

**Toni Noble**

## **Education for the New Development Paradigm**

Education is the key to creating new possibilities for a safe, socially and ecologically responsible global order that enhances human happiness and the wellbeing of all life. It is intrinsically dynamic and transformative. Education is the thread that connects all nine domains of GNH and therefore offers the most leverage for the new development paradigm. The Prime Minister of Bhutan Jigmi Thinley (2009) proclaimed “*there is no more effective, comprehensive, and far-reaching way to put GNH fully into practice ... than to infuse our education system fully and properly with the humane and ecological principles and values of GNH*”.

**GNH SKILLS & COMPETENCIES.** What are the skills and competencies that underpin Education for GNH and wellbeing for the 21<sup>st</sup> century? The following list has been adapted from the Bhutanese Lhomen Framework for Education (2012). These skills can guide education for GNH in formal education settings such as schools, colleges and universities and in informal educational contexts such as local communities and online education.

*As connected individuals they will:*

- Value and seek out a deep understanding of the importance of interdependence (socially, culturally, economically, and environmentally)
- Have the ability to develop & maintain healthy & rewarding relationships with diverse backgrounds & cultures
- Effectively use communication skills (listening actively, cooperating, resisting inappropriate social pressure, negotiating conflict constructively, seeking & offering help when needed)

*As actively involved individuals they will:*

- Understand and embrace GNH principles of wellbeing and sustainability
- Understand their responsibilities, roles and opportunities in society
- Feel responsible and empowered to contribute to the wellbeing of others, and to the wellbeing of their community or country—socially, culturally, economically, and environmentally

*As lifelong learners they will:*

- Know how to learn and how to think creatively and flexibly
- Have the ability to find and use information with critical discrimination
- Be guided by pro-social values & emotional maturity and possess resilience and a well-grounded sense of confidence and optimism
- Be able to identify their strengths & limitations, set goals, persevere & gain a sense of accomplishment
- Enjoy learning for the sake of learning

## **Embed GNH skills & understandings in all instruction & across all curricula**

What does a GNH-infused school curriculum look like? How can we infuse appropriate learning into the traditional academic subjects of mathematics, literacy, social science and science so they fully reflect GNH values, skills and competencies? By making the curriculum for GNH and wellbeing a cross-curriculum priority across all core academic subjects and providing teacher-friendly resources, there is the potential for widespread adoption of these key skills and understandings in education.

### *Ecological sustainability as a cross-curriculum priority*

Education for ecological sustainability can be embedded into all school subjects from the first years to the final years of schooling. For example:

- Through *Literacy* curriculum students can learn the skills necessary to investigate, analyse and communicate ideas and information related to sustainability and to advocate, generate and evaluate actions for sustainable futures.
- Through *Mathematics* curriculum students can learn the understandings and skills necessary to measure, monitor and quantify change in social, economic and ecological systems over time. Statistical analysis enables prediction of probable futures based on findings and helps inform decision-making and actions that will lead to preferred futures.
- Through *Science* curriculum students develop an appreciation of the Earth's biosphere, geosphere, hydrosphere and atmosphere. They also develop observational and analytical skills to examine these relationships in the world around them.
- Through *Social Sciences* curriculum students learn to take a historical perspective in understanding the changes in environments over time from farming and settled communities, the Industrial Revolution and the growth of urban populations, the overuse of natural resources and the rise of environmental movements.

### *Social-emotional competencies and thinking skills as a cross-curriculum priority*

*Social-emotional competencies* such as relationship skills /self management skills /social awareness and *thinking skills* such as responsible problem solving/ decision making/ critical, creative and ethical thinking can be embedded in all curriculum. A persuasive argument for the embedding of social-emotional learning and thinking skills in the curriculum is provided by a large meta-analysis linking SEL with academic gains and positive school climates. More than 300 research studies conducted by independent scientists show that SEL programming in school and after-school settings significantly improves the conduct and academic performance of both the highest-needs students (those already identified by schools as at risk for problems) and the general student population. The gain on standardized achievement tests for the general student population was 11 percentile points (Durlak et al 2011).

## **Recommendations**

### **Elevate GNH in Global and National Educational Policy**

What do districts and schools need from United Nations and their own country and state governments to adopt, implement and sustain education for GNH?

- Be clear about our vision for GNH in education and use our collective power to advocate and champion for educational policy for GNH
- Work at all levels of our educational systems: local, state, national and international
- Plan how the policy can be made a living, breathing document that guides educators
- Keep in mind the Millennium goals to achieve universal primary education and promote gender equality and empower women

### **Develop District & School Leadership Capacity for Education for GNH**

What strategies are effective in developing staff capacity for leadership in implementing GNH educational initiatives?

- Develop district clusters of school leaders who share common goals for educating for GNH
- Create opportunities for professional development for leadership in educating for GNH
- In schools encourage the development of a school leadership team for GNH
- Empower young people in leadership initiatives for GNH
- Engage parents and the wider community in ways that everyone can be educated for GNH

### **Promote Professional Learning for Teachers**

How can teachers be supported to promote and develop the skills for GNH?

- Focus on training and embedding GNH skills into the curriculum by developing exemplars through case studies of good practice, videos, online and other resources and linking to existing resources.
- Develop a clear simplified common language that unites similar initiatives
- Encourage pre-service teacher education programs that promote education for GNH
- Develop assessment tools that enable teachers and school leaders to report on the development of GNH skills

### **Connect Education for GNH to other educational agendas**

Many different agendas in education and in youth development share common goals with education for GNH. These include social-emotional learning, positive education/positive psychology, character education, health/mental health promotion, positive behaviour supports, restorative justice, mindfulness/meditation, bullying prevention, student-centered learning, service learning, values education, civics and citizenship, green schools, thinking skills and more.

- Aim for a widespread adoption of the new development paradigm by linking and coordinating education for GNH with these existing educational agendas

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