

2016 International Essay Contest for Young People

[Youth Category – Honorable Mention]

It is just 7am

(Original)

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It is just 7am and I wake up touched by the sunlight passing through the slits of the wooden window in my bedroom. I stand up filled with hope, knowing that if the sun is still shining, there is still life out there. It is just 7am and, along with all my excitement for this new day, I am choked by the slight distant sound of my father's radio informing that the number of homicides in my city has increased once again. It is just another day where I realize that I live in a complex world harmed by prejudice, hunger, terrorism, inequalities, and too many other atrocities.

Surrounded by contrasts it is difficult for us to believe in a better future. Has humanity really got to a point from which there is no retreat? From now on will everything become increasingly worse? Even though it seems we are just in a small boat drifting over a huge, revolted sea, the answer is no. Education, the compass in the crooked path of our lives, will always be the light capable of reaching different windows in this world and as long as it exists, there will always be hope.

As a root is responsible for feeding its whole tree, education is the basis that allows society to grow. Unfortunately, people have fostered unfertile fields, killing the nutrients of many roots; women in Africa forced to work and stay at home as well as the huge number of refugees around the globe have lived in an environment of sameness; they can easily state that access to a good education is not a benefit that all society has. Satirically, when education is affordable it has been used to grow unfruitful trees. In today's world, many terrorists have shown a high level of education but are still practicing inhuman acts.

Indeed, access to education must not be a privilege but an evidence for all; however, alongside this accomplishment we still need to reflect about what kind of education we have received.

Otherwise we would just spread more problems rather than solutions to our diverse contemporary issues. The truth is that people have been instructed rather than educated. Education is not the training we receive in order to do something; it is the key that opens up our mind and allows us to be free to unlock different doors of solutions and possibilities.

Nowadays we have experienced an education with a discouraging and standardized background based only on tests and content absorption. How can we shape new values and vocational skills in a system in which the only way to succeed is by adapting to a standardized model? In fact, it can't be the student's role to adapt to a model, but it is the model itself that must adapt to the student. In order to decrease evasion rates and improve learning, students must see a purpose in going to school. This will only happen if we motivate them by valuing their own interests.

Certainly, schools and universities play an important role in forming our citizens, but education is more than a diploma. It will not mean anything if we become intolerant engineers or experienced monsters. In other words, we must guarantee, above all, that the type of learning our future generations will inherit will transform them into better humans eager to love and respect all kind of differences.

In order to achieve this, we must adventure ourselves into the essence of education. By surpassing our common educational problems, we will be able to see what the so-called powerful weapon in this world can do. As Paulo Freire, a great Brazilian philosopher, once perfectly explained: "Education doesn't transform the world. Education changes people. People change the world."

It is just 7am and I am prompted to decide if I want to be a prisoner of the circumstances or if I want to struggle to make them prisoners of my solutions; it is just another day that I have chosen this second option believing in humanity and knowing that we already have the necessary tools to build a better future for all.