



Convergence(s)
pour l'Éducation Nouvelle

RESISTING

SEEKING

MOBILISING

CONVERGENCE(S) FOR PROGRESSIVE EDUCATION

FIGHTING

Seek, resist, mobilize,
and fight for a democratic,
ecological, and empowering
education in Europe



CONVERGENCE(S) FOR PROGRESSIVE EDUCATION 2026



CONVERGENCE(S) FOR PROGRESSIVE EDUCATION SEEKING, RESISTING, MOBILISING AND FIGHTING

For «Convergence(s) pour l'Éducation Nouvelle», all education has a political aim, as it contributes to shaping the society to come. New Education movement intends to play its role fully in building solidary and democratic societies across all educational settings, both formal and non-formal, concerning children and adults alike. The educational action of our movements is grounded in values and convictions, but it cannot be set in stone as certainties and dogmas. Each organisation lives on a daily basis through permanent movements of research and action around an education that constantly reinvents itself, while remaining deeply connected to the realities of the societies within which it acts, promoting a culture of peace and justice.

Recognised as a strategic tool for social cohesion, justice and democracy, our conception of a comprehensive approach to education aims to develop a critical understanding of knowledge, strengthening civic commitment, the recognition of human rights, and international solidarity. In New Education movement, while practices are multiple, they all attempt to address the social and cultural fractures that exist in our countries and that threaten our democracies. Promoting cooperation, New Education contests the current primacy given to an individualistic vision of human learning and the placing of people in competition with one another, which fuels many forms of exclusion, exploitation, oppression, and social injustice.

The member organisations of Convergence(s) are committed to bringing to life, on a daily basis, educational situations based on several postulates, first and foremost that of trust in the other, in their capacity to learn, to understand and to act upon reality. But also:

- particular attention paid to individual/group relationships;
- the implementation of forms of work that produce critical and complex thinking;
- the implementation of assessments benefiting learning dynamics, that accompany progress rather than sanction it;
- the implementation of a school contract that binds rather than isolating and excluding;
- the articulation between knowledge, know-how, imagination and creation in service of the emancipation of all. For we are convinced that the transmission of knowledge does not consist in accumulating it. Human knowledge consists of constructions that have been elaborated in order to respond to societal, economic, intellectual and practical needs. Their appropriation by younger generations must enable everyone to act in an ever more lucid and free manner upon the world.

In doing so, the forms of education we support are a direct political response to the challenges identified by the European Action Plan for Democracy.

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ACTING FOR THE PROTECTION OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND THE (RE)CONSTRUCTION OF A HABITABLE PLANET: ONE OF THE MAJOR CHALLENGES OF THE 21ST CENTURY

Convergence(s) considers the protection of the environment and the (re)construction of a habitable planet as one of the major challenges of the 21st century. That ambition is inseparable from social justice, democracy and the transformation of economic models towards forms that are respectful of nature and living beings.

The six main objectives of the eighth «Environment Action Programme», which guides the EU's environmental action for the period 2021-2030, are crucial but not sufficient!

In the current context – marked by the climate emergency, geopolitical tensions, energy transitions and social inequalities – the environmental question is not solely ecological: it is educational, cultural and democratic. It calls for a profound transformation of our ways of learning, understanding the world and acting collectively. In this perspective, Convergence(s) supports the orientations of the European Green Deal and their articulation with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development carried by the United Nations. Yet, achieving these objectives implies making “learning for sustainable development” a strategic priority of European educational policies.

Yet, the transmission of scientific knowledge, however indispensable it may be, cannot be sufficient on its own. Ecological and social crises demand learning strategies capable of modifying the representations, practices and forms of engagement of individuals and communities. It is precisely in this perspective that the practices of New Education movement make an essential contribution. Based upon experience, cooperation, critical thinking and active participation of learners, they make it possible to relate knowledge to action and to build a renewed relationship between human beings, societies and nature.

FIVE MAJOR CHALLENGES AND ONE OVERARCHING GOAL FOR CONVERGENCE(S) POUR L'ÉDUCATION NOUVELLE



1 CONNECTING INDIVIDUAL EMANCIPATION AND COLLECTIVE SUSTAINABILITY

Education must enable everyone to understand the interdependencies between human societies, ecosystems and natural resources.

2 BUILDING A SHARED ECOLOGICAL CULTURE THROUGHOUT LIFE

The right to environmental education must be set in a continuum extending from early childhood to lifelong learning.

3 DEVELOPING RELATIONAL, ETHICAL AND COOPERATIVE COMPETENCES

The ecological transition implies new ways of living together and deciding collectively. Educational practices must therefore foster empathy, cooperation, responsibility and a sense of the common good, all of which are indispensable to a sustainable society.

4 EDUCATING CITIZENS SO THEY ARE CAPABLE OF UNDERSTANDING THE COMPLEXITY OF THE WORLD

Climate, energy and environmental challenges are closely linked to economic, social and geopolitical questions. Education must provide the tools to analyse these interdependencies and to understand inequalities in access to resources and common goods.

5 MAKING SURE EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS BECOME ACTORS OF ECOLOGICAL AND DEMOCRATIC TRANSFORMATION

Schools and places of education must become spaces of experimentation and engagement. In cooperation with local authorities, associations and territorial actors, the aim is to contribute to the regeneration of living environments and the development of more sustainable social practices.

To achieve that, an absolute necessity: training educators

To take on these challenges, Convergence(s) considers it essential to strengthen public policies guaranteeing equal access to education and public teaching, from school to university. This also implies an ambitious pre-service and in-service training of educators and teachers, enabling them to design educational experiences and curricula that take into account contemporary environmental challenges.

This professionalisation must make it possible, in particular:

- to support children, young people and adults in acquiring analytical tools enabling them to understand the interdependence of climatic, energy-related, economic and social phenomena;
- to develop pedagogical approaches that make learners actors of change, by fostering participation, cooperation and commitment within their territories;
- to build educational communities capable of contributing to the ecological and democratic transformation of European societies.es.

Thus understood, education becomes a force for emancipation and transformation. It participates in the emergence of a renewed humanism founded on solidarity, the common good and the awareness of belonging to a shared community of destiny, both European and planetary.





THE NOTION OF CULTURE OF PEACE : AN LONGSTANDING CONCERN IN NEW EDUCATION MOVEMENT, BUT ABOVE ALL A CONTEMPORARY AND FUTURE CHALLENGE, OF MAJOR IMPORTANCE FOR EUROPE

If, from its very first congresses at the beginning of the 20th century, New Education movement was concerned with developing this notion both inside and outside school, within learning itself, the project of a «culture of peace» is more than ever a burning issue. The persistence of numerous wars throughout the world, violations of human rights, the particularly vulnerable status of children, the predatory development of humans in relation to the earth, the climate crisis, and the now obvious prospect of future and widespread migrations, all of these mean that both adult and children's educating training systems, as well as the educational offer as a whole, must change profoundly..

This is no longer a matter of marginal adjustments, but of a shift in the educational paradigm :

- in the relationship to the «other» and to the community collective, at the heart of the construction and transmission of knowledge;
 - in the teaching of a global human history, capable of questioning contemporary relations of domination (social class, race, gender);
 - in the relationship to science, conceived as a common good towards emancipation and sustainability;
 - in the full and complete recognition of the diversity of human cultures, wherever they may develop.
- In this context, the «culture of peace» can no longer be considered as a mere ethical supplement or an optional cross-cutting theme: it turns out to be an indispensable political, educational and democratic foundation for the future of the European project.

CONVERGENCE(S) POUR L'ÉDUCATION NOUVELLE IDENTIFIES FOUR MAJOR CHALLENGES FOR EUROPEAN POLICIES



1 RECOGNISING THE CULTURE OF PEACE AS A STRUCTURING PILLAR OF EUROPEAN EDUCATIONAL POLICIES

Convergence(s) calls for the culture of peace to be explicitly integrated as a priority objective in European education and training frameworks (programmes, recommendations, funding), on an equal footing with digital or linguistic competences.

2 SUPPORTING A TRANSFORMATION OF PEDAGOGICAL PATHWAYS FOUNDED ON HUMAN RIGHTS, SOCIAL JUSTICE AND INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY

The European Union must encourage and fund educational approaches that develop a global human history, critical of relations of domination, and foster education in equality, anti-racism, gender equality and democratic citizenship.

3 INVESTING IN THE INITIAL AND CONTINUING TRAINING OF EDUCATORS IN THE CULTURE OF PEACE

The culture of peace cannot be conveyed transmitted without trained educators. Convergence(s) calls for reinforced European support for the training of teachers, educators and adult trainers in cooperative pedagogies, non-violent conflict approaches and intercultural education.

4 MAKING EDUCATION FOR PEACE A CENTRAL LEVER OF THE ECOLOGICAL TRANSITION AND THE RECEPTION OF MIGRANTS

The European Union must recognise the key role of education in articulating climate justice, international solidarity and the dignified reception of migrant populations, by supporting educational projects that connect ecology, peace and social cohesion.



FOR A COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH TO EDUCATION, SITUATING THE SPECIFICITIES OF ACTIVE EDUCATION, AND CONSIDERING THE ESSENTIAL ROLE OF POPULAR AND LIFELONG EDUCATION SPACES AT THE HEART OF THE EUROPEAN PROJECT

The European Union was built around common values affirmed in Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union: respect for human dignity, democracy, equality, the rule of law and human rights. Today, democratic crises, rising inequalities, identity-based withdrawals, climate emergencies and geopolitical tensions are putting those founding values to the test. In this context, education cannot be reduced to a mere lever of employability or economic competitiveness. It must once again become a political pillar of European construction, recognised as a central lever of social, democratic and cultural transformation.

1 POLITICAL RECOGNITION OF ACTIVE EDUCATION AND NEW EDUCATION MOVEMENT

Convergence(s) calls for the explicit recognition of active pedagogies and New Education movement as essential components of European education. These approaches, founded on experimentation, cooperation, critical thinking and learner autonomy, must be integrated into European strategic frameworks.

Convergence(s) is ready to contribute to the establishment of participatory governance mechanisms, associating New Education movements, active education networks and civil society with the elaboration, monitoring and evaluation of European educational policies.

Popular education

constitutes a fundamental pillar of that vision. By fostering participation, collective emancipation and experiential learning, it gives back to education its political meaning. Too often relegated to the background of educational policies, it nonetheless plays an essential role in the inclusion of people having little access to formal systems, in the fight against disinformation, and in the democratic revitalisation of territories. This ambition cannot be achieved without a respected civic space, a strong policy of lifelong education recognised as a fundamental right, guaranteeing every person, throughout their life, access to spaces of critical and civic learning.

2 STRUCTURAL SUPPORT FOR ACTORS IN ACTIVE, POPULAR AND LIFELONG LEARNING

We call for stable and multi-annual European funding for organisations and associations implementing active education and New Education practices, particularly in non-formal education, adult education and global citizenship education. The aim is to guarantee the sustainability of emancipatory pedagogies, which are often weakened by short-term and competitive funding.

We also advocate for institutional recognition of the complementarity between formal, non-formal and informal educational spaces. European programmes must encourage synergies between schools, universities, local authorities, civil society organisations and popular education movements.

3 RECOGNITION AND VALORISATION OF NON-FORMAL AND INFORMAL EDUCATION
Convergence(s) calls for enhanced recognition of learning originating in non-formal and informal education in European policies, including in competence validation mechanisms (micro-credentials, competence frameworks, recognition of prior learning). The aim is to better guarantee equality of value between different forms of learning.

Full and complete recognition of the experiential, cooperative and collective learning produced by active education, within European competence recognition systems, would make it possible to better valorise the civic, social, intercultural and critical competences developed outside conventional school pathways.

Situating interculturality at the heart of every European educational strategy

In a Europe that is diverse by nature, interculturality cannot be treated as a secondary or sectoral issue. Interculturality is a political principle that implies recognition, equality and dialogue between cultures. It constitutes a bulwark against racism, discrimination and hate speech, and a lever for building a sense of European belonging. To recognise the diversity of cultures, pathways and identities is to refuse the logics of exclusion and domination.

4 INTERCULTURALITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION: A MAJOR CHALLENGE ADDRESSED IN ACTIVE PEDAGOGIES

We call for European programmes to give priority support to active pedagogical approaches integrating interculturality, human rights education and the fight against all forms of discrimination.



ACTIVE EDUCATION METHODS: A EUROPEAN LEVER FOR COMBATING SCHOOL FAILURE, STRENGTHENING INCLUSION AND PROMOTING SOCIAL JUSTICE

School, the first bulwark against exclusion, and education more broadly, benefit within the European Union from a genuine strategic dimension and from cooperation between Member States. To date, schools across Europe fulfil a mission that goes beyond the original intentions of instruction. Called upon to address multiple societal causes, welcoming children, young people and their families in all Member States within a sovereign, universalist mission of education, they are nonetheless unable to sufficiently meet today's challenges and do not always benefit from the political attention and resources needed to address the full breadth of these societal issues.

The European Union fosters cooperation between Member States in matters of education, complete their action and encourages the emergence of innovative practices, while fully respecting each country's responsibility for the content of teaching and the organisation of the education system, as well as their cultural and linguistic diversity.

In such a context, the EU can and must support Convergence(s) pour l'Éducation Nouvelle, for it is indeed through the register of cooperation and competence, and in trust with the pedagogies of active education, that more strategies will emerge to oppose school failure, strengthen inclusion and promote a form of equal dignity and access to education.

Beyond questions of resources allocated to schools and the ghettoisation of some neighbourhoods, «classical» teaching methods – that is, vertical, lecture-based and frontal – undoubtedly bear a heavy share of responsibility for this situation. Indeed, teachers report exhaustion despite, or because of, their commitment; a great number of pupils are reduced to a passive attitude and show little motivation; and families are often kept at a distance. Moreover, in many Member States, school failure is strongly correlated with pupils' social background. Inclusion struggles to be achieved and is in many cases stalled, adding to many families' distress.

This situation leads to an increasingly externalised management of school difficulties, meaning that only the most financially and culturally resourced families are able to find suitable solutions.

Faced with this situation, the member organisations of Convergence(s) recall that New Education, which had once brought together pioneers of active education methods from the beginning of the 20th century, had then developed substantial analyses of the difficulties encountered by schools and had elaborated working methods and systems designed to address those problems.

These approaches were subsequently tested and refined in numerous European countries and beyond, in places particularly affected by social deprivation as well as in the least valued school streams.

This can still be observed today through the success of schools located in underprivileged, or even very disadvantaged, environments, which achieve convincing results. It is also evident through structures combating school dropout. It is further evident through innovative projects led by particularly committed teaching teams. In all these cases, one can observe the contextualised use of these approaches and systems. One can mention here cooperative learning systems, intergenerational approaches, formative assessment modalities, project-based work, free writing, mathematical investigations, pupil councils, and so on.

Since the Treaty of Lisbon, the European Parliament and the European Council have adopted various texts within a strategic framework while respecting the principle of subsidiarity of Member States. Recognising Convergence(s) pour l'Éducation Nouvelle means fully recognising the potential of active education methods as a lever for transforming educational systems. We therefore call on European institutions to support the deployment of Convergence(s) in a structured and sustainable manner.

TO DO SO, CONVERGENCE(S) PROPOSES



- 1 The implementation of substantial teacher educating throughout their careers;
- 2 The development of training for teachers, school heads, inspectors and all staff working in schools, enabling them to understand and take ownership of active education approaches (including, if teachers
- 3 The implementation establishment of European information and practice-sharing systems (networks) between teaching teams already engaged in, or wishing to engage in, these approaches;
- 4 A genuine and sustained support policy for teaching teams implementing these approaches, with the expectation that they accompany communities collectives wishing to adopt them;
- 5 The strengthening of training — currently absent or insufficient — for educational staff focused on the diverse target public (their ways of life, representations and culture) most affected by exclusion or failure, including cultural minorities, pupils with disabilities, and children from disadvantaged backgrounds;
- 6 Support for European research programmes examining the impact, conditions of implementation and transferability of active education approaches, in close collaboration with practitioners in the field.

These proposals are fully in line with the European Union's objectives in terms of social cohesion, reduction of inequalities, educational achievement and lifelong learning. They aim to contribute to more equitable, more inclusive and more emancipatory educational policies, towards all European citizens.



FOR AN APPROACH TO EDUCATION FROM THE EARLIEST AGE, IN COHERENCE WITH THE VALUES OF NEW EDUCATION MOVEMENT : AN ESSENTIAL CHALLENGE AT THE HEART OF THE EUROPEAN EDUCATIONAL PROJECT

Early childhood education and care have been identified as a priority area of cooperation within the European Education Area for the period 2021–2030. The European Commission supports Member States and facilitates cooperation between them, although initiatives in this area include childcare services funded by private or public funds that vary from one Member State to another.

While the French “*école maternelle*” is a structuring model (in the proper sense of the term) as it actually provides for early childhood, while early childhood pedagogy is remarkable in Pistoia, Italy, and in Budapest, Hungary, through the knowledge developed by Emmi Pikler, the genuine and daily implementation of co-education between professionals and families in different reception structures is exemplary in other countries such as Spain. These experiences also demonstrate that quality education from the earliest age, in coherence with the values of New Education, is not only possible but necessary at the European level.

Early childhood education and care is essential to the cognitive, social, emotional and physical development of the child, for improving gender equality and supporting long-term educational outcomes. It is also a structuring factor of social cohesion and reduction of inequalities. International research consistently shows that early investments in young children's education produce lasting effects on educational pathways, as well as health, social and professional integration, and civic participation. For Convergence(s), «The baby is a person» — as argued in Jacques Martino's 1984 film — the young child is indeed a person to be surrounded, protected and educated. Safety, reference points, benevolence, repetition, stability and coherence: these principles engage all stakeholders — institutions, professionals, local authorities, families — and require ambitious and coherent public policies.

From this perspective, Convergence(s) calls on European institutions to fully recognise early childhood education and care as a pillar of the European educational and social project, and as a lever for the lasting transformation of European societies.

TO THIS END, CONVERGENCE(S) CONSIDERS IT ESSENTIAL TO

- 1 **GUARANTEE THE PROVISION OF QUALITY EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE FOR EVERY CHILD**
Convergence(s) calls on the European Union to encourage Member States to invest strongly and sustainably, in partnership with local authorities and with the support of dedicated European funds, in childcare and early childhood education. This is a paramount challenge in a situation where the lack of structures, places and trained staff is critical.
- 2 **AFFIRM EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE AS A FUNDAMENTAL RIGHT FOR ALL CHILDREN AND ALL FAMILIES**
Convergence(s) refers to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (20 November 1989) and calls on the European Union to affirm universally and consistently that childhood has the «right to special help and assistance.»

3 STRENGTHEN CO-EDUCATION AND THE PLACE OF FAMILIES

In order to build a relationship of trust — welcoming, informing, engaging in dialogue and involving — a shared discourse addressed to families is needed. Convergence(s) advocates for the integration of families into the projects of early childhood reception structures and schools, by establishing constructive relationships. This builds an approach to co-education based on «parity of esteem within a disparity of roles» with professionals — a concept developed by Gaston Pineau, a researcher in educational sciences and social sciences at the University of Tours.

4 PROMOTE EDUCATIONAL CONTINUITY IN THE PRIMARY INTEREST OF THE CHILD. TO THAT END, CONVERGENCE(S) ADVOCATES:

- for the implementation of spaces for consultation and exchange between professionals (in education, healthcare, early childhood and animation), enabling successful transitions from early childhood to childhood and to compulsory schooling;
- for the organisation of effective bridging pathways between structures, in order to build coherent trajectories that respect the needs of the child and are not segmented by institutional logics.

5 SUPPORT THE TRAINING, RECOGNITION AND COOPERATION OF PROFESSIONALS. IN THAT REGARD, CONVERGENCE(S) CALLS FOR:

- the development of pre-service and in-service inter-professional training, fostering mutual knowledge, cooperation and a shared educational culture;
- the recognition of the competences of early childhood professionals, both pedagogical and relational;
- support for transversal joint projects associating education, health, culture, sport and social action;
- the inclusion of parents, voluntary sector actors and institutional leaders, within a logic of shared educational responsibility.

Investing in early childhood is investing in the future of Europe. Convergence(s) calls on the European Union to strengthen early childhood education and care as a political, educational and social priority, drawing on the values of New Education movement, respect for children's rights as enshrined in the UNCRC, and cooperation between Member States.



STRENGTHENING COOPERATION BETWEEN PEDAGOGICAL MOVEMENTS AND RESEARCH : A STRATEGIC LEVER FOR EUROPEAN EDUCATIONAL POLICIES

The relationships between the world of pedagogical movements and the world of research have been, and sometimes still remain, somewhat complicated. They have been marked by mutual mistrust for many reasons, among which is a lack of understanding of the functioning, the stakes and the criteria of validity of each of these two worlds. Another reason lies in reciprocal criticisms. Some researchers have reproached pedagogical movements for their dogmatism or their activist dimension. For their part, pedagogical movements have reproached certain researchers for their biases, insufficient data collection or reductive methods.

This can rightly be considered regrettable, since in both worlds, and for decades, there has been genuine knowledge construction on pedagogical questions relating, among other things, to inclusion, school failure and dropout. In both fields of activity, not only are there precise analyses of these phenomena elaborated, but also some experimentation of approaches and systems likely to better equip teachers.

It can be noted, however, that in recent years, in many European countries, relationships have developed in the field of education with more peaceful exchanges, thanks to actors participating in both sectors, and also thanks to research — participatory or otherwise — conducted according to very diverse modalities. These are generally medium- or long-term research endeavours aimed at shared knowledge rather than judgements. This is the case, for example in France, with FESPI (the federation of innovative public schools) and, at an international level, with the biennials of New Education movement. This has given rise to study days, numerous articles and publications on those questions.

On the basis of this overview, Convergence(s) wishes to draw the attention of European institutions to the strategic interest of supporting and amplifying these dynamics. The proposals that follow aim not to engage teachers in a militant way within any pedagogical movement, but to enrich their professional culture and equip them with a broader and more open pedagogical toolkit.

THESE PROPOSALS ARE AS FOLLOWS:



1 SUPPORT PEDAGOGICAL MOVEMENTS

that have demonstrated their value in building efficacious systems against dropout, school failure and discrimination, by abandoning the restrictions that have affected them in recent years and by providing them with the human and financial resources commensurate with their needs and the stakes of their missions of general interest.

2 STRENGTHEN SUPPORT FOR EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH

on those pedagogical issues, in particular research that articulates scientific analysis and pedagogical practice, by providing it with human and financial resources commensurate with its needs, through adapted and multi-annual European funding.

3 FACILITATE EXCHANGES AND RELATIONS BETWEEN PEDAGOGICAL MOVEMENTS AND RESEARCHERS

through mechanisms enabling better mutual understanding and more effective collaboration: this may take the form of calls for tenders, European calls for projects emanating from institutional bodies, research support granted to voluntary organisations, or better support for dissertations and doctoral theses on these questions, particularly when they are the work of pedagogically engaged teachers.

- 4 **BETTER INTEGRATE A GENUINE INTRODUCTION TO RESEARCH** into training programmes intended for actors within pedagogical movements.
- 5 **BETTER INTEGRATE INFORMATION ON PEDAGOGICAL MOVEMENTS** into research training in education.
- 6 **ENCOURAGE, THROUGH DEDICATED MEANS,** the creation or development of shared information and publication spaces at national and European level.
- 7 **SUPPORT RESEARCH ON ASSOCIATIONS, INSTITUTIONS AND SYSTEMS** in order to better document the conditions of their effectiveness, transferability and sustainability within European educational systems.

These orientations are fully in line with European objectives in the areas of inclusive education, success for all, and the strengthening of links between research, professional practice and public decision-making. They constitute an essential lever for building more just, more effective and more sustainable educational policies across the European Union.



FOR A DEMOCRATIC, CRITICAL AND EMANCIPATORY EDUCATIONAL ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

AI is not neutral: it embodies economic, social and political choices. The challenge of AI is also one of civilisation: it concerns our conception of knowledge, thought and humanity. The question is therefore not only what AI can do, but for whom it is designed, by whom it is governed, and what democratic conditions it must meet to serve the greatest number.

Ethical and fundamental rights issues

The use of AI in education opens the way to practices of surveillance, profiling and automated assessment. Algorithmic biases — social, cultural, gender-based or linguistic — increase inequalities rather than correcting them. Those tools undermine the fundamental rights of pupils and staff, weaken privacy and normalise forms of control incompatible with a democratic school.

- 1 Convergence(s) insists that any use of AI in education should be subordinated to the strict respect of fundamental rights, data protection, pedagogical freedom and the right to human contestation of automated decisions. Convergence(s) also demands that forms of surveillance, profiling and automated assessment that undermine the dignity of individuals and reinforce discrimination be prohibited.

Technical and epistemological issues

AI reproduces statistical correlations drawn from data and objectives defined upstream. There is a significant risk of a disembodied conception of knowledge that does not make a difference between the production of probable responses and human understanding, and that tends to erase what makes human thought distinctive: doubt, inquiry, lived mistake, experience of reality, confrontation with others, and the responsibility of judgement.

- 2 Convergence(s) demands that any deployment of AI in education be evaluated against a central criterion: does it strengthen pupils' critical capacity? Convergence(s) also points as necessary the systematic integration of critical AI education into curricula, transparency regarding the algorithmic logics used in pedagogical tools, and teacher educating to understand the epistemological limitations of these technologies.

Pedagogical issues

On the pedagogical level, AI tends to promote a technicist and managerial vision of education. Depending on the configuration it has been given, it favours standardisation at the expense of human relationships, debate, conflict of ideas, and collective construction of knowledge. The risk is significant: producing efficient users rather than critical citizens.

- 3 Learning necessarily involves extended time, effort, error, experimentation and confrontation with others. Convergence(s) therefore promotes a school of thought, debate, human relationship and collective knowledge construction, thereby combating the standardisation of productions.

Social and democratic issues

The governance of AI belongs to major private actors and technical experts, and responds to market logics. Education cannot be abandoned to systems that escape democratic control over their purposes, criteria and uses. Furthermore, the civilisational risk is great: a society in which thinking counts for less than calculating, in which understanding counts for less than producing, in which deliberating counts for less than optimising. To reduce intelligence to the sole capacity to process masses of information and rapidly generate responses would be to deny what makes knowledge human: its inscription in lives, languages, histories, conflicts of interpretation and shared worlds. Such a conception threatens the very possibility of an emancipatory education.

- 4 Convergence(s) wants AI tools developed or funded by the European Union to : open, interoperable and publicly controllable; designed with educational communities; oriented towards cooperation rather than individual performance. Convergence(s) also calls for effective mechanisms of democratic control, adversarial evaluation, and participation by staff, students, families and researchers in the technological choices that engage schools and universities.

Economic issues

Public money today predominantly funds the lasting installation of private dependencies, rather than supporting shared infrastructures that are collectively controllable and designed in the general interest.

- 5 Convergence(s) wants European funding (Erasmus+, Horizon Europe, structural funds) to prioritise open and non-proprietary solutions and open source software and educational digital commons; exclude proprietary solutions that create lasting technological dependency; impose interoperability and data portability.

Environmental issues

The use of AI entails enormous consumption of energy, water and mineral resources. Its carbon footprint is incompatible with educational discourses on sobriety, ecological transition and intergenerational responsibility.

- 6 A mandatory requirement for transparency on the carbon and material footprint of AI systems used in education, combined with the integration of digital sobriety criteria into public procurement, would strengthen the coherence between educational policies and the objectives of the European Green Deal. Digital sobriety would thus become a structuring principle of educational policies.



FOR AN EMANCIPATORY PUBLIC EDUCATION: RESISTING COMMODIFICATION AND RE-DESIGNING SCHOOL AS A COMMON GOOD

Over recent decades, Europe, like the rest of the world, has witnessed a growing process of commodification of education. In many countries, educational policies have led to:

- a disengagement from schools and public services in favour of the private sector;
- competition between institutions, encouraged to operate in accordance with entrepreneurial logics;
- a subordination of schooling trajectories to the demands of the labour market;
- a reduction in the openness of schools to neighbourhood life outside teaching hours..

These developments have major consequences, both in terms of the guarantee of rights and the quality of education.

Private companies occupy an increasingly significant place in primary and secondary education. Their educational offerings, subject to profitability logics, tend towards standardisation. Furthermore, families face growing pressure to secure the «best» possible education for their children, often at the expense of their personal aspirations, by steering them towards pathways deemed more prestigious.

The increasing provision of private school also accentuates school segregation: pupils from underprivileged backgrounds become concentrated in certain public schools, which aggravates a burden towards individual trajectories inequalities and favours the social reproduction of the more affluent social classes. Those dynamics are a burden towards individual trajectories, but also towards social cohesion, and they weaken the development of active citizenship.

IN RESPONSE TO THOSE OBSERVATIONS, CONVERGENCE(S) PROPOSES THE FOLLOWING ORIENTATIONS:



1 REAFFIRM THE CENTRAL ROLE OF THE STATE IN GUARANTEEING THE RIGHT TO EDUCATION AND TO QUALITY STATE-RUN SCHOOL FOR ALL

The right to education is a matter of general interest and constitutes an essential lever of emancipation, democracy and development, at both European and global level. It is necessary to reinforce the institutional place of school, ensuring that structures, regulations and educational content respond above all to the objective of forming active and responsible citizens, rather than to the sole expectations of the labour market.

In this perspective, Convergence(s) calls for opposition to secondary education reforms that favour the early tracking of pupils, and asks for the extension of compulsory schooling to the age of 18 in all countries where this is not yet the case.

2 INCREASE PUBLIC (STATE) INVESTMENT IN EDUCATION

Disinvestment in schooling affects both personnel and infrastructure

→ **Regarding personnel:** the profession is insufficiently recognised and valued. Beyond salary issues, which strongly influence the attractiveness of the profession, teacher training tends to prioritise disciplinary content while neglecting to offer teachers reflective work on the relational and internal dispositions that lead to greater involvement of all members of the educational community. School must be a collective space, founded on cooperation between teachers, administrative staff, students and families. Developing that dimension requires sustained investment in the training and support of teams.



→ **Regarding infrastructure:** many European countries suffer from insufficient maintenance of public schools. The responses offered, often in the form of «rationalisation», result in the closure of local schools in favour of larger structures, entailing increased reliance on school transport. This development weakens territories, particularly rural ones, by contributing to their depopulation. School must be recognised as an essential pillar of the local socio-economic fabric : its disappearance entails that of the surrounding community. It is therefore necessary to revalue, in particular, multigrade classes, which constitute open educational spaces rooted in their environment.

3

PROMOTE SCHOOL AS AN OPEN EDUCATIONAL COMMUNITY

The school system forms a dense network at the heart of our territories, offering spaces and facilities that are often under-used when limited to school hours alone. Numerous initiatives have already demonstrated the potential of open and participatory schools. Thanks to the engagement of parents, local associations and citizens, they become places of encounter, sharing and social cohesion — accessible and at a low-cost.

Convergence(s) calls for the opening of educational institutions and their territorial embedding to become a genuine public policy. That implies better regulating and facilitating access to school infrastructure outside of teaching hours (buildings, supervision, transport, heating, etc.).

The objective is to develop a broader range of activities and services, by mobilising the voluntary sector, families and volunteers, so as to make school a living space, serving the education of younger generations and adults alike. The aim, in short, is to build an educational community founded on cooperation and shared responsibility.

In the face of the rise of market logics in education, it is becoming urgent to reaffirm that school is not a product, but a fundamental right and a pillar of our democratic societies. Guaranteeing quality public education, accessible to all, is not merely a political choice: it is an essential condition for combating inequalities, for reinforcing social cohesion and forming free and enlightened citizens. Reinvesting in school, recognising the central role of educational communities and reweaving the links between institutions and their territories are all levers for building a fairer and more inclusive educational model. Restoring to education its primary vocation — to emancipate, to transmit and to build society together — will enable Europe to meet the challenges of the present and the future.

				
				
				
				
				



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