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International Falcon Movement -
Socialist Educational International

**RESOLUTION ON SOCIALIST EDUCATION
TOOLKIT**

Adopted at the online XXIX Ordinary Congress on 22-24 April 2022.



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Background:

IFM-SEI uses its special brand of education known as socialist education in which we educate on the principles of equality, democratic participation, cooperation, inclusion, and friendship which we believe is essential for the creation of a world where all may live in peace and solidarity. Even though socialist education is something that is historically connected to movement, it is not always understood in the same way or operates under the same values and principles. We can all agree in spirit that even though our members all adhere to socialist education and its values, the ideas of what really are the values of socialist education, and the competencies of a socialist educator are as varied and diverse as the individual and collective experiences of our members across the globe.

For these reasons, we believe it is important that we move to adopt this resolution and unite under a common understanding and agreement of the content this toolkit is developed from.

Current situation:

We believe that it is vital to agree on the principles that will guide our written approach to non-formal education called ‘socialist education’ as well as the competencies of socialist educators, as identified at our Socialist Education Toolkit Seminar taking place 7-13 February 2022 in Salvador-Allende-Haus in Oer-Erkenschwick, Germany.

Why ‘Socialist Education Toolkit’?

We believe that the ‘Socialist Education Toolkit’ is an important educational resource not just for children and young people but for our movement as a whole because it will lay the groundwork for socialist education in IFM-SEI. It will be a blueprint towards developing a common understanding of the values and competencies of socialist education/educators and used by socialist educators across IFM-SEI to make their work more socialist.

The main aim of socialist education is solidarity

This is the core of child-friendly pedagogy. Löwenstein wants to "create a solidarity environment between us and children". This demand is not only a didactic and methodical principle, but also a fundamental condition for the success of class struggle. The proletarian class solidarity must include every generation of the class because adults can also learn from the collective process of life with children. Solidarity also means to feel safe in a group with the possibility to be as you want to be without being laughed at or discriminated against. Today solidarity also means fighting the ideology of individualisation and fighting for equality among all different marginalised and oppressed groups including children.

Socialist education is a lifelong process

Socialist education is a lifelong process that does not simply take place as a one-off activity but is a long-term development of attitudes, understanding and empathy, whereby people can become critical thinkers and reflect on power structures in society, and give them the skills and tools to fight for a more equal and just world. This takes place in different settings



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and on different levels, through non-formal education and accompanied by informal learning. Education is not only for children; we never stop learning in our life and we are all learners. Educating the educator is very important for socialist education.

No education is neutral

We believe that no education is neutral, and all education is underpinned by values, and is influenced by the experiences and background of the educator. Socialist education does not claim to be neutral and is explicitly value-based. Socialist education is the process of exploring, discussing and reflecting on the world through red glasses in line with our socialist values of solidarity, equality, democracy, cooperation, internationalism, anti-capitalism, peace, environmental sustainability and freedom. We believe that a better world is based on these values therefore we promote them through our educational work. Socialist education.

Self-organisation

We don't do something for children but together with them. On the one hand, it is an education aiming at productive, socially useful work. On the other hand, one of its goals is collective self-organisation of work and consumption. Group life, preparation of events, solidarity actions and above all the "Children's Republic" are possibilities to practise this. Self-organisation is the experience that we can change things if we do it together.

Class consciousness

While Socialist Education is education for class struggle, it is not education through class struggle. The IFM-SEI movement is an instrument of cultural class struggle. But we do not want the children to be involved in adults' conflicts, where they do not fully understand the stakes, goals and consequences and for which they are not yet physically and mentally prepared (in real life, however, they often were part of groups involved in class struggle). The issue of class struggle has of course changed during the decades. Nowadays there is no such thing as a conscious proletariat. Thus, this educational aim has changed to

A world free from oppression means a world free of capitalism

We strive for a world that puts people over profit and where every person can live in a world free of oppression. A world without oppression is not possible under the capitalist system, where some groups in society live lives of luxury and excess at the expense of other groups do not have access to their basic civil, political, social, economic and cultural rights. Capitalism is perpetuated by creating divisions in society whereby the working class and marginalised and minority groups are pitted against each other. Capitalism only maintains current social order through inequality. Through socialist education we challenge the capitalist status quo and offer alternatives to capitalism in theory and practice. Only once capitalism is destroyed can we live in a world where all people are equal. We want to encourage children to act and give them confidence in the possibility of fundamentally changing the world. An important part of our work is helping children find tools for analysing social and political structures and processes and assisting them in reflecting their positions



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in society as well as articulating their own interests. We train and encourage children to solve their conflicts through negotiations and with respect to the opponent's position rather than violently or through discrimination.

Education for social change

Socialist education not only develops theoretical understanding and knowledge, but also gives participants the competences to examine the necessity and possibility of social change. Socialist education motivates and empowers children and young people to take action for social change and gives them tools to fight the system. As a result of offering a counter-world alternative through our groups and activities, children and young people can see the changes that we want to see in wider society. Education for social change is the mantra for socialist education.

Meaningful participation and democracy

Our groups and activities are not just delivered for children and young people but with and by children and young people. We promote peer education and that everyone has something of value to share with others. All of our activities and groups are optional and voluntary. Within socialist education, children and young people are active players in their educational processes where they can practice collective self-organisation of work and consumption. Group sessions, preparation of activities and campaigning are planned with a meaningful input from our children and young people. Our groups and activities are a space to practice a real and socialist democracy, and everybody should have the possibility to participate in decisions on matters in which they are concerned or interested. For Löwenstein, the term 'democracy' includes the social counterpart to the economic process of socialisation of production: the socialisation of the possession of the means of production and administration, the abolition of domination of men over men. This means the development of the formal bourgeois democracy into a real social democracy as a way of communication; a relationship between people determined by the regulation of the process of their material and ideological lives. In our work we practice what we think is a real, a socialist democracy. Everybody should have the possibility to participate in decisions on matters they are concerned with. In the process of decision-making every opinion enjoys an equal status, no matter if it is the opinion of the youngest group member or that of the adults. We consider the needs and interests of minorities in the process of decision making. When a decision has been made everyone is responsible for its implementation.

Challenging hierarchy and discipline

Socialist education challenges the notions of discipline and hierarchy, and we believe that we should strive for all members of a group to have equal status, no matter age, background or experience. However, we must be aware that our groups and activities can reflect our societies and we must name and identify power structures in order to be aware of them and challenge them. Socialist educators are facilitators of a group and a self-organisation process rather than owner of knowledge. Being more experienced doesn't mean that your opinions in discussion count more than those of others and every person should be open to being challenged constructively. Having open feedback and reflection structures as a means and



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space for facilitating constructive is a core tool in challenging hierarchy. We want to encourage children to act, and we know that an emancipated person needs to be educated. Education is crucial for participating in society and one needs to know a lot about the world we live in to explain and - most importantly - change it. Our work aims at enabling children to formulate their own standpoints and interests and at giving them the courage to stand up for them.

Anti-patriarchal and inclusive approach

In socialist education we strive for equality of outcome and need; this makes sure everyone has the same outcome depending on the needs and starting point of everyone. We recognise that gender is a social construct yet recognise that women and people of other genders are oppressed in our society, and we stand up against gender stereotypes and binaries in socialist education. We actively challenge discrimination on all levels and use education to challenge and transform prejudices.

Creating a safe(r) space based on solidarity

The environment that we aim to create is that of a safe(r) space. This means that the children and young people should not feel threatened, and they should have the space to express their views. We stress that we try to make a safe(r) space, rather than a safe space, as we are all products of our society and perpetuate negative or prejudiced behaviours based on our privileges. We practice solidarity, which means to feel safe in a group with the possibility to be who you want to be without being laughed at or discriminated against, and promoting empathy, understanding and acceptance of diversity and difference.

Child and youth participation

We call ourselves “helpers” rather than “group leaders” because we do not claim to be the big bosses who set the rules. We consider ourselves members of the group with more experience in life, whose task is to help the group on the way towards self-organisation. As an ideal, we aim at making ourselves obsolete. The advantage of being more experienced doesn’t mean that our opinions in discussion count more than those of others. After all, there may always be topics on which children are the experts, so that the adults can learn from them. Education is not only for children. As we never stop learning in our life, educating the educators is very important for socialist education. We keep educating ourselves in pedagogical and political issues.

Cooperation not competition

Only if people look after each other, work together and develop ideas in the spirit of solidarity will society develop in a positive way. Cooperation is powerful because we can create better things when we work together and learn from each other. And it is powerful because it is fair. When we cooperate, we don’t leave anyone behind. In cooperation, everyone contributes in whatever way they can in accordance with their needs, and everyone gets a fair share of the outcome. Socialist education promotes cooperation and cooperative activities over competition and competitive activities. Cooperation also means fighting the



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ideology of individualism.

Education for internationalism

An important part of socialist education is challenging the idea of the nation and the promotion of internationalism. We challenge the notion of the nation because it is a category that creates boundaries, yields discrimination, and promotes the exclusion of others. However, we recognise that the reality divides the world in terms of nation states therefore within socialist education we promote the practice of ‘I am not my country’ - the practice that an individual is not responsible for the actions of their country or government. We want to see a world without borders where all humans have the right to move, live, work and love freely anywhere in world with freedom from discrimination or stigma. An important part of our work is anti-racist education and education against the idea of nation.

Conflict as a transformative practice

Peace education is fundamental to socialist education. Conflict is not inherently a negative thing; it is a natural part of a group process, but we must be aware of the potential of a conflict evolving into violence. We educate and encourage children and young people to solve their conflicts through dialogue, negotiation and with respect to another person’s position rather than violently or through discrimination. Not every conflict has a solution, and we recognise that there will always be diverging opinions and needs between individuals and groups.

Empowering children and young people

Socialist education encourages children to act and get their voice heard and gives them confidence in the possibility of fundamentally changing the world. We believe that lots of small changes in society can bring about a big societal change. We believe children and young people are key actors of change in society and socialist education fosters critical thinking and encourages them to be reflective and question the society in which they live, for them to be active citizens and ambassadors of socialist values. An important part of our work is helping children and young people to find tools for transforming social and political structures and processes. Socialist education supports every child and young person in developing the ability to act.

Addressing climate crisis

Recognising that any kind of climate justice efforts should use a systemic and intersectional approach by encouraging young people to politicise climate crisis and to challenge the individual-focused approach that is multiplied by popular culture and the media. Environmental sustainability should be promoted from a socialist educational perspective while empowering and supporting young people in their crucial role towards climate justice efforts by providing them opportunities for engagement.

Every socialist educator should strive towards personal development of individual competences as a set of skills, knowledge and attitudes needed to protect and encourage



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the learning process of others.

As outlined in the ‘Education for Social Change’ seminar, a **socialist educator is someone who...**

- understands and upholds core socialist values;
- understands social problems and is able to identify the mechanisms behind it;
- upholds, protects and promotes human rights and is able to recognise violations of human rights;
- has knowledge of and ability to implement non-formal education principles;
- actively uses intersectional principles to challenge normative practices;
- recognises the importance of meaningful and impactful child and youth participation;
- nurtures the development of collective identity as a central concept of social movements;
- is an active and empathetic listener;
- critical thinker that is open to also question their own behaviours.

Recommendation

We believe that the ‘Socialist Education Toolkit’ is an important educational resource not just for children and young people but for our movement as a whole because it will lay the groundwork for socialist education in IFM-SEI. It will be a blueprint towards developing a common understanding of the values and competencies of socialist education/educators and used by socialist educators across IFM-SEI to make their work more socialist. It will become the bible of all toolkits.

Due to the weight that this publication will hold, it is paramount that the Congress moves to accept the foundations that the Socialist Education Toolkit will be built on.

This Congress resolves to adopt the content above so that they be included as part of the SET toolkit to be published in 2022. The toolkit will be developed by the SET Task Force with the support of the IFM-SEI Secretariat.