

“Discussion Paper”

~ to education movements worldwide ~

Intro:

During an international meeting in Munich [Germany] at the end of November 2009 activists from the education movement in Austria, Germany and Spain got together and wrote the following paper.

We ask local groups across Europe and other parts of the world to discuss this text and give feedback [united4education@riseup.net]. The responses will be published inside the forum of <http://emancipating-education-for-all.org> and discussed at the Education Congress in Bochum [Germany] in June 2010 together, hopefully, with as many of you as possible. It is essential to create a strong network between the education movements.

Our objective is to kick off discussions on the concept of education and collect as much input from local groups as possible, to try to formulate a statement that reflects the unity and diversity of the struggle for free and emancipatory education.

Vision:

Essential to formulating a vision is to ask ourselves what social role an education system should have within society.

Furthermore an education movement – be it on a local or global level – should define *education* itself and include its own definition within a social discourse about education. The following describes the basic concept for free and emancipatory education. We believe, contrary to *training*, *education* must be critical. It must be free and accessible to all individuals, aim to empower people to understand and critically reflect the conflicts of interests surrounding them, as well as to reflect one's own individual role within society as a whole and be encouraged to actively shape it. This way education is a means for emancipation.

Training on the other hand is the sole learning of skills to be offered on the labour market.

Free and emancipatory education, which is accessible to all, is a pre-condition for any society considering itself democratic, since critical education is a catalyst for political participation.

The educational system – a “clash of interests”:

We understand the educational system to be a platform for several interests, which partly contradict each other; some being: economic interests, state interests, and institutionalized religious interests.

All of these three organized streams of interests are structurally opposed by the interest to let people decide the direction their own lives should take. This interest, unlike the others, is not organized yet. Emancipation enables people to live self-determined lives. It is up to critical education activists to get organized and strengthen the *emancipatory interests* within the structures of the existing platforms of interests.

The currently dominating interests - especially those of an economic nature - function globally. Therefore we are convinced that we can be successful in the long run only by networking and uniting in our struggle globally ourselves. We express our solidarity with all those struggling for free and emancipatory education worldwide.

- activists from education movements in Austria, Germany and Spain -