



**Outcomes of the Policy Dialogue on
Transformative Education and Sustainable Development in Small States: Building resilience through
skills and livelihoods**

Key Messages

Preamble

With the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development mandating global action towards a sustainable and resilient path, the role of education as a bold process intended to develop new perceptions, knowledge, values, critical and functional skills, attitudes, confidence, and happier livelihoods within that agenda has become imperative.

We are here to engage with the transformative process necessary for Sustainable Development in Small States in particular, as pertaining to the challenge of building resilience through knowledge, values, skills, attitudes, and livelihoods. Here, our mission is to bring about genuine transformative processes relevant to the challenges of the 21st Century that provide a vigorous educational approach to resilience concerns in respect to the local and national particular needs within a globalised community.

In acknowledgement of this, **we as civil society commit to continue to make a case for transformative lifelong learning, to leverage the Commonwealth comparative advantage on small states and widen the entry points for engagement on education and sustainable development, and to self-organise and build capacity for greater advocacy on the issues, including the ask for a more enabling environment.**

Going further, we therefore ask Commonwealth small states governments in general and Education Ministries in particular to consider the following policy NEEDS for a transformed future:

1. Reconceptualize education and lifelong learning for Sustainable Development (not limited to employment and economy), both individual and collective. This has implications for curricula not only for small states and small island developing states (SIDS) but also for developed countries many of which are in the North.
2. Provide spaces for critical literacy and higher order thinking skills through basic literacies and experiential learning within the context of existing curricula and national education frameworks while recognising the need for updating where relevant. This clear shift in policy could include:
 - A safe space for critical thinking without fear
 - Overcoming the fear of change
 - Emphasis on *transformative learning* for social and environmental justice, happier livelihoods, wellbeing & quality of life.
3. Timely responsiveness to the needs and demands of a host of marginalised populations. This includes:
 - Fully informed bottom-up and top-down approaches to policy formulation and practice that acknowledge the presence and voices of all social groups in addressing their needs fairly and equitably.
 - Enabling political processes that underpin educational development and social responsibility
 - Emphasising the right to livelihood as a prerequisite to inclusive and transformative education
 - Being aware of citizenship as a tool of exclusion
 - Embed necessary communication skills into education programmes and curricula to foster effective and meaningful communication, bridging the gap between non-disabled and disabled persons.
4. Policies that are informed by and draw inspiration from examples of better practices but always conscious of context. This includes policies that privilege connectedness with nature and interrelationships (such as with local knowledge systems), and policies that speed up and scale up both the process and existing positive initiatives.
5. Supporting schools to have ownership (within the established curriculum frameworks) - through communities of leaders, teachers, parents and students - that are facilitated to make decisions responding to their specific challenges and can define quality delivery and success through multiple means.



CHOGM
Malta 2015



People's
Forum



Commonwealth
Foundation

*In recognition of the need for concrete steps to help build a sustainable future for the dignity and wellbeing of all, we ask Commonwealth small states to consider the following **recommendations for adaptation and implementation at the Commonwealth, regional, and national levels:***

1. A broad and balanced curriculum that innovatively incorporates sustainable development concepts - such as environmental protection, social cohesion and economic well-being - within the already existing national education frameworks;
2. A redefinition of the role of policy makers at the “top” to that of catalysts of change that can facilitate and engage the necessary support at the “bottom” thus ensuring that the multiple facets of the curriculum are addressed;
3. Building the capacity of school leaders and developing leadership roles that can respond quickly and efficiently to innovative initiatives at the community level;
4. Building the capacity of schools and educational institutions to harness the potential of ICTs to equitably provide greater access to open educational resources (OER);
5. Greater commitment to research funding to provide the necessary data for evidence-based education and sustainable development policy and programming;
6. Investment, support, and meaningful recognition of universities linking and engaging at the community level, thereby fostering community engagement as a two way process;
7. A policy for the protection of environmental refugees and to facilitate safe and legal migration for all that can serve as a guarantee for the right to a quality education for all;
8. Investment in a combination of local knowledge systems and new technologies to inform curricula (drawing from the experience of the UNESCO and University of Waikato (2011) Kiribati Climate Change Initiative);
9. More efficient harnessing of partnerships within the Commonwealth family on education, national frameworks, and small states issues at a multi-sector level, placing education at the heart of sustainable development dialogue in areas such as financing, environmental conservation, social well being, blue economy, ocean governance, and other areas where the Commonwealth is also working.
10. Providing further spaces where policy makers and civil society can explore the issues together in a transparent and reciprocal manner.