ORIGINAL ARTICLE

An evaluation of Students' Quality Circles and the World Council for Total Quality and Excellence in Education

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Abstract This research was sponsored by the government of Japan through the UNESCO/Keizo Obuchi fellowship programme, to promote a culture of peace ideals through peace education. Conducted at Kingston University, UK, from September 2010 to January 2011, it was facilitated by the Mauritius National Commission for UNESCO and the Ministry of Education and Human Resources. It emphasises innovation and partnerships to tap hidden potentials of individuals, and bring people to work together for peace and progress. Globalisation has facilitated free trade and the flow of information, but it has shown the difficulties of managing cultural diversity. The importance of dialogue and intercultural learning is emphasised, but needs to be practised from an early age. Can Students' Quality Circles, which have roots in 'Quality Circles' from industry, empower young individuals to develop problem-solving skills? How far is it sustainable? At a time when 'Corporate Social Responsibility' is cautious about investment and the UN Millennium Development Goals for many countries are a priority, can SQCs help to bridge the gap?

Keywords Dialogue · Innovation · Partnership · Peace · Responsibility · Students' Quality Circles

1 Purpose

The research evaluated Students' Quality Circles (SQCs) and the World Council for Total Quality and Excellence in Education (WCTQEE), after more than a decade of

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implementation in educational institutions in various countries. It aimed to assess the effectiveness of WCTQEE in promoting a culture of peace through the SQC philosophy. It was also intended to strengthen WCTQEE and make SQCs more sustainable. It aimed to give a new boost to the UNESCO Associated Schools Project Network (ASPnet), and ease its developmental projects in relation to peace, human rights and culture sharing through SQC methodology.

The specific objectives were:

- to examine and make proposals concerning WCTQEE strengths and shortcomings
- to analyse SQC's pedagogical approach towards educating for peace and social change
- to explore SQC's ability to promote peaceful conflict resolution
- to show its impact on the school community

The outcomes were expected:

- to enhance the role of SQCs as a method for peaceful conflict resolution
- to facilitate networking among institutions involved in SQCs and ASPnet
- to strengthen collaborative action at regional, national and international level to promote the culture of peace

To these ends, collaborative action has been initiated, with different partners committed to further the global movement for peace.

2 Introduction

This article aims to trigger 'reflection and action', at a time when economies are in crisis and the culture of peace runs