



Effective People Centered Health Education for Human Security

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Abstract

Everybody needs to wake up to the reality of the Anthropocene. At present, humanity appears ill equipped to cope effectively with the mounting problems that it has itself created; we urgently need to update and upgrade the way we educate and train people since, at present, their competences to see the problems we have created and find effective ways to cope with them are badly insufficient and/or obsolete. The scenarios on our planet are fast worsening, and to help people cope with the mounting emergencies, we need to help them rise to the challenge. We need to create a Marshall Plan of Competences, a new paradigm of education, equipping everybody with the needed competences in how we see, how we know, and how we correctly apply our knowledge. More than anything, we need to learn new ways of being.

After much triumphalism over how humanity has steadily progressed across the centuries, we find ourselves in a tragic quagmire. We are lost in a world of our creation that resembles a nightmare; our so-called achievements have backfired; we have produced many goods but they are unequally distributed and quickly discarded in a consumerist frenzy that creates mountains of garbage that pollute the earth, the waters and the air, contaminating even the food we eat and seriously damaging our health and environment.

This is crazy; clearly, our mental health is at risk. We have lost our innate capacities for deep contact, empathic understanding, and respect for ourselves, others, and the living forms of life around us (Zucconi, 2021). We have been alienating ourselves from reality; we have lost touch with the basic fact that we are part of nature and part of the universe. This alienation, a painful divorce from the basic and scientifically proven reality that we, as everything else, are connected to the web of life, that we are literally made of star dust, and that the universe is our home, has created, like all forms of alienation do, serious consequences. Our alienation from ourselves, others, and the world has produced, and is producing right now, severe destruction of human security, serious existential threats, destruction of natural environments, depletion of precious resources, and even jeopardising the future.

We have inflicted on ourselves and the world so much damage that the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists warns us that our alienation has brought us to 90 seconds to midnight! As you probably know, the *Doomsday Clock*, created by the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists to illustrate how close humanity has come to the end of the world, moved its “time” in January

2023 to 90 seconds to midnight, 10 seconds closer than it has been for the past three years. Midnight on this clock marks the theoretical point of annihilation. (Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, 2023; Zucconi 2013).

On May 30, 2023 a group of top AI researchers, engineers, and CEOs issued a new warning about the existential threat they believe AI poses to humanity.

The 22-word statement, trimmed short to make it as broadly acceptable as possible, reads as follows: *“Mitigating the risk of extinction from AI should be a global priority alongside other societal-scale risks such as pandemics and nuclear war.”*

This statement, published by a San Francisco-based non-profit, the Centre for AI Safety, has been co-signed by figures including Google DeepMind CEO Demis Hassabis and OpenAI CEO Sam Altman, as well as Geoffrey Hinton and Yoshua Bengio, two of the three AI researchers who won the 2018 Turing Award (sometimes referred to as the “Nobel Prize of computing”) for their work on AI.*

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) in its 2022 Report forecast for 2021–2040 states: *“The number of people at risk from climate change and associated loss of biodiversity will progressively increase... In the near term, violent conflict and, separately, migration patterns will be driven more by socioeconomic conditions and governance than by climate change.”* (IPCC, 2022, p. 13).

In 2016, I wrote: *“If we manage the 4th industrial revolution with the same blindness and forms of denial with which we managed the previous industrial revolutions, the negative effects will be exponential.”*

Further on I added: *“Effective forms of education are crucial. The fourth revolution could be an unprecedented success if we are able to manage complex processes and at the same time assure that each innovation will not only bring change but also foster a more humane, sustainable, peaceful, and prosperous future for all. To meet these challenges, effective and scientifically validated person- and people-centred educational approaches are necessary. They will play a crucial role in enabling us to stop wasting our best resources—human and natural capital—and will facilitate us in achieving effective and sustainable governance.”* (Zucconi, 2016, p. 1)

I still strongly believe that is true and that we can change the course of things, even create a New Renaissance, but time is running out. For example, effective education can and should be fruitfully employed to protect and promote Human Security and health if we just apply the scientifically sound guidelines offered since 1986 by the World Health Organisation (WHO); research shows that we will achieve significant results (Zucconi & Howell, 2003).

* If you wish, you can endorse the statement: <https://www.safe.ai/statement-on-ai-risk>

In 1986, WHO launched a revolution in the field of health with the Ottawa Charter, the manifesto of the bio-psycho-social paradigm of Health Protection and Promotion. With the Ottawa Charter, WHO urged all the nations part of the U.N. system to stop being blind and realise that we have to see health not just as an absence of illness—that is a dangerous mechanistic reductionistic obsolete frame of reference—we need to apply a scientifically sound and updated bio-psycho-social paradigm, a holistic/systemic frame of reference where *“Health is not just the absence of Illness but the development and actualization of human potentialities. There is no Individual Health without Social Health.”* (WHO; Ottawa Charter, 1986)

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The health determinants are:

“Peace, Shelter, Education, Food, Income, a Stable Ecosystem, Sustainable Resources, Social Justice, and Equity” (Equal Opportunities, Gender Equity, Non-Discrimination, etc.) (WHO 1986, pp. 5).

Furthermore, the Ottawa Declaration states, *“The prerequisites and prospects for health cannot be ensured by the health sector alone. More importantly, health promotion demands coordinated action by all concerned: by governments, by health and other social and economic sectors, by nongovernmental and voluntary organisations, by local authorities, by industry, and by the media. People in all walks of life are involved as individuals, families, and communities.”* (WHO 1986, pp. 6).

Sustainability is imperative according to the Ottawa Declaration: *“Our societies are complex and interrelated. Health cannot be separated from other goals. The inextricable links between people and their environment constitute the basis for a socio-ecological approach to health. The overall guiding principle for the world, nations, regions, and communities alike, is the need to encourage reciprocal maintenance—to take care of each other, our communities, and our natural environment. The conservation of natural resources throughout the world should be emphasised as a global responsibility.”* (WHO 1986, p. 6).

Empowerment and education during the lifecycle are fundamental aspects of health promotion. *“Health promotion works through concrete and effective community action in setting priorities, making decisions, planning strategies, and implementing them to achieve better health. At the heart of this process is the empowerment of communities—their ownership and control of their own endeavours and destinies. Community development draws on existing human and material resources in the community to enhance self-help and social support and to develop flexible systems for strengthening public participation in and direction of health matters. This requires full and continuous access to information, learning opportunities for health, as well as funding support.”* (WHO 1986, p. 7).

“No other institution in the world is as powerful in shaping our future as education.”

The Ottawa Charter links all the above-mentioned processes, empowering people to learn how to develop personal skills to protect and promote health. *“Health promotion supports personal and social development through providing information, education for health, and enhancing life skills. By so doing, it increases the options available to people to exercise more control over their own health and over their environments and to make choices conducive to health.”* (WHO 1986, pp. 7).

Brock Chisholm, the first Director-General of the World Health Organisation and one of the founders of WAAS, promoted from the very beginning of WHO a bio-psycho-social holistic vision; he stated that *“without mental health, there can be no true physical health”* (Kolappa, Hendersona, & Kishoreb, 2013, p. 3).

WHO continues to remind us that effective promotion of health and well-being needs to be carried out with actions of empowerment and needs to be person-centred. (WHO, 2008, 2009, 2015, 2016)

Health Education and Human Security in a holistic/systemic frame of reference are one since they are always interconnected and are primarily grounded on human rights, respect, and person-centred actions of empowerment (Zucconi & Rollè, 2013).

All life forms’ survival depends on effective and rapid learning as to how to adapt their behaviours to environmental changes. If we want to survive, we need to adapt, retool, and upgrade all levels of our education system. Formal and informal education at every level needs to offer us the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that will enable us to survive and even prosper in the present period of change by learning the needed skills for coping with and governing in peaceful and sustainable ways in the turbulent scenarios of the Anthropocene Era (Zucconi 2016).

No other institution in the world is as powerful in shaping our future as education; it is during the educational process that much of the social construction of reality occurs. Education is the process by which the minds of the new generation are shaped about what is real (Dewey, 1897, 1924; Rogers, 1959, 1961, 1965, 1969, 1977, 1980, 1983; Freire, 1970; Rogers, Lyon, & Tausch, 2014; Zucconi, 2013, 2016).

Francis Bacon stated that knowledge is power. Also, the opposite is dramatically true: A community promoting faulty and obsolete knowledge is sabotaging itself with lethal actions of disempowerment. The present traditional education badly needs to be updated and offer effective tools to effectively address the present challenges. (Zucconi, 2016).

Another problem with traditional education is the unbalanced use of power. Traditional education is centred on the professor, who has a large power differential compared with the learner. In that way, that was a reflection of the past, where power was held by the privileged few (Zucconi, 2016).

The same power differential is found in traditional medicine and mental health, where the huge power differential created severe forms of learned helplessness in the service users who, not by chance, were described as patients (Zucconi & Howell, 2003).

The Bologna Process for transforming Europe into a knowledge society publishes a bulletin to monitor the results: The results are still lacking; education is still largely traditional, failing to engage more students in designing curricula and involving them in evaluation and self-evaluation. *“European higher education also faces the major challenge and the ensuing opportunities of globalisation and accelerated technological developments with new providers, new learners, and new types of learning. Student-centred learning and mobility will help students develop the competencies they need in a changing labour market and will empower them to become active and responsible citizens.”* (Bologna Process 2009, p. 1)

A realistic evaluation of the present situation shows that the challenges for a more effective education are many; here are a few examples of what needs to be done:

Reorient the education and curricula of future professionals: To socially construe the professional profiles and equip them with effective tools to be part of the solutions and not of the problems, as obsolete education unfortunately persists in many parts of the world (Gurgulino de Souza et al., 2013; Jacobs & Zucconi, 2014; Zucconi, 2016). **Some examples:**

Economy: People graduating in economics still learn the importance of the Gross Domestic Product, but such measures are making them blind to see where prosperity is created or destroyed (Zucconi 2016, pp. 18).

Artificial Intelligence and Nanotechnology: People creating Artificial Intelligence do not have sound ethical guidelines and boundaries to avoid the risk of creating serious boomerang effects. The same is true for the lack of guidelines and ethical imperatives for the industry using nanotechnology. WAAS, through its projects on Human Security and Education, could facilitate the creation of an ethical code of ethics to be developed and adopted by the different stakeholders involved in Artificial Intelligence and nanotechnology.

People training in the field of health receive training that is, in many aspects, obsolete and mechanistic, missing the important links between health and environment. One of the best practices is not only prevention, which would necessarily include the prevention of illness, but since the Ottawa Charter of 1986, the cost-effective goal has been the empowerment of all the stakeholders in active protection and promotion of health. This includes eliminating

the health risks created by toxic waste, pollution, climate warming, ocean pollution, unsafe working conditions, stress at work, and other determinants of ill health like lack of human security, lack of human rights, gender discrimination, religious, political, and sexual orientation discrimination, racism, bigotry, violence, etc.

Mental Health: Students trained in mental health are still taught to see mental health as limited to the single individual or family, missing the fundamental link between individual and social mental health. We need to be aware that health and mental health are socially created and that the concepts of mental health change over time and from culture to culture (Rovesti et al. 2018).

Health protection and promotion means promoting change by empowering people and using person-centred approaches in order to protect and promote health. Human security has to be granted; it is the starting point, a secure base, and a prerequisite needed to promote health and well-being.

As stated in the Ottawa Charter, the prerequisites for health are “*peace, shelter, education, food, income, a Stable Ecosystem, Sustainable Resources, Social justice, and Equity (equal opportunities, gender equity, non-discrimination, etc.)*.” (WHO 1986, pp. 5).

All the member-nations of the U.N. endorsed the Ottawa Charter, but nevertheless, many years later, some of their commitments remain mostly on paper. The sad reality is that there is still a lack of vision on the part of decision-makers who have largely failed to have foresight and to realise that it is crucial to empower people and grass-roots organisations to ensure the success of the needed change, a process strongly encouraged by WHO.

It has been calculated that, without the hard selling of pharmacology perpetrated by disease mongering, the savings would be significant, stopping a waste of financial resources and preventing iatrogenic damages. “*Genuine sustainable change, however, will not come until policymakers better understand the phenomenon of disease mongering and the potential benefits of responding against it. In Australia, for example, it has been estimated that winding back the public subsidy for inappropriate prescriptions of several high-profile drugs to people with milder health problems could save hundreds of millions of dollars per year.*” (Moynihan & Murphy, 2002, p. 5).

Today, it is imperative to broaden our understanding of mental health by recognising the significance of our relationship with the natural environment. There is an urgent need to update and expand the concept of mental health to include the capacity for deep contact with all living organisms on the planet. It is very important to include ecopsychology in the training of psychotherapists and other helping professions, enabling them to address the profound interdependence between human well-being and ecological integrity (Zucconi, 2013; 2016).

In the Sundsvall Conference, the third International Conference on Health Promotion: Supportive Environments for Health, the WHO stated: “*Public action for supportive environments for health must recognise the interdependence of all living beings and must*

manage all natural resources, taking into account the needs of future generations.” (WHO, 2009, pp. 14).

Not everybody likes to follow the leadership of the World Health Organisation; one of the reasons is that it gives priority to making money above anything else. If people became proactive in protecting and promoting their health, some members of the pharmaceutical industry fear that they will make fewer profits.

As Ivan Illic warned in 1976 that normal life events were medicalized (Illic, 1976), nowadays the pharmaceutical industry keeps investing in research; however, it spends more on marketing than innovation. About a third of the revenues and a third of the staff are used only to sell medicines (Angeli, 2004). Even worse is the practice of Disease mongering, focused not on health but on profits (Payer, 1992; Moynihan & Murphy, 2002; Moynihan & Cassels, 2005; Moynihan & Henry, 2006). Disease mongering is an intentional process promoted by some exponents of the pharmaceutical industry to turn *“healthy people into patients, waste precious resources, and cause iatrogenic harm. Like the marketing strategies that drive it, disease mongering poses a global challenge to those interested in public health, demanding in turn a global response.”* (Moynihan & Henry, 2006, p. 1).

1. The Interconnectedness of Life: Deep Contact with All Living Organisms

Interdependence of Life Systems: The Earth’s ecosystems operate as interconnected networks of relationships where every living organism plays a vital role. Recognising this interdependence allows us to understand that the well-being of human beings is intrinsically linked to the health of the planet and all its inhabitants.

Ecological Identity and Connection: Developing a sense of ecological identity involves feeling and accepting our interconnectedness with nature and recognising that our well-being is intimately tied to the health of the natural world. Deep contact with all living organisms fosters a profound sense of belonging, promoting mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being.

2. The Need for an Expanded Concept of Mental Health

Ecological Grief and Climate Anxiety: The accelerating ecological crisis and its consequences, such as species extinction, habitat destruction, and climate change, have significant psychological impacts on individuals and communities. Integrating the concept of deep contact with all living organisms into mental health frameworks acknowledges and addresses the ecological grief and climate anxiety experienced by many people.

Biophilia and Nature-Based Therapies: Biophilia, the innate human affinity for nature, underscores the importance of incorporating nature-based therapies into mental health practises. Exposure to natural environments and engaging with all living organisms can positively impact mental health, reducing stress, anxiety, and depression.

Ecopsychology, which has its roots in deep ecology and was first developed by the Norwegian ecophilosopher Arne Naess, abandons the notion of a boundary between self and the world.

It does not perceive the world as “other.” In ecopsychology, mental health or effective human functioning demands a congruence between self and Nature. It demands an expansion of the notions of “self” and “self-realisation” not only to the species but to the whole of nonhuman reality. Subjective, individualised experience is acknowledged and valued as a manifestation of the “mind of the world.” Ecopsychology explores the interrelationship between human psychology and the natural environment. It recognises that the well-being of both individuals and the planet is interconnected and seeks to integrate ecological principles into psychotherapeutic approaches (Naess, 1973; Neville, 1990).

Ecopsychology for Psychotherapists and Helping Professionals Training: Incorporating ecopsychology into the training of psychotherapists and other helping professions equips them with the knowledge and skills necessary to address the psychological implications of ecological degradation. It enhances their ability to support clients in cultivating a deep connection with nature, fostering resilience, and promoting eco-centric ways of being.

Benefits of Integrating Ecopsychology: Integrating ecopsychology into psychotherapist training offers numerous benefits, including improved mental health outcomes, increased ecological awareness, and enhanced therapeutic relationships. It allows for a more holistic and sustainable approach to mental health that aligns with the current environmental reality.

Challenges and Considerations: Integrating ecopsychology into psychotherapy practise poses challenges, such as the need for curriculum development, training resources, and a shift in therapeutic paradigms. However, these obstacles can be overcome through collaborative efforts among mental health professionals, educators, and policymakers.

In conclusion, the concept of mental health needs to be expanded to include the capacity for deep contact with all living organisms on the planet. This expansion recognises the interconnectedness of life and the importance of our relationship with the natural environment. Integrating ecopsychology into the training of psychotherapists plays a crucial role in addressing the psychological impacts of ecological degradation and promoting a more sustainable and holistic approach to mental health. By nurturing a deep connection with nature and fostering eco-centric perspectives, individuals can develop resilience, alleviate ecological grief, and contribute to the preservation of the planet for future generations. (Naess, 1973; Roszak, Gomes, & Kanner, 1995; Nelville, 1999; Mayer et al., 2009; Chalquist, 2014; Clayton & Myers, 2015; Kaplan & Kaplan, 2019; Searles, 2020; Zucconi, 2019, 2021; Zucconi & Wachsmuth, 2020; Zucconi & Rollè, 2023).

3. Traditional Education is Professor-centred and often Disempowers Learners

Student-centred, also called person-centred, education offers better results in learning by fostering critical thinking, fostering less absenteeism and dropout rates, fostering solid relationships outside the classroom, and encouraging active citizenship. (Zucconi 2016).

Learning does not happen only at school; learning starts when we are in our mother’s womb. We learn from our parents, siblings, relatives, peers, and neighbours; from the

behaviours and beliefs of the members of our community; from our culture; from television, songs, and cartoons; and from the social construction of reality, or what is called consensus reality, or culture, traditions, or shared frames of reference that are of course socially construed (Berger & Luckmann, 1966).

For effective promoters of change, it is very important to be aware of the social construction of reality and to be able to plan change using reliable tools like Force Field analysis. (Lewin, K., 1951) Participatory research and evaluation (Cornwall & Jewkes, 1995; Zimmerman & Rappaport, 1988) and win-win negotiation approaches (Fisher, Ury, & Patton, 2011). By promoting change through person- and people-centred approaches, using the observational points offered by the sociology of knowledge, utilising scientifically sound measurement tools, and adopting participatory and evaluative approaches, we can promote social change that is grounded in evidence, driven by community needs, and aimed at transforming social realities. Empowering individuals and communities to actively participate in the change process not only enhances the effectiveness of interventions but also fosters sustainable and inclusive outcomes since people-centred approaches shift the focus from external interventions to internal capacity-building, nurturing individuals' and communities' ability to drive their own development and shape their social realities. In doing so, they contribute to the transformation of social norms, values, and power structures, creating a more inclusive and equitable society. Through their emphasis on dignity, autonomy, and collective action, person- and people-centred approaches contribute to the creation of inclusive and equitable societies, aligning with the broader goals of international declarations and sustainable development agendas (Huxham & Vangen, 2005).

International declarations such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Ottawa Charter on Health Promotion, and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals have a profound impact on reality around the world. These frameworks create epistemic communities that foster knowledge sharing, shape values and attitudes, promote inclusivity and participation, and influence policies and practises globally. By embracing these international standards, societies can actively contribute to the transformation of social realities and work collectively towards a more just, equitable, and sustainable world (Alsop; Bertelsen & Holland 2006).

One significant way to promote change is to offer a compelling vision, like Martin Luther King did with his speech *I Had a Dream*, or Gandhi with the salt strike in colonial India, Nelson Mandela's Long Walk to Freedom, and more recently Greta Thunberg (Thunberg, 2019) and Malala Yousafzai, the girl who stood up for education and changed the world (Yousafzai, 2014).

Another significant way to promote change, offering not only a vision but also some specific guidelines, are the United Nations Universal Declarations, which not only offer a compelling vision but are also powerful ways to change reality and effective ways to impact formal and informal education. By fostering empowerment and self-responsibility, these declarations support and enable individuals and communities to actively participate

in decision-making processes, drive their own development, and transform social realities. Through their emphasis on dignity, autonomy, and collective action, they contribute to the creation of inclusive and equitable societies.

“Through person and people-centred approaches, individuals and communities become active agents of change, contributing to the transformation of social realities and embodying a sense of ownership and empowerment.”

Education is a fundamental pillar of society that plays a pivotal role in shaping individuals, fostering critical thinking, and driving social progress. While formal education systems have long been established as the primary means of knowledge dissemination, the emergence of informal pathways and epistemic communities has opened up new avenues for learning and knowledge exchange. Additionally, global declarations, charters, and campaigns by international organisations have significantly contributed to setting standards and values and promoting education on a global scale. Education can assume informal pathways through the creation of epistemic communities. Various international bodies and frameworks, such as the constitutions of nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Ottawa Charter on Health Promotion of the World Health Organisation, and goal-setting campaigns like Sustainable Development by the United Nations, shape global education standards. Of great importance will be fostering the development of codes of ethics in emerging fields where they are not yet in place, for example, in the Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Nanotechnology industries, to address potential existential threats.

International Declarations and Formal Education: International declarations, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), influence formal education by promoting values of human rights, equality, and social justice. They advocate for the integration of these principles into educational policies, curricula, and teaching practises. By incorporating these values, formal education systems nurture individuals with a deep understanding of their rights and responsibilities as global citizens, fostering empathy, critical thinking, and social engagement.

Sustainable Goals and Informal Education: Sustainable goals, such as the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), extend their influence to informal education. They inspire and empower individuals and communities to engage in lifelong learning by raising awareness of pressing global challenges and promoting sustainable practises in everyday life. Informal education initiatives, such as community-based projects, awareness campaigns, and social media activism, provide opportunities for individuals to learn, share knowledge, and take collective action towards the achievement of sustainable goals.

International Standards of Best Practices: International declarations and sustainable goals contribute to the creation of international standards of best practises across various

professions. For example, the World Health Organisation (WHO) establishes guidelines and frameworks for healthcare professionals to ensure quality care, patient safety, and ethical practises. These standards foster collaboration, knowledge sharing, and innovation, promoting the development of interdisciplinary approaches to address complex health issues and improving the overall quality of healthcare globally.

“Promoting change requires more than just a vision; it necessitates effective leadership, strategic communication, mobilisation of stakeholders, and a commitment to overcoming challenges.”

Shaping the Sociology of Professions: International declarations and sustainable goals shape the sociology of various professions by influencing the values, ethics, and social responsibilities of practitioners. They foster a shift towards person-centred and people-centred approaches, focusing on holistic well-being, inclusivity, and sustainability. Professionals across disciplines, such as healthcare, education, and business, are encouraged to embrace a broader societal perspective, addressing systemic challenges and contributing to social transformation through their practices and decision-making processes.

4. Creation of Worldwide Epistemic Communities

International declarations and development goals facilitate the creation of worldwide epistemic communities, bringing together individuals from diverse backgrounds, cultures, and disciplines. These communities form networks of knowledge exchange, collaboration, and shared learning that transcend geographical boundaries. By connecting researchers, practitioners, policymakers, and activists, they promote interdisciplinary understanding, facilitate the sharing of best practises, and foster innovation, ultimately leading to collective intelligence and enhanced problem-solving capacity.

Creation of Shared Interdisciplinary Knowledge: International declarations and sustainable goals drive the creation of shared interdisciplinary knowledge by encouraging collaboration and interdisciplinary approaches to address global challenges. They inspire the integration of multiple perspectives, expertise, and methodologies to tackle complex issues such as climate change, poverty, and inequality. This interdisciplinary knowledge promotes a more holistic understanding of interconnected global challenges, informing policy-making, guiding research agendas, and empowering individuals and communities with the tools to create sustainable and equitable solutions.

Empowering People: International declarations and sustainable goals empower individuals and communities by promoting person-centred approaches. These approaches prioritise the dignity, well-being, and participation of individuals, emphasising the importance of local contexts, cultural diversity, and community engagement. By fostering inclusive decision-making processes and empowering marginalised groups, these frameworks facilitate social

transformation and address power imbalances. They encourage a shift from top-down approaches to bottom-up, participatory approaches, giving voice to those directly affected by social issues. Through person and people-centred approaches, individuals and communities become active agents of change, contributing to the transformation of social realities and embodying a sense of ownership and empowerment.

International declarations play a significant role in shaping both formal and informal education, fostering the creation of international standards of best practises, empowering individuals and communities, and facilitating social transformation. By integrating the principles outlined in these global frameworks, formal education systems promote values of human rights, equality, and social justice, nurturing informed and engaged global citizens. Informal education initiatives driven by sustainable goals raise awareness, inspire action, and empower individuals and communities to address pressing global challenges. The creation of international standards of best practises fosters collaboration, knowledge sharing, and innovation across various professions, driving interdisciplinary approaches to complex issues. Moreover, these frameworks shape informal education, promote the creation of worldwide epistemic communities, and foster the collective intelligence and problem-solving capacity needed to create sustainable and equitable solutions created by processes that are person-centred, empowering individuals and communities to actively participate in decision-making, social transformation, and sustainable new ways of being (Zucconi 2016).

5. The World Academy of Art and Science is an International Epistemic Community

WAAS has been contributing to the process of change since its founding. Lately, WAAS has expanded its contribution in significant ways by growing in numbers and creating many significant partnerships with sister organisations that share similar values and goals. Just to mention a few examples:

WAAS has created a sister organisation. The World University Consortium has been carrying out significant work in the field of education and organising several international conferences on a new paradigm in Education.

WAAS has created partnerships with several University consortiums and networks like the Inter University Centre (212 universities) and the Black Sea Universities Network (2013 universities).

WAAS has been given special consultative status by the U.N. Economic and Social Council and consultative status by UNESCO.

Since October 2022, WAAS has been in formal collaboration with the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security (UNTFHS) on a global campaign to promote Human Security for All (HS4A). It promotes a comprehensive, integrated approach to security that encompasses all the dimensions of the 17 SDGs, including peace and human rights.*

* <https://worldacademy.org/human-security/>

The World Sustainability Forum (WSF), a partner of WAAS led by Ken Stokes, a WAAS Fellow, has created a Declaration of Responsibilities of Present Generations Towards Future Generations. Many decision-makers and opinion-makers have endorsed the declaration.*

Another partner of WAAS, the Interparliamentary Coalition for Global Ethics, is led by Shoshana Nicole Berkerman, another WAAS Fellow. Following the successful Roundtable Conference on Strategy for a Joint Abraham Accords Model Curriculum for a Culture of Peace and the SDGs, held last February in Dubai, a second meeting was held at the University of Rome in March 2023, and we are successfully moving towards developing a model curriculum on education for the culture of peace and the SDGs to be used in the elementary schools of all the Abraham Accords nations.

The outline will be presented at the United Nations Headquarters as a best practices model to be available to parliamentarians, educators, media, religious leaders, and decision-makers to utilise in accordance with specific national and regional needs.†

6. The Trauma Informed Care Best Practices Project (TIC Project)

The Person-Centred Approach Institute (IACP), in collaboration with the World Academy of Art and Science, the World University Consortium, the Department of Psychology of the University of Torino, the University for Sustainability, Santa Fe, New Mexico, the Black Sea Universities Network, the Protect Our Planet Movement, and the Psychological Association of Ukraine, has created a worldwide project to support, connect, and assist all the professionals and public and private organisations operating in countries ravaged by violence and disasters that are in one way or another dealing with people, and in so doing, need to be trauma informed. We decided to extend the free training and assistance to colleagues in the helping professions working in Turkey and Syria with survivors of the earthquake and to offer for free 25% of the available training courses at IACP headquarters to helping professionals that are in Italy as refugees. The costs of trauma are systemic; trauma damages individual and social health and, if untreated, may be passed on to the next generation. The high economic costs of trauma hit trauma survivors, their families, communities, and countries.

Trauma-Informed Care Best Practices are scientifically sound procedures that avoid the risks of retraumatization and can facilitate growth from trauma.‡

In conclusion, international declarations and sustainable goals not only shape formal and informal education but also promote change through person-centred approaches. By fostering empowerment and self-responsibility, these approaches enable individuals and communities to actively participate in decision-making processes, drive their own development, and transform social realities. Through their emphasis on dignity, autonomy, and collective action, person-centred approaches contribute to the creation of inclusive and equitable societies, aligning with the broader goals of international declarations and sustainable development agendas.

* If you share similar values and aims, you can sign it at <https://www.worldsforum.org/letter-to-the-international-community.html>

† <http://ipege.org/event-2023-june-united-nations.html>

‡ If you wish to know more and donate to the project, visit <https://worldacademy.org/support-ukraine/>

Promoting change requires more than just a vision; it necessitates effective leadership, strategic communication, mobilisation of stakeholders, and a commitment to overcoming challenges. By understanding the principles and practices of people-centred participatory leadership, individuals and organisations can facilitate the badly needed transformative change.

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