

Betty Reardon

Personal Statement on Social Change

No single theory or strategy of social change is adequate to global movements such as the current effort to gain world wide recognition of the need to respect and realize human rights, any more than one form of education is appropriate for all learners. Social change of the quality and dimension we seek in the objectives of the PDHRE, must be multi level and multi issue, taking into account cultural, ideological and historical circumstance of the learning populations with which we are concerned. And, of course, the other factors such as age, personal concerns and capacities that educators address in the design of learning programs.

For the purpose of this consultation, I believe we should address the issues of the fundamental principles we believe should characterize all learning programs for human rights education; determine which social institutions most affect the state of the realization of those principles, and what kinds of learnings will enable us, the "educators" and the societies and institutions we seek to influence, to achieve some of the component changes of the major transformational change that I would assert is necessary for the realization of a human rights culture as the common culture of an essentially multi cultural society. In order that the latter which I would assert should be one of the central principles of human rights education can survive, we also need to address education to halt and reverse the social changes bringing about cultural homogenization and globalization of economics and politics.

There are very few educational agents raising these issues, even the more radical, "grassroots" popular programs do not confront the issues of the complex of the interrelated processes of militarization, globalization, homogenization and all the violations of human rights they entail. What kind of learning can move people and institutions and capacitate them to take effective remediative action in the face of these trends? It's certainly not being dealt with in the universities and the schools and I haven't seen it in our training manuals. Can this consultation do anything about that?