

FED Workstream Reflections

The Foundation for Education Development's vision is informed by hundreds of hours of consultation with hundreds of stakeholders across hundreds of events which has delivered a consistent message: we need a long-term strategy and plan for education in England in order to deliver a system which leads to better outcomes for all learners.

We asked members of our workstream and stakeholder councils to reflect on the experiences over the last year of consultations and asked each them of three questions:

- 1. Why did you volunteer to do this?**
- 2. What have you learnt?**
- 3. What are your hopes and aspirations?**





Julian Huppert

Director of the Intellectual Forum, Jesus College, Cambridge

Why did you volunteer to do this?

Education is hugely important, but as a policy area suffers from a lack of long-term thinking, and a paucity of good evidence. Too often, people push ideas because they feel right, or because of experiences they had as children, many decades ago.

What have you learnt?

I've had some really good and interesting discussions with a wide range of experts on education - with much more direct experience.

What are your hopes and aspirations?

I hope that we can contribute to the process of making education policy-making more sensible, evidence informed, and long-term.



Joy Madeiros

Global CEO, Oasis Community Learning

'Nothing exists, and therefore can be understood, in isolation from its context, for it is context that gives meaning to everything we think and do.'

This well known quote could easily stand as one of the founding principles of our approach to community development in Oasis. Everything that happens in community (and of course in life in general) affects everything else. Stating the blindingly obvious and not wanting to teach anyone to suck eggs, a child's education cannot be separated from their home life, from their housing, from the state of their own health, from the food they get to eat, or not, from the employability in the household and so on. That's why we work hard to ensure that Oasis academies are not just 'co located' with other Oasis community activities (youth and family work, health programmes and community projects etc) but that they actually work together to the same outcomes and with joint structures. We call that the Oasis hub model.

I was inspired to take up the opportunity with FED because I am passionate about integration – nationally and locally. One of the great sins, in my view, of both current and past governments, is the sin of the silo'ed department, silo working, silo mentality. That being said, integration is much easier said than done and has a great deal to do with vision, brave leadership and governance. (Hence my choice to join the governance theme). The overall opportunity, afforded by FED, to contribute to an agenda – or even a model – that might consider the value of real integrated working was too much to turn down.

I have learned - as a general rule of thumb in life - that it's hard work and very time consuming to create change in embedded systems which are supported by territorialism and party politics but that, while we all know the reality of those things, we also know equally well that 'it takes a whole village to raise a child'. School must never be an island but that means that the leadership and delivery of schools, housing, health etc cannot be either.

I am hopeful that the 10 year approach to our FED work will create time and opportunity to reflect on, and give voice to, the fact that the quality of a child's education is as much an outcome of the way other 'services' work together with education - to make a good education even a possibility in any one community - as it is about the quality of teaching and learning in any one school.



Frank Norris MBE

Education & Skills Adviser, Northern Powerhouse Partnership

Why did you volunteer to do this?

In the past three years, since standing down from the CEO role at the Coop Academies Trust, I have become heavily involved in the work of the Northern Powerhouse Partnership (NPP). This is an organisation committed to improving opportunities for citizens and businesses in the north of England. I knew Carl from some previous work we undertook together so I reached out to him when I heard that the FED movement was developing. I felt that the current approach to education was too narrow and created a group of young people who left schooling feeling as though they haven't hit the mark. It seemed an absolute waste of talent and this was a view shared by a number of NPP business leaders. In addition, I have been fascinated as to why some major businesses collapse and the role that weak governance played in these events. I thought my varied experience could be of value.

What have you learnt?

I've been struck by the wide range of professional voices that have been drawn into FED. Some of these voices do not align closely with my own views on education but discussions have been illuminating and well researched. I'm involved in the governance strand, and I've been able to extend my understanding of different approaches to governance and accountability in other countries. This led to me undertaking some additional research into arrangements in the Czech Republic where they appear to have greater local control with broad direction driven by their central government. This helped me consider how education including skills could be managed by devolving more power to regions and involving elected mayors. This is something the NPP is particularly interested in.

What are your hopes and aspirations?

Drawing together the various strands of the FEDs work is a significant challenge. I hope that FED can create a vision for the future that is driven by greater equity and enhances opportunity particularly for the poorest members of society. I also hope that it can strengthen the role of the local community in the education service. It would be wonderful if key figures in education, including the government coalesced around FED's key priorities and recommendations. Getting the communication right at the point of publication will be critical. I would be pleased to play a part in supporting this.



James Kempton

Independent Chair, Oldham Opportunity Area

Why did I get involved with FED? As a former politician I have exercised political choices over education. As a former think tank-er I know the limits of policy wonkery. And as a former classroom practitioner, I have experienced the impact both have on the life chances of young people and the professional autonomy of teachers. It is hard to justify that our education system is still run without the benefit of an widely agreed and enduring statement of purpose and practice.

Countries as diverse as Finland and Singapore have based their highly admired education systems on explicit statements of values that govern why, how and with what purpose education is delivered to young people in those jurisdictions. I applaud FED for bringing a sense of urgency and rigour to creating a national conversation, and ultimately seeking a formal national agreement, on what our school education system is for and on the principles governing how it should be run.

Over the past year co-chairing workstream 3, I have been reassured by just how much agreement there is that our education system is too nationally driven and that it is only by coming more place-based that we can:

- address the imperative to level up educational outcomes across England
- capitalise on the plethora of different contexts, assets and challenges that face local education systems and leaders across the country
- liberate local communities to own and drive better outcomes for children, young people, and adult learners in their area
- challenge education and skills providers to better meet the needs of local employers and the local labour market, providing clearer career paths for learners and employees
- face up to the reality of how vulnerable children, adults and families engage with a range of local support services that help to remove barriers to learning and ensure that they can undertake learning and skills acquisition in safety

My hopes are that we can now move on from addressing what to change, to how to change it. We have taken a necessary first step in developing a shared analysis of the problem, but FED will change nothing unless its admirable inclusive process can now forge wide agreement on how we create a place-based education system that drive the levelling up of education and social mobility outcomes for children and young people and older learners across the country.



Professor Toby Greany

Chair in Education, University of Nottingham

Why did you volunteer to do this?

I'm always interested in how policy and practice interact and inform each other and, in particular, how the voice of practice can influence policy. FED is a fascinating example of that. I am also very interested in place and how this is being reshaped in England, so the working group on that topic is particularly relevant.

What have you learnt?

Lots! It has been great to participate with a diverse but like-minded group in the working group and I have really enjoyed working with Patrick and co in the policy group.

What are your hopes and aspirations?

I think FED has the potential to make a genuine difference – in particular by focussing on how long-term policy can be made less partisan and more focussed on the need of children and families, and by raising the issue of place and devolution as a key consideration for how education systems come together to meet the needs of communities.



Carol Shepherd

CEO & Founder, CS Coaching & Development Ltd

Why did you volunteer to do this?

I volunteered because I believe education plays a significant part in determining the life chances young people have in society. For this reason it is important that any conversation or plans around the development of a future education system is influenced by a range of voices. This diversity will hopefully ensure that any system change will take into account a range of barriers and possible solutions in order to design a system that is as fair, equal and just as is possible.

What have you learnt?

I have learnt that there are many people who are out there who have the skills, knowledge, and experience to create a fair, just and equitable education system; and the drive to do so.

What are your hopes and aspirations?

That the work we have completed moves beyond being a 'talking point' but becomes part of a movement that creates real and sustainable change within education, improving outcomes and life chances for all children irrespective of their starting point.



Al Kingsley

Group CEO, NetSupport

Why did you volunteer to do this?

With 30 years under my belt in the education space wearing many hats the common theme I have seen is a history of short term interventions that rarely have time to embed before they are compounded by fresh, short term changes. I agree, like many that what we need is a long-term plan for education, outside of normal political cycles where we can really make progress during a p[eriod of stability. The FED represents that view, and most importantly is supported by so many like-minded individuals, all with very different experiences but common under a desire to build and facilitate a long-term plan. The FED membership cannot but inspire, I wanted to volunteer my time because it's too big an opportunity to miss, too big an opportunity not to share my experiences and definitely too big an opportunity not to learn.

What have you learnt?

What have I learnt? How long have you got? There is such a broad church of volunteers and members that it's a constant learning journey. Many of my ideas and experiences have been validated and some healthily challenged. I've definitely learnt the more diverse and broad the voices, the more productive and rewarding the process. I've learnt that we all want the same thing, we have different ideas on how to get there but without a doubt the network is stronger than the node.

What are your hopes and aspirations?

Simply that all the time and effort we all invest in the FED will result in those who are in a position to act, will listen, will look at the research undertaken, will recognise the breadth of views and voices captured and will have the courage to take the right decisions as a result. We all want to see our children experience a world class, rounded and enriching education, so the more we can collectively offer solutions and a plan that is sustainable, the better. I'm very proud to work with so many inspiring people.



Caroline Keep

Data Scientist & Education Researcher, EdTech Advisory Forum

Why did you volunteer to do this?

The Fed has allowed educators from diverse and ranging backgrounds to contribute to this report and I am delighted to see that. It is the first type of long term national plan that includes such a range.

What have you learnt?

For this I am deeply grateful. I took part in the inclusion pathway. I took part in work stream 4 looking at equity and inclusion in our education system. Being a SEND student myself and teaching them I was thrilled to represent the views and difficulties young people face in understanding, support and provision.

What are your hopes and aspirations?

We have a long way to go for inclusion and equity and often it feels like we are going backwards, I hope this report can enlighten the way forwards, workstream 4 was an incredible range of expertise and real on the ground teachers.

It's a real plan. Thank you to the FED for taking the time to allow us to build one.