**Change is good. Honest**

 **Talat Yaqoob**

Talat currently works as Campaigns Officer for the charity White Ribbon and is also chair of the board of trustees for the humanitarian charity First Aid Africa. She was previously Head of Membership Development and before that, Mental Health Campaigns Officer, at NUS Scotland. She has been an education sabbatical officer at Heriot-Watt University, where she led the campaign on feedback, which won the National Union of Students campaign of the year in 2008. She has also worked on campaigns on international development and global poverty.

Scotland’s continued focus on quality enhancement, and not just assurance, in education, has given Scotland’s colleges and universities the platform to create progressive curriculums. Organisations such as, sparqs, the National Union of Students Scotland and local students’ associations have been vessels for that progress and there are institutions up and down the country, which have embraced this progress and created real partnerships with these organisations. These are the institutions making real and lasting change.

The concept of change may be a scary one, but it is what defines an average, or even good, curriculum from an excellent curriculum, and one which a student feels a sense of belonging to.

In an education setting, and within this sparqs framework, change can mean the way in which a lecturer delivers a lesson, the way in which a student engages, or even the physical setting of where the teaching takes place. However, why this change matters and what this change should be, is even greater than the concept of education. How we create and campaign for change in every area of society, can be used as a blueprint for change in the curriculum and a student-led experience.

When a lecturer asks their students how they are finding their classes by passing out feedback sheets, and then makes changes accordingly, those students feel a sense of ownership over that change and, consequently, a sense of ownership over their curriculum. This is the same sense of ownership that activists feel when they make change in their community, or even the sense of ownership we can feel when we cast our votes in a national election. It is this sense of belong, that changes a student from merely attending an institution, to being engaged in an institution. To create this engagement we can take lessons from campaigning techniques and community participation. Below, are examples of further reading which provide some insight into how change is created and how participation can be fostered.

These are lessons which can, and should, be transferred into higher and further education quality enhancement.

<http://gladwell.com/the-tipping-point/> - Malcolm Gladwell’s book The Tipping Point, provides an insight into societal change and how this can create ‘positive epidemics’. This can be transferred into education: one student’s voice being heard can create a ‘positive epidemic’ into all students feeling empowered to have their voices heard.

<http://www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/sites/default/files/Beneficiary_Voice_pdf.pdf> - A resource on how to include beneficiaries. If you change the word ‘campaign’ to ‘curriculum’ and ‘beneficiary’ to ‘student’ and you have a how to guide on engagement.

<http://www.campaignstrategy.org/maslow_campaign.pdf> - Although looking at political campaigns (climate change), this paper outlines why motivation of those involved is so necessary, looking at it through the lens of psychological needs

When a student’s view is listened to and when they are empowered to change their every day, they are inspired and given the tools to change tomorrow, not just for themselves but for society as a whole, or in this case, for their class, or even the next generation of students. The student who made change whilst being a class representative and had a positive experience doing so, might just become the leader who makes a change to create a better world.