Introduction

While there have been significant advances since the Second World War in global understanding and the protection of fundamental human rights, many people around the world still contend with conflict, discrimination, insecurity and poverty. In responding to these tragedies and challenges, education – in its many forms – is often granted a pre-eminent role. Faith in the possibilities of education was affirmed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which states that:

> Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups…
>
> (United Nations, 1948)

Perhaps nowhere is the pivotal role of education more eloquently expressed (gender insensitivity notwithstanding) than in the founding Constitution of UNESCO, which states that: ‘since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed’. In similar ways, education has been called upon to bring about social goals as diverse as economic growth, population control, social cohesion, sustainable development, peace, patriotic sentiment and political empowerment.

Such are the expectations on education that it seems almost destined to disappoint. In fact, the expectation of an economic miracle through investment in basic education in newly independent countries of Africa and Asia in the post-war period in many cases did result in disillusionment. Education is certainly not a ‘silver bullet’, an automatic and straightforward solution to easily defined problems. And yet, it can indeed be a miraculous tool, one that gets to the heart of human divisions and suffering, transforming them deeply, rather than scratching the surface.

The UNESCO Constitution is certainly right that peace (and justice) must be built first in people’s minds. Yet it must not be assumed that this is a straightforward battle, either in terms of the fundamental moral and political positions to be promoted or defended, or in terms of the processes through which people’s values are shaped. When considering the ways education might best support – and avoid exacerbating – hostility and mutual incomprehension, careful thought is needed as to the forms of education, the processes of teaching and learning, the educational providers and sites, as well as the ways in which education policies and practices are established.

This view of education – of its wondrous possibilities and inevitable limitations – underpins this report. The task here is to assess the role that education – and *citizenship education* in particular – can play in developing respect and understanding in Commonwealth countries, a platform emerging from the 2005 Heads of Government Meeting. Before assessing the notion of ‘respect

and understanding' in question, there will first be a brief overview of the Commonwealth and its educational challenges.

Challenges facing Commonwealth countries

The 54 member states of the Commonwealth are distributed across six continents, including countries with vast land area like Canada to small island states such as Nauru, and cover the full range from high to low income and varying positions on the Human Development Index. As many as 26 Commonwealth states have a population of less than 1 million, while India alone has well over 1 billion. For the most part the Commonwealth states are united by the use of English, either as the sole national language or as an additional official language, and many share characteristics such as a parliamentary political system and other features of the British colonial legacy. Otherwise, the countries are extremely varied in their histories, cultures and geography.

While many of the challenges faced in the Commonwealth are global in their reach, a number of countries are affected disproportionately by them, such as southern African countries in relation to HIV and AIDS, and low-lying island states in relation to climate change on account of the risks of a rise in sea levels. In addition to environmental concerns, the 32 small states in the Commonwealth can also be politically and economically vulnerable, and reliant on good relations with neighbours. While the Commonwealth as a whole is underpinned by a strong commitment to democratic political systems and the rule of law, the member states have not been able to avoid internal disputes: of the 23 armed conflicts around the world in 2003, nearly half were in Commonwealth countries (Commonwealth Secretariat, 2007). These conflicts – together with environmental disasters such as the 2004 Tsunami – in many cases lead to high numbers of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees. Poverty levels are also high in a number of countries, being both a possible cause and result of these conflicts.

Even high income countries face significant challenges at the current moment. While increasing migration has brought a rich diversity to metropolitan centres, it has also led to resentment amongst existing inhabitants (particularly those on low income), and integration of new populations has had varying success. In countries like the UK, Australia and Canada, the significant challenge remains of building social cohesion around shared values that are inclusive of all different ethnic, cultural and religious groups. Challenges associated with ethnic and religious diversity can also be seen in many low and middle-income countries, such as India, Sri Lanka, South Africa and Kenya.

Governance is a key issue in many countries, both in relation to combating corruption and installing effective democratic institutions and processes. In recent years, a number of Commonwealth countries have emerged from military dictatorships to constitute functioning democracies, but these transitions are fragile and need continued efforts. As argued by Collier (2007), democracies require not only multi-party elections but also elements such as a free press and independent judiciary.

Marginalisation is also a key problem for countries across the income range, manifesting itself in a number of different ways. In its most explicit form, certain populations may be denied citizenship altogether, on account of their migrant or refugee status, their ethnicity or nomadic lifestyle. Even in cases in which official citizenship is granted, many groups remain excluded from effective participation in political processes and in economic and cultural activities on account of active

discrimination or their lack of relevant knowledge and skills. Education is, therefore, central to the marginalisation debate, as evidenced by the focus of the 2010 EFA Global Monitoring Report (UNESCO, 2010). Many groups are marginalised from access to formal education, or to education of quality, and this in turn leads to their marginalisation from the broader society, creating a cycle of exclusion that is not only a fundamental injustice in itself, but can also lead to criminality and conflict.

Educational initiatives in low and middle-income countries in the Commonwealth are largely focused on the global framework of Education for All (EFA) and the Millennium Development Goals. Following the failure of the global community to meet the challenge of universal primary access in the decade following the 1990 World Conference on Education for All in Jomtien, a further set of goals was established in the Dakar conference of 2000. Most prominent of these is the requirement for universal primary education by 2015, but there are five other goals relating to early childhood education, youth and adult life-skills programmes, adult literacy, gender equality and quality of education.

Progress towards these goals in Commonwealth countries has been reviewed in the publication *Achieving the Goals – 2009* (Packer and Aggio, 2010). Of 40 Commonwealth countries on which data is available, over a third have achieved near universal enrolment, while in 19 countries more than one in 10 children of the relevant age group are out of school (see table below). Survival to the last grade of primary school is low even in some countries that have high initial rates (e.g. Zambia, India and Jamaica).

Adjusted net enrolment ratio (%) (2007 or most recent year)

Above 95%	Australia, Barbados, Belize, Brunei Darussalam, Cyprus, Malaysia, Maldives, Mauritius, New Zealand, St Lucia, Seychelles, Sri Lanka, Tonga, Tanzania, United Kingdom, Zambia (16)
90–94.9%	The Bahamas, Jamaica, India, Malta, St Kitts and Nevis, St Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, South Africa (8)
75–89.9%	Bangladesh, Botswana, Dominica, The Gambia, Grenada, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Swaziland, Trinidad and Tobago, Vanuatu (12)
Below 75%	Antigua and Barbuda, Ghana, Lesotho, Nauru, Nigeria, Pakistan, Solomon Islands (7)

Source: Packer and Aggio, 2010

Increasing the rate of access in many countries remains a significant challenge, even in the context of the concerted push provided by the Education for All movement and its associated initiatives. Even when sufficient funds are in place, difficulties are posed by geographical factors (for example the remote areas of North-East Kenya), nomadic populations, HIV/AIDS and the competing demands on children's time, including paid as well as household-based work. Teacher shortages are a significant problem, and even when there are sufficient numbers, absenteeism and unsatisfactory teacher education reduce their effectiveness. Quality of education, therefore, remains a significant issue, even in countries that have achieved high rates of access.

Gender is a significant factor in many Commonwealth countries. The majority of those denied access to primary education across the world are girls (54%, according to the latest figures –

UNESCO, 2010), although the disparity is declining. The gender parity targets have been achieved in 36 Commonwealth countries, yet there are 13 in which girls are still disadvantaged at the primary level[1]. In some countries –particularly those in the Caribbean – enrolment rates for girls are higher than those for boys at the secondary level, representing a historical victory in terms of opening opportunities for females, but raising a new challenge of responding to the alienation of teenage boys from institutional education. Of course, it is important to remember that 'parity' is not the same as 'equality' (Aikman and Unterhalter, 2005), and there are many areas other than initial access in which discrimination on the basis of gender may occur, in relation to textbooks and the curriculum, school infrastructure and so forth.

Looking beyond primary level education, there are other significant challenges. A total of 18 countries[2], predominantly in sub-Saharan Africa, have less than 50 per cent of young children enrolled in pre-primary education. There is inadequate data on adult literacy, but for those 29 countries assessed, 12 are unlikely to meet the EFA targets. Sierra Leone is projected still to have a 52.5 per cent illiteracy rate for 15–64 year olds in 2015, with Mozambique on 50.7 per cent and Pakistan on 41.6 per cent. Enrolments in higher education have expanded rapidly, in many cases fuelled by new private sectors – yet equity and quality remain concerns. Morley's (2005) study of higher education in Commonwealth countries (focusing on South Africa, Sri Lanka, Nigeria, Tanzania and Uganda) showed that despite improving access rates, discriminatory practices impeded both women's career progress within universities and female students' learning experiences.

Countries in the Commonwealth with well-developed education systems still face a number of educational challenges. Persistent inequalities characterise even systems with near universal access, on account of the stratification of educational institutions, disparities in home support for learning and discrimination such as institutional racism. The curriculum also remains a battleground between different political and epistemological camps, and strains to respond to the social demands placed on it by government and other groups. Funding is also becoming a significant challenge in the context of the economic downturn, particularly in relation to the expansion of higher education systems.

Civil Paths to Peace

This study builds on *Civil Paths to Peace* (Commonwealth Secretariat, 2007), the report of the Commonwealth Commission on Respect and Understanding. Specifically, it is a response to the educational challenges identified by the report, and a closer look at the ways schools and other educational settings can contribute to the broader task of fostering respect and understanding.

The Commission was set up following the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in 2005, which via the Valletta Communiqué '... affirmed the importance of promoting tolerance, respect, enlightened moderation and friendship among people of different races, faiths and cultures' and declared the need 'to explore initiatives to promote mutual understanding and respect among all faiths and communities in the Commonwealth.' The Commission was chaired by the economist and philosopher Amartya Sen, and included a number of respected scholars, politi-

1 India, Swaziland, St Vincent and the Grenadines, South Africa, Tonga, Antigua and Barbuda, Cameroon, Mozambique, Nigeria, Pakistan, Sierra Leone, Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea.

2 Of the 44 for which data are available.

cians and social activists from around the world. The report produced by the Commission was endorsed by Commonwealth leaders, and led to the Munyonyo Statement on Respect and Understanding, adopted in 2007. The respect and understanding agenda was further developed at the 17th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in 2009.

Civil Paths to Peace (hereafter, CPP) is a response to the dual scourges of group violence and terrorism in the contemporary world. As indicated by the title, the report is characterised by a commitment to *civil* action, although it is acknowledged that there may be a role for military intervention in some cases. The response to these scourges is the development of ‘respect and understanding’:

> The importance of understanding and respect lies partly in their intrinsic value – indeed they are indispensable parts of good living in peace and harmony with each other – but also lies in their contribution to restraining and removing the group-based violence and terrorism that have become such pernicious features of the contemporary world. (Commonwealth Secretariat, 2007: 5)

‘Respect’, according to CPP:

> is about acknowledging a common humanity, and a preparedness to treat everyone, no matter how different their world views, with the dignity they deserve because of humanity. (p.16)

CPP emphasises that the notions ‘respect’ and ‘understanding’ do not entail ‘unanimity of substantive views of different people’ (p.16). Nevertheless, respect does:

> demand trying to understand the points of view of others and why they are held, and appreciating the shared interests that people of diverse groups have in cultivating common objectives. (p.16)

This position corresponds to the idea of an ‘overlapping consensus’ put forward by the political philosopher John Rawls (1993), through which democratic societies containing multiple groups with different conceptions of the good are held together by agreement on certain common principles. This idea has substantial implications for educational settings, as will be explored further in this report.

The mode of action endorsed by CPP is the so-called ‘Commonwealth approach’, which ‘involves a tradition of doing things through dialogue, where everyone has the right to speak, to be heard and to be consulted in coming to a common view’ (p.17). This conception of consensus building is close to those of deliberation and deliberative democracy, ideas that have gained prominence in recent years as a counterpoint to the combative, majoritarian forms of democracy that often alienate minorities, divide societies and reduce political discussions to the ‘lowest common denominator’. As will be explored through this report, education can contribute to deliberation in society both by equipping people with the skills and knowledge needed, but also by providing a space in which people of diverse groups can come together and interact.

One of the characteristics of CPP is its emphasis on multiple identities. It sees ‘the truncating of identities down to a single category’ (p.29) as a key cause of group violence – and this truncation is seen to have been spurred on by opposition to the homogenising forces of globalisation. While by no means opposing the practice of religion, it warns against reducing people to their faith:

> Whilst religious identities can be used in a very positive way, like for example instilling a moral code and way of living, stressing religious identities over and above other political and social identities can undermine efforts to strengthen civil society and community cohesion. (p.22)

Questions of religion are highly topical in educational circles, due to continuing debates over the teaching of religion in state schools, controversies over the use of religious dress and symbols, and the emergence of new faith schools, within both private and state sectors. There are strong disagreements over the desirability of faith schools in contemporary societies. For example, the separation of most young people in Northern Ireland into Protestant and Catholic schools was seen to exacerbate the conflict in the territory (Bush and Saltarelli, 2000) – although this view is not shared by all. For CPP, faith schools:

> may be problematic if the impact of these schools is that students learn to see the world in fragmented terms, with their faith identity setting them apart from others with different faiths or no faith at all. (p.64)

On the other hand, the report *Engaging with Faith*, stemming from the Commonwealth Foundation (2007) project on Improving Understanding and Co-operation between Different Faith Communities, provides a different perspective. This report encourages a stronger acknowledgement of the importance of religious organisations in service provision and the place of faith in people's lives as a means of bringing about development and mutual understanding.

Responses proposed by CPP to the disrespect and hostility that are seen to generate violence include governmental activities, but also other spheres of society such as the media and education. Specifically, the report puts forward seven recommendations: use of dialogue and multilateralism; commitment to civil paths – not to be displaced by military initiatives; addressing grievance and humiliation; political participation and inclusion; women's political participation; contributions of the media and communication; and education and the role of young people. This report will address the seventh of these recommendations, that relating to education and young people, although there will necessarily be engagement with the other six, given the centrality of education to promoting respect in these different spheres.

There are a number of roles education can play. One educational implication of the report is the need to challenge within schools contested theories such as the 'clash of civilisations', and provide an 'intellectual confrontation of confused and flammable readings of the world' (p.5). Education is also instrumental in allowing young people to develop awareness of their own multiple identities. The portrayal of history in school textbooks, and its treatment by teachers in class, also plays an important role in either exacerbating conflict or promoting reconciliation. Skills can also be gained for effective political participation – through which previously marginalised groups can gain seats at the decision-making table, and consequently feel stronger identification with the whole of society and endorsement of its political system.

There has been considerable interest in the relationship between education and conflict in recent years, raising awareness of the negative role that schools can play in certain contexts, as well as positive responses. The 2011 *EFA Global Monitoring Report*, focusing on armed conflict and education, highlights the scale of the issue, identifying over 48 armed conflict episodes between 1999 and 2008 and estimating that 28 million children of primary school age are out of school in con-

flict affected countries (UNESCO, 2011: 23). Further, UN data reports that over 43 million people were displaced at the end of 2009, and that almost half of refugees and internally displaced people (IDPs) are under 18 (UNESCO, 2011: 25). Displacement exposes children and youth to the risk of extreme disadvantage in education and can also put pressure on host communities, presenting complex challenges to education provision as well as citizenship education.

Davies (2004; 2005) provides an extensive analysis of the relationship between education and conflict. While the roots of conflict are deep in societal structures and dynamics – relating to 'economic or class relations', 'gender relations' and 'ethnicity, religion, tribalism and nationalism' – education has a pivotal role in either exacerbating or ameliorating the situation. As Bush and Saltarelli (2000) point out, many conflicts in recent years have been civil rather than inter-state wars, and predominantly 'ethnic' in nature – although the underlying causes are multiple and complex. As well as the destructive effects of conflict on education – in terms of recruitment of child soldiers, loss of teachers' lives, the destruction of physical infrastructure and disruption of provision – there is also the influence of education on conflict:

> through the reproduction or amplification of inequality, exclusion and social polarisation; through the hardening of ethnic or religious identifications and divisions; and through its acceptance of dominant macho, aggressive, militaristic and homophobic masculinities. (Davies, 2005: 359)

This complex scenario requires a multifaceted response. As Aikman (2010) argues, responses to post conflict situations – which are often ones of severe poverty too – involve diverse dimensions relating to 'the school as a place; the school as a space for democratic relationships; and the school as an opportunity for wider social transformation' (p. 28). Power relations within the school must be addressed, as well as aspects such as violent masculinities that may have fuelled the conflict in the first place. Smith and Vaux (2003) also highlight the dangers of assuming that education is part of the solution, but also point to the positive role it plays in protecting civilians during conflict and in bringing about reconciliation and reconstruction afterwards. Bush and Saltarelli (2000: 33) emphasise that 'additive' approaches – whereby initiatives are simply inserted into existing practices – are unlikely to work, giving the destructive as well as constructive role of education. Instead, a 'transformative' approach is needed, that is, 'solutions that change the underpinning logic and structures of behaviour'.

CPP devotes a whole section to analysing the possible implications of respect and understanding for education. It highlights three principal aspects:

1. Educational participation
2. Extending the age reach
3. Educational content

Unfair distribution of educational opportunities is both a result and a cause of broader social exclusion, so widening educational participation can directly contribute to respect and understanding. Yet it is important to think beyond primary education, and extend educational access to early years, secondary and adult education. The third point is that the curriculum is key to the values underpinning respect and understanding. The report highlights both the aspect of 'teaching children about the cultural heritage of a range of ethnic and religious communities' as well as 'fundamental human values that transcend religion, cultural and ethnic boundaries' (p.62).

Education is key to both understanding and engendering respect for difference.

However, while both give a strong endorsement of education, neither CPP – because of its broader focus – nor the Munyonyo Statement on Respect and Understanding – because of its brevity – present extensive concrete proposals for education. The role of this report, therefore, is to draw out these implications for education in its many forms.

Promoting respect and understanding through education has two major aspects. The first relates to the concern raised in CPP that inequalities and the 'sense of being isolated from the mainstream community, can feed extremism and violence' (p.15). The educational implications here are that all groups must have access to education, and moreover to education of quality. (This point relates to the first and second aspects of education highlighted by CPP). However, it is important to go beyond equity of access to consider the nature of education. Just as schools can promote parochialism, mindless obedience and racism, so they can foster a broader critical understanding of the world, skills of deliberation and an openness and respect for other peoples. Given the extensive literature on expanding access in lower middle-income countries emerging from the priorities of the EFA movement, this report will focus primarily on the second of these questions. In particular, the focus will be on the role that citizenship education can play in responding to this challenge. Nevertheless, the two are strongly linked and neither universal access nor a curriculum oriented towards respect and understanding is sufficient on its own.

Aims and scope of the report

This report does not put forward a specific normative framework of citizenship or societal development. Nevertheless, the discussions are underpinned by commitment to values of global justice, cosmopolitanism, participatory democracy and critical reflection – values that also underpin the respect and understanding agenda. While models and ideals of citizenship are outlined in the chapter that follows, the primary focus in this report will not in fact be on understandings of citizenship, but on the educational experiences designed and enacted to achieve them. In this, there will be a particular attention to the problematic disjuncture between the intentions of educational initiatives and the realities of implementation. These discussions will be informed by the framework of *curricular transposition*, a model for understanding the challenges of converting a set of political ideals into an effective educational programme, as will be explored further in the following chapter (McCowan, 2009).

It will not be possible for this report to address all important aspects of the lives of children and young people, the many spheres in which they interact and the influences on them that shape their attitudes – aspects that may be fundamental to respect and understanding broadly speaking. The focus will be primarily on education, although including non-institutional occurrences. In addition, the report focuses principally on issues of curriculum, pedagogy and educational practice, rather than high-level policy and planning. Like the CPP, this report is focused primarily on Commonwealth countries, but is also attentive to 'the Commonwealth's role in directing attention to policy issues of general interest in the world, across regional boundaries' (Commonwealth Secretariat, 2007: 75).

The report is structured in six sections. Following the introduction, there is an outline of the concept of citizenship, its multiple orientations and the complexities of promoting political visions

through education. Chapter 3 provides an overview of the Commonwealth Secretariat's past work in this area – along with that of sister organisations. The panorama of current initiatives around the Commonwealth relating to citizenship education and associated areas are reviewed in chapter 4. This section includes an analysis of five country case studies (Canada, England, South Africa, Sri Lanka and Vanuatu) and the challenges they have faced in developing respect and understanding through educational initiatives, focusing particularly on the 'implementation gap' between policy and practice. Chapter 5 presents examples of best practice from around the Commonwealth and beyond, as well as a discussion of the potential of school linking. Finally, conclusions are drawn out and recommendations proposed for the ways the Commonwealth Secretariat can take this work forward.