

Rethinking Ed 2023

APOLOGY TO DR CUTHBERT - SUNDAY 24TH SEPTEMBER 2023

After the first Rethinking Education conference in 2022, an otherwise [positive review](#) in SchoolsWeek noted that the "only thing that was missing was conflict".

In organising the 2023 conference, we were keen to address this. We were therefore delighted when the Academy of Ideas offered to organise two sessions that promised to feature robust conversations - a debate on behaviour, and a 'forum discussion' on indoctrination.

We carried out due diligence and determined that we were happy with the speakers they proposed - including Dr Alka Sehgal Cuthbert, a respected academic and author and the Director of Don't Divide Us.

We published the names of all the speakers on a poster and shared it publicly, to advertise what became a sold-out event for 500 people, including over a hundred speakers.

On the evening of Wednesday 20th September, we were contacted by several people - a combination of speakers and delegates - who expressed in very clear terms that they did not feel safe attending the conference alongside a representative of Don't Divide Us.

With very little time before the conference, we faced a difficult decision. Based on the information available to us at the time, we felt that we should respect the concerns of these speakers and delegates, and asked Dr Cuthbert to step down.

We wish to make clear that we respect Dr Cuthbert and her deeply held beliefs and views, and we would be happy to invite her to be involved in any future events that we stage. The loss of her involvement at the event was a loss for Rethinking Education and the values of free speech and open debate that we hold so dear.

We apologise to Dr Cuthbert, her colleagues and supporters for any and all implications this decision has had. We hope that there is some understanding - if not agreement - about the difficult position we were put in at the eleventh hour of planning.

We hope to be able to work together in the future. In the mean-time, we are undertaking an internal review to explore every aspect of our event planning, to help ensure that this unfortunate situation can be avoided in the future.