

THE STAREHE DECLARATION ON YOUTH LEADERSHIP IN SCHOOLS

PREAMBLE:

We, the delegates of the fifth meeting of Global Connections, have gathered at Starehe Boys' Centre, Nairobi, Kenya to explore ways in which schools can contribute to the nurturing and promoting of positive youth leadership at local, national and global levels.

- We endorse the articles of the UN Charter on the Rights of the Child.
- In the spirit of the Deerfield Declaration, adopted at Global Connections Seminar IV, we affirm the model of servant-leader which involves care, support and respect. We believe this is consistent with Article Two of that Declaration in that it fosters a holistic understanding of our place and purpose in the universe, thus shaping responsible global citizens who are stewards of a better world for all.
- We recognize that positive, effective leadership is essentially situational. It can be unplanned and emerges at different times, in different styles and contexts and for different ends.
- We affirm that the capacity for leadership resides in each individual and that personal growth and the development of leadership skills go hand in hand.
- We celebrate the rich variety of perspectives and leadership models which abound in the diverse societies we represent. We recognize that gender, cultural and religious issues all influence and determine choices of models of leadership. However, while recognizing this, we are also of the view that within these many perspectives there are universal features which characterize environments which are conducive to the nurture, promotion and practice of positive youth leadership.

Mindful of these five precepts, we commit ourselves to be agents who will champion the shaping of environments in our schools in which the following will be encouraged:

1. The vesting of trust and responsibility in young people;
2. A purposeful building of self-esteem and confidence in young people through an experience of belonging, affiliation, respect and acceptance;
3. An embracing of a moral and values base which fosters a spirituality that transcends self-interest;
4. The consistent practice of regular, open and constructive dialogue and communication;
5. A celebration of both courage and humility, and an active recognition that these two will best emerge in a culture that permits freedom to experiment, to fail and to learn from failure;
6. The consistent provision of positive adult and peer role models;
7. The promotion of a sense and experience of opportunities and contexts for all to take leadership initiatives;
8. A holistic understanding of the hierarchy of human needs and conscious planning by school leadership that ensures the meeting of these needs in young people;
9. The encouragement of the kind of decision-making in young people that requires the exercise of the courage of their convictions in difficult situations, and at the risk of personal popularity, decision-making that demands accountability as well as the living out of professed values so that personal growth and development can be sustained;
10. The promotion in our schools of a culture of service and volunteerism as a key feature of our identity and leadership;
11. The growing of an understanding that we serve not out of duty or political correctness, but because through service to others, we affirm our common humanity.

We believe that the above-named features constitute the ground substance that makes possible the emergence of positive leadership that can and must influence our schools, our communities and our world.

We believe that this kind of leadership will promote fairness, compassion and moral fortitude that will offer hope for a better world.