

CALL FOR PAPERS

Education and Climate Activism: Youth democratic practices and imaginations towards a common world

Special issue *ESC – Educação, Sociedade & Culturas*

Proposals (up to 700 words, excluding references) due September 17, 2021

Guest Editors

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Young people around the world have become mobilised by the urgency to tackle the climate crisis. Increasingly gaining momentum, youth activist movements have been calling everyone's attention to governmental inaction on the climate crisis and to the shortcomings of institutional political agreements (European Youth Forum, 2019). While for the general public (mostly in the Global-North, which has been less affected by) the consequences of climate change seem a somewhat distant, abstract and dystopian phenomenon, when they become more widely felt, it will actually be too late to reverse the problem (Giddens, 2009). Faced with such paradox and aiming at triggering generalized motivation for individual and collective change, young generations have been defying 'adultist biases' and taking their future into their own hands.

From weekly strikes to street demonstrations, disobedience and performative acts, the youngsters seem to forge their citizenship in ways largely relying on visual imagery, on social media, on community-based initiatives, and on prefigurative modes of organisation. They reveal themselves as skilful claimers, adopting new strategies, tools and repertoires of action to get across their messages about the urgency of structural transformations before the world changes beyond recognition (O'Brien, Selboe, & Hayward, 2018). Taking many shapes and forms, in and out of school, the youngsters' practices and choices towards the creation of a new sense of urgency are unavoidably anchored on how they imagine and reclaim a common world.

Beyond environmental messages, intersectional issues of social justice (social class, global North-South citizenship, ethnicity, gender, age) often root climate justice struggles. Thus, climate change education, as pleaded by UNESCO (2015), breaks formal walls, expanding from school curricula to community projects and other public spaces (offline and online) (Monroe, Plate, Oxarart, Bowers, & Chaves, 2019). School climate strikes are one of the most paradigmatic examples of young people taking ownership of their formal education positions to radically challenge the divisions between education and activism. By going on strike, youngsters repurpose their role as students towards an active role as citizens, capable of contesting the

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governments' priorities and unveiling the system's contradictions (Mattheis, 2020). Surely, these experiences operate in-between individual and collective arenas, making formal, non-formal and informal learning contexts highly permeable to one another. Education on climate, democracy, politics and citizenship unfolds by learning with and teaching others (e.g., families, teachers, school authorities, adult stakeholders), by linking real-life knowledge with school contents, by building bridges but also managing tensions between contexts.

This special issue welcomes interdisciplinary contributions addressing education and climate activism, using qualitative, quantitative or mixed-methods approaches; cross-country comparisons are encouraged. We invite contributors to explore broad topics of interest that include but are not limited to:

- Critical assessments of the role of education in addressing climate change issues;
- Meanings of climate mobilisation and activism, from the viewpoints of different actors: activists, young people, teachers, parents, policy-makers and school authorities;
- Processes and factors motivating or challenging young people's involvement with climate issues and activism, which may configure new learning models;
- Practices of civic and political participation in formal and non-formal educational contexts, including youth-led or initiated participatory projects and grass-roots movements, aimed at tackling climate challenges;
- Innovative educational intervention programmes for promoting climate activism and environmental action;
- Interplay between the offline and the online in fostering and sustaining climate activism, including the visual dimensions of climate-related claims, expressions and performances.

References

- European Youth Forum (2019). *Resolution in support of youth demanding urgent climate action*. Council of Members. Brussels, 12-13 April 2019. https://www.youthforum.org/sites/default/files/publication-pdfs/0052-19_Resolution_Climate_Change2019_FINAL%20.pdf
- Giddens, Anthony (2009). *The politics of climate change*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Monroe, Martha C., Plate, Richard R., Oxarart, Annie, Bowers, Alison, & Chaves, Willandia A. (2019). Identifying effective climate change education strategies: A systematic review of the research. *Environmental Education Research*, 25(6), 791-812. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13504622.2017.1360842>
- Mattheis, Nikolas (2020). Unruly kids? Conceptualizing and defending youth disobedience. *European Journal of Political Theory*. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1474885120918371>

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O'Brien, Karen, Selboe, Elin, & Hayward, Bronwin M. (2018). Exploring youth activism on climate change: Dutiful, disruptive, and dangerous dissent. *Ecology and Society*, 23(3), 42-54. <https://doi.org/10.5751/ES-10287-230342>

UNESCO (2015). *Not just hot air: Putting climate change education into practice*. Paris: UNESCO. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000233083>

Important dates

This special issue will be published in 2022.

Authors interested in contributing to this special issue should send an extended abstract (up to 700 words, excluding references) to esc@fpce.up.pt until **September 17, 2021**. By early-October, authors will be informed whether their proposals were accepted or not. Manuscripts (of up to 8000 words) should be sent no later than 5 January 2022.

Manuscripts should be written in English, Portuguese, French or Spanish and must follow the guidelines for authors, available in the [journal's website](#). All manuscripts will be subject to a blind peer review process.

For additional information on this special issue, please contact the guest co-editor Carla Malafaia through the following email: carlamalafaia@fpce.up.pt.