Education that transforms: Critical analysis of inspiring experiences

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Type of activity

Digital curation of good educational practices, critical analysis, and recording of a reflective podcast or video.

Target educational level

It can be addressed to the last courses of High School students and to any university student.

Information entry

The resource begins with an introduction to SDG 4, delving into the principles of inclusive, equitable, and transformative education. Key concepts covered include:

- Educational equity
- Intercultural education
- Emancipatory education
- Student participation
- Service-learning

Educational equity refers to the principle that all individuals should have access to quality education, regardless of their social background, gender, culture, socio-economic status, disability, or any other condition. Unlike equality, which entails offering the same to everyone, equity acknowledges that not all individuals start from the same circumstances. Therefore, it requires adjusting support, resources, and educational strategies to compensate for initial inequalities. Educational equity ensures that no one is left behind and actively works to remove structural barriers that hinder learning and holistic

development for certain groups. In this sense, equitable education is key to building fairer, more inclusive, and cohesive societies.

Intercultural education is a pedagogical approach based on recognising cultural diversity as an asset rather than a problem to be managed. It is not just about coexisting with people from different backgrounds but about fostering dialogue, mutual respect, and the joint construction of knowledge across cultures. This approach goes beyond simply celebrating diversity; it focuses on dismantling prejudices, combating racism, and promoting a critical, inclusive, and pluralistic citizenship. Intercultural education seeks to transform schools and other educational spaces into places where all voices, knowledge, and experiences are valued and have a central role, thus contributing to a true democratisation of knowledge.

Emancipatory education aims to develop individuals' ability to think critically, question unjust structures, and take action to transform their reality. Inspired by critical pedagogies such as those of Paulo Freire, this approach does not limit itself to content transmission but becomes a process of awareness and action. It seeks to empower students by understanding education as a tool for both individual and collective liberation. In this framework, knowledge is not seen as something imposed from above but as a dialogic construction in which individuals recognise themselves as active subjects of their own learning and agents of social change.

Student participation is a key element in any democratic educational approach. It means that students are not mere passive recipients of information but active protagonists in the educational process. Participation can be encouraged in various ways: through decision-making about content, methodologies, or assessment; by organising activities and projects; or by engaging in critical reflection on what is being learned and why. A participatory education not only enhances learning but also strengthens students' sense of belonging, autonomy, and social responsibility. Moreover, it fosters essential skills such as teamwork, communication, negotiation, and conflict resolution.

Service-learning (SL) is an educational methodology that combines academic learning with performing a community-based service. Through SL, students

apply acquired knowledge in real-life contexts, developing competencies while contributing to improving their environment. For instance, a group of students may engage with curricular content while designing an awareness campaign on human rights, supporting a community project, or collaborating with a social organisation. This methodology bridges theory and practice, school and community, knowledge and ethical commitment. Service-learning promotes more meaningful, transformative education oriented towards the common good.

Teachers may accompany this introduction with videos, readings, or short presentations that highlight the need to rethink traditional educational models.

Source

Guided autonomous research. Students will be required to locate, select, and analyse real and innovative educational initiatives, such as:

- Community or cooperative schools
- Educational projects led by NGOs
- Schools in contexts of social exclusion
- Hospital, rural, or intercultural classrooms
- Networks such as Ashoka, UNESCO, Fundación Bofill, OEI, transformative Schools, etc.

Problem statement

What real educational practices reflect the principles of SDG 4?
What lessons can we draw from them as future education professionals?

Solution

1. Selection and critical analysis of a real educational experience, highlighting its transformative elements.

2. Development of an analysis sheet, covering:
- Context and target population

- Educational methodology used
- Inclusion and participation
- Social impact
- Transferability potential

3. Production of a short podcast or video (3–5 min) presenting:
- The selected experience
- What inspired them as future professionals
- How to replicate key elements in other contexts

4. Sharing and discussion space (digital forum or in-person class) to present the outputs and debate the educator's transformative role.