



# THINK EQUAL

EMPOWERING CHANGE THROUGH EDUCATION

## Concept Note

*"Before every child on this planet turns nine, I believe he or she should acquire a foundational understanding of human rights, and that these concepts should grow in depth and scope as he or she develops. The underlying values of the curriculum would be virtually identical in every school, deriving from the Universal—and universally accepted—Declaration of Human Rights. In this way, from Catholic parochial schools to the most secular public institutions, and indeed Islamic madrassahs, children could learn—even in kindergarten—and experience the fundamental human rights values of equality, justice, and respect."*

**UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein, February 2015**

## OUR MISSION

We believe in a holistic approach to education to support a new generation of global citizens – human rights conscious, equal thinkers – in the context of the United Nations' post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals. Our purpose is to add human rights education as a compulsory component of education curricula around the world, and for such education to start from the very beginning of every child's formal education.

Our ongoing inquiries into human rights violations, increasingly and inexorably lead to the conclusion that a pervasive, discriminatory and unequal mind-set is their primary cause across our world. We can only address this problem if we commit to educating children with moral values and focus on breaking the cycle of negative stereotypes and prejudicial judgements. We must invest in encouraging value equality and respect for the dignity of others from the first day of entry of a child to school. We must commit to a holistic approach to education which will result in a new generation of equal thinkers – global citizens who can rise to the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

## **What is Think Equal?**

Think Equal works towards a world in which all children of all genders, ethnicities, religions and other backgrounds have optimal opportunities to develop their full potential, to freely express themselves and have their views respected, to respect one another, to live free of discrimination and violence, become youth leaders and active participants and proponents of a free and equal world. THINK EQUAL presents a detailed and extended curriculum to foster these values from the earliest years, when the child's personality and moral framework is still developing. The initiative is being launched as a direct response to issues of racial, religious and gender-based discrimination and increasing incidences of violence, especially sexual violence against women, across the world.

THINK EQUAL embraces the latest, visionary, forward-thinking philosophies on inclusive and holistic education. These principles are widely accepted around the world, and more often than not, without controversy, but they are rarely implemented.

THINK EQUAL will produce a sustainable, workable and comprehensive programme of human rights education, conceived as a model for the post-2015 development agenda. It is a transformational agenda with a clear strategy for investing in people and in synergy with the UN Secretary-General's recently released synthesis report (December 2014) '*The Road to Dignity by 2030: Ending Poverty, Transforming All Lives, and Protecting the Planet*'.

### **Which Sustainable Development Goals does THINK EQUAL address?**

**Goal 3:** Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages

**Goal 4:** Ensure inclusive and quality education for all and promote lifelong learning

**Goal 5:** Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

**Goal 10:** Reduce inequality within and among countries

**Goal 16:** Promote just, peaceful and inclusive societies

**Goal 17:** Revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development

### **What is innovative about THINK EQUAL ?**

- We are bringing together the best of existing programs, exercises and instruments, into 1 extended detailed curriculum
- We are bringing together the world's leading and most visionary experts in education, human rights, empathy, SEL, creativity, and psychology / neuroscience, in pursuance of designing the most brilliant and effective curriculum possible,
- We are plugging gaps as far as design and creation of any new exercises, resources and instruments as may be required.
- We are asking adopting countries to make such education **compulsory** across their national curricula (with 27 countries having been persuaded of this thus far)
- We are asking adopting countries to ensure that the new curriculum begins to be taught / mediated from **day 1** of a child's entry into school (with 27 countries having been persuaded of this thus far)

### **Why is this initiative important?**

Like many of those who have campaigned so long for human rights, we see education – changing the mindset – as the primary engine of progress. Inequality begins at birth and continues as the child is instructed in the ways of the world and their role and status within it.

Education – and equal access to it – is a long-standing goal of the UN and a number of progressive governments across the world. This global initiative is not an attempt to address the issue of access. Rather it is concerned with elaborating an equality studies curriculum, addressing all forms of inequality and rights that is seen to be as fundamental as literacy and numeracy. In other words, it is primarily concerned with what – and how – to teach children about human rights and equality in pursuance of changing a dominant mindset.

We believe that many of the challenges and atrocities of modern life will be transformed by committing to educating a new generation holistically. THINK EQUAL is about giving young people a profound grounding in human rights, dignity and equality and thus building the foundation for individual and societal progress. In this, there will be social and also economic rewards for all nations. The initiative's primary innovative principles are to make such education compulsory and to start from day one of a child's entry into school.

### **The cost of prejudice and inequality**

Gender, racial, religious and other forms of prejudice and inequality not only have long lasting consequences for individuals but also their families, the community and the country at large. It has tremendous costs which impact national budgets and overall development. For example:

- 4 to 5 million children have been left disabled due to armed conflicts
- 12 million children have been left homeless due to armed conflicts
- US\$ 400 billion is the annual cost of armed conflict mainly due to racial, religious or tribal differences
- US\$ 8.3 billion is the annual cost of domestic violence against women in the USA alone
- 180,000 people were killed in armed conflict in 2014. The figure was 49,000 in 2010
- 50 million people were displaced by 2013 due to armed conflict
- 1.2 billion people are affected by some form of violence or insecurity
- Nearly ALL of us are affected by some form of prejudice or discrimination due to our race, religion, gender, sexual orientation or other difference

The costs of the consequences of inequality are staggering.

### **We can counter inequality and prejudice**

*"I call for stronger efforts to focus on girls and women, those belonging to ethnic minorities, persons with disabilities and children living in conflict-affected areas, rural areas and urban slums. Education must do more than produce individuals who can read, write and count. It must produce global citizens who can rise to the challenges of the 21st century."*

— UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, May 2015

Adoption and implementation of THINK EQUAL will mean that within 10 years, one generation, we will have dramatically reduced racial and religious prejudice, violence against women and many other forms of discrimination among the school-going population. We will have empowered confident children and youth who have their own voice, autonomy, and self-respect, and who will more fully participate in public life blind to gender, racial, religious and other differences.

### **How can countries benefit from adopting THINK EQUAL?**

The benefits of this better world will not only be felt by the young but also their families, the community and their countries will benefit in many concrete ways.

Reducing prejudice and discrimination means direct gains in areas of economic and social development which would have otherwise been wasted in violence and prejudice. Countries are likely to experience a massive injection into economic development, greater savings in health care, incarceration of prison populations, and major productivity gains. Every national budget and the economic and social development of every adopting country will be positively impacted.

## **WHAT WE AIM TO ACHIEVE**

### **A world with optimal opportunities**

There is compelling and credible evidence that the early years of a child's life are the foundation for individuals, families, communities, and for building sustainable societies. Rigorous economic analyses have modelled both the returns on investment and also the cost of inaction when it comes to early intervention programmes.

THINK EQUAL works towards a world in which young people have optimal opportunities to develop their full potential, to freely express themselves and have their views respected, to respect one another, to live free of discrimination and violence, become youth leaders and active participants and proponents of a free and equal world, and foster these values from the earliest years, when the child's personality and moral framework is still developing.

### **Compulsory human rights education**

The overall aim is to ensure that empathetic and respectful interaction skills and education in human rights, with particular emphasis on gender, racial and religious (amongst other) equality and moral values, become part of the formal, **compulsory** education curriculum of school-goers across the globe.

### **The Equality Studies Curriculum ("ESC") as standard**

The ESC will be designed for The Early Years (ages 2-7) and begin from the first year of a child's entry into the school system and need entail no more than 2 hours of formal tuition per week in the early years. It will focus primarily on values of fairness, equal status, confidence to express one's voice, courtesy, empathy and consideration. It will employ the latest philosophies of the world's education systems and teaching concrete instruments and exercises (incorporating imaginative play, narrative, role-play/empathy, art, music, sport, instruments aimed at mediating emotional intelligence, breaking down stereotypes, etc.)

Learning will be about fortifying and empowering children to utilise their potential fully as responsible, moral, empathetic, and equal future citizens. We believe that this new holistically educated generation will grow into natural advocates of change and will self-identify with issues of equality. They will be leaders who take not only personal but also collective action to end violence and discrimination in their lives and communities. This will liberate religious, racial and sexual minority groups from stereotypes, previously prescribed social roles and negative impulses, impelling them towards conflict-resolution.

The initiative will run in parallel to the various initiatives already robustly underway, whose attention is bent upon universal education for all. THINK EQUAL focuses on

*what* is being taught through the ESC, not who, or how many are being taught. The initiative aims to work in partnership with education ministers and their departments (be they national or state-centric), the United Nations and its agencies, civil society organisations and independent experts, in achieving its goals of a more equal and civic conscious world. Civil Society organisations, foundations and the private sector will also be involved to raise awareness and mobilise support and resources needed to achieve this mission.

## WHAT WE SEEK

By adding an all important education in human rights and life-skills to numeracy and literacy, we seek:

- The creation of a free and equal world for the world's school-going populations.
- Creating equal opportunity and empowerment, irrespective of one's gender, race, religion, sexual orientation or disability, in whom potential will be unlocked to contribute in a palpable and enriching way to the development and the economy of countries.
- Providing children with the tools to succeed on a *lifelong* journey of learning, and the ability to promote human rights and moral values in their communities.
- Educating rounded, sensitive, respectful, more equitable and inclusive youth.
- Transforming mind sets and creating a new generation of human rights and equality advocates within 10 years in all school-going youth.

## WHAT WE ASK

### Global Commitments

Our primary goal is to secure national and international commitments to adopt, and implement the ESC as compulsory and from the earliest years, to empower and transform mind sets in children and youth around the world. In doing so, we hope to generate a multiplier effect that will empower parents and families. More broadly, achieving these goals would make communities safer, healthier, stronger, and more economically productive.

We ask governments, member states of the UN and the UN to cause or encourage member states to commit to adopt, implement and monitor the ESC. If we can agree the principle, the next step is to construct a model global curriculum; mindful of the fact it will have to be adjusted to suit different contexts and societies.

### UN Partnership

*“Even the youngest children should be taught human rights and gender equality. We often talk about building bridges. But let me be more specific. We have to construct understanding by teaching people respect – especially for girls and women. I call for school curricula and activities that promote gender equality. If we start now, within two decades we can have a generation of adults who champion this cause.”*

**UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon, May 2015**

The Secretary-General has prioritised global citizenship education as part of his Global Education First Initiative. Although global citizenship education has been cited as critical to prevent armed conflict and forge peace by engaging its students in the learning of human rights and equality and respect for diversity, there hasn't been a global discussion focusing on the components and approaches that can contribute to creating a more just and human rights conscious world.

We believe that THINK EQUAL can provide the global citizenship education required for the Secretary-General's Global Education First Initiative. The goals of the UN and THINK EQUAL are the same when it comes to human rights and equality education. We ask the UN, its agencies and partner organisations to come on board and work together with us to establish the ESC a part of compulsory education.

### **Effective Government Action**

We have identified seven key principles for framing effective action against inequality and indifference to human rights violations. We want to change harmful attitudes and shift social norms and believe that these principles can ensure the successful implementation of our aims.

Our **seven key principles** to effective action against inequality are:

1. ***Comprehensive compulsory and Integrated Education***  
Education Ministers must adopt a comprehensive, compulsory, integrated and multi-disciplinary education curriculum based upon the ESC. The ESC must be adapted to take account of local/regional cultural sensitivities and factors. The curriculum should be responsive, take into account the diversity of experiences and needs of marginalised communities, and look specifically at the local context.
2. ***Effective implementation and regulation***  
Teachers must be trained by trainer-mentors to implement the curriculum and schools must be compelled to submit to regulation and spot checks to ensure proper implementation and accountability.
3. ***Safe and effective reporting and response***  
Implementation of the ESC must be clear, committed, and consistent. It must comply with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.
4. ***Well-supported, well-trained personnel***  
Universities will be invited and encouraged to provide post-graduate degrees in human rights and gender sensitisation teaching. This will ensure an ongoing sector of trainers and monitors. Teachers and school administrators must be well-Trained, equipped and supported.
5. ***Partnership***  
Civil society organisations working in the sectors of human rights and gender-equality must be partners in maintaining, fortifying, and monitoring the progress of the new curriculum.
6. ***Inclusiveness***  
Communities, starting with parents, must be encouraged to be involved in

responding to their children’s life-skills growth, and to support their new learning. Civil society organisations will partner in this.

7. ***Becoming champions of human rights***

In adopting and applying these principles, governments and their education authorities can bring a strong national focus to tackling inequality, inequality-based violence and human rights abuses. By adopting the THINK EQUAL and the ESC they become champions of human rights.

## **HOW WE ARE DOING THIS**

### **Drawing on expertise to design the ESC**

We are in the process of confirming Patrons, and setting up a Global Committee of Experts. We aim to draw expertise from the frontline of visionary educationalists and thinkers on human rights, education, gender, and psychology across the world.

The Early Years Curriculum ESC will be completed in Year 1, adapted by adopting countries in Year 2 and rolled out in Year 3

### **Cultural adaptation**

A country/state-specific Curriculum (a “CSC”) will be adapted from the ESC by a country/state-constituted committee comprised of the required expertise. These will be set up by the Education Boards of each country in collaboration with THINK EQUAL. Each CSC will require considerable cultural fluency and therefore will be handled at a local level to ensure integration of culturally sensitive approaches in ‘translating’ the ESC into a local/regional framework.

## **HOW YOU CAN SUPPORT US**

Changing mindsets and bringing peace requires funding. THINK EQUAL is working with leaders in their field to produce a curriculum that can effectively change the world. The overall budget of THINK EQUAL is US \$660,000 for the establishment and creation of the new Equality Studies global curriculum for the Early Years. A full, detailed budget is available on request. A small but vital investment to solve the problem of inequality and human rights violations through education.

## **OUR COMMITTEE OF EXPERTS**

The following experts have joined our Global Committee of Experts:

- **Tazeen Hassan** - Senior Legal specialist Gender & Development, World Bank Women Business & Law Program
- **Barbara Isaacs** - Director National Strategies Montessori Centre International
- **Rafi Feuerstein** - President of Feuerstein Institute
- **Valerie Lovegeen** – Teacher Trainer, Feuerstein Institute

- **Robin Stern** - Associate director for the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence.
- **Tanya Barron** - (CEO of Plan UK)
- **Yuwei Xu** - PhD University of Glasgow, Gender and Teaching in early childhood settings.
- **Dr Sheila Wamahiu** - Gender and Development expert, Kenya.
- **Dr. Urvashi Sahni** - fellow Brookings Institution, Hillary Clinton's CHARGE, Founder of the Study Hall Educational Foundation.
- **Dr Gilda Darlas** - Founded and created a theoretical framework for EUDE, Ashoka Fellow and a Fellow of the Mind and Life institute University of Harvard.
- **MarYam Hamedani** - Associate Director of the Center for Comparative Studies in Race and Ethnicity (CCSRE) at Stanford University. As a social and cultural psychologist

#### **Committee Advisory:**

- **Hon. Unity Dow** - (Education Minister Botswana, former judge – Legion d'Honneur de France)
- **Sir Ken Robinson** (Education specialist and visionary)
- **Mary Gordon** (Roots of Empathy – Founder & President)

#### **OUR PATRONS**

- **GRACA MACHEL MANDELA**
- **SIR KEN ROBINSON**
- **MERYL STREEP**
- **PRESIDENT JOYCE BANDA**
- **MARY GORDON (Roots of Empathy)**
- **LORD RUMI VERJEE**
- **UNITY DOW**
- **DEBORAH LINDHOLM**

#### **WHO WE ARE**

The Equality Studies Global Initiative (Think Equal), is a not-for-profit organisation, in the UK and a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation in the USA.

#### **OUR FOUNDER AND CEO**

**LESLEE UDWIN** - BAFTA award winning Film Producer/Director, Human Rights Campaigner, Winner of the Anna Lindh Human Rights Award and named *New York Times* Second Most Impactful Woman 2015, named Global Hero by *Safe Magazine* and Global Thinker by *Foreign Policy*.

## OUR TRUSTEES

**SHIREEN IRANI** - Founder of iProbono. MA International Law, Warwick University, member Attorney General Pro Bono Committee

**ARITHA WICKRAMASINGHE** - Lawyer at K&L Gates LLP; Sri Lanka Country Representative for iProbono; LLM, London School of Economics; BA (Hons) Political Science, University of Birmingham; UN International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda

**FRANCINE BATES, OBE** - CEO Lullaby Trust; Fellow Royal College Pediatrics & Child Health

## OUR EDUCATION DIRECTOR

**HELEN LUMGAIR** - Founder, The Educationalist; BA (Hons) Early Years Teaching; Montessori Intl Dip, Feuerstein IE Mediator.

## OUR TEAM

### Non-Executive Director

**COOKIE HABTEGABER** - MSc International Economics (University of Maastricht); MBA in Strategic Carbon Management and Climate Change (University of East Anglia); diploma in management consultancy (Institute of Consulting). Global Lead for WWF International; founder of Netherlands NGO for education and health of children in Africa.

### Chief Of Staff Africa

**DECLAN MAGERO** - Research Consultant in UNESCO Areas, Lecturer & Business Consultant; BA (Hons) Philosophy, Pontifical Urban University Rome; MBA Strategic Management, Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology JKUAT; Fellow (PRME) UN Global Compact)

### South Asia Ambassador

**HARIN FERNANDO** - Honourable Minister of Telecommunication and Digital Infrastructure, Government of Sri Lanka)

## OUR RESEARCH DEPARTMENT

### Director of Research and Development Executive

**NAOMI SHAH** Teaching Certification and MA in Early Childhood and Special Education (CUNY Hunter College, NY). Bachelor of Science in Psychology (Carnegie Mellon University, PA, USA). Early childhood educator and Teach for America alumna.

### Senior Research Executive

**IMRATI ANAND** BA English Language and Communication Kings College London. Former Media Officer of the Amnesty International Society and Founder and Co Editor in Chief of the KCL Amnesty International Journal). Digital Sales and Marketing team at Yahoo London.

**Senior Research Consultant**

**GIULIA SCACCHI** is Desk Officer, Desk for Intergovernmental and Non-governmental Organizations - UNESCO, Paris (France). Intern European & International Cooperation Department - Council of Europe Development Bank - CEB, Paris (France)

**WHO WE ARE TALKING TO**

At the date of publication we have 28 countries committed to participating in the initiative, bringing human rights education on a compulsory basis and from the first day of schooling, to their national curricula. Schools in Sri Lanka, Somalia, the Netherlands, UK, Ethiopia, the Bahamas and Dubai have committed to piloting the unadapted Global Curriculum for the Early Years in 2017.

*"When humanity topples on the cusp of real and vicious self-destruction, we don't necessarily need people who are only smart. We need people who are kind. People with PhD-level compassion. People who feel joy, and generosity, and love, and who have fully integrated the values that are essential to life in freedom and dignity. We need people with a strong moral compass, and we need to help to build—or rebuild—that compass with education that includes a deeper moral content."*

**UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Prince Zeid Al Hussein, February 2015**

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT OF THIS  
WORLD-CHANGING INITIATIVE**

Contact:

Leslee Udwin (founder and CEO)

[ludwin1290@gmail.com](mailto:ludwin1290@gmail.com)

Mob: +44 7957548232

Tel: +442072298390