

2016 International Essay Contest for Young People

[Youth Category – 3<sup>rd</sup> Prize]

## **Envisioning a futuristic education in a metamorphic world**

(Original)

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Education is the key and perhaps the panacea to the many global challenges we encounter today and in future. In the face of wars, terrorism, crimes, depletion of energy sources, global warming, natural disasters, epidemics and economic crises today, and a myriad of future challenges pressing upon us tomorrow; how has education played a part? In a metamorphic world where change is constant and substantial, what and how should an ideal education be that would ensure a sustained world of peace, harmony and well-being in the long run?

As a young novice educator, I envision an ideal education as a holistic process of growth as a person in an interdependent community. It is providing a conducive platform where each individual is given opportunities to develop their innate talents, and to use these unique potential to collectively contribute to the good of the world. A school should be a micro society, a transition that links home to the real world. In this miniature community, students would have the opportunity to exercise leadership, make decisions and solve problems collaboratively for the betterment of the entire community. Even today, there are still students who fail to achieve their potential in life and live a life of meaningless toil after years of education. Without passion in their work, it is uncertain how far these individuals could be valuable contributors to the world around them.

Furthermore, in this process of growth, character should be continually developed and nurtured. Today's education system across the world place a great amount of emphasis on cognitive development of students, be it critical, innovative or creative thinking. However, the significance of character development has often been neglected and thrown out of the window over the focus on brain or knowledge development. One clear example of this is the overemphasis of test results as a reflection of students' success in school which is still deeply rooted within the culture in many parts of the world. This approach to education is obsolete

and lopsided, as it has little power to empower students to be advocates of truth and integrity in order to help formulating practical solutions to tackle complex issues of the world. What is conventionally considered as “success” should be relooked at. How far can we go with such illusive misconception?

Especially in a world where wars and hostility are a norm, I strongly contend the importance of developing positive values and virtues among students of both today and tomorrow through education at all levels. Virtues and values should be upheld in the world today where morality seems to be neglected and even trampled. This can only be achieved through education. Only with good values can the global citizens around the world preserve and value global peace; only with good that overflows from our hearts can we overcome evil and challenges together. Love will be the strongest catalyst that spur unity amongst global citizens and to build a world of peace and well-being together. Love will be the basis of all decision-making that is for the good of the world, where the well-being of every individual and the state of our mother earth is a shared responsibility of all in the interconnected network. Love will be the force to propel students to be aware, to empathize and to act upon the pressing issues that the world is facing today and tomorrow with resilience.

To strive towards a sustainable education also means providing equal opportunities for all. It is a unifying, global education that is blind to race, social status, political ideology, faith and citizenship.

Only when the borders between nations no longer are a cause for political dissension but for partnership;

when we view each other as comrades in collaboration instead of rivals in competition;

when our hands and hearts are joined together in unity and love;

when we take on a global instead of merely a national perspective;

when the entire world becomes one;

then can we ensure an education is sustainable—one that will be a means to fulfil the needs of people today and overcome the challenges of tomorrow as one.

This might appear ambitious, but together, we are one;

and together, nothing is impossible.