



## Writing Our Own Futures



Laura Goad, Director

**Exploring and prioritising emotional health and wellbeing in our schools has never been more urgent. CDEC's director Laura Goad digs deep to explain how acknowledging the past gives us, and our young people the power to write our own future and attain healthy emotions and better wellbeing – and how key it is to achieving the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).**

'Sankofa' - a word, and concept, from the Twi language that roughly translates to 'go back and get it' - has taken on a new meaning for us over the past year. The concept inspires us to learn from the past to make a new story, a new future. It inspires us with the confidence that we can take something positive, regenerative from our year of disrupted schooling, working and living and move forward.

This ability to write and tell new stories, based on our experiences and those of our families and friends, is an important part in building compassionate and restorative school communities. And to do this, we need a focus on good emotional health and wellbeing, which has never been more relevant or important.

September 2020 marked five years since the adoption of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) – and is 10 years to the date when we will assess our global success in achieving them. The SDGs are a set of guidelines that are intended to allow us all to fix the systems of inequality and injustice; they are goals for all of us, designed to make our lived experiences, those of our communities and those of humans around the world fairer, equitable and

sustainable. Core to enabling us - children, young people, teachers, people working in charities, businesses, local and national government - to be able to take action is good health and wellbeing. SDG 3.

Without resilience, compassion, empathy, hope - personally and collectively - we cannot achieve the goals for ourselves and our communities, local and global. Here at CDEC we have focused on weaving the golden thread of global learning together with a focus on projects and resources that support good health and wellbeing.

Caring for people, place and planet are mutually supporting and health-invigorating. To that end, we have new resources developed over the past nine months (explore our Compassionate and Restorative Education (CARE) approach via our website and the opportunities for your school to receive training and resources) that are designed to specifically support you, your colleagues, pupils and parents to rebuild your school communities in a way that is stronger and more connected. Read about (and get involved with) our new PLACE project on page 3, which also has emotional health and wellbeing at its core.

Our experiences of the past 12 months have been a storm that we have navigated in our own boats. The process of looking back, processing our individual and collective experiences, is a vital part in building our new future and creating school communities that are stronger, more connected to their place and to the world outside it.



### CARE - COMPASSIONATE AND RESTORATIVE EDUCATION

A new teacher training course and toolkit, in response to the challenges schools are facing at the moment as a direct result of COVID-19.

[cdec.org.uk/what-we-offer/training/care-compassionate-and-restorative-education/](https://cdec.org.uk/what-we-offer/training/care-compassionate-and-restorative-education/)



### ACTIVITIES TO IMPROVE WELLBEING, FOR YOU AND YOUR STUDENTS

Become a Tiddilik storyteller.  
[bit.ly/TiddilikStoryteller](https://bit.ly/TiddilikStoryteller)



### BRITISH COUNCIL RESOURCES

[connecting-classrooms.britishcouncil.org/resources/global-learning-resources/wellbeing](https://connecting-classrooms.britishcouncil.org/resources/global-learning-resources/wellbeing)



# Activities for the classroom

Use these activities to give your young people space and time to think and create.



## ACTIVITY 2

### My invisible backpack

This activity is a chance for your class to think about and share their own identity. We all carry an 'invisible backpack' filled with unique memories, relationships, values, hobbies and family. But we don't often take time to share this – now's the time!

1. Ask your class to draw a big backpack on a piece of paper. Encourage them to draw pictures inside the backpack that represent important aspects of their life.
2. Let your pupils take it in turns share their backpack with their classmates in small groups, explaining what each drawing represents. They must listen carefully to each person. Then they can talk about these questions:
  - Were there any common ideas in your group?
  - What did you like hearing about?
  - Which is the most important item/value in your pack?
3. Looking back, looking forward. Now ask your class:
  - Do you think the contents of your invisible backpack were the same when you were a toddler?
  - Do you think they might change in the future?
  - The experience of Covid-19 may have meant we 'repacked' or add a few more items. Which of these do we want to keep near the top of the backpack?



## ACTIVITY 1

### Make a place for peace of mind

A quiet space at some time in the day for peace and calmness is important for our mental and spiritual health. It is difficult to find sometimes when you are at school, at home with family or having a busy day. This activity encourages you and your pupils to find a small place outside or in your classroom or house which you can design to encourage calmness and reflection.

1. **Find a corner.** Ask your pupils to find a corner where they can sit comfortably – it does not have to be big.
2. **Get them to clear the space.** They should take their time and think of clearing away any worries or fears while doing it.
3. **Collect objects.** Ask them to collect objects that they like and choose a special one to go in the centre.
4. **Make a mandala.** Mandalas are circles and can be used to help calmness and meditation and are lovely to make. Build up from the centre outwards and use repeating patterns.
5. **Now practice some peaceful meditation.** Encourage your pupils to sit comfortably and focus their eyes on the centre of your Mandala – they should feel their breathing slow down. Then ask them to move their eyes outwards and leave any worries outside the circle. Let them return their eyes to the centre and close them. If thoughts bubble, your young people can focus their eyes on the centre again, breathing slowly and gently.

## ACTIVITY 3 Explore your community

Here is an activity that can help young people look at school and their community with a fresh eye.

1. Get your pupils to walk around your school grounds or your local community.
2. While they are out, ask them to look for heart shapes (or any other shape you like). They can be anywhere and made of anything; perhaps it is a cloud in the sky, a shadow or a heart-shaped leaf.
3. When they see one, ask them to put their hands together so they form a picture frame.
4. Encourage them to share their sighting with you and their friends, so you can also look through their frame to see the heart or heart-shaped object.
5. Talk about the shapes: are your young people drawn to the same objects as each other?
6. Talk about how you all feel at the end of your exploration.



## PLACE - Paths to Learning: Active Community Exploration

**Welcome to PLACE – Paths to Learning: Active Community Exploration! This latest CDEC project is being led by Debbie Watson, who here shares her passion for the project which is helping children take outdoor action to be active members of their communities whilst also developing their own resilience.**

The PLACE project puts children at the heart of the action. They will be responding to their community's needs through place-based learning and wellbeing approaches. Our project invites children to free their imaginations in order to lead with outdoor practical action in rebuilding from the Covid crisis.

From engaging with businesses to reduce plastic, to designing and creating therapeutic garden spaces for all to enjoy, to creating a 'quest' for young families, our children can make meaningful interventions as active citizens in their community.

### What is the PLACE project?

Community and citizenship will be key features of this exciting two-year project. The aim is to put wellbeing at the core of learning in primary schools. It provides a creative opportunity for schools to 'build forward' from the challenges

of Covid-19 and encourages young people to strengthen connections with the outdoors and to take an active role in their community.

It is led by CDEC, funded by Erasmus+ and will involve partners in Dorset, Czech Republic and Slovakia.

### Supporting teachers and pupils

The overall aim is to develop a menu of tools and resources that will support teachers to equip young people as agents of change and to become more resilient and hopeful citizens for the future.

Pupils will develop a community-based project that grows their skills and understanding of citizenship. They will build respect and care for their community and how they can make a difference for themselves and others.

Teachers will gain new skills in place-based learning and wellbeing approaches. There will be opportunities to collaborate with schools from other partner countries and a transnational visit.

Schools will put wellbeing at their heart, strengthen their school community and learn from connections with other countries.



### ADDITIONAL READING

#### PLACE-BASED LEARNING

[generationsworkingtogether.org/downloads/504dec6769526-IG\\_Place-based\\_Education.pdf](https://generationsworkingtogether.org/downloads/504dec6769526-IG_Place-based_Education.pdf)

#### LEARNING THROUGH LANDSCAPES AND WELLBEING

[www.ltl.org.uk/outdoor-learning-health-and-wellbeing/](https://www.ltl.org.uk/outdoor-learning-health-and-wellbeing/)

#### QUESTING

[vitalcommunities.org/valleyquest/](https://vitalcommunities.org/valleyquest/)  
(An American site but a useful introduction)



Debbie Watson,  
Global Education Officer

Schools may decide to take part for one year only or for two years with different age groups or community projects.

### How will this project link to the curriculum?

This project will link well to geography and history; it will strongly support PSHE, emotional health, citizenship and language skills.

### What training is on offer?

Initial online teacher training in May 2020 will introduce the main methodologies:

- Active citizenship and service learning.
- Philosophy for Children (P4C) to enhance dialogue and understanding.
- Creating natural and therapeutic gardens/spaces.
- Questing – active ways to explore and learn from your place and involve others.
- Principles of place-based learning and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).



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Erasmus+ Programme  
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### WANT TO BE INVOLVED?

This is open to Primary teachers (KS1/2) who would like to extend their skills in using Place Based Learning and using the outdoors for wellbeing.

Please contact [debbie@cdec.org.uk](mailto:debbie@cdec.org.uk) for more information or express interest by 30<sup>th</sup> April.



## ABOUT CDEC

### WHO WE ARE

CDEC is a global learning charity. We build high-quality and inclusive partnerships with schools and communities in Cumbria, inspiring and enabling them to create a socially and environmentally just world. Our local interventions have a global reach.

### WHAT WE DO

CDEC works hard to give schools, communities and businesses in Cumbria the chance to engage with the wider world in order to understand and to take responsibility for their own place within it.

CDEC does this through working with schools, communities and businesses by:

- Delivering continuing professional development (CPD) and corporate social responsibility (CSR) training as well as classroom and workshop sessions for children and young people
- Providing advice, a network of support and resources for schools and organisations
- Running community-based projects that engage and support those living in Cumbria
- Working in partnership with a range of organisations to encourage thinking about, and action on, local and global issues

*"Cumbria has been one of the most successful counties in England in promoting global learning in recent years."*

Professor Douglas Bourn, University College London-Institute of Education.

# Over a third of Cumbria's primary schools are members of CDEC.

**Join our community and become a member. We provide resources and assistance to ensure pupils gain as wide a perspective of the world as possible. It costs just £40/yr if you have under 50 pupils, £75/yr for over 50 pupils, and £100/yr for secondary schools.**

- Loan our resource boxes, which include a rich collection of artefacts and activities on world religions and countries, the Early Years, the environment and sustainability as well as art and design
- Receive a dedicated members' e-newsletter with suggestions for resources to follow the global calendar and other news from CDEC
- Be the first to hear about opportunities for schools to be involved in CDEC's projects
- Receive 10% off our continuing professional development open course programme when the course is run by CDEC
- £10 off our Creative Assembly (normally £40)
- 10% off our Creative Classrooms programme (where we take a class for you on one of our themes)
- Receive a session with your staff on how to use the boxes to greatest effect or an assembly during the year on a global learning theme
- Ask us for advice and support on how to work towards accreditation of a number of schemes that support global learning – like Christian Aid's Global Neighbour's Programme, becoming an EcoSchool and gaining Fairtrade School status.

**Get in touch to find out more!**



## RESOURCE BOX HIGHLIGHT AS A MEMBER, YOU CAN BORROW OUR BOXES FOR FREE



### PLASTICS: WHAT'S THE ALTERNATIVE?

Want to explore plastics and the alternatives with your class? This fabulous resource box includes an array of teaching and learning resources that will provide your young people with opportunities to learn, investigate, build knowledge and bring awareness to a big world-wide problem. Magazine articles, single-use plastic items, books and a game of bottle tops gives you plenty to explore the pros and cons of plastic with KS2 and KS3 so they gain a deep understanding of the plastic problem (as well as begin to understand Sustainable Development Goals 12, 13 and 14). The array of resources is provided by Futamura, a Wigton-based company that produces bio-degradable cellulose.



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CDEC is registered as charity number 1156649

CDEC is a member of the Consortium of Development Education Centres Find out more at [CoDEC.org.uk](http://CoDEC.org.uk)