



# **learn2change**

TRANSFORMING THE WORLD  
THROUGH EDUCATION

PERSPECTIVES • STORIES • METHODS

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THROUGH EDUCATION**



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**Learn2Change – Global Network of Educational Activists**

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**Further information:** [www.learn2change-network.org](http://www.learn2change-network.org)



Flowers symbolize the eternal cycle of life, they embody transformation. The colourful blooms facilitate the reproduction of the individual plant and its metamorphosis into new life. Even if not every flower is identical, or may not live the same length of time, it serves its purpose of continuity in diversity.

The flowers on the cover showcase the tapestry of diversity that our network is, which is both our strength and inspiration. Our network finds resonance in that natural power of creation. In connection with and in relation to each other, we are serving our individual purposes on earth and shaping our living environment. Owing to our shared beliefs and goals, renewed buds are continuously bursting forth, blooming for a just and harmonious world.



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Vision model, Kick-Off Workshop 2017, Barnstorf

Learn2Change-Summer Academy, Germany, June 2015







## INTRODUCTION

### **Learn2Change – A global journey towards change**

*Gabriele Janecki and Sarah Laustroer*

Welcome, dear reader, to the Learn2Change network that connects educational activists from all over the world. We work together, as it is becoming increasingly clear that global challenges can only be addressed in global partnerships. The world is facing multiple and interconnected global challenges. Worldwide, people and societies have to respond to climate change, ecological degradation, injustices and inequalities, political and religious fundamentalism. Human rights, justice, democracy and ecology play a subordinate role in economic globalisation processes. It seems obvious that a 'development model' based purely on economic growth is not suitable for responding to pressing global issues. Proactive agents of change in all sectors and levels of society, politics as well as economy are of great importance. Change is a task of many; everyone.

We invite you to join our journey towards change. Maybe you are already on your own path, maybe you are looking to take the first step or you are just interested in getting new ideas. We are happy that you are interested in our stories and experiences. We hope that some of them inspire or support you on your way.

A collective effort to achieve the transformation towards a more sustainable world must be based on fundamental changes in attitudes and actions as well as alternative economic and social models. But how can this look? Which models already exist? And, how can we bring about the necessary cultural and conscious changes to give globalisation a peaceful, just, secure and ecological shape and direction?

The members of the Learn2change are united by their strong belief in the transformative power of learning and education in a global partnership. That is why we founded the global network



Learn2Change in 2015 during a Summer Academy in Germany. We search for new paths in order to turn awareness of global and local issues into educational action and commitment for social change. The strength of the network and its members lies in the capability to inspire, empower, to raise questions and to uncover opportunities.

### **Opportunities and challenges of global educational partnerships**

Global educational dialogue with partners from all around the world contains many opportunities. It supports the discovery and exchange of diverse concepts, visions and philosophies and promotes exchange of knowledge and learning from one another. Alternative methods and practices can be shared and tested in new regional contexts. The sharing of success stories on social, economic and ecological change can create feelings of solidarity between learners and educators worldwide. At the same time, knowing that people around the world are facing similar challenges and remain active in this quest can also provide inspiration and motivation for personal activities in the pursuit of sustainable global transformation.

It is great to walk the Learn2Change road together and to discover new paths, despite the journey to change not always being straight. Neither is it clear nor easy. The realisation of an equal and fruitful global partnership needs a lot of consciousness, compassion, patience and generosity of all network members.

Our expectations as well as ways and means of communication differ. All members of the network are engaged in a variety of activities and projects in their local communities. As a result, the opportunities to participate actively may be intermittent. Furthermore, it is not easy to keep the exchange alive over the years – not just with the physical distances, but encountering difficulties due to different languages and cultures. Modern technologies offer wonderful opportunities for collaboration; however, working across time zones and working with dissimilar accesses to the internet complicate online communication.

The biggest challenge of the network is on power imbalances. We founded the network together and we recognize ourselves as equal partners. Still, we cannot ignore the fact that the network exists within a system where imbalances of power and the economical gaps are significant. In our network, we don't have the same

access to resources and we don't have the same possibilities. For several members of the network, difficult visa procedures prevent easy entry into certain countries, while others have the privilege to move around the world freely. Furthermore, the financing of the network comes mainly from the Global North. This means, it has to be administered according to certain criteria, which creates a hierarchy within the members, even if not wanted.

At the same time, these and other challenges offer chances to learn and grow as a global network, and to contribute effectively to global change. Overcoming global imbalances of power and resources is only successful through global partnerships, even though the process is a long and difficult one. To Participate in the Learn2Change network has been extremely valuable for all its members and offers an experimental platform for cooperation beyond traditional North-South hierarchies, which may be an example for future collaborative projects.

### **The Learn2Change 'travel book' – An inspiration for change**

Already within our first meeting, we found that telling and hearing our experiences and stories and sharing our diverse perspectives, methods and concepts is an extremely inspiring and empowering tool. Consequently, the idea came up to make parts of this treasure accessible to a broader public. The idea grew and finally we started compiling this wisdom in a book. Members of the Learn2Change network from all over the world were keen to contribute and share their manifold knowledge, thoughts, educational practices and personal learning stories. It has been an adventure – and a real global experience.

The guiding questions for this book – central to our network and our work are: What kind of world do we want to live in? What does *Good Life*, prosperity and development mean for us? How do we relate to the concept of Global Citizenship? What role does education play for change to occur? Which successful practices already exist for motivating and empowering people to become active, as they strive for global justice and ecological sustainability?

The book consists of essays, personal stories and methods, interspersed with poems and statements from Learn2Change members on terms and questions that are relevant for our work.

In the first part, six authors discuss their perspectives on important terms, ideas and concepts, serving as the basis for our educational work. The essays deal among other things with the

question of what we need and what prevents us from real change. They ask about how (global) learning can contribute to individual, social and political change. They advocate for a decolonisation of education and learning systems. They explore what *Good Life* is and critically question prevailing notions of development. Finally, there is a debate about the meaning of 'Global Citizenship'.

Personal stories occupy a central place in our network. They are about sharing experiences, understanding more deeply the work and challenges of the other participants, and seeing the underlying assumptions and beliefs we hold about education and learning. In the second part of this book, you will find nine stories as diverse as our members are. They focus on individual learning experiences as well as on experiences of learning in community. They motivate for own action and also illustrate different leverage points, objectives and learning concepts in order to involve people. In consonance with the theoretical and methodological contributions, they offer an opportunity to reflect and question one's own perspectives.

The third part of the book presents methodological approaches and practical suggestions for transformative education and learning. The authors reveal the thematic diversity of the network, its areas of education, topics and target groups. Practical instructions are given, e.g. how children and young people can discover what *Good Life* means to them. Methods are introduced that can help to decolonize our bodies and minds and empower learners to stand up for themselves and others. Tools are presented that enable us to discover connections between our own lives and those of people in other parts of the world. Creative tools such as theatre, storytelling and poetry are featured as well as city walks, games and a geocaching tour using mobile phones. Most of the methods can be used for a wide range of issues from climate change, inequality and justice to gender issues and personality development.

We thank all supporters and authors for their contributions to the book, be it in the form of articles, translation, financial, personal and moral support. Without the commitment of the contributors and their belief in the network, this book would not have been possible.

We wish you, dear reader, an inspiring and rewarding journey towards change.

Enjoy reading!



#### ABOUt the AUthors

*Gabriele Janecki*, geographer, works as a global learning facilitator and project manager with the VNB (Verein Niedersächsischer Bildungsinitiativen). A special focus of her work lies in the strengthening of alliances and networks of educational organizations and activists in order to support their work for the achievement of ecological and global justice. She coordinates the Learn2Change-network together with Sarah Laustroer.

*Sarah Laustroer* works for the VNB (Verein Niedersächsischer Bildungsinitiativen) and is coordinating the Learn2Change network. She believes that education and empowerment are important engines for change. She has worked in various projects with youths, young adults and multipliers in the fields of global learning and political education before.





Learn2Change-Summer Academy, Germany, September 2017

Learn2Change-Summer Academy, Germany, June 2015





# ESSAYS





Learn2Change-Summer Academy, Germany, June 2015





## **The boundaries of the adjacent possible, or what can we ask of an olive tree?**

*Rene Suša*

Learn2Change. The name of the network and the corresponding title of this book offer a good starting point for asking many questions. How might we learn to change? Change what or whom? And for what? The potential answers to these questions seem to largely depend (among other things) on how we imagine who we are, where we are now, how we got here, where we are going and where (we think) we may want or need to be. They also require us to think about our relationship to change and to the role that knowledge plays in fostering change. While all kinds of involuntary change happen all the time, personal change (in attitudes, perceptions, sensibilities, behaviours, desires, imaginaries...) is often seen as something that we can (hope to) *engineer* using different tools and methods of educational/pedagogical engagement. As we (modern, Cartesian subjects)<sup>1</sup> have been socialized into believing that we are rational, autonomous, individual agents, knowledge has come to be seen as the indispensable and pivotal instrument for change.

A dominant theory of how change works proposes that an input of more and better knowledge leads to a change in personal beliefs/knowledge systems. This, in turn, leads to a change in attitudes and dispositions which influences how we make decisions, which ultimately translates into changes in our behaviour and actions. We may agree/identify or disagree/ misidentify with this proposition, but in both cases most of our educational efforts remain – consciously or subconsciously, tied, at least to some extent, to this theory. Anyone that has ever tried to kick an undesirable habit or any kind of physical and non-physical addiction, would likely agree that simply more knowledge about how personally and socially damaging these things may be, has

very little, if any influence on changing our dispositions towards them, let alone changing our behaviour. Some sort of a crisis, rather than knowledge, seems to be a much more likely candidate for inducing deep and potentially lasting change. The neurochemical pathways that get wired in our neural networks through habits and addictions cannot simply be rationalized/thought off away. We literally embody/inhabit them. Changing them means also changing our bodies, not just our minds.

Although problematic addictions and habits are often seen as personal, individual issues, there is a very long list of those that we, as collective entities (societies, cultures, global economies, shared humanity), developed over time. Once collectivized they are usually not seen as addictions, habits, beliefs, but as normalized ways in which we exist, interpret and relate to the world. Thus, for most of our everyday existence we repeatedly mistake our construction of reality and the experience of that construction for reality itself. In order to maintain the coherence of our constructions we tend to seek company and to identify with people and groups whose worldviews are close to ours, while tending to dismiss and ignore those whose worldviews we find challenging, unreasonable, non-realistic or simply false.

Usually this desire for developing a coherent, consensus-based worldview is referred to as the notion of universal reason. The notion assumes that through evidence-based arguments and dialogue, humans can (and will) reach consensus about the universal and fundamental laws of nature and society (universal rights and freedoms) and that such laws are – at least in principle, discoverable. The implication of these dispositions is that, if we all think really hard, we will ultimately learn to see the world in the same way. Then, once we agree on the kind of world there is and on the kind of world we want, all we would need to do is to bring this new (better) world to life. In other words, once we agree on common knowledge (shared epistemology) the only problems we would need to solve are essentially methodological. There are several problems with this notion, of which only three will be mentioned in this text and only one examined in more detail. The first and most obvious one is that we would never all agree neither on a shared description, nor on a shared vision for the world, as its inexhaustible complexity (be it bio-physical or socio-cultural) and dynamic nature will continue to resist any attempt at such gross reductionism<sup>2</sup>. The second is the psychoanalytical insight that something that is fundamentally a



desire or a fantasy (driven by drives often unknown to us) gets to be conflated with what we have learned to call reason or rationality<sup>3</sup>. The third, and this is a very important one, is that the creation of exclusive frames of what we call rationality, reasonable behaviour and/or reasonable thinking, is severely restricting our possibilities to imagine, think and exist differently<sup>4</sup>.

This particular kind of constrained thinking/rationality that draws its roots from the project of European Enlightenment is referred to by Sousa Santos<sup>5</sup> as “abyssal thinking”. Arguably the main crux of abyssal thinking is that it can imagine only one particular way of being (originating in modern, Western, (secular) Enlightenment-based ontology) as a legitimate source of its knowledges (epistemologies). These knowledges can then be operationalized in different ways – they can develop many methodologies, but ultimately the source and the structure of knowledge production is reduced to one single legitimate, valid and intelligible option.



Andreotti et al.<sup>6</sup> attempt to represent abyssal thinking through the figure of the olive tree. In this figure the trunk and the roots of the tree represent a single ontology (way of being), grounded in the soil of metaphysics (reality – as both existing and insisting), from which many different knowledges (epistemologies) branch out with even more different methodologies (countless leaves). However, as these different branches (epistemologies) all come from the same trunk and roots, they can only always (re)produce the same kind



of fruit (olives). There may be different variations of olives, but the tree cannot produce other kinds of fruit – figs, pears, or apples for instance.

In the last decade or so a new concept, borrowed from the work of theoretical biologist and complex systems theorist Stuart Kauffman<sup>7</sup> has begun to find its home in various theories of social change, most notably in the works of Roberto Mangabeira Unger<sup>8</sup>. It is the concept of the “adjacent possible” that – in its societal adaptation, refers to notions of alternatives that are viable, but unimaginable within the currently existing modes of thinking. Although promising, and long awaited in its wake-up call, Unger's work can be used as an example of how the awareness of and indeed, deep reflection on the limits of our thinking and being, does not necessarily or automatically translate into propositions for *ontologically* different solutions.

In brief, Unger<sup>9</sup> argues that we need to radically expand our imaginative possibilities for institutional/structural systemic changes, if we are to have any hope for developing more egalitarian, inclusive and democratic societies. Since, according to him, the three main political and economic projects of the 18th and 19th century Enlightenment, capitalism, socialism and representative democracy (all very important branches of the olive tree) have failed to deliver on their promises of creating societies that would enable everyone under equal conditions the access to means to realize their full human potential. Unger calls for a need for radical experimentation with different forms of social organization and integration. He proposes<sup>10</sup> a “high-energy democracy”, in which changes to social, political and economic institutions can happen quickly and where many different types of social, political and economic organisation are able to co-exist. However, as his proposition still focuses on personal realization through (meaningful) work and consumption, it could be interpreted as suggesting a development of a new branch of the tree, but that that branch should be expected to produce the same kind of fruit as before (olives).

In recent years countless alternative movements have sprung to life in response to different aspects of social, economic, political and ecological crises and many of them see themselves and/or are seen by others as radical, revolutionary and/or innovative. It would be interesting to explore, what types of critique, what horizons of hope and what kind of imaginaries of existence are articulated in these various movements, in particular in those that could

be arguably seen as the most aware of some of the irresolvable contradictions of modern societies, such as the degrowth and the transition movements. The awareness of planetary boundaries and limits to growth is clearly visible in both of these movements, but to what extent do their propositions challenge or affirm the fundamental tenets of modern societies such as the single story of progress, development and human evolution<sup>11</sup>, the mediating role of nation states and its legal systems, the dependency on international markets and hierarchical, exploitative, gendered and racialized international divisions of labour? To what extent do they address not just questions related to constitutive social, economic and environmental violence and injustices, but also to cognitive, affective and relational injustices?<sup>12</sup> It would be also interesting to see in what ways do their horizons and imaginaries overlap or diverge from other initiatives that claim different ontological roots, such as Buen Vivir or Ubuntu?

I do not wish to suggest that there should be some kind of a checklist for initiatives of social change to tick off, in order to deserve a badge of being *genuinely different* for two main reasons. First, it seems that it is perhaps impossible to challenge all of modernity's ontological premises at the same time as they are constitutive of what we consider to be 'us'<sup>13</sup>. Second, similar to a process of trying to overcome an addiction, this process is not so much subject to rational decision making, as it is subject to developing the courage and stamina for being open to being interpolated by the world in ways that interrupt our treasured ontological securities and that remove the orientation markers that help us navigate in the world.

Very likely the same considerations and concerns apply to those of us, involved in (global) education. We often look at these initiatives as sources of inspiration and hope. If we are interested in exploring pedagogical practices that would help us develop the necessary courage, stamina and discernment required for such openings to emerge, then we need to considerably re-imagine and re-conceptualize our dominant theories of change and the way we see the role of knowledge in terms of fostering (deep) change. In contrast to prevailing approaches in education, this would entail going beyond the need for more and better information (the banking model of education), beyond (merely) critical reflection (critical pedagogy) and also beyond essentializing attempts at plurality and inclusion where other knowledges and ways of being remain always precisely just that – other. As all of these approaches

operate predominantly, if not exclusively, in the rational/cognitive domain, they cannot offer pathways of engagement with desires, projections and attachments that are beyond rational control. They can however, show us the limits of our rational capabilities. While I would find it difficult to suggest any specific models to look up to, I do believe that an exploration and experimentation with pedagogical (and other) practices that engage with our affective and relational dimensions through embodied, experiential and other kinds of more-than-merely-cognitive work offer us a much better chance at creating conditions for some of that stamina and courage to emerge.

Moving towards pedagogies that might have the potential of nurturing deep change requires from us that we begin to develop a different relationship with knowledge, both with what (we think) we know and do not know, but also with what we cannot know – with what lies beyond the socially and historically inherited ontological framework of what makes sense to us. It is however questionable, whether we are already in a position where we really want and dare to that. Given our very strong attachment to relating to the world and each other through meaning and knowledge production, it may very well be, that while the tree of singular ontology is still alive the only thing we can do, is to keep growing new branches. Genuinely new possibilities will perhaps only become legible, once the composting tree becomes the substrate for new trees (or other plants) to emerge.

Meanwhile, in the south of Italy, more than a million olive trees are estimated to be dying, presumably from *xylella fastidiosa*, a bacterial disease for which there is no cure. Entire regions are devastated, because olive trees were pretty much the only trees that grew there for hundreds of years. Perhaps they will be replaced with a different monoculture of figs, dates or almonds? Or perhaps, after some time, a forest might again grow there...

#### Notes

1. The term Cartesian subject is related to the work of French philosopher Rene Descartes — Cartesius (1596–1650), whose metaphysical assumptions (I think, therefore I am — Cogito ergo sum) and rationalist philosophy (the idea of universal reason, addressed in the paper) are widely considered as foundational to modern ways of being and knowing.
2. Stuart Kauffman. 2008. *Reinventing the Sacred. A New View of Science, Reason, and Religion*, New York: Basic Books.

3. Slavoj Žižek. 2000. "The Cartesian subject without the Cartesian theatre." *The subject of Lacan: A Lacanian reader for psychologists*, edited by Kareen Ror Malone and Stephen R. Friedlander. New York: SUNY Press. Pp. 23–40.
4. Vanessa de Oliveira Andreotti. 2016b. "Re-imagining education as an uncoercive rearrangement of desires" in *Other Education: The Journal of Educational Alternatives*, 5 (1): 79–88.
5. Boaventura de Sousa Santos. 2007. "Beyond Abyssal Thinking: From Global Lines to Ecologies of Knowledges" in *Review (Fernand Braudel Center)* XXX(1): 45–89.
6. Vanessa de Oliveira Andreotti, Sharon Stein, Ali Sutherland, Rene Suša, Sara Amsler and Karen Pashby. 2018. "Mobilizing different conversations about global justice in education: Toward alternative futures in uncertain times." *Policy & Practice: A Development Education Review*. (in press). Draft version available at <<https://decolonialfutures.net/portfolio/cartographies-text/>>, Accessed February 16, 2018.
7. Stuart Kauffman. [1995], 2008. *At Home in the Universe. The Search for the Laws of Self-Organisation and Complexity*. New York: Oxford University Press.
8. Roberto Mangabeira Unger. 2009. *The Left Alternative*. New York: Verso.
- . *Religion of the Future*. 2014. New York: Verso, 2014.
9. Unger, 2009.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 29.
11. Vanessa de Oliveira Andreotti. 2016a. "Multi-layered Selves: Colonialism, Decolonization and Counter-Intuitive Learning Spaces", <<http://artseverywhere.ca/2016/10/12/multi-layered-selves/>>, Accessed January 12, 2018.
12. EarthCARE network. 2017. "EarthCARE Global Justice Framework", <<https://blogs.ubc.ca/earthcare/framework/>>, Accessed January 12, 2018.
13. Vanessa de Oliveira Andreotti. 2012. "HEADS UP: editor's preface", *Critical Literacy: Theories and Practices*, 6(1): 3–5.

#### ABOUt the AUthor

Rene Suša is a post-doctoral fellow at the University of British Columbia, Canada. His work explores the hidden ideas, ideals and desires that drive modern global imaginaries. He is interested in exploring educational pathways that might help us re-orient some of these desires and create openings for different (unimaginable) futures. Rene is also part of the EarthCARE educational network.



## Shaping global change with education: Thoughts on the effectiveness of Global Learning

Marion Rolle

### Preliminary remarks

*This article does not claim to talk about Global Learning in the sense of the totality of all available opportunities and providers in Germany, and certainly not about those existing in other countries. In my opinion, there is no standardised or singular way of defining "Global Learning". Educational approaches and concepts referring to this heading are as diverse and colorful as the stakeholders providing them.<sup>1</sup>*

*As a consequence, I simply would like to take a very subjective look at a section of the German "Global Learning Community", and invite all educational providers to use my thoughts for self-reflection.*

In 2015, the United Nations adopted the Agenda 2030<sup>2</sup>, with the Sustainable Development Goals at their center, to combat global poverty, climate change and move the world along a sustainable development path. Agenda 2030 ascertains that this requires comprehensive political, economic and social transformations, and that education plays a key role (see SDG 4.7)<sup>3</sup>.

Accordingly, the UNESCO emphasizes within its 'Roadmap for implementing the Global Action Programme on Education on Sustainable Development'<sup>4</sup>:

*To create a world, that is more just, peaceful and sustainable, all individuals and societies must be equipped and empowered by knowledge, skills and values as well as be instilled with a heightened awareness to drive such change. This is where education has a critical role to play. Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) is about shaping a better tomorrow for all – and it must start today (UNESCO 2014)<sup>5</sup>.*



UNESCO confirms what providers of Global Learning / Education for Sustainable Development (within as well as outside schools) have stressed for many years: 'There will be no transformation without education.' (VENRO 2014)<sup>6</sup>.

All thanks to approaches such as Global Learning, knowledge about global interrelations has increased significantly. At the same time, such initiatives have contributed to foster awareness of existing imbalances, values and responsibilities. Worldwide, people and civil society initiatives have started to develop and practice new, sustainable life and production styles. They've become pioneers of the major transformations we urgently need, much on the lines of a post-fossil (and sometimes post-'development') economic strategy.

And yet the world has not become more sustainable in many areas: For example, biodiversity is still declining while carbon emissions increase. Moreover, the gap between the rich and poor is widening.

Thus, doubts have arisen in recent years about the transformative power of education. Reflection and reorientation might be as necessary as helpful.

### **What is Global Learning? Key objectives and content**

In short: The educational concept of Global Learning offers approaches to deal with a world that is characterized by increasing globalization, more exchange of goods and human beings (virtual as well as real), by climate change, scarcity of resources, wars, nationalisms and partitions, by increasing injustices and the need for deep transformations. The topics of Global Learning opportunities thus are extremely diverse and range from fair trade to water, child labor, peace, human rights, colonialism, the world economy, transformation, climate change to anti-racism and anti-bias as well as diversity trainings and empowerment.

The variety of topics also has to do with the evolution of Global Learning.<sup>7</sup> The foundation as well as core objectives of this educational approach lies in human rights as well as sustainable development—including all aspects: society, politics, environment and economy. However, Global Learning focuses on global interrelations and the question of global justice. The clear orientation on values emphasizes that Global Learning is not only a pedagogical but also a political concept: It understands people as part of a global society and wants to support them in shaping the world as active global citizens. This finds expression in the United Nation's



Silence Climate Parade from JANUN e.V. On the placard: "Sorry for the inconvenience. We just want to save the climate".

Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation's (UNESCO) Global Citizenship Education (GCED) that aims at empowering learners to assume active roles to face and resolve global challenges and to become proactive contributors to a more peaceful, tolerant, inclusive and secure world.<sup>8</sup>

Against this background, Global Learning provides knowledge on interrelationships, sharpens awareness on imbalances and contradictions, and encourages questioning the current situation. Global Learning in my understanding is 'transformative learning'. It wants to contribute to making life on earth more just and sustainable. Accordingly, it promotes the development of alternative, positive visions and concepts of living and capacitates participants to develop their own position toward grievances and participate actively in change.

### **Key pedagogical principles**

Global learning is above all learning about oneself; it aims at *self-reflection* and focuses on one's own role in the (world) society, one's own perspectives, values and attitudes. In global learning, teachers are always also learners. They initiate and facilitate *learning processes* and, accordingly to the principle of *learner's orientation*,

consider at all times the background, interests, competences and capabilities of the learner.

This is linked with the principle of orientation on *people's living (and working) environment*. Global learning builds on one's own life and creates links to the world. Therefore, Global Learning can (and should) take place everywhere and at any time: not only in schools or educational centres, but also in the city centre, at work, at public events, in parks and supermarkets.

Global Learning helps to understand oneself as part of the world and to *express solidarity* in the sense of human rights. It is based on a fundamental, empathic as well as appreciative attitude towards the diversity of persons who are equal. It strengthens the ability and willingness to put oneself in the position of other people and to understand one's own (e.g. national) perspective as only one possible perception.

Here, it is particularly important to encourage learners to deal with colonialism and global power imbalances, and to stir or expose stereotypical or racist ideas of other countries or people, but also central ideologies and concepts (e.g. development). Additionally, and in line with the principle of *multi-perceptiveness*, Global Learning fundamentally takes into account explicitly differing and often marginalized perspectives of people in countries of the Global South.

In Global Learning, learning takes place *holistically*, i.e. with all senses. It is participative and interactive and should be fun because one's own participation can best trigger sustainable learning processes. Global Learning encourages experimenting and discovering one's own abilities. *Orientation to action* begins with (self-) reflection as mentioned above, or in other words: with turning one's own world (school, community,...) upside down. It then includes the development of ideas (which might be considered utopian) and concrete activities. To sum it up: At the centre of any educational activity in the context of Global Learning is the emancipation of the learners to become global citizens.

### **Criticism and suggestions for further development**

Unfortunately, the portrayed understanding of Global Learning is often only partly reflected in educational practice. Accordingly, it is not as transformative as it could be in my opinion. Some thoughts on potentially relevant changes in this context:

### *1. Creating learning and experimental spaces for political engagement*

The act of being or becoming a global citizen must be learned. The focus of current education programs is often on knowledge transfer and super- (or anti-) ficial discussion. However, it is a *real* discourse that is needed to develop one's own position and to learn to defend it – even against resistance. As described above, *acting* is a central competence of Global Learning. Activities, however, far too often aim at responsible consumption. For sure, every purchase of a fair trade or sustainably produced product benefits the producer or the environment a little bit. However, the basic, unfair and unsustainable structures won't change in this way. (Riek, 2015)<sup>9</sup>

### *2. Alliance with active civil society*

The majority of those involved in Global Learning in Germany are committed to a fair and sustainable world. But they often act occasionally, individually and in a fragmented way without any connection to associations, initiatives or movements. A stronger link between the national and international education community and solidarity/human rights/ sustainability community strengthens civil society and enables people to learn and exercise community action and commitment practically in real life.

### *3. Developing equal international partnerships*

All too often, Global Learning, e.g. in school partnerships, is learning about the Global South, their challenges and needs in terms of support. In reality, partnerships are often sponsorships, aid or fundraising projects. In this way, equal learning from each other cannot take place. This only occurs when partners develop common topics—irrespective of the interests and specifications of the donors, when they use meetings to uncover mutual ideas as well as prejudices, when they reflect and discuss with each other and develop joint projects. The involvement of extra-curricular civil society partners, especially from the Global South, could also be helpful.

### *4. Reorienting the target groups of educational work—Strengthening adult education*

Children and adolescents—who are currently the focus of attention in Germany—are usually not the ones who have the power to initiate the necessary changes (in the required time, i.e. NOW). In order to become politically more effective, we urgently need more

educational opportunities for adults who are decision-makers in society, politics and business. Correspondingly, new learning and activity areas besides school and education centres should be found and used.

Global learning has the potential to be the driving force of political change. But it needs to take its objectives and aspirations seriously.

*'Education is the most powerful weapon to change the world.'*  
(Nelson Mandela)

#### Notes

1. These range from small—mainly voluntary, associations and initiatives, to big non-governmental or governmental organisations with full-time employees, to schools or teachers and self-employed trainers, to name but a few.
2. On 1 January 2016, the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development — adopted by world leaders in September 2015 at an historic UN Summit officially came into force. <<http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/development-agenda/>>.
3. Target 4.7: "By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development. <<https://en.unesco.org/gced/sdg47progress?language=en>>.
4. The World Action Programme shall also serve particularly to implement the SDGs.
5. German UNESCO Commission e. V. (Ed.), Bonn 2014: <<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0023/002305/230514e.pdf>>.
6. <[http://www.venro.org/uploads/tx\\_igpublikationen/2014Diskussionspapier\\_Globales\\_Lernen.pdf](http://www.venro.org/uploads/tx_igpublikationen/2014Diskussionspapier_Globales_Lernen.pdf)> (only in German).
7. Global learning has its origin in Germany in the 'Third World' pedagogy, whose focus was mainly on the Global South—and served in particular to generate support for (developmental) aid measures broadly speaking. With a slowly changing development cooperation, the so-called 'development policy education work' emerged. Emancipatory approaches from the Global South, such as Paulo Freire's Liberation Pedagogy, played an important role in politicizing the (international) solidarity and human rights work. The United Nations Rio Conference on Environment and Development (1992) was another milestone. The Rio Declaration emphasized, that environmental protection and development cannot be separated, and that countries like Germany also have to be understood as developing countries. Each and everyone's responsibility has come to the fore and continues to



shape Global Learning in the context of Education for Sustainable Development.

8. < <https://en.unesco.org/gced> >

9. Barbara Riek. 2015. "Between goals and achievement. Stumbling blocks on the road to political change". CONCORD/DEEEP 2015. <<https://info.brot-fuer-die-welt.de/blog/zwischen-zielen-zielerreichung-stolpersteine-auf>> (only in German).



#### ABOUt the AUthor

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## Decolonisation of Education: A call from within

*Ruby Hembrom*

Mainstream formal education as a development tool to assimilate and civilise India's 104 million indigenous peoples (Adivasis/tribals) has done just the opposite. Instead of having positive outcomes it has even failed to cover the entire indigenous population in terms of access. The 2011 census records India's literacy rate at 73% and the Adivasi/tribal literacy at 59%<sup>1</sup>.

That itself speaks of the gaps in infrastructural preparedness, capability or standards to enable an alphabetic and numerical literacy to all. That's just the tip of the iceberg. We're not yet questioning how and why indigenous life ways need salvaging or civilising and how an imposed alien system of education can be used as the medicine to cure us of our 'backwardness'.

Though India's indigenous peoples constitute 12.5% of India's 1.3 billion population, their linguistic and cultural diversity and habits have not been incorporated in the legal, political and policy structures that cater for general education of Indians. Even among various tribes, what is relatable or comprehensible to one isn't to the other—a 'one for all' system is flawed in its very premise that all citizens can be taught or that they learn in the same ways. The reality of the colonial mind-set—as a foundation of nation building—developed by both the British and the Hindu dominant classes discriminate against us.<sup>2</sup> The conventional system of education is seen as contradictory to indigenous, traditional knowledge systems or simply dismissed as inferior. On that premise we already have evidence of an intellectual bias.

Today, trying to make us fit into the templates of modern education is how colonisation of education—of minds, thought processes, creativity, imagination and individuality—takes places. This new, internal colonisation of education kills diversity by



An alternative learning centre for Adivasis, West Bengal, India.

attempting to make us clones of one another; the yardsticks of a successful student have to do with grades and examinations. If you do not meet certain minimum grades you're just stupid and if you are Adivasi you're naturally stupid.

Even after India's independence from the British in 1947, mainstream education has served to further uphold and continue this colonial process, with frequent infusions of the *Indianised* standards of progress, achievement and success, isolating us more and making us redundant.

The quality of schooling delivered in tribal communities is often sub-standard, leaving children with low levels of literacy and few skills to enable them to get the 'mainstream' jobs that schooling was set up to do.

Children often get lost in the inaccessible, alien and poorly taught materials, leading to high drop-out rates or they become individuals with no connection to, or skills for, the lives their parents' lead.

This is an intellectual alienation that comes from the inherent design of the curriculum and those who implement it. It rests on a notion of superiority of their knowledge systems and our 'primitive, unscientific' ways. A system of learning where we are continually being measured against a set of doctrines that require submission to an alien, colonial (external and internal) agenda set up to

rewire, re-program and create urban and employment-oriented aspirations for entire tribal populations.

This alienation is complete when it is served in a language that's not our own, often leading to native languages being lost and the domination of another language and vocabulary taking over — leading to an indoctrination by new thought patterns.

This attempt of assimilation (linguistically, economically and culturally) also involves processes of influx of outsiders (physical movement into our traditional territories), dispossession and displacement from one's land for the 'greater good of the country' leaving us more confused, isolated and automatically exploited and subjugated.

Decolonisation is an act and a process of resurgence and identity assertion and it begins with a critical examination, engagement and then a "radical break from state education systems—systems that are primarily designed to produce communities of individuals willing to uphold settler colonialism".<sup>3</sup>

Worldwide, indigenous communities have been reclaiming control of the formal education of their children with our most urgent demands being influence over the curriculum, mother-tongue intervention, at least in primary levels of education and therefore the need of native teachers. While we hear of success stories from pockets in Latin America and Canada, in India many NGOs have tried to incorporate these demands and the ethos in educational mediations, filling in gaps left in the public education system, or setting up alternative mediums, yet this is not and cannot be effective precisely because we work within systems that are skewed in favor of the colonizer legacy, conditioning us to think, act and behave in ways that will make us 'model citizens'.

While Indigenous scholars, students and leaders have made substantial inroads in some disciplines of the academy in terms of curriculum and programing, we have been much less successful in gaining the academy's recognition of Indigenous Knowledge systems and intelligence on their own merits, and far less successful in dismantling systems of domination and oppression, dispossession and erasure advanced by the academy. While there are sites of decolonization within academic institutions, they still remain a colonizing force upholding the values of heteropatriarchy, settler colonialism and capitalism.<sup>4</sup>

Decolonization of education has to begin with decolonization of the schooling system. Can our knowledge systems thrive and

be transmitted in establishments that are built, owned and run by non-indigenous peoples and mindsets? Even if we have our own curriculum—how can experiences and learning environments be recreated?

Learning for indigenous peoples happens on the land—on fields we plough and harvest, on fishing and hunting grounds, in forests where roots, tubers, mushrooms are picked, firewood is collected and lands where cattle are grazed. A sustainable life for all is transmitted in those workings of everyday life and survival. One learns to take as much as one needs, learns to cut trees in ways that would facilitate resilience and not cause irreversible destruction and we learn how not to cause imbalance in the society we live in. In other words, indigenous peoples' lineages are attached to the environment they are part of. You acquire a philosophy of life and respect for an eco-system and biodiversity, and help maintain it. This is lived-in wisdom—which only flows through relationships between living entities.

What we have with an indigenous curriculum in textbooks within the confines of a classroom is decontextualized knowledge, which is far from being decolonized.

The land and its lessons are both the context and process of this learning which makes sense only when it lives through us. Decolonization of education means reorienting and re-focusing on the importance and urgency of lived-in teachings and learning of the land and advocating for it as a legitimate knowledge system.

Our curriculum, even if incorporated, is mostly taught by non-indigenous folk who can appropriate and reproduce the content but that's all they do and can do with it. Our people don't have the educational qualifications and degrees to obtain teaching positions. Therein lies the paradox of 'indigenous knowledge'—what paperwork was required for our elders and ancestors to transmit survival skills, harmony, co-existence to the next generation? So for us to formally enter academic and learning spaces as teachers we have to be re-colonized. To bring change we have to work within a system that is operating against us. It is a system which conceives us as non-thinking and unintelligent peoples. How much can we affect decolonization in a prejudiced system?

Our formal education systems have effectively 'de-indigenized' us — taken away everything that makes us indigenous. Not only are our children learning alien lessons and mannerisms but are also





Lining up for lunch at the alternative learning centre, West Bengal, India

indoctrinated in a religion and language that's not ours. We often hear parents say that this education has made their children useless: they have an education but have lost the skills to live an indigenous life. These children don't know how to do anything at home. Our children have an education that will place them in companies and organizations that have left many displaced—businesses our forefathers protested against, resisted, died for, were murdered and jailed for. There is no greater tragedy than this. Decolonization is a process of addressing the key question of how will we recognize we're indigenous when everything that makes us indigenous is taken away from us.

Mainstream Education and the medium of its transmission itself is a tool of dominion and suppression. Being educated in Hindi or any of the regional dominant languages and not standard English has left us more ill-equipped for 'mainstream' jobs. This sub-standard education dished out to us is a ploy to keep us dependant and colonised. If we are educated, where will domestic helpers come

from — how will a continuous supply of cheap, labour class be created? Decolonisation of education also is about demanding which colonial ways we'd like to use as a crutch to further our goals — and language literacy of our choice is one way.

Decolonization of education can only truly happen when we stop our dependence on the structured systems that exist. How feasible is that in these modern times and market economy? Decolonization as an act and process takes immense courage — can we refrain from the temptations of an easier, comfortable life, which a school or college degree has a higher chance of getting us in a technologically devised market economy. Decolonization is also a process of sacrifices — demanding not simply to let go of an imposed mindset but an entire lifestyle.

Yes, we need to create alternatives — that's resurgence, a continuous process of claiming our place in establishments — rebuilding and demanding acknowledgement of our own political, intellectual and cultural traditions.

We need new generations of indigenous knowledge producers, reproducers, carriers and custodians, who'll be committed to the regeneration and preservation of our traditional knowledge systems, making the established educational set ups recognize and respect a land-based philosophy, worldviews and an organic pedagogy that has survived millennia.

Decolonisation of education is not a takeover — why would we want to control such a system that aims to make machines of humans — either we dismantle it or eliminate it or transform it into something useful and valuable for us. We choose resurgence of our lived-in wisdom and intellect to fortify our indigenous framework of knowledge empowerment to assert our rights as peoples.

#### Notes

1. "Literacy rates of Scheduled Tribes far below national average, says parliamentary panel", *Firstpost*, March 15, 2015 <<http://www.firstpost.com/india/literacy-rates-scheduled-tribes-far-national-average-says-parliamentary-panel-2154745.html>>.
2. The British Empire's conquest and colonisation of India lasted from 1612 to 1947 while the Hindus, as a Supreme Court report acknowledged, colonised this territory around four thousand years ago: "India is largely a country of old immigrants and that pre-Dravidian aborigines, ancestors of the present Adivasis ... were the original inhabitants of India" (January 5, 2011 by a Supreme Court of India Bench comprising Justice Markandey Katju and Justice Gyan Sudha Misra, in Criminal Appeal No. 11 of 2011, arising out of Special Leave Petition No. 10367

- of 2010 in Kailas & Others versus State of Maharashtra TR. Taluka P.S.).
3. Leanne Betasamosake Simpson. 2014. "Land as pedagogy: Nishnaabeg intelligence and rebellious transformation". *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society*, Vol. 3 No. 3. pp. 1–25. <<http://www.decolonization.org/index.php/des/article/view/22170/17985>>, Accessed January 15, 2018.
  4. Ibid.



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# NETWORK DIALOGUE

What does Good Life mean to you?  
What makes you happy?

It doesn't mean housed, dressed and eaten well. A healthy living/working environment where creatures and nature in harmony and peace. No need to worry about the basic needs; people are free to choose their path.

**April Lai**

In my opinion, good life means access to the basic human needs, that is a quality education, adequate food that has a balanced diet, clothing, quality medical care, adequate shelter and a clean environment. It also includes access to information and an environment where one's human rights are not violated. What makes me happy is a world where all children and all the other vulnerable groups of people are safe, have a good life and their rights protected. If I can play a role in ensuring that they can access quality education, and their rights are protected, then that makes me happy.


**Geofrey Nsubuga**

Good life for me means to be able to live in a situation, which enables and fosters physical and psychological balance. It makes me happy to live

according to my own rhythm and to have ideas, dreams or concrete projects to follow. Climbing and Sports interlinks all of those dimensions – and community is essential.

**Timo Steinert**





A good life to me means not struggling with basic human needs or being scared about how to survive. Not to get judged or discriminated for my origin, religion, culture, disabilities, skin colour, gender or sexual orientation. It means to be accepted the way I am. A good life means to have access to education: to go to school, to study or to do an apprenticeship and be able to take care of myself. Also to have family and friends who support and care about me and share their love.

**Malin Venhuis**

Waemo kiminino – our 'buen vivir' (good life) in Waorani. We are connected with the Jaguar, the harpy eagle, the waterfalls and the forest. Being this is the base for all living beings in the amazon, the good life means rivers and forests without contamination, healthy organic food and conserving our ancestral territory for generations to come.

**Mencay Ninquihui**

My view is: Good Life for all is the aim of development. Sharing

and discussing with people around the world can strengthen the awareness that we are all members of the human community on Mother Earth.

**Sabine Meyer**

Good life for me means having access to nature and artistic expressions besides being able to provide these possibilities to other people.

**Gaia Sanvicente Traverso**





## **Buen Vivir, Pacha Mama, and the Defenders of Mother Earth**

*Claudia Gimena Roa* (translation by Menja Holtz)

There was a time in human history, which saw, even in the lands of the dominators, nature in a different condition. The constructions respected nature, the art was inspired by nature, and science was no more than the level of knowledge derived from her.  
Esperanza Martin <sup>1</sup>

Buen Vivir is a fascinating philosophy, adopted by imperfect societies, which have experimented with and dreamed of a way of life that would maintain their harmony with nature, and with economies based on autonomy and wholesome quality of life. It is a proposal, which differentiates itself from the so-called 'development' from a modern perspective of an occidental way of life. It is a term of the language and cosmovision of the indigenous peoples of the Andes and Amazon Basin of South America: 'The original peoples were the ones who in practice and on the terrain have questioned the fact that nature is considered an object contingent to the requirements of capital.'<sup>2</sup>

Thus, the term Buen Vivir originates from two languages in its broader translation: in Quechua, the co-official language in Bolivia, Peru, Colombia, Chile, Ecuador and Argentina, it is called Suma Kawsay. In Aymara, which is the co-official language of Bolivia and Peru, and which is spoken in parts of Argentina and Chile, Suma Qamana means 'to live and co-live in a good way'. It 'is the ideal which the Andean man and woman are searching for. It translates as plenitude of life, the social, economic, and political well-being, which the people desire. The full development of the people.'<sup>3</sup>

Imagination and reality have made us pause and consider Buen Vivir, because the appreciation and claim of this term has been embraced by indigenous peoples, peasant farmers, fisherfolk, environment protection groups, writers and social movements. All



Learn2Change-Summer Academy, Germany, June 2015.

of them have analyzed in depth its importance and contribution in order to put it on the agendas of not only these groups but also in its transcendence at national and international levels.<sup>4</sup>

In the political and global context, it is important to study the constitutions of Bolivia and Ecuador in detail, and also the agenda of the United Nations to understand how we could have another form of development. A form that includes harmony with nature, its protection and respecting its rights as well as those of its defenders.

What makes Buen Vivir as a way of life special is that it is not an individual concept, but is interdependent with other concepts that seek to guarantee our planet's sustainability. For example the word

Pachamama<sup>5</sup> (Mother Earth) is tightly connected to Buen Vivir, as oxygen is for human beings. It is like a voice singing to the rhythm of

Mother Earth. In this sense, this essay focuses on a Latin American context but without forgetting that Buen Vivir and Mother Earth have their meanings, one could say, in the ancestry of all living and extinguished cultures of our world.

Within the vivid cultures that survived extinction, which have suffered to the extreme the diminution of territory, we could mention the U'wa<sup>6</sup> who insist: 'More than thousand times and in thousand ways we have told them that the earth is our mother and we neither want to nor could sell her.'<sup>7</sup>

According to oral knowledge, the earth is a living being and is seen as the mother in many Andean and Amazonian cultures. Also in the Quechua and Aymara languages it alludes to this concept. In the Andean cultural tradition, to talk about Pachamama is to be of accord with the idea that she provides for all the well being and she is the protector. Finally, on 22nd of April 2009, the General Assembly of the United Nations, opted for the idea to call our planet earth 'Mother Earth'. On 17th of June 2015, the earth was designated as the 'Common House' of all people by the Pope, based on the chants of Francis of Assisi: 'Be lauded, my Lord, through the sister, our Mother Earth'.<sup>8</sup>

It is for sure, that if we see her as mother, we live in the privilege of her endowments and gifts, with her generosity she is for all of us and we all interact in her. Curiously in the Greek culture, the earth was a deity called Gaia. It had the same connotation for the Romans: 'Terra mater'.

Obviously, words have different forms of expression in different languages, and in this case, referring to the two words mentioned above, in the special character of these and many more languages, there exists a philosophy of life as a whole. This is a logic, which originates off a cosmovision. It is also essential because in this moment it has converted into the necessary notion to begin understanding the decolonization of the concepts of the so-called 'development'. Particularly there we can see which type of life we want to carry on: a bad or a good life — *mal vivir* or *Buen Vivir*. But words just as people, have tight relationships, or they simply separate from one another and keep a distance and often do not communicate with one another. Effectively, we cannot deny that there exists universal languages, although every culture appropriates its own language. This is the case with the ancestral peoples, that have maintained their ways of expression through an ideology, a philosophy, a language, and a root and cultural identity, which is impossible to vanquish in time. At this point the question arises: Who came up with/conspired the theory of a developed, civilized world as opposed to a barbaric or primitive one? The first version tells us about development and a civilization based on numbers and letters, while the second version gives us a concept like *Buen Vivir*: quality of life and well-being. This way, the dichotomy between a civilized versus a primitive one was created, and with it the indigenous cosmovision was also underappreciated. Curiously, though, these cosmovisions entailed a source of wisdom

about the relation with the planet that is so necessary to reverse, if possible, the disaster of climate change.

Arturo Escobar<sup>9</sup> writes: 'It was trusted in that almost by technological and economic order and thanks to something called planning, over night millennial and complex cultures would convert themselves in clones of the rational occidentals of the countries, that are considered economically progressive'.<sup>10</sup> Those who followed this objective abused Buen Vivir and discriminated against the defenders of Pachamama in Abya Yala<sup>11</sup>. The latter were called primitive, barbaric, not developed, poor, and inferior. But they were the inhabitants of enormous rivers, mountains, seas; all with a traditional food culture, with a great environmental and cultural patrimony and biodiversity, who managed to conserve their ecosystems. Still, they were called poor and backward, in accordance with the social system and the vision imposed on them by European colonists. This was justified with them being the saviors from so much poverty and ignorance, and that the rich needed to help the poor to become part of the unbridled consumerist system.

When we live our lives, we are who we are not only because we think we are so, but because sometimes others imagine us like that. Despite the extermination of cultures, the deep roots of ancestral cosmovisions persevered. Now they give space to other types of life, alternatives to development for agricultural communities, and even for urban areas, which have opted for another kind of relation with the territory.

In the occidental world, the idea of nature dominated by humans, has different expressions, one of which is related to a religious vision. It starts with the book Genesis 1:28, at the point when the Bible manifests: God blessed them and said, 'Be fertile, increase in number, fill the earth, and be its master. Rule the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, and all the animals that crawl on the earth.'<sup>12</sup> From then on, mankind felt justified to subjugate and mistreat her.

Consequently, the so-called 'development', considered the only truth, a truth that still should be considered incorrect, began with the flagrant crime of killing new and uncommon forms of life and also of its defenders.

This essay would have been written in vain, if we would not remember and pay tribute to all those who always have struggled for the planet: 'More broadly, Latin America remained the most dangerous region for anyone wanting to protect rivers, forests, mountains and oceans, accounting for 60 of the global total of

killings of environmental defenders even though it is home to less than a tenth of the world's population.'<sup>13</sup>

Let us remember Berta Cáceres, indigenous Lenca<sup>14</sup> of Honduras, and defender of the rights of mother earth, who was assassinated in the year 2016. Her death and many more we need to know about and name; give evidence to the fact that mother earth is being violated in her rights and those who defend her face the destiny of being eliminated or silenced. There is still hope, though: in the words of Arturo Escobar, who speaks about collective action of the social movements in order to defend the Buen Vivir and the rights of mother earth. He also differentiates very clearly the concept of the so-called development, confronting it with alternative ways of development.

As I conclude this essay, I propose that in education, the concept of Buen Vivir and mother earth's rights, in its study and use, should be seen in its profoundness and it should not be trivialized. That both in Bolivia and Ecuador, indigenous and social movements struggled to ensure that the term 'good living' was adopted within their constitutions and that the United Nations (UN) later considered it important to consider good living on its agenda, shows the path to such a key way of living on mother earth.

Project-tour, Learn2Change-Summer Academy, Germany, June 2015





The children and young people of this planet should know about alternative forms of economy, which does not declare war on Pachamama or her defenders, but which comes from an understanding that all human beings are to be the defenders of life.

#### Notes

1. Esperanza Martin. (no date, page 1) 'Pachamama y Sumak Kawsay'; Acción Ecológica. <<http://www.comitesromero.org/sicsal/reflexiones/CentenarioProanhoEMartinez.pdf>> .
2. Los Derechos de la Naturaleza Nueva Arma de Lucha Frente a Las Actividades Petroleras en los Países Amazonicos. MAIPPA Articulacion por un movimiento de afectados por la industria petrolera en la Amazonía. (Undated). <<http://www.estudiosecologistas.org/documentos/reflexion/indigenas/derechosnaturaleza.pdf>>.
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4. Alberto Acosta and Esperanza Martínez, from Ecuador with their experiences propose, in the current use of this expression, an emphasis is placed on environmental protection and the display of solidarity. Cops. P. 25 *Revista Latinoamericana* <<http://journals.openedition.org/polis/260>>.
- Alberto Acosta y Esperanza Martínez (comp). 2009. *El buen vivir. Una vía para el desarrollo*. Santiago: Editorial Universidad Bolivariana. p. 184.
5. The word Pachamama is a word that comes from the Aymara and Quechua meaning: Pacha as a concept of earth, while mama is the mother. From then on, the word Pachamama is used as mother earth, and it is constantly paid tribute to.
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#### ABOUt the AUthor

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Fostering participatory methodologies, intercultural dialogue and community exchanges between rural and urban localities are her main responsibilities.

She is also active in promoting reading, writing and communication processes with women and youth groups, using testimonial literature, story books, journals, press articles, videos and radio programs and case studies on food sovereignty and sustainable societies with organizations in Latin America.



## The Ubuntu Concept of Good Life

*Louis Zulu*

This essay seeks to argue that Africa's unique contribution to the global concept of good life lies in her distinct social cohesion type of communitarianism. The title of this essay seems to suggest some kind of generalization regarding how people in Sub-Saharan Africa perceive good life. Though it is difficult to speak for all Bantu people because of the striking diversity in cultures and other aspects of life, at the same time, there are remarkable similarities, which make it possible to draw certain conclusions about the Bantu people. This essay will attempt to articulate such similarities.

Bantu people's way of living is guided by Ubuntu philosophy — which has its origins in humanist African philosophy, where the idea of community is one of the integral parts of society, a theory of shared humankind, togetherness — humanity, you and I.

The Bantu occupy vast patches of land in Sub-Saharan Africa. Some well-known Bantu tribes are the Kikuyu in Kenya, the Bemba in Zambia, Shona in Zimbabwe, the Sotho in the Republic of South Africa and Chewa in Malawi. Ubuntu is attributed to all the various groups of people who share this common descent and cultural heritage.

In Bantu philosophy, one is not attributed the title of a human person unless they live up to that expectation. Basically, this means to be human is not necessarily about the ontology of a person, *per se*, but rather to behave humanely in one's intersubjective relationships. Etymologically, there are two closely related words; Bantu and Ubuntu. Linguistically, both terms contain the stem “-ntu” which means personhood or humanness. Apparently, it is possible to alter slightly the sense of the word by changing the prefix. For example, by adding the prefix ‘Ba’ to the stem, the terminology means people in general. This is the level of ontological existence



Men and women working together to make manure

whereby because one is born of the human folk, they automatically deserve humane treatment.

By putting the prefix 'Ubu' in front of the same stem, the word acquires a new sense of having humanness in one's dispositions in the community. Bantu philosophy distinguishes human-like behavior from animal-like behavior. The former is characterized by altruism and self-giving to one's community. It also entails avoiding all detrimental acts to the human race. On the other hand, animal-like behavior is egoistic. Human beings are expected to be better than animals. As such, personhood is measured against the background of doing what is good for humanity and never just by virtue of being born as a human being. That is why Desmond Tutu, argues that in Africa when we want to praise someone for exhibiting the highest degree of humanness, we say: 'Yu u nobuntu' meaning 'this one is a person'<sup>1</sup>. Nierkerk's line of thought<sup>2</sup> also resonates well with Tutu's when he says that the Nguni expression 'Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu' means one is a person through others. In fact, the earliest African scholar to have articulated this assertion of Ubuntu is Mbiti. He said in Africa, the guiding principle of all humane behavior is: 'I am because we are and because we are therefore I am'<sup>3</sup>.

Comparatively, Descartes in his famous phrase 'I think, therefore I am' seems to suggest that being incapable of self-reflection means not existing. The Cartesian concept of human existence appears contradictory to that of Ubuntu because it dwells on a

person's self-consciousness to prove his existence. On the contrary, in Ubuntu, each human being's personhood is essentially expressed through interacting with other people in a manner that promotes everybody's welfare. That is why in Ubuntu it is correct to say that there is *no me without you*. Barbara Nussbaum<sup>4</sup> excellently expresses this fact about Ubuntu communalism in her three phrases: 'Your pain is my pain, my wealth is your wealth and your salvation is my salvation'. It would not be wrong for one to add that in Ubuntu 'your happiness and sorrows are mine too'.

However, communalism of African people does not mean the good or happiness of the individual is subordinated to that of the community<sup>5</sup>. Rather, by pursuing the communal good, the individual pursues his or her own good. To that extent, Ubuntu communalism is unlike Marxist collectivism (cultural value that is demonstrated by importance on cohesiveness among individuals and prioritization of the group over self).

Unlike Stoic and Aristotelian jurisprudence, which emphasized mastery of personal desires of the self as a way to attain eudemonia (from Greek language which means happiness but it could also mean good life in this context). Ubuntu's normative philosophy is formulated on the outward basis of social harmony. The essence of Ubuntu morality lies in the moral paradigm: 'An action is right just in so far as it produces harmony and reduces discord; an act is wrong to the extent that it fails to develop the community'<sup>6</sup>.

Although, social harmony appears to be the key in achieving happiness or good life among the Bantu, Ubuntu philosophy is not oblivious to the multifaceted nature of human life. Every living human being relates on three levels; firstly, to people who are presently living. Secondly, every living human being relates to the natural surroundings. Lastly, there are ancestors who are called the 'living-dead' among the Bantu. The next three paragraphs examine the connection between good life and these three interactions.

As already alluded to before, in Ubuntu there is a kinship both among and between indigenous people, which creates a family atmosphere through a kind of philosophical affinity. In this regard, Ubuntu is in tandem with the global process of creating global citizens because it is a philosophy that respects all human beings regardless of race, tribe and other statuses. Historians have documented how the indigenous people in Africa warmly welcomed white settlers at the dawn of colonialism and

evangelization. They were given land, food, water and other bodily necessities. Such an affinity is inspired by a spirit of sharing life sustaining physical and psycho-social needs such as food, clothes, housing, water, land, security and others. Having good relations with other human beings can and in fact does ensure that not only personal basic needs are met but also the communal ones. If someone in a village has food, which he is not willing to share with others, especially the poor, orphans, widows, the disabled and the sick, then he could be called a wizard. Being labeled a witch or wizard does not always mean that one practices the so-called 'black magic'. The cost, which could come with this labeling of witch or wizard, is social exclusion. A selfish individual isolates himself from the community. The negative effects are self-evident when such an individual has a wedding or funeral ceremony. Community members do not render all the necessary support, as they would have done if the person were humane. So, to sum it up, on this aspect of interpersonal relationships, good life entails contributing to one's community in both good and bad times.

The second aspect of human life, which also contributes greatly to the measure of good life, is interaction with nature. A healthy natural environment provides humanity with the resources, which sustain both plant and animal life forms. These are the two major sources of food for human beings. Living in harmony with nature is something that is inevitable because people's lives are wholly dependent on natural forces such as rains, winds and sunshine. Most indigenous societies are agrarian. This means their survival is dependent on the balance of natural forces. When these forces are in good balance, then life is secure. Prolonged durations of rain or dry spells are a catastrophe. Being agrarian is living an unpredictable life because forces of nature too are. However, harmony with nature guarantees good life for human beings because when cared for properly the earth is better able to support all forms of life, including that of mankind. That is why the Bantu concept of good life inexorably includes physical needs because no one can be happy without having them. Paradoxically, modernity has brought tarmac roads, electricity, tap water and other technological advances but sometimes these alienate certain members of the populations thereby robbing them of their happiness. The consequences of environmental degradation are natural disasters like floods, famines, dry spells and hurricanes. How can man be happy





with these natural disasters threatening human lives and their property?

Lastly, Bantu people are aware of the importance of respecting ancestral spirits. This is a metaphysical dimension of Bantu life. Though dead, ancestors are living. Indigenous Africans are conscious that their survival on earth also depends on fulfilling the wishes of those who have already gone ahead. Even in death, it is believed that ancestors can deliver prosperity or disasters to their offspring. Misfortunes in one's life could come from disobeying orders or the wishes of the ancestors. Similarly, pleasing the ancestors can also attract fortunes.

In conclusion, happiness in the life of a Bantu emanates from a harmonious life with neighbors, Mother Earth and the ancestral world.

#### Notes

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#### ABOUt the Author

*Louis Zulu* is a teacher of languages and humanities in Malawi. He has over 16 years work experience teaching adolescents in public schools. He is presently pursuing a Master's degree in Philosophy at the University of Malawi. He volunteers as the Coordinator of LEAD project and Aware and Fair. In his work, he aims at agitating school going youths to be drivers of the change they want to see in the world.



## **Global Citizenship** **A common compass for transformative education?**

Timo Holthoff

*Education gives us a profound understanding  
that we are tied together as citizens of the global community,  
and that our challenges are interconnected.*  
Ban Ki-moon, UN Secretary-General<sup>1</sup>

Following discourses of global education within Germany and beyond, *Global Citizenship* has become a popular buzzword in defining the normative aspects of an educational agenda that seeks to respond to interconnected challenges in a globalized world. On the one hand, this is based on the fact that the idea of a cosmopolitan worldview and identity (that learners should acquire a sense of belonging and solidarity as equal citizens of a shared world) has always been core to the concept of Global Education. On the other hand, it is due to more recent developments in the international educational agenda, since UNESCO has made 'Global Citizenship Education' (GCE) its approach for "preparing learners for the challenges of the 21st century", seeing it as an umbrella concept that is integrating different educational practices, like peace education, human rights education or Education for Sustainable Development (UNESCO 2013)<sup>2</sup>. It produced a couple of widely followed papers and conferences and, together with civil society lobbyists, succeeded in explicitly integrating the notion of Global Citizenship Education into the UN-Sustainable Development Goals (Goal 4.7) in order to give it more value on the political agenda of UN member states (UNESCO 2015). This created a frame of reference for civil society to push value based education in their national contexts: both in promoting the general role that education plays in facilitating societal change and in the particular role of Global (Citizenship) Education within the quest of rendering

education itself more transformative by changing curricula and learning methodologies. UNESCO defines GCE by distinguishing three conceptual dimension of learning:

<b>Cognitive:</b>
To acquire knowledge, understanding and critical thinking about global, regional, national and local issues and the interconnectedness and interdependency of different countries and populations.
<b>Socio-emotional:</b>
To have a sense of belonging to a common humanity, sharing values and responsibilities, empathy, solidarity and respect for differences and diversity.
<b>Behavioural:</b>
To act effectively and responsibly at local, national and global levels for a more peaceful and sustainable world.

(UNESCO 2013, P. 15).

Yet, the notion of Global Citizenship (Education) and its transformative potential remain vague to many. Therefore, in this essay I will elaborate different understandings of Global Citizenship from the past to the present and suggest aspects that it should entail in educational and activist contexts in order to unfold a more transformative, emancipatory, inclusive and empowering impact.

#### **The evolvement of the idea of Global Citizenship – from a European point of view**

The notion of Global Citizenship can be traced back to ancient Europe. Greek philosopher Diogenes, one of the founders of the cosmopolitan school of thought, is documented to be the first one

to refer to himself as a Global Citizen in 412 B.C., when he was asked what his origin was (Wikipedia 2018a)<sup>3</sup>. Already at this time the notion comprised of a sense of belonging to a human family, beyond particular national identities, and along with the general understanding of citizenship both rights and responsibilities.

The idea had a revival in the time of European Renaissance and the so called *Enlightenment*: Immanuel Kant in his philosophic oeuvre *Perpetual Peace* proclaimed 'the law of world citizenship', referring to the idea that the planet belongs equally to all people, which should be considered respectfully both in treating foreign visitors and in behaving in foreign countries (Kant 1795)<sup>4</sup>. At this time, together with the evolvement of the concept of Human Rights, the notion of Global Citizenship found its way into (western) judicial philosophy which later informed the formation of the United Nations, with the UN-Charta and Universal Declaration of Human Rights as foundations of international law in the post World War II order. This, of course, remained symbolic in many ways. As the UN regime of law does not warrant equal rights bindingly and enforceable to all people in the world, Global Citizenship in a legal sense – if you aspire it at all – remained and remains a utopia.

It was before this background that in 1948 US-Bomber-Pilot Garry Davis abandoned his US-Citizenship and sought political asylum at the UN in Paris. Convinced that nation states are the root of all evil, he declared himself *World Citizen No 1*. and with



some spectacular public interventions lobbied for a peaceful world government. He founded the *Global Citizens Registry*, which issued symbolic *World Passports* to stateless refugees of war (Wikipedia 2018b)<sup>5</sup>. The concept was pushed by other popular individuals, too. Albert Einstein described himself as a world citizen and supported the idea throughout his life, famously saying '*Nationalism is an infantile disease. It is the measles of mankind*' (Wikipedia 2018a).

To socialist ideology the western idea of modern cosmopolitanism (in the capitalist sense of a widely travelled and open-minded individual) was too apolitical and lacked collective identity. *Internationalism* can be seen as a socialist version of Global Citizenship that emphasized solidarity among peoples/classes beyond national borders, however, without neglecting the important role of nation states.

After the end of the Cold War, with an ever-accelerating globalization, dissolving borders and growing (or more consciously recognized) interdependencies science more prominently dealt with the phenomenon of Global Citizenship, especially in describing the facets of increasingly interconnected lives (on political, ecological, economic, social and cultural levels) and how this effects (multiple) identities or brings about contradictions and uncertainties.

For people migrating between countries (both physically and mentally) global citizenship might be a reality and aspect of identity, however, migration renders the political and other inequalities of our world visible at the same time. Also to some members of a global (business) elite, enjoying the privilege of free mobility to all countries, Global Citizenship has become a self-attributed attitude. So, the notion itself does not automatically imply the normative objective of a more just world – and we have to be mindful of power imbalances when we use it and define its values.

### **A eurocentric or a universal concept?**

This derivation tells a rather eurocentric (his)story of Global Citizenship and it would be ignorant to believe that other world regions haven't brought about similar – or even more sophisticated – philosophies or lived practices that are relatable to the idea of Global Citizenship – especially since the European version of it is somewhat a tainted one: it was in the exact same era and by the exact same philosophers of *European Enlightenment* that racial theory (with the idea of white supremacy) was developed and provided a moral justification for the suppression, exploitation and elimination of peoples through



colonialism. This, not in the least, showcases the importance of looking for contributions from non-European schools of thought – and possibly of a revision and extension of what is understood by Global Citizenship, in western dominated international discourse. Below I present some examples that are known to me, which might help in re-defining the narrative of Global Citizenship:

The *Maha Upanishad*, one of the oldest Sanskrit texts that constitutes philosophies of Hinduism, carries a strong relation to Global Citizenship, in describing the idea of *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam* (the world is one family):

*One is a relative, the other stranger,  
say the small minded.  
The entire world is a family,  
live the magnanimous.*<sup>6</sup>

The philosophy of *Ubuntu* that comes from southern Africa provides us with some beautiful ideas for reframing Global Citizenship, too. *Ubuntu* means 'humanity' in Nguni language and its core belief is often translated by the catch phrase 'I am because we are'. The concept has gained more attention since both Nelson Mandela and Desmond Tutu applied it more practically to their political or theological agenda (Wikipedia 2018c)<sup>7</sup>.

A political activist from South Africa once described his understanding of *Ubuntu* to me: 'Ubuntu means that I can feel you breathe through the soles of my feet'. The difference to the catch phrase of European Enlightenment 'I think, therefore I am', which displays the western paradigm of rational thinking and individualism, is obvious. So rather than for a *cognitive* recognition of our interconnectedness *Ubuntu* stands for a deeply felt togetherness, as an essence of what it means to be human. Based on this understanding it would not need a *decision* to act with mindful consideration of other people's rights based on information about the consequences of our own actions (which is a central learning objective of classic GCE). It would be a constituting element of our human self, hence rather a deeply emotional and visceral than a cognitive process.

Many indigenous religions and ontologies (assumption of what and how humans are to be in this world) contain a belief that everything, both physical and metaphysical, is part of one big living organism. A prominent example is the idea of Pachamama/Mother

Earth, pursued by several indigenous groups in Latin America. Such holistic worldviews embody an understanding of interdependence so deep that system theory could hardly achieve it cognitively. They invite for a less anthropocentric and less rational notion of Global Citizenship – which also involves the practical and spiritual interconnectedness with all (non-)living beings and the lands and therefore a dissolution of the separation of both human and nature and mind and body. In such a belief system a destruction of the natural environment feels like cutting your own arm. It means embodied sustainability, having existed long before the eco-crises caused by industrial countries made scientists invent this word. Before this background some folks have suggested to reframe Global Citizenship to *Earth Citizenship*, stressing a more holistic approach.

### **Expanding the narrative of Global Citizenship – as an educative response to a cultural crisis**

Bayo Akomolafe, a Nigerian psychologist and activist, said: ‘the problem is not the system but the culture that built the system’<sup>18</sup>. He refers to the fact that all our (mainstream) solutions to the multiple crises of our world are based on the same paradigms of thinking that caused the problems in the first place – and therefore constantly reproduce them. Modernity has programmed us to think and even feel and interrelate in certain limited ways that have proven unfit to lead us to a wiser future.

In this sense of a predominantly *cultural* crisis, education and activism become a struggle of creating space for silenced voices (inside and among us), of *unlearning* our hidden paradigms, of re-connecting with what and whom we separated from, of re-creating meaning and of experimenting with different possibilities of (non-) human co-existence – ultimately of self-liberation from the tiny boxes that we thought are the limits of what is knowable, tangible and doable. A precondition to that is the acknowledgement that we do not have all the answers, that there is no masterplan for a future worth living. We have to humble ourselves and start posing different questions instead of looking for better answers.

For Global Citizenship Education to be more responsive to this, the notion of Global Citizenship and the implied narratives of change must be opened, diversified and expanded. This means looking for diverse wisdoms and practices from different (especially marginalized) knowledge and belief systems – beyond popular



notions of development, beyond western ontology and rationalism. Some paths to explore were suggested in this essay.

What I already like about the term Global Citizenship, however, is that it entails the emancipatory idea that change can happen from below, that all people can raise their voice and have a capacity to actively involve themselves in reshaping their societies, mindful of living in a shared planet.

Indeed, many political activists and researchers see a *Global Citizens Movement* as a necessary key to realize the great transition to a future worth living, paying respect that we are in fact living in a diverse and entangled planetary civilization and hence need a global social movement for change – across civil societies worldwide and beyond dichotomous North-South-relations. Apart from the challenge of mobilizing so many people from so diverse realities and conceptions of the world, however, it is – unlike other social movements in the past – challenged by the lack of a clear opponent to revolutionize against and short of a clear narrative of an alternative future: because it is not *the system* but it is us, who in unconscious complicity re-build the system on a daily basis, that have to change our dearest truths, habits and beliefs. It is, so to speak, *a revolution against ourselves* without knowing where this will lead us. While this may sound harsh and frightening and adding to the many uncertainties that people face already, I believe that the

path to go on for this revolution is bumpy, twisted and queer, often painful but essentially beautiful and unfolding while we walk it hand in hand together.

#### Notes

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#### ABOUt the AUthor

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He is currently undergoing a major transformation himself: He has become a father and is looking forward to rediscovering himself and the world through the eyes of his daughter.

# We are a global family

*Louis Zulu*

Together, we cling to our shared vision and goal  
Does it matter how long it will take to achieve it?  
Not really,  
Slow but for sure, one step at a time, we know we will get there  
So, steadfastly, we march on, as soldiers advancing towards the  
opponents

From North and South, East and West, we come  
One by one, we come  
What motivates us in our work? Social Injustices? May be. But  
maybe not

Not really. Wait a minute!  
Is it not for the love of humanity itself? And Mother Earth?

Clumped together in small groups, we left our homes, our offices  
and our work.

But to do what?  
Seeing is believing, so they say in Africa.  
We had to see with our eyes and appreciate Global Education  
projects

Permaculture, eco-village, wild life conservation,  
Social justice, climate justice, civic action, e-learning and what not?

It is not over until it is finally over, so it is said in English  
Sooner than later, Sonnenberg beckoned  
But for what?  
Conference of course, to share and deliberate on global challenges  
Here we are now, discussing, sharing, learning, and exchanging  
some global solutions

Poem for the L2C conference in Sonnenberg, Germany  
Written for the O-talent show on 14.09.2017.



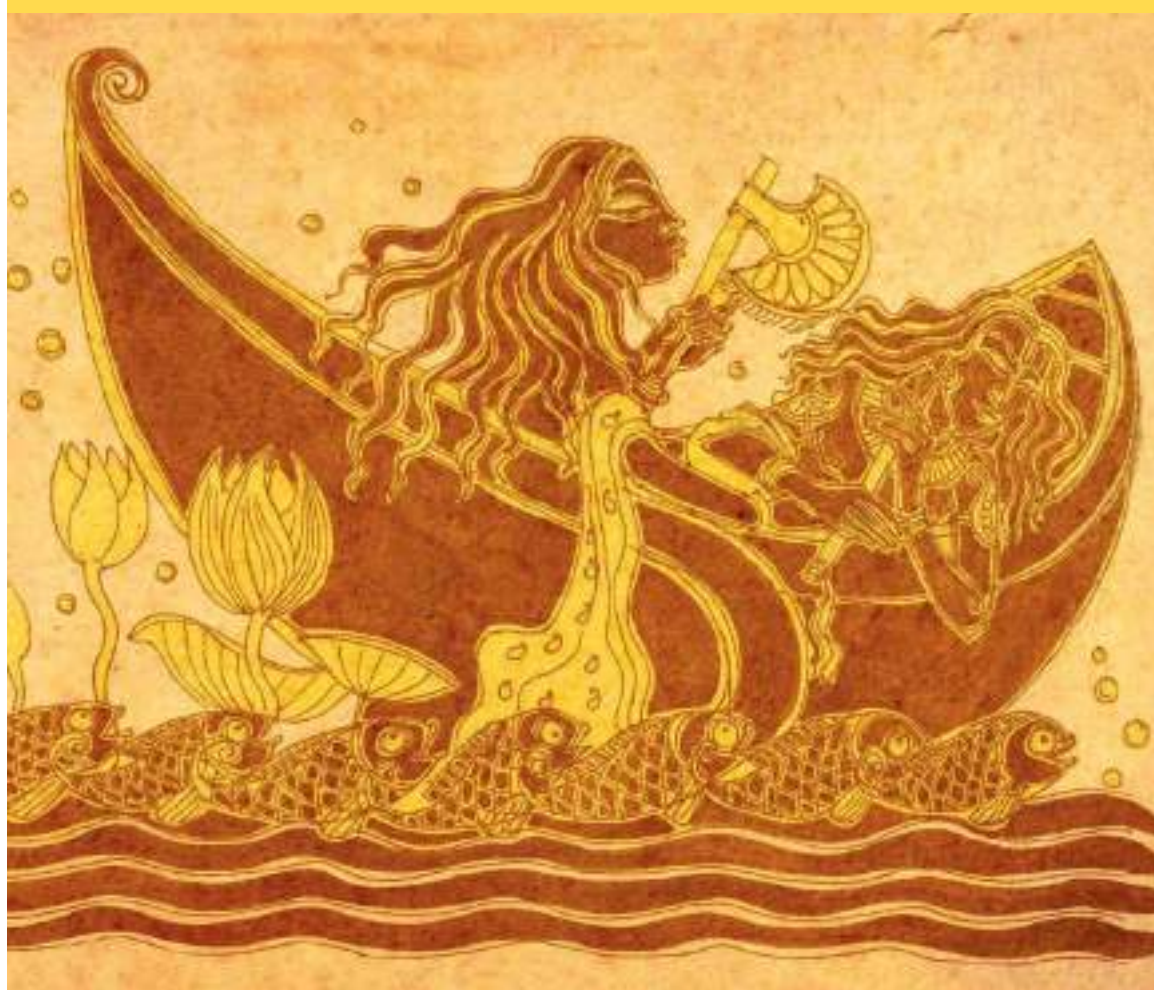


The space between stories: Learn2Change-Summer Academy, Germany, June 2015

Learn2Change-Summer Academy, Germany, June 2015



# STORIES





Project-tour with Harald Kleem, Learn2Change-Summer Academy, Germany, June 2015







## Education and perfect times to learn

*Harald Kleem*

My name is Harald Kleem. I am 64 years old, married, with a daughter and I live in a community of 3 families in a house in the countryside in Germany.

My working life has been dotted with interventions within various and several issues, many regions and institutes; but at the core of it has been learning and change. I've run lots of campaigns, projects, NGO-work, in partnerships across countries. I worked with UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization), for the Ministry of Education, Germany and other international organizations. My very old mother sometimes asked me: "Why are you doing all that? Who inspired you?" Maybe you will find answers in the following snippets from my life.

I was born as the third child of a middle class family in 1954, in a small town with a progressive university, called Marburg. My parents had some books, travelled to the mountains, and survived the war. Kindergarden and Primary schools were good and I got the chance to go to 'Gymnasium', a school for students with a privileged future. I liked music and started to play the drums at the end of the 60s: Pop, Rock — nothing for my parents and their tastes. They made a pact with me: maintain your standards at school, and then you'd be allowed to make that kind of 'noise'. So they gave me the freedom to try out different things, which gave me the motivation to learn — even things that weren't very attractive.

To supplement the family income, my parents hosted students from France, Sweden and Iran. This was my first exposure to 'foreigners' and the larger realm out there and began my natural initiation to a global world and existence.

In the last 3 years at school, the German friends I had were a group of creative, crazy, border-liners who followed the political

ideas of that time. They influenced me personally as well as the life of the university in my town Marburg (50000 locals, 30000 students). Young people were very political at that time. In 1970 I had a teacher who gave me 'space' and encouraged me to read literature, to love arts and experiment with everything. He stimulated my thinking and thought process. We finished school — the school of the establishment, as we called it then.

In 1972 I started university training to be a teacher. The faculty, called 'visual communication' was under construction and needed a student's representative. I took the opportunity and assisted in creating a curriculum for new students, which gave me the freedom to define what to learn: we added more space for researches on effects of media consumption and on manipulation by mass media; we cancelled lectures on arts and added space for political design.

In 1976 I started as a trainee teacher, after passing another exam, in a new school, somewhere in the countryside. I was not much older than the students there. Apart from regular classes I began to open my classroom to assist young students in need of special attention to help them cope with studies. I got very good feedback for that. Meeting both in public places and at school, our interactions attested to the fact that they had met a good friend and not a teacher. This experience enabled us to see school differently: I saw the struggles of those who faced learning difficulties and assisted them with small interventions. I talked with their parents to understand better why they struggled at school and tried to ensure their home situation supported their learning at school.

In 1978 I moved to another federal state and started to work as a regular teacher — interrupted by a civil service (instead of the army) in a youth center for nearly 2 years and there I could enrich my previous experiences of working with under privileged young people, in and out of school. At school we were many young teachers and we worked in teams to learn, teach and upgrade our knowledge about various aspects of the world. During a research on the Third World (now the 'developing' countries of Asia, Africa, and Latin America.) problems, I met Brazilians and started an NGO (Non-governmental Organisation), supporting social projects in Brazil. We also started the 'Kulturwerkstatt'— a program with international artists offering concerts and workshops. I also met representatives from several schools at an UNESCO-network (Associated School Projects-ASP) and my school got the title 'member in the ASP'





Project-tour with Harald Kleem, Learn2Change-Summer Academy, Germany, June 2015

network', in which I later became the federal coordinator for the state of Lower Saxony in 1990.

In that role I motivated schools and the UNESCO-network to assist schools destroyed in the Balkan wars in Bosnia and Croatia. We conducted lots of seminars there in order to uplift disheartened teachers and encourage German schools to partner with those schools.

All along, my work with Brazil continued. We received information about poverty, violence, drugs, social and ecological disasters in Brazil and that drove us to support friends in a youth project in the mountains not far from Rio de Janeiro. After 10 years of supporting Brazilian social projects and learning, I travelled there in 1995 because we'd adopted a child from there. We encountered a completely different country than I had imagined — big and prosperous cities, a middle class, a functioning infrastructure etc. We were completely blind to that side of Brazil. We only asked for the problems and disasters it was faced with and our friends there gave us this account because it brought in donations from Germany.

I invited friends to experience the same in seminars with Brazilians, sometimes in Brazil and sometimes in Germany. I gave reports to my students, who wanted to travel too.

Meanwhile, I left my old school because I realized that even though I'd added lots of extra-activities in that school, the core of the school was still the same: 15 different subjects, 45 minutes per lesson, 6 lessons a day. They'd divide the world within those subjects with four to five thousand different topics and a child had to recombine those fragments to get an idea of the world. There was no time for questions, curiosity, for interdisciplinary projects, for acting, learning with the hand and heart.

Primary school years still are better, but secondary school kills childhood. The result is that those with vivid peer-groups outside of school and/or with a stable social background stay curious and active, while others feel alienated. Both groups ultimately 'emigrate' with their brain. School produces certificates but no skills.

In 1997 I started with a team to build a 'new' school in a village nearby, in a community, with the community. We included our Brazilian friends and other contacts, and started a student's exchange program with very young ones: 11–13 year old students. We called the meetings 'millennium villages', which were supported by artists.

But again the school—the new one—was not able to capitalize on the great experiences of the youngsters and the energies of the students returning from international meetings. At the same time we tried to link all institutions working with and for children, creating a regional network. I was able to use my gathered experiences and contacts and I learnt a lot: how to build a 'landscape of learning', following the African saying: 'To raise a child you need the whole village'. It was a great idea, but the formal schools were not ready to open the doors for cooperation. They were not aware that they do not have a monopoly on or for learning. A child between 1 and 16 years spends only 10% of its waking hours at school! The institutes were not prepared, however, to acknowledge and include other partners and new topics. There was no time, no space and mostly no teacher was interested to change his/her role from teaching to facilitating.

In 2005 we founded another NGO, called 'Future Life' in order to work on the idea of inclusive work—a network of persons, ideas and institutions.

Another NGO called 'MIRANTAO' extended its cooperation to Bosnia and South Africa; the cooperation with South Africa was an idea of our Brazilian partners, who wanted to know more about their African roots. To cooperate with Bosnia was an idea born in 1997

because of the Balkan war and the need to assist such countries to restart a tolerant and peaceful life and to support returning refugee children.

We have, since 1999, in South Africa, explored the idea of peer-leadership and adopted the idea of 'using' the energy of young students to share experiences and lead others to start change projects: on poverty, justice, conflicts and climate. Peer-leader-international was born.

Until July 2017 I was at school teaching under privileged children in the old, established style but supplanting it with the allied networks, integrating them within the projects of the two NGOs. In the last two years I've had a class with refugees from Iraq, Syria, Afghanistan.

In 2017 I left the governmental institutions.

The school and schooling system did not change, but I changed permanently: I learnt to listen, to act, to evaluate, to change direction and discover new worlds (social groups, countries, cultures, situations). I still have the drive to change education. For 15 years I was in the Ministry for Education of Lower Saxony running projects/experiments on Global Learning and I'm still closely engaged with innovative projects in the German Ministry of Development and International Cooperation. We are supporting ideas of 'Learn2Change'; have expanded peer-leader-international, and have influenced political concepts of international partnership.

Since I began teaching formally, I've been an active part of our teacher's trade union. I've been an active member of the 'Greens', a political party in Germany for 30 years. I was working in local parliaments and I was a candidate for the National Parliament twice.

Looking back, I was lucky to have so many 'windows' to learn what I was interested in, to learn what was necessary to learn, to learn what others thought about and learnt about how they live. I have not been successful in changing the school system yet, but perhaps they must discover the prospects themselves. Perhaps you cannot force change at the school from the outside. Maybe you just have to offer space and time to learn. For me though, this process of trying new things, methods and interactions turned out to be lessons for life, as well as for my students. So my story is the story of 'transparent and open windows to different worlds'. A story of opportunities and of seizing these opportunities and taking initiative.

Coming back to my mother's question: I learnt the basics from my parents, who were part of a generation, that had to learn hard lessons: poverty, holocaust, war, the partition of the country in two parts, reunification, migration and digitalization. They learnt to handle it; they were always ready and open to pushing the reset button. My global mentality grew out from the many people I met along the way. I was always encouraged to be part of or influence change. The spice I got in an overdose was *curiosity*. But honestly, even today I don't know what is the best way to change conditions effectively but what I do know is; how to learn, how to teach, how to encourage young people — give them space, be a facilitator not a teacher. Trust in their *curiosity*.

German dramatist, Berthold Brecht in his famous *Stories of Mr. Keuner* (fictionalized comments on politics, everyday life, and exile), in the section 'Hardships of the best' leaves us with a wisdom that has been my maxim for work and life:

"What are you working on?" Mr. K. was asked. Mr. K. replied: "I'm having a hard time; I'm preparing my next mistake."

#### ABOUt the AUthor

*Harald Kleem* is 64 years old, married and has a child. He lives in a community with another 2 families. He studied to be a teacher (subjects: Arts and German). He worked in two different schools and part time in teacher trainings and as a coordinator for projects of the Ministry for Education in Lower Saxony, Germany. He is an active trade unionist, green politician and founder of two NGOs.



**Monito eñemonipa waoto waemo kewinguimoni**  
**We are learning to change**

*Mencay Patricia Nenquihui Nihua*

My name is Mencay Nenquihui. I am a Waorani woman of the Ecuadorian Amazon region. Our territory is the Yasuní forest in the Napo, Pastaza and Orellana provinces. I am the president of the 'Association of Waorani Women of the Ecuadorian Amazon' (AMWAE). We represent 400 women in 35 communities in the Yasuní. We speak our native language Waotededo. In our communities, we dress traditionally with the fibers of the Chambira palm tree and we paint our faces with the red dye of the Achiote (*Bixa orellana*) nut.

I want the world to know our history because we are not a culture of the past. 'Learn to Change' is a good theme to describe our history of the past 50 years. It is since then that we have been in contact with western civilization. My parents were born free in the forest; they did not know anything about the world of the whites and *mestizos* (a person of mixed race, especially one having Spanish and American Indian parentage in Latin American usage).

In earlier times, each Waorani family lived deep in the forest; there were no communities or villages like today. We were not farmers; both men and women went hunting and the families grew only some yucca (cassava) and plantain trees close to the house. The forest provided us with the essentials, it was like a supermarket for us – always filled with plenty of everything we needed. From time to time, we met with other families or clans. Each clan had its own chants and spiritual power, represented by an animal like the jaguar, the boa or the harpy eagle.

Fifty years ago, everything changed. Many foreigners came with intentions that were not clear to us at first. It was the generation of my grandmother when there was violent confrontation due to the increasing intrusion of foreigners from the rubber industry, cattle ranchers, the military and the oil companies. They killed my



grandfather Ñihua who was a great Waorani leader with much power. Then came the evangelical missionaries that wanted us to live in a community called Tiweno. It became the first settlement ever in our culture where more than a family or a clan lived together. Many Waorani died of polio because they lived so close to one another and did not have natural defenses against this new disease. At the same time, the oil industry began to give us money and gifts, trying to buy up our consent to violate our territory through exploitation of crude oil.

It was also the moment when two Waorani groups separated from the rest of us: the Tagaeri and the Taromenane. They decided to go back to a free life in the Yasuní forest and leave beyond any contact with the Kowode (Non-Waorani) world. Up until now, they live in so-called 'voluntary isolation', but they are free people. Although there are conflicts and violence due to oil and mining extraction business that puts pressure on our people, the Tagaeri and Taromenane are our brothers and sisters. They are nomads and survive on hunting and gathering. Even though we are not in contact with them, but we raise our voices for them because they are not represented in the western world. They are the last free people. Waorani means 'the real people'. In Ecuador, the government used to call us 'Aucas', which means savages, and our right to life and territory were not recognized. My grandmother Epa Wamoni confronted the government, she said "We are not Aucas, we are Waorani!"

The contact with western civilization was accompanied by confusion, violence and fraud. There were family feuds and killings – some Waorani even killed other Waorani only because they had started to dress like Kowode. However, we tried to cope; my father translated written letters to our language, which was solely oral. He was a schoolteacher and taught us by pictures and images – a Spanish-Waorani dictionary with images. Then came a Kowode teacher to my school. He hit us with a stick when we dared to speak Waotededo. So we kids took his little children into the forest and put them into a deep hole, saying: "You will not get out of here until your father stops beating us – may the tigers eat you!" He stopped beating us after all. We Waorani know how to defend ourselves.

Afterwards, in Tiweno the food situation started to worsen, the village became too small to host so many of us. So we founded more communities like Toñampare, Damintado, Kiwaro, Dayuno. Currently, there are 58 Waorani communities in the Yasuní, the great



majority of them with no road access, no school and no medical institutions. They live with the ancestral knowledge, the wisdom of the forest.

I was born in Kiwaro, learning only Waotededo at first. I came to learn Spanish only at the age of 12. My grandmother taught me to work in the garden, to chant, to do handcraft, to use medicinal plants and to learn about the spirits that accompany us. It was my mother who taught me to speak up for other people, to claim my rights as a woman and a Waorani. She told me never to be afraid, but to confront problems, to ask for favors and give back favors. From a very young age, I had to take up responsibility for the family and to speak in our gatherings.

In 2005 I began to work as a schoolteacher in the Waorani community of Nemompade. Then the AMWAE association was founded and I joined them as an assistant accountant. We women soon realized that the men fight for their rights, but it is difficult for them to be united against the temptations of the 'modern world'. As women, we look ahead to the well-being of everyone in the communities and the diversity of life in our forest. In that particular moment, we were very worried about wild animals disappearing in the Yasuní, like the jaguar, the boar or the tapir. The illegal hunt for bush-meat had increased a lot because many Waorani families did not have a stable income. The promises of the petrol industry



and the government about employment never came true. It was sad and alarming to see how deforestation and poaching gained velocity. We Waorani have the right to hunt for our own needs, but hunting for selling the meat is prohibited; these activities destroy the sensible balance of our forest. As AMWAE we decided that we had to do something about it, we learned that we had to change. In 2011 we called for a big meeting and we asked our people – the pikenani (elders), youth, children and the community leaders – how we could stop this destruction. Do we have confidence in the government and the oil industry to provide us with charity or do we solve the problems with our own strength? Of all the ideas that came up to improve the economic situation of the families, growing organic native cocoa in the communities in the Yasuní seemed to us the most promising. Before, we used to suckle only the pulp of the wild cocoa seeds to refresh ourselves when walking in the forest; we had never used the beans.

However, we did not only want to provide markets with the raw material. We wanted to sell a final product, a processed gourmet chocolate that tells our story. So we did. And although until now

it has been difficult for us, being hunters not farmers, we learned that change always bears opportunities. In the year 2012, we held our first 'Chocolate Wao' in our hands, thanks to the support of the TRAFFIC program (Wildlife Trade Monitoring Network, a program from the International Union for Conservation of Nature). Nowadays, the Fundación Ecociencia supports us in organizing ourselves as an association and an enterprise, with funding from the Belgian Cooperation, BosPlus. Thanks to the cultivation of the cocoa, 400 Waorani families in eight communities are harvesting 1.5 tons of cocoa annually. We care for the cocoa trees, we do not use any agrochemicals or artificial manure, we ferment the cocoa beans, and we dry it and send it to a chocolate processing plant in Ecuador's capital Quito. The cocoa we use is a high-quality and native variety, called 'Fino de aroma'. The families grow it in small lots that had been previously deforested, near their houses. All the generated income goes directly to the AMWAE associated families.

We never thought the impact could be so immediate. In 2013 the largest illegal bush meat market in the amazon city of Pompeya was closed down. It is proven evidence that this happened due to our economic alternative, the 'Chocolate Wao'. It has become our symbol for change.

Our incentive received international attention: In 2014, we received the highest award from the UNDP (United Nations Development Program), the Equator prize in New York City. In 2015, we received the prestigious 'Premio Latinoamerica Verde' (Green Latin America Prize). Although these events gave us high international acknowledgement, the most important thing for us has always been a peaceful and dignified life in our communities. With the income from the chocolate, we could demonstrate what a sustainable life could be. Organic; going beyond fair-trade standards, our cacao project expresses our commitment for biodiversity and the Amazon forest. It gives us economic and political empowerment as Waorani women, allowing us to stand strong and saying 'no' to oil exploitation and mining activities in our territory.

Right now, we are optimizing the value chain of the cocoa, improving the growing techniques and the quality of the chocolate bar. Currently, we are developing agro-forestry systems that go beyond the organic products. Alongside, we want to start community-based, small-scale tourism in some of our communities. So we keep on learning and changing. As Waorani women, we



have learned to claim our rights and to make ourselves visible as indigenous people. We try to adapt to the market economy, and in the city, we wear T-Shirts and shoes. But we believe in a united community of men, women and nature – there is no separation between humans and nature. We keep on being Waorani, we walk the trails of our ancestors, we hunt the animals and we feel their spirits that give us strength. Finding this balance between diverse worlds is our waemo kiwigimamo, the 'good life'.

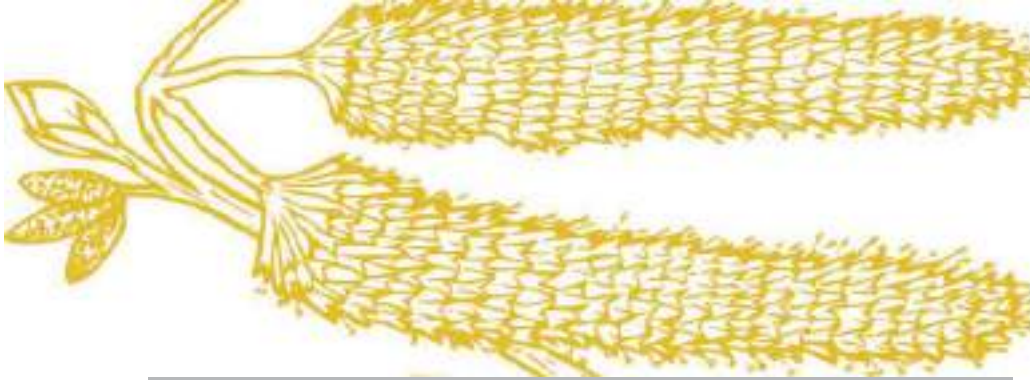


#### ABOUt the AUthor and the Compler

*Mencay Patricia Nenquihui Nihua* is a Waorani, native from the Yasuní rainforest. Currently, she is the president of the Association of Waorani Women of the Ecuadorian Amazon. Previously she has worked as a primary school teacher. She grew up in a village called Kiwaro and still has a deep connection to her territory.

Recorded and compiled by *Christian Cray*, a Global learning facilitator and a member of the learn2change network. He lives in Quito, Ecuador as a communication and media specialist in the EcoCiencia Foundation.





## Decolonizing the body with Teatro Trono

*Iván Nogales* (Translation: Katherine Arp)

My work and personal life is driven by the immeasurable enthusiasm to try and ensure that theatre 'touches' all kinds of bodies. I wanted to share the transformation that theatre had caused in me and given my whole environment the chance to engage in this strong and special physical practice. I'd gained experiences with miners, peasants, adolescents and Aymara women<sup>1</sup> and deliberately wanted to work with 'street children' as an experiment. I never assumed that this offer would become so powerful.

I started working in a state-run rehabilitation center for minors in 1989, where about 100 children were locked up for minor criminal acts like robbery or alcohol and drug consumption. The city's image was freed of the offence 'street children'. The center's tasks, making possible a reintegration for the children or offering therapeutically treatment, were not fulfilled. There was not enough financing, personal nor capacity, so that the place practically was a prison. I tried to win back these children's trust with play and imagination — in the beginning pretty much against the center's politics, which had no space for art. I thought that I could help them in this way to free themselves from material and spiritual conditioning under which they were living. Like the Don Quixote<sup>2</sup> we all have inside, I left my comfortable life and went outside, fighting against the ruling psychological understanding at the center. Because the only thing they did was the destruction of the only and most valuable talent of the children: their imagination and joy — thus their fantasy; which people are so afraid of. Military education, unification and regulation of their behavior should strengthen their personality. The children were treated as prisoners. Instead, we said the children were victims of poverty. With theater, they could discover aspects of themselves playfully and develop their personalities. Fantasy



does not bring disorder in the world, but organizes it in a better way. Fantasy can be harder than punishment, because it shows the contrast to harsh reality clearer. Fantasy is the distance you go to see better. The psychologists told me, not without their reasons, that I was crazy.

My job consisted in the permanent exercise to make the children imagine all possible and impossible worlds. I painted a line on the floor with chalk and said to the children that on the other side of the line a whole different world existed where we could invent whatever we wanted. This is theater: a room of a few meters where everything is possible. It is the past, the present, the future; we are beings from here or from wherever we want to be. It is a play; a cloth might be the coat of a beggar or a king. These worlds became ours and we nourish them with our wishes. In the meantime fantasy fulfilled its function to heal and wake up. The recovery happened immediately, at once. This allowed me at first to take the children for a walk on the streets on Sundays, then for a tour all over Bolivia, another one to Peru where we performed theater. And after a while, on Christmas 1991, I could take seven of the children (between 12 and 16 years) to a room in El Alto to live together in 18 square meters. We performed theater on the streets to earn our food — our only income.

These children had given the center for minors the name *trono* — throne, which according to the verb *tronar* also meant to *destroy something* and at the same time *sitting on a throne* as kings in a penal institution, with a bed and food gratis. As we were searching for a name for the theater group, a boy said: "Iván, you read us a poem where it said that the real kings of fantasy are the children, so it's us." That is how we gave the fateful name a more poetic meaning. It was the starting signal for a seven-year poetic madness in which we tried obsessively to lay the base for an independent durable theater group of the masses<sup>3</sup>. Such a group did not exist yet in the country and I gave myself to this task with unrestrained passion, working 24 hours a day for it. For the children, there were conflicts between the theater and their own life, between the police and the relapses into the innocence of glue and alcohol. Anyway, the seven children started to be actors of their own lives. After seven uninterrupted years, each made their way whilst other children arrived. They, the first group, the founders, made their lives. The majority reached the place they wanted to or at least gave their lives the name they wanted.

From the beginning *Throne* was understood as a theater of the masses. This definition was for the eight *Alteños*<sup>4</sup> that we were, who created theater from our lives, which was more than enough. Besides, it was necessary and politically effective and offered enough identification with the longing of the working class and their historical aim — socialism. Mainly it meant: Theater of the people, from the people, with the people and for the people. We worked according to that, neither as visitors, nor as artists that observe the people to develop their pieces of art, but as a part of the community. We began to work on the memory of the community with the participation and permission of the neighborhood — until the point where we stopped being masters over our own bodies. We called it the 'theatralization of the collective memory'. This collective memory, which we are, from which we nourish ourselves, permitted us to work with real life, to create kind of a documentation theater.

Our daily dealing with the body of the people revealed a big problem: This body that we are — be it the individual or the collective — is a humiliated body by the *other* memory and the *other* body, that of the colonizers of these lands and people who told us that we are ugly and deformed, black and dirty and that we had no souls, with the aim to make us bow to their intentions. The denial



of the body is the most rentable business. From the explicit denial in war, the collective murder, until the bombing with commercials to domesticate the body and create artificial needs. Already Domitila Chungara<sup>5</sup> said that the biggest enemy of the oppressed is not the military, but fear. And there is no worse fear than shame about oneself. We Bolivians are feared bodies, bodies held captive by fear<sup>6</sup>. We need the decolonization of the body: there is a cult of reason, which is the first imbalance of humanity. We are more mind than the rest of our body. We have to search for a return to our body, a physical collective democracy, because the first community is our body. The decolonization of the body is a necessary dimension to work on not just for our theater group of Aymaras in El Alto, but for the people in the whole world which, nearly all, are conditioned by industrial practices of clothing, of eating, of birth and of life, living distantly from one's own systems of belief, climate and tradition and from their fantasy and freedom.

*Teatro Trono* is probably the Bolivian theater group with the most national and international shows of all times. We worked with more than 5000 children, have a house in El Alto, projects in other cities and a mobile theater bus. Besides, *Throne* partakes in an eventful, intense and very fruitful exchange with the exterior, which permits us a lively dialogue and cultural communication. The 'village of the

creative' is now our most ambitious project that we brought on the way. Together with Aymaras, Afrobolivians, our artist community Compa and Teatro Trono we are creating a place to live together to cultivate community art, wisdom and joy.

#### Notes

1. The Aymara are the biggest ethnic group in the Bolivian Andean area of La Paz and El Alto. My family and I are Aymara.
2. The character of Miguel de Cervantes' novel Don Quijote invented adventures in his madness, which we can still talk about. Only his craziness allowed him to do things outside the normal.
3. The Spanish word popularly refers to the lower classes of society, which are affected negatively by (post-) colonial structures. It is about the mass of the people, indigenous, peasants, workers and poor.
4. Inhabitants of El Alto, the big natural space of action. At 4000 meters height the city La Paz, the political capital of Bolivia, is crowned by her daughter El Alto, our city of birth, which currently is the ideological capital of Bolivia.
5. Domitila Chungara (1937–2012) was a Bolivian worker's and human rights activist who contributed to the end of the military dictatorships with a hunger strike of housewives.
6. Also the white, who so much reject the indigenous that they fear to be confused with (or discovered) any feature, behavior or any indigenous characteristic.

#### ABOUt the AUthor

*Iván Nogales* is Bolivian and studied sociology. He has developed different initiatives in the field of community theatre and education since 1980. He has worked with peasants, miners, migrant women and street children. Based on these experiences, in 1989, he founded the Community of Art Producers, which is the base for Throne Theater.





# NETWORK DIALOGUE

Do you feel like a global citizen?  
What does this mean for you?

Global citizen? Yes, certainly I am one in this globalized planet. I am affected by global issues/ warming/disaster/good news; and surely impacting with my atoms: a mosquito effect but a dragon effect with the atoms' chemical reaction.

**April Lai**


I was born here, you were born elsewhere; but we were both born on this planet. What unites us is that we're precious citizens of this wonderful earth. Nationalities have been created by humans to structure and organize our human life. Global citizens can't unhitch themselves from others. Global citizens have this interconnection in mind in every step they take, feeling part of a belonging that goes beyond the national borders they are born in or are living in. Global citizens thus act and think, asking: what is healthy and beneficial for the global community? I define myself as a global citizen – do you?

**Rosa Lynn Grave**

I somewhat feel like a global citizen. I was politicized within the movement criticizing the neoliberal globalisation. Connecting local struggles with the fights for justice, human rights and the environment of activists in the global south. I had the privilege to travel to several countries in Latin America and connect with peoples' movements there. Global citizenship for me means to work towards a world where all humans have the same rights and possibilities.

**Robin Stock**





I understand global citizenship as a political project of (global) social utopia. It begins with the attitude of individuals to combine unconditional acceptance of the diversity of cultural lifestyles with the granting of civil, social, economic and political rights within the meaning of Agenda 2030 such as food security, decent work and equal educational opportunities for all. This is followed by the path to jointly support, cross-cultural ethical-political principles as a basis for the equal participation of individuals both in coping with the (world) social challenges facing us and in securing their basic needs for life.

**Markus Auditor**

Feeling like a global citizen means to me becoming more aware of my own society's global (colonial) past and present — of my role as a white German woman in contemporary German society. Of how much my perception of *globality* and citizenship depends on this specific context I've been raised in. I feel like exchanging with people who have been raised in the same and/or different contexts about this question of global citizenship, trying to listen deeply to their ideas. Thinking about the question again, I feel like being on a life-long journey of (un)

learning.  
**Nina Reichert**

To be a global citizen is not a question to me, because by living on earth we are part of this global ecosystem that connects us all and connects all our lives and actions. The awareness of this essential relation between us all is part of what we have to understand in this world to make the future good life on earth possible.

**Barbara Brunner**







## Janusism

Maissara m. Saeed

*Altes Brot ist nicht hart, kein Brot, das ist hart* — Old bread is not hard, no bread, that's hard. This German proverb reflects rationality and relativity of what's integral to the concept of life and living. Economic inequality affects what and how we eat, where and how we live and what educational opportunities we can afford. For me, I take it one step forward to add 'Bad freedom' is not hard, 'no freedom' is hard.

My name is Maissara m. Saeed and I was born and raised in Sudan, where the government decides everything for you —which god you should worship and how, how to love and who to love, even how to dress.

In Sudan people have no freedom, neither personal freedom nor political. This absolute lack of freedom in Sudan is the main reason, which pushes youth to leave their beautiful home country.

I grew up during the civil war between the Northern and Southern Sudanese, the war that lead in 2011 to separation of Sudan into two countries. Our family lived in *Al-abasia* neighbourhood in Khartoum the capital and my father worked as lieutenant colonel in the army, while my mother was a housewife; she did not have a job. My father passed away when I was 4 years old, and so did my mother when I was 10. Economically I had a relatively good childhood in Sudan as my mother's family has had a good economical condition during the seventies, eighties and early nineties.

Many people in Europe, in particular, in Germany do believe that we are leaving our home and trying to gain asylum in Europe, because we are poor people, seeking money. Now, after 7 years of living in Germany, I can understand why they think so; when a man builds his life on materialism, he will lose his sense of both freedom and responsibility.

Actually, my extended family in Sudan has a very good social standing and is economically stable. And in the last years before leaving Sudan, I was working as a medical scientist at hospitals as well as a tutor at Khartoum university, but whatever the economical inequality which can be seen in Sudan, my fundamental motivation to leave Sudan was the lack of freedom and life threatening circumstances; altogether poverty is just a manifestation of the core problem which is the lack of freedom and democracy in Sudan.

From my point of view poverty in Europe or in Sudan is a man made phenomenon. Because in 2010 when I newly arrived in Europe, I was restricted from having a job because I had no right to stay in Germany at that time. And when I could get the permission to stay, the authorities here did not recognize my qualifications or they recognized it unfairly — that means there were fewer opportunities for me than those who had already graduated here in Europe. Further more, the authorities in Germany control the usage of other languages for national security purposes, and as a result if the migrant does not succeed to have very good German language skills, that means he or she is on his/her first step towards poverty in Germany.

It is hard for me to say that the official German system is welcoming new comers, and it will be tricky if I said otherwise; but the ground realities are not all-smooth sailing. Yes, honestly, to live in a democratic and free society can be life saving. I could survive and maximize my opportunities here through an intensive engagement in/with the civilian society, and it was my school through which I could learn more about the reactivity between politics, society and economy.

Upon my arrival in Germany I faced a completely different reality and system. Although I enjoyed my partial freedom, but I recognised that people in Germany have a different concept and understanding of what freedom is or means and what human dignity means. And when I say people in Germany, I mean those who have a great portion of wealth, power and media apparatuses. They think that, to give a man a bed, food and money is quite enough for his dignity and freedom, while all laws and regulations will tell you as a foreigner: you are not equal as a citizen.

When I left Sudan I had had the imagination about a different freedom in Europe but unfortunately that imagination was a slap on





"No one is illegal"

my face by the hand of reality; which is how, I started the journey of Janusism in my life.

Janusism refers to Janus — the god of beginnings, gates, transitions, time, duality, passages, and endings in ancient Roman religion and myth. He is usually depicted as having two faces, since he looks to the future and to the past.

I found myself become a Janus in Germany, not only with two faces, but also two minds, two hearts and two souls. It is all about cultural and social differences between Sudan and Germany. In Sudan for example, we are living in a society which lives collectively, while here in Germany the society is build on individuality, so it was challenging for me to adapt between these two; the collective atmosphere or the individually one.

My work in Refugee rehabilitation and political activism had me meeting several people and allied networks. In May 2015, I was invited to join the *Learn2Change* (L2C) conference and being part of the network has been one of the most enlightening experiences that I have had in my life.

The network includes activists and educators from the global south, like India, Hong Kong, Uganda, Malawi, Chile, Colombia, Tunisia and Brazil and the Global North. Strangely enough, when I say Global North the network is primarily composed of members mainly from Germany.

Whoever be the representatives in the network, I found myself alone and isolated in an isthmus of Janusism between the Global North and South, particularly when we were trying to realise our



"We fight. We're not giving up! Never"

vision into reality ground. It is a fact that people in the Global North and Global South are not economically equal. And this of course will affect the productivity of any kind of working relationship and system, like the L2C network. Sooner or later economical gaps will affect the degree of commitment to the network, if they do not already do. From my observation, while many participants especially from the South surely see and know that these opportunities to engage with and travel to Germany happen only because it's fully funded. None of us would be able to make the trip or participate if we had to do so ourselves.

L2C has a chance for greater impact not just on global issues but in empowering its members from the South economically, and elevating the idea of solidarity from a rhetorical to a practical level.

This unspoken economic gap among L2C Global South's members as well as the need to draw attention to it triggered me to undertake a survey among ourselves in the network in order to 'see ourselves' and 'think again' about our network.

In September 2017, during the L2C's periodic conference I tried to place the question of 'poverty' at the centre of discussions and address the financial realities of our members in the network. 'Poverty' is the key word, which can be the common talking point for those from the Global North and Global South — because the root of problems, access and opportunity is money or the lack of it. Acknowledging this reality and then finding ways to tackle it help 'learning and changing' effectively.

As a political activist, who sees the world and the relationship between Global North and South with two faces, minds, hearts

and souls, we need to learn more and more about/from local communities in the Global South and North.

My big concern is about the Global South network members and their local communities; the fact is that we are not equal wealth-wise — neither as individuals nor societies.

In this regard, it is up to the network members to recognise this disparity and show solidarity among us to reflect the true meaning of equality. How can we address social issues and bring about change in equal measure and with equal commitment of time and passion, when half of us have to worry about earning a living alongside?

If our members are not financially secure on the personal front how can we take up global issues, even if we are passionate and committed to the cause.

The prompt study was conducted between March 19<sup>th</sup>–23<sup>rd</sup>, 2017 in Barnstorf, Germany. The goal of the study was to allow the members to look at their and others' reflection in the mirror of 'financial stability' and to rethink of themselves and their place in the North-South relationship, keeping in mind the economical gaps.

11 members (5 persons from global South and 6 persons from global north (Germany) participated in a written questionnaire of 7 points and questions — income, working hours and important living conditions was investigated and examined.

The study showed that only 36.4% of L2C members have permanent jobs, while 63.6 % have either temporary, voluntary or others form of jobs. 16.7% from Global North members have permanent jobs in contrast to 60% in the Global South. Also the results reflected that, the monthly income average for the L2C members is 980 EURO. It is 1,475 EURO in Global North and 388 EURO in L2C south, (L2C north: L2C south = 5:1). Despite that, the working hours per week in L2C south are 44.2 hours/week in comparison to 27.4 hours/week in L2C North. 100% of the L2C North members said they have health insurance. 60% of L2C South, have health insurance while 40% have not. 60% of L2C south are men, while this 40% are women. In comparison, L2C members from South are younger (average = 35 Year old) than members from North (average = 45 year old).

In this finding there are still discussion points, which are:

(1) The sample of the study resembles approximately (18%) of the total number of L2C network which is still growing and still not fixed in its structure.

(2) The living cost needed for satisfactory living conditions vary from one country to another.

(3) The social and cultural norms vary when it comes to 'talking openly' about money, wealth and living conditions at a personal level.

Accordingly, I strongly recommend the starting of a deep, transparent and serious discussion about the social welfare gaps among L2C members. Actions should be proposed to (learn) more about and from the local communities in both North and South, giving a priority to local communities of our members in South and how economic inequalities in their local contexts have kept them from having a 'good', fulfilling and respectful life and how we as members can work towards solutions to alleviate that.

If I am in a position to send a message to the members, funders, followers and others it will be 'we should be attentive and very sensitive to our economical and welfare differences and gaps in our day to day life while we are trying to work together to make the world a better place'. It is not accidental that the eradication of poverty occupies the very top priority in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG).

#### ABOUt the AUthor

*Maissara m. Saeed* is a founding member the German Sudanese Association for Development (G.S.A.D.) and Umbaja e.V.

He lives by the motto: 'Connect people, help people!' He looks at himself as a connector between two different cultures: the African and the European. Globally he focuses on education in the fields of migration and human rights in the European context as well as the education about poverty and eradication of it. He believes in thinking out of the box in his global learning engagements through evidence-based activism in the associations and the business he founded in Germany.



## Connections

Jorge Huichalaf

*Sister! Brother!*

*Today I saw your pupils looking to the future.*

*They were dark as mine,*

*I felt your blood running through my veins,*

*Like lava from volcanoes flowing out.*

*I heard your voice whispering truths,*

*It sounded like my grandparents praying for change.*

*Enjoy your bones like Mother Earth,*

*In the eternal death and rebirth, the purest white!*

*Your hands smelled of free land,*

*Seeds charged with tender children.*

*You live in all my senses,*

*I throb in all your emotions*

*And in you I deposit my hope*

*Like raindrops, love and belief in the earth.*

My name is Jorge Huichalaf, and I am Mapuche (the Mapuche are the indigenous people of Chile, the name means 'people of the earth'). In our cosmos, we as humans belong to our Ñuke Mapu (Mother Earth), and she belongs to us. We are not owners of the planet, but part of it. As the father of three adolescents and as a teacher in a rural indigenous school, I always seek to spread those notions of our ancestors to my children and students. Especially today, they gain more importance in the modern world. People





seem to be alienated from each other and a small oligarchy is rising to rule the world, threatening our environment, nature and our ecosystem. Therefore, the notions of our cultural heritage become more and more significant in the defence of our Mapu Ñuke. *Kelluwün* and *Llamewün* are the guiding principles to live by. *Kelluwün* means the mutual support among human beings in harmony with the whole, united by their birth on our earth and their stay in the space we all share as humanity; *Llamewün* means the mutual respect, in harmony with the whole life in deep respect to every existing being, creature or force in our entire universe. These and more notions, the knowledge and wisdom of the Mapuche and other native nations on our planet, lead to *Küme Mogen* — the Good Life: a life in consciousness, balance and happiness.

We carry a mandate from our forefathers. It channels actions for the retrieval of former economic, cultural, linguistic, educational practices. My opportunities to travel, first to Germany and then to other parts of Europe became an extension of this critical directive. There, I had the privilege to learn about diverse topics, which resembled ancient notions we are re-developing in our own group of institutional work in Chile.

Fair trade, conscious consumption, control of alimentation, alternative energies, educational system based on playing, the work in eco-villages, the multiple variants of the informatics

systems, recycling, the time bank, the disturbing experiences of our refugee brothers, the associative work on self-organized fairs, social currencies, communitarian supermarkets of organic products, the conservation of national parks and so much more.

In our journey of consciousness, we need to comprehend how to share our space, living on mother earth. It is an opportunity to meet and discover the spirits that guide us. We need to fully develop our abilities of solidarity to revert to the core of being human, connected to the earth, loving and appreciating nature and promoting diversity.

My story starts in the sad eyes of children in rural schools. The dominant culture's existing discrimination against the Mapuche leads us to think of new methodological and strategic educational alternatives to leave the abysmal well of radical racism. In the land of the highest inequality worldwide<sup>1</sup> the racism a few economic groups promote, strengthened by alliances with political parties and justified in the eternal argumentation of material progress and economic development only look at us as an inconvenience.

My participation at various conferences, of likeminded activists from around the world whose work, ethics and aspirations align with mine, provided me with some life-changing experiences. Together with all, I learned with and from my friends of the network 'Learn to Change' unveiled the world on the other side of the fence of information. It is astonishing to see the disparity of the relations between citizens and governments in different countries and to compare it with the reality in Chile and its indigenous peoples.

The discrimination and repressive violence of police forces, politicians and entrepreneurs against social movements and its activists, especially the Mapuche movement: the charades of the police, the repeated trials in the courts of justice, the imprisonment and permanent criminalization of poor people, the violence against children and women, the murders of youths without any trial, the absence of recognition of the indigenous peoples in the constitution and many factors make me think we do indeed live in the fourth world.

Considering this context, I appreciate the work in the 'Learn to Change' network. For me it resembles the inner connection of the earth's tectonic plates: every insider is a river of lava of solidarity and when these rivers gather, they provoke intercontinental eruptions of mutual support. In the land where I come from education is considered a consumer good<sup>2</sup>. I share the opinion of Claudio

Naranjo, who proclaims that today 'education is a crime, a fraud'<sup>3</sup>. According to him, it focuses on the access to money, which 'is the most terrible addiction, worse than cocaine or heroin. It provokes a feeling of satisfaction in the people and hardens their heart'<sup>4</sup>. His efforts in educational networks or networks of similar professions help to intervene with love and compassion to affect the world and impact it with *earthquakes* and upheavals of our collaboration to strive for more and better. Thus, we can promote to reconnect with human beings and further the sensibility to listen to the voice of our mother earth to contribute in the recovery of the balance for the future generations.

To know that there are voices rising to generate changes in dormant consciences, which affect our behaviour, but also the awareness, that we can intervene in an educational level to definitely change the erratic direction of our fate, is a great alleviation of our despair.

Seeing furthermore, that there are different peoples in different parts of the world in need of support, impels us to continue working together. Peoples living in situations of helplessness, injustice, discrimination, misrule, abusive exploitation of natural resources, which generates great environmental imbalances, need solidarity. United in our pursuit of change, we make efforts to search for alternative ways in both the direct educational experience in the classrooms and the social experience of organizations to encourage the emergence of new spaces of expression with ancient concepts (*Kelluwün* and *Llamewün*) to create new opportunities for sustainable development and institutional responses.

Thanks to the union and alliance with institutions like 'Learn to Change' I have felt a true shelter and unprecedented projection for our precarious personal and institutional existence. The linkage in the Global Learning Network helped me become acquainted with ideas, actions, shared dreams and successful experiences of educational and social change. In my case, it is an opportunity to transform the ankylose and discredited economic institutions into real opportunities to fight rural and urban poverty. In short, the journey through our shared work in the network of international educators, 'Learn to Change' has been an invaluable experience, an experience that has resulted in awareness and changes in our own local perspectives. We could open spaces of transition into the future, windows of reconnection between cultures and passionate

people for the education of peace, continued in the pursuit of an endogenous development through linkages with the *kūme mogen* or good living and the experience from inside to discover the endogenous development of our beings.

The participation in the network handed me an enormous knowledge acquisition and the tour through different countries increased the certainty that we cannot give up on fostering a global reconnection. The more we seem to be separated and disconnected as human beings, the more we are urged to reconnect with each other to re-educate ourselves as human beings and to be able to enlighten the darkness to where the current economic system has taken us. The powerful voice of our mother earth forces us to amend the course of humanity, until we find equilibrium through gratitude, mutual support, and collaborative work.

Among branches of the mountains, in the green meadows by the river, in diaphanous premonitory dreams or dazzling visions of unknown vibrating states nature revolts, are messages transmitted to the healers (*machi*), who for millennia have kept the answers to the diseases of soul and body. The voices of the earth are trying to connect with us, human beings, to whisper the keys of a sacred planet. We seek to reconnect us in solidarity and affect our environment in such ways as to generate permanent changes and develop alternative models to draw the participation of groups. We seek to implement similar ideas as the Transition Groups<sup>5</sup> in the



European countries, which sued irresponsible companies that harm the environment for the crime of ecocide.

Furthermore, we combine this journey of encounter out of our territory with an epistemological journey into culture to gather, to search and to recreate ancient concepts from the first human settlements of America or Abya Yala. In the discovery of the development of a cooperative concept based on ancestral cultural canons, we form a group of humans vibrating with the spiritual mandate and material defence of the mother earth inherited from our ancestors. We need freedom of mind to enhance our work in community action and to assume a commitment to consolidate changes that spring from the very bowels of citizens organized by their rights and those of mother earth.

We aim for the creation of an ethical bank for the *Wallmapu* (Mapuche name of our territory, our homeland) and South America and offer our best efforts and creativity to generate points of support in the creation of new foci of alternative economies. For dialogues, we seek for sustainability that requires our planet to be alive to sustain us as humanity. Time Banking or *Mingako*; the barter that involves the exchange of seeds, products and services without monetary valuation or *trafkintu*, together with the development of local energies and the social currency. All that is needed in the recovery, for our children and future generations of our *Mapuzungún* — mother tongue, and its movement of reconnecting concepts, the sounds of mother earth and its diversity.

#### Notes

1. <<http://www.elmostrador.cl/noticias/pais/2015/01/14/piketty-y-la-desigualdad-en-chile-el-1-mas-rico-tiene-cerca-del-35-de-la-riqueza-nacional-y-es-la-cifra-mas-alta-del-mundo/>>.
2. <<http://www.cooperativa.cl/noticias/pais/educacion/proyectos/presidente-pinera-la-educacion-es-un-bien-de-consumo/2011-07-19/134829.html>>.
3. <<http://www.theclinic.cl/2018/01/08/claudio-naranjo-pienso-la-educacion-crimen-una-estafa/>>.
4. <<https://www.disidentes.net/2018/01/08/chileno-referente-de-la-psicologia-mundial-hace-mierda-la-educacion-la-gente-dejara-de-ir-a-los-colegios-asi-como-ya-no-va-a-las-iglesias-como-en-el-siglo/>>.
5. These are local groups/hubs of the Transition Movement, founded in 2005 by Ron Hobkins. On their website, they explain themselves as follows: It is about communities stepping up to address the big challenges they face by starting local. By coming together, they are able to crowd-source solutions. They seek to nurture a caring culture, one focused on supporting each other, both as groups or as wider



communities. In practice, they are reclaiming the economy, sparking entrepreneurship, reimagining work, reskilling themselves and weaving webs of connection and support. It's an approach that has spread now to over 50 countries, in thousands of groups: in towns, villages, cities, Universities, schools.  
More information here: <<https://transitionnetwork.org/about-the-movement/what-is-transition/>>.



#### ABOut the AAuthor

*Jorge Huichalaf Díaz* is a primary teacher. He has a Masters in management, planning and innovation of educational practice. He is president of the Koyam Educational Corporation and president of the Endogenous Mapuche Credit Union Küme Mogen. He works in rural schools to support for the education of Mapuche children.

He's a core group member of the Learn2Change network.



## How did a rural South African girl end up in Europe?

*Buso Memela*

Imagine buying your mother a beautiful house — a house that she cleaned as her job! Imagine paying a flight ticket for your mother to visit your grandma from work! Well, I cannot imagine this part, because I never knew flying was 'a thing' for everyone.

My dream was to grow up and do 'cool' things for my mother and spoil her rotten.

My name is Nombuso Memela, known to most people as Buso. I'm an only child on my mother's side and have unknown siblings from my father's side. My life revolves around my family from my mother's side because I have no connection to my father's. I actually don't know any of them.

My mother was one of 4 siblings (3 sisters and a brother) and a half-brother from her father's side. She was the first born.

In 1984 my grandpa got ill (a sickness similar to stroke) and my grandma, a housewife, was his primary caregiver. This meant my mother as the first born in the family had to stop school at Form 4 (Grade 10) and work to look



after the family, becoming the breadwinner. My Grandpa passed away in March of 1992, just 3 months after I was born.

At the age of 24 my mother became a mother to all her siblings along with me and she became the head of the family. I was born on the 28th December 1991 and mostly my grandmother and aunts raised me while my mother was earning a living for us.

I had very loving parents until I was 6 years when my parents separated and I became my mother's sole daughter because that was the last time I saw my father.

With the little education my mother had, the only job she was qualified for was a domestic worker – and boy, she was good at it! I am from a rural area called Donnybrook (a village 80 kilometres southwest of Pietermaritzburg), and to find domestic work one has to go to the city. That's what my mother did and she found a job in Durban, 172 kilometres away. Transport being expensive she could not travel to and fro every day. We thus only saw her every month-end when she came home to bring us groceries and some money — and that's when we got to eat 'nice food', such as meat and eggs.

My mother's employers were fond of me. They always sent toys and children's books for me when my mother came home. These books made me the smartest kid in the Crèche. I was the one helping other kids with learning and I was number one in class.

Growing up in the rural area in a struggling family, sharing my mom with her siblings meant I could not get everything I needed or wanted as a kid. I used plastic bags for a school bag and sometimes I would walk barefoot to school in the cold. But all this made me want to go to school even more, I could see how hard my mother was trying, giving her love and all her best for the family, so I wanted to grow up, be responsible and honour her sacrifices by helping her.

On school holidays I would visit my mother at work. This is when I saw the other beautiful world out there (apart from and a contrast to the place I grew up to know — the farms). This was an amazing world, beautiful streets and nice houses and cars and stay-in dogs — I wanted to have all these when I was older.

My mother's employers had a daughter, Nikita, who was my age and we would play together. As 6 year olds, we understood each other despite speaking different languages and we had so much fun. This encounter introduced me to English. In Primary School, they taught us everything in IsiZulu — everything — even English was taught in IsiZulu. The only thing I knew in English was the

basic greetings and 'I love you', from writing my mom a Valentine's or Mother's Day card.

Even though Nikita and I played together without language difference coming in the way, I still wanted to learn English so I would try speaking to her. I picked up English from watching cartoons with her. All the fun I had with Nikita, my mother, and Nikita's family in the city made me want to help my mother change things back home. I wished so much that my grandma would experience it as well. I still do.

When I was 11 years my mother's employers left the country. They wanted my mom and me to go with them, but my mother being what she was to the family couldn't. It made sense. My mother got another job in Johannesburg and had to leave Durban. This meant we couldn't see her every month-end but every half-a-year. This was difficult and her wanting me to get a better education led to the decision of my moving with her. I was 12. My mother was very determined to do the best for me, even though she couldn't afford the schools in the city, resolute as she was, found a subsidy



to support it. I did my Grade 7 in a Model C school (a school in South Africa that used to be for white children only and is now mixed). I had to speak English but with my background, I certainly couldn't. I got bullied a lot, children made fun of me thinking I was stupid. But I was good in Math — I didn't really need English for this subject so I excelled.

Determined to prove to the kids who bullied me wrong, I studied and did my homework and continued watching cartoons and my English got better.

Even though that was my first year in an English school, I passed the exams very well and even got awards.

This made my mother proud. For High School, she got me another subsidy and I went to Princess High (another good school). Now as a teenager in a school with kids from different backgrounds I was determined to fit in, not in a regular way, but to be known as one of the smart ones. Being a 'Kitchen Girl's' (Domestic Worker) daughter isn't a cool thing but I felt fortunate. I felt fortunate because I stayed in the suburbs, it was quiet and all I had to do after school was to go home, finish my homework and learn more English. I got better at it and my excelling at school didn't go unnoticed.

At 17, I was in Matric (last level of high school). Sadly, I lost my mother that year. She passed away on the 5<sup>th</sup> of June 2009, the same day I started writing the mid-year Exams and to be honest, all hope was lost.

Knowing what my mother went through to get me that far I persisted and I passed my Matric.

From there on, I had to grow up and take responsibility for my life. Without any guidance, I didn't know what to do and where to go to further my education, so I took a gap year. One year turned into 2. During those years I found small jobs so I could earn some pocket money, and my grandma helped me with some of her pension money while I stayed with my aunts.

I didn't settle for these small jobs — I wanted more for myself. I did research on bursaries and scholarships and I applied to study at the University of South Africa and by God's Grace my bursary application was successful with NSFAS (National Student Financial Aid Scheme, in South Africa).

I was so grateful to have had the chance to go back to school — I worked hard and I got great marks. Because NSFAS only paid for tuition and books I didn't have spending money, so I still had to earn a living and I took up waitressing. That still was not enough — I was exploring and pushing the boundaries with how I could have and live a fulfilling life. I wanted to work with young people where motivation and inspiration was key. So in 2014, I started volunteering at Golden Youth Club (GYC), which is a youth Non-profit founded by Johannah Mahlangu. The group engages in performing arts and educational leadership projects in the community of Winterveldt and around South Africa and the world. With GYC, I could both learn and share my skills with others — with youth of a similar background (orphans or raised by single parents). I helped with project management and because I was studying IT (Information Technology) I could help technically as well.



GYC collaborates with Peerleader International (German NGO) in exchange programs and that year was my year! With the dedication I showed, GYC chose me to represent the organization in 2014/2015 and that enabled my first entry into Germany — an unimaginable journey both literally and symbolically. I lived in Germany for a year doing an Ecology program. Germany — the geographical shift opened the doors to global opportunities, experiences, professional and personal associations, lasting friendships and ties. Following that stint were travels to countries like Israel, Holland and Bosnia, learning, experiencing and inhabiting other cultures. These were all the possibilities I never thought of as a kid living in the village because I never knew what existed beyond my immediate surroundings.

I am where I am today because of the knowledge Johannah shared and the space she gave us, allowing us to grow. I used that knowledge to broaden my horizons.



Mom with Grandma and her Siblings



4-year-old Buso

Today I am 26 years with a qualification in Information Technology and I work in Filming & Television Production, having worked in more than 5 Film and TV Productions. I also have leadership skills in Youth and Community Development through my experience at GYC and Peerleader International.

My willpower to want to change how things were in the past and continue from where my mother left things off pushes me to want to learn and do more.

Love, willingness to learn and humility, to me are the key attributes to success.

For as long as I live I want to be a testament that being an orphan isn't the end of the world and that one's background doesn't determine their future as finality.



#### ABOUt the AAuthor

*Buso Memela (26)*, is a University of South Africa IT Graduate from Donnybrook, KZN. She is caught in between IT, Film & TV Productions and being an enviro-preneur youth Activist. She defines herself as a Misfit because she hasn't found a career that has all 3 of her major expertise.

# NETWORK DIALOGUE

What does development mean for you?  
Who or what needs to develop?

For me development means primarily fair distribution of income and access to all – health, education, work, housing, basic sanitation ... What in my country needs essentially to be developed is a social and political awareness so that the population in general can consciously elect their politicians and demand the guarantees of their basic rights. Development in my country will only happen when they stop killing leaders who defend human rights.

**Gaia Sanvicente Traverso**

Every single person is here on earth to develop. We are here in a big playground and our mindfulness and respect to each other and our surrounding and base (the earth) makes us grow and gives us an example for our fellowbeings.

**Ulli Meinholz**

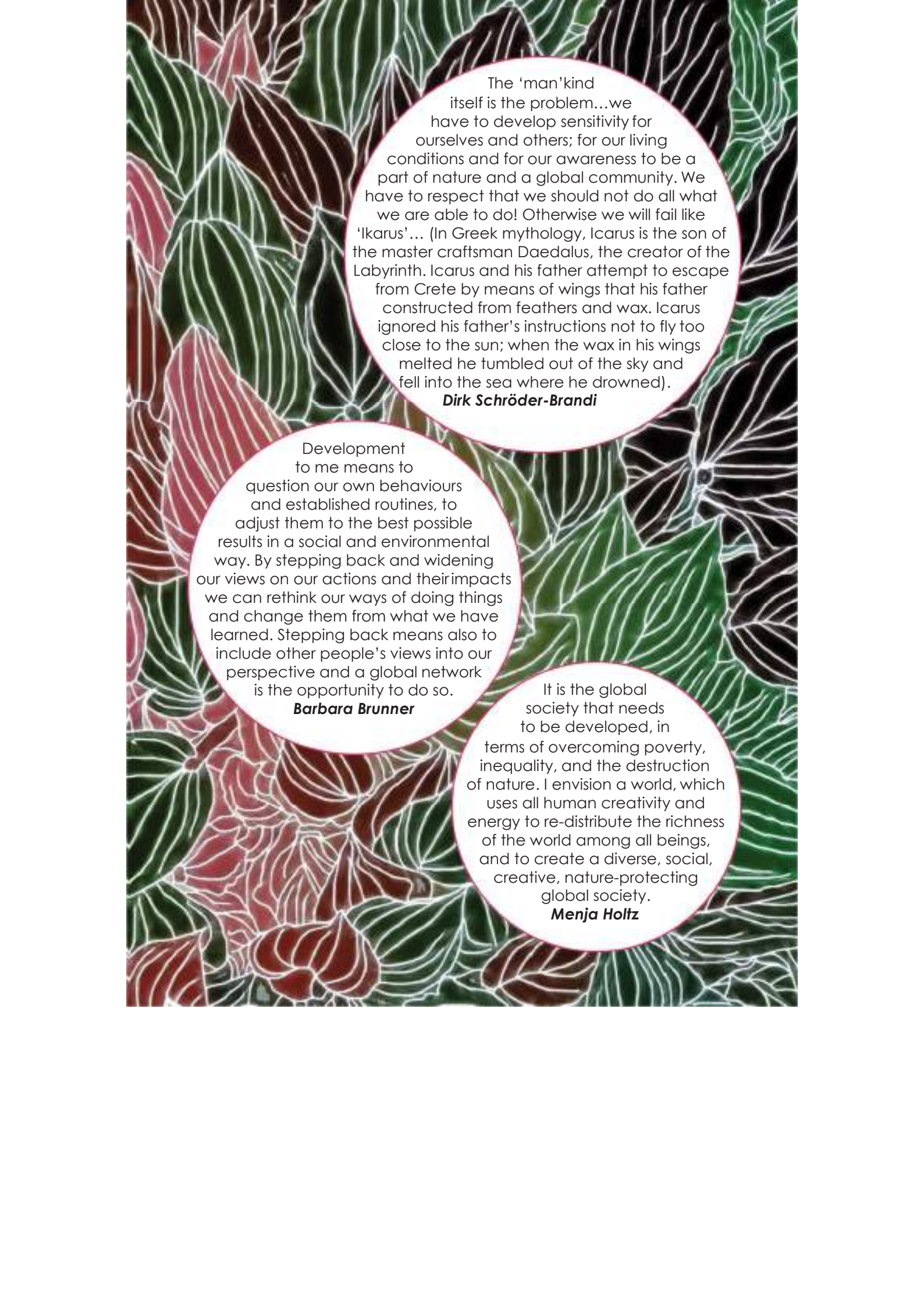
There is much potential for human kind in developing ways of thinking and self-awareness: a person that lives according to its inherent resources and has a connection to its own self and its surroundings, probably also will have much more positive impact than self-exploiting products of our meritocracy.

**Timo Steinert**

Development is all about developing yourself to being a better person. For better changes to happen we need to develop ourselves every day more and more.

**Aleksandar Slijepcevic**





The 'man'kind  
itself is the problem...we  
have to develop sensitivity for  
ourselves and others; for our living  
conditions and for our awareness to be a  
part of nature and a global community. We  
have to respect that we should not do all what  
we are able to do! Otherwise we will fail like  
'Ikarus'... (In Greek mythology, Icarus is the son of  
the master craftsman Daedalus, the creator of the  
Labyrinth. Icarus and his father attempt to escape  
from Crete by means of wings that his father  
constructed from feathers and wax. Icarus  
ignored his father's instructions not to fly too  
close to the sun; when the wax in his wings  
melted he tumbled out of the sky and  
fell into the sea where he drowned).

**Dirk Schröder-Brandt**

Development  
to me means to  
question our own behaviours  
and established routines, to  
adjust them to the best possible  
results in a social and environmental  
way. By stepping back and widening  
our views on our actions and their impacts  
we can rethink our ways of doing things  
and change them from what we have  
learned. Stepping back means also to  
include other people's views into our  
perspective and a global network  
is the opportunity to do so.

**Barbara Brunner**

It is the global  
society that needs  
to be developed, in  
terms of overcoming poverty,  
inequality, and the destruction  
of nature. I envision a world, which  
uses all human creativity and  
energy to re-distribute the richness  
of the world among all beings,  
and to create a diverse, social,  
creative, nature-protecting  
global society.

**Menja Holtz**



Newspaper clippings of 'running away factories'





## Running away factory: Why I am a labour activist!

*April Lai*

This was the first day after a special 30-day Lunar New Year vacation of a Hong Kong capital run Qualimax Plastic Factory in 1988. Some 50 workers were happily returning to the factory to resume duty and were ready for the Lai see (red packet with money, representing blessings and good wishes) from the boss, Law Chan. The factory was located in Kwun Tong, a densely labour populated industrial area of Hong Kong. The factory looked unusual: the entrance was blocked, no new year greeting banners on the door, no manager, no boss, no work; and certainly no Lai See to start a happy new year.

All the workers could not believe what was in sight. It had been a very busy overtime work schedule to complete the orders before the New Year vacation. Chun Cher, a caring woman worker with a slight hearing problem couldn't stop asking around about what was happening. Ah Yik, a high school educated, a guys in his early fifties, pointed to Chun Cher a notice by Law Chan, the employer, mounted at the entrance. He then read out word-by-word to her, 'Qualimax Electronic Factory shut down last month without paying the Qualimax Plastic Factory huge amount of debts. Apparently, the Plastic Factory was unable to operate nor pay workers' wages anymore. Please go to the Labour Department for assistance. Wish you all good luck.'

The workers did not have the intention to know Qualimax Electronics and its relationship with their factory. What they wanted to know was how to get the reward they worked so hard for from Law Chan; particularly some 20 workers were eligible to claim severance payment; a bigger amount of money, upon their long employment service. They called up Hong Kong Christian Industrial Committee, a labour concerned Christian Organization

active in promoting labour rights in Hong Kong territories. Chun Cher, Ah Yik, Ah Pang and other 4 workers went to meet the labour organizer early next day with the hope their grievances would be well addressed.

Since China's economic policy to open Special Economic Zones in 1978, many factories, big or small, were moving away from Hong Kong to relocate to the Zones where employers could enjoy cheap, massive and submissive workforce and other comparative advantage. Qualimax Plastics workers were one of the victims due to factory relocation. But this was the worst case as Law Chan, the employer, totally denied his obligation and left the problem to the workers and Hong Kong society as a whole.

The wage in arrears and the 7 day payment in lieu of notice were secured but not the severance payment under the Protection of Wages on Insolvency Fund. With the factory winding up order, workers could have a priority share on the assets capped to a fixed ceiling that could not fully pay workers with more than 4 years of service. However, where had the valuable machinery gone?

It was the workers' strong belief that Law Chan would take up the role of the employer and come up with the settlement once the workers met him. An exhaustive search for Law Chan was then launched, including a demonstration outside the factory to alert Hong Kong workers in risk of the factory shut down and appeal to Law Chan's obligations.

But, the efforts were in vain. Law Chan was completely quiet.

"Dongguan. Let's go to find Law Chan at his native place," Ah Pang and Ah Yik finally spoke up.

It was a chilly early morning, 4 workers and I started the journey of searching for Law Chan, the employer at Lowu. Before noon, we arrived at an outer township of Dongguan City, a very popular Special Economic Zone with Hong Kong and Taiwanese capital factories.

"That is the house," Ah Pang cried.

All of us felt excited and knocked on the gate very gently.

Without any feedback, we moved forward closer to the house.

"Our machines!" Ah Yik exclaimed by the window.

"Yes, this is the mold machine," Ah Pang was identifying the machine one by one with his logbook.

Chun Cher was dumbstruck and burst into tears.

We were looking in the neighborhood for clues to find Law Chan. Time passed by but Law Chan remained elusive.



Workers meeting with the Church based labour rights forum

Locating the equipment was a very important finding. The missing Qualimax Plastics machines were moved to Dongguan. What should we do to reclaim the machines?

It would be a long run legal battle and somehow the monetary returns too would not be as expected. But I could not tell the workers that at that moment.

China was a socialist country and the rights of workers and peasants were highly respected and enshrined in the national constitution. If the Chinese authority stepped in, Law Chan would have to show up for a settlement. In light of 'worker solidarity' and Hong Kong and China being family, we decided to lobby at the office of Foreign Trade and Economic Co-operation Department and All China Federation of Trade Unions Chinese government to step in.

Chun Cher, on behalf of the workers placed a demand at the official of Foreign Trade and Economic Co-operation Department to ban the production of Law Chan's Dongguan factory until he managed to settle the payments. The female official stated calmly and clearly that labour issue was not the department's jurisdiction. She directed us to the trade union.

It was logical for workers to seek help and support from the union, a worker's organization. We then moved on to seek help



The machine in China

from All China Federation of Trade Unions. However, the union's official responded to our demands with the important reference of National policy. According to the National development plan, attracting foreign capitals to invest in Dongguan was the priority. As part of the government structure, the unionist said they were required to collaborate with the national economic policy. Her office would not take the big move to seize the machinery nor ban the factory production process. She further convinced us to find solutions in Hong Kong.

We then came to the darkest moment of the long day's mission. We decided to stay in a small local hotel for a night and go back to Hong Kong the next day.

On the hotel guest check-in log, a name caught my attention. 'Law Chan.' The employer was staying here! Everyone was excited to discover that the target was under the same roof as us. Our hopes were revitalized. An emergent guarding plan was immediately worked out. Chun Cher was assigned to watch the lobby and entrance. Ah Pang guarded the stairway and lift. Ah Kuen would approach Law Chan for a chat and then the fellow workers would join in was the plan. The clock went tick-tock, tick-tock but Law Chan was a no show.

The search-boss trip ended and what did we achieve?

It seemed not much was gained concretely and we were disappointed with Law Chan, the employer, hiding to deny his obligation. We were angry to learn that the labour rules and government departments concerned, in fact, did not safeguard workers from victimization.

Nevertheless, the trip uncovered the whereabouts of Qualimax Plastics machinery. It was easy to relate to the plot of Law Chan, the employer, who asked workers to go on a special unpaid long Lunar New Year holidays, when he got the time to shut down Qualimax Plastics, clear the assets and move away (steal) the machinery to Dongguan where he was building up a new Plastics factory to continue the production business. This finding was so solid to make workers and lawmakers understand the problems of the existing labour laws. Extension to severance payment was made to the

Protection of Wages on Insolvency Fund afterwards. Qualimax workers had contributed to the Extension that'd be beneficial to all working people with better security when employers went insolvent.

I could not foresee the achievements when we planned for this labour action. But there were some consequently. Without labour actions in response to unfair practice against workers' rights and interests, I was sure the labour movement was stagnant and no progressive change would have occurred. Labour organizing was like growing a seed. It took time and underwent a process. We plant, but someone in the later stages harvests.

The action Qualimax workers went through was an empowering process. Many times, workers work in asymmetric employment relations, in which they always perform the submissive role to follow the given suits rather than taking initiatives to think and work out something new. The labour action was collective. No one was the boss of orders. In contrast, everyone was trying to contribute to make the action a success. I was feeling proud to see the engagement of Chun Cher, Ah Pang, Ah Yik and all active workers who looked at labour protection in the long run more than their own benefits at the end.

#### ABOUt the AUthor

*April Lai* is a labour rights and eco activist; who focuses on ground organizing, people participation, power sharing, emancipation.







## Maternity within a Community

*Gaia Sanvicente Traverso*

My story is a journey of learning from the community — be it in the absence of one, or as a part of it. It begun with my becoming a mother, where I found myself relearning life's processes by my eventual seclusion from a community.

For the sake of financial security, my life partner and I had to make many changes in our lives. We had to move away from the community we had been living in, contributed to and found support in. I saw myself in need of building a new community that would bring my family and me, physical and emotional balance.

This occurrence is common for many women in Brazil and in the world, initiating reflections on maternity, the relationship with formal paid work environment, schooling processes and education in early childhood as well as some of the challenges imposed on contemporary Brazilian families within the realm of urban communities.

When I got pregnant, I was unemployed. Before that, I was working in a government environmental project. I lived near my community which comprised of several social groups (family, neighbors, friends and work mates). Our future with a baby was worrying and that was when my partner — my daughter's father, was offered an opportunity that would give us financial stability and a good quality life within a crisis scenario that was affecting everyone around us. For him to take up the new post we would have to move to a periphery area in the city of Rio de Janeiro, far away from everyone we knew. With this move, I ended up losing or being automatically alienated from all social groups I used to share with and had built my life around.

During the gestation period, I decided not to look for a full- time job because paid formal work environment is not favorable to



women, mothers and less so to mothers-to-be. Rarely will someone offer a job to a pregnant woman and, even employed women sometimes end up being fired after their maternity leave. Women with young children are not offered employment too.



In Brazil, there are no incentives from the State for women to contract or rejoin work or find dedicated care for the newly born and toddlers — the future generations, in suitable work conditions.

According to the current law, women have the right only to four months of maternity leave. The father has the right to only five days. That is, in four months, working parents are forced to outsource a caretaker for their children. In this way, they go to formal institutions — nurseries and day care centres. The public ones rarely have vacancies; the private ones are unaffordable to the majority of the population. Both public and private institutions have the problem of following very hierarchical, standardized and market logical operations, besides being distanced from nature.

In many cases, the pedagogy put in practice responds to the market more than to the real developmental needs of children, such as, offering suitable meals to children. In the early food-offering phase, giving them industrial, processed food known to cause cancer (sausage, margarine) is harmful. Even simply excluding the community from the construction of pedagogical content and also childcare that involves the local community in all its needs and potentials lead to skewed priorities. This creates social imbalance. What's best for babies, at least in the first year, would be to be in their family environment, being fed by their mothers and under the care of another adult who belongs to their community, such as grandparents, aunts and uncles and friends, besides, being in touch with nature and with the freedom to play in order to fully develop naturally.

In this scenario, where the paid and formal workplace does not favor mothers and where schools are not the most appropriate alternatives for children, I dedicated myself to the care of my daughter during her first two years, without the urgency to get back to work and without the need to put her in a nursery. However, this choice became a very lonely experience.

It was then, in this moment, caring for my daughter, far from my familiar social groups, friends, families and other mothers that I realized the profound need to again belong to a community, forming new networks. When I was away from this community that is when I understood the old African saying: 'It takes a village to raise a child'.

According to an educator and a professor Severino Antônio apud Carpegiani, in an interview for the documentary 'O Começo da Vida' (2016): 'One of the great loneliness' in the contemporary

world is losing a community'. However, creating a support network is not so simple, families are not as big as they used to be, neither are they close as before, with grandparents, uncles and aunts, cousins living nearby. Not to mention that the routine in great metropolis can be a barrier to looking at others with compassion."<sup>1</sup>

In the place where we moved, there were not many public spaces that would welcome mothers and babies. There are no parks; squares are not cared for and one of the few options is going to highly priced shopping centers to engage in offered activities and a constructed way of life that is not what I consider a model.

Little by little, I started to realize that maternal loneliness affected lots of other contemporary women too. By being entirely dedicated to the exclusive care of children, the woman is also overloaded with un-paid domestic work. Tired, I missed living together with people and the desire to be with people grew again. As a mother, as the matriarch of the family, I feel, think and notice that the community is a vital need.

That is why I decided no longer to live motherhood in such a lonely way. By then, my daughter was already one year old and I already felt the wish to go back to work and find a school for my daughter where I wouldn't have to worry about her safety; which had a community proposal, connected to nature and committed to healthy meals and uncontrolled playtime.

I started to look for mother's groups and alternative ways of education for early childhood. In this research I found a series of initiatives and one that caught my attention the most was the so called Parental Nursery, also called Collective Care Network or Care Parental Collective. Fernanda Carpegiani, a journalist, in her article to Crescer magazine explains that it is a model inspired by the French experience that began in the mid-70s, from an organized movement of families that couldn't find places in public nurseries or that looked for a greater parental involvement in early childhood. Each family must dedicate a minimum amount of time — from one to four months, in shifts.

In Rio de Janeiro, these parental collectives have established their own organizational form, each with a different configuration. What they have in common is the families' collective management. In Brazil, there is no government incentive as in France; only a minor movement that is moving for its recognition and a growing demand for regulation. The experience that was closest to me was Parental Collective Cria-Mundo<sup>2</sup> (and by 'close', I mean something located



approximately 50 minutes from my house, in another district). This was the initiative I was and still am in contact with. It is an initiative that has been working for about 2 years, in which more than 15 families have taken part and, currently, only 3 (besides my own) are active. Children live in a familiar environment and enjoy unrestricted



playing time in permanent contact with nature (and far away from sterile classrooms and industrialized products).

Going to this collective was the strongest re-connection experience to a community that I had since my daughter was born. It represents to me a community of families, especially women, mothers, children, educators and activists that fight to guarantee women's rights, children's rights and quality education. It was there, even if I wasn't there too often, that I was welcomed and felt appreciated, shared joys and sadness of parenthood and, most importantly, strengthening myself as a mother, woman and educator.

This and all other initiatives that I have experienced have inspired me to promote an initiative like these ones in my locality — both to have a support network and as well as to allow support to other women.

I started to organize meetings in order to map possible interested people in the building of community educational proposals. I created the *PráBrincá Creative Lab*<sup>3</sup>, a space dedicated to pedagogical experiences for children with creative workshops, incentives to uninhibited playing and support for families. I also perform activities in squares and parks, which are underutilized and conduct various kinds of events. Although I have not managed to create a family group, to form a collective care network, which is more consistent, and frequent, this experience has permitted me to know educators, parents and mothers who today I can say are a part of my community and form a critical support network. To be able to reach out and connect with these people has allowed me to participate in the collective building of creative and artistic actions in my locality that welcome collective upbringing of children and families – which, as I have mentioned, here are almost non-existent.

It is a social movement made by the ingenuity of families and communities in the construction of a pedagogical proposal based on community cooperation, environmental friendly and equality principles for early childhood. It is a social movement aimed at guaranteeing basic childhood rights: life and health; freedom, respect and dignity; education, culture, sports and leisure.

Collective caring spaces are therefore a movement opposed to the maximum individualization of modern patriarchal society that gives the nuclear family, more specifically the woman the responsibility to care for children. It takes away the meaning of communal care for children which is very powerful since

that redefines social relations and the meanings given to early childhood that are beyond school walls. It is a proposal that aims at mapping other existing potentialities, which are important to child development.

This entire journey has only confirmed the potency of what it is to be in a community, and how through the community it is possible to do what we cannot do alone. After all, as social beings, we need one another to survive.

I hope that with this story, I can inspire other initiatives that move towards this same path and continue to widen the possibilities of fostering spaces such as these to new generations, that will be the foundation of a world — another possible world, based on cooperation, solidarity, welcome and collectiveness.

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### ABOUt the AUthor

*Gaia Sanvicente Traverso* was born and raised in the Brazilian country side, among the mountains, bathing in rivers and climbing on trees. Her first school was built by parents in their community, and then she went to public and private schools. All of that has inspired her to go to the big city and study Education, searching for new ways to educate.



## **Born and raised in the slum: A blessing in disguise**

*Nsubuga Geofrey*

Born and raised in the slums — where everyone living in it are stigmatized nationwide — branded as thieves, hooligans, prostitutes, addicts among others is quite challenging. However, one can turn these slurs into a powerful testimony of a continuous stream of motivation for transformation.

I was born in the slums of Bwaise within Kawempe, one of the divisions that make up Kampala district, Uganda, and I grew up there. The area is 98% a slum, where drug abuse, commercial sex work, and other risky activities are the order of the day and are considered as normal sources of income.

The girls within the area are particularly highly disadvantaged compared to the boys, because of cultural stereo-types; being denied education up to higher levels and being married off at a tender age. The girls are still viewed as property and sex objects for others. Their bodies are perceived as a source of income for them to survive. The area has poor and cheap facilities but is still attracting many households because they are stricken by poverty. Slums are the only place in the cities where poor families can afford to pay for accommodation. This leads to even more congestion as time goes by since more and more poor families trickle into them. The slums offer a passage for human and drug traffickers alike. They are a centre of prostitution and a hub of all kinds of crimes, also because this is considered normal by the people there and for some reason not known to me there is even limited action against this by the law enforcement agencies.

But the world has forgotten the strong-minded and talented slum dwellers that only need a platform to exploit that potential and take their community to another level. I grew up with a vision of a transformed Bwaise in the sight of us the slum dwellers, government



and the whole globe. I was keen to participate in programs by organizations and other well-wishers but something was not adding up. I kept wondering why so many programs with lots of money did not transform our community, until I realized that such programs were planned in bigger offices, multi-storied buildings, implemented by well-wishers and finally imposed on the slum dwellers, yet insensitive to actively involving them in the programming right from the planning stages which would surely result into better programs. Slum dwellers know what can transform their community. Planning and implementing intervention actions with them would promote a sense of ownership of the outcomes of the program by the slum dwellers themselves and the results would be more sustainable.

Understanding my people I realized the great opportunities that my community has. We don't have the money but we have the 'life, joy and peace'. We have the community, the power of people to transform our society ourselves. I realized that no person in my community wants to stay in vulnerability. The continued criminality is because of the continued stigma and how we respond to it by living up to how and what we're viewed as; with a fatalistic attitude.

The turning point in my life was when one young girl committed suicide due to community and self-stigma in 2009. I said in my heart 'enough is enough'. With a team of young people in my area we mobilized everyone, to save our own lives. We knew what we wanted — LOVE. We created a space where we could get that love and pass it on to others without discrimination and stigma — the Somero Uganda Center. The short time we stayed together added meaning to life and the more we met the more we wanted to stay together. We started learning from each other all that classroom education



could and did not offer us. Ambitions developed, dreams were aligned and strategies laid out.

I personally realized that I could be a good trainer. I never had the courage even though I had a Bachelor' degree in Education. Though not many people believed in me I leaned on the few inspirational people around me to polish the small piece of gold in me, to greater heights, even to work with International organizations. I knew this was the time, I knew my time had come.

I used the platform to make people understand us. We the youth are the change makers with the best intentions for our community. I started Somero Uganda ([www.somero.org](http://www.somero.org)) shortly after the young girl's suicide. The organization Somero Uganda was founded to restore hope and courage in the youth of my community with Education as the major tool.

In 2010 a center was set up to provide a safe space for the slum youth to interact and share experiences. Education to us meant learning from each other and this was the most important thing for us. With the invitation by Somero Germany ([www.somero.de](http://www.somero.de)) a Somero Uganda partner, I visited Germany in 2011, where I learnt about climate change, more about education and life styles of people beyond my community. I took this experience to my fellow youth and eagerly started projects around Information Technology and global learning.



I knew I couldn't transform my community alone and this led to the initiation of empowerment programs targeting young people to enable them to develop their own communities, in their own localities. Since then, we have become not merely agents of change, 'we are the change', the ghetto presidents, the slum ambassadors, the future of the great nation — Uganda and the strong pillar of this world.

Today I feel that one way I can for sure give back to my community is by becoming and providing a stepping-stone for fellow slum dwellers to dream, shine and walk together.



#### ABOUt the AUthor

*Nsubuga Geoffrey* has a Post Graduate Diploma in Project Planning and Management, Uganda Management Institute, a Bachelor of Arts in Education, Makerere University Kampala, a Dip. Social Work Social Administration, Makerere Institute for Social Development.

He's the Executive Director and founder member; Somero Uganda and an ILO SCREAM National Trainer.



## Integration of scientific and indigenous knowledge in climate resilience

*Joseph Kenson Sakala*

I grew up in a society that saw great conflict between man and nature, not to mention climate shocks that have kept on increasing over the past twenty years. My passion emerged with my interest to turn things around to protect nature in my small community. This made me pursue studies in Environmental Sciences at University of Malawi. What looked like a crazy and unrealistic dream gradually evolved into a 'dream come true' as I embarked on a journey to work towards bringing people and nature in harmony and helping vulnerable farmers from the small communities to build resilience towards climate change, which poses as the greatest challenge towards food security and their livelihood in general.

Just like any intervention, I started by bringing awareness in schools and communities on the implications of destroying nature. For example, I emphasized on the increasing soil erosion due to rapid water runoff on the land surface (in some scenarios this has the potential to cause floods), extinction of various flora and fauna, less vegetative cover, drought and change in micro-climate which eventually transcends into macroclimate of the area in general. These information-sharing sessions were conducted in schools and communities within my reach at that particular time. One might also wish to know that Malawi is among the most vulnerable countries to climate change. The country continues to face increasing extreme weather events such as droughts, floods, and reduction in the rainfall season from 7 months to 4 months now or even less in some instances.

Today most people have come to know me; Joseph Kenson Sakala, through my active involvement in environmental and climate related activities since 2010. My life was greatly transformed with my first working experience with the small communities called



Joseph during one of the information-sharing sessions

Mgona and Mutu. I began to mobilize the community and optimized our team of 'Youth for Environment and Sustainable Development' (YSD) to ensure a change in the communities' attitude and behavior towards conserving nature. We conducted a number of awareness meetings advocating for a change in perspectives towards natural resources, especially trees. The team was impressed, as people seemed to get the message. However, there was no tangible alteration in the conduct and trend in which trees were being destroyed.

It came to a point when we needed to reflect and brainstorm on the 'unsuccessful impact' or less results/outcomes of the project. This reflection on the project approach is what led to the tremendous mindset-shift towards how to approach a community for change of behavior or attitude.

The group had to make a number of resolutions; among them was the highlight on the lack of community participation and ownership of the intervention being taken. The group realized that in the development, planning and execution of the interventions, the community members were not involved. The general perception from our team was that the intellectual capability, which they had, was enough to turn things around. Nevertheless, it was learnt from the reflections that the intellect alone wasn't enough — the community members' commitment and ownership was needed to steer and sustain any project.

One would wonder how a project can be implemented in a community with community involvement. The approach the group

took was to engage with the community right from situation analysis, identifying the problem together and in the same way developing appropriate interventions that would accommodate both the intellectual and indigenous understanding and skills. For example, in our new approach both the community members and our team formed one project team that worked together to address the problem of deforestation and rainfall challenges.

Through community inclusion, the team was able to identify local crops, which could be used as drought resistant harvests, such as local cassava and locally available edible wild fruits and vegetables. My team of YSD and I helped the community understand how nature and climate is changing and how the community should prepare to be resilient in such a crisis, for example, by promoting crop diversification and irrigation farming. At the same time, the communities are taught how to conserve and sustain natural resources. Out of this experience, our community outreach program on nature and climate change has seen a significant difference and now we're even able to produce some results as compared to the past. There are communities that have demonstrated understanding and practicality of crop diversification with local drought resistant crops being fully utilized in the process. Since then, our YSD team and I have continued to work with different communities affected by climate change.

My passion is to help more people in the rural areas of Malawi, especially farmers, to build resilience towards climate change and also being able to replicate the impact to other surrounding communities. Climate change continues to pose as one of the major global challenges of our times and urgent global actions are needed to address the challenge the changing life styles — transitioning from fossil fuel energy to renewable energy and promotion of Sustainable Development Goals in general.

Nevertheless, I also believe that on a small scale in rural Malawi, communities should lead this movement to make this difference; this understanding and commitment is what will continue to keep me moving towards the direction of Nature and Climate Change Management.

In conclusion, I acknowledge and recommend that the most effective and sustainable way to conduct transformative community outreach is to have effective inclusion and participation between the project implementing institution or team and the target group of the project. As it is noted in this story that integration of scientific



or intellectual knowledge with indigenous knowledge is key towards achieving sustainable climate resilience, nature conservation and not forgetting food security.



#### ABOut the AAuthor

*Joseph Kenson Sakala*, a global citizen, born in Malawi on 17<sup>th</sup> September, 1988. Married to *Rhoda* and has a daughter *Jennaya* born on 06<sup>th</sup> July 2016. Joseph is a Nature & Climate Activist with a B.Sc. in Environmental Science, a Dip. in Environmental Management, a certificate in Climate Change and Renewable Energy. During his free time, Joseph loves playing with his daughter, having fun with family and viewing nature. He is the fifth born son of the late Kenson & Dorophy Sakala.

## Ode to the Beauty of the Revolution against Ourselves

*Timo Holthoff*

Sisters and brothers, scattered and frightened in places of inner rebellion.

Come together, take courage, and proudly proclaim  
the *revolution against ourselves*.

Armed with questions, I want to  
March, dressed in polyforms instead of conform uniforms,  
Seed doubt and harvest dreams.

Not seek answers but allow new questions to be born.

Have trust to move gently in the darkness of the unknown.

Leave streets, take hills and twisted paths that unfold under our feet  
while we walk them.

Discover new lands beyond the narrow fences of our being.

Shoot with crazy ideas and turn the chaos of order into the order of  
chaos.

Tear town grey houses in our hearts and laugh in tears about the  
easiness of it,


because they are just empty facades, behind which we find cosy  
caves in which our ancestors sat around the fire for millenia, looking  
into the stars, entangled with the multiverse of life.

Until animated stories faded into secret whispers and whispers  
became silenced by the loudness of only one story.

We find a grave, a tombstone:

*Humanity*

*Died a hero in the name of civilisation.*



Get our hands dirty and dig it out, reassemble the pieces, breeze it gently back to life. Tell the many stories it lived, lives and could live.

We pull out just tiny pieces at the right place of the wall, peak through the hole, through which a hand or a claw or a tree branch or a vine is already lusciously reaching out.

And with just a breath,

unthinkables become outthinkables.

Impossible becomes I'm possible.

Words dissolve into meaning and meaning gives words. Screams make room for silence and silence for unheard voices.

We hug our inner trees and monsters – and yes, why not a real tree, or a monster.

We believe no one, but are full of belief in ourselves and each other.

We seek and create connection where there was division.

Because

While we stand back to back with those who we call our enemies, our inner children are gently holding hands,

Healing wounds, where band-aid after band-aid was tearing open.

We take time, slow down, contemplate with the ghosts inside us, that are assembled around the fire in our belly.

We celebrate our failures and make procrastination a gift against the force to succeed. We jump around wildly, dance with possibility, speak the unspeakable. Or not.

We take breaks under trees to ease ourselves from the drudgery of inner revolution, look through vibrating crowns into the sky, let thoughts flow and queer the lines of linearity. A sudden realization dawns: That is not a break from the revolution. That *is* the Revolution.



Learn2Change-Summer Academy, Germany, June 2015



# METHODS







Learn2Change-Summer Academy, Germany, June 2015



## Happiness—A subject for learning!

*Sabine Meyer*

<b>Name of Activity</b>  Happiness—A subject for learning!	<b>Total time</b>  One school year with weekly meetings of 90 minutes and 7 days camp recommended, though it can be adjusted and is flexible: for example incorporating these into a school-holiday or in blocks of 4 days a week.
<b>Overview</b>  This activity offers a guided expedition to discover our concepts and approaches to 'Happiness' through opening and reflecting various perspectives. It relates personal needs and choices to those of the group, natural environment, national societies and to the sustainable development of our planet earth. It fosters competencies of communication, expression, team-cooperation and self-efficacy.	<b>Materials/room</b>  Writing and drawing tools, plus things to create models from.  Room with screening equipment and internet connection.  Campsite in a natural environment.
<b>Number of people</b>  12 to 20 participants	<b>Target groups &amp; Age</b>  Teenagers in their puberty and young adults in the transition period between school and professional life.

**Learning outcomes**

Become aware of one's own view and experiences of happiness;  
Express oneself in a trusted group and listen respect-/mindfully to others;  
Experience one's own talents and role in a cooperative team;  
Become aware of the relations between one's own lifestyle with the earth and humanity;  
Trust one's own talents and the cooperation in the group; experience self-efficacy.

*Success is not the key to happiness. Happiness is the key to success. If you love what you are doing, you will be successful*  
Albert Schweizer

**PART I: Introduction**

One might think Happiness is a very private issue. Though, can a person really be happy when others around are struggling, or in difficult circumstances?

Especially in periods of change it can help to be conscious about the needs of individuals, groups and the world's sustainability to take suitable decisions.

What we can say for sure: EVERYBODY wants to be happy!

I want to invite you to start the quest: what can be done to support people to discover their ways to happiness in today's world?

**PART II: The Method**

Our course has 4 parts:

1. Council circle talking – learning to speak from the heart
2. Experience nature/wilderness – learning to live with nature
3. Global perspectives – learning about approaches of people in other parts of the planet
4. Practical self-efficacy – learning to design and complete one's own small project

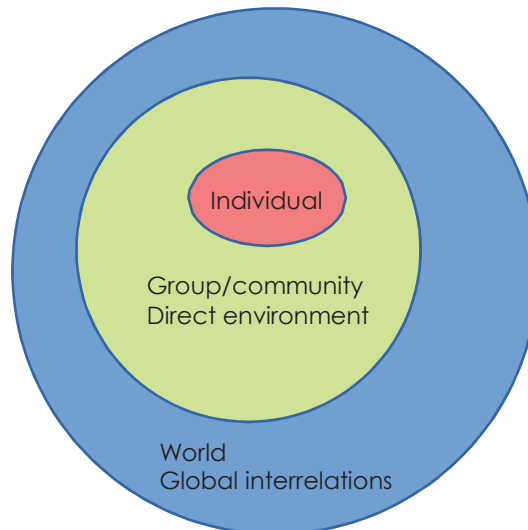
**Intentions**

Encounter Happiness in various aspects;  
Support competencies of communication, expression and team-cooperation;  
Relate and reflect ones lifestyle to sustainable development of our planet;  
Foster self-efficacy.

### Objectives

Become aware of one's own view and experiences of happiness;  
Express oneself in a trusted group and listen respectfully to others;  
Experience one's own talents and role in a cooperative team;  
Become aware of the relations between one's own lifestyle with the earth and humanity;  
trust ones own talents and the cooperation in the group; experience self-efficacy.

### Three levels of reflection regarding happiness



#### 1. Council circle talking

This setting and way of sharing in a non-hierarchical way came to Europe from north American indigenous roots. In a council every voice is heard and everybody is visible. The talking piece (for example a natural branch of wood) is handed around clockwise, so everybody who wants to talk talks – one at a time. In the beginning participants agree to treat everything shared in the council as confidential. There are 4 rules/intentions: speak from the heart, listen from the heart, speak spontaneously, and speak concisely. This frame can help to develop mindfulness and empathy for the shared humanity and for the present situation: for example the passage of puberty or any need to adjust to transformations in the outside world.<sup>1</sup>



It connects to happiness in two ways: sharing personally relevant issues with the consciousness that all in the circle is going through a similar passage. Plus the experience to get time to speak uninterrupted to others who are mindfully listening – together it seems to touch a basic need of feeling connected with others and of being present in the very moment.

Some questions to start with:

- How are you today? What's on your mind just now: any burning question or challenge?
- Please describe a happy moment today/during the last week/during the last school-month.
- How would you define happiness? What do you need to feel happy?

The sharing and the experience to be heard and seen in a safe setting itself can benefit the personalities and support the feeling of being part of a group.

## *2. Experience nature/wilderness – learning to live with nature*

Once upon a time nature —‘the wild’— was our ancestor's home. In today's ‘modernised’, industrialised world many people have become alienated from this home.

Nature and environmental-pedagogy intends to reconnect participants to nature and to bring the interdependency back to our awareness.



**Method:** The 'tools' are real experience: spend some time in the forest and build a shelter from natural materials, find firewood, light a fire, find something eatable. And most important: open the senses for the sounds, smells and other observations by spending at least 20 minutes in silence each day.

**Location:** Find a place close to nature to set up a camp, where the participants can sleep in tents and where you have permission to cook in an open fire. We recommend a one-week duration. This allows a comfortable timeframe to get to know each other and find ways to collaborate as a group. Also as we get to know the area and build self-trust to feel safe with oneself in the nature.

In case you can't take a week: try to make it possible to spend at least one night outside with the group!<sup>2</sup> (Recommended guidebook with lots of inspiration for practise by Jon Young, Ellen Haas, Evan McGown).

### 3. *Global perspectives – learning about approaches to happiness of people in other parts of the planet*

Intention: relate oneself and the lifestyle of one's community/ country to global issues.

Material needed: Internet connection, screening equipment, world map, pens and paper.

#### **Method A: Opener: Let's take a look at the whole world — 'World-allocation-game'**

Please draw the world map on the floor so that participants can position themselves on it. Then ask the group to position them on the map like they think the wealth (the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, fossil fuel resources) is allocated. All participants are representative of 100% of Earth's population. At the end you confront the group with real figures, which you can find on the internet<sup>3</sup>. The obvious inequalities will trigger reflections. (Detailed description of this method is available on the internet<sup>4</sup>).

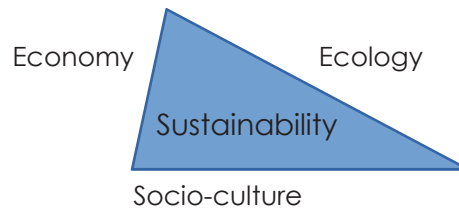
The core intention of the method is to open the perspective to imbalances in the world. This overview leads to some questions to discuss:

- Is financial wealth important for happiness?
- Does the use of fossil energy sources and the emissions like CO<sub>2</sub> and their effects on the planet relate to happiness?
- Does consumption relate to happiness? — to one's own, the communities' or the worlds'?

- Does it affect your happiness, to see the inequality in the world?

This is a good moment to introduce the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)<sup>5</sup> as an international reference point.

A much-simplified drawing can serve as a reminder in the following discussions to assess different approaches.



Why refer to the SDGs in a course about happiness?

The SDGs are part of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which is adopted by 193 Countries in the world. It is the most widely accepted agreement to take appropriate steps towards a kind of development that secures the survival in dignity on planet earth for all.

### **Method B: Happiness as a national aim — Example Bhutan**

In 2008 the king of Bhutan stepped back and handed over powers to a democratic parliament. The new constitution contains the specific aim of the country: the Gross National Happiness (GNH) instead of a growth in GDP (Gross domestic product) — as most other countries pursue. Since in this Buddhist country spirituality and compassion have been integrated in governance before, this seemed a consequent path to modernise the system.

The GNH's central tenets are: 'sustainable and equitable socio-economic development; environmental conservation; preservation and promotion of culture; and good governance'<sup>6</sup>.

#### **Approach:**

Step A: Ask the participants: Suppose you were the leader of a country: Which indicators would you use to measure the happiness of the people?

Step B: Explain the concept of how Bhutan has implemented the Gross Happiness Index; show a short film<sup>7</sup> to get an impression and discuss: How can you relate to the Bhutanese approach? Which of their indicators would you implement in the country you live in?

Step C: You may have a look at the World Happiness Report<sup>8</sup> together and discuss its approach and results, as well as relate it to the living conditions in the country you live in/in your community.

**Method C: Buen vivir – Sumac Kawsay – ‘Good living’: An approach from South America**

This philosophy has its roots in practises of indigenous peoples in the Andean-region. Its focus is collaborative consumption and the sharing economy as well as a balanced way to live with the Mother Earth (Pacha Mama).

In Ecuador it found its way into the preamble of the constitution, so here it becomes a political struggle as well, with the objective to save nature/respect Mother Earth as an existential basis for survival.<sup>9</sup>

Step A: Two small groups each write on a poster what ‘Good living’ means and the other group on ‘Successful living’. Afterwards all take a look at what was expressed and discuss differences and commonalities of both ‘life-approaches’. Experience says that the expressions focus on different pathways: ‘Good life’ seems to trigger more intrinsic aims – ‘Successful’ more extrinsic/reaching status in society.

Step B: Explain to the participants the example of Yasuni National Park in Ecuador where oil extraction poses a threat to the rainforest nature reserve and the survival of the indigenous residents.<sup>10</sup>

Small groups of 3–4 then find arguments, pros and cons of keeping the oil in the ground. Thereafter they discuss in the plenum their arguments in relation to the approach of Good living and SDGs.

You might think: ‘Ecuador is too far away for the imagination of my group.’?

In that case you will find other examples closer to your location. Unfortunately mining vs. ecosystem and socio-culture is a burning issue in many regions of the world. In my experience children and teenagers pick up very fast what the problems are – sometimes even better with some distance as observers.

With a little more time it can be very interesting and lively to arrange this discussion with various roles – politicians, farmers, conservation — activists, etc. — and ask the groups to prepare arguments for a panel discussion.

**Method D: How do we envision the future with a better balance?  
(prototyping<sup>11</sup>)**

Now, well prepared with knowledge and the awareness of needs of nature and people, we raise the question: What is our vision of a happy and sustainable life in the future, on this planet?

At least by now it is clear for all the participants that this course deals with real challenges — as a person, as communities, as humanity on earth — we all are sharing responsibilities and have the potential to influence our future.

The task is to build models/prototypes of a happy world in future – lets say 50 years from now – in small groups; and present and discuss the results afterwards.

As creative materials, things from nature and clay are suitable as paper, glue stick and little toy figures.

Looking at the created tangible models, some questions can be raised:

- Did this model-vision find a balance of environment, economy, socio-cultural needs?
- Does it imply a priority of an aim?
- In which way does it foster happiness?

*4. Practical self-efficacy – learning to design and complete one's own small project*

During the previous activities there will be ideas coming up what can be done practically. At this point we ask the participants to brainstorm and put all ideas on the table. They will decide in small groups of 3–4 which one they will work on to make their selected projects happen. First, each small group develops a plan with timings and work steps.

Now: enjoy the path to realisation!

*5. Reflection and feedback during the course*

Further to regular feedback for monitoring the process and fitting of group and methods, a diary for each participant seems very useful. Encourage them to note down their own impressions, thoughts etc. in whatever ways they like to express it. It is for their own reflection and remembrance.

As for the whole course: there is no compulsion! All questions and methods are an invitation to join in and experience, and each person decides how much they want to share with the group and with the guide. Yes, this concept is more like a guided learning tour





8. <<http://worldhappiness.report/>>.
9. <[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sumac\\_Kawsay](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sumac_Kawsay)>.
10. <[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yasun%C3%AD-ITT\\_Initiative](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yasun%C3%AD-ITT_Initiative)>.
11. Scharmer, C. Otto. 2009. *Theory U – Leading from the Future as It Emerges*. USA: Berrett-Koehler Publishers.
12. The project presented here "Towards Happiness – innovative Learning for sustainable learning-and lifestyles for young people" (Zum Glück - Innovative Bildungsprozesse für nachhaltige Lern- und Lebensstile für Jugendliche). The concept frame was designed by ifak (Institut for applied culture research), Bildung trifft Entwicklung Regionale Bildungsstelle Nord (Education meets Developement, unit north), dem Verein Niedersächsischer Bildungsinitiativen VNB e.V. (Networking for education in lower saxony) and Wildnisschule Wildniswissen (Wildernessschool 'Wildernessknowledge'). Three 'pilot' schools have been on the project since 2016. Within this project I developed the part of global learning in relation to happiness and practically worked with the participants in that area plus coaching the realisation of their practical projects. More information: <<http://www.ifak-goettingen.de/entwicklungspolitische-informationsarbeit/projekt-zum-glueck/informationen-zum-glueck>>.

#### ABOUt the AUthor

Sabine Meyer trained as a technical drawer in engineering, an Abitur from evening school (qualification granted by university-preparatory schools), a Diploma from University of Hanover in Adult Education with a focus on sociology.

She worked some years in cultural tourism in India and Nepal, which entailed extensive travelling and exploring those countries. She currently freelances as an educator and facilitator in the field of global learning, involving practical action, mindfulness and creativity. She is an Education activist for sustainability and global learning.



## Personal Storytelling

*Benjamin Kafka*

<b>Name of Activity</b> <i>Personal Storytelling</i>	<b>Total time</b> A minimum time of 10-15 minutes per person to be given to each storyteller and if you want to invite specific stories and more complex stories, then I would advise giving storytellers at least 20-30 minutes time.
<b>Overview</b> The method explores the power of stories and storytelling is as a tool for change. Stories are the way we construct coherence of our experiences and create meaning for our lives – individually and collectively, stories shape our actions as individuals and as groups. Stories are a powerful leverage point for change because we can become aware of them and work to reshape them – again both individually and collectively.	<b>Materials/room</b> Can be conducted both indoors and outdoors.
<b>Number of people</b> Small and large groups	<b>Target groups &amp; Age</b> Varied, from children to adults.

**Learning outcomes**

Have the opportunity to share and experience and thereby create deeper understanding for the storyteller's personal history, social context and work environment.

Create an opportunity for deeper personal connection and community building.

The foundation is laid for the group to have a conversation on values underlying their educational (or other) work.

**PART I: The background to the Method***Educational philosophy:*

We are continually surrounded by stories. Our entire social, psychological and political reality consists of stories. Stories we tell ourselves, stories we hear, stories we tell others and stories we tell together with others. Stories are the way we construct coherence of our experiences and create meaning for our lives – individually and collectively, stories shape our actions as individuals and as groups. Stories are a powerful leverage point for change because we can become aware of them and work to reshape them – again both individually and collectively. Stories are also a powerful tool for change.

**What is special about stories?**

- Stories centre our attention, and they help to select and structure facts, experiences, etc.
- They let these facts come alive by adding emotional content. Stories can be funny, sad, surprising, personal – etc.
- Stories connect people. They give people the opportunity to relate the story to their own experience; in personal stories the storyteller opens him or herself to the audience in a way that creates a special field of trust between the storyteller and listeners.
- Stories allow us to express values as lived experience rather than as abstract principles and therefore have the potential to move others and inspire action. (Marshal Ganz, 2008)
- Neuroscientists have found out that we remember stories similarly to how we remember actual experiences (Hasson, 2016)
- Stories are more memorable than the facts alone can ever be.

## PART II: The Method

The workshop tool described here invites individual members of a group to share in the form of a story an important experience they have had. The objectives of this particular storytelling variant are as follows:

- Give participants an opportunity to share their experience and thereby create deeper understanding for their personal history, social context and work environment;
- Create an opportunity for deeper personal connection and community building;
- Lay a foundation for the group to have a conversation on values underlying their educational (or other) work.

This can work well in small and large groups – what changes is mostly the mechanics of sharing. One thing that is important to consider is the trade-off between as many people as possible hearing a particular person's story – and the connecting power it has when many people share their own story, even if the listening circles are smaller.

### Method Description

This description has the following parts:

1. Invitation
2. Thoughts about/instructions for preparation
3. Setting it up and thoughts about timing

Before your meeting, you can share an invitation with the storytellers. You can also invite people spontaneously – the latter works better when the invitation is for everybody or almost everybody to share a story. An invitation could read a little bit like this:

**Invitation:** You are invited you to tell a personal story about (*insert topic*). This session is about sharing experiences, understanding more deeply the work and challenges of the other participants, and seeing the underlying concepts and assumptions we hold about (*insert topic of your meeting*). Some of these assumptions may be similar, others may differ. It is also about getting to know each other better personally – and growing together as a community.

In our experience, sharing stories and reflecting about what one has heard is a great way of learning – and especially so when it comes to the 'juicy' parts of our work: the nitty-gritty, our tacit knowledge, our assumptions, our values and world-views, our drive to act!

So, we would like to invite you to be a **storyteller** during this session.

### **Thoughts about / Instructions for Preparation**

It is helpful to give people a short brief on storytelling. What makes a great story? Instructions to storytellers could contain the following points:

- The story should be about a challenge you have faced in your work. A challenge from which you have learnt and that has to do with your view of (*topic*).
- Think back to the great stories you've heard – they have a *beginning*, *middle* and an *end* and usually have a challenge at the core of them with the key element of overcoming or grappling with the challenge.
- Ask yourself what is the breakthrough point and/or learning of your story. What is its 'arc' – meaning where does tension build, and where is it released?
- The story need not be a success story, and it might still be evolving.
- To prepare as a storyteller, set some time to do a little bit of writing. This is your real story you are telling – not one with made-up characters. Think of your story topic and make some notes along these lines (think of this as the 'spine' of your story):
  - Here's who I am...
  - Here is the challenge that we faced and is the challenge that I personally faced...
  - Here's who is/was involved...
  - Here's what happened/when/where... then because of *that* what happened... and because of *that* what happened...
  - Here's where we are now...
- You are welcome to bring your story notes to support you as you tell your story, but don't read your notes. This isn't a formal or rehearsed presentation (no PowerPoint!) – rather imagine you are sitting around the campfire with your peers telling them your story. This preparation work simply helps you craft your thoughts into a story that we can listen and learn from.

### **Setting it up/Timing**

When you invite people to tell their story, you should also let them know about timing. A minimum time in my experience is 10-15





minutes per person. If you want to invite specific stories and more complex stories, then I would advise giving storytellers at least 20-30 minutes time.

Again, you might share an overview of the process with participants ahead of time:

- **Framing and introduction of the process:** The whole group is together and the facilitator introduces the process. If there are pre-selected storytellers, they briefly (1 sentence) introduce their story and participants choose which story they want to join and listen to.

Alternatively, divide into small groups (e.g. of 3 people each) in which everybody is invited to share a story

- **Small group storytelling:** After the introduction, participants move to separate spaces to share their stories.

- **Breathing space and small group harvesting:** At the end of each story, take a moment to breathe. I recommend deliberately taking 2 minutes of silence (time it) and invite listeners to see what images, feelings or even movements the story inspires in them. After the silence, they can share this with the storyteller. Lastly the storyteller will be invited to share what gifts or key insights they are

taking away from sharing the story. A nice variant is to invite listeners to spontaneously draw a little picture after having heard the story, and briefly explain it to the storyteller.

- **Convergence and harvesting:** At a set time, the whole group comes back together and moves into a plenary conversation to share their inspiration and learning from the session. You might also ask a specific question (e.g. what have I learnt about values in our group) and ask participants to have a quick buzz with their neighbours or at tables of 5–6 and then share.

#### *Notes and Additional Resources*

These references are starting points on narrative work – some more practical, some more theoretical. Have fun!

1. Marshall Ganz. 2008. <<https://friendsofjustice.wordpress.com/2009/02/18/marshall-ganz-why-stories-matter/>> and <<http://marshallganz.usmblogs.com/files/2012/08/Chapter-19-Leading-Change-Leadership-Organization-and-Social-Movements.pdf>>.
2. Uri Hasson. 2016. <<https://blog.ted.com/what-happens-in-the-brain-when-we-hear-stories-uri-hasson-at-ted2016/>>.
3. Mary-Alice Arthur calls herself a 'story activist' and is a facilitator who started working with stories long before it became a buzzword. Her website contains many resources and tools as well as inspiration for further work <[www.getsoaring.com](http://www.getsoaring.com)>
4. Beyond storytelling Conference and community of practice: This is a more recent initiative of facilitators with different backgrounds with a common interest in storytelling <[www.beyondstorytelling.com](http://www.beyondstorytelling.com)>.
5. On the archetypal structure of stories, see the classic by Joseph Campbell (1949) *The Hero with a thousand faces*. The 'monomythical' structure he discovered can be found in virtually every movie or fairy tale.
6. For a larger literature list, see a draft article by my colleagues David Wagner and Christine Blome (in German – but references are mostly in English): <[https://www.giz.de/akademie/de/downloads/Story\\_Telling\\_and\\_Leadership.pdf](https://www.giz.de/akademie/de/downloads/Story_Telling_and_Leadership.pdf)>.

#### **ABOUt the AUthor**

*Benjamin Kafka* is a freelance trainer, coach and consultant in organization, team, and leadership development. He frequently works in multi-lingual, cross-cultural and multi-stakeholder environments – with governments, academic institutions, civil society and with businesses. He very much enjoyed facilitating the 2015 and 2017 summer academies of Learn2Change.



## Theatre In Education: Bangladesh Institute of Theatre Arts – A testimony of a methodology

*Sisir Dutta*

This contribution is not a description of a specific method but of a broader programme and work experience of BITA.

<b>Name of Activity</b> Theatre In Education	<b>Total time</b> Preparation time varies depending on the context, content, etc. The dissemination period is 45 minutes including interactive dialogue.
<b>Overview</b> TIE is a participatory method, including interactive and performative moments and integrating cultural methods into school- and folk-education. The TIE content might come from learners, the school curricula or extracurricular subject matters. The content could include local and global issues like environment, climate change, education, science, human rights and child marriage etc.	<b>Materials/room</b> TIE typically includes a theatre company or professionals presenting in an educational setting (i.e. a school) for youth. It can be conducted both indoors and outdoors.
<b>Number of people</b> Any	<b>Target groups &amp; Age</b> Children and youngsters, children from different cultures, religions, races, and backgrounds of all ages

**Learning outcomes**

TIE creates a space of learning for children in a joyful environment. It contributes to enhance knowledge and positive attitude in children towards real-life matters. It helps to enable the children to discover their dormant aptitudes and abilities.

*Theatre in education* (TIE) originated in Britain in 1965. TIE typically includes a theatre company or professionals presenting in an educational setting (i.e. a school) for youth, including interactive and performative moments.

Bangladesh Institute of Theatre Arts (BITA), initiated the TIE activity from the year 2000 in different schools in rural and urban settings of greater Chittagong and Noakhali regions, placing due importance on child rights and child education.

The program originated as an outcome of a survey conducted in 1995 with underprivileged children, to find out the status of cultural activities in school and the students' perception of pleasure through education. The majority of findings reveal that the education system had no space for children's creativity and expression in educational activities and that they found no delight in learning. Consequently children became less interested in education and some of them stopped going to school.

Teachers shouldn't be held responsible solely for this situation. The pattern of the education system is such that there is no space for recreation and participation, although some topics are included in theoretical discussion.

Keeping the findings in consideration, BITA launched recreational theatre activity incorporating TIE.

The primary aim of the intervention is to ignite in children keen observation, imagination and simulation, to motivate and trigger creativity so that they are able to uncover their latent talents and faculties.

The objectives of TIE:

- To create a space of learning for children in a joyful environment
- To enhance knowledge and positive attitude in children towards real-life matters

- To enable the children to discover their dormant aptitudes and abilities.

Children constitute around 42% of Bangladesh's total population of over 116.5 million.

The development of the country depends on how these vast populations are being build up with appropriate education. The primary duty of the state is to ensure minimum education of all citizens. It requires a modern, updated, methodical education policy and progressive education system. But in this 21<sup>st</sup> century, our education system and teaching methods are influenced by colonial systems or pre-independence stages of education, which mainly entails a one-way communication. We recognize without hesitation that our students, particularly in school, don't get enough experiential, hands-on learning exposure in their formal educational settings. It seems like they devour education instead of internalizing it. They don't find inspiration to explore their latent strengths.

It is an indispensable task to cultivate cultural education including traditional practices and associated activities for a delightful learning environment as well. The educational setup might be created in the classroom but it is also necessary to extend it outside.

We think the essence of the TIE method should be expanded through interactions to create a positive environment in the family and community as well. A large number of students in primary and secondary school levels, aged mainly between 5 to 16 years are at an impressionable age and need these creative interventions. This is the period of not only self-preparedness and but also for self-construction.

Regrettably in this period, they remain disconnected from cultural practices. In later stages, they don't make progress in the cerebral and social spheres as bearers of culture.

TIE promotes and strengthens entertaining education. Children are naturally drawn to processes, which involve participation, and to do something interesting.

We think various tools of the Method arouse inquisitiveness among the children. As per the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC or UNCRC), cultural education is an integral and important part of child rights. But children of Bangladesh are denied it, so it's imperative to bring changes in the education system and teaching methods. In this regard, theatre arts could play a vital



role. In this process, theatre arts or differently termed TIE could be considered as an active education system in our country.

The TIE content might come from learners, the school curricula or extracurricular subject matters. The content could include local and global issues like environment, climate change, education, science, human rights and child marriage etc. The dissemination period is 45 minutes including interactive dialogue.

For its translation into practice we analyse the context and determine the key issues for the use of theatre through participatory ways. The probable issues, texts and performing forms of dissemination are consulted with stakeholders. The performing form is then finalized and disseminated in schools or communities. The children perform in TIE in some phases accompanied by presentations by peer performers. After the peer presentations, they directly take part in question and answer sessions that stimulate their power of expression and be enriched with in-depth knowledge on the specified issue. Simple questionnaires are used to get their feedback and accordingly follow up actions are undertaken. Through reflective learning and a gradual refining process, learning through theatre has spread.

We think TIE could be a substantial mechanism for folk-education. So BITA has continued to identify contemporary issues through consultation with teachers, parents, students and other stakeholders. The subject matters cover rights education to essential day-to-day learning matters. The issues include: Our Six Seasons, Country and History, Concepts and History of Human Rights, Discrimination and Protection, Women Education, Child Rights, Ecology and Environment, Women and Child Trafficking, Delinquency, Reproductive Health, etc. To make the content vivid and understandable in the classroom or outside, BITA uses visuals, songs, masks, puppets, mimes, rhymes, recitation etc. Variety draws the attention and eagerness of children. So BITA applies different forms to invite students to learn through fun.

Expert members of BITA Theatre Core Team and skilled local theatre activists conduct TIE activities with primary and secondary school students. Another notable side is teachers are becoming skilled to facilitate the learning methods with classroom lessons in an attractive presentation style.

BITA has varied publications on TIE where the 'Theatre In Education Program' guideline is an important one. This valuable instrument is very helpful to develop resource persons or performers



and also to develop productions suitable for classrooms or outdoors.

Western countries especially Europe exhibited an adeptness in the skillful utilization of TIE, whereas our country's success is minor. But we have a thousand years old cultural heritage, which needs to be engaged with.

Theatre has been used in different social and professional sectors to educate on development perspectives. But at the primary and secondary school levels it's penetration is limited: initiatives to integrate theatre and alternative medium of instruction, neither in state peripheries nor in institutional set ups exist. A couple of private and non-governmental organizations are trying their best to advocate for such endeavors.

As we've observed TIE reaches out to younger people, the cultural forms used in the Method are effective to understand the nature and evil effects of radicalization and hopefully will be helpful to build a sense of rational thinking, tolerance and peace in a world of multiplicity. Since the Method is participatory itself, where children from different cultures, religions, races, and backgrounds work together in harmonious manners, it has far reaching outcomes.



To turn the possibilities into reality, we should consider and realize the following recommendations:

- Firstly undertake initiatives to include TIE in the country's education system. Policies and pragmatic strategies should be formulated engaging experts through the Ministry of Education.
- Training Guidelines might be developed integrating TIE as a compulsory course in Teachers Training Curriculum.
- Diploma courses might be initiated through establishing Separate Teachers Training Institutes. This course might be made compulsory for those joining as teachers. Hence it would be possible to recruit at least one arts-educator-teacher in every school.
- At the university level, inclusion of TIE into the curriculum of the Theatre Arts Department, so that university graduates will be able to incorporate this experience and learning in their respective work spaces.

- Alternative ways in education system incorporating theatrical processes with coordinated efforts from non-government organizations working with Theatre in development initiatives, *Shilpakala Academy* (principal state-sponsored national cultural center) and Teachers Training Centres.

As a whole, the possibilities of TIE are unlimited. Since our social and cultural environments are mostly conservative, customary communication means having limitations in conveying messages on child abuse, child marriage and gender based violence to the masses including children. TIE presents artistically, key messages that get acceptance from people from all walks of life. So integration of the arts and content effectively overcomes barriers in communication and opens new doors to bring change in thoughts and actions of people.

Students, teachers, school management committees, community organizations and government officials are now beginning to recognize TIE as an effective mode of learning and have extended cooperation in practice. That our intervention through TIE has finally found relevance and acceptance is encouraging for us because we see the true value of education through creative means—which is essential for the progressive advancement of the nation and the country.

#### ABOUt the AUthor

*Sisir Dutta* is the founder of Bangladesh Institute of theatre Arts (BITA). He worked for over 10 years as a Feature Editor in a newspaper. He was Director of Arindam Nattaya Sampradiya. He has some publications on culture and development and news articles published in national and international Journals. He holds a Masters in Sociology.



# NETWORK DIALOGUE

Do you think that global educational partnerships can shape or transform the world? How does your work relate to that of others who are in the global network of learning?

The global educational partnership is the only way to learn something about the essential experiences from others, to ask the important questions and to find the right solutions for the complexity of our present global situation. If we are able to learn from each other, then we could find a way to transform the world.

It is helpful to learn something about different angles of views on the present situation and problems and the teamwork inspires me to find creative solutions for sustainability. As an employee of the Regional Hubs for Sustainability Strategies in Germany I could give hints and proposals for politicians within the framework of the Agenda 2030 for sustainability.

**Dirk Schröder-Brandt**

Global educational partnership is essential towards transforming the world through the complementarities and synergies that are created through some common grounds.

**Joseph Kenson  
Sakala**

We are

all getting closer via technology and also in real life. For years we in our work have talked about politics, economics and people in the global south. It's time to stop just talking about each other but doing something together.

**Kathrin Damm**

To

transform the world, we need good ideas and people to share them with through networks.



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Global learning means to see local and global challenges and to work on them. To find a good solution we need global networks to change perspectives and the power and knowledge of our friends. I'm sure that our local solutions then will have global effects.

**Harald Kleem**

I believe that the action of the network is already impacting the change of the world. I had another image of the German citizen and that has changed from the relationships I have had with the members of the network who belong to different parts of the world. Not everything is Hollywood and the wrong image they intend to create for us.

**Jorge Huichalaf**

Speaking to educators from all over the world filled me with pride and hope! Hope that there is a way to work together on a better future. Education is one key element to overcome racism, fear, and environmental issues. We educators always profit from putting our heads together for finding new ways to learn.

**Annika Hammer**

The transformation of the world is a big goal. It is

important to have small 'islands of hope' in different parts of the world but it is also important to have global partnerships to connect them and to bring the struggles together. The problems we are facing, are global ones so we should also bring the strengths together and look for global solutions. I can draw great motivation for work from the global network because I can see that people around the world are working for the same big goal.

**Sarah Laustroer**





## The Decolonization of the body: Throne Theater as a method

*Iván Nogales, El Alto, Bolivia (Translation: Katherine Arp)*

<b>Name of Activity</b> The Decolonization of the body: Throne Theater as a method	<b>Total time</b> About 2 to 3 hours. For shorter workshops, one can start with a combination of stages 1, 5 and 8.
<b>Overview</b> This method of exploring ways to decolonize the body is a task of understanding why we're inhibited and how to free ourselves becoming powerful bodies with many skills.	<b>Materials/room</b> This could be conducted both indoors and outdoors.
<b>Number of people</b> 6 to 30 participants	<b>Target groups &amp; Age</b> Anyone
<b>Learning outcomes</b> With the body workshop we try to realize a journey to oneself, to accept oneself, to love oneself, also with the gaze of the other. If you accept and love the other, you love yourself—all of this happens through exploring and letting the body take over the brain and control our thoughts and actions.	

## **PART I: The background to the Method**

### *Educational philosophy:*

As I was walking across the street, Mercedes appeared, calling for me, gesticulating. Mercedes is Jasmani's mother who had been part of our theater group for a few months. The first thought that crossed my mind was that her son had committed some foolishness for which I was to be accused and convicted without the right of defense. I approached her, although I preferred to escape.

"Good morning, Doña Mercedes."

"Hello Iván, I would like to tell you something about Jasmani."

I smiled to myself.

"It is..." said the mother slowly "it's just that he has changed a lot lately and you see, little by little he changes us all in the family. You know, Iván, we people in the altiplano<sup>1</sup> are like stones, we never touch each other, we do not come close to one another. I don't know what you are doing in your theater, in your exercises; I know that you are doing strange things, because Jasmani came home one day and suddenly hugged us. And slowly we have started in the family to hug each other and now we are doing it a lot. I just wanted to say thank you Iván, because you and all of you gave us all these hugs."

These words went directly to my heart not without pain and stopped my breathing. My eyes were drowning in my face, like every time when I tell this story, as it is right now.

Colonialism means every form of using and abusing of the other, or, which is the same, every theft of the other's lands, of the other's place, the other's time and the other's energy. In spite of 500 years of time, republican constitutions and new discourses, colonialism remains the biggest enemy of the body: a bulldozer that is driving above us again and again, that reminds us every day of our condition as inferior and historically denied persons. Because of this, decolonizing the body is a task of major strategic interest. Decolonized bodies, which furthermore are prepared for theater, are very powerful bodies with many skills: They are more sensitive, intelligent, movable. The preparation of actors is a big responsibility. It is not about forming personal egos, but leaders of another kind, collective, truly decolonized – not more colonizers.





## **PART II: The Method**

A workshop of Throne Theater includes these different stages:

- Warm up
- Relaxing
- Theatric languages
- Individual composition
- Composition in pairs and groups
- Relaxing
- Analysis
- The hug

An instructor leads the group through the different stages.

### *1. Warm up*

A series of exercises prepare the body for creation. The muscles, joints and parts of the body underlie a routine which the context forces on them and whose automatisms they have to shake off. From this moment on, it is a rediscovery of the own body. If some movements cannot be carried out, these frontiers are signals from the body.

Example: Draw soft circular movements with different body parts, especially with the joints. Form circles, squares, triangles and



other figures with different body parts. Then you start dissociation, slowly: The knees move in circles, the hands in squares at the same time, and the head forms a triangle.

## 2. Relaxing

This part is a soft invitation to the head to let go its constant role as dictator over the body and to simply act upon ideas parallel to other body parts.

Example: Fantasy journey

We start lying on the floor, the eyes closed, the head is empty, everything happens slowly and softly. We are in an earthenware vessel and feel the moisture, the cold, water comes in, it is warm, then cold, then hot, the water rises and covers everything, we dive into it, keep our breath, we cross a tunnel and the arms are searching for an exit with exaggerated gestures. We find a way outside; becoming beings that we are not used to describe when we see ourselves in the mirror. This being gets in contact with its environment by using parts of the body, which we usually do not perceive as body. We invent kinds to touch, to feel, to see with other parts of the body, we go through other bodies just with micro movements. We travel with three invented movements into the remotest past. We can do the same with the future or geographically remote places – it is a spontaneous dramaturgy. In the end we come back to the vessel, we are reborn

and come back to life in the bodies that we have, but with a memory full of the previous experience.

### 3. Theatric languages

Different codes are used in theater, which connect diverse languages that are spoken on stage at the same time. We are not just talking about Western theater, but also Eastern forms. These languages are for example: scenery, light, color, make up, props, sound, music, movement, masks, costumes, voice, text, objects, space, monologue, dialogue, direction. The word reinvents itself when it becomes aware that it is just one of the many possibilities of the body.

Example: Experience the room: forward, backward, sideward, standing, crouching, lying with closed eyes. Recognize the room, dimension it with the body, experience clearness in expansion, in smallness. Make movements with parts of the body that you never use.

### 4. Individual composition

Bodies are filters of the collective. Now, the participants look into the other in themselves. This connection is crucial, because commitment for the community is just this, an alliance with the complementary other.

Example: Every person invents three very logical phrases (e.g. A tree is high.) and they are said loudly for collective listening. After this, you invent three absurd phrases and say them (e.g. A tree loves fish). Finally, use phrases that are totally disconnected, senseless, that do not say anything and therefore say a lot (e.g. A tree jumps red). This sequence should be repeated with the same logic but this time with the bodies, without words. And finally, combining movements and phrases.

### 5. Composition in pairs and groups

What is valid for the individual, obtains a higher creative level in interaction in pairs or groups. This is based on the most important technique for collective creation: improvisation. To look at each other, touch and contact are the basis for this. It needs a lot of patience because the bodies resist the approach, as we are not used to closeness. And when it exists, it is often distorted as lustful explosion. Closeness has to happen gradually. Keeping the eye contact, the other is you. Learn the contact gently, full of

respect – this lets the body creak and contract rifts. At this point we experience the slow step to confidence uncountable times, where the libido takes a passive place. Together, we open the body: the hinges of a door creak because of the many repetitions of its work. Encrustation because of the mechanical repetition: this happens also with our body physically, emotionally and mentally. Accumulated automatisms make the joints creak because of gathered fear. Bent backs, closed bodies, hanging heads – this is neither the cold nor the Andean nature, it is mainly fear.

Example: Someone says a word or a sentence (e.g. ocean) and everyone answers at the same time without interruption logical phrases (e.g. water is blue) that are connected to the above said. Then we open to absurd phrases (e.g. water is flying away) and in a third phase the pronunciation of the said should be stopped when the speaker notices that his or her sequence begins to be logical (e.g. water is...Stop! Participants should think of something NOT connected to 'ocean' as 'fire', stop when one starts connecting again (e.g. fire is hot), but everyone tries to keep on talking. Every logical connection must be destroyed. You will see how difficult but at the same time enriching for the body these kinds of tasks are. In the second round, the exercise is repeated with the body and after that, phrases and body movements are combined into what is incredible. A hidden dramaturgy comes out of the bodies.

#### *6. Relaxing*

Collective fantasy journey: Similar to the first relaxing exercise, but this time everyone is connected. It might be the hands or other body parts that symbolically join all participants. This journey should be more fantastical than before.

#### *7. Analysis*

This is a return to the speculation of the reason, to the head. Participants give back their emotions that support the learning and the preparation of the next meeting.

Example: Someone says a word or a sentence that was provoked by the workshop and everyone answers with logical sentences, then absurd sentences and finally, disconnected phrases. We explain our feelings in brief.

#### *8. The hug*

There is no more important celebration of the creative treaty than the hug. Close together, united, compressed, the bodies of two or

more persons become one. The collective hug in the end celebrates the daily revolution of the body.

With the body workshop we try to realize a journey to oneself, to accept oneself, to love oneself, also with the gaze of the other. If you accept and love the other, you love yourself. That is the denial of the prior colonial condition.

#### Notes

1. The altiplano is a plateau of the Andes, which is located at 3600 to 4000 meters height in Western Bolivia.

#### ABOut the AUthor

*Iván Nogales* is Bolivian and studied sociology. He has developed different initiatives in the field of community theatre and education since 1980. He has worked with peasants, miners, migrant women and street children. Based on these experiences, in 1989, he founded the Community of Art Producers, which is the base for Throne Theater.





## Civic Education with the Smartphone: Discovering places of diversity and exclusion with the app *map the gap*

Katherine Arp

<b>Name of Activity</b> Map the gap	<b>Total time</b> Time for preparation, playing and follow-up: about 90 minutes each
<b>Overview</b> The project <i>map the gap</i> uses an app, to create an activity similar to an interactive paper chase to discover places of diversity and of marginalization.	<b>Materials/room</b> Smartphone, free app <i>map the gap</i> which can be found in the Google Play Store or the App Store
<b>Number of people</b> (Various) small groups of 3 to 4 players	<b>Target groups &amp; Age</b> Young people between 14 and 18 years. Adults
<b>Learning outcomes</b> <i>Map the gap</i> helps participants confront, understand and address many forms of discrimination. The app also shows places that are positive examples of how people with different living realities can come together in equality. The project enables young people to deal with exclusion and diversity in their reality and encourages discussion.	

## PART I: The background to the Method

### *Educational philosophy:*

The basics for living together in democracy shall be transmitted by civic education and citizens' judgement abilities and their democratic behaviour will be strengthened. Equivalence — the assumption that every person has the same values—is the basis of a democratic society. Anyway, it is challenged by prejudices, exclusion or discrimination over and over again. Racism, sexism, anti-Semitism, devaluation of Muslims, refugees, homosexuals, homeless and of people with queer identities or special needs are a widespread phenomena in Germany. This is also known as 'group-focused enmity'. At the same time, society is becoming more diverse in its ways of life, family constellations and migration stories. Therefore, civic education should discuss the chances of a diverse society and the dangers of exclusion, reaching and including especially young people.

Digital media is part of everyday life of young people. In Germany, 97% of the 12 to 19 year-olds possess a smartphone of their own (JIM-study 2017 [Youth, Information, (Multi-) Media])<sup>1</sup>. Age appropriate designs of civic education should therefore also come up with digital offers. The project *map the gap* provides an app, which is similar to an interactive paper chase to discover places of diversity and of marginalization. It can be used independently in small or big groups. The app leads players by their smartphones via GPS (Global Positioning System) along a route where tasks have to be fulfilled. In a peer-to-peer-approach, young people choose places in their neighbourhood, where they wanted to show the app during a workshop. These can be places where exclusion becomes obvious such as the swimming pool where girls experienced sexual harassment, the club where black people are turned away or the town hall where adolescents have few possibilities to participate. On the other hand, the route leads to places where living together in diversity works out well as in a youth centre that counts on inclusion, the intercultural sports club or a store for everyone<sup>2</sup>. In this way, the players of *map the gap* confront many forms of discrimination. The app also shows places that are positive examples of how people with different living realities can come together in equivalence. The project enables young people to deal with exclusion and diversity in their reality and encourages discussion.



Information, videos and pictures related to the places that the players find, appear on the smartphone so that new perspectives or past events can be experienced. The questions and tasks of the tours reach into the players' real world and request them to work collectively. To achieve points, the group has to exchange opinions and find answers together. Acknowledging different perspectives and feeling empathy for others are aims of the game. It sensitizes young people to discrimination and asks them to question prejudices. In this way, *map the gap* encourages building of one's opinion via the app. Participating in the tours is a playful approach to fundamental questions of living together in democracy at a low threshold.

## **PART II: The Method**

### **An interactive paper chase about prejudices and diversity:**

#### **Playing *map the gap***

*Map the gap* can be played in a town where a tour already exists or new tours can be created e.g. with the software *Actionbound*. (There is more information in the part 'Developing an own tour').

#### *Preparation*

- *Map the gap* creates a space to talk about prejudices and exclusion. This can be painful for some people; facilitators should pay attention to the topic beforehand to avoid offensive language and behaviour.
- In our experience, sometimes teenagers do understand words like discrimination or sexism differently or incorrectly. Words

that come up should be defined in the group so that everyone understands what is talked about.

- For preparation, common methods to deal with prejudices or discrimination are recommended.

#### *On the tour — playing the game*

- The app *map the gap* is downloaded free of charge from the Google Play Store or App Store.
- In the app, all tours that are created up to now are available. Choose a nearby one.
- The small groups go to the starting point of the tour from where the app leads them by GPS to the next stops.

#### *Follow-up*

- Enough time should be slotted to talk about questions and topics that came up during the game in the groups. Therefore, all the places the groups found during the game can be gone through again and the backgrounds of the tasks should be discussed.
- The results, the photos and videos taken by the small group during the tour are a good basis for a discussion. They can be accessed, watched together and visualised as the experiences of the small groups by the whole group.

#### *Developing an own tour*

- The *map the gap* app is based on the software *Actionbound*. It is available worldwide in German and English. If one wants to create a GPS tour at his or her place, there is more information at [www.actionbound.com](http://www.actionbound.com) (there are free and charged options available).
- The places for a tour can be chosen and the tasks can be designed individually. It is recommended that the tour is not too long. It should include diverse types of tasks and self-made photos and media are used.
- The technical design of the tour is just one aspect: it is more important to know what should be transmitted by the tour. If one wants to deal with group-focused enmity, prejudices or diversity, it should be made sure, that one organizes a workshop for his or her group regarding these topics first. One's own topics can also be emphasized.
- There is the option to design a tour that needs GPS-access in the area where it is played, but it is also possible to invent questions,

quizzes and tasks that do not use GPS.

*map the gap* is a cooperation project between the Federal Youth Association of Lower Saxony and Centre of Democratic Education. It was financed by the Ministry for Science and Culture of Lower Saxony.

More information in German at [www.mapthegap.de](http://www.mapthegap.de)



MAP THE GAP

#### Notes

1. The research network of media education Südwest conducts annual studies regarding the use of media in children and teenagers. The JIM study focuses on youth, information and (multi) media.
2. In these stores you can find donated but good products at an affordable prize. Often people who work in the stores are those who've been jobless for a long time and who haven't been able to find jobs in the labour market.

#### ABOut the AUthor

*Katherine Arp* dealt with societies, gender and the global distribution of power during her studies of history, politics and MA Atlantic Studies. She got to know perspectives of the global south in Bolivia, Colombia and Chile and is now working in Hanover in civic education for a diverse and open society.





Learn2Change-Summer Academy, Germany, June 2015





## A role-playing game to learn and exchange about real-life issues

Lena M. Reibelt, Natasha Stoudmann, Patrick O. Waeber

<b>Name of Activity</b> Wetland Education game (WEdu)	<b>Total time</b> One scenario takes on average 15 minutes (consisting of 1-5 rounds), a game workshop lasts 1–3 hours depending on the players, their decisions in the game, the rules they establish, and evaluation.
<b>Overview</b> Players need rice and fish to feed their family; they can do rice farming and fishing, use fertilizer, and transform natural marshes to farmland. However, the marshes are crucial as wildlife habitat, for fish reproduction, and as water reservoir, impacting also rice harvest. During the course of the game, players can play through different management rules, and learn about ecosystem links.	<b>Materials/room</b> Game board, and household sheet for each of the 8 players, tokens representing fish, rice, fertilizer, and money, biodiversity, and natural vegetation; further, the water barometer and biodiversity table (Figure 2 & 3). A facilitator is needed to run the game, to represent the market, update the game board, and guide the discussion, debriefing, and if applicable the evaluation.
<b>Number of people</b> Eight players along with a facilitator.	<b>Target groups &amp; Age</b> Developed for natural resource users in the Alaotra as discussion and learning tool; also suitable for pupils as from secondary school.

**Learning outcomes**

Increased knowledge about sustainable resource use, and the potential as well as consequences of different management scenarios in the Alaoira region.

Increased knowledge and understanding about the importance of the marshes for fish reproduction and water availability.

Enhanced awareness regarding the dependencies of system components and possibly the skills to translate the conceptual simulation to real-life situations.

Improved awareness regarding the impact of individual decisions on the whole system.

Enhanced critical thinking and solution-oriented, collective decision-making.

**PART I: Context and methodology***How gaming helps bridge science and local knowledge*

It is widely known that knowledge produced by science rarely satisfies the information needs of practitioners and decision-makers on the ground<sup>1</sup>. Companion Modelling, or ComMod<sup>2</sup>, is a participatory modelling approach that bridges this researcher-practitioner divide by enabling stakeholders, each with their own value systems, world-views, and aspirations, to elicit mental models of the system at hand. This allows the co-construction of a common representation of their socio-ecological system or a specific issue. Its adaptive process allows researchers to identify together with stakeholders the main problems, actors, resources, dynamics and interactions that are relevant to the system under analysis and planning<sup>3</sup>. ComMod is based on an iterative and incremental process of creating conceptual models from field evidence and stakeholder statements, with restitution to knowledge providers, and has been tested and applied in a variety of settings in Europe, Africa, America, and Asia on topics such as forest utilization, water management, pest control, cattle farming and fishery<sup>4</sup>. By enabling the elicitation and integration of multidisciplinary knowledge, it creates a platform for discussions, shared learning, and the creation of collective understanding for meaningful multi-actor and integrative engagement.

A widely accepted assumption is that people who have knowledge and understanding of their environment will take actions to prevent environmental degradation and destruction<sup>5</sup>. However, knowledge about and positive attitudes towards the environment alone do not prompt pro-environmental behavior<sup>6</sup>. To move from understanding to action we need to engage, include, and hand over responsibilities to stakeholders. Gaming does just that by allowing players to explore and test the system that they are part of, and to visualize and experience the impacts of their decisions. Educators can use local knowledge to jointly develop meaningful educational material, tailored to specific contexts by accounting for local perceptions, attitudes, values, and traditions.

#### *The Wetland Education game*

Following the ComMod approach, the Wetland Education game (WEdu) was developed as a research tool to exchange and learn about sustainable resource use in the Alaotra region of Madagascar<sup>7</sup> has a detailed account on tool development of a predecessor of the WEdu). The many issues that the region is facing are some of those being observed across the globe, including overexploitation, ecosystem destruction, as well as a growing population. A key example is the destruction of marshes around Lake Alaotra for agricultural production, reducing the habitats of endangered species such as the Alaotran gentle lemur, *Hapalemur alaotrensis*<sup>8</sup>. These growing pressures on the natural system in turn negatively impact local communities (e.g. reduced crop yields), creating a vicious circle of continuous environmental degradation<sup>9</sup>.

Breaking free of this circle entails the development of practical solutions that consider both conservation and development needs, requiring the involvement of local stakeholders. The WEdu creates a space where this type of collaboration is possible, through mutual learning and collective exploration of potential solutions. Stakeholders are not told how to 'win' the game, but it is through a process of self-directive learning that they explore their own values and priorities. The WEdu was developed in close collaboration with relevant actor groups and builds upon both local and scientific knowledge, leading to a strong sense of ownership of the game by participating stakeholders. WEdu is an open role-playing game, allowing the self-establishment of rules. It deliberately models a highly simplified version of reality (Figure 1), to allow actors to focus, think critically and learn about the interlinkages and dynamics within

the system. This simplicity facilitates adaptations and modifications to fit different learners and other environmental contexts (e.g. replace rice by maize or potato, or marshes by forest, and increase complexity by adding further components).

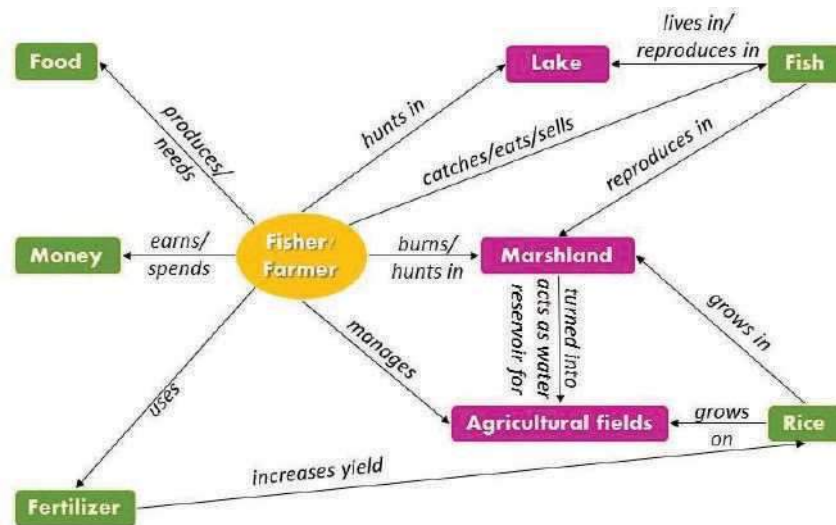


Figure 1. Conceptual model of the WEdu game; simplified model of Reibelt et al. 2017a.

This mind map served the gamification process: actors (orange) turned into players, resources transformed into tokens (green) and zones (pink), and interactions (arrows) and dynamics (verbs on arrows) represent the game rules and game steps (Figure 2).

## PART II: Implementation

### *Playing the game*

All eight players in the game represent natural resource users, who can fish and farm. A player's goal is to survive, and the group as a whole can only do so by creating rules in response to their learning. A facilitator accompanies the game to support the discussions and establishment of new gaming rules, to update the game board after each round and to lead the debriefing. In case of evaluation needs, additional team members are recommended. Game evaluation consists of recording and observing the decisions and discussions during the game and/or debriefing. The total time needed to run a game workshop is 1-3 hours depending on the



players, their decisions in the game, and the rules they establish; usually one scenario takes about 15 minutes, but a repetition with alternative rules is required to ensure holistic learning.

To play the game, the following items are needed: game board and household sheet for each player (Figure 2), tokens representing fish, rice, fertilizer, and money (Figure 3), biodiversity, and natural vegetation; further, the water barometer and biodiversity table (Figure 2).

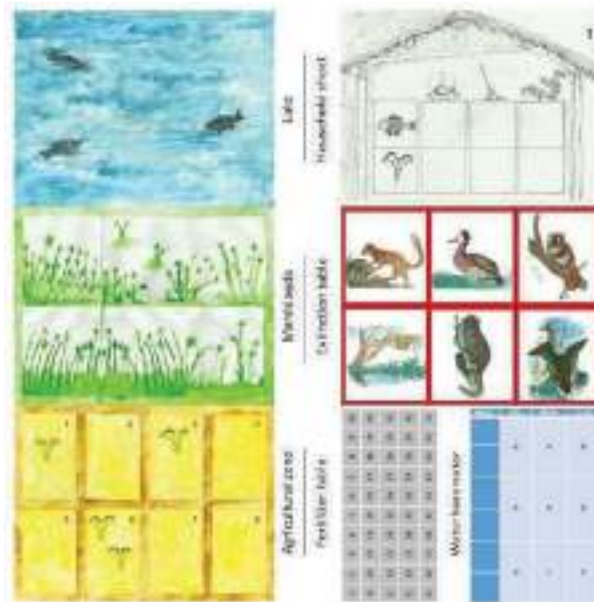


Figure 2. WEdu game components.

The game board consists of three zones: lake (blue), marshes (green, six patches), agricultural zone (eight patches, one per player, indicated by player number). The water barometer indicates the output of rice harvest according to players' chosen treatments and water availability. The fertilizer table serves as a visualization tool to show the cumulative use of fertilizer on the game board: after each game round, the players shift their fertilizer tokens onto the table. The extinction table also serves for discussion purposes. Each player has his/her own house (indicated by the player number), where respective tokens can be placed. Drawings by Bernard T. Ranaivoson and Andry F. Rakotondranisa (Madagascar Wildlife Conservation).

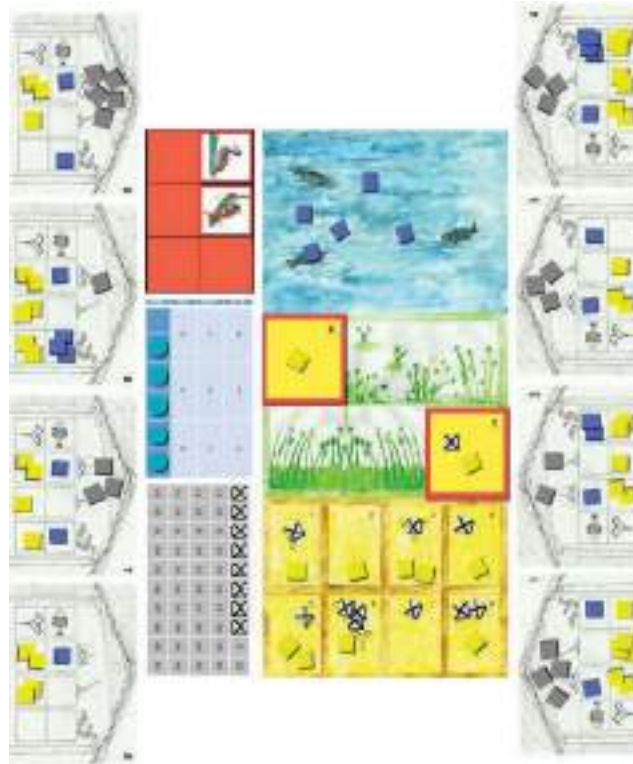


Figure 3. WEdu setting and tokens. Rice (yellow), fertilizers (x), fish (blue), money (dark grey).

When a player decides to plant rice in the marshes, a marsh patch is burned (indicated by a red rectangle placed on a yellow background). The previously hidden wildlife is then placed in the extinction table (e.g. two patches have been converted, thus, a duck and a lemur have gone extinct).

The lake contains 28 fish tokens at the start. Players can fish as much as they want by simply taking the tokens from the board (Figure 3). Players then decide on their rice farming: where and how to plant, whether to use fertilizer, which they can obtain from the market (represented by the facilitator) by paying with their game money (starting capital is 4; rice costs 2, fertilizer 1). Once players have made their decisions, the facilitator updates the water barometer: for each burned marsh patch, one water token is removed, impacting the future rice output (Figure 3). Based on the water barometer, the facilitator adds rice tokens to the farmed fields (number depending on water level, use of fertilizer,

and zone as indicated in the water barometer), representing the rice production. Fish reproduction is illustrated through each remaining patch of marshland providing reproduction ground for one fish but at most half of the remaining fish in the lake reproduce (e.g., if 6 patches of marsh and 10 fish in the lake remain, 5 fish will go to a distinct marsh patch each and reproduce; if there are 2 marsh fields and 10 fish, still only 2 fish will reproduce). Fish quintuple and go back to the lake. Players can then collect their harvest and shift the fertilizer tokens from their agricultural field to the fertilizer table (Figure 3). This serves as a discussion tool during the debriefing regarding environmental impacts, or the difference between chemical fertilizer and biological compost. Each player decides how to distribute the products in his/her household: first column is food (mandatory for "surviving" are 1 fish and 2 rice), 2<sup>nd</sup> column is seeds for future production, and 3<sup>rd</sup> column is sale to earn money (rice for 2, fish for 4 money; Figure 2). The decisions are then implemented. After each family is fed (i.e. by returning tokens to the facilitator) and excess products are sold, the next round starts.

Once a resource is depleted, or players can no longer feed their families, the facilitator stops the game to start a discussion about the problem that arose and how to circumvent it in the future. The game restarts from the initial conditions after players establish an additional gaming rule.

### **Final remarks**

Role playing games are an excellent tool to experience different real-world scenarios in a short amount of time. Presenting stakeholders with scenarios where unanticipated threats take place allows them to develop their adaptive capacity by reflecting on their response strategies. There are several key outcomes during such a game workshop. One is that participants learn the interconnectedness of their system components. Another is the realization that their personal decisions have an impact on the bigger picture (e.g. on the whole landscape, or their livelihood). A core component of this serious gaming approach is the debriefing; it is the discussion that follows the game that allows exploration and unpacking of what happened during the game. "Learning begins when the game is over"<sup>10</sup>, i.e. participants bridge together the virtual experience with the real world. Having a skilled facilitator is therefore crucial to ensure that critical thinking and

real learning takes place. He or she is fundamental in guiding the discussions from the experienced emotions during the game to the real world. This allows comparisons, and most importantly allows the participants to get a glimpse into the future; what it may look like if...?

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#### ABOut the AUthor

*Lena M. Reibelt* is a biologist by training with a PhD in environmental education. She's further interested in natural resource management scenarios and likes to develop games that allow a better understanding of complex socio-ecological systems and human decision-making. Currently she's focusing on the challenges of saving the Alaotran gentle lemur from the brink of extinction.

*Natasha Stoudmann* is an environmental scientist by training, with a focus on human-environment systems. She is interested in livelihood studies and the dynamics between decision-making at various geographical scales in driving environmental and social change.

*Patrick O. Waeber* is zoologist by training, with a focus on primates, and special affinities to forests. He's interested in the interplay of landscapes, wildlife, people and policies, and working on complex system problems using transdisciplinary methods. Project focus is the tropics. His favourite tools are games.





# NETWORK DIALOGUE

How can we move from learning to action?

'Solutions start with education' – this was the take home message of the promotional video of a university that I saw a few years ago and it kind of stuck in my head. It expresses to me that people have to learn that they can be part of the solution.

**Antje Rendigs**

Learning by action!  
**Menja Holtz**

Having a good idea, real personal motivation and hopefully people around you, who believe in the same.

**Achim Riemann**

I think that learning is an essential form of taking action if we use it to not only think about 'the others' but to reflect on our own attitude that informs every decision we make and the way we see the world. If we include our own learning process in our idea of 'taking action', we can find new ways of getting involved in every day life situations. Our daily life is full of opportunities to take action. Starting from there, we can practice our skills in shaping the world we live in.

Let's see how far we can get.

**Nina Reichert**





We need to communicate stories of success, stories from courageous people and successful action to show to other people that we have the power to change. Furthermore, we need to know how we can get active for a better world, as a consumer as well as political and social actors. And we need experimental spaces in and outside schools where learners of all ages can connect to community, can discover own needs and the needs of the community, develop own ideas and can try out political and social action. This strengthens, empowers, and leads from learning to action.

**Gabriele Janecki**

In my case the action means organized resistance, many of my blood brothers understand that they must resist to death. My idea is to organize to resist and thus disseminate cultural issues and solidarity between human beings and with Mother Earth.

**Jorge Huichalaf**

In almost every educational project I plan that the learners put into practice what they learn – anticipatively. My motto is: EDUCATION & ACTION = CHANGE. An example: In the VNB project 'Die Klimafresser' on climate and nutrition, we offer learners a GREEN BUNNY DOG, a vegan, almost climate-neutral alternative to a Hot Dog with carrots instead of sausage, without palm oil products, with regional organic wholemeal flour, salads, etc.

**Reinhold Bömer**



## Puentes Educativos – Educational bridges

*Lesbia Karina Gadea Salguera*

<b>Name of Activity</b> Puentes Educativos – An educational strategy for migrant labor's children	<b>Total time</b> 12 hours (5:30 am to 5:30 pm) everyday in the 3-month-period of coffee harvest (October to March)
<b>Overview</b> A strategy which aims at giving children who are excluded from the educational system and exposed to the threat of child labor during the 3-month-period of coffee harvest (October to March), access to education so that they can continue to study and thus move on to the subsequent scholar level/class/grade in regular school.	<b>Materials/room</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A safe, comfortable space provided in coffee plantations.</li> <li>• Pedagogical material to support the educational intervention</li> </ul>
<b>Number of people</b> Flexible	<b>Target groups &amp; Age</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Infants from the ages of 3 months up to 3 years.</li> <li>2. Children from the ages of 4–13 years.</li> </ol>

**Learning outcomes**

Customized educational intervention in small doses right in children's own environment is one way of ensuring education for all.

Take learning to children if they can't come to school

Unconventional ways to reach out to those who miss out on school due to their families being migrant workers is the innovative ethos behind Puentes Educativos. It has become a task for all in the framework of shared social responsibility between the state, private enterprises and civil society organizations (La Cuculmeca).

**PART I: The background to the Method***Educational philosophy:*

The following program is an example of how customized educational intervention in small doses; in children's own environments is one way of ensuring education for all. We learned that in cases whereby children do not have the possibility to attend regular school classes it is necessary to look at unconventional ways to reach out to them directly. In this sense *Puentes Educativos* – 'educational bridges' – is a strategy which aims at giving children who are excluded from the educational system and exposed to the threat of child labor during the 3-month-period of coffee harvest (October to March), access to education so that they can continue to study and thus be promoted to the subsequent scholar level at a regular school.

The program continues with the coordination of local actors, governmental ministries and the civil society in order to concretize the establishment of Puentes Educativos in their respective territories and therefore to guarantee to the children in danger of child labor their right to education.

*Background*

The Educational and Communicational Association *La Cuculmeca* is a non-profit making organization in Jinotega, Nicaragua which has been working in the field of education for Nicaraguan children and adults for more than 27 years.

La Cuculmeca defines its priorities based on education as an alternative development for its target groups. It manifests in its first

strategic objective: Children, adolescents and adults who are accompanied by La Cuculmeca's learning interventions have better access to quality education that focuses on their rights and which is relevant for their lives.

#### *Genesis of Puentes Educativos*

The strategy Puentes Educativos is based on a socio educational survey conducted in 2005 by the Municipal Delegation of the Ministry of Education, which revealed that 8,565 children were excluded from the educational system of Jinotega Municipality. The results proved the necessity to join forces in order to include these children in the educational system and in order to guarantee their right to education. An important finding of the study is that child labor is one of the most critical reasons for school dropouts and lack of integration of the children in the school system.

In this context it is important to mention that the parents of these children are migrant workers who travel from community to community on the quest for temporary employment on coffee farms. Many aspects play a part in this phenomenon—in many cases these families argue that they depend on the financial contribution of their children. Furthermore, it is culturally accepted to place domestic and family responsibilities on the children's shoulders from a very young age.

Another decisive aspect in this is lack of care and a safe place for the children while their parents work in the field.

Based on the analysis of the study, strategies and actions were designed in order to confront the multilayered problem. A working methodology was designed to sensitize parents as well as their employers of the children's rights and needs.

The ultimate goal of the program is to guarantee the children's basic needs so that they have the opportunity to attend to and stay in the educational system – all of which is fundamental in the context of the 'batalla por el sexto grado' (fight for sixth grade) of the Ministry of Education.

#### *Steps towards the Establishment of Puentes Educativos*

##### **Step 1: Coordination and Joint Forces**

Identifying the situation of the working children, strategic alliances emerged and links with the Ministry of Education (MINED), Ministry of Labor (MITRAB), Ministry of Family Affairs (MIFAM), Institute of Social Security (INSS), Ministry of Health (MINSA) and the private



sector (owners of coffee farms) were created, who assume their roles and competencies in the context of education, child labor and development of children and adolescents.

***Step 2: Process of Sensitization of Producers and Employers***

This step offers information and sensitization to coffee producers and employers about laws and conventions that support the accomplishment of the rights and the protection of children.

As a result of this effort (tenemos que) producers and employers assumed their responsibilities to guarantee the accomplishment of the rights of the children against the background of two codices:

The Nicaraguan codex of children and youth – international convention on the rights of the children.

The Nicaraguan codex of labor – chapter six which stipulates minimum age limit for employment.

***Step 3: Setting up and adaptation of places on the coffee farms by the owners of the farms***

The owners of the farms and the employers invest financial resources by setting up and adapting places for classes in order to facilitate the project Puentes Educativos. They guarantee minimum conditions of attention for the children, including space for child care.

***Step 4: Identification of facilitators for child care on the coffee farms***

In the next step, educators and kindergarten teachers from each respective community who also work at the farms have to be identified. Another possibility is to engage university students who are in their final year of teacher training whose work is recognized as practical working experience. Furthermore, they can gain economic acknowledgement from the side from the farm's owner.

***Step 5: Coordination between MINED, La Cuculmeca and the owners of the farms aiming at the training of facilitators in the period of coffee harvest.***

Facilitators enjoy training on the methodology of the implementation of 'educational bridges' – Puentes Educativos. They get to know methodological considerations in the development of Puentes Educativos.

***Step 6: Implementation of Puentes Educativos in the period of coffee harvest***

Generally, the period of implementation of Puentes Educativos lasts from October to March every year. While parents deliver their labor harvesting coffee, their children enjoy the attention and the protection offered by Puentes Educativos.



#### **Step 7: Visits and accompaniment by governmental institutions and La Cuculmeca**

All actors already mentioned above coordinate visits and accompaniment.

- MITRAB: guarantees that children are not employed as child workers. Checking of the payroll as well as on site in the coffee plantation is the norm.

- MINED and La Cuculmeca: technical and methodological accompaniment in order to guarantee integral attention of children with a strengthening and leveling of the scholarly level, with a focus on recreation, culture and environmental education. They make sure that children are free from child labor.

- MINSA: guarantees adequate hygienic, sanitary conditions as well as conducts workshops on integral health for the children in Puentes Educativos.

- INSS: guarantees that permanent staff issues are taken care of.

## PART II: The Method

### *Methodology of Puentes Educativos*

The methodological momentums in the development of Puentes Educativos are determined in the following way:

#### **Opening: Arrival of the Children**

Between 5:30 and 7:00 am: The children arrive

Between 7:00 and 8:00 am: Groups for the educational work are determined.

#### **The groups are formed according to the following categories:**

Infants from 3 months up to 3 years

Children aged 4–13 years, depending on the grade they are in, usually 3 groups are formed that are organized in the following way:

Preschoolers: between 4 and 6 years;

First, second and third grade for children between 7–9 years;

Fourth, fifth and sixth grade for children between 10–13 years.

#### **First Momentum: morning**

Scholar strengthening and leveling particularly in Mathematics;

Break;

Scholar strengthening and leveling in languages and literature;

Lunch.



**Second Momentum: afternoon**

Workshops (handicrafts, environmental education accompanied by seminars on cleaning and reforestation and hygienic behavior);  
Excursions;  
Sports – instructed games.

**Closing:** the children leave between 4:00 and 5:00 pm.

*Who are stakeholders of the program?*

- Children in the age range of 0-12 years;
- Parents of these children;
- Owners of the coffee farms;
- Administrators of the coffee farms;
- Managers of the coffee farms;
- Labor unions of coffee farms.

*Achievements of Puentes Educativos in the education of rural children*

1) The children capitalized on opportunities to develop, in safe, playful, creative and sheltered spaces where they can enjoy their childhood. Such spaces trigger learning from an experiential and experimental methodology that fosters creativity, culture and school of life.

2) After concluding the process of Puentes Educativos (after 3 months of coffee harvest) the children receive a certificate of approbation for the school year which the Ministry of Education (MINED) acknowledges. The certificate permits them to matriculate in the subsequent grade in any educational institution in the country.

3) The work with mothers and fathers in the context of sensitization and information on the rights of children, on the importance of education and on the consequences of child labor capacitate the parents to assume their roles more belligerently when it comes to protecting and supporting their children in their educational process.

4) Strengthening and coordination of local actors in order to guarantee education and the accomplishment of the rights of the children.

5) Sensitized farmers assumed the challenge to develop and implement in their farms the strategy of Puentes Educativos and they plan it year after year as a form of social responsibility in their realms.

6) Implementation of knowledge and experiences of the different actors and sectors involved, on the search for solutions for the identified problems concerning the care of children and the guaranteeing of their rights.

7) Pedagogic accompaniment for facilitators of Puentes Educativos and organizational support for farm owners. Furthermore, governmental institutions guarantee integral and integrative attention to the children who are part of Puentes Educativos.

8) Institutionalization of the strategy Puentes Educativos as 'a task for all in the framework of shared social responsibility' between the state, private enterprises and organizations of the civil society (La Cuculmeca).

#### ABOUt the AUthor

##### *Lesbia Karina Gadea Salguera*

Coach in Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP), economist, consultant and facilitator for personal and organizational development processes.

Since 2013, she has been responsible for the Institute of Knowledge Management of the Educational and Communicational non-profit Organization "La Cuculmeca" which has 27 years of work experience in sustainable development of the rural population of Nicaragua.

She is experienced in the planning, monitoring, evaluation and systematization of social programs and projects and furthermore has broad skills in the development of knowledge management processes where she applies participative methodologies that focus on the personal development, emerging from a gender and generational perspective.





## What is this thing called gender?

**A method from the Program Y (YOUTH) - Innovative Approaches in Gender-based violence (GBV) Prevention and Healthy Lifestyle Promotion for Young Men and Women**

*Aleksandar Slijepčević*

<b>Name of Activity</b> What is Slijepčević this thing called gender? (Introductory session)	<b>Total time</b> 45 (minimum) to 90 minutes
<b>Overview</b> This activity is conducted in order to understand the differences between sex and gender and reflect on how gender norms influence the lives and relationships of women and men.	<b>Materials/room</b> Flipchart paper, tape, and markers. This could be conducted both indoors and outdoors.
<b>Number of people</b> 15 – 30 participants	<b>Target groups &amp; Age</b> 1. 14 to 19 year olds 2. Teachers, educators, trainers, and pedagogues
<b>Learning outcomes</b> To reflect on one's life and society on how gender norms are created and in which way they are enforcing rigid and stereotypic behavior that leads to inequality and violence. Think constructively about how to challenge the negative impact of gender stereotypes and promote more positive gender roles and relations in our lives and communities.	

## **PART I: The background to the Method**

### *Educational philosophy:*

Program Y is a training manual designed to help build the necessary skills for youngsters, aged between 14 and 19 to develop healthy relationships based on gender equality, to understand their physical, sexual, and emotional development and to address all forms of violence in their everyday lives. It encourages the adoption of relevant attitudes and values and motivates young people to make informed decisions with more self-confidence as they face challenges throughout adolescence. The comprehensive goal of the program is to promote adoption of healthy lifestyles and non-violent behavior among youth by challenging gender stereotypes. This methodology is integrated throughout the activities and contributes to the realization of the comprehensive goal by strengthening the students' knowledge (cognitive development), having them build upon existing life skills and adopt new ones (behavioral development), and changing their values and opinions (affective development).

### *Expected results and outcomes:*

In a wider context, participation in the activities defined by Program Y can help students with the development of the following:

- Identity
- Emotional intelligence
- Interpersonal communication skills
- Negotiation skills
- Life skills, with focus on critical thinking and decision-making
- Capability to resolve problems
- Skills for resolving critical situations
- Pro-social and social competences
- Gender equality attitudes and values
- Healthy lifestyles, particularly in the context of sexual and reproductive
- Tolerant attitudes towards others, including people who are different from themselves

### *Extent of the manual and approach:*

Program Y is not a tool focused exclusively on educating and informing young people. It is also a tested and proven platform that offers concrete directions to teachers, educators, trainers,



and pedagogues on how to offer knowledge and information to help develop life skills known to be key competencies for making healthy and non-violent decisions. Besides instructions for the implementation of each individual session, the manual offers accompanying content that allow students to get all the necessary information for understanding and achieving the defined learning outcomes. Different exercises, discussions, educational games, and workshops provide students with the necessary life skills to help them make informed decisions about their health in future, without perpetuating inequality or resorting to violence.

*Thematic area of manual:*

This manual consists of four thematic parts that can be applied as one in four years of implementation:

Identity development

- Identity, sense of self, and feelings
- Gender and gender norms

Violence Is OUT

- From violence to peaceful coexistence
- From violence to respect in intimate relationships, self-control and managing emotions
- Psychoactive substances

Sexuality and protection of sexual and reproductive health and rights

- Healthy sexuality, adolescent pregnancies, sexual and reproductive health and rights
- Pregnancy, yes or no, sexually transmitted infections and HIV and AIDS

Parents of the 21st century

- Fatherhood and motherhood

*Using the Manual:*

This manual is intended for use by teachers, professional staff, health workers, and/or other experts, educators, trainers or volunteers that work with or would like to work with young people. Every activity is designed to last between 45 and 90 minutes and can be implemented in different environments such as schools, youth centres, sports clubs, parks and reformatories for juveniles.

Manual Program Y was developed in 2016 by CARE International Balkans and its partners at Young Men Initiative project (YMI) that is being implemented in the Balkan region since 2007.

For more information please visit: [www.youngmeninitiative.net](http://www.youngmeninitiative.net)

## **PART II: The Method**

*Procedure (Execution):*

1. Divide a flipchart page into two columns.
2. At the top of the first column write "woman." In the second column write "man."
3. Ask the participants to think of words and phrases associated with the idea of "being a woman". Keep writing these down in the first column as participants say them out loud. The responses can be positive or negative. Elicit both social and biological characteristics from the participants.
4. Repeat the same step for the "man" column.
5. Briefly review the characteristics listed in each column.
6. Exchange the titles of the columns by putting "woman" in the place of "man" and vice versa. Ask the participants if the characteristics mentioned for women could be attributed to men and vice versa.
7. Use the questions below to facilitate a discussion about which characteristics the participants do not think can be attributed to both men and women, and why. As discussed above, it is important

that these sex and gender categories are not presented as rigid or strictly dichotomous.

*Suggested questions for Discussion:*

1. What does it mean to be a woman?
2. What does it mean to be a man?
3. Do you think men and women are raised in the same way? Why or why not?
4. What characteristics attributed to women and men are valued as positive or negative by our society?
5. What would it be for a woman to assume gender characteristics traditionally associated with men? Would it be hard or easy?
6. How would it be for men to assume gender characteristics traditionally assigned to women? Would it be hard or easy?
7. How do our families and friends influence our ideas of how women and men should look and act?
8. Are boys and girls given the same toys? Why or why not?
9. How do mass media (television, magazines, radio, etc.) influence our ideas of how women and men should look and act?
10. Is there a relationship between gender and power? Explain.
11. How do different expectations of how women and men should look and act affect our daily lives/your relationships with family/your relationships with intimate partners?





12. How can we, in our own lives, challenge some of the negative, or non-equitable, ways that men are expected to act? How can we challenge some of the negative, or non-equitable, ways that women are expected to act in?

13. What did we learn from this activity? Is there anything we can apply to our own lives or relationships?

*Conclusion:*

Throughout their lives, women and men receive messages from family, media, and society about how they should act and how they should relate to each other. It is important to understand that, although there are differences between men and women, many of these differences are constructed by society and are not part of nature or biological make-up. Even so, these differences can have fundamental impact on women's and men's daily lives and relationships. For example, a man is often expected to be strong and dominant in his relationships with others, including with his intimate partners. At the same time, a woman is often expected to be submissive to a man's authority. Many of these rigid gender stereotypes have consequences for both men and women, as we will be discussing throughout these workshops, with other related activities in the module. As we become more aware of how gender stereotypes can negatively impact our lives and communities, we can think constructively about how to challenge them and promote more positive gender roles and relations in our lives and communities.

*Additional instructions/variants of the activity:*

To help reinforce the difference between sex and gender, you might want to prepare images of men and women that reflect examples of biological (sex) and social (gender) roles. These might include a woman washing dishes (gender); a woman breastfeeding (sex); and a man fixing a car or hunting (gender).

*Tips for facilitators:*

Before carrying out this activity, it is important that the facilitator understands the differences between sex and gender.

Sex is biological—that is, we are born with male or female reproductive organs and hormones.

Gender is how we are socialized—that is, how attitudes, behavior, and expectations are formed based on what society associates

with being a woman or being a man. These characteristics can be learned from family members, friends, cultural and religious institutions, and the workplace.

Some participants might confuse gender with sexual orientation. It is important to clarify that gender is a sociocultural construct by which certain attitudes and behaviors are assigned to individuals based on their physical and hormonal attributes. Sexual orientation, on the other hand, is the feeling of being able to relate romantically and sexually towards someone of the opposite sex (heterosexual), the same sex (homosexual), or persons of both sexes (bisexual). Independent of one's sexual orientation, every individual is influenced by social expectations based on their sex.

*Suggestions for follow up:*

Additional material and information about the program can be found on: <http://youngmeninitiative.net/en/resources/>

The same link will lead you to the Program Y manual for free download.

#### ABOUt the AUthor

*Aleksandar Slijepčević* is an experienced Project Coordinator with a demonstrated history of working in the civic and social organization industry. Skilled in Peer Education, Team Building, Public Speaking, Training facilitation and Accounting. Strong program and project management professional graduated from Faculty of Economics, University of Banja Luka. Very experienced in gender transformative programs for prevention of violence and gender equality empowerment and is very dedicated on change attitudes and norms of young people regarding healthy life styles, violence and drug abuse.



## temperaTOUR: An effective method to teach youth their own connection to the topic of Global Warming

Achim Riemann

<b>Name of Activity</b> temperaTOUR	<b>Total time</b> A workshop consists of 90 minutes.
<b>Overview</b> <p>The name of the activity explains the ethos of the method—a learning on the move.</p> <p>Tempera: Because it is about the rising temperature in the world.</p> <p>TOUR: Because the workshop does not take place in a classroom, but in the city where we walk from location to location during the 90 minutes of the workshop.</p>	<b>Materials/room</b> Photos and customised props (foam cubes, food dummies).
<b>Number of people</b> Any	<b>Target groups &amp; Age</b> Teenagers in the ages of 13 to 18.
<b>Learning outcomes</b> Making the youth aware of own connections to the topics of Global Warming, Climate Change and other environmental issues and showing them how they could counter it or contribute to reducing the negative effects.	

## **PART I: The background to the Method**

*Content background:*

### **Fighting Global Warming – a worldwide test of humanity, foresight and intelligence**

Climate change is a world-wide topic that does not stop at any border. It is a problem that will influence our future more than we can imagine today. It connects people in all parts of the world as creators of the problem and at the same time as victims of it.

The only difference between us on earth is how much we are going to be effected by global warming and how much we are part of the creation of it.

For example in Malawi, the climate-change is creating shorter rain-seasons and that causes massive problems for the small-scale farmers. An average Malawian has a CO<sub>2</sub> Emission of 0,07 tons per year. On the other hand, the temperature rising has not had a big impact so far on Germany. In the future the impact will not be that strong either. In addition, Germany has the financial and technical resources to address the problems that will come up. A German approximately produces 9,4 tons of CO<sub>2</sub> per year, the same amount that 100 Malawians produce together. 70 – 80 % of all human made climate gas-emissions so far were produced in the industrial countries.

The ones who are creating the climate problems are usually not the ones who are going to suffer the most.

Fighting global warming is probably the best test to see, if we as humans can manage to be a solidary species. Are we able to change our lifestyle to help people we do not know, since they live far away or are going to live in the following generations?

### *Education about Global Warming is a challenge*

In general people know about global warming, its effects, how it is created and what we could do to fight it. Although people do not know about it in detail, everybody, at least in Germany, where our organization is working, knows that driving a car is not good for the climate and that going by plane is even worse. Furthermore, people know that saving electricity is good for the climate; still this does not change the behavior of people.

As an environmental youth organization, which works with young people on this topic, we had to question ourselves:

- If young people already know something about global warming, how can we still draw their interest?
- If the impact of the behavior on global warming is invisible, for example when you take the car and you do not see how you raise the CO<sub>2</sub>-Emission, how can we make its effect more visible and understandable?

The solution was to:

- Use an unusual setting for your teaching
- Do it close to peoples personal life
- Teach them in places where the decision is made if they want to be part of the problem or part of the solution, for example in the shopping street
- Make it interactive and entertaining

*The goal and the target group:*

The goal was to reach teenagers in the age from 13 to 18 and to inform them, what climate is, what kind of activities affects the climate and what we can do in our personal life to protect it. The best way to reach this target group is to offer a workshop to schools and to invite school classes to participate.

*The title of the project: temperaTOUR*

Tempera: Because it is about the rising temperature in the world.

TOUR: Because the workshop does not take place in a classroom, but in the city where we walk from location to location during the 90 minutes of the workshop.

*Place of activity*

We are meeting the school class, for example in the city centre, ideally in a place with some space and without too much of disturbance.

## **PART II: The Method**

*The start:*

### **Climate and weather**

After welcoming the group of participants and introducing ourselves, the first question is:

*Do we have good weather or good climate today?*

Some answers of the participants are collected and discussed.

Answer: The weather is changing from day to day; the climate



is not. The average weather of 30 years of a certain region is the climate of this region.

Through the following three pictures the Greenhouse-effect is explained to participants. Because the topic is usually not new for pupils, it should not take much time.

### How does a climate catastrophe occur?





Sonne – Sun

Weltall – outer space

Atmosphäre - atmosphere

Wolken - clouds

Erdoberfläche - earth's surface

Kurzwellige Wärmestrahlung - short-wave thermal radiation

Langwellige Wärmestrahlung – long-wave thermal radiation

Ein Teil der Wärme bleibt – a part of the heat stays

Treibhausgase sammeln sich - Greenhouse gases accumulate

Wärme staut sich - Heat accumulates

Erdoberfläche heizt sich auf - Earth's surface heats up

*Most important messages:*

The Green-house effect is a natural process and it is good to have it.

Because of the Greenhouse-effect the average world-wide temperature is 15C. Usually, to be more interactive, the group is asked to guess the average-temperature of the world, combining all countries and all seasons.

Without the Greenhouse-effect it would be much colder on earth. Again you could ask the participants to guess. That way they stay interested.

-18C would be the correct answer.

Final message:

The Greenhouse-effect as it is right now makes our life possible on earth. But through driving a car, putting the light on, buying a plastic bag, we are producing climate gases and their effect is the same as at night in bed. "You are in bed, the blanket is perfect, and you are not freezing and not too hot. The blanket is your Greenhouse-effect. Through industrialization we are putting a thin blanket on top of yours, and another thin one, and another ... With each blanket it is now slowly getting warmer and warmer for you. That is what is happening with our planet right now.

*What is creating the human made Global Warming?*

If we do want to do something against the climate change, we need to know what is creating the climate change in the first place.

Seven big photos are now placed next to each other on the ground, representing the main seven sources, which are creating the global warming.

These are:

Electricity

Industry

Change of land-use, for example the destruction of the rainforest

Agriculture

Traffic

Heating and Cooling of houses

Waste

Now you hand out cards with percentages that the group needs to connect to the pictures.

They are: 26%, 19%, 17%, 14%, 13%, 8%, 3%

Now a discussion between the participants about what affects the climate worldwide more and what less should start.

The right answer would be:

Electricity: 26%

Industry: 19%

Change of land-use, for example the destruction of the rainforest: 17%

Agriculture: 14%

Traffic: 13%

Heating and Cooling of houses: 8%

Waste: 3%

(IPCC Fourth Assessment Report: Climate Change 2007)

At this point the participants already know in which areas they could become active if they would like to save the climate.

Now it is about what exactly you can do. If you want to reduce for example the effect of agriculture on the temperature-rising should you eat less? We will find out later. There are so many options to save the climate.

We walk to the train station or a bus stop, because the next topic is about mobility and we need some space for the first "game".

*Transportation: How far can you get with half a Gramm of CO<sub>2</sub>?*

The idea of this activity is to compare different ways of traveling and how far you can get if you use different ways of transportation and you are just allowed to use 0,5 Gramm CO<sub>2</sub> per person in your vehicle.

On the picture you can see how this activity works. Usually the Car-Team starts and shows the distance by unrolling the rope. As far as the rope goes two people can go by car until 0,5 g CO<sub>2</sub> per person is emitted. Because usually you drive in twos, you can use one gram and this gram takes you 2,75 meter. This example is important, because nobody knows how far you can get with a gram of CO<sub>2</sub> in a car.

After seeing how far you get in a car the participants can guess, how far they could go by using the train, the bus or the plane.

A discussion starts. If the bus is more environmentally friendly you can get farther than a car, but how far? If it is less environmentally friendly, the distance should be shorter than by a car.



The results:

Car (2 People in the car): 2,75 m/0,5g (105 kg CO<sub>2</sub>, per person)



Long-Distance-Bus (80% capacity): 11,37 m/0,5g (23 kg CO<sub>2</sub> per person)



Train (70% capacity): 23,73 m/0,5g (11 kg CO<sub>2</sub> / Person)



Air-Plane (80% capacity): 1,91 m/0,5g (137 kg CO<sub>2</sub> / per person) / 0,63 m \*



\* Because airplanes also create steam (the visible condensation trails) at a height of 10 kilometres the impact on the climate becomes bigger. That way you could only get 63cm far with your 0,5 gram of CO<sub>2</sub> in a plane.

The next topic is agriculture, food and its effect on the global warming.



### *Agriculture, food and Global Warming*

The group walks for about 300 meters, heading to the nearest McDonald's (or another shop that is connected to food). While walking the participants have a break and a little time to chat.

After the arrival in front of McDonald's, six black foam cubes are laid down side by side on the asphalt together with six food dummies. The dummies are each representing a kilogram of bread, fruits, vegetables, beef, egg and milk. The task of the participants is now to assign the six foods to the six cubes. The size of each cube symbolizes the average amount of greenhouse gases caused by the production, processing, packaging and transportation of a particular food per kilogram. The plastic apple symbolizes fruits in general, the banana from Panama as well as the apple from your region.

The tour-guide could now assign the food to the dices in a short time and explain the reasons for it, but to make the learning process more sustainable, it is now up to the participants to become active. They need to discuss together which of the six chosen foods are more or less harmful to the climate. During the decision-making, the following questions can help:

- Is the production of the food energy intensive?
- Does the product need to be processed further?
- Will the product be transported far?
- Is packaging required?
- Does the food require precursors?

To get the discussion going, the workshop leader can ask questions, for example, where the tomatoes, which you buy at the supermarket usually come from.

Gradually, the food is assigned to the cubes. The participants usually make changes to the order decided. It goes back and forth. The group usually never really agrees quickly.

Ask them in the end, why they think their distribution is correct. That way they need to express their thoughts and explain their decisions. Done!

Now everyone is looking forward to the right answer, even if the interest in the subject itself, climate change, is not so big. You want to know if you were right.

### *CO2 emissions of selected foods and cube size calculation*

(All climate values have been converted into CO2, these apply to Germany and may differ in other countries.)

Foodstuff	CO <sub>2</sub> -Emission (in gramme CO <sub>2</sub> pro kg Foodstuff)	Cube-Volume (1g CO <sub>2</sub> e = 3cm <sup>3</sup> )	Cube- Side- Length
Fresh vegetables	150	450 cm <sup>3</sup>	7,7 cm
Fresh fruits	450	1 350 cm <sup>3</sup>	11,1 cm
Bread	750	2 250 cm <sup>3</sup>	13,1 cm
Milk	950	2 850 cm <sup>3</sup>	14,2 cm
Eggs	1 950	5 850 cm <sup>3</sup>	18,0 cm
Beef (from Cow)	13 300	39 900 cm <sup>3</sup>	34,2 cm

Source: Pendor CO2 counter (Pendo Verlag 2007)

Nearly 30% of the anthropogenic climate change is created by agriculture and food, including parts of the destruction of forests (especially rainforests), because it is done for the cultivation of feed and food.

But it also becomes clear: if you want to protect the climate you do not have to starve. It depends on what you eat.

Basically,

- the less meat and other animal products such as milk, butter or eggs are consumed, the better it is for the climate.
- the less transportation, the better it is for the climate.
- the less processing or packaging the better it is for the climate.

**Have a good appetite, the future eats with us!**

#### *Evaluation*

The group leaves, hopefully they are going to discuss the tour during their next lesson in school. You can prepare some questions for the teacher, so it might motivate him or her to take up the topic during the next lesson.

Possible Questions:

What surprised you the most during the temperaTOUR?

Did you know most of the information before?

Did you talk with friends or your family about what you learned? And if so, how did they react?  
Did the temperaTOUR motivate you to do something to protect the climate?  
Is there something you would like to change now in your personal life?

*More detailed instructions and Tips:*

Please look at the website: <<https://janun-hannover.de/climate-change-education.html>>.

The website has material about the project and how to run it in English, German, Russian and Serbian.

#### ABout the AUthor

*Achim Riemann* founded his first environmental club in the age of eight. With 18 others he co-founded JANUN e.V. Since 1994 he has been working for the Youth Environmental Organization JANUN e.V. in the field of Education.



## NETWORK DIALOGUE

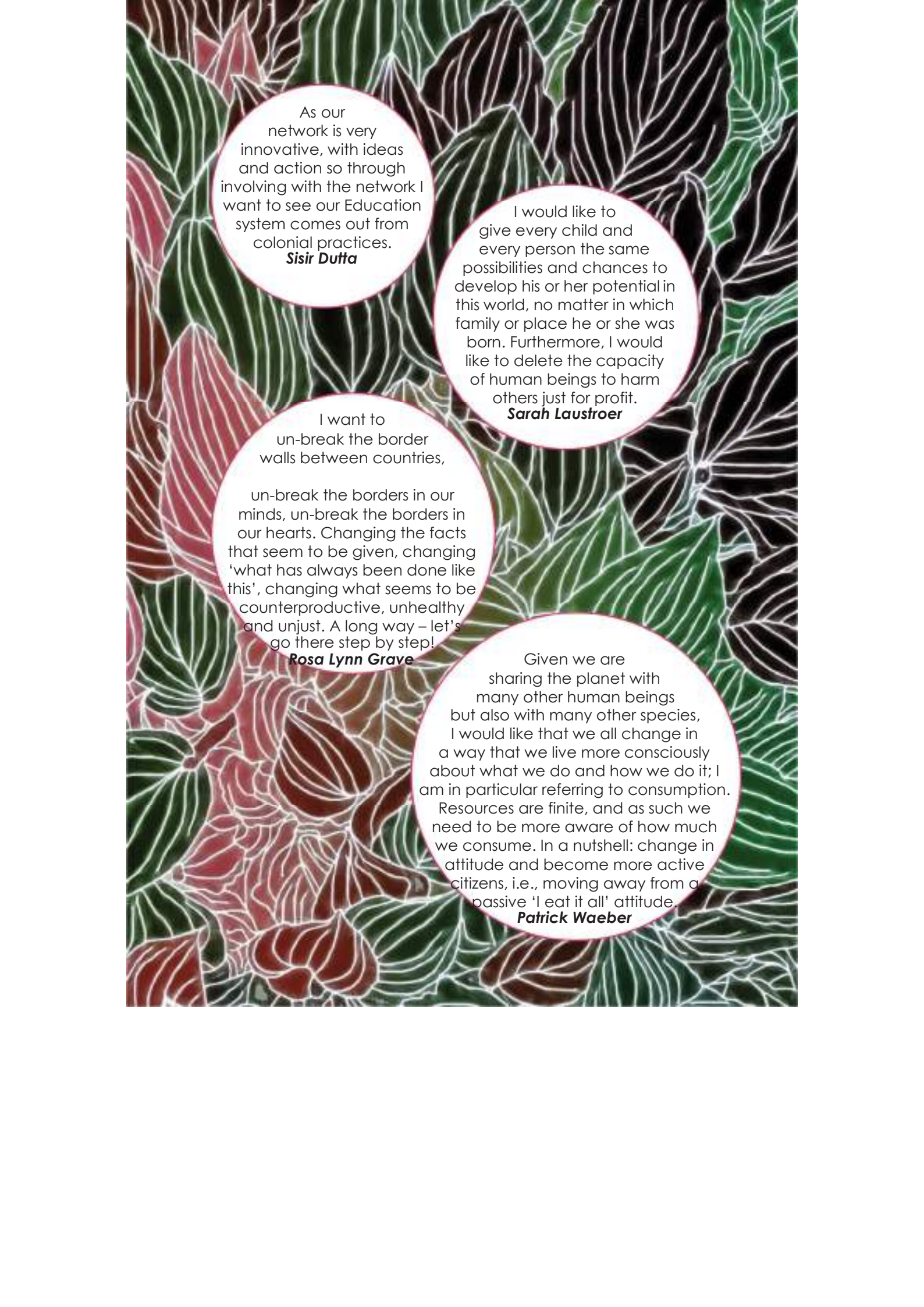
Our network has the name Learn2Change  
What do you want to change?

I want  
to change the  
community and youth's  
attitude to perceive  
themselves as change  
agents and to utilize available  
resources instead of waiting  
for resources, which are not  
readily available.  
**Joseph Kenson Sakala**

I want  
to change the  
perception of our world:  
we cannot go on like we have  
been; we need creativity and  
openness to the manifold solutions  
available for the big problems of  
society. I believe the experience  
of creating far-reaching solutions  
with other people makes us much  
happier than any consumption  
could ever do.  
**Menja Holz**

In my  
case I would like to  
change the educational  
relationship between students  
and teachers for something more  
participative, a two-way dialogue  
and more than the sense of  
economic good that the authorities  
of my country give to education.  
New relationships between human  
beings, and consider Mother  
Earth as a living being.  
**Jorge Huichalaf**





As our network is very innovative, with ideas and action so through involving with the network I want to see our Education system comes out from colonial practices.

**Sisir Dutta**

I would like to give every child and every person the same possibilities and chances to develop his or her potential in this world, no matter in which family or place he or she was born. Furthermore, I would like to delete the capacity of human beings to harm others just for profit.

**Sarah Laustroer**

I want to un-break the border walls between countries,

un-break the borders in our minds, un-break the borders in our hearts. Changing the facts that seem to be given, changing 'what has always been done like this', changing what seems to be counterproductive, unhealthy and unjust. A long way – let's go there step by step!

**Rosa Lynn Grave**

Given we are sharing the planet with many other human beings but also with many other species, I would like that we all change in a way that we live more consciously about what we do and how we do it; I am in particular referring to consumption. Resources are finite, and as such we need to be more aware of how much we consume. In a nutshell: change in attitude and become more active citizens, i.e., moving away from a passive 'I eat it all' attitude.

**Patrick Waeber**





"Harvest • Spinning • Dyeing • Weaving • Sewing • Sale"

From seeds to jeans - put them in the right order!





## Global Learning out of a Suitcase

Gertraud Gauer-Süß

<b>Name of Activity</b> Global Learning Out of a Suitcase	<b>Total time</b> 90 minutes to 1 week
<b>Overview</b> Thematic suitcases on different topics filled with multi-sensual educative materials allow tackling complex issues of global interdependencies on a low-threshold level. Complemented by teaching suggestions the suitcases provide multipliers that are not familiar with the topic with a starter kit on global learning / education for sustainable development.	<b>Materials/room</b> Thematic suitcase with learning materials (e.g. texts, films, photos, visual and haptic objects).  Board / Flipchart.
<b>Number of people</b> 5 – 30 participants	<b>Target groups &amp; Age</b> Content and level can be adapted to any group of learners from nursery level to adult education. With multi-sensual learning approaches and the possibility for differentiated materials and tasks it is suitable for inclusive learning in heterogenous groups.
<b>Learning outcomes</b> Understanding issues of global interdependencies and inequalities with practical reference to one's everyday life, especially to issues of consumption. Developing ideas for concrete action and behavior changes that contribute to a juster and ecologically moresound world.	

*Chocolate suitcase, cotton suitcase, banana suitcase, escape suitcase, football bag...* The Bremen Information Centre for Human Rights and Development (biz) lends out these and other thematic suitcases and bags to teachers and multipliers in the field of global learning.

**What is in the suitcases, how can you use them? What is the idea behind it and what are the experiences with it?**

The thematic cases are intended to encourage teachers and multipliers and to put them in a position to communicate Global Learning topics in their lessons or in extracurricular (leisure) activities in an interesting, comprehensive and easy way. The suitcases are based on the concept of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD). The objective of ESD is the promotion of creation and action skills among learners. Worldwide interdependencies with their ecological, social/cultural and economic dimensions should be recognized and own options for action should be presented or rather jointly developed as contributions to a sustainable and just development for all people and the natural foundations of life.

The cases usually contain information brochures, photos, films, games (e.g. puzzles, memory games, quizzes), teaching suggestions and worksheets but also visual and haptic objects on the respective topic. For example, cotton seeds, raw cotton, yarns, fabric samples and a pair of jeans can be found in the cotton case. In the chocolate case you can discover cocoa butter, cocoa beans, a dried cocoa pod and various ingredients for chocolate production. The football bag includes original sewing tools for the ball production and the escape case contains a life jacket which comes from a refugee boat from the Mediterranean. As a rule, the cases represent a pool of materials and methods from which the users select and, if necessary, modify what is suitable for the respective learning group and learning situation.

The cases want to meet the following requirements:

- Enabling learning with as many senses as possible and "comprehension through comprehension",
- Enabling learning in heterogeneous learning groups,
- Providing offers for different age groups or target groups (children, young people, adults),
- Offering references to the everyday life of the learners,
- Enabling self-organized station learning,
- Promoting competencies such as a change of perspective,

empathy, recognition and evaluation of complex contexts as well as solution-oriented thinking among learners.

The cases can be used for shorter or longer sessions, from a double lesson (90Min) to a project week.

### **Concrete example: The cotton suitcase**

Today, clothing is (mostly) a global product, the origin of which we know little about. It serves not only to protect and cover the body but is also important as an expression of one's personality, lifestyle, belonging to a group, political or religious conviction etc. Cotton is by far the most important natural fibre for clothing. It is produced and marketed on a very large scale on plantations, for example, in the USA, China, India, Uzbekistan and Pakistan, as well as by small scale West African farmers. Cotton is therefore an excellent subject for global learning.

The cotton suitcase deals with numerous aspects: the textile chain (stages of production), problems of conventional cotton cultivation and advantages of organic cotton, working conditions in the textile industry, the cultural-historical significance of cotton, consumption and fashion.

In the following, some of the tools from the cotton suitcase are presented as examples for how diversely such material collections can be used.

Getting started: The clothes check is a good way of introducing the participants to the topic and lets them reflect on their own clothing consumption in advance. It can, for example, be distributed to pupils\*in the run-up as a homework assignment. Participants research and note which garments they have purchased in the last 12 months and calculate the total weight using a worksheet. The evaluation on the back of the worksheet shows how one's own result is to be classified and provides information for a more sustainable purchasing behaviour. If necessary, the evaluation can be dealt with again later. This personal approach generally arouses the interest of the participants in the subject of cotton and clothing and they are open to further study.

### **Deepening 1:**

#### ***From cotton seeds to jeans - put things in the right order!***

The participants should put cotton seeds, raw cotton, seed cotton, roving yarn, an open dried cotton capsule, a piece of denim (or a finished jeans) in a logical order and, if possible, mention the

associated working steps (e.g. sowing, harvesting, ginning, spinning, bleaching, dyeing, weaving, sewing, selling). Depending on the level of knowledge of the participants, possible social or ecological problems in the respective areas of work can also be asked for. This exercise can easily be carried out with the whole group or class in a conversation, during which a diagram with the most important production steps as well as the respective ecological and social challenges is created on the flipchart (blackboard, whiteboard). This can be used again and again in the further course, for example, to visualize contexts and the progress of lessons. The depth or intensity of the method can be adapted to the possibilities and competencies of the participants.

### **Deepening 2:**

#### ***The textile chain - winners and losers (price composition of a jeans)***

In this exercise participants should reflect the price composition of a piece of clothing. A jeans is provided with five different percentage-prints (50%, 25%, 13%, 11% and 1%) which stand for value shares in the sale price of the jeans. The participants receive five cards with different cost positions (material costs, transport costs, labour costs of sewers, retail, fashion label). They should then assign them to the individual percentages and justify their assumption.

The task is intended to stimulate reflection on the composition of the product price. Do prices reflect the actual production costs? Which costs are hidden behind the different positions, e.g. retail (rent, staff, VAT), fashion company (design, advertising)? Is advertising necessary? Is the wage fair for the workers? Why do some jeans only cost 10 or 20 Euro but others 100 Euro and more? At which stages of production could something be changed without changing the final product (jeans)? In our experience, only few people have ever thought intensely about the price composition and the costs that arise at different stages of production. This task is a good opportunity for an exchange or discussion.

#### **For relaxation / loosening up in between: *Touch and feel bags***

with sheep's wool, cotton, cotton wool (made of pure cotton) and polyester wadding provide a playful, haptic approach. Who can find out by feeling what is in which bag? Everyone can make a contribution here, even without special knowledge of cotton. In order to do justice to the different competences and abilities of the participants they can be asked to describe how the respective fibres feel (e.g. soft, rough, greasy etc.). Especially younger people



or people with learning difficulties can make a good contribution here. This module is also well suited to arouse people's curiosity at info desks, at major events or trade fairs. Our experience shows that this tool is very popular with all age groups.

**The conclusion: Consumption Ambassadors - What can I do?**

The question "What can I do?" almost inevitably arises among the participants. For a starter you can collect suggestions and discuss them. In the end, everyone can commit himself/herself and choose from a list of tasks that he/she would like to complete within a certain period of time.

**Combination of Global Learning and Inclusion:** in order to take into account current school developments (socially inclusive learning in Bremen and Germany), some time ago the cotton suitcase was explicitly examined and adjusted with regard to heterogeneous learning groups. Special needs educators had often mentioned the visual / haptic objects positively and used the suitcases mainly for this reason. However, texts of different levels of comprehension were missing. As a consequence, existing texts were edited so that they are available at three different levels. Appropriate tasks were also differentiated and formulated accordingly. A station plan for three different

levels now allows students in heterogeneous groups to work independently on topics.

**What the suitcases do not offer**

The suitcases are not ready-made teaching offers "to go" that you open and use in a class or group without having seen them in advance. We give suggestions and advice for their use but the teachers and multipliers are the experts for their respective learning situation and group. In this way, they themselves decide the exact form of the learning unit.





### **How do we develop and create new cases?**

When we develop new materials, this is usually done in cooperation with practitioners. In exchange with teachers, educators and special needs experts and others we brief ourselves first about the basic conditions as well as the current topics and challenges in schools, nurses, vocational training programs etc. The materials developed are then tested in practice presented to teachers and multipliers during a symposium and, if necessary, adapted again before they are finally completed and offered.

#### **ABout the AUthor**

*Gertraud Gauer-Süß* works as CEO at the Bremen Information Center for Human Rights and Development (biz). She studied biology and development politics and is engaged in the Clean Clothes Campaign and Fair trade issues for a long time.

Her motto: Practice what you preach! or in Gandhi's words: be the change you want to see in the world.



## The Power of Expression

Nsubuga Geofrey & Namirembe Molly

<b>Name of Activity</b> The power of expression	<b>Total time</b> 12 sessions of at least two hours each
<b>Overview</b> SCREAM is the acronym for Supporting Children's Rights through Education Art and Media. The method is built on the principle that promotes creativity of children as a methodology that puts into consideration the creativity of the children and the power of music as a mode of expression.	<b>Materials/room</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Space (with flexible chairs that can be moved)</li> <li>• Black or white board, Pens, Papers.</li> <li>• Images that are related to the topic of discussion, Pencils, Balloons, Crayons, Stick notes, Sacks.</li> </ul> <i>(However these materials can be substituted with any local materials that can serve the same purpose.)</i>
<b>Number of people</b> Maximum 20	<b>Target groups &amp; Age</b> Youngsters between 10 and 18
<b>Learning outcomes</b> Children will be able to utilize their creativity to contribute to the development of their communities in a manner that does not deprive them of their own rights but also do so without conflicting with the feelings of the adult world.	

*Unexpressed feelings never die. They are buried alive within  
and will come out later in more aggressive ways*  
Sigmund Freud<sup>1</sup>

## **PART I: The background to the Method<sup>2</sup>**

### *Educational philosophy:*

SCREAM literally means to speak out, to shout out and to call for help. SCREAM is therefore a method that aims at empowering children to be able to speak out. SCREAM is the acronym for Supporting Children's Rights through Education Art and Media. The method is built on the principle that promotes creativity of children as a methodology that puts into consideration the creativity of the children and the power of music as a mode of expression. It is an educative and mobilization method that provides a platform where children can utilize their creativity to contribute to the development of their communities in a manner that does not deprive them of their own rights but also without conflicting with the feelings of the adult world.

It can be utilized in cases of exploitation and violation of rights, in education where learners are transiting from one level of education, one academic system, learning topic or learning method to another. It begins with the identification of the young people that are going to benefit from the session. Put young people with the same desired situation and possibly background together (for example school dropouts that wish to go back to school) and provide open space for interaction so that they can freely participate. Start with a bonding activity or energizer. The method is more applicable for a smaller group of young people not more than 20 (for easy monitoring of all the participants) between 10 and below 18 years.

## **PART II: The Method**

The whole SCREAM methodology requires 12 sessions of at least two hours each. This can be done consecutively or with regular intervals of days or weeks but ideally all sessions are important.

It comprises of 14 modules including Basic Information, Collage, Research and Information, Interview and Survey, The Image, Role-Play, Art Competition, Creative Writing, Debate, Media Radio, and Television, Media, Press, Drama, World of Work and Community Integration.



### Session 1 : **The myths and facts.**

The very first session of the myths and facts segment begins with the objective to ascertain what the group knows about the subject. This can be done by coming up with statements that are either myths or facts and asking the group to choose or decide if they are true or false. If you want the group to get a few points that came out of the discussion then you can pick them out of the discussion and tell each group to present something out of them in just one minute through a 'one minute mime'. The mime aims at deepening the children's understanding of the issue at hand or the topic of interest.

### Session 2: **Basic information and Information & research**

These are two modules that can be done separately or concurrently.

With basic information, the facilitator provides the fundamental knowledge about the topic of interest, clear the myths that participants have as well as emphasize the facts to ensure that the participants have the correct and appropriate information.

With the information and research part, the young people come up with a simple questionnaire with guiding questions regarding what information they want to know about the particular topic. Give them an opportunity to interact with the desired situation and they come back and present to the bigger group what exactly they found out.



### Session 3: ***The moving debate***

This moving debate is for aiding the reporting back of the information that is collected by the participants. It aims at providing space to all the participants to speak out and this builds their ability for public speaking and to express themselves.

Facilitate the moving debates. Here you only need any random object to use as an imaginary microphone, and ensure that each and every young person gets hold of the imagined microphone and says what they found out when they went to the research (however this may not work for very young people. This is applicable for young people above 10 years). Emphasize that all opinions are valid so that there is respect for everybody's opinion.

### Session 4: ***The image***

The objective of this session is to heighten the emotional awareness of the children towards the issue of discussion and the expectations (imaginary emotional, psychological and physical awareness) of the participants from a particular course of action or a level of achievement.

Utilize pictures that bring out the topic of discussion at a particular time, for example, if one is talking to young people who are joining college, present to them pictures of other young people who have been to college before. Start with the simple profiling of the pictures and later get deeper to attach character, mindset and any other aspects as deemed important for the group to understand. This session can be utilized to discuss with the participants the actual situation so that they can move away from the imaginary.

### Session 5: ***The role-play, drama***

This introduces the participants to the use of drama in education and gives them a platform to act out the roles of all the people around them in the desired world and supports young people to understand the role they and the other stakeholders have to play.

In the already divided groups (maximum of 20 young people), collect all the information that is used to describe the images in the previous session and ask the group to come up with a drama/play that depicts the person described in the desired situation. It is even more fun when the images are interchanged with different groups.

If the group does not feel very comfortable about acting the roles, together as the big group they could come up with any funny action like a sound, walking style and let the group do it together before the actual role play.



In this activity you find that young people shall start questioning their own interpretation of the image but even after the presentation of the drama a facilitator can even go ahead to ask them what they feel about the drama as either the audience or even as actors.

#### Session 6: **The power of ART**

The power of art is a strong means of expressing feelings and needs. This can be done in smaller groups of a maximum of 10 people while putting children of the same age in the same group. The participants should draw images depicting what they feel they are and what they desire to be in line with the topic of interest. Seek approval of individuals to discuss their art pieces with the bigger group so that the whole group is able to share the feelings of others. As a facilitator invest time in understanding the feelings and needs behind the art piece of every participant. Some art pieces depict happiness and contentment, others portray future prospects and many reveal sorrows, worries or fears of the participants, it is better to employ counselors and social workers to provide psycho-social support and to talk to the participants so that they are able to confront their fears and pave the way to meet their needs. During this session we come up with the next step of action in their lives. For example, for cases where young people had dropped out of education, at this level the participants must be able to choose if they want to go back to formal education or would they opt for vocational training or something else. Or if they are supposed to choose a career they should be able to choose among the available options or actually come up with a better option.

### Session 7: **The power of music and poetry**

This can be employed as a mode of evaluation to know if the participants have actually benefited from the sessions.

At the end of the session you can choose to bring the big group together and subdivide them again and ask the groups to either sing songs, write poems, act skits out of all that they have learnt in the day and take notes of their presentations and from them find out what they have learnt and what they have not learnt for the future meetings.

#### **Tips for the facilitator**

Understand the group of people you are working with and their dynamics including their gender, personal backgrounds and treat all of them with respect and in a non-discriminatory manner. Each session should take a maximum of 2 hours. It is advisable to have a co-facilitator.

Notes:

1. Sigmund Freud. 1930. *Civilization and its discontents*, in the standard edition of the complete psychological works of Sigmund Freud: 21. (J. Strachey, Trans., pp. 59–145). London: Hogarth Press.
2. SCREAM is a programme developed by the International Labour Organisation ILO. Somero Uganda has been working successfully with this methodology for years and adapted it to its needs. SCREAM consists of 14 modules, which are implemented in 12 sessions of 2 hours each. In this article 7 modules are presented as examples. Further information on the method can be found at <<http://www.ilo.org/ipecc/Campaignandadvocacy/Scream/lang--en/index.htm>>.

#### **ABOUt the AUthors**

*Nsubuga Geofrey* has a Post Graduate Diploma in Project Planning and Management- Uganda Management Institute, a Bachelor of Arts in Education- Makerere University Kampala, a Dip. Social Work Social Administration, Makerere Institute for Social Development.

He's Executive Director and founder member; Somero Uganda and an ILO SCREAM National Trainer.

*Namirembe Molly* is Programs officer at Somero Uganda.

She has a Bachelors of Social work and Social administration from Makerere University.

She's passionate about working with young people and observing change in their behaviour patterns.



## Transformative Poetry – Creative Writeshop

Timo Holthoff

<b>Name of Activity</b> Transformative Poetry – Creative Writeshop	<b>Total time</b> At least 90 minutes
<b>Overview</b> This is a method to prove that everybody can be a poet and that poetry has an empowering and transformative power! After some techniques of venting body and mind, a collective brainstorming around a chosen theme provides the basis for composing individual texts (stories, poems) and possibly drawings. The results shared within the group often reveal unexpected insights into both the author and the topic.	<b>Materials/room</b> Chairs; paper, pens, crayons; talking stick; possibly items to create an inviting atmosphere like candles and objects related to the topic/motto of writing. Possibility to sit in a circle on the floor (maybe provide mats, pillows, blankets). Possibility to go for a quiet walk outside.
<b>Number of people</b> 5 – 20 participants	<b>Target groups &amp; Age</b> The method is suitable for any group with literacy skills, starting from an age of 10 years.
<b>Learning outcomes</b> Learners discover unknown potential within themselves and gain self-assurance by experiencing that they can be poets. Learners gain new perspectives on a given topic by exploring it through arts and silly ways rather than rational thinking. The group practices mindfulness and appreciation for each other.	

### **Background - Why poetry is a magic elixir for change**

Rational thinking is a gift in many ways but in its linearity and narrowness also obstructive in finding the unusual solutions that we possibly need to cope with our complex challenges. Other forms of knowing and creating meaning through our bodies, our hearts and our relations have been outruled in western mindsets. Poetry and creative writing can be used as a tool to break through the structures of everyday normality and to broaden our imagination by inviting queer and weird forms of wisdom, interrelation with the world and co-creation that go beyond the cognitive and logical, making more space for the heart, the belly and the magical. The writing in this method is around a topic set by the facilitator (or possibly negotiated by the group). With an unlimited variety of possible themes this method can complement almost any workshop, seminar or lecture - providing an unusual way of exploring the respective topic. The charm of this method is its simplicity that enables everybody to write and share a meaningful text. Especially to people that have never wrote in this sense, that would never have thought that they too can be poets, this method has an empowering effect. By the personal insights shared by the texts the method creates a lot of mindfulness and empathy within a group.

### **Steps of the method:**

#### *0. Preparation: Creating a Welcoming Space*

- Chose a topic as a theme for the writing. It can be anything, however, the more dimensions a theme has, the more diverse the texts will be. Something abstract and open (e.g. Social Justice) rather than something technical (e.g. tax regulations) usually works better. Examples for themes that provoked great writing: "Life", "Transformation", "Wilderness beyond our Fences", "Revolution", "Love", "Mother Earth", "Freedom", "Togetherness", "Fire".
- Prepare the room in a way that people can sit in a closed circle, ideally in a comfortable position on the ground (maybe provide blankets, mats or pillows). Arrange things in the middle that contribute to a cosy and creative atmosphere, like a candle, flowers and objects related to the topic (e.g. things from nature or daily life, pictures).
- Provide pens, papers and crayons.

#### *1. Intro (5 Min)*

- Welcome the group and explain the intention and course of the writeshop. Present the theme / motto for the workshop and why





you chose it (or let participants chose one theme they would like to write about together). Say something encouraging like: this room is full of poets who didn't know they are poets! Explain that a poem does not have to rhyme, that it can be any form of text, and that the artists should just start writing without feeling under pressure to create something great. Emphasize that even though the idea is to share the texts, everybody is free not to, hence first of all everybody writes for her- or himself. As a little ritual you might light the candle, symbolizing „the fire in our belly“ that the method seeks to ignite.

## 2. Preparatory Techniques to Vent both Body and Mind (15 Min)

In order to have a cut from whatever works the minds of the participants and to invite a broader imagination some warming-up methods can be useful. These two have worked well:

- **Breathing Exercise** for creating mindfulness, a sense of connection and venting the body: Invite participants to get up and stand in a circle with their eyes closed, in order to be led through a short meditation (with shoes off if room and temperature allow): „Take a few deep but natural breaths. Feel how the air is flowing into your body – and out. Feel where your feet touch the ground - the thin border between your body and the earth. Feel how the earth supports your weight, carries you. With every breath you take, the border between your feet and the ground dissolves more, as if your feet were growing roots into the earth. It's like the earth was pulling you closer to itself. You feel grounded. Rock your body back and forth a bit – and to the sides - like a tree in the wind, held safe by it's roots. Now, imagine you had a hole at the top of your head – like the breathing hole of a whale. When you breath in, air flows through that hole down into your body and with breathing out it

flows out of your feet into the ground. Take deep breaths to vent your body. And now change the direction of breathing: you breath in through your feet and breath out through the hole on your head – let all bad energies and hard feeling vaporize to the sky. Take a few calm breaths before you open your eyes again and put your attention back to our circle.

- **Silliness Exercise:** Ask participants to take a chair each and individually spend 10 minutes with it. First, studying it, trying to grasp and feel it's history: for example, the tree that it's wood came crome, the rocks from which it's metal was taken, the hands and steps it went through in being built, the roads it travelled to get here, the many bodies it carried, the talks it witnessed. Second, trying out what ELSE it is good for, using it for anything BUT a chair, putting yourself into differet relation to it, playing with possibilities unthought of. Participants might leave the room / building for that. After the exerisze you can share the experiences with the group.

### 3. *Collective Brainstorming (10 Min)*

- Participants sit in a circle. Provide each person with a pen and paper, folded in 3 parts (like a letter). Ask everybody to thinkof 3 things that they associate with the given theme and to write their 3 words on the 3 parts of the paper.
- Ask people to hand the paper (folded) to the person sitting to their right. Ask everybody to look for the first word on the paper– and next to it to write down another word that they associate with this word.
- Repeat this process for the second and third word. Than have all papers handed back to their original owners.
- In the end everybody has 6 words associated with the given theme, as a trigger for his or her writing. An example:

<b>Theme: Transformation</b>	
<b>Caterpillar</b>	Butterfly
<b>Fear</b>	Love
<b>Revolution</b>	Power

#### 4. Individual Writing (at least 15 Min)

- Based on the collectively brainstormed 6 words everyone is invited to write a poem, making use of all of the 6 words – which might already tell a story. Give at least 15min time for this.
- Additionally you can provide crayons and invite people to embellish their poem with drawings (or even just draw something if they don't feel like writing).

#### 5. Sharing of Results - different options (at least 30 Min)

- Invite people to put their (un)finished poem to the wall and then to walk around the gallery reading all poems. If they find a poem very appealing, they are invited to take the floor and read it out aloud.
- Take people on a silent walk outside, e.g. to the forest. Brief them that at a certain point you will stop and then everybody should find a position in a hearable distance. One might start to break the silence by reading out his or her poem. Others can follow until nobody rises to speak anymore. Then you walk back in silence – or already use the time for a debriefing (in pairs if the group is very big).

#### 6. Debriefing (15 Min)

- Start by appreciating and thanking everybody who participated and those who spoke and listened.
- Ask people to share what they experienced through the exercise, how they felt and what they take out from it. Use a talking stick or the like so that everybody gets the chance to speak.

#### ABOUt the AUthor

*Timo Holthoff* works for the Association of German Development and Humanitarian Aid NGOs (VENRO e.V.) as coordinator for the Bridge 47 - Building Global Citizenship project where he experiments with innovative educational approaches as part of a European network. For 8 years he has been working for NGOs in the field of Global Learning and as a freelance lecturer and trainer for transformative and decolonial education. As an activist he is committed to radical educational change, e.g. with his film *Learning Transformation - Voices for Another Education*.

He is currently undergoing a major transformation himself: He has become a father and is looking forward to rediscovering himself and the world through the eyes of his daughter.





*Julia Wältring*

A yearning in my heart  
out there the wood  
and now?

clouds passing away  
things take its course  
everything remains unaffected, everything as always  
hard  
fixed  
I feel like a trunk  
a dead one

A yearning, still in my heart  
out there, still the wood  
now!  
now?

to let things pass away with the clouds  
and my heart takes its course

\* A poem written during the Transformative Poetry – Creative Writeshop  
held at the L2C conference in Sonnenberg, Germany, 2017.



# NOTES





**learn2change** – *Global Network of Educational Activists* connects civil society activists from all over the world. Founded in 2015, it serves as a platform and think tank to exchange, foster and implement new approaches of learning and social change through global partnerships.

We come from diverse backgrounds and work on various topics, target groups and methods. This diversity is our treasure and our strength. We draw from each other's teaching, learning, and unlearning experiences and create opportunities for its sharing through face-to-face meetings, collective research, e-learning and online dialogue.

By learning from each other, we seek to explore and nurture stories of unconventional wisdom and alternative social practices across borders to decolonize our hearts and minds and relink to our shared earth.

With this book we want to provide an insight into concepts that are underlying our work, methodological approaches and personal stories of successful learning from Learn2Change members around the world.

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