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The Kids Aren't Alright

Publish Date:

November 2022

The Age of Anxiety has dawned. While this may be easy to dismiss as a natural corollary of the recent pandemic, when one looks a little closer, it's not hard to see where this phenomenon manifested and where it is sustained.

In 2021, The *Lancet* published a global survey of responses from 10,000 young people, aged 16–25 years from Australia, Brazil, Finland, France, India, Nigeria, Philippines, Portugal, the UK, and America.

The survey found that 84 per cent of young people aged between 16-25 were 'moderately to extremely worried' about climate change. More than 50 per cent of respondents reported feeling sad, anxious, angry, powerless, helpless, and guilty.

Over 75 per cent said that they think the future is 'frightening'. Climate anxiety and distress were correlated with perceived inadequate government response and associated feelings of betrayal.

Yet despite decades of technological and medical advances and the raising of hundreds of millions of people out of poverty, the natural question that arises is, where did this anxiety come from?

You need look no further than our education system and what is being taught to students of all ages on a daily basis.

For years the University of Sydney's Environment Institute (SEI) has been at the forefront of Woke ideology and radical climate activism. According to the SEI's worldview, radical climate activism is an antidote to falling education standards and eco-related mental health problems.

Ultimately, activism-driven anxiety is a product of the left-wing vanity project to achieve Net Zero emissions by 2050.

It's a dream being fuelled by Australia's oldest and most prestigious sandstone university and its treatment of the climate debate.

Who cares about numeracy and literacy? We have a global apocalypse on our hands! This is the mantra repeated by the Greta Thunbergs of the world and supported by SEI research.

The upshot: schools should be replaced with climate activism camps.

According to SEI Postdoctoral Fellow Blanche Verlie and Melbourne University's Alicia Flynn,



‘ecocidal global socio-economic systems’ can be blamed for most problems in the modern world.

Verlie and Flynn ask, ‘What if education is not the solution, but part of the problem?’

They question whether education has ‘young people’s best interests at heart’ and claim schools constrain ‘cultural and political agency and effect’.

‘The transformative response is to reorient educational structures, practices, and relations towards those that sustain life on Earth. It is time for education to reckon with its role in the climate crisis and its entanglement within colonial-capitalist extractivism.’

In other words, the likes of Verlie and Flynn believe schools should be turned into centres where future social justice warriors can be trained the transform the ‘ecocidal’ structures from within.

Verlie and Flynn also remain stubbornly attached to the notion that there is ‘insufficient climate change education in schools’.

Perhaps they have not read the latest version of the National Curriculum, which is liberally littered with environmental content, thanks to the presence of ideologically driven cross-curriculum priorities like ‘sustainability’.

The criticism doesn’t just stop at schools, it extends to universities as well.

‘Our ecocidal global socio-economic systems (namely colonial-capitalism) are largely the result of work by people with BAs, BSs, LLBs, MBAs, and PhDs,’ Verlie and Flynn claim. ‘The transformative response is to reorient educational structures, practices, and relations towards those that sustain life on Earth.’

Well then, out with the old and in with the new!

Such extreme rejection of the Western intellectual tradition also undermines the SEI’s role as a department of research, but we cannot be surprised. After all, it was the University of Sydney that promoted the *Unlearn* campaign encouraging students to ‘demolish social norms and rebuild new ones in their place’.

To promote research and innovation, the University of Sydney said that preconceived ideas about ‘truth’, ‘love’, ‘medicine’, and ‘criminal’ must be questioned. Calling for students to ‘unlearn’ basic fundamental ideas of knowledge will leave young and impressionable Australians unaware of the basic principles which built our way of knowing and way of life.

Similarly, advising students – terrified that the end of the world is nigh – to attend climate rallies, is a recipe for disaster.

More activism is the last thing that Australian children need at school right now. The most recent



report from the OECD Program for International Student Assessment confirmed that Australia has continued its 20-year decline in education standards.

Throwing education out the window entirely and replacing it with more climate activism is not the answer. Neither is it the answer to the growing mental health crisis among younger generations.

The educated SEI elite, living in a world of ideas, rather than reality, must start to present real solutions to the problems they identify.

Obliterating the entire 'ecocidal' system which includes Western literature, culture, education, morals, values, institutions – to make way for a green new world – is a fine example of Einstein's observation of infinite 'human stupidity', not progress.

Original Link:

<https://www.spectator.com.au/2022/11/the-kids-arent-alright-2/>

Originally published in:

The Spectator Australia