

Geo-edu-ethics: Learning ethics for the earth

David Crookall (1) and Pariphat Promduangsri (2)

(1) Université Côte d'Azur, France (crookall.consulting@gmail.com), (2) Lycée Renoir, France (pariphat.promduangsri@gmail.com)

Ethics is becoming ever more important, not least in the geo-sciences, particularly under the impetus of the IAPG. However, ethical behaviour seems to be lacking (a) in areas where it is needed most, such as care of the environment, and (b) on the part of those (eg, politicians, CEOs) who should be providing role models for youth, instead of engaging in unethical behaviour.

In 2016, one of the authors coined the term eduethics, inspired by the term geoethics and the IAPG. The term intends to convey the fact that education is inconceivable without ethics (and ethics impossible without education).

For heuristic purposes, we distinguish two levels of ethics: First, ethics for the earth; second, ethics for education on ethics for the earth. Research highlights the increasingly dangerous impact of human activity on planetary life systems: overshooting earth's carrying capacity, GHG emissions, cryosphere, earth temperature anomaly, pollution, ocean plastic, resource depletion, food insecurity, deforestation. Yet most governments still unethically beat the drums of growth, while hypocritically humming the tune of sustainability.

The second level is ethics for learning to be ethical for the planet. Our planet is in dire need of ethical behaviour by all its citizens. How do we get several billion people to treat the earth and each other ethically? Some efforts are being made (eg, UNESCO, SDG-4, UNEP), but their impact is relatively small. What can we do to encourage more ethical behaviour towards the earth and the life it supports, and thus to combat impending disaster?

The only viable answer is through geoethical education. We need people to learn, and grow up learning, about what is right and wrong in regard to each aspect of our personal earth citizen lives. That needs nothing short of a recast in educational practice for all educational communities (schools, universities, ministries, NGOs) across the globe. It is doable, but it is urgent. It seems to us that the IAPG is in a unique position to trigger such a movement.

In this presentation, we hope to start a process of reflecting on how the IAPG and educational communities can together move towards implementing education programmes that encourage ethically sound behaviour individually and collectively, and do it before it is too late. To this end, we will propose a preliminary draft set of ideas, goals or principles that could become part of a universal IAPG geo-edu-ethics charter, eventually being adopted by international organizations and education communities round the world.

Without a concerted, world-wide, geo-edu-ethics effort, we are afraid that our children will grow up in turmoil and distress. Remember Mandela: "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world." and "It always seems impossible until it's done."