



Education Working Group



Global Listening Initiative



and IF20 Edu WG

- **IF20** offers an annual platform where religious institutions, faith organisations, and interreligious/interfaith communities collaborate to engage on the agendas set by the G20 leaders.
- **IF20 Edu WG** is one of IF20's working groups that aims to bridge between global intercultural, interreligious and interfaith institutions, organisations and communities and G20 leaders, regarding educational policymaking.
- For 2021, **IF20**'s theme is ***A Time to Heal***.



Edu WG Partners

- ADYAN Foundation
- Arigatou International / Ethical Education Council
- Dream-a-Dream India
- The Fetzer Institute
- Guerrand-Hermès Foundation for Peace (current financial sponsor)
- International Dialogue Centre (KAICIID)
- Salzburg Global Seminars
- Scholas Occurrentes

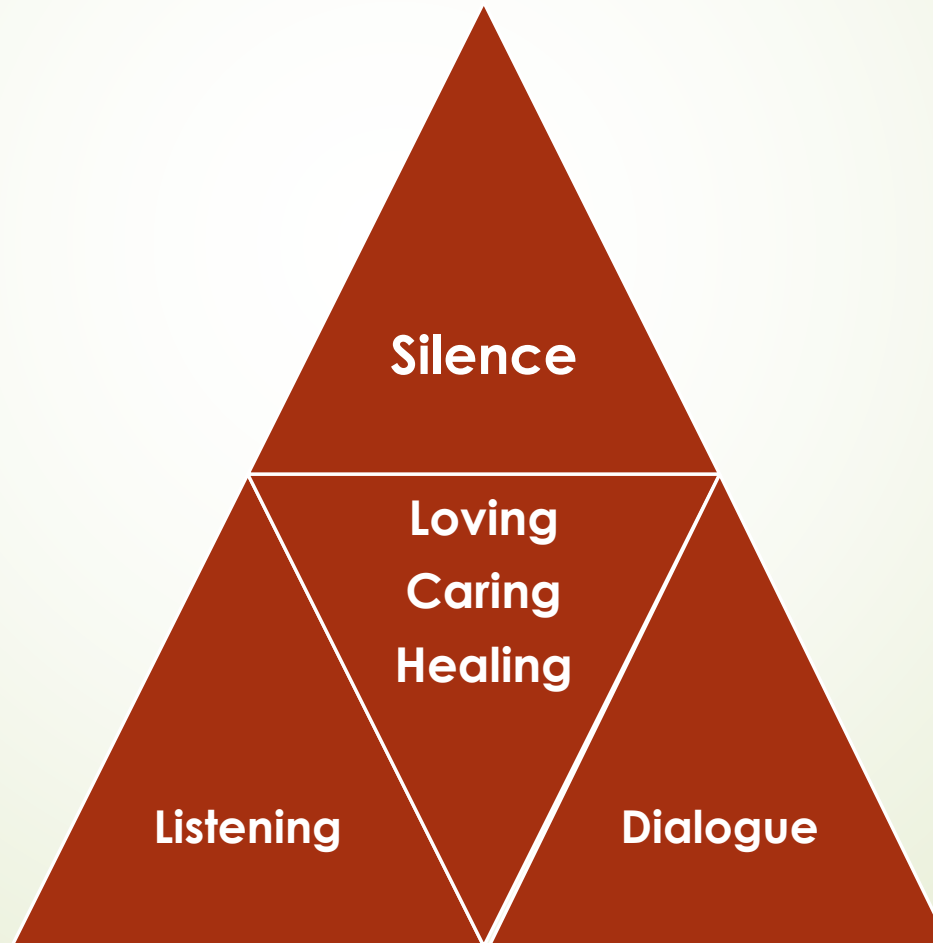
- The COVID-19 Pandemic has resulted in **educational disruption and dislocation** following school closures, but also provided an invaluable opportunity for reimagining education, e.g. educational aims, nature of learning, curricula and pedagogical innovation, and systemic change.
- A key element to consider as we move forward is the imperative of **collective healing and the holistic well-being** of children, young people, educators and communities.
- **IF20** Edu WG recognises the paramount importance of **listening to and integrating children and young people's voices** in shaping educational policy and practice.
- Hence for 2021, we launched a **Global Listening Initiative**.

- **Healing and well-being** can be found in the quietude of **deep silence**, the attentiveness and caring of **deep listening**, and the openness, curiosity, and mutual valuing of **deep dialogue**.
- Together these three interlocking processes can offer comfort to the vulnerable, appease the wounded, and make whole our selves fragmented by trauma and fear.
- From deep silence-listening-dialogue, we return to ourselves and to our community and re-experience each other as part of 'WE', a relational reality at the core of our well-being.

In deep silence-listening-dialogue, we tune into a greater source of wisdom, re-centre ourselves, enact radical hospitality – **embracing everyone's well-being** with good will, and on this basis, engendering **co-belongingness**.

Three Interlocking Processes

Deep Silence ↔ Listening ↔ Dialogue



Deep Silence-Listening-Dialogue

- **Deep silence** is to dwell in where human spirit resides – within us, in our encounters with others, and in our being-*with* each other, all things in nature and the transcendent.
- **Deep listening** is to attend to ourselves and to others from a place of valuing, caring and receiving. It is generative, empathic, supportive, and open and trusting the unknown.
- **Deep dialogue** is to open ourselves to difference, deepen our awareness of the *Other*, cultivate curiosity and questioning, and collaborate towards new possibilities. It enables us to share our life experiences, concerns and aspirations; and helps to break down hierarchical structure and power dynamics within an educational institution, thus nourishing generative relations.

Through deep silence-listening-dialogue, we open ourselves to the lived realities of each other compassionately and caringly. It contributes to the emergence of a co-creative, co-constructive, relational present and future.

Collaborative and Co-Creative Processes

- **Exploring** our selves and **connecting** with our community
- Identifying **shared** values and **common** concerns
- **Reflecting** on personal and collective needs
- **Co-inquiring** into challenges, strengths, and opportunities
- **Co-envisioning** mutual aspirations
- **Building upon** enriched WE-ness and generative relationships
- **Collaborating** to enable personal and communal healing
- **Co-creating** conditions for personal and collective well-being

An Appreciative Approach to Co-Inquiry

- ▶ Values what is intrinsically worthwhile in ourselves, our experiences, and practices;
- ▶ Draws on our collective perspectives that can enable us to shift the focus from problems, failures, and obstacles where we can feel stuck and disempowered;
- ▶ Affirms and appreciates our existing strengths, experiences of meaningful practices, and inspirational stories of possibilities;
- ▶ Taps into our shared enthusiasm;
- ▶ Engenders life-giving opportunities to educators and communities;
- ▶ Co-envisions a promising future together;
- ▶ Supports transformation at personal, communal and structural levels.

- To **collaborate with and engage children and youth as partners** in education policymaking;
- To take an **appreciative approach to identifying educational policy priorities** as we move forward;
- To articulate **policy recommendations for systemic educational transformation**

Adolescents (14-18 yrs) across five continents have participated in experiential workshops featuring deep silence-listening-dialogue processes:

- To reflect on and explore with one another **their experiences of life and education** during Covid-19 pandemic
- To share and identify **who and what have been most supportive to their learning and well-being** at this time
- To consider together and **propose key priorities for educational transformation** in their contexts.



Global Listening Initiative Participating partners

- Arigatou International
- Adyan Foundation
- Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University
- Dream a Dream India
- DofE (The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award)
- GNRC (Global Network of Religions for Children)
- GHFP (Guerrand-Hermès Foundation for Peace) Research Institute
- KAICIID International Dialogue Centre
- Scholas Occurrentes
- SoH (Spirit of Humanity) Forum
- States of Mind
- WOSM (The World Organization of the Scout Movement)
- WAGGGS (The World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts)

Adolescents' experiences of life and education

- ❖ Emotional upheaval, sadness and grief, stress, anxiety and other mental health challenges.
- ❖ Feeling the physical, psychological and educational constraints due to lockdown, including feelings of disconnectedness and loneliness, lack of motivation, and limited support from teachers.
- ❖ Limited technology (computers/cells/etc.) and online access as well as increased costs, which reduces their opportunity to connect with peers, teachers and learning opportunities.
- ❖ Limited access to electricity and good Internet speed.
- ❖ Length of complete educational lockdown (for many, more than a year now) and concerns about losing out.
- ❖ Many affected by greater family economic precarity, as well as emotional strain experienced by other family members.
- ❖ Unprecedented opportunities for strengthening connections with family members.

What helped adolescents' well-being & learning?

- ❖ Enriched relationships with family, providing emotional support, guidance and motivation.
- ❖ Social contact and peer-peer support through social media.
- ❖ Good access to digital media and ICT (internet, laptops, tablets, smartphones, electricity, internet) for connection and for online learning.
- ❖ Where access to technology was limited, intermittent, or non-existent this was noted as the greatest barrier to learning and wellbeing.
- ❖ Sustained contacts and relationships with teachers, religious/ faith/ interfaith and non-formal education groups, and the wider community.
- ❖ Spaces for quiet time, play, creativity, spiritual practices, personal development, and connection with nature.
- ❖ Opportunities for volunteering and contributing to improving others' well-being and the betterment of the community
- ❖ Learning new online skills and new forms of communication
- ❖ Extra curricular groups and online sessions specifically directed towards nurturing motivation, resilience, life skills and wellbeing.

Priorities for Educational Transformation

- ❖ Providing a greater focus on generative and relational processes in education, including a more flexible and collaborative approach to teaching and learning that listens to and attends to individual needs, encourages independence, and nurtures motivation; including holistic care (physical, psychological, social-emotional, and spiritual) across educational ethos, curriculum structure, and pedagogical practices;
- ❖ Allowing spaces in the curriculum for reflection, quiet time, self-development, creativity and meaningful relationships, including activities that create and sustain mutual connections between students, with teachers/mentors, and their communities beyond the school;
- ❖ Integrating environmental awareness into all aspects of education;
- ❖ Moving away from grades and exams, towards holistic approaches to evaluation that value students' learning processes and well-being, and towards learning that enriches young people for the world, including supporting them to embrace future challenges;
- ❖ Offering equality of and better access to learning resources, such as online learning spaces, digital technology, computer devices, and good bandwidth, and equally building teachers' capacities to teach through the online and digital media;
- ❖ Ensuring that children and young people are dialogue partners in educational transformation, and that their voices must be listened to in educational policymaking.

Recommendations for Policy Brief

Through listening to global adolescents, the following recommendations have been identified for G20 leaders, and especially Ministers of Education, when developing new educational policies:

- Respecting children and young people as partners for educational transformation and engaging them formally and informally in educational decisions at all levels;
- Creating spaces in curriculum for innovative, community-rooted, well-being oriented contents, such as spiritual practices, social emotional learning, opportunities for relational enrichment, play, creativity, nature and outdoor experiences, environmental education, arts, sports, volunteering, service learning;
- Abolishing standardisation and high-stakes testing and taking a participatory, collaborative and context-sensitive approach to educational evaluation, including the involvement of children, young people, teachers, parents, and others in the community;
- Prioritising teachers' well-being and professional development, in particular, to improve their digital and online teaching competencies, and their capability to facilitate co-creative, collaborative and dialogic spaces for teaching and learning;
- Investing in good educational resources and facilities to ensure all children and young people have equitable & consistent access to both in-person and online learning opportunities.



Integrating Students Perspectives in Policy Brief

IF20 Edu WG will:

- Draw together these themes arising from the Global Listening Initiative, together with proposals for educational transformation post-COVID in relevant policies and literature;
- Develop a draft **policy brief on educational transformation**
- Organise international webinar for policy consultation with religious and faith leaders and educators;
- Finalise and present the Policy Brief at  Forum in September 2021 and to G20 Summit in October 2021.



Impact of IF20 Edu WG Listening Initiative (1)

Adolescents Dialogue with Icelandic Minister of Children and Social Affairs during 5th Spirit of Humanity Forum

- Following the Global Listening Initiative, young people from India, Lebanon and UK were invited to a webinar where they shared their experiences of taking part in the IF20 initiative and presented their recommendations with regard to educational transformation.
- Selected adolescents then took part in the 5th Spirit of Humanity Forum, opened by the Prime Minister of Iceland.
- During the Forum, two adolescents from the IF20 listening groups were selected to join a panel dialogue with the Icelandic Minister of Children and Social Affairs.
- <https://youtu.be/JISvLfvZ64>

Ministry of Education Delhi, India:

- India was devastated by a most shattering tragedy during the 2nd wave of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- People have either lost loved ones or witnessed someone who suffered such losses, and families and communities are crushed by the agony of grief and fear.
- Delhi educational leaders decided to offer support for educators to integrate relational processes, e.g. deep silence-listening-dialogue, as an ethic of caring to enable their own, students and communities' healing and well-being.
- The IF20 Edu WG provided a four-week workshop aimed at fostering and enhancing teachers' competencies in applying the relational processes in supporting children's healing, nurturing them back into well-being.
- Inspired by the IF20 Global Listening Initiative, Ministry of Education Delhi is now engaging children and young people as partners in co-envisioning education as they move forward.
- **This is a beautiful virtuous cycle that prioritises processes of relationing and caring as a condition for educational regeneration.**