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How Education can Contribute to Healing and Well-Being: A Global Listening Initiative



By Scherto Gill, Ph.D., Taos Institute Associate, Senior Fellow, GHFP Research Institute, and Research Fellow, University of Wales Trinity St David. Scherto chairs the G20 Interfaith Forum's Education Working Group.

The [G20 Interfaith Forum](#) (IF20) offers an annual platform to engage on the agendas set by the G20 leaders. For 2021, IF20's theme is *A Time to Heal*, a call for a reflection on the global challenges confronting humanity during the COVID-19 pandemic, especially in terms of restoring our collective well-being, and renewing the wellness of our planet.

The [IF20 Education Working Group's](#) partners believe that healing and well-being can be found in the quietude of deep silence, the attentiveness and caring of deep listening, and the openness, curiosity, and mutual valuing of deep dialogue. Together these three interlocking relational processes can offer comfort to the vulnerable, appease the wounded, and make whole our sense of self fragmented by trauma, anxiety and fear. From deep silence-listening-dialogue, we return to ourselves and to our community and re-experience each other as part of 'WE', a relational reality at the core of our well-being. In deep silence-listening-dialogue, we tune into a greater source of wisdom, re-center ourselves, and engender co-belongingness.

In March-June, the [IF20 Education Working Group](#) launched a Global Listening Initiative, including experiential workshops where worldwide collaborators intentionally created respectful spaces to engage adolescents in these three interlocking processes, online and/or face-to-face. During these workshops, adolescents listened to and shared with each other experiences of learning during the last 18 months, and explored through dialogue how education might be transformed to make a genuine difference to their present well-being, enrichment of their future lives, and the betterment of the world as a whole.

Together, young people from five continents provided the following recommendations for G20 leaders to consider, and especially Ministers of Education, when developing new educational policies:

- Respecting children and young people as partners for educational transformation and engaging them formally and informally in educational decisions at all levels;
- Creating spaces in curriculum for innovative, community-rooted, well-being-oriented contents, such as spiritual practices, social emotional learning, opportunities for relational enrichment, play, creativity, nature and outdoor experiences, environmental education, arts, sports, volunteering, service learning;

- Abolishing standardization and high-stakes testing and taking a participatory, collaborative and context-sensitive approach to educational evaluation, including the involvement of children, young people, teachers, parents, and others in the community;
- Prioritizing teachers' well-being and professional development, in particular, to improve their digital and online teaching competencies, and their capability to facilitate co-creative, collaborative and dialogic spaces for teaching and learning;
- Investing in good educational resources and facilities to ensure all children have equitable & consistent access to both in-person and online learning opportunities.

These recommendations will be developed into Policy Brief to be presented to the G20 Leaders Summit in Rome in October 2021. As part of the Global Initiative, politicians also entered into dialogue with adolescents, including Ásmundur Einar Daðason, Icelandic Minister of Children and Social Affairs, who was joined by two teenagers in a panel at the 5th Spirit of Humanity Forum. Minister Daðason suggested that engaging youths in educational policymaking be a priority for all politicians.

2021 G20 Interfaith Forum Global Listening Project:
Educational Transformation & Holistic Well-Being
Voices of our Young People