

Towards 2030 and Just Transitions

Fircroft College of Adult Education Strategy

Doing better things rather
than doing things better

Introduction

“ To shape peaceful, just and sustainable futures, education must be transformed ⁽¹⁾ ”

According to UNESCO's 2022 report, 'widening social and economic inequality, climate change, biodiversity loss, resource use that exceeds planetary boundaries, democratic backsliding and disruptive technological automation are the hallmarks of our current historical juncture. These multiple overlapping crises and challenges constrain our individual and collective human rights and have resulted in damage to much of life on Earth'. (IBID)

In the development of this strategy we have challenged ourselves to ask for what future and for whom are we educating for? In this next strategy for the College, we have chosen to extend our timeframe to 2030. This will take us beyond the 120th anniversary of the establishment of the college. The college remains committed to its original social justice purpose and legacy, defined by our founder George Cadbury Jnr. But we will be brave and innovative in thinking about what that means for today and the future. The United Nations global goals and the 2030 agenda envisions, 'a secure world free of poverty and hunger, with full and productive employment, access to quality education and universal health coverage,

the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, and an end to environmental degradation'.⁽²⁾

The UN's 2030 agenda is a plan of action for people, planet and prosperity. Our ambition, represented through this strategy is to contribute to the future vision of people, planet and prosperity through our unique residential learning environment and education offer. We want to become a sustainable organization which is a 'permeable learning community that focuses on regeneration'.

⁽³⁾ Our new impact framework will further help us to demonstrate and evaluate the transformation which happens to our students and their communities. This strategy enables us to connect our curriculum directly to our strategy thus enabling a re-imagining of the (green) skills that will be required for the future. AimHi describe these as the 'skills, knowledge, experience, attitudes and abilities needed to bring human systems into line with the rest of nature, to minimise the destruction of the climate emergency and to steer a path to healthier, fairer and more prosperous future for our decedents'.⁽⁴⁾

This strategy is framed by a radical sustainability viewpoint which recognises the interconnectedness of social and climate/environmental injustice. By focusing on this inseparability, we believe that the economic cannot be sustained if the underlying social structure is unsustainable, a social structure cannot be sustained if the environment it depends on is unsustainable and that the environment cannot be sustained unless proper economic and social practices are in place. It also focuses on de-centering the human and acknowledging the importance of more than humans and non-humans on our planet. It is therefore more aligned to indigenous cultures understanding of sustainability which

emphasises the importance of living in harmony with nature and preserving the natural environment. ⁽⁵⁾

This strategy adopts a global perspective as our horizon both in terms of citizenship, our lifeworld and ecosystem. There is much to learn from and be motivated by fellow adult educators and adult education across the world. A collective, global endeavour will be our focus. We will seek out and develop new alliances, allies, partners and networks to support and challenges us in this work.

Our values

'We describe our college as **mission led** and **values driven**. During 2023 we have revised our values to better reflect the position of the college and the changes to local and global values.'

Authentic **Anti-Racist**
Collaborative
Supportive
Brave **Empowering**

Our mission

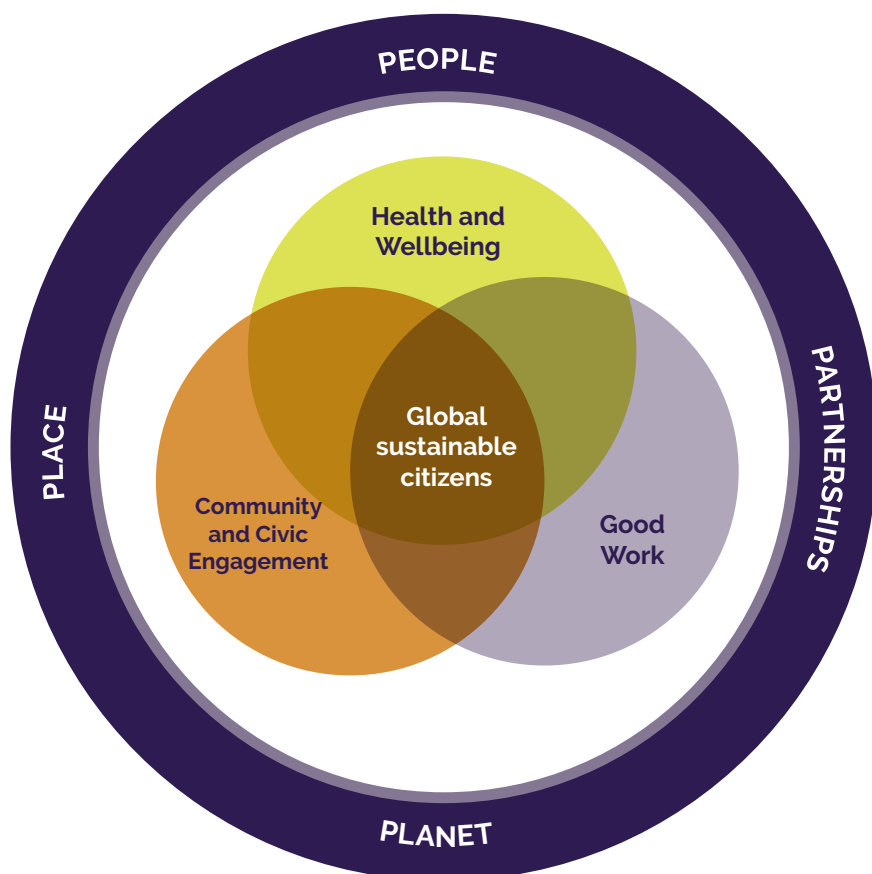
'To promote social and climate/ environmental justice by providing adults with an excellent learning environment for personal, professional and political development'

Our vision

“ **learning to
become a
better world** ”

Our 2030 strategic goal

Fircroft College remains firmly committed to placing our students at the heart of our strategy. Our goal is support the development of global sustainable citizens. Our strategy shows that global sustainable citizens exist at the intersection of **good work, health and well-being** and **civic and community engagement**



Global sustainable citizens:

Learn, change, adapt

“ We need a new social contract for education to repair past injustices whilst transforming the future ⁽⁶⁾ ”

Fircroft College remains firmly committed to placing our students at the heart of our strategy. Our ambition for our students is reflected in this strategy and our aim is to support the development of global sustainable citizens. Global sustainable citizens exist at the intersection of good work, health and wellbeing and civic and community engagement. This strategy will drive all parts of the college; including a living, experiential curriculum and a residential pedagogical approach which develops skills, behaviours and agency.

Birmingham City Council's joint health and well-being strategy has a vision to 'create a city where every citizen, whoever they are, wherever they live and at every stage of life, can make choices that empower them to be happy and healthy'. ⁽⁷⁾ Our strategy contributes to one of their key encompassing life course themes; 'living, working and learning well'. According to the TUC's definition of good work, 'People not only want to work, they want to work in good jobs that they feel are rewarding. This is not just about decent pay and basic standards of employment. It is about a fulfilling working life, job satisfaction and achieving

individual potential. ⁽⁸⁾ The CIPD states that importantly, good work should be accessible for all, regardless of job type or someone's background. ⁽⁹⁾

We know that many of our students are driven to give back to their communities, whether these be communities of place or circumstance. We want to be bolder in our ambitions for our students and their futures. We recognise that it's not just cognitive and behavioural transformation which is important, but being able to act in the world in a way that is meaningful to them and enables them to enact change in their lives and communities. We believe adult education can empower communities to be more sustainable. According to L&WI, 'Learning in and for community purposes helps to increase a sense of belonging, builds relationships through shared experiences and issues, fosters understanding of others, sharing of customs and traditions and can empower individuals and groups to work together for common/community purposes. Adult learning has the potential to enable people to think globally and act locally in fast-changing world'. ⁽¹⁰⁾

Residential adult education

Residential adult education will remain as our pedagogical approach and primary delivery method. We are now only one of two remaining long-term residential colleges in England. We are the only adult residential college in the Midlands. Residential adult education and transformational learning gives people choices and opportunities. It provides hope and builds pride and ambition.

Residential adult education enables people to not be defined by their past or their present but to envisage and achieve a very different future for themselves, for their families and for their communities. Simply, it transforms lives.

Our strategic goal will be delivered through our strategic foundations of **people, place, partnerships** and **planet**.

People

This strategy recognises our responsibilities to consider good work, health and well-being and civic/ community engagement as an employer.

Place

This strategy recognises our responsibilities as custodians and caretakers of a unique educational space in the south of Birmingham and to becoming carbon neutral.

Partnerships

This strategy recognises that we must work to strengthen and develop our partnerships at a local, regional and global level.

Planet

This strategy recognises our global responsibility in creating just transitions.



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Fircroft College of Adult Education

1018 Bristol Road
Birmingham B29 6LH

Contact

0121 472 0116
enquiries@fircroft.ac.uk
www.fircroft.ac.uk

 @fircroftcollege
 /fircroftcollege
 @fircroft_college