Opening Remarks

by Marcus Cornaro,

Ambassador of European Union to South Africa

at

Kapuscinski Development Lecture

"Education : fundamental to a country's future"

Pretoria, South Africa, 31 May 2016

University of Pretoria

Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honour and a great pleasure for me to be here for this evening's Kapuscinski development lecture. It is worth mentioning at the outset that I am delighted that our hosts, the University of Pretoria, together with the United Nations' Development Programme and ourselves, the EU Delegation to South Africa, have been able to collaborate on this exciting initiative. Special thanks to Professor and Vice-Principal (Academic) Norman Duncan. We recognise and appreciate the deep involvement of the University in this event.

I also take this opportunity to welcome for this lecture Mr Ruairi Quinn and Mr Nesmy Manigat, our two high level speakers for tonight who are also two important actors in the development of education in their respective countries.

They participate in a prestigious series of lectures that the European Commission is proud to have been and continues to be associated with. Since their inception in 2009 there have been over 80 lectures and it had been particularly gratifying to observe that their popularity has grown significantly.

2015 was designated European Year for Development - the first such theme dealing with ‘external actions’ of the EU. We have provided an unprecedented window to put the spotlight on the role of the European Union as a global actor, in particular, on international cooperation and development policy. As one of the flagship events of the Year, one special Kapuscinski Development Lectures was organised in each of the Union's

Member States – making it 28 lectures - and five were organised outside the European Union … and for the second time in South Africa (previously in Cape Town).

The lectures provide students, academics, NGOs, media, EU Member States and partners with the unique opportunity to discuss increasingly relevant issues and explore answers to raised questions.

The lectures honour Ryszard Kapuscinski, a talented polish journalist and writer, famous throughout the world for his insights into development issues and challenges, and who sadly passed away in 2007. Kapuscinski whose books were translated into numerous languages, was often named the “Third World Chronicler” or the “Voice of the Poor” for his famous reportages and books describing developing countries on all continents (from 1956 to 2006). He belongs to the category of reporters, who, through their work, have gained almost universal recognition from their peers.

Ryszard Kapuscinski once said *"Life is truly known only to those who suffer, lose, endure adversity and stumble from defeat to defeat".* Today, the words “solidarity” and "partnership" are more relevant than ever, not only for moral reasons but also as a strategic imperative for the future. We live in a world where we are all interconnected and where the challenges are global: trade, education, vocational training, climate change, security, migration, human development … to name a few. The world is changing and we need to change with it.

2015 has been a critical year for development, with the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development adopted,

and the first universal climate agreement adopted at the COP21 in Paris**.** There is a tremendous opportunity but also a major challenge that requires determined action of all involved partners.

In the new agenda for sustainable development, goal no. 4 targets quality education, with the ambition to *"Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all"*. This also happens to be a priority of EU cooperation in education with partner countries and, notably, in our cooperation with South Africa.

The Commission has a strong and growing commitment to education: EU funding for education in developing countries is expected to top some €4.7 billion (… that is R80 billion) over 7 years through to 2020. 42 EU partner countries have identified education and training as a sector of cooperation, and, as already mentioned, one of them is South Africa.

In South Africa, the focus is on higher education - notably through the Erasmus+ Programme, on Teaching and Learning Development, and potentially on other aspects such early childhood education, inclusive education, and school health.

Our cooperation with South Africa in education goes beyond a programme funding approach. Based on the strength of our Strategic Partnership, our relations are more and more about dialogue and sharing of practices, notably looking at and connecting issues of education, broader skills, employability and entrepreneurship.

Globally the EU will renew its efforts to improve access to, and quality and equity of education, paying special attention to countries affected by

conflict or in fragile situations, in the framework of a comprehensive approach including education financing, teacher training and management, vocational training and higher education.

With a growing world population, new challenges need to be taken into consideration in the design of education policies. Education is more than reading, writing, and arithmetic. It is one of the most effective ways of reducing poverty and inequality and improving people’s lives. It can contribute to greater employability, boost economic growth, promote gender equality and human rights and contribute to building peaceful societies.

Lecture

by Nesmy Manigat,

Former Minister for Education of Haiti

at

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Ladies and Gentlemen,
Distinguished Guests,

I would first of all like to thank the organizers of the Kapuscinski Development Lectures, the United Nations Program for Development (UNDP), the European Commission as well as the directors and administrators of the University of Pretoria for their invitation. I would also like to take this opportunity to commend the important contribution of the Kapunscinski Development Lectures, its partners and of all speakers who have taken part in these debates, a means of advancing the development agenda for a more inclusive and prosperous world. Please accept my gratitude for the cordial reception extended to me.

The question of the day is an essential one: **Can Education make a difference in Employability and in a country's development?** We will not be able to approach all the elements of such an important and complex subject, but the answer is certainly YES, provided that the school and education systems are reformed, just as would be the case in the labor market.

Indeed, more and more we live in an inter-connected world and it is becoming increasingly important “to build together” the solutions which have a durable impact on the future of the world's countries. Although public decision makers, thinkers and various leaders have for a long time admitted the dangers of "one-track thinking”, there remains the trap of a “singular approach” which consists in producing optimal solutions limited to one's own environment.

But, the world of today is not only inter-connected, it is also complex and changing. Migratory movements, urbanization, information technologies, the rejuvenation of the population in developing countries are as many phenomena that upset our traditional institutions, in particular our schools.

Nowadays, schools and their missions have fallen out of step with this dynamic world, populated more and more by the young and the young at heart, who live and work longer than ever before. Gone is the era where people spent 25 years of their lives acquiring knowledge and skills, and the following 25 years maintaining their skill sets and working. In today's world, diplomas and degrees come with an expiration date and quickly become obsolete. To repeat what I say to my university students: The new jobs of today and tomorrow perhaps do not exist yet, it is up to you to create them, and what is better, to do so in a collaborative way. In today's fast-paced and dynamic society, school can no longer limit itself to transmitting static knowledge to future workers who would be equally unreactive. The guarantee of lifelong employment is dead. Long live employability.

In the 21st century, the challenge for our schools is to transmit a culture of training to future workers, professionals, “mobile” entrepreneurs, engaged in the development of their community, but more generally, of their region. Employability requires new knowledge, acquired throughout one’s life. This calls for an education system that is based not only on subject-specific knowledge and competencies, but also on cross-curricular competencies.

Can this be done simply by massive investments in basic education? What types of alternative training is available for young people who have

not completed the primary cycle? What should be the role of early childhood, a fundamental stage in the future development of certain cross-curricular skills: social and psychosocial for young people? How are we to make up for the considerable delay in secondary education, be it general or vocational? Where do we stand today? Should education simply undergo such changes, gradually adapting, or should it bring on these adjustments? Where do we stand today?

Ladies and Gentlemen, Distinguished Guests,

Exactly 20 years ago, since the summit on education in Jomtien in 1996, developing countries virtually unanimously made a commitment to basic education at the primary level. We must of course admit that much progress has been made. Everywhere, net enrolment rates have progressed at the primary school level, although as we speak there are still 58 million school-age children who do not go to school.

Nonetheless, we must take a second look at the "All primary" strategy. In other words: Can " Basic Education" make a difference in Employability and National development?

It is clear that a series of studies are still necessary to confirm the level of correlation between the courses of studies, but low investment in the other levels of education exerts an influence on the course of studies in its entirety, and on academic achievement at the primary level. Certain studies that are already available suggest that, the lower the investment at the early childhood level, the more the drop-out rate and grade repetitions on the primary level will be elevated. The same should apply in the case of secondary and university level education.

In many countries, school teachers have only a secondary-school education and very few have university degrees. Today, 250 million children, whether enrolled in school or not, are effectively unable to read nor write. Thus, it is not by chance that 71 million teenagers are not enrolled in secondary school.

In addition to pedagogical considerations, the demographic bonus for several countries is about to turn into a demographic bomb, if there is not also a major investment in secondary education, especially in vocational training. Indeed, a high number of countries face this demographic bomb and its timer is ticking. This bomb is called exclusion, youth unemployment, insecurity and crime, kidnapping, prostitution, drugs, rural depopulation, mass migration.

It is clear that no country can claim to have any future at all if millions of young people are deprived of the essential skills needed to find a job or to create their own employment throughout their active life. 40 to 50% young people living in developing countries currently find themselves out of school.

In certain countries the situation is worse. My own country, Haiti, can keep only 25% to 30% of teenagers in secondary school.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Distinguished Guests,

Can Education make a difference in Employability and in national development? Yes, but of all the measures needed to ensure this reality, I will mention for:

1 - Re-establishing a balance in investments between education levels

It is clear that education suffers from a chronic deficit in investments. According to UNESCO estimates, it would now be necessary to spend 22 billion dollars per year more than what is currently being spent to fund Education for all by 2030. Though it is generally recommended that 15 to 20% of national budgets be allocated to education, no recommendations are made as to the distribution of such funds.

However, no matter the amounts mobilized, what should not be overlooked is the principle of mutual enrichment for all levels of education. An optimal investment in all educational channels, from pre-school to University, represents a greater guarantee for employability, while of course keeping in mind vocational training alternatives for those young people who have not completed the primary education cycle.

The Incheon Declaration must be more than wishful thinking when it proposes 12 years of quality primary and secondary education that is free and equitable, publicly funded and at least 9 years of which are compulsory, and that provide relevant acquired knowledge and skills. Furthermore, it encourages the inclusion of at least one year of quality, free and compulsory pre-primary education, and access for all children to quality early-childhood development, education and protection services.

It is clear that the foundation for the gains attained at the preschool and primary levels is however quite weak in guaranteeing durable employment, professional mobility and lifelong learning. The budgets allocated for secondary education through higher education must clearly

manifest this will to grant special focus to young people. This rebalancing will certainly represent a major paradigm shift from current policies, which require from countries that they make significant investments only in primary education.

2 - Emphasizing cross-curricular skills

To reform national education systems so that they prepare the emerging generation of thinkers, visionaries, reformers, critics, scientists, professionals on all levels surpasses the simple framework of transferring subject-specific competencies. Knowing how to learn on one's own, knowing how to solve problems, working in teams, starting up one's own business, selling and communicating one's ideas, knowing how to engage in the development of one's neighborhood or one's country are among the new key skills, etc.

This effort aims at getting a new generation that is motivated and will find the conditions necessary to remain in their country and take part in the progress of its times. This requires re-engineering of content and of school time while finding a complementarity between subject-specific competencies and cross-curricular competencies.

To do this, we must first reform the secondary education system, including technical and professional education and training, in order to better prepare young people for life and work in a world that now is fully in the throes of a complete and rapid transformation. Education systems must be better equipped to offer a set of generic basic skills that are very practical, such as entrepreneurship, information technology, education for citizenship etc…

3- Replacing schools at the center of the village or the neighborhood

Giving young people the capacity to take an active and effective part in the future of their community, of their country or their region requires the creation of strong linkages and networks between schools and communities. Training, even lifelong training, is not enough. Schools must no longer remain under public governance, and must migrate under citizen governance. Considering the rigidity of the labor markets, governed by bureaucracies and rules that often are obsolete, the time has come to develop bonds making it possible to create consensuses toward minimizing the various barriers usually encountered. Partnerships between Schools and Chambers of Commerce, Schools and Trade Councils, Schools and Businesses, Schools and NGOs, should be promoted.

It thus becomes important to do well in anticipating the evolution of current and future trades while at the same time helping education systems be more attuned to the needs and realities of the world of economics. It is a “win-win situation” because the next century is already under construction, day by day, in our classrooms.

Moreover, it becomes increasingly imperative to involve the family, public authorities, the media and civil society in the work of transmitting cultural heritage and key values to our youth. To address the current and future challenges of peace, prosperity, public health, the environment etc… education systems can no longer be land-locked in traditional concepts of schooling. The learning environment must go beyond the classroom and mobilize other key actors. Gradually we must tear down the walls of our

classrooms to better facilitate re-engineering of curricula, guarantee the quality and especially the relevance of education, the mobilization of innovative and targeted funding, sourced particularly from businesses, etc.

4- Making Higher Education work for the entire education chain

I was privileged to observe the education system in many countries, in various capacities: as University professor, Technical assistant, as the Director of a Non-profit organization, as Minister of Education, and now as I sit on the Board of the Global partnership for Education. All of this has led me to conclude that, schools, as much as the world's religions, are an institution that is hard to reform. No one can question school missions without engaging – whether willingly or not – in a battle against traditions, conventional wisdom, even dogma. That is why I do not expect what I am about to say to be very popular, but nonetheless it is clear that Higher Education should be in search of new meaning.

Without a doubt, Higher Education has made some progress, as it is now available to 30% of young people, compared to 15% just 20 years ago. Even though in some countries only 5% are enrolled. Too few young people earn degrees, and too few degrees provide real skills for the labor market.

Add to that the fact that 40% of young people worldwide are not enrolled in secondary school, causing me to ask myself – and you -- these 3 questions:

- Who is preparing the majority of youths aged 15 to 24 for active life, including those who dropped out of primary school ?

- Who is doing real work to prevent academic failure among those who are sitting in the class rooms?
- Who better than academics in Higher Education has the necessary knowledge and skills and is better able to develop them to fulfill these needs ?

Therefore, if Higher Education must reinforce itself to enhance its capacity to accommodate students and increase graduation rates, the time has now come for it to play a more active role in supporting job creation for a larger public than just its academics. To do this, it must get involved in curriculum reform from the outset, at the early childhood level, in large-scale initial training and continuing education of school principals and teachers, and of school administrators.

Higher Education should also supplement the gaps in technical and vocational education and training, and make it a new sector for education activity. This includes partnerships aimed at supporting, training and certifying the skills of those who stopped their schooling very early. This also includes support for business incubators, especially in the sectors requiring innovations in technology.

Placing Higher Education, and other fields, in the service of the entire education chain is one way to efficiently enhance the employability of young people, and to guarantee employment for the future.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Distinguished Guests,

In conclusion,

I would to remind us of the old African adage : « It takes a whole village to raise a child. » And please allow me to add today: “ It takes a whole village for young people to get a job or create their own employment”.

Thank you.

Lecture

by Ruairí Quinn,
Former Minister for Education and Skills of the Republic of Ireland at
Kapuscinski Development Lecture

"Education : fundamental to a country's future"

Pretoria, South Africa, 31 May 2016
University of Pretoria

I am honoured to have been invited to deliver this year's Kapuściński Lecture. I sincerely hope that I can live up to the high standards which my distinguished predecessors have already set.

Ryszard Kapuściński was a brilliant journalist and an extraordinary writer who could interpret the winds of change while being in the centre of the storm. Since he died in 2007, the global weather has not improved. If anything, it has become more unpredictable and extreme. Yet we have to continue to explore and examine the social and political changes which, with characteristic indifference to our level of experience and preparedness, continue to take us by surprise. We are not the first generation to encounter this experience, but we ourselves are living through it for the first time.

My country, Ireland, is currently exploring a decade of commemorations from 1913 to 1923. This year is the centenary of the 1916 insurrection which erupted on Easter Monday in Dublin, then, the second city of the British Empire. Britain had been at war since August 1914 and the Irish Rebellion, which lasted for only seven days, was seen by the vast majority of Irish people, as a stab in the back. It was perceived, at that time, as an act of unrepresentative treachery by less than a thousand rebels, against the thousands of Irish soldiers fighting in France against Germany, for the rights of small nations such as Belgium and Ireland.

Yet, within seven years, the political landscape was utterly transformed. A new independent Irish Free State emerged, but did not include all of the Island. Indeed, the very name of the new state which London allowed the Irish Nationalists to use, was taken from this part of the empire, which had incorporated the Boer Orange Free State

Back then, imperial Britain and her political leaders, could not even let the word “Republic” past their lips lest it challenge the very orthodoxy of empire and monarchy.

The dynamics of political change, as we continue to observe or even experience it, do not wait for those who hope for a retention of the status quo, who find political change difficult to understand and even harder to accept.

From both Kapuściński’s travels and his writings it seems clear to me that he had a unique insight into the culture of education. In times of strong political change or social transition, what remains? And what needs to be redefined. Sometimes the change comes from within, as in the new independent Irish State in the 1920s or post apartheid South Africa at the end of the last century.

Social change can also be delivered by the emergence of new inventions or transformative technologies. These enable age-old systems of transferring and storing knowledge to be completely changed. For example, in many universities around the world, paper based communications between lecturers and students, outside the classroom, concerning the delivery of a particular course, have been replaced electronically by the widespread use of the Internet. Interactive whiteboards, flipped classrooms, tablets and smartphones, eportfolios - all of these and much more are beginning to increase in prevalence, in the learning environments across the world.

Technology can be used to increase access to education, to share wonderful resources between teachers in different corners of the world, and to help prepare students for the world they will face later in life.

Yet to my mind there are two questions we must continue to ask ourselves when embracing the use of technology. Firstly, do our students have access to the technology in an equitable manner? And secondly, are we using evidence-informed approaches that combine excellent teaching with the use of technology? None of us would argue that digital technology has already transformed our workplaces. In seeking to leverage the same technologies to enhance learning, we must ensure that we do not widen inequality in our societies, and we must remember that technology may assist with high quality teaching, but it can never replace it.

Learning and teaching go right back thousands of years, to this continent of Africa, where we are told by archaeologists and scientists, that modern humanity first emerged. From this part of our world, primitive human beings, our very own ancestors, developed and explored the rest of planet earth. It is clear to me that learning was the first part of understanding, so that the knowledge acquired could be stored and transmitted to succeeding generations, in order that they actually survived. Today, our methods and equipment are completely different, but our motivation and our patience as teachers and students are essentially the same.

This is true throughout our education system, including in higher education. There, research is increasingly important, but critical thinking, guided by innovative & skilled teachers is vital. In a world that is rapidly changing, our higher education systems must prepare people to

participate fully within a dynamic and evolving educational and labour environment.

Quality Education was listed fourth amongst the seventeen Sustainable Development Goals in Education 2030, the Incheon Declaration, which was proclaimed at the World Education Forum 2015, in the Republic of Korea. Over 1600 participants from 160 countries, including over 120 Ministers, heads and members of delegations, heads of agencies and officials of multilateral and bilateral organisations, and representatives of civil society, the teaching professions, youth and the private sector adopted the Incheon Declaration for Education 2030, which sets out a new vision for education for the next fifteen years.

I am very supportive of the concept of the Development Goals and the aspirations which they properly contain. There are however, in every country, different levels of education attainment, even between countries of similar economic and cultural development.

Having considered this over a few years I have come to the conclusion that the key component, which explains the difference, are: the qualifications, the social status, the quality of teacher skills and commitment of the teacher. There are many factors which bring about this difference, some of which go back a long time. Accordingly, these cannot be replicated quickly in new and emerging countries.

However, in my view, where these factors are absent, then sustained efforts over time should be undertaken by the relevant authorities and the wider population to build or even strengthen them at all levels of the education system, from pre school through to third & fourth level. This

includes parents and grandparents, community groups, school patrons, including local government authorities as well as Teacher Training Colleges and the Teachers Unions. All the players, listed above and civil society generally, have had a role to play, in the past, in creating and sustaining the effectiveness of teaching in the educationally successful countries which I have mentioned. The existing strong culture of education must not be taken for granted. Where that culture is weak, or fraught with conflicting tensions between the different actors, then educational leaders, including the Minister for Education and Department of Education should act to restore the system to its previous strength.

They could start by recognising that the issues are real and must be addressed, before changes in the curriculum, the assessment/ examination regime or teacher training issues are resolved. The existing landscape of learning must be prepared properly so that a culture of education can be properly installed and maintained over decades. Education 2030 must be mobilised by all, not as a destination, but more as a staging post along the route which by its very nature is open ended.

Here in South Africa, your efforts to improve education and training resonate with many other countries around the world, including Ireland. Like you, we have a burgeoning youth population in Ireland which is both a challenge and an opportunity. Meeting that challenge is particularly difficult at a time of economic constraints such as occurred in Ireland when we had to be 'bailed-out' by the IMF and the EU six years ago.

The austerity measures introduced were tough on all our citizens. Recruitment of staff in many areas of the public service such as nursing, was effectively halted but the government exempted primary and

secondary schools where additional teachers were hired to cater for rising rolls.

While we shielded education, as best we could, from the worst cuts we also recognised that we had to reform the system so that our young people would leave school better prepared for a world where technology is transforming our lives at an accelerating pace.

A rapidly changing labour market can leave disadvantaged young people behind, especially in times of recession. In Ireland we are concerned, as you all are, with the phenomenon of the NEETS – young people who are not in education, employment or training. But we have to ask the reasons behind the huge numbers in this category. Is it because the traditional jobs that had been available to early school leavers are no longer as readily available? Or is it also because too many young people remain in school to little benefit as they have stopped engaging with the schooling system and are likely to end up with no or low qualifications.

In Ireland, research has shown that the predominantly academic curriculum of secondary school has resulted in many 13 and 14 year olds students 'switching off' for a variety of reasons. These include a weak educational commitment in the home, disinterest or boredom from the young student, or a disconnect with the relevance of the curriculum subjects to the life expectations of the young person and his/her peer group.

This youth cohort, according to authoritative Irish studies, is destined to prolonged periods of unemployment for many, poorly paid short periods of semi skilled work and an overall sense of alienation. This in turn can lead

to a life of drugs and crime, or, increasingly in Ireland and elsewhere in Europe, to antagonism to foreign migrant workers who appear to be excluding them from the local labour market.

It is my strong opinion that our educational system needs to move into an educational and training area which is also about learning by doing. This collective group work, under supervision with trainers/ teachers and active projects with completed outcomes is more engaging for the participants than the present predominantly academic system in Ireland. It is no coincidence, in my view, that in the European Union, the member states which have the lowest levels of youth unemployment are those countries which followed the German model of vocational apprenticeships in the workplace, leading on to certified qualifications for which there is a real labour market.

This is not an existing system that can be culturally transposed into other countries. Instead, new ways, appropriate to the 21st century, have to be found to prepare young people for the existing and future labour markets. When learning in those countries with high levels of drop out of unemployment moves from listening to doing, then there is a new hope for that group of young people which our existing education system simply does not currently serve. But curricular change and a closer connect between the worlds of education and life in the real world outside school can help all students, not just those likely to fall into the NEET category. I have the distinct impression that the same observation could equally apply to many parts of the developing world, including the Republic of South Africa.

A very important part of Education 2030 is gender equality. In Ireland, which has a well-established and old school system, we still have a significant minority of primary and secondary schools which remain single sex institutions. These typically, are more than fifty years old. All new schools, funded by the State, to meet the demands of our growing population, which will not peak until 2027, are fully integrated and co-educational. But I should tell you that efforts to bring about school amalgamations in old established communities have met with, sometimes, strong parental opposition. For some who may themselves be past pupils of the affected school, sentiment and nostalgia cover a strongly held view that girls will do better academically if boys are not present in the classroom. Leadership from the patron and the board of management as well as all the parents in both schools, is a critical component of any process that may eventually emerge. The incentives to help bring that about are the attractions of a greater range of subject choice for all students, along with the improved social skills developed when young people study alongside peers from a representative mix of abilities, backgrounds, ethnicities and genders.

The gender challenge in Ireland remains an important one. But it pales into insignificance when compared to the challenge facing the developing world. Plan International estimates that more than 62 million girls around the world are not in school. These girls are more likely to live in consistent poverty, to suffer through child or forced marriages, and are considerably more likely to die during childbirth. Young Malala Yousafzai has inspired us all - not just by telling her own story - but also by reminding us of the absolute urgency that we must attach to making sure every girl gets the education she deserves.

Gender is not the only challenge facing Ireland or the developing worlds. Many groups are underrepresented in third level and this needs to be acknowledged and planned for. And many higher education students and staff are responding to this with creative, individual plans and initiatives. These successful initiatives should be shared and incorporated across our education system. For example, migration, which is occurring globally on a large scale for a myriad of often complex reasons, brings its challenges. Such initiatives and the community engagement I referenced earlier, can help resolve these challenges and thus ensure that all levels of education are seen as welcoming and inclusive spaces and desirable attainments.

Education is deeply ingrained in the Irish psyche and this is reflected in Government policy decisions. Governments see investment in education, training and skills as crucial to economic and social development. The availability of a skilled workforce and research base is, undoubtedly, an attraction for Foreign Direct Investment and essential for the development of indigenous industry. Arts and culture flourish amongst a well-educated population, while education also enables people to participate fully in politics and in society. Parents see education as holding out the prospect of a better future for their children.

In Ireland, parents have a major role in the operation of the school, both by right and by tradition. Where parental engagement is strongest, this is usually because of the active encouragement of the school Principal. I would say that if the possibility exists to involve parents, and by extension the wider community, then I would strongly recommend that it be adopted. The social engagement of the community in the life and work of the school is, where it is positively mobilised, a great addition to the school

and the community which it serves. Ireland's experience may have some lessons which you could apply.

Finland, educationally a very successful country, has a strong level of parental and community involvement which works for the benefit of all involved, particularly the principal and the other teachers. The wider community can provide work experience for students as well as hands on career and social guidance.

One area where we have sought to leverage such parental and community engagement over recent years is in tackling the scourge of bullying amongst children and young people. Some argue that bullying has always occurred, and that bullying experiences build resilience amongst young people. But this viewpoint disregards the nature and impact of bullying on young people. It disregards the fact that much bullying is identity-based, and further marginalises children and young people who most need our support.

LGBT children, children from different ethnic minorities, and children with disabilities are all more likely to be bullied, according to research. And bullying has a greater impact upon these same groups of young people. They are more likely to suffer from low morale, from depression, to disengage from education, and most tragically, to engage in suicidal behaviour.

We can no longer look upon bullying as a natural part of childhood. We must recognise that it inflicts very real hurt upon children and young people, and that it can be prevented. School culture is incredibly important in stamping out bullying, but so too is a community approach.

I am conscious that during this lecture I have not spent much time upon conventional educational matters. That is because there is a wide body of literature and learning to which you already have access. Besides which, I am not a professional educationalist!

During my time as a Shadow Minister, and then Minister for Education and Skills, nearly eight years in all, I realised that every person, who has gone to school, regards themselves as an expert in Education. If, like me, they have sent children to school they have a PhD as well! This is not the experience of most other professions or trades.

I was lucky, growing up in Ireland in the 50s and 60s. My father was a grocer, a successful shopkeeper, as was his father. Both my parents had a respect for education and a love of learning. They managed to send their six children, my sister and four brothers through school and on to university. We were the first generation, like so many others in Ireland at that time, to go to university. My sister and two older brothers had left home when I started studying architecture. I had the large attic bedroom in our house, with plenty of space to lay out my drawings. Many evenings when he came home from work, my father would come up the stairs into my room, to see my drawings and learn how I was doing.

One evening I confessed that I was finding chemistry extremely difficult, particularly the periodic table, which I mastered but could not understand. I was forcing myself to learn it off by heart. He turned to me and said ‘Ruairí, no matter how hard, stick with it. Remember, no recession, no bank, no single person, can ever take back from you, the qualifications and skills that you get from education!’

Ryszard Kapuściński, were he alive today, would not be surprised by the level of political upheaval and unrest in the world. He had, after all, lived through so much himself.

What would be new to him, as it is to us, is the instant media coverage of horrendous events of disruption, brutality and even wilful cruelty. Those who survive, particularly families and young children, have lost their ‘education years’ and can never regain them in real time.

Education 2030 must begin to explore ways in which young people, who have lost their ‘natural education years’ are given space and time to find them again. If we fail to address this issue, then we will not be properly prepared for the additional challenges which it poses for us all. We are all interconnected in a world characterised by global communications, disruptive technological advances, forced migration, climate change, increased travel and trade. This interconnectedness has made us all increasingly aware of our common humanity and of the need to learn from and to help each other.