

A West Midlands Coalition

The work of the Commission and those who contributed to the process have demonstrated that there is potential for a new framework initiative to take the agenda forward.

It is clear that there is considerable interest [and concern] among young people, teachers and the community at large about the global considerations which shape our lives ... and about the impact we have on others.

It is proposed that such a positive disposition should be the corner stone to building effective strategy.

The paper *Young people and schools in a globalised society* that has been widely used, is providing a focus for a West Midlands consultation. Ann McCollum in her evaluation of the first stages of that consultation process comments ...

"The work of the Commission has been highly valuable, in that it has contributed to capacity - building and begun to explore the opportunities and challenges of engaging in these issues on a regional scale."

A partnership with DfID and in particular the *Enabling Effective Support* initiative has provided the opportunity to develop substantial proposals for such a framework.

Enabling Effective Support (EES)

The Government White Paper on international development and the subsequent document *Building Support for Development* called for " ... every child to be educated about development issues so that they can understand the key global considerations which will shape their lives."

ESS is a DfID response to this challenge. It identifies the potential for a Regional framework to engage teachers and schools in new curriculum projects, the development of new materials, new networks, and new research and academic exploration.

The ideas are built up from key propositions that highlight the educational needs of young people growing up in an increasingly global context and the idea educational entitlements.

EES also proposes:

"That a global dimension, development perspectives and human rights principles have a crucial part to play in the implementing of a curriculum which responds to the challenges posed by citizenship, sustainable development, democracy and a the multi-ethnic society."

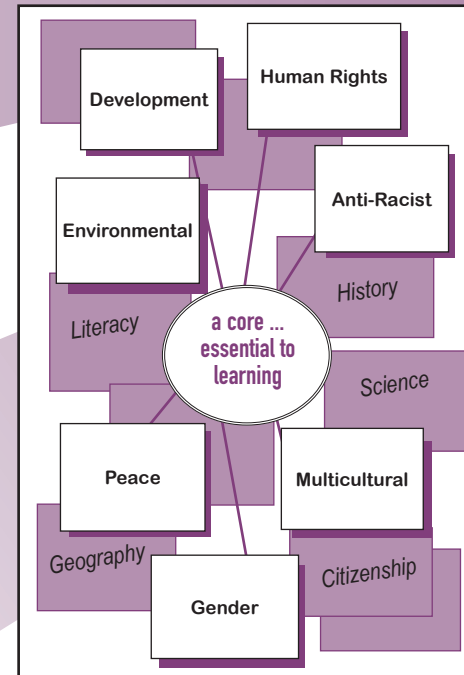
The EES Report also recognises opportunities for global dimensions and development perspectives to contribute to understanding current regional concerns such as:

- ❑ **Identity** ~ and the ways in which a place defines itself in relation to other places socially, economically, politically and environmentally.
- ❑ **Aspirations** ~ and the ways in which local people would like to see their 'place' contributing to the world [~ or concerns they might have about its impact on other places and people].
- ❑ **Participation** ~ and the building of a new sense of civil society in the context of new regions/countries. [and about the need to see that civil society in its global context].
- ❑ **Interdependence** and globalisation ~ and new understandings of ways in which our lives are affected by issues elsewhere and vice versa.

EES identifies the potential for an voluntary sector structure facilitating co-operation between LEAs within a region and partnership with other regional initiatives, such as those relating to sustainable development.

We need your advice ~

What should our long-term aspirations be?



How do we build a coalition which puts educational goals and the needs of teachers at the heart of such work?

There is much existing work on particular challenges. This needs to be more coherent for young people.

- Can we bring these together to form 'a core essential to learning'?
- How could teachers and schools more effectively share what they are doing?

There is a need for new creative work. What would you give priority to?

The new West Midlands brings new opportunities

- How do we see them?
- Are they different in different parts of the region?
- How can different organisations and structures have a role in effectively supporting teachers and schools in this work?



What questions would you give priority to?

Part of the leaflet being used as a focus for consultation in different areas in the West Midlands.

Think big ~ make space for little plans

There is a need for a framework which engages a wide range of actors in the West Midlands. A framework to provide a context for creativity, and networking and, most importantly to provide space for people to make their own plans.

All too often "thinking big" [and this report is clearly identifying some big issues] results in a mind set which seeks to impose priorities on others. The tendency is to plan centrally and reduce the complexity rather than to engage others by sharing the challenges.

The process of designing the proposed West Midlands Coalition for Global Learning needs to avoid that trap. The challenge is to think big by making space for "little plans".

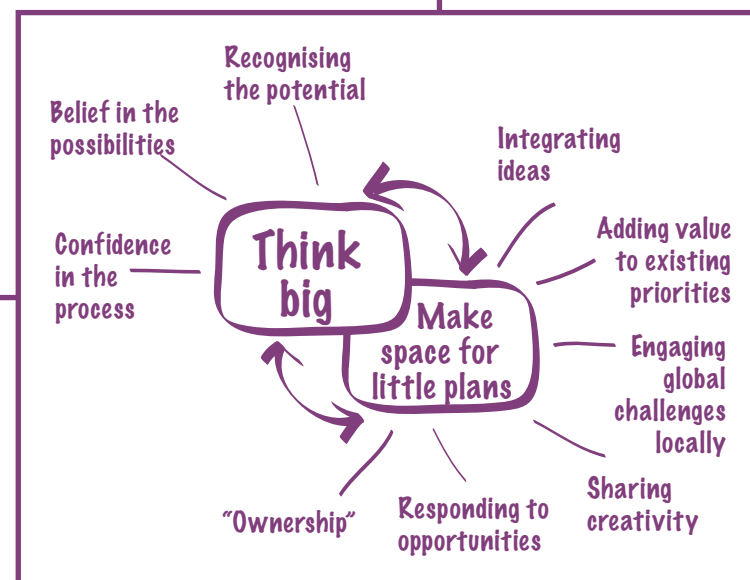
There is a need for key strategic initiatives, new network structures, and innovatory projects. They will stimulate many of the most effective plans that will emerge within existing resources and will be seen to give added value to existing priorities. Together those "little plans" will make the difference.

Such a framework will need to offer strategies:

- which enable us to think long term;
- which are inclusive;
- which move away from deficit models of those we work with;
- which enable wide ownership of the agenda;
- which build on existing strengths and practices and bring added value to them;
- which build on the energy and enthusiasm of many people.

A framework which seeks:

- to share responsibility for change;
- to integrate with other agendas;
- to share challenges and enable creativity;
- to develop both policy and practice.



At the heart of the matter is the aim to enable schools to play their part in responding to the challenges raised by the government white paper. For schools to play their part there is a need to directly engage teachers and school structures in creative work about how they might do this.

There is a need to address a range of matters in each of the following areas:

- the curriculum and what is taught;
- the experience of school as a whole;
- the role of the school as a key civil society organisation;
- the personal and professional development of teachers.

Strategies that engage, motivate and stimulate creative work among teachers are vital. Such an approach should take account of:

- The need for teachers to have **practical ideas** about teaching about their curriculum area backed up by appropriate materials.
- That teachers themselves have a **key role in developing such resources**.
- That teachers require opportunities to **learn about these issues for themselves** "as adult learners".
- That teachers need to have first hand **experience of participatory methods and activities** designed to make complex concepts more accessible if they are going to really value them as learning processes.
- That teachers get a lot of value from **opportunities to engage with other teachers** who are tackling similar areas of the curriculum etc.

To date the Regional consultations have demonstrated the breadth of interest in global citizenship issues and highlighted the need to build on existing work and to create opportunities to respond to the new curriculum and in particular to Citizenship. They emphasised the value of opportunities for teachers and others within the education system to take on this work, to share good practice and to integrate such work with other challenges facing them.

The West Midlands Coalition idea responds to the need for new Regional structures that:

- address matters of regional policy, official structures and diversity within the Region;
- address thinking about current issues and about the West Midlands' interdependence [including economic, social and political and environmental dimensions];
- engage young people directly in contributing to such thinking/debates;
- facilitate practical curriculum delivery, school based initiatives and creative work to support this;
- share West Midlands experiences from these networks to contribute to national debate about educational policy, the curriculum and good practice.

The Global Citizenship Commission set out to share the challenges of citizenship education in collaborative, creative and experimental ways and to link policy and practice.

The Commission generated debate about how to respond to the challenges of global citizenship, raised awareness of the debates and concepts around essential learning and contributed to the task of building consensus that these issues are important and need to be addressed.

The main challenge for a new Coalition is to translate awareness into action that is sustainable and to translate the emerging consensus about the value of such work into a capacity within the education system.

This report ... and the conference at which it will be launched have become part of the Coalition consultation process. Interested? email us at: info@tidec.org