



## Students and Pupils Experiences with the Covid-19 Pandemic

Foto: Mahmut Koyas

# First Impressions of the International PoliTeknik Questionnaire



İNGİLTERE - HİNDİSTAN - VİETNAM - UGANDA - GÜNEY AFRIKA - TÜRKİYE - İSVEÇ - EKVADOR - PERU - MADAGASKAR - KIBRIS - ALMANYA



The world has faced an abundance of new challenges during the CoVID-19 pandemic; we have seen a great impact on health, economy and education. This questionnaire is a small initiative taken up by PoliTeknik to reach pupils in order to understand the difficulties they faced during this global crisis. There has been a sudden shift from traditional classrooms to digital learning and an increased requirement of digital resources.

Teachers, and students hardships are inflated. This questionnaire would help us better understand your situation and would play a crucial role in helping us to extrapolate our data to a larger group of students.

**Link to the questionnaire in different languages:**

- <https://forms.gle/mnmL7FPDD7Sk88LQA> (English)
- <https://forms.gle/Nz38JpbyuPteXsKV7> (Spanish)
- <https://forms.gle/TrytWzo9bjHVqcf19> (Portuguese)
- <https://forms.gle/ApaHBc2bjmdNr2gQ6> (Turkish)
- <https://forms.gle/EKtW8a4TCRzccPML9> (Macedonian)

The questionnaire includes a large variety of multiple choice questions. We will use data collected from these to publish results, establish

common themes and present general analysis of the effect of CoVID-19 on students in our upcoming issues.

We would like to thank our partners, and students across the world, who took time to share and respond to our survey. As more responses come in, we would be able to present concrete themes that have become everyday facets of education during the pandemic. This would help researchers and scholars initiate specific local studies which would, in turn, help them come up with novel solutions to deal with issues that have plagued education during this time.

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PoliTeknik United  
Global Invitation

### INVITATION for an eBook co-publication of Student' Unions

This is a call! A call that go beyond our local and national scaled conditions to meet our shared platforms at macro level. We see the necessity to share our views, to interact with each other and, to articulate shared benefits. It is clear that we have enough reasons for such an interaction.

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PoliTeknik United  
International Questionnaire

### Students and Pupils Experiences with the Covid-19 Pandemic - First Impressions of the International PoliTeknik Questionnaire -

The questionnaire includes a large variety of multiple choice questions. We will use data collected from these to publish results, establish common themes, and present general analysis of the effect of CoVID-19 on students in our upcoming issues.

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Students' Positions  
Comments and Demands

### FREE HEALTHCARE as a HUMAN RIGHT

Demands:

- Free Healthcare: Physical and Mental Healthcare must be provided to every single human being with a standard universal quality.
- Selling of healthcare in any form must be banned and declared a crime against humanity.

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Sibiya Thandeka Patience

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### TEACHER EDUCATION AND GLOBAL ISSUES:

**The Role Of Higher Education In Developing A Sound Teacher Knowledge And Implementation Of Sustainable Development In Schools.**

This article seeks to explore the role of higher education through teacher education in assisting teachers who are both in training and working, to deliver a pedagogy that is sustainability-driven.

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## PROJECT "EXTENSION of HUMAN RIGHTS to EDUCATION

UDHR  
DRAFTING COMMITTEE 1948

### Project Extension of Human Rights to Education

#### Universal Declaration of Human Rights – Article 26

1.  
Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.

2.  
Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.

3.  
Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children.

<http://www.unhcr.org/EN/UDHR/Pages/Language.aspx?LangD=eng>

#### PROJECT GOAL\*

The Project "Extension of Human Rights to Education" has been conceptualised as a council to the UN. Various social actors involved in the extension of human rights to education will work out different aspects of this matter with the aim of formulating a "Declaration on the Extension of Human Rights to Education" to the UN for voting. The project focuses on Article 26 of the UN Declaration of Human Rights which is to be modified/supplemented in the sense of a progressive enlargement. The original deadline for submitting the Declaration to the UN was 10th December 2018, the 70th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This date is considered by management to be the time to fully develop the project, which is expected to take several years.

#### KNOWLEDGE

When we came up with an idea for changing the Article 26 of UN Declaration of Human Rights, we shared it with our close circle and one of our friends said that: "Yes, this Article can be amended, but only after a great battle!"

Anything can come to an end at any time, and everyone or everything may have to start over from the current point. In any case, humanity will live and learn through a conscious activity based on its free will whether it adopts human rights permanently before a big disaster or after.

In this determinist time-course, we prefer to leave audience grandstand, and this move indicates a tremendously dynamic situation; we have no doubt that in this project, there is a quality of life which emerges thanks to an engagement occurred in an optimistic manner and in harmony with the human's social nature. Therefore, cooperating with you in this project would be a great pleasure for us.

\*<http://politeknik.de/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/PROJECTDOSSIER-EN.pdf>

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TEACHER EDUCATION AND GLOBAL  
ISSUES:  
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## STUDENTS' VIEWS - AN EBOOK PROJECT

### INVITATION FOR AN EBOOK CO-PUBLICATION OF STUDENT UNIONS

Dear Student Friends from  
all over the World,

**This is a call!** A call to go beyond our local and national scaled conditions and to meet on a shared platform at a macro level! We see the necessity to share our views, to interact with each other, and to articulate our shared benefits. It is clear that we have enough reasons for such an interaction. The **COVID-19 pandemic** has shown us that humanity is a whole entity; however, the **economic, social and political crises** as well as **the destruction of nature** are equally valid examples for the previous claim.

**This is an Invitation!** We had witnessed that students across the world are listing their demands and are dreaming for a better future, and more just future regarding their natural right to education. All these efforts are precious, and their realization would mean a great success. We, **the Students eBook Project** seek to materialize such

realization and to take steps to become voice such aspirations to global scale.

Because of this reason, we have managed to come together from different walks of live across the world, **Latin America, Africa, Europe, Oceania, and Asia**. We kindly invite you and would like to see you in our ranks!

The title of the eBook is:  
**"STUDENTS' VIEWS - Human Rights to Education in Times of Covid-19 and other Crises"**

Dear friends,

With this in mind, we would like to invite you and your organization to be a part of this mission through writing an article for our new eBook. This eBook will be a co-publication with all students' unions who accepted our invitation. This eBook will focus on students' perspectives on the following topics:

1. Ideas and suggestions on the Extension of the Human Right to Education
2. Student protagonism and social movements
3. Colonialism, International policy, Economy, Independence
4. National education policies and current education reforms
5. Teacher training and Human Rights
6. Black lives matter and other antiracist or antifascist movements
7. Covid-19 and its consequences to education
8. 100 years of Paulo Freire and his legacy

We would like to hear personal perspectives/experiences with socio-political changes affecting education, Covid-19 psychological impact on students, social movements, and so forth.

We are in constant contact with professors, scholars, UN, UNESCO etc. so that we can secure funds in order to get physical copies of this eBook published. With a plethora of views on all these topics, we aim to understand global situation of accessibility to quality education better.

A further project could be the organization of an **international scientific survey** with students on the **Extension of the Human Right to Education**.

The desired length of the article is **minimum 2,500 words and maximum 7,000 (including references)**. Deadline for receiving these articles is **september 2021**.

### Students' eBook Project Members

Politeknik Newspaper **INTERNATIONAL** • Malawi National Students Union **MALAWI** • Southern African Students Union **SASU-SOUTH AFRICA** • Student Federation of Peru **FEP-PERU** • Students' Federation of India **SFI-INDIA** • Independent Youth Association **BAGEP-CYPRUS** • Correnteza Students Movement **BRAZIL** • The International Relations Student Representation at the State University of Paraíba **BRAZIL** • Students Union of Catalonia **SEPC-CATALUÑA** • Federation of University Students of Ecuador **FEUE-ECUADOR** • Law Students' Union of **SRI LANKA** Kurdistan Students Association **IRAQ** • Global Students Association **INTERNATIONAL** • Hyderabad Students Unions **INDIA** • Revolutionary Students Front **RSF-PAKISTAN** • Students of Social Work University of Barcelona **CATALUÑA** • The Union of Communist Students **FRANCE** • Student from the University of Santiago **CHILE** • Communist Workers and Students for the Social Change • **PUERTO RICO** Youth Syriza **GREECE** • Youth Coalition For Education in Liberia **YOCEL-LIBERIA** • Students from the University of Toliara **MADAGASCAR** • Uganda National Student's Association **UNSA-NEC-UGANDA**

### STUDENTS' VIEWS

Human Rights to Education  
in Times of Covid-19 and other Crisis

### STUDENTS' VIEWS

Human Rights to Education  
in Times of Covid-19 and other Crisis

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STUDENTS AND PUPILS EXPERIENCES WITH THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

- FIRST IMPRESSIONS OF THE POLITEKNIK INTERNATIONAL QUESTIONNAIRE -

Link to the questionnaire in different languages:

https://forms.gle/mnmL7FPDD7Sk88LQA (English)  
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https://forms.gle/TrytWzo9bjHVqcf19 (Portuguese)  
https://forms.gle/ApaHBc2bjmdNr2gQ6 (Turkish)  
https://forms.gle/EKtW8a4TCRzccPML9 (Macedonian)

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

How has the pandemic changed your school activities?

Aysel T., UK (Grade 12): Pandemic has significantly affected my school activities. All of my friends live far away from me and now with the current guidelines, restrictions and travel bans, I am unable to meet with them.  
Gaurisa Y., India (Grade 10): Earlier there was a regular assembly time during which all students gathered, but now due to pandemic, no morning assembly is conducted. No curriculum activities are conducted in school during this period.  
Nguyen P. H., Vietnam (University student): I am able to learn normally during the school closure.  
Florah, Uganda (University student): I missed my school year.

David V., Ecuador (University student): Lack of necessary tools to carry out my tasks and learning difficulties.  
Daniela, Perú (University student): The complete change and cancellation of face-to-face classes and therefore cancellation of practices in hospitals, too, increased the limitation of the teaching-learning process due to the deficiency of access to the internet.  
Dharly Medhaly P. C., Perú (Superior): Difficulty in the issue of connectivity, as the internet is very slow and I have to recharge my cell phone every week.  
Anonymous, Madagascar (3ème année student): Nothing new, knowing that half of the lessons are not face-to-face.  
Anonymous, Madagascar (Masters Unversity student): This has developed a new system of teaching, learning and research.

Please elaborate on how the digital/online learning has an impact on your learning and overall development.

Aysel, UK: Digital/online learning has had a negative impact on my learning and development. Learning online is nothing like learning in person. It is a lot harder for teachers to utilize technology as it is all happening so fast.  
Abaho Badru, Uganda (University student): You lack face to face interactions with the lecturer.  
Dakshita, India (Grade 9): 9th grade is the base for 10th grade and the topics are not clear to us; if we don't know the topics of 9th then how would we do the

topics of 10th.  
Mary, Kenya: It has lagged me behind now I can't finish my course in time.  
Lakheni N., South Africa: The lack of contact with teachers made it difficult to grasp content.  
Recep D., Turkey: Since I have more time at home, my study time and naturally the amount of studying has also increased. So we can say it's a good development.  
Asya A., Turkey (Grade 8): Since the lessons are digital, people have more difficulty understanding. I have to work alone at home, and there is no suitable environment for me to work at home.  
Nihal, Turkey (Grade 9): I did not understand much online, I couldn't complete the notebooks.  
Emel U., Cyprus (Grade 12): I think it has both advantages and disadvantages, but for me, digital education has more advantages. My school was always inadequate socially and academically, and I was completing my education at home by myself. At the same time, I do not want to be in places that I could not get along with and dislike because of my psychological disorders, but I am aware that it is healthier for me to be in the same environment with my peers.  
Mehmet, Sweden: The learning process is badly affected, focusing on online lessons at home is difficult due to distractions.  
Mirian S., Ecuador (University student): In parts it is positive because those of us who have children can spend more time with them. The downside is that we can't understand the tasks and the classes well.  
Fernanda V., Ecuador: The impact is negative since some fellow students not

Pictures:  
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have not dwelled on it too much.  
Gaurisa Y., India: Due to online classes, I spend more time on phone and laptop. This resulted in negative impact on eyes and now I have to wear prescription glasses.  
Florah, Uganda: It affects my eyes too much. Most especially to us who are myopic. I get no time for myself.  
Mary, Kenya: Having no money at times, I feel stressed since the class maybe going on and I've not attended.  
Lakheni N., South Africa: Since all the information was available online, it made me lack creativity and mindfulness.  
Anonymous, Deutschland (Grade 2): Headache  
Asya A., Turkey: I don't know but most of the day my head and back hurts.  
Anonymous, Turkey: My eyesight got worse but I am okay now.  
Emel U., Cyprus: houlder ache  
Mehmet, Sweden: Sometimes my eyes hurt.  
Digna, Ecuador: That I have problems with my eyesight. It hurts a lot; I cannot be in front of the computer. It is a strange despair.  
Mirian S., Ecuador: Partly yes, because it helps us to be more informed about what the world is going through.  
Cristina M., Ecuador (University student): Blindness, headaches until getting used to it. More time on the cell phone, a cybernetic vice.  
Franssua P., Perú: Currently my eyes are treated due to an ocular deterioration. And insomnia; before my mind cleared from the university when I left it, and my house was my place of rest, of freedom, of feeling calm; now my house is my university and I cannot find a place of clearing my mind. This is why I

always feel rushed, with my mind very accelerated.  
Dharly C., Perú: The eyes are the first affected, due to me spending hours with the cell phone listening to classes and doing virtual work. I was frustrated about the amount of work given by teachers and the lack of communication that we could have despite the distance and we could not consult doubts.  
Anonymous, Madagascar (Masters University student): My eyes are often tired. It reduced my social life.

How do you think your friends are handling the pandemic?

Aysel, UK: I know that my friends are feeling as lonely, isolated and bored as much as I do.  
Gaurisa Y., India: My friends were fed up with the online classes due to network issues etc. They wanted that schools should be reopened.  
Tayebwa J., Uganda: It is not easy on their side, since they no longer have a good living. This has been due to closure of schools, parents businesses like restaurants and many others.  
Mary, Kenya: Some are involved in small businesses that they are doing.  
Lakheni N., South Africa: Most of my friends saw this as an opportunity for leisure.  
Anonymous, Deutschland: Same. Getting bored.  
Asya A., Turkey: They usually study, but they probably have concerns about their future as well.  
Nihal, Turkey: I don't think most of them can handle.  
Mehmet, Sweden: I can say that my friends were affected by the pandemic process as much as I did. In general, everyone naturally had a problem of focus. But I cannot say that the pandemic affects any of us psychologically / physically.  
Gissela Jamileth P. P., Ecuador (University student): Well I think my friends are coping with the pandemic by staying home and taking care of themselves.  
Fernanda V., Ecuador: The truth is bad, because without a good education you don't learn anything.  
Yulissa De L. C., Ecuador (University student): Bravely together with their families trying to survive against the tremendous situation that we have in the country.  
Daniela, Perú: With stress, fatigue and worry about not knowing what will happen to us in the future.  
Franssua P., Perú: Peru: Like me. It is difficult. At first it was not, but now you feel the consequences of the teachers' failure to establish a new virtual methodology.  
Anonymous, Madagascar (3ème année student): My friends (and me included) are very introverted types so we handle it pretty well.  
Anonymous, Madagascar (Masters University student): Considering the moderate

impact of the pandemic, it hasn't changed much in their lives.

How have your outdoor activities (cycling, running, skateboarding etc.) changed during the pandemic?

Aysel, UK: There has been a significant decrease in my outdoor activities. I make less effort to go outside now; before lockdown, school would have been my excuse to go out but now I don't have an excuse.  
Tayebwa J., Uganda: I find more time like never before to jog and play some soccer.  
Dakshita, India: During the starting 2 - 3 months I couldn't even go out from my home but after some time I started doing cycling with my friends. Before the pandemic, I was not even able to go cycling because of my busy schedule which started with school, then tuition, then study, sleep and repeat.  
Lakheni N., South Africa: Although it was lockdown, we still went to the gym.  
Anonymous, Deutschland: Everyone stays at home.  
Asya A., Turkey: I only go out twice a week I hardly ever go out.  
Nihal, Turkey: It did not change.  
Mehmet, Sweden: I only ski as an outdoor activity. This year I was deprived of this activity due to the low snow level for a period of time; when it snowed, the weather was really cold, this again deprived me of skiing. But in general, these have nothing to do with the pandemic.  
Marjorie, Ecuador (University student): Well, during this pandemic I haven't been out doing any physical activity... I used to do it before but not now.





Yulissa De L. C., Ecuador: There is not much time. Most of my time is dedicated to university and home responsibilities.

Nayeli, Ecuador (University student): Being in close contact with people who do not live with you increases your risk of exposure to someone infected with the virus that causes CoVID-19.

Daniela, Peru: Total cancellation of going out since the national lockdown began.

Dharly C., Peru: I do not do any outdoor activities due to fear of being infected or that it can infect my family. I prefer to mainly avoid it.

Anonymous, Madagascar (Masters Unversity student): Everyone took advantage of the free time to get some fresh air.

How have your outdoor social activities (socialising with friends, grandparents, visiting parks and malls with friends) changed during the pandemic?

Gaurisa Y., India: Since the pandemic started, we were at home for 4-5 months. No outdoor social activities were there.

Tayebwa J., Uganda: People went in panic especially concerned for our grandparents whose healthy is always weak. To avoid unnecessary spread of the disease we are advised to remain in our homes.

Mary, Kenya: We have no money to pay for the activities, pandemic destroyed all our plans.

Lakheni N., South Africa: Still had access to see my grandmother.

Anonymous, Deutschland: We are afraid of coronavirus so we dont go out.

Asya A., Turkey: Since it is a pandemic, I can neither hug my grandmother and grandfather, nor can I go and visit them out of fear, same for my friends too.

Maheer, Turkey (Grade 7): My social activities have decreased.

Mehmet, Sweden: There is nothing preventing me from seeing my relatives online. I can arrange time with my friends and travel as I want.

Daniela, Peru: We avoid face-to-face meetings but we communicate daily with each other by calls.

Dharly Cumpa, Peru: It is diminished, since we have to take care of my grandfather and for the same reason we have to take care of ourselves in order to take care of him.

Marjorie, Ecuador: At the beginning of the pandemic, no one saw anyone to avoid having contact, but after all the time that has passed we have started to see each other again but with due security (mask and alcohol).

Wilber B., Ecuador (University student): Because I have always lived with my parents and my grandparents and I hardly ever leave the house.

Nayeli, Ecuador: Public health restrictions caused by the pandemic of COVID-19 have led to the cancellation of festivals, concerts, and other events.

Anonymous, Madagascar (Masters University student): It didn't really have an impact because social life continued in my country

What do you think about the rules of conduct like wearing masks and social distancing?

Aysel, UK: I think it is completely a smart thing to inform people about but the people need to respect and strictly follow these rules and only then will it be beneficial. They mustn't disregard it for things like 'comfort' etc.; however, of course there are exemptions who cannot wear a mask due to medical reasons but can always still socially distance.

Gaurisa Y., India: People in my area believe that rules are meant to be broken. Only a few sensible people follow the pandemic rules.

Abaho Badru, Uganda: They've much helped in preventing spread of CoV-ID-19.

Abaho B., Uganda: They are helping us and we should continue putting them on as number one priority.

Lakheni N., South Africa: Rules of conduct helped mitigate increase in the number of CoVID infections, especially in public schools.

Anonymous, Deutschland: Very important.

Asya A., Turkey: I think I comply with what should happen, but I also think that this is not enough. I think the measures should be tightened even more.

Recep D., Turkey: This is a requirement. No matter what we think, we have to fulfill.

Emel U., Cyprus: I think the most accurate one is the rules and recommendations of the World Health Organization so I follow all of them.

Mehmet, Sweden: Of course, these rules are important to prevent the virus from spreading, but where I live there are not many such rules in the country, but those who want to follow the social distance rules and wear masks. But there is no such restriction in general, the restriction in the society in order to slow the virus was only those who are sick or symptomatic should stay home.

Ceyda, Sweden: It's a good thing.

Daniela, Peru: It is a measure to prevent the spread of the virus. Strictly complying with it will help to ensure that fewer people become infected and / or die.

Luiggie, Peru (University student): That it is effective, but there should be raised even more awareness in the population about the importance of its use.

Nayeli, Ecuador: Masks help stop the transmission of the COVID-19 virus, but,



as many parents have found out, it does not mean that it is easy to get children used to using them.

José Gustavo A. C., Ecuador (University student): The use of masks is very necessary to protect from this pandemic and alcohol is to disinfect in order to not spread the virus.

David V., Ecuador: I think that with the help of masks we could end the virus, but unfortunately there are people who do not comply with the provisions.

Anonymous, Madagascar (3ème année student): Social distancing hasn't changed the way I behave knowing that I don't like human contact. As for the other rules of conduct, they did not bother me.

Anonymous, Madagascar (Masters University student): Not so efficient as a means to struggle..

How do you think your teachers are handling the pandemic?

Aysel, UK: I know that teachers are trying their best; however, it can be extremely difficult for them to fully utilize technology in the most helpful way possible.

Dakshita, India: I have no idea about it. It may be also very difficult for teachers as well especially those who don't know much about using technology.

Florah, Uganda: They are poor and suffering.

Tayebwa J., Uganda: It's not simple since their work was put on halt due to closure of schools. And they no longer earn a penny some had to change to other casual labor like brick laying etc.

Mary, Kenya: The teachers are trying their best to make sure we're being taught.

Lakheni N., South Africa: Teaching style hardly changes. Teachers felt unsettled during class time following the addition of technology and the raging pandemic.

Anonymous, Deutschland: The teachers are good. The ministry is bad. They make decisions, give nothing to teachers, tablets or time.

Anonymous, Turkey: I don't know, I am responsible for myself. It doesn't interest me how they cope with it.

Dilara, Turkey (Grade 7): Teachers follow the mask distance and health rules.

Mehmet, Sweden: I think online education has also been bad for teachers, the teacher may have to explain the same thing several times because students are not fully focused. Therefore there may be a boredom with the teacher.

Ceyda, Sweden: Sometimes good, sometimes bad.

David V., Ecuador: They help us as much as they can and we likewise appreciate that they are doing their best for our learning.

Nayeli, Ecuador: Teachers and professors protrude with their daily and individualized monitoring that they carry out with their students through the different channels, such as email, conference calls, and tools from Google Classroom.

Wilber B., Ecuador: I cannot say it on his behalf, but he always advises us to practice social distancing and the use of masks.

Franssua P., Peru: Like us; surely they are still looking for how to take the weight of long and tiring classes from us.

Luiggie, Peru: Stressed, but they do what they can by adapting to the available technologies.

Anonymous, Madagascar (3ème année student): Not bad. They did their best to make up for school hours before the exams but it was rather difficult.

Anonymous, Madagascar (Masters University student): they had to adapt themselves.

Do you have any friends or teachers who had to leave the school because of their financial situation?

Abaho B., Uganda: Since their parents and guardians couldn't raise tuition fees, some had to leave school.

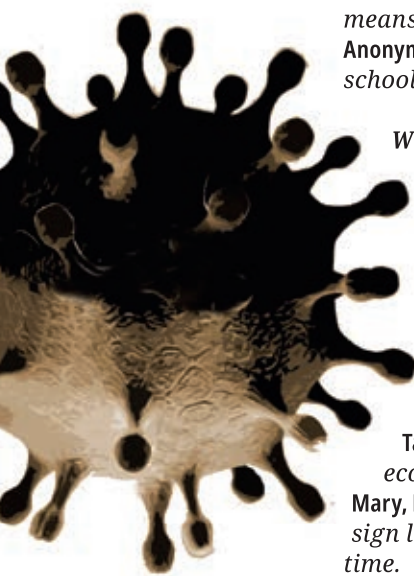
Tayebwa J., Uganda: Due to closure of schools my friend Julian (3rd year university student) got married. This was due to overstay at home and the economic implications.

Gaurisa Y., India: This situation didn't happen with my friends or teachers.

Mary, Kenya: [Teachers] weren't paid for the nine months when they were at home.

Anonymous, Deutschland: We go to school compulsory.

Anonymous, Turkey: I thought about dropping off, but my mom talked me out of it.



Emel U., Cyprus: Yes

Mehmet, Sweden: No, we do not pay tuition to the school as students. The economy of the country has not been affected as much as other countries since there are not many restrictions, so I think teachers can also get their salaries properly.

Ceyda, Sweden: No idea.

Franssua P., Peru: Many; they force us to stay at home and not work, but only us, while large companies continue to charge; banks, universities have no mercy on it.

Dharly C., Peru: Due to the lack of money to recharge the cell phone and lack of pc to carry out the tasks.

Fernanda V., Ecuador: My friend had to stop studying because she could not pay for the internet and since she does not have a computer it got even more complicated for her.

Erika, Ecuador (University student): Yes, because they do not have internet or devices with which to connect.

David V., Ecuador: A friend missed the semester because he did not have the means to continue studying online.

Anonymous, Madagascar (Masters University student): they had to choose between school or job.

Which subjects/contents do you think are more challenging in the time of distanced learning in the pandemic?

Aysel, UK: Chemistry or sciences in general are a bit more challenging as there is a lot of content to memorize learn and understand as well as huge amounts of application required.

Gaurisa Y., India: Maths and science, because teachers couldn't explain it using practical experiments.

Florah, Uganda: Mathematics, it is hard when not fully discussed with teachers and friends.

Tayebwa J., Uganda: Computer, biology experiments, art, engineering, economics, architecture.

Mary, Kenya: Sign language, it's hard to learn sign language online because sign language is a practical lesson, it needs enough sunlight, space and time.

Dakshita, India: Science (especially physics and chemistry), History, Maths. They need live interaction and the videos were in English which I can't understand clearly. Though in class they teach in English but teachers use some words/phrases in Hindi (my mother tongue) which helps us.

Lakheni N., South Africa: Mathematics.

Anonymous, Deutschland: All of them.

Recep D., Turkey: I think history is hard to learn online, I don't find other subjects challenging.

Duru, Turkey (Grade 6): I don't understand math very well.

Emel U., Cyprus: Non-verbal subjects such as mathematics and the ones that needed to be a more active listener.

Mehmet, Sweden: I think Physics and Chemistry are the most difficult lessons to understand during distanced education. I think these both courses are courses that really require special attention. I mean the student understands these subjects by practicing at school in the best way, it is very difficult to understand the subject with the help of a slide in distanced education.

Ceyda, Sweden: Math is very challenging.

Franssua P., Peru: Architecture courses that demand to have a very expensive PC that only universities have.

Daniela, Peru: Practices in hospitals.

Dharly C., Peru: Pre-professional practices.

Cristina M., Ecuador: Subjects that need theory and more practice (as the practice part cannot be developed).

Wilson, Ecuador (University student): I cannot answer technically but I can only contribute that the practice makes the professional.

Lizbeth, Ecuador (University student): Mathematics and English.

Anonymous, Madagascar (3ème année student): I have nothing to say about that.

Anonymous, Madagascar (Masters University student): No idea about that.

What are the challenges of online classes faced by you (or students with special needs you know)? How has your school addressed these challenges?

Aysel, UK: Students with special needs have permission to go into school so that staff can give them the extra help they need.

Mary, Kenya: The special needs students are facing challenges since majority have limited knowledge on online classes.

Lakheni N., South Africa: Difficulty in grasping content. Teachers made no efforts to hear our concerns.

Anonymous, Deutschland: One of the students don't have a computer. He uses a cellphone.

Anonymous, Turkey: Unfortunately I don't know.

Recep D., Turkey: There were problems with the internet connection, different robotic voices were experienced, our school had nothing to do because it was a personal problem.

Mehmet, Sweden: There is no major problem I encountered with online classes.

Luis Q., Peru (University student): Online classes are more difficult since it is making you more tired.

Marjorie, Ecuador: The need for a good internet signal and more importantly there are co-students who, as they work, sometimes connect and other times not.

Samuel, Ecuador (University student): Well, I think they are grasping it along the way when they are getting trained in it, because, as we know, nobody was prepared for this but I think that little by little it has been improving.

Nayeli, Ecuador: It has been a complex process because nobody was prepared, neither the establishments, nor the families, and unbelievably, not even the students.

Anonymous, Madagascar (Masters University student): Difficult access to network, adapting to the online course are some of the challenges we had to face. Our school has set up networking rooms for students in order to compensate for this.

Other than the challenges faced in the education during the pandemic, could you please elaborate on other challenges like financial difficulties, bad nutrition/hunger, domestic violence, if you have to take care of small children (siblings or cousins) or elders (grandparents), or if you lost family members with CoVID-19, etc.

Gaurisa Y., India: My relatives also were CoVID infected. But they recovered in 14 days due to good hospital facilities.

Tayebwa J., Uganda: Financial implications are general the country lost more tax than ever before between the month of March and September due to the total lockdown of transportation, businesses, schools and other taxable ventures. However, on the other hand the online businesses thrived since it became the new normal.

Mary, Kenya: Financial difficulties have been the main challenge on my side, since I wasn't paid for nine months.

Lakheni N., South Africa: The pandemic has exacerbated the socio-economic differences in my community.

Anonymous, Deutschland: I do not want to study. My mother and father have it done by force.

Anonymous, Turkey: We are 3 siblings and there is a computer and a phone at home, one of my siblings was left uncovered. There were also family matters. My mother and father divorced during this period but no other problem occurred.

Asya A., Turkey: There are financial difficulties in our family as well as in many families, but apart from that, we do not have a problem such as violence or hunger.

Samuel, Ecuador: Well, it has been a bit more difficult to spend time with the family and take care of the little ones, because as we go out, we arrive with fear of whether we might have caught the covid virus and therefore we cannot get very close to the little ones and our grandparents.

David V., Ecuador: At the moment we have not lost anyone. We have taken the test and we came out negative by using a mask. We also have to find a way to work since the situation is very difficult economically!

Marjorie, Ecuador: So far no one in my family has caught the covid and no one has died from it either ... We take care of ourselves with homemade remedies that are very good. But yes, there are fellow students who are facing the low economy.

Luis Q., Peru: It is more difficult since you cannot control the young children or relatives' noise making.

Dharly C., Peru: Take care of ourselves too much and be cautious at all times, since the elderly are vulnerable people, so we must be more careful.

Anonymous, Madagascar (3ème année student): Personally, nothing has changed, everything is fine and I am isolated from the situation outside my city, so I cannot help you.

Anonymous, Madagascar (Masters University student): Personally, we nevertheless encountered a decrease in the profitability of our activities due to the pandemic.



# FREE HEALTHCARE as a HUMAN RIGHT

## STUDENTS' POSITIONS

### Independent Youth Association - CYPRUS

#### Comments:

It is a fact that free healthcare is a universal human right. It is the building block of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights that foresees the equality and freedom of dignity and rights of all human beings without any discrimination, and states that "Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person". Today, the whole world is going through a global pandemic; and, except a very few successful examples. It can be said that most of the states and their healthcare systems that they provide to their citizens failed and are still failing to give an effective response to Covid-19 pan-



Cyprus/Kyrenia Wikimedia Commons: View over Kyrenia from Kyrenia Castle - Kyrenia (Kyrenia) - Turkish Republic of North Cyprus

dem. Both economically strong and weak, developed and underdeveloped countries are facing devastating effects of the virus within every sphere of life. However, the production of vaccines by different states and widening use of various vaccines as the latest developments, created a degree of feeling of hope towards the global situation formed by the pandemic. On the other hand, while developed countries and some of the developing countries are able to produce their own vaccines or purchase adequate number of vaccines; underdeveloped countries do not have a sufficient infrastructure to produce vaccine and cannot afford to purchase vaccines. Therefore, the importance of the role of international organizations, espe-

cially the United Nations, is increasing in order to provide an equal and free spread of vaccines in the world, to support healthcare systems of various countries and to protect more lives of people throughout the world.

#### Demands:

The United Nations should take an action to help the developing and underdeveloped world because the virus will continue to spread if developed countries use vaccines and other effective methods to fight against the Covid-19 only for themselves. Furthermore, it is unethical to let people of the poor countries suffer more because of the pandemic.

- Firstly, the COVAX Initiative of the World Health Organization should be kept on the agenda of the UN and the world persistently. The UN should encourage all of the vaccine producers and states to get their support to create the pool of vaccines more comprehensively.
- Secondly, IMF and the World Bank should develop and formulate new economic policies in order to support healthcare system to countries with low GDP per capita. By financial aids, underdeveloped countries can improve their healthcare systems and the spread of virus in those certain countries can be slowed down.
- Thirdly, the United Nations should be an intermediary to bilateral or multilateral agreements among states that aim to help each other and to promote spread of vaccines.

### Students' Federation of INDIA

#### Comments:

A global pandemic such as the one the world has been witnessing for over a year now makes the necessity of a strong and sufficient healthcare system, that everyone can fall back upon regardless of their socio-econ-

omic condition, all the more important and vital. If we are to believe that every human has the right to live, then we must realize that the right to free healthcare comes as a subset to that idea. The idea that more money will fetch better healthcare provisions is absurd, unfair and downright cruel; we simply cannot have people ignoring their health or avoiding check-ups simply because they do not have medical insurances and know that they will not be able to afford the prescribed tests or medicines. This has proved to be extremely dangerous in recent times, not just for the patients themselves, but their families and society at large, too. Many Covid-19 patients have avoided getting tested, which has resulted in the increasing number of cases throughout the country. Especially in a time like this, when a large number of workers have lost their jobs, or have had a pay cut, making them pay exorbitant bills makes the



existing inequality between classes all the more evident. Health is one of the most basic aspects in a person's life, which needs looking after, and the fulfilment of that need should not depend on how much money someone owns; Universal free healthcare should be a basic right for all.

#### Demands:

- Everyone should have access to free healthcare of superior quality; the quality of the medical care should not be compromised just because it is free. Governments should allot a higher percentage of their budgets towards healthcare to make this happen.
- More emphasis needs to be put in

medical researches; the stipends/allowances of the researches should be increased.

- Free healthcare should include free universal access to therapy for the overall wellbeing of mental health.

### Lucie F. Razafimandimby & Saroy Remaney MADAGASCAR

#### Comments:

Madagascar is a country in which a big part of the population can't have access to water, food, education, health etc... However, the island has still shown a strong will to figure in with the countries that ensure a juridical protection of human health. In fact, the actual malagasy constitution mentioned in its 19th article : « The state recognizes and organises for every individual the right to health's protection from its conception by the organisation of free public healthcare, in which the free care results from the capacity of national solidarity », while making the Universal Declaration of Human Rights hers. Madagascar is also a country that is characterised by its strong attachment to traditional values. The fight against the pandemic has resulted in a throwback to traditional medicine which always had a fundamental place in malagasy society. This throwback that has been legitimated by an alternative against Covid-19, has awoken a feeling of unity between the nationals that had found in this alternative a recognition of their culture, which has been affirmed and confirmed.

This attachment to traditional medicine is explained primarily by a psychological ensurance. Secondly, traditional medicine is more accessible financially (an important number of the population lives under poverty), and also practical because it has the role of first aid in remote places.



But, even with all of that, the access to free healthcare is still an ideal to reach ; a consequent number of the population can't have access to healthcare due to the lack of basic health centers, dispensaries, hospitals in the countryside, for example, and even less the access to free healthcare. By the way, the sanitary crisis has been a revelation of inequalities in the access to healthcare, by putting the light on irregularities, anomalies, treatments and problems that fall in the malagasy's health domain. It's in that point of view that the access to free healthcare as a human right constitute an alternative against the inequalities in its accession but will certainly contribute in reducing the mortality rate caused by the lack of free healthcare. In the social level, it would play the role of balancing social inequalities due to the inequality of treatments in the health's domain.

#### Demands:

- That good health, as the first condition to allow the enjoyment of rights and liberties, should be recognized as a human right and that every States should reunite all the conditions, necessary means and a favorable environment for the enjoyment of this right.



- An enhancement of the control of the effectivity of the human rights in every country by a local independent organ, objective and timeless, all of that followed by a complain of intense sensibilisation and insertion of the population to the knowledge, enjoyment and protection of the access to free healthcare.
- That the access to free healthcare implies an equal accession without discrimination, a quality care and a multicultural environment that respects the values and local practices.

### Etienne Raveloson Fanomez MADAGASCAR

#### Comments:

It would be wonderful in a perfect world to have free healthcare. However, free healthcare implementation in a country imposes binding obligations on the state. As we all know, 'nothing is free in life'. Who is going to pay for the doctors and nurses and hospitals and medicines and equipment etc... Governments get all their money from taxes. If they don't get enough money from their citizens and businesses in tax, then they don't have enough to

spend. As there in the UK, they have free healthcare - and free schooling but at a huge cost to the taxpayer. Everyone employee pays a minimum of 25 per cent tax, rising to 40 per cent for higher earners. All services and products are taxed. One pays tax on everything one spends. Even when one dies one gets taxed on one's estate. In developing countries such as in Africa, where very few people pay tax, it would be impossible to have free health care. It is just too expensive to provide. They have their National Health Service there in the UK but it struggles all the time to provide a good service even with billions of pounds provided by the Government (taxpayer) each year. Suggestions:

#### Demands:

- Like Madagascar certainly needs more tax inspectors to make sure that businesses and people pay their taxes. Everyone hates to pay taxes but if one wants a Government to give a good service to the people, it needs to be properly funded by people and businesses all paying their tax...
- developing countries must develop a long term business plan for physicians integration, for their salary
- limit the population growth to avoid overcrowding then then state can provide free healthcare to everyone
- before people pay taxes, then they must have work so the infrastructure construction must be prior especially in the developing countries where joblessness and homeless are increasing.

In conclusion, free healthcare is the common dream of everybody as human rights. But so far, the developing countries face a lot of economic crisis especially after this pandemic of covid 19 striking the entire world.

### Revolutionary Students Front - PAKISTAN

#### Comments:

Today, people are not only suffering from Covid Virus but are also hurting from a broken, expensive and out of reach health care system. In countries like Pakistan where two-third of the population was already forced to resort to the non-scientific methods of health care, the situation is dire. The ruthless destruction of the environment by this profit-driven system has ushered in an era where the healthcare system will be humanity's first line of defence. The regressive policies of the World Bank and IMF to pri-

vatisate health care will further shrink the reach turning this situation into a human crisis. Given the challenges, we are facing today it has become necessary to acknowledge free healthcare as a basic human right. Furthermore, scientific inventions are a result of collective human development hence we believe it's the right of every human being to receive the covid vaccine free. The current profit and competition-based approach have failed to manage the socio-economic crisis. We will have to replace it with a need and cooperation based approach if we are to survive on this planet otherwise extinction awaits humanity.



Pakistan Institute Of Medical Sciences (PIMS) Wikimedia Commons: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Pims.jpg

#### Demands:

- Free healthcare physical and mental health must be provided to every single human being with a standard universal quality.
- Selling of healthcare in any form must be banned and declared a crime against humanity.

### Justin B. Geißler GERMANY

#### Comments:

Human rights form a realistic utopia, which is the ideal objective of a just society. The right to free healthcare is not only a question of good living conditions and a just society in the face of a global pandemic, rather, health is an essential basic condition for every human action. Some are born in countries where there is national healthcare to which everyone is legally entitled. Others will wake up worried about damage to their health, and they will accept damages to their health due to a lack of material resources. This is due to the fact that medical care is so expensive that people cannot effort it. However, there will always be a portion of any society that will be able to afford good quality healthcare, even when it comes at a high price. In light of the current pandemic, it is essential, to remember that the risk for future global pandemics will increase due to the fact that we are facing species extinction and climate change. This will be problematic especially for people that don't have access to free healthcare. They will either not be able to receive quality healthcare or seek it too late



Germany/Berlin Wikimedia Commons: Berlin Skyline Architecture City Germany Lights

to avoid financial ruin or in the worst-case starvation. Both will further inequality and violation of human rights of many people. Are we encountering an institutionally produced inequality that is politically wanted? Therefore, the author sees the need for free healthcare for everybody.

#### Demands:

The author is of the opinion that free healthcare is a human right:

- Everyone must have the right to free healthcare. This right includes free access to healthcare, which enables people to receive the best care to ensure their health.
- In order to work towards realizing and respecting human rights, it is essential that healthcare is further developed institutionally and medically.

### Federation of University Students of ECUADOR

#### Comments:

I believe that it is a great initiative to send the letter to the Secretary of the United Nations, it seems to me that we should address the letter stating that health is a universal human right and that governments have the obligation to provide the population free of charge, healthcare. comprehensive and quality health. universal.

Secondly, I believe that we must point out the importance of guaranteeing international cooperation mechanisms in financing in order to help countries where their health system has collapsed.



And the third thing is that the Covid vaccine is NOT marketed, and we urge governments to make vaccination plans transparent to the population so that business is not generated at the expense of health.

Continues on the next page ►



## Law Students' Union of SRI LANKA



### Comments:

- We are currently facing a global pandemic unlike any we have faced in the recent history. This is a completely novel situation not only for us as the general public, but also for the health care sector as well.
- Close analysis of different countries illustrate that while some countries have fared well, most countries have crumbled at the face of this virus. It can be seen that countries which have prompted asymptomatic patients and patients with mild symptoms to stay at home without resorting to hospitals for healthcare have not managed to grab control of the situation. These are mostly countries which do not provide free healthcare. Even if the government policy does not restrict the asymptomatic and patients with mild symptoms from resorting to hospitals, they themselves would be hesitant to do so aching to hefty medical bills and insurance charges.
- However it was seen that countries which promote free healthcare had higher rates of admission of asymptomatic patients to treatment centers at least if not for hospitals and thus were better equipped to control the situation to a certain extent.
- We believe that COVID19 global pandemic was an eye-opener for all countries and International Organizations to indicate it is time the World recognized free health care as a human right and that it should be read and interpreted in consistency with the right to life.

### Demands:

- To declare free health care as a Human Right and to make available globally. Also to ensure that all member states take necessary measures to provide free healthcare to ALL its citizens.
- To improve the infrastructure of Public Health universally and to initiate awareness campaigns to educate the public of personal hygiene and measures to be taken to protect oneself from infectious diseases.

## Federation of Students of PERU

Of our special consideration,

*Greetings from the Glorious and Centenary Federation of Students of Peru (FEP), the highest union of student representation in schools, colleges and universities nationwide.*

*The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed the shortcomings of the health system in Latin America, therefore, the students of Peru reaffirm our demand for health as a human right, in this sense, we are ready to collaborate in whatever is required to establish new forms of organization of the states to protect public health from private interests that are negotiating with the lives of the people.*



*In Peru there are many examples where human rights are commercialized due to the negligence of the state, which does not fulfill its role as guarantor of fundamental rights. That is why the FEP demands a New*

*Constitution for the Republic, which recovers the rights of all and protects health, education and others, from the mafias that traffic with the lives of Peruvians.*

*Without further ado, we attach the contact information at the end of the document, reiterating our greetings with fraternal appreciation and personal esteem.*

*With our best regards,*

## Youth Syriza - GREECE

### Comments:

- We face an unprecedented health crisis. The response of world governments is lukewarm at best. The current infrastructure, personnel and organisational structures cannot guarantee that all civilians receive the appropriate level of healthcare.
- The dominant neo-liberal paradigm influences health related policy making. Health is seen as a merchandise. All actions that support the public health system are thus unthinkable in the current political constellation.
- The constant barrage of tough lockdown measures and the worsening of the labour conditions have a negative impact on the well-being of civilians. Mental illness, especially among youth and the elderly is growing rampant and unchecked.
- It is very hard to totally isolate a group of people from the rest of the world. High rates of infections spread quickly. The nature of the pandemic means that the world is connected in this fight. Higher health care standards worldwide translates to fewer deaths and/or infections everywhere.

ter extent; they will be able to afford any good and possible health care. An institutionally produced inequality that is politically wanted? The author sees the need for free health care as given here. But there is still a brief outlook: we are facing the extinction of species and climate change today

as well as in the near and distant future with increasing intensity, which in its consequences (increasing risk of pandemics) will inevitably exacerbate the question of human health.



Greece/Athens  
Wikimedia Commons: <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Polytechn2.jpg>

### Demands:

- The world governments have to ensure high quality treatment for all civilians. The U.N can help governments to take the necessary action by:
- Openly declaring access to health care as a universal right. All member nations should pledge to offer free health care to all civilians. A UN ranking list can show how well member states adopt changes to their health policy making.
- The U.N. should launch a campaign with the purpose of educating the population on various health related subjects such as the importance of free universal health care and the basics of vaccination.
- The U.N. guidelines to governments and individuals should be updated to include advice on the mental aspect of the pandemic.

# Collateral Damage of the Covid-19 pandemic



Toygar Türkmya | Independent Youth Association- Cyprus

Covid-19 pandemic contaminated numerous sectors all around the world and forced every state to take various measures to reduce collateral damage of the pandemic on negatively affected sectors. For instance, besides healthcare sectors which are still being struggled the most, financial sectors, tourism sectors, educational services and many different sectors are also hit harshly by the pandemic and all of them are dependent on the measures and guidelines that the governments took and are following for almost a year. By prioritizing the public health, governments formulated their measures and followed different ways to fight against the virus. However, measures of governments also contributed to increase of collateral damages of the pandemic over several dimensions.

Within the educational dimension, there are many controversial issues that almost all of the states are currently facing. Firstly, according to Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of the Human Rights, education is accepted as a fundamental human right. During the Covid-19 pandemic, most of the states had to create an online education infrastructure and the great percentages of the countries are still continuing education online at different levels of schools. Although the aim was to reduce the spread of the virus by obstructing the gathering of too much people in a closed-door classroom or by decreasing the frequency of transportation; it created inequalities among students and in addition, among states. Even though developed states succeeded more than developing and underde-

veloped states, students all around the world faced and are still facing various inequalities. Accessing to internet, possessing technological gadgets to join lectures, having an appropriate environment to listen lectures and more can be counted as examples of inequalities that online education brought. Secondly, other health problems started to be seen within students and teachers as they sit in front of computers for long hours. Besides seeing problems which may be the most common, various kinds of physiological problems such as neck pain, back pain may be increased. Furthermore, it is a fact that to stare towards a screen for a long time affects negatively the psychology of a person, especially of a child. Thirdly, schools were offering students an environment to socialize

besides academic understanding of education. Therefore, students, especially the ones that can be considered as children, may struggle to get into interactions and communications with people that they are not familiar, as they didn't have the opportunity to socialize since the schools are closed.

These 3 points are just some of the most common and significant negative outcomes of closure of schools. There are more issues that it brought in terms of inequalities, socializing and more that the world is going to face as long-term consequences of the collateral damage of pandemic on the education.

Ángel L. Martínez | City University of New York

## Struggling Against Pandemic-sized Austerity at the City

At the City University of New York (CUNY), faculty and staff are struggling on two fronts: against Covid and against austerity.

First, the CUNY faculty and staff union, the Professional Staff Congress, has fought to ensure that all faculty and staff are safe by demanding standards before allowing a transition back to the campuses. Many issues are not resolved, such as inadequate ventilation, uncertainty in ensuring that workers could safely go on campus, and in the campus where I work, a lack of adequate drinking water.

Second, because State of New York has had a decades-long austerity regime at the university, many part-time and contingent faculty and staff have lost their jobs, including adjunct faculty, higher education officers, and college laboratory technicians. Union agitation has been critical in saving many of their jobs and the struggle to recover those jobs of people who are on furlough. Part of this is agitation for pay equity for part time faculty and staff, hiring more full time faculty, and free tuition under the campaign of a New Deal for CUNY.

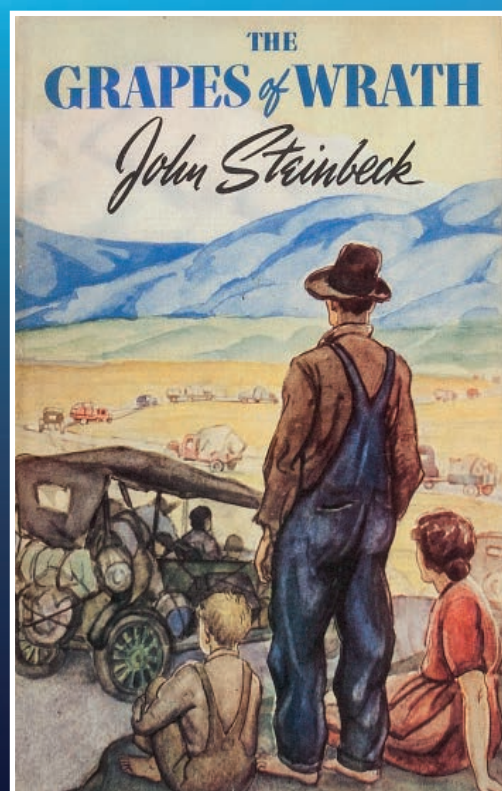
John Steinbeck

## The Grapes of Wrath

ISBN: 13: 9780670016907

April 2014 marks the 75th anniversary of the first Viking hardcover publication of Steinbeck's crowning literary achievement

First published in 1939, Steinbeck's Pulitzer Prize-winning epic of the Great Depression chronicles the Dust Bowl migration of the 1930s and tells the story of one Oklahoma farm family, the Joads, driven from their homestead and forced to travel west to the promised land of California. Out of their trials and their repeated collisions against the hard realities of an America divided into haves and have-nots



evolves a drama that is intensely human yet majestic in its scale and moral vision, elemental yet plainspoken, tragic but ultimately stirring in its human dignity.

A portrait of the conflict between the powerful and the powerless, of one man's fierce reaction to injustice, and of one woman's stoical strength, the novel captures the horrors of the Great Depression and probes the very nature of equality and justice in America. As Don DeLillo has claimed, Steinbeck "shaped a geography of conscience" with this novel where "there is something at stake in every sentence." Beyond that—for emotional urgency, evocative power, sustained impact, prophetic reach, and continued controversy—*The Grapes of Wrath* is perhaps the most American of American classics.

To commemorate the book's 75th anniversary, this volume is modeled on the first edition, featuring the original cover illustration by Elmer Hader and specially designed endpapers by Michael Schwab.

## Join us on social media...

### Dear Authors,

Politeknik has been in circulation in Turkish and German since 2014 and now, with the support of participants from all over the world, it has also been published in English, Spanish and Portuguese. This is our invitation to be part in the third edition of the year 2020, in which authors share their ideas and suggestions regarding the extension of the human right to education contained in Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

To this end, a group of volunteers is working in English, Spanish, German, Italian, Sri Lanka, Costa Rica, Colombia, Germany, Turkey, etc. Join forces at Politeknik United as part of a joint editorial board.

**Thematic areas, topics and editorial topics:**

- Human Rights Education
- Human Rights and Education
- Workers, Migrants, Refugees and Social
- International Policy
- History
- Economy

**Thank you.**

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### Extension of Human Rights to Education

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Vernor Muñoz

GCE Head of Policy, Advocacy & Campaigns - UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education (2004-2010)

# Education financing to reach the most marginalized: Challenges and solutions during COVID-19 response and recovery



Education is first a universal human right: it should be guaranteed to all people in all cases, including sanitary emergencies. The COVID-19 outbreak is affecting girls and boys, women and men differently. And the pandemic impact on education was huge not only in terms of the number of schools closings but in terms of the terrible effect on those who live in rural areas, people with disabilities those who lack of electricity, electronic devices and internet access. The COVID-19 pandemic has put the entire Sustainable Development Agenda at risk in particular the right to education, affecting around One and a half billion learners in almost two hundred countries where schools have closed and learning disrupted.

However, the pandemic just revealed the exclusion and discrimination that was there before COVID-19. Most of current education problems come from outside the education systems and that is why the term “education crisis” is relative. Education financing and in general public financing is part of this concern.

While the international law states that governments should take steps to the maximum of their available resources to realize the right to education, the international political frameworks are more precise around their obligations on education financing. For instance, the Incheon Declaration aligned to the Sustainable

Development Agenda states that all countries should allocate efficiently at least 4 – 6% of Gross Domestic Product and at least 15 – 20% of total public expenditure to education. These instruments also state that the Official Development Assistance by rich countries should achieve the target of 0.7% of gross national product for developing countries.

Despite these clear obligations, according to UNESCO, the total annual financing gap is around 39 billion dollars.

Now, it is well known that 97% of the new financing needed to achieve the Sustainable Development Goal on education would need to come from domestic resources so the international cooperation should prioritize their aid to fragile and low-income countries. At the same time, international financing mechanisms should not lend to countries at moderate or high risk of debt distress, especially during the pandemic and obviously, banks should not be empowered to doing business at the cost of the sanitary emergency.

A few words on the private sector: I think private sector should contribute building an enabling environment, no doubt about it, but private sector should not lead the education governance, which is clearly a State central obligation. The participation of big corporates in national and interna-

tional policy spaces on education should depend on companies having a reputation for solidarity, transparency and reciprocity – and paying fair taxes where they make profits is perhaps the most critical indicator of this. We should stress that the crisis in education financing arises in part from the aggressive tax avoidance by the richest companies that have left public budgets stripped of resources to fund quality public education.

Concerning the pathways to influence to mobilize action towards bold financing solutions for realizing the right to education, I would like to quickly suggest some urgent recommendations that the guests of this panel might wish to comment too:

In first place, states and international community must ensure the continuity of learning for all persons, including those who are most disadvantaged and likely to be excluded. Distance and virtual education is an option only if people has access to technology, so closing the digital and technological gap should be a priority.

Set progressive national budgeting, including the continued payment and incentives of teachers and school staff seems to be urgent as well. National budgeting for Education require four central obligations: Increasing the share of budgets for education, Increasing the size of budgets overall,

Increasing the sensitivity of budgets in order to respond to the most marginalized and Increasing the scrutiny of budgets, so governments are accountable to people. Setting progressive budgeting obviously require tax justice schemes: this would be a fundamental shift in how the private sector engages with and supports the public sector in education.

The international architecture for cooperation to education should be strengthened, so the Global Partnership for Education and the Education Cannot Wait Fund can get the resources needed to support fragile and low-income countries.

International Community should consider debt cancellation and debt relief to unlock funds in developing countries' budgets, and ensuring that the provision of additional finance does not put countries in higher risk of debt distress.

Finally, I think these difficult times offer a unique opportunity for all to review the current privatization and utilitarian trends of education and strengthen the public education systems so education remain as an enabling right, not only responding to the employers needs but to the development of respect for human dignity, as the Convention on the rights of the child states.

Rita W. Tunwah

Communication Officer YOCEL – LIBERIA

# A look at Liberia's Education System; The Effect of COVID-19



The issue of quality education in Liberia has been an old age discussion for decades now. After working in the education sector for over six years, the Youth Coalition for Education in Liberia-YOCEL and other partners have observed with grave curiosity serious gaps in revamping the education sector. The organization has proffered strong recommendations towards the betterment of the sector but up to date, these alarming weaknesses continue to exist.

Liberia suffered fourteen (14) years of civil war, then came the deadly Ebola disease outbreak and the COVID-19 pandemic which greatly weakened almost every sector of our country. Education, like most sectors, is one of the most affected areas that is struggling to recover from all these shocks.

It is a fundamental right for all human beings to have equal access to quality education as provided in Article 26 of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights which calls for free and compulsory elementary and primary education and the availability of technical and professional education for all. But Liberians continue to witnessed complex challenges in achieving this as the sector still remains engulfed with series of problems such as inadequate budgetary allocations, high number of out-of-school children, poor learning outcomes, poor infrastructures, unskilled and unqualified teacher and overage enrollment, lack of effective monitoring and evaluation amongst others.

According to findings from World Bank and other development partners, Liberia has made some significant progress over the years to revamp the education sector, ranging from policy reform and strategies some of which include but not limited to the Education Reform Act of 2011, the Getting to Best Education

Sector Plan for 2017-2021 (initiated by our former president Madam Ellen Johnson Sirleaf) the Girls' Education Policy to the COVID-19 Education Response Plan amongst others.

Despite all the interventions, there is still a lot to be done to eradicate the impact of the war, Ebola and COVID-19 on our already challenged educational sector as reports indicate that in all primary grades, the majority of enrolled students are three to six years older than the official age for the grade; and there is a wide distribution in the age range of students enrolled in each grade compared to other neighboring countries.

There still exists a huge gap in teacher to student radio and teaching outcome, according to a World Bank Report on the Education sector analysis of 2016, Across all schools and levels of education, the Student-Qualified Teacher Ratio (SQTR) ranges from 33.8 to 90.0, with a means of 43.5. but in eight counties across Liberia, the SQTR is above 60. These disparities are important because teachers account for approximately 85 percent of MoE expenditure, and access to trained teachers is very crucial to improving learning outcomes.

Liberia recorded its first confirmed case of COVID- 19 on March16, 2020 after WHO had declared the virus a global pandemic. The President of Liberia declared COVID-19 a national health emergency on April 10, 2020. In order to curtail the spread of the Corona Virus, the Ministry of Education (MoE) ordered the closure of all schools, which resulted to the disruption of learning activities for more than 2 million children, adolescents and youth.

To mitigate the impact of the above situation, the Ministry of Education and its partners established practical distance learning and wellbeing options for learners at home through

Radio lessons aired on several stations across the country. MoE also established the Education in Emergency (EIE) Technical Working Group which comprises of education and humanitarian sector partners who aligned their programming to contribute to the emergency response, including reprogramming of funds initially earmarked for regular development programs. The MoE also developed its own sector response plan which aligned to the National COVID-19 Response Plan.

These measures are highly commendable but could not be beneficial (ACCESSABLE) to majority of the ordinary Liberian children who resides in the remote parts of rural areas with no or limited access to smartphones, radio courage etc., especially giving the fact that digital technology has not been integrated into our education system.

It is evident that the longer children are out of school, the higher the risks that vulnerable children may not return to school again. Being out of school puts children, especially girls, at increased risk of teenaged pregnancy, sexual abuse, child marriage and other dangers. These negative impacts will be significantly higher for children most especially from poor households.

Since the closure of schools, there has been a high increase in the number of sexual and gender based violence cases including rape, teenaged pregnancy and other form of sexual abuses against adolescents, young women and girls.

Most adolescents and youth have engaged into street selling to help support themselves and their families while other young girls are involved into prostitution and some are forced into early or forced marriages.

Considering these troubling circumstances, it became difficult for most children to return to school after the Government of Liberia through the Ministry of Education declared schools reopened.

At present, the number of children enrolled in school has dropped drastically compared to previous years before COVID-19 due to these outlined factors.

In order for education to improve in Liberia, we must invest more time and resources into the sector. The Government of Liberia should see reason to increase the education budget by at least 20% or more as provided in the Dakar Framework, the Incheon Declaration and other National and international instruments to which Liberia is a signatory.

In addition, there is a need for the Ministry of education to strengthen monitoring and evaluation mechanism in all schools and school related activities across Liberia, most especially in the rural areas and the full implementation for educational instruments and policies that give equal access to Technical Vocational Educational Trainings-TVETS for all.

We are hopeful that the new road map and the COVID-19 Education Response Plan can be fully implemented to address the flaws in the Education sector and the numerous post COVID-19 challenges faced by children most especially girls, and development partners should provide the needed resource through technical, moral and financial support to ensure that this threat which is consider as a national security concern and borders on our human capital development portfolio. Urgent attention is needed sooner than later to revert this, taking it from worse to best.



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# "Education of Children: an Emergency in conflicts and crisis zones"

## Introduction

Maintaining and strengthening quality education is essential to combat humanitarian crises. Education is not given enough priority by humanitarian interventions and emergencies (wars, epidemics, natural disasters...). Emergency education must be a pillar of humanitarian aid.

Yet beyond learning, education supports some of the overarching goals of humanitarian aid such as protection, support, social services and familiar-ity.

Thus, Inter Agency Emergency Network that is gathering non-governmental organizations, governments and United Nations' agencies work together to ensure the right to education in emergencies and in the early stages of construction, food, housing, health etc. However, it is recognized that humanitarian aid should consider the overall well-being of human beings.

On september 02, 1990, twenty states marked the vigor of the International Convention on the Rights of the child, adopted on July 11 by the Organization of the African Unity which became the African Union (the African Charters of Rights and Welfare). However, it remains to apply it, to transform words into actions, to make words a reality.

Safe Schools Declaration's Commitments has limits, since "one in 10 lives in a country or zone affected by armed conflict are children, and one in four of these children do not go to school" (unicef.fr), and temporary learning schools are to be welcomed and encouraged given that education allows a return to normality and instills hope in the future.

## Chapter I : Recognition of Children's Rights

One can postulate, following several studies and research, that for a sustained development of the African countries in particular. It is more "profitable" to invest in the education, the literacy, the training of the women, who, as housewives.

Thus better contribute to the socio-cultural development of their descendants and from a double observation (although constituting more than 50% of the senegalese population.

that risk perpetuating this handicap. The hypothesis adopted is that the under-education of girls in Senegal results, to a large extent, from a "pre-disposition", from an unequal logic

Several socioeconomic indicators tend to prove that the senegalese women, despite her numerical importance in the global population and the central position which is hers in the family as an "interior" (private) space, as opposed to "exterior", to the public, occupies a relatively less privileged position.

In fact, in economic activity, women are still relegated to non-preponderant positions, for example in the pretty trade of the so-called informal sector, even if they also generate increasingly significant income thanks in particular to Female the Promotion Groups (GPF).

The Global Partnership for Education works for more than 65 developing countries to strengthen their education systems, so that all children, regardless of economic status, gender, disability or wherever they live, can go to school and benefit from learning. However, more than 260 million children are out of school and two-thirds of school children will finish primary school without knowing how to read.

The main issues facing children are:

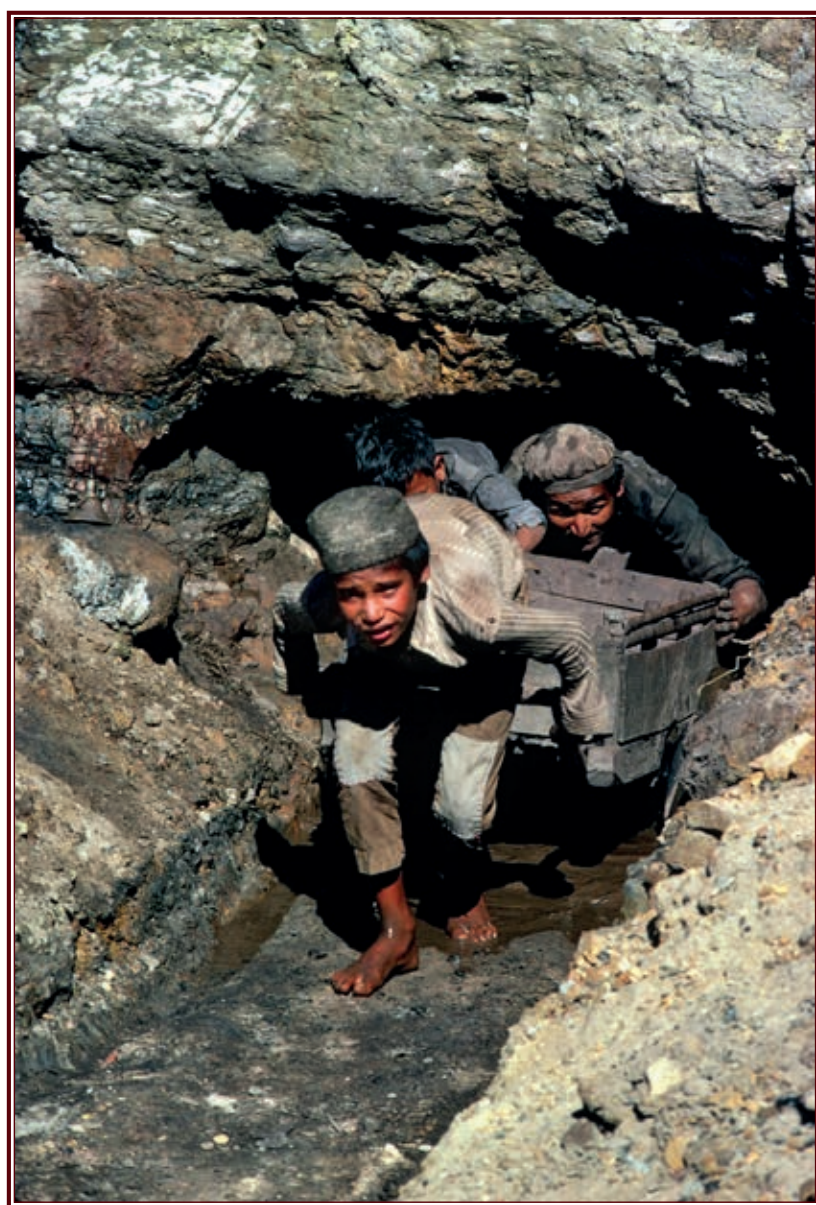
### - The war

In armed conflicts, children are often deliberately targeted or not adequately protected. In Mali, children have suffered greatly from the crisis due to the displacement, violence, sexual abuse, loss of, or separation from family members and their recruitment into armed forces or groups. Among other traumatic events and stressors is the deprivation of the right to education by certain actors. And if education is under attack, UNICEF should be:

"on the frontlines in conflict-affected countries to develop school safety plans, get children back to learning by providing psycho-social and informal learning opportunities, training teachers, rehabilitating schools and distributing supplies for teaching and learning" (unicef.org)

between men and women, which is still very significant in rural areas in particular and that the current crisis of the school strengthens notably.

In other words, strategies adopted to deal with the poor performance of the school system end up having negative effects on increasing the enrollment rate for women.



UN Photo: The Right of the Child, India, Unique Identifier: UN7736915

Women are only literate 19% when only 40.7% of girls go to elementary school and 10% go to secondary), the existence of glaring disparities in the under-education of girls according to the regions of the country.

The study deciphers the most determining factors of the phenomenon and analyzes the mechanisms

## "Education of Children: an Emergency in conflicts and crisis zones"

All of these are factors of hopelessness, demoralization, anxiety and general psychological distress.

In addition, sexual violence against civilian populations has become a feature of conflicts. The fear of such violence, which increases when the perpetrators are not held accountable for their actions, has the effect of weakening vulnerable populations. This can restrict the mobility of girls and women and may cause them to stay at home and avoid going to school.

### - Education

Schools can be seen as an embodiment of state authority ; therefore, they are considered legitimate military targets by non-state actors.

### - Poverty and Child Labor

The international trade sanctions imposed because of anti-regime protests have had a significant negative impact on the socio-economic situation of the civilian population. These sanctions limit state revenues, further limiting the resources available to pay public sector workers. This causes a significant reduction in the income of several families.

Child labor is generally a neglected issue in humanitarian crises. Working children, especially those involved in the worst forms of child labor, are often invisible and excluded from humanitarian assistance.

### Chapter II : Safe Schools Declaration

To protect schools and universities, the Safe Schools Declaration was initiated

in 2015 in Geneva. It urges signatory states (56) to follow the following recommendations:

- Refrain from using schools and universities in their military efforts,
- Do not seek to destroy or damage schools or universities,
- Use force only as a last resort and consider all alternatives. (unicef.fr)

We do not know this enough but schools do not enjoy the same level of protection as those granted to hospitals and international humanitarian law : if the international convention do indeed prohibit deliberately attacking a school...they do not prohibit that it be occupied by armed forces.

However, a school used for military purposes not only deprives children of their fundamental right to education... but even becomes a "target" for attacks.

This is why UNICEF France had asked Francois Hollande and the french government to commit to signing this text (2017)- and thus become the first member of the United Nations Security Council to do so. The Haitian scholar Lefabson Sully even suggested that "a course of rights and duties of children must be included in the curriculum offered by the ministries of education" (www.washingtonpost.com)

In Syria and its neighbouring countries, Syrian children have been forced to become breadwinners of their families. Education systems have been the

target of attacks in Syria, as armed groups have seen military strategies targeting schools, school children and teachers.

In 2016, UNICEF reported that 2.1 million children in Syria and 700 000 Syrian refugee children do not have access to education. Among Syrian refugee children in Jordan in 2016, more than 80 000 were out of school (Human Rights Watch).

### Chapter III : Temporary Learning species

During the Ebola crisis in Sierra Leone, the Ministry of Education was able to continue teaching during radio program while the schools were closed for almost a year. In Afghanistan, the state has recognized that commuting to school is often dangerous in times of crises and has therefore established community schools.

Nevertheless, the organization of the space must allow flexibility of use during these different periods and these different times. The space must respond to the evolution of the use of premises, over time. Based on the words of Helena Murseli who believes that : "the process of setting up temporary learning spaces consist first of all identifying the places, in or near displacement camps, then proceeding to the opening of these spaces, conditioned on the supply of materials." (unicef.org)

An environment which is a support for learning and production, in which pedagogy centred on the learner is set up, must, in its very conception, reflect and value the diversity of origins and

cultures, promote respect and facilitate the link between teachers and students.

The comfort of the environment remains an important criterion in the design of buildings : species must provide comfort, good air quality and good lighting. In some countries, especially those affected by natural disasters such as earthquakes, schools are seen as a natural refuge for the local community.

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# Beyond Culture: The Linguistic Aspects of Culture in British Literature



### Introduction

What is British culture? When we say “English” certain icons come to mind; sausages, bread and butter, cornflakes, phlegmatic, calm, cool and collected are usually characteristics of “Englishness” whereas porridge, whisky, tartans, tight-fisted are icons referring to Scottishness. Whether true or false, these are internationally accepted icons. So, in this way is there any icon of Britishness? If any it is less evident. In literature, there is English literature, there is also Scottish literature, but not British literature. Yet we talk about British citizenship or British passport.

British culture is bipolarized between the working-class culture and the middle-class culture. The notion of Britishness came out in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. The Great Exhibition in 1851 emphasized the emergence of two cultures: the working-class culture represented by employees and landworkers and the middle-class workers represented by employers and landowners. Matthew Arnold theorized this dichotomy in his book *Culture and Anarchy* (1869), so did Lionel Trilling in his essay *The Liberal Imagination* (1950). Trilling explores the theme of what he calls “liberalism” by looking closely at the relationship between literature, culture, mind and the imagination. If our self-respect, our economic and social growth, and even our political survival depends on “being one”, these concepts of unity and diversity inevitably raise questions of languages and cultures.

This study will, at first, analyze British culture in a literary perspective, then it studies the linguistic aspects of culture in relation to literature in order to show the part imagination plays in literary achievement.

### 1. A Redefinition of British Culture

The term ‘Britishness’ appeared in 1804 and ‘Scottishness’ in 1872. It is important to go back to the context of the period because Scottish writers emphasized Britishness. So, Scotland would lose if they emphasized Englishness. The Acts of Union, passed by the English and Scottish Parliaments in 1707, led to the creation of the United Kingdom of Great Britain on the 1<sup>st</sup> May of that year. After the Union of Parliament between England and Scotland, writers like David Hume (1711-1776), tried to write pure English removing Scottish language, Scottish culture, which means Scottishness. Imagology, not yet recorded, means the study of images from various perspectives, for example, how British people are seen by different people and different views is a key factor in understanding Britishness and Scottishness.

David Hume upheld *Les Belles Lettres and Rhetoric* as the study of models and canons proper to English. In 1751, Adam Smith (1723-1790) gave a *Lecture on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres* at Glasgow University. But referring to William Scott (1937), contrary to popular opinion, the lectures were not delivered at the University or un-

der its auspices, but rather at one of the numerous clubs then flourishing in Edinburgh, probably the “Philosophical Society of Edinburgh”, originally a medical society whose range of interest was extended in 1737 to science and literature<sup>1</sup>.

The rhetoric lectures of 1748-51 were read to an enthusiastic and notable audience including among other men of *lettres*, Lord Kames and Hugh Blair, both of whom drew from Smith in their own subsequent works on rhetoric. The lectures concerned jurisprudence, then many domains of subject, which commanded Smith's attention for its connection to natural law, morals and economics. Indeed, Smith's conservative re-use of Edinburgh materials dates a number of his leading literary, political and economic principles to these apparently fertile years.

By the mid-eighteenth century, Scottish desire for self-improvement in literature and criticism had given considerable impetus to the study of *Belles Lettres*, creating a sympathetic climate of opinion to which Smith's fundamental approach to rhetoric lectures and his Edinburgh success owed in part. In his article “Adam Smith's Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres” (1963), Bevilacqua makes the following clarification about the eclosion of Scottishness:

But it was in the University of Edinburgh that *Rhetoric and Belles Lettres* was being given its widest and most scholarly encouragement.

There, John Stevenson, professor of logic from 1730 to 1775, not satisfied merely with explaining the principles of logic and metaphysics, endeavoured “by prelections on the most esteemed classics, ancient and modern to instil into the minds, a relish for works of taste, and a love of elegant composition [...] Stevenson's academic rivalries is the impetus and support his lectures gave to the transition in Scottish philosophical-literary thought from formal logic and rhetoric considered separately and traditionally, to psychological and belletristic view of logic and rhetoric (43).

The belletristic view is of paramount importance in the accomplishment of Scottishness culturally, Thomas Reid (1852) considered it as an illustration of the various mental operations expressed by the several modifications of speech and writing<sup>2</sup>.

In *Wealth of Nations* (1776) and *Theories of Moral sentiments* (1759), Smith says that part of his endeavor is improvement of society, linguistically, proper style of language. His concern was economically, philosophically and rhetorically bound and linked with 18<sup>th</sup> – century anxiety for improvement. So does his friend Blair, a chair holder at Edinburgh. Smith refers to models of proper English. He also refers to Alan Ramsay and other Scottish writers as barbarous. Hugh Blair often refers to “Ossian” (1760) poems in Gaelic, translated into English. The Rhetoric taught in the 18<sup>th</sup> – century in Scotland was to become English Literature. Ramsay spoke often of the British language.

### 2. The Linguistic Aspects of Culture

Cultural imperialism was done upon Scott by Scott (Smith and Blair), these two wanted Scotland to be recognized within the U.K. Tobias Smollett's *The Expedition of Humphry Clinker* (1771) is an epistolary novel, presented in the form of letters written by six characters. A classic in the history of the English novel, it takes the form of a collection of letters written by various members of Mr. Matthew Bramble's family (for whom Humphry Clinker is a general servant) during their eight months of travel in England and Scotland in the 1760s. The wanderings of the Bramble party result in a series of amusing adventures and episodes, unfolding within the main plot in which the eccentric and contentious characters – “originals” as Bramble's nephew calls them – discover the sources of true happiness. Others writers, like Boswell were interested in this question of the status of the Scottish language.

In his novel *Waverly* (1814), the British nationalist writer Walter Scott confronts the question of Britishness. Inspired by tales that he had heard from veterans of the ‘45 and by his own youthful travels in the highlands, he saw the fictional potential of a clash of cultures, and felt sure that “the ancient traditions and high spirit of a people who, living in a civilized age and country, retained so strong a tincture of manners belonging to an early period of society must afford a subject favorable for romance”<sup>3</sup>. Following Boswell and Smollet, he upheld British ideology, in other words Britishness. Scott's language is heterodox, not pure English, not pure Scott, either. Scottish writers tend to articulate British ideology, because they are British, they do it out of anxiety.

Most recently, Christopher Murray Grieve, best known by his pen name Hugh MacDiarmid (1892-1978), a Scottish poet, journalist, essayist and political figure, is considered one of the principal forces behind the Scottish Renaissance 4 and has had a lasting impact on Scottish culture and politics. Much of the work that MacDiarmid published in the 1920s was written in what he termed “Synthetic Scots”: a version of the Scots language that “synthesized” multiple local dialects, which MacDiarmid constructed from dictionaries and other sources.

From the 1930s onwards, MacDiarmid found himself turning more and more to English as a means of expression so that most of his later poetry is written in that language. His ambition was to live up to Rilke's dictum that ‘the poet must know everything’ and to write poetry that contained all knowledge. As a result, many of the poems in “Stony Limits” (1934) and later volumes are a kind of found poetry<sup>5</sup> reusing text from a range of sources<sup>6</sup>. For that reason, in his critical work *Lives of the Poets* (2007), Michael Schmidt notes that Hugh MacDiarmid “had redrawn the map of Scottish poetry and affected the whole configuration of English literature” (643). In a nutshell, MacDiarmid opposes British imperialism using poems in English and Scottish.

### Conclusion

This study has shown a redefinition of British culture and the linguistic aspects of culture. The belletristic view helped to understand its importance in the accomplishment of Scottishness and Britishness culturally through literature.

It reveals that Nationhood as such does not seem to be a well-defined concept in many respects; but its definition has been much debated since

the 1980s. To come to a complete culture, it is necessary not to give up the task of defining and constructing a national culture. This seems to indicate that in Britain, and especially among the English, the sense of being a nation, or at least, of being a nation like others nations, is something that is only gradually being constructed; disparate elements that have been associated with it by various groups are gradually put together to form a consistent auto-stereotype: the long continuity and flexibility of institutions. In this way, we understand why Standard English achieved its status, not because it is the most frequently used form, but because it is the language of those who exercise power – cultural, economic, academic, and inevitably political.

<sup>1</sup> See William Robert Scott, 1937, *Adam Smith as Students and Professor*, Jackson, Son & Company Glasgow.  
<sup>2</sup> *The Works of Thomas Reid*, ed. William Hamilton, Edinburgh, 1852.  
<sup>3</sup> See Walter Scott, *Waverly*, Edinburgh University, London, www.walterscott.lib.ed.ac.uk/works/novels/waverley.html, December 2011.  
<sup>4</sup> was a mainly literary movement of the early to mid-20th century that can be seen as the Scottish version of modernism. It is sometimes referred to as the Scottish Literary Renaissance, although its influence went beyond literature into music, visual arts, and politics (among other fields). The writers and artists of the Scottish Renaissance displayed a profound interest in both modern philosophy and technology, as well as incorporating folk influences, and a strong concern for the fate of Scotland's declining languages.  
It has been seen as a parallel to other movements elsewhere, including the Irish Literary Revival, the Harlem Renaissance (in America), the Bengal Renaissance (in Kolkata, India), which emphasized indigenous folk traditions.

<sup>5</sup> *Found poetry* is a type of poetry created by taking words, phrases, and sometimes whole passages from other sources and reframing them by making changes in spacing and lines, or by adding or deleting text, thus imparting new meaning. The resulting poem can be defined as either treated: changed in a profound and systematic manner; or untreated: virtually unchanged from the order, syntax and meaning of the poem.  
<sup>6</sup> See Hugh MacDiarmid, free encyclopedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hugh\_MacDiarmid#cite\_note-21 January 2021.

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# Language as Development and Development as Language



Wikimedia Commons: Ferdinand de Saussure by Julien.png

This paper is a commentary paper about the imperativeness of language in development and argues that language is development and development is language. Saussure linguistic structuralists analysis is going to be our locus of enunciation in conceptualizing that language is imperative and inseparable to development.

## The Saussure conception of language as a structure

Saussure<sup>1</sup> argued against the manner in which people regard language when reduced to its elements as a naming process i.e. words are a list and that each word is corresponding to that thing it names. Saussure argued that such conception is open to criticism as it assumes that ready-made ideas exist before words and it does not tell us whether a name is vocal or psychological in its nature. Nonetheless, the regard of conceptualizing language when reduced to

its basic elements as naming process Saussure posited it and brought us near to the truth through demonstrating the linguistic unit that it is a double entity formed by associating two elements- the signifier and the signified. Saussure further argued that both the terms [signifier and the signified] involved in the linguistic sign are psychological and are united in the brain by an associative bond. The linguistic sign unites not only a thing and a name but a concept and a sound-image. It is imperative to mention that in Saussure linguistic unit analysis qua that sign is not the material sound, but a purely physical thing and the psychological imprint of the sound, viz. the impression that it makes to our senses. The two elements alluded in the previous sentences where Saussure argued that they are intimately united and each recalls the other. Also, the sign sanctioned associated by that certain language becomes apparent to confirm reality to its people, and that they disregard whatever others might imagine. Saussure pointed that the bond between the signifier [the concept] and the signified [sound-image] is arbitrary. The phenomenon of the arbitrary nature of the signifier and the signified gave in the expression of the structure qua, that there is nothing intrinsic in them rather, they are collectively determined thus, there is no individual that has the power to change the sign.

The above analysis of the sign using Saussure in conceptualizing the signifier and the signified is relevant to the argument that language is imperative to development. In the following section, we demonstrate language imperativeness in development.

## Conceptualizing Development

In the previous section it has been demonstrated that sign is not merely a naming process that corresponds to the thing that it names, however, it has been demonstrated that sign is a psychological phenomenon having a double linguistic unit that is formed by two elements that bond them together. Signifier and the signified induce to the subject and psychological imprint of the object. This analysis is integral in our argument which says t that language is imperative to development because to develop any object, it begins from imagination, even before it could exist in the material world. Language, therefore became imperative for development in its generic sense as it gives developers an expression and further emboldens and elevates the language of the peoples who have manufactured the product to prominence more especially if their product is consumed by a large population that transcends their race or ethnicity. The people who develop products, name them after their language and those who utilize producer's products have to learn language to efficiently use the products. The unfortunate phenomenon about language as development and development as language to African is that African languages were deprived of development through the imposition of the European language. Colonialism through intrusion coerced Africans to learn and use European languages. The enforcement of Africans to learn and use European language was intertwined with Africans using European materials which deprived them (Africans) of their inalienable divine right to develop their language. For instance, during the apartheid era in South Africa, the regime vociferously denied African

children access to speak their language and enforced European languages as a medium of instruction. The results of that were adverse because that stiffened the development of African languages, thereof the development itself. The unfortunate part is the apartheid legacy that still persists [post]-apartheid under black-led government. African children in South Africa in [post]-apartheid are forbidden to speak or reprimanded for speaking their African languages. The previous phenomenon is further enforced and made possible by African parents' who continued their colonial mentality. Thus, African parents in large numbers bus their children off from townships to [former] white school in white suburbs. Moreover, having African children who studied at [former] white schools in white suburbs pains in competing with their fellows who studied in rural areas to demonstrate to them that they have imbibed whiteness and mastered the art of assimilating to whiteness and forming part of the nose brigade and nasalizing which further alienate themselves from their community.

## Conclusion

Africa has a big population and for her to develop, it could start by introducing one language that could unite Africans. Then speaking in one voice (through one language) and having a common understanding, Africa can then begin to articulate real development. For that to happen it would need political ambitions to be set aside and to prioritize Africa and her future generation, and simultaneously level the uneven international system.

<sup>1</sup> Saussure Ferdinand. 1974 Course in General Linguistics, Fontana.

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# Politique éducative et droit à l'éducation



D'après Nelson Mandela, l'éducation est l'arme la plus puissante pour changer l'humanité, et l'inverse aussi est vrai. L'humanité a changé l'éducation pour la rendre plus efficace, et l'adapter à ses besoins. L'Inde et l'île Maurice sont des exemples solides surtout considérant les réformes à l'éducatif qu'ils ont menés dans leurs systèmes éducatifs respectifs. De plus, l'éducation a évolué depuis les siècles. Connue pour être rigide sous la forme d'éducation religieuse, elle connaît des réformes majeures, dont la plus notable est lorsqu'elle devient un droit universel **fondamental** en 1948. En effet, si l'éducation comme arme peut changer la face du monde, il ne faut pas non plus négliger comment elle est partagée, et dans quel environnement cela se fait. Des sondages sont alors faits et l'instauration de politiques éducatives (qu'elles soient au niveau planétaire ou dans une localité) sont mises en place pour la bonne structuration de l'éducation favorisant ainsi l'avancement fluide d'une société.

Le droit à l'éducation a été, pour ainsi dire, le premier pas vers le changement. Ce droit a remis l'équilibre dont on avait besoin. L'égalité éducative a permis à des femmes de s'imposer de par leurs talents dans une société, jadis (peut-être toujours) patriarcale. Kamala Harris et Greta Thunberg a montré récemment que la détermination et la confiance en soi, enrobées dans une bonne éducation peuvent mener au sommet, et rapidement. L'éducation traditionnelle, celle dont l'élève apprenait selon les connaissances de son tuteur, et ce en dépit des compétences propre à l'enfant avait des fortes lacunes. Pourtant, la pédagogie active nous enseigne que l'enfant peut être maître de son apprentissage, et de plus avec les résultats de Jean Piaget sur le développement cognitif de l'enfant, on s'est enfin retrouvé avec l'enfant comme protagoniste de l'éducation, et tous sont dotés d'une intelligence considérée désormais comme « fluide », différente à chaque tranche d'âge de l'enfant.

L'idiosyncrasie des élèves engendrent un apprentissage dynamique. Il est fondamental que le droit

à l'éducation soit respecté, et que dans l'optique d'une éducation saine, soient formés des ressources humaines qui porteront ce respect sur plusieurs générations. L'idylle, cependant, ne dure que dans les lignes écrites. D'après les données de UIS collectées en 2018, plus de 258 millions d'enfants, dont 59 millions au niveau élémentaire n'ont pas accès à l'éducation. Que faire alors ? Innover ? Difficile quand on pense que dans certains pays, la guerre civile fait rage. Les matériels nécessaires pour bien dispenser l'éducation la plus basique sont inaccessibles. Un moyen à court terme serait l'immigration, ces réfugiés de guerre, vers des pays où l'éducation peut leur être donnée gratuitement. Formé ces jeunes cerveaux aux objectifs de l'UNESCO : éradiquer la pauvreté, au développement durable, et surtout à l'instauration et la contribution d'une culture de paix mondiale. On ne peut qu'espérer pour demain que les situations d'aujourd'hui s'améliorent. L'éducation inclusive porte aussi ses fruits et, en élargissant cette sphère inclusion, on peut aisément y inclure les filles « des populations rurales et nomades isolées, des minorités ethniques et linguistiques, des enfants, jeunes et adultes victimes de conflits, souffrant du VIH/SIDA, de la faim, d'un mauvais état de santé ; et de ceux qui ont des besoins éducatifs spéciaux ». Dans la république de Maurice, à l'île Rodrigues, certaines écoles catholiques incluent des élèves autrement capables dans le cursus pédagogique normal. Ceci aide l'enfant à voir la différence et à l'accepter chez l'autrui, ainsi solidifiant encore plus les valeurs que les institutions éducatives, que la pédagogie veut transmettre, un pas considérable vers une société inclusive. Lors du COP26 qui avait eu lieu à l'île Rodrigues, l'emphase a été mis sur l'éducation de la jeune fille pour une nation plus unie et plus productive. « L'éducation inclusive est un processus, pas une finalité » (Rapport Mondial du suivi sur l'éducation, 2020). Oser le changement, faire les choses différentes peut aboutir à un nouvel idéal et une fluidité et efficacité jamais atteintes jusque-là.

Donc, on vient aussi à lier l'éducation, processus facilitant l'apprentissage ou l'acquisition de connaissance, de compétences, de valeurs et habitudes, à la politique qui la concerne. Mais c'est quoi cette politique et en quoi elle concerne l'éducation. D'après Easton, une politique est une allocation autoritaire de valeurs, ou un système de valeurs transmis à travers le langage (Ball 1993). Par conséquent, il y a une autorité qui instaure des valeurs. Sans politique, une institution pédagogique ne peut fonctionner fluidement, ici on parle de politique éducation institutionnelle (mais tous suivant le même but que l'éducation au niveau national). Tout récemment, la nouvelle politique éducative en Inde, la NPE 2020, vise au développement intégral de l'enfant. Cette politique ne concerne que l'Inde mais le gouvernement indien veut faire innover sa méthode éducative, l'adapter à sa culture. On voit ainsi que l'éducation est aussi culturelle. Il est important d'avoir une politique éducative nationale, une fondation sur laquelle construire. On ne peut espérer élever le droit à l'éducation comme droits humains sans avoir une vision dans laquelle travailler. Pour revenir à l'Inde, on peut vraiment parler d'adaptation. Le Sanskrit sera intégré, le codage informatique à partir de Grade VI, une reconnaissance sans équivoque entre les Arts et la Science. Avec l'ère nouvelle, et suite aux normes sanitaires changeantes, l'Inde a su agir, et a agi vite. Une belle perspective pour l'avenir.

Il s'agit ici d'avoir une politique éducative nationale pour soutenir ce droit à l'éducation. Les familles à faibles revenus arrivent que peu souvent à envoyer leurs progénitures à l'école. La politique standardisée devrait être le **soutien** aux enfants qui ne peuvent accéder à une institution pédagogique sporadiquement. Faisons-leur réaliser que leur droit, malgré les difficultés que les entourent, peut leur être dispensé. A Maurice, la réforme éducative vise à propulser l'éducation mauricienne vers des sommets encore jamais atteints. Faire que l'apprenant devienne un citoyen du monde, jetez un œil sur son développement holistique. Cette politique

s'accorde parfaitement aux objectifs de l'UNESCO, c'est-à-dire, le développement durable. Pourtant des aspects de cette politique peuvent être améliorés. Une sensibilisation sur la pollution, et placer des cursus scolaires, ou des activités extra-scolaires pour que l'apprenant voit au plus près les dégâts sur l'écologie que peut causer une négligence ou un acte négatif envers l'environnement. Il est difficile de toujours appliquer une politique. Les médias, les parties prenantes (parents, instructeurs, formateurs...) compliquent l'implémentation d'une politique. C'est bien pourquoi un travail acharné est fait pour satisfaire au mieux les parties concernées quant à la réforme d'un système éducation au niveau national. Un casse-tête, mais un casse-tête nécessaire. Et pourquoi pas inclure une vision plus contemporaine de l'éducation ? Inclure des modèles scientifiques et les liés intrinsèquement aux valeurs traditionnelles et affectives ? Faire développer l'enfant vers une sortie plus philosophie, analytique de ce qui a été fait jusqu'à présent.

Le monde a su changé de perspective. Avec la nouvelle ère informatique, la propagation et le chaos suite au coronavirus, on a du trouvé une solution pour l'éducation. L'instauration de nouvelles lois, de code de conduite, l'accessibilité à la technologie a engendré une nouvelle façon d'apprendre. Cependant, sur un plan plus large, rien ne change véritablement. Les politiques éducatives s'appliquent aussi aux plateformes d'apprentissage en visioconférence en ligne. L'un n'empêche pas l'autre. A travers des politiques éducatives, on trace un chemin pour que ceux aux premières lignes dans le secteur éducatif puisse aisément faire valoir les droits humains, et semer une graine constructive dans le psychisme des apprenants quant à l'importance d'une éducation, une éducation ou prime l'égalité entre les sexes et les classes sociales, la compréhension et l'acceptation de ce qui lui est différent surtout au niveau culturel. Le droit à l'éducation pour devenir un citoyen du monde.



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# CLIMATE CHANGE AND ECONOMIC SITUATION IN TIMES OF PANDEMIC IN BRAZIL.

## Aligning with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)



As global temperatures rise, water vapor becomes more abundant at a proportion of 7 per cent for each degree Celsius of warming in the tropics. This has strong implications for the climate, as water vapor also causes the greenhouse effect. The various scenarios of climate change for the country due to different scenarios of greenhouse effect gas emissions (GEE, mainly carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide, CO<sub>2</sub>, CH<sub>4</sub> and N<sub>2</sub>O, respectively) for the next 100 years, indicate the possibility of significant climate impact. In the “business as usual” scenario of growth of greenhouse effect gas emissions, computer climate models suggest that a warming of 4 to 6 degrees Celsius may occur in parts of the country (especially in the Amazon) at the end of this century (NOBRE, 2001).

The gradual warming of the atmosphere involves an alteration in the delicate cycles of climate balance along which civilizations developed over millennia. These cycles included the development of processes of positive retro feeding, for example,

the change of the planet albedo with the melting of continental glaciers and the drop in the marine ice cover, which in turn, with the decrease of the surface albedo, caused a greater absorption of solar radiation to the surface, which resulted in the rise in air temperature (PBMC, 2013).

The most visible result of a warmer planet is an ocean that is also warmer. Thus, a warmer northern hemisphere has favoured a positioning of the Intertropical Convergence Zone (main meteorological phenomenon causing rain in the Brazil Northeast semi-ar-

(coastal) regions of the Pernambuco state. Rainstorms may generate flash floods in the watersheds. The fact is that rain scarcity is occurring simultaneously with a significant amount of rain, year after year, generating floods and agricultural droughts, for consecutive years. This observed change of the hydrological cycle is intrinsically linked to the changes in rain and temperature patterns in Pernambuco (LACERDA et al., 2015).

Strategic actions may be adopted and expanded to live with the consequences of climate change in course

THE PROBLEMS IDENTIFIED IN THIS CONTEXT ARE SYSTEMATIC ENVIRONMENTAL SOIL DEGRADATION, THE EMISSION OF GREENHOUSE EFFECT GASES AND THE POLLUTION OF WATER RESOURCES.

id) more to the north of the average position, thus being able to cause prolonged droughts for over 10 consecutive years in Brazil's semi-arid.

The current climate patterns have generated extreme climate events. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the occurrence of intense rain, combined with storms, has affected various areas of the Sertão (arid hinterland), Agreste (between Sertão and coast) and Litoral

such as developing reforestation programs involving the Caatinga and Atlantic Forest biomes, in rural and urban areas, not only because of the value of native forests for the stability of the climate and biodiversity, but also because of the environmental and economic service they represent.

No less important is the anthropic effect that has rapidly transformed the environment, introducing signif-

icant amounts of fossil carbon into oceans and biome, consuming enormous volumes of water through various processes. The impact of modern agriculture has altered ecosystems, with a high impact on microbiota, potentially increasing the risk of zoonotic pathogens from the point of view of their proliferation in human beings. Biodiversity competes for space with productive activity, the increase of cattle ranching affects native vegetation (MOURKAS et al., 2020).

The problems identified in this context are systematic environmental soil degradation, the emission of greenhouse effect gases and the pollution of water resources. In relation to GEE emissions, cattle raising activity contributes close to 16% of the total of emissions.

Cattle raising is demanding more and more water and feed. For bacteria to live inside these animals, the massive growth of hosts tends to spread globally. This results in risks to humans; however, little is known about these zoo bacteria (MOURKAS et al., 2020). This scenario requires a radical, significant, and permanent transformation in the socioeconomic and environmental landscape of the Northeast semi-arid. The transformation in the planet is profound, a reality that reflects what we nowadays.

## ALTERAÇÕES CLIMÁTICAS E ECONOMIA EM TEMPOS DE PANDEMIA. Alinhamento com os Objetivos de Desenvolvimento Sustentável (ODS)

It is worth noting that energy and economic crises, and the current pandemic in Brazil, have put environmental concerns on the backburner. It appears increasingly certain that resolute actions to decrease GEE emissions will only take place after the occurrence of some climatic “surprise”, especially, if this climatic surprise occurs in developed countries, as was the case with the COVID-19 pandemic.

### Present and future

According to Heinrich Hasenack (2020) <https://www.correiobraziliense.com.br/app/noticia/brasil/2020>, the improvement in air quality mainly in cities due to social isolation is not definitive. With the relaxing of social isolation norms, cars went back to the streets and factories systematically started emitting, once again, polluting and greenhouse effect gases. From the perspective of climate change, this reduction of gases is not incredibly significant, given that 410 ppm of CO<sub>2</sub> have been surpassed in the planet's atmosphere and that we continue to exponentially expel greenhouse gases. The reduction of emissions resulting from the drop in consumption of fossil fuels by industry and vehicles will only contribute to softening climate change if it is effectively systematized by a radical public policy to eliminate emissions.

The population has demonstrated that the current lifestyle cannot be overturned and that we are part of a complex, global ecosystem. Data from the United Nations (UN) show that 8.8 million people die each year due to consequences related to air pollution.

If the current scenario in Brazil of socioenvironmental and political lack of control is maintained, it is difficult not to make a pessimistic forecast, whether it is an economic, social, or humanitarian disaster. “It is a path that may lead to political rupture”, according to Marco Antonio Teixeira, professor at FGB-SP - ... “The virus has revealed the inequality in Brazil. The scarcity of food and the precariousness of the public health system are powerful social dynamite.” [https://www.em.com.br/app/noticia/politica/2020/04/02/interna\\_politica,1135043/o-impacto-do-coronavirus-na-politica.shtml](https://www.em.com.br/app/noticia/politica/2020/04/02/interna_politica,1135043/o-impacto-do-coronavirus-na-politica.shtml).

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The pandemic has shown that it is necessary to rethink policies to move forward towards a modern and sustainable global economy. <http://www.abranet.org.br/Noticias/Paul-Krugman-Covid-19-obriga-avancar-rumo-a-economia-global-moderna-e-sustentavel-3082.html?UserActiveTemplate=site&UserActiveTemplate=mobile#.X2ti0MJKi>

The current pandemic has made it evident that it is necessary to move forward towards a responsible and sustainable global economy, which considers the climate emergency and its effects. According to Krugman (2020), the current crisis brought more devastating damage than that generated by periods of economic recession. Krugman believes that more jobs will be lost. The lack of medium-term policies will have drastic consequences. According to him, even though some economies have adopted severe measures, these did

ing to Rifkin (2014) under two points of view, one linked to a vision that rules over the earth biosphere as outward expression of economic activity, in other words, classic economic theories do not recognize the first and second law of thermodynamics as ruling economic activity. All economic activity comes from the use of the energy available in the system to transform it into goods and services. The goods produced are consumed, discarded, and returned to nature, generating an increase in the entropy of the system. This being so, there is no gain of energy in the process, only losses. The consequences of this model of production are dramatic rises in the accumulation of greenhouse effect gases into the atmosphere, through the burning of fossil fuels, generating climate change and a destruction of the earth's biosphere. The second one is technological, a combination of the internet of things with the internet of digitalized renewable energy. In sum,

IS THE CAPITALIST SYSTEM'S MODE OF PRODUCTION GIVING BIRTH TO A GLOBAL, MODERN, AND SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY WITHOUT GENERATING NEGATIVE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS?

not last long enough, and in economic terms, we will still have a big problem with the restart of the economy.

There is an urgent need to establish a global sustainable economy, with structures that enable a world of collaboration, sharing, concern with ecology and a connection with life.

Is it possible to establish a great change in paradigm from market capitalism to collaborative shared goods? Is the capitalist system's mode of production giving birth to a global, modern, and sustainable economy without generating negative environmental impacts? Though the transformation into a new economic system may not be subtle, the economics of collaborative shared goods is on the rise and will be established by 2050 (RIFKIN, 2014). The capitalist model is, accord-

the profits of big capitalist corporations have slowly withered the market economy and given rise to a new economy based on abundance.

A decreased use of natural resources, in a more efficient and circular manner, fostering a transition to renewable energies, is characteristic of a new economic paradigm. Is this new economy, that shares common goods, viable and can it be practiced? Can sharing common resources be an economic model that can enable a change to the development of a prosperous and sustainable model? It is up to us to decide if we want it to be something slow, or a rapid and lasting change.

Krugman ponders that “the policies that encourage people to do things differently may be more successful

than the formula used until now”. “The adaptability of modern economies is enormous. We can make this work. We can still have modern, prosperous economies with all the conveniences that we are accustomed to.”

We are experiencing the consequences of a limited and narrow vision from the environmental and economic perspective. We must act, as well as establish policies that encourage the use of renewable energies much more than those that apply taxes or rates over carbon burning. The change is already under way! Do we or do we not have the motivation to desire a radical change?

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# TEACHER EDUCATION AND GLOBAL ISSUES:

## THE ROLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN DEVELOPING A SOUND TEACHER KNOWLEDGE AND IMPLEMENTATION OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN SCHOOLS.



### Abstract

Teachers are at the core of any local and global movements; this can happen consciously and unconsciously. However, often, teachers are left out of major decisions, that later influence how they deliver the curriculum and lead their lives, hence, it is of vital importance that they are offered a seat at the table, but also this should be made a deliberate and intentional decision by teachers to take an active role in the global events, and initiatives, such as the Sustainable Development Goals 2030 (SDGs). However, teachers on their own, cannot always see the importance of participating in these initiatives, because of the workload, perception, teaching contexts, and even attitudes, hence, there is a need for external players to assist. Teacher education is one of those areas of teaching that needs to assist teachers both in-training and in-service to realise their expanded roles, particularly their roles in global matters, in to teach towards sustainability. This article aims to make use of existing empirical evidence in exploring the role of higher education in teacher education in developing a sound knowledge of the SDGs and

meaningful teaching and learning in their classrooms and ultimately in the entire school.

**Keywords:** sustainable development, teacher education, global, meaningful teaching

### 1. Introduction

It does not come as a surprise that the globe has adopted sustainability as a springboard to solve various problems ranging from environmental to education because the earth is experiencing unprecedented threats. It is from this understanding that sustainability as a concept, has catalysed Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), a model necessitated by the demands posed by environmental challenges and concerns, to offer practical solutions. Sengupta, (2020), argues that the adoption of ESD to address topics that are linked to sustainability will offer teachers and learners a transformative and holistic approach to teaching and learning, in the process, gaining valuable pedagogical content and outcomes. This view is supported by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO). The

organisation believes that the United Nations (UN) agenda, in the area of sustainability, referred to as the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, that was established from 2005 to 2014, has had a role to instil the culture of sustainable development in all spheres of life, (UNESCO, 2004). To achieve this goal, it requires participation from various stakeholders, particularly higher education institutions, to train teachers, both pre-service and in-service. Darling-Hammond and Bransford, (2007) claims that teachers are at the core of education, and with pre-existing and further knowledge, they are better equipped to impart knowledge and skills to learners, which will, in turn, prepare them to face the threats to sustainability. Education is viewed as a platform that represents a critical system that can facilitate influential and long-lasting transformative knowledge, in sustainability literacy and meaningful learning and teaching, for present and future teachers, Foley, *et al* (2015).

It is only just, therefore, that teachers are trained adequately in the field of sustainability, to quench such

expectations. According to (Nolet, 2009), those who are concerned with the preparation of teachers (citing and American context) must respond meaningfully to the issues regarding the depletion of environmental resources, which is a major contributor to the global catastrophe of Global Warming and Climate Change. From this stance, it seems necessary for teachers to be empowered with knowledge and skills to creatively and innovatively use the curriculum to address these matters. This is necessary because the topic of sustainability is fraught with controversy, misunderstanding, contestation, myths, misconceptions, and heated debates among other challenges according to (Hopkins, 1998); (Rasool, 1999); Jickling, (2000); (Foster, 2001); (Gough, 2002); (Bonnnett, 1999). Consequently, it is necessary that teachers are assisted in internalising sustainable development education not just as another subject in the curriculum, but an essential integration that “*will encourage the future generation to acquire the necessary knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes that will empower and equip them to create a just and balanced society with an*

*integrated approach toward saving the environment, alleviating the society out of poverty and moving in a trajectory toward sustainable development”* Sengupta, et al, (2020 p.4). If teachers embraced this type of pedagogy, they would be essentially empowering their learners to apply consistent logic in the process of the critical learning, for the classroom and their adult life.

This article wishes to explore the role of higher education through teacher education, in assisting teachers who are both in training and working, to deliver a pedagogy that is sustainability-driven. The discussion will comprise of anecdotal experiences, and conclude with a general view of teacher education, which includes research and exposure.

### II. Discussion

#### 2.1 Attitude is everything

I began my teaching career in 2006, as a primary school teacher. When I started, I was not a professional teacher, I only held, an academic qualification in Humanities. My first teaching job was in a rural school, and when I think about that experience, my heart always sinks, because there were many terrible mistakes that I made. Fast-forward 2014, three years after completing a teaching qualification, a post-graduate certificate in education (PGCE), a lot of things, that I would have taken for granted before, began to make a lot of meaning to my work as a teacher. It all began in 2011, when I enrolled for the teaching qualification at a local university, that one of our professors, Jane Pennefather, referred to and mention the words “context and resilience” often. It was like her lessons were incomplete without these words, and teacher testimonials, from newspaper articles. Apart from the academic content that we learnt in class, I took with me, a huge chunk of practical examples and lessons of how teachers have made it worked in their environments, in some cases, with no or fewer resources. Since then, I have been inspired to work with local non-profit organisations, think tanks, international organisations, taking my learners to both local and international conferences, to share their ideas on how they believe environmental challenges in their community can be addressed, how women can have a meaningful impact in society, how oral history can be a viable project, both for social cohesion and as a tourism tool, how birds and the local wetland, could be a means for development in the community, how indigenous knowledge systems can supplement textbook content, among other things.

I owe my sudden change of attitude to the efforts of a teacher educator, who took it upon herself to instil the

idea that teachers were agents of change. According to (Fullan and Hargreaves, 2014), the idea of educational change and teacher development has recently been conceptualised. While it may seem to be an uncomplicated, effortless, and simple endeavour, but the truth of the matter is that teaching is fraught with nuances and complexities, that may hinder teachers to realise seemingly obvious change, hence (Fullan and Hargreaves, 1991), argue that teacher education should be a comprehensive agenda, that includes an exhaustive framework that is cognisance of teacher's purpose, a teacher as a person, who lives in a society, and has various interpretations of who she/he is, both in and out of the classroom. Furthermore, it should be mindful of the real-world context in which teachers work. This takes us to the next discussion, which is the role of teacher education, informed by the above perspective.

#### 2.2 Sustainable development-driven pedagogy

The United Nations General Assembly, (2015) acknowledges that teaching is a daunting task, where teachers are expected to endow the next generations with knowledge, skills, and attitudes that they will need to address challenges sustainably. Therefore, this positions teachers at the core of this call for action. It is also an extended call for people around the world to collaborate in designing solution-driven platforms. The question is, why does teacher education matter so much then, in the preparation of future generations in a highly globalised world? This is because according to (Darling-Hammond, 2010), in addressing the challenges of the 21st Century, through teacher education, asserts that it appears that, even though, this area of education is fraught with persistent and extensive criticism, regarding how teachers are trained, including slamming its prerequisite for aspiring teachers, claiming that teaching is an innate activity, yet still, teacher education cannot be replaced, instead, it can be ameliorated to a level where it can adjust and adapt to the changing world. Darling-Hammond (2010) argues that evidence indicates that those teachers who have been prepared for teaching, exuded self-esteem, and can make grounded decisions regarding the curriculum and their learners. It is against this backdrop that it is believed that higher education through teacher education, has a surmountable task to equipping both in-service and student teachers with skills and knowledge, for delivering sustainability-driven pedagogy.

Based on the above stance, we are of the view that teachers could be better positioned to teach towards a sustainability orientated curriculum if they understand the intercon-

nectedness that is associated with it. Evidence suggests an existence of an overlap between sustainability education and environmental education, which according to (Gough, 2013), gives rise to an educational approach that creates a springboard to access different types of knowledge and a pluralist notion of how the world operates. This repositioning according to (Hart, 2007), generally presents us with the gateway to the interrelations that exist within the different spheres of life, for example, how the environment is interrelated with the notion of socio-culturalism. According to this logic, the ability to explore the role of culture, human identity, is an enabler to exploring and identifying challenges and threats that can potentially harm the socio-ecological systems. It is behind this rationale that topics such as immigration, social justice, inclusion, and multilingualism, which stem from diversity, should be viewed in the same light, and that this umbilical cord that connects them with sustainability, is central in sustaining the present, and the future if implemented well, through meaningful education processes and platforms. It is, therefore, also of remarkable importance for teacher education, according to (Panagiotopoulou, *et al*, 2020), to take a step towards the right direction, and adjust its curriculum to address these topics and issues.

#### 2.3 Globally Competent Teachers

Friedman, (2005) introduces us to yet another nexus, pivotal to teacher education, globalisation. Friedman argues that globalisation is a concept that is viewed to be tantamount to an easy reach, where, people and goods can move from one destination and reach another, within a very short space of time. In this event, humans are no longer confined to their geographical locations or limited by political entities. According to (Zhao, 2010) globalisation like technology, often presents challenges to teachers, as well as opportunities for the future. He argues that it is the most powerful social phenomena that will influence the direction of education and how children live their lives thereof, but also that which determines how teachers become players in a globalised turf.

Hence a serious task for teachers to adjust and adapt to this era is important. To realise this critical assignment, (Fullan and Hargreaves 1991), introduce us to the notion of teacher moral purpose. They argue that teachers hold certain values, that are often displayed and achieved during teaching. These values are a consequence of the nature of teaching as a profession, it carries a moral obligation and evokes a moral purpose for those who practise it. While they argue that this moral purpose is not sacrosanct, but

when interrogating these factors, it is fair to regard teacher education as a bridge between teaching and teacher development, in a sense that teachers are enabled to voice and act on their sense of purpose Fullan & Hargreaves, (1991). To keep teacher moral purpose, vibrant, they suggest an intervention from teacher education institutions, whereby in a highly globalised village, teachers are enabled and capacitated to adapt and find innovative ways of asserting their sense of purpose. Furthermore, there exists the need to merge this moral purpose with knowledge and information, to transcend beyond the regular subject syllabus and the ability to teach for real-life contexts. Foley, *et al*, (2015) argues that one of the ways to effectively reach this stage in education, teachers ought to gain literacy in the field of sustainable development, in its entirety.

#### 2.4 Meaningful teacher agency

A body of empirical evidence under the topic of teacher education establishes that indeed there is a critical deficiency in higher education in terms of equipping teachers with the necessary skills and sound knowledge to advance their moral purpose, even more so now that there is a need for education to be sustainable in nature. Darling-Hammond, (2000), argues that there have been voices raised in discontentment to the teaching profession particularly in the United States of America (USA). The argument suggests that teacher education requires an overhaul. The belief is that such an enterprise will enable teacher education to strengthen its knowledge base and its relationship with teaching practice and theory. This implies that there is a dire need to focus teacher education on teaching pragmatics to align education with the social context where teaching and learning are taking place. This is believed to be contributing to teacher professional training, adaptation skills and knowledge-based curriculum delivery. While this may seem a dilemma, the reality is that teacher education should transform to address teacher adaptability and sound knowledge.

A classic example is that of South Africa, where, educational reforms after the eradication of the oppressive apartheid regime, became rather a challenge instead of a societal transformative agenda. Vandeyar, (2017) argues that the initiatives that were introduced and implemented were meant to meaningfully transform education however, the efforts did not target the pivotal agents in education, their roles, identity, and beliefs, and the role they play in effecting transformation. Fullan & Hargreaves (2013) argue that teacher identity is one of those areas of teacher professionalisation that have been overlooked, often



TEACHER EDUCATION AND GLOBAL ISSUES: THE ROLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN DEVELOPING A SOUND TEACHER KNOWLEDGE AND IMPLEMENTATION OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN SCHOOLS.

leading to a singularised viewpoint, which stereotypes them. This turns to give us the wrong impression of teacher identity. For example, a teacher's age, gender, stage of his or her career, life experiences, among other factors, determine how she or he will react to a teaching context, as well as how they respond to motivation and change. According to (Vandeyar, 2017), if this fundamental consideration is not made, there will be a series of negative reactions from teachers, which may counteract the intended agenda. Generally, stakeholders tend to assume that teachers will willingly accept change, and further be able to implement it. However, according to (Harley & Wedekind, 2004); (Jansen, 2001); (Jita, 2002); (Sieborger & Nakabugo, 2001); (Vandeyar, 2006); (Vandeyar & Jansen, 2008); (Vandeyar & Killen, 2003), this varies from one context to another. An experiment conducted by Stallings, on teacher attitudes, demonstrates that staff development is connected to a change in teacher attitude which ultimately affects student performance (Stallings, 1989). Hence, the role played by teacher education becomes crucial.

2.5 Bridging the Gap

Transformation has proven to be a challenge for higher education, threatening the curriculum of universities and other institutions that offer teacher training programmes. Foley, *et al*,

(2015) argue that universities are still struggling to change their curricula, in a way that the topic of sustainable development is integrated into every curricula programme. If universities themselves, are struggling with this form of transformation, we can only imagine what teachers in schools are experiencing, either personal resistance or resistance from school management. In the USA, the New American University has managed to embrace this epic and ambitious initiative, to embrace change, in the wake of wide criticisms that universities are inadequately preparing their students for the grand challenges of the twenty-first century as (Crow, 2008) argues.

The university's approach in this regard is proposing to prepare its students for sustainability. One of its *modus operandi* is to “*enact lasting and impactful change toward achieving this goal is educating future teachers in sustainability literacy.*” (Foley, *et al*, 2015 p.53). In the book chapter, Foley and his co-authors describe how at Arizona State University, the topic of sustainability is embraced by the faculty of education. The university has initiated a interbreed programme referred to as *Sustainability Science for Teachers*. It is through it that in-service teachers as early as pre-school education up until the 8<sup>th</sup> grade are equipped with skills to teach tech-

nology and storytelling in an integrated way. The university projects to introduce this meaningful education programme to pre-service teachers, so that they are primed for an engaging content knowledge. That way the pending gap in teacher education can be narrowed, and eventually closed.

It is our view that transformative initiatives in higher education can also be achieved if teacher education programmes are designed and driven to rigorously examine the moral and epistemological underpinnings of teaching as a profession. Sockett, (1993) claims that to achieve professional aspirations in education, that will probably give teachers confidence to address global issues through pedagogy, teacher education programmes must be grounded in philosophy and driven by intellectual credibility. Education is one sector of academics that is highly contested, by politicians, ideologists, and philosophers, it is essentially a minefield of epistemological controversy (Sockett, 2008). It is against this backdrop that we believe that since teaching has this philosophical characteristic, to maintain its status, it requires continuous professional development Sockett, (2008).

III Conclusion

We are of the understanding that teachers need to learn how to teach effectively. To achieve that, they

should acquire aspects of pedagogical content knowledge that incorporates language, culture, and community contexts for learning. Teaching is not a mere regurgitation of the subject content and knowledge but includes the understanding of a learner as an individual. Darling-Hammond, (2006) asserts that every child has a unique personality, that requires cultivation. Accompanied by this, they still need to acquire skills that are necessary for classroom management, to communicate effectively, use technology, and reflect on their craft. Furthermore, as members of a professional community that has the autonomy to service individual clients, need to collectively work with society to find solutions for global challenges. This will be achieved if they are exposed to research along with supportive, functional, and cohesive leadership across disciplines, sectors, and organisations, (Sengupta, *et al*, 2020). Institutions of higher education have a role that cannot be overemphasised, since “given what academics know about the *current ecological condition of the planet, there is an obligation for universities to become leaders in the movement to prevent global ecological collapse.*” Moore, (2005b, p. 326) by empowering teachers in the process.

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The Right to Education for Children and Adolescents in Extreme Poverty  
Ugandans connive to deny children and adolescents in extreme poverty the right to education



Uganda is a developing country where majority of the people are categorized as poor. The country joined the rest to adopt the sustainable development goals (SDGs) to be achieved by 2030 and is steadily making remarkable progress towards the goals. Efforts to reduce poverty in the country have yielded some tangible results. According to World Bank, the percentage of Ugandan households living in poverty was halved by 2013. However, the northern region, which has been described as the poorest in the country, still has 33 percent of the population still living under extreme poverty. Children and adolescents in this section of the population have limited or no access at all to education. Government efforts to salvage the situation are frustrated by what I choose to refer to as self-seeking school managers who have instead continued to lock such children and adolescents out of schools.

The government of Uganda started implementing Universal Primary Education (UPE) in 1997 with the aim of increasing the number of the country's children accessing primary education. In 2007 the same government embarked on implementing Universal Secondary Education (USE) and Universal Post Primary Education and Training (UPPET) to absorb the UPE graduates. These programs cater for children and adolescents. According to government policy, children in these public schools must not pay any tuition fees as this became the responsibility of government. This is almost similar to free education, but parents were left with the responsibility to provide uniforms, exercise books and food for their children while at school. These programs resulted into increase in enrolment in both primary and secondary schools in the country. For example, according to Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Sports (2016), UPE increased the transition rate to Senior One from

51% in 2006 to 73% in 2007; and USE increased access to secondary level from 18.6% in 2006 to 24.7% in 2015.

Whereas on the national scale statistics paint a more beautiful picture, analysis at the grassroots indicate otherwise. For instance, according to the Uganda Bureau of statistics (UBOS, 2014) in some remote districts in the north of the country, over 50 percent of the children of school-going age were not actually going to school, while in the Capital City 5.1 percent were not going to school in 2014. The situation might not have become any better today. This is an appalling situation!

Although the government has, through UPE, USE and UPPET programs, created conditions that greatly increased access to school for children and adolescents, what actually goes on in public schools keeps away those from extremely poor families. The transition from a situation where fees per child would be collected from parents to one where schools have to wait for government releases was not a smooth one for school administrators. Two reasons made the transition not easy. One, the release of funds from government would delay which made it difficult for schools to meet running costs especially at the beginning of a school term; and two, the funding itself was found inadequate by managers of schools who had previously been collecting and managing huge sums. Prior to UPE and USE, a primary school child was paying a minimum of Uganda Shillings (UGX) 20,000 and a secondary school child a minimum of UGX 60,000 per term. This was obviously much more money compared to the UGX 2,700 and UGX 41,000 that government pays per child per term for primary and secondary respectively. To get a clear picture of these figures one needs to use the conversion rate of 1 US Dollar to UGX 3,650.

In a bid to make up for the delayed and inadequate government funding, some schools slowly and quietly started charging children fees. Today, most public primary schools are charging a minimum of UGX 10,000, while secondary schools charge a minimum of UGX 30,000. This is not to mention those that are charging UGX 50,000 and above. The fees charged are given different names by different schools, for example, development fee, lunch fee, library fee, etc. In most schools, the money raised for fees is used to facilitate teaching staff in terms of feeding, transport, housing, and other allowances; ultimately to make the financial position of the teacher better.

Although the government claims to be committed to its policy of non-payment of fees, it has not moved out strongly to apprehend school administrators who contravene the policy provisions by charging fees or to deter them from doing it. It should be noted that schools, especially secondary schools, have their annual budgets showing sources of income to the Ministry of Education and Sports for approval, and they are actually approved. This is a clear indication that the staff at the ministry are either not concerned about schools charging fees or are just supportive of the act. Due to this laxity, schools which started charging small amounts of money have progressively increased the fees, ultimately going back to what the situation was prior to UPE, USE and UPPET or even worse. For example, the school where I work started by charging UGX 5,000, later increased it to 50,000, then to 75,000, and is slated to increase to 100,000 as suggested by a section of parents at their meeting just before COVID- 19 lockdown. I believe the same has happened in many other schools. What is disheartening about this is that this fee increment is being proposed at a time when government has increased its funding per child.

This rapidly growing and unchecked move by public school administrators to charge fees has closed doors for children and adolescents in families living in extreme poverty, ultimately denying them a chance to benefit from the UPE and USE programs, since they are unable to pay. This amounts to nothing less than gross violation of this category of people's human right to education. The government's continued laxity to take measures to stop charging fees or apprehend those doing it is a sign of failure in its obligation to ensure access to education for all its people. This, therefore, makes one wonder as to who is there for people in extreme poverty, if government is not.

There is dire need to do something about this situation as a big number of children are being left out. To this effect, I would like to make these suggestions. One; the government of Uganda should come out strongly to enforce its policy of non-payment of any fees and apprehend those that contravene the policy. Two; the government should work towards paying a living wage so that school managers are not tempted to charge fees for purposes of enhancing their staff salaries. Three; measures to eliminate poverty must be expedited so that everybody is able to afford their children's education requirements.

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# Law and Countryside Education Classes

In the environment of the campesine resistance's project and fight for democratization of the land, the campesine social movements have, as a mark of their trajectory, prioritizing the question of education, contributing for the formation of collective actors that integrate the whole mass of movements, having education as a basic principle for the change of society.

[...] The Sem Terra's Movement was concerned about organizing teachers' formation courses, developing a methodology of teaching and releasing materials related to agrarian reform, promoting courses and lectures, meetings, always enhancing the ideals of persistence, fight and solidarity, fundamental in the process in which they live. Concerned, also, about the children and the adults of the movement's education. (VARELLA, 1998, p.153).

According to the references that approach the theme, like the reflections contained in the "Dicionário da Educação do Campo"<sup>2</sup>, and Varella's affirmation, an important point of this path is promoting spaces of collective accumulation, such as seminars, conferences, that go on strengthening the debate and pointing to the necessity of demanding public politics of education specific to the countryside populations. It's in this context that emerges the National Program of Education in the Agrarian Reform (PRONERA), created in 1998.<sup>3</sup>

The PRONERA program emphasized on greater attention to the legitimization of social movements' flags, in the field of formulation and achievement of new rights, contributing with the democratic principles that guide the Democratic State of Right.

Placing the Law "not as a stagnated order, but as achievement, on fight, of the libertarian principles, in the movement of social totality, where the Law, the kingdom of freedoms, would have as boundary, only the liberty itself" (Sousa Silva apud Lyra Filho), the PRONERA program took a path thinking of the environment of formulation and consolidation of public politics elaborated according to the countryside social movements' demands. The perspective was guaranteeing public politics on education to the people of agrarian reform camps and settlements.

The creation of the First Class of Law turned to the public of rural workers happened as a result of the countryside education project and of the fights made by countryside social movements. It made possible to perform actions of formation in a critical and emancipating way, in the context of fighting for rights.

In that sense, the program contributes to the visualization of the reach of human rights' actions, that in some moments seem to be so distant from reality, with a crystallized and abstract reading of their applicability as rules which intend to guarantee basic rights.

The six classes of PRONERA, the Pioneer Class Evandro Lins and the Fidel Castro Class, from Universidade de Goiás (UFG); the Eugênio Lyra Class from Universidade do Estado da Bahia (UNEB); the Nilce de Souza Magal-

jects, facing the education processes implemented by the State, that follow the capitalist production logic.

This perspective of thinking of countryside education as a result of fights for rights, denouncing the exploitation of rural workers and of environmental resources turns possible the dialogue with the theoretical horizon of "O Direito Achado na Rua" (The Law found in the Streets). This work thinks the Law from a critical and dialectic sight, of the encounter of social movements with the Law, trying to create and make possible the materialization of the right over the concrete actions of social movements.

In the Federal Constitution of 1988, the right to education appears as a right to be assured to all the population through the action of the State (article 205). The education is right for all and duty for the state and shall

tice, opposing big land's properties, aiming to decrease the economical, racial and gender inequalities in the territories.

The necessity of strengthening the debate about our system of justice and consequently the forms of access of countryside populations to those spaces is that they act for the accomplishment of justice.

The set of reinvention of existent practices developed by the classes enables the establishment of a new mark on Law Education and therefore, the formation of popular lawyers aligned with the human rights' conceptions, linked with a project of countryside education's defense in Brazil. An experience not yet recorded in another countries of the world.



hães Class from Universidade Federal do Paraná (UFPR); the Frei Henri Class from Universidade Federal do Sul e Sudeste do Pará (UNIFESSPA); they are spaces of struggle and creative contest over new rights against the positivist vision that narrows the rights and turns the access to them into a question of juridic formalism, attending to political and economical interests consolidated in society.

The place of the fight for countryside education is the struggle of rural workers excluded from the free access to land and other resources. These workers reorganize themselves to fight for the access to teaching and learning, in accordance with the collective practices of countryside sub-

be promoted and encouraged with the collaboration of society, aiming for the complete development of people and the preparation of all to the exercise of citizenship and qualification to work. However, the efficiency of this right shows up as a challenge, when there are groups in Brazilian society that have difficulties accessing this right, such as the countryside population.

The PRONERA classes experience made possible that people from countryside, from the waters and from the forests had access to knowledge from law world and can act as human rights' defenders and lawyers of social movements. They can act in defense of collective rights, promoting social jus-

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<sup>2</sup> <https://educacaodoCampo.ufes.br/sites/educacaodo-campo.ufes.br/files/field/anexo/Dicionário da Educação do Campo.pdf>  
<sup>3</sup> The National Program of Education in the Agrarian Reform (PRONERA) was created with the goal of alphabetizing and elevating the rate of schooling among young and adults that live in agrarian reform areas. The PRONERA program was extinguished by the current Brazilian government.

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