

**WORLD COALITION FOR EQUITY AND DIVERSITY IN EDUCATION**  
*April, 2019*

**PREAMBLE (PURPOSE, AIMS, JUSTIFICATION)**

This statement of principles on rights to an education based on equity and diversity rights is grounded on the belief that everyone has an entitlement to an education and, undergirded by Critical Multicultural Education, clearly and explicitly states a vision for an education that is equitable for all. On one level, it serves as a vision statement for the World Coalition for Equity and Diversity in Education (WCEDE). At the same time, it does not intend to replace the mission and vision statements of the respective partner organizations of the WCEDE (see, Appendix A) but rather to serve as a complementary document. On a second level, this statement is intended to serve as a guide to individuals, schools, community based organization, associations, government agencies to ground their efforts around assuring equity, inclusion and diversity within their efforts to pursue an education that is multicultural.

We write this document at a particularly important time in the history of the world. We are witness to a wave of nationalism in many nations motivated by xenophobia and which, in particular, seek to close borders to those seeking safe harbor as well as to marginalize those recent arrivals. We are witness to a backlash of civil and human rights protections especially those that have been developed to counter racism, gender identity discrimination, and sexual harassment. We are witness to global racism with its insidious impact on people from minoritized communities. We are witness to the denial of global climate changes at a time where we are experiencing unprecedented and unexpected natural disasters which are creating a wave of climate refugees. We are witness to war, civil conflict, and terrorism that have led to the displacement of people throughout the world.

As witnesses, we recognize that these events are re/shaping how we address essential questions around educational equity and the pursuit of social justice—questions of highest concern to the WCEDE and its respective member organizations. It rests on our understanding and recognition of the direct and profound impacts of these geopolitical events on the quality of education that is provided in schools throughout the world.

We write this with a strong commitment to recognizing one of the most valuable of human resources--cultural heritage and diversity. In this regard, we stand with *UNESCO's Declaration of Human Rights*. While not minimizing the "common heritage of humanity," we also seek "to preserve cultural diversity as a living, and thus renewable treasure that must not be perceived as being unchanging heritage but as a process guaranteeing the survival of humanity." At the same time, as with the UNESCO declaration, we aim "to prevent segregation and fundamentalism" which places those cultural differences above Human Right principles more broadly.

Simultaneously, we recognize that we are part of a new world order that ties us together--across geo-political lines--and provides new understandings of the interdependent nature of nations across the globe. With the increase in communication technologies and renewed approaches for learning from and with people across cultural and linguistic lines, come new opportunities to forge productive alliances, cross-cultural collaborations, and bolder educational projects.

## **GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

The stated principles of the World Coalition for Equity and Diversity in Education (WCEDE), honoring the belief that all people of the world are born free and equal and who have the right to a quality and equitable education, advance the following principles:

### **Basic Human Rights Principles**

- Honoring the belief that all people of the world are born free and equal.
- Standing solidly in support of fundamental values and actions that lie at the heart of humanity: respect for human dignity, freedom - including freedom of expression - democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights.
- Spreading social recognition and respect of individual natural rights of world citizens in an environment of multiculturalism.
- Committing to the achievement of social justice across the globe.
- Pledging to uphold those values which are common to all in a world in which pluralism, non-discrimination, tolerance, justice, solidarity and equity prevail.
- Learning about human rights principles as well as how to advocate for themselves and others relative to human rights.

### **Cultural/Linguistic Diversity Principles**

- Understanding, valuing and affirming the unique cultural, ethnic, and linguistic heritage/treasure of all people, including the plural identifications of individuals and the plurality of nations.
- Eliminating discrimination, racism, and other social disadvantages (including microaggressions and cultural appropriation) in the interest of advancing all educational fields towards the benefit of everyone regardless of race, social status, gender, or religion.
- Exposing and combatting hegemonic ideologies used to colonize and enslave people's bodies, minds, and spirits.
- Facilitating the acquisition of the attitudes, skills, and knowledge to function in various cultures.

### **Education Grounded in Critical Multicultural Education Principles**

- Committing to an approach to education which aims to equip learners with capacity to contribute to social change through the progressive acquisition of analytical skills, knowledge and understanding.
- Working toward the achievement of educational justice across the globe.

- Rooting our work in the many different and diverse knowledge systems (epistemological frameworks), with special attention to those local knowledge systems, which inform teaching and learning.
- Pursuing institutional policies, procedures, and practices that support an education that is multicultural and in pursuit of the above goals in local, national and global contexts.
- Engaging multicultural education work with humility, authenticity, grace, empathy, patience, solidarity, and vulnerability.
- Valuing the role of critical self-reflection and question-raising/problem-posing.
- Inviting a radical re-imagining of education (generally) and education that is multicultural education as it might be.
- Developing culturally relevant, responsive, and sustaining curricula.
- Recognizing historical and contemporary forms of inequality in education, especially around race and gender lines, extra efforts must be made to close consistent and persistent opportunity gaps.

### **Education for Interculturality Principles<sup>1</sup>**

- Recognizing that education for interculturality complements multiculturalism through the promotion of activities which are grounded in interaction, mutuality and the permeation of cultural boundaries.
- Respecting the cultural identity of the learner through the provision of culturally appropriate and responsive quality education for all.
- Providing every learner with the cultural knowledge, attitudes and skills necessary to achieve active and full participation in society.
- Fostering in all learners the cultural knowledge, attitudes and skills that enable them to contribute to respect, understanding and solidarity among individuals, ethnic, social, cultural and religious groups and nations.

### **Organizational Principles**

- Working with and across organizations and individuals to achieve these goals.
- Engaging in genuine dialogue and collaboration wherein our collective work and the individual missions of our different organizations are advanced.
- Holding ourselves and our colleagues accountable for the educational outcomes relative to these goals.

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<sup>1</sup> The following principles underpinning education for interculturality are articulated in the UNESCO guidelines for intercultural education

## **Appendix A**

### **Mission Statements of the Founding Organizations**

#### ***International Association for Intercultural Education (IAIE)***

The International Association for Intercultural Education is totally committed, through its work, to the achievement of social and educational justice across the globe. Moreover, against the background of current issues and events, the IAIE is pledged to working with professionals around the globe to welcome into our ranks fellow educators who have become refugees and to collaborate with them wherever possible. Accordingly, based on the words of the 2015 Paris Declaration, the IAIE affirms its determination to stand solidly in support of fundamental values and actions that lie at the heart of humanity: respect for human dignity, freedom - including freedom of expression - democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights. These values are common to all in a world in which pluralism, non-discrimination, tolerance, justice, solidarity and equity prevail.

#### ***The Korean Association for Multicultural Education (IAIE)***

The purpose of KAME is to organize, develop, and plan research activities related to multicultural education. We are working hard to eliminate discrimination and other social disadvantages in the interest of advancing all educational fields towards the benefit of everyone regardless of race, social status, gender, or religion in Korea. It is our appointed task and endeavor to spread social recognition and respect of individual natural rights of world citizens in an environment of multiculturalism.

#### ***The National Association for Multicultural Education (NAME)***

The National Association for Multicultural Education is a non-profit organization that advances and advocates for social justice and educational equity through multicultural education. There are six points of consensus regarding multicultural education that are central to NAME's philosophy, and serve as NAME's goals:

- To respect and appreciate cultural diversity.
- To promote the understanding of unique cultural and ethnic heritage.
- To promote the development of culturally responsible and responsive curricula.
- To facilitate acquisition of the attitudes, skills, and knowledge to function in various cultures.
- To eliminate racism and discrimination in society.
- To achieve social, political, economic, and educational equity.