



Strategy #6 – Change through Education Listening Guide

Education shapes the way people think at a societal level and schools can be a vehicle for defining communities. The values and information imparted to young people in schools can either indoctrinate them or promote the critical thinking and knowledge necessary to participate in a democratic society. These are the voices of people who sought to promote change through education. Please review the quotations and answer the questions below.

	Deborah Given, Northern Ireland	Mike McQuillan, United States	Jose Morales, Philippines
What ideal is important in education?			
What changes were being sought?			
What are the characteristics of a well-educated citizen?			

For further discussion:

Why is education important for democracy?

How can education be used as a vehicle to create change?

How does integration within the education system promote community?

Change through Education Quotations

Deborah Given, Northern Ireland

I think it did, yes, because really I felt when you have lived through that -- that, you know, what can you do to try and heal the society, what can you do to try and build trust amongst people. And I think with integrated education, which was started by a group of parents, the first school was Lagan College, which I'm sure you've heard of, in 1981. And that was the first school and that was really a group of parents who got together, Catholic and Protestant parents at the height of the Troubles [a period of sectarian violence in Northern Ireland] and said, "Look, you know, if we want to build a stable future here, we've got to bring the children together so that they can learn to understand and respect each other's background and culture." But the thing about the integrated schools was it wasn't just the children, it was the parents meeting at the school gates for the first time, the teachers were both Catholic and Protestant and the board of governors were Catholic and Protestant.

Mike McQuillan, United States

I think there's a direct relationship. And here's how: first of all, an educated person can define his or her terms. What does democracy mean to you? I know what it means to me, and what it means to me is something more than you could find in the dictionary. To Pericles in Athens, it was that an individual advances not by favoritism, but by merit, you earning your way through society. You earned your way up through the economic class structure of society. Education teaches you how to define this term. For Pericles, democracy also meant that every citizen has a duty to serve, and so Athens had these enormous town meetings in which anyone had a right to say his piece. There were problems with that, if we talk about democracy in an ideal state. There were slaves in Athens, women did not have the same rights, and so on, just as this country has been hypocritical about its democratic ideals, but what schools can teach us is that democracy is an ideal that's always there for us to work for towards making better.

Jose Morales, Philippines

During the anti-Marcos dictatorship struggle, the people at the front line were really the students. Now that people say we have democracy in the country, I can still see some protests led by students, but they are not as aggressive as before. In the past, the students were willing to take a risk, to risk even their lives for the freedom they hope for. So my advice to the youth is, perhaps the circumstances do not yet call for such a struggle, but you should learn how to question, ask yourself what is really happening in society. What is your role as youth? If you want to be part of the economy and in advancing the economic progress of the nation then that's okay. But you should always remember that the power of the people cannot be realized by keeping your silence. If you don't speak up, then you know what happens... So my only advice is for you is to learn how to inquire, and in the process of asking, you examine what you should do.