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Education

Education: Final Declaration of the III World Congress against Neoliberalism in Education

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Education workers, popular educators and students from Latin America and from around the world gathered from 11-14 November 2024, in the facilities of the State University of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, to proclaim our irreducible will in defence of public, free, popular, scientific, secular, democratic, feminist, anti-racist, ecological and social reality transforming education.

For four days we discussed the importance of racial, gender and class issues for the construction of an emancipatory education, in the construction of which the unions of education workers and the organised student movement play a central role. We have discussed and denounced the risks of accelerated digitalisation of school and university systems that is not accompanied by social equity and increased public funding for education. We argued with conviction that hybrid education without state funding for internet connection and provision of connection equipment for education workers and students is a new model of educational privatisation. We have also analysed the risks involved in the attempt to turn artificial intelligence into a regime of human truth, as well as the problems caused by the dehumanisation of distance education through exclusively virtual and standardised learning formats.

The analysis of the impact of conservative projects in education has been one of the main concerns of this world congress, especially when their paradigms seek to impose themselves on school systems and universities. The defence of secularism, freedom of ideas, comprehensive sexual education, the right to decide freely about our bodies, the recognition of sexual, ethnic and black diversity, is seriously threatened by neo-conservatism in education. The only way to avert this danger is with more democracy and critical thinking in education. This is what we have understood and ratified.

This poses new and renewed challenges for the trade union, trade union and student education movement. The class perspective is powerful to the extent that it deepens participatory democracy, social control and rotation of positions, principles that we inherited from the Paris Commune.

We have much to learn from the social movements of the 21st century, especially feminism and environmentalism, which have found the keys to mobilise and contest hegemony. That is why we dare to dream of a world day of mobilisations for the right to education, a utopia for which we are working and committed. We are initiating a global dialogue so that 8 October 2025 will be the beginning of convergences that will bring together energies, consciences and ideas to mobilise all over the world for a public education at the service of the people and not of capital.

We have listened to our brothers and sisters from different territories of the world, who have shown us how neoliberalism assumes thousands of masks to try to impose commodification, privatisation and neoliberal evaluative culture.

It has become clear to us that in all places the construction of anti-neoliberal resistance has been effective to the extent that we have managed to create broad social fronts of support that converge in mobilisation. In this direction, will, knowledge and critical consciousness combine to move forward.

There is no trade union and student movement outside the pedagogical movement and the dispute of ideas. These are intertwined dynamics that are part of another way of conceiving education, learning, the vindication of knowledge and the knowledge that contributes to social justice. That is why we are committed to accompany, promote and strengthen the pedagogical movement within our unions and trade unions, so that from their reflections and ideas it will be possible to build consistent and radical alternative proposals.

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We will create our own training, editorial and communication system, based on the experience of Other Voices in Education and those that each union has developed over time. Research, Education, Communication and Organisation (INVEDECOR), working together, as a paradigm for the work we will do in this field. In 2025 we will launch our editorial, training and communication initiative to complement the work we do in the territories.

Our story of confluence has just begun. We have decided to meet again in 2026, at the Fourth World Congress against Neoliberalism in Education, at a venue to be announced in April 2025. In the meantime, we will advance in the realization of International Conferences of Classist and Autonomous Trade Unionism together with the Pedagogical and Student Movement to be held in April 2025 in Mexico, another one in October of the same year in a virtual way and a third one, of a face-to-face character, in Quito, Ecuador. We will also promote the International Trade Union School and the Pedagogical Congress of Popular Education in the first half of 2026. With joy and redoubled commitment we proclaim that we will continue to meet on all roads, to join and weave anti-neoliberal and anti-capitalist resistances, which will allow us to continue advancing in an education for the people, with freedom, social justice, solidarity and love for life.

18 November 2024

Translated by **International Viewpoint**.

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