Global skills

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## Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Executive summary</strong></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Introduction</strong></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aims and background to research</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Context</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>World class skills</strong></td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Skills for a global economy and global society</strong></td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Global skills and current policy initiatives</strong></td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making connections between initiatives</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Framework of globalisation</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International experiences and wider world outlook</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International partnerships and international programmes</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equality and diversity</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intercultural competencies</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community cohesion and citizenship</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustainable development</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enterprise education</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public support for international development</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Skills needs for the twenty-first century</strong></td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employers’ observations</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic observations and debates on globalisation, learning and skills</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main components of global skills</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Framework for global skills</strong></td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Putting global skills into practice in colleges</strong></td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Leadership and professional development</strong></td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ways forward and conclusion</strong></td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Authors</strong></td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Development Education Research Centre</strong></td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bibliography</strong></td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Executive summary

1. This report has been produced for the Learning and Skills Improvement Service (LSIS) as part of the development of its international work. It builds on its strategy for supporting international development in the learning and skills sector, *World Class Leadership for Global Excellence* published in June 2006, and the outcomes of the 2006 Global Skills conference published as *The leadership challenges of globalisation*, 2007.

2. The report provides an overview of the debates, policy initiatives and practice relevant to global skills, and makes suggestions as to potential priority areas for further work. It recognises that there are a number of interpretations as to what could be meant by global skills, such as skills in the era of globalisation, exporting of skills to elsewhere in the world, skills to more effectively compete and skills for international development.

3. The report comes to the conclusion that there is a need within the further education and training sector to implement a framework that equips the UK workforce to make sense of the global society, with the appropriate skills to be active participants in the global society and economy of the twenty first century.

4. Key to the debates on what is meant by ‘global skills’ is recognition of the importance of globalisation, particularly the connections between the local, national, and global, the relationship between the social and the environmental, and the recognition of cultural sensitivities in forms that are appropriate and relevant to upskilling the UK workforce.

5. A key message within the report is that there exists a wealth of initiatives in areas such as internationalisation, sustainable development, community cohesion, public support for international development, enterprise education and equality and diversity which if brought more closely together would provide a rationale for a framework for global skills.

6. Within many existing UK government policies there are references to these areas, but they are usually seen in isolation from one another and are therefore often interpreted by providers within the context of ‘another new initiative we have to deal with.’ It is suggested however that the main elements of what could be called ‘global skills’ exist within existing policies, and what is needed is a mechanism or a framework to bring these together and take things forward.

7. The report also recognises that there has been some important work done in this area already by bodies such as LSIS, the Association of Colleges, British Council and the DEA. This study is the first that addresses leadership needs within further education and training providers on global skills.

8. Central to this report is the premise that debates and programmes on skills in the UK need to recognise globalisation as the primary driver and influence. It is suggested that crucial to discussions on ‘global skills’ is an understanding of the impact of globalisation in all its facets. Whilst policy statements, pronouncements by government ministers and initiatives from training bodies make reference to globalisation, little appears to be mentioned about how learners can be more than recipients of globalisation, and how they can engage in understanding and feeling part of a global society and economy, recognising they are global citizens.
9. There is a recognition of the impact of globalisation on the skills agenda and increasing engagement with areas such as international partnerships and the environment, insufficient priority has been given to equipping learners to develop the skills to make sense of what globalisation means to them and how the potentially negative threats of this agenda can be transformed into positive and constructive experiences and engagement. A major topic for further discussion is which areas come within the discourse on ‘global skills.’ To some it could be seen as being about skills around the world or, more specifically, skills within the framework of globalisation. In the UK, some would see ‘global skills’ as being about promoting and exporting UK skills globally. There is also the relationship between global skills and sustainable skills; and between global skills and intercultural skills. For those from a development education background, the term is most likely to be related to skills concerning global issues and processes.

10. The report outlines the following as the key elements for global skills:

- An ability to communicate with people from a range of social and cultural backgrounds
- An ability to work within teams of people from a range of backgrounds and other countries
- Openness to a range of voices and perspectives from around the world
- Willingness to resolve problems and seek solutions
- Recognition and understanding of the impact of global forces on people’s lives
- Willingness to play an active role in society at local, natural and international level.

11. The development of these skills poses wider questions about approaches to learning within further education and training, particularly in pedagogy, ensuring that leaders and educators have the ability to translate these elements into the delivery of courses and qualifications.

12. In taking forward this framework, consideration needs to be given to the following:

- Promotion of debate and dialogue by policy-makers, training bodies and employers on the extent to which the UK workforce is being equipped to make sense of and apply their understanding of global forces in their lives and employment
- Encouragement of the drivers of key initiatives related to global skills to look at ways in which there could be greater harmonisation and linkages between various initiatives and programmes
- A review of appropriate qualifications, training provision, national occupational standards and assessment frameworks for the sector to ensure that skills for living in a global society and working in a global economy are reflected.
- Further research on how learners themselves are making sense of the impact of globalisation on their lives and how this relates to their employment and engagement in society
- New programmes of professional development for leaders in further education and training, on how they can incorporate debates around global skills within their institutions
- Piloting a range of professional development courses for lecturers, tutors and trainers in the sector on global skills, including the development of a new masters’ level degree module course in this area.

13. Globalisation has and will continue to have an increasingly central role in driving training needs and in explaining how and what the learner understands about the world in which they live and work.

14. The global skills agenda is here to stay. The issue is not why, but what and how – what does it entail and how should it be delivered within further education and training in general?
Introduction

Aims and background to research

15. This paper has been produced by the Development Education Research Centre at the Institute of Education of the University of London, for LSIS as a contribution to its international strategy.

16. The aim of the research is “to assess the extent to which ‘global perspectives’ and understanding of the wider world are, and could be, part of the debates on ‘global skills’, within the context of the implementation of the recommendations of the Leitch Review.”

17. Specifically the research has looked at how skills for a global society and global economy are perceived by employers, whether they perceive them as a key need, and the extent to which further education and training providers are responding to this need.

18. The research has concentrated on the following areas:
   - Undertaking desk research on the impact of a range of policy initiatives in further education with an impact on understanding of the wider world
   - Reviewing academic debates on globalisation and internationalisation, and their relevance to identifying what is meant by global skills
   - Gathering views and observations from the main stakeholders involved in further education on how they perceive global skills and its relevance to upskilling the UK workforce
   - Developing a potential framework for global skills
   - Identifying priority areas for further research and development.

19. The research was based on a combination of desk based work, interviews with representatives of a range of employer bodies, further education colleges, key sector skills councils, Learning and Skills Council, British Council, European Training Foundation, Association of Colleges, DIUS, key national further and adult education bodies and civil society organisations. In addition two focus group discussions were held one in London and one in Manchester. The research was also supported by an advisory group comprised of representatives from the key stakeholders in the sector.

20. Whilst it is outside the scope of this report to review the debates on what is meant by ‘skills’ or even the term ‘global’, the issues raised here do pose questions about the need for greater clarity by policy-makers particularly as to what they perceive these terms to mean. This report follows definitions developed within European frameworks which see ‘skills as ability to apply knowledge and use know-how to complete tasks and solve problems’ and ‘general capacities to perform a set of tasks developed through the acquisition of experience and/or training which require more than just knowing about the subject.’ Thus, skills can be seen as more than occupational and technical, including transferable skills, skills needed in everyday life, and wider employability skills.

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1 Employment bodies including Astra Zeneca, National Grid, Nissan, Co-operative Group.
2 Greenwich Community College, Preston, City and Islington, Southwark.
3 National Skills for Manufacturing, Financial Skills Council, Creative and Cultural, Automotive Skills, Lifelong Learning.
4 NIACE, LSN, Co-operative College, City and Guilds and People First.
5 Lancashire Global Education Group, Engineers Against Poverty and Practical Action.
7 www.euro-inf.eu/content/view/16/16
8 www.neiu.edu/~dbehrlic/hrd408/glossary.htm
9 www.lluk.org.uk/documents/sector_skills_agreement_stage_5_england.pdf
21. These definitions suggest that any implementation of skills strategies cannot ignore questions of knowledge, understanding, values and personal experience. The connections between these areas are key within the debates on global perspectives and approaches.

22. There is an equally difficult debate about the usage of the term ‘global’: within a number of the policy initiatives referred to in this report, ‘international’ is the word more often used to incorporate understanding of and engagement with the wider world. The distinctions between these terms has been the subject of debate in the schools sector: ‘international’ has often been used in relation to links and connections between people, places and institutions; whilst ‘global’ has been used in recognition that wider world issues and experiences have a direct impact on people’s everyday lives. The term ‘global’ is also used in this report in order to frame the discussions within the dominant social, political, cultural and economic discourse of today, namely that of globalisation. However as the report will outline, there is increasing blurring of the distinctions between these terms, particularly through the general promotion of the term ‘internationalisation’.

23. Global Skills could be perceived as covering a number of different areas:

- Common understanding of key skills around the world
- Skills to work internationally
- Skills for working in a global economy
- Skills to understand globalisation and wider world issues.

24. Whilst this paper aims to cover some of the debate around interpretations of terms, the focus is on the extent to which an understanding of and experience of the wider world is perceived as relevant within the post-16 training sector.

Context

25. The research has been undertaken at a time of major change within the sector, including the creation of new structures, amalgamations and publication of a number of major reports from government and key stakeholders on the future of further education, training and skills.

26. In addition to proposals for the future structure of the sector, there have been a number of publications linked to skills needs, most notably Learning and skills network’s (LSN’s) Employability Skills Explored (2008). There have also been continuing debates about European policies on lifelong learning and skills development linked to the Copenhagen process. Professor Kenneth King has been undertaking research on the link between skills needs and the millennium development goals, for the British Council and UNESCO UK.

27. Secondly there has been research commissioned by the Association of Colleges (the AoC) on the international work of colleges, and research undertaken by CILT on inter-cultural competences.

28. This wealth of activity demonstrates the interest of a wide range of policy-making bodies, at both UK and international level, in addressing the skills needs for economies and societies more widely.

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10 Bourn, D, eds. 2008, Development Education: Debates and Dialogue, London, IOE.
14 www.cilt.org.uk/standards/draft_standards.htm
29. However as this paper aims to demonstrate, whilst there is a plethora of initiatives, there is a perception from both policy-makers and practitioners that these are separate activities and not part of a coordinated reappraisal of the skills needs for a global society and for a global economy.

30. As a consequence, whilst examples could be found that address the needs of a multi-cultural workforce or the importance of sustainable development, there is little evidence to demonstrate that policy-makers and practitioners are framing these initiatives within the context of global skills. The question to pose is therefore:

“To what extent is the further education and training sector asking itself how we are equipping the UK workforce to make sense of global issues and forces within their lives and employment, with the relevant skills to be able to apply that understanding?”

31. This report suggests the basis of an answer to this question; and proposes a framework for policy-makers and providers to incorporate global skills within their course and training provision.

World class skills

32. The UK is a central player in the global economy, with one quarter of UK jobs connected to overseas business. It may be the fourth largest economy in the world but is ranked only seventeenth in terms of human capital.\(^\text{15}\) This challenge for upskilling the workforce is the key driver behind the Leitch Review of Skills. The Review stated that unless the UK develops a more highly skilled workforce it will not be able to compete effectively on the global stage.\(^\text{16}\)

33. The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) review of skills in 2007 states that: ‘globalisation presents opportunities as well as threats. The opening up of markets leads to increased competition that will likely lead to an increased demand for skills, but employer responses may sometimes be too late’.\(^\text{17}\)

34. Alongside the Leitch review and implementation plan, Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) have developed a new programme for 14-19 year olds based around a diploma framework that it is suggested will play ‘a key role in helping the next generation succeed in the global skills race’.

35. Globalisation also leads not only to changes in labour market patterns, but also to changes in conditions of service, and increased competition from migrant workers. Young people competing for work will require much more than formal qualifications, including the development of softer skills and a willingness to adapt and learn. This encompasses how to work in partnership with others, building relationships and team working.\(^\text{18}\)

36. As Humphries has suggested, skills required in the future will continue to evolve and change. In addition to generic employability skills, he suggests that each of us ‘will have to re-skill or up-skill ourselves between 5 and 10 times during our lengthening working life, if we are to maximise our future employability.’\(^\text{19}\)

37. The challenge therefore as outlined in the Leitch Review and its implementation plan is to promote, encourage and support the development of skills in ways that not only raise the standards of the skills required, but also take account of the nature of the skills that will be needed in the future.

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\(^{15}\) Centre for Excellence in Leadership 2007, Leadership for Globalisation, CEL, London.

\(^{16}\) HM Treasury 2006, Leitch Review of Skills.


38. The Leitch Review implementation plan refers also to the key role that employers must play with the support of the Sector Skills Council. In taking forward the recommendations, the UK government in 2008, through the ‘Ready to Work, Skilled to Work’ publication, supported employer-accredited training programmes developed an enhanced apprenticeship programme, and recognised local conditions and needs in terms of employment and skills.

Skills for a global economy and global society

39. In response to major structural changes within European economies, from primary (especially agricultural) and manufacturing industries to knowledge and service jobs, a range of policies, programmes and targets have been developed by the European Commission.

40. Key objectives within these programmes include the development of skills for the knowledge society, ensuring access to ICT for everyone, making learning attractive, supporting active citizenship, improving foreign language expertise and increasing mobility and exchange.

41. A range of policy statements from the Commission and European Parliament has supported this strategy. One key document is the 2006 Parliament’s recommendations on key competences for lifelong learning. This identified eight key competences: communication in the mother tongue, communication in a foreign language, mathematical competence, digital competence, learning to learn, social and civic competence, sense of initiative and entrepreneurship, cultural awareness and expression.

42. Globalisation has been recognised in these policy initiatives, particularly in terms of technological advances, faster access to communications, de-regulation of trade and capital movements and rapid growth of transnational business.

43. Central therefore to the European strategy is the need for richer EU states like the UK to focus on moving from production and services into higher-level skills. This means an emphasis on research, design and marketing strategies, with ICT at the heart of the knowledge economy.

44. A key element of European strategies on skills is the importance of economic competition through improvements in human capital and the promotion of social inclusion. This suggests that in the development of thinking on ‘global skills’ consideration needs to be given to social as well as economic needs.

45. This identification of the social alongside the economic has not always been promoted. Indeed one interpretation of the policy statements from government and training providers is that the skills agenda is all about raising standards of basic skills such as numeracy and literacy alongside relevant technical skills appropriate to the specific sector.

25 Ibid. 32-33.
26 Ibid. 34.
46. However, as the key skills materials demonstrate, employers are looking for people who can:
   - Communicate well – in speaking and writing
   - Use numbers to do calculations, pricing and measurements
   - Use new technology
   - Get on with other people and work as part of a team
   - Manage their own work, look for how they can improve and are keen to learn
   - Show initiative and recognise and solve problems.  

47. The key skills identified are thus not only communication, application of numbers and ICT but also
   ‘working with others’, ‘improving own learning and performance’ and ‘problem solving’.  

48. The relationship of these wider key skills to the agenda of globalisation was recently noted in an
   article by Gordon Brown in February 2008, where he stated that ‘fulfilling the demands of a global
   jobs market requires us to nurture creativity, interpersonal skills and technical abilities, as well as
   analytical intelligence.’

Global skills and current policy initiatives

Making connections between initiatives

49. It is suggested in this paper that key to the debates on what is meant by ‘global skills’ is a
   recognition of the importance of globalisation, particularly the connections between the local,
   national, and global, the relationship between the social and the environmental, and the
   recognition of cultural sensitivities in forms that are appropriate and relevant to upskilling the
   UK workforce.

50. Within many existing UK government policies there are references to these areas, but they are
   usually seen in isolation from one another and are therefore often interpreted by providers within
   the context of ‘another new initiative we have to deal with.’ It is suggested however that the
   main elements of what could be called ‘global skills’ exist within existing policies, and what is
   needed is a mechanism or a framework to bring these together and take things forward.

51. CEL’s The leadership challenges of globalisation (2007) is suggested as an excellent basis upon
   which to take forward the debates: not only is it one of the few documents in the skills area that
   recognises the wider context, it also makes connections between domestic and international
   needs and includes references to linkages across initiatives, the importance of curriculum
   development and developing leadership capacity to embrace change.

52. A key need therefore is to demonstrate existing and potential linkages between the broad skills
   agenda on the one hand, and policies and programmes on internationalisation, inter-cultural
   competencies, community cohesion and citizenship, sustainable development and enterprise
   education, on the other. If these debates are brought more closely together under the heading of
   ‘global skills’ and ‘leadership for globalisation’, the responses of the various sectors are likely to
   be more positive and supportive.

28 Key Skills - see www.keyskillssupport.net
29 The Value of the Wider Key Skills in Work Based Learning, www.keyskillssupport.net
30 Gordon Brown, 2008 - ‘We’ll use our schools to break down class barriers.’ Observer 10 February, 2008.
Framework of globalisation

53. In the Quality Improvement Agency (QIA) booklet for Post 16 Citizenship, there is a series of activities on the theme of globalisation. The booklet notes that globalisation is ‘often described as the spread of American culture’ but that it needs to be seen as much more than this, being primarily about ‘the increasingly close connections between people and countries across the world, particularly in relation to work and the economy.’  

54. Whilst many academics would agree that globalisation is about connections and linkages across the world, Giddens (1991) for example suggests that globalisation could be defined as ‘the intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa.’ It is therefore suggested here that whilst the starting point is economic, debates on globalisation need to incorporate references to social and cultural forces. Following Harvey (2003), it is suggested that globalisation should be seen as being about the interdependence of societies on a world scale, the links that are and ‘can be made globally between people, nations, organisations and communities.’

55. The context of globalisation is recognised by government ministers’ policy, funding bodies and training agencies. However, where ministers have made statements, the emphasis has been on economic forces and the changing nature of employment. Yet as the British Council has noted, in launching the DCSF-funded Global Fellowship programme:

“Cultures and people around the world are connected more than ever before, opening up exciting possibilities for young people. It matters for Britain that today’s generation of young people grow up understanding first-hand what globalisation means for people and are confident to make the most of the opportunities of the twenty first century.”

56. Key to understanding globalisation’s impact is to recognise the relationships between the economic, the social and the cultural. Not only has the nature of employment radically changed over the past decade, globalisation has also resulted in major social and cultural changes within communities around the UK, particularly due to economic migration. Whilst there are considerable regional variations in terms of cultural groupings and impact of economic migration, there is no doubt that the UK workforce is increasingly culturally diverse. This presents major challenges for both employers and employees in terms of achieving harmonious working environments and ensuring that potential sources of discrimination are challenged.

57. Changes in people’s identities, how they perceive themselves and their relationship to others is influenced by global forces, be they based on American cultural influences, breakdown of traditional family relationships or emergence of local forms of identity as a reaction to the mass of global forces of change.

58. These challenges are also linked to unease in certain quarters of UK society about identity and place in the world. Debates about identity in response to political devolution, the growth of economic migration, global terrorism and the consumer culture have led to politicians promoting the need for a major debate on Britishness, which has become linked to citizenship.

37 DCSF, 2007, Youth Transitions Research Overview, London, DCSF.
38 Bacon, N .2006, North East London: Case Study in Globalisation, Young Foundation.
Finally a key element of globalisation is the revolution over the past decade in communications technology, particularly through the Internet, electronic mail and use of mobile phones. Access to information, people and places anywhere in the world has transformed learning and skills needs for the twenty first century.

Recognising the impact of globalisation, and its social and cultural as well as economic context, is proposed here as the key starting point for the debate on global skills.

International experiences and wider world outlook

The leading driver for promoting greater recognition of the importance of understanding the wider world over the past five years has probably been the UK government’s international strategy, ‘Putting the World into World Class Education’. It notes ‘that the people of the UK should have the knowledge, skills and understanding they need to fulfil themselves to live in and contribute effectively to a global society and to work in a competitive global economy.’ Bill Rammell, minister responsible for the government’s international education strategy, has spoken about the ‘global dimension being increasingly seen as an integral part of supporting the upskilling of our citizens.’

CEL’s own international strategy World-class leadership for global excellence recognises that the drive for world class skills cannot be divorced from the skills needed for life and work in a globalised economy and multicultural society. But as the strategy document suggests, ‘embedding global perspectives in the primary skills purpose of our sector means completely repositioning institutional approaches to international education.’

The Association of Colleges’ International Charter is based around encouraging colleges to have international strategies that are embedded across their institution and include partnerships, professional development of staff and increasing students’ knowledge and understanding of other cultures.

The importance of promoting greater understanding and learning about the wider world in terms of a competitive advantage to employees and employers has been one of the arguments given for this work by the British Council.

The Council states moreover that ‘young people may, at some time during their careers, be required to represent their company/organisation abroad, at all levels from management to technician, and be expected to succeed in this unfamiliar environment. Students may need to have knowledge of other countries’ work practices and procedures even if they do not travel’. And finally they ‘need to be able to communicate competently with people from other countries and with different cultural outlooks.’

These statements and programmes give the space, opportunity and potential endorsement for global skills as outlined in this paper. What perhaps is less clear as yet is the evidence to demonstrate the value of such strategies to broader skills needs as outlined in Leitch.
International partnerships and international programmes

67. One of the main ways in which colleges and training providers have engaged in global and international questions has been through the development of partnerships and programmes with similar providers elsewhere in the world. This can be seen in the increasing interest in partnerships between colleges supported by the British Council, particularly the recent drive for links with China and India. The Prime Minister’s Initiative (PMI) for International Education, first launched in 1999 and followed by a second phase five-year strategy for 2006-11, emphasises the importance of international students and partnerships with colleges overseas.

68. A considerable number of colleges throughout the UK are engaged in partnership programmes. Grimsby College, for example, has links with China. Park Lane College, Leeds has links with colleges in Pakistan and Bangladesh. Principal Daniel Khan from Grimsby College has stated, “part of our education in life is to absorb new cultures and embrace diversity. Our relationship with education establishments across the world will continue and we can become a real centre for international growth and cultural exchange”.

69. Greenwich Community College has been one of the leading colleges in making connections between the diverse nature of its student body and internationalism. Its current international strategy in endorsing the AoC international charter states that it ‘supports the needs of its local community, staff and students in understanding and responding effectively to the needs of a global economy and society.’ The strategy also makes reference to the development of international partnerships ‘in order to learn from and share best practice with other countries’. The College recognises the importance of high standards and that international work necessitates recognition of ethical dimensions.

70. Recent research for the AoC and British Council identifies the potential strengths and opportunities for international partnerships that in themselves could be a driver for further engagement in international work more widely. However, what is less clear from this increased interest is the extent to which it positively addresses the skills needs of the UK workforce, in terms of their understanding and engagement with global issues and questions.

Equality and diversity

71. Over the past decade there has been significant progress within the further education and training sector in responding to the challenges of inequality and discrimination.

72. Whilst much of this work has been around addressing under-representation from black and minority communities within all sectors, there has been increasing recognition of the need to include reference to curriculum development and learning styles. An initial driver for the development of policies and programmes for colleges and training bodies was legislation and back-up inspections.

73. Bodies such as LSIS and the AoC have engaged in major programmes in this area. In the context of global skills, initiatives around equality and diversity are directly relevant since understanding of cultures and diversity cannot be divorced from an understanding of the historical and global context of societal and economic changes.

45 www.globalgateway.org.uk.default.aspx?page=2488
Particularly relevant is recognition of the need to offer a more culturally diverse curriculum, to take account of the backgrounds of students and the societies within which they will be working and living. As a National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE) publication in this area has stated, teaching methods and styles may also need to be re-considered to take account of the past learning experiences of certain black and minority ethnic groups. But above all there is a need to move beyond euro-centric viewpoints and ensure that teaching and learning perspectives recognise there is more than one way of learning e.g. basic skills such as numeracy and literacy, or technical skills in areas such as hairdressing, engineering and use of ICT.

Key to securing change within colleges in areas of equality and diversity is the need to raise the profile of these issues. This, as Lumby et al have commented, requires leadership in areas such as ensuring more diverse staff in senior roles, recognition of multiple identities within communities and above all training and professional development.

**Intercultural competencies**

Intercultural understanding has been recognised by training and education providers for a number of years. Often it has been linked to areas such as equal opportunities, addressing discrimination and inequality within the workplace or promoting diversity and the specific needs of minority communities. But as UK society has become increasingly culturally diverse, and the need to address specifically the exclusion and isolation from society that some communities feel, an agenda has emerged around diversity, intercultural working and promoting greater language learning.

Within further education, CILT, the National Centre for Languages Teaching, has developed an initiative linked to Occupational Standards for Intercultural Working. Intercultural working is seen ‘as working effectively with clients and/or colleagues from a range of linguistic and cultural backgrounds.’ The draft standards it is suggested would help with workforce management, service delivery and business development; and equip workers not only to understand people from another country or culture, but to be able to manage people from a range of backgrounds and be able to engage more effectively with new markets.

The work CILT is currently undertaking also builds on an Intercultural Competence Assessment (INCA) initiative that has been funded through the EU Leonardo da Vinci programme. This INCA project has developed a framework, with a suite of assessment tools, which was tested in the engineering sector and is now seen as appropriate to a range of employers. It includes tolerance of ambiguity, behavioural flexibility, communicative awareness, knowledge discovery, respect for others and empathy.

These aspects of intercultural competence are a key element of global skills but there appears to be little evidence to date to promote linkages between these initiatives and programmes on international work or sustainable development.

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51 www.cilt.org.uk/standards/draft_standards.htm
52 www.incaproject.org/manuals.htm
Community cohesion and citizenship

80. UK government is clearly putting increased emphasis upon community cohesion agendas, and linking them to discussions about citizenship, social inclusion and identity. The skills to engage in society, to respect others, and to recognise the value of a diverse cultural society, are key needs for the UK workforce.

81. There have been a range of government initiatives in these areas, from the Ajegbo Report to the Commission on Integration and Cohesion’s ‘Our Shared Future’ published in June 2007. Both these publications emphasise the importance of understanding the linkages between local, national and global perspectives and experiences; and of understanding that the global is now local.

82. The Commission, in recognising that the ‘global is now local’, notes three themes that reinforce this: super-diversity, multiple identities and trans-nationalism. Globalisation, the report notes, adds a new ‘layer of complexity’ to community cohesion. In recognition of these influences, the Learning and Skills Network has published “We all came here from somewhere: diversity, identities and citizenship” which is part of a series of support materials produced by the Post-16 Citizenship Development Programme.

83. Another element of the citizenship and cohesion agenda is the skills needed to take part in society, to value democratic structures and to understand how political systems work. These areas are central to the Post-16 Citizenship programme, with the emphasis on ‘active participation in their own communities’.

84. Recently, DIUS in partnership with the Association of Colleges produced a consultation document on Further Education and Community Cohesion. Whilst a major driver for this consultation is to challenge extremist views and promote shared values within colleges, it does raise wider issues that are relevant to the debates on ‘global skills.’ For example the document states that colleges ‘play an invaluable role in promoting community cohesion and integration, providing settings where young people and adults from every ethnic, faith, belief and social group can come together.’ The consultation document goes on to state that ‘Colleges should foster shared values which prize openness, respect, tolerance and the importance of debate. Promoting and discussing these shared values can help individuals develop their own sense of identity and establish their place in society.’

85. The consultation also emphasises the importance of the post-16 citizenship agenda, in terms of resources and curriculum development as an integral component of the cohesion agenda in colleges.

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54 Ibid
55 www.lsneducation.org.uk/pubs/Pages/062482.aspx
56 www.post16citizenship.org/about
57 Ibid, 9.
Sustainable development

86. Sustainable development has been defined by UK government as allowing ‘people to meet their basic needs and enjoy a good quality of life without compromising the quality of life of future generations. It has been an increasingly important feature of the government’s educational agenda since 1997, and the Leitch Review Implementation Plan makes direct reference to sustainable skills as an area that needs development:

“If the nation is to play its full part in challenging global poverty and combating environmental problems like climate change it is imperative that everyone in this country develops the skills of sustainable living and working. That means placing sustainable development at the heart of the skills provision, ensuring that it is a fundamental goal of our economic and social progress.”

87. The importance of sustainable development within the skills sector had already been identified by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) whose 2005 strategy and follow up 2007-08 strategy emphasised the importance of capacity building within the sector, identifying and supporting examples of good practice and agreeing a set of guiding principles.

88. Another key body to address sustainable development within the further education sector was the Learning and Skills Development Agency (LSDA), now LSN, who through a range of publications identified why, where and how sustainable development is crucial to the post-16 learning and skills agenda. A key feature of its work in this area was through the Centres of Vocational Excellence (CovEs). The research by the LSDA, based on case studies and dialogue with a range of Centres, identified a number of generic skills that employees will need to think about in the context of sustainable development. These included the importance of systems thinking, understanding the international dimension and the importance of decision-making processes in a world of uncertainty.

89. The Association of Colleges has also engaged in this area directly, most notably through its Green Colleges publication which outlines a series of initiatives taking place within colleges that emphasise the environmental aspects of the sustainability agenda. Research by LSN identified similar conclusions with a few examples ‘taking a wider and more holistic approach to sustainable development.

90. The ‘Mind the Skills Gap’ report on sustainable communities by the Association for Sustainable Communities identified ‘that there aren’t enough people with the right skills in the right places to deliver the Government’s ambitious agenda for creating sustainable communities across England.’ These skills were seen to be not only specific technical skills but also a range of generic skills.

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58 www.dfes.gov.uk/aboutus/sd
60 LSC, 2005, From Here to Sustainability: The Learning and Skills Council Strategy for Sustainable Development.
63 Ibid. p.11.
65 Martin et. al. op.cit.
66 Association for Sustainable Communities (ASC) Mind the Skills Gap: The skills we need for sustainable communities, London, ASC, 5.
91. In recognition of the need to address these issues, in 2007 the Centre for Excellence in Leadership produced *Towards leadership for sustainability*. This publication recognised the need for leaders in the FE sector to have the ‘capability and capacity’ to support and embed sustainable development. A key feature of the CEL publication is the recognition that sustainable development is not just about estates management and operational matters, but equally about curriculum development and strategic planning across all subject areas.\(^{67}\)

92. In making reference to CEL’s *Leadership qualities framework*, this publication on sustainability suggests that, from its research, effective leaders demonstrated many of the key change management skills necessary for sustainability. This included:

- Distributed leadership
- Taking account of the organisational climate and culture
- Employing a wide range of influencing strategies
- Building organisational capacity
- Cultural sensitivity
- Commitment to equality and fairness.\(^{68}\)

93. The report also identified skills that needed to be strengthened. This included understanding interconnectedness and managing complexity, creating a vision for the future, recognising broader social and political trends linking this to capitalising on learning opportunities, and having the belief and confidence to develop new practices outside of ‘regulatory permission’.

94. These themes were also reflected in a recent debate on sustainable skills where it was suggested that these could be interpreted as applying generic skills such as critical thinking, team work and systems thinking in areas such as climate change. There was also recognition of the links not only to basic skills but also to higher level skills related to reflective learning, and understanding of processes that impact upon the environment.\(^{69}\)

95. This directly relates to issues already identified with regard to global skills, particularly in areas such as dealing with complexity and preparing for the future.

### Enterprise education

96. Another area that has risen up the educational agenda in recent years is that of enterprise education. Enterprise education is perceived by government as ‘enterprise capability supported by better financial capability and economic and business understanding’. Young people, it is suggested need ‘opportunities to be enterprising through applying their knowledge, skills and attributes — to make their mark’.\(^{70}\)

97. OFSTED identifies two other key elements: an enterprising learning environment in which students are encouraged to take the initiative; and an enterprise process which is akin to project working. Enterprise is also a key element of Work Related Learning which is statutory at Key Stage 4. In addition, within the PSHE programme of study for key stage 4 there is an emphasis on understanding the key concepts that underpin economic wellbeing and financial capability.

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\(^{68}\) Ibid.11.

\(^{69}\) Unpublished notes of a seminar on Sustainable Skills organised by Sustainable Development Commission in partnership with DEFRA, 2007.

\(^{70}\) www.teachernet.gov.uk/teachingandlearning/14to19/ks4/enterpriseducation
There is a wealth of programmes within colleges that relate to these areas and of course they are critical to work-related learning. In the context of this research consideration needs to be given to the potential connections between enterprise education and global skills, particularly in the context of learning and understanding about globalisation and how it relates to local economic, social and cultural questions.

There is a range of resources and projects that have supported colleges in these areas making connections between global and business enterprise. One of the most significant has been the just business project and the related work of economics and business studies teachers’ networks.

These areas of curriculum development clearly relate to the discussions on global skills, but they need to be seen as appropriate to areas of learning within colleges and in the programmes of training providers, because of the connections between the economic, the social and the cultural.

Public support for international development

The final driver in the debate on global skills is the support given by UK government, led by DFID, for greater public understanding of global and international development issues. Within the UK this has been seen most directly in its support and funding for the wide range of bodies and projects that come under the heading of development education. Since 1997, DFID has promoted a strategy of Building Support for Development that emphasises the importance of seeing development in the context of interdependence, moving beyond a mentality of charity and aid.

Within the support given to development education, a number of projects and initiatives have covered the skills agenda. These have included a range of projects led by the WEA on developing a network of trainers on global and development issues, support to trade unions for members and tutor training, projects with bodies such as the Co-op movement in areas such as the supply chain, and support for the work of Groundwork UK in making connections between local and community development programmes and global issues.

One specific example funded by DFID which directly addresses the issues in this paper is a project led by Lancashire Global Education Centre in partnership with Preston College. The project is called ‘Global Skills’ and is primarily based around professional development and the production of resources for tutors on basic skills courses to help them use global issues as a basis for learning. For example the Centre has published a resource ‘Global Skills: Understanding the World through English’. It is aimed at tutors and learners in Skills for Life (SfL) English and ESOL. The resource includes sections on globalisation, millennium development goals, global sports, fair-trade, refugees and the global drugs trade, and begins with a chapter on ‘where in the world does the English language come from?’

This project has focussed on providing resources, training and support to college tutors and students on global skills by taking issue-based approaches such as fair trade, millennium development goals and the global drugs trade. The Centre has been working with a number of SfL tutors from the local college in a variety of settings, to develop and trial materials that allow learners to find out more about the world, whilst at the same time helping them to improve their English and Mathematics skills.

The training the Centre provides is designed to enable tutors to see where the global dimension can be incorporated into their teaching of SfL English, ESOL and Mathematics, and the benefits to be gained for both tutors and learners.

See www.enterprise-education.org.uk/home.php?mod=students
www.justbiz.org
Lancashire Global Education Centre 2008 Global Skills Understanding the World Through English, see www.globalskills.lgec.org.uk/
Another important sector that DFID has funded through this fund is the trade union movement, initially via a number of projects within specific unions, but more recently through a strategic programme with the TUC that included the creation of a mini-grants fund for unions, related to development education. The most recent outcome of this programme has been the launch in March 2008 of an eight week on-line course covering areas such as trade and global poverty.

Skills needs for the twenty-first century

Employers’ observations

There is a wealth of policy initiatives related to global and international issues and skills in recent years but how do they relate to the needs and observations of employers?

A number of recently published studies on employer needs have emphasised the increased importance they are giving to transferable skills, team working, good interpersonal skills and the capacity to deal with uncertainty and solve problems. Research by Newton et al (2005) for the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) reinforces the value that employers are placing on softer skills, including positive self-esteem, reliability and initiative. Martin et al (2008), in a report for the Learning and Skills Network (LSN), identified the following top eight employability skills: self-management, team working, problem solving, communication and application of literacy, business awareness, customer care, application of numeracy and application of ICT.

Such generic skills are acknowledged within large companies, for example through workforce requirements in terms of ability to work in a range of complex social and cultural environments, being culturally sensitive and able to communicate to a wide range of customers.

KPMG state the following:

“So what exactly are we looking for when we recruit new people? Naturally, we want you to have good technical skills, problem-solving abilities and commercial focus. We’re also looking for people with a lot of integrity — good team workers who can build effective relationships, learn from experience and bring out the best in others.”

A member of the Board of Directors of a large retail company stated that they are looking for people who have

“The ability to communicate what our company stands for, to be open and honest and aware of the needs of our customers. We are particularly committed to promoting fair trade products and have put resources into ensuring our staff, particularly managers, have some understanding of this issue.”

74 www.tuc.org.uk/international/tuc-14447-f0.cfm; http://www.unionlearn.org.uk/education/learn-2062-f0.cfm
77 Martin et. al. p.8 ; DfES , 2005. Skills: Getting on in Business, getting on at work.
78 http://www.kpmg.com/globalcareers/careerops/whatwelookfor.shtml
79 Interview with author March 2008.
112. Beverley Salt from AstraZeneca has said that, in order for companies to compete globally, they:

“Need staff who are not only excellent in their chosen discipline, have strong leadership ethic and capability, and (also) are comfortable working in a global environment, interacting with colleagues from across the world and preferably willing to work in different countries”.

113. She has also raised the importance of employees needing to get use to living and working in a complex environment. They need to be ‘fit for the future’ and ideally have had an education particularly via school that gives them the basis of being able to apply this understanding of the wider world within a range of social and cultural environments.

114. Therefore whilst a global perspective may not emerge specifically within employer needs, there is evidence to suggest that some understanding, experience and ability to work within a range of social and cultural settings are being seen as increasingly important. Archer, a recruitment consultant, has suggested that not only understanding the wider world is important, but an ability to make connections between local and global questions and to have some experience of what this means is becoming an essential need for many employers.

115. The CBI education and skills survey for 2008 re-enforced some of these points with a particular emphasis on the importance of language skills and environmental concerns, The report also notes the investment of some companies are giving to the development of language and cultural skills:

“Tesco helps welcome staff and customers of different faiths and cultures by providing employees with a religions and cultural toolkit which enables then to learn more about different cultures and faiths.”

116. The Co-operative Funeral Care service has invested resources in equipping its workforce to understand a range of faiths.

117. Research by Bourn and Sharma (2008) on engineering companies’ perceptions of the value of global skills has reinforced these views. Senior staff from a well-known Japanese automobile manufacturer, for example, emphasised the importance of recruiting engineers who have all-round interpersonal skills, fit into their culture, have an objective focus and an ability to identify and resolve problems quickly. Inter-cultural sensitivity was a key skill for them:

“That is key for us because the perception that some people may have is that engineering is not very global. However, sensitivity to different perspectives, nationalities and cultures, languages, locations, time zones and different styles of working in different countries is crucial. This is often lacking in people from the UK. Because we are a Japanese company, this becomes very important for us.”

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81 Interview with author 9 April, 2008.
This emphasis on ‘well-rounded human beings’ with an understanding of the importance of areas such as sustainable development and corporate social responsibility has been identified from research by Cade and from studies of the needs of the engineering profession and financial sector.85

The German Employers Association (BDA) has pointed out that it expects its workers to ‘have the capacity for integrated thinking and knowledge about world economics and ecology, as well as an ability to work in teams, deal with complexity, take responsibility, have a strong personality, refer to a stable set of values, feel empathy and be interculturally competent.’86

Price Waterhouse Coopers (PWC)’s professional development programme, Ulysses, has a strong emphasis on global reasoning and positive world change:

“PWC’s young people will have to take on some very complex global challenges in the years to come, and they will need more than business skills and an MBA - they will also have to be socially aware, possess intercultural communication skills, be thoughtful, committed to accountability and above all compassionate”.87

Support for global skills within large multinational companies is perhaps not surprising, but there is less evidence to suggest support for these areas from smaller and medium-sized enterprises. However in areas such as the cultural and creative industries, leisure and tourism, new technologies and financial services, the relationship of these generic softer skills to their application in a global context and with a multicultural workforce is being recognised as important88. For example, within the hotel and catering industry there is recognition of the skills needed to respond to a diverse cultural workforce and to respect the perspectives and backgrounds of customers.89

87 Quoted in Bourn, D & Neal, I. op.cit.
122. A comment from representative of leading retail chain has stated:

“In the past it was simple! You selected your suppliers from your area, and they used the materials that were to hand. This delivered your project in such a way that the projects’ impact on the environment was automatically as low as it could realistically be. This is no longer the case. Nowadays, the complexity of materials and components, from an ever increasing global supply chain, means that your management must have a thorough knowledge of the entire supply chain and exactly how it all fits together, in order to make the right decision. The real stars of the future will be the Managers who take onboard all this information to deliver projects and can also demonstrate how they use it to reduce their impact on the environment.”

123. The promotion of skills for the 21st century and ‘world skills’ has also arisen in a number of different quarters in North America, in some cases influenced by the federal government’s response to 9/11 but also employment bodies, as they respond to increasing global competitiveness and the impact of the Internet. World Wise provides training to international businesses on global skills, and emphasises the importance of local country knowledge to enhance global competitiveness.91 The Metiri Group for example identifies twenty first century skills as covering digital age literacy, inventive thinking and intellectual capital, interactive communication and application of results.92 The Partnership for 21st Century Skills initiative incorporating a range of companies and foundations identified the following:

- Learning and innovation skills including creativity, critical thinking, problem solving, communication and collaboration
- Information, media and technology skills including ICT, information and media literacy
- Life and career skills including flexibility and adaptability, initiative and self-direction, social and cross-cultural skills, productivity and accountability, leadership and responsibility.93

Academic observations and debates on globalisation, learning and skills

124. There have been major debates within the academic community on the impact of globalisation on education and the need for all aspects of learning to be more international in outlook. Whilst much of the discourse has been around the economic impact of globalisation on education, there has been a recognition that globalisation raises some major new challenges for education. These include instant global access to information and knowledge, increased social mobility, contact and dialogue with people from a wide range of cultural backgrounds, the impact of events elsewhere in the world on what and how people learn in a specific locality, and above all the myriad cultural influences leading to challenges to one’s own sense of identity and belonging, within a community.94

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90 Andrew Brown in correspondence with author, 12 May, 2008.
91 www.eworldwise.com/whatisglobalskills.php
93 www.21stcentury.skills.org.
125. Ulrick Beck, one of the key thinkers over the past decade in the area of globalisation, has noted that one of the main political responses to globalisation has been to build and develop the education and knowledge society. This he suggests has led to making training longer rather than shorter, and to loosening or doing away with links to a particular job or occupation, gearing instead to key qualifications that can be widely used in practice. Beck goes on to suggest this should be seen not only in terms of ‘flexibility’ but also areas such ‘as social competence, ability to work in a team, conflict resolution, understanding of other cultures, integrated thinking and a capacity to handle uncertainties and paradoxes of secondary modernity.’

126. Beck also notes that learning within the framework of globalisation also poses questions about where, what and how people learn. Part of the exciting dialectic of globalisation, he suggests, is that it replaces ‘traditional lecturing societies with dialogic attentiveness and courage to disagree – people beginning to realise transnationalisation of uneventful education and curricula.’

127. Equally relevant to the debate on global skills is the discourse, particularly within higher education, on what is seen as ‘international’ and ‘internationalisation’. ‘International’ and ‘internationalisation’ have been perceived in most sectors of education as primarily about policy and structural partnership, with a specific focus on recruiting students from elsewhere in the world or developing and promoting courses to other countries. Such relationships in the past have often been influenced by an economic rationale and have not always been strategic in the sense of their contribution to enhancing learning.

128. But the term ‘internationalisation’ has, as Knight has defined it within the context of higher education, been seen as a ‘process of integrating an international/intercultural dimension into the teaching, research and service of an institution’. It involves, she suggests: ‘sharing knowledge through mobility of staff and students, adopting broader outlooks which recognise other viewpoints, recognising new global institutions, preparing students for working anywhere in the world and finally recognising and understanding views of ‘others.’’

129. This perspective on internationalisation as more than just structural linkages has been noted in a recent review of literature in this area in higher education, which notes that internationalisation needs to be seen as ‘a long term process of ‘becoming international’ or developing a willingness to teach and learn from other nations and cultures as distinct from traditional definitions of ‘involving more than one country’.

130. The review further notes ‘that internationalisation entails a shift in thinking and attitudes’ and that the ‘pedagogy has social, cultural, moral and ethical dimensions that both transcend the narrow economic focus and establish a synergy with other agendas.’

131. These debates suggest recognition of the need to bring together the discourse on education and globalisation and internationalisation, and to look at its application to all forms of learning.

Main components of global skills

132. In the context of this paper, a key question to tackle is the extent to which we are talking about generic skills in the context of globalisation; or are there specific skills that require enhancement and support for people to effectively engage in society and equip them to work in the global economy?

96 Ibid p.138.
It could be argued that generic skills in the context of globalisation refer firstly to areas such as being prepared to communicate well with a range of people, recognising their cultural and social differences. Language skills could be referred to here as an important area to encourage. Secondly, working within a global economy requires skills to respond to rapidly-changing needs, being prepared to take on a variety of tasks and being able to adapt and continually recognise the need for developing new skills and knowledge. Thirdly, in the context of working with others, understanding cultural difference and developing skills to work with people in collective environments from a range of backgrounds could be crucial.

The recognition that global skills mean more than up-to-date technological skills, the ability to be networked and mobile and have good language skills was commented upon by DIUS. ‘Indeed when talking about ‘global citizens’ we need to be clear about the 21st century skills they will need – the ability to communicate, collaborate, critically evaluate, research, innovate and be creative - in an increasingly networked, mobile and technology rich world.’

It could be argued therefore that ‘global skills’ need to emphasise the development of skills to be equipped to respond to the impact of globalisation on a person’s life, to enable someone to make sense of the rapidly changing world around them and to give them the confidence, knowledge and value-base to make a positive contribution to both the economy and society more widely.

This could be summarised as covering the following areas:

- Understanding of what globalisation means, particularly in relation to planned or current area of employment
- Ability to understand and engage with global challenges, such as climate change and poverty, in order to become a more informed and engaged citizen
- Development of skills to understand and respect a range of cultures and values and to be able to reflect critically upon one’s own values base.

In support of these suggestions, one can identify the following observations:

“The essential skills for the 21st Century are to do with flexibility, ability to learn and transfer learning to new contexts, personal fulfilment, community development, intercultural understanding and above all, the ability to understand and engage with the environmental challenges facing us this century”.

Catteeuw, a Flemish government advisor on skills, suggests the following as a framework for intercultural competences for business purposes, directly relevant to this study. He identified the following key skills: critical awareness, openness, flexibility and empathy, communicative skills, solution-orientated attitude and cultural knowledge.

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100 DEA, 2003, Global Success For All: A Skills Strategy In An Unequal World. London, DEA.
It is suggested therefore that global skills need to be considered as recognising the importance of generic skills of communication, team work, adaptability and respect for others but within the context of recognising the complex nature of society, its diverse cultural base, the impact of rapidly changing economic forces and the need to be able to deal with the unknown. The recognition of the economic, social and cultural context is therefore seen as key to global skills. As this author has mentioned elsewhere, building on the work of the Open Space for Dialogue and Enquiry initiative, key to the skills needs of the global society are skills that enable people to deal with complexity, uncertainty and insecurity.

For a further education and training provider, development of global skills is an essential component of the framework for learning for the twenty first century. This is about recognising the skills for working in a global economy and living in a global society. It starts from generic skills needs, but develops and applies them within appropriate training environments. It also incorporates the development of skills linked to understanding and engagement with the wider world.

Framework for global skills

In recognition of the range of activities and building on current initiatives developed by LSIS, the AoC, British Council, LSC and CILT, it is proposed here that a framework for global skills should be located within initiatives on internationalisation, globalisation, community cohesion, enterprise, international development and interculturalism and the key skills identified by the principal providers.

Such a framework needs also to build on the approaches developed within the school curriculum, summarised in the ‘Global Dimension to the School Curriculum’ and based on the following concepts: diversity, interdependence, citizenship, sustainable development, values and perspectives, social justice, conflict resolution and human rights.

“The global dimension explores what connects us to the rest of the world. It enables learners to engage with complex global issues and explore the link between their own lives and people, places and issues throughout the world.”

The revised secondary curriculum published in 2007 includes the ‘global dimension and sustainable futures’ as one of the five cross curriculum lenses. It states:

“A curriculum for the 21st century should encourage learners to be aware of global issues. Learners should evaluate information and events from a global perspective. By exploring the connections between the local and the global, they can also realise that it is possible to play a part in working towards solutions to challenges such as climate change and global poverty.”

102 www.osdemethodology.org.uk
103 Bourn, D & Neal, I op.cit.
104 DfES, 2005, Developing a Global Dimension to the School Curriculum, London, DfES.
144. The framework outlined below also aims to build on outlines developed at a European and international level that make reference to skills for the 21st century and future skills needs. Above all, the framework aims to bring together the range of common skills addressed through the initiatives outlined above, and to demonstrate their relevance and application to living and working in a global society and economy.

145. The following are suggested as the key elements of a framework for global skills:

- An ability to communicate effectively with people from a range of social and cultural backgrounds and other countries
- An ability to work in teams with people from a range of backgrounds
- Openness to a range of voices and perspectives from around the world
- A solutions-oriented attitude
- Ability to understand the impact of global forces on people’s lives
- Ability to play an active role in society at local, national and international level.

146. Within each of these elements, a number of discrete goals and objectives could be set. For example, openness to a range of perspectives could be interpreted as Catteuw does:

“Can deal with ambiguous situations, is open to others and can accept and respect possible differences”.

147. He further suggests a three-level framework, from level 1 being ‘recognising other cultures and cultural diversity’, to level 2 being ‘tolerates other cultures and cultural diversity’ and level 3 being ‘functions with other cultures and cultural diversity.’

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With regard to the concept of communications, Catteeuw suggests that the skill of communicating ‘effectively and correctly with others in realistic situations’ starts at level one as ‘recognising the intercultural background and possible problems in written, oral and non-verbal communication’ and moves to the level of ‘understanding and engagement with the problems and issues’.

Above all, the framework needs to incorporate a challenging approach to learning that requires consideration of areas such as recognising a range of voices and perspectives, critical thinking skills and a participatory and experiential methodology.

Central to this approach are the following suggested principles:

- Moving from fixed content and skills to conform to a predetermined idea of society, to concepts and strategies to address complexity, difference and uncertainty
- Moving from absorption of information and acceptance of existing models of learning, to challenging, questioning and moving positions and views
- Moving from structured and ordered and universal views of the world to complex, multifaceted and different means of interpretation.

The framework needs to be considered as a mechanism for underpinning the global skills relevant to the initiatives currently being promoted. It can also be seen as a mechanism for interpreting and applying key skills such as team work, communication and personal development.

The framework should also stress the importance of understanding global forces and their relationship to people’s everyday lives. An example of this is the global skills project in Preston College, in its use of topics such as millennium development goals within classes on English as a second language and basic literacy.

This framework also needs to take account of the literature and programmes that have promoted concepts of global citizenship, international understanding and critical thinking from bodies such as Oxfam, Christian Aid, WWF and particularly two projects that emerged from Nottingham University: Open Space for Dialogue and Enquiry; and Through Other Eyes.

For the framework to have any impact, it needs to be considered within the appropriate quality assurance mechanisms, the programmes of the sector skills councils and the bodies that support the delivery of courses and programmes in colleges. There above all needs to be a review of accredited courses to ensure the key elements of global skills outlined in this paper are incorporated.

Putting global skills into practice in colleges

Further education colleges clearly have a major role to play in taking forward the debate on global skills. To date, this is where programmes in areas related to global skills - including internationalisation, sustainable development, intercultural questions and specific curricula initiatives – have been most visible.

In a range of already published material from CEL, the AoC and the British Council, there are details about a number of colleges engaged in programmes and initiatives that address international and sustainability matters.  

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110 www.openspacemethodology.org.uk; www.throughthereyes.org.uk; www.globaldimension.org.uk
111 Otravista, 2008 op.cit; Baldauf et. al op.cit
157. As already mentioned the AoC’s International Charter and the Green Colleges’ material provide a stimulus for colleges to engage in these issues. There is also a study currently being completed for the AoC by Warwick University that addresses the international role of colleges. The evidence to date from this research suggests that whilst there are a considerable number of colleges engaged in international work, a primary driver appears to have been economic in terms of securing new income, whether from partnership programmes or recruitment of students. The research does however note the important role senior management has played as a driver for engaging in international work.

158. Less evident are examples from colleges that start from a recognition of the challenge of globalisation in terms of the learning and skills needs of students. Colleges located in culturally diverse communities tend to recognise the need to respond in different ways, but there is a tendency in most institutions to see areas identified in this paper such as internationalism, sustainability, community cohesion, enterprise and understanding of development as almost separate topics.

159. There is some evidence, from colleges such as Park Lane College Leeds, Grimsby, Greenwich and City and Islington Colleges, of attempts to ensure the international partnerships they have developed have a direct impact on students’ learning experience within the college. Greenwich for example has promoted internationalisation across the college and all departments have to have international strategies.

160. These are seen as including partnerships with colleges elsewhere in the world, recruitment of international students, and ensuring the curriculum and courses reflect global issues and perspectives. Examples include the organisation of a fair trade fashion show, the development of joint courses with colleges in Thailand that includes perspectives from both countries, and employer links to courses in areas such as hospitality and tourism, in recognition of London as a global city.

161. There have also been examples around the country of colleges that have taken global issues and perspectives and developed them into a range of curriculum and professional development projects around themes such as globalisation, fair trade and involvement of NGOs.¹¹²

162. Colleges in inner-city areas have often used their multicultural student body as an important enrichment process for all students. This diversity of background and experience is often used to promote initiatives and events such as City and Islington College’s engagement with refugee week¹¹³. Shipley College refers to quality, equality and relevance as core values, whilst Somerset College of Arts and Technology refers to ‘encouraging all its members to embrace challenging learning goals to realise their full potential as citizens in a global world’.¹¹⁴

163. One example of a college that has attempted to re-position itself in the context of having a global outlook is Regent’s Park College in Leicester. It promotes itself as a Global Citizens’ College. This outlook is summarised by the institution as follows:

¹¹² www.dea.org.uk/sub-541180 which includes summaries of projects by Cornwall, Preston, Croydon and Pendleton colleges.
¹¹³ www.candi.ac.uk/about/news/2006/060706refugees.asp
¹¹⁴ Quoted in Martin et al.op.cit.
“The college is a diverse and successful learning community and this makes it the ideal setting to offer a broad education for global citizenship. Our students achieve excellent exam results and they also want to contribute to changing things for the better and to develop the confidence, knowledge and skills to make a real difference in society. They develop skills of leadership, co-operation, communication, questioning, critical thinking, problem solving and conflict resolution.

“They learn to understand global, local and individual perspectives and to critically examine all points of view; in other words to be informed, skilled and active global citizens. The Global Citizens’ College programme will help to broaden your understanding of the world and help you to achieve across all your subjects. It will help you to develop the confidence and advanced skills you need for the most challenging university courses and jobs.”

Regent College’s support for a global citizens’ programme grew out of links with the University of Leicester’s citizenship education programme. This link is an avenue that other interested colleges could potentially consider, in view of the significant growth in interest in these areas within universities.

What is less clear however from the research undertaken so far is the extent to which colleges engaged in international programmes see a connection with the other agendas mentioned in this paper. This is an area that needs further investigation.

**Leadership and professional development**

164. If there is recognition of the value of raising the profile of and support for global skills in colleges and with training providers, what are the priorities that need to be considered?

165. There is evidence from the work of the AoC and CEL that a considerable number of further education colleges are supportive of international work. Evidence from other recent initiatives in further education suggests that unless there is senior management buy-in, new proposals will be interpreted as just another additional burden.

166. The following points are key to promoting a strategy for global skills:

- Making connections between a range of policy agendas and external influences, and applying them in the most effective form within an institution
- Maximising and promoting the social and cultural elements of a diverse workforce and student body in the life and activities of the institution
- Undertaking ongoing dialogue with employers to ensure the skills they require are matched by what is being taught in the institution
- Promoting a culture that values respect, social justice and concern for the environment.

169. Underpinning this strategy is the need to promote what Marquardt calls a ‘global mindset’:

“People with global mindsets seek to continually expand their knowledge, have a highly developed conceptual capacity to deal with the complexity of global organisations, are extremely flexible, strive to be sensitive to cultural diversity, are able to undertake decisions with adequate information and have a strong capacity for reflection. A person with a global mindset thinks and sees the world globally, is open to exchanging ideas and concepts across borders... The emphasis is placed on balancing global and local needs, and being able to operate cross functionally, cross divisionally, and cross culturally across the world.”

170. As Turner (2006) has commented, ‘Raising the profile of global skills would enable colleges and training providers to re-think their policies and programmes on diversity, because it enable institutions to be able to look at the changing reasons for the student and staff intake and what they are doing to ensure it reflected the diversity.’

171. The example from Regents Park College in Leicester about promoting the concept of global citizenship is one that could be considered by other institutions. A number of schools and universities in the UK are now using the term ‘global citizenship’ as a way of demonstrating their commitment to equipping their students not only to understand the wider world, but also to have the skills and values base to actively engage in society and make the world a better place.

172. To take forward these points it is suggested that consideration needs to be given to a programme for leaders in the sector that sees global skills as a mechanism for bringing together a range of initiatives and themes, within a framework that is directly relevant to the needs of the learner and the institution. This need not necessarily take the form of more courses, but could be a programme of mentoring, support and engagement, with the development of a portfolio model of learning that encourages reflection, critical thinking and the development of new thinking. In addition consideration could also be given to looking at the development of masters’ level courses that could either be based around or include explicit reference to global skills.

Ways forward and conclusion

173. The evidence identified in this report suggests there is potentially fertile ground on which to build and take forward the debate on global skills. It is important above all to avoid promoting any discussion on this area as ‘yet another new initiative’ for colleges and training bodies to consider. This report has aimed to demonstrate that the priority is to pose questions, encourage further research, review existing qualifications frameworks and re-think existing professional development and leadership programmes in terms of the extent to which skills provision for the UK workforce incorporates references to the global society and the global economy.

174. A number of key recommendations are proposed.

- Promotion of debate and dialogue by policy-makers, training bodies and employers on incorporating skills for a global economy and global society within planned programmes.
- Encouragement of the drivers of the main initiatives related to global skills to look at ways in which there could be greater harmonisation and linkages between various initiatives and programmes.

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- Review of appropriate qualifications, training provision, national occupational standards and assessment frameworks for the sector to ensure that skills for living in a global society and working in a global economy are reflected.
- Further research on how learners themselves make sense of the impact of globalisation on their lives and how it relates to their employment and engagement in society.
- Development of a programme of professional support for leaders in the further education and training sector on how they can incorporate global skills within their institutions.

175. Piloting of a range of professional development courses for lecturers, tutors and trainers in the sector on global skills, including the development of a new masters’ level degree module course in this area. This paper has aimed to give an overview of current debates within further education and training that directly relate to discussions on what are global skills. It has shown that whilst the term ‘global skills’ may not, as yet, be that well used within further education and training, the key elements can be identified within a range of existing provision. Whilst there is a range of views as to what is meant by ‘global skills’, from being closely linked to language and ICT provision to the basic skills to work in a global economy, there is other evidence that recognises that this area necessitates the promotion of learning about globalisation, sustainable development, cultural understanding and social, as well as economic, engagement.

176. What is recognised, from a range of policy initiatives and from dialogue with trainers to date, is that globalisation has and will continue to have an increasingly central role in driving training needs and in explaining how and what the learner understands about the world in which they live and work. The global skills agenda is here to stay. The issue is not why, but what and how – what does it entail and how should it be delivered within further education and training in general?

**Development Education Research Centre**

The Centre was established in 2006 with funding support from DFID. Its main aims are to:

- Promote the value of development education to the academic community as part of the essential learning of the 21st Century
- Provide evidence to DFID as to where and how development education contributes to its ‘building support for development’ strategy.
- Develop a community of researchers and body of evidence through a range of publication
- Develop a range of courses on development education and related areas
- Promote and encourage critical reflective engagement with the meaning and effectiveness of development education.

It has recently established a new masters’ degree course in development education. The Centre sees development education as an approach to learning about global development issues through recognising the importance of linking lives throughout the world. It is also based on an understanding of the importance of critical thinking and the need to challenge stereotypes that could enable people to develop the skills and confidence to support changes towards a more just and sustainable world.
The Learning and Skills Improvement Service (LSIS) came into operation on 1 October 2008. Combining the best aspects of two different and highly successful sector bodies – the Centre for Excellence in Leadership (CEL) and the Quality Improvement Agency (QIA) – LSIS will focus on learners and on developing excellent and sustainable further education and skills provision across the sector. Leadership development will underpin and form an important part of the organisation’s strategic role in the sector.

LSIS was established after consultations with sector leaders identified a strong desire for an organisation that would be sector-led. As a sector-owned public body, LSIS will be owned, directed and governed by FE and skills colleges and providers, and will be dedicated to supporting excellence, leadership development and self-regulation in the FE sector.

LSIS will be consulting with the sector during autumn 2008 and spring 2009 about its priorities and remit. While this is taking place, the activities and services of CEL and QIA will continue under joint branding; more information about their range of activities is available on their respective websites.