Stories of Climate Change, the Green Economy and Education

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(Asia South Pacific Association for Basic and Adult Education)
Acknowledging the learners, the educators & their communities
Three Propositions

1. Climate change is a gift (for me as an environmental educator)?

2. The Green Economy (a new holistic and integrated vision for the future of learning)?

3. Learning for Resilience or….?
The Story of the Frog in the Pot ...

From Jill Sanguinetti, Marysville, Victoria, Australia
The Story of the Frog in the Pot...

...of boiling water
The frogs need to save themselves...

...and find a way to 'learn their way out'
From Jill Sanguinetti, Marysville, Victoria, Australia
for us... there is no 'out' from our Earthly Pot.
1. Climate Change is a gift?

- It gave a starting point for a conversation that was very localised problem yet it allowed a tangible link to the global scale of the problem. (*local – global connections*)

- It gave an appreciation of the complexity and interrelatedness of not just the different parts of the environment, but the different parts of our lives - the social, the cultural the economic and the political. (*holistic understanding*)
1. Climate Change is a gift?

- It gave an opportunity to talk about science, but also about the limits of science in understanding the impacts and in finding solutions. (multi/ inter/ trans-disciplinary)

- It gave the perspective about how the problem was the result of previous decades of human activities, and gives us a reminder that we cannot only think about today, but always consider the implications of our thinking and actions for the future. (long-term perspectives)
1. If climate Change is a gift, then current crisis....

The Chinese characters for the word CRISIS is made up of two parts.

危 机

danger  opportunity

2. The Green Economy
an opportunity to develop a holistic and integrated vision of the future

UNEP defines a green economy as one that results in
*improved human well-being and social equity, while significantly reducing environmental risks and ecological scarcities.*

In its simplest expression, a green economy can be thought of as one which is *low carbon, resource efficient and socially inclusive.*[1]

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2. The Green Economy
an opportunity to learn to work in a more holistic and integrated way

• “The shift to a green economy can be seen as a pathway to sustainable development, a journey rather than a destination.”

• The nature of a ‘green economy’ sought after by a developed or developing nation can vary greatly, depending on its geographical confines, its natural resource base, its human and social capital, and its stage of economic development.

• What does not change however are its key tenets – of targeting improved human well-being and social equity, whilst reducing environmental risks and ecological scarcities?”[1]

A story from the Village of Mendrelgang, Tsirang District, Bhutan

- Six-hours (a mere 162 km) from the capital.
- A history of relocation linked to land distribution.
- But not ideal for farming because the land is generally rocky, sloping and narrow.
- What crops are appropriate for this kind of land?
A poverty alleviation project was conducted by the Ministry of Education (funded by ACCU/UNESCO ESD Program) which aimed to reform the farming process through developing the thinking skills of the learners as a central component of literacy education.
A story of an innovative literacy project, Harvesting Passion(Fruits) of Learning

“Before joining the literacy class, my life was like that of a cow. I just did farming and ate whatever available grain blindly.
Now I am with confidence. I know what I am planting and why I am doing this.” - Villager

“They used to grow vegetables, but through this project, they became good decision-makers. This impact will remain for new generations.”

- Literacy class instructor
"They share agricultural knowledge with me and I share that of literacy – it is a both-ways learning."

Institutional outcome – an MOU between the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Education
3. What can the context of the climate changing world and the vision of a green economy tell us about this new vision of education?

- First, the new vision must include the major previous education policy cornerstones and commitments – be universally available and accessible, of high quality, sensitive to gender and cultural differences, of practical value and transformative.

- Learning is contextual but the contexts of learning, while it still begins from one’s localized and lived experience, this is now embedded within the complex and diverse global contexts. Therefore, it about learning to live within this embeddedness, when one is always present in both local and global – some have called it being ‘glocality”. Maybe we can call it about being a glocal citizen.
3. What can the context of the climate changing world and the vision of a green economy tell us about this new vision of education?

- Learning is no longer about certainty, but rather about **learning to live with dynamic uncertainty**. Therefore, it is more about developing an inquiring mind capable of designing and discovering.

- Learning one form of knowledge is only the beginning; today and in the future it is about acknowledging and engaging with other knowledges and ways of learning. Therefore, it is about a sense of confidence about what one knows, and humility about what one needs to learn from and with others - **Knowledge and Learning Partnership**.
3. What can the context of the climate changing world and the vision of a green economy tell us about this new vision of education?

- Learning will no longer be exclusively from the more advanced and prosperous nations, but is already occurring from communities who have been made more vulnerable by climate change, because they have managed to survive amidst situations of crisis. Therefore, it is now about an attitude of reciprocity and mutual learning from differently resourced countries.

- Learning will need to continue to expand its focus beyond narrow definitions of literacy and numeracy towards what Paulo Freire described as ‘reading the world’. Equally important is an emphasis on the ability to respond to, re-imagine and re-shape the world.
The ability of a social or ecological system to absorb disturbances while retaining the same basic structure and ways of functioning, the capacity for self organization and the capacity to adapt to stress and change

(IPCC Fourth Assessment Report, 2008, as applied in the context of climate change)
THANK YOU and LET THE CONVERSATIONS BEGIN.