth discussion on how you get involved, and/or would like to be a reviewer for the second draft of the policy glossary, please contact the Secretariat:

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