

Sangsaeng

Living Together Helping Each Other

WE ARE ALL
IN THIS
TOGETHER

COVID-19 Pandemic and Global Citizenship Education

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EDITOR'S NOTE



Considering the significance of this global pandemic crisis, the 54th edition of *SangSaeng* is published as a special issue focusing on the “COVID-19 Pandemic and Global Citizenship Education.”

The COVID-19 pandemic reminds us all of how interconnected and interdependent we are. No one can be safe alone. The pandemic calls for a better understanding of the world we live in and those various challenges facing us. Reflections on our ways of life, ways of thinking, and the ways to promote global citizenship and solidarity are crucial.

In this vein, through a special initiative of <APCEIU Insights>, APCEIU invited 10 contributors comprising of experts from various fields and global citizenship education (GCED) partners to share their reflections and insights on how we should address the challenges brought on by this pandemic while at the same time, enhancing global citizenship and solidarity. Between April and October 2020, those 10 contributors to <APCEIU Insights> shared their thoughts, stories and insights through the APCEIU email news service – their contributions are compiled in this issue. With the prolonged pandemic still raging, the points of those articles written several months ago still remain timely and relevant today.

In the Special Column, Dr. Hyun Mook Lim, Director of APCEIU, asks “What changes do we want in a post-coronavirus world?” and strongly calls for everyone to fight hate and discrimination, and to practice the spirit of solidarity and cooperation so that we can all overcome this global crisis.

The expanded Focus section covers eight contributors. Professor Soon-Yong Pak reflects on Global Citizenship Education, revisiting such concepts as “citizenship” and “globalisation” and emphasizing that true GCED should be combined with practices. Professor Ilan Kelman asks a fundamental question for the purpose of choosing our post-pandemic world: “What does it mean to be human?” While providing explanations for increased virus outbreaks and pointing out the limitations of the current socio-economic system, Professor Chang-Yup Kim calls for fundamental system changes.

Professor Yonas Adaye Adeto pays attention to the yearning for a peaceful mind amid the global pandemic and proposes the 5P’s for internal transformation. Dr. Virginia Miralao reminds us of the important roles that families, schools and faith congregations play in building communities to overcome this crisis. Dr. Kerstin Forsberg shares her reflections on resilience and sustainability through her marine conservation efforts in Peru.

Professor Lynn Davies presents three imperatives in relation to inequality, racism and social action, and emphasizes the importance of political and citizenship education in times of social unrest. Professor Divina Frau-Meigs explains why media and information literacy (MIL) matters in addressing the pandemic challenges, and introduces various initiatives on MIL in Europe.

In the Youth Network section, several core members of the GCED Youth Network from different regions share their responses to the pandemic as well as stories of global citizens taking action towards achieving solidarity.

All the contributors unanimously point out that the pandemic has affected the vulnerable the hardest and it is important to critically understand and reflect on our common, multifaceted challenges, while calling for transformation and actions to achieve solidarity.

I sincerely hope that this special issue will provide readers with opportunities to further reflect on those challenges and on how we should and can work together to foster solidarity and cooperation as global citizens, remembering that “We are all in this together.”

Please stay safe and well.

Yangsook Lee

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SangSaeng [상생], a Korean word with Chinese roots, is composed of two characters: *Sang* [相], meaning “mutual”[each other] and *Saeng* [生], meaning “life.” Put together, they mean “living together,” “helping each other,” which is our vision for the Asia-Pacific region. *SangSaeng* [相生] aims to be a forum for constructive discussion of issues, methods and experiences in the area of Education for International Understanding. *SangSaeng* also seeks to promote Global Citizenship Education, which is one of the three priorities of Global Education First Initiative launched by the United Nations in 2012.

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Cover: A solidarity message “We Are All in This Together” is written on a handmade sign on a tree with the writer’s name in the street of Westfield, New Jersey, USA. Children in Westfield made similar signs to encourage people going through the COVID-19 pandemic.

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WHAT CHANGES DO WE WANT IN THE POST-CORONAVIRUS WORLD?

By Hyun Mook Lim

(Director, APCEIU)

Something beyond our imagination is occurring. The novel coronavirus is forcing humanity into the greatest crisis since World War II. Even the United States and European countries, regarded as advanced nations, are being hit hardest due to the ongoing pandemic. However, crises sometimes bring about positive changes. The 1918-19 influenza triggered the introduction of national health services in European countries. What changes do we want once the coronavirus crisis has passed? While overcoming the immediate crisis is an absolute priority, we need to look beyond that.

Accelerated globalization over the past several decades has connected the lives of humanity more closely than ever, which means that no single country can be safe alone. COVID-19 has evidenced the stark risk of such globalization. Will market globalism retreat after the coronavirus crisis and will state sovereignty, resource nationalism, and protectionism resurge? Is this change positive? If not, should we go back to pre-coronavirus globalization? In history, crises did not necessarily lead to positive changes. The opposite was often the case. Economic inequality in South Korea widened after the 1997 financial crisis, and polarization has deepened in many countries since the 2008 global financial crisis.

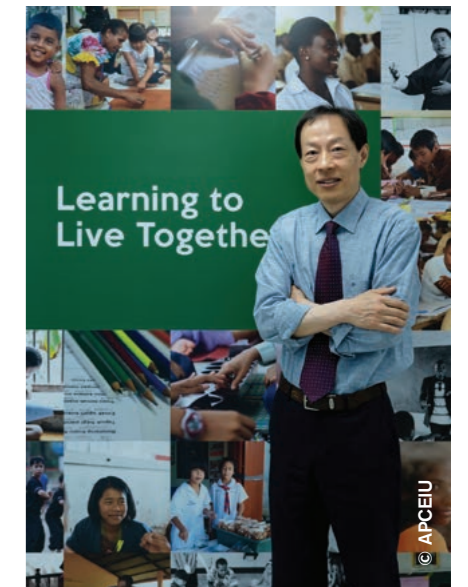
Globalization in Retreat?

Some predict that globalization will recede, and the role of the state will be strengthened again. Actually, almost all countries have closed their borders and blocked the entry of foreigners. Exports of medical supplies have been banned, and global supply chains of manufacturing components have been disrupted. Some countries have halted food exports. Along with these actions, the authority and responsibility of states are expanding unprecedentedly. From forceful lockdown measures to the allocation of workers and resources, countries are behaving much like during the times of war. Some critics fear health fascism. The state is also mobilizing large amounts of public money to provide disaster aid to the people and nationalize companies on the brink of bankruptcy.

Strengthening Democracy and the Public Sector

As we go through this crisis, we feel the desperate need to strengthen the public sector above all. We realize that, at the cost of enormous sacrifices, citizens' health and safety cannot be protected by privatization but by social solidarity and public systems. We must not forget that countries that have cut the number of public health workers and budgets and put public health in the hands of the market are suffering the most in this crisis.

Each country's response strategies and policies inevitably vary depending on its infection control, the medical system, and the political regime. There can be no one-size-fits-all strategy. However, it is



△ Dr Hyun Mook Lim, Director of APCEIU, standing in front of a "Learning to Live Together" banner.

essential to learn from the experiences of other countries. While most countries have declared an emergency and are struggling to slow the spread of the virus, South Korea has succeeded in flattening the infection curve due to its citizens' participation and cooperation without employing coercive measures. The utilization of technologies such as the tracking of movements of those that tested positive also played a significant role in South Korea, but more importantly, the citizens' willingness to cooperate for the safety of the community was paramount to its success.

When disasters and crises strike,



△ A participant of the March of Silence demonstration holding a "Stand Against Hate" sign in Seattle, USA, on 12 June 2020.



△ People wearing masks and keeping distance with each other in a long queue for their turns to vote at a polling station early in the morning on 15 April 2020.

people naturally feel fear first, which is followed by unusual behaviors such as panic-buying. The most effective antidote to combat this fear is democratic leadership. Democratic leadership instills trust in its citizens and promotes civic cooperation. This is because it prioritizes the health and safety of citizens and responds quickly to the needs of civil society in times of crisis. In some countries, the government's coercive responses are temporarily supported by its citizens. However, coercive measures suppress the voluntary cooperation and creative response of a country's citizens and eventually diminish the community's capacity for responding to crises.

In addition, accurate and sufficient information is important. This is also the foundation of democracy. Media reports that blame others and fake news can hinder citizens' responsible actions and undermine the morale of those striving to overcome the crisis. The news media that responsibly deal with an infectious disease crisis are another critical factor that strengthens the public sphere.

Viruses are said to be equal to everyone, but in reality, they sacrifice vulnerable people more. It is the politicians, assisted by scientists, who take special steps to protect them and make decisions to allocate insufficient medical resources for them. This brings to mind

the importance of democracy. Likewise, it is international politics that coordinates internationally assistance for low-income countries with weak medical systems.

International Solidarity and Cooperation

COVID-19 has revealed the vulnerable reality of high-income countries so much so that it is frightening just to imagine how badly low-income countries will be damaged if such explosive outbreaks happen. International support and cooperation for them are desperately needed. However, global governance aimed at tackling the pandemic crisis is not functioning well. Even the strongest nation in the world, the United States, is focusing on its domestic countermeasures. Moreover, European Union countries have failed to show strong joint action.

International solidarity and cooperation could be less robust than before if globalization retreats after the coronavirus pandemic and state sovereignty continue to rise. This is not good for world peace and safety. What we need is not higher walls, but more cooperation.

Sustainable Civilization

Ironically, the COVID-19 crisis has made the skies clean. As lockdowns in many

countries have dampened industrial activities, there is a significant drop in fossil fuel consumption. Fine dust has also decreased. We are in a paradoxical situation where the pandemic crisis helps to fight the climate crisis.

The cause of the continued emergence of mutated viruses such as SARS, MERS, and COVID-19 may be attributed to modern industrial civilization. As animal and plant habitats are destroyed, and the ecosystem is disrupted by climate change, there are more chances for virus strains to spread to humans. In addition, urbanization has concentrated the population, and globalization has led to frequent international movements, both factors that generate a favorable environment for the virus to spread worldwide.

Epidemics are likely to outbreak again in the future. In view of this, while we need to fully reinforce the quarantine and medical system, more fundamentally, we need to reflect on whether our lives are sustainable. The coronavirus may be a "canary in a coal mine" that warns of the dangers of modern industrial civilization, captivated by the tenet of economic growth based on fossil fuel.

The Role of Education

What role should education play for positive changes to be pursued in the



△ A Solidarity Box for the needy people in the street in Turin, Italy. The note with a rainbow reads "Everything will be fine." The note in front of the box says "Those who can, put; those who can't, take."

© MikeDotia / Shutterstock.com



△ A screenshot of the launch meeting of the Group of Friends for Solidarity and Inclusion with Global Citizenship Education (GCED) on 24 May 2020.

post-coronavirus world? What lessons will we as responsible citizens learn and pass on to the next generation in this pandemic crisis, the biggest one since World War II?

Above all, the first lesson should be that fighting hate and discrimination, and practicing the spirit of solidarity and cooperation, is absolutely important in overcoming a crisis. Under the current crisis, some people equated certain groups with the virus; they stigmatized, hated, and wielded violence against them. On the other side, there have been many cases of people showing solidarity and cooperation in order to narrow the psychological distance while avoiding physical contact. Regardless of racial, national, and ethnic distinctions, citizens of the world showed empathy with the suffering of victims, appreciated the strenuous effort of medical workers and quarantine authorities, and did whatever small things they could do to contribute to overcoming the crisis. This

has moved and encouraged us all.

Understanding the value of democracy and the public good, empathizing with the suffering and hardship of those affected by the disease, and practicing solidarity and support, particularly for the vulnerable and underprivileged people and low-income countries with weak medical systems should also be an important lesson. In addition, it will be essential to develop literacy that enables a critical understanding of the information disseminated from social media channels and the press.

Reflections on the sustainability of modern society are also a critical lesson that has emerged from this crisis. The questions the coronavirus is asking us, such as the climate crisis caused by the use of fossil fuels, lives of humanity closely interconnected under globalization and the resulting greater risks and vulnerabilities, and the harmony between the protection of personal information and

community safety, are all important and urgent.

Sharing these lessons and finding their meaning together is perhaps the most important educational task of the time. Global citizens who have developed their capabilities through such education will become agents for driving positive post-crisis changes. UNESCO should further strengthen its efforts to promote Global Citizenship Education in this regard. APCEIU will also continue to contribute to this effort.

I extend my respect and gratitude to medical workers and quarantine authorities around the world who are struggling to fight the crisis even at this moment. I also appreciate the solidarity and cooperation displayed by global citizens sharing common humanity beyond all distinctions and differences. 🙏

REFLECTING ON GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION IN THE ERA OF THE PANDEMIC

Placing Priority on Global Citizenship Education during This Critical Juncture of the Global Community

By Soon-Yong Pak (Professor, Department of Education, Yonsei University)



△ Students participants calling for climate actions at the "Fridays for Future" demonstration held in Frankfurt am Main, Germany, on 22 March 2019.

With the World Health Organization's official declaration of COVID-19 as a pandemic on March 12, 2020, the scope and speed of the formidable virus have brought about a halt in the daily life of the global village amidst lingering fear in an unprecedented scale.

Compared to the recent past experiences of the Zika (2014) and Ebola (2014-2016) viruses, which were also very infectious but regional as they affected mostly Latin America and West Africa and thus did not call for the declaration of a pandemic, the far-reaching case of COVID-19 has brought about an entirely different situation characteristic of a true pandemic.

We are indeed witnessing a real and ongoing global crisis as of May 2020. Moreover, a true cause for concern is at hand if we are to take heed of the warnings from the medical community that COVID-19 may be but one of a series of outbreaks of highly infectious collective contamination cases reaching a pandemic scale to follow in the near future. Because the impact of the pandemic is not confined to health issues but causes ramifications in all spheres - including economy, society, politics, and culture - the global community is at a critical juncture where accelerated changes in social and organizational paradigms are called for in the coming months and years.

Relevance of GCED

With regard to Global Citizenship Education (GCED), the timeliness of the pandemic has made it all the more relevant despite the closing down of borders and a shift toward parochial tendencies. Upon first glance, GCED may sound ironic given the situation that has affected schools around the world, delaying the start of a new semester and relying on online classes even when they are open.

However, if we recall that GCED has emerged in recent years amid the growing need for a conceptual framework for educational practices that address the global concerns on the future of humanity, the discussion on how to converge educational values with global circumstances has become necessary more



△ The first-year students are attending the school entrance ceremony, keeping physical distances with each other, at Seoul Sincheon Elementary School in Seoul, Korea, on 6 April 2020, after the postponement of the school start three times from 2 March 2020.



△ Transparent partitions installed for each desk in the classrooms of Pyeongchon Elementary School in Anyang, Korea, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

than ever before. This may actually be an opportune time to reflect on the meaning implicated in the term "global citizenship" and ponder the possibilities of GCED, which aims to nurture global citizenship based on school education.

As is widely known, GCED began to draw the attention of the international community as the main discourse in

education following United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki Moon's Global Education First Initiative (GEFI) proclaimed in September 2012, which set forth "fostering global citizenship" as one of its three main priorities. Furthermore, international cooperation and commitment to action for realizing the initiative have been widely diffused with the



△ Screenshots of the PNU Webinar on Reflecting GCED in the Time of Pandemic on 17 July 2020 with Professor Soon-Yong Pak (right) delivering a key-note speech.



△ Participants sharing their reflections at the 17th Asia-Pacific Training Workshop EIU held at APCEIU in July 2017.

inclusion of GCED as a key target of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) proclaimed at the UN Summit on Sustainable Development in September 2015 and subsequently in the UNESCO Education 2030 Agenda adopted at the UNESCO General Conference in November of the same year.

GCED Vision

Ultimately, UNESCO aims to create a universal, global educational paradigm that is suitable for the “age of the global village” by helping countries integrate GCED into their educational policies and embrace it as an educational mandate of the global community. Core values that run through the definition and role of GCED can be found in “Learning to Live Together” and “Teaching Respect for All,” which are emphasized by UNESCO.

According to UNESCO, GCED is “a framing paradigm that encapsulates how education can develop the knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes learners need for securing a world which is more just, peaceful, tolerant, inclusive, secure and sustainable. It also acknowledges the role of education in moving beyond the development of knowledge and cognitive skills to build values, soft skills, and attitudes among learners that can facilitate international cooperation and promote social transformation.”

Nevertheless, GCED is not an entirely new creation that came into being all of a sudden under the above-mentioned international initiatives.

In the Republic of Korea, the term “global citizenship” began to appear in

the 7th National Curriculum adopted in 1997 to nurture the desirable orientation of the educated person. In addition, a large share of major topics and contents of the learning objectives of GCED had already been covered in depth in the form of peace education, multicultural education, environmental education, and human rights education for quite a long time in Korea. Such learning contents and activities could be found not only within the schools but also in lifelong education institutions, NGOs, and civil society organizations.

In this respect, GCED should be regarded less as a means to deliver packaged information, but rather be taken as a series of processes that bring together dispersed efforts by multiple parties in different regions and at different levels so as to address concerns on the future of the earth and humanity. Such an approach may allow more effective and coordinated responses to various forms of global crises. In short, the ultimate vision for GCED is to converge parochial efforts to this end so that the global community can search for a common path that will allow educational solutions to emerge.

To this day, there have been ongoing debates among various actors in academia and civil society concerning the plausibility of the “global citizen” concept. It is commonly understood that the concept of global citizenship was conceived from an imaginary sense of solidarity, which transcends spacial, racial, ideological, and linguistic boundaries across regions and states. However, contradictions harboured in the concept of the “global citizen” have been pointed out more

often than not.

Reconciling the Conflicted

The concept of the “global citizen” presupposes “globalization,” a term which manifests both universality and fragmentalization. Such an inherent contradiction within the concept is therefore an unavoidable feature as it encompasses both widespread expansion of, and resistance toward, globalization across far-reaching regions. Furthermore, the most frequently raised issue about the conceptualization of global citizenship is whether the identity of the “global citizen” among individuals could be possible in the absence of a globally governing political structure in the form of a substantive entity. This is also directly related to the problem of how to compromise the cultivation of national citizenship - which is considered as a primary goal in state-led school education - with global citizenship in a post-state, trans-boundary context.

It should be pointed out, however, that oversimplifying the usage of the term “global” forces us to think in a manner based on the binary opposition of “nation” vs. “world,” which may only incite further misunderstanding of the concept. Conversely, the term calls for our attention to a need to establish a coherent concept by reconciling the seemingly conflicting combination of the “global,” a trans-boundary concept, and “citizenship,” which is based on a bounded exclusive collective identity.

To this end, we need to treat the concept “citizenship” not at the dimension of national identity anchored on an

exclusive membership, but with a focus on the sense of responsibility and duty that lead to proper action. In other words, if people conceive the meaning of citizenship around the notion of civic duty instead of civic identity, the term “global citizen” will not appear as disjointed.

Civic duty, which is usually mentioned at the national level, means that individuals extend voluntary commitments and perform duties for the greater cause of the collective they belong to. In this regard, it represents the code of action that puts the community first before individuals, and others before one’s own self.

To apply civic duty to the wider concept of global citizen, we can posit individuals who empathize with global challenges and fulfil duties for the greater cause of humanity as members of the global community. Therefore, global citizenship signifies the ethos embraced by individuals who do not cling to the exclusive collective identity and are willing to extend their boundary of relevance in order to respond to the conditions facing the global village.

Global Paradigm Shift

Entering the 21st century, globalization has led to deepening regional interdependence and interconnectedness; an example is the operating principle of a Global Value Chain (GVC). It refers to the mode of global-level cooperation involved in the whole process of value chains from a product’s design to production to promotion for sales. But, if a pandemic such as the COVID-19 crisis or a return to nationalism causes border closures, the

connecting chains can crumble instantly, putting the whole sequence in a precarious condition. While GVC represents a material link among global actors, global citizenship represents a mental connection. In this context, global citizenship can be regarded as a product of globalization and, simultaneously, a mental mechanism in response to it.

The post-COVID-19 world will be a new challenge, as we may witness a new global paradigm to emerge in terms of how we connect with one another. In this respect, GCED, as a conscious effort to exercise the duties of education in helping people attain multifaceted understandings and critical reflections on the conditions confronting humanity in the 21st century, has become all the more relevant. GCED can present significant educational implications for what should have priority, when we are pressed to select a path to secure human sustainability in times of urgent need for international cooperation, such as a pandemic. That is because GCED is oriented to respond to the contemporary era’s call to fulfil the duties as members of the global village, and as global citizens, moving beyond immediate national and regional interests.

Ultimately, GCED, as an umbrella concept, can shine by integrating diverse educational efforts to achieve a proper understanding of the conditions of humanity and to reflect on the limitations of the current educational terrain that is dominated by statism or nationalism. If it falls short in addressing these issues, it can quickly become relegated to superficial education propaganda, which produces an illusion of pursuing global common good,

while still dwelling on the statist paradigm of thinking.

In the end, meaningful practice of GCED lies in mapping out a blueprint in the field of education that allows us to advance the awareness of the global community for collaborative responses to global challenges facing the world today and to realize common prosperity based on sustainability and righteousness. GCED forces us to rethink our priorities as it promotes educational values leading to conscious choices that forsake narrow-minded thinking and parochial selfishness centred on one’s own culture.

Finally, if GCED is to fulfil its manifested role to the fullest extent, it needs to expose the global community to the realities facing our times rather than resorting to simple idealism or imagined solidarity. The value of an abstract concept such as “global citizenship” can only become meaningful when it is followed by practices that GCED undergirds. Only then will humanity have a fighting chance against global crises that threaten our very survival for decades to come. 🏠

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CHOOSING OUR POST-PANDEMIC WORLD

Applying Global Citizenship to Cure Inequity and Inadequate Access to Basic Services

By Ilan Kelman
(Professor of Disasters and Health, University College London)



△ A sign for the physical distancing of 2 meters apart is painted on the street in London.



△ Health workers wearing protective gear monitor body temperature of people during the health check up camp at a slum in Mumbai, India on 17 June 2020.

The 2020 COVID-19 pandemic has uprooted our lives and livelihoods. Most readers here have engaged in extensive international travel, now curtailed for an extended period. Most of us expect to be able to buy what we need when we want, often being able to afford our choices without too much trouble. We expect to be able to use our income which is certainly hard-earned and deserved to go out for good food with good friends at will, an experience that is now inhibited.

All these are far from the reality of life experienced by most people. Even being healthy and energetic with full stomachs and plenty of drinking and washing water each day is not the typical experience of most people around the world, particularly those who will never have the opportunity to read this article. And when we do not feel so healthy, despite the difficulties with many healthcare systems, we typically have options for seeing professionals to hope for sound advice and a cure.

As we consider our post-pandemic world, seeking opportunities to build up and push forward global citizenship and solidarity, what does it really mean for those who do have few options to lead the efforts? For most of them, the pandemic has meant mainly fewer opportunities for livelihoods and more opportunities to die of illness.

A Fundamental Question

For me, choosing our post-pandemic world involving everyone together is fundamentally asking “What does it mean to be human?” What have we done to our society to reach this situation of calamity? What will we do better? And how do we move forward with the choices we select? Too often, we end up taking comfort in buzzwords, such as “transformation” and “resilience,” which can mean whatever we wish them to mean.

Regarding transformation, we have now seen it. Lockdown, travel bans, and new modes of interacting with people

represent social transformation. It happened exceptionally quickly, from the end of January 2020 when parts of China started lockdown to the end of March when much of the world had adopted some level of measures. We have achieved transformation and it is not pretty.

For resilience, the standard assumption from ecology which has infiltrated many climate change discussions is about bouncing back, or returning, to normal. Do we really know what “normal” means? Is “normal” with or without intercontinental travel at will, with or without social media and unbroken internet connectivity, and with or without the vast amounts of food discarded by supermarkets and restaurants while people go hungry along the same street? These have been the normal in recent times, but are from the normal throughout human history.

I hope that we would not really want to restore normalcy after the pandemic by perpetuating the massive inequities across society fueled by gross resource

overconsumption through the exploitation of people and the environment. Why should we bounce back to the normal in which a tiny minority of people with resources and power, and without much real accountability, make decisions about the lives of everyone else? Surely we should prefer a resilience which is, in effect, the opposite of returning to the pre-pandemic “normal.”

Pandemic by Choice

Much of the pre-pandemic normality created the conditions for a pandemic in the first place and retains prospects for many more pandemics. Examples of our “normal” behaviour are the high speed and vast extent of long-distance travel, the harmful ways in which we treat ecosystems and animals thereby supporting conditions for microbes to jump species, and the gross inequities which force many to live in crowded, unhygienic conditions. That is, pandemics are more about long-term societal conditions and everyday behaviour than about a specific microbe’s traits.

Most fundamental is the state of and access to our health systems. Many countries do not have enough professionals, facilities, or equipment to deal with day-to-day health, never mind during a time of crisis. Some countries do not provide fully accessible healthcare to all their citizens, so people must pay for diagnosis and treatment. This chronic crisis of inadequate healthcare for everyone inevitably invites acute crises such as outbreaks.

Why return to this pre-pandemic state which set up this pandemic disaster and its consequences?

Even the more affluent countries ended up with a dire choice. One choice, taken by many jurisdictions, was to implement lockdown. Society’s functions were overturned in such a way that those most vulnerable and marginalised, and who had the fewest options to improve their situation, ended up even more vulnerable and even more marginalised. The alternative was to permit the virus to spread with a horrendous death rate and again tending to hit worst those who are most vulnerable and marginalised, with the fewest options to improve their situation.

With choices limited to complete

lockdown, mass death, or somewhere in between these two extremes, we have lost already, because nowhere on this axis supports being human. This is not a state we should recover to, when pandemic prevention is possible instead.

Consider, too, what happened in those places which chose an extensive lockdown. Without disputing the thousands of lives (or more) which a lockdown saved, we must be aware of the mental health consequences, such as increased stress, self-harm including suicide attempts, domestic violence, and substance use. All these are poorly treated epidemics within society anyway, depicting yet another normal to which we should never return.

Being human means wanting to solve them; it does not mean stigmatising mental health conditions, brushing over or excusing everyday violence, and creating livelihoods and compensation which are about squeezing the humanity out from the worker ants so that those who do not need it accumulate even more wealth.

We have constructed systems in which, each year, the world spends more than ten times on defense budgets (basically, weapons for intimidating, harming, and killing) than we spend on official international aid. Notwithstanding all the problems with the international aid system, at least it tries to help people. Meanwhile, governments use our tax money to

subsidise the fossil fuel industry at perhaps two orders of magnitude more than governments invest in all forms of disaster prevention, including for pandemics.

Citizenship and Solidarity

So, what does it mean to be human? Here is where the importance of citizenship and solidarity shines.

Citizenship does not refer to having the passport of a country. It embraces the individual, accepting their rights and duties as a constructively contributing member of society to the best of their ability. Ask for help when needed and help others when possible. Enjoy the privileges of living oneself while fulfilling obligations to others. Retain opportunities to have fun without neglecting the hard, dedicated work required to keep society functioning.

Solidarity is not about a specific ideology or opposing one. It is about one catchphrase of the pandemic that “We are all in this together.” We are all human beings together, aiming to stop others from suffering. Responsibilities and freedoms coincide, aiming for the same availability for everyone. As humans, we need to join forces to work with and for each other, against the ravages of lethal viruses and inequities.

Not all of us have the options to consider citizenship and solidarity, indicating the

“

This rampant disease of inequity and inadequate access to basic services can be cured through applying global citizenship and solidarity.

”



△ A street sign board in Raleigh, NC, USA, shows the “We are all in this together” slogan.

need for those who can to generate the opportunities for others. Are disasters such as pandemics one such impetus? Are we rallying around the concept of being human of being human collectively?

Sadly, not always, as seen through examining pandemic diplomacy as one element of the wider concept of disaster diplomacy. Disaster diplomacy analyses how and why disasters might create new peace and cooperation initiatives. In general, unfortunately, they do not, with the same conclusion reached for disease diplomacy.

From a top-down perspective, during the COVID-19 pandemic, too many countries and governments used the virus and the lockdown to either pursue cooperation, something they wanted anyway, or to gain advantage over rivals and to ferment conflict which is useful for them. It is a sad conclusion that disaster diplomacy simply does not succeed in the long-term. Instead, the interests of those with power have too often been about themselves without fully considering the negative impacts on others.

Even the typical vocabulary of the pandemic shows our baseline. The phrase “social distancing” has stuck, rather than using the more accurate “physical distancing” which communicates the important premise that we must remain as social as possible without physical proximity. We heard plenty of talk about

the “exit strategy” from lockdown rather than an “entrance strategy” to a better civilization and a better humanity as the choice for our post-pandemic world.

More optimistically, from a bottom-up perspective, so many people ignored the petty politics driven by self-interest. They reached out to their fellow humans to build a better world.

Throughout it all, health professionals, utility workers, transportation staff, cleaners, trash collectors, those in the food industry, and so many others continued going to work on-site to keep systems up and running for us. Far too many of them died from COVID-19 because lack of preparedness put them at risk, followed by inadequate responses to protect them until it was too late.

This awful way in which essential workers have been treated by the governments they serve mirrors the awful way in which many within the most marginalised populations have been systematically denied basic healthcare and measures to keep themselves safe, during and irrespective of the pandemic. Such mistreatment, though, can happen only in places where these services actually exist. Too many people still suffer the pandemic of lacking basic needs such as clean water, sanitation, hygiene, shelter, community, healthcare, food, education, and many others. We do not wish to re-create this condition of perpetual illness.

Cure All Pandemics

This rampant disease of inequity and inadequate access to basic services can be cured through applying global citizenship and solidarity. For citizenship, if we are not helping ourselves and each other, while being helped by others, then we will simply continue with all the problems identified so clearly. As for solidarity, we are all in this together since injustice to one person or group harms us all. This double-edged cure will contribute to preventing microbe-based pandemics and to resolving the societal problems which created the 2020 pandemic.

To answer the question “What does it mean to be human?” we must choose this post-pandemic world, which favours prevention over cure in ethos and in action. Then, through citizenship and solidarity, we will be tackling the long-term, chronic ills that plague us. From functioning and accessible health systems to mutually beneficial interactions with ecosystems and species, we can do much better than the long-term, baseline conditions which created the 2020 pandemic.

We know that new infectious agents with the potential to kill us are inevitable, but that pandemic disasters are not. It is up to us to create this post-pandemic world by being human. 🌍



△ Ilan Kelman is giving a presentation at the UCL Institute for Risk and Disaster Reduction.

POLITICAL ECONOMY OF COVID-19 AND GLOBAL COOPERATION

Calling on Global, Regional Cooperation and Solidarity for a New System of Collaboration

By Chang-Yup Kim (Professor, Graduate School of Public Health, Seoul National University & Director, People's Health Institute)



△ Students calling for climate actions with a "System change, not climate change" banner at the "Fridays for Future" demonstration in Taranto, Italy, on 27 September 2019.



△ Deforestation and illegal gold mining in Brazil destroy the Amazon rainforest and contaminate the rivers with mercury.

Infectious diseases such as COVID-19 are biological, health, and medical incidents, and at the same time, they are social, political, and economic phenomena. Science for prevention and treatment is closely related to who should be prioritised in the distribution of health resources, e.g., ventilators and vaccines. A country's decision to ban the entry of foreigners is bound to consider the international political economy and quarantine effects. Even individual responses of fear and anxiety are not irrelevant to the socioeconomic system or ideologies such as racism, colonialism, and neo-liberalism at the national and global levels. Such non-pharmaceutical measures as "social distancing" are formulated in social, political, economic, and cultural contexts.

An infectious disease's political economy implicates more than just a political or economic factor that affects or is affected by the disease. For instance,

inequality in health and access to health and medical care services is only one aspect of its political economy.

From the outbreak of an infectious disease to the epidemic, spread, responses, consequences, and impacts, the various phenomena and incidents surrounding infectious diseases we encounter are the overall outcomes emerged from the deep structures involving pathogens, humans, non-humans, and society. The political economy can be an ontological and epistemological pursuit to develop a comprehensive explanation of the emergence process.

Frequent Outbreaks of Emerging Infectious Diseases and Zoonoses

COVID-19 is an emerging infectious disease and zoonosis. Here, the word "emerging" means that a pathogen, which used to be of little harm to humans, has caused a new infectious disease and

attention should be paid to the reasons for its "emergence" rather than "newness." It is because something has changed, and new factors are in play, for what was previously harmless to humans has become a new cause of disease. A new infectious disease would break out due to the changes in the conditions surrounding the infection sources (viruses or bacteria), human susceptibility, or the relations between the infection sources and humans.

Going through the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS), the Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS), and COVID-19, we have become familiar with the term zoonosis. It refers to an infectious disease whose pathogen is transmitted from its natural host of animals to humans which then causes infection. In addition, a zoonosis is not necessarily an emerging disease. For a long time, many human infectious diseases have been of this



△ A screenshot of an online consultation organized by APCEIU to publish a book on the pandemic on 24 April 2020, with a group of Korean experts including Professor Chang-Yup Kim (below right).

category, and such diseases as smallpox and tuberculosis, which we all know well, are zoonoses by nature. Although they have received renewed attention recently due to the outbreaks of SARS, MERS, and avian flu, zoonoses are frequent in incidence, taking over 60 percent of human infections.

Why have zoonoses - which have coexisted with humanity for so long - increased, especially in the form of emerging diseases? We cannot explain it with one or two reasons, but the most convincing one, “upstream” cause particularly, seems to be the surge of contact between humans and animals.

For example, indiscriminate deforestation and arable land development boost close contact between animals and humans, something that has not existed before. Consequently, pathogens in animals are transmitted to humans with new risks. The Ebola virus, which used to live in wild animals that inhabit dense forests, gets nearer to humans as forests disappear and mutates itself in a new environment before encountering humans.

A study of 27 regions in West Africa where Ebola broke out shows a higher probability of epidemics in the recently

deforested areas, supporting the political economy of outbreaks of emerging infectious diseases. The Nipah virus epidemic in Malaysia in 1998-1999, which cost more than 100 human lives, resulted directly from the destruction of forests and the expansion of pig farms.

Eliminating forests, expanding farmlands, and building livestock factories in forests cannot be explained solely by individual economic actors’ market behaviours. A global politico-economic structure exists in the deep of those reality changes. Whether the target or domain concerns farming, forestry, raising livestock, or whatever, it is essentially a direct consequence of the unequal international division of production and labour established on a global scale. Robert G. Wallace and Rodrick Wallace, who studied the “systemic” nature of Ebola, even call this emerging infectious disease regime as “neoliberal Ebola.”

Epidemic and Spread of Infectious Diseases

The current capitalist socioeconomic system provides optimal conditions for a small-scale endemic to spread

and transform into a global pandemic. Mobility and connectedness, two factors that encompass the entire planet, are particularly notable. While the Influenza A (H1N1) pandemic in 2009 took only nine days to spread across the Pacific, it was several months faster than expected, no matter how it was calculated at the time. The same goes for intra-country movements. When the COVID-19 outbreak began in China, domestic air travel spiked up more than ten times, compared to the SARS outbreak.

Now that no country can surpass these conditions, once incorporated into the globalized economic system, such preventive measures as entry bans and lockdowns are impossible and of no use. This “impossibility” is also the case with the issue of prohibiting the entry into South Korea of those traveling via China, which caused controversy in Korea. If the research results are correct, that there were already COVID-19 cases in several European countries before China reported the outbreak of the disease to the World Health Organization (WHO), blocking cross-border movements would hardly mean more than just lessening the quarantine burden.

Furthermore, implementing the policy is next to impossible. Inbound Koreans coming from China hovered at 13,000 per day before the epidemic and close to 3,000 in early February 2020, even after the spread. Most of them are economic actors who have to travel between the two countries for essential business reasons. Is it possible to ban traveling or to enforce voluntary or involuntary separation of so many individuals once admitted to traveling? It is not the science of quarantine, but more of politics, mainly domestic politics, to demonstrate wills and capacity of the nation-states to prevent the spread of infectious diseases.

Urbanization is another critical factor in promoting the diffusion and epidemic of infectious diseases. An exemplary case is the city of Wuhan, China, where COVID-19 emerged for the first time and subsequently spread to other places. The urbanized Wuhan does not merely mean the planar urban feature of a dense concentration of people. It is an industrial production base and regional transportation and educational centre, with various characteristics that makeup a globalized city.

It was not a coincidence that over five million Wuhan dwellers left for other areas before its blockade in time for the Chinese New Year holidays, which was a critical contributor to the spread and epidemic of the disease. Numerous migrant workers have scattered to other regions and countries, becoming the sources of infection everywhere. Fully integrated into China’s socioeconomic system and further, the global capitalist system, the megacity, has the optimal conditions for the spread of infection worldwide.

The political economy of the epidemic and the spread of infectious diseases is integrated into quarantine means and technologies. To take an example, the so-called “social distancing” is one of the powerful ways to contain cluster infections in local communities, but its applicability and extent vary depending on the society’s socioeconomic circumstances.

In a typical capitalist market economy, it is relatively easy to adopt social distancing measures for schools, religious organizations, and leisure activities. However, production activities and workers engaged in them would find



△ Community Healthcare Workers conduct door to door screening for covid-19 in Lebowaqgomo, Limpopo, South Africa, on 26 April 2020, in a bid to minimise the spread of the virus.

it quite challenging to practice social distancing at the individual level. It is because the issue of “power” intervenes in terms of who is to bear the cost of halting labour, in addition to the sustainability of economic activities. A large number of workers in the United States cannot afford to take time off from work, because they are hired part-time or have no paid leave; therefore, social distancing, that is, staying away from work, can hardly be a viable quarantine measure for them.

System Crisis and Transformation Possibility

From the outbreak to the epidemic and spread; responses; consequences; and long- and short-term impacts; the COVID-19 pandemic has revealed our socioeconomic system as its condition and basis. The manifestation will continue to unravel in the coming months and years. Border closure, shortage of hospital beds and equipment, racial inequality, and the impossibility of practicing social distancing are only a few facets of the related phenomena. Most countries have responded to the pandemic mainly as nation-states, while shutting down borders and prohibiting transborder movements. It is fully reflective of the vulnerability of global health governance.

Most countries, including South Korea, have attempted predictions on what a “post-pandemic” era will be like and speculated on the “new normal.” It illustrates that they are well aware of the “systemic impossibility,” i.e., that the current system is too inadequate to respond effectively to the outbreaks of infectious diseases. For instance, the quarantine authorities’ “recommendation” for workers to take sick leave when they are ill is a roundabout technical statement on the need for a new labour system. In a similar context, countries that have refrained from spending on health and medical care under a fiscal austerity policy vow belatedly to strengthen or restore the “publicness” of healthcare services.

From the perspective of power dynamics, the necessity for systemic transformation does not automatically turn around as a possibility. It is questionable whether we could consider the current situation with the system becoming unstable due to the impact of an external factor (a pandemic) as a “crisis.” But we should not forget that the possibility of sustaining or transforming the existing system is almost entirely the outcome of power relations.

If the current arrangement could be regarded as a “morbid state” of crisis in Antonio Gramsci’s notion, existing power



△ "We are all in this together" sign poster in Ann Arbor, Michigan, USA.

groups will continuously struggle to go back to the "old normal." Unless alternative powers manage to formulate a new equilibrium, "resilience" would probably end up only meaning regression to the old normal.

The same is true for the microsystem. Claiming that "K-quarantine" has already made a success, the Korean government (state power) defines biotechnologies, ICT, and public-private partnerships as primary success factors. It perfectly matches the politico-economic interests of the new growth engine policy that

has been put forth in full swing since the 2000s and corresponds to the capital accumulation model pursued by Korean capitalism. In comparison, the power to promote an alternative system, including strengthened public healthcare, seems unsure in its magnitude and foundation.

Although forecasts say that vaccines and treatments will be the key to fundamentally resolving the COVID-19 crisis, without changing the old system, the solution is very likely to benefit only a limited number of groups. The political

and economic interests concerning the development of vaccines and treatments are already well-known, thus do not need a long and detailed explanation.

Like other vaccines and the treatments for neglected diseases, vaccines and treatments for emerging infectious diseases such as COVID-19 often have a small market and low profitability. As the pandemic subsides and enters a stable phase, the momentum for their development will weaken inevitably. Even if vaccines are developed soon as everyone hopes, the situation is unlikely to get much better. The firm structure and mechanisms of the between- and within-country inequalities will continue to play on in the distribution of such limited resources as vaccines.

Nation-state-centered responses to the pandemic are highly likely to reveal their contradictions and implausibility more apparently. Not only can the strictest travel ban stop the spread of infection, but even if it is possible, a country's social and economic isolation can hardly last beyond a specified period. Moreover, it should not be overlooked that the epidemic of an infectious disease in a particular country affects others indirectly in the current global economic system with production and consumption connected with all countries in the world.

The coronavirus pandemic, literally, will not end until it finally ends in every country. That is why global and regional cooperation and solidarity are acutely called for even now. The question is, though, how to construct a new collaboration system now that the existing global governance has revealed its total incompetence and weaknesses. It seems somewhat too early to predict, but at least one thing is clear, the principles of a new global system must be based on the lessons we have learned from the COVID-19 pandemic and our responses.

Perhaps the new relation system should go beyond the international relations composed of nation-states and be anchored as a new global governance based mainly on civic solidarity and cooperation of greater breadth, depth, and strength. In my view, the core principle should be democratic publicness that all global citizens should put into action. 🏠

PEACE IN THE TIME OF GLOBAL PANDEMIC

What Implications for the Global Citizenship Education?

By Yonas Adaye Adeto

(Director, Institute for Peace and Security Studies, Addis Ababa University)



△ Playground closed in Dallas suburbs, USA, during COVID-19 pandemic.



△ Yonas Adaye Adeto conducting a peace education session at the 4th Global Capacity-Building Workshop on GCED at APCEIU on 28 August 2019.

Pace is a positive relation within and between parties. It is a form of love, which is the union of body, mind and spirit; in a more general sense, love is the union of those unions, according to Professor Johan Galtung. Love is the miracle of sex and physical tenderness; the miracle of two minds sharing joy and suffering, resonating in harmony; the miracle of two persons having a joint project beyond themselves including constructive reflection on the union of body, mind, and spirit. Extending this metaphor of love for peace to a community or country, we find that, as Galtung said, “the body is the economy, the mind is the polity, and the spirit is the culture, particularly the deep, collectively shared, subconscious culture,” which is the basis of inner peace. It is this interconnectedness and complexity that constitutes peace.

Peace can also be viewed as an intrapersonal (within oneself) as well as interpersonal (between persons) positive relation. In either case, the condition for peace is altruism, compassion, dignity, equality, equity, love, reciprocity, respect,

etc... not necessarily in this order, though. A structure without all or some of these elements is not giving to others what they deserve and demand for themselves making the realisation of peace difficult. Once these qualities are developed within an individual, they then are able to create an atmosphere of peace and harmony. As Dalai Lama said, this atmosphere can be expanded and extended from the individual to their family, from the family to the community and eventually to the global world.

How can we internally transform ourselves as individuals and nurture inner peace in order to feel at peace with ourselves during the global pandemic?

I propose the **5P**'s for internal transformation of individuals to acquire inner peace, which need to be diffused and permeated to the family, community, the country and to the global level during the pandemic turbulence: These are **purpose** - the rationale behind or justification for us to seek peace; **passion** - our commitment, compassion or dedication to peace; **prayer** - peace transcends the material world, it has a spiritual dimension, it

goes beyond the here and now physical world; **partnership** - peace is relational, like love, peace is expressed in interaction; and finally, **practice** - peace is never passive, like love, it should be expressed in action, it must be seen, admired, celebrated, gently touched, hugged, embraced, caressed, felt, respected, smelt, shared, cared for, lived with, and so forth.

Purpose: Why Peace?

There is an inner hunger and yearning for peace of mind particularly during the global pandemic of the coronavirus. What we currently view through the window of our televisions almost all the times is the death, despise and destruction caused by COVID-19. Before our very eyes on the TV screen, thousands and tens of thousands are buried at times in an undignified manner, reminding us how fragile and frail we are! Deep down we feel completely empty, helpless, and depressed. Hardly anywhere in the world could we turn to for any news of hope, news of comfort, news of positive information, news of peace. We feel completely drained and in

need of filling the yawning gap with inner peace. No food or drink can satisfy that hunger. The evening or morning news are filled with the images of mass graves in this or that part of our world.

We look at our children, the children of our neighbours, and mull over their hopes, and ask ourselves: “Do they have any future?” “Can they ever have peace?” They are all locked down, no more schools, no more plays, all locked in some bitter lessons from the most advanced countries (which could not prove their economic tag of being advanced) in their efforts to stop the spread of COVID-19. Only inner peace and peace of mind do we cry and yearn for now. We know only too well, both theoretically and practically, that it is impossible to imagine any meaningful life without inner peace.

Essential for inner peace, in my opinion, is to maintain positive attitudes towards and relations with the self, others, nature, and one’s own conscience or a Creator. Our quest for inner peace is not only for self-preservation and our loved ones, but also for saving our planet from anthropogenic destruction by ego-centric individuals. The importance of peace in general and inner peace in particular remains evident for its effect on human life and human development. It is this reality, which should be tapped to transformative pedagogy and peace education in Global Citizenship Education. It ought to prepare the young generation to develop their own strategy to nurture inner peace in a time of unexpected crisis and, through time, transform those adversities into opportunity by using skills, passion and capacities from the transformative pedagogy in the Global Citizenship Education classes.

Passion for Peace

Passion for peace is an individual’s psychological resilience, strength and a collective action for peace. Passion is a commitment, which is an engine to gather momentum for inner peace. It can be realised through creative and innovative approaches to peacebuilding through peace education.

To me, passion implies dedication to make what appears to be the impossible possible through creative engagement



△ An unknown girl prays for peace during a street fight with police in government district on 24 January 2014 in Kiev, Ukraine.

in community peacebuilding activities; it means to dare to walk on fire thinking that tomorrow is a better and brighter day, even though today is clouded with the coronavirus pandemic. This way it is possible to imagine peace amid crisis and visible war against an invisible enemy. This is the missing link in most peace studies classes, which I recommend for Global Citizenship Education, so that it prepares the young generation for the uncharted future, the unexpected and emerging global human insecurities brought on by pandemics such as COVID-19, and for future unknown pandemics, by going beyond the here and now and stretching as well as igniting their imaginations.

Prayer: Crucial for Inner Peace

The most effective strategy to build a better life with inner peace, in my view, is to know one’s limitations, acknowledging it, and working to fill that gap. The most remarkable lesson COVID-19 must have taught humanity is or should be that human capacity is limited. Science is limited. Civilisation is limited. Human beings are frail, fragile and vulnerable. Humanity has not yet controlled its fate. Developed as well as developing countries

are almost equal before COVID-19.

In my personal experience, prayer is crucial for inner peace since it is communion and conversation with the Creator, irrespective of the different names we attach. It is directly related to spirituality, which is the deep awareness of something beyond the sum of individuals and it is the foundation for attaining inner peace.

In the words of Galtung, “There is something beyond us.” It is by transcending the here and now, it is by transcending the physical and material world, and it is by going beyond our body and reaching out to our mind and spirit that we can have inner peace during the turbulent times of the global pandemic. This is yet another area almost neglected by our education systems and I, therefore, strongly recommend it for Global Citizenship Education classes because it creates a whole-rounded personality by creating peace within oneself and with others.

Partnership, the Most Essential Antidote for Hopelessness of Daily Life

Peace is relational. We are not just a sum total of isolated individuals. We live because of the inspiration we get from



△ Participants of the 4th Global Capacity-Building Workshop on GCED in group activities at APCEIU on 2 September 2019.

those who went before us and those who are next to us. We are in the network called relations and our task in life is to inspire others. Simply put, we have cascades of inspiration. We are interconnected to each other as the African philosophy, Ubuntu, teaches us. In the words of Archbishop Desmond Tutu, “A person is a person through other persons.”

In the turbulent times of COVID-19, partnership, irrespective of social distancing rules, is the most essential antidote for hopelessness, loneliness, and the dreariness of daily life. In the partnership, we discuss and dislodge some of our heavy feelings accumulated over the day, choked with coronavirus updates of how many people were tested positive, how many survived, and how many died. Inner peace and comfort come when we are in a partnership. Peacebuilding and relationship building entail partnership. Peace by its very nature is relational and isolated individualism is not natural to inner and perpetual peace. This is the very fundamental point for Global Citizenship Education; it is the source of inspiration for learning and living a healthy life as learning itself is life when learners are holistically engaged and when the learning makes meaning for the learners before they practise what they have learnt.

Practice: Peace Is an Active, Dynamic Force

In its meaning and purpose, peace is neither a state of perpetuation nor the status quo. It has nothing to do with inactiveness. Peace is an active, dynamic force. Committing to it as a goal offers an individual or a group the strength to respond to any and all types of violent conflict. Moreover, ideas of peace generate enthusiasm and illuminate the path for humanity’s progress. Being the basic source and centre of peace, communicating peaceful ideas among partners or networks brings a human being out of the domain of individualism and inspires action for the welfare of others, as Albert Einstein and Galtung argue.

Through learned practices and new activities, people move forward on the pathway to peace. Like love, without action, interaction and pro-action, peace does not have life. It requires a new reality from old relations. In love affairs, as a couple metamorphose from isolated and boring singularity to a singularity of the heavenly paradise of a collective and complete life and a new relationship, so does peace metamorphose from turmoil to tranquillity, from insipidity to inspiration, and from darkness to light when it is practised. This aspect of peace

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Peace by its very nature is relational and isolated individualism is not natural to inner and perpetual peace. This is the very fundamental point for Global Citizenship Education.

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phenomenon needs to be included in and reflected on Global Citizenship Education if we mean to achieve world peace that works at individual as well as community and global levels.

Final Thoughts

We need essentially new ways of thinking of peace and adapting it if we are to survive as a human species during the global coronavirus pandemic, as well as after it as a human community on planet Earth. To this end, we must internally transform ourselves by entrenching purpose, passion and prayer as well as a partnership for peace, and by practising peace. We have to learn to celebrate not only the peace elements in our own cultures but also those in others, by celebrating each person’s gift to humanity during the global crisis and beyond.

In the words of Einstein, we must radically change our attitudes towards each other and our views of the future. It is up to our generation to succeed in thinking differently in order to achieve inner peace through internal transformation at the individual level, which is the foundation for peace at the family, community and global levels amid this present or future pandemic turbulences.

THE PANDEMIC STALL OF 2020

Long, Tough Lesson about Contributions of Families, Schools and Faith Congregations to Social Stability, Harmony and Peace

By Virginia A. Miralao
(Former Secretary-General, UNESCO National Commission of the Philippines)



△ Antipolo City, Philippines – 11 May 2020: Local government workers and members of the national police distribute relief goods to residents during the lockdown due to COVID-19 pandemic.

Years and years from now when COVID-19 would be but a blip in the history of human experience, surviving accounts of the period may yet show that COVID-19 pandemic of 2020 stalled the trajectories of world developments and instilled the seeds of long-term social change and transformation.

Within a month after the declaration of COVID-19 as a pandemic, border closures and lockdown measured unrolled country after country until the world came close to a standstill. The developing catastrophe caused the stoppage not only of travel and movement, but of almost all economic activity and forced the closure of schools, offices, churches and public places. Unprepared as the world was for the pandemic, COVID-19 overwhelmed even the most modern health care systems of the developed world, prompting governments to declare states-of-emergencies and mobilize all resources to battle the pandemic.

But just weeks following the lockdowns and amidst the fear and uncertainty wrought by COVID-19, there were some unexpected but heartening developments welcomed by citizens and communities. Among the immediate of these was the improvement of air quality worldwide. By spreading quickly, stopping air, sea and land travel, and curtailing manufacturing and industry, COVID-19 cleared the air and advanced an environmental goal that has eluded the global community. Also, the pandemic began to engender changes in lifestyles as the prolonged “stay safe - stay home” orders stalled people’s “busyness,” causing them to pause and rethink what to do with their time and how to rearrange their lives.

Uniting to Fight the Pandemic

Expectedly, governments took the lead in responding to COVID-19’s outbreak, quickly expanding health care facilities and providing direct financial aid to the populace. Governments also forged partnerships and cooperation with private sector and civic entities to produce and deliver necessary supplies and services, even as other groups and individuals independently embarked on their own



△ Dr. Virginia Miralao at the 13th Governing Board Meeting of APCEIU on 8 December 2015.



△ A colorful handmade sign on the window says thank you to healthcare workers during the COVID-19 pandemic.

assistance initiatives.

Uncharacteristically setting profits aside, big corporations and individual billionaires and celebrities donated huge sums of money to provide food and necessities to the public; build structures to expand hospital and treatment centre capacities; fund research and development projects to speed up the search for a cure and vaccine for COVID-19; and even went as far as repurposing their manufacturing

plants to produce sorely needed supplies and equipment, i.e., face masks, protective shields and the like.

Similar assistance has come from local groups, churches and traditional charities, civic associations and non-profits that organized food aid and assistance programs. Unable to reach their usual markets, farmers offered their produce free or at token prices to the public. Thousands volunteered to prepare, pack and deliver



△ Mumbai / India - 11 May 2020: Migrant workers walk on the highway on their journey back home during a nationwide lockdown to fight the spread of the COVID-19 coronavirus.

food bags and essential supplies to households and street dwellers alike. Artists and those with talents and expertise created online programs to entertain people stuck at home, or provide online counselling to those increasingly disturbed and frustrated by the prolonged lockdowns. Churches likewise went online, live streaming services to their congregations.

Expressing heartfelt gratitude to those health, security and public order personnel for their services and dedication to care for those infected with COVID-19 risking their own lives, citizens the world over organized moving events on their streets and on social media to thank and honour these frontline workers of the pandemic. It was as if the pandemic touched people to the core and evoked in them feelings of compassion and belongingness to one and the same human race.

Damage Done by COVID-19

The foregoing demonstration of caring

and cooperation among different actors notwithstanding, it must be told that COVID-19 hit society and economies very hard, causing incalculable suffering as the numbers of COVID-19 infections and deaths continued to rise. The pandemic too, caused widespread joblessness: unemployment numbers rising in almost all economic sectors. Many of these sectors were growing robustly just before the pandemic, fuelled earlier by the globalization of the economy via bilateral and multilateral agreements that reduced barriers to free trade and other exchanges between and among countries. But crippling the economy, COVID-19 has left countries around the world in severe economic slumps or with barely growing economies.

One might say that the pandemic exposed the strengths and weaknesses of globalization as countries saw the vulnerabilities of their economies to international crises and calamities. Agricultural enterprises that were heavily dependent on

migrant and foreign labour for example, could no longer easily and effectively harvest and process their produce. Manufacturing and industrial plants, many of which are located in the developing world ceased or reduced production as the demand and markets for their products dropped in the developed world. Several other businesses closed down in view of their dependence on component parts or operations produced or undertaken in other parts of the world.

Meanwhile, countries whose economies were buoyed up by migrant labour remittances (like the Philippines), suffered significant drops in income and bore the costs of repatriating their nationals rendered jobless in other lands. The massive loss of jobs and livelihoods from the pandemic have swelled the numbers of the poor, likely creating a new underclass even from among the mainstream and middle class who have lost their businesses and jobs.

In turn, the realization that national

economies are heavily interlinked and that no one country is ever self-sufficient appears to have furthered nationalist and totalitarian tendencies, already evident in a number of governments before the pandemic. At national levels, ideas of rebuilding the economy have turned towards lessening the dependence on external labour, products and markets and increasing self-sufficiency, particularly in the area of food production and the provision of essential services. It may not be surprising then that governments could increasingly turn protectionist and pursue nationalist economic policies to shield their countries from global economic turmoil.

Additionally, one notes that the declaration of states of emergency to battle COVID-19 has justified the stronger powers and roles given to the police and the military to enforce mandated restrictions, curfews and lockdowns, maintain peace and order, and provide necessary logistics for the care and treatment of COVID-19 patients. Inadvertently, this has reinforced the resurgence of “strong leaders/strong states,” also evident in not a few countries before the pandemic. The revival of nationalist and authoritarian tendencies represents a push-back (or a stall) against earlier globalizing trends that promoted mobility and freedom of movement and cross-country and cultural exchanges.

Increasing Social Tensions, Conflicts

Although the pandemic brought governments and other social actors to partner with one another and cooperate to fight COVID-19, this has not sufficiently suppressed ongoing geopolitical tensions and social conflicts around the world. Historical border disputes between and among countries for instance, and issues of territoriality and sovereignty remain sensitive issues that threaten world peace.

Equally concerning are the ideological and economic tensions among the world’s superpowers as they compete for global technological, economic and political dominance. These tensions have not eased and may have been exacerbated by current trends towards nationalism and

authoritarianism, and the politicization of the origins and spread of COVID-19 and its handling by governments and international bodies.

Neither has COVID-19 diminished occasions for conflicts arising from longstanding class differences and the increased differentiation and diversity of societies that came with modernization and globalization. Some of these differences have evolved into today’s ideological and “culture wars,” and are evident in the debates over such issues as ethnic, racial, gender and religious diversities and rights.

The non-resolution of these conflicts have erupted into street rallies and protest actions around the world, despite the COVID-19 lockdowns and prohibitions against mass gatherings. These protest actions (organized in defence of freedoms, democracy, human and sovereign rights, and other related causes) have at times turned unruly and violent, surfacing deep-seated differences that fuel extremism, partisanship and the polarization of the body politic.

These also highlight the difficulties in arriving at a common understanding on global issues among people of varying cultural backgrounds and countries of widely differing viewpoints and perspectives. The continuation of these conflicts not only feeds geopolitical tensions but also distracts governments’ attention from the complex problems unleashed by the pandemic.

Challenges of Rebuilding, Recovery

Extensive as the damage of COVID-19 has been, it also had some beneficial consequences such as the improvement of the atmosphere and environment. The pandemic also brought into focus opposing social tendencies towards cooperation and unity on the one hand, and towards discord and division on the other.

The success of countries and the world community in ending the pandemic, reviving economies and restoring regularity to social life, depends in no small measure on their ability to manage tensions and conflicts and rally public support and unity to move their countries forward.

There is no telling how the recoveries of societies and economies will go, but it is generally accepted that there will be no return to “business as usual,” signifying the evolution of new norms and practices in a post-COVID-19 world. It is also acknowledged that the rebuilding of societies towards a “new normal” is fraught with huge challenges that can exhaust available resources and exacerbate existing fissures and divisions within and across countries.

The biggest challenge is on the economic front as governments deal with massive unemployment and worsening destitution, poverty and inequality.

On the health front, and despite expected scientific and medical breakthroughs in dealing with COVID-19, a huge challenge lies with the rise of pandemic-related hunger and diseases expected to increasingly follow in the disease’s aftermath. Health needs can easily outstrip public health provisions and strain the delivery of humanitarian aid to already poor, conflict-ridden and pandemic-stricken places and regions across the globe.

On the education front, educational institutions must find ways to minimize the disruption of schooling following the school closures during the lockdowns. Although much progress has been made possible by digital technologies in distance education and in the conduct of educational programs online, the education sector faces difficult challenges in adjusting school calendars and curricula to changed schooling systems and settings, while also taking into account the differential access of localities to the internet and online learning.

Finally, today’s highly differentiated and socially, linguistically and demographically diverse societies have left the world with fewer commonalities and guiding norms and values to govern individual behaviour and social life. Differences in viewpoints among groups of varying social classes, ages, genders, ethnicities, races and religions are fodder for conflicts and social unrest.

As politicians, activists and interest groups get naturally drawn into these conflicts, these soon become polarizing and politicized. COVID-19 may have

“
The COVID-19 experience points to the role of other social institutions, family, education and religious institutions outside of politics and government, working to keep societies intact and assisting people through difficult and trying times.
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△ Antipolo City, Philippines – 29 January 2020: Catholic men and women kneel down and pray inside the Antipolo Cathedral of the Our Lady of Peace and Good Voyage church.

exacerbated these disruptive and divisive processes within and across countries, leaving governments hard-pressed to maintain social order and unify the citizenry behind the pursuit of urgent socioeconomic measures and reforms.

But, on the positive side, COVID-19 brought people together to share and commiserate with one another at a time of common suffering - preventing societies from falling apart or into varying states of anomie and dysfunction.

Since conflict and contestation are in the nature of politics, governments are not well-positioned to unify and effectively govern in crisis situations. And here, the COVID-19 experience points to the role of other social institutions, family, education and religious institutions outside of politics and government, working to keep societies intact and assisting people through difficult and trying times. One notes that it is more in the nature of families, schools and faith congregations to build communities, prepare children for adulthood, and impart values of caring for and respecting “the other,” and living harmoniously together.

Schools for instance, play important roles in promoting civic-mindedness and ideas of the common good. Drawing

lessons from COVID-19, schools can enrich educational content to further awareness of today’s contending global issues. Lessons in civics, history, social studies and other subjects can delve into the historical and cultural contexts surrounding the emergence and development of these issues, and their interpretations by various publics. A more informed understanding of these can prevent knee-jerk reactions to conflicts and foster appreciation of difference and dialogue.

Families provided the first line of support - material, emotional and psychosocial - to household members during the lockdowns. It is within families that members are rooted (versus simply being networked) in primary ties and relationships that sustain individuals and communities at large.

Churches and faith-based organizations on the other hand, have long engaged in charities and the provision of a range of social services particularly to the needy and disadvantaged. During emergencies like the COVID-19 lockdowns, they are known to mobilize quickly and bring assistance to large numbers of the public. This is on top of their primary mission of growing the faith of their members and attending to their spiritual

needs.

Like families, churches and faith groups provide comfort and psychosocial support to individuals and build a sense of community amidst turmoil and difficulties. But considered as constituting private and individual concerns, discussions on the value of families and religious faith in sustaining the social fabric have been pushed out of the public square. In the run-up to rebuilding a post COVID-19 world however, it may be time to revisit the contributions of families, schools and faith congregations to social stability, harmony and peace. 🏠

Dr. Virginia Miralao is a sociologist. While serving as Secretary-General of the UNESCO National Commission of the Philippines, she was also a Governing Board member of three UNESCO centres, including APCEIU. Previously, she served as Executive Director of the Philippine Social Science Council, among other positions.

MARINE CONSERVATION EFFORTS IN UNCERTAIN TIMES

Challenges, Lessons on Resilience

By Kerstin Forsberg (Director, Planeta Océano)



△ Kerstin Forsberg speaking at the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting in Davos, Switzerland, in January 2020.

Early this year, while I was attending the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting in Davos, Switzerland, I heard about a newly discovered virus that could rapidly spread into a devastating pandemic. A friend told me about the outbreak; I had no clue how my life was about to change.

For more than a decade, I have been working to scale-up the efforts of Planeta Océano (www.facebook.com/planetaocean) that engages coastal communities in marine conservation through research, education and sustainable development initiatives. To achieve this, my specific work these recent years has been to balance my activities on the field with a schedule packed with international meetings. Although I had always strongly questioned my travel footprint, these opportunities had certainly strengthened our conservation impact. After the meeting in Davos, I returned home to Lima, Peru, and started planning for my next conferences while envisioning my work for the year ahead. Yet, abruptly, all my events were cancelled; my daughter's first-grade classes changed to home-schooling and I found myself under a strict lockdown without the possibility of leaving home, which has so far lasted for over seven months.

Our flagship Manta Ray Project encompasses fieldwork and data collection and is greatly supported by Earthwatch expeditions (<https://earthwatch.org/expeditions/protecting-perus-giant-manta-rays>) and international volunteers. But, the project was put on hold due to travel and tourism restrictions. Suddenly, as the leader of a small non-profit, I began my continuous challenge of balancing home-schooling with fundraising, team management at a distance, and continuing to implement impactful initiatives without being able to go out into the field. Despite budget constraints, I fought to keep supporting our core staff, hoping that these challenges would make us stronger.

While we are fortunate that our team and families are healthy and safe, with an already fragile medical system, Peru has become one of the most heavily affected countries by COVID-19. The economic impact of this crisis has been devastating

for almost everyone, perhaps even more so for small non-profits across the globe.

Although the lockdowns were sometimes initially referred to as a measure to support the recovery of nature by decreasing habitat perturbations and emissions, the truth is that the pandemic has only underlined the environmental challenges we are all facing at several levels.

In terms of waste and pollution, the increase in protective gears and masks has led to an increase in unmanaged waste disposal flooding our streets, rivers and our oceans. According to the BBC, elastic straps from face masks have been found entangled with fauna, and campaigns calling for the responsible disposal of face masks highlight the need to cut these straps to prevent wildlife entanglement as well as utilize reusable and washable masks whenever possible.

Single-use plastics were already a huge concern even before the pandemic, with plastic pollution causing severe challenges to our ecosystems' health. In many cases, the pandemic has further incentivized the use of more plastic packages, as people opt for more take-out and delivery services and avoid goods bulk bins, amongst others. For example, the initial strict lockdown in Peru had paused the county's recycling systems, creating a challenge for adequate waste management and local recyclers.

But, even beyond these easy-to-see environmental impacts brought on by consumer behaviours, the environmental agenda has been severely challenged this year.

Challenged Oceans

Previously, everyone thought that 2020 would be a "super-year" for the world's oceans with many critical events planned, such as the 2020 United Nations Ocean Conference. Yet understandably, lockdowns postponed events, international negotiations, and decision-making. Environmental organizations worldwide have been confronted with challenges in attaining their goals, with reduced incomes, the reduction of personnel, and project delays. Furthermore, reduced enforcement has opened the door to

illegal practices such as illegal fishing or hunting.

Soon after I started my quarantine, I received calls from fishermen in northern Peru reporting on the illegal harvest of giant manta rays, a species we had worked hard to get legally protected (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4OwS7QxhCE>). Mantas were now being exposed to furtive capture due to limited government enforcement caused by the country-wide lockdown.

In short, a combination of all challenges we have faced during the pandemic has decreased our global capacity to "conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources," as stated in the UN's Sustainable Development Goal 14 or SDG 14; as well as our capacity to support all other Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through a healthy ocean (an approach referred to as SDG 14+).

With this, I would like to highlight the importance the oceans have on every person living on this planet. The oceans are our planet's main life support system; it regulates our climate, provides over half of the oxygen we breathe, sustains livelihoods and food security, and makes our planet habitable. We all depend on the oceans, even if we have never seen them.

Thus, it is critical that we all understand our impact on the oceans and the oceans' impact on us; in other words, that we all become what UNESCO calls "Ocean Literate" (<http://oceanliteracy.unesco.org/>). However, our oceans have been continuously exposed to threats such as over-exploitation, pollution, climate change, have notoriously been under-explored, and investments in ocean resilience are far from what one would expect for the planet's main life-source.

Affecting Humanity

With marine environments and local livelihoods at greater risk due to challenges arising from the pandemic, it has also become clear that minorities, vulnerable and disadvantaged populations, such as small-scale fishers, women and youth, amongst many others, have been further exposed to the previously existing inequality gap.

As we move forward, all of us must



△ Ballestas Islands, Paracas National Reserve, is the very first Marine Conservation center in Peru.



△ Encounter with a giant manta ray in northern Peru during one of Planeta Océano's Earthwatch expeditions. Virtual experiences are now being designed for this project

understand that a healthy ocean is critical to achieving the SDGs. Likewise, through a “blue” approach, all other SDGs can greatly contribute to our oceans. This includes, but is certainly not limited to, achieving climate action for the oceans (SDG 13), incorporating ocean literacy in quality education (SDG 4), and improving local sustainable fisheries for economic growth (SDG 8), among so many others.

As we rebuild our nations from the pandemic, it is more important than ever to invest in a Blue Economy and recovery. If we fail to do so, it will increase environmental challenges and inequality.

While under lockdown, I suddenly found myself witnessing how countries could potentially risk fragile environments as they struggle to rebuild their suppressed economies. I observed how an existing port near one of Peru's most iconic Marine Protected Areas, the Paracas National Reserve, was intending to store and transport ore concentrate near and

within the reserve, an operation that could potentially affect local ecosystems and livelihoods, as reported by Fortune magazine. In a coalition with others, I soon embarked on a new pursuit: trying to protect the Paracas, hoping to promote a sustainable blue-green recovery.

Implementing conservation efforts in these uncertain times has certainly been challenging globally as well as at the individual and organizational levels. However, we need to strengthen our environmental efforts now more than ever. All of us should ensure sustainable consumption and lifestyle patterns and behaviours; funders invest in ocean resilience; decision-makers note the critical need of a sustainable blue recovery. It has become clear that the loss of nature can contribute to the proliferation of pandemics. The current global crisis is a reminder of our society's dysfunctional relationship with nature.

Despite difficulties, this year has

hopefully opened our eyes to things we need to learn and improve, while showcasing things we used to take for granted. My own lockdown experience has allowed me to reframe the way I think, question, and act. It has taught me lessons on resilience, both at the personal and organizational levels, as I work forward for sustainability.

Creativity is Key

For over half a decade, my team and I have been working to engage local fishermen in leading community-based giant manta ray ecotourism, thus helping to increase the value of this vulnerable species' life rather than harvesting them. This majestic and harmless species, reaching up to 7 meters from wing tip to wing tip, is vulnerable to extinction globally.

Although mantas were previously hunted in Peru, our collaboration with local communities, partners and

government officials led to the legal protection for this species in Peru, an effort that supported the development of local ecotourism. Building upon our collaboration with the local fishing industry, fishermen would take tourists out to swim with giant manta rays. It has contributed to citizen science and the monitoring of this species in addition to supplying fishermen with an income and a livelihood.

However, with tourism suddenly cancelled, our efforts and progress immediately collapsed. I could only feel the need to search for new alternatives for this program, perhaps even beyond what could be initially recognizable.

Since then, we have been seeking to design an innovative online platform where anyone from around the world could potentially connect with those fishermen and learn about mantas, a service we hope to launch very soon. In this process, we have noted how this

platform could be replicated to other areas and further help increase resilience and income of the low-income communities that depend on the ecotourism.

Similarly, we soon started tapping into technology platforms we had not fully used before. During this lockdown, our in-person workshops turned into radio campaigns and our school activities into national and international webinars for all. Our fieldwork with fishermen was replaced by an online forum that expanded information exchanges with fishermen sharing their stories of sightings and releases of threatened species (<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=327985535287775>).

These processes have shown me how challenges can open one's mind to new possibilities and creations, and wider opportunities and engagements. In many cases, challenges can press creativity beyond boundaries, leading to even greater results.

Leverage Power of Networks

Although many global events were challenged or postponed, the global ocean community still proved to be strong and resilient, with many discussions now taking place online. During a webinar I attended during the lockdown, I learnt that what we really need to practice and refer to more is physical distancing rather than social distancing, as collaboration is even more important at the current stage we are living in. When I heard this, World Ocean Day (June 8) was two weeks away, and I found myself returning to a dream I had for some time: creating a video with young voices from across the world, showcasing the importance of the world's oceans.

Despite the short time frame, I reached out to international friends and partners, inviting them to join and collaborate on this video. In only two weeks, we united 102 children's voices from 44 countries for our World Ocean Day Video (<https://>



△ Fishing community in Tumbes, northern Peru, prior to the pandemic. Community engagement and youth-led initiatives in Tumbes are core to Planeta Océano's work

www.youtube.com/watch?v=cwGbtbG-Epzc) that we posted on YouTube. The video features the children calling for a “new normal” for our planet and asking adults to build a world that respects nature. Children explained the importance of the oceans and nature for their health and life, and the actions that they expect to be carried out by adults as they rebuild society. Some of them mentioned: “this year has been difficult for us,” “we have been patient,” “we want to grow up in a planet that is different,” and “now you have a second chance, please don't let it slip away.”

This video represented a greatly needed message of hope from our children. They trust us to give them a renewed world and we cannot let them down. Furthermore, this effort also showed how we can always take a step further to fully leverage our networks. Convening so many voices in such a short time showed the power of what we can all do together.

Look through Positive Lens

Building upon Planeta Océano's ten years of work in marine education, in the past couple of years, we started framing our 'Connecting Schools' initiative, which aims to scale-up our educational efforts by bringing together youth from

different countries and communities through online technology and community action. Our program is focused on guiding the youth through a series of modules in which they learn and research about coastal and marine environments and the local challenges faced by these environments.

Participating youth are guided to design and implement a youth-led initiative that aims to contribute towards solutions while gaining experience in project development, enhancing critical thinking skills and environmental leadership. Throughout this process, the youth are paired with peers conducting the same program in another geographic locality. Peers learn from one another and develop fellowship, collaboration skills and global citizenship so critically needed for our shared oceans.

With distance education suddenly being the new norm, establishing our Connecting Schools model became even more relevant and timely. Although technology gaps are still a pressing issue in many locations worldwide, given internet access at home, students can connect across borders, recognizing how we all share the same oceans.

We are confident that this initiative can help contribute to ocean conservation, provide skills for youth professional

development, and support peace education. As we now look forward to growing this new initiative, I notice how our current challenges can become opportunities. Although we can all fall, we have the strength to stand stronger.

Celebrate the Simple

Despite the current environmental challenges, I am optimistic that collaborations, innovations, and commitments throughout the world will move forward efforts for a more sustainable, resilient, and healthy oceans. I am excited, for example, for the upcoming UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (<http://www.oceandecade.org/>), which will take place from 2021 to 2030. As a mother of a young girl, I look forward to the next decade of Ocean Action and what this will greatly mean to my daughter.

One day during my lockdown, I was attending an online meeting for this UN Decade with my daughter home-schooling beside me. As this was happening, I realized that spending more time at home has allowed me to further value what is most important to me as a person, appreciate every single detail of the environment surrounding us and build this into my life and work; to focus on what I previously overlooked and allocate time to write, analyse and be strategic. It has also helped us value our efforts' human component, as we engage with others who are also at home. All these personal connections and learning processes will certainly benefit our work in conservation. Likewise, our work in conservation will continue to enrich our own individual experiences.

Ultimately, this lockdown has shown me how humanity took many things for granted before the pandemic: our resources, surroundings, and communities. At an incalculable global cost, what we have all gone through will hopefully shed light on things we now need to change. Although this year has been particularly challenging for conservation and the environment, I hope that coping with the challenge will only make our efforts stronger by helping us build resilience and gain perspective. 🏠

PLAGUE, PREJUDICE AND PROTEST

Role of Education in Fighting Hatred in a Pandemic World

By Lynn Davies

(Emeritus Professor of International Education, University of Birmingham, and Co-Director, ConnectFutures)



△ Students in the Female Headed Households programme in Somalia

Writing in September 2020, one's gaze both backwards and forwards is unprecedented. Because of COVID-19, the past few months have seen an almost unique upheaval globally; the future is unknown but likely to be equally unmatched. Across the world, schools have been closed, people have lost jobs and livelihoods, and the harsh economic and social impact is yet to be evaluated. "Recovery" and "normality" are only visions.

So how can one even begin to make prescriptions about the role of education - nationally let alone globally? This article offers three imperatives relating to inequality, racism and social action - based mostly on not making things any worse, while possibly sharpening up educational responses to turmoil.

Inequality: Poverty, Displacement, Gender

The first most obvious task centres around inequality. While schools across the world have been trying to maintain some educational contact through online teaching, it is feared that children already disadvantaged will become more so. This includes those who do not have access to the internet, or where a family of eight shares access to the sole mobile phone, or, as always, where there are no books in the home. Libraries are shut. While innovative work is being done through television and radio, this requires electricity. But a UNICEF report says that poverty also seriously affects access to electricity. In seven least developed countries, less than 10 per cent of the poorest households have electricity.

Nonetheless, we can draw inspiration from efforts by organisations such as Africa Educational Trust (AET), who work in the poorest regions of Africa. Where there is connectivity, they have been able to deliver training to head teachers, community education councils and project officers through Zoom, with the training that includes child-centered pedagogy, disaster planning and resilience - including safe back to school measures post-COVID-19 and the protection of vulnerable children and adults.

When there is little connectivity, outreach workers and local networks



△ A screenshot of Professor Lynn Davies being interviewed during the Second UNESCO Forum on Global Citizenship Education (GCED)

come into play. In Kenya, parents of school children can visit those outreach organisations by making appointments, using social distancing and hygiene practices, to pick up home learning packs and nutritionally enhanced porridge powder to help them survive.

We have to remember that COVID-19 is not the only disaster in Africa. In Kenya, they have suffered from the worst locust swarm in living memory, devouring all crops; in Somalia, floods displaced over 250,000 people in March and a rise in fighting between armed groups in South Sudan resulted in over 250 deaths in one week in early June. Whilst facing all these challenges, people that AET talk to on the ground still maintain that education is the only way that they see themselves getting out of poverty.

With the economic impact of COVID-19, we will see increased migrations and refugees. Children who are displaced across or within borders already are more likely to have their education disrupted. Refugees can be stigmatised. Girls in conflict-affected settings are even more adversely affected. According to World Education Blog, organisations such as UNICEF and Mercy Corps have been 'reimagining' education and devising a whole array of platforms to deliver lessons and find inclusive learning apps.

But disadvantaged girls are at the most risk. Without the protective school environment, COVID-19 menaces the education, health and wellbeing of girls. With increased poverty among families and limited social protection, parents are increasingly likely to marry their daughters

at a younger age as a negative coping strategy. This increases the risk of female genital mutilation (FGM), child marriages and subsequent permanent dropouts from schools. Families in Somalia are taking advantage of school closures to carry out FGM so that girls have time to recover from the ritual, which can take weeks. FGM of course takes place in many other countries, including wealthy ones. The protective role of schools is at a premium. Vigilance is so much more than just stressing hand-washing and social distancing.

Nationalism, Racism, Extremism: Spread of Infodemic

Any emergency generates fear, threat and a culture of blame. Conspiracy theories abound regarding who, what and which country is responsible. So educational efforts on media literacy and fake news have a key importance now. Habits of questioning what is read and seeking for evidence become vital. The great problem in these COVID-19 times is that the evidence seems to change, whether face coverings protect people, what exact social distance is necessary and whether a vaccine is possible. There is likely to be the growth of an anti-vaccination movement, as we saw with the measles and, in some countries, polio. Hence, the role of education is to dissuade against kneejerk reactions based on fear and to encourage the scrutiny of available science.

Frighteningly, we are seeing greater explicit racism and prejudice. When the Chinese are blamed for example, there can be attacks on anyone who is or looks



△ Black Lives Matter Peaceful Protest in Hoboken, New Jersey, USA, on 5 June 2020

Chinese. In the United States, many individuals, particularly those from East Asian backgrounds, are reporting more experiences of racism and xenophobia.

A Canadian survey conducted by Angus Reid in June 2020 revealed that almost one-third of Chinese Canadians reported being physically attacked due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In parts of Europe, the racism against Roma communities has increased with accusations of the community spreading disease. This is the collective danger - a license to unleash racism against stigmatized groups.

What is happening is that extremist groups are using the opportunity to spread their hatred. This is part of what the World Health Organisation calls an "infodemic" - the massive spread of misinformation and cybercrime relating to COVID-19.

The Commission for Counter Extremism in the United Kingdom published a report on July 9 revealing how hateful extremists of all spectrums, including neo-Nazis and the far right, have been exploiting the pandemic to launch

broad misinformation campaigns that aim to sow social discord. They have promoted racist and xenophobic narratives on social media platforms that aim to incite violence against minority groups, such as urging their supporters to intentionally infect Jewish and Muslim populations with the coronavirus. Other groupings have also been fingered by neo-Nazi groups as a danger; whether refugees, LGBT individuals or elites. Fringe extremist and fringe health groups are mingling dangerously in this infodemic.

Conversely, from Islamist groups, the apportioning of blame is varied. The "crusaders" in the United States are held responsible for a wave of atheism and immorality that has allegedly provoked punishment by God in the form of the pandemic. According to the Politico, the Islamic State (ISIS) is telling terrorists to steer clear of coronavirus-stricken Europe. Those who believe they might have contracted the coronavirus are told to stay away from areas under ISIS control in order to preserve the health of others and fulfil the "holy obligation of taking up the causes of protection

from illnesses and avoiding them."

Elsewhere, it was reported in The Conversation (a network of not-for-profit media outlets) that an Islamic State group online publication in India has called for its supporters to spread the coronavirus, saying "every brother and sister, even children, can contribute to Allah's cause by becoming the carriers of this disease and striking the colonies of the disbelievers." In Nigeria, according to the British daily newspaper The Guardian, the leader of the Boko Haram breakaway faction of extremists has released an audio clip claiming that his brutal version of Islam was an "anti-virus" while portraying the social distancing measures that have closed mosques as an assault on the faith.

Hence, media literacy has an intensified role of enabling young people to work their way through the large number of conflicting messages and politicised strategies on a pandemic. Teachers need support in their role of recognising hate speech and how to report it, whether online or offline. Students also need



△ ConnectFutures Safe Space discussion with a former extremist

support in recognising misinformation, open or hidden xenophobia and the tactics of extremists.

Social Unrest and Protest

Finally, we are seeing a confluence of the impact of both COVID-19 and protest movements. The Black Lives Matter movement has swept across many countries, with different facets - from statues of slave traders being toppled, to the exposure of how BAME (black and ethnic minority) people are more likely to be affected by COVID-19 because of historic racism and deprivation, differential access to health care and differential representation as frontline workers in hospitals and care homes.

Foreign Policy magazine, a U.S. news publication, reported that in parts of Latin America, COVID-19 initially dampened down protest movements - for social media cannot replace social mobilisation - but they are likely to re-emerge with increasingly vulnerable and disaffected populations.

A recent analysis by Verisk Maplecroft, a global strategic consulting firm, predicts that protests are likely to surge globally. The economic shock of the pandemic coupled with existing grievances makes widespread public uprisings “inevitable.” Thirty-seven countries, mainly in Africa and Latin America, could face protests for up to three years. But the risk of unrest

in other countries including India, Brazil, Russia, South Africa, Indonesia and Turkey are only slightly less acute and still constitute a threat to stability. In 2019, Verisk Maplecroft recorded 47 countries with a significant uptick in protests, including Hong Kong, Chile, Nigeria, Sudan and Haiti. As reported in The Guardian, more turmoil is predicted in 2021.

When schools fully reopen (if they do), this may lead to a new world of unrest. Teachers need to be aware of how protests are triggered, and how to discuss with students both the causes and effects of these protests.

Civil disobedience takes different forms and is responded to in different ways and in different countries; the responsibility of teachers is to try to keep students safe, yet at the same time, not avoid discussions that examine the root of conflicts or grievances and what protests do or do not achieve. This includes warnings about how protest movements get hijacked by extremists: for example, far-right white supremacists have seized the opportunity to mount counter protests about White Lives Matter, with inevitable outbreaks of violence across groups and with the police, according to the Southern Poverty Law Center, a nonprofit legal advocacy organization in the United States.

Vigilance and Action

The intersections between inequality, racism and violent protests have been amplified by COVID-19. The role of schools has become equally intensified. On the one hand, they have an opportunity and responsibility to build on any benign aspect - that many communities have actually demonstrated greater coherence, providing food and supporting each other across ethnic, social class and age lines. Schools and agencies across the globe have had to develop innovative ways of accessing the hardest to reach. Yet major challenges remain and will get worse.

It is vital that schools continue to fight hate speech and propaganda, enable young people to extend skills and vigilance in what they read online, and not thinkingly or unthinkingly contribute to racism, antisemitism and Islamophobia through what they themselves post, what they share or “like.”

Yet the task is more than media literacy. The slogan of the Holocaust Memorial Museum is highly relevant here: “What you do matters; what you fail to do is critical.”

In times of social unrest, informed political and citizenship education becomes central: for example, how to protect the self and others, how to protest against injustice or corruption, and how to create social change without violence.

MEDIA AND INFORMATION LITERACY MATTERS IN PREPARING FOR POST-PANDEMIC WORLD

Casting Light in Out Reaches of Minds Empowers to Respond, Provide a Counternarrative to Disinformation

By Divina Frau-Meigs

(Professor, Sorbonne Nouvelle University & UNESCO Chair “Savoir Devenir in digital development: mastering information cultures”)



△ In the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, there is an urgent need to address the challenges of disinformation and discrimination as well as health crisis.

COVID-19: Disinfodemic Insights

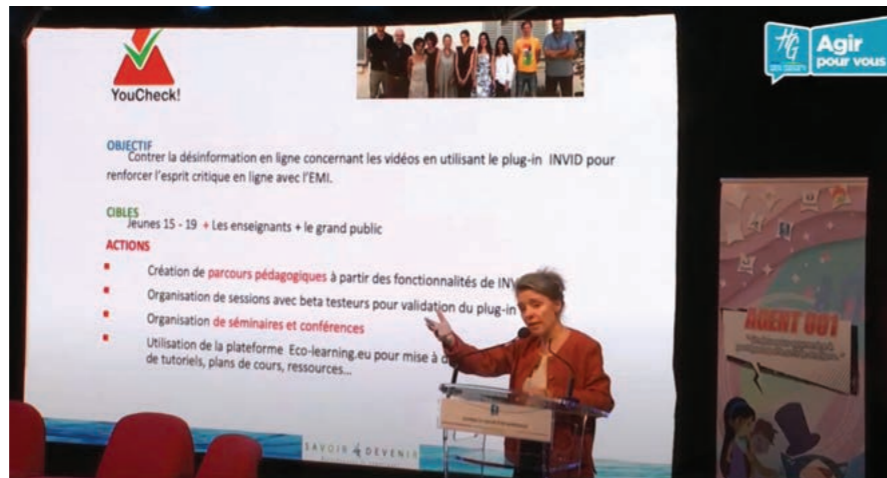
The COVID-19 crisis has not only been a health pandemic, it has also been a disinfodemic, with many “fake news” that show how information can be weaponized by all sorts of third parties and rogue actors that work to undermine the trust in scientific knowledge and professional journalism.

The disinfodemic can be analysed as an unprecedented life-size experiment of our strengths and weaknesses in the face of information in the digital era. It has tested our tolerance to what is bearable and tolerable in terms of manipulation of fears and emotion in democratic societies. The post COVID-19 situation makes us stand at a crossroads: either move towards a digital future of surveillance, traceability and monetisation of our actions or move towards a future of resilience, openness and digital citizenship with online freedoms.

The COVID-19 crisis has precipitated the double process that construes information as the fuel of the digital revolution. During the e-confinement, our lives have moved online and on screens: all our social functions (work, school, leisure, etc.) have been connected to networks and screens have mediated them with videoconferences, e-learning platforms, virtual globe-trotting and virtual visits to museums, concerts and so forth. The attendant risks have invited cyber-harassment, data theft, hate speech and disinformation.

The disinfodemic has made us conscious that reliable information is, literally, a matter of life or death. Eating garlic, drinking disinfectant or destroying 5G antennas to stave off the virus are detrimental fakes. Not adopting protective gestures as supported by some world leaders is lethal to the entire under-protected populations. Taking advantage of the situation in order to deal with cyber-attacks on data, or destabilize countries by finger-pointing at some minority groups is also fraught with danger.

In order to respond to various forms of discrimination on the internet as well as disinfodemic (spread of false information globally) in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic



△ Professor Divina Frau-Meigs presenting on the Youcheck! Project at the conference on fake news organized by Haute-Garonne Department Council, France, on 27 January 2020. Screenshot from the video clip on the Council's YouTube channel.

Relevance of Media and Information Literacy

Building resilience, openness and digital citizenship is part of what Media and Information Literacy (MIL) is about and the disinfodemic has precipitated the need for MIL solutions.

In this context of digital use and misuse of information, MIL can help facilitate the digital transition as democratic societies undergo the dual pressures of ubiquitous media and big data. Minimally, it can help expose the factors that lead to the creation and dissemination of such toxic material such as “fake news.” More ambitiously, it can unveil the patterns that drive individuals and communities to consume and disseminate fraudulent and falsified information.

MIL induces us to revisit our knowledge constructions and belief systems because it relies on critical thinking and focuses on how our minds work to construct, consume and contest media narratives online and offline.

MIL research has benefited from the disinformation crisis that started in 2016 with such scandals as Cambridge Analytica, which revealed the capacity for the manipulation of people's choices via micro-targeted AI-driven political advertising campaigns.

Much like a disease can be used to understand the way a healthy body functions, the disinformation virus, by contaminating democratic institutions

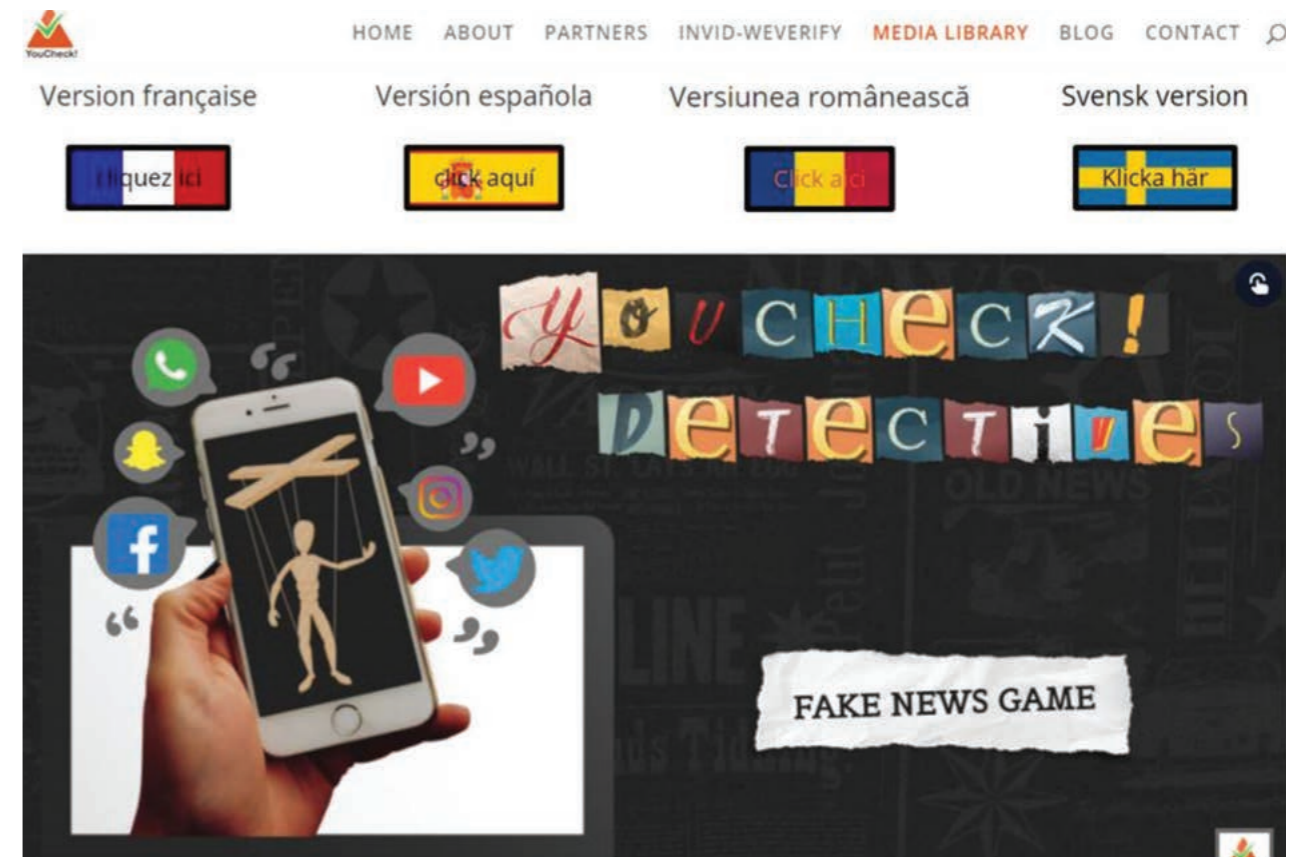
and individual choices, has revealed the information factory as it is driven by media and data in the digital era.

Four new insights on how our mind functions have come to the fore: the role of emotions (not logic) in the thought processes leading to knowledge-construction and decision-making; the power of image-driven content (not text) on many types of screens, including those of immersive virtual reality; the influence of algorithms and artificial intelligence (not human) to predict our future decisions based on our past ones online; and the strength of interactions between individuals and communities to authenticate information based on group-belonging influence and values (not proof and science).

These new insights shed a new light on the MIL competences required in a post-pandemic world to mitigate the negative impacts of such functions and harness their opportunities for positive change.

To deal with emotions, we need to be aware of how affective elements cause us to lend cognitive authority to others, especially when fear and anger are used to blind people in their search and use of proper information.

To deal with images, we have to go beyond pre-digital visual literacy (composition, contrast, camera angles, etc.) to assess the authenticity and trustworthiness of our sources as current ways of processing images (neuro-imaging, data visualization, deepfakes, etc.) can modify



△ Screenshot of the website of the Youcheck Detectives, an online game on fake news (<http://project-youcheck.com/game-english>)

our perception of facts.

To deal with algorithms and their automated decisions based more on our navigation history and the popularity of news than on the quality of news and the force for evidence, we need to know about audience measurement that consists awareness metrics (impressions, views, clicks) and engagement metrics (likes, shares, comments).

To deal with interactions via ubiquitous social media platforms, we must see how they have a vested interest in producing fake news that generate traffic and profit and require transparency and accountability, if not downright dismantling of their de-facto monopoly on our data and media.

Paradigm Shift: MIL as 1st Curriculum

Online wellbeing thus depends on the way we balance our control over data analytics (trends, patterns, profiles, etc.) and our knowledge of the values, emotions and

ideologies that construct and bias them, as it is essential to our connectedness and the way we engage with others. For instance, knowing the patterns of the COVID-19 spread via big data is an opportunity as long as the data collection is transparent and accountable, and not used for further purposes as exemplified by the controversies doubting the uses of the COVID-apps beyond the pandemic.

As notions of credibility, authenticity, authority, accountability and transparency take a centre stage in the way we construct information and disinformation, the very notion of basic literacy is displaced.

The 1st curriculum of schools that focused mostly on text, logic and source verification, is fast becoming obsolete in the face of the emergency at hand. It needs to be completed or augmented with MIL; something that has been considered as a 2nd curriculum and an adjustment variable that could be called upon in times of crisis and dismissed after. MIL needs to be the 1st curriculum by default, as a trans-literacy, with its specific mix of text,

“
The COVID-19 crisis has not only been a health pandemic, it has also been a disinfodemic, with many “fake news” that show how information can be weaponized by all sorts of third parties and rogue actors that work to undermine the trust in scientific knowledge and professional journalism.
 ”



There is an urgent need for ready response to develop quick healthy reflexes or heuristics for young people and citizens at large as soon as doubts about the credibility of a piece of information appear.



visual and algorithmic literacy, as images and data become crucial elements of information, beyond news and fake news.

There is an urgent need for ready response to develop quick healthy reflexes or heuristics for young people and citizens at large as soon as doubts about the credibility of a piece of information appear. Heuristics is a critical thinking practice that involves using a tool to solve problems by “learning by doing” and trial-and-error methods. Combatting disinformation can be quite a messy problem-solving case that needs to become a common practice and not appear as a huge hurdle that seems beyond a solution.

This is the point of departure of the action-research that UNESCO Chair Savoir Devenir is conducting (savoirdevenir.net). A case in point is the Youcheck! project, funded by the European Union programme “Media Education for All” (www.project-youcheck.com). This civil society initiative relies on a key asset, the InVID visual verification plugin, which works to foster critical thinking about pictures and videos shared on social networks and help debunk fakes as a rapid response. It develops a toolbox with pedagogical materials and gamification to serve the needs of media educators, students and citizens at large. It is also research-based an element often missing in good practices focused on implementation, with scientific evaluations of the impact of the toolbox on teachers and students as well as on a random sample of the adult population whose feedback matters to the InVID developers.

Fostering citizens’ agency with such smart tools as InVID and adopting a solution-oriented approach to debunk “fake news” appears as the most efficient way to change both people’s understanding of the disinfodemic phenomenon and their daily post-pandemic behaviour with regard to information. InVID is thus being repurposed, from an image and video checking technology reserved for professionals (used worldwide by many newsrooms, journalists and human rights workers) to a tool for nonexperts. Although, as most MIL practitioners, we do not support tool-based only educational approaches, we strongly believe that in our AI-driven digital world, being empowered by

high-level smart tools is a necessity, if and only if technical skills are a support for MIL competences and human right values.

To ensure that such smart tools are embedded within the MIL competence framework, we have ensured that InVID functionalities are associated with visual and data literacy resources and training. InVID make it possible (1) to retrieve metadata about videos and images; (2) to fragment videos into key-frames to allow image-similarity search in other contexts; (3) to perform advanced search queries on Twitter, Facebook and YouTube; (4) to compare the efficiency of search engines (Google, Yandex, Baidu, etc.); (5) to look inside images through a magnifying lens; and (6) to analyse an image with forensic filters (to detect alterations within its structure such as quantization, frequencies, colours and pixel coherence). All these itemized functionalities are matched to cognitive processes (retrieve, fragment, search laterally, compare across data sets, apply filters, etc.) and examined with many examples to ensure understanding and mastery.

A serious game, Youcheck Detectives, has been developed to encourage learning by doing and by playing (<http://project-youcheck.com/game-english>), with workshops for teachers and trainers. Several Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) on Information and Disinformation have been created to ensure that teachers, educators, librarians, journalists and others feel comfortable in these news competences. Optimizing the plug-in thanks to testing results and enriching it with pedagogical scenarios and self-paced tutorials, quizzes and games also makes it an available teaching gateway to MIL.

This is how we can concretely move between theory and practice, and ensure that research fosters reaction and, ultimately, refutation the test that MIL has empowered citizens to respond and to provide a counternarrative to disinformation. Such digital critical thinking strategies should be part of the MIL curriculum for digital citizenship.

This curriculum is crucial in the classroom but can also be shared in discussions with parents, politicians, human rights workers, etc. These functionalities lend



△ Participants attending the session on GCED in the Digital Age on 4 September 2019 during the 4th International Conference on GCED

themselves to many activities that can be developed by civil society associations such as hackathons, urban games, and fake news challenges.

Country Readiness: Preparing for Healthy Post-pandemic Media Ecosystem

As with any new literacy, the training of trainers is a key for scaling up. Such experiments can be helpful for the design of materials for curriculum and for policy-making. The disinfodemic can show positive outcomes as the e-confinement has sensitized everybody both to the market-minded responsiveness of the e-learning and social media platforms and to the lack of preparedness of school systems at the local and national levels. The main points of vigilance around MIL deal with the lack of quality control regarding commercially-provided tools and contents and the lack of safety control regarding the use of data and the protection of privacy of minors.

The disinfodemic can be an opportunity for schools and institutions of education and culture to closely evaluate the adaptations necessary to ensure that MIL helps them develop strategies for the future, compliant with a certain number of international instruments with the best interests of young people and citizens in mind, such as the various declarations on data protection such as The Council of Europe Data Protection Convention 108 and Recommendation CM/Rec(2019)10 on developing and promoting digital citizenship education (2019).

Solid cooperation across actors is also called for, as MIL programmes often require the media industry sector to contribute their expertise and partnerships. Getting countries ready with a set of diagnosis tools and implementation strategies is at the heart of the Council of Europe Digital Citizenship Education Project (<https://www.coe.int/en/web/digital-citizenship-education-project>). Its main messages deal with the new insights opened up by disinformation, in relation

to emotions, image-driven content and predictive algorithms. Rights and responsibilities are set as part of online wellbeing for all to ensure sustainable learning outcomes. Embedding MIL in the early design of services and contents becomes key to democratic societies as it fosters trust and solidarity.

As the consequences of the disinfodemic on democratic societies are still being determined, MIL appears as a beacon of hope that casts light in the outer reaches of our minds as they interact with media and data. Effective MIL activities and policies can have beneficial impacts at political and societal levels. Providing citizens with an understanding of algorithms, brain processes, data patterns and social networks can build information resilience on a large scale. Producing robust counter-discourses to climate change coverage, gender injustice, migrant crisis representations or virus pandemics prepares them for any emerging information disorders that may emerge in the future. 🏠

YOUTH VOICES ON THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC AND A NEW WORLD

Youths from Different Countries Work Towards Strong Sense of Togetherness in the Face of Uncertainty

By Diego Manrique, Tshering Zangmo and Zanzi Sinkala in collaboration with Hadi Althib
(Members of GCED Youth Network)



△ Participants of the 3rd Youth Leadership Workshop on GCED in 2017

The COVID-19 pandemic is challenging the social, political and economic dynamics of the world. This global pandemic is forcing us to ponder our actions while changing the life of many people and raising a lot of questions for the future, especially for young people across the world.

Through these short stories, we aim to take you on a journey around the world through the eyes of young people facing the COVID-19 pandemic. From Bhutan to Zambia, youth are suffering the effects of the pandemic, but they are also working to tackle them by helping their communities. When facing the current crisis, young people are reminding everyone the importance of realizing that we all live in one same global village in which we are responsible for one another. While the novel coronavirus has disrupted entire countries, it has also brought people closer despite national, political or social boundaries.

This global crisis has also shined the spotlight back to the people and their most fundamental needs and rights. We are therefore facing an opportunity that we can all take advantage of in order to foster global citizenship at all levels with the hope of building a more sustainable and prosperous world.

If Not Now, When?

The isolated Kingdom of Bhutan was watching the world from afar when the effects of the pandemic ravaged through the economies and the social lives of people around the globe. Within days, it hit Bhutan as well. Bhutan was not prepared or equipped to deal with the pandemic when a 76-year old American tourist became the first to test positive for COVID-19. However, he was treated with the utmost care, and sincere prayers and messages flooded social media for his quick recovery.

This incident showed how important it is to consider one nation's problem as another's concern. The American tourist, despite having underlying medical conditions, fully recovered and now expresses his gratitude to Bhutan. This depicts the ideals of global citizenship and the importance of support and solidarity that extends beyond



△ Mask dancers at the Paro Tshechu, at Paro's Rinpung Dzong (a Buddhist monastery), the most popular religious dance festival in Bhutan held annually since the 17th century. The festival was not held in 2020 due to the pandemic.

one's border in times of need.

On the other hand, it caused a lot of panic among the country's citizens with a heated blame game of neglect and irresponsibility. Gradually, people came together as a community to fight the virus.

Young people in Bhutan have played a significant role in these difficult times. Youths across the country are rendering their services as volunteers. The essence of global citizenship is realised locally as Bhutanese youth have united and are determined under a common cause. They have scattered around the country as volunteers with some raising awareness in rural Bhutan, patrolling the borders, and offering to work in the food sector and in every other area where help and service is needed.

All the positive cases in Bhutan are associated with the youth who returned to the country from abroad. They have been doing their part firstly by coming out on social media sharing their experiences and raising awareness. The Bhutanese, in general, have started stigmatising people who have tested positive for COVID-19 and foreigners in Bhutan with racism. Youths who have tested positive as well as youths who are volunteering have been advocating and addressing society -especially those in rural Bhutan - on the stigma and racism associated with COVID-19.

Sonam Zam is a 26 year-old high school teacher in rural Bhutan who has been volunteering to patrol the India-Bhutan border. She has been managing her time between online lessons and her service as a volunteer. Likewise, Kesang, a 26 year-old dentist is volunteering as a frontline worker. Meanwhile, another Sonam (26) is volunteering to serve the other volunteers with food and drinks. There is also Ninjay (21), who has been staying home, keeping himself updated with the latest news while educating and informing his family about COVID-19. When asked what motivates them to unite in these difficult times, a common response echoed, "If not now, then when?"

Their services have helped their communities remain calm and provide the country with hope and strength. The youth of the country make up the largest section of this landlocked country and the King of Bhutan, who is highly revered by its people, has always said "the future of Bhutan will depend upon the youths of today."

Waving Flags Away

The COVID-19 pandemic has strongly affected Latin America and the Caribbean. Guatemala, the most populous country in Central America, is struggling to deal with



△ Volunteers are preparing meals in Antigua Guatemala.

the effects of what started as a sanitary challenge and evolved into a multi-source crisis.

With over 60 per cent of the national population below the age of 35, the country's youth are both at the frontline of the efforts to tackle this crisis and also are some of the most affected. In addition to young people, people living in the rural areas, women and indigenous people are among the most affected by the pandemic in the country.

The Guatemalan government has failed to contain the spread of the virus and does not seem to have a clear strategy on how to deal with the negative

economic and social effects brought on by the pandemic.

As of early June 2020, the number of new cases has not ceased and the very weakened public health system is on the verge of collapse. As a result of the lockdown and curfew policies enforced in the country since late March, thousands of people have lost their source of income as they rely on informal economic activities that cannot be practiced in the current context; therefore the levels of poverty and extreme poverty are rising.

One of the most visible effects of the COVID-19 crisis is the widespread hunger that numerous families are facing. All

across the country, entire families take to the streets to waive white flags at cars and pedestrians in a desperate call for help as they are hungry and do not have any more resources to feed themselves.

Due to the needs of the many facing hunger and the lack of effective actions from the local authorities, a group of young citizens created an initiative called "La Olla Comunitaria (The Community Pot);" an initiative that focuses on feeding all of those in need. This movement started in Guatemala City and was quickly replicated in six other cities across the nation and later in El Salvador as well.

For over two months, each Community Pot fed over a 1,000 people and provided supplies to many more every day. They use their own resources as well as donations given by many fellow citizens. Despite the high risk environment, groups of young friends would cook and serve meals and deliver supplies across the country. Unfortunately, due to their popularity, some Community Pots have been forced to close to avoid becoming clusters of infection. However, people are still hungry and many are now left alone on the streets to fend for themselves.

The Community Pots are a very clear example of global solidarity being raised by young people across Central America and beyond. The COVID-19 crisis has allowed people across the world to better understand the desperate need to foster global citizenship due to disruption of people's everyday lives.

This experience has made it very clear that we are all vulnerable and are not that different from one another when facing adversities. Therefore, the best and only way to ensure a sustainable future for all is to come together as a global community, leaving all pre-existing tags and flags behind.

This pandemic is a call for more caring and empathetic communities. It is a call for tolerance and solidarity. It is a call for critical thinking citizens and, above all, a call for individual actions to have a global impact.

"Let's take advantage of this crisis to transform ourselves and realize that it's possible to have another type of humanity," said Byron Vasquez, founder of La Olla Comunitaria.



△ Banner of <My Home is Your Home>

A Place to Call Home

The pandemic that the world is facing today has brought back many nationalist ideas that challenge the way people and countries interact with one another in today's globalized and connected world.

Shortly after China first announced an outbreak of COVID-19 in the city of Wuhan, many Chinese and Asians around the world became the target of prejudice and different forms of violence. Citizens of different countries started blaming China for the spread of the virus believing that all Chinese people were virus carriers.

Later on, as the virus spread around

the world, each country started applying containment policies. Regions with high levels of cooperation and exchange such as Southeast Asia, Europe and South America have gone back to more traditional nationalistic approaches to preserve the wellbeing of their own. Therefore, the institution of the traditional nation state has regained importance as today's citizens rely on their governments to assist them in weathering this crisis.

However, many people around the world cannot count on any government since they do not have the legal requirements to be considered as a citizen of

the territory in which they reside. This is the case of thousands of refugees and displaced people around the world, particularly coming from conflict areas and currently seeking to locate themselves elsewhere due to violence, war, natural disasters, etc. Although we do not hear from them during this global crisis, they are also suffering from the effects of the pandemic in ways that few people can imagine.

This is the current situation affecting many Syrian refugees. To be a refugee means to be away from home, away from families and friends. It also means that



△ Tshering Zangmo during the 3rd Youth Leadership Workshop on GCED in 2017.



△ Diego Manrique during the 3rd Youth Leadership Workshop on GCED in 2017



△ Hadi Althib(left) during the 3rd Youth Leadership Workshop on GCED in 2017



△ Zanji Sinkala(left) during the 3rd Youth Leadership Workshop on GCED in 2017

they struggle to adapt in a new country with new cultural values and norms. To have to go through this while quarantined can be a very challenging task that can have a strong impact on their lives. In light of this, a group of young Syrian refugees in Turkey have created an innovative platform for Syrian refugees around the world to connect and accompany each other during these difficult times. This initiative is called “My Home is Your Home” and it is based on the principle of solidarity.

This initiative consists of an online volunteer-based platform that facilitates open spaces for dialogue and exchange between Syrian refugees. Through this

platform, people can access sessions facilitated by experts in fields such as civil participation, psychology and other areas of expertise that are relevant to overcome the effects of isolation brought on by the confinement and lockdown policies in many countries.

In Syria, the COVID-19 situation is very complex and diverse between regions. There is an overall lack of resources to deal with the pandemic as the health system has been decimated as a result of almost a decade of civil war.

In late April, the United Nations called for a nationwide ceasefire in Syria in order to focus on the pandemic. However, the

war is still ongoing. As of 10 June, the government controlled areas reported around over 150 cases of COVID-19. However, young people in Syria believe that the authorities refuse to admit the gravity of the situation and are not doing enough to support the population.

This initiative showcases the potential that individual experiences can have when transformed on a collective community action, therefore highlighting the importance of all forms of diversity in our societies and the importance of cooperation. At the same time, it is a clear example of how today’s young people around the world remain connected regardless of the physical distances that separate one another. Even when being away from the place that was once called home, a sense of community and belonging will remain strong when supporting one another regardless of where they come from and where they may end up in the future.

Together, Apart

Zambian youths are piercing into their power like never before and demanding a space to make their voices heard. They are the front runners of their generation and are working towards a more successful and compassionate world.

As a young person involved in making a meaningful impact through driving social inclusion movements for underrepresented communities, I (Zanji Sinkala) believe this should be an opportune time to reach populations that the market and governments are unable to account for.

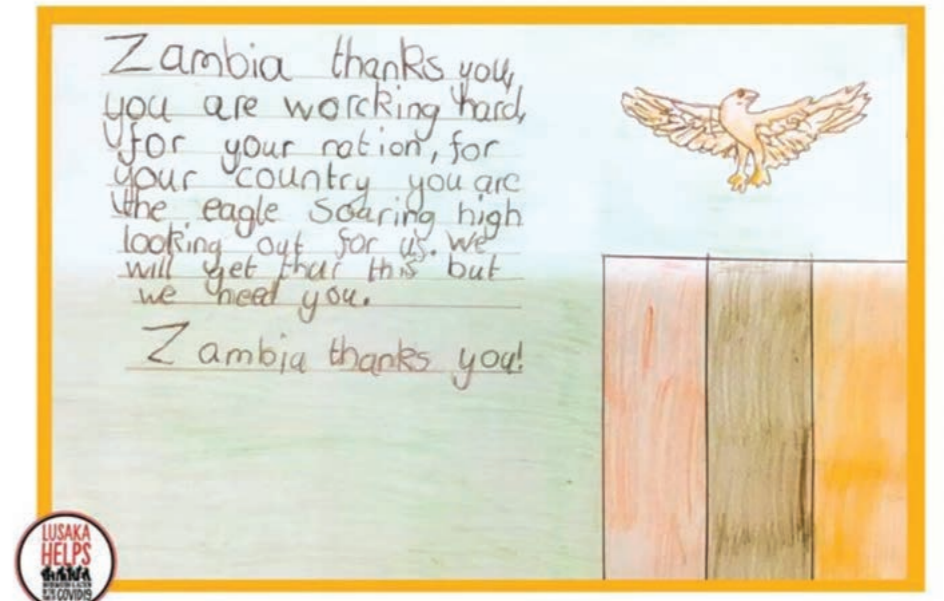
To my dismay, certain factors such as lockdowns, have hindered and restricted my efforts inevitably. As a solution to this, I write journalistic articles about the diverse ways youths have been responding to COVID-19 to highlight their voices and foster solution-based action plans. It is to not only render help where it is needed, but to ensure that young people’s voices are raised alongside other communities’ voices in the roll-out of health and non-health interventions in response to this pandemic, because our reactions and responses have been often overlooked.

Typing furiously on her laptop keyboard, Kasuba Kaisa creates a petition for her college institution to introduce

“

As the country learns to live in this “new normal,” it continues to work ‘together, apart’ proving fierce solidarity and a strong sense of togetherness in the face of uncertainty.

”



△ A letter of encouragement and hope written by a child in Zambia to the health workers on the front-lines treating COVID 19 patients in isolation centers. (Provided by Zanji Sinkala)

online graduation amidst the pandemic so that she and her peers can graduate. Without her degree, she can’t get a stable job anywhere.

“I don’t know how long this will go on for or how long I will be jobless,” laments Kasuba, “Even if they sent my degree via email, I wouldn’t mind. I just desperately need it.” Kasuba hopes that this petition can speak for the potential graduates countrywide who feel like their lives and dreams have been put on hold abruptly and indefinitely.

Mulenga Chileshe, a young professional Zambian tennis player and coach, stands on an empty court in Roma Park in Lusaka. In his 12 years in the game, he has never experienced a significant plummet in business like this.

“I went from having 13 consistent clients a week paying me per one-hour session, to three vacillating clients I wouldn’t even be certain would attend,” he said.

Aside from his tennis job, Mulenga helps run his family’s restaurant in downtown Lusaka. However, the crisis has pulverized his business, leaving his five workers unpaid and uneasy.

“It hurts me that there’s nothing I can do to help them right now,” he noted. “I

am equally struggling.”

To combat the economic effects of the unprecedented retrenchments countrywide, Victoria Hospital, a private medical institution, with the help of youth volunteers, recently donated bags of corn flour - Zambia’s staple food mostly known as Mealie Meal - to individuals who lost their jobs due to the COVID-19 crisis and could not secure a single meal. Speaking of meals, a youth initiative called “The Lab Lunch,” created by a local restaurant, pulls their weight by providing free lunches for the scientists and healthcare workers treating the numerous people infected with the coronavirus.

In the midst of the devastation and distress, a sliver of hope manifests through the selfless acts of young people in Zambia who have chosen to rise to the plate and cushion the tangible impact of the virus on their fellow citizens.

Lusaka Helps is an initiative run by youths in Lusaka, which supports the efforts of young people making a difference in their communities during the COVID-19 crisis. This includes highlighting even the simplest of gestures made by young people, such as letters of encouragement written to healthcare workers or phone calls made to people

suffering emotional breakdowns.

As the country learns to live in this “new normal,” it continues to work ‘together, apart’ proving fierce solidarity and a strong sense of togetherness in the face of uncertainty. [\[link\]](#)

- Diego Manrique from Guatemala is a Core Team member of the GCED Youth Network. He studied political science and currently works as an international development consultant.

- Tshering Zangmo from Bhutan is also a member of the Network’s Core Team. She is a former TV producer in Bhutan and currently a master’s student in communication.

- Zanji Sinkala from Zambia, a member of the Network, is an investigative journalist currently working with Reuters to report the COVID-19 crisis in sub-Saharan Africa. She is also a human rights activist.

- Hadi Althib from Syria, a former member of the Network’s Core Team, works as a program manager of #MeWeIntl based in Turkey. He helped Diego with the article by providing information on the COVID-19 situation in Syria.

APCEIU Celebrates 20th Anniversary



APCEIU held a virtual ceremony celebrating its 20th Anniversary under the theme “Global Citizens’ Call for Solidarity and Cooperation in the Pandemic” on 25 August, 2020. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the ceremony was held through a video conference in addition to being live streamed via APCEIU’s YouTube channel.

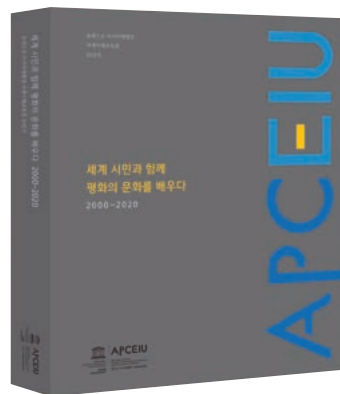


The 20th anniversary ceremony consisted of a variety of programmes including a performance of “Song for Global Citizens” written by youth from around the world, welcoming remarks by APCEIU Director Dr. Hyun Mook Lim, congratulatory remarks and messages from key partners, the presentation of plaques of appreciation on the occasion of the 20 platinum anniversary, as well as watching videos of heart-warming stories about global citizens cooperating towards achieving solidarity and a video recapping APCEIU’s highlights over the past 20 years.

Over 500 participants, including partners and alumni participants of APCEIU programmes from around the world agreed to work together to promote Global Citizenship Education (GCED) and further the values of solidarity and cooperation in the pandemic era.

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“20-Year History of APCEIU” Published

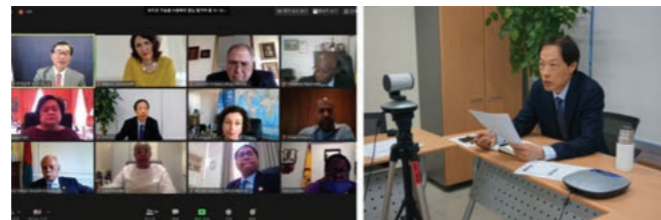


APCEIU published “The 20-Year History of APCEIU: Learning a Culture of Peace with Global Citizens (2000-2020)” in the Korean language to commemorate the 20th anniversary on 25 August. The commemorative book showcases the achievements and challenges of its 20 years of endeavours to promote education for international understanding and global

citizenship in diverse regions of the world – including the Asia-Pacific region while presenting its vision and strategic direction for the future.

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Launch of UNESCO GCED Group of Friends to Combat Hatred and Discrimination



The launch of UNESCO Group of Friends for Solidarity and Inclusion with Global Citizenship Education (GCED) took place on 26 May. Alongside the launch ceremony, 110 representatives from UNESCO Member States and partners participated in the group’s first meeting which occurred virtually.

The group was launched in accordance with the global community’s efforts to find collective solutions to fight hatred, discrimination, and stigmatization exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, and to enhance global cooperation through GCED. Celebrating the launch of the Group of Friends, Director-General of UNESCO Mme. Audrey Azoulay highlighted the importance of GCED by noting that it promotes critical thinking, understanding, and empathy. In addition, Mr. Hyun Mook Lim, Director of APCEIU, shared presented his suggestions on the Group of Friends’ future initiatives to promote GCED while emphasising the urgent call to Member States for action as well as reiterating APCEIU’s commitment to support the process. In a joint statement, the GCED Group of Friends pledged to work as an open platform to combat hatred and discrimination through strengthening international cooperation with GCED.

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“Multiple Pandemics” Published



In order to address the challenges of the pandemic and its associated crises, APCEIU published a book in the Korean language that addresses our current plight titled “Multiple Pandemics: Global Citizens Seek to Find a Way to Solidarity beyond COVID-19 and Injustice.”

Humanity today is faced with “multiple pandemics” that surpass the global infectious disease caused by the novel coronavirus. Economic inequality, racism, discrimination and hate, and the climate crisis have been starkly revealed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Published on 31 July, the book pays attention to the challenges of this “multiple pandemic” era by having 10 Korean experts of various areas including infectious diseases, human rights and GCED. They present key questions to be reflected with a more multi-faced perspective and offer their insights on the ways to overcome those challenges, focusing on keywords such as citizenship, solidarity, public and cooperation.

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Consultation Meeting on GCED and Pandemic



APCEIU held a consultation meeting with the theme “Global Citizenship Education and COVID-19 Pandemic” within its premises on 17 April. In response

to the challenges in education imposed by the current pandemic, representatives of partner organizations, academia, and civil society participated in this consultation meeting and shared their activities and plans to strengthen the promotion of GCED in the Republic of Korea and beyond. The participants discussed the importance of and challenges in promoting GCED in the face of this unprecedented global crisis, the need for further research and discussion, and the need to have a sustainable platform to strategize and share information to develop future directions. All participants agreed on the urgency of spreading GCED to prevent conflicts that may occur due to the crisis, as well as the need to explore synergies to maximize the impact of future actions to be taken.

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PNU/APCEIU Webinar on GCED



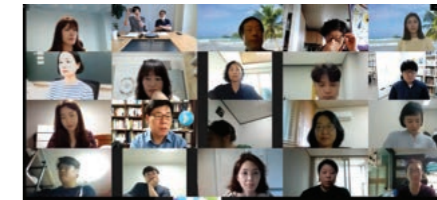
Rethinking the roles and challenges of Global Citizenship Education (GCED) under the turbulent conditions of the COVID-19 crisis was examined at a webinar on 17 July. Titled “Reflecting on Global Citizenship Education in the time of the pandemic,” the webinar provided an opportunity to re-think the roles and challenges of

GCED under the current COVID-19 crisis and delve into its increasing demand on the world. Further discussions delved into methods of transforming these challenges into opportunities for reconstructing a more effective up-to-date education system while highlighting the contextualization of GCED.

The event reached more than 5,000 participants with total views hitting over 22,000 on the airing day of the webinar. Furthermore, the webinar unravelled the continuing importance and the increasing demand for GCED as one of the key education initiatives to tackle the issues around various conflicts emerging in the pandemic era. The event was co-organised by the Philippine Normal University (PNU) and APCEIU along with the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO) Secretariat, and the Philippine National Commission for UNESCO.

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Capacity-Building Training for Korean GCED Lead Teachers



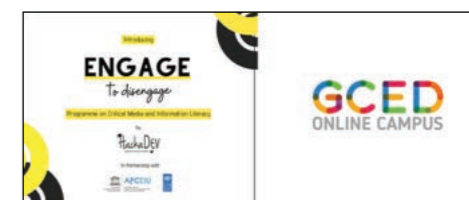
The Capacity-Building Workshops for the 6th Batch of the National GCED Lead Teachers programme was conducted this year for 64 teachers appointed by 17 Metropolitan and Provincial Offices of Education (MPOEs). Since their first workshop on 13-17

January 2020, the teachers played pivotal roles in implementing and disseminating GCED in Korea while currently carrying out diverse GCED activities in cooperation with their schools, communities, and each MPOE.

At the second workshop held virtually on 8 August, the GCED National Lead Teachers shared with each other their GCED activities and experiences amid the COVID-19 pandemic during the first half of the year, and exchanged ideas and plans for the second part of the year. The programme was co-organised by the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Korea and APCEIU.

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MOU with UNDP Sri Lanka



APCEIU signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the United Nations Development

Programme in Sri Lanka (UNDP Sri Lanka) for mutual cooperation and exchange programmes in line with Media and Information Literacy (MIL) and Global Citizenship Education (GCED). Both organizations agreed on the following:

- Implementation of GCED Online Campus courses in HackaDev Academy programme for youths
- Collaborate in designing learning programmes for HackaDev Academy of Learning and Skills, and GCED Online Campus upon mutual agreement

Co-organisation and facilitation of workshops and seminars for the benefit of youth.

Through this partnership that was inked on 13 August, APCEIU and UNDP Sri Lanka will strengthen the global actions of youths on GCED with the aim of contributing to the achievement of SDG 4.7.

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A DOUBLE RAINBOW APPEARS BEHIND GERS ON THE MONGOLIAN STEPPES. GER IS MONGOLIAN TRADITIONAL NOMADIC DWELLING.
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