

Education News & Notes

Education: Fostering Global Understanding

(NAPSA)—Education today involves a lot more than learning your ABCs.

Young people will enter a very different world from the one their parents found after leaving school. Not only is technology advancing, but the social and cultural landscape of our increasingly interconnected planet is changing at a rate never before experienced.

Educators everywhere are struggling over how to prepare young people to face the challenges of tomorrow's global economy and a confusing world.

One person who has been addressing this problem is Japanese educator and philosopher Daisaku Ikeda, founder of the Soka education system that focuses on equipping young people to thrive in today's world as "global citizens."

Ikeda—one of the most widely honored individuals in the field of education, having received a total of 200 honorary doctorates and professorships from around the world—sees education as the key to bridging the religious and cultural differences that are at the root of many conflicts.

For him, being a global citizen is not a matter of speaking foreign languages or even being widely traveled. Instead, he suggests the following criteria:

- The wisdom to perceive the interconnectedness of all life,
- The courage not to fear difference, but to respect and strive to understand people of different cultures, and



Education today allows us to embrace the concepts of diversity and world understanding.

- The compassion to maintain an imaginative empathy that extends to those suffering in distant places.

"What our world most requires now," he says, "is the kind of education that fosters love for humankind, that provides an intellectual basis for the realization of peace and empowers learners to contribute to society."

Ikeda is no armchair philosopher; as leader of the Soka Gakkai International lay Buddhist organization, he has traveled widely to engage in dialogue to promote global peace. He has also founded numerous cultural, educational and peace institutions.

"Education makes us free," he explains. "The world of knowledge and of the intellect is where all people can meet and converse. Education has the potential to liberate people from prejudice and free the human heart from its violent passions."

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