2022 Annual Gladwyn Lecture – 29th November 2022

How can we leverage technology to support, upskill and energise the most important resource, teachers?

Good evening, allow me first to thank the Council for Education in the Commonwealth for hosting me this evening and I would also like to say thank you for your commitment to the Commonwealth and to the cause of education.

It is an honour to follow in the footsteps of the previous Gladwyn Lecturers and I can only hope to approximate the insight offered by those who have spoken before me.

I am also delighted to speak to you this evening about a topic that is of huge importance and that also always sits close to my heart, and I will be sharing my own, lived experience of the global challenge of providing quality education, and the critical role low-tech, innovative and context-appropriate solutions play in enabling teachers and educational stakeholders to achieve SDG4.

How can we leverage technology to support, upskill and energise the most important resource, teachers?

In 2020, during a time of a time of great upheaval and peril, the United Nations marked its 75th anniversary in an era in which strong multilateral institutions were perhaps needed more than ever before.

At this moment, are we not only recovering from the effects of COVID-19, but there is also a war which makes the challenge of delivering on the targets of the Sustainable development goals and its promises to future generations even more arduous.

Seven years ago in New York, the United Nations adopted Agenda 2030. This Agenda put together a plan of action for people planet and society.

The Sustainable Development Goals or the SDGs for short provide a comprehensive and challenging framework for the nations and citizens of the world to tackle poverty climate change and injustice.

It is a plan of action for people, planet, and prosperity.

The Commonwealth and all Commonwealth accredited organisations have a vital role to play if we're going to help deliver the goals and by the Commonwealth, I mean all parts coming together - the institutions, the Commonwealth itself, governments and civil society.

2.5 billion people living in Commonwealth Countries make up a third of the world's population and of course most of them are under the age of 30 and the numbers are increasing.

Very often when watching the news and listening stories about the growing numbers of young men, women risking their lives and those of their children across the Sahara and then the Mediterranean, I often wonder weather any consideration is given to the fact that a good education or a lack thereof and that maybe encountering a transformative teacher might have changed the minds and the fate for some of them.

There are 17 goals with 169 targets and 231 indicators which makes it is a huge, complex, and daunting agenda and I know that that the sheer scale detail and ambition of agenda 2030 might put people off.

However, I am confident that with a shared commitment and a collective effort we can make the next 8 years one where we take action to deliver the global goals.

Tonight, I'm going to focus on just two of the SDG's. Goal 4 on education and Goal 17 on the multi stake holder partnerships needed to achieve the goals.

SDG4. The context, challenges, and opportunities

The ambition of SDG 4 is to ensure all children receive a quality education by 2030.

Teachers, trainers, and other education personnel are generally considered the single most influential variable in an education system for achieving learning outcomes and the achievement of SDG 4 and the transformation of education will depend heavily on teachers and education personnel that are empowered, adequately recruited, well-trained, professionally qualified, motivated and supported within well-resourced, efficient and effectively governed systems.

During the recent Transforming Education Summit thematic Action Track 3 sought commitments and action to create such an education workforce in a manner that is sustainable and achievable.

It also states that currently, education systems are confronted by four major challenges related to the education workforce:

1. Personnel shortages.
2. Difficulties in ensuring adequate qualifications.

3. Skills and professional development needs of teaching personnel.
4. The low status and working conditions, and lack of opportunities to develop teacher leadership, autonomy, and innovation.

In 2016, it was estimated that 69 million teachers were needed globally to meet SDG 4.

Without enough teachers, classrooms are overcrowded, teachers are overworked and demotivated, and the quality of teaching is inadequate to enable all learners, especially the most vulnerable, to achieve desired learning outcomes.

While this number has decreased as we approach the target year, it is estimated that Sub-Saharan Africa will still need 15 million teachers.

Inequitable deployment and distribution of teachers is also a major challenge that impacts shortages in rural and hard-to-reach locations.

To achieve universal basic education by 2030, the world education systems will require additional 24.4 and 44.4 million teachers respectively in primary and secondary.

Sub-Saharan Africa and Southern Asia account for over 76% of the need for new teachers in developing countries. In Sub-Saharan Africa, 70% of countries for primary against 90% for secondary face serious teachers' shortages leading to the continent being home to the most overcrowded classes; hence the most overburdened teachers.

May I now ask you to consider my earlier point about those making their way across the Mediterranean to European shoes.

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, teachers in many countries, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa (1 in 3) and Southern Asia (1 in 4), lacked the minimum required qualifications and training.

Changes brought forth by the pandemic, including widespread digitalization and increasing inequality, have further underscored the need to transform teaching and to better train and support education personnel.

This transformation is needed so that in collaboration with parents, communities and other social service sectors, learning and teaching can be adapted to a variety of situations and challenges, such as including climate change, displacement and conflict.

Learning Poverty, the Work of the CET and Teach2030

According to the World Bank, learning poverty affects almost 250 million children around the world, stifling their life chances. It is estimated that up to 80% of children in low-income countries are unable to read and understand a simple text by the age of ten.

This low standard of education is a multifaceted issue, with many challenges contributing to limited learning and life opportunities for an estimated 800 million children by 2030 (World Economic Forum

2018). Studies by the World Bank, stress that the lack of training and support for teachers plays a significant role in these poor learning outcomes, identifying a clear need for targeted professional development support.

'Teachers matter more to student achievement than any other aspect of schooling' (Rand, 2019), yet in lower- and middle-income countries

(LMICs) they may rarely receive guidance or support to ensure they feel motivated, valued and crucially, keep developing their practice throughout their career.

The Commonwealth Education Trust is a leading institution for the promotion of educational resources in lower income Commonwealth countries. We are committed to investing in teachers, the only consistent resource in every classroom.

Our impact model is based on 4 core pillars.

WE BUILD

Our digital Teach2030 programme consists of bite-sized and low data courses that are both scalable and contextualised for teachers in low- and middle-income settings.

WE ADVISE

We work closely with local governments, international agencies and other organisations, to bring sustainable digital TPD to schools and teachers in low- and middle-income settings.

WE WORK TOGETHER

We create open and collaborative partnerships: connecting teachers, pooling knowledge and sharing resources. We aim to deliver contextualised, digital TPD materials to teachers.

WE ELEVATE

Through our global community of teachers, we celebrate their successes and empower them to be part of the process of designing innovative solutions to help improve their teaching.

Today, our modern and innovative online Teach2030 platform reaches teachers in the most remote areas across the world to provide bite-size, digital learning courses contextualised for their challenging setting.

By improving teacher performance, Teach2030 has helped improved the lives of thousands of children supporting the economic survival of underserved communities who are at the epicentre of the current and worsening global education crisis.

Why did we create this innovation?

Schools cannot exist without teachers, yet they are often last to receive support or investment in their classroom practice, resulting in poor learning outcomes for 80% of children in low-income countries. By providing engaging and high-quality digital courses that include sound pedagogy, evidence-based strategies and activities, we facilitate regular access to quality professional development.

How does your innovation work in practice?

Teach2030's flexibility ensures it can be used to meet the needs of both an individual teacher or a school, using any digital device. Through partnerships with in-country organisations (governments and NGOs), the programme is implemented by those working directly with schools and teachers themselves.

Our platform is web based, rather than in an app, to keep costs low, and ensure accessibility across a range of devices. We use a very simple platform that teachers can log onto, and through that link, they can browse our course offerings and enter the courses.

All our courses and curriculum are mapped to the Cambridge teaching standards, which we used to align our original MOOC courses as well.

These consist of eight topics from "What makes a great teacher," to "Classroom management," to "Effective assessment."

Each of our courses covers one of these themes and include four micro-courses per topic and each course is divided into two sections.

The first part, which is free, contains the learning objectives, several short, animated videos, and practical tasks for teachers to test out in their classrooms. For example, one of our initial courses is called "Fresh Thinking in Your Classroom." In this course, we hope to help teachers to start thinking differently about their classroom. Specifically, one of this course's requirements is for teachers to record a small video of them teaching and then watch the recording back. We have seen some incredible transformations amongst teachers after they watch themselves and notice some of the things they might not have thought about otherwise.

In part two, the course includes additional content, an assessment, and a downloadable certificate. This portion can vary from free to a few dollars in cost, depending on whether it is individual teachers accessing the content or teachers connected to a specific partnership.

We release new content based on the interests and needs of our community. We hold interviews and calls with teachers to determine what would best serve their needs.

Over the last year, due to the pandemic, we have had to pivot based on feedback from teachers about accessibility concerns, as many were using their mobile devices to view the content. Based on those conversations, we developed a new course outside of the curriculum plan called "Becoming a Digital Learner Using a Smartphone" to help our teachers develop and strengthen their digital literacy skills.

During the pandemic, we have seen a large increase in users, and the interest continues to grow. Moving forward, our focus is on continuing to build communities through our work, as well as improve the sequencing of the platform so that teachers can follow a clear path between different courses. Because the courses are self-paced however, this is more challenging for individual teachers using the platform.

With our current partnership model however, we use a different approach which helps build our partners' capacity and further expand our teacher training efforts. For example, there are three key roles: facilitator, head teacher, and coach, which form a triangle of support.

The facilitator works at the government or organization level, undergoes training on the program, their role, and how they can support schools, and then they are tasked with engaging schools within their province or district. At each of those schools, the head teachers go through their own training, and then identify and appoint coaches within their school. They also ensure that the professional development is incorporated into the weekly schedule. Coaches are enthusiastic teachers who help with the facilitation of the course, such making sure everyone is coming to the training and helping to troubleshoot.

Over time, we realized that some coaches and schools found it challenging to break up the course across a certain number of weeks, so we are working on creating session plans for them, additional materials, and observation forms. We are also conducting baseline surveys and impacts to continue improving our work.

How has Teach2030 been spreading?

Teach2030's growth continues, with more than 10,000 teachers from over 40 countries accessing our courses in 2020 alone, and nearly 50% from sub-Saharan Africa. Course registration surveys show that many users are from word of mouth; confirmation of a desire and need of teachers in lower-income countries to develop their own practice - often as a result of the lack of provision of regular, quality and contextualised CPD in their schools.

We believe in the 'little and often' approach to CPD by bringing training to the teachers. Sustained access to relevant CPD materials results in those small changes to teaching practice that have a profound effect on learning outcomes. Feedback from our users shows that 89% say courses are engaging and relevant to them and their setting.

Courses can be accessed on any device for a meaningful learning experience - even on a smartphone; the digital resource owned by many teachers, even those working in poorly resourced settings. A single course with compressed images and targeted videos uses less than 50MB, and is browser based rather than using an app to minimise technical challenges.

A global crowdsourcing initiative, called Teachers for a Changing World, conducted in collaboration with HundrED and UNESCO, and the world Bank identified scalable and impactful TPD programs that utilize low- and high-tech solutions to train teachers and pedagogical leaders. After a rigorous review of over 400 TPD programs from 80 countries, the campaign selected the 10 most effective programs. I am pleased to say that Teach2030 was one of the TPD programs selected.

SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals) and its role in achieving SDG4

The achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals and Teachers' capacity for innovation is one of the keys to building resilient education systems. This is because teachers are best placed to assess the conditions of their own classrooms and communities, governments need to promote their leadership to generate meaningful transformations.

Experimentation and adaptation must take place within clear policy frameworks. Therefore, Governments, teacher education institutions and other actors must balance structure and flexibility to foster both bottom-up (grassroots) and top-down (system-wide) innovations.

It also requires different sectors and actors working together in an integrated manner by pooling financial resources, knowledge and expertise.

In our new development era with 17 intertwined Sustainable Development Goals and 169 associated targets as a blue-print for achieving the sustainable Future We Want, cross sectorial and innovative multi-stakeholder partnerships will play a crucial role for getting us to where we need by the year 2030.

This year, the theme for Commonwealth Day 2022 centred around the theme for the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting – 'Delivering a Common Future' – and highlighted how the 56 member countries in the Commonwealth family are 'innovating, connecting and transforming' to help achieve goals like fighting climate change, promoting good governance and boosting trade.

In June of last year, I had the privilege of attending The Financing Education summit for the global partnership for education Co-hosted by two Commonwealth leaders President Kenyatta of Kenya and Prime Minister Johnson of the United Kingdom the global partnership for education has set out ambitious goals to raise 5 billion U.S. dollars invest in education systems in countries that are home to around a billion children and young people that additional investment will be essential for how it is spent is equally important collaboration and innovation will be vital if we're going to deliver sdg four.

Local governments and the private sector have very important role to play across the world to ensure that the vision of high-quality education for all is achieved and now more than ever we need that spirit of cooperation to learn from each other about what works best.

Commonwealth countries must also work together to build education systems that are resilient enough to withstand future pandemics and other shocks.

This was the call from participants at an event held in the wings of the recent Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA) Triennale in Mauritius, under the theme: 'Reflecting on the impact of COVID-19 on Africa's educational systems and how to build resilience to sustain the development of skills for the continent and beyond'.

Hosted by the Commonwealth Secretariat, in partnership with the Kenyan Ministry of Education, the Commonwealth event at the ADEA's conference, focused on ways to implement the outcomes of the 21st Commonwealth Conference of Education Ministers (21CCEM).

Our Partnerships

The CET recently secured a partnership with the **Commonwealth of learning** which has sought to foster innovation including during the challenging circumstances of 2020 with its focus on distance learning both in schools and in further and higher education. We will be reviewing the teacher competency framework for the Seychelles Ministry of Education.

We also recently worked with the Princes Trust International in delivering some of our courses to teachers in Jamaica and in Trinidad and Tobago.

We are also pleased to be working with **Generation Global** with is a part of the Tony Blair Institute for Global change and last year, we were proud recipients of the Commonwealth Secretary Generals award for Innovation.

In an effort to also create more awareness of our work amongst a younger UK demographic, we have partnered with two UK boarding schools. Gordons School and Radley College.

On the 28th of September, I visited one of our partner schools, Radley College, in Oxfordshire. We were obviously thrilled by the prospect of presenting to 120 Year 10 students and the opportunity to present and capture the minds of so many talented, eager and enthusiastic students in the hope that they would also realise that they too have a vital role to play in helping to address the global learning crisis.

Other partnerships created in the last year include the delivery of Teach2030 to

- TVET teachers with UNIDO in Liberia
- A pilot with the Teaching Council of Zambia to provide free access to Teach2030 for teachers in two districts
- And reaching teachers in Ghana, Tanzania and South Africa through our collaboration with the NGO Warwick in Africa.

As an organisation that is fundraising for the first time, making an ask is never an easy conversation to have. However, we need the funding to remain sustainable.

Teacher working conditions and remuneration also deter youth from entering the profession and in-service teachers from remaining in it.

Teacher wages remain comparatively low in many countries, and in crisis-affected areas, teachers are often paid late or not at all.

So, we need your support to provide TPD for more teachers and accelerate progress toward achieving SDG 4 and transforming education

Funding of education as a public good is vital needs to be supported by everyone who recognises teaching as a collaborative endeavor.

Finally, allow me to offer a personal reflection. I grew up in Cameroon. My mother became a teacher, and my father joined the police force.

After serving as a police officer, and having had five mouths to feed, my father took a bold step to write his GCSEs via correspondence via what was then called the Rapid results college in the UK. He would then seek admission at the university of New Hampshire, resign as a police officer and take a gamble at getting his first degree in the USA. After a year, my mother would join him, and both would eventually obtain their degrees and return to Cameroon to serve the country they loved.

I have obviously benefitted from their ambition and though it was challenging studying in a low- and middle-income country, the fact that I am standing here is a testament to the transformative power of education, and of the teachers I have encountered.

As I conclude my lecture and on the importance of investing in teachers, bearing in mind how it might benefit communities we serve, I would like to pay a special tribute to one teacher who impacted my life and who in my opinion, mirrors the honour, the values and commitments that led Lord Gladwyn into a life of public service.

That is my secondary school teacher, Mr Bodylawson. Mr Bodylawon, my father, and I held a secret. Which is now obviously no longer one because you are all about to find out.

My father had handed me my school fees which I foolishly squandered on campus. One fine day while in Biology class the bursar came and informed me that the principal wanted to see me. I can assure you that it was a long walk. I admitted that there was little left of the money and profoundly apologised to both my dad and the principal and prayed my father would not share it with my mum.

I was sure that event would be a defining moment in my life. In addition to this, I was never a top student and now I was about to go down in my family's history (In addition to being a middle child) as the one who didn't pay in her school fees.

Over the next three years, I would work hard and try to stay out of trouble and where possible away from Mr Bodylawson's gaze.

I never became a top student, but my grades did somewhat improve.

On graduation day, the most prestigious award is the principals award for most outstanding 6th form student. The person who got it usually also had earned the grades to go with it.

So naturally, when my name was read out, I stared at the podium in utter disbelief.

One of the ways our courses seek to improve learning outcomes is by making sure that teachers provide effective feedback which doesn't discourage the students but encourage creative thinking and better learning.

Technology can help support teachers remotely, but it certainly won't be enough on its own.

Rather, it is a tool that policymakers, can use under the right conditions to enhance support to teachers.

It is vital to acknowledge that the 80 million teachers world-wide cannot be expected to be superheroes: we must build an education-supportive environment where the work of teachers is amplified outside the educational institution.

Thank you all.