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Promoting pluralism in and through education – a long overdue paradigm shift.

The challenges in education, arising from pervasive globalization, are becoming more complex. Globalisation has brought us closer together in the last decades, but it is a community composed of many ethnic, religious and linguistic groups, which has resulted in considerable social shifts. Without countries to manage diversity, whole communities can feel marginalised and oppressed, creating conditions for conflict and violence. The need to prepare a next generation for living together in peaceful co-existence has emerged as a new educational challenge. Coping strategies, such as confronting social and cultural differences, understanding prejudices recognizing stereotypes and empathy have begun to play an essential role in an increasing pluralist society. Promoting pluralism in and through Education will be central in this, and a more intentional approach that helps students develop dialogue skills to combat fear and intolerance, intercultural understanding and comfort with plurality and complexity in our globalized world, is timely. Let us not imagine that there is on simple, one-size-fits-all approach to solve problems of diversity; it requires holistic, conventional and unconventional approaches. In this presentation, based on a global review, various approaches will be discussed to promote pluralism in and through education, contributing to fundamental changes amongst learners, the education system and society, to not only accept but actively seek to understand and learn from differences.