

A Living Educational Theory Research approach to enhancing the educational influence of ANGEL

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Abstract

As global educators and educational researchers we agree with the ANGEL 2006 call for submissions that there is an urgent need to recognise, document, research, re-invigorate and continue to reimagine the role of global education as a force for peace, justice, and collective action in the face of war, environmental crises, deepening inequalities, and the rise of nationalism and authoritarianism. We are responding to this need by explaining how Living Educational Theory Research (LETR) can contribute to the reimagining of the role of global education. At the heart of this reimagining is the acceptance of responsibility, by global educators, to generate and share their valid, evidence-based and values-laden explanations of their educational influences in their own learning, in the learning of others and in the learning of the social formations within which their practice is located. Drawing data from over 50 LETR doctorates and living-educational-theories, published in the Educational Journal of Living Theories (2008-2026), we explain how global learning can move beyond rhetoric towards meaningful and transformative practice. Our understandings including the global education of researchers from Indonesian and Bangladesh, in emphasising the importance of decolonial, feminist, indigenous, and Global South perspectives, alongside critical examinations of neoliberalism.

Introduction

This paper aims to be consistent with the Event Goals of ANGEL in that we aim to promote dialogue between policymakers, researchers, and practitioners, encouraging reflection on the value of research for policymaking. We draw attention to implication of LETR research for exploring international policy frameworks and their effects on Global Education, particularly in relation to policies on Continuing Professional Development (CPD), and what constitutes Educational Knowledge as distinct from Education Knowledge.

Structure of the paper

- Context
 - Complex social, cultural, political and historical inter-related ecologies within which we live, work and research
 - Educational education and learning
 - A Living Educational Theory Research approach
- Data and analysis

- data from over 50 LETR doctorates and living-educational-theories, published in the Educational Journal of Living Theories (2008-2026) – analysis to show how
- analysis – re the contribution practitioners adopting A Living Educational Theory Research approach are making to enhancing their educational influence in learning in their local context **and** contributing to the growth of a global educational, values-grounded knowledgebase all may benefit from – whatever their context.
- Discussion
 - an argument for the adoption of a Living Educational Theory Research approach to enhance the educational influence of ANGEL by drawing on the data to explain how:
 - global learning can move beyond rhetoric towards meaningful and transformative practice.
 - Living Educational Theory Research (LETR) can contribute to the reimagining of the role of global education
- Concluding section
 - drawing together key points of argument made
 - implications for members of ANGEL adopting LETR approach to the CPD to enhance their educational influence in learning

Context

The meaning of words can only be understood in the context of their use (Wittgenstein 1953, §43). What he did not mention was that there are many inter-related contexts, and each context is forever evolving. What is more, words are not only used to describe a reality, they help to create realities as Lakoff (2004) shows and Orwell (1949) illustrates in his novel '1984'. So, before going further we will give a few details of the complex social, cultural, political and historical inter-related ecologies within which we live, work and research, and our motivations that comprise the context of this paper, which we hope will help to illuminate the meanings of some of the key words we use.

A few details of the complex social, cultural, political and historical inter-related ecologies within which we live, work and research

We recognise that we live in a complex inter-related world. Throughout history, centuries before the internet and effect of social media, significant social, cultural and political changes rippled round the world. So, while we speak from our experiences having been born and lived our lives in Britain, we recognise that what we have learnt has been influenced by the knowledge created by others living in different times and places; many of the significant changes we experienced were also being experienced in diverse contexts around the world.

Whitehead was born as WW2 came to an end. We both grew up in a postwar Britain which saw the creation and expansion of public services, such as education, health, social services, and the nationalisation of many industries and utilities that serve the public good, such as

transport, steel, coal, water, gas, electricity. Since then, successive governments, have progressively developed and implemented neoliberal, 'free market' economic politics. While continuing to provide public funds for some services, 'delivery' and control of what serves the public good has gradually been transferred to private enterprises. By 1988 when Whitehead gave his BERA presidential address, (Whitehead, 1989a) and published his most referenced paper, *Creating A Living Educational Theory from Questions of the Kind, 'How Do I Improve My Practice?'* (Whitehead, 1989b) when privatisation of nationalised services and industries in Britain was well underway. A new Prime Minister (member of both the Labour and Cooperative Parties) has just been appointed in Britain. His rhetoric suggests that the social, cultural and political climate might have evolved to the point where values of a cooperative, liberal democracy are gaining ascendance, and he will be looking to develop alliances with like-minded politicians around the world, which will not only benefit Britain but elsewhere too given we are all part of an inter-connected world. That has considerable implications for the development of education to serve an educational, values-laden purpose, rather than simply training a well-qualified workforce, which brings us to clarify an educational meaning of 'education' and 'learning'

Educational education, and learning

'Education' is given many meanings, some of which might be better described as training or schooling. We follow those like Peters (1966) and White (2003) in seeing education as a values-informed process. More particularly we work with an understanding of education as a life-long, life-wide process of people, as individuals and members of collectives, learning to live humanely satisfying, and socially productive and worthwhile lives, helping others to do so too, and contributing to Humanity flourishing as a benign presence in and of the world. This goes beyond a social utilitarian view of what constitutes education and associated curricula, such as that expressed by organisations such as UNESCO and GENE:

Global Education is education that enables people to reflect critically on the world and their place in it; to open their eyes, hearts and minds to the reality of the world at local and global level. It empowers people to understand, imagine, hope and act to bring about a world of social and climate justice, peace, solidarity, equity and equality, planetary sustainability, and international understanding. (Dublin Declaration, 2020)

The curriculum serves as a political and social contract that encapsulates a society's shared vision, balancing local, national, and global needs and aspirations. It reflects the educational goals and core values that a society aims to cultivate through its education system. (UNESCO, 2025)

We do not set aside or minimise the importance of a prescribed, or "given" curriculum, such as that which constitutes Global Education, that equips people with the skills, knowledge and expertise to, "... understand, imagine, hope and act to bring about a world of social and climate justice, peace, solidarity, equity and equality, planetary sustainability, and international understanding" (GENE 2020, p.1); to fulfil their responsibilities as a citizen

(2026) and global citizen (United Planet, 2026). What we notice is missing among the 'stakeholders' is the person themselves; what constitutes their evolving curriculum to enable them to realise their responsibility for themselves to learn to live humanely a life that they find personally satisfying, and making a productive contribution to society that they judge to be 'worthwhile'.

This diagram of Ikigai is intended to communicate the meaning of Ikigai as a motivating force that gives a person a sense of purpose or a reason for living.

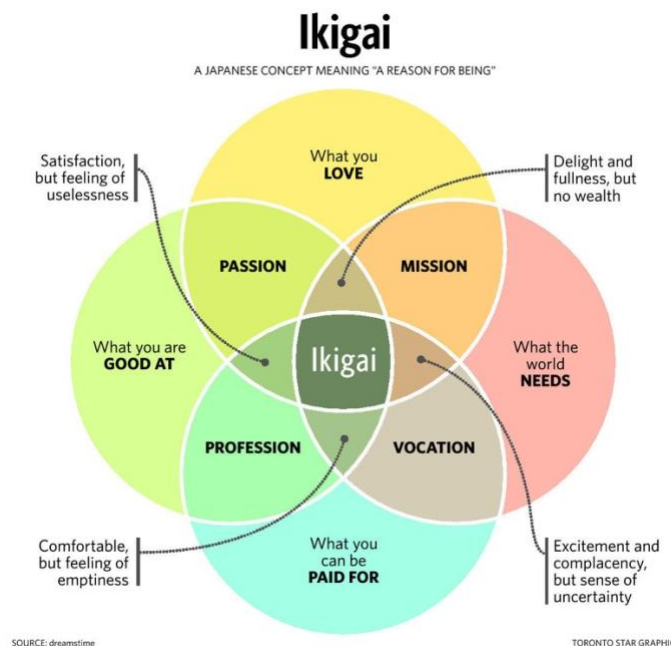


Fig 1. Venn diagram to communicate an understanding of 'Ikigai' by someone who is not Japanese, created by Winn (2014)

To claim that something has been learnt there must be evidence that something has been changed. As Whitehead has pointed out humans have the capacity to learn many things, such as how to build gas chambers, weapons of mass destruction, promulgate lies and 'fake news'. Hence, in the context of LETR we focus on promoting processes and products of people learning to create knowledge of self, of the world, and self in and of the world', that contribute to human flourishing.

Each individual has a unique constellation of values that they express in their practice. These values are important in the development of teacher's explanations of their educational influences in their professional learning and development.

Development of teachers' agency and professionalism

When training as a teacher Whitehead began reflecting on what constituted 'professionalism in education' (Whitehead, 1967). While teaching science in secondary schools (11-18 pupils) he enrolled in a Master's programme at the London IoE to realise his responsibilities as a teacher for improving his practice and developing his agency and professionalism. During the course he came to realise that the theories he was being taught about did not enable him to generate a valid explanation for what he did in the classroom or judge its efficacy.

When given one of the first video cameras by a school inspector he turned it on himself and saw to his consternation that rather than encouraging his pupils to engage in enquiry learning he was furnishing them with the questions, which he had answers for; he for the first time experienced himself as, what he later came to refer to, a 'living-contradiction' (ref). He learnt of the 'Disciplines Approach to Education' from Peters (ref), one of his tutors, which led to him distinguishing between 'education research' and 'educational research' (Whitehead, 1989a) and eventually to create Living Educational Theory as a distinctive paradigm and methodology.

A Living Educational Theory Research approach

This approach serves professional practitioners prepared to accept their responsibility to continually research their practice to understand and improve it, create a valid explanation for their educational influence in their own learning, the learning of others and the learning of the social formation that forms the context of their practice <for which Whitehead (1985) coined the term 'living-educational-theory>, contribute the knowledge they generate in the process to a global educational knowledge base for the benefit of all, and help others to do so too.

As professional practitioners engage in LETR as continual professional development, they do more than develop their knowledge, skills and expertise; they realise their responsibility to go beyond rhetoric to contribute to the creation of meaningful, transformative practice and education which emerges from clarifying, challenging and evolving their embodied meanings of values of human flourishing, which serve as their practical and epistemological standards and explanatory principles in their living-educational-theory.

Living Educational Theory Research is a form of professional practitioner, self-study, educational research. While engaging in LETR practitioners are encouraged to extend their cognitive range and concern, and engage critically and creatively with a wide range of literature to improve their practice and research.

Five of the key distinguishing features of LETR:

- The inclusion of 'I' in a research question and a claim to knowledge. This often includes 'I' as a living contradiction in the sense of holding together the experience of hold certain values together with their negation.
- The practitioner searches for data to help them clarify, challenge and evolve, their embodied meanings of the values of human flourishing, which they use to judge the consequences of their practice to be having an educational influence in learning, and enable them to create a valid explanation for their educational practice i.e. their living-educational-theory.
- The practitioner searches for data to help them identify where they experience their embodied values of human flourishing contradicted, by themselves and/or others and/or the cultures of the social formations/organisations within which they practice, and formulate ways to improve matters.

- The practitioner works with others throughout their research journey to help them improve their practice and strengthen their research. Whitehead (ref) often refers to peer-validation groups, while others may refer to ‘critical friends’, Communities of Practice’, Researching communities.
- The practitioner makes public the account of their LETR, which includes their l-e-t, and in the process tests its validity and communicability by submitting it for publication in globally accessible academic and scholarly journals. In doing so they offer answers to “questions of power, voice, and purpose: whose knowledge is valued, whose futures are imagined, and how can global learning move beyond rhetoric towards meaningful and transformative practice?” (ANGEL 2026)

These explanations are generated by practitioners asking, researching and creating valid answers to questions of the kind, ‘How do I improve the educational influences of my professional practice with values of human flourishing?’ Answers are provided in the form of valid, evidence-based and values-laden explanations of the practitioner’s educational influences in their own living, in the learning of others and in the learning of the social formations within which the practice is located, with values of human flourishing and helping others to do so too.

LETR involves the experience of ‘l’ as living contradictions, in contributions to knowledge, as values of human flourishing are denied in practice or experienced as not being lived as fully as possible in practice. The LETR approach to professional development involves clarifying and communicated the embodied values of human flourishing as these are clarified in the course of their emergence in practice. These values are used to judge whether improvements in practice are taking place. They are also used as explanatory principles in explanations of educational influences in learning.

The validation of explanations of educational influence in learning involves Popper’s (1975) insight about the mutual rational controls of critical discussion and Habermas’ use of four criteria of social validity when applied to communications and the evolution of society. These criteria involve comprehensibility, evidence, sociocultural and sociohistorical understandings and authenticity. These criteria are derived from Habermas’ (1976, pp. 1-2) four criteria for understanding each other in his work on communication and the evolution of society.

In the next section we draw on data from over 50 LETR doctorates and living-educational-theories, published in the Educational Journal of Living Theories (2008-2026) in response to <https://angel-network.net/ANGELConference2026> ANGEL’s urgent need to recognise, <https://angel-network.net/ANGELConference2026document>, research, re-invigorate and continue to reimagine the role of global education as a force for peace, justice, and collective action in the face of war, environmental crises, deepening inequalities, and the rise of nationalism and authoritarianism.

Data

The data has been selected from over 50 LETR doctorates (accessed from <https://www.actionresearch.net/living/living.shtml>), papers published in the Educational Journal of Living Theories (2008-2026) (accessed from <https://ejolts.net/>) and the living-posters at <https://www.actionresearch.net/writings/posters/homepage2025.pdf>. We have drawn from these data sources as they are freely accessible to all with access to the web, whatever the cultural context in which the practitioner is working.

Members of the EDS (Education for Development and Sustainability) community

Md Hafizur Rahman, Trine Lund, Md Alamin, Abdullah bin Mujib bin Abdul Khalid & Erling Krogh (2021). Developing a transformative, cooperative living-educational-theory with children and youth in the EDS (Education for Development and Sustainability) community of practice in Bangladesh. *Educational Journal of Living Theories (EJOLTs)*, 14(2), 26-50. Access from <https://web-cdn.org/s/1445/file/node/14-8.pdf>

Living posters <https://www.actionresearch.net/writings/posters/eds24.pdf>

Members of the Indonesian TERG (Transformative Education Research Group) working on their Living Educational Theory Research.

Siti Aminah Alfalathi (2026) "How Do I Improve My Practice as a Lecturer?": A Living Educational Theory Research Study of Supporting Students Empowerment through Attachment Theory. *Educational Journal of Living Theories (EJOLTs)*, 19(1) 56-71. Access from <https://web-cdn.org/s/1445/file/node/siti19-1.pdf>

Rika Kartikawati (2026). Living My Value: Navigating the Challenges of Practicing Confidentiality in Counselling. *Educational Journal of Living Theories (EJOLTs)*, 19(1) 30-55. Access from <https://web-cdn.org/s/1445/file/node/rika19-1.pdf>

Living posters <https://www.actionresearch.net/writings/posters/indonesiangp23.pdf>

Lecturer in Pakistan

Abdul Panhwar (2020) Improving ESL Teaching and Learning Through Living Educational Theory Research at the University Level. *Educational Journal of Living Theories (EJOLTs)* 13(2), 48-70. Access from <https://web-cdn.org/s/1445/file/node/13-9.pdf>

Abdul Panhwar (2025). A Living Educational Theory approach to enhancing Pakistani literature students' critical thinking and engagement through cooperative learning. *Educational Journal of Living Theories (EJOLTs)*, 18(1) 1-20. Access from <https://web-cdn.org/s/1445/file/node/abdul18-1.pdf>

Peace-worker

Joakim Arnøy (2025). Appreciating my core values to more fully appreciate others: My living-educational-theory as a peace education researcher-practitioner. *Educational Journal of Living Theories (EJOLTs)*, 18(1) 32–49. Access from <https://web-cdn.org/s/1445/file/node/joakim18-1.pdf>

[Video - Joakim gives a brief introduction to his paper.](#)

International Development worker

[Arianna Briganti's Doctoral Thesis on 'My living-theory of International Development'. Graduated from University of Lancaster in November 2021.](#) Access from <https://www.actionresearch.net/living/ABrigantiphd.pdf>

Living Ubuntu as an Academic Standard of Judgement

[Eden Charles \(2007\) How Can I bring Ubuntu As A Living Standard Of Judgment Into The Academy? Moving Beyond Decolonisation Through Societal Reidentification And Guiltless Recognition. PhD Thesis, University of Bath.](#) Access from <https://www.actionresearch.net/living/edenphd.shtml>

Social Justice

[Bernie Sullivan's Ph.D. \(2006\) A living theory of a practice of social justice: Realising the right of Traveller Children to educational equality. PhD Thesis, Limerick University.](#) Access from <https://www.actionresearch.net/living/sullivanPhD.pdf>

Analysis

Our analysis is focused on the original contributions to knowledge made by each of these living-educational-theories in developing a 'Living Educational Theory Research approach to enhancing the educational influence of ANGEL'.

Each thesis and publication above, explains the researcher's educational influence in their own learning, in the learning of others and in the learning of the social formations within which the practice is located. Their explanations of educational influence, in the learning of social formations, because of the nesting of a social formation within interconnected global relationships, have greatest significance in a LETR contribution to the educational influence of an academic network on global education and learning.

The explanations use the unique constellation of each researcher's values of human flourishing, as explanatory principles, in explaining their educational influence in learning in their local context **and** their contribution to the growth of a global, educational, values-grounded knowledgebase of an Academic Network for Global Education and Learning, in which all may benefit from whatever their context.

The explanations are grounded in the individual practitioner's acceptance of a professional responsibility to enhancing their educational influences through living their values of human

flourishing as fully as possible. By making public their educational influences in learning, grounded in this responsibility, they are contributing to enhancing the educational influence of ANGEL as a professional practitioner who is engaging in LETR as continual and career long Professional Development.

The evidence in our analysis is drawn from the data provided by the following as explanations of their educational influences in learning. We are offering this evidence, as sufficient to support the claims we are making about enhancing the educational influences of ANGEL with a LETR approach to continual professional development, from:

- Members of the EDS (Education for Development and Sustainability) community.
- Members of the Indonesian TERG (Transformative Education Research Group) working on their Living Educational Theory Research.
- A Lecturer in Pakistan.
- A Peace-worker.
- An International Development worker.
- Living Ubuntu as an Academic Standard of Judgement.
- Living Social Justice.

Discussion

The discussion is framed by an argument for the adoption of a Living Educational Theory Research approach to enhance the educational influence of ANGEL by drawing on the data to explain: how in doing so global learning can move beyond rhetoric towards meaningful and transformative practice and; how Living Educational Theory Research (LETR) can contribute to the reimagining of the role of global education as a force for peace, justice, and collective action.

The arguments for developing a LETR approach to enhancing the educational influence ANGEL include the GENE definition of Global Education:

- i) Global Education is education that enables people to reflect critically on the world and their place in it; to open their eyes, hearts and minds to the reality of the world at local and global level.

LETR involves practitioners in asking, researching and answering questions of the kind, 'How do I enhance my educational influences with values of human flourishing. This includes reflecting critically on the world in order to understand the constraints and possibilities within their particular local and global contexts.

- ii) It empowers people to understand, imagine, hope and act to bring about a world of social and climate justice, peace, solidarity, equity and equality, planetary sustainability, and international understanding.

LETR encourages practitioners to express their values of human flourishing even within contexts that deny these values (Frankl, 2006, 2019; Egar, 2017). The publications in EJOLTs (2008-2026) provide the evidence of LETR researchers explaining how they are seeking to live these values of human flourishing as fully as possible. It involves respect for human rights and diversity, inclusion, and a decent life for all, now and into the future.

LETR includes a responsibility for researching one's professional learning and development with values of human flourishing that include respect for human rights and diversity, inclusion, and a decent life for all, now and into the future. The inclusion of explanations of educational influences in the learning of social formations influences the global relationships within which the social formations are nested.

- iii) Global Education encompasses a broad range of educational provision: formal, non-formal and informal; life-long and life-wide. We consider it essential to the transformative power of, and the transformation of, education.

As shown by LETR practitioners above, including those in the EDS and TERSD groups, their research encompasses a broad range of educational provision: formal, non-formal and informal; life-long and life-wide. The TERSD group address the transformative power and the transformation of education in their living-educational-theories. We think that it is worth repeating, for emphasis, the point made in the analysis section above that the practitioner's explanations of their educational influences are grounded in their acceptance of a professional responsibility to enhancing their educational influences through living their values of human flourishing as fully as possible. By making public their educational influences in learning, grounded in this responsibility, they are contributing to enhancing the educational influence of ANGEL as a professional practitioner who is engaging in LETR as continual and career long Professional Development.

Conclusion

The argument we have offered for developing a Living Educational Theory Research approach to enhancing the educational influence of ANGEL rests on each professional practitioner accepting their responsibility to research questions of the kind, "How, as I fulfil my contractual duties, can I contribute to improving the quality of global education and learning in my context, and move beyond rhetoric towards meaningful and transformative practice?". This is grounded in practitioners contributing accounts of their LETR to a global knowledgebase through which we are claiming that they are enhancing the global educational influence of ANGEL realizing its purpose grounded in values of peace, justice, and collective action.

Adopting a Living Educational Theory Research approach to their professional development requires the practitioner to make public the knowledge they create as they explain their educational influences in their own learning, that of others, and that of the social formations that form the context of their practice. When ANGEL is one of the social formations a practitioner identifies as forming the context of their practice and research,

then their account will include how what they are doing enhances the educational influence of ANGEL.

Our optimism is grounded in the expression of a life-affirming and life-enhancing energy with values of human flourishing that we experience in the LETR communities we belong to, and as members of ANGEL. We hope that as more educators adopt a Living Educational Theory Research approach to their continual, career-long professional development they will contribute to enhancing the educational influence of ANGEL to realise its values-grounded aims and purposes for the benefit of all.

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Appendix 1.

Definition of Global Education (Dublin Declaration, 2022):

Global Education is education that enables people to reflect critically on the world and their place in it; to open their eyes, hearts and minds to the reality of the world at local and global level. It empowers people to understand, imagine, hope and act to bring about a world of social and climate justice, peace, solidarity, equity and equality, planetary sustainability, and international understanding. It involves respect for human rights and diversity, inclusion, and a decent life for all, now and into the future. Global Education encompasses a broad range of educational provision: formal, non-formal and informal; life-long and life-wide.

Core Values, Principles and Dimensions of Global Education

Global Education includes certain core elements. These include:

- Core values of global and local social justice, peace, solidarity, equity and equality, planetary sustainability, inclusion, human rights, the embracing of diversity, and international understanding.
- A focus on the interconnection between local and global dimensions of issues affecting people, other living beings and the planet; between generations; between cultures and between past, present and future.
- A common commitment to pedagogical practices that are inclusive, participatory, inspire hope, enable critical thinking, and do justice to the primacy of the learners; while building competences and skills for informed, self-reflective, meaningful action, individual and collective.

Uniting for Coherence and Impact

This Declaration recognises the diversity of terms used according to national circumstances, and that the use of specific terms changes over time. It uses Global Education as an umbrella term to bring together related concepts and areas of policy and practice, to promote coherence, facilitate policy learning, avoid silo-isation and ensure greater combined effect.

Global Education encompasses formal, nonformal, informal education; life-long and lifewide and intergenerational learning. It is about people's realities, local, national and global, in a planetary context.

It involves critical thinking, learning to deal with complexity, democratic and participatory pedagogical practices. It encompasses a variety of ways of understanding how people learn.

It includes historical consciousness, a critical analysis of present systems, and a vision of hope for the future of people and the planet. Currently aligned to the Global Goals and to specific commitments such as SDG4.7; Global Education also harnesses the power of broader, longer and deeper human aspirations for social justice, peace, equity and equality, sustainability, human rights and a decent life for all.

Appendix 2

An annual national reporting process to report on progress vis-à-vis the Declaration; based on and taking account of existing processes of national reporting annually to peers (at GENE Roundtables). This would include:

- A focus on National Strategy and policy development (and review, evaluation, redesign, etc.) that will also be reported annually, and compiled on a pan-European basis.
- A focus on national funding mechanisms, data and changes to levels of funding, from ODA and from other sources, being shared at European level annually.
- A focus on developing inter-ministerial cooperation, on supporting stakeholder engagement, dialogue, and networking.

(page 1) Conscious of

- The range and complexity of crises and challenges facing people, other living beings and the planet.
- People's right to learn, to critically reflect on their place in the world, to respond and to act in solidarity, as global citizens with planetary responsibility.
- The important contribution of education – and Global Education in particular – to empowering people, individually and collectively, to learn and to contribute to changing the world.

Extracting from above this appears to be what signatories have agreed to report on:

- National strategy and policy documents produced
- European funds identified and distributed
- Ministers cooperate to support 'stakeholder' engagement, dialogue and networking

But it is a truism that you tend to get what you look for – so what evidence should signatories be looking for in reports that show the production of National strategy and policy documents, the identification and distribution of European funds, and Ministers cooperating to support 'stakeholder' engagement, dialogue and networking is having an educational influence in the learning of people, individually and collectively, to contribute, as global citizens with planetary responsibility, to bring into being a more peaceful, sustainable world. We focus, for now, on 'peace' and 'planetary sustainability' as values that give meaning and purpose to Global Educational and Learning, as we believe that there could be more common, cross-cultural agreement on what might constitute evidence of a more peaceful and sustainable world, than on other values such as 'justice', 'human rights' etc. alluded to.

We recognise that all human beings are part of an inter-related world, so we find the term 'stakeholders' curious, as we believe all: learners (irrespective of age); educators and; people concerned with the development of local, national, and global education policy, strategy and provision, now and for the unknown future, have a 'stake', a vested interest, in improving the quality of educational relationships, experiences and opportunities offered by formal and informal education, *and* helping others do so too.

We make a distinction between the responsibilities of practitioners and those of professional practitioners: practitioners have a responsibility to fulfil their contractual obligations, professional practitioners *also* have a responsibility to, in the process, contribute to the growth of practical knowledge and an epistemology of praxis for the greater good.

Our argument is that Living Educational Theory Research can contribute to reimagining Global Education and Learning to serve the good of all by providing a framework for professional practitioners, such as teachers who are professional educators, to continually research the educational influence their practice has in learning, in order to understand and improve it and contribute the knowledge they generate in the process to the realisation of the hope filled visions of organisations such as ANGEL, GENE and UNESCO of creating a better world.

A LETR approach to enhancing the educational influence of ANGEL integrates the curricula, skills, knowledge, competencies and attitude detailed in the Dublin Declaration (ref) with the personal and social educational purposes of education. Human beings are complex social creatures, each a unique being with individual needs, talents, ways of seeing the world... When we expressed our understanding of Ubuntu as "'I' am because we are – and – we are because 'I' am." (Whitehead & Huxtable 2023) This was not to present 'I' as a self-serving, egotistical, isolated 'self' but to recognise and accept our personal responsibility as a professional practitioner to contribute to human flourishing – and being no more nor no less human than anyone else that has to include our responsibility for our own flourishing too, which foregrounds the tensions when for one person (or collective) to feel they can flourish conflicts with the flourishing of another, in the present or in the future. For example, what one person or culture construes as a 'public good', a 'human right', a threat to 'democracy', 'a decent life', can be very much at odds with another; one person's freedom fighter is another's terrorist; a defensive gun can look very offensive if you are looking down its barrel. Even when we can agree a lexical definition of such values-laden words it often does not create movement beyond rhetoric towards meaningful, transformative practice and education that brings into being a more peaceful, humane and sustainable world. The state of current 'peace' initiatives brought to international attention is testament to that. 'While 'jaw, jaw', is much better than 'war, war' too often fear inspired hate filled, words can cause as much long-term damage as exchanging bullets and missiles. So, learning to develop a common language for peaceful critical dialogue and the ability to learn from the past without holding people and nations hostage to it at a global level are essential for global education to have an educational influence in humans learning to create a more peaceful sustainable world. This learning has been addressed by Charles (2007) with his original ideas on Guiltless Recognition and Societal Reidentification.

That all sounds very fine – but what practically can we, as educators, do to contribute? Which brings us to reimagining the educational role of global education and highlighting the importance of academic, scholarly and intellectual work as an antidote to fake news and populist politics. At the heart of this reimagining is the acceptance of responsibility, by each educator, whatever the context of their practice, to generate and share their valid, evidence-based and values-laden explanations of their educational influences in their own learning, in the learning of others and in the learning of the social formations within which their practice is located. Hence, we propose educators consider adopting a Living Educational Theory Research approach to their continual professional development. In doing so they respond to the urgent need ANGEL 2006 call for submissions identifies “to recognise, document, research, re-invigorate and continue to reimagine the role of global education as a force for peace, justice, and collective action”.

There are a number of implications for the professional development of educators who wish to develop a LETR approach to enhancing the educational influence of ANGEL. At heart of these implications is the acceptance of responsibility, by global educators, to generate and share their valid, evidence-based and values-laden explanations of their educational influences in their own learning, in the learning of others and in the learning of the social formations within which their practice is located. The examples given in the data section above, demonstrate that the approach can be usefully adopted by professionals practicing in diverse fields of practice and cultural contexts.

In a LETR approach to GE it is important to recognize the contested nature of values of human flourishing. Hence the importance of respectful, cooperative critical dialogue in developing a LETR approach to the professional development of global education (See for example Charles, 2007).