



Education Diplomacy

Education Diplomacy **Professional Standards**



Childhood Education
International

Overview

As education professionals, we are united in a shared mission to move education agendas forward to solve both local and global education challenges in diverse environments—in various regions of the world within different cultures, contexts, languages, program designs, and delivery mechanisms, and with varying levels of access to resources. The scope of challenges in an education system can be wide-ranging, from early childhood education, disability and social inclusion, curriculum development, and pedagogical approaches to education policy and administration.

Since 1892, Childhood Education International (CE international) has worked at the intersection of education, human development, and international development around the world. Our organization has listened to, supported, coached, and trained thousands of education professionals, including policymakers, leaders, educators, advocates, and consultants in a multitude of organizations, such as NGOs and government bodies. Throughout the years, CE International has heard education professionals describe the "pain points" they face as they work to achieve collective action on long-term sustainable solutions to education challenges. In our work, CE International has found that solving education challenges often relies on our ability to effectively negotiate, communicate, and collaborate across a range of stakeholders. Our critical insight into the role of diplomacy in advancing education agendas led us, in 2010, to develop the concept of Education Diplomacy—the foundational approach that can be used to help groups with differing priorities come together to tackle complex issues affecting education systems. In 2011, we held our first Institute for International Education Diplomacy in Washington, D.C., which was attended by participants from around the world. We have held three subsequent Institutes since that inaugural event, each of which were attended by between 200-350 participants.

In 2020, CE International began to work on a set of standards that would serve as the foundation for the practice of Education Diplomacy. We hope that educators and education leaders worldwide will learn from and appreciate the changes they can make when using diplomacy as a strategy for advancing education to solve education challenges.

Education Diplomacy as a New Field of Practice

CE International defines diplomacy as the art of building relationships with people and across groups using sensitivity, tact, understanding, and strategy to manage and expand the capacity for creating meaningful, productive, and collaborative relationships.

Education Diplomacy is a new field of practice in the global education sector that uses the skills of diplomacy to support progress in education by:

1. Building a collective vision around shared goals for education
2. Using these shared goals as a basis for collaboration, cooperation, and collective action among diverse actors to solve complex education challenges.

Education Diplomacy Professional Standards

stand·ard

/ˈstændərd/

something established by authority, custom,
or general consent as a model or example

Professional standards are a set of practices that include references to ethics, behaviors, and skills that members of a particular professional group should adhere to. Professional standards are frequently agreed upon by a council or by an organization that represents the interests of the group and works within the sector referenced in the standards. CE International has led the way in developing Professional Standards for Education Diplomacy.

The Professional Standards for Education Diplomacy could be considered a global public good, summarizing the overall philosophy of Education Diplomacy and supporting the education sector to adopt and embed Education Diplomacy approaches. The standards set out the beliefs, skills, dispositions, and character traits that are required to effectively engage in positive change within the sector.

The main goals of the standards are to:

- ✓ Professionalize the community of actors working in the sector toward education improvement, reform, and transformation
- ✓ Secure high standards of practice across the education sector for the emerging field of Education Diplomacy
- ✓ Share the potential of Education Diplomacy as an approach to help shape agreement and take collective action
- ✓ Ensure those in the sector are equipped to achieve local, national, and global goals for education
- ✓ Raise aspirations for what can be achieved by the education sector and cross-sectoral interactions and actions
- ✓ Recognize Education Diplomacy as a change approach that inspires confidence and consistency in the education reform sector internationally.

Education Diplomacy Professional Standards



Standard 1:
Realizing Education's
Transformative Potential



Standard 5:
Moving Toward
Collective Impact



Standard 2:
Embracing Diplomatic
Interpersonal Skills



Standard 6:
Promoting Access, Quality,
Equity, and Inclusion



Standard 3:
Using Effective
Communication Skills



Standard 7:
Finding Innovative Solutions
to Education Challenges



Standard 4:
Upholding Ethics in Professional
Diplomatic Practice



Standard 8:
Cultivating Leadership for
Change

Who should use them?

The Professional Standards for Education Diplomacy encompass both practical and aspirational concepts and ideals that can be used by all actors who are working with others in the design, development, and delivery of education and who desire that their efforts further education for all.

Individuals in the sector (such as policymakers, consultants, practitioners, researchers, teachers) who share an understanding of the potential for education and whose values, character traits, behaviors, and skills influence the advancement of education*

Both private and public organizations (such as Ministries of Education, (I)NGOs, foundations, for-profit companies, consultancies, bi/multi-laterals) that play a critical role in shaping and advancing education and need to be able to engage collective action to drive change

The sector as whole, made up of individuals and organizations that, together, have a significant level of responsibility for the shaping and advancing of education that benefits all

How should they be used?

To unite organizations and individuals behind a shared vision for the advancement of education.

To drive standards across the sector—when widely adopted and adhered to, the framework sets the standards that need to be met by the sector to advance education globally.

To guide practice—the framework can be used to articulate the core principles for cooperation, collaboration, and collective action between stakeholders.

For professional development—the framework can be used to articulate the values and competencies that individuals need to develop to become more effective in driving change in the sector.

For recruitment—the framework can be used to articulate the values and competencies that organizations could look for when recruiting to the profession.

**Although not intended to be used by teachers, per se, the teaching community may find aspects of these standards quite applicable to their work.*

Standard 1. Realizing Education's Transformative Potential



Professional Standard:

Education diplomats embrace education as transformational and pivotal for achieving all forms of development, both human and societal.

Rationale:

If the potential of education is not realized, human development will deteriorate and the future sustainability of the planet will be at risk.

Guidance for Practice:

Education diplomats understand that:

1. Education supports all aspects of human growth—mental, physical, intellectual, social, and emotional—and provides people with opportunities to reach their full potential.
2. When education is appropriately designed and delivered, it promotes the economic and social development of communities and nations by providing learners with the knowledge and skills essential to thrive in society.
3. Education for sustainable development cultivates environments and conditions that are critical for protecting the planet and is necessary for the achievement of all 17 Sustainable Development Goals.
4. Education as a tool for global development requires an understanding of the intersection of education with other sectors, such as health, protection, housing, sanitation and water, nutrition, workforce development, and other areas that are vital to human existence.
5. The transformative power of education can only be realized by focusing on the needs of learners and measuring the outcomes of the education experience for those learners.
6. Because education is a global good, national governments need to mobilize resources and build partnerships to ensure that education is available and accessible to their citizens.

Standard 2: Embracing Diplomatic Interpersonal Skills



Professional Standard:

Education diplomats establish and maintain positive relationships by using diplomatic skills and approaches that help people and groups reach agreement.

Rationale:

Without using these skills, education diplomats cannot build the trust among stakeholders needed to take collective action to solve urgent education challenges.

Guidance for Practice:

Education diplomats understand that:

1. Humility, patience, empathy, sincerity, and tactfulness are essential to responding thoughtfully to the needs, feelings, and experiences of others and help to establish relationships built on trust.
2. Addressing power imbalances between people and groups is critical to ensuring a productive dialogue in which voices and opinions of all stakeholders are heard and valued.
3. Diplomacy's most important goal is the ability to shape agreement between people and groups.
4. Active listening and respectful dialogue provide the best opportunities for information and knowledge sharing to help stakeholders achieve mutual understanding.
5. When serving in the role of mediator, sincere willingness to identify and acknowledge the positions of both sides and take action to resolve conflicts when they arise must be displayed.
6. Negotiation is the most essential skill for establishing agreement.

Standard 3: Using Effective Communication Skills



Professional Standard:

Education diplomats encourage open and responsive communication skills to create positive change.

Rationale:

Without strong communication skills, a common agenda for collective action to advance education goals, policies, and practices cannot be constructed or advocated for.

Guidance for Practice:

Education diplomats understand that:

1. To create open and constructive spaces for discourse and help others bridge potential cross-cultural communication gaps, education diplomats should communicate thoughtfully, respectfully, and tactfully.
2. Good communicators convey their message to others simply and effectively, with the goal of influencing positive change without damaging relationships.
3. Communication style and approaches must be adapted to fit contextually and culturally diverse situations so that an atmosphere of understanding and the exchange of ideas can be fostered.
4. Education advocacy, or speaking out on critical education issues, is a strategic communication tool that can be employed by diplomats, when appropriate, to advance education goals, policies, and practices.
5. Establishing strategic communication goals and designing focused communication plans are essential to building public or political support for the reform of education policies and programs.
6. Cultural competency (i.e., the ability to interact with people with different values, belief systems, behaviors, and problem-solving and negotiation styles) and sensitivity increase the quality of interactions with multi-cultural and multi-lingual groups.

Standard 4: Upholding Ethics in Professional Diplomatic Practice



Professional Standard:

Education diplomats commit to high standards of ethics and integrity in their professional practice.

Rationale:

If ethics are not upheld, the pathways to collective action are undermined and education systems will not be able to provide quality, equitable, and inclusive education for all.

Guidance for Practice:

Education diplomats understand that:

1. The goals and needs of others are the focus of their work and this supersedes any personal or organizational gain.
2. Diplomats should act in accordance with relevant laws, standards, principles of practice, and codes of ethics, including policies and laws that safeguard child and family information and data to secure the privacy of each person.
3. Rejecting inappropriate practices, such as corruption, fraud, or other types of dishonest or deceitful behaviors, is crucial to diplomatic practice and interactions.
4. It is vital to engage regularly, intentionally, and critically with knowledge, research, and evidence to ensure that the most effective approaches to solving education challenges and to designing education interventions are being deployed.
5. Various knowledge frameworks exist in the world, including knowledge that emanates from cultural beliefs, community norms, traditions and customs, and indigenous wisdom, and these ways of knowing must be respected and used to guide approaches to education reform.

Standard 5: Moving Toward Collective Impact



Professional Standard:

Education diplomats collaborate with stakeholders to drive forward a common agenda through a structured process in which each stakeholder commits to specific and mutually reinforced actions and activities aligned to a system of shared measurements.

Rationale:

If education actors do not effectively move toward collective impact, it will be difficult to identify, achieve, or produce sustainable solutions, which can result in a fragmented education system.

Guidance for Practice:

Education diplomats understand that:

1. Effective cooperation, collaboration, and coordination between relevant stakeholders provides opportunities for advancing education goals and objectives.
2. Stakeholders have their own unique missions, goals, motivations, interests, and objectives; therefore, they may need diplomatic support to create a shared understanding of the purpose and goals of their collaborative efforts.
3. Collective action occurs after initial collaboration between people or organizations as they work together to shape a common goal or objective in an organized manner.
4. A whole-of-government and a whole-of-society approach to supporting education develops lasting and effective collaborations and comprehensive partnerships that can create positive change in education. (SDG 17)
5. Large multi-stakeholder or multi-sectoral collaborations rely on frameworks and policies to establish the structure of the partnership, gain consensus, and produce sustainable results.
6. Collective impact is achieved when positive results of the collective action efforts are demonstrated through the system of shared measurements.

Standard 6: Promoting Access, Quality, Equity, & Inclusion



Professional Standard:

Education Diplomats work to ensure that everyone has access to quality education and to learning experiences that embrace equity and inclusion.

Rationale:

By not advocating for education as a human right, global inequalities in access to quality education, especially for marginalized groups, will increase, and global peace and security will be compromised.

Guidance for Practice:

Education diplomats understand that:

1. Education is a human right, which means that every person has a right to quality education regardless of gender, race, religion, ethnicity, ability, socioeconomic status, or their geographic location.
2. Accessible, equitable, quality education is essential for ensuring learning for all.
3. Adopting inclusive and equitable education policies and practices, and putting systems in place to deliver these, ensure that everyone is included, and everyone has an equal chance of personal fulfillment through learning.
4. Decentralized approaches to education are more likely than centralized approaches (top-down approaches) to yield greater inclusiveness and improved education outcomes.
5. Inclusive and equitable education promotes tolerance and understanding between people, which reduces misunderstanding and conflict by fostering empathy and compassion.
6. Inclusive and equitable education inspires values and attitudes that encourage the development of more just and peaceful societies.

Standard 7: Finding Innovative Solutions to Education Challenges



Professional Standard:

Education Diplomats reform and transform education by sensitively applying human-centered design to solve complex problems and generate innovative and creative ideas to education challenges.

Rationale:

Without innovation, education challenges cannot be adequately addressed with inspired, empathic, and diverse solutions, advanced technology, and cutting-edge, contextually relevant pedagogical methods.

Guidance for Practice:

Education diplomats understand that:

1. Education diplomats create a culture of inspiration, empathy, and exploration in finding solutions to education challenges.
2. Solutions to education challenges can only be found by observing, listening to, and engaging through open-ended questions with others who are a part of or impacted by the education challenge.
3. By being receptive to new ideas and working methods, we can actively seek to apply new methods to improve outcomes for children and create opportunities for learning and development for all stakeholders.
4. Empathy is vital in gaining a clear understanding of the problem and articulating the problem statement in a way that integrates the needs and insights of others and guides the process of generating high-quality solutions.
5. The work of Education Diplomacy often places diplomats in the unique position of generating or influencing a variety of ideas for innovative solutions to the problem statement without the need to make immediate judgments or evaluations.
6. When engaging in development and delivery of education programs and interventions to address an education challenge, education diplomats may start with a mock-up, model, or scaled-down prototype to pilot their program and create criteria for success.
7. When implementing programs and interventions, it is important to observe and engage with all stakeholders to obtain feedback and use these new learnings to make improvements in future iterations or expansions of solutions.

Standard 8: Cultivating Leadership for Change



Professional Standard:

Education diplomats use leadership skills, change management approaches, and innovative thinking to drive change that transforms education.

Rationale:

Without leadership and innovative thinking, the global architecture of education and education governance cannot be strengthened, and collective action initiatives will be unable to garner support needed to move forward.

Guidance for Practice:

Education diplomats understand that:

1. Realizing the vision of education for all will require strengthening the global architecture of education and education governance mechanisms.
2. Education Diplomacy is one of the tools to achieve change and systemic transformation.
3. Childcare programs, schools, districts, regulating bodies, and local centers of excellence all function as organic systems. Initiating change in these systems requires consistent, transformative leadership and Education Diplomacy at multiple levels.
4. Systemic transformational change is complex and requires in-depth analysis, careful planning, and a commitment of time to understand the breadth, depth, and interconnectedness of the systems involved.
5. Being an advocate and using diplomacy to help others understand the nature of the change prior to launching a change effort is a vital step for successful facilitation of change, gaining confidence and trust and achieving transformative goals.
6. Translating collective vision to collective action means that education diplomats work to help align others' ambitions and goals to the change and help them see the long-term benefits in it.
7. By using Education Diplomacy and change management skills, we can create an environment that is conducive to change so that education interventions can be implemented and evaluated effectively.



Education Diplomacy

To learn more, visit

www.ceinternational1892.org/education-diplomacy



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