

A collection of hand-drawn buttons with various colorful designs, including houses, a boat, and hearts. The buttons are arranged on a white surface. One button features a yellow house with a red roof and purple windows on a green hill under a blue sky. Another shows a blue boat on a white sea under a yellow sky. A third has a red heart on a pink background. Other buttons show a sunset, a landscape with a green field, and a colorful abstract design.

## Introduction





## Introducing Social and Emotional Education

Christopher Clouder

*Caminante no hay camino, se hace camino al andar*

Wayfarer there is no path, We trace our path as we go along.

Antonio Machado

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights establishes the fundamental principles of human rights and freedoms, and that includes education: "... education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship..." (Article 26.2). These competencies are in essence social and emotional. In 1996 UNESCO published a significant document "Learning: The Treasure Within" compiled by their Commission on Education for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century which makes an excellent adjunct to this report. It highlights the value of diversity as an educational principle "Between the extremes of abstract and over-simplifying universalism and relativism which makes no higher demand beyond the horizon of each particular culture, one needs to assert both the right to be different and receptiveness to universal values". (p.59). These ideas are becoming increasingly influential. It is suggested that education throughout life is based on four pillars:

**Learning to know**, by combining a sufficiently broad general knowledge with the opportunity to work in depth on a small number of subjects. This also means learning to learn, so as to benefit from the opportunities education provides throughout life.

**Learning to do**, in order to acquire not only an occupational skill but also, more broadly, the competence to deal with many situations and work in teams. It also means learning to do in the context of young people's various social and work experiences which may be informal, as a result of the local or national context, or formal, involving courses, alternating study and work.

**Learning to live together**, by developing an understanding of other people and an appreciation of interdependence –carrying out joint projects and learning to manage conflicts– in a spirit of respect for the values of pluralism, mutual understanding and peace.

**Learning to be**, so as better to develop one's personality and be able to act with even greater autonomy, judgement and personal responsibility. In that connection, education must not disregard any aspect of a person's potential: memory, reasoning, aesthetic sense, physical capacities and communication skills.



To which was added: *Formal education systems tend to emphasize the acquisition of knowledge to the detriment of other types of learning; but it is vital now to conceive education in a more encompassing fashion. Such a vision should inform and guide future educational reforms and policy, in relation both to contents and to methods.*

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All these four pillars, which are concerned with a reformulation of the goals of education, highlight how important for the learning process is how we feel about our learning. Learning too requires skills, volition and purpose and all these lie rooted in how we feel about ourselves and our relationship to the world. What are termed “life-skills” are becoming more decisive as to how we lead our lives, with the ability to communicate, work with others, and manage and resolve conflicts. Classrooms are becoming more engaged with the surrounding world and teachers are the agents of this change. What previous generations had regarded as an educational system set, as it were, in stone and delivering traditional expertise and straight-forward cultural transmission is now faced with new challenges that require quite radical reforms. To meet the needs of 21<sup>st</sup> Century children, schools are being called on to develop beyond being cloistered institutions that are removed from adult life. In this great and demanding undertaking we need to learn from each other beyond national boundaries and share experiences internationally in search of the life-long citizenship of our planet, As subsequently pointed out by Jacques Delors: *“Together the four pillars provide balance at a time when many policy makers still speak of education only in terms of the economy and labour market. We must not overlook the other aspect of education... through which people are empowered to achieve self-mastery”*.<sup>1</sup> Education is not a commodity, despite consumerist and financial jargon being imported into educational policy making. Social and emotional learning processes can make an important contribution to enabling people to take hold of their own lives and finding their particular equilibrium. *“There is a contradiction, which we see as only apparent, between the utilitarian, that is to say economical or useful view of competencies on the one hand, and on the other, the view of competencies as being liberating forces, enabling individuals to take charge of their own lives.”*<sup>2</sup>

Many cultures are conscious that the present is turbulent and uncertain, full of unforeseen and weighty questions, and that the answers to these will have a deep impact on the future world of our children. One of which is a perceived crisis in social cohesion. The identities and groups that held society together in the past are, like all human endeavours, evolving. This

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is not to deny the many catastrophic conflicts of the past but recent advances in technology, new discoveries about the human impact on the natural environment, social upheaval and increased mobility, and our increasingly globalized world of interdependence bring new and complex dimensions. We are no longer so far removed from each other. *“Domination, oppression and human barbarities undeniably persist and aggravate our planet. These are fundamental anthro-historical problems which have no a priori solution: but they are subject to improvement and can only be treated by the multidimensional process that will strive to civilize all of us, our societies, the earth.”*<sup>3</sup> Being human has become an ethical concept. This phenomenon cannot be without consequence for the upbringing and education of children. As Steve Biko pointed out, during his struggle against apartheid in South Africa, the route towards living together lies in the humanization of education. Martin Luther King likewise perceived that having brought ourselves closer through technological progress our next task is to create global social cohesion. *“We are challenged to rise above the narrow confines of our individualistic concerns to the broader concerns of humanity... Through our scientific genius we have made the world a neighbourhood; now through moral and spiritual genius we must make it a brotherhood”*. We can connect rapidly and easily but have we the skills to connect well and wisely? Luther King also warned that *“our scientific power has outrun our spiritual power. We have guided missiles and misguided men.”* So where else should one start but in the early years of life and school?

There are international educational initiatives that seek to redress this imbalance. The United Nations and UNICEF have initiated a programme on human rights and citizenship education for primary and secondary schools, which is running from 2005 to 2009, and is being mon-

itored by the Council of Europe. Although in a recent conference report (November 2007) it was noted that teachers are inadequately and poorly prepared for the teaching citizenship and human rights education. Likewise the World Health Organisation (WHO) has been promoting psychosocial competence through life skills programmes to prepare individuals for adaptive and positive behaviour in order to deal with the demands and challenges of everyday life. As well as cognitive skills such as critical and creative thinking, this programme seeks to enhance coping with emotions, empathy and interpersonal relationship skills. The media also have a role in shaping our perceptions concerning education and the issues around childhood and can stimulate debate and activities. In some countries there is a constant reporting of such concerns and in others barely a mention. Nevertheless, across the world questions are being raised as to whether our systems and educational institutions actually do meet the needs of the child of today. This is, of course, not to underestimate the many great improvements in childhood well-being that have been accomplished in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Yet these advances are still not available to all children and there is much suffering in many parts of the globe that with effort and ingenuity could be markedly reduced.

However we are not only faced with new challenges in our social relationships with each other but also with our relationship to the planet itself. *“Among the most important learning that schooling provides of relevance to sustainability, are the attributes of critical thinking, self-reflection, media analysis, personal and group decision making and problem solving.”* (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development OECD.1999).<sup>4</sup> We are witnessing an enormous growth of travel possibilities as well a great familiarity at one level with other cultures than our own. Multiculturalism and world citizenship has become an explicit goal for education and accordingly the learning of modern languages and a deep understanding of one’s own culture and those of others becomes more critical. These tendencies are loosely termed globalisation, which some see as creating new opportunities and others as a threat to social coherence.

*“Globalisation , because of the risk it brings of soulless standardisation, can lead to fragmentation and a reduced sense of belonging to a wider community. The excess of unbridled markets... are being met with an excess of nationalism, regionalism and parochialism. These threaten peace and raise the spectre of resurgent racism and intolerance.”*<sup>5</sup> (OECD 2001). Our children face an age of hyper-complexity. This has implications for how we assist them now in developing the competencies that will be demanded of them in the future.

### The Task of Schools

This sense of the need to change our contemporary educational culture has appeared repeatedly in recent publications produced by institutions like the OECD and UNESCO. *“Our way forward is to reinforce the socialisation functions of schools, and to recognize more explicitly their nature as communities in their own right. Such an emphasis does not necessarily conflict with a strong focus on cognitive development but it suggests an acknowledgment of a comprehensive set of educational outcomes going beyond measurable standards”*<sup>6</sup> (OECD 2001). More recently, in August 2007, UNESCO assembled a panel of experts in Berlin and together they issued the *Kronberg Declaration on the Future of Knowledge Acquisition and Sharing*<sup>7</sup> – a declaration that again highlights a radical change in perceptions. Among other things it promotes extensive, value-oriented education as a necessity, in addition to normal professional knowledge. The 18 international experts from 13 countries were in agreement that the education sector faces dramatic changes. *“The educational institutions of*

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*the future need to dedicate themselves much more intensively to emotional and social capabilities and convey a more extensive, value-oriented education concept. The importance of acquiring factual knowledge will decline significantly, in favour of the ability to orientate yourself within complex systems and find, assess and creatively utilize relevant information. The learner will take on a much more active and self-responsible role in the learning process, including the creation of content.”* Whereas in the past compulsion and regulation for the young was the norm, the last decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century has seen a change to negotiation and consensus seeking in many areas of family and educational life. Certain skills determine the success of this approach to childhood, from both generational sides. It has now been claimed that, over a dozen years, personal and social skills such as self-control and an ability to get on with others, became 33 times more important in determining children’s futures than they had been before.<sup>8</sup> In western societies the drift to greater individualism raises the question of the future social coherence and sustainability. The increase in family fragmen-

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tation with a dramatic rise in the divorce figures places new emotional strains on a child, faced with feelings of insecurity and risk over which they are powerless.

We are clearly in a process of change and this report will survey how this change has already influenced the education of our children and how it will in all likelihood develop in future years. The teaching and bringing up of children has always been a deeply emotional and social experience. Working intensely with children challenges our humanity and our nature as beings of thinking, feeling and volition, with our intricate involvement in the lives of others through social engagement. This is not a new discovery. As Dewey wrote in 1897, *“In sum I believe that the individual who is to be educated is a social individual and that society is an organic union of individuals. If we eliminate the social factor from the child we are only left with an abstraction; if we eliminate the individual factor from society, we are left only with an inert and lifeless mass. Education, therefore, must begin with a psychological insight into the child’s capacities, interests, and habits.”*<sup>9</sup> From a teacher’s perspective, when we stand in front of a class or work with children as individuals or in groups, we guide, encourage, cajole, explain, dispense order, motivate, inspire, enthuse, caution or are just benignly present, and then all our capacities come into play to some measure.

Educational practice in schools has to a large extent been dominated by the acquisition of knowledge for centuries and, although this has often been questioned, and some instances rejected, as the major emphasis in the past, the sense that our children will require a different approach has grown consistently stronger in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Previously in conventional thinking aspects of deep human significance such as love, companionship, happiness and their contraries were regarded as pertaining to the private and family life of the children and, like disreputable or disorderly relatives, held at bay from the classroom. Now as a result of methodological research into human nature through disciplines such as psychology, sociology, and human biology alongside a greater understanding of learning skills, we can see that this was and is actually impossible. The children bring their culture, moods, attitudes and inner life with them, even though they have been expected to suppress these in a classroom situation.

The task of the contemporary teacher is to make learning relevant and engaging, and the following is a good, if incomplete, summary of what that entails:

- Connecting learning to student’s lives
- Holding high expectations for all students, even those whom others have given up on
- Staying committed to students in spite of obstacles
- Placing a high value on students’ identities (culture, race, language, gender, and experiences, among others) as a foundation for learning
- Viewing parents and other community members as partners in education
- Creating a safe haven for learning
- Daring to challenge the bureaucracy of the school and district
- Remaining resilient in the face of difficulties using active learning strategies
- Continuing to experiment and “think on their feet”
- Viewing themselves as life long learners
- Caring about respecting and loving their students<sup>10</sup>

The world of feelings can be explored and utilised to enhance how we work and influence our children’s futures. Whoever is educating the child has to be aware that their feelings and relationships to what they are imparting are intrinsic to the process and have an effect. We cannot really divorce our personalities from the process of teaching. Our character as expressed for instance by our reactions, gestures, tone, underlying assumptions, expectations, creativity and patience is either implicitly or explicitly part of the process. The concept of social and emotional learning highlights the changing nature of being human for both the learner and the teacher. Pedagogical skill is the ability to use our attributes to serve the children. A lesson is a communal experience and as such can be judged by all the participants in a variety of ways, but whatever the outcome it has wrought change. A social and emotional education approach has the potential to help children learn to learn by giving them a sense of self-mastery and an improved climate of learning in the classroom. School can be a happy and satisfying experience that provides a training or further development in awareness about our interactions with others. This can and has to be learnt if we aim to create a more socially cohesive world and it is when we are young that we are provided, either in the family or at school, with the optimum opportunity for developing this in a secure and caring environment. The goal for social and emotional learning / skills for life programmes is to give children the tools and understanding in order to enhance their resilience and develop their ability to cope capably with the ups and downs of life.

So why have the concepts of emotional intelligence, literacy and learning found such resonance recently and why has that interest gathered strength over the last decades? Are we in any sig-



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nificant way different from all the many generations of teachers and educators that have preceded us? As parents are we looking for something different from a school than our forebears? As academics are we entering a more uncertain, ever-changeable and immeasurable terrain? As policy makers can we have enough long-term vision to deal successfully with what is, in some respects, intangible? Why has the fact that the study of emotions has become the focus of research for a number of different disciplines suddenly given it a higher profile and immense ramifications for our children's learning experiences? Are the traditional models of schooling still tenable? We stand on the brink of changes brought about by the vast amount of research conducted in the last few years regarding the neurobiology, child development, human emotional capacities and learning processes. Teaching has ceased to be a vocation that had clear and simple goals, measurable outcomes and straightforward methodology. Increasingly, it is a complex and multifaceted realm of endeavour that prepares children for a world beyond our imagination.

Such potential changes are grounded on a growing evidence based in the area of social and emotional well-being which in recent decades has provided much theory and debate and introduced a vocabulary through which to facilitate national and international discussion. Howard Gardner in his theory of multiple intelligences conceived of personal intelligences as based on an interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligence, thereby linking the social and emotional dimensions. The concept of 'emotional intelligence' itself was first introduced by Salovey and Mayer (1990) and was later popularised by Daniel Goleman<sup>11</sup> (1995) in his book entitled 'Emotional Intelligence' in which he highlighted the existence of the five domains of *emotional intelligence*:

- The skills of understanding our own emotions
- Managing our feelings





- Self-motivation
- Recognising emotions in others
- And forming positive relationships

Goleman later went further and stated (2001) that emotional competencies are “a learned capacity based on emotional intelligence that results in outstanding performance at work.” According to this definition we are going beyond a potentiality to develop and control certain emotional abilities, to a level of performance and effectiveness. This makes it different from what we usually see as general intelligence because this suggests that emotional intelligence is a capacity that can be learned and developed. More recently Katherine Weare brings these definitions together by describing emotional literacy as ‘the ability to understand ourselves and other people, in particular to be aware of, understand, and use information about the emotional states of ourselves and others with competence. It includes the ability to understand, ex-

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press and manage our own emotions, and respond to the emotions of others, in ways that are helpful to ourselves and others.’ (2004).<sup>12</sup> As the field is comparatively new we are dealing with many interchangeable terms, like social and emotional **intelligence**, **competence**, or **literacy**, which can mean different things according to experience and context. Each culture and profession seems to have preference for particular terms according to their perspective but nevertheless a common understanding is possible and broadly speaking we are referring to the same aspect of a personality. Social and emotional learning has become the paradigm for these thoughts and consequent practices, yet it is also a comparatively recent term.

This goes hand in hand with recent neurological discoveries. Scientists, like Damasio, have shown that in our brains emotion and thinking are not separable activities but constantly play into one another. “Emotion appears to be the support system without which the rational build-

ing process cannot work... These results and their interpretation have questioned the idea of emotion as a luxury, as a disturbance or as a mere mark of previous biological evolution.”<sup>13</sup> Human beings do not think against their emotions or even in relation with them, we all think through our feelings. And now that the scientific evidence of this is academically well grounded and accepted it is becoming obvious that it affects how we work in an educational setting. Le Doux contends in *The Emotional Brain* (1998) that, in evolutionary terms, there is a trend where cognitive-emotional biological connectivity is increasing in the brain. “As things now stand, the amygdala has a greater influence on the cortex than the cortex has on the amygdala, allowing emotional arousal to dominate and control thinking... Yet there is another possibility... With increased connectivity between the cortex and the amygdala, cognition and emotion might begin to work together rather than separately.”<sup>14</sup> The human brain has astounding flexibility and over time the relationships between differing aspects can change and the interconnections become stronger or weaker. This seemingly simple statement is in fact a radical departure from the past in that early cognitive investigators divided the mind into a distinct area for thinking and reasoning and another for emotion, motivation and personality. Le Doux also points out that emotions are notoriously difficult to verbalize as they operate in an area not readily available to consciousness. These contentions provide an insight into how in a pedagogical sense everything that an educator, whether teacher or parent, does has an influence, especially as the brain of a child is undergoing rapid growth and transformation, although it may not be apparent either to the educator or the learners themselves.

This is not the place to give a comprehensive survey of recent neurological discoveries but, to summarize, they point in one direction: “There is not an exclusive brain area that determines intelligence, nor is there one for emotions or social skills. Scientific knowledge on this issue is crystal clear – cognitive, emotional, and social competence evolve hand in hand. When a supportive environment is provided, the emerging structure is sound, and all parts work together.”<sup>15</sup> We know that decision making, problem solving, creativity, role play, repetition, rehearsal, the performing arts and social relationships are essential for strong connections between the limbic system (the seat of our emotions) and the cortex. A rich physical environment with movement and stimulation and a rich emotional environment are also necessary for the lobes in the cortex to develop well. Our decision-making circuit doesn’t actually complete its development until we are well into our 20’s. So social-emotional learning has a deep relationship to our growth over time and a certain age-appropriate awareness is required by adults who take on a responsibility for nurturing children. Other factors like humour also play an important part. For instance, adolescents need fun as it develops the dopamine hormone which helps them to be more empathetic by increasing frontal lobe activity (which is not yet fully functioning) and supports purposeful acts such as judgement, creativity, problem-solving and planning.

As educational systems move towards more competence-based assessments it is particularly necessary to recognize that competences do function together as constellations and in order to integrate and relate cognitive and noncognitive aspects of competence.” ...it has been recognized for some time that ... curriculum based and subject-related competencies and basic skills do not capture the full range of relevant educational outcomes for human and social development.”<sup>16</sup> Intelligence does not evolve independently of the social-emotional side of human development. Research into our emotional life has increased greatly in the last decades and generally accepted working definition of emotion would be “ a mental state lasting usually for minutes or hours that changes priorities of goals or concerns, that makes ready a particular repertoire of actions and that biases attention and memory.”<sup>17</sup> The word is often commonly used in a less precise fashion to cover moods and attitudes as well.

### The Teaching of Social and Emotional Competencies

Emotions change both within the individual and in cultures. To give an example, not so long ago, from a common European perspective, mountains were considered barbarous places to be avoided at all costs. They were arid, dangerous hindrances that inspired horror. Up to the end of the 18th Century people saw no point in climbing a mountain to attain a view and travelers across the Alps often asked to be blindfolded so they would not be perturbed by what they saw. Then towards the end of that Century and the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> it became the fashion to clamber up hills and mountains just for a divine prospect that was considered beautiful, awe-inspiring and influenced the personality of the viewer. The same object called forth different emotional reactions that are then culturally and socially transmitted and become a norm. For a certain class of people not having mountains to climb became a form of deprivation. “Although we might like to believe that our experience of altitude is utterly individual, each of us is in fact heir to a complex and invisible dynasty of feelings, we see through the eyes of innumerable and anonymous predecessors.”<sup>18</sup> When discussing social and emotional learning we are also touching on the realms of imagination, the context of cultural evolution and the world of values. If we wish to inculcate and develop positive competences we will also have to define what they are to be able to distinguish them from negative and destructive aspects of life. Or are the words competence, literacy and intelligence inherently positive and who decides?

All this is mirrored in our schools, whether consciously or unconsciously, and working with the concepts behind what we call social and emotional learning helps raise awareness of our practices and their implications. It is natural to want a better world for our children yet we also know that they will face a complexity and transformation that we can hardly imagine. Teachers and educators have passed from an era when the profession was one of tradition and

transmission to one where we have become the agents of change. The future is challenging and unsure, yet we have to assist the children in developing the skills and competencies they will need if any high ideals are to be striven for with any hope of success. “The need for change from narrow nationalism to universalism, from ethnic and cultural prejudice to tolerance, understanding and pluralism from autocracy to democracy in its various manifestations..., places enormous responsibilities on teachers...”<sup>19</sup> Society expects much from its educators and those countries, such as Finland and Korea, who give their teachers the status the vocation deserves are those most successful in educational terms (McKinsey report 2006). Much is spoken about the knowledge economy by governments, business and in the media, but it is just as well to remember Rabelais’s warning from the 16<sup>th</sup> Century that “Knowledge without conscience is but the ruin of the soul.” Our knowledge has responsibilities attached and the more accessible and wide-ranging it becomes, the more complex become our moral choices. Knowledge that works in a healthy conjunction with our emotions can become wisdom.

In this report we are assuming that:

- the ability to relate well to others
- to cooperate
- to manage and resolve conflict
- to act autonomously
- the ability to act within the larger context
- to form and conduct life plans and personal projects
- to defend and assert one’s rights, interests, limits and needs
- to use language, symbols and texts
- the ability to use knowledge and information interactively and the ability to use technology interactively

...are human rights that all children should have access to. Secondly, we are assuming that it is vital that this happens for the sake of the health of future societies.<sup>20</sup> These not only have relevance to active and interactive learning in school. Other institutions such as the family, the media, religious and cultural organizations are all responsible for the transmission and development of these competencies and have different impacts at different levels. Competencies are not synonymous with skills as competencies involve many interrelated skills, including cognitive skills, attitudes and other non-cognitive components. There are also transversal competencies like reflectivity- a critical stance and reflective practice- that is required to meet the demands of modern life in a responsible way. Skills, being the ability to perform complex motor and/or cognitive acts with precision, adaptability and ease in themselves, have no in-



trinsic set of values. The nine competencies listed above do however, and are important for individuals to meet future global and local challenges. All have a social and emotional aspect, as well as a cognitive one. The human being has to be seen as a whole, not as a fragmented object. In educational discourse the concept of working with the “whole child” is once again becoming a prominent feature.

Nell Noddings puts the challenge succinctly “*The traditional organization of schooling is intellectually and morally inadequate for contemporary society. We live in an age troubled by social problems that force us to reconsider what we do in schools.*”<sup>21</sup> She balances the common misperception that arises when assuming that social and emotional education is only about

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**Nell Noddings**

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happiness, in that we must educate for unhappiness as well. Children learn that sharing the unhappiness of others paradoxically brings with it a form of happiness. “*This is the major conclusion reached by care theorists, who argue that things we do to improve the relationships of which we are part will work for our benefit as well as others.*”<sup>22</sup> Social and emotional education is value based in that it is perceived that in a given cultural or social context some emotions are preferable to others. When dealing with other people, love is preferable to hatred. Aggressive self-assertion is not a passport to well-being for either the community or for oneself. Emotional literacy involves being able to work with and even transform emotions when relating to others. An attitude of understanding, tolerance, solidarity, empathy and ultimately compassion can be practiced and learnt. We can develop skills that enable us to reflect both in and on our actions and find new ways of being.

The debate about character or values education is probably as old as humankind when consciously faced with the complexities of educating the next generation. It was certainly an important aspect in the culture of ancient Greek culture. Some philosophers like Socrates, whose life was devoted to unceasing education with the aim of thinking clearly, doubted that virtues could be taught at all, although he also believed that people will care for what they love. Plato, on the other hand, held that education should be practiced to educate the “soul”, which for him

was a harmonious amalgam of desire, reason and spirit (energy), and should lead to the acquisition of four virtues, courage, philosophical wisdom, prudence and righteousness. The philosophic or “gentle” element is manifested in the social values of sympathy, fellowship and cooperation. Thus good behaviour is produced because there is “*an internal order of the soul*” and through the achievements of self-mastery a person can integrate his personality to become “*the just man*”. For Aristotle, “*education and habituation are required in order to perform elements of the task of any capacity or craft*”. This holds also for the “*activities of virtue*”. The correct form of education was one which respected the needs, abilities and limitations of human nature with the goal of producing a harmonious integrated person. In our times this would be called a “holistic” approach. He saw our emotions as modes of practical perception that embodied beliefs, desires and virtues. It is a matter of feeling the right things “*at the right time, about the right things, towards the right people, for the right end, and in the right way*” (Nicomachean Ethics 1106d21-23) that therefore had to be educated. Our era may use different terminology and concepts, having inherited the fruits of the Enlightenment and many scientific and medical advances, yet in this field the debate continues as vociferously as ever. There is no one approach with justified claims to permanence, but by being aware of the possibility of different ways we at least respect the individuality of each child and the social changes around them.

### Creating Conditions for Social and Emotional Education

There are many approaches to the teaching and acquisition of social and emotional competences and we are highlighting only a few of them in this volume. There is much future work and research to be done. In the work with social and emotional learning one cannot be dogmatic as that is self-defeating, so nothing here is prescriptive but rather it is descriptive. However there are already some conclusions to be drawn from general experience. For instance, this cannot work in a school or classroom that is isolated from the family and parents, so new relationships have to be formed where expectations are clear and understandings are worked for. This entails a transparency of purpose, well formulated and accountable forms of decision making, taking the views of all stakeholders seriously and welcoming all who wish to be involved and carry responsibilities. In other words, turning the school itself into a learning community in which all who wish have the opportunity to participate, thus creating shared values and understandings that enable individuals and groups to trust each other and work together. There is, of course, risk involved, what worked in one place might not work in another and emotions have, by definition, the quality of constant movement and unpredictable volition. Nevertheless, “*Au fond de l'Inconnu pour trouver du nouveau*” (Baudelaire: In the depths of the unknown, we will find the new) is true of all creative processes. Teaching and living happily in a changing social community is a creative art. To work in this area of endeavour we

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have to look at and develop ourselves and not regard the children as objects to whom we just deliver knowledge and precepts.

This fresh territory brings with it the possibility of significantly changing the educational landscape as researchers consider how human beings interact with each other in a way that goes beyond purely cognitive theories of human nature. The concept of social and emotional learning should remain all-encompassing and not end up divided into anti-pathetical schools of thought or issues of personalized dogmatic contention and a label for only one particular approach. Just as Picasso loathed the term “Cubism” because, as he said *“When we invented cubism we had no intention whatever of inventing cubism. We simply wanted to express what was in us”*.

True leadership is service that involves personal emotional development too and that sometimes requires an element of selflessness or even sacrifice. The great Polish educator, Janusz Korczak, who perished voluntarily alongside the orphaned children in his care in Treblinka in 1942 wrote: *“Find your own way. Learn to know yourself before you know children. It is a mistake to believe that education is a science of children and not of man.”* In other words, to work with children positively and successfully we also have to know ourselves. Much depends on the personality of the educator, whether parent or teacher, and all professional trainings and development through experience have consequences for who we are as individuals and it is to this quality of developing personal integrity to which children are sensitive. This may sound radical to some but the narrative of social-emotional learning is radical and transformative. We are not only calling for the reflective teacher but one who will act according to the outcome of these reflections. Persuasion is the least effective mode of changing behaviour and attitude. Active attainment and modelling are far more powerful. Creating a caring environment in the school and being consistent are essential foundations, especially at a time when schools are being asked to play a greater parental role in society, and with values being demanded that are conducive to the children acquiring good citizenship skills and constructive values.

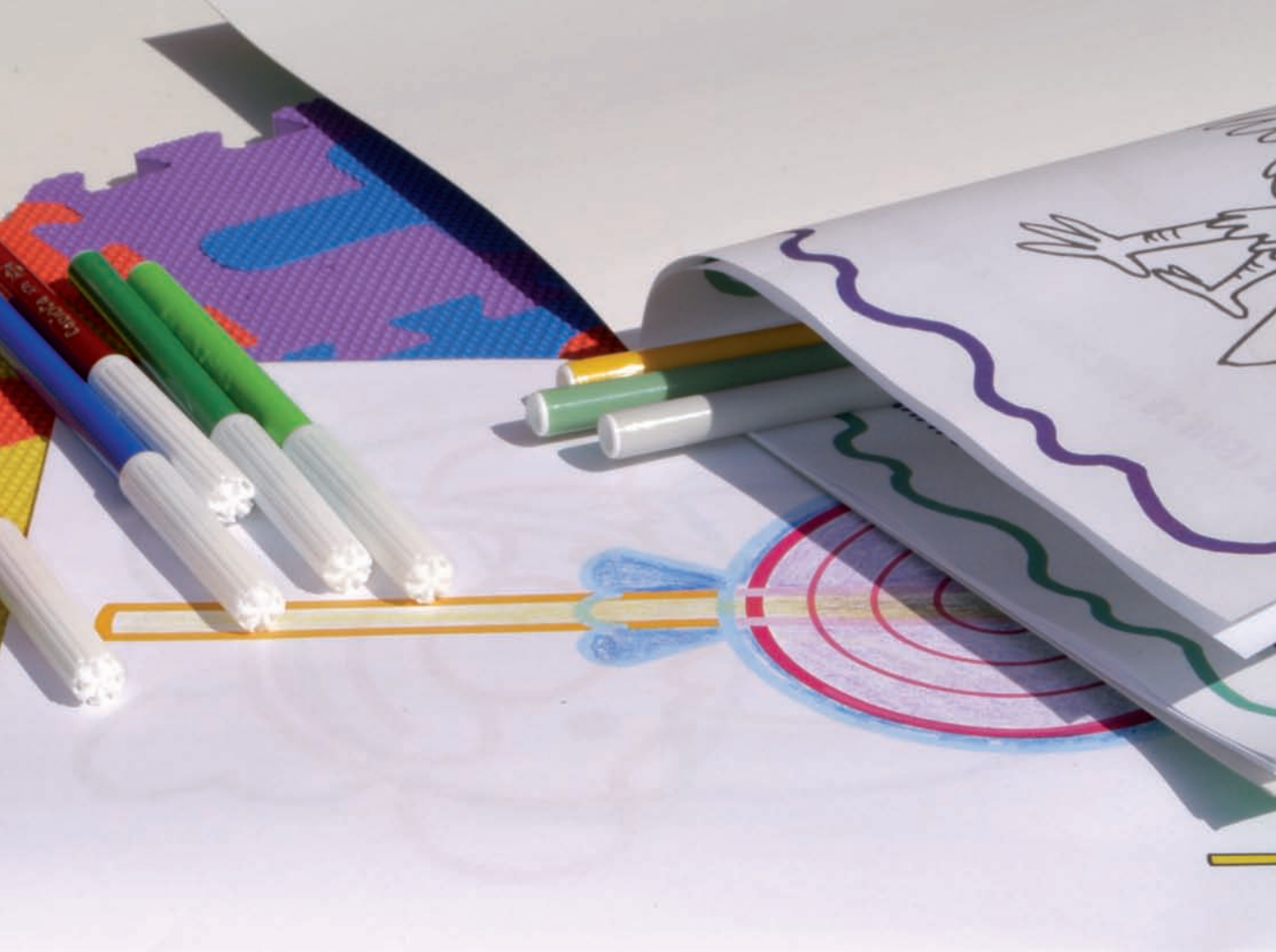
However, it might at this point be worth noting here, there are many experiential ways of accessing the faculty of social responsibility and engagement, including music, poetry, the visual arts and drama. Creativity is being increasingly recognized as a fundamental aspect of learning. We are all in the process of becoming, our brain is always learning and in this process we find our own individualized paths for life. Our stories differ. This is recognized in the new drive for personalized learning where the students participate and are actively engaged in finding their own targets, devising their own learning plans and choosing from among many different ways to learn with the appropriate assistance and support. None of this can be divorced from how we feel about things. This way of integrating the individual into the educational process has implications for our social bearing and democratic expectations as well. The traditional mass production model of schooling is being challenged through advances in understanding our own biology and minds.

### Curricular and Contextual Approaches to Social and Emotional Education

Social and emotional learning can be taught as a subject in its own right within the curriculum, where lesson programmes are carefully constructed to enable children to consciously develop their social and emotional abilities, and contextually, where it underlies the curriculum and methodology and relates to the organization of the school as an institution, parental involvement and co-operation and the school’s relationship to the wider community it serves. The balance relies very much on the context in which it is being developed and examined. Some alternative and progressive schools have worked for many years on an integrated approach, because the whole school attempts to incorporate a supportive ethos and child orientated approach. In this context the curriculum itself is a meaningful and interconnected narrative closely parallel to child development. Every aspect of school life, such as telling a story or recounting an experiment or historical episode, is seen as having a pedagogical aspect by exemplifying social, intellectual and emotional learning. The teachers engage the children in self-development by being prepared to engage in it themselves.

In more traditional school settings, there is case for direct teaching. However, because of the complexity of the task there is still much debate about the effects of curricula and contextual teaching and there are many varying perspectives, as will be shown in the country reports. However there is common ground in the view that the school leadership cannot stand aloof but must be fully engaged in and committed to the process. The whole school environment is instrumental in achieving successful outcomes. These steps though should not just be taken by the adult or official world. Children need to participate too, be taken seriously and their insights and personalities respected. Whole school means whole school. Children have a remarkable sense of values, and an acute feeling for justice and injustice, even babies have a





moral sense. Consequently, to strengthen this they need a say because developing emotionally also means taking responsibility and learning from mistakes. In addition, it means reflecting on emotions in oneself and in others and being able to contextualize emotions by being empowered to explore them. Children can also help each other in ways that are sometimes imperceptible to adults and need the trust and space to do so. Simple play is often an exercise in this ability, within an imaginative guise.

### School as a Learning Community

In times past parents could be kept at arm's length behind school fences as though education was a secret garden tended by omniscient experts. Now, however teachers, embarking on a SEE strategy cannot do so in isolation from the immediate circumstances of the child and will need to call on greater resources to call from within the community. Teachers face greater expectations, seemingly limitless needs and enormous responsibilities and unless they are able to share this vocational challenge with the wider community and know they are supported by it the impression that we are asking too much of them is unavoidable. Similarly, parenting has become an increasingly complex task as traditional structures disappear, to be replaced by smaller and often more fluid family units, more mobile lifestyles, a tendency for both partners to be at work and the general pressures of modern life impinging on family relationships. Consequently, the welfare of the child in a rapidly changing society requires all agencies to cooperate in a meaningful and insightful manner. Families need to be to be appropriately involved in the schooling of their children by right, as they are the child's first and primary educators. Time and organizational energy needs to be invested in finding ways for their positive participation and schools following these routes have found it pays dividends in many unforeseen and supportive ways. If all adults caring and carrying responsibility for the education and upbringing of children could see themselves as "co-educators", then the barriers between those with professional skills and those within the family context can become more permeable, to the advantage of the child. The community as a whole can become aware and decide where this new awareness can lead, thereby exercising lifelong learning through practice, listening, seeking to understand, cooperating, appreciating the richness of human diversity and finding common goals. Supportive families are critical in order for most children to do well at school, and in an age of many patchwork families the school community can end up needing greater sensitivity and skills compared to the previous times of comparative stability. Emotional literacy is called on from more people than just the immediate circle around the child and the healthy partnership between family and school can be decisive of a child's future. If social-emotional learning respects the education of the "whole child" which seeks to integrate all facets of being fully human, then the whole social, moral and natural environment plays a role.

Developing emotional competence – learning to regulate one’s emotions, behaviours, and attention, and social competence – learning to relate well to other children and forming friendships – partly depends on two aspects of the child’s upbringing. Success is influenced by a child’s history of relationships with primary caregivers and other children as well as the child’s own physical and mental health. Learning to take another’s perspective is formed by interplay with others at home, kindergarten and school. “*They are important predictors of a child’s ability to get along with peers and the adults in their lives, to learn effectively and ultimately to succeed in school.*”<sup>23</sup> This begins in babyhood when “*Wonder is the first of all the passions*” (Descartes 1645) and the more this sense of Wonder can be enlivened throughout schooling the more chance there is of remaining open to new emotional experiences and accordingly developing empathetic understanding. A child needs to understand her own feelings in order to recognize those in others. Some emotions are more appropriate in certain situations than others and a capacity for adjustment has to be learnt. Emotions are the inner equivalent of outer movements and handling them is likewise a skill.

Clearly introducing social and emotional education calls for rethinking of the whole of the child’s educational experience and a weighing up of priorities. For social and emotional education to be effective however, evaluation procedures will have to be found that provide accountability but nevertheless are of such a nature that they encourage, rather than stifle, development and are also a tool for positive and appreciative relationships. Whatever we seek to measure in our developing children will be incomplete. This is what Mannheim called perspective, “*The false idea of a detached impersonal point of view must be replaced by the ideal of an essentially human point of view, which is within the limits of human perspective, constantly trying to enlarge itself.*”<sup>24</sup> We have to also take into account where we are looking from as well as what we are looking at. By accepting that all learning has an emotional component and that we live in an increasingly fragmented and tense world, where the ability to cooperate becomes essential for our survival as a species, we are setting a new challenge to schools and placing a redefined responsibility on educators.

## Conclusion

Learning from each other at an international and culturally diverse level, both through our successes and failures, lies at the heart of this report. Regardless of our being adults, in order to produce this report we have had to become a community of learners too, thus mirroring the processes we are seeking to describe. This is a new field and as such has to be approached with a certain humility, yet it is also exciting and invigorating. Our contention is that we can all do better and by taking up the challenge of social and emotional education in schools, we can also provide an opportunity for our children to do so. We all have to look wider and deeper

as our times take on greater global challenges and our children will need even greater skills than we possess. As adults, we take on the responsibility for bringing up the next generations and how we work together determines our success. If we have one commonly agreed goal it would be to live together in harmony with our fellow human beings and the natural world around us. Where else can one learn this most effectively but when we are young in our families, with our peers and in early years’ provision and schools?

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**The mosaic in the chapters that follow are a snapshot of the present practice and understanding from very different cultural and national perspectives, and as this is pioneering work the terms used to describe the ventures are occasionally fluid and even sometimes imprecise**

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The mosaic in the chapters that follow are a snapshot of the present practice and understanding from very different cultural and national perspectives, and as this is pioneering work the terms used to describe the ventures are occasionally fluid and even sometimes imprecise. We are neither attempting to produce a fully comprehensive picture nor a recipe book but by depicting and discussing what is happening in widely different environments we hope to give impetus and inspiration for future developments as a contribution to the well-being of children. Our science shows us that our heads and hearts are not as divided as we once thought and just as our emotional world is never definitive but constantly transformative, so too are our descriptions of it. Our cultures evolve and are never static and likewise our educational ideas and methods should be able to take on new forms if we seriously wish to serve the needs of every individual child.



## Notes

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- <sup>6</sup> Ibid. p. 52
- <sup>7</sup> <http://www.futureknowledge.org/background/Kronberg-Declaration.pdf/view>
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- <sup>23</sup> Zigler see note 15. p. 244
- <sup>24</sup> Mannheim, K. (1936) *Ideology and Utopia*. cited in *Assessing Children's Learning*. Drummond, M.J. (1995) David Fulton Publishers. London