The right to education: transform education from a global south perspective
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Introduction

The 2024 C20 Education and Culture Working Group theme is “The right to education: transform education from a global south perspective”. Education in the Global South stands at a crossroads, urging a shift from the conventional industrial education model toward its values-driven origins. Historically rooted in moral and community-oriented foundations laid by missionaries and religious organizations, passing through an industrial revolution and evolving to a new form of education to meet market needs, the educational system has, over time, veered towards a rigid knowledge acquisition model that fails to meet the holistic needs of students and educators. This shift has distanced education from its core purpose of nurturing well-rounded individuals to contribute to the betterment of society through character, relationships, energy, dialogue and application of knowledge to solve complex problems. And we are entering now into a new age of education that needs transformation.

The path to transformative education is challenging but crucial. It calls for a concerted effort to realign education with its aims as stated by the Human Rights instruments and reaching the purpose of A) holistic development, B) addressing society challenges, C) fostering inclusivity, D) preparing individuals for a productive life in all senses and with character for peacebuilding and meaningful contributions in a global values-centered community - addressing the aims of education as stated in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) and in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). The Global South, with its rich values, cultural diversity, and strong interconnection of community and schools, stands as a significant player in igniting this transformation. The urgency to act is clear to transform educators and students, focusing on people’s whole development and holistic transformation.

In order to advance the agenda of imbuing meaning into what we perceive as the transformation of education through the Global South, grounded in the right to education, we put forth recommendations across five key axes: 1) Governance and Sustainability, 2) Human Flourishing in the Global Community: Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, 3) Digital Transformation and Access, 4) The Central Role of Education and Culture Professionals, and 5) Lifelong Learning, Character and Holistic Growth and Global Citizenship. These pillars serve as guiding principles to foster a more equitable, inclusive, and sustainable educational landscape, emphasizing the crucial role of educators, digital accessibility with human rights principles, and the cultivation of lifelong education essential for global citizenship.

The right to education in the Global South perspective urges for the connection among different public policies and programs that can align understanding and resources towards the triad educational needs - cultural potential - socioeconomic sustainable development. Individuals, groups and institutions need to be culturally and socioeconomically inserted into their communities through educational and cultural policies that make their full potential emerge.
I. Governance and Sustainability

In an era marked by global interconnectedness and evolving societal needs, redefining the paradigms of education and culture stands as a paramount endeavor. Governance and Sustainability emerge as foundational pillars, underscoring the importance of inclusive decision-making processes and sustainable resource allocation. By centering global governance systems, prioritizing public goods, embedding environmental education in a whole educational approach within public policies to equip future generations with the tools for climate adaptation and resilience and regulating private involvement through a human rights and sustainability lens, we pave the way for a more equitable and collaborative educational landscape.

Recommendations

1. **Governance and Sustainability**: Centering the global governance systems of education and culture involves implementing mechanisms of multilateralism, ensuring the active participation of governments and organized civil society and recognizing that states are the main responsible. This ensures the representativeness of the diverse social actors involved in these spheres, promoting an inclusive and collaborative approach, with accountability and transparency, and considering the link between educational needs, cultural potential and socioeconomic sustainable development. Bolster the international governance system, prioritizing public goods while curbing corporate influence in decision-making and regulating private involvement in education through the International Human Rights framework.

2. **Tax Justice and Financing of Education and Culture**: Upholding tax justice is pivotal in financing education and culture quality and sustainably. By implementing fair taxation policies (such as progressive taxation and other kinds of prioritizing financing of education), we can secure the necessary resources to nurture these essential sectors, fostering societal growth and sustainable development. This effort can be achieved by promoting taxation both at the domestic and international levels, by securing the active participation in global and regional negotiations such as the UN Tax Convention, and by putting education as priority into those decisions.

3. **Climate Justice and Sustainability**: Embedding environmental education and nature-based learning within public policies is vital for cultivating climate literacy among children, adolescents and youth, recognizing the disproportionate impacts of climate change on minority groups. It is necessary to expand access to climate education and sustainable infrastructure at all educational levels, integrate sustainable practices into curricula and train education and cultural professionals for formal and non-formal education on sustainability and climate justice, in an interdisciplinary and multisectoral approach with children and youth engagement. This proactive approach prepares future generations for climate adaptation and resilience, addressing climate change as a pressing political issue. Moreover, enhancing investment and budget allocation for environmental education, climate mitigation, adaptation efforts and climate justice is essential. Additionally, public policies should embrace interculturality and bilingual education, respecting
the diverse ethnic cultures, traditional communities, and rural and urban populations, as well as addressing disproportionate impacts of climate change on marginalized groups. By doing so, we not only strengthen public educational frameworks but also safeguard the lives of individuals impacted by the global socio-environmental crisis and promote action now to make the transition to a just and sustainable planet.

4. **Democracy, Secularism and Human Rights:** Upholding democracy, secularism and human rights is fundamental in ensuring equitable access to education and culture for all. By championing democratic principles and protecting human rights, we create an environment conducive to the flourishing of diverse cultural expressions and the free exchange of knowledge and ideas, strengthening social cohesion and promoting a peaceful world. This can be done by unlocking the participation of families, communities, caretakers and by strengthening educational and culture institutions and communities relations and connection and through knowledge democratization in all forms and realities, with a human rights perspective.

5. **Accountability and Monitoring:** Implementing robust mechanisms for accountability and monitoring, drawing from the Right to Education conceptual and legal framework, is essential in safeguarding the right to education and culture. This entails ensuring availability, accessibility, acceptability, and adaptability of educational and cultural resources. Additionally, integrating the concept of education and culture into monitoring frameworks enhances their relevance and effectiveness in promoting equitable access and quality.

6. **The Future of Education and Culture:** As we envision the future of education and culture, it's imperative to prioritize innovation, inclusivity, and sustainability. By harnessing the potential of emerging technologies with regulation and safety, embracing diverse cultural perspectives, and fostering lifelong learning, we can cultivate dynamic and resilient societies where education and culture thrive as cornerstones of human development.

II. Human Flourishing in the Global Community: Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

In the 21st century, achieving an inclusive society remains a complex challenge. The G20/C20 platform stands as a critical opportunity to address these challenges, recognizing that embracing diversity and promoting inclusion are vital for global flourishing, universal consciousness and collective progress. The pursuit of unity necessitates both personal and social transformation, transcending individual barriers and institutional paradigms, with education and culture playing a central role. Through integral and integrated approaches to the whole development, we can pave the way for a more inclusive and diverse global community, reaffirming our commitment to human unity in diversity and ensuring that all individuals thrive, regardless of their backgrounds or circumstances and to embracing a broader perspective than capturing partial realities. Overcoming these barriers demands a reimagining of
diversity, equity, inclusion and unity embracing its potential to enrich and empower every individual and society as a whole. A transformative education campaign has the potential to achieve these goals.

**Recommendations**

1. **Defending the rights of inclusion in education and culture, irrespective of origin, disability, autism, gender, sexual orientation, age, language, or race and ethnicity**, demands not only the establishment of adaptive public policies but also the creation of inclusive infrastructure. It is imperative to ensure that educational and cultural institutions are accessible to all and to develop and enforce policies that dismantle barriers rooted in racial discrimination, while also prioritizing the integration of migrants, refugees and marginalized communities, as well as anticipating the needs of future generations. It means also implementing measures against bullying, discrimination and all forms of violence.

2. **Promoting the implementation and maintenance of a transformative and intersectional educational system** that takes into account various dimensions of diversity for fostering inclusivity, dismantling systemic barriers, and promoting social equity within society. This can be done by embracing diversities - including neurodiversities - and promoting environments that ensure rights and empathy, with autonomy for all individuals, and social awareness among families, communities, and society for a truly inclusive present and future.

3. **Prioritizing public policies, with adequate financing and training** that encompass a comprehensive, inclusive, culturally sensitive, accessible, antiracist and cost-effective approach across all levels of the educational system. This includes both providing the institutions with the support of an adequate number of professionals as well as adequately preparing teachers and education professionals with specialized training and protagonism to effectively support and address the needs of diverse groups effectively and with excellence.

4. **Guarantee an inclusive, diverse and local-sensitive curriculum rooted in cross-cutting, comprehensive, and integrative approaches** ensuring inclusivity in education extends to instruction, structure, and formal support. It means respecting national and international frameworks promoting equity and addressing the issues of diversity in the educational and cultural ecosystem. It must focus on transversal interventions and practices, ensuring the rights of information, accessibility, communication, barrier elimination, and participation for all students and education and culture professionals. These approaches highlight the importance of cultivating an environment that values diversity, encourages collaboration, and eliminates teacher-learning obstacles, thus enhancing educational quality for all.

5. **Focus on inclusion** and appreciation of the existing culture when curating cultural and pedagogical projects for culture and formal and non formal education as well as ensuring barriers to education and culture such as poverty, maternity, and environmental factors are accommodated or eradicated. This means ensuring inclusion in the curriculum, in spaces, in educational and cultural relationships, and promoting popular education that embraces the
culture of all children, youth, adults, elder people, and individuals with disabilities, deaf individuals, those with global developmental disorders, autism, high abilities, or giftedness; of women, girls, LGBTQIAP+ individuals; of black, indigenous, Afro-descendant people; of refugees, migrants, and those seeking asylum; and of people from rural areas, forests, riverine and remote areas.

III. Digital transformation and access

In today's digital age, ensuring equitable access to information and technology is paramount for fostering inclusive education and cultural development. Recognizing technology as a language and the internet as a territory, we must view them not as ends in themselves, but as powerful tools to be harnessed for the advancement of knowledge and expression. This necessitates a multifaceted approach that encompasses universal access to digital resources, community-centric empowerment, open knowledge initiatives, and ethical deployment of AI. Moreover, prioritizing data privacy and security is essential to safeguarding individuals’ rights in the digital realm. By embracing these principles, we can bridge the digital divide and empower communities, particularly in underserved regions, to actively participate in global dialogues and decision-making processes, thereby fostering a more equitable and interconnected world.

Recommendations

1. **Equitable access to Information**: Promote equitable access to information by recognizing technology as a language, the internet as a territory and the significant connectivity as tools for education and culture, not an end in itself. This stance emphasizes the utilization of digital resources for inclusive communication, encompassing diverse formats and information accessible across various contexts and realities. It also champions the representation of diverse voices within society.

2. **Universal Access to Digital Resources**: Ensure equitable access to the Internet and cultivate digital literacy and autonomy in Educational and Cultural Institutions and also in non-formal education and culture processes, particularly in underserved regions to empower the Global South to engage meaningfully in international dialogues and decision-making processes.

3. **Community-Centric Digital Empowerment**: Foster collaboration across sectors to provide tailored digital tools and devices that address the specific needs of communities. Emphasize the establishment and fortification of community networks to enhance connectivity and resource sharing.

4. **Open Knowledge Initiatives**: Advance open knowledge strategies and digital public goods to democratize access to educational resources. Develop intuitive platforms and tools for generating and disseminating educational content in diverse multimedia formats, catering to communities affected by the digital divide and by the infrastructure gap.

5. **Ethical AI Deployment**: Ensure transparency and accountability in the integration of AI tools within educational and cultural contexts, whether by governmental bodies or private entities.
Prioritize a public and human rights-based approach and equitable access to technology. Enhance regulation of private sector involvement in educational and cultural technology, internet access, and AI provision to ensure equitable access and responsible usage – on economical competition, transparency responsibilities, ethical and human rights standards, etc.

6. **Data Privacy and Security:** Uphold data protection principles in the utilization of technologies in education and culture. This entails robust safeguards against potential privacy breaches, applied consistently by both public and private stakeholders.

IV. The central role of education and culture professionals

In the ever-evolving landscape of global civilization, educators stand as catalysts for transformative change within educational institutions. With the majority of the world's young learners concentrated in the Global South, educators wield significant influence beyond the confines of classrooms, shaping the values and aspirations of future citizens in communities worldwide. Rather than solely addressing surface-level issues within educational systems, attention must be directed towards empowering educators and educational leaders as agents of meaningful change within their regions and communities. Essential to this transformative agenda is the personal and professional development of educators themselves, enabling them to create nurturing learning environments that foster socioeconomic whole sustainable development, peacebuilding, and real-world problem-solving. This approach is particularly vital in regions where education is deeply intertwined with cultural values, underscoring the importance of investing in the empowerment of those who guide the journey of learning.

Recommendations

1. **Expanding on the concept of the education and culture professionals subjects and promoting democratic management mechanisms and participation** in the discussion and development of public policies, considering, in addition to teachers and artists, also all the education and culture professionals as managers, coordinators, secretaries, assistants, mediators, lunch waiters/cooks, doormen, families, students, communities etc. This includes also the implementation of local communities and education and culture institutions partnerships in the territories, taking into consideration the need of media and spaces for public information-sharing on the local scenarios of culture and education.

2. **Value all education professionals inserted in educational institutions (formal and non-formal)** ensuring physical working conditions and health for education and culture professionals is paramount to fostering a conducive teaching-learning environment. This involves not only providing adequate facilities and resources but also prioritizing the mental well-being of educators and guaranteeing decent salaries in accordance with the economic wealth of the countries that make up the G20 and other countries in the world, career and remuneration plans for all education professionals in school institutions and with equal salaries for education professionals with other professionals at the same level of training. Education and culture
training must embrace specific themes as inclusion - including neurodivergence -, digital tools and ethical use of technology, focus axes of 2024 C20 Education and Culture WG.

3. **Promote international coordination for initial and continuing training of education and culture professionals** (between undergraduate and postgraduate courses: specialization, master's, doctoral and postdoctoral studies, etc.), allocating human and financial resources for ongoing training and international exchanges of teachers, school administrators to provide quality education to their respective needs. It includes the implementation of intercultural programs within and across nations, fostering the exchange of social actors and initiatives, towards the promotion of sustainability and climate education, knowledge, cultures, languages, technologies, peace and citizenship.

4. **Recognize the potential of art and artists for sustainable economic and social development at all levels**, considering the centrality of international artists to ensure better engagement and interaction among peoples, groups, communities, and governments towards sustainable economic and social development, by guaranteeing that artists play a key role in local, national and international spheres. It includes the mobilization of international artists to help Member States to achieve maximum progress on the SDGs in the light of the fast approaching target year of 2030, by strengthening cooperation and dialogue with the UNESCO’s Program Goodwill Ambassadors, Artists for Peace and Champions.

V. Lifelong Learning, Character and Holistic Growth and Global Citizenship

From early childhood education to lifelong learning initiatives, the educational landscape must prioritize comprehensive access and cultural inclusivity to ensure the holistic development of individuals across all stages of life. As we navigate its complexities, embedding global citizenship education, fostering character building, individual's role in the society and intercultural competence across all educational levels is paramount in nurturing self-understanding, empathy, spirituality and democratic perspective, and respect for cultural diversity and human rights. By prioritizing these values and initiatives, we pave the way for the transformation of individuals and society for a more inclusive, interconnected, and resilient world.

**Recommendations**

1. **Whole Education for Life**: Embrace experiential learning and community engagement in rural and urban areas, champion indigenous, traditional and popular cultures and knowledge systems, and address character and holistic well-being. Prioritize investments in the mental health of children and young people in school environments as a strategy for protecting human rights and strengthening resilience to face humanitarian, climate and environmental disasters. Strategies encompass the promotion of cultural and educational inclusion and social justice through whole education and culture promotion.
2. **Early Childhood Education**: Bolster investment in education to ensure comprehensive access and quality education from early childhood education to old age. Promote initiatives fostering holistic development, covering cognitive, social, emotional, and physical aspects tailored to all learners within their diversity and looking at the infancy culture. Forge partnerships to promote a context of flourishing opportunities in education and culture and of protagonism for education and culture professionals, establishing partnerships between educational institutions, caregivers, and community bodies to provide robust support for early childhood development and lifelong learning.

3. **Basic Education (Primary and Secondary Levels)**: Fortify the right to education and foundational education through ensuring adequate funding, conducive working conditions, teacher training, infrastructure, and social quality education as paramount for basic education. Advocate for inclusive policies dismantling barriers for marginalized populations, including those from low-income backgrounds, ethnic minorities, and children with disabilities. Integrate cultural diversity and heritage preservation into curricula to foster intercultural understanding and respect among students.

4. **Higher Education and Vocational Training**: Expand access to higher education and vocational training for all, including adults and elders seeking skill enhancement or career transitions. Cultivate exchanges between science, technology and innovation in collaboration between educational institutions and the needs of socioeconomic sustainable development.

5. **Adult Education and Lifelong Learning**: Cultivate a culture of lifelong learning by providing accessible and inclusive education for adults and the elderly of diverse backgrounds. Develop community-based learning initiatives empowering them to guarantee their human rights holistically. Invest in adult literacy to face total and functional illiteracy and in continuing education programs to address foundational skill gaps and promote social inclusion and socioeconomic empowerment.

6. **Cultural Enrichment and Heritage Preservation**: Uphold cultural diversity, heritage preservation, and the arts as integral to lifelong learning and community vitality. Allocate resources for cultural heritage and institutions, museums, libraries, and community centers to offer educational programs celebrating cultural heritage and fostering intercultural dialogue. Foster partnerships among cultural entities, educational institutions, and local communities to cultivate inclusive spaces for cultural exchange and artistic expression.

7. **Global Citizenship and Intercultural Competence**: Embed Global Citizenship and Human Rights Education across all educational levels to nurture understanding, empathy, and promotion of cultural diversity and human rights. Facilitate cross-cultural exchanges through student, teachers and education and culture professionals programs, international partnerships, and virtual interactions. Empower educators and culture professionals with training and resources to impart intercultural communication and critical media literacy, preparing students for active engagement in an interconnected world.
C20 Brazil 2024 Education and Culture Working Group

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