

For solidarity in education in the global migration society

An appeal from the education sciences, pedagogy and social work

Interplays of political conflict situations and economic inequality lead to unendurable living conditions in a number of countries. According to estimates of the UNHCR worldwide there are 59 million forcibly displaced people. This is now one of the biggest movements of forcibly displaced persons since the Second World War.

European refugee politics of the last decades was and presently still is shaped by the attempt to hinder displaced persons to enter Europe by strengthening European border systems. The European Union for example provided Greece in 2012 with four million Euro towards the care of asylum seekers and with 200 Million Euro to secure borders. This political strategy constructed a European border regime, which gradually has been expanded towards the South and East and militarised and has by now cost many thousands of human lives. To secure Europe's advantages, the European state and government officials are in the process of further strengthening this border regime. Increasingly, positions utilising arguments based on racist patterns of interpretation (e.g. lack of moral behaviour of the people seeking refuge) have become respectable in public discourses and are employed to prove, why a refusal of asylum and refuge is legitimate.

Refugees have reasons for the high-risk decision to look and aspire to places with a higher probability of survival and possibilities for a better life. A disregard of the motives of refugees and the reasonable justification for each decision to seek refuge leads to new exclusions. In the European public, civil wars and terror are not discussed with regard to Europe's stake in them, based on their own economic and geopolitical interests, but are seen as legitimate reasons for migration and refuge seeking. However, part of the global reasons for forcible displacement are the realities of exploitation in globalised, postcolonial industries and agriculture and its consequences, from which the European states and consumers frequently profit, and which often create unbearable contexts with no perspective for the future, thus leading to migration.

In this way forcible displacement and migration phenomena are constitutive for local national and global contexts and can, in terms of

Wolfgang Klafki, be seen as “epochal-typical key problems of our present and possible future”.

Pedagogic and social organisations and institutions of education have a central role to respond to current global conditions and to understand displacement/asylum in connection with with global suffering and inequality as a significant general topic for education.

This leads to the question, how possibilities of formal, non-formal and informal education concerning this topic can be created and strengthened. Here, the focus is not only on the transfer of knowledge about the global, European, German and local contexts. But also individuals and social groups need to be encouraged - in terms of an education process - to face their more or less privileged positioning in the world and to become aware of their involvement in structures and contexts of global injustice and violence as well as their specific options in dealing with these. A striving for global solidarity can be identified as a central education goal of the 21st century. Contemporary solidarity cannot be conceptualised as a model of solidarity between those who know and trust each other, but has to prove itself in contexts shaped by plurality and difference. This education goal needs to be strengthened and developed (further), theoretically and on a didactic level - and also so that the increasing popularity of racist-identitary positions need not be observed helplessly.

Education politics, education sciences and social work have to stand for a sensitisation of the migration society, so that historic, economic, legal, political and social settings, connections and consequences of global inequality and violence become topics of education and upbringing. The reactions to migration due to forced displacement need to expand beyond mere help measures and in addition need to focus on and strengthen the incontestable rights of all humans. According to UNICEF, more than 65000 forcibly displaced children live in Germany with an unsecure residence permit status. Taking the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child as well as the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities seriously, further violations of the rights of forcibly displaced children and young adults, as they are planned in many currently discussed revisions of laws, need to be denounced decisively.

To implement solidarity education as a workable concept, the following education-related demands and guidelines - within the framework of responsible refugee and migration politics - are necessary, as they have been sketched out by the German Council on Migration (Rat für Migration, <http://www.rat-fuer-migration.de/>), among others, in the demands for sustainable refugee politics:

- The judgement of the Federal Constitutional Court (Bundesverfassungsgericht) of 2012, according to which migration politics considerations and regulations are not allowed to infringe on and limit human dignity, has to be implemented.
- The alignment of legal rights of forcibly displaced and migrant children and young adults according to the Child and Youth Welfare Act and the Convention on the Rights of the Child has to be implemented.
- Continuous and regular capacities for the social discourse with forced displacement and global migration have to be offered in all pedagogic education streams and further education programmes.
- A revision and supplementation of content in pedagogic education streams with regard to reflections on globalisation and with regard to the migration society needs to be guaranteed.
- The systematic examination of structural, organisational and interactive discrimination in a migration society as well as the possibilities of their reduction has to be established in all pedagogic fields and education streams.
- The systematic reduction of migration specific citizenship and residence permit laws as well as barriers within organisational cultures in the access to schools, universities and vocational training needs to be implemented with serious intent.
- Historic-systematic knowledge about colonial and racist violence as well as the teaching of critical race theories and ways of dealing with racism (Handlungskonzepte) are to be implemented as a general part of pedagogic professionalism.

The universal need for adequate circumstances for life and work as well as the multiple, reciprocal, practical interdependence of the citizens of the world connects forcibly displaced persons, people who have reached the final destination of their refuge-seeking (86% of all forcibly displaced people in 2014 were in countries which could be described as economically less developed) and established inhabitants of relatively privileged final destinations of this world. On this a contemporary solidarity can build. The impulse generated from migration movements is therefore further-reaching than it is suggested by integration measures and “welcome cultures”. Connected with a pedagogy of the migration society and critical pedagogy is a political project, which looks at and revises orders of pedagogic, economic and social organisations and of educational institutions on a theoretical, conceptual and practical level. These revisions, expanding beyond “integration of migrants” and aiming for equal rights for everyone, is one of the most important tasks of education sciences, pedagogy and social work – at least, if the realities of the global and local migration society are not negated and instead actively – and with a focus on justice – shaped.

We demand from all those working in education policy and pedagogy as well as those with the power to make decisions, to commit themselves to the maxims sketched out in this appeal and to openly and decisively advocate them in their contexts.

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The up-to-date list of supporters of this appeal, as well as the option to personally sign the appeal, can be found at

www.aufruf-fuer-solidarische-bildung.de

We also entreat organisations and institutions of education and of social work to sign the appeal and will install a separate list for this, please email: mail@aufruf-fuer-solidarische-bildung.de