

Resolution of the African Round table "Human Education in the Third Millennium: Problems, goals and values of education and democracy in Africa"

The activity of Human education' Initiative and the draft Declaration came to us at a time when our civic associations and academic structures are expanding and clearing the paths for greater success in our own projects. So, this Round table allowed us to better formulate our common values; clarify current challenges; better formulate our projects; be more united. We generally agreed that in Africa we need an education that will liberate us from ALL forms of dependency i.e. economic, social, political, intellectual among others, and that will transform the way of thinking and the life of our societies in its entirety. *As a result of the African Round table, we came to the following conclusions.*

We welcome the 'Human education' Initiative and the Declaration that are unique and valuable, because come from the world of the teachers themselves, the University which is the guarantor of the qualification and availability of human ideas and knowledge in their most recent state. The Declaration highlights concrete proposals for educational solutions to the problems of our present age. The Declaration proposes a humanistic approach to education, i.e. the preservation and promotion of the dignity, capacities and well-being of the human person in relation to others and nature (Unesco 2015: 40). We need to redefine education as an education that places the human being at the centre, as a humane education: ethical, moral and cultural, as a transformative education that transforms the hearts of students in order to lead to a complete transformation of the society. Freedoms and responsibilities, fruitful innovations are the signs of progress in human education. Human education will prospectively take into account the multidimensional as well as the complexity of anthropo-social realities: economic, political, even ecological, thus challenging the orthodoxy of the dominant system(s) and the rhetoric that underlies it. Some sensitive issues that seem to have been eluded or diffused throughout the text of draft Declaration are: inclusion, resilience, critical thinking. The Declaration is a plea for an education that prepares individuals for a meaningful life.

We have revealed our general concerns as the following.

Individual and collective potential almost buried secularly (historically) by a school culture of obedience and submission. This leaves little or no room for human social values such as love, empathy, affection, compassion, harmony, tenderness, kindness, and especially happiness or human flourishing. We feel the need for recognizing the voices of those who are being taught and for including indigenous African cultures in education. We are concerned about whether governments really feel a need for critical thinking in education and critical thinking democratic societies.

Rethinking education as a whole, we state that

Our fight must engage civil societies, States, political organizations and at all national, regional, sub-regional and international levels. Education is the most powerful means to change the world. Education strengthens the capacities especially of the less well-off, young people, especially women. Education helps to better understand responsibilities, solidarity, strengths and weaknesses. Education helps to see convergences and differences, stages, gateways, immediate systems. Education helps to draw fertile water, to resist against headwinds. Education must be considered as a tool of transformation which suggests that a more humane and humanized approach to education is necessary. This calls to review our policies, structures and practices.

Education by its vocation forms and produces human capital, this sector should always be the priority of public authorities in all countries of the world, especially in low-income countries. Education should be egalitarian and equitable. Education should create a space for social justice, in specific conditions of the country. Human education will initiate, develop educational strategies that will awaken awareness, the conquest, the liberation of individual and collective potential for real empowerment. This approach will thus promote in the future more spaces for the redistribution of power, new forms of participation and commitment within plural communities. The main concern of education stakeholders (government authorities, parents, students) lies in the employability. Thus, the challenge for teachers is to succeed in articulating this economic need with the content of the knowledge and values to be transmitted so that education produces autonomous people who live in harmony with the world, society and themselves.

Education must take into account the socio-cultural environment and develop in a person dialogical, civic and ecological consciousness.

The current cult of the student in education is wrong, the role of teachers should not be forgotten, supplanted.

Regarding the education in Africa in particular we think that

We have to think about the vocabulary, epistemology and be careful with the terms of global North and South as ideas of eurocentrism. For education, it is important that African countries be integrated into the common world history as one of the centers of development.

In most African countries the issue of education cannot be addressed without reference to the colonial past, the consequences of which are still strongly felt. As consequence, policies are often only systemic transpositions that are unsuited to the context in which they are deployed, in spheres of governance, legal, education, belief and value systems, thus there is a tendency to grant value to what comes from elsewhere to the detriment of endogenous resources and to create a dependence on the assistance offered for the implementation of the said systems. All this prevents true self-determination for the transformation of countries.

For education we need the notion of African ethic of Ubuntu, that is human dignity and more importantly the quest of human co-existence and recognition. Dignifying oneself through the recognition that people can coexist in the pluralistic society.

Social justice, dignity, critical thinking are necessary as common human values. But we need take into account "national universalism" as the method of colonial regimes by which they introduced their national values as universal. For social justice social support for students in formal education is necessary.

The state should play an important role in human development in education. In addition to state support, it is important to reach out to business to create "educational funds for the progress of national societies" so that government and business can work together through education for social change and progress. Through this, the consciousness of the citizens will be awakened.

The main concern should be the role of education to stamp out the greatest problem of Africa corruption, which means that people want to go to positions of leadership not really to serve, but for their benefits.

Here is an urgent need for a new mentality, aided by an African based scientific revolution that would take into consideration our African realities, to bring in a new cosmology, a distinct state of mind, a new view of the world, and for this, a proper education focused on critical thinking and problem-based learning, should be used. Human education should be taught formally, nonformally to students and informally to market women, farmers, merchants and other artisans as enlightenment (through social advertising in audio materials, video and pictures on posters, etc.) in order to convey the rudiments of humanism and solidarity Ubuntu. This means affirming the self-consciousness of a personal dignity (the value of own life, anthropological awareness, meaning of flourishing, feeling of responsibility) together with the social, dialogic, civic consciousness and also fostering awareness of national culture and world culture; ecological consciousness and modern worldview, combining indigenous and scientific notions. There should be free formal and nonformal education programs through phone audio materials for school, university and adults. In effect, the education will extend beyond formal education to include the entire community. Through this, the consciousness of the citizens will be awakened.

The aims of African education are to struggle for democracy, help people to have self-sufficiency with regard to food, health, peace, the preservation of the environment, be good neighbors and stay without fears inside and outside Africa. Performance measures could be taken in the light of the eradication of poverty. We have to start from the stage of kids, primary education, separate the Pre-School Education Level and help kids to learn how to live with each other, to respect each other, to respect relations with people.

In African education, it is very important to give space for local culture, knowledge, such as traditional medicine and to preserve the diversity of languages and of writing systems.

In addition, we consider the following points important

Education of women, girls, disabled people. School activities (arts, sports, school trips).

A creation of dialogical spaces in the city. The establishment of spaces for citizen exchanges in rural and urban areas framed by institutional support will promote the integration of intergenerational, intersocial and intercultural public life. Analyzing in education the relations between the value of life and violence, between hostility and productivity, since the crises that the world has been going through lately raise many such problems, but conflicts of whatever nature can and must be resolved in the interest of the populations and the world we inhabit and the species that live there.

Civil society should take a part in education policy. Unity and solidarity between teachers.

Cultivating the 3rd mission of universities, namely services to communities in addition to teaching and research tasks.

Creating a structure that would help to identify the experience that exists in different countries of the world and, having identified practices, adapt them to local grounds.

The participants of the African Roundtable made proposals on a number of specific amendments and additions to the global draft declaration.