



CALL FROM TEACHERS FOR THE PLANET

Greta Thunberg is 15 years old, and she has been striking from school: she says there's no point in studying if the planet is dying. Greta is right: she could be one of our students and she has opened our eyes.

We, as teachers, hold a major responsibility: we know that this young girl is telling the truth, we know that the urgency to act on this unprecedented ecological and humanitarian crisis is absolute. The media and the scientific community have been warning us for a long time. We know the facts and yet we remain silent. In our classrooms, we have agreed for too long to teach 'sustainable development' thus maintaining our students' illusion that the situation is under control and taken seriously by the governments of the world. On the contrary, our students need to know that the current governments, while enjoying the benefits of fossil fuels, are burdening them with climate change. Our students need to know what their future holds, a future that they will not choose but has been determined for them by the criminal inaction of past and current governments.

The crisis has not been prevented: heatwaves, droughts, floods, migrations, political unrest and the collapse of biodiversity are now omnipresent in the news all over the world. We are appalled to realise that the curriculum reveals an institution in denial: in the French National Education system, everything is done as if nothing was happening on Earth.

In view of this, we declare that we refuse to be the instruments of a reassuring propaganda that makes the ecological catastrophe invisible. On the contrary, it is our responsibility to tell our students how serious the situation is. We must tell them about climate change, about the loss of biodiversity, about the pollution that enters even our cells. And we have to tell them that no degree nor any training whatsoever will protect them against all of this. Because they trust us, we have to make them aware of what is happening. Because we are educators, we will find the words. It is out of the question to push students to give in to panic: on the contrary, we must show them the knowledge and skills that will be needed to understand, think and respond to the coming collapse, now more than ever.

We, as teachers, also need to accompany our students to mobilise and participate in the movements that are demanding profound economic and socio-political change during these critical times. If we want to limit the impact of the coming catastrophe, revolutionary changes must take place in the distribution of wealth, in our systems of governance, in our production and consumption of goods, in our relationship to living things. Nothing will happen without citizen pressure and mobilisation on an unprecedented scale.

Spring 2019 will be one of our last chances to act: from now on, we are calling on all of our colleagues – in primary and secondary schools and in higher-education institutions, teachers, administrative and all staff — to participate in the international student strike on 15th March 2019 and to extend it until our political leaders implement the profound changes that are needed. Our aim is neither to oppose nor to compete with existing movements, rather we call for the purposeful convergence of all those who are fighting for today's youth. We are calling on all trade unions of the education sector to support this strike and the ones to come. On March 15th, we want our schools to be dead empty, just like they will be if there is no hope in the future of our students.

We, as teachers, are signing this call to express our determination to act for the future of our students.

