

Creating Our Futures Together

**The UNESCO Recommendation
on Education for Peace, Human Rights,
and Sustainable Development**

**14 Essentials and 42 Guiding
Questions for Educators
Around the World**

I . Introduction

Few would disagree with the idea that people cannot live in dignity without basic literacy and numeracy. Yet how should we respond to the question: beyond these fundamentals, what should we learn?

A look back at history shows that what has been prioritized in education has varied greatly across eras and cultures—from poetry and music in ancient Greece to information technologies in the modern age. This invites us to refine the question: what kind of education and learning should we cultivate not only for ourselves living in contemporary society, but also for future generations?

Answering this question is by no means easy. However, a crucial international framework emerged in November 2023. At the 42nd session of the UNESCO General Conference, 194 Member States reached a shared understanding and adopted by consensus the Recommendation on Education for Peace and Human Rights, International Understanding, Cooperation, Fundamental Freedoms, Global Citizenship and Sustainable Development (hereinafter referred to as either the "Recommendation on Education for Peace, Human Rights and Sustainable Development" or the "2023 Recommendation").

We find ourselves living in an era in which wars seem never to cease. In such times, it is of profound historical significance that all UNESCO Member States were able to reach an agreement that peace, human rights, and related issues must be the highest priorities of education in contemporary society.

The predecessor of this Recommendation was the 1974 Recommendation concerning Education for International Understanding, Co-operation and Peace and Education relating to Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms. Although it emphasized the importance of human rights and international understanding, it has often been viewed as having had limited practical impact.

Indeed, while many countries expressed agreement with the principles of the earlier Recommendation, it is difficult to say that the human rights of every individual—beginning with the rights of children—have been fully protected over the past half century.

Believing that such history must not be repeated, we decided to create this card-based learning tool to promote wider understanding and use of the new Recommendation for all educators and students. This learning resource was developed through extensive discussion among volunteers from the University of the Sacred Heart in Tokyo and the Japan Association for International Education (JAIE), as part of a project supported by a Japan MEXT grant.

The 2023 Recommendation sets out fourteen Guiding Principles that can be regarded as its core. For this learning tool, we have selected simple English titles (one or two words) as keywords for each principle to serve as an entry point to understanding the Recommendation as a whole.

Beneath each title, we provide an essential message—an accessible, interpretive explanation of the Guiding Principles—along with three guiding questions designed to encourage all educators and students to make the issues their own. Detailed guidance on how to use the cards is provided in the following sections.

The UNESCO Recommendation calls on all of us to respect, promote, and protect these principles, and urges Member States to continuously review their laws, policies, and plans in light of the Recommendation.

We sincerely hope that this learning tool will serve as a first step toward understanding this new commitment of humanity, guide our education system in a more positive direction, and ultimately contribute to the realization of a peaceful, human rights–respecting, and sustainable society envisioned by the Recommendation.

The 2023 UNESCO Recommendation Promotion Project Committee
The Japan Association for International Education (JAIE)
Project Representative / Professor, University of the Sacred Heart, Tokyo
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II . How to Use the Card-Based Learning Materials

I. What can we do with these cards?

- What possibilities exist for education in today's schools and communities?
And what should be changed to address current challenges?
- Let's explore these issues through dialogue, using the "Keywords," "Essences," and "Questions" on the cards as starting points.

II. Before Engaging in Dialogue

- On the front of each card, you will find a keyword at the top, followed by an explanatory essence (interpretive translation), and 3 guiding questions at the bottom.
- Use one set per group or individual.
- Form groups of 4 to 6 people. When you have many groups, an overall coordinator helps ensure smooth facilitation. Discussing one question usually takes 5 to 10 minutes, so decide in advance how many cards and questions to use.
- If participants are meeting for the first time, begin with brief self-introductions in each group. Sharing how you feel at the moment (nervous? excited?) can also be helpful.

- Designate a facilitator within each group to guide the discussion. Enjoy the dialogue. As long as no one is disrespected, all opinions and impressions are welcome. There is no single correct answer to the questions. Feeling uncertain or confused is also important. Share questions about the issues and about others' views, and avoid imposing your own opinions. Dialogue is a process through which our thinking changes.
- Deepen dialogue through critical thinking, which is the ability to discern the truth.

III. Engaging in dialogue using the cards

1 Sit in a circle in groups of around 4 to 6 people. First, look at all cards.

2 Select several cards, which you are interested in.

*The coordinator decides how many cards can be handled within the available time. If it is necessary to avoid overlap between groups or if time is limited, the coordinator may assign specific cards.

3 Decide the order of the cards to be discussed. Have one person in the group slowly reads aloud the keyword and essence of the selected card.

*If you prefer to begin the dialogue with a specific question, you may skip this step.

4 Read aloud 1 of the 3 guiding questions written on the selected card.

*The questions are arranged in the order of a personal question, a general question, and an action-oriented question. It is recommended to start with the first question.

5 Share any ideas, possible answers, new questions, or opinions that come to mind regarding the question (approximately 5 to 10 minutes per question).

6 Repeat the same process with another question.

*If you wish to experience a larger number of cards, you may choose only one or two questions from the 3 questions on each card.

7 If time allows, freely discuss the significance and challenges of the keywords and essences.

8 Repeat steps 3 through 7 with another card.

9 Let's share the ideas with the whole group. You may then continue the dialogue with everyone.

*Please adapt these steps flexibly according to the number of participants, available time, and the composition of the group.

*It is also possible to begin with more specific questions and then move on to discussing the keywords and essences, rather than following the order shown above.

IV. Critical Thinking for Deep Dialogue

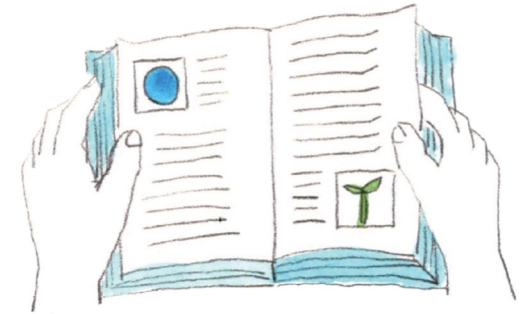
Try engaging in dialogue by asking questions such as the following.

- 1 What does that mean?
- 2 Why do you think so?
- 3 What are the underlying assumptions? Are they taken for granted?
- 4 What are the implications of that?
- 5 Is that really true?
- 6 What evidence supports that idea?
- 7 Are there any exceptions?

III. Card-Based Learning Materials

1. Common Good

Education is a common good.
It is a treasure that should be
accessible to everyone.



Q1. Some people are unable to access education, even though it should be available to all.
Who are they?

What can be done to support their equal access?

What kinds of places outside of schools provide learning opportunities?

Q2. These days, private information industries and corporations have gained significant influence over public education; as a result, some say it is becoming a service industry.

What do you think about this trend?

Q3. Recently, education is often seen as a private matter.

What can we do to ensure that education remains a common good for everyone?

2. Human Rights

Human rights belong to everyone.
Over time, humanity has created
shared commitments to protect them.
Through education human rights come to life.

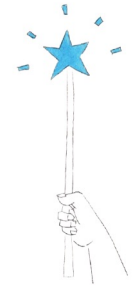


Q4. When do you feel that people around you are not being treated with dignity or respect?

Q5. UN bodies have pointed out that some countries need to improve the situation concerning their human rights. What do you think about this?
What is the best way to protect human rights in your own country?

Q6. How can we create learning environments that fully reflect and uphold the Convention on the Rights of the Child?

3. Free from Discrimination



Regardless of differences, everyone has the right to be free from discrimination.

Through learning all people are empowered as rights-holders.

Q7. Have you ever noticed yourself holding biases or engaging in discrimination, even unintentionally?

Q8. Why can we not get rid of prejudice and discrimination?

Q9. What can learners and teachers do to recognise and challenge discrimination in schools?

4. Ethic of Care and Solidarity

It is ideal that one feels the pain of others as one's own, and that one lives together in ways that allow everyone to thrive and support one another.



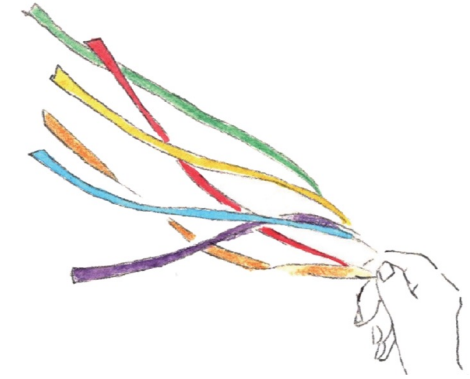
Q10. In what moments, and through what kinds of experiences, do you feel a sense of connectedness with others?

Q11. Have you ever experienced or heard about compassion —feeling another person's pain as your own?
What did you feel in that moment?

Q12. What can be done to create convivial relationships in learning environments —cooperative rather than competitive, and where people support one another?

5. Gender Equality

Promoting gender equality
in and through education
—it is key to empowering women and girls.



Q13. Have you ever had a painful experience because of your gender?
Or do you know someone who has?

Q14. Your country might be assessed as having not yet achieved gender equality.
Why do you think that is?

Q15. In your country, are girls and boys treated differently in schools?
If so, how can such gaps be bridged?
What is the most important thing to achieve gender equality in the learning environment?

6. Inclusivity

Each person is unique and diverse. Education must not exclude anyone and protect the histories, cultures and languages people value.



Q16. What kinds of diversity do you find among people around you?

Q17. Have you ever felt that people's valued histories, cultures, or languages were ignored or disrespected? When did that happen?

Q18. What do you think is necessary to create an educational environment that values and respects diversity?

7. Health and Well-being

Let us create environments where everyone involved in learning thrives mentally, physically, and socially.



Q19. At what moment do you feel happy in your daily life or at work?

Q20. Do you know adults or children—in your country or elsewhere—who live with fear or threats to their safety?
What can we do for them?

Q21. What is your first step to ensure the health and well-being of everyone related to learning activities?

8. Lifelong Transformation

Learning is a lifelong journey of transforming oneself and making society better. Through learning—anytime and anywhere—connections are formed and deepened.



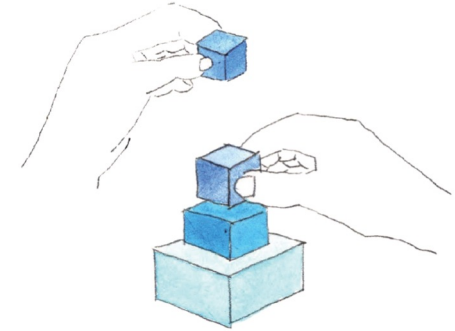
Q22. Have your values or actions ever changed through new learning or awareness?

Q23. Have you ever experienced that when you changed, people around you also changed?

Q24. What can be done to improve learning opportunities both in and outside of school and also throughout one's lifetime?

9. Knowledge Co-creation

Knowledge is not just something given;
it is something created together.



Q25. Have you ever experienced adults and children creating something together or overcoming a challenge by thinking together?
What was the effect of such an approach?

Q26. How can learning environments ensure no one is left behind and that all children become co-creators of knowledge?

Q27. If schools did not rely on prescribed textbooks, what kinds of learning could be created?

10. Freedom of Expression

Everyone has the freedom to think, believe, and express ideas.

At the same time, support for discrimination or violence must never be accepted.



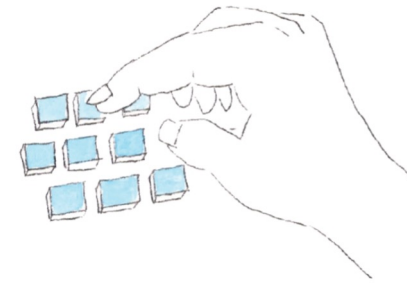
Q28. Have you ever felt that young people's freedom of expression is restricted, or that it is difficult to speak up?

Q29. Have you ever felt that freedom of thought or belief was not respected?

Q30. To eliminate hate speech and discriminatory actions, what role can educators or education play in society?

11. Ethics of Technology

We should use technology ethically and responsibly.



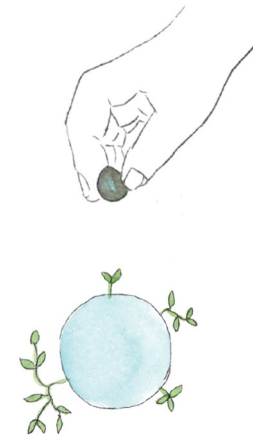
Q31. What problems have been solved or improved through advances in technology?

Q32. What challenges might remain unsolved, no matter how much technology advances?

Q33. What is crucial for today's technologies—such as AI—to be used ethically and responsibly at school?

12. Interconnectedness

What is close to us is interconnected to the world.
Education nurtures this awareness and perspective.



Q34. In classrooms or community activities, what experiences can help students and young people feel connected to the world?

Q35. How can we value and strengthen our connections with people affected by war, conflict, or the loss of human rights?

Q36. How can we simultaneously value our local culture and experiences and yet feel connected with the rest of the world and its challenges?

13. Dialogue

To overcome divisions across cultures and generations, we need to build connections. Dialogue with those who are different from ourselves is essential.



Q37. Have you ever found it difficult to have dialogue with people from different cultures or generations?

Q38. Have you ever learned from others or changed your own thinking through dialogue?

Q39. How can we deepen connections through dialogue —between people, communities, and countries—and how can schools promote this?

14. Global Citizenship

Our planet is reaching its limits. To realize peace, human rights, and sustainable development, we must cultivate global citizenship and take the first steps toward transformation—fulfilling our responsibility.



Q40. What issues come to mind when you hear the term “planetary boundaries” (the limits of the Earth)?

Q41. What are some of the global issues that each one of us can help to tackle?

Q42. If you were to change yourself in order to realize peace, human rights, and sustainable development, what would be your first step?

This learning material is also available in a digital format.
Please feel free to print it out for your use.

<https://kyosei.u-sacred-heart.ac.jp/unesco2023/en/>



The English original text of the 2023 UNESCO
Recommendation on Education for Peace, Human Rights
and Sustainable Development can be accessed
via the following link.

<https://x.gd/h0jB8>



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