

Rebuilding education, quite a program!

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At the beginning of July, what a surprise for ArkeoTopia to discover a website launched by the French National Education Ministry called *Let's rebuild the French Republic School*. Quite a program!



The screenshot shows the website 'REFONDONS L'ÉCOLE DE LA RÉPUBLIQUE'. The main heading is 'L'actualité' with a sub-heading 'CONCERTATION : CONTRIBUTIONS DES MEMBRES'. Below this, there is a section titled '3 août 2012 DÉCOUVREZ LES RÉSULTATS DE LA...' with a sub-heading 'Plus de 500 valeurs ont répondu à la question de la...'. There are two columns of text, one titled 'Contributions au débat' and the other 'Question de la semaine'. Below this, there is a section titled 'La concertation' with four images and captions: 'LA RÉUSSITE SCOLAIRE POUR TOUS', 'LES ÉLÈVES AU COEUR DE LA RÉFONDATION', 'UN SYSTÈME ÉDUCATIF JUSTE ET EFFICACE', and 'DES PERSONNELS FORMÉS ET RECONNUS'. At the bottom, there is a navigation bar with four icons: 'CONCERTATION', 'PROPOSITIONS', 'PROJET DE LOI', and 'MISE EN ŒUVRE'.

Within ArkeoTopia we welcome the **initiative** which, nevertheless, **surprised us on several levels**. It is true that the presidential elections only ended on May 6th and among the most urgent subjects there is obviously education. However, **why choose to launch a consultation of national order when the majority of people involved are on holiday? In other words, during the summer**. An even more surprising choice is that the end of said consultation is planned for the end of September.

Had the scientists, institutions, associations and unions involved been warned in advance? The long list of participants, which appeared just as suddenly as the site itself a few weeks after the first website pages were put on-line, could lead one to imagine this. If the people and groups mentioned were informed it is justifiable to question how? **Apart from the absence of a public invitation, there does not seem to have been an internal call** if judged by the ignorance of our contacts in primary and secondary schools and by the absence of certain institutional organizations such as the Association of Art History and Archaeology Teachers. Consequently, the process seems less than clear.

If the initiative, in the beginning, does not seem to be the most democratic, is there, perhaps, a way of joining the movement? The fact is that the organizers thought about suggesting that people and organizations wishing to contribute to the thought-process could do so via a form. However, there is no email address, no telephone number and no reception contact details, and if you do take part via the form, as we did, you receive no copy of your email and not even a simple acknowledgement that your contribution has been received. We will go even further.

As a player in education, we had the moral obligation to participate and this is why, on July 7, 2012, we made our own contribution (accepting its publication) as follows:

Sir/Madam,

At ArkeoTopia, we consider that alongside the basic skills of reading, writing and arithmetic we should add that of thinking. In other words, not just mechanically applying knowledge but systematically enveloping it with thought, bringing real know-how: the exercise of critical thinking. Why? Because, for example, when a child or a student uses the Internet, he or she must be able to ascertain the relevance of the source. Or, another example, when he or she will be asked to vote later, he or she must be able to do so while understanding the issues of the programs presented by the candidates. For all of this, therefore, he or she needs to start learning the basics in primary school and, of course, continue through secondary school and further education.

On this point, as with Finland in Europe, the Vietnamese Education Ministry has also integrated the mental map or Mind Mapping as a tool to facilitate pupils' learning process. (cf.

<http://english.vietnamnet.vn/en/education/11077/moet-plans-to-treat-rote-learning-with-mind-map.html>). So, it would be interesting to do the same.

If the fun aspect has importance, it is first and foremost the process that we retain within ArkeoTopia. If the tool helps to structure the analysis and synthesis which is vital for an effective mind map, the process, the question of 'why to make a mind map' is added to the exercise. This approach is a good way of arriving at the notions of critical thinking and structure of thought that we believe are essential for quality teaching and must start in primary school.

Of course, in addition to the previous aspects relating to content, it would be necessary that the respect due to teachers and a real assessment be worked on within the idea of rebuilding the School of the Republic.

We would be interested in following up the workshop on "academic success for all". Please could you advise us on how to do this.
Gransard-Desmond, President of ArkeoTopia

Besides no acknowledgement of receipt, we received not any answer to our request. **It may be normal that it is not possible to reply to all contributions, but it would be nice if they were at least read, otherwise they risk becoming simply another demagogic or populist tool..**

We sincerely hope that this consultation, essential to the modification process and which will, a few months from now, lead to legislation on such an important subject, takes place under the best auspices, but we are already sure of one thing: unfortunately, change does not seem to be coming tomorrow.

To learn more....

- [French school in a few figures](#).
- [French university in a few figures](#) (September 2011) with [update in 2020](#).
- Access to the public report [Refondons l'école de la République. Rapport de la concertation](#) on october 5, 2012 (Let's rebuild the Republic School. Report of the consultation).
- The page www.refondonslecole.gouv.fr is no longer active, we refer you to the [loi du 8 juillet 2013 portant sur l'orientation et la programmation pour la refondation de l'école de la République](#) (law of July 8, 2013 on the orientation and programming for the rebuilding of the school of the Republic).