

Teach the Future

Written Inputs for the Preparation of the Zero Draft of the Pact for the Future
P Bishop, 12/30/23

Chapeau

Youth participation, and consequently trust, in decision-making is strengthened when youth and the adults they will become are schooled to anticipate the many, diverse changes they face and to influence those changes at the individual, community and global levels. Our recommendation, therefore, is to urge Member States and their Ministries of Education to develop a sound and rigorous curriculum to teach futures thinking skills in their schools and to train teachers and other staff to offer it to their students.

South Africa, Taiwan, and the United States among others, are offering degrees in futures studies. Universities, NGOs and companies are now offering short courses for adults in strategic foresight. The University of Houston and its spinoff, Foresight Elements, alone have served almost 2,000 adults since 2009. We are teaching adults how to deal with the uncertain future, but we are not sharing these skills with young people in their schools where they spend most of their time.

Pact for the Future

At least three of the Policy Briefs supporting the Summit of the Future deal with this topic:

Conclusion

Young people's participation in policy making would be more substantial and meaningful if they have learned how to think about, discuss and influence the future before they participate. Futures literacy is also useful for other parts of their lives, such as career planning, their contribution at work, and their general participation in governance as citizens.

In 2016, Teach the Future participated in [Education 2030](#), an OECD initiative to identify learning objectives focused on skills more than just information. Some of the skills the OECD identified were creativity, critical thinking, problem solving, goal setting and decision making ([OECD Future of Education and Skills 2030 Concept Note](#), 2019), all of which are attributes of futures literacy. Teach the Future can continue in that direction and use its work there to include futures literacy in the standard curriculum on behalf of the UN's mission in education.

So far policy makers and educators have focused on the future of education, which is welcomed. At the same time, however, we should include young people in the discussion by putting futures into education by making it an explicit part of the curriculum.