REFLECTIONS ON EMOTIONAL HEALTH, WELLBEING AND CHARACTER IN EDUCATION

What do we mean, why is it important and what can it look like?

Fair Education Alliance

Family Links

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ALLEN & OVERY

UBS

KPMG

Authors
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Audience
School leaders and policy makers, Initial Teacher Training providers and organisations working in children's emotional health and education

Purpose

1. To recognise the complexity of the problem and confusion caused by numerous different approaches to children's Emotional Health in Education – and to suggest both a common language and approaches that have been shown to work

2. To show the journey for professionals supporting children's Emotional Health, from Initial Teacher Training to the classroom

3. To support school leaders by signposting resources, research and guidance and through showcasing examples of good practice

"Good mental health, character and resilience are a priority for the government. We have high aspirations for all children and young people and we want them to be able to fulfil their potential both academically and in terms of their mental wellbeing.

To enable all young people to realise their potential we want schools to support them to become confident, motivated and resilient. In other words, to prepare them for adult life.

All children and young people deserve opportunities to develop their character: to learn how to persevere and work to achieve; to understand the importance of respect and how to show it to others; how to bounce back if faced with failure; and how to collaborate and build strong relationships with others at work and in their private lives."

Department of Education, August 2016

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1. FOREWORD

This report provides a remarkable example of what has already been achieved by the Fair Education Alliance and points the way towards the fulfilment of one of its goals.

It has become clear that social mobility cannot be realised for young people solely by paying attention to and improving what happens in classrooms, much as that may help. As an alliance of organisations that are collectively concerned with multiple aspects of the education, health, identity, wellbeing and social circumstances of children and young people, FEA has created spaces in which significantly deeper understanding of, and response to, these interrelated issues can be achieved, providing the basis for a major contribution to change.

This report sets out both to acknowledge the complexity of the debates about emotional health in education, and to cut through this complexity by providing a steer to school leaders and other stakeholders as they negotiate them. It identifies both theoretical perspectives and practical considerations. Importantly, it asserts the need for engagement in the issues at all levels in the education system and by education professionals working in all roles with relevant influence.

Dr. John Moss
Dean of Education, Canterbury Christ Church University

2. INTRODUCTION

The Fair Education Alliance (FEA) is a national coalition, with representation from the education, business and charities sector, united in closing the achievement gap between rich and poor. Established in 2012, its 10-year mission is to identify and define the gap, and to see a measurable reduction in all measures by 2022 through campaigning, raising awareness and direct intervention. In order to change this, the FEA has identified five ambitious Impact Goals. Impact Goal Three's aim is perhaps the most challenging; we must **"Ensure young people develop key strengths, including character, emotional wellbeing and mental health, to support high aspirations"**.

Theresa May outlined her government's emphasis on improving mental health in schools in her shared society speech in January of this year. The previous government's Secretary of State for Education had announced the Character Awards in December 2014, making £3.5 million grant funding available for schools committed to developing attributes and behaviours in children and young people that underpin and promote their academic and longer term success. Never before has there been so much interest in emotional health, wellbeing and character in schools. Although the national conversation is moving nearer to achieving a common language through the Character Awards, there are a multitude of organisations and initiatives offering support to schools to ensure they are providing emotional and mental health support for their students, many still using different terminology and offering a different angle on the same problem. How should school leaders and others working in Education make sense of it all?

The following articles hope to support school leaders and policy makers to refine their thinking, to work through the 'noise' around mental health in schools and to take action.

3. WHY IS EMOTIONAL HEALTH, WELLBEING AND CHARACTER IMPORTANT? PART 1

COLLECTIVE GROWTH MINDSET: ENSURING A FAIR EDUCATION FOR ALL

Jennifer Shearman
Senior Lecturer, Secondary Mathematics Education, Faculty of Education, Canterbury Christ Church University

In July 2016 I was invited to be a panel member in a session during the Teach First 2016 Impact Conference, titled 'Why the social mobility engine has stalled and what can we do to restart it? –Lessons from the FEA'. The panel event was attended by over 100 professionals with a huge range of experience, from trainee early years teachers to secondary head teachers, the chancellor of a Russell Group university and representation across the third sector. The message from the panel and the audience was clear: if we are serious about closing the gap, professionals who work in this field must adopt a Growth Mindset.

The Growth Mindset concept, a central feature in the work of Carol Dweck and underpinning much of teacher pedagogy, suggests that a child will believe that they are capable of great things if they can experience:

- an education that demonstrates the importance of a broad range of skills
- open questions and rich debates
- a culture where wrong answers are celebrated as an opportunity for learning
- a classroom which encourages problem-solving
- the belief that everyone can and will improve regardless of prior attainment

Canterbury Christ Church University (CCCU) and Family Links co-lead the FEA working group responsible for ensuring that "young people develop key strengths, including emotional health, wellbeing and character to support aspirations". Members of the working group include charities providing peer mentoring, youth social action, training and development of teachers in schools in areas of high deprivation and national charities supporting all children and the arts. Although we are a relatively new, and quickly expanding working group, our working group's successes start with our own Growth Mindset.

We demonstrate the importance of a broad range of skills. We KNOW that defining these key strengths as 'character, wellbeing and mental health' covers a multitude of trending terminology. We are committed to the use of these clearly defined terms in order to emphasise our message without jargon, acronyms or political correctness. In this report, we will show why it is so important to adopt 'whole school' approaches that celebrate all aspects of child development, learning and achievement, not just a narrow set of academic measures.

We encourage, and demand, rich debate. We KNOW there is a wealth of good practice out there, and our work is about pinpointing where this practice is effective, so others can learn from it. ReachOut, a charity which enables young people to engage in social action, has published case studies which suggest good practice brings both short and long-term impact: young people improve their own confidence, resilience and wellbeing and also make a real difference to those they work with. The prospects of many are changed for the better.

We are prepared to celebrate wrong answers. We KNOW that there is no perfect measure of key strengths. If there was, it would be part of every government's manifesto, every education minister's targets, every setting's Ofsted framework. It would be used as a carrot for potential researchers and a stick to beat schools that didn't quite 'measure up'.

It is not good enough to measure a reduction in negative outcomes (for instance, permanent exclusions), we want a measure which celebrates the possession and development of these key strengths, to see it improve and for the gap to close. As a well-informed, committed working group we need to put our weight behind one or more measures, having examined work that is being undertaken by national bodies, and by debating and scrutinising these in an open forum. In this report we will outline our belief that measuring the positive attributes that are demonstrated in a broad range of children, in a systematic way, and over time, will highlight gaps that exist and more importantly will show why the work of our partners is making a positive impact.

We believe that everyone can, and will, improve. We KNOW that there is a positive correlation between development of these key strengths and achievement. We know that investing time and resources in developing and improving key strengths will improve educational attainment.

We also know that children from poor families are more likely to benefit from early years, in-school and beyond-school programmes. We want to directly celebrate instances of improvement and also highlight where improvement is not happening. Only then can we dig deeper into whether the problem is one of access to interventions, or their effectiveness.

Highlighting action does not in itself mean better outcomes for children. We all know that. But as a working group we are feeling more confident that we have the bedrock in place and are close to committing to a set of measures to which we will hold ourselves accountable. After that, our effectiveness will be for all to judge.

4. WHY IS EMOTIONAL HEALTH, WELLBEING AND CHARACTER IMPORTANT? PART 2

WHY THIS MATTERS TO EMPLOYERS

Jennifer Shearman in conversation with Nick Wright, UBS and Emma Turnbull, Allen & Overy

The makeup of our working group is not only organisations involved in education or the third sector; we also have representation from the private sector who are keen to share why developing these key strengths is important to employers. Nick Wright, Managing Director, Global / EMEA Community Affairs at UBS, and Emma Turnbull, Pro Bono and Community Investment Officer at Allen & Overy LLP explain why positive emotional health, character and high levels of wellbeing are vital employability skills.

What do your organisations do, and why are these skills important?

Emma Turnbull: "Allen & Overy is an international legal practice with approximately 5,000 people, including some 527 partners, working in 44 offices worldwide.   Our pro bono and community investment programme uses the skills and time of our people around the world to find solutions to some of society's most pressing issues. We partner with a wide range of organisations to achieve the best results, for example with schools and colleges on high quality work experience programmes, or leading human rights organisations to provide access to justice around the world. We believe business has a critical role to play in raising the aspirations of young people, including building social and emotional resilience, which in turn leads to increased academic achievement."

Nick Wright: "UBS is a global firm providing financial services to private, corporate and institutional clients, with offices in over 50 countries. Our success derives from the quality and character of our employees and the professional services and relationships they forge with our clients. Our interactions with colleagues, clients and communities are dictated by our three "UBS Behaviours", which are Integrity, Challenge and Collaboration.

It is worth reflecting on some of the ingredients for success at UBS. Teamwork is absolutely essential. An ability to relate to, work with, motivate, persuade, and on occasions lead a disparate group of individuals across functions and divisions in collective endeavour is a pre-requisite of success. Acting thus, consistently, with integrity and through challenge, often under time pressure takes resilience, high levels of inter-personal and communication skills. This is especially true in a modern workplace where flatter structures are prevalent, in comparison to historically hierarchical office structures where obedience would have been more important. In flatter structures, constructive challenge is acceptable and encouraged. There is a place for employees whose technical skills may outweigh their "soft" skills, and there is a place for original thinkers, but it would be rare for a team to be made up wholly of one type: a dynamic workplace is made up of a range of skills and personalities.

It also greatly benefits from a positive outlook and set of values and attributes that can be consistently applied through a range of environments (meetings, presentations, reviews etc.). UBS measures performance in reference to core behaviours of challenge, collaboration and integrity, recognising that these are essential to the proper and successful functioning of the firm.

Can you give some specific examples?

NW: "Communication plays an important role – for employees to communicate with each other, with managers, with direct reports, clients or suppliers, with openness and integrity. If this does not happen, people put up barriers, and constructive working relationships become more difficult. Related to this, ease of communication is important. This is much easier in a smaller business but in a large business where electronic communications are the most prevalent form of communication with employees across departments, there needs to be a commonly understood ethical and strategic framework and a common trust and understanding amongst employees.

Coping with failure is an important test of character. Employees are encouraged to take risks in an environment nurtured to foster innovation. Employees need to have the freedom to innovate and not worry about career damage, but to thrive in this environment they need to be able to cope with disappointment. Those that are unable to cope may simply plough on feeling that they risk being a failure, and that is likely to help neither the team nor the business.

ET: "Emotional and social resilience is a growing area of importance as it equips young people with the skills to cope with stress and difficult situations – much like we do with our lawyers. A number of our social mobility programmes are closely aligned to building character and resilience in young people."

It is clear that these key strengths and skills are important. How would you assess these skills during recruitment and training?

ET: "Resilience is a key competency that we look for in applicants. For example, in the 2016/17 recruitment season Allen & Overy asked a question in our application form which was explicitly focused on resilience. It read, 'One of the things we look for in our trainees is resilience. Please describe a recent challenge that you have experienced, and specify in detail how you responded to the challenge.' After recruitment there is a requirement of our trainee lawyers to enable them to deliver within our competency framework. We also have elements of resilience training for trainees and further on as they progress in their career. We have a programme called 'Sustaining High Performance', which is undertaken by all staff and is based on our behaviours. We explain early warning signs that can lead to problems and how to prevent them."

NW: "All UBS employees are assessed against UBS's three Behaviours (Integrity, Challenge and Collaboration) on an annual basis through the appraisal process. Graduate recruits are assessed against UBS's Behaviours during the recruitment process and asked to describe a time when they have worked in a successful/unsuccessful team, about when they have taken a risk or had to make a difficult decision. As well as application forms, assessments are based on workshops and practical exercises."

All employees clearly need to be prepared to demonstrate these skills from application onwards. In order to ensure that young people and their teachers understand this, how does the private sector work with local schools?

ET: "Business has a big role to play in supporting the education sector, in helping to raise young people's aspirations, build their confidence and skills and educate them about how to access opportunities. There are so many ways we can do this, starting from primary school age up to higher education. Financial help is important, but so too is volunteering the skills and experience of business professionals to support young people and the education sector broadly. Increasing access to education and employment is an important focus for Allen & Overy's Pro Bono & Community Investment work. We and many other companies deliver a number of programmes from primary school age up to higher education, with the overall objective of helping young people fulfil their potential, regardless of their background."

Can you describe one of these programmes?

NW: "UBS has a longstanding Community Investment programme, a core strand of which is addressing educational disadvantage in our local communities. UBS's flagship education partner is the Bridge Academy in Hackney, an inclusive, mixed ability secondary school cofounded by UBS in 2003. UBS was invited to open the Bridge by central and local government as part of the UK Government's Academy programme, due to our established role in supporting education in Hackney.

UBS has been explicit in developing destination pathways with Bridge Academy senior management. One of our partnership objectives is to see students progress to quality destinations. A large part of this is "equipping young people with the behaviours and attitudes necessary for the next stage of education, training or employment and for their adult life". This is achieved through a number of ways:

- Regular contact with UBS volunteers who can take on the role of mentor and are enthusiastic and passionate about their own careers.
- A range of specialist and independent support through partners such as Pure Potential, who provide Bridge students with careers guidance and help develop employability skills, and the Duke of Edinburgh Awards. The Duke of Edinburgh is a good scheme that gives young people the opportunity to experience physical and mental challenge.
- Work placements enable students to experience first-hand the skills and behaviours that are expected in a professional working environment.
- Failure in a safe environment."

There has been a lot of talk in the media recently about whether the children who really need these programmes (those who don't have the opportunity to access careers advice, mentoring and coaching and work experience through other networks) are those who take part. How do you try and ensure this is the case?

NW: "In equipping young people for life post-school, it is important to address behaviour and welfare for those most in need. For these young people, UBS's support aims to improve engagement, attendance, behaviour, attainment and employability, reduce exclusions, promote character development, and raise aspirations. Specialist partners and programmes support these aims, such as Place2Be. Place2Be is the leading children's mental health charity providing in-school counselling services at the Bridge. The majority of students who access Place2Be services at the Bridge are eligible for Free School Meals, some have Special Educational Needs, many live with lone parents, some are involved with social care agencies, and the majority are Year 7s (the youngest age group at the Academy).

The Annex at The Bridge Academy supports vulnerable students, many of whom have chaotic and challenging lives at home and have been or are at risk of being excluded from school. It is designed to ensure that excluded students continue their education at The Bridge Academy and address the issues that gave rise to their exclusion. For many the Annex is a last chance. While at the Annex students follow the normal school day with periods for Literacy, Maths and academic study as well as activities to help them address their behaviour and attitude to learning. The assessment and mapping of need is important to ensure that interventions are designed to directly address the issues facing young people."

Is there anything that you would like schools or other professionals to be doing to help young people?

NW: "Ofsted's framework now requires schools to say what they do to develop character. A consensus is emerging: parents and employers would say the same thing about the general character traits young people should have. However, there are specific requirements when it comes to the workplace. Employers would like stable, confident, collegiate employees. People who are mentally or emotionally insecure tend to be more self-regarding, and so concerned with their own agendas, than those who are self-confident.

Addressing mental health in the workplace is a growing area of concern for employers, with increased awareness of the economic cost and decreased productivity associated with a lack of wellbeing."

Where can people go to know more about what you do?

NW: "Our website provides an introduction to our community investment programme and our careers pages provide a useful insight into what we, as an employer, seek from potential recruits – **www.ubs.com**."

NW: "Employees' emotional health, wellbeing and character is very important to employers. Corporates are playing an active role in promoting character building in young people in local communities as evidenced by UBS's partnerships in its community investment programme. The public, private, and third sectors all have an interest in and role to play in supporting and partnering the education sector to address the gap that exists in developing these soft skills for an inclusive workforce of the future."

5. HOW CAN ITT PROVIDERS SUPPORT?

PRIORITISING SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL HEALTH AT THE HEART OF TEACHER EDUCATION

Wendy Cobb
Canterbury Christ Church University

 Skills associated with emotional health and wellbeing, such as resilience and empathy, are too often perceived as the 'softer side of learning' (Egalite et al, 2015); subjective and immeasurable personal quality traits often equated with fluffy notions of emotional intelligence. So called 'hard skills', including technical competencies listed in job specifications such as being able to speak a foreign language or analyse a set of statistics, are more easily measurable and evidenced through a set of qualifications or experience. Given that 'hard skills' are seen as teachable and easily quantifiable, it might seem logical to prioritise a focus on effective teaching pedagogies of academic and vocational skills in teacher education programmes rather than putting emotional health and wellbeing and the development of 'soft skills' at the heart of teaching and learning. Yet social and emotional learning is fundamental to a broad, balanced, holistic and effective education and essential to meeting the diverse needs of children, families and the whole school community.

Recent research suggests that employers consider 'soft skills' at least as important as 'hard skills' when recruiting new employees (Ricker, 2014), so preparing young children for future success is clearly not just about enabling them to collect and communicate a set of academic and/or vocational qualifications. It is also about supporting them to develop the resilience, self-awareness, self-motivation, critical thinking and leadership skills that will enable them to take full advantage of both the hard and soft skills they will acquire over a life time of learning and experience.

Prioritising social and emotional health at the heart of teaching and learning begins with the teacher educator and transcends the wider learning community. It begins with teachers and teacher educators prioritising their own health and wellbeing and establishing and facilitating safe, nurturing and purposeful learning environments. Teachers need to develop practical skills in managing and moderating the emotional environment and acting as the 'emotional thermostat' in the classroom. The recent resurgence of an emphasis on character education is a reminder of the pivotal role of the teacher in shaping young lives.

But it is not an easy task and we should continue to critically evaluate promoted social and emotional learning approaches. That is why at Canterbury Christ Church University we are prioritising the creation of a social and emotional learning resource toolkit in the form of an online wiki and why we have developed through our partnership with the charity Family Links a Post Graduate Certificate in Social and Emotional Learning.   It is also why we continue to focus on supporting our students in building authentic partnerships with parents, why we have embedded resilience and wellbeing within our new mentor development programme and why we have a growing network of ambassadors who advocate social and emotional health at the heart of teaching and learning. Teacher education should seek to develop research-informed, values-led emotional leaders who will shape the character of education. These are not 'soft' skills but the solid building blocks for raising aspiration and achievement.

6. WHAT DO SCHOOLS NEED TO CONSIDER? PART 1

THE IMPORTANCE OF A WHOLE SCHOOL APPROACH

Jessica Tanner
Family Links

A whole school approach to social and emotional wellbeing is one which "pervade(s) all aspects of the life of a school" (NICE, 2015:2), including:

- Whole school policies and practices that promote positive wellbeing;
- Training and CPD for staff;
- The school culture, ethos and environment;
- Teaching, learning and the curriculum;
- Partnerships with parents, families and the wider school community.

It is underpinned by intentional support to develop key social and emotional competencies, including self-awareness, self-regulation and communication skills, amongst others, as well as school-wide policies and practices which support positive wellbeing.

The importance of a whole school approach is advocated within both government policy (NICE, 2015; Public Health England, 2015) and empirical research, which demonstrates that a whole school approach can lead to improvements in the school culture, staff wellbeing, pupil behaviour, school attendance and academic attainment (Weare, 2015; Banerjee et al., 2014).

While specific provision for pupils with identified social, emotional and mental health needs is unquestionably important, a whole school approach enhances the emotional health of all children and young people. Not only is this vital as both a preventative approach, and to optimise life chances for all pupils (Goodman et al., 2015), but it also creates a positive, supportive environment in which to cultivate those with identified difficulties. NICE (2015) outline two distinct pathways for supporting emotional wellbeing and mental health in schools: targeted support for children and young people with particular needs, and a universal, whole school approach embedded within the culture of the school.

Critically, a whole school approach fosters a school culture which holds the wellbeing of the entire school community at its forefront. This school culture and ethos impacts on teacher wellbeing, teaching practice, including classroom management strategies, the teacher-pupil relationship and the culture within individual classrooms, all of which mediate a range of pupil wellbeing and academic outcomes (Jennings and Greenberg, 2009; Banerjee et al., 2014). Public Health England, (2015:2) state that "The physical, social and emotional environment in which staff and students spend a high proportion of every week day has been shown to affect their physical, emotional and mental health and wellbeing, as well as impacting on attainment."

Here are my key recommendations for implementing a whole school approach:

Ensure the Senior Leadership Team are committed to a whole school approach: Effective leadership is paramount to implement supportive policies and practices, and establish a positive school culture. Public Health England (2015) identify seven key principles of adopting a whole school approach, all of which are underpinned by the eighth principle – effective leadership and management.

Develop school wide policies and practices that support emotional wellbeing: A whole school approach ensures that all school policies and practices, including behaviour policies, anti-bullying policies, teaching and learning approaches etc. promote positive wellbeing and support the development of social and emotional competencies. School policies and practices should be regularly monitored and reviewed to ensure they are conducive to positive wellbeing, for both pupils and staff.

Use an explicit social and emotional curriculum, alongside embedding skill development across the curriculum: It is essential for pupils to receive explicit support to develop their social and emotional skills through discrete lessons using a relevant curriculum. Alongside this, social and emotional skill development should be embedded within all lessons across the curriculum, particularly those with applicable lesson content or delivery methods, i.e. group-based tasks.

Involve all members of the school community: It is essential that all staff, regardless of their role, receive training and CPD in supporting pupils' social and emotional wellbeing. Government bodies and trustees play a significant role in supporting the emotional health of a school, and Public Health England (2015) recommend appointing a governor with specific knowledge in this area to champion organisation-wide practices. NICE (2015) advocate working in partnership with parents to promote positive social and emotional wellbeing, including running parenting programmes within schools. This has the additional benefit of increasing parental engagement.

Recognise that it takes time to fully embed a whole school approach: It takes time to fully embed a whole school approach to social and emotional wellbeing, with Chapman et al. (2011) demonstrating that it typically takes between two and four years to achieve measurable impact after first implementing a whole school change. However, investing the time and resources into fully embedding approaches produces long-term benefits on the emotional health of the whole school community, as well as enduring impacts on pupil social, emotional and academic outcomes.

7. WHAT DO SCHOOLS NEED TO CONSIDER? PART 2

HOW TO BUILD CHARACTERFUL SCHOOLS

Alison Braybrooks
ReachOut, www.reachoutuk.org

> *'Intelligence plus character – that is the goal of true education'* – Martin Luther King

> *"Recently, everyone has been talking about character education – policy makers, parents, teachers, employers and young people. But character education is not a new fad, it is an idea dating back to the ancient Greeks and in particular the philosopher Aristotle. Aristotle believed that the purpose of life was to flourish and that in order to flourish you must possess good character."* – Professor James Arthur, Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtue

Every passionate educator knows that developing their students' character will be vital in shaping their overall success both personally and professionally. Just as each new generation of parents, carers and teachers aims to impart their wisdom to their children, each new generation of academics aims to create a common language that can drive changes in character education at an institutional level.

In the UK, The Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtue, based at Birmingham University, is the leading UK organisation focused solely on the examination of how character and virtues impact on individuals and society. A key conviction underlying the existence of the Centre is that the virtues that make up a good character can be learnt and taught. The Jubilee Centre's Framework for Character Education in Schools outlines a four-part typology of virtue – Moral, Civic, Performance and Intellectual.

The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) is a charity set up in 2010 and funded by the Department of Education. Its aim is to improve educational attainment. In 2012 it was given a £1 million matching grant by Nicky Morgan, then Secretary of State for Education, to research the direct link between character strengths or 'soft skills' and academic attainment. They regularly publish the reviews of their results online in their Teaching and Learning Toolkit (available at https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/resources/teaching-learning-toolkit).

At an international level, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development is leading on this. The OECD is an inter-governmental economic organisation formed of 35 countries, designed to share good policy. In terms of character education its main aim is what it calls 'global competency', which provides a framework of education which puts social and emotional skills, as well as attitudes and values, on an equal footing with hard disciplinary knowledge.

The challenge now is maintaining commitment to a common language of character, which we can all use to communicate effectively with each other; whether you are a Year 6 child or government minister we should all be using the same language when we talk about character.

This will help us avoid confusing ourselves with character clichés and catch-all buzzwords. Development of character requires constant practice in a formal, taught environment, which engages children directly and helps them apply the skills they need. So what works?

Here are 3 ways that evidence shows can develop character values in children:

1. Mentoring – individual tutoring and pastoral guidance in a formal setting is proven in research to help students deemed to be 'at risk'. Careful screening and ongoing supervision of volunteers, monitoring implementation and the long-term commitment of volunteers lead to more successful programmes. (Fostering and measuring skills: improving cognitive and non-cognitive skills to promote life time success: Tim Kautz, James J. Heckman, Ron Diris, Bas ter Weel, Lex Borghans).

2. Social action is one of the most empowering things a young person can do. Volunteering, fundraising and campaigning allow the development of skills such as teamwork and leadership, #iwill is an example of an organisation which makes this possible and it is currently working with Ofsted to share best practice.

3. Whole school approach: At the 2016 Teach First impact conference Alan Milburn, the Government's Social Mobility 'Tsar', said "schools that had "cracked the code" on social mobility use the pupil premium strategically, build a high-expectations culture, focus on the quality of teaching and engage parents effectively. Critically, they seek to prepare students for life, not just exams."

At ReachOut, everyone in the organisation refers to four key character strengths: Staying Power, Self-Control, Fairness and Good Judgement. These are taught actively in academic, mentoring, social action and sports contexts.

> 'Good character is not formed in a week or a month. It is created little by little, day by day. Protracted and patient effort is needed to develop good character.' – Heraclitus

8. WHAT DOES THIS LOOK LIKE IN PRACTICE? PART 1

MORE THAN JUST CHARACTER EDUCATION

Professor Trevor Cooling
National Institute for Christian Education Research, Canterbury Christ Church University

A prevalent idea embedded in the current passion for character education is that its main goal is to improve pupils' measurable academic performance. But maybe this utilitarian view of character education is missing the point?

I have a question I like to ask student teachers: 'How could a Year 5 science lesson on the properties of rocks be taught christianly?'

Some background is required. The Church of England and Canterbury Christ Church University were successful in winning one of the DfE Character Awards in 2015. The focus of our project was the development of those character traits that contribute to community cohesion. The government list includes respect, tolerance, neighbourliness and community spirit. As the project was a church school project, we consulted theologians and decided to focus on developing the attribute of hospitality. Hospitality is of growing interest in Christian theology as it is a more generous and welcoming response than mere tolerance to those who we perceive as different from ourselves. We produced a brief introduction to hospitality as a theological understanding of learning to live well together and then asked the 20 participating schools to draw on this in designing their pedagogy using an approach called 'What If?' Learning[ii].

One Year 5 lesson involved investigating the durability of rocks. The class was divided into groups, each with a scientific investigation to undertake. This is how the school described what happened next[iii]:

The teacher's objective was for pupils to show curiosity towards the views of others. Midway through the session when pupils had formulated hypotheses and were planning tests, the teacher introduced 'unexpected changes' to the groupings. Children had to engage differently and 'think about how to work as a team.' The teacher observed children empathising with the child joining their group who had not contributed to their investigation plan. The group needed to be inclusive, 'welcoming' and 'respectful' while listening to each other's viewpoints.

There are a number of interesting features to highlight in this example.

1. The character emphasis developed more than individual grit. It focussed on learning to live well together.
2. Character education was not an add-on to the science. It turned 'gaining knowledge of science of rocks' into 'learning how to work well as a scientist'.
3. What had changed was the framing of the lesson, rather than the content (i.e. learning how to work well as hospitable scientists rather than accumulating knowledge to perform well in a test).

Now for the big question – does an approach like this work? That was what the DfE wanted to know. We could have answered this by testing pupils' academic performance. But how do we find out if they have developed their character through the project? To do this we used ambiguous situations to test the pupil's responses to those they perceived different from themselves.

What we discovered is that after the project the pupils were less likely to make negative judgments on other children in ambiguous situations. So yes, the approach appears 'to work', which is good news. But to focus only on such measurable outcomes is to miss the important point: that children's well-being, and society as a whole, will be much enhanced if children's education is reframed from its current focus on individual performance to a focus on how learning contributes to living well together.

www.whatiflearning.co.uk

9. WHAT DOES THIS LOOK LIKE IN PRACTICE? PART 2

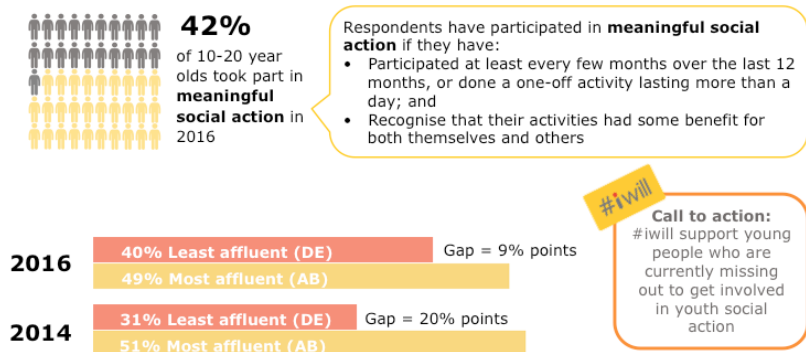## YOUTH SOCIAL ACTION AND #iwill

Dr. Rania Marandos
Deputy Chief Executive, Step up To Serve

Youth social action is young people taking practical action in the service of others to create positive change. Young people across the UK are already making a difference in their communities by campaigning or fundraising for causes they care about, volunteering at their local hospital, mentoring fellow pupils at school or helping an elderly member in their community with day-to-day tasks. The campaign's #iwill ambassadors represent the range of ways young people are making a positive contribution to society – have a look at their stories. A robust evidence base is emerging that shows that young people who take part in social action develop character qualities such as empathy, cooperation, resilience, problem solving and a sense of community (Ref BIT and EEF studies).
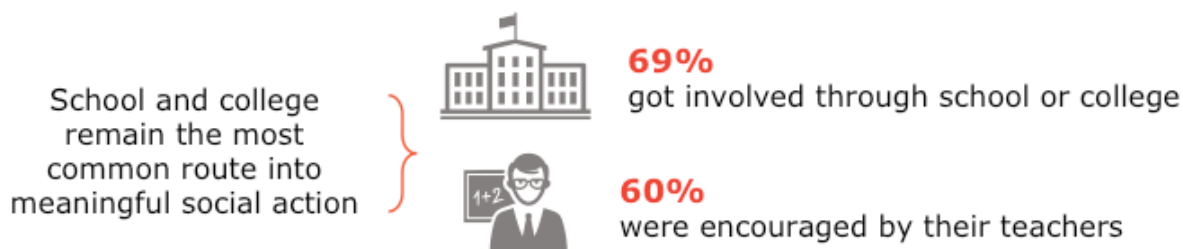
When the #iwill campaign was launched in 2013 with a vision to make social action part of life for all 10 to 20 year olds in the UK, we didn't have robust data on participation. Most available surveys didn't include responses from young people under the age of 16 and weren't UK wide. We worked in partnership with the Office for Civil Society and the #iwill Data & Quality Assurance Steering Group to develop a new National Youth Social Action survey to understand trends in young people's social action participation and inform the campaign's strategy towards achieving our collective 2020 goals.

The baseline survey in 2014 showed that around 40% of 10 to 20 year olds are taking part in meaningful social action although young people from less affluent communities were taking part significantly less. Whilst overall participation has remained stable over the last 3 years, the 2016 survey indicated for the first time that the socioeconomic gap in participation may be narrowing (see figure right).

Almost 70% of young people taking part in social action get involved through school or college; moreover, teachers are the biggest motivator for young people from the least affluent families (2016, National Youth Social Action Survey).

42% of 10-20 year olds took part in **meaningful social action** in 2016

Respondents have participated in **meaningful social action** if they have:
• Participated at least every few months over the last 12 months, or done a one-off activity lasting more than a day; and
• Recognise that their activities had some benefit for both themselves and others

Call to action: #iwill support young people who are currently missing out to get involved in youth social action

2016
40% Least affluent (DE)   Gap = 9% points
49% Most affluent (AB)

2014
31% Least affluent (DE)   Gap = 20% points
51% Most affluent (AB)

Yet schools serving more young people from low-income families are least likely to have a culture of social action (2016, NFER survey). The role of schools and colleges will be critical if we are to achieve the campaign's 2020 goals to increase overall participation from 40% to 60% of 10 to 20 year olds across the UK, whilst closing the socioeconomic gap in participation.

School and college remain the most common route into meaningful social action

69% got involved through school or college

60% were encouraged by their teachers

Headteachers and Principals who have a culture of social action in their school or college say there are four steps any education leader can take to do the same:

1. Put youth social action at the heart of your school or college.
2. Inspire and reward youth social action.
3. Empower young people to lead their own social action.
4. Build strong partnerships locally and nationally.

The #iwill campaign is led by over 700 cross sector organisations working to increase participation in meaningful youth social action from 40 to 60% of 10 to 20 year olds in the UK, whilst closing the socioeconomic gap by 2020. Step Up To Serve is the charity that coordinates the #iwill campaign.

10. HOW DO WE MEASURE THE IMPACT OF THIS?

MEASUREMENT: WHERE WE ARE AT

Alison Braybrooks
Deputy Chief Executive, ReachOut

There are many studies that demonstrate the link between social and emotional skills and improved outcomes. Probably the most famous is the marshmallow test – a series of experiments in the 1960s led by Professor Walter Mischel at Stanford University. He found that the longer a child could resist eating a marshmallow, the better they performed in school tests.

But how can schools assess the skills of their own students and measure if their interventions make a difference without locking all their students in a room with a marshmallow and seeing how long they can hold out? And this is just a self-control test – it doesn't tell us anything about resilience or motivation.

Research to date:

Currently, there is no test that enables schools to assess their students on the full range of social emotional skills, and no agreed intervention for tackling each one.

There is increased interest in this area and the Education Endowment Foundation is now investigating this for their Teaching and Learning Toolkit, so a body of evidence on good practice is beginning to emerge.

https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/school-themes/character/

So far, their research has shown that character-related interventions seem to be most effective when specifically linked to learning.

'For social and emotional learning interventions, improvements in attainment appear more likely when approaches are embedded into routine educational practices.'

They have also found that interventions work best when targeted at the specific needs of individual students, and that they disproportionately benefit disadvantaged or low-attaining students.

The most successful approaches measured by them so far are learning to learn strategies; students are taught to plan, set goals and evaluate their own academic development – read the report here:

https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/resources/teaching-learning-toolkit/meta-cognition-and-self-regulation/

How do you assess your students' skills?

If it is important to target the intervention to specific student needs, then it is important to establish what these are. All of these can be used before and after interventions to show any difference:

1. The most widely used is Goodman's Strengths and Difficulties questionnaire which is available free. It is a behavioural screening questionnaire aimed at 3-16 year olds and can be completed by teachers for each of their students. It is widely used as a pre-screening for child and adolescent mental health services – but as the focus is on strengths as well as difficulties it can be useful for all students. It is freely available with guidance on how to assess and interpret results but is quite tricky to understand if you are new to testing! It is widely used by UK organisations such as Family Links and Place2Be.
   www.sdqinfo.org/a0.html

2. The Mental Toughness Questionnaire (AQR International) – assesses students for control, commitment, confidence and challenge. Students take the proprietary survey, and AQR International produce reports which show results for each student and the whole school population. It is easy to use but there is a cost per student. It is currently being piloted by Right to Succeed in a pioneering study in Blackpool secondary schools.
   http://righttosucceed.org.uk

3. Motivated Strategies for Learning (Pintrich). Another free to use resource (researchers ask that you acknowledge the use but that's all). It is aimed at older students and gives an insight into students' belief in their own capacity to learn. Students rate themselves on a seven point Likert scale from 'not at all true of me' to 'very true of me'. There are 86 questions but they tackle 15 different areas. You can test the individual areas so you might only be rating students on 5 questions on the area you feel is important and the results will still be valid.

4. The Child Self-Control Rating Scale (Kendall and Wilcox): A free to use scale with 33 short questions that students answer themselves. It is similar to the Goodman Strengths and Difficulties questionnaire in that there is a version for teachers to use and version for students to self-report. It has been shown to be a good predictor of classroom behaviour.

ReachOut Experience

At ReachOut we have developed a character questionnaire that we administer and analyse ourselves. We are looking to test if our mentoring programme develops self-control, staying power and self-belief (resilience), and empathy.

As no single published questionnaire tests this range of skills, we have developed our own, based on sections from a number of questionnaires including Goodman's Strengths and Difficulties, 2 areas of Motivated Strategies for Learning, and the Self-control Rating Scale. It didn't take that long to put together and it is easy to administer.

We use our questionnaire as part of a formative development process – so mentors and mentees work together to discuss and complete the questionnaire at the start and end of each school year. We are pretty sure this makes it statistically invalid but it works for our purposes, which is to enable each student and mentor and ReachOut staff to have an understanding of their development focus and to give us a broad idea of distance travelled for our students.

We work in schools in after school clubs so we can sometimes access the computer suite or a set of ipads – but not reliably, so in the main we use paper questionnaires and then plug in the answers to an excel spreadsheet. If you are working in a school, then hopefully you will be able to avoid this. Individuals and schools can create questionnaires online via a website such as Survey Monkey and get the students/teachers to complete them online. This means all the answers are collated accurately, you don't need to know how to use excel, you don't need to spend boring hours inputting data, and you can spend more time thinking about how to use the results than thinking about how to use excel.

www.surveymonkey.co.uk/mp/education-surveys/ There is a lot of information and a blog to help you get started.

The National Foundation for Educational Research is a great organisation – they will help you design, write and administer surveys: www.nfer.ac.uk/schools/school-surveys/pupil-surveys/

11. GOOD PRACTICE CASE STUDIES

The organisations involved in the Fair Education Alliance Impact Goal Three Working Group are proud of the work they do. These Case Studies have been written by Headteachers, young people and other professionals to showcase what is available and how different approaches have had a positive impact.

It's not about the name, it's about the impact – North Ormesby Primary Academy

Chris Kemp-Hall, Principal of North Ormesby Primary Academy, Yorkshire & The Humber, explains that the complex language that encompasses this area is irrelevant, providing that the interventions are working.

Our students are the ones driving forward the social action at our school. We're big into project-based learning and this allows us to put social action at the core of everything we do. As a small community we talk about being one big family where everyone has a role in helping it flourish. If we are going to build excellent citizens of the future, this is where we start. So, alongside finding local activities to support, we seek out opportunities throughout the year where we can tie our work into wider national and international events such as National Literacy Day. This has two benefits: it's easy to get resources to support within curriculum time and it creates a whole school approach. We have a 'Buddy' system that sees Year 6s playing with reception children at break time. Our social action 'ambassadors' present assemblies with inspirational ideas for community engagement and make sure we react to events on a local level too. For instance, when one student was diagnosed with brain cancer, everyone engaged with their feelings by learning about the condition and fundraising for a relevant charity.

Our children need to learn resilience, in our area they have got to get used to taking knocks, and social action helps them handle that. But we don't necessarily call it 'youth social action' with the younger children, rather the idea of paying something back or 'paying it forward'. When we did a drive around the local food bank with our students – many of whom are on the receiving end – it helped them realise that there are always people who are worse off than you.

What's more, children like responsibility and it's important for them to feel like they've been trusted to make a difference to somebody else. Placing youth social action so obviously and visually at the heart of our curriculum has helped cement our community and drive us towards our recent "Outstanding" judgement with Ofsted. The children like to be at school, the staff like to be at school – it's a happy place to be!

The importance of a joined-up approach – Victoria Academy, Cumbria

Caroline Vernon, Principal at Victoria Academy, Cumbria, explains how a collaborative approach with a variety of national and local projects is vital to her pupils' emotional health, resilience and wellbeing.

For many years our school's academic priorities have been underpinned by collaborative community learning but truly integrated social action has come, to a large extent, from participation in the 'Furness Future Leaders Academy'. The brainchild of a local MP, it meets a recognised need for long-term, sustainable projects that support young people to reach their full potential and benefit themselves, their communities and local businesses.

'Furness Future Leaders Academy' develops academic ability, life skills and aspiration through a fun-packed three-week programme of off-site and on-site learning, team building and outdoor adventures. The Community Action Challenge, for example, asks the students to select a worthy local cause and teaches them to plan effective campaigns and lead projects. The children are in the driving seat and during the programme every child has the opportunity to develop as a leader.

Staff, graduates and apprentices from the main supporting companies (who fund much of the programme) work alongside educational facilitators to deliver the programme, so the children learn with and from experts from the business sector. The relationship between schools, businesses and the local community is strong here, and the 'Future Leaders Academy' shows community really working together for future economic success. The project's focus on youth social action raises our young people's awareness to the positive difference they can make in our community.

If we want to inspire a new generation of leaders, we need to increase their skills and raise aspiration much earlier than we have been doing. In school, we use a student leadership model called L4L (Learning for Life) and our pupils have flourished through this model.

How effective communication between professionals makes such a positive difference – RSA Academies Case Study on Well-being

The RSA academy, Whitley Academy in Coventry, has outstanding inclusion provision, including an additional facility, 'The BASE'. The BASE provides all kinds of support for Whitley Academy students and their families, involving a team of mentors, learning support caseworkers, counsellors, youth workers, teaching assistants and home/school liaison officers. This multi-agency team also offers support to the parents/carers of students through signposting to a range of external agencies including PPP (positive parenting programme) and the Citizens Advice Bureau. The team further provides support to families through CAFs (Common Assessment Framework) and our in-house Counselling service is available to parents/carers as well as students. The work of this team has been highlighted in the national media and Mary Myatt, an educational advisor, on visiting the school reported that "the students' personal development, behaviour and welfare is correctly identified as outstanding" and the school does "exceptional work on inclusion".

The importance of debating

In November 2015, Ife, a former Debate Mate student at Bridge Academy in Hackney, became the first student from a non-selective state school to earn a place on the England World Schools Debating team in a decade. The team went on to win the entire championship in Stuttgart. Ife will be beginning his university studies in September 2017. In the Case Study below, Ife describes the impact that debating has had on his life.

"I think there is a really big difference between speaking and having a voice. Growing up, I always loved to speak. I did drama and poetry and loved being on stage and telling a story. However, it wasn't my voice; I was representing a character or an idea that was written by someone else. Many people speak but don't have the confidence to explore their voice and challenge the world around them.

To have a voice requires self-worth. You need to feel like the words you say matter because you believe that you matter. Believing that I mattered was something I always struggled with growing up, and it wasn't until I did the Debate Mate programme that I started to develop my feelings of self-worth.

The key to Debate Mate's programme is the peer to peer mentoring. Getting to meet and know my university mentor, Scott, changed my life. He was the first person who truly believed in me and, because of that, I started to believe in myself. Debating can make you a great speaker, help with team work, and give you critical thinking skills, but I think the main thing it does is teach you that you're important.

Through debating, I also learned to be resilient. For every debate that I have won, I have lost several more. It taught me that losing doesn't make you a failure – which is something I often felt education ingrained in me. Our education system teaches us to assess our worth through numerical grades and pushes us to constantly compare ourselves to the people around us. I think that was particularly true for me. Coming from a disadvantaged background and being black, I already felt like I was so far behind everyone else, and it wasn't until I did debating that I felt like I was strong enough to be successful.

People from top schools are brought up being told they matter and are important. To close the attainment gap, it is important that we help all students feel that way. If you can imbue students with the self-belief to speak and be heard, with the feeling that they matter, then you truly can change the world."

English Speaking Union Debate Academy Participant, Harriet Pinder (16), shares how being involved with school debating has transformed her confidence and improved her resilience.

When I was signed up to the school debating club by my Year 5 teacher, it was not my own choice. I had always fancied myself as the sporty type, not one for speaking in front of my peers and definitely not one for debating. For the first few sessions I sat at the back and kept my head down, not wanting to draw any attention to myself.

Then, much to my horror I was told I would be debating the next week. "This house believes all children should receive pocket money".

My 9-year-old self was passionate about the subject (I did not receive pocket money), and I threw myself into preparing my argument.

And that is where my debating journey began. 7 years later, I am a confident, resilient, (modest) and determined student, and I would put it all down to my Year 5 teacher signing me up to the debating club.

Last year, I reached the national final of the ESU Public Speaking Competition, and can proudly say that speaking on a stage at Cambridge University is my biggest achievement to date. I believe that the ability to orally share your ideas with a group of people is an immensely valuable skill, especially in a world where so much emphasis is on the written word. Furthermore, to be able to formulate a convincing argument is so important where you feel it is necessary to defend the other side of a story. Whilst writing a post on social media is an easy way to share an opinion, the art of speaking to people directly is definitely more effective.

In the summer, I attended Debate Academy, run by the English Speaking Union, in order to refine my skills. I was expecting to find myself among a group of pretentious, arrogant and over-opinionated teenagers, but I can honestly say I've never met a bunch of more intelligent, confident, (slightly over-opinionated!) and interesting people. Even though Debate Academy was full of people from all walks of life, there was one thing that brought us together: our passion for debate. It has made us the people we are today.

Measurement of Character, Emotional Health and Wellbeing

Alison Braybrooks, Deputy Chief Executive of ReachOut, shares her experiences

At ReachOut we have developed a character questionnaire that we administer and analyse ourselves. We are looking to test if our mentoring programme develops self-control, staying power and self-belief (resilience), and empathy.

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I've never used this service but the National Foundation for Educational Research is a great organisation – they will help you design, write and administer surveys for you:
www.nfer.ac.uk/schools/school-surveys/pupil-surveys/

12. CONCLUSION

What are the next steps for the Impact Goal Three working group?

As a working group we have a lot to do. Despite our individual organisations' achievements, as a collective we need to do more; we need to share our expertise on 'What Works', gather support from all parts of the education sector and agree how we will hold ourselves accountable. We are not happy with the current measure of 'reduction in negative statistics', such as fixed-term school exclusions, as a proxy for measuring skill development. We are going to alter the present 'deficit model' and instead aim to better understand, and measure, positive strengths, positive traits and positive attributes that we believe all young people can develop, both inside and outside of education.

To know more about good practice in this area, keep up to date through the Fair Education Alliance website.

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IMPACT GOAL THREE WORKING GROUP MEMBERS

Canterbury Christ Church University

Family Links

Allen & Overy

Barnardo's

Debate Mate

ESU

Football Beyond Borders

Girlguiding

Hackney Pirates

NCB

Nurture Group Network

ReachOut

Right to Succeed

RSA

Step Up To Serve

UBS

Whizz Kidz