

[Redacted]

From: Bruce A (Andrew)
Sent: 22 May 2017 12:47
To: Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills
Cc: DG Learning & Justice; Robertson FMG (Fiona); [Redacted]
Maxwell B (Bill); Armstrong A (Alan); [Redacted]

Subject: religious and moral education - submission on Israel/Palestine teaching resource next steps - 22 may 2017

Please find attached a submission providing advice for DFM on next steps in relation to the Israel/Palestine teaching resource, along with an annex providing draft responses to the range of correspondence received on this matter.

Thanks

Andy



Israel - Palestine
Teaching Resource

Andy Bruce
Deputy Director, Curriculum, Qualifications and Gaelic
Scottish Government

[Redacted]

ENGAGEMENT TITLE: MEETING WITH MICHELINE BRANNAN – SCOTTISH COUNCIL OF JEWISH COMMUNITIES (SCoJeC)

<i>Date and Time of Engagement</i>	Thursday, 11 May 2017 10.00 – 10.45
<i>Where</i>	T4.23, Parliament
<i>Who</i>	Micheline Brannan, Chair, SCoJeC Mr Ephraim Borowski, Director, SCoJeC Mrs Nicola Livingston, co-President, Glasgow Jewish Representative Council Ms Danielle Bett, member of SCoJeC Council
<i>Key Purpose / Message</i>	Meeting to discuss a teaching resource on Israel and Palestine: its development and the resource itself. Key message – interest and support.
<i>Official Support</i>	Andy Bruce, Head of Qualifications, Curriculum and Gaelic Division [Redacted] Alan Armstrong, Strategic Director, Education Scotland [Redacted] [Redacted], Learning Directorate [Redacted]

Sensitivities:

- SCoJeC do not believe it is appropriate that there should be a resource at all.
- Secondly, they are unhappy with their involvement in the process of developing the resource thus far.
- Further, SCoJeC believe Chair of the development group to be biased in favour of the Palestinian side of things.

Education Scotland suggested approach (following the consultation):

To ensure the resources are recognised as balanced and helpful learning and teaching materials for schools on this complex topic.

- Prospect of limited success. SCoJeC CANNOT be obliged to approve of a resource. However Ministers may wish to re-state that it is better teachers have access to something good quality rather than reverting to the internet.
- We don't think there is a space where Ministers can agree to SCoJeC's view that certain topics should be off-limits. As with all sensitive aspects of learning teachers use their professionalism to ensure that there are balanced inputs which reflect each perspective. Teachers will create the environment that young people feel safe when asking questions and expressing views.

Further work should be undertaken to pilot the resources in schools and feedback shared on Glow.

- Partners will be fully informed of the outcome of the pilots as part of the ongoing consultation and dialogue.

Working with SCoJeC

Education Scotland have recently spoken to][Redacted] at Glasgow and Clyde Rights-Based Learning Group (GCRBL) who own the resource and [Redacted] is happy to work with all partners to produce an introduction statement from each perspective.

Education Scotland will be able to ask GCRBL to add these but part of the problem here is the Jewish groups have stated they consider [Redacted] to be biased so they may raise further concerns about [Redacted] involvement, but this approach was always what Education Scotland advocated as a compromise.

Background Briefing

Background and Publication of Resources

In March 2015, it came to light that a homework worksheet was issued to P7 children at North Lanarkshire school which portrayed Palestinians as terrorists/suicide bombers and required pupils to provide examples of 'Palestinian terrorist activity'. A similar worksheet was discovered in use in a Glasgow secondary school in December 2015.

The incident was covered in the national press and, among a number of actions that followed, Dr Allan met with the Association of Palestinian Communities (APC) in Scotland. Following this Education Scotland has supported the Glasgow and Clyde Rights-Based Learning Group (GCRBL), a collaborative group of representatives from eight local authorities, to develop more appropriate teaching and learning resources. GCRBL is chaired by [Redacted] as part of her duties as West Dunbartonshire's Quality Improvement Officer (QIO) in West Dunbartonshire.

GCRBL's work began in April 2015 with the aim of developing balanced advice and resources which supports good teaching and learning of this sensitive and complex topic that:

- develops learners' knowledge and understanding of human rights and how this relates to life locally, nationally and internationally (including details of specific entitlements, and their universal and unconditional application);
- explores the background to the Israeli-Palestinian situation;
- explores the challenges to peace in these countries;
- allows learners to consider and be able to demonstrate their role as local and global citizens in promoting justice and peace.

Concerns have been expressed by others, including the Scottish Friends of Israel (SFI), over the new teaching and learning resources. These partners have been invited to contribute their views on the development of the resources but it is not clear to us at this stage the extent to which these organisations, including SCOJEC, engaged. We are seeking this information now.

The APC requested Scottish Government funding to support this development but no resource was available from Scottish Government or Education Scotland. Education Scotland has, however, provided support to the Chair of GCRBL in holding several quality assurance sessions with interested partners on both side of the issue.

On completion of the resources, Education Scotland supported GCRBL placing them on the GLOW website earlier this year (where they can be accessed by practitioners using a password). The introductory text accompanying the resource is attached at Annex A. The resource is not hosted on any of Education Scotland's sites.

Correspondence from SCoJeC

Micheline Brannan, the Chair of SCoJeC (Scottish Council of Jewish Communities) wrote to you, copying Education Scotland, on 7 December. She raised a number of issues including:

- the manner in which the resource has been prepared;
- the appropriateness of the resource at all for use P6-S2;

- the potential for the topic to be divisive and raise inclusion issues; and
- a perceived lack of inclusion of the Israeli and Jewish perspectives.

Learning Directorate officials withdrew this letter from the MACCS system on 4 January. This was done in error following your meeting of 14 December with Dr Issam Hijawi of the Association of Palestinian Communities in Scotland (a member of the Palestine Alliance) and [Redacted] of GCRBL.

The error in having the correspondence withdrawn from the system was established following a recent exchange between Paul Johnston and Ms Brannan. Immediately upon realising the error that had been made, officials contacted Ms Brannan's office on 27 March to explain that the case had been mistakenly withdrawn from the correspondence system and to convey apologies for this.

Resource on Glow

It was always the intention to give partners access to Glow. As with all resources and access to Glow, as this is used by children and young people there is a requirement that all must have been through Disclosure to obtain access and most of the partners do not.

Education Scotland have arranged for the key partners to have access to the password protected blog on the Glasgow and Clyde Rights-Based Learning Group (GCRBL) website.

Available on GLOW at the following link:

<https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/glowblogs/ClydeRights/recent-posts/draft-israel-and-palestine-teaching-and-learning-resources/>

The introductory text explains the context and its anticipated use: Israel and Palestine Teaching and Learning Resource.

- The resource is designed to be flexible, matching Experiences and Outcomes for social studies but also sitting well within Learning for Sustainability and in particular political literacy, global citizenship and human rights education.
- It is not intended that these resources be used in their totality; rather, they represent a library of resources that can be incorporated as appropriate into a curricular area in a way that adheres to the core principles of Curriculum for Excellence.
- It is envisaged that individual local authorities and schools will refine the material to meet local needs.
- An introductory unit for each level, with accompanying teachers' guide, has been produced to demonstrate how the materials may be used to produce classroom units of work.
- Supporting documents provide a rationale and background to this project and offer guidance for teachers planning to use the material.