

Ambiances of common education: The case of *Mesopotamia* Solidarity School, Athens, Greece

Recent work and research on transformative democratic education and the commons debates the extent to which formal schooling can provide a site for meaningful and creative interventions. The presentation will broach this issue by delving into the case of the *Mesopotamia* Solidarity School in Moschato, Athens, where the author has conducted fieldwork since May 2023. *Mesopotamia* is an informal educational structure integrated in the political space and collective of *Mesopotamia. Citizens' Movement of Moschato*. It offers multiple courses supporting students of public high schools in their formal education and the certified knowledge of foreign languages. *Mesopotamia* is organized as an educational commons, whereby an open self-organized community of citizens runs a school that supplies courses open to all public school students in a way that integrates them in a solidarity political and cultural community without charging fees as private 'frontistiria' ('coaching schools') do. The school advances thus socio-economic equality both through free supportive education and through the broader community activities and solidarity network. However, the attachment to formal education has an impact on the effective participation of students in the self-management of the structure, curtailing the scope for experimentation and reducing the interest of students in political participation. At the same time, fieldwork brought to the surface a significant finding, the production of an ambience of collective freedom and joy which informs and nuances the educational process, attracting and bolstering participants as students and members of the community.

Keywords

commons, education, formal/non-formal education, democratic transformation, ambience, *Mesopotamia*

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