



Global call to re-think education – learn to change!

Learn2Change - Global Network of Educational Activists

The COVID-19 crisis reveals hidden beliefs and contradictions of our current thinking: How is it possible that the world's economy is at the brink of collapse, only because we are reduced to buying what we really need? How can isolating yourself from other humans suddenly become no longer a doom, but a privilege for those who can afford it? So, should coming back to normality after the pandemic be our longing or must we acknowledge that *normality* is the crisis?

We know that the probability of uncontrolled pandemics is enhanced by deforestation and biodiversity loss¹. It is known to us that one billion people will live in insufferable heat within 50 years². And that environmental degradation and natural disasters increasingly interact with the drivers of refugee movements³. Everything is related and interconnected. We, educators, practitioners and activists from Africa, America, Asia and Europe, united in the *Learn2Change – Global Network of Educational Activists*, call for a global turning of our paradigms of education, as well as of our production and consumption patterns, mobility, energy production and the way wealth is being distributed and accumulated. We need educative activism against exclusion and discrimination, when there is so much wealth in our countries.

We call upon everyone who is passionate about working in the diverse educational fields: Let's turn the tide in our actions, learn, teach and practice a democratic, rights-based citizenship and an ecologically conscious mindset. Defend what really sustains us as human beings. There are already countless initiatives, institutions and individuals in our diverse countries which are applying new ways of teaching, learning, sharing, producing or growing food, successfully. Let's not waste the learning opportunities that lay in these practices. And let's not waste it in this very moment of crisis. Local communities in rural areas as well as in the cities possess a huge empowerment potential by showcasing that education and learning go hand in hand with new ways of locally based economies, food-security, sustainable livelihoods and social cohesion in solidarity.

The COVID-19 crisis leaves us with the feeling that we have been sent home to think about the mess we have created to our fellow humans and to our planet which we refer to as Mother Earth. And if one of the marks of a dominant paradigm is the difficulty people have in imagining an alternative view, now is the moment to stop, re-think and learn to change.

1 www.scidev.net/america-latina/medio-ambiente/noticias/deforestacion-aumenta-riesgo-de-nuevas-enfermedades.html

2 <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/may/05/one-billion-people-will-live-in-insufferable-heat-within-50-years-study>

3 <https://www.unhcr.org/climate-change-and-disasters.html>

We call to learn to act according to the following six points:

1. **Learn to act for the planet:** empower educators and learners to reflect and get active on big crisis like the climate collapse or biodiversity loss. Link educational topics always with pro-active ecological issues and potentials on local level. Take up the diversity of practical economic alternatives to the globalized growth economy, towards a sense of “buen vivir” (good life). The Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are highly credible reference points, even as we see that governmental decisions are not always conform or even thwart these global targets.
2. **Learn with creative methods:** seek diversity and creativity in learning and co-learning techniques and methods to educate open-minded, conscious and concerned global citizens.
3. **Learn to act for inclusion and cultural diversity:** promote democratic, participatory and human rights-based approaches in your education system. This includes the rights to basic social services like health, decent work or access to justice, especially considering poor and excluded people. Enhance cultural and ethnic diversity, including migrant cultures and indigenous peoples. Combat racism, social and racial discrimination, antisemitism, exclusion and cultural stereotypes! Educative activism has a great power against hate/fake news and conspiracy theories that currently go viral in social media.
4. **Learn to act for gender equality:** engage in women and girls equal opportunities in all areas of our social and economic lives and educational settings.
5. **Learn to act for peace:** Violent conflict, authoritarian power abuse, corruption, communities isolated or displaced forcibly are issues that, from an educational standpoint, require capacity-building in democracy, human rights education and education to empower people to stand up for these rights.
6. **Learn to manage stress and to build confidence:** As educational practitioners we must not underestimate the emotional, cultural and psychological impact of the current crisis, especially on children and youth. We should reflect the stress and insecurity that the current situation produces in our work and goals.

We are the *Learn2Change – Global Network of Educational Activists*, educational practitioners, activists and defenders of the Right to Education, engaged for social, cultural, economic and ecological transformation.

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