

“Life Learning”

Conceptual proposal for educational learning processes

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Introduction

The multi-challenge (*refers to multi-crisis / polycrisis / metacrisis*) that we face as a global society in the second quarter of the 21st century invites us to reflect on the way we, humans, through our collective behaviour, have been contributing to its existence. At the same time it offers us the opportunity to re-evaluate the mechanisms of our societies that condition our collective behaviour to directly and indirectly contribute to this multi-challenge.

The interconnection between different challenges such as ecological, social, economic, political, and others, requires a multi-solving approach. More than a re-evaluation, this implies a re-co-creation of different mechanisms of our social systems. One such fundamental mechanism is education and the learning processes offered through its formal and alternative forms.

The mission of this work is to provide tools for an education as a safe space for individual and collective growth and for the co-creation of solutions to the current and constantly changing needs of individuals, global society and planet Earth.

Problem Statement

For the past centuries, most of the formal and alternative educational learning processes of human societies had at the core of their focus the well-being of the social systems, a well-being that today is measured mainly by economic growth. With such a focus, the learning processes have shaped the mental models and the behaviour of the learners to contribute to this well-being as active members of their societies.

At the end of a decadal or multi-decadal learning process, a learner becomes an active member of a social system, and through their contribution (production and consumption) to this well-being focused on economic growth, they also contribute to this multi-challenge.

This focus of education is limited and does not take in consideration the well-being of the environment in which the social systems are embedded and on which they depend upon. The resources that sustain the social systems come from the natural systems and the constant influx of resources required by these do not allow a regeneration of the natural resources. The result

of this lack of consideration is the ecological crisis that we are living through with its many dimensions.

Another missing piece of the focus of education is the well-being of the individuals which is perceived more as a human-resource and less as a human being. The individual is the cell of the society, and the well-being of the society depends on them. A result of this missing focus are the un-conscious contributions (production and consumption) that feed the social crisis with its socio-economic inequalities.

Proposed Solution

The proposed solution is a conceptual framework for educational learning processes that maintains a balanced focus on the well-being of the individual, society and natural environment.

This framework has been named “Life Learning”; it is inspired by life and it can be a lifelong learning process, but it does not refer to “lifelong learning” or “life based learning” concepts and methodologies. It is a framework inspired by ancient cosmovisions and by the work of many contemporary visionaries.

“Life Learning” puts life at the core of learning processes and learning happens based on the understanding of the relationships the learner has with the following expressions of life: the self, society and nature. It is a reminder that “life” in all forms of expression has always been and it will always be the teacher, the classroom, the content and the methodology.

A learning process that has this framework at its core makes learning relevant to every learner regardless of their constantly changing individual context.

Expected Outcomes

The main expected outcome of implementing “Life Learning” as a framework for educational learning processes will be a shift in the learner’s awareness regarding the following dimensions:

- Individual awareness regarding physical, mental, and emotional health, spiritual well-being and material ownership;
- Societal awareness regarding the interconnection and interdependence between all humans as a global community;
- Ecological awareness regarding the interconnection and interdependence among all living beings, between social and natural systems;

With such a shift in awareness the learner becomes a conscious member of the societies they are part of and they consciously choose their role and the way they choose to produce and consume. In the long term, conscious individuals will contribute to the co-creation of socially and environmentally aware societies, which foster healthy individual and collective development with respect for nature and all living beings.

Unique Qualifications

Based on international experiences in education and working with age groups spanning from primary school to adult education, the author became interested in exploring what education with meaning can be and how it can play a role in addressing the causes of the multi-challenge we face, and how it can stay relevant regardless of constant changes.

Working with a variety of methodologies such as “Place Based Learning”, “Project Based Learning”, “curriculum contextualization”, “education for sustainability” and “climate change education”, an understanding of “missing essentials” was reached - at the core of learning processes there are “missing essential” required to address the roots of the multi-challenge that we collectively face.

Addressing the symptoms without addressing the causes will continue to produce the same unwanted results that sustain this multi-challenge. As an answer to it and based on these personal and professional experiences, this framework was created.

Conclusion/Call to Action

The current multi-challenge that we are facing as a global society can be seen as a mirror that reflects our collective understanding of life and our relationship with it as a species. In other words, this is how far we’ve got as a species in this collective journey.

Education has always played an important role in human societies and now, more than ever before, a recognition of life at the core of education is required; the current path is clear, and as we move forward on it without profound changes, we increase the potential of our species to become an endangered expression of life.

This is just one of the infinite possibilities that we have available. The way we choose to act regarding this multi-challenge defines the trajectory of the rest of our collective journey as a species.

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