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Editorial

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The events over the last few years starting already in 2018 with the Swedish climate activist Greta Thunberg who began in August of that year sitting outside the Swedish parliament calling for stronger action on climate change holding up a sign reading *Skolstrejk för klimatet* (School strike for climate). This action led to several youth protests around the world and culminated in the Fridays for Future school strikes, which were highly coordinated and multi-city protests involving over a million students each. These school strikes soon became overshadowed as the new decade began with a pandemic outbreak of the COVID-19 virus. This pandemic has killed over 500 thousand, infected over 10 million people worldwide, and affected economic, social and other aspects of life as we normally know it.

To reduce the spread of the virus, governments have confined billions of people to their homes in worldwide ‘lockdowns’ and as country after country ordered school closures, education was suddenly faced with an extraordinary new reality. Worldwide billions of children were restricted to their homes together with their parents and extended families. This shutdown saw the adaptation by educational institutions and teachers to support homeschooling and to move much of their teaching online. It seems that while the world has become somewhat more polarized over the years these events have led us to see how interconnected we are and the need to work more collectively.

This general issue is not about the climate strikes or the COVID-19 pandemic, but these situations are important reminders of the importance of working together across borders and to find solutions to common problems. The role of education is highly important as well as access to information and knowledge sharing. The development of Open Access journals, such as the NJCIE, aims to support part of the European political project, built on solidarity between European nations and a shared sense of history and

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culture. According to the European Union, Open access (OA) can be defined as the practice of providing on-line access to scientific information that is free of charge to the user and that is re-usable (European Commission, 2017). Once the niche choice of a motivated few who wanted to make their scholarly publications freely available, open access publishing has become increasingly mainstream. As an OA journal NJCIE wants to encourage our authors and readers to share information from the journal and to engage with the scholarship in new ways particularly given the online-only platform. We also encourage our audience (readers and authors alike) to consider other ways to share their work such as video abstracts, engage in debates through Forum pieces, podcasting their article through the platform, and make use of the emerging scholar submissions through inventive approaches. In this way, we aim to make use of new and emerging technologies to facilitate a more inclusive approach to how research is produced and disseminated.

Of course, the pandemic and climate change is a challenge not only for the European political project but also to provide an empowering learning society for sustainability at a global scale (Didham & Ofei-Manu, 2015). Perhaps with the sharing of information, ideas, and beliefs across borders focusing on both the global climate strikes and the pandemic we are witnessing a new and reinvigorated period in the educational policy landscape both at the national and at the international level. In that respect, new investigations are needed to understand the field of Comparative and International Education and its contribution to whether this will mean a continuation of education as usual or if we might see an enhanced movement in the field via digital means or a rethinking of education altogether.

Reference

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