

Conclusion: Think Twice and Ahead

All the while, we have been contemplating how to bring up our young with global values. Despite the possibility, we have seen the difficulty in agreeing on global values, since values are often mingled with identities of persons, cultures or societies. We are left with the question: Who would really like to forgo his identity completely? I cannot imagine you would like to. I also would not like to. The reason is simple: You are you, and I am I. But now, both of us have a common room – the globe – which is becoming smaller daily due to technological innovations. That means we must definitely meet, today or tomorrow. The chain of the expansion of values associated with identities, ranging from those of the individual to cultures and societies can continue and include the global society. We only have to see ourselves as belonging to this global community – in order to have the common basis for talking about global values. In order to reach there, would you please ask yourself the same question I ask myself: What can I learn from you? Do not ask: what can I teach you? The later question leaves me arrogant with a feeling of superiority, and leaves me closed to new things I can learn from you; but the former leaves me humble and open to see something good in you. It leaves both of us equally pupil and teacher for one another. Such a mentality avails the reciprocity of respect and dignity and can foster our living together in peace.

Every society of the world has its goals and cultural methods for educating the young. By showing how educational psychology can wear African clothes, we just intended to use a little local example to show how these methods and objectives (if positive and successful) can influence the personality of the young. The advantages of this learning must not be restricted to the local community alone, rather must be oriented towards serving the global community. That means, an adequate education and the development of a young person in any part of the world really means an adequate development of the global human community. Guaranteeing the rights and needs of children is the stepping stone to this development in all its facets. The challenges posed by poverty must not be an obstacle.

Children must be handled as persons. Their rights dare not be undermined. To enable us understand the different insights to the rights of children, Guido Pollak¹ differentiated three levels of discussions on the rights of children: The rights of children can be sought at the *level of philosophical discourse* – just like in the philosophical pedagogical anthropology of Rousseau or Kant (which we examined in part one). At this level, “Kinderrechte partizipieren an den elementa-

¹ POLLAK, G., „Ist der Kritische Rationalismus (nur) eine Methode? Zur möglichen ethischen Bedeutsamkeit des Kritischen Rationalismus für die Kinderrechts-Debatte“ in: *Erziehungswissenschaft: Wissenschaftstheorie und Wissenschaftspolitik* (Hrsg. KEINER, E./POLLAK, G.), Weinheim und Basel, 2001, 101-109.

ren Menschenrechten, gehen jedoch auch in einigen mit dem besonderen Wesen des Menschen als Kind verbundenen Merkmalen über diese hinaus.² Here, children have rights by virtue of their participation in human rights; moreover, they need special considerations for being children. Secondly, the rights of children can also be sought at the *level of social scientific theories*. Examples can be found in the child development theories of Piaget or Kohlberg (which we discussed in part three). The third form of understanding the rights of children is codified legally in the national and international laws – like the UN declarations over the rights of children (also discussed in part three). This can take the form of historical analyses and researches into different cultural, religious or political systems of promoting or abusing children’s rights.

Humanity must bring itself together in partnership and solidarity to leave a legacy of values for future generations. Such a world of partnership is a world governed by standards of human rights and responsibilities, a world where the only hunger is the human hunger for learning and creative expression, where the basic needs for food, shelter, and education can be met by all. It is a world where our human adventure unfolds in creative and caring ways, where the human spirit can flourish.³ To move towards this kind of world, the education of our children must enable them to create a more equitable, peaceful and sustainable future. What we have to implant in our children is that, in issue after issue, what is at stake is not white or black perspectives; not European or African or American or Asian or Arabic perspectives; rather, the issue at stake is the *human perspective*. Freedom, peace, equality and global solidarity should no longer be ideological variables for political debates. Rather, they are necessities that must be commonly fought for. The young people must be inspired to actively participate in examining and creating the more humane system of values needed for coexistence and a better future. Humanity must learn to live and survive together.

This demands that we include inter/multicultural learning in the training-curricula in schools and societies. Such transcultural or pluralistic lessons offer the opportunity of global learning, and can help young people become global citizens. In schools, students/pupils can be encouraged to link with kindred/village spirits by engaging in activities that help others in their communities and bring about partnership changes in the world at large.⁴ Encouraging students to become actively involved in their communities and the world is particularly important because students today are much immersed in the computer and the internet. And if they are well educated towards a positive and responsible use of the media, they can influence the world through these media facilities. In fact, through a pluralistic partnership curriculum, young people can be helped to find

² POLLAK, G., *Ibid*, 106

³ See EISLER, R., *The Chalice and the Blade: Our History, Our Future*, San Francisco, 1988.

⁴ EISLER, R., *Tomorrow’s Children, A Blueprint for Partnership Education in the 21st Century*, Colorado, 2000, 199.

common ground with one another. Such a curriculum can help them sort out what in their own and in other cultures promote equitable and caring relationships, as opposed to inequitable and uncaring rivalries. They must learn to apply human rights standards to all persons and cultures. This will save them from falling into the trap of superiority versus inferiority complexes; and also avoid cultural relativism, whereby every local practice tends to be justified on the grounds that it is a cultural or religious tradition. Such a curriculum will reveal to our young people that the primary issue in intercultural contact and assessment is to discover the degree to which their own culture or those of others is oriented towards promoting the sense of solidarity of humanity. On the long run, we are all responsible for making our world a better village, habitable for all; each beginning from himself, his environment and his society.

Our children are our greatest assets for tomorrow. Investing in them is investing in the future of humanity. Part of this investment is to inculcate in them the consciousness that we all belong together as humans, and involve them in the preservation of humanity. They want to learn because human beings are naturally born curious. We see babies eager to learn, to explore everything about their world. Children have a voracious curiosity, a hunger for understanding, a quest for meaning. They have an enormous capacity for all human qualities. As children grow up, they ask thousands of questions. As adolescents, they strive to develop their own ideas and find meaning in life. In short, every stage in the child's development tries to show that at the core of every child is an intact human. We must utilize this quest and teach them values for human solidarity. Kant reiterates the importance of bringing up the young with values. "Auf die Notwendigkeit endlich der Abrechnung mit sich selbst an jedem Tage, damit man am Ende des Lebens einen Überschlag machen könne in Betreff des Wertes seines Lebens."⁵ The relevance is for one in the final analysis, and at the end of life, to be able to look back and count his values and see the worth of his life. I see this as a noble objective; and nobler, when global values are at stake.

From early childhood on, young people have an intrinsic interest in values, in finding out what is rewarded or punished, approved or disapproved. As part of their education, children will learn what is important or not, what is good or bad. In other words, they will learn values. Their education should therefore be in the position to help children acquire human solidarity values by presenting them information in such a way as to help them become aware of how certain unconsciously held beliefs acquired through both formal and informal indoctrinations contradict basic values really needed for human coexistence. It is also essential in their education to let children say what they think, even if the adult disagrees with them. Children must be offered recognition in order to awaken their trust and confidence. The most important thing in education is to open up

⁵ KANT, I., *Über Pädagogik* (Hrsg. von T. Dietrich), Bad Heilbrunn 1960, 52

channels of communication with the young to help them understand what is good for them and for us all.

If we must live together, as we are now destined to, we must recognize and cherish one another and work together for our common good. That is why I hold the sense of human solidarity to be the fundamental “Value-Mental-Set” which will cultivate other values we need for global coexistence. We need to live it and teach it to the young ones. This solidarity must be understood in the context of “live and let live” – i.e. be yourself, and I be myself; but then, we come together and work together for our common good and for our future common destiny. That is what the above mentioned principle of recognition is all about. And our children must be taken on board by bringing them up with such sensitivity for humanity and human environment – recognizing and respecting one another as well as conserving our natural habitat. It is obvious that our values influence and direct our thoughts, feelings, actions and reactions.

The greatest value we can globalize is the act of conscientizing our mental network into cherishing one another. And this must begin at a very early age through global and intercultural education. The idea of having global values is more of a *challenge* than a *solution* to global predicaments. Rather than being an *answer* to global questions, it is more of a *call* to action towards the solidarity of humanity in the just pursuit of values serving the global human family and interests. Our task is to realize this challenge and work towards addressing it. And today’s greatest pedagogical priority, as legacy to the children of our human global community, is to educate the young with the consciousness of this ongoing challenge. The struggle must continue.