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Learning to Love or Loving to Learn? Compassion Education Teaches Both



Compassion is the foundation of humanity; it defines how we connect and flourish as a community. In a quantified, data-forward world, how can our schools refocus on those at the center of everything: our students?

Compassion education is a transformative approach that nurtures empathy, understanding, and kindness among individuals, paving the way for a more harmonious and connected society, going beyond the traditional boundaries of academics and emphasising the importance of social-emotional learning (SEL).

Today, nobody denies the importance of SEL in the classroom. It equips individuals with the tools to navigate complex emotions and bridge gaps between diverse perspectives and experiences, fostering academic success, personal growth, and well-being. SEL empowers students to build strong interpersonal relationships and make responsible decisions by cultivating self-awareness, emotional regulation, and empathetic communication. As SEL continues to gain recognition, educators and innovators are finding more and more ways to incorporate it into the classroom through programs, activities, and conversations.

To learn more about how our different innovators have been teaching compassion in their projects, we spoke to Vivi Lin from [Unlock the Power of Understanding: 50/100 Menstrual ED](#), Pax Dettoni from [In Their Shoes](#) (Global Collection 23'), and Franca Sulem Yong Akinboboye from [Afrogivness Movement](#) (Global Collection 23'). All three innovations have been shortlisted for this year's Global Collection.



Each Innovation utilises its own method of teaching compassion education, addressing various aspects of emotional development and societal understanding. Vivi Lin's program, "Unlock the Power of Understanding: 50/100 Menstrual ED," stands out for its approach to teaching compassion through menstruation education. By addressing a topic that has often been shrouded in stigma and silence, Lin's initiative provides vital education on menstruation and promotes inclusivity by ensuring that this education reaches everyone, regardless of gender.

“It’s not enough to cater to only individuals who menstruate, to create an understanding and empathetic environment everyone needs to be included in the conversation.” - Vivi Lin, Founder of With Red

Her approach through inclusive education and working directly with policymakers, education boards, and nurses allows her to take policies and turn them into action.

“In their Shoes” introduces a fusion of theatre to emotional education based on the Theater of Consciousness methodology developed by Pax Dettoni. Using storytelling and dramatic representation, “In Their Shoes” makes the “invisible, visible”. Encouraging students to step into the shoes of their emotions (anger, fear, joy, and sadness), they can begin to understand how emotions can control one’s reactions and behaviour if allowed.

This immersive and physical approach allows students to visualise and learn by doing and gives them a vocabulary in which they can communicate with classmates. All students are provided with a mask and cloak to help embody the character and distinguish between the child and emotion.

Along with the theatre program, they have actively avoided digital materials, opting for poster campaigns around the school and storybooks to foster emotional literacy for all age groups. Their program works through a cascade method “I have to learn to be able to teach”, meaning that facilitators first have to go through their program, and students put on plays for the younger grades, eventually causing a ripple effect of awareness and understanding.



“We Cannot build coexistence if we are not able to take into consideration the errors of the other person and ourselves and be able to forgive. Forgiveness and awareness is the core, if we don’t learn forgiveness we will only end up taking the pain out on either someone else or ourselves” - Pax Dettoni

Following the same focus on forgiveness in Cameroon, Franca Sulem Yong Akinboboye’s “Afrogivness Movement” takes a similar approach to teaching compassion by focusing on creative expression to foster trauma reconciliation.

Developed to address the trauma one may have obtained through bullying in schools, the ongoing conflicts in Cameroon, and personal life events, Afrogivness aims to educate and uplift individuals using a universally recognised language of art. Through Akinboboye’s movement, she has developed a community that provides support, purpose, and motivation to continue their education or find a job.

“Afrogivness is healing centred, we ignore the reasons why education may be so difficult for many. Students who have suffered some form of trauma have emotional and social blockages that hinder their learning, so we need to focus on compassion.” -Franca Sulem Yong Akinboboye

All three innovations demonstrate how we can foster a more understanding and compassionate environment. Whilst each Innovation has its own individual focus and methodology, taking place in separate parts of the world, they all highlight the importance of open dialogue and inclusion. Removing technology and the digital, they bring humans face to face to address our differences, share our thoughts and emotions, and show the individual behind the mask.

If you have an innovation working on compassion and empathy we would love to hear from you!
Register at [HundrED](#) and apply for the [2025 Global Collection!](#)