

Guidance Notes for Facilitators (National Discussion: Toolkit for Children and Young People)

The National Discussion: Let's Talk Scottish Education

Background

- Twenty years ago, Scotland held a national debate on the future of education, and this led to the development of Curriculum for Excellence
- The recent [Muir Review](#) (2022) recommended holding a national discussion to agree a clear vision for the future of Scottish education
- Scottish government is inviting everyone who has an interest in the future of our education system to join 'Let's Talk Education' – Our National Discussion. This includes children and young people, parents and carers, adults, practitioners, and those in the community.
- Professor Alma Harris and Professor Carol Campbell, members of the International Council of Education Advisers, have agreed to facilitate the process. They have developed eight core questions to support the National Discussion.
- The key principles underpinning the national discussion are that:
 - it is inclusive
 - it is in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) which states that children and young people should be at the heart of the process.
 - parents and carers are involved and meaningfully engaged in the process as outlined in the Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006.
- Practitioners and young people of all ages will be invited to test these materials prior to their formal launch and availability online, ensuring they best meet the needs of those working with children and young people in different contexts.
- The resources can be used either independently or by facilitators to support conversations.
- The resources are open source; they can be freely adapted to best meet the needs of different contexts.

- Evidence from conversations can be collected and submitted in a whole range of formats – video, audio, presentations, online conversations, posters. Those working with children and young people are best placed to judge how, where and when conversations take place and the nature of the evidence that is collected.

Guidance

- Facilitators working with parents and carers are best placed to judge how, where and when national discussions can take place and the nature of the evidence that is collected.
- Facilitators should use the ‘National Discussion: Toolkit for Parents and Carers’) along with these Guidance Notes as appropriate and adapt if necessary. They are not meant to be prescriptive, rather they should be used as an aid to support and facilitate meaningful discussions. Consideration should also be given to parents and carers circumstances and barriers to participation should be addressed before any sessions are delivered.
- Recent reports and consultations on education have produced valuable insights and will also be used to complement evidence collected from the National Discussion.
The National Discussion will lead to a ‘**Call to Action**’ with clear priorities for the future of Scottish education.
- The national discussion will be launched by the Cabinet Secretary at the Scottish Learning Festival (SLF) on 21st September.

Purpose of the Toolkit and this guidance

Purpose of the national discussions

- Prepare participants to give a considered response to one or more of the eight core National Discussion questions and/or any additional questions.
- Produce artefacts (posters, drawings, video clips) that can be easily shared with the ND research team via email or Twitter.

Guidance for facilitating national discussions

- View the introductory video from Professors Campbell and Harris at the outset of each session, if possible, to ensure a consistent understanding of the National Discussion
- There is no requirement to cover all the questions.
- The Toolkit and text in this guide is for exemplification only.
- Facilitators are welcome to use the activities in the Toolkit or adapt their own group activities, or those from other toolkits, to support discussion and exploration of the questions. Facilitators will know their participants' needs best.
- You may also wish to engage learners in discussions about the best ways to capture views around the questions. This will help to ensure that learners feel this process is being done 'with' them rather than 'to' them. Learners themselves may have very creative ways of approaching and gathering data around the core questions. Working with learners to make use of these approaches will support the process to be more learner-centred and learner-directed.
- It is inevitable that in discussing the future shape of education in Scotland that participants may well refer to their personal experiences and their current situation with regards to school. **It will therefore be important to set boundaries around what should and should not be raised. For example, facilitators should request that individuals are not named and that discussions around people's experiences of education are sensitive and respectful.**
- It is equally important to establish some ground rules, such as respect and honesty, for your group discussion to ensure that everyone's voice is heard.
- Discussing 'education in Scotland' might be quite abstract for some learners so this might be reframed as 'schools in Scotland' or 'School' in order to make the concept less abstract. For those learners engaging with education outside school settings the phrase 'learning setting' might be used.

- Similarly, there is research evidence to suggest that learners at this stage are more likely to engage with questions where they are prefaced by 'In your opinion', since this asks them clearly for their own views rather than requires them to express something which they may not feel confident about.
- Facilitators are encouraged to complete the survey from their own personal perspective and the links to this can be found at the end of this guide under **Submitting Responses**.

Session 1 (Option A): I've got the power...

Facilitator Notes

Purpose

This session supports participants to consider the core National Discussion questions. Facilitators are encouraged to support groups to discuss the questions before summarising and sharing the output of their discussions. Depending on the group each of the questions could be discussed in turn, or alternatively the participants could be grouped and allocated different questions to explore.

A summary of the output from the group discussions can be shared via the online survey here at the end of this guide.

Facilitators may wish to read Education Scotland's guidance on effective facilitation before holding any session. Click [here](#) to access this.

*Questions 5 – 7 can be used together to facilitate deeper discussion on vision and prioritising the actions for implementation. Alternatively, they can be discussed separately.

Core Question 1: What kind of education will be needed by children and young people in Scotland in the future and how do we make that a reality?

Unpacking the question:

This over-arching activity involves spending around 140 minutes facilitating the creation of a vision statement for Scottish education. This can support learners to explore the big ideas for Scottish education as they see them
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This question aims to support learners to consider what they would do if they had the power to set out the vision for Scottish education. This could involve useful discussion around who currently has the power and who should have, as well as how empowered learners feel at the moment and how empowered they think other groups in society are/might be in future.
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Definitions:

The definitions in this activity mirror the definitions in Programme 2, question 1

' Vision ' for some learners is likely to be a relatively abstract concept. Facilitators may therefore wish to provide some exemplification of 'Vision' to support learners to engage with the concept.
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For example, facilitators could explore 'Vision Statements' with learners and start by inviting them to imagine a 'Vision Statement for Scottish Education in future'. This will also be explored in a subsequent activity in the toolkit (linked to question 5).

The concept of ' Scottish education ' might also be quite abstract for learners, so some discussion of what this means now might support exploring what it might look like in future. Unpacking the concept of Scottish education might help learner

to consider concrete examples of change – for example; schools; who oversees education in Scotland; how teachers teach and learners learn; what qualifications are available and what might be available etc.

‘Power’ is also possibly a relatively abstract concept for learners so this could be unpacked by inviting them to consider who currently makes decisions about education in Scotland, based on what and taking into account whose views. Learners could consider how this could be improved so that they, and other actors in the education system are empowered to set the vision for the future.

Reframing the question:

This over-arching question and activity covers the eight questions in Programme 2 and can be used where there is limited time to engage learners.

To enable effective facilitation of this activity, facilitators may wish to draw upon some of the more detailed guidance provided in the approach outlined for the eight questions below as well as the teasing out of questions in Programme 3.

Discussion prompts:

In considering **‘Setting out your vision?’** learners could be provided with further scaffolding to provide them with reference points for what might be included in the future. For example:

- What kind of education is needed in the future what will it be trying to achieve and for whom?
- What will it look like/feel like if this vision is achieved? What would be the outcome if it wasn't achieved?
- Who needs to do what to achieve this vision?
- What would the first steps be in achieving this vision, what would the next steps be etc.?
- What are the opportunities – i.e., what could be made better?
- What are the barriers? i.e., what might get in the way of achieving the vision?
- What things in schools and society might be more important than they are now? Less important?
- What would teachers be like in future? How would they teach?
- In the future, what would schools, timetables, the curriculum, be like?
- What subjects which exist now should still exist? What subjects might need to be added?
- What differences in how you learn might exist in future?

Session 1 (Option B): Our Future Education

Facilitators Notes

If your Group has less time they can pick and choose between this package of eight shorter tasks.

Each one addresses one of the national discussion's questions.

Core Question 1: What kind of education will be needed by children and young people in Scotland in the future and how do we make that a reality?

Unpacking the question:

This question aims to support learners to consider the overarching vision for education in Scotland in future. It centres on the concept of 'Vision'. It invites learners both to consider the vision but also how to bring that alive.

Definitions:

' Vision ' for some learners is likely to be a relatively abstract concept. Facilitators may therefore wish to provide some exemplification of 'Vision' to support learners to engage with the concept.
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For example, facilitators could explore 'Vision Statements' with learners and start by inviting them to imagine a 'Vision Statement for Scottish Education in future'. This will also be explored in a subsequent activity in the toolkit (linked to question 5).

The concept of ' Scottish education ' might also be quite abstract for learners, so some discussion of what this means now might support exploring what it might look like in future. Unpacking the concept of Scottish education might help learner to consider concrete examples of change – for example; schools; who oversees education in Scotland; how teachers teach and learners learn; what qualifications are available and what might be available etc.

Once a 'Vision Statement' for Scottish Education in future is agreed, learners could then explore how this might be realised through some scaffolding prompts as below. This would facilitate discussion around 'what needs to be included?'
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Reframing the question:

Following some exploration of definitions of terms used in the question and the scaffolding prompts, opening up the question might benefit from the facilitator re-framing the question in ways that are accessible for learners. Some examples are below:
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>How can education in Scotland in the future help all learners (and anyone else best)?</i> This might involve some discussion around the nature of any help which is currently provided, how helpful it is and how it might be improved. |
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- *In addition to learners, who else might need to be considered? ?* Learners should be encouraged to explore their own experiences and hopes for the future, but it will also be helpful to ensure that they consider a diverse range of needs, agents and actors across the system. Who might be affected by and/or effect the changes required?
- *What should be the whole point of education?* This question can support learners to consider what they see as current priorities in education as well as who sets them and how far they feel involved in that process. It will likely involve discussions about success and how it is/might be measured.
- *Should there be a purpose for education in future? What should that purpose be? How might that be different to now? (if it is)* This question will support learners to think about the over-arching purposes of education. It is important to explore the likelihood that there will be multiple purposes rather than one central purpose and that these purposes may be different for different learners in different contexts.
- *Is there something that education in Scotland should be doing in future that it isn't now?* This 'compare and contrast' question also requires learners to make some projections about how things might be in future compared to now. It invites learners to consider how things might be, in contrast to how they are. This might involve them suggesting things to keep, discard or simply improve.
- *How can education in Scotland be better in future?* There could be a number of creative ways to approach this question through asking learners to devise ways of predicting the need for change and the likely mechanisms for it.

Discussion prompts:

In considering '**What needs to be included?**' learners could be provided with further scaffolding to provide them with reference points for what might be included in the future. For example:

- What would a timetable in a secondary school look like?
- What would classrooms look like?
- What would the school day look like?
- What would assessment look like?
- What things in schools might be more important than they are now? Less important?
- What would teachers be like in future? How would they teach?
- What differences in how you learn might exist in future?

Core Question 2: How do we ensure that children and young people in Scotland feel supported in their learning in the future?

Unpacking the question:

This question aims to support learners to consider the support they require around their learning. It invites them to consider the support they need, but also potentially to consider the range of support which is needed by a wider group of learners across the education system.

Definitions:

There will be value in considering with learners what support mechanisms they are aware of. They could consider Which groups and individuals require which types of support. This could support discussion around diversity and inclusion so that learners consider the varying types and degrees of support required.

Facilitators could provide some examples of groups who might require specific types of support now and the mechanisms in place across the system for providing this kind of support and learners could then reflect upon what this support might look like 20 years from now – will it change?

The task is for learners to imagine a future and to consider the extent to which the support required has been provided. This will facilitate discussion around what needs to change now to provide the required support.

Reframing the question:

Following some exploration of definitions of terms used in the question and the scaffolding prompts, opening up the question might benefit from the facilitator re-framing the question in ways that are accessible for learners. Some examples are below:

- *What does it mean to feel supported?* This will require some discussion about what support means and how it differs according to individuals. How are support needs identified and addressed? How is being supported in your learning beneficial?
- *Which groups/ individual might require specific kinds of support?* This could involve some sensitively handled discussion about different support needs, how these are and might be addressed in the future.
- *Who can help provide this support and how?* This will engage learners in discussion perhaps around ‘people who help me’ and how this will look in future. There could also be some discussion here about the further support required by those who are providing the ‘front-line’ support for learners.
- *How would ‘a supported learner’ be any different from one who is not supported?* Learners could be invited to consider the impacts of support – how does it make a difference? What would it be like if that support was not provided? What would the implications be for future learners?

Discussion prompts:

In considering **how we might ensure that learners feel supported** learners could be provided with further scaffolding to provide them with reference points for what that support might look like in the future. For example:

- Which groups or individuals might need which kinds of support?
- What would need to be in place for this support to be effective?
- Who might be best placed to provide support? Teachers? Parents? Anyone else?
- Who might be required to empower those who are providing the support? What would that involve?
- When someone feels that they are being 'supported' what does that look and feel like?

Core Question 3: What is one thing that needs to stay and why?

Unpacking the question:

This question aims to support learners to explore a 'now and then' approach through inviting them to consider what is currently working well and what should be retained from current practice. This will support learners to consider things which should be held on to in the current system and should be 'carried over' to a future system.

Definitions:

Learners would benefit from exploring the kinds of things which are going well currently and so what should stay on in future. This will involve them in identifying the good things which they think are of value and working now and which therefore should continue to feature in any future system.

Reframing the question:

Following some exploration of definitions of terms used in the question and the scaffolding prompts, opening up the question might benefit from the facilitator re-framing the question in ways that are accessible for learners. Some examples are below:

- *What things are working well just now and so should stay?* Here, learners can take a positive focus in considering what's working well in the education system and why it works well. What is so valuable that we should hold on to it?
- *What things are not working well and so should go?* This may involve some discussion around aspects of learning which aren't going so well. Facilitators should take care to ensure that this part of the discussion avoids criticism of individuals, schools or structures which might be unhelpful and take the focus away from a positive forward-thinking approach.
- *Are there some things which could stay if they were adjusted in some way?* Rather than keep or discard, perhaps there are some things which could be kept following some kind of adjustment. What would these be and what adjustments would be required?

- *What are the most important things you think should stay and why?* This is essentially a ranking exercise where learners are invited to come up with a top or top three of things which should stay. This will likely involve some debate and discussion and perhaps taking on the role of being a ‘champion’ for something which a learner thinks is of high value

Discussion prompts:

In considering **what should stay** learners could be provided with further scaffolding to provide them with reference points for what that support might look like in the future. For example:

- Should school buildings remain the same?
- Should the timetable remain the same?
- What good things about classrooms should be kept?
- What good teaching practices should remain?
- What ways of assessing progress should remain?

Core Question 4: What are the most important priorities for a future Scottish education system?

Unpacking the question:

This question aims to support learners to consider the top priorities for the future of education in Scotland. Again, this is a ranking-type exercise which invites learners to consider what matters most for the future education system which could be a key driver of future change and the process of future change since the priorities would be the first things to address.

Definitions:

Learners will be aware of the concept of priorities from their own experience, and that in their own lives, they are likely to prioritise one thing over another on a regular basis – for example, homework due tomorrow or going out with friends. How learners decide what to prioritise and why would be a good way into the discussion around how an education system might agree its priorities.

Reframing the question:

Following some exploration of definitions of terms used in the question and the scaffolding prompts, opening up the question might benefit from the facilitator reframing the question in ways that are accessible for learners. Some examples are below:

- *How do you decide what your priorities are?* This supports learners to grapple with the concept of conflict in priorities and how they decide on one thing over another. The skills used in agreeing and putting into action priorities in individual experience can then be extrapolated to the education system.

- *What do you do when your priorities conflict?* It is likely that a range of priorities will be important in a future Scottish education system. Learners might wish to consider the ways in which these priorities will be agreed and actioned. This will benefit from them linking this to any processes they use themselves when choosing from a range of possibly conflicting priorities.
- *Who/What people in education should decide which priorities matter most? Learners? Teachers? School Leaders?* Learners would benefit from considering the key actors in the education system and what roles they might have in agreeing and auctioning priorities. This could be teased out by thinking about the roles that learners and/or parents/carers etc. could play.
- *What would need to be done first to make the priorities happen?* Essentially, this invites learners to consider what might be the top priority – what has to come first so that other things follow and why?

Discussion prompts:

In considering **what are the most important priorities** learners could be provided with further scaffolding to provide them with reference points for what those might be in the future. For example:

- Should change approaches to learning and teaching be a priority?
- What would be the first thing you would change?
- Should changing the structure of the school day/year be a priority?
- Should changing the curriculum be a priority?
- What things about a learner's experience in school might be a priority for change? School uniform? School buildings? School rules?

Core Question 5: Overall, what is your vision for the future of education in Scotland?

Unpacking the question:

This question aims to support learners to draw up a vision statement for Scottish education. Facilitators could invite learners to discuss vision statements they are already aware of – where they have seen these, how prominently they are displayed and how appropriate they are for the organisation/ group they are associated with. It may well be that the school has a vision statement which could be a good starting point for considering how this vision statement was developed and also how appropriate it is for the school – and perhaps how far learners consider it is put into action.

Definitions:

While it is likely that learners will have been exposed to vision statements. The terminology for these may be different in different contexts. For example, they may be referred to as 'Mission statements' or 'Mottoes' (which many schools have). Examples will support learners to consider the purpose of vision statement and how they are constructed and communicated. It would also be helpful here for learners to consider the values upon which vision statements are often built – what are these and how are they agreed?

Finally, learners could be invited to consider how vision statements are put into action and how far the outward expression of any vision statement matches practice.

Reframing the question:

Following some exploration of definitions of terms used in the question and the scaffolding prompts, opening up the question might benefit from the facilitator re-framing the question in ways that are accessible for learners. Some examples are below:

- *Looking ahead to the future, what should education in Scotland look like? Feel like?* When thinking about a vision it may be helpful for learners to consider the ‘end-game’ of any vision – what would it look like and feel like for a range of different actors – e.g., learners, parents/carers, teachers etc. This could then support learners to think further about what kind of vision would be required to bring that ‘end-game’ about.
- *What values matter in Scottish education now and what values should be central in future?* This question can support learners to consider the kinds of values which currently feature in the system and which of those need to be retained. Facilitators may wish to provide some examples of values or draw upon those agreed in school – e.g., respect, compassion, understanding, kindness, integrity etc.
- *How can we reach agreement across the whole of Scotland about what the vision for Scottish education will be?* Again, this invites learners to consider potentially conflicting narratives around the future of Scottish education – how could we reach a vision for the future of education in Scotland which all could sign up to and which would include everyone?
- *Who will need to do what to bring the vision to life?* Learners would then be able to consider the various steps required to put the vision into action. Who would do what and how? What roles would different people and groups have?

Discussion prompts:

In considering **your vision for the future of education in Scotland** learners could be provided with further scaffolding to provide them with reference points for what that vision might look like. For example:

- What should be the ‘mission’ of Scottish education in future?
- How could that ‘mission’ be summed up in as few words as possible?
- What values are important in Scotland and what values should be important in future? Examples could be provided.
- How might individual schools play their part in deciding on the mission of Scottish education and the values it is based upon?
- What actions are going to be required to make the mission/ vision statement come to life? Who will need to do what and how?

Core Question 6: How can we make that future vision for education a reality in Scotland?

Unpacking the question:

This question aims to support learners to consider the practical steps which would need to be taken to bring the future vision alive. This invites learners to consider who might be involved, what needs to be done and in what order, and what resources might be required. A good starting point again might be for learners to have some input around how a school put its vision into action and the process which that involved.

Definitions:

The concept of the job card (or project plan) would be a good starting point for learners to consider the process of moving from vision to reality – for example, exploring the design process from initial idea to production or the steps involved in project management for example. Learners could draw upon the experience of a range of different individuals and groups in this respect, from teachers in specific subjects in secondary schools to members of the community where job/ project planning is part of working life. Learners could also explore the resources which are needed in the current education system and how these are agreed and allocated. This would support them in thinking about the resources which might be needed in future.

Reframing the question:

Following some exploration of definitions of terms used in the question and the scaffolding prompts, opening up the question might benefit from the facilitator re-framing the question in ways that are accessible for learners. Some examples are below:

- *What would need to be done first to start the process off?* This should get learners thinking about what needs to be done first to bring the vision to life. Every journey starts with a single step and any changes learners have brought about in their own lives would be a good starting point for considering the first steps necessary for the education system.
- *Who would be taking this first step and what support would they need?* This invites learners to consider the who as well as the what and how. This would invite learners to consider how things change in their own lives or school and who plays a part in that – what would this look like when extrapolated to the whole education system?
- *Who currently supports education in Scotland and how might this need to be different in future?* Again, learners could be provided with some examples here around who does what currently – for example, the Head Teacher’s responsibility is to... etc. Learners could consider a range of actors across the system and what role they play/could play as well as what support they need/would need to play that role.

- *What obstacles might there be to bringing the vision to life and how might these be overcome?* In any job card/ project plan there will be some recognition of the possible risks involved and how to mitigate these. Examples could be provided for learners from a range of sources – including school to support them to explore how risks are identified and mitigated against.

Discussion prompts:

In **considering how to make that future vision a reality in Scotland** learners could be provided with further scaffolding to provide them with reference points for what that might involve. For example:

- What would it look like and feel like once that vision was achieved?
- What would be the first thing which would need to be done to bring that vision alive – what things would need to change?
- Who would have what responsibilities in relation to bringing the vision alive – some suggested actors might be helpful – e.g., what would teachers need to do?
- Who might need to provide support, what support and how? Again, some suggestions would be helpful – e.g., the Government, local authorities, parents/carers.
- What resources would be needed – some examples might be: teacher time; changes to the school day; funding etc.

Core Question 7: What are the most important steps we need to take to achieve the future vision for education in Scotland?

Unpacking the question:

This question aims to support learners to consider the key steps which would need to be taken to achieve the future vision for education. It asks learners to consider this in respect of three possible sets of circumstances – unlimited, limited and very few resources.

Definitions:

It will be helpful to support learners to understand that any changes to the education system will likely involve allocation of resources so some discussion around what these resources include would be helpful. This could include, for example, finance and funding, staff resources or other resources such as time. Concrete examples of this might be explored – for example ‘Every teacher in Scotland would teach only a half-timetable so that...or ‘learners could choose whether they want to learn face-to-face or virtually...’.

Reframing the question:

Following some exploration of definitions of terms used in the question and the scaffolding prompts, opening up the question might benefit from the facilitator reframing the question in ways that are accessible for learners. Some examples are below:

- *In what ways is the world changing? How can education keep up?* This might involve some discussion of how technology has changed life, what jobs there are now which didn't exist in the past and how the education system is or is not addressing the needs of these changes.

- *What steps has your school taken in the recent past to address changes in the world and/or your community?* This can support learners to consider actual steps which have been taken, what motivated them and potentially how successful they were – this can then be extrapolated to possible future steps.
- *What resources are needed to keep education going now? How might that (need to) change in the future?* This can help open up the issue of the resourcing of education and society generally in ways that are sustainable. Examples might be suggested – e.g. more teachers; schools open 7 days a week etc.
- *To achieve the future vision, what would be your **first** priority?* Ranking and prioritising activities are often helpful in supporting learners to foreground what really matters and to keep other things in the background – having learners justify their choices in a sensitive way is also sometimes helpful.

Discussion prompts:

In considering ‘**the most important steps**’ learners could be provided with further scaffolding to provide them with reference points for what steps might be possible/desirable. For example:

- What changes might need to be made to the school day?
- What would teaching in the future look like?
- What needs must come first and for which groups in society?
- What changes would be beneficial to make to the curriculum?
- Should some subjects in school stay? Go? Be more or less of a priority? Should new subjects be introduced?
- What would qualifications look like to make sure they were helpful for all?
- In what ways might the world be different in future and what changes to education would there need to be to fit that new world?

Core Question: How can we ensure that everyone involved in education in Scotland has a say in future decisions and actions?

Unpacking the question:

This question aims to support learners to consider the mechanisms and process for people being able to have their say around the future of education in Scotland. Learners are likely to be aware of ways in which they already have a say in decisions which affect them, but this could vary across learners so further exemplification for learners would be of benefit. Learners may also have varying levels of understanding around how data are gathered, research processes etc. so the aim here is to get learners thinking about how their views are currently represented, listened to/ acted upon and how this might develop further in future.

Definitions:

Examples of ways in which 'learner voice' is currently a feature of the education system could be explored with examples. Learners could discuss the pros and cons of pupil councils, youth and community groups, parliaments etc. It is also likely that learners will have been involved in some kind of consultation during their life – what was this? What information was it trying to gather and how? How far was the information gathered acted upon? May schools use 'You said, we did' approaches to develop policies and practice and so examples like this might be drawn upon. Also, this could be extended beyond learner voice to other stakeholders in the system – e.g., how are the views of other groups gathered, analysed and acted upon? E.g., Teachers, Parents/carers etc.

Reframing the question:

Following some exploration of definitions of terms used in the question and the scaffolding prompts, opening up the question might benefit from the facilitator re-framing the question in ways that are accessible for learners. Some examples are below:

- *Do you think learners are listened to? Could this be improved?* This invites learners to consider current mechanisms for having your say and how effective these are. This might draw upon a range of possible mechanisms and learners could be invited to consider how well these do their job in bringing about changes which learners want. This could also be extrapolated to other groups in society with some examples explored of how well different groups in society are listened to and how this could be improved.
- *Who needs to have a say in the future of Scottish education?* This invites learners to consider who needs to be taking part in discussions about the future shape of education in Scotland, how their views can be gathered and acted upon.
- *Are there any individuals/ groups in Scotland whose opinion is particularly important? Who? Why?* This question could prompt some discussion around groups in society whose voice may not always be heard. Who are these groups and why are their views possibly under-represented? How could this be put right?

- *How can the way people in Scotland have their say about education be improved?* This takes an in focus look at mechanisms and learners could be invited to consider the pros and cons of various data-gathering activities – including perhaps the one they are currently engaged in. For example, what are the benefits and drawbacks of an online survey? Who puts the questions together and how and how are the answers analysed? What's the best way to gather data from learners, parents/carers, teachers etc.

Discussion prompts:

In considering '**ensuring that everyone involved in education in Scotland has a say**' learners could be provided with further scaffolding to provide them with reference points for what how they currently have a say and how they might. For example:

- If you have a pupil council? What does it do? Who serves on it? How are they elected? How do they gather your views and what do they do with them?
- How are the views of parents/carers and anyone else gathered and made use of? Does your school have a parent council? A PTA? What does it do?
- What surveys have you completed and for whom? What were the outcomes of your completion of the survey?
- Have you ever asked for anyone's views? How did you do so?
- Do you use social media to express your views about anything? What are the advantages and disadvantages of using social media to do this?

Session 2: An in-depth look

This series of group discussions can help learners take a focused look at topics of interest to them, including the future of learning, equity, wellbeing, rights and world.

Each question can be explored with learners using the prompts in the Toolkit. Facilitators can use their professional judgement around facilitating the discussion and gathering the resulting data.

As an example, the over-arching question can be shared with a whole class group and then sub-groups could be tasked with discussing the prompt questions with the opportunity to report back to the class in a format of their choice.

Submitting Responses

Thank you for taking part in the National Discussion.

These tasks will have helped us all think about some of the National Discussion questions.

Learners should now either work in groups – or with the facilitator - to complete their group's response via the following link: <https://consult.gov.scot/learning-directorate/national-discussion-feedback>

Or, complete their own personal response via the following link: <https://consult.gov.scot/learning-directorate/national-discussion-on-education>

If neither of these options fit your group's needs, you can instead choose to email a summary to: nationaldiscussiononeducation@gov.scot, or post on social media #TalkScottishEducation (via Instagram or Twitter). Please remember to include a rough description of who was in your group and how many people took part.

