

# DOSSIER

## LEARNING TO LIVE TOGETHER



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Deputy General Secretary

Since September 11th much soul searching and questioning on how some individuals can have so little value for human life – their own and that of others - has led to examination of the role of education in building intercultural understanding and democratic values. What we can see is that regardless of the educational approach adopted we need to deepen our analysis of this topic. We must also remember we reach students who are in school. Who teaches the millions of exploited marginalised children deprived of an education? What lessons do they learn?

Current political objectives in education focus on skill development for a knowledge society. Education indicators show what skills are high on the political agenda. A more rigid, results oriented education system has resulted. Accepted as part of this paradigm competition is viewed as a social value applicable to schools, students and those who work in them.

Few indicators measure how well students are prepared for democratic participation or whether democratic values have been learned.

The hidden curriculum rarely exemplifies good practice in the promotion of intercultural understanding. Rarely is societal ethnic and cultural diversity reflected in staffing in education. Policies exist to encourage minorities to enter teaching, but the political will and positive action measures to move from rhetoric to reality are missing.

Maintaining cultural identity in multi-cultural societies in a globalising world is central to intercultural education. Language, traditions and religion or belief are components that bind societal groups. But groups live and function in a wider world where contact with “others” is inevitable.

The ability to understand, speak and write the majority language of society is a prerequisite for participation in societal life. Every child has to function effectively in the majority language. However, care must be taken that education provided with the intent of allowing pupils to function in society is not education that assimilates. All areas of study must be examined through multiple lenses to ensure that groups are not seen only from the point of view of the majority culture. Education has been - and at times continues to be - used

for assimilation rather than integration, and teachers and their unions have a responsibility to make sure this no longer happens.

Language is the bedrock of every cultural group and so every child needs to retain and continue learning his or her first language to permit participation in minority cultural communities.

Students from both minority and majority groups must be prepared to live in a multicultural society. Too often children from minority groups are taught to live with the majority but little is done to prepare children from the majority to adapt.

Respect for and knowledge of other cultures and traditions is a requirement of intercultural education. Human rights education requires students to examine cultural practices of their own community and those of others. Tensions between cultural communities and schools can arise when students question cultural practices and traditions. Parents must understand that intercultural education in a framework of human rights teaches about cultures and about universal values that may be different from those espoused by a particular group. Human rights education does not require any individual to jettison their cultural attachments but it does open the door to questioning the values and practices of all communities.

Differences arise in all societies so skills to resolve conflicts without violence have to be taught. Mutual respect among protagonists is a pre-requisite for successful conflict resolution. Skills for fair resolution of conflicts have to be taught from the earliest stages of education and throughout all levels.

Appropriate teacher training on intercultural practices, human rights and peace education and education for democracy must be integrated into teacher education programmes. These areas of study must be valued as highly as other subjects. Support for teachers who try to promote such education is needed since teaching such skills is often considered as less important than teaching IT or science for example.

Values espoused in the home, community or sports arenas, in the media or in any field must teach that all human beings have intrinsic worth, that no groups are superior to or have more rights than others. The same holds true for cultures, traditions or religions. None have all of the answers.

This dossier gives you the opportunity to sample what some EI members are doing in this field, what governments are saying and provides information from UN special rapporteurs, academics and campaigners on this issue. ♦

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## What Learning to Live Together Means to EI Member Organisations



**School plays a pivotal role in the process whereby people acquire a sense of solidarity and learn the rights and duties that link each individual to the rest of society. The cultural diversity we observe, both locally and globally, requires an education system capable of teaching new generations to understand other cultures more fully, to be more receptive to the contributions that other people with different backgrounds make to the common good, and to be able to engage in a dialogue with others on an equal footing.**

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Citizenship and respect for others are not something that can be decreed by law, but rather, they must be fostered. By transmitting knowledge and skills, education can become a factor capable of either aggravating or mitigating tensions. Education can fuel confrontation or strengthen the cohesion and integration of social groups; it can teach people tolerance or be a hotbed of bigotry.

As highlighted by the FETE-UGT (Spain), one of the key aims of education in the 21st century must be to “teach people to learn” in accordance with a new conception of active citizenship and multicultural coexistence.

There can be no genuine development of culture, be it the culture of a group or an individual, nor can other human rights be enjoyed fully, if the right to education is denied or if people are discriminated against in education. All international instruments unanimously affirm that everyone is entitled to education<sup>1</sup>. However, the UNESCO Convention Against Discrimination in Education of 14 December 1960 (“1960 UNESCO Convention” for short) is particularly relevant to our objectives because it addresses discrimination in relation to this issue.

### Public education against exclusion

Public education and the principle of free, compulsory schooling imply that children from different backgrounds go to the same school. The aim of state schools should be to ensure, through quality education for all, equal opportunities for everyone who completes secondary education. Thus for example, in France, UNSA-Education is campaigning for a public and non-denominational education service which will cater to all children, regardless of their racial, social or religious

background and regardless of any handicaps affecting them. “This education system has a mission to fulfil in the general interest, namely to turn publicly-funded schools into the locus of cultural integration, where children learn to live together and acquire a sense of citizenship. Such a school must be built on the principles of equity, continuity, non-denominational teaching and free access to all,” says Jean Pierre Rulié of UNSA-Education.

The creation of private schools and, more generally, the privatisation of education can lead to the confinement of some ethnic groups into virtual ghettos, breeding incomprehension and fear of others, and is therefore a potential source of conflicts between communities. Consequently, a balance must be found between, on the one hand, public education as an institution based on the fundamental principle of free

and equal education, and, on the other hand, the freedom of individuals to choose a type of education which reflects their beliefs or their sense of belonging to an ethnic group.

To some extent, because it inherently tends to create a segregated situation, the creation of separate schools or classes runs counter to the “equal opportunities” and “equal treatment” principles enshrined in numerous international instruments. In Russia there is a growing trend to argue for separate classes for boys and girls, reports Nikolay Kolobashkin, Head of the International Department of the Russian union ESEUR. “Some teachers and parents are calling for a differentiated system on the grounds that pupils will be able to pursue their personal development in an environment closer to their gender-specific sensitivity.”

In some countries, including Australia, ethnic groups claim “the right to be treated as a distinct group, independent of the nation-state’s education system” and are demanding separate provision for their education needs on the grounds of this distinct identity.

The 1960 UNESCO Convention requires that separate establishments “for students of either gender” fulfil four conditions to a degree at least equivalent to the conditions applicable to mixed establishments<sup>2</sup>. These conditions concern ease of access, the qualifications of the teaching staff, the quality of the school buildings and equipment, and the syllabuses taught in such establishments. With regards to establishments separated for “religious or linguistic reasons”, e.g. schools for ethnic minorities<sup>3</sup>, the Convention requires them to meet two conditions: attendance should be optional and the establishments should comply with any standards laid down by the state, particularly in the case of secondary education.



### Learning to live together: trade unions show the way forward

Trade unionism in general is about a collective approach to issues, problems and challenges. For example, in Israel – where, as apparent from recent developments, peaceful coexistence is a daunting challenge – the Israel Teachers Union (ITU) has thousands of Israeli Arab members. ITU provides social activities suiting their social needs, holidays, culture and tradition, and publishes a magazine in Arabic. “Of course all teachers are considered equal partners in all of the union’s activities and in terms of duties and rights. ITU organises extensive activities for all teachers, from kindergarten to teacher training colleges, through advanced studies and conferences to strengthen cohesiveness and respect for differences, and to create mutual support”, says Abraham Ben-Shabat, General Secretary of ITU.

ITU is an influential actor in the education system and contributes to the establishment of the practical aspects of a multicultural approach. ITU has achieved full equality for Israeli Jewish and Arab teachers both in terms of trade union rights and as regards their professional rights.

In Kenya, too, EI’s affiliate the Kenya National Union of Teachers (KNUT), is striving to build greater cohesion among the teaching profession. “The unity in diversity sought after by the KNUT is a reflection of the situation in Kenya as a nation. In fact, in Kenya, the challenge of ‘Learning to Live Together’ has been very formidable, as most public and political leaders have rarely demonstrated a serious commitment to this noble objective. In this regard, the KNUT has demonstrated a higher standard than is the norm in Kenya,” says John Katumanga, President of KNUT.

In co-operation with several NGOs, the Salvadoran union “ANDES 21 de Junio” is working intensively on the issue of delinquency at school, a problem neglected by the government. “El Salvador has lived through twelve years of civil war,” explains ANDES General Secretary Arnoldo Vaquerano. “The peace agreements

include provisions to promote reconciliation but, in practice, many children whose parents were on opposite sides find themselves together in the same class, and there is still a great deal of resentment. Of course the schoolbooks extol the value of tolerance and solidarity, but feelings of hostility are still rife. The government is not tackling the problem of delinquency in schools even though stu-

dents are being murdered and some establishments have been pillaged. We regularly organise discussion days on these issues with teachers and have already achieved some positive results,” adds Arnoldo Vaquerano.

The teachers’ union in Guatemala, the STEG, is also striving to palliate the government’s deficiencies. “Following the educational reform included in the 1996 Peace Agreements and the establishment of a dialogue process in which all social actors took part through forums in the country’s 331 municipalities, we proposed defining the contents of education in such a way as to strengthen national unity while at the same time respecting cultural diversity,” explains STEG General Secretary Eduardo Machuca Quiroa. “The STEG believes it is important to promote – through the educational community – civic, cultural, social, moral and ethical values as well as respect for sexual, cultural and religious differences. Unfortunately, the government has failed to meet the commitments made in the Peace Agreements,” remarks Eduardo Machuca Quiroa.

### Increasing the awareness of teaching staff and providing adequate training

Teachers must be made more aware of the issues involved in multiculturalism and receive adequate training in this area, particularly in regards to the most effective means of combating discrimination. The training of teachers responsible for multicultural or multi-denominational classes is a high priority.

Such training is essential since teachers themselves may be guilty of discriminatory behaviour and, moreover, a poorly managed multicultural class is likely to fuel racist stereotypes. It is the task of teachers to discharge these myths and stereotypes and to help children to develop a sense of respect for others as well as for themselves.

In Nicaragua, the multicultural bilingual education programmes available in the eastern region have been phased out by the government. The General Secretary of CGTEN-ANDEN, José Antonio Zepeda – who is a

<sup>1</sup> Article 26.1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; Article 13.1 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; Principle 7 of the Declaration of the Rights of the Child; Article 28.1 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child; Article 1 of the American Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man; Article 8 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights; Article 2 of the first Protocol of the European Convention on Human Rights, whose negative formulation (“No person shall be denied the right to education.”) should not be interpreted as implying exclusively the obligation to refrain from active denial of the right to education.

<sup>2</sup> 1960 UNESCO Convention Against Discrimination in Education, Article 2 (a).





From 17 to 24 March 2002, in Quebec, the "Semaine d'actions contre le racisme" (Week of Actions Against Racism - SACR), will no doubt provide a particularly fruitful opportunity to exchange ideas and experiences, raise awareness and bring the members of different cultures together. Over 70 organisations and associations, including the CSQ, will take part in this event. In co-operation with the Council for Intercultural Relations (a body responsible for advising the government on intercultural issues), CSQ is preparing an educational dossier for teaching staff. The aim is to encourage teachers to carry out a range of activities (both in the classroom and in the school as a whole, within the framework of the official curricula) in order to make young people more aware of existing forms of racism and promote the skills and knowledge required to live together in harmony.

Dominique Marlet  
Chief Editor



From ethnic groups whose cultures are at risk, particularly the Rama and Sumo<sup>3</sup>. "This would enable us to ensure the protection of cultural values," he argues. In fact, the union would like to see all teachers trained to understand these cultures, so that each and every teacher will be familiar with – and respect – all the different cultures that make up Nicaragua. "It is essential for teachers working in areas with specific cultures to come from those communities," stresses the General Secretary of the CGTEN-ANDEN.

The right to education has special significance for ethnic, linguistic and/or religious minorities in terms of protecting their cultural identity and guarding against various kinds of discrimination. A human being's sense of dignity is based on the acquisition of a "cultural identity", which can be described as a set of cultural values by reference to which an individual or a group define and expresses themselves and wish to be recognised. Education and cultural identity are therefore closely intertwined, and any prejudice resulting in discrimination or intolerance is an attack on human dignity. A number of international instruments recognise the specific rights of minorities, while at the same time subordinating the exercise of these rights to certain conditions which have been established, basically, to preserve social cohesion and the unity of the state.

For over a decade now, the *Centrale des syndicats du Québec* (CSQ) has been taking a close interest in "intercultural education". On the basis of an initial study entitled "Apprendre à vivre ensemble, Immigration, Société et Education" (Learning to Live Together: Immigration, Society and Education)<sup>6</sup>, the CSQ adopted an intercultural education policy covering all aspects of school life. "CSQ intervenes in a number of ways, notably through local committees and by monitoring school regulations, to ensure that educational establishments are free from discrimination or racism. In some situations we strive for a reasonable compromise (for example, no pork meat or the availability of a vegetarian dish at the cafeteria), but the bottom line in all cases is compliance with the Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms,"

Jocelyn Berthelot, a researcher at CSQ.

so promotes measures to facilitate access to training for members of ethnic and cultural minorities, in order to reflect social diversity of the minority in the teaching and support staff.

nions offer direct assistance to teachers faced with difficulties in the exercise of their profession. In for example, the ITU has set up a "hotline" accessible 24 hours a day to help teachers cope with (and combat) violence. "We also assist through different curricula in eliminating violence in the classroom," says Abraham Ben-Shabat, General Secretary of ITU.

### Schools, a place to practise democracy

Education must be based on the fundamental values of solidarity, tolerance and understanding between people. Teaching common values and ideas is fundamental. The basic principles of democracy, tolerance and human rights have to be incorporated in the curricula of all education systems, but to become meaningful they must be practised.

"Schools are not islands, and all actors responsible for the wellbeing of children – both in the education system and beyond – should co-operate in transmitting the values of tolerance, which will help students find a place in society," notes Martin Kircz, a teacher and a member of the Executive Board of the **Dutch** union AOb. This is the concept of "broad school" (*brede school*), which has found a great deal of favour in the Netherlands.

For its part the **French** UNSA-Education argues that the public education service should accord an increasingly important role to its users (i.e. the students themselves and their parents) and work in partnership with all those who contribute to young people's education, including community educational associations, businesses, other government departments, etc. In this way public education will move towards new methods and practices which enable teaching to become more individualised, while at the same time promoting a sense of citizenship, respecting young people's fundamental rights, such as the freedoms of expression and association, and more generally giving young people a greater say<sup>7</sup>.

It is essential to equip teachers and students alike with effective tools to help them combat prejudice and intolerance if we want to build a society composed of responsible citizens who are more aware, more caring, and capable of reacting against the forces that threaten the general interest as well as the interests of all the various minorities. ♦

It is a comfortable, albeit erroneous, assumption that children have the right to education all over the world: international law tells us how states should behave, not how they do behave, explains the Special UN Rapporteur on the Right to Education Katarina Tomasevski



Multiple assertions in international law that education is a right, not to mention the vast number of recommendations and frameworks for action, are tools for action - but action itself is missing. One could easily apply the rule of inverse proportion and say that action is missing where it is needed the most.

Examples where action is needed - and sorely missed - can be revealed through a quick *tour d'horizon*. The right to education is affirmed in the constitutions of 142 countries, while there is no such guarantee in at least 44 countries. In 37 countries the right to education is formally restricted to citizens and legal residents<sup>1</sup>.

Moreover, the right to education is confined to citizens in quite a few countries. The lack of citizenship does not affect only foreigners, but also domestic minorities. Serbs in Croatia or Tamils in Sri Lanka tend to experience obstacles in access to citizenship, as do their children in access to education. The foreign-domestic distinction pales in significance in the case of the internally displaced. Although in their countries, children of internally displaced people are often denied access to education because they lack residence certificates. Moreover, obstacles that are invisible from laws and statistics preclude access to education for the internally displaced. The Special Representative on Internally Displaced Persons has emphasised "fear of the identification of children for what they are and repression or reprisals that may target the family if children are sent to school."

The absence of education for victims of armed conflicts dooms them to remain recipients of assistance while preventing them from becoming self-sustaining. Water, sanitation, medical services, shelter, clothing and food constitute the 'survival package' are conventionally offered through humanitarian relief. Education may or may not be included in this package. If it is included, decisions on who teaches what and how can have profound consequences. Even the choice of language can have a lasting detrimental effect on social integration, as was documented in "the polarisation of Dari- and Pashtu-speaking refugee communities in Iran and Pakistan [now] with little opportunity to learn each other's language<sup>2</sup>."

Education is commonly discussed in quantitative terms alone and there is a general craving for more of it. In countries, which have just undergone warfare, pleas for education in an attempt to return to normal life often means reverting to pre-war education. The extent to which education had actually contributed to warfare is questioned only if extreme examples of advocating genocide are found in textbooks. Otherwise, education is assumed to have been benign which is often not the case. One example suffices to illustrate how mathematics can be taught: "One maths book, printed in the US during the Afghan war, offered the following problem: 'If you have two dead Communists, and kill three more, how many dead Communists do you have?'" ♦

IN SIERRA LEONE, THE GOVERNMENT HAS IDENTIFIED EDUCATION AS CRUCIAL FOR RESTORING SOCIAL COHESION. CONSEQUENTLY, A NEW EDUCATION ACT HAS BEEN DRAFTED WHICH DEVOLVES MUCH POWER TO LOCAL AUTHORITIES SO THAT COMMUNITIES CAN HAVE GREATER INFLUENCE OVER THE EDUCATION OF THEIR CHILDREN. "RECOGNISING THAT ILLITERACY CONTRIBUTES TO THE FRAGMENTATION OF SOCIETY, GOVERNMENT HAS SIGNIFICANTLY INCREASED ITS INPUT TO ADULT LITERACY," STRESSES MR. ABASS M. COLLIER, DEPUTY MINISTER OF EDUCATION OF SIERRA LEONE. THE CURRICULUM HAS BEEN UPDATED. PEACE, POPULATION, CITIZENSHIP AND AIDS EDUCATION HAVE ALL BEEN BLENDED INTO EXISTING SYLLABI. ADDITIONALLY, GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING WITH SPECIAL EMPHASIS ON TRAUMA COUNSELLING HAS BEEN MADE AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE SYSTEM. (dm/EI).



### 44 COUNTRIES PROVIDE NO CONSTITUTIONAL GUARANTEE FOR EDUCATION

Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Botswana, Brunei, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Central African Republic, Côte d'Ivoire, Djibuti, Dominica, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Fiji, Gabon, Indonesia, Jamaica, Kenya, Kiribati, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Malaysia, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mozambique, Nauru, Niger, Oman, Papua New Guinea, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, San Marino, Senegal, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Swaziland, Tonga, Tuvalu, United States of America, Vanuatu, Zambia.

© Annual report of the Special Rapporteur on the right to education, Katarina Tomasevski, 11 January 2001, E/CN.4/2001/52

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. (b)

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> The Rama language is considered by the UNESCO to be "in grave danger of extinction", *Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger of Disappearing*, UNESCO, 2001, p. 78.

<sup>6</sup> Editions SH-Martin-CSQ, 1989

<sup>7</sup> UNSA-Education has published its proposals in "Pour une société éducative, Une réflexion syndicale sur l'école et la société", éditions ESF, 2001, ISSN 1158-4580, with a preface by Fred van Leuven.

<sup>1</sup> Commission on Human Rights - Annual report of the Special Rapporteur on the right to education, Katarina Tomasevski, U.N. Doc. E/CN.4/2001/52 of 9 January 2001, paras. 66-67. <http://www.right-to-education.org/index2.html>

<sup>2</sup> Commission on Human Rights - Analytical report of the secretary-general on internally displaced persons, U.N. Doc. E/CN.4/1992/23 of 14 February 1992, paras. 70-71.

<sup>3</sup> Rugh, A.B. - Education for Afghans. A Strategy Paper, Save the Children and UNICEF Afghanistan, Peshawar/Islamabad, July 1998, p. 33.



## Common Kinds of Discrimination in Education

In his report<sup>1</sup> to the World Conference Against Racism in Durban, the U.N. Special Rapporteur on Religious Intolerance produced an outline of the types of discrimination in education.

Mr Amor Abdelfattah identified common forms of discrimination that often flow from deliberate state actions. Such identifiable discrimination derives from state-established policies, regulations and other material conditions relating to the organisation and content of education. He went on to refer to discrimination and segregation arising out of negative attitudes on the part of states, when the discrimination is the result of inactivity.

### DISCRIMINATION BY ACTION

An examination of certain state practices reveals three attitudes that might be described as discrimination by action: impermeability, domination and marginalisation.

#### Impermeability

Impermeability arises when the education system is intentionally or unintentionally incapable of taking into account the specific expectations of certain ethnic and/or religious minority groups. For example, in countries where there are many indigenous populations, official systems of education may be unable or unwilling to incorporate the values of these populations' cultural identities. In particular, discrimination occurs when the education system delivers forms of education whose content clash with the beliefs and convictions of pupils belonging to minority ethnic groups. This may arise in connection with sex education, sports and music.

The organisation of education can also pose problems in relation to the weekly rest day, tolerance of certain religious rites or attitudes to dress.

#### Domination and assimilation

The policy of assimilating minority children in a way that forces them to lose their identities may take a variety of forms. It may be material and direct or it may be based on psychological and moral conditioning. One form of this is the affirmation of at least the partial superiority of the culture, language and religion of the group exercising the domination. Generally speaking, this concerns the glorification of the dominant culture, including its language, and the devaluation of the cultures, traditions, standards and languages of minorities. Domination finds a fertile breeding-ground in education as it is the most effective way of shaping people's minds. School curricula and classroom books abound in examples of

this conditioning which, by approximation or by falsehood, states that the history, culture and language of the dominant group have always been, and will be, superior.

Sometimes, the domination steps outside psychological conditioning and is accompanied by actual physical discrimination. Obvious examples of this are found among minority groups under military domination and may include raids carried out by occupying forces on schools attended by the children of minorities.

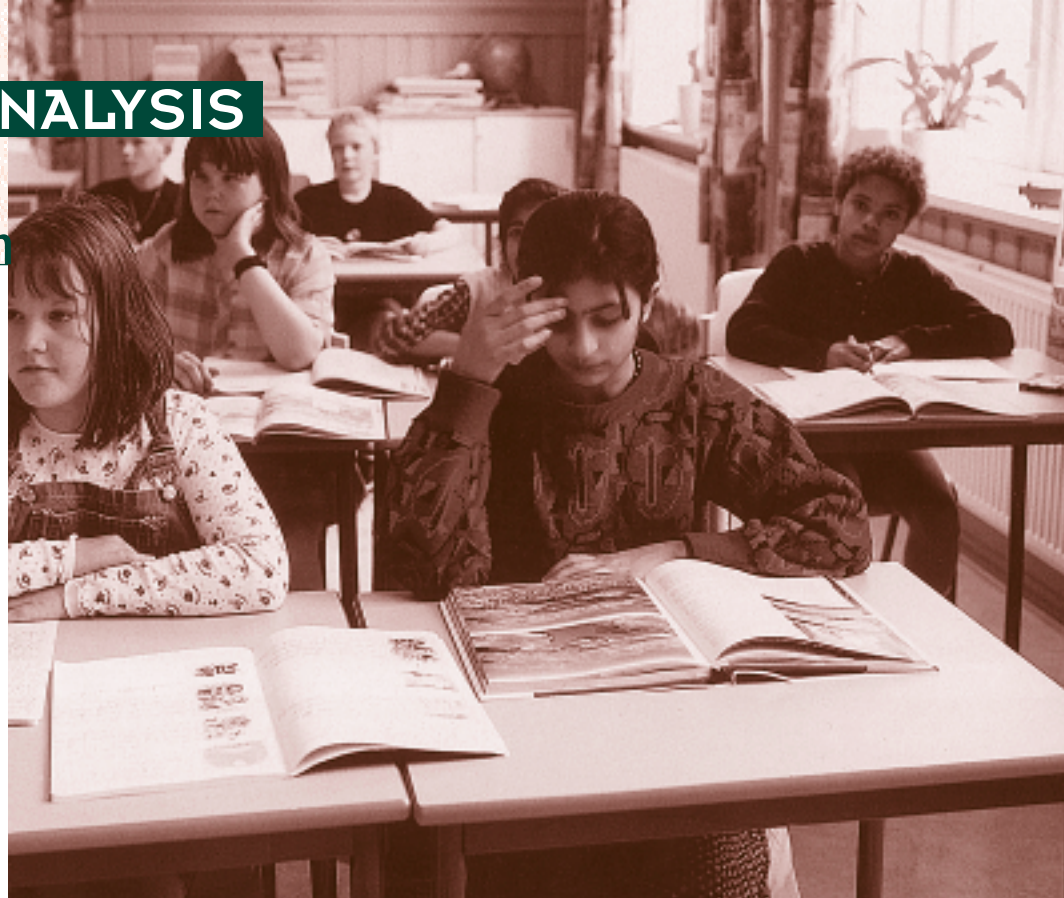
Physical domination may also take the form of a ban on the use of a minority group's language; for example, some children are alleged to have been beaten for speaking their language at school and teachers can be arrested if they acknowledge the existence of the language and culture of the group in question.

#### Marginalisation and devaluation

Marginalisation is the direct outcome of the first two types of discrimination flowing from a desire on the part of the dominant group to ensure that minority children remain on the fringes of the education system. Extreme examples of this involve refusing them access to education. This refusal, the most serious form of discrimination against the children of minorities and migrant workers, has been identified in numerous United Nations human rights treaties: often states try to claim inadequate capacity in the relevant schools.

Another attitude consists in knowingly degrading anything that is linked to cultural features of minority groups. This may take the form of what appears to be a legitimate pedagogical approach, but actually contains racist stereotypes. An example of this is the inclusion in a textbook of a discriminatory picture with the accompanying sentence: 'The gypsy stole the duck'.

Damaging representations of girls in society and praise for polygamy in schoolbooks are also likely to perpetuate discrimination between the sexes, instead of promoting tolerance. Similarly, the imposition of a strict code of



conduct that forces women to remain in the home and prevents girls from attending school is a discriminatory attitude contrary to the relevant principles of international law. The same may also be said of stereotypes containing a negative representation of women belonging to different minority ethnic and religious groups.

Devaluation may take the form of attitudes concerning the educational environment of pupils who, for ethnic reasons, may have to attend a special school for children with learning difficulties, or else are simply told to sit at the back of the class: 'disproportionate numbers of Roma children<sup>2</sup> are relegated to second-class educational facilities ("special schools") designed for pupils thought to be suffering from intellectual or behavioural deficiencies.'<sup>3</sup> Others are put in separate classes, or are the victims of discriminatory treatment in the school itself (e.g. separate ceremonies for the awarding of certificates and different mealtimes)<sup>4</sup>.

### DISCRIMINATION BY INACTIVITY

Certain aspects of discriminatory practice may be passive, i.e. when the practice is the outcome of one of three kinds of inactivity: non-prevention, the rejection of positive discrimination and the absence or inadequacy of appropriate resources.

#### Non-prevention

Non-prevention here refers to an attitude of the state that involves not taking the necessary steps to avoid discriminatory situations in the school environment. This is also true of the training of teachers who are given responsibility for managing multicultural or multi-denominational classes: the role of the teacher is to get rid of myths and stereotypes and to help instil in children a culture of respect for others as well as for themselves.



Teachers need to be made aware of, and given training in, issues of multiculturalism and appropriate ways of combating discrimination.

#### Refusal to engage in positive discrimination

The second aspect of discriminatory attitudes takes the form of a refusal to take special measures in support of a particular group. This mostly happens when the organisation of school curricula is not adapted to the needs of minorities. Discrimination occurs when the inactivity leads to preference based on race or restriction that ensures that a minority child is denied a fundamental right. These acts of omission may result in there being no bilingual or remedial classes in the official language or a lack of diversity reflected in the school curricula and teacher training. Often, minorities not only ask for their specific features to be addressed, but say they want to be involved in designing and implementing education policy themselves.

#### The absence or shortage of appropriate resources

The failure to provide appropriate resources to ensure a form of education that meets aspirations for non-discrimination is an immensely complex matter and has to contend with objective facts, namely the financial difficulties that educational systems are facing worldwide, particularly in developing countries. The reasons most frequently given for not delivering secondary education in the languages of the minorities concern a shortage of money, the absence of competent teaching staff and a wish not to fragment the education system – or even fear of jeopardising national unity.

When the shortage of resources affects ethnic and religious groups unequally, for example in some European countries<sup>5</sup>, budgetary cutbacks affect educational programmes aimed at the children of minorities and migrants and remedial classes in particular. Recently, the Committee for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination stressed that, in a central European country, 'the situation of Roma population is a subject of particular concern since no improvements have been noted in the low educational level traditionally predominant among members of this minority<sup>6</sup>, and called for palliative measures to be adopted for the benefit of the Roma population, particularly in the fields of education and vocational training. It is only when these measures (or, rather, non-measures) have a negative impact on a particular group's fundamental rights that they may be referred to as unlawful discrimination. ♦

<sup>1</sup> World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, Preparatory Committee, Second session (Geneva, 21 May – 1 June 2001), Item 6 of the provisional agenda, Racial discrimination, religious intolerance and education' prepared by Mr Amor Abdelfattah, Special Rapporteur on religious intolerance, 3 May 2001, A/CN.4/CONF.189/PC.2/22 Original: FRENCH

<sup>2</sup> 'Roma', refers to a gypsy culture that is found throughout Europe

<sup>3</sup> See report by Mr Maurice Glèlé-Ahanhanzo on racism and racial discrimination (E/CN.4/1999/15, paragraph 84).

<sup>4</sup> Op cit.

<sup>5</sup> See in particular the 14th report from Finland to the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD/C/320/Add.2, chap. V, sect. E, subsect. 4).

<sup>6</sup> Report of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) 54th and 55th sessions (1999) (A/54/18, paragraph 282)



## SPECIAL UN RAPPORTEUR

'It all starts in the mind: a battlefield warrior is first a school warrior'<sup>1</sup>

**The right to education (e.g. equal access, compulsory and free of charge) completely loses its reason for being if education itself in any way fosters racial discrimination and religious intolerance.**

Education is both a fundamental right and an essential means of enjoying other human rights<sup>2</sup>. It allows economically, socially and culturally marginalised people and groups to break out of the cycle of poverty and exclusion, to play a useful role in society, and to develop a sense of their own dignity.

A number of international instruments focus specifically on the objectives that education should be aiming at, despite the fact they limit themselves to formulating or re-stating general principles instead of identifying a precise content of education (see page 24). Of course, the weakness of international legislation is explained, as it is in any branch of the law, by their relative newness, and by the fact that that attention has been focused on them only recently. However, it is worth noting that unlike certain features involved in attaining the right to education (e.g. actually putting an education system in place), non-discrimination cannot be achieved 'progressively', but needs to be immediately and fully guaranteed, and apply uniformly to all states, whatever their level of development may be.

The numerous factors that have a negative influence on education in respect to racial discrimination and racial intolerance include the historical circumstances, the social and economic conditions of groups and minorities, their demographic distribution in the country concerned, their cultural deprivation, the prejudices of dominant groups, the status of minority and majority languages, the political will of the government and of the groups themselves, the inadequacy of the resources, and the absence of intercultural dialogue.

It is not realistic to act on these factors, and imagine that this will immediately have the anticipated result. In fact, some of these factors have nothing to do with education, and require a major input and vast resources on the part of the state and the international community. Meanwhile, others do not call for large resources, but instead need long-term action because they touch on matters that by definition evolve slowly and not always along a linear path.

Responsibility for the education process falls on the whole of society, and not just the state. Several players, including the family, the media, civil society, religious

groups, the private sector and NGOs, help to shape children's minds. Combating racism and intolerance in a school environment is also a matter of conviction, and representatives of various religions need to be brought together at national and international level.

### Banning and crushing discrimination more robustly

The state has a major responsibility for overseeing the whole of the public and private education system so that it can detect *de facto* and *de jure* acts of racial discrimination and manifestations of religious intolerance, and ban them and possibly suppress them. States need to adopt precise measures<sup>3</sup> and ensure that they are being implemented effectively, especially with regard to the minimum age for commencing employment, so as to protect vulnerable groups, particularly of an ethnic and religious nature, from dropping out of school early<sup>4</sup>.

### Restricting the emergence of a separate education system

Whatever may be said in their favour, such systems are not in a position to promote the integration of minorities and immigrant communities, although in some scenarios they are able to protect the rights of ethnic and religious minorities. The state has obligations with regard to recognising qualifications issued by these schools, and for a range of services (e.g. financial help with teacher training, the upkeep of buildings, and awarding subsidies and grants to students) which, when on offer, should be provided on a non-discriminatory basis.

Without exception, and irrespective of what they are called (e.g. separate schools, separate classes or minority schools), separate systems of education must not be administered in a way that they impede these groups from understanding the majority group, particularly its language, culture and religious beliefs.

### Teacher training

Reforms, no matter how well conceived, will fail if teaching staff are not well trained or sufficiently committed to combating discrimination. To put it in another way, the role of the teacher cannot be reduced to that of a technician tasked with carrying out laid down procedures, but of a professional able to determine the most appropriate and effective pedagogical approach in a given situation. In particular, it is the duty of teaching staff to help to alleviate tensions between pupils, ensure that school curricula take account of the diversity of the groups, and promote a plural and tolerant form of education and a non-discrimination culture.

The recruitment of teachers must take account of the specific needs of plural societies and reflect their ethnic variety. Moreover, intercultural education and the fight against xenophobia, racial prejudices and intolerance need to be incorporated into initial and follow-up teacher training courses.

### Changing the content of textbooks and classroom materials

Education must develop a positive representation of oneself and of others<sup>5</sup>. Changing the content of textbooks (e.g. on history, geography, language, literature, general culture, and civic and religious education, stories for children and strip cartoons) must impact on all educational curricula whose content is likely to shape the minds of children and adolescents and their future representation of others. Any historical facts (or simply observations), tendentious explanations and insinuations that might exacerbate tensions, or create a negative representation of others, must be withdrawn, and replaced with fresh teaching materials that stress the unity of humankind and the amazing range of its human components, and encourage respect between different ethnic, religious and linguistic groups.

### The development of multicultural and intercultural education

Multicultural (or pluricultural) schools that are premised on taking account of racial and/or religious diversity and on drawing up specially adapted curricula are not enough in themselves if we want to deliver an education in tolerance. If we do not want to devalue or over-value different cultures, and thereby avoid a sense of hegemony, fear and intolerance, we need to gradually introduce a form of intercultural education based on a comparative perception of the various cultures, while at the same time taking account of specific local features.

Inter-cultural education cannot be imposed by administrative fiat. The path to tolerance and a positive understanding of others will be long and hazardous. Teachers have a key, educational role, and they must have the tact needed to encourage students to have a spirit of inquiry and avoid the sometimes inconclusive

outcomes of intercultural education. It would be wrong to expect pupils to respond in a uniformly positive way to the effects of intercultural schooling. Objective factors such as the influence of tradition, history and religion, and social cohesion play a role; they also have a major influence on whether the implementation of this policy succeeds or fails<sup>6</sup>.

### An education in human rights

The issue of human rights must have a place in education curricula. What it comes down to, though, is how human rights can be better taught. The pedagogical dimension of this area of education is decisive in relation to the quality of the message received by pupils and students. First and foremost, as the Committee for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination recommends, human rights and issues of racial discrimination must be taught in a multidisciplinary way so that racism can not claim a scientific basis.

### Setting standards at the international level

Standards should be set with a view to adopting interpretative rules that make it easier for states to understand exactly what strategy they need to adopt with regard to non-discriminatory, tolerant education. In particular, this work should focus on the development of education curricula and course books in history and other sensitive subjects, the teaching of which is likely to shape pupils' minds in respect of their perceptions of cultures and civilisations that are different from their own. UNESCO has a key role to play in urging states to adopt appropriate measures in order to examine, and possibly amend, legislation that might be discriminatory in the field of education because of religious beliefs or language.

There is also a need to strengthen control mechanisms through agreements and instruments. Education is the fundamental human right that is necessary for other rights to be fully exercised. It therefore seems entirely logical to draw out all the legal implications of this in relation to the existence of appropriate appeal mechanisms and the effective protection of this right. ♦

#### FREE, BASIC EDUCATION SHOULD INCORPORATE A MINIMUM OF INTERCULTURAL CRITERIA:

- Learning two or more languages, according to the needs of the state, and the resources it has at its disposal;
- An inclusion of the heritages of foreign countries, with a view to acquiring a better understanding of other people and fostering a positive representation of their culture;
- Multicultural, integrating teaching programmes that place a high value on the knowledge of different cultures and civilisations and promote a sense of self-esteem;
- The adoption, in multiethnic and multidimensional societies, of general laws that recognise multicultural diversity and embody the principle of intercultural dialogue both in and through education;
- The use of preventive, and possibly repressive, means to combat factors that hinder the promotion of intercultural education, such as xenophobic reactions, assimilative tendencies, discrimination in access to education, the use of education systems that lead to a loss of the history, language and traditions of minority groups and indigenous peoples, and an inability to reproduce the racial, ethnic and/or denominational composition of society in the teaching profession.



**International financial organisations such as the World Bank, the IMF and regional banks should fashion their interventions in such a way that the right to education, particularly insofar as it benefits minorities and society's most vulnerable ethnic groups, does not suffer excessively as a result of the burden of debt and structural adjustment policies.**



## South Africa Struggles for Equality in Education

Since before 1994 when the multiracial democratic government came into power, there has been high expectations for the transformation of the apartheid curriculum, and the role of teachers in this process.



Whereas the Apartheid regime used the schools and communities to foster racism, democratic South Africa uses the constitution and laws, such as the Schools Act, to promote democratic school governance, and accountability to all stake-holders. Racism has been replaced by a culture of human rights.

Despite massive gains, the recent report School Register of Needs shows, however, that black learners are still receiving the short end of the stick. Unions insist that the government change its macroeconomic strategy from one that leans towards neo-liberal economic policies to one that puts people first. This report tracks developmental progress, or lack thereof, as it pertains to schools.

More than 45% of South African schools still do not have electricity, 34% do not have telephones, and more than 27% are still without clean water. In addition, 66% of schools (17,907 in 2000) are without adequate sanitation and 11.7% (3,188 schools) do not have any sanitation at all. Although the Constitution proudly states that "everyone has the right to basic education, including basic adult education", the Constitutional Assembly could hardly have intended it to be as basic as these shocking statistics reveal about school conditions. The Minister of Education, Kader Asmal, admitted that progress had been made in reducing inequality in the country's schools, but then admitted that "the backlog is still huge and the differentiation between rich and poor schools within the public system is still unacceptable."

"Today, the apartheid curriculum is still firmly in place in most South African schools", said Jonathan Jansen, from the University of Pretoria, speaking at the National Educational Conference held by the South African Democratic Teachers' Union (SADTU) in April 2001. "The policies of government have not effectively eroded the firm grip of the curriculum legacy. Teachers still teach the way they taught in the past. Curriculum content still reflects the dominant themes of the past, especially at high schools. Examinations still dictate what is taught, how it is taught, and to whom it is taught. Parents con-

tinue to have conventional expectations of schooling and how it is organised. Learners are still measured in terms of common goals or standards, rather than on the basis of "opportunity to learn" or in the context of historical disadvantage."

After 8 years of democratic rule, inequality persists. Poverty reinforces racism! The union has committed itself to fighting policies that take away investment from basic needs and divert it to things like excessive military spending, such as the recent 6 billion Euro arms deal. The reality is that, even with democracy, gross inequality, largely racially and poverty-based, remains in the schooling system.

Thus, South Africa has begun the long journey to create the strategic and effective funding and the political will that is needed to eradicate the remaining legacy of Apartheid within the womb of the new society. For that to succeed, international worker solidarity is essential. ♦



### FREE AND EQUAL EDUCATION, BACK IN 1955

On 26 June 1955, The Congress of the People adopted the Freedom Charter, which demanded houses, work, security and for free and equal education. Some of its clauses read as follows:

- The government shall discover, develop and encourage national talent for the enhancement of our cultural life;
- All the cultural treasures of mankind shall be open to all, by free exchange of books, ideas and contact with other lands;
- The aim of education shall be to teach the youth to love their people and their culture, to honour human brotherhood, liberty and peace;
- Education shall be free, compulsory, universal and equal for all children;
- Higher education and technical training shall be opened to all by means of state allowances and scholarships awarded on the basis of merit;
- Adult illiteracy shall be ended by a mass state education plan;
- Teachers shall have all the rights of other citizens;
- The colour bar in cultural life, in sports and in education shall be abolished.

## The Role of Textbooks in the Promotion of International Brotherhood

The desire to move from a century of war to a century of peace is one that is shared by all people throughout the world. However, at the beginning of the 21st century, the relations between the various countries of East Asia have become unstable over the issue of historical consciousness. At the center of the controversy is a Japanese junior high school textbook. The nationalist authors and editors of the history textbook deny the realities of the war of aggression carried out by Japan in the Asia-Pacific region a half century ago, making statements such as "the Nanjing Massacre" never took place," and "the 'comfort woman' system was commercial so Japan as a state bears no responsibility." Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) approved the use of this textbook despite the fact that it glorifies Japan's wartime history and emphasizes the superiority of Japanese culture over other cultures.

Under the system in Japan, different private textbook publishing firms compile and edit textbooks. Then they submit them to MEXT. MEXT precisely checks each textbook to ensure that it conforms to the purposes and contents specified in the Courses of Study<sup>2</sup>. Only those that pass this screening process are used in schools. Because of this, the government exerts a strong influence on the contents of textbooks, often obstructing academic freedom. Moreover, local boards of education make the decision on which of the authorized textbooks will be used in particular public schools. This system is extremely problematic, as teachers have no say in the choice of textbooks. Consequently, teacher pedagogical expertise is undermined.

At the beginning of the 1980s, a similar textbook that distorted the facts of Japan's wartime aggression appeared. At that time, the Japanese government was severely criticized by neighboring Asian countries, and the textbook became a serious diplomatic issue. The government then formulated a new rule stating, "Consideration should be given to our neighboring Asian countries when compiling and editing textbooks." Partly thanks to that rule, and with the deepening friendship between Japan and other Asian countries in the following years, textbooks began to state the truth of the war of aggression. Since the early 1990s, a host of women have come forward to testify that in the past they were forced by the Japanese army to work as 'comfort' women. In the midst of this, the United Nations Human Rights Commission in February 1996 issued a recommendation<sup>3</sup> aimed at the Japanese government. It stated that the "comfort woman" system was a system of sexual slavery and a

"crime against humanity." As a violation of international law, the report recommended that the Japanese government fulfill its legal obligations. Because of these moves, the textbooks used in 1996-2001 contained clear references to the truth about Japanese aggression and "comfort women."

Right-wing forces that did not want to recognize the truth of the war of aggression approached the Liberal Democratic Party<sup>4</sup> (LDP), which shared their views, and began a political offensive against the textbooks. MEXT gave in to the political pressure and authorized a textbook that distorts history. Naturally, there was fierce criticism from South Korea, China, and other neighboring countries. At one point there was concern that these tensions might have a negative effect on the 2002 World Cup co-hosted by Japan and South Korea. Numerous citizen-level exchange programs were suspended. There are no other examples of the governments of advanced industrial nations authorizing textbooks that were written by ideological groups equivalent to neo-nazis. The Japanese government is very "backward" in this respect.

However, people of conscience within the education sector stopped this textbook from being used in many schools. When the nationalist textbook is introduced in April 2002, it will only represent 0.039% of the total textbooks in use. It can be said that this reflects the efforts carried out by the Japan Teachers' Union. In relation to the current adoption process, JTU, along with a broad range of democratic organizations, carried out a campaign to prevent passing on to our children a textbook that will completely destroy, not only Japan's relations with its neighbors, but also the values of pacifism and respect for human rights that have been built in the postwar era." During the first half of 2001 alone, at least 1,000 rallies were held around the country in protest of the textbook.

The 3rd EI World adopted a resolution, jointly proposed by the trade unions of China/Hong Kong, Japan, Korea, Singapore and Taiwan, condemning the revision and distortion of history in Japanese textbooks.

With the expansion of globalization, nationalism is emerging in many countries. In essence, these movements bear a relationship to the textbook problem and the greater issue of historical consciousness. There is an ever-growing role to play for education unions in promoting world peace and multicultural understanding. ♦

There are no other examples of the governments of advanced industrial nations authorizing textbooks that were written by ideological groups that are equivalent to neo-nazis. The Japanese government is very "backward" in this respect.

It is estimated that 1.6 million school-age children are out of school in South Africa. Presumably financing is the biggest problem – but many of these children qualify for child support grants and do not receive them. Clearly we have a long way to go.

Willy Madisha, President of SADTU  
April 2001

Hassen Lorgat  
Media Officer  
SADTU



Shinji FUJIKAWA  
Director, Cultural Development  
Japan Teachers' Union



1 At the end of 1937, during the Sino-Japanese War, the Japanese Army occupied Nanjing, the capital of China at the time. In the process, Japanese troops engaged in atrocities such as a mass slaughter, killing many Chinese people including women and children.  
2 The Courses of Study are revised every ten years. Textbooks are revised every several years, and go through a screening process each time.  
3 Ms. Coomaraswamy report on military sexual slavery by Japan. Ms. Radhika Coomaraswamy is the Special UN Rapporteur on violence against women.  
4 The Liberal Democratic Party, which has held the reigns of power in Japan throughout the postwar period.



# The Commitment of Governments to Multicultural Education

**'The most formidable challenge we face as ministers of education is to ensure that the systems we run are efficient, imaginative, creative and well equipped to respond effectively to our desire to create a peaceful world.' These were the words of the Education Minister of Bahrain at the UNESCO International Conference on Education held in September 2001. A lot of education ministers made very solemn pronouncements about the role of education in forging societies in which we can each of us live and learn together', but were they just fine words, or were they serious commitments?**

'We live in a world,' argued Mohamed Al Ghatam, Minister of Education of **Bahrain**, 'that is still divided along ideological, religious and ethnic lines. If we are genuinely interested in fusing these numerous worlds into one, or at least bridging the gap between them, we must act together to change from a culture of confrontation to one of cooperation, and from a culture of war to one of peace and intercultural dialogue. By so doing, we stand a better chance of getting to know one another, forging new partnerships, creating new ways of achieving cooperation, and developing new approaches to sustainable development. This goes further than mere economic growth, as there is no sustainability without freedom of expression, sustainable democracy and trained human resources. This leads us to the crucial role that education has to play in inculcating new attitudes of openness, of interaction, of discussion, of persuasion, and above all, of global solidarity in the minds of the younger generation. Only through cooperation can such an ideal be realised.'

The views of government representatives from countries now or previously in a state of war, or in the midst of civil conflict, are relevant:

'Social cohesion is perceived as a reality only when individuals have a chance to be heard. In short, when everyone is made to feel that they "belong", and have a stake in the processes and outcomes. With ownership comes responsibility,' said Abass Collier, Deputy Minister of Education in Sierra Leone, 'and the need to respect opposing views.' The **Sierra Leone** government has identified education as crucial to the restoration of social cohesion. A newly drafted Education Act accordingly devolves considerable power to local authorities so that communities have more say in the education of their children. And in recognition of the fact that illiteracy contributes to the fragmentation of society, the government has significantly increased its input into adult literacy schemes. The curriculum has been updated, and peace, population, citizenship and AIDS education have all been woven into existing syllabuses. Guidance and Counselling, with special emphasis on trauma counselling, have also been made an integral part of the system.

In the view of the **Algerian** Minister of National Education, Boubakeur Benbouzid, 'Learning to live together can only objectively come about if each individual in the global village can aspire to a decent life. Living together can only be an attainable goal if each country is permitted to develop

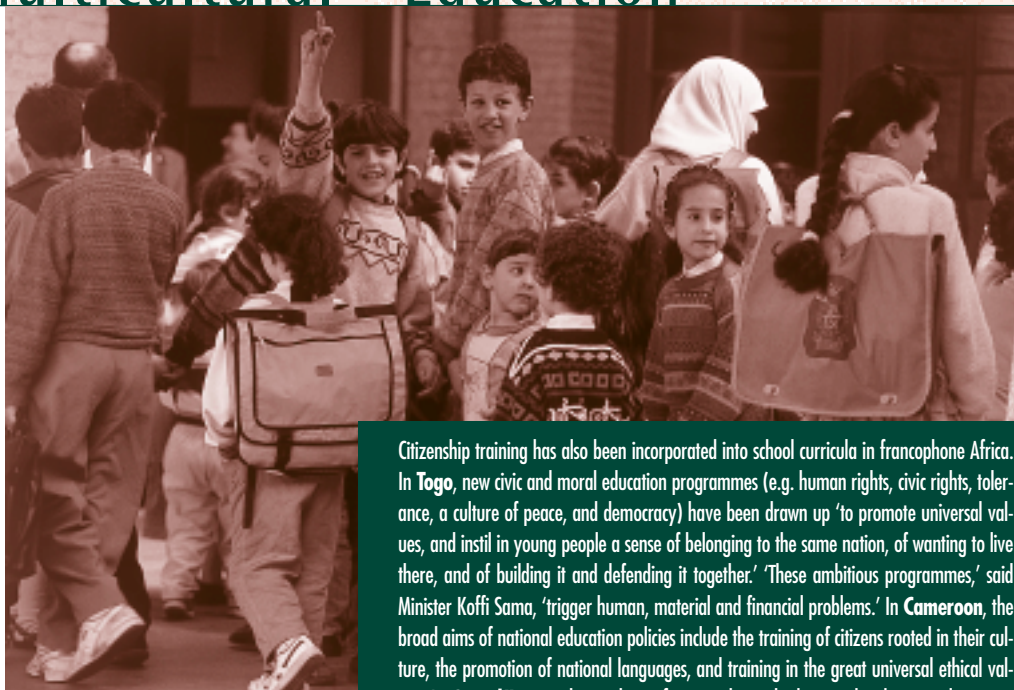
economically. Learning to live together also means that no culture may dominate another, and that no civilisation may exclude another.'

'Re-learning to live together is an educational imperative, and a vital cure for the virus that has so fundamentally fractured **Burundi's** social fabric,' explained Prosper Mpawenayo, the country's Minister of National Education. 'Education for living together must as a matter of priority be aimed at young people, and focus on the inculcation of fundamentally Burundian human values, and on new concepts of human rights, democracy and tolerance.'

Combating illiteracy must also be prioritised in **Guatemala**, according to the Minister of Education, if they are to achieve the training and citizens' participation provided for in the 1996 Peace Accords: 'Learning and citizenship,' believes Mario Rolando Torres Marroquín, 'combine to portray a society ideal and a human ideal in a multilingual, multiethnic and multicultural country.'

In **Rwanda**, war and genocide will long continue to affect the country's education system. 'The country has been abruptly forced to take in huge numbers of refugees who have grown up under different education systems,' explains the Secretary of State for Education, Jean Damascène Ntawukulirayo. To cope with this, Rwanda has agreed to incorporate into the various school curricula ideas relating to education for peace, human rights, tolerance, the peaceful resolution of disputes, and democracy. The problems that they have encountered have been linked to the shortage of teachers and qualified staff, and of technical materials and financial resources.

In **Haiti**, in the context of follow-up to the Dakar Forum, the government has put in place an education programme in citizenship that was drawn up with a view to providing students with the ability to participate actively in the construction of a new society project. 'The aim,' explains Haiti's Minister of National Education, Gaston Georges Merisier, 'is to turn schools and literacy centres into high-quality settings of democratic practice that will enable children and adults to understand, on the basis of concrete exposure, what their rights and duties are, and how



Citizenship training has also been incorporated into school curricula in francophone Africa. In **Togo**, new civic and moral education programmes (e.g. human rights, civic rights, tolerance, a culture of peace, and democracy) have been drawn up 'to promote universal values, and instil in young people a sense of belonging to the same nation, of wanting to live there, and of building it and defending it together.' These ambitious programmes,' said Minister Koffi Sama, 'trigger human, material and financial problems.' In **Cameroon**, the broad aims of national education policies include the training of citizens rooted in their culture, the promotion of national languages, and training in the great universal ethical values. In **Côte-d'Ivoire**, the teaching of civic and moral education has been in place since 1995, but the Minister of National Education, Michel Amani N'Guessan, drew attention to shortcomings, particularly the inappropriateness of teaching content (deemed too theoretical), the lack of initial training for teachers, too little classroom time (four hours a month), the inadequacy of material resources, and the problem of access to teaching documentation.

the exercise of their own freedom is concomitant with other people exercising the rights and freedoms that are theirs.'

Learning together is also one of the main challenges in the **Balkans**. The **Albanian** Minister of Education and Science, Ethem Ruka, reported that "Learning and living together" was one of the main goals of his country's education system: its mission is to equip the new generation with correct concepts of coexistence with different groups and minorities, and respect for other nations and other cultures. 'We intend to create a cooperative climate in participating schools and communities, to develop models of student, teacher and parent participation and support the creation of adequate structures and working methods, to enhance the role of schools as civic, cultural and social centres in local communities and allow people to feel they own their schools, to train teachers and head teachers, to encourage cooperation between different schools and different regions in Albania, and to carry out school-based projects aimed at democratically improving the day-to-day functioning of schools by promoting concepts of coexistence without conflict.'

The Republic of **Croatia** is in the process of carrying out a reform of its educational system (i.e. the structure and standards, curricula, and methods and forms of work) based on the principles of pluralism, coexistence, tolerance and democratic standards. In cooperation with UNESCO and the Council of Europe, Croatia has developed the National Programme of Education in Human Rights and Democratic Citizenship as part of a clear cam-

paign to democratise education, explore differences, promote tolerance, and develop a culture of peace and non-violence. 'Another example of good practice is the programme of education in national minority languages and scripts. This is an outcome of our efforts to create high standards for all national minorities in the country,' says Minister of Education Vladimir Strugar.

In **Bulgaria**, 'one of the major priorities is the production of textbooks that objectively acquaint young people with the history, culture and customs of our neighbours, and thereby overcome negative stereotypes,' according to Education Minister Vladimir Atanassov. 'We believe that regional cooperation should focus mainly on manuals, on setting up international networks for the exchange of ideas on teacher training, and on pupils' active participation in international dialogue. If we want to get rid of negative stereotypes, there is no better way than direct contacts and joint work with people, teachers, scientists, educational decision-makers, and trade union and NGO representatives.'

## The importance of dialogue and consultation

In the view of **Chilean** Education Minister Mariana Aylwin, 'The main challenge facing education is how to open up participation spaces in schools for all actors. Implementing ways of delivering coexistence education is a task for all citizens.' She also acknowledged the need to introduce and maintain a dialogue and commitment with parents, schools, teachers and students: 'We need to produce a consensus,' she argued, 'in order to define the tools that will crush the discrimination that deprives children and young people of opportunities for development.'

'To learn about democracy, children have to come across it in everyday life,' said **Denmark's** Minister of Education, Margrethe Vestager. 'This is the only way that young people can experience the fact that democracy is worthwhile, and that it makes a difference if you take an active part in society. Teachers have a big responsibility in creating a democratic way of living together in the classroom.'

The **Luxembourg** Minister of Education was one of the few to deal with the integration of children with special needs or a disability.

Many Ministers also emphasised the role – a miraculous role, if they are to be believed – that the use of New Information and Communication Technology (NICT) in school will play in ensuring a better understanding among peoples. NICT effectively opens up opportunities for exchanges between pupils, schools and countries, and in this way is a precious educational tool in international understanding. Reducing issues of tolerance and peace to a communications tool, however, seems Utopian. ♦

The use of languages in multilingual countries was also specifically raised, particularly by Education Ministers in **Bolivia, Canada, Eritrea, Kenya and Luxembourg**. The **Bolivian** Minister, Amalia Anaya Jaldin, also stressed the importance of providing bilingual education in order to enable young people to know, respect and value the cultures, languages and ways of thinking of the peoples who make up the country, while at the same time making sure they have a good command of Spanish, the international language that will give them an opening onto the world.

<sup>1</sup> The messages of 108 Ministers of Education on the theme of the 46th International Conference on Education ('Education for all for learning to live together: contents and learning strategies – problems and solutions'), Geneva, 5-8 September 2001, may be consulted on the ICE website: <http://www.ibe.unesco.org/International/ICE/46english/46minise.htm>



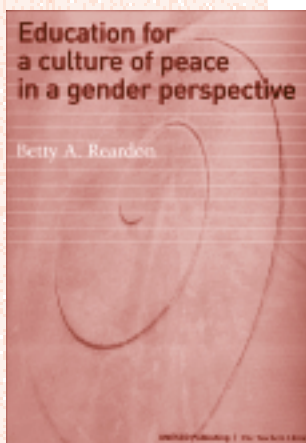
By Betty A. Reardon,

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## Gender in the Pursuit of a Culture of Peace



**Awareness of the fact that something so seemingly part of the natural order or divinely ordained as gender roles is in fact culturally derived and socially sanctioned human invention is an invaluable basis for exploring possibilities for alternative peaceful and just futures.**



This UNESCO volume, designed as a resource for teacher education, is especially relevant for teaching in secondary schools, but can also be used for the preparation of elementary school teachers and facilitators of non-formal adult education. By providing students with learning experiences in holistic and gender-sensitive human rights and peace education, teachers develop the skills and capacities to build and maintain a culture of peace.

UNESCO, 2001, ISBN 92-3-103811-7

With the issuing of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on the participation of women in confronting issues of peace and security, came the formal recognition that gender role separation in public affairs is an obstacle to peace. Exclusion of women from policy making has long been acknowledged to be detrimental to development and to the full realization of universal human rights. Indeed, the UN policy of "mainstreaming gender" reflects the significance of the gender lens in viewing global problems. Thus it is evident that gender should also be integral to global education and education for peace, and, I would argue, to all education.

Questions of girls' access to educational opportunities in literacy, technical training, basic through higher education, removal of sexist stereotypes and language from texts, equality in teacher attention and time for classroom recitation were raised and remedial policies were undertaken in many school and educational systems. However, what has remained largely out of the realm of attention are issues related to gender as such: gender relations and roles and positive and negative effects on both men and women, the costs they exact from society and the obstacles they pose to all the goals encompassed in a culture of peace.

Gender affects all aspects of personal and social life. It is a highly significant factor in the future the young can envision for themselves and the world society. Surely, they need to understand gender and all its ramifications and be helped to reflect on what, if any, the practices, circumstances, and consequences of gender roles in their respective cultures and societies are.

Peace education seeks to develop capacities to envision and work for alternatives to the many systems, structures, behaviors and relationships that comprise the culture of war and violence. Using the lens of gender complemented by that of violence – the central problem addressed by peace education – enables educators to illuminate the relationships between the denial of human rights for all and the prevalence of armed violence. Reflecting on gender as a human invention enables learners to contemplate other seemingly immutable institutions, such as war itself.

The research on gender and peace has been largely devoted to analyzing the sexist nature of the institution of war and its particularly devastating effects on women, especially its role in exacerbating all forms of violence against women. Recently, however, research in masculinity – its multiple forms, cultural variations, and its socio-psychological manifestations – has given new insights into concepts of masculinity and their relationship to the legitimization and perpetuation of war. Research has also demonstrated how schooling and educational practice have contributed to those forms of masculinity that encourage aggressive behavior among boys, as well as the forms of femininity that impede women and girls from asserting their equality.

Such research upholds the argument that much of formal education has not been a vehicle for the enhancement of either gender equality or peace. Nor has it made it possible for young men and women to make choices for their own lives with the full knowledge that their sex need not determine the work they choose or their roles in public life. Neither has it developed the complementary potential of women and men to contribute to the development of a culture of peace. The cooperation between men and women necessary to that development requires more than gender equality. It also requires that world society become more aware of both the possibilities and in many cases the need to work for changes in gender roles and relations to free both sexes to work toward the fulfillment of all their human capacities.

The cultivation of that awareness lies largely in recognizing that the need to mainstream gender in education is a necessary complement to mainstreaming gender in global policy making. Both depend upon the active participation of teachers in bringing a gender perspective into their teaching and into the exercise of their responsibilities as world citizens. Toward this end, I would urge all members of the profession to join in UNESCO's efforts to infuse a gender dimension into education for a culture of peace. ♦

## Education For All for Learning to Live Together: Problems and Solutions

**The 20th century saw major advances in universal schooling. But this progress could not prevent the death of more than 180 million human beings who were intentionally murdered. What's more, the vast majority of the political leaders, intellectuals and weapons experts, as well as numerous torturers and medical doctors who were responsible for horrific crimes against humanity, were people who had benefited from many years of education.**

In view of these facts, we are faced with a number of crucial questions: What was the point of the effort to provide schooling? Do education systems bear some responsibility for the deaths, crises, conflicts between ethnic groups for generations, violence against women, religious persecution and other forms of victimisation? Can education contribute to peaceful co-existence by teaching people to live together in peace?

In 1998, UNESCO's General Conference addressed these questions and therefore proposed that the 46th session of the International Conference on Education (ICE) should centre on the theme "Education For All for Learning to Live Together: Contents and Learning Strategies – Problems and Solutions". From 5 to 8 September 2001, the Conference met in Geneva, organised by the International Bureau of Education (IBE). It was attended by more than 600 participants, among them 80 ministers and 10 vice-ministers of education, from 127 member states of UNESCO, as well as representatives of intergovernmental and non-governmental organisations, including Education International, and several foundations.

The basic assumptions underlying the choice of themes and work methods for the ICE were that more of the same kind of education which prevailed in the 20th century will not serve the purpose of learning to live together. The ongoing processes leading to the deepening of economic, cultural and social forms of interdependence must be tackled by achieving a new balance between local and national education as well as education aimed at promoting international understanding. In order to learn to live together, it is essential for people from all cultures to benefit from basic education so as to be able to have a share in public life, in knowledge and, hence, in global wealth and in the efforts to achieve a more equitable distribution of wealth.

The exchanges of views at the ICE were intense, professional and respectful. The International Conference Centre in Geneva was alive with interest and a joyful team spirit. Participants in the Conference strove to show through their own example that it is possible to work together on complex and controversial issues.

The conclusions of the Conference reiterated the need to solve several well-known problems, for instance the fact that "the right of children to have free access to



schools is far from being respected everywhere in the world..."

But new issues were also addressed. For the first time, an International Conference of Ministers of Education unanimously called for the adaptation of curricula (including education plans, syllabuses and work methods in the classroom) and the updating of the contents of education in order to reflect, among other things, "the

economic and social changes set in motion, in particular, by globalisation, migration and cultural diversity" and the "ethical dimension of scientific and technological progress". A call was also made to "create within the school a climate of tolerance and respect encouraging the development of a democratic culture" and to "provide a way for the school to function that encourages participation of the pupils in decision-making."

Also for the first time, a Conference of Ministers of Education expressly refuted the mistaken notions that:

1. More of the same kind of education can suffice to learn to live together;
2. Schools can single-handedly overcome the problems that exist in countries and at the international level;
3. Words – whether in a speech, in legislation or in educational curricula – can by themselves achieve the goal of learning to live together.

Participants in the ICE returned to their countries in an enthusiastic mood, equipped with new critical approaches, ideas, commitments and images of exemplary practices which they learned about thanks to videos produced in all parts of the world. In his closing speech, the Director-General of UNESCO urged participants and the world at large to guarantee the quality of Education For All in order to ensure that the 21st century is one in which human life will be enhanced and made more fruitful and meaningful universally.

The 21st century, however, has already shown us new faces of death. Highly educated terrorists murdered thousands of people. Prejudice, hatred and racism are again making the headlines of newspapers and magazines in different parts of the world. Intolerance is conveyed by word of mouth or in writing by uneducated people as well as people who went through many years of schooling. The world is still largely indifferent about the fate of the 35,615 children who died of starvation on September 11th or the 14,000 people who probably contracted HIV/AIDS that same day.

Perhaps the 46th ICE of UNESCO will be seen, retrospectively, as an instance of counter-culture, a small blossom of a growing movement for peace, justice and democracy which eventually flourished into a worldwide tide against today's immeasurable forces of destruction. Perhaps it will not be so. Only the future can tell. ♦



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THE RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS OF THE 46TH  
ICE ARE AVAILABLE AT:

<http://www.ibe.unesco.org/International/ICE/46english/46menu.htm>

**The outcomes of the conference are of particular interest to policymakers and educators who are aware that education alone is not enough; that without quality education, however, there can only be poverty and misery and that, in such conditions, life is constrained and always – though it may not be immediately apparent – violent; and that the contents, methods and practices of education can either be an essential ingredient of learning to live together or a major hindrance to that goal.**