

We the World

ARI Institute

Promoting Positive Changes in Education
Policy and Practices

An ideological statement to the United Nations

Foreword

The ARI Institute was established to promote positive changes in society and in education. We are an apolitical institute whose goal is to join hands with any organization, institute, or establishment that aspires to inculcate the mindset of globalization and integral worldview as key to humanity's well-being in the 21st century.

As such, we consider it a moral duty to make known our observations as to the root cause of the turmoil the world has found itself in over the past months. The texts below illustrate not only our views as to why matters are evolving as they are, but also what we believe can and should be done to resolve the crises that have erupted throughout the world

The three sections in this document can be treated either as standalone pieces or as a continuous flow of thought. Each of them focuses on a different angle of the global crises, and together they create an inclusive description of the global situation as we at ARI Institute see it.

It is our hope that after reading the words below you will find us a worthy partner with which to collaborate in order to achieve the goal of seeing all members of the humankind in a dignified and affirmative state of being.

Contents

We, We, We.....	3
The Road to Social Justice.....	6
Toward Mutual Commitment.....	8
Contact Information.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.

We, We, We

That we are in the midst of a “global crisis” is no longer questionable. Since there is also ample evidence that the term “globalization” covers far more than the correlation between stock markets worldwide, a more accurate meaning of the term should address the interconnected nature of today’s reality at large. We are “global” not just in the financial sense, but also, if not primarily, in the social, if not emotional sense. Our sentiments affect one another so intensely that they can start social blazes in country after country, passing from one hot spot to the next via the fibers that connect the World Wide Web.

The “Arab Spring” has expanded far beyond the Arab world. In each country the causes and the manifestations of the protests wear a different attire. In Egypt mass demonstrations overthrew the government. In Syria, the people’s heroic resistance in the face of carnage is a testimony to the profoundness of the change that has taken place in people’s spirits. They simply cannot tolerate tyranny any longer. In Israel, it is so far a peaceful demonstration, but of an unprecedented magnitude. Roughly 400,000 participated in the demonstrations that took place on Saturday, September 3, roughly one out of every 17 Israelis. If one out of 17 Americans were to participate in demonstrations, it would be approximately 18 million people.

In Spain, the tent camps of protestors have been standing for months, with no solution in sight. In the UK, the violent riots that erupted baffled Prime Minister David Cameron, who was caught off guard vacationing in Italy. Even Chile is on the protest-map with violent student demonstrations. According to a CNN report,¹ “More than 60,000 demonstrators protested in Santiago.”

Yemen, Libya, and many other countries are either on the list of countries where unrest has erupted, or are about to join it.

When you analyze the crises in each country, it is evident that social, economical, and political injustice are at the bottom of all of them. Yet, these wrongs are nothing new. They have been plaguing human history for thousands of years. So why is everyone protesting specifically now, and why is everyone protesting simultaneously?

The answers lie in the structure and evolution of human nature. As Jean M. Twenge and W. Keith Campbell beautifully illustrated in *The Narcissism Epidemic: Living in the Age of Entitlement* (Free Press, 2009), “People today are not only narcissistic and self-centered, but are becoming more and more so at an alarming rate.”

¹ <http://edition.cnn.com/2011/WORLD/americas/08/09/chile.protests/index.html>

As narcissists, we put ourselves in the center, and “grade” everyone else according to the benefit or harm they bring us. This is how we connect to the world, through the spectacles of self-entitlement. However, this is precisely how we must not function if we are to succeed in an era of globalization, when the world is interconnected and interdependent. To succeed, we must want to benefit those to whom we are connected just as much as we wish to benefit ourselves. If we are connected and dependent on each other, then if they are happy, so will I be. And if they are unhappy, neither will I be happy, as demonstrated by Nicholas A. Christakis, MD, PhD, and James H. Fowler, PhD, in *Connected: The Surprising Power of Our Social Networks and How They Shape Our Lives – How Your Friends’ Friends’ Friends Affect Everything You Feel, Think, and Do*.

The solution, therefore, lies in shifting our viewpoints from self-entitlement to social-entitlement, putting the society first, and our personal interests next, so that we ourselves may eventually benefit.

In practical terms, this solution entails three goals:

1. Guaranteeing the necessary provision to every member of society.
2. Guaranteeing the continuation of that mindset by inculcating prosocial values and conduct using mass media and the internet, primarily the social networks.
3. Using our prosocial work for self-enhancement in order to fully realize the potential that lies within each of us.

To achieve goal 1, an international panel of statespersons, economists, and sociologists, in which there are representatives from all the nations, must be set up and devise a plan for establishing a just and sustainable economy. Note that the term “just” does not refer to equal distribution of funds or resources (natural, human, or financial). Rather, a just economy is one where no person on earth is left uncared for. Thus, a starving child in Kenya may not need the latest model of iPhone, but is undoubtedly entitled to proper nourishment, home and clothing, proper healthcare, and proper education.

Conversely, a child of a similar age in Norway may already have the latest model of iPhone, but still feels miserable to the point of taking his or her own life, or worse yet, the lives of others, as recent events in that country have shown us. The distress in the two cases is very different, yet just as acute, and both must be addressed by the panel, keeping in mind that, as noted by Nobel prize laureate in economy and The New York Times columnist, Paul Krugman: “We are all in the same boat.”

Achieving goal 2 requires a shift of mindset. Since the media determines the public agenda, it is the media that must lead the way to annihilation of self-centeredness. Instead of the current “Me, me, me,” attitude it has been cultivating for the past several decades, the new mottos should be “We, we, we,” “mutual guarantee,” and “one for all and all for one.” If the media explains, and even extols the benefits of mutual guarantee, and the harm in the narcissistic approach, we will naturally gravitate toward sharing and caring, rather than toward suspecting and isolating ourselves. If commercials and

infomercials show veneration of giving individuals then we will all begin to want to give, just as today when the media shows reverence to the rich and powerful, we also want to be rich and powerful.

Such a prosocial mindset will guarantee that our society remains just and compassionate toward all people, and at the same time that all the people willingly contribute to that society. Additionally, many of today's regulating and restraining agencies, such as the police, the army, and financial regulators will either become obsolete or require a fraction of the resources and human power that they require today. In such a state, all those financial and human resources will be directed toward improving our daily lives, rather than struggling to keep us relatively safe, with diminishing success.

In such an encouraging and prosocial atmosphere, goal 3, "Using our prosocial work for self-enhancement," will be a natural outcome. Society will encourage, strive, and make efforts to guarantee that each of us realizes his or her personal potential to the maximum, because when that potential is used for the common good, it is in society's interest that we realize it to the fullest. Moreover, liberated from the need to protect ourselves from a hostile environment, a treasure trove of new energies will lend themselves to our self-realization. The result will be eradication of depression and all its related ills, and a dramatic improvement in our satisfaction from life.

After a few months of living in a society oriented mindset, we will not understand how we could ever think that self-interest was a good idea. The evident success and happiness of such a society will yield an ever-growing motivation to promote and strengthen it, thus creating a perpetual motion in favor of society, and at the same time, in favor of each of its members, without neglecting a single one of them.

In our globalized reality, only a structure that deems the happiness and well-being of all the people in the world equally important can prove sustainable and successful.

The Road to Social Justice

Throughout the world, nations and peoples are awakening. They are demanding of their governments to listen to their cries, recognize their pains, and resolve their problems. The uproar is not only over food or housing prices. At the bottom of it stands a firm demand for social justice.

Yet, social justice is an elusive goal. With so many sections of society affected by inflation, unemployment, and lack of education, one person's justice may very well entail another person's injustice. In the current structure of society, it seems that whatever solution is reached, it will only perpetuate, if not exacerbate the injustice, causing widespread disillusionment, which could lead to more violence, and even war.

Therefore, the solution to the demand for social justice must include all parts of society, none excluded. The 2011 "Spring of the Nations" proves that the world has changed from the root. Humanity has become a single, global entity, and as such, requires that we acknowledge every part of it—nations and individuals—as worthy in their own rights. Nations no longer tolerate occupation, and people no longer tolerate oppression. Compare humanity to a human body containing numerous organs of different functionalities. Yet, no organ is redundant. Every organ both contributes to the body what it should, and receives what it needs.

Likewise, the approach toward resolving the unrests in all the countries must be include all parts of society. The keywords to all negotiations involving government officials and protesters should be "thoughtful deliberation." The negotiations should be based on the premise that all parties' demands have merit and should be addressed respectfully. Yet, because so many parties have just demands, all parties must take the other parties' demands into account, as well.

In such deliberations, there are no "good guys" or "bad guys." There are people with genuine, legitimate needs, sharing their problems with one another and trying to reach an acceptable, dignified solution for all sides.

Think of a large and loving family. Everyone in the family has his or her needs: grandpa needs his pills, dad needs a new suit for the new job he is about to begin, mom needs her Pilates lessons, and the big brother has just been accepted into a high-priced college. So the family gets together for a family meeting, a bit like thanksgiving but without the turkey. They talk about their incomes, argue over priorities, share their needs, squabble a bit, and laugh a lot. And in the end, they know what's necessary, what's not, who will get what he or she needs now, and who will get it later. But since they are a family, connected by love, those who have to, agree to wait because after all, they're family.

In many respects, globalization and growing interdependence have turned humanity into one giant-size family. Now we just need to learn to work as such. If we think about it, a big family is always safer than being alone, provided it truly functions as a loving family.

Also, we must keep in mind that in almost all the countries, governments are struggling with mounting deficits and debt, and there is not enough resources to go around, but there are certainly enough resources to allow for respectable living for all, if only we acknowledge each other's needs. Therefore, the "big family" is the best way to ensure that social justice is eventually achieved. Just as in a family, the idea is not to break down the system, but to adjust it, tune it into catering to people's needs rather than catering to the wants of various pressure groups.

King Arthur had a round table, around which he and his knights would congregate. As its name suggests, the table had no head, implying that everyone who sat there was of equal status. Similarly, governments and citizens need to understand that there is no way to resolve the social problems unless by discussing everyone's problems while seated together at a round table (metaphorically if not physically).

We must remember that we are all mutually responsible for one another and that we're interdependent, like a family. The problems that seem to tackle us around each corner are not the causes, but the symptoms of our real problem—lack of solidarity and mutual responsibility for one another. Therefore, it is of utmost importance that we resolve them specifically in the round table way and spirit. By resolving these problems one at a time we will gradually build a society that is governed by mutual guarantee. Indeed, the mindset of mutual guarantee is the real reason why Nature is presenting us with these problems. And once we achieve mutual guarantee among us, they will be gone like the wind.

Toward Mutual Commitment

Why a shared responsibility in tackling the world's challenges is the key to resolving the global crises in an interdependent world

Despite decades of unimaginable efforts, resources, and planning on the part of the UN to eradicate inequality, exploitation, and lack of basic conditions for sustaining life, these problems still pose major challenges in many countries. Around the world, some 1.4 billion people are living on less than \$2 a day, while \$5.2 billion worth of food are wasted every year in Australia alone. Jonathan Bloom, author of *American Wasteland: How America Throws Away Nearly Half of Its Food*, writes, "More than 40 percent of the food produced for consumption is wasted by Americans. The total cost of food wasted comes out to an annual amount of more than \$100 billion." Worse yet, the gap between the haves and the have-nots is only widening over time, instead of shrinking.

For decades, the efforts of the developing nations to seek aid in food, health, and development among the more affluent countries have yielded highly inadequate results. Until today there was no other choice because the name of the game was "Winner Takes All."

The gaps are not only among nations, but also within the countries. The realities of discrimination and injustice cause tension both nationally and internationally, and in light of the global crisis, the situation could get much worse.

But now the game has changed. The recent worldwide protests are teaching all of us a lesson we should heed carefully: The world is connected, and what goes around comes around. Globalization has made us all interdependent, and no nation can exploit another nation simply because it is stronger, or it will pay dearly. As we can see, countries that yesterday seemed unassailable, today are crumbling from within, maintaining solvency only by the mercy of nations that only a few years back were treated as inferior.

In today's globalized reality, either we all win, or we all lose, because we are interdependent. When enough people in the world open their eyes to the facts of globalization and shared responsibility, a major shift will unfold. No longer will countries and peoples exploit one another; no longer will mammoth consortiums exploit millions of underpaid workers around the world; no longer will children be allowed to die of hunger and illnesses that can be treated with common antibiotics, and no longer will women be abused simply because they are women. Indeed, in a world where people realize that their own well-being depends on the well-being of others, they will care for others, who will care for them in return.

When that shift unfolds, terms such as "first world" and "third world" will cease to exist. There will be only one world and the people living in it.

Carrying Out the Shift

To actualize the above-said, two things are of utmost importance: first aid, and education.

First aid means that we begin by launching a worldwide campaign that explains why in a globalized reality, insufficient food supply and lack of clean drinking water are inexcusable and must promptly be ousted. It is easy to show that the cost of such investments pays itself back with interest within a few short years. Countries such as India, Vietnam, and Indonesia serve as wonderful examples, for all their still existing challenges.

“Education” means informing people of the new era of globalization, mutual dependence, and shared responsibility that has come upon us and engulfed us like a wave. The recent global financial crises and the series of uprisings around the world are sufficient evidence to the fact that we affect one another on all levels of life—economic, social, and even emotional (see Thomas Friedman’s reference to “Globalization of anger”²).

At stage one of the education process, people will realize that it is unthinkable that over a billion people should starve while another billion is throwing away almost half the food that it buys and suffers from obesity. Once the bare necessities of life have been provided to the entire world population, stage two will begin.

Stage two will focus on enhancing unity and solidarity among individuals and nations, in congruence with the current reality.

In Nature, unity, reciprocity, and mutual responsibility are prerequisites to life. No organism can survive unless its cells operate in harmony. Likewise, no ecosystem thrives if one of its elements is removed.

Until recently, humanity was the only species that did not follow the law of mutual dependence and reciprocity. We believed that Nature’s law was “Survival of the fittest.” But now we are realizing that we, too, are subject to interdependence and must act accordingly if we wish to survive.

The Campaign

To inculcate the message of mutual responsibility and interdependence, we are suggesting to declare next year, which the U.N. titled “The Year of Cooperatives,” the starting point of shifting the global mindset toward the urgent need for mutual commitment in order to keep society and economy sustainable.

The Steps of the Shift

1. We should assemble an international forum of scientists (from hard sciences as well as from social sciences and humanities), artists, thinkers, economists, successful businesspersons, and celebrities under the auspices of the U.N. to declare the start of The Year of Cooperatives. In that conference, the participants will commit to doing their utmost to eradicate hunger and

² <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/08/14/opinion/sunday/Friedman-a-theory-of-everyting-sort-of.html>

- deprivation. They will be chartered by their countries to devise a worldwide campaign to instill the awareness of globalization, shared responsibility, and interdependence.
2. At the end of the forum, teams from the U.N. will work with each country on devising media campaigns, school programs, street signs, and any other means of advertisement to promote the abovementioned concepts. The goal of the campaign will be to make the concept of exploiting abominable, and the idea of sharing and caring in accord with life's law natural, and even praiseworthy.
 3. The U.N. teams will convene regularly to report and synchronize their moves, thus creating uniform global progress toward unity and mutual responsibility. The teams' meetings will be broadcast live to demonstrate transparency and enhance credibility, but mostly to demonstrate how productive work can become when collaborating.
 4. Countries, consortiums, and even individuals who excel in demonstrating solidarity and shared responsibility will be praised and glorified much the same as movie stars and pop stars are admired today. This will be a powerful incentive to them to continue excelling, and to those who are not, to begin.
 5. From numerous experiments on the effects of prosocial behavior (such as David W. Johnson and Roger T. Johnson, "An Educational Psychology Success Story: Social Interdependence Theory and Cooperative Learning"³), we know that typically Western afflictions such as depression and drug abuse will be all but gone when the campaign takes root. This, in turn, will free up a tremendous amount of financial and human resources to tend to humanity's other needs. International hostilities will also decrease dramatically, even if only for lack of moral and financial support of the adversaries. In an interdependent world, it is simply unwise to battle, and this will be very clear to all.

We at ARI Institute have years of experience in international collaborations, networking, and circulation of ideas. We have an online system of free broadcasts with simultaneous interpretation into eight languages, and we can produce text and video materials almost on a moment's notice.

We are already collaborating with UNESCO on the topic of global education, and we offer all our services and facilities to the U.N. in the hope of expanding this fruitful partnership.

Today, Nature is demanding that we unite. Over time, that demand will intensify until we all consent. At the same time, that demand is the key to our success in building a sustainable reality for ourselves and for our children. In light of all that, we must unite, we must work together, and we will succeed.

³ <http://edr.sagepub.com/content/38/5/365.full>

