

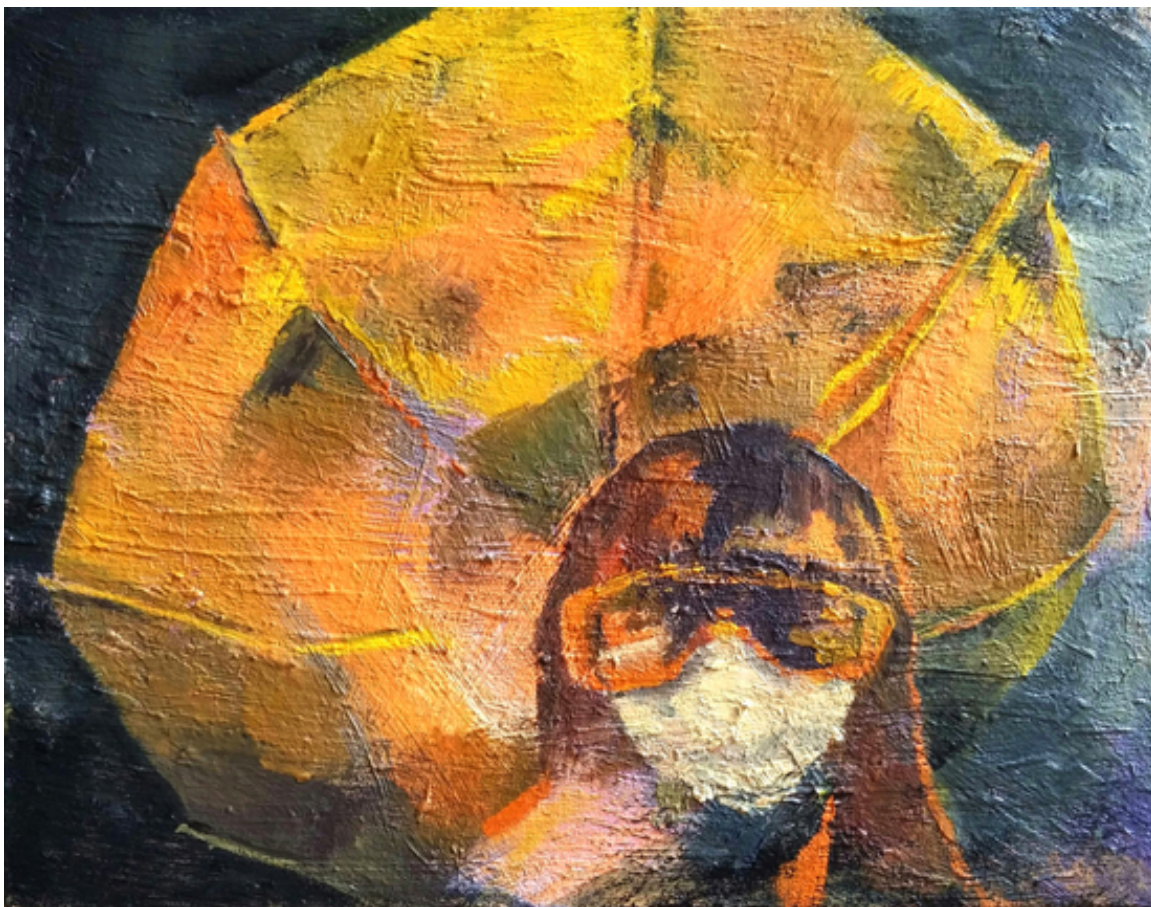
# THE EDUCATION OF CHILDREN IS OUT-OF-STEP WITH THE STATE OF THE PLANET

DENNY TAYLOR | NOVEMBER 2019

Thank you for this incredible honor. I am deeply appreciative to NCRL and to Catherine Compton Lilly for this much appreciated opportunity to be here today with so many people who I respect, honor and love. NCRL has inspired me and kept me focused on my research for many decades and I am grateful for that. In the next few minutes I am going to make seven observations that are associated with possible transformative actions to prepare children for their present and future lives on Earth.

## **ONE: No Country in the World has the Capacity to Protect Children and their Families from a Country Level or Planetary Scale Disaster**

Imagine, if you will, that you are looking at a little child. She is standing on a hill with her back to you sheltering under an umbrella. In front of her is a town. Everyone is asleep. Oblivious. Beyond the town are trees and fields. Verdant. Bucolic.



Jessica Cheung, Self Portrait, from the Umbrella Revolution series  
<https://artcritical.com/2014/10/05/painting-from-the-barricades-self-portrait-with-a-yellow-umbrella/>

The child likes to watch the sunrise, but on this day what she sees on the horizon is a mushroom cloud and a pillar of fire. Blink. Look again. The child with the umbrella, the town of sleeping people, the trees and fields are gone. Oblivion.

Imagine now, if you will, that the child is yours. She is everybody's child in every country in the world.

The umbrella is the country in which the child lives.

The town is every human dwelling on Earth.

The trees and fields are all the ecosystems on the planet.

And the pillar of fire and the mushroom cloud?

The nuclear explosion?

It represents the cluster of existential risks confronting every child now alive on the planet. It is a cataclysmic scenario for which we are not prepared. Once again: the reality is that no country in the world has the capacity to protect the child with the umbrella from a planetary scale disaster. The retreat to unilateralism is ratcheting up the risks. Multilateralism has failed.



The greatest existential threat to human societies is how power is exercised almost exclusively by men. Human history is often reduced to their triumphs, scandals and

legends. They are revered and reviled. Powerful men silence, crush and prevent conversations that do not privilege them. All other existential risks can be ascribed to them. Realistically the only hope for all our children is the global commitment to governance by and for the people. The alternative is annihilation.

## **TWO: A Step-Change in the Education is Essential to Prepare Children for the Step-Change that has taken place in the State of the Planet**

It is of the utmost importance and in keeping with the U.N. Sustainable Development Goals for human survival that we create spaces in schools and classrooms, neighborhoods and communities, for children to participate in building a global democracy for a peaceful planet.

At a time when the future of humanity is in jeopardy the ideas presented by Arnetha Ball, Dahlia Hamza Constantine, Teaira McMurtry and Katrina Liu are of utmost importance to our re-Imagining of the educational opportunities that we have to prepare children for an uncertain future. This will require that we:

- Reconceptualize Marginality with Arnetha by moving children and their families from the margins to the center human societies;
- Construct Personal Geographies with Dahlia;
- Create pluralistic pedagogical possibilities through generative thinking and practice with Teaira; and
- Use Critical Counter-Narratives to Prepare Prospective Teachers of Color and All Marginalized Groups with Katrina.

Their studies require that social justice and inclusive participation in human societies be moved to the center of the education of all children. Engaging in sense making, exploring cultural meanings, building trust and social acceptance and appreciation of risk perception have all become essential –so has the transformative engagement in the generation of knowledge.

And yet, some commercial opportunists with the support of the media are still arguing about synthetic phonics, as they did in the 1980s and 1990s and way before that. This worn out narrative loop is presently being played again, even though we all know the promotion of synthetic phonics programs is about money, control and power.

The "science" of the lucrative phonics obsession was deconstructed in the 1990s in "Beginning to Read and the Spin Doctors of Science" The research was fudged then as it is now.

Such tangled narrative loops trip-up teachers and impede the steps that must be taken to prepare kids for the increasing severity of the climate crises and ecosystem destruction. But great transformations are still possible and we do have the capacity to create an educational infrastructure that is **in-step** with the rapid changes that are taking place to human societies and the planet.

### **THREE: A Baby Born on this Day – November 23<sup>rd</sup> - will Experience a Different World than the One in which We Grew Up**

It doesn't matter which country we come from or where we live, climate change is creating systemic crises that are exacerbating existential risks to all human habitats, and our transgression of planetary boundaries for human existence on the planet places our children in jeopardy.

In a review of *The Uninhabitable Earth*, by David Wallace-Wells, published in the *London Review of Books*, Francis Gooding writes:

If decarbonisation had started in 2000, only 3 per cent annual emissions reduction would have been necessary to keep us below 2°C of warming. The figure is now 10 per cent per year. If we wait until 2030, it will be 30 per cent. U.N. Secretary General, António Guterres, believes **there is only one year left in which to begin this reduction**. The IPCC says that global mobilisation on the scale of the Second World War will be necessary.

The New York State government website<sup>i</sup> provides science-based assessments of the anticipated rise in temperatures that give some indication of the severity of the systems crises that children born after 2000 will experience in their lifetime:

- Modeling shows that New York should anticipate more warming. Compared to the 1971-2000 period, average temperature will be:
  - **up to 3°F warmer by the 2020s.**
  - **up to 6°F warmer by the 2050s.**
  - **up to 10°F warmer by the 2080s.**
- **By 2100, scientists project sea levels 18 to 50 inches higher than today** along New York's coastlines and estuaries, though a rise as high as 75 inches could occur.
- **Sea-level rise is locked in for centuries**, or even millennia, by heat-trapping greenhouse gases already in the atmosphere. Continuing or increasing emissions will speed up the rise to higher levels.

- **Energy, land use and infrastructure decisions made now will determine how vulnerable our children and grandchildren will be to rising sea-levels.**

A **3° F rise** in temperature by the 2020s will impact all aspects of life in NYS and have significant impact on NYC where urbanization intensifies the impact of the temperature rise. In NYC a 3° F rise will create additional stresses exacerbating existing risks to livelihoods, human and ecosystem health, infrastructure, and food systems.

A **6°F rise** in NYC temperature by the 2050s will have systemic and cascading consequences for our children and grandchildren, negatively impacting all aspects of life in the city. For example, the NYS website cited above highlights that the intensity of severe flooding and storm surge damage will impact the infrastructure of the city, not only transportation and communication but also the food chain and drinking water.

Finally, **by 2080 when the temperature is 10°F higher, all bets are off.** We would be wise to take note that the last temperature rise of this magnitude is called **The Great Dying**. Essentially, the environmental alterations and predicted outcomes of current climate change caused by out-of-control human activity on the planet are similar to the climate changes caused by volcanic activity that took place at the end of the Permian Period. The Great Dying is the largest extinction in Earth's history – up to 96% of all marine species and 70% of terrestrial species were lost.

A statement in the Executive Summary of a 2019 report the IPCC<sup>ii</sup> is declarative:

A 2. Since the pre-industrial period, the land surface air temperature has risen nearly twice as much as the global average temperature (high confidence). **Climate change, including increases in frequency and intensity of extremes, has adversely impacted food security and terrestrial ecosystems** as well as contributed to desertification and land degradation in many regions (high confidence).

The following statements by the IPCC are of critical importance to all those who care for children and to all peoples in human societies:

- Mutually supportive climate and land policies have the potential to save resources, **amplify social resilience**, support ecological restoration, and **foster engagement and collaboration between multiple stakeholders.**

- **Rapid reductions in anthropogenic GHG emissions** across all sectors following ambitious mitigation pathways **reduce negative impacts** of climate change.
- **Acting now may avert or reduce risks and losses**, and generate benefits to society.
- **Delaying action** as is assumed in high emissions scenarios **could result in some irreversible impacts** on some ecosystems, which in the longer-term has the potential to lead to substantial additional GHG emissions from ecosystems that would accelerate global warming

**FOUR: We have the Tremendous Capacity to Interrupt the Trajectory of the Extreme Conditions and Catastrophes that Our Kids will Experience if We Act Responsibly, but Global Leaders – especially the U.S., China and Russia – and the Powerful Elites Who Control the Money have Chosen Not To**

The reality is that whatever the causes of the step-change in climate and socio-ecological systems, we cannot return to the more gentle epoch of the Holocene. Changes to the physical and social worlds have been set in motion that we cannot stop, but we can still push down the risks for our children.



Protesters sit on a street during a pro-democracy protest. (Photo by Anthony Kwan/Getty Images)

Of critical importance to the educational community is the statement the IPCC makes on local responsibility. In the 2019 IPCC report, these scientists state, “The successful implementation of response options depends on consideration of local environmental and socio-economic conditions.”

This is the unanimous conclusion of the IPCC:

The effectiveness of decision-making and governance is enhanced by the **involvement of local stakeholders** (particularly those most vulnerable to climate change) ... in the selection, evaluation, implementation, and monitoring of policy instruments for land-based climate change adaptation and mitigation (high confidence). Integration across sectors and scales increases the chance of maximising co-benefits and minimising trade-offs.



<https://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/politics/article/3021353/hong-kong-protests-more-20-arrested-after-clashes-tsim-sha>

The urgent need for global mobilization to strengthen local capacities was the dominant theme and overarching take-away from the 2019 U.N. High Level Political Forum. There was consensus between U.N. officials and civil society representatives that we cannot wait for governments to act.

Similarly, the Center for the Study of Existential Risk (CSER) at the University of Cambridge constantly emphasizes that the active participation of local communities is essential if human societies are to push down the risks of climate change and other interrelated life threatening crises that will be experienced by our children and grandchildren – and actually experienced by many of us.

Once again the thinking and actions advised by Arnetha, Dahlia, Teaira and Katrina are important.

Their exemplary research demonstrates that in schools and communities, and through amplification, in the U.S. and U.N. member states. We have the capacity to make a step-change in public education, to be more inclusive and participatory, and to prepare children to live healthy lives in the epoch of existential risks.

**FIVE: The Survival of Our Children Requires of Us that we are Resilient and Unbreakable. We the people – parents, teachers, and all peoples in civil societies must take up the call to demand equality and justice and reject all forms of violence, discrimination and contemporary slavery.<sup>iii</sup>**

“There are a large number of governments that don’t care one way or other about human rights,” a senior U.N. Official states at the July 2019 U.N. High Level Political Forum (HLPF) on Sustainable Development.

“If the U.N. pushes back against human rights violations it is accused of undermining governments,” he states. “Many countries do not want ‘human rights’ mentioned in any discussions or included in any U.N. documents. If we mention human rights in our strategic plans we get push back.”

“What’s happened to Human Rights up Front?” a man in the audience asks.

Human Rights up Front (HRuF) is the Secretary-General's initiative to strengthen prevention of serious problems with human rights consequences that cut across the U.N.'s three pillars of: 1) peace and security; 2) development; and 3) human rights.

“Human Rights up Front is in difficulties,” the U.N. Official states. “It is systematically being broken apart.” The official looks tired and dispirited as he notes that human rights receives only three and a half percent of the U.N. budget, which is troubling given that it is one of the three pillars.





<https://www.lawnn.com/child-labour-india-child-labour-laws-child-rights-legislations-recent-amendments/>



[https://www.ilo.org/yanon/press/WCMS\\_631831/lang--en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/yanon/press/WCMS_631831/lang--en/index.htm)



<https://www.aljazeera.com/programmes/specialseries/2019/06/world-day-child-labour-watch-documentaries-190610114838557.html>

“We’re off track,” the U.N. Official states, and the discussion shifts to the views of members of the Security Council who question the relationships between human rights and sustainable development. He states that human rights are not “filtering through” at the U.N.

“If we push back on human rights we get accused of undermining governments.” He laments, “Some countries will not use the words ‘civil society’.”

The consistent message at other sessions of the 2019 U.N. HLPF is that “there is a huge sense of urgency” and that “the huge SDG architecture has not delivered.” There is talk of the violation of “moral and ethical boundaries” and that “civil society can no longer function in silence.”

In many of the side events at the HLPF, the acute sense of urgency at sessions organized by Major Groups and other Stakeholders (MGoS) is palpable. Speakers and participants share an unsettling energy to “*push forward*,” to “call for action,” and a common purpose to insist that U.N. Member States be “more accountable,” “more inclusive” and to “leave no one behind.” In contrast, at the session with the U.N. Official on human rights, he reports that the overriding message from U.N. Member States is to “*push back*”.

He makes the case that many countries have taken a similar stance, lauding the advancement of SDGs in their own country, while ignoring their unacceptable behavior and degradation of their own people.

At the MGoS *Civil Society Forum* that took place on September 24, 2019 at the U.N.GA, the panel focused on identifying structural barriers to establishing durable partnerships that recognize the interconnections between human societies that governments cannot break. There was concern expressed that the private sector is not accountable, and that there is more private money than public money, which constitutes an emergency for human survival.

While the speakers at the *Civil Society Forum* focused on **identifying structural barriers**, at the *International Congress on Discrimination on Work and Descent* the speakers demonstrated **how to break them down**.

Every speaker came from an oppressed group and identified themselves with the 260 million people worldwide who are discriminated against. There were participants at the Congress from Africa, Asia, Europe, North and South America, and every speaker highlighted the need for inclusion, equity and non-discrimination in human rights if the SDGs are to be achieved by 2030.

Speakers focused on the protection of existence and the right of the estimated 260 million people in marginalized groups to define themselves. They decried how marginalization becomes internationalized, and that discrimination starts in hearts as well as in minds.

But the overarching message, so powerful and so significant, was that those who perpetuate discrimination against marginalized groups should take into consideration that those who have been left behind are now able to come together to unite and to fight for their rights.

“We have come here to declare our freedom,” a speaker shouts. “The freedom of the people. Not the freedom of the nation. The freedom of the people!”

“It’s not just about achieving policies that are needed. It’s a complete rethinking of the interrelationships between policies and governance.”

“It starts at the local level. Strengthening the capacity of local communities”

**SIX: The work many researchers in language and literacy have done amplifies social resilience, fosters engagement and collaboration between multiple**

**stakeholders, integrates across sectors and scales and maximizes the chances of co-benefits for children, their families, their communities and human societies**

The quest before us requires consideration of our experiences as scholars, researchers, educators, and members of families and communities to discover those aspects of our research and teaching that is transformative.

Once again the research and teaching of Arnetha, Dahlia, Teaira and Katrina is exemplary. As stated above, their studies require that social justice and inclusive participation in human societies be moved to the center of the education of all children. Engaging in sense making, exploring cultural meanings, building trust and social acceptance, and appreciation of risk perception have become essential – so has the transformative engagement in the generation of knowledge.

Their research fulfills one of the recommendations for human societies by the scientists who participated in the most recent report of the IPCC – a report in which every word is contested and unanimous support is required before inclusion in the report.

Similarly, my forty years of family literacy research in high poverty urban and rural locations, and on-the-ground in regions of armed conflict and in the aftermath of extreme weather events, **also** focuses on social justice, inclusive participation, sense making, and on-the-ground first responses to life and death risks, and the exploration of transformative engagement.

The global trajectory of family literacy initiatives and projects undertaken by governments, NGOs, U.N. Member States, academia, the private sector, and the U.N. system, including UNESCO and UNICEF is remarkable.

In economically advanced countries including the US, Canada, Australia, Canada, Korea, and the UK, as well as EU countries, there are government sponsored family literacy programs as well as programs and initiatives sponsored by NGOs, academia and the private sector. An overview of these initiatives in EU countries is presented in the report *Family Literacy in Europe: Using Parental Support Initiatives to Enhance Early Literacy Development*, published in 2012 by NRDC, Institute of Education.

Family literacy is now ubiquitous, and there are family literacy initiatives in more than 140 U.N. Member States:

Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso,

Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Gambia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Latvia, Lesotho, Liberia, Luxembourg, Malawi, Malaysia, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States), Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Palau, Paraguay, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Romania, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Saint Lucia, Samoa, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, Somalia, South Africa, South Sudan, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor-Leste, Togo, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Turkey, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Venezuela, Vietnam, Yemen.

Two noteworthy findings of the analysis of family literacy in U.N. Member States follow:

**The first finding is that family literacy has become integral to/and in keeping with the U.N. Sustainable Development Goals.**

A systematic analysis of the family literacy initiatives undertaken by U.N. Member States indicates that family literacy is used in most countries in ways that are in keeping with the U.N. Sustainable Development Goals. Most importantly, family literacy initiatives are used to promote just, peaceful and inclusive societies. The focus of worldwide family literacy initiatives on many of the other 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is remarkable but nevertheless unrecognized. Family Literacy Programs and Initiatives are of critical importance both locally and globally to providing access to justice, and to building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.

**The second finding is that family literacy has become integral to/and in keeping with the U.N. Resolution, Adopted by the General Assembly 27 April 2016, which is outlined in the 70/262 Review of the United Nations Peacebuilding Architecture.<sup>iv</sup>**

Family literacy has become a conduit for the peaceful relocation of refugees and economic migrants in Canada, the U.S., and many countries in Europe, especially Germany and Sweden. In many economically advantaged countries family literacy programs are available, especially for immigrant mothers and children learning new languages and life skills so that they can survive and thrive in the new places that have become their home.

Connections between the 70/262 Review of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture and family literacy initiatives are evident when the architecture is used to evaluate family literacy Initiatives. There are family literacy initiatives in many U.N. Member States that fulfill the following aspects of the U.N. peacebuilding architecture:

- “Encouraging coherence, synergies, and complementarities”
- “Recognizing that development, peace and security, and human rights, are interlinked and mutually reinforcing”
- Responding to “the high human cost and suffering caused by armed conflicts”
- Recognizing the importance “to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war”
- “Recognizing and participate in the struggle to establish a just and lasting peace all over the world”
- “Ensuring that the needs of all segments of the population are taken into account”
- “Encompassing activities aimed at preventing the outbreak, escalation, continuation and recurrence of conflict, addressing root causes, ... moving towards recovery, reconstruction and development”
- “Stressing that civil society can play an important role in efforts to sustain peace”
- “Promoting sustained and sustainable economic growth, poverty eradication, social development, sustainable development”
- Supporting “gender equity and respect for, and protection of, human rights and fundamental freedoms”
- “Recognizing also that the scale and nature of the challenge of sustaining peace calls for close strategic and operational partnerships ... (including) civil society organizations, women’s groups, youth organizations”
- “Reaffirming the important role of women in peacebuilding and noting the substantial link between women’s full and meaningful involvement in efforts to prevent, resolve and rebuild from conflict and those efforts’ effectiveness and

long-term sustainability, and stressing, in this regard, the importance of women's equal participation in all efforts for maintenance and promotion of peace and security and the need to increase women's role in decision-making with regard to conflict prevention and resolution and peacebuilding”

- “Reaffirming also the important role youth can play in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and as a key aspect of the sustainability, inclusiveness and success of peacekeeping and peacebuilding efforts”

Family literacy is used to frame peace-enhancing initiatives in Afghanistan, Nepal, and Sub Saharan Africa, offering village-based family literacy programs, which seek to develop literacy in the context of community needs such as health, employment and family planning.

In some countries family literacy initiatives are designed to reduce gender inequality and family violence, while in other countries family literacy programs focus on the amelioration of psychological and emotional traumas resulting from armed conflict and the support of family members physically disabled by war. For example, family literacy peace enhancing programs have been established to:

- Respond to the needs and concerns about health, employment and family planning (Afghanistan; Albania; Sub Saharan Africa)
- Respond to the psychosocial needs of women (Afghanistan; Egypt)
- Respond to war trauma and PTSD (Afghanistan; Iraq)
- Respond to issues of child labor, family violence, and other life adversities (Afghanistan)
- Establish literacy programs for socially excluded families (Bosnia and Herzegovina)
- Establish literacy and peace education classes for families (Iraq)
- Establish literacy programs, especially for women and girls who want to attend schools and literacy classes in order to lead a peaceful and better life (Iraq; Bangladesh)

- Establish programs empowering rural women to develop literacy skills through the writing and documenting of their own poetry as a cultural resource that is valued both locally and nationally (Yemen)
- Establish programs in low-literacy regions, e.g. with families in the deeply-rural, under- resourced mountain valleys of KwaZulu-Natal (South Africa)
- Create home-based programs to engage with families in literacy activities (South Africa)
- Create literacy centers of care for vulnerable children and mothers (South Africa)
- Combat HIV and AIDS through informational literacy activities (South Africa)
- Establish family and community literacy programs for children isolated and needlessly separated from their families (Armenia)
- Encourage family literacy for boys and girls living in poverty by developing basic literacy and using “communication technology” (Azerbaijan)

Thus we can state that family literacy projects and initiatives address the SDGs and are in keeping with the U.N. peace building architecture, **amplifying social resilience, fostering engagement and collaboration between multiple stakeholders.**

### **SEVEN: The Education of Children Must Be In Step with the State of the Planet: Great Transformations are Urgently Required**

At a meeting at the U.N. on July 11, 2019, concern was expressed that the World Bank is undermining public education around the world by loaning money to private actors. Also, relevant, at another U.N. meeting on July 15, 2019, concern was expressed that tax havens are undermining the fiscal health of human societies. A U.N. official stated that seven hundred billion dollars is lost each year to havens primarily in the U.K., U.S. and Switzerland.

“We don’t take responsibility,” he said, focusing on the “negative externalities” that are in part responsible for the climate emergency, ecological crisis and social unrest around the world.

It is very hard to change old ways of doing things. The power-profit paradigm dominates the infrastructure of all human societies and is negatively impacting the state of the planet.



Now here's the most important point I want to make. My participation in the event organized by Major Groups and other Stakeholders (MGoS) at the 2018 and 2019 U.N. High Level Political Forums leaves me in no doubt that **multilateralism can be bottom-up as well as top-down.**

The principles that undergird the call for multilateralism by MGoS participating in the 2018 and 2019 U.N. HLPF are similar and complementary to the principles guiding researchers here today and to educational researchers working in many countries. Similarly the principles are foundational to many family literacy projects that are integral to initiatives by governments, non-profit organizations and local groups to address the problems that confront them.

In all of these contexts the first principle is written in the 1948 Preamble of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights that states:

Recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world.

This first principle creates a covenant that requires of us that we do everything we can to: reconceptualize marginality and move children and their families from the margins to the center human societies; to recognize the importance the inalienable right of all peoples to construct their own personal geographies; create pluralistic pedagogical possibilities through generative thinking and practice in schools, families, and communities; and use critical counter-narratives to prepare prospective teachers of color and all marginalized groups.

At the 2019 U.N. HLPF the World Economic Forum (WEF) and the International Monetary Forum (IMF) were under verbal fire by MGoS who decry the huge economic impact on governance of U.N. Member States and the U.N. Many participants in the MGoS are raising alarm because the U.N. has become a conduit for the WEF and IMF to co-op and monetize the 2030 SDGs. The MGoS pierce the thin benevolent shell of these world controlling economic organizations that deny the inclusion of human rights in mission or focus, but embrace the SDGs, which in fact have a human rights mandate.

“The end of the world is competing with the end of money,” a speaker states, at one of the MGoS meetings.

“It's not just about achieving the policies that are needed,” a speaker said. “It's a complete rethinking of the interrelationships between policies and governance.”

“It starts at the local level. Strengthening local communities and the capacity of local communities”

“Why are we allowing the WEF and IMF to co-opt the SDGs?”

“Twenty first century capitalism is reshaping inequalities. The WEF and IMF are driving inequalities.”

“No U.N. member state is on track to achieve the SDGs.”

“How do we operationalize for a common cause – the survival of humanity?”

The U.N. has transformative choices to make and so do educators. MGoS are aching for U.N. Member States to place the experiences of the most vulnerable in human societies at the center of a re-visioning of governance—and so are teachers. It is the only way we will sustain life on this planet.

The climate has changed, the temperature is rising, and none of us can go back. We are hurtling forward and we must insist on the establishment of a practical political project that disrupts the status quo, a universal political project that is intolerant of corruption, accepts the challenge of social, economic and political reconstruction, and recognizes it is the most vulnerable people in human societies who hold the key to human survival.

Those with power and privilege have got to stop monetizing poverty and treating the education of children as a lucrative financial opportunity for the private sector.

We must reconfigure societal priorities, stir the passions, dissolve the divisions and establish new relationships with each other and the planet.

Central to this effort must be a transformation on a global scale of the ways in which teachers are taught to teach and how children are taught to live on the planet.

If educators take up this challenge it is entirely possible that it will be teachers, along with others in the caring professionals, who push down the risks and protect the future for all our children.

The family literacy projects and initiatives in U.N. Member States – including in the U.S., Russia and China – make the proposition that multilateralism is possible, when families and communities focus on over-coming societal inequalities that they all share.



<https://globalnews.ca/news/1589795/why-the-umbrella-became-a-symbol-of-hong-kongs-protests/>  
 XAUME OLLEROS/AFP/Getty Images

<sup>i</sup> <https://www.dec.ny.gov/energy/94702.html>

<sup>ii</sup> [https://www.ipcc.ch/site/assets/uploads/2019/08/4.-SPM\\_Approved\\_Microsite\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.ipcc.ch/site/assets/uploads/2019/08/4.-SPM_Approved_Microsite_FINAL.pdf)

<sup>iii</sup> <https://itstillexist.weebly.com/facts.html>

<sup>iv</sup> A subsequent U.N. document on guidance for sustaining peace reaffirms the importance of family literacy to sustaining peace.

[https://undg.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Guidance-on-Sustaining-Peace.170117.final\\_.pdf](https://undg.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Guidance-on-Sustaining-Peace.170117.final_.pdf)