



Many to Many

- I **Editorial: ‘We the peoples....’**
- II “Climate Change and Nuclear Proliferation”
- III Declaration on Equal Access to Justice for All by 2030
- IV Preparing for the 2019 Climate Change Summit
- V The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
- VI UN Environment Frontiers 2018/19 Report
- VII Reflections: A personal journey through life-time education and learning
- VIII “Think Equal, Build Smart, Innovate for Change”
- IX The Great Invocation

Anthony & Gita Brooke, co-founders Te Rangi, 4 Allison Street, Wanganui 4500, New Zealand

Website: www.peacethroughunity.info Email optubrookiana@xtra.co.nz

ORDER THE EMAIL EDITION OF MANY TO MANY BY SENDING AN EMAIL TO: optusteve@earthlink.net
with ‘Many to Many subscribe’ in the subject line.

I 'We the peoples..'

I shall never forget May the fifth, 1945. This was the day that Denmark was freed from the German occupation, and – having just heard the announcement over the radio – we all spontaneously streamed out into the streets from wherever we might have been at the time, to celebrate with one another. Our hearts, overflowing with relief and gratitude, were already envisioning the new – free - world, built on the firm foundation of good, fair and open relationships across all borders.

However, like the candles we had lit in the windows, replacing the heavy wartime blinds, the immediate euphoric jubilations came to an end, tempered with a dose of stark reality. As the German forces retired and returned to their own depleted nation, it became painfully clear that Danish people had been involved in and engaged at all levels of the 'Nazi' modes and means of domination - even participated in the use of 'tools of persuasion' to make prisoners from the Danish resistance movement talk.

I still remember the sinking feeling when I realised that the issues and mind-sets that had caused the war, were far from resolved; that, like particularly vicious strands of virus, they could – and would – continue to infect 'weak spots' within us, whether as individuals, groups or nations. And, to this day, we are seeing - at every level of our local/global societies – the tendency to create and cultivate groups around special interests which may, or may not, always be having the best interests of the whole at heart.

Even so, members within the war-weary family of nations had been giving much thought to the creation of a future world in which peaceful relationships could be established and ensured for coming generations. The essence of these deliberations is contained in the Charter of the United Nations, which came into force 24 October 1945. In the very first words of this document '*we, the peoples of the United Nations*' declare our determination '*to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our life-time has brought untold sorrow to mankind....*', and solemnly promise to '*practice tolerance and live together in peace with one another as good neighbours...*'.

The Charter further states that '*membership in the United Nations is open to all other peace-loving states which accept the obligations in the present Charter....*', and today the United Nations consists of more than 190 member states who – on behalf of their citizens - have committed to upholding the vision and fulfilling the aims outlined in the Charter, as well as the many resolutions agreed upon through the following years ... So, what happened!?

Let us not merely put candles in the window and hope for the best; let us acknowledge that we have the governments, which reflect with painful accuracy the work that needs to – indeed must - be done within every neighbourhood of each and all nations. Let us take to heart that it is we, wherever we live, who must rise to the task of healing and restoring all relationships between peoples as well as with all the many other forms of life and livingness with whom we share our planetary home. And, indeed, throughout the world people of all ages, races and cultures are uniting

across all human made borders and boundaries in a firm resolve to fulfil the pledges made in our name.

It is we, the peoples, who can – and will – make all things new.

II “Climate Change and Nuclear Proliferation”

As current Chair of the Elders - the group founded by Nelson Mandela which celebrated its centenary in South Africa last year - Mary Robinson recently announced that the main focus for their 2019 activities will be climate change and nuclear proliferation. Both these threats will demand a concerted and coordinated international response she said, and the consequences of inaction will be genuinely frightening, stressing that *“nothing less than the survival of our planet is at stake”*.

“Prioritising equally pressing issues is always an immense challenge but it is clear to me that there are two urgent existential threats that we as Elders must urgently act upon: climate change and nuclear weapons.”

We shall need to act now: *‘with clarity, conviction and compassion; and we shall need to ‘insist on a people-centred, holistic approach to tackling all the interlocked global challenges – including equality for women and girls, sustainable development, universal health coverage, access to justice and the strengthening of democratic institutions’*.

We must also *vigilantly* uphold the values and standards of *‘truth, integrity and decency across public life, including political and media discourse’*, she added. And the *“common strand binding these two challenges is that both can only be effectively addressed by ethical leadership and multilateral cooperation.”*

On the 16th February, at the Munich Security Conference, the Elders presented their new ‘minimisation agenda’ containing proposals for countering the dangerous rise in *‘geopolitical tensions and distrust between states’*, and offering a *‘realistic long-term path to the total elimination of nuclear weapons’*.

These proposals focus on four key principles:

- * Doctrine, whereby every nuclear state should make an unequivocal ‘No first Use’ declaration;
- * De-alerting, with almost all warheads taken off high alert status;
- * Deployment, with a substantial reduction of all nuclear warheads that are currently operationally deployed; and
- * Decreased numbers, to dramatically cut the number of nuclear weapons in existence

https://theelders.org/news-insight?term_node_tid_depth_3%5B%5D=68

III Declaration on Equal Access to Justice for All by 2030

At their meeting in the Hague on 7th February this year Ministers from UN member nations and high-level representatives from international organisations met to discuss how they together - prior to the 2019 High Level Political Forum (HLPF) and SDG Summit – could fulfil the commitment made in the Sustainable Development Goals (16.3), regarding the ‘equal access to justice for all’.

Members of this meeting took to heart that the 2030 Agenda is based on the resolve to ensure that the vision of a *‘just, equitable, tolerant, open and socially inclusive world in which the needs of the most vulnerable are met’* – leaving no-one behind. It was acknowledged that billions of people - men, women and children alike - throughout the world communities, are having ‘unresolved justice problems’, which could ‘exacerbate inequality’ and ‘fuel violent conflict’. Recognising that ‘new approaches’ were required to *‘move from justice for the few to justice for the many’*, the participants of the Hague meeting agreed on the necessity to:

1. Put people and their legal needs at the center of justice systems. Through understanding what people need and want when they seek justice, which obstacles they face and what kind of justice they receive.
2. Solve justice problems. Transform justice institutions and services through a broader range of justice providers, to ensure respect for human rights.
3. Improve the quality of justice journeys. Empower people to understand, use and shape the law, while offering them fair informal and formal justice processes that meet their needs in terms of both procedures and outcomes.
4. Use justice for prevention. Make use of mediation and other methods to prevent disputes from escalating. Address legacies of human rights violations. Invest in justice systems that are trustworthy and legitimate.
5. Provide people with means to access services and opportunities. Break down legal, administrative and practical barriers that people face to obtain documents, access public services, and participate fully in society and the economy, while promoting gender equality.

<https://namati.org/resources/declaration-on-equal-access-to-justice-for-all-by-2030/>

“you are never too old to learn, and never too young to lead”.

Kofi Annan

IV Preparing for the 2019 Climate Change Summit

In its recent report the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) confirms that the years 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2018 were the four warmest years recorded to date – both on land and in the ocean.. Further to this we are told that the 20 warmest years on record have been in the past 22 years.

But temperatures are merely ‘part of the story’, says the report. As WMO Secretary-General, Petteri Taalas, explains, the extreme and high impact of the weather is affecting many countries and millions of people with *‘devastating repercussions for economies and ecosystems in 2018’*. Most of these extreme weather events are

consistent with what we can expect from a changing climate, says Petteri Taalas, and *'a reality we need to face up to'*. He urged that *'greenhouse gas emission reduction and climate adaptation measures should be a top global priority'*.

The analysis, based on the monitoring performed by five leading international organisations, also shows that the global average surface temperature in 2018 was approximately 1° Celsius above the pre-industrial (1850-1900) baseline. It further points out that limiting global warming to 1.5°C will require that the *"global net emissions of carbon dioxide, attributable to human activity, would need to fall by about 45 per cent from 2010 levels by 2030, reaching 'net zero' around 2050"*.

The UN Secretary-General, Antonio Guterres will be convening a Climate Summit on 23 September this year, and is working closely with Member States and non-party stakeholders so as to *'inject momentum'* into the race of meeting the commitments already made and agreed upon at the 2015 Paris Climate Summit. This year's Summit will aim to focus on key areas, such as how to manage *'the transition to alternative energy sources, managing industrial transition, coming up with solutions through agriculture, oceans, forests and nature-related environments'*. To this end the Secretary-General has specified 'action portfolios' which are having 'high potential to curb greenhouse gas and to increase global action on adaptation and resilience'. These are:

- * **Finance**: mobilising public and private sources of finance to drive decarbonisation of all priority sectors and advance resilience;
- * **Energy Transition**: accelerating the shift away from fossil fuels and towards renewable energy, as well as making significant gains in energy efficiency;
- * **Industry Transition**: transforming industries such as Oil and Gas, Steel, Cement, Chemicals and Information Technology;
- * **Nature-Based Solutions**: reducing emissions, increasing sink capacity and enhancing resilience within and across forestry, agriculture, oceans and food systems, including through biodiversity conservation, leveraging supply chains and technology;
- * **Cities and Local Action**: Advancing mitigation and resilience at urban and local levels, with a focus on new commitments on low-emission buildings, mass transport and urban infrastructure, and resilience for the urban poor;
- * **Resilience and Adaptation**: advancing global efforts to address and manage the impacts and risks of climate change, particularly in those communities and nations most vulnerable.

The Special Envoy for the 2019 Climate Change Summit, Luis Alfonso de Alba, stresses that we shall need a lot of political will to address the many and complex issues that are today confronting us all; and the commitments we made in the 2015 Paris Agreement are *'simply not enough to reach the goal of keeping global warming to 1.5°C or 2°C'*.

There is an urgent need to recognise and *'address a number of pending issues, like getting sufficient resources for activities both to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and to adapt to the challenge that climate change presents, such as natural disasters'*, said Ambassador de Alba.

Further to this: *'climate action is not only possible, it's not only urgent, it may be also a very good opportunity for a fundamental transformation of the way we produce, consume and the way our own economies develop'*. Climate Change affects not only the

environment but touches on all the spheres of development, said the Ambassador. So, *'if we want to achieve sustainable development, fight poverty and eradicate diseases etc., climate action is a fundamental thing, and will have far reaching impact on the future of our communities'*.

<http://www.un.org/en/sections/issues-depth/climate-change/index.html>

V The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

In his recent address to the Human Rights Council in Geneva (25 February) UN Secretary-General, António Guterres officially welcomed the new High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet Jeria, who - in September last year - assumed this position, succeeding Zeid Raad Al Hussein of Jordan.

Stressing the Human Rights Council's commitment to function as an *'epicentre for international dialogue on the protection of all human rights – civil, political, economic, social and culture'*, the Secretary-General felt convinced that she would bring *'added value to the advancement of human rights around the world'*. Your efforts will highlight that human rights are of value in themselves and that they are essential to advancing peace and human dignity, he said, and these efforts will be empowering women and girls, deepening development and sparking hope.

The UN Secretary-General also stressed that, although human rights seem to be losing ground in many parts of the globe *'I am not losing hope'*! Because, we are simultaneously witnessing the rise of a powerful movement for human rights and social justice, he said, and: *"Youth, indigenous people, migrants and refugees are demanding their rights and making their voices heard. Journalists are fearlessly getting their stories out, and women are standing up and saying 'me too'"*.

Prior to assuming her new position as High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet was twice elected President of Chile, from 2006–2010 and from 2014–2018. During this time a National Institute for Human Rights as well as a Ministry of Women and Gender Equality was established. Michelle Bachelet also served as Health Minister from 2002–2004.

On 10 September 2018 the Human Rights Council opened its 39th regular session in which its President, Vojislav Suc, welcomed the newly elected High Commissioner of Human Rights and also acknowledged the new representatives from five least developed countries.

In her first oral update to the Council, Michelle Bachelet stressed her long-time commitment to *'reversing hatred and ensuing quality and respect for all,'* and expressed her conviction that *'cooperation between all actors through multilateral institutions could solve the complex challenges that faced the world'*. The most effective solutions were grounded in principle and in openness; in collective agreements and in coordinated action, she added. While political differences may divide countries, the upholding of human rights *'was in the interest of every State'*, she stressed. As High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet vowed to advocate for the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights that were the inherent entitlements of all people. Irrespective of the type of political regime in any given country the Human Rights Council *'had the duty to advocate and to assist transformative improvements to upholding all human rights.'* The Human Rights Council cannot, she insists, pick and choose from among people's inalienable rights, because *'they build*

on each other'. <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/Pages/NewsDetail.aspx?NewsID=23522&LangID=E>
<http://www.responsibilitytoprotect.org/index.php/about-rtop>

VI UN Environment Frontiers 2018/19 Report

In her foreword to this latest report, UNEP Acting Executive Director, Joyce Msuya reminds us how, since the first decade of the 20th century when synthetic nitrogen-based fertilizers began to transform farming methods throughout the world, it marked 'the beginning of our long-term interference with the Earth's nitrogen balance'. This has resulted in the degrading of our soils, polluting of the air, and has triggered the spread of 'dead zones' and toxic algal blooms in waterways. In just a few decades we have caused global temperatures rising 170 times faster than the natural rate and altered the flow of more than 93 per cent of the world's rivers.

While pointing out humanity's shocking short-sightedness and mindless exploitation of the natural habitat we share with all other planetary forms of life, the report thankfully also offers the reader some 'good news' as people around the globe are waking up to the challenges that must be faced and overcome. The report is giving the reader much information on holistic approaches which 'can help us to farm cleanly and sustainably, a hallmark of a truly circular economy'.

Joyce Msuya concludes her foreword by stressing that: '*... whenever we interfere with nature – whether at the global scale or the molecular level – we risk creating long-lasting impacts on our planetary home*'. However, '*by acting with foresight and by working together, we can stay ahead of these issues and craft solutions that will serve us all, for generations to come*'.

<https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/27538/Frontiers1819.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>

<https://www.unenvironment.org/about-un-environment>

VII REFLECTIONS: A personal journey through life-time education and learning

What qualifications do I have to speak on the topic of education? My career relationship began in 1967 and since then I have been an educator in the formal secondary system (Years 9-13), followed by a 'second' career in the tertiary system (Polytechnic/Community College) and now working with the community as required. I began my teaching career in Scotland before moving to New Zealand in 1972. Most recently I have worked in the local prison delivering a course on Creative Writing.

I have been involved in many changes in education. From my own experiences at school where we were expected to sit quietly, listen carefully and give back the required answer when asked – in class and in tests. If you stepped out of line, in the teacher's view, there were several punishments which could follow, ranging from a leather strap to the palms, a cane to the bottom, and detention, to writing out lines of repetitive material. The intent of these was to bring the recalcitrant child into line so that all could progress at the same rate. Things have thankfully changed since then.

After Teacher's Training College, my early years in the classroom were somewhat similar to my own school days. The teacher was the fount of all knowledge – rightly or wrongly – and as such, deserved total respect and deference. The teacher spoke,

the class listened. I can well remember teaching typing classes – drills on manual typewriters, with no communication between students – in which I could hear a pen dropped on the floor! However, I also learned very quickly that my delivery and style would need adjustment. Having delivered a lesson introducing a new topic, I went to my head of department to ask what to do next! She looked a bit taken aback, but suggested moving onto the next topic. I did this and asked what next? But this time she suggested I could ‘test’ how well the class had mastered the topics. You can imagine the results...not encouraging! So, back to the drawing board and finding different ways to explain what was needed. In later years, I often felt like an advertisement for Heinz – 57 varieties!! But it was obvious that not all students learned the same way. Over the years my delivery style has changed completely. Where possible I will now use a much more interactive approach, such as story-telling, to deliver the required content.

My love of learning was kindled early and continues today. When young we were able to play by ourselves outside around the farm, while the adults were working. There were always interesting things to explore and test out. An old tractor which could be partially dismantled, or a hole dug in the chicken run preparatory to a visit to ‘Australia’! I was not aware that even if I dug far enough, I would miss Australia by quite a distance. And there were people around to ask questions about how things worked. As I got older, reading and listening to music were fitted in to a very active, family work environment. As for formal, academic qualifications, my latest diploma was gained last year. Will I continue? Probably not in the formal sense, but I will be learning as long as I live! Learning happens daily in all settings, often quite unexpectedly and serendipitously.

How can life-long learning be promoted? The easiest way is to begin early by encouraging curiosity and a built-in learning habit. When I was young, pre-school learning was not an option, but it is now much easier to take advantage of crèches, playgroups and kindergarten, and the value of early childhood education is becoming much more accepted. Children are exposed to a mixture of activities involving language and play while the interaction with others, carers and young classmates, sets a firm foundation for the future. “Humans are hard-wired to learn by imitation, even when that is clearly not the best way to learn.” However, “Maybe imitation is a lot more sophisticated than people thought.” (This was quoted in an article by Carl Zimmer in the New York Times in December 2005, “Children Learn by Monkey See, Monkey Do. Chimps Don’t”). How often can you remember a song or rhyme learned in childhood? There are entertainment groups in many countries who use colourful costumes, catchy melodies, simple, repeated lyrics and humour to entertain while teaching and exhibiting acceptable social behaviour. By building an atmosphere of trust, anxiety levels are lowered which can lead to non-aggressive relationships in later life.

UNICEF published a short booklet, “*Starting Early To Build Stronger And More Peaceful Societies*” in which the following benefits of play are listed, “...working cooperatively, managing conflict, regulating emotions, showing appreciation for diversity and processing complex information.” Some benefits of Early Childhood Education programmes are discussed in the booklet, including, “...promoting positive attitudes and skills ... reducing conflict and violence ... contributing to social justice ... serving as platforms for community cohesion.” All of these assist in building right relationships and promoting a peaceful society.

<http://learningforpeace.unicef.org/partners/early-childhood-peace-consortium>

The human brain operates on two levels – the conscious and the subconscious. The subconscious brain is developed in early life when all of the ‘new’ experiences are absorbed and remembered without any filtering or judgement. It is therefore

important that these experiences are chosen carefully, where possible. Whoever is telling a child something is seen as an 'expert' and will be copied. The language they hear, the tone of voice used, the body language and visual stimulus as well as the setting or environment are all filed away in the sub-conscious. *"What teachers say to students—when they praise or discipline, give directions or ask questions, and introduce concepts or share stories—affects student learning and behavior. A slight change in intonation can also dramatically change how language feels for students."*

This is an explanation of what to expect in a recently published book by Mike Anderson, [What We Say and How We Say It Matter](#).

A child's emotional experiences are equally, if not more, important as the physical reactions to what is going on around them. How they feel becomes linked with what they are absorbing. If things are repeated often enough, good or bad, they will become more deeply embedded in the unconscious memory, and become automatic future responses. This, in turn, will contribute to the degree of self-confidence a child develops and how they react to and with others. This does not mean that the operations of the brain are then 'fixed'. The study of neuroplasticity shows that the brain is capable of change and adapting to new information. It works best when it is challenged and used. Theodore Sizer, a leading US educational reformer in the 1970s, suggests that we develop the habit of learning when no-one is looking. <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Theodore-R-Sizer> So, even if we have unhelpful habits, they can be changed with a determined effort. The more positive material fed to the brain from an early age, the fewer later changes will be necessary.

'Education' takes many forms. If we are to make progress in creating a more peaceful community, education for right relations is also required. In the preamble to the Charter of the United Nations, 'we the peoples...' are given the task of living together as good neighbours.

<http://www.un.org/en/sections/uncharter/preamble/index.html> To achieve this, when society has decided what acceptable social behaviour is, it will then be modelled and taught from childhood. While it is obvious that society can and will change over time, peaceful relationships with one another can be encouraged at all ages.

Most countries have a formal education system, provided through schools, intended to give young people a foundation in knowledge and skills to grow and become part of society. A progression from pre-school, through primary and secondary schools (to Year 12/13 is compulsory in New Zealand), with provision of tertiary education (community college/polytechnic or university) available for those who wish to continue their studies. The curriculum offered will reflect current thinking of what is 'needed' for society and the economic workplace. The emphasis historically has changed over time from classical, to science and individualism, to rationality followed by the need for a skilled workforce. In the early 21st century, education has become a commodity driven by market forces. This has resulted in different pressures and expectations being placed on students and teachers alike, by government control of the education system. However, changes in the educational system have not kept up with changes in social conditions or society's expectations of it.

Learning takes place in many settings, both formal and informal. Howard Gardner, Professor of Cognition and Education at the [Harvard Graduate School of Education](#) at [Harvard University](#), has identified multiple areas of intelligence. These are, Verbal Linguistic, Logical Mathematical, Spatial, Musical, Bodily Kinaesthetic, Interpersonal, with Intrapersonal and Naturalistic added later. <http://tecweb.org/styles/gardner.html>. These intellectual strengths would seem to

reinforce the relevance of intuitive infant learning tools. It would also appear to help reinforce learning if more than one of these intelligences was to be activated. We all will have at least one of these which is more pronounced, although we will use a mixture of many of them. The practice of project-based learning is an attempt to combine as many of these different intelligences as possible into a student's learning. Combined with a collaborative approach, social relationships and complementary skills are also recognised and applied. This further develops a sense of self-worth and confidence in a student. It is also showing some practical application of what is being learned. But this form of learning does not fit neatly into a subject-based school timetable as many subjects are involved in a project.

Unless new material is offered in a style which is easily understood by a student, it becomes difficult for them to 'learn' as part of their group/class. It is equally, if not more, difficult for them when it comes to the assessment of their learning. A formal examination or multiple choice assessment may not give the student the opportunity to show a true level of knowledge. The same will apply to standards-based assessments, especially when several attempts are offered to reach the required level of competence. The results of these assessments will be used to measure a person's educational success. If the results of these assessments are poor, the self-confidence of the student and the pathways open to them can be restricted. Their place in society can also be set. Although possible, it is more of a challenge to return to formal education later in life when trying to juggle the requirements of a job and a family.

The importance placed on the results of assessments can skew the content delivery. Teachers will often teach to the assessment, given little time to pursue student curiosity or related supportive material. Students often choose subjects which they perceive as easy to 'achieve' to build up the required number of credits, while judging the value of material being delivered by checking whether or not it will 'be in the test!' Add to this the teacher being held responsible for a student's results, with or without the active co-operation of the student, and the prevalence of students' rights outweighing any of their responsibilities, the need for changes in the education system becomes clear.

"Education is not a product; mark, diploma, job, money – in that order; it is a *process*, a never-ending one." Bel Kaufman 1967 (The International Thesaurus of Quotations)

This is even more apparent with further, tertiary education. Apart from the cost and length of time studying for and gaining formal degrees and diplomas or certificates, their usefulness in practice is not always what was expected. It is difficult to accept that the content you have worked so hard to master, is often out of date by the time you come to implement it! But at least, you have learned how to learn.

In *21 Lessons for the 21st Century*, Yuval Noah Harari suggests a formal education curriculum should be structured around the 4 Cs: *Critical thinking, Collaboration, Creativity, Communication - and emphasis on Life Skills*. Perhaps another C could be added – *Curiosity*: asking 'Why?' which comes so easily to young children. To do this, much more time and flexibility will be needed in the 'school' organisation to pursue the questions, but the long-term benefit would greatly outweigh any extra cost. Students would be trained for life-long learning. An added benefit would be in active listening. With this additional skill, a person will be able to distinguish more easily between fact and 'spin'. Understanding is more than words. "*To understand another's speech, it is not sufficient to understand his words – we must understand his thought. But even this is not enough – we must know his motivation.*"

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lev_Vygotsky. Being able to understand what is being said,

heard or seen is even more important in today's world of social media. It is easier to influence young people, and their decisions, when they are bombarded with material of all sorts and fact checking is not only difficult but also time consuming. At least with the printed word there was time to digest, research and reflect before coming to a conclusion. Television and video cut down this time of reflection while social media almost requires an instant response.

Too often the media subjects us to an education for fear, subtle or not, where, if something is repeated often enough, it must be true. However, what if this material is taken out of context, or worse still, deliberately manufactured? Is anyone doing the fact checking? The challenge to teachers and educators is to incorporate the useful aspects of technology while limiting the harmful ones.

Not all learning takes place in a formal setting. Training for a vocation or in a practical setting is the choice of a growing number of students. Learning 'on the job' in the form of apprenticeships or internships, is going back to an earlier way of learning: working from an apprentice (learner) to a journeyman (able to work under supervision) leading to the production of a 'masterpiece' and the master status. This is as much a relationship education as a skills mastery.

At any stage of the learning journey, success will have an emotional effect, often reflected in having the confidence to tackle something new. The curiosity and creativity so obvious in early learning environments needs to be celebrated and encouraged. If these are being squashed in a formal academic setting, outside opportunities are needed involving the wider community, but more directly, a peer group. In my youth, outside games were commonplace with young people spending much of their time following their curiosity in the company of others or by themselves. Contrast that to today's children who spend the majority of their time in front of a screen of some kind. While information technology can be useful for learning, there are also serious disadvantages from overuse and inappropriate use. The skill of synthesis and comprehension of what is being said or shown is even more important, to avoid being led by a peer group in directions you may later regret. Being aware of the consequences of decisions taken can be difficult for young and old, and negative consequences can have long-lasting effects.

As our society changes, so too does the need to be flexible in skill development. Children today will be exposed to many different ways of learning, earning a living and spending their leisure time. Continuous self-improvement is becoming expected if you are to become an active and contributing member of society. The life-long part will need to include methods and opportunities for re-education where necessary and for previous gaps to be filled in a socially acceptable manner. The importance of education in its widest sense, starting from early childhood to the end of life, is now accepted.

It is timely to consider what happens when the education system, family, peers and the community fail our children. When an individual feels they are not valued, or worse, told they are 'stupid' and 'useless', it can lead to them looking for a sense of importance elsewhere. If labels are used to describe people who do not fit in 'our group' the sense of alienation can be made worse. When everyone who is 'different' is seen as a threat to our 'community', it can result in the formation of groups of people who are disenchanting and disengaged from general society. In some cases this can lead to breaking the law. Most of the prisoners with whom I have worked, accept that they made poor decisions and they are living with the consequences. Any who have not acknowledged that what they did was 'wrong' will not be offered the

chance to join classes, such as Creative Writing. Again, most of them expect to be able to improve their skills and avoid further incarceration. However, this will depend on the support and resources available to them both while in prison and on release. In many cases, the prison system is still punitive rather than rehabilitative, which produces a breeding ground for further offending. While what is needed is clearly understood, the political will, funding and available resources have not yet caught up.

Instead of society placing the 'blame' on prisoners' anti-social actions, looking at their educational development and the opportunities available to them might give a more effective solution to anti-social activities. Money spent on an improved educational system could lead to significant savings on prison facilities.

"It is easier to build strong children than to repair broken adults", Frederick Douglass. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frederick_Douglass

Kate Smith, PTU co-worker
Kmwsnth48@gmail.com

[Formal qualifications in Computer Graphic Design, Information Technology in Education, Proofreading and Editing, Accounting and Secondary teaching in business subjects.]

VIII "Think Equal, Build Smart, Innovate for Change"

The above heading is the theme for the 2019 International Women Day celebrations throughout the world.

This day, which had its first gathering in 1911, belongs to any group within each and every nation who wants to assist in the struggle of women for equal rights and responsibilities everywhere in the world. In the words of journalist and activist, Gloria Steinem, this is women's continuous striving for equality *everywhere*: '... equality belongs to no single feminist nor to any one organization but to the collective efforts of all who care about human rights.' <https://www.internationalwomensday.com/About>

In his statement on this year's International Women's Day, the UN Secretary-General António Guterres pointed to the many global challenges which are today confronting humanity as well as the global environment, and stressed that gender equality and women's rights are fundamental to addressing each and all of these challenges: "We can only re-establish trust and rebuild global solidarity by challenging historic injustices and promoting the rights and dignity of all". Although significant progress has been made on women's rights and leadership, these gains are 'far from consistent', he added.

Today the world is experiencing two parallel trends: 'while global movements and increased awareness are contributing to greater acknowledgement of the need for gender equality, this is happening simultaneously with a reinvigorated pushback on women rights'; and brutal attacks on women and those who speak up for their rights aim to 'reinforce women's traditional roles in society and punish those who challenge it'.

Concluding his message for this year's international women's day, the UN Secretary General calls for a new vision of equality and opportunity:

"...so that half the world's population can contribute to all the world's success".

<https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/statement/2019-03-08/secretary-generals-remarks-international-womens-day-2019-delivered>

IX THE GREAT INVOCATION

*From the point of Light within the Mind of God
Let light stream forth into the minds of men.
Let Light descend on Earth.*

*From the point of Love within the Heart of God
Let love stream forth into the hearts of men.
May Christ return to Earth.*

*From the centre where the Will of God is known
Let purpose guide the little wills of men -
The purpose which the Masters know and serve.*

*From the centre which we call the race of men
Let the Plan of Love and Light work out
And may it seal the door where evil dwells.*

Let Light and Love and Power restore the plan on Earth.