Quest for inclusive dialogue and negotiations: using the potential of AI for the Earth and hope

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In this piece, I am telling about recent critical encounters and asking where dialogue is when young people's trust in future is deteriorating or has even vanished. We are experiencing crisis, polycrisis and permacrisis, in other words a "crisis-ridden world" (Macgilchrist, et al., 2024, 20). Young people face a destroyed planet left by previous and our generations. Social media algorithms catch and accelerate negative messages that draw attention simply to increase profit for some. Several scholars warn that facts are blurred and lost amid fabricated masses of false information. Artificial intelligence (AI) is expected to provide both solutions but also more ethical dilemmas in scanning and analysing the astronomical amount of data.

This gloomy scene is evident in Finland's latest Youth Barometer (State Youth Council, 2026) which reports that only 17% of young people (N= 2312) are optimistic about the future of the world. The decline in optimism is notable, from 39% in year 2021. Furthermore, for the first time ever in the history of the annual Youth Barometers that have been published from year 2004, around 50% of young people were pessimistic about the future of the world. When asked about their own future, 62% felt optimistic but 55% who belong to an ethnic minority experienced discrimination. In addition to the environmental unsustainability the global political situation caused feelings of unsafety. Young people were interested in contributing to a better world but less willing to participate in politics due to the politicians' rude behaviour and insulting language use.

The State Youth Council's (2026) warns about the concerning trend, "young people's faith in both their own and the world's future has collapsed, uncertainty and insecurity have increased, and life satisfaction is declining in the long term. When young people's faith in the future falters, it is reflected in everything". The Council's petition is that young people be prioritised in decision-making. This requires dialogue.

In June 2026, in my local town I met young people who had participated in dialogue training organized by Peace Education Institute in Finland (Rauhankasvatusinstituutti, 2026). They were fascinated by the facilitators who succeeded in creating an encouraging and safe atmosphere

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where everyone felt welcome to talk and tell their stories. The facilitators emphasized skills of listening, "tell me, I am listening and hearing what you say". The participants experienced the invitation as space that they seldom have. Throughout educational paths young people tend to be treated as students who are to learn from senior experts and this model is applied in the wider society. According to the participating young people they may be asked to represent youth and inform about their views but seldom are their suggestions taken further in decision-making and implemented. This suggests that organized listening happens at the surface with the aim of ensuring democracy, but this may not mean that the listeners are hearing what young people say.

As declining democracy is a common concern across Europe and around the world, more training in dialogue is certainly needed but more so among decision-makers and leaders than for young people. However, I am asking whether dialogue is sufficient in this "crisis-ridden world". We may need to move from dialogue to training in negotiation that reminds us where and how we have reached this point and what we want to maintain and what to change for collaboration necessary to safeguard the planet.

Sharon Stein (2026) has suggested a novel way of tackling the crises with an Earth-aligned approach that "situates AI within the wider web of planetary relations in which we are entangled and for which we share collective responsibility". She thinks we may find ways to use available knowledge more ethically and wisely with AI, and in education cultivate practices that increase accountability and care for the world. Can we imagine that we may use AI to better include young people in decision-making and to create constructive and wise dialogue, and even guide negotiations for justice, peace and sustainability? In her view, this depends on our imaginary and commitments.

I wish we can find ways to use AI for dialogue without discriminating or ignoring face-to-face encounters that inspire human relations and connections to places and specific contexts. Furthermore, we may imagine that AI can be used to compile and analyse local level dialogues to inform decision-making but also question and resist global promises. AI will not, however, remove the concerns of power and safety. The question remains, who are participating and heard. This depends on who are involved in defining criteria and ensuring safe spaces for dialogue that can lead to negotiations and actions. In the meanwhile, I will go back to young people who clearly showed how they valued listening and hearing and recommended we all learn dialogue skills.

On the anniversary I congratulate *Sinergias* on their determined promotion of dialogue in society.

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