

Traduction en anglais de la "Charte pour un enseignement à la hauteur de l'urgence écologique"  
par Cédric Guénard

## **Charter for education in line with the ecological emergency**

Scientists are unanimous and their observation is clear : our modern way of life, based on absolute growth, dependent on fossil fuels and unaware of the finiteness of resources, leads to the overcoming of many planetary limits<sup>1</sup>.

Every day, the habitability of the Earth, our future and that of our children are a little more threatened.

Erosion of biodiversity, climate change, floods, pollution, increased disease, reduced food security and access to water, growing inequalities, increased poverty and migration flows, etc. Today, nearly one in two people in the world already live in a situation of great vulnerability.

However, solutions exist but, as the latest IPCC and IPBES reports remind us, their implementation is still very insufficient while the window of opportunity to act is rapidly shrinking.<sup>2,3</sup>

Society and the adults of tomorrow must be better prepared to face the ecological emergency. Young people regularly demand it, during climate protests, through recent surveys<sup>4,5</sup> by expressing themselves in the media<sup>6,7</sup>, by actions of civil disobedience.

Implementing the necessary changes in all areas of society requires

- the understanding of environmental issues and their impacts on our lives,
- the courage to question norms and habits,
- the will to act collectively and individually for a desirable future.

This responsibility belongs to everyone. And the School and its actors have a decisive role to play. Don't our missions recommend preparing young people for a desirable future? To turn them into aware, critical, responsible and supportive (eco) citizens ?

**It is hand in hand, all together with the younger generations and a rediscovered freedom that we will be able to rise to the challenges that are ahead of us.**

Move forward, without delay, towards the solutions that already exist, invent even more of them... to build an enviable future, to give back to the younger ones the hope and the power to act concretely, building a conscious, ethical and resilient future. A future inspired by the Living. Actions at the level of our children !

**We invite the entire profession, in primary, secondary and higher education, to join our call and commit with us to...**

### **1. Help students understand ecological issues**

Equip students for the search for quality information (questioning, reliability of resources, media education).

Develop an understanding of threats to human and environmental health, without euphemism or simplism.

## **2. Address environmental issues in their complexity/wholeness**

Highlight the interdependence of economic, ecological and social aspects.

Decomartmentalize and create links between disciplines to think about environmental and social issues as a whole.

Grasp the responsibility of human activities in the current disruptions as well as the obstacles to the deployment of certain solutions.

Show the injustice of environmental crises that affect even more harshly the most disadvantaged groups and populations and those least responsible for environmental degradation.

## **3. Debate to develop critical thinking**

Stay open to different points of view.

Don't be afraid to dig deep and explore issues for which there is no single, simple answer.

Distinguish scientific knowledge, with its share of uncertainty, views and beliefs.

## **4. Supporting students to become citizens**

Work on the question of values, critical reflection, the confrontation of ideas.

Promote equity and solidarity within and outside our institutions.

Strengthen the desire for commitment and the power to act as responsible citizens.

Give students real power in the operation of their school, encourage them to exercise their rights of expression and take their place in democracy.

Encourage eco-responsible actions and behaviors (in terms of mobility, food, consumption of goods and energy, waste reduction, promotion of biodiversity, etc.)

## **5. Embedding teaching in reality**

Open the doors of our establishments.

Collaborate with external stakeholders (environmental education associations, local actors, etc.).

Discover inspiring alternatives.

Live and experience concrete activities that give make sense and are meaningful.

Talk about "green" jobs, and all the others, which are constantly evolving and can participate in the necessary transition.

## **6. Leaving an anthropocentric teaching**

To (re)connect with nature, observe it and marvel at its diversity and richness.

Rethinking our relationship to nature and other living things.

## **7. Dare to explore different pedagogical approaches**

Question our relationship to time, slow down and refuse the race dictated by certain programs.

Draw inspiration from new pedagogies and sensitive approaches to environmental education.

Take advantage of professional help and coaching from environmental education and tools that exist.<sup>8</sup>

Explore, experiment with other things, dare to take risks and make mistakes.

## **8. Value engagement and collaboration over competition**

Show the strength of the collective and its capacity for resilience.

Favor active and participatory methods.

Value collaboration and benevolent cooperation between students, between teachers, and between students and teachers.

Collaborate, exchange, share our experiences between teachers of the same institution and between institutions.

### **9. Offer space for emotions and cultivate imagination**

Take into account the eco-anxiety of young people and teachers, prepare for it and address it in class.

Stimulate mobilizing emotions and creativity.

Questioning our tales, opening up possibilities to imagine desirable futures.

Overcome the fear of change by showing the opportunities and benefits (personal and collective) of the ecological transition.

### **10. Motivating with pleasure**

Share the PLEASURE to act, to understand, to do together, to be useful, in accordance with our values... A pleasure essential to the motivation of students and teachers.

### **11. Making School a place of inspiration**

To question the school model and its functioning through the prism of the societal issues of our century.

Reduce the ecological footprint of our establishments as well as that of our professional activities and projects.

Ensure consistency between discourses and actions so that the school serves as a model, has an exemplary value.

### **12. Be a committed teacher**

Show that environmental and societal issues are part of our priorities and that we care.

We regularly train and update our knowledge to be able to integrate environmental issues into our courses and practices.

Trust each other to exercise our educational freedom with regard to priorities.

Reflect regularly and as a team on the search for solutions and the adequacy of our work in the context of ecological emergency.

Take a stand for a school better adapted to the challenges and demand the necessary resources (in terms of teacher training, study programs, external collaborations, renovations and equipment of institutions, etc.) in all training courses.

**By signing this charter, we are committing ourselves to work together for an education that lives up to the ecological emergency and ask our political leaders to help us.**

<sup>1</sup>Two new planetary limits crossed in 2022: what are we talking about ? Mélanie Mignot, The Conversation, 26/06/2022 : <https://theconversation.com/two-nouvelles-limites-planetaires-franchies-en-2022-de-quoi-parle-t-on-184508>

<sup>2</sup>The latest IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) synthesis report on climate.be : <https://climat.be/changes-climatiques/changements-observees/reports-du-giec/2023-report-de-synthese>

<sup>3</sup>IPBS (Intergovernmental Science and Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services) Synthesis Report for Policymakers : [https://www.ipbes.net/sites/default/files/2020-02/ipbes\\_global\\_assessment\\_report\\_summary\\_for\\_policymakers\\_en.pdf](https://www.ipbes.net/sites/default/files/2020-02/ipbes_global_assessment_report_summary_for_policymakers_en.pdf)

<sup>4</sup>Youth Forum Survey (2023) : <https://forumdesjeunes.be/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/Avis-Education-a-lEnvironnement-Forum-des-Jeunes.pdf>

<sup>5</sup>Youth, Communication & Climate. Diversity of climate issues among 15-24 year olds in Belgium. UCLouvain report, following a call from the Federal Council for Sustainable Development. (2022)  
<http://hdl.handle.net/2078.1/267798>

<sup>6</sup>Carte blanche d'étudiant·es ingénieur·es, published in Le Soir, 31/03/2023 :  
<https://www.lesoir.be/504574/article/2023-03-31/la-crise-environnement-exige-un-changement-radical-de-nos-etudes-dingenieur>

<sup>7</sup> Avis de certains es étudiants et professeur es bioingénieur·es sur le site de la RTBF, 07/04/2023 :  
<https://www.rtf.be/article/la-grogne-des-etudiants-bioingenieurs-nos-cours-ne-sont-pas-du-tout-en-phase-avec-les-enjeux-ecologiques-11179389>

<sup>8</sup>The Réseau IDée centralizes on its site existing educational tools (tab Resources peda), environmental education organizations in Wallonia and Brussels (Services >Addresses), activities and training offered (Agenda) : <https://www.reseau-idee.be>