



SUR SUR Southern Knowledges: Education, Sustainability and Social Change

Sur-Sur (South-South) Dialogos is an ongoing collaborative conversation that has a specific characteristic. Rather than a geographic reference, *Sur-Sur Dialogos* is a way of approaching social, cultural and political phenomena with a critical perspective, which is distanced from predominantly 'Anglo-Eurocentric' approaches, while keeping in mind current globalisation processes. South-South dialogue is based on an epistemological perspective that is critical of Western colonialism and neoliberalism. It acknowledges the diversity of roots, races, languages, genders, sexualities, ethnicities, nationalities and civilisational transformations that seek fresh ways of living and coexisting. For instance, Indigenous worldviews provide a broader understanding of the world than the dominant Western understanding, in feminist movements against patriarchy as well as the ways in which humans relate to nature.

The SUR SUR/ Southern Knowledges: Education, Sustainability and Social Change Symposium 2024 was founded in a collaborative project between the School of Education at Western Sydney University (WSU), the Faculty of Social Science at the Universidad de Chile (FACSO) and the Universidad Metropolitana de Ciencias de la Educacion (UMCE) culminating in 2018 in a highly successful two-day symposium: *The Sociocultural Challenges of Contemporary Diversities: childhood, migration, education and cultural inclusion*. The focus was to bring diverse sociological perspectives to issues shared by Australia and Chile in the context of Southern Theory and the recognition of how knowledge hierarchies play a major role in the creation and failure to address global, regional and local inequities that play out in the everyday lives of individuals. The success of the dialogues since then is that other South American institutions have collaborated with WSU in three subsequent online 'dialogues'.

This is the context in which the **School of Education at Western Sydney University**, proudly hosts the 2024 dialogues bringing together academics, activists, researchers, educators and students committed to addressing global change such as social and cultural inequality, racial inequality, gender inequality and colonial legacies. One of the most significant current debates in education concerns the incorporation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as a key response to UNESCO's Education 2030 Agenda. It involves 17 SDGs that are focused on a universal vision, common principles, an implementation strategy, and a global review framework that highlights collaborative action for people, planet, prosperity, peace, and partnership (5P's). The most effective way to achieve equitable and quality education, as well as lifelong learning opportunities for all, is through collaboration between actors across countries sharing global objectives. However, national policies and priorities are influenced by contextual factors such as local environments and community characteristics, making it essential to address challenges such as environmental change. As the world stands on the precipice of sustainable living, it is crucial to also focus on 'active hope' (Freire, 1992/2004). Although the future looks uncertain and perilous with increasing inequality and unequal distribution of resources, we must work together for a collective response (Macy & Johnstone, 2012), moving courageously toward shared, critically hopeful action.

The 2024 symposium, therefore, focuses on responding ethically, justly and collaboratively to global challenges in education, translating knowledge into action and building community to advance stable and sensible interactions. The dialogues bring together experienced and fresh voices and expand the discourse on Southern knowledges of justice, activism and political action. Our collective experiences and challenges form the basis for creating a South-South community to promote constructive dialogue, collaboration and cooperation. From this perspective, South-South dialogues, while acknowledging the importance of universal referents, value the diversity and plurality of Southern knowledges that differentiate it from dominant homogeneous visions. Our goal is to establish a transdisciplinary learning community that enhances ethical, civic and educational awareness. Our ultimate aim is to foster the development of global citizenship including responsibilities in multiple contexts and providing opportunities for purposeful behaviours that affect distant as well as local environments. The Southern Knowledges symposium commits to this vision of South-South (Sur-Sur) exchange by addressing issues facing individuals and groups in societies marked by significant heterogeneity and social inequality.

The forum invites participants to consider the following key questions:

- What are the emerging theoretical and empirical paradigms on sustainability challenging mainstream development frameworks in the South and what are their contributions and limitations?
- How do we decolonise research in the academy so that knowledges that have been historically and epistemically erased are moved into visible zones? (Munoz-Garcia, Lira & Loncon, 2022)
- What does it mean to exist in academic spaces in the middle of a crisis that is social, political, and environmental? (Munoz-Garcia, Lira & Loncon, 2022)
- How might education be managed in collaboration with communities and stakeholders to build more regenerative, agentic and resilient societies in the future?
- How can the prominence and momentum of South-South co-operation be maximised and what will its impact on development practices and discourses be?
- How can 'common but differentiated responsibilities' best be operationalised to deliver the SDGs in local and global contexts?
- How can we improve the integration of human dignity and respect into the policies and practices related to development in the South?