



EDUCATION IN CRISIS: A LIBERAL WAY FORWARD

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Gummersbach, Germany

Abstract

“Without education, freedom does not withstand the test of time. Without freedom, there is no good education. Education and freedom of choice of educational paths are the foundation on which every person is empowered to develop their talents. For the benefit of all.” (FNF)

Liberals all over the world express concern at the poor quality of education which will be amplified by a pace of technological and economic development never experienced before. Today's realities demand radical changes in education policies that do not seem to be forthcoming. Poor education means being unable to seize the full potential of opportunities being created, being left behind and even means exacerbating the inequalities that exist in society. What do we need to do to enable stakeholders to ensure modern, well-financed and sustainable education systems? And how do we do this keeping core principles and values of liberalism at the centre?

The last 2 years of the pandemic have made more visible the cracks in school education globally - both at the level of the education providers and at the level of the education system. Children across the world were thrust into the virtual world, many without access/ sufficient support. Teachers were expected to overnight become masters of engaging and educating children in an entirely new way. Schools were the last places to open up severely impacting the social and physical health of children raising questions about the soundness of government policy. At the same time, we also experienced unexpected resilience, faster coordinated government action, innovation in teaching that perhaps also have shown what could be possible for the future.

OBJECTIVES

In the 2-weeks seminar, the participants will articulate why education is, and should be, a central concern of liberalism and a priority in liberal policy-making. Participants will discuss and refine their understanding of a liberal concept of school education.

Participants will also take a deeper look into the historical and desired goals of school education and develop a systematic analysis of the interests and impact of key stakeholders on the design and delivery of education.

Finally, they will analyse their country/ region's educational successes and challenges from the liberal lens and have a broadened perspective of global education policy and practice. This provides them with inspirations and recommendations for improved policies and education delivery in their own countries/ regions.

TOPICS

This seminar covers the most critical discussions about primary and secondary school education. This includes:

Where is the world headed? - what are the key opportunities and threats for education design and delivery emerging from key trends in politics, economics, society?

Why schools? - are they meant to support self-fulfilment, engaged citizenry, or socio-economic progress? Are they designed to make children ready for the world or to create innovators and game changers? Is character building a desirable objective and how are schools achieving this?

How does this look in a historical and cross-country / cross-cultural perspective? What are the relevant education principles and philosophies that influence policy and practice?

What are the institutional arrangements that ensure that all children enjoy education opportunities and chances of upward mobility while also providing sufficient support and nurturing to gifted children? This touches on questions regarding social integration through school education, the respective roles of private and public schools, school finance and management, and also takes regional and country perspectives into account.

How to ensure educational freedom and choice for all households? This addresses the autonomy of parents and communities and includes a discussion of religious freedom in education.

What constitutes quality of learning? - who decides on the content of the curriculum and makes sure that it transitions from input-driven to outcome-oriented education? How are these outcomes measured in an international comparison? Where does edutech fit in and allows for an adjustment to new consumption behaviours.

TARGET GROUP

Liberal politicians and think tank members specialising in education policy, leading members of the educational profession and journalists covering educational issues. Participants must have a track record as liberals, seek reform in education and are open to unconventional approaches.

METHODOLOGY

The seminar will be an engaging and interactive experience. Participants will immerse themselves in the dialogues through role plays, debates, facilitated conversations using visuals constantly bringing in stakeholder perspectives, in particular parents, teachers/educators, students, and policymakers. The variety of methods used aim to challenge and elevate the thinking in the group. Experts will be invited

to engage with participants in discussions of particular challenges and solutions. An excursion to another city will exemplify German experiences with reforming school education.

Facilitators



Manali Shah

Manali believes in the power of facilitation towards more connected and meaningful selves, teams, organisations and communities. She facilitates a range of online and offline programmes including learning journeys, strategy and visioning exercises and facilitation trainings for various local and international organisations. She intends to create a life nurturing environment in her spaces which brings in all voices and fuels collective wisdom and energy. Her journey in facilitation and the liberal movement began in 2001 at Centre for Civil Society - a partner of FNF in South Asia where she was designing and hosting liberal programs for youth across India. She worked with FNF South Asia for 4 years managing projects in areas of governance and liberal politics while also facilitating strategy conversations and facilitation trainings for partners. She enjoys mentoring budding facilitators and holds a peer learning facilitator community with about 50 folks working across sectors, themes and approaches. She blogs about her facilitation journey and all that impacts it at <http://manafacilitator.blogspot.com/>.



Rainer Heufers

Rainer Heufers is the founder and Managing Director of SIAP Solutions Pte Ltd, a Singapore-based consulting firm that provides strategic counseling, public policy consulting, leadership training, and other services to international think tanks, political parties, corporations, and government agencies. He is also the co-founder and Executive Director of the Center for Indonesian Policy Studies in Jakarta/Indonesia and a Senior Fellow of the Atlas Network in Washington DC. From 1999 to 2011 he represented the Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Liberty in several Asian nations and supported the development of the Economic Freedom Network Asia. Prior to this he specialized in researching China's economic and social transition towards a market economy. Over the years he has coached teams and individual staff members of FNF around the world as well as facilitating workshops and seminars of FNF and IAF on various topics including Leadership, Facilitation, Strategic Planning, Climate Change and the Economy.

The Foundation

We, the Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom, promote individual liberty, free and open societies and free markets in Germany and throughout the world. To us freedom is the guiding principle in policy making. We believe that free and open societies are the only societies that allow human beings to decide for themselves what is best, to develop their full potential and to pursue their dreams. This is what we mean when we claim to value human dignity. And it is freedom that produces prosperity. Together with our counterparts – who all share a similar set of values – we support initiatives in Germany and abroad that serve to enhance respect for the rule of law, private property and human rights, that foster tolerance and that strengthen economic freedom rights and democracy.

The programmes of the Foundation's International Academy for Leadership (IAF) form an integral part of our international work and offer Liberals from all parts of the world opportunities to engage in dialogue, an exchange of ideas, networking and mutual cooperation. We aim to inspire.

Venue: **International Academy for Leadership (IAF)**
Theodor-Heuss-Straße 26
51645 Gummersbach
Germany

Language: English

Registration: 13 May 2022 (via dvinci)
<https://fnst.dvinci-hr.com/en/p/iaf/jobs/20299/intro>

Registration fee: 260,00 €



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