

Digging Deeper and Relating Wider

An invitation by Vanessa Andreotti

https://youtu.be/kZXWti_kxH4

Video presentation outline:

- A. Work and personal background
- B. A story about North-South partnerships between Brazil and the UK
- C. HEADS UP checklist of problematic patterns in North-South engagements
- D. Global Citizenship Education otherwise: 4 denials
(decolonialfutures.net/gce)
- E. An invitation to shift our desires and motivations for working more meaningfully with partners for global change

HEADS UP checklist

	Whose idea of development / education / the way forward?
Hegemonic practices (reinforcing and justifying the status quo)	Whose assumptions and imaginaries inform the ideal of development and education promoted in this initiative?
Ethnocentric projections (presenting one view as universal and superior)	What is being projected as ideal, normal, good, moral, natural or desirable? Where do these assumptions come from?
Ahistorical thinking (forgetting the role of historical legacies and complicities in shaping current problems)	How is history, and its on-going effects on social/political/economic relations, addressed (or not) in the formulation of problems and solutions in this initiative?
Depoliticized orientations (disregarding the impacts of power inequalities and delegitimizing dissent)	What analysis of power relations has been performed? Are power imbalances recognized, and if so, how are they either critiqued or rationalized? How are they addressed?
Self-serving motivations (invested in self-congratulatory heroism)	How are marginalized peoples represented? How are those who intervene represented? How is the relationship between these two groups represented?
Un-complicated solutions (offering 'feel-good' quick fixes that do not address root causes of problems)	Has the urge to 'make a difference' weighted more in decisions than critical systemic thinking about origins of problems and implications of 'solutions'?
Paternalistic investments (seeking a 'thank you' from those who have been 'helped')	How are those at the receiving end of efforts to 'make a difference' expected to respond to the 'help' they receive?

4 Denials

1. Denial of violence (complicity in historical and systemic harm): the fact that our comforts, enjoyments and securities come from expropriation, exploitation and dispossession somewhere else
2. Denial of unsustainability (limits of the planet): the fact that the planet cannot sustain exponential growth, consumption, biodiversity loss and pollution or the promise that everyone can consume at the same level of high income countries
3. Denial of entanglement (how all life is interdependent): the fact that we are part of a wider planet-metabolism of human and non-human beings and the responsibilities that this entails
4. Denial of the depth of the problem (desire for simplistic solutions): the fact that our global problems are complex and “wicked” and that quick fixes and band aid solutions will not be effective in the long run (we need another way of existing together, not doing or thinking differently)

Digging deeper and relating wider

This table contrasts the desires encouraged by society that are easy to activate as motivational tools for engagement (feel good, look good, do good, move forward) with the dispositions (dt. Gesinnungen) necessary to interrupt systemic harmful patterns of engagement - which are much more difficult to activate but can create more meaningful engagement in partnerships.

Instead of wanting to...	We would need to want to...
...feel good	...face and sit with the pain and the mess of the historical and systemic violence that makes it possible for us to even be together. We need to find a way to be open and well even if there is pain.
...look good	...decenter ourselves and center the work that we need to do together and do the work that is needed even if it does not make you look smart, righteous or heroic for others
...do good	... interrogate what good means (who decides, in whose name, for whose benefit, how come, what implications?) and commit to work through the difficulties, tensions, discomforts, and frustrations of trying to unlearn and interrupt systemic and historical harm
...move forward	...dig deeper and relate wider: learn to sense and stay at the edge, learn from failure and from mistakes, map the ditches (dt. Gräben); emphasize the integrity of relationships, rather than the pace or the destination