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The opinions and views expressed in this journal are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the positions of the editors, advisory board, and the WCCI.

The WCCI Secretariat
Alliant International University, 10455
Pomerado Road, San Diego, CA 92131-1799, USA.

For submissions, send by E-mail to
wcci@alliant.edu

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Toh Swee-Hin (S.H. Toh)
University for Peace, Costa Rica

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MESSAGE

This special issue of the WCCI Journal on Dialogue among Civilizations was conceptualized in response to one of the central themes of the mission of the United Nations in 2001 as the “Year of Dialogue among Civilizations.” The advent of globalization resulted to new challenges as well as threats to humankind which spurred the need for dialogue among civilizations.

The WCCI Journal provides an array of qualifiers for a deeper and insightful understanding of key terms like dialogue and civilizations and the rationale for the need for such actions. Viewing it from the context of education, the readings provide a platform for dialogues among all peoples and cultures in the world across physical, cultural and social boundaries. It also offers initiatives as well as actions on how to grapple with diversity, conflict, injustice, human rights and other issues. It also cites key personalities across countries who have deeply involved themselves in programs on these areas. Illustrations of human courage are exemplified. It likewise presents possibilities on how we can bring light to the world through an aggressive development and promotion of a culture of peace.

It is hoped that this special issue will make it easier for people across the globe to see a way through the confusions and sufferings of our time. Finally, I would like to think that the ideas and thoughts in the Journal would be useful to those responsible for the governance of our society at all levels. They have the awesome responsibility of evolving a structure for a society where most of the ground rules have changed but where the need for justice begins; where respect, love and peace abide; and where stability and progress prevail.

We need a new perspective in life. Thus, this serves as a challenge to the World Council for Curriculum and Instruction (WCCI) leaders and members and other sectors to be able to spearhead and rally behind the development of a culture of peace.

While the articles in the Journal provide us with the overall framework on how to approach the attainment of goals, as an

organization, it behooves upon us to develop our own paradigm shifts specific to our individual conditions, and to operationalize and put in place mechanisms to carry out the conceptual dimensions of the dialogue among civilizations. It is very important that our feet be on the ground, if we have to be successful in achieving our objectives. This means that we start with achievable projects as we build on increasing opportunities for achieving bigger projects.

Through it all, I would like to congratulate Prof. Toh Swee Hin, the guest editor of this special issue of the Journal, for having selected a very timely and sensible theme of the time considering the current realities and problems besetting humankind at this point of our history. Thank you, Professor Toh for this significant contribution of yours to the WCCI publications. I would also like to extend my heartfelt and sincere appreciation to the contributors as well as to Dr. Estela Matriano, WCCI Executive Director, Ms. Carole C. Caparros, WCCI Executive Assistant, and Dr. Virginia Cawagas, Associate Professor, University for Peace, for their untiring support and cooperation in the completion of this publication.

Dalisy G. Brawner

President, 2006-2008

World Council for Curriculum and Instruction

Enhancing the Dialogue and Alliance of Civilizations: Perspectives from Peace Education

Toh Swee-Hin (S.H. Toh)

Distinguished Professor

UN mandated University for Peace, Costa Rica

Introduction

Over the past few decades, the role of culture and intercultural themes and issues has been increasingly recognized as vital in understanding and shaping relationships among diverse communities and nations. As immigrants arrived in North America, Europe, Australia and New Zealand to begin new lives, institutions from workplaces and bureaucracies to schools and families, began to adapt to the reality of cultural diversity. In the face of resistance and barriers raised by certain segments of dominant ethno-cultural groups and the continuing existence of discrimination and racism, policies of multiculturalism and multicultural education have nonetheless gained widening acceptance. Due to the accelerating forces of economic globalization, hitherto relatively culturally homogenous societies are now also obliged to resolve issues of integration arising from the inflow of migrant workers and intercultural marriages.

Elsewhere, in places in which diverse ethnic, tribal and faith groups have lived together over many generations, the dynamics of modern political, economic and social formations and relationships have also catalyzed inter-group conflicts. In some instances, these conflicts have spawned xenophobia, ethnic cleansing violence and the horrors of genocide which all need resolution and reconciliation as witnessed tragically in, for example, Rwanda, Nigeria, Indonesia, Darfur, India and the former Yugoslavia.

Within the broad field of peace education, the specific dimension of education for intercultural or multicultural understanding, harmony and cooperation has therefore gained

substantive and widening visibility across formal and non-formal sectors (May, 1999; Sefa Dei & Calliste, 2000; Grant & Lei, 2001). Unless individuals are encouraged from an early age to respect cultural differences and to learn to live together peacefully, it is likely that seeds of discrimination will grow to bear fruits marked by racist attitudes and conduct, which can lead to extremist hatred and even violence.

Yet, as in virtually all other dimensions of peacebuilding and peace education, while progress can and has been made through good policies and effective implementation, fresh challenges will always arise in the context of changing societal and global realities. One such major challenge to intercultural understanding and education was initially sparked in the nineties by the concept of “the clash of civilizations” that the North American political scientist Samuel Huntington (1996) proposed. It did not take long, however, before the 9/11 attacks on New York and subsequent official and societal reactions and counter-reactions provided much fuel for this argument. As this paper seeks to show, there is an urgent need for intercultural educators committed to building a culture of peace to counter and transcend thinking and practice based on the worldview of a “clash of civilizations”. The acknowledgment of this need is reflected well in the growth of programs and initiatives to promote instead a “dialogue among civilizations” and its implications of intercultural and multicultural education over the past decade.

From “Clash of Civilizations” to Dialogue among Civilizations

In the 90s, the impact of culture on international relations was further highlighted by the thesis of the “clash of civilizations” formulated by Samuel Huntington in an essay related to US foreign policy and later in an elaborated book version. Sparking considerable controversy, the thesis argued that the major source for international tensions, conflicts and wars would increasingly stem from “ideological” conflicts and differences between civilizations or broadest cultural entities. More specifically, the “fault line” between “Islam” and the “West” is deemed to be especially deep and problematic. The 9/11 attacks on New York and subsequent implementation and expansion of the global “war

of terror” led by the USA and other allies in turn provided much political justification for this view and generated a rise in “Islamophobia” in much of the “Western” world (van Driel, 2004).

It did not take long, however, for this “clash of civilizations” thesis to be critiqued and challenged conceptually and politically. Scholars such as Esposito (1995) pointed out serious analytical flaws in the arguments backing this worldview, while leaders among South nations, notably former President Khatami of Iran, advocated instead for a “dialogue among civilizations”. Instead of emphasizing conflicts attributed to differences, efforts need to be made to find common or shared values and principles leading to international understanding, respect, cooperation and conflict resolution and transformation and thereby peaceful relationships.

This global movement for inter-civilizational dialogue has been increasingly reflected in inter-governmental circles as leaders and spokespersons for diverse nations acknowledged the dangers of leaving unquestioned a de facto self-fulfilling policy of civilizations “inevitably clashing”. Hence 2001 was declared the UN Year for the Dialogue of Civilizations. Among UN agencies, UNESCO has in particular played a leadership role in promoting intercultural and inter-civilizational dialogue (see King in this issue).

In recent years, Turkey and Spain has also mobilized a growing number of UN member states to join the “Alliance of Civilizations” initiative as an organizational framework to promote dialogue among civilizations and cultures at local, national, regional and international levels (United Nations Alliance of Civilizations, n.d.; Mirici in this special issue). The year 2010 has been designated the International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures and much momentum and energies have been generated by a consortium of civil society organizations and international agencies for 2011-2020 to be commemorated as the International Decade for a UN Decade of Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue, Understanding and Cooperation for Peace.

Among faiths and religions, likewise, much progress has been achieved in building interfaith dialogue movement. In contrast to blaming religions for generating violence and fuelling

wars, interfaith dialogue advocates seek to enhance deeper understanding, respect for differences, and reconciliation among faiths. These global interfaith organizations like Religions for Peace, Parliament of the World's Religions, and United Religions Initiative have regularly gathered in international, regional and local venues to share insightful experiences in how diverse faith communities are building a culture of peace in every region and continent.

As these grassroots and global efforts to promote dialogue and peaceful relations among civilizations and cultures continue to expand, it is also clear that education plays a vital role. To be effective and sustaining, intercultural and inter-civilizational dialogue needs appropriate educational theory and practice. This article seeks therefore to highlight some key educational implications in building dialogue among civilizations and cultures. The efforts catalyzed in particular by the Alliance of Civilizations will provide one helpful building block. However, I will also emphasize the need to envision education for a dialogue of civilizations and cultures through a multidimensional and holistic paradigm of education for a culture of peace (Toh & Floresca-Cawagas, 2000). In this regard, as also reflected in the other papers and annexes of this special issue of the International Journal of Curriculum and Instruction, the work of advocates in specific fields of transformative education for peace will yield constructive ideas and strategies for the urgent project of deepening dialogue among diverse civilizations and cultures.

*From Dialogue to Transformative Education
for a Culture of Peace*

The urgent and challenging work of building a more peaceful world clearly benefits from ideas and initiatives such as the Dialogue among Civilizations and the Alliance of Civilisations. As noted above and as shown in a number of articles in this special issue, educators in many regions have been encouraged to integrate understanding and dialogue between cultures and civilizations into their curricula and institutions. Furthermore, as noted in her reflections on programs and projects under the

auspices of UNESCO, King also provides a wide range of intercultural education initiatives whose principle, values and practices are similar to or complement dialogue of civilization visioning and practices. The Declarations in this issue also exemplify the collaboration of many countries, institutions and educators in two conferences yielding helpful declarations for guiding ongoing for inter-civilizational dialogue and future activities.

Nevertheless, from a holistic peace education perspective, it is also essential to critically reflect on a number of themes and issues where promoting dialogue among civilizations and cultures as well as the efforts of the Alliance of Civilizations need to more fully consider the root causes of conflict and violence locally and globally. In addition, as explained later, it is vital to fully explore the role of active nonviolence in building peaceful relationships among cultures, civilizations and nations.

Broadening the theme of “Islam and the West”

In focusing strongly on the relationship between “Islam” and the “West”, the Alliance of Civilisations initiative chose to highlight the political actions (e.g., military interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq and terrorist violence) of “Western” states and extremist groups guided by distorted news coverage of Islam. At the same time, the Alliance of Civilisations was properly critical of negative cultural responses to such religiously-motivated violence that lead to damaging stereotypes (e.g., “Islam” justifies violence”) that fuel the expanding phenomenon of Islamophobia. From a peace education perspective, the Alliance of Civilisations provides a significant demystification of views that unfairly label Islam and Muslims as inherently “supporting” terrorism. Furthermore, another analytical and pedagogical strength of the Alliance of Civilisations framework lies in its acknowledgment that there exist interpretations of some believers which promote the oppression of women, honour killings and corporal punishment that violate human rights standards. Such interpretations in turn need to be critiqued as contradictory to Islam as a faith that is oriented towards peace.

Besides these conceptual strengths, however, a number of limitations of the Alliance framework need to be noted. To begin with, the use of the broad categorization of the “West” in its discourse is conceptually problematic and pedagogically inadequate. In civilizational terms, the “West” is usually seen as being rooted in certain dominant cultural and philosophical foundation, notably Judeo-Christian values, and worldviews from the Roman and Greek civilizations. Yet the current cultural realities of “Western” societies can no longer justify this long-held traditional social construction. With the growth of migration and in many situations, an increasing acknowledgement of indigenous peoples and history, the “West” is now very culturally diverse or multicultural. Hence in terms of “Islam and the West” relationship, Muslims are already present and visible within contemporary Western societal formations.

It is true that this multiculturalism faces ongoing challenges, including racism, ethnic discrimination and social and economic inequalities faced by certain marginalized cultural or “racialized” groups. But not to also highlight the cultural diversity characterizing present-day Western societies is to overlook the potential bridges of understanding that already exist within this broad civilizational category. For example, as earlier cited, there are many fruitful lessons of multicultural education available in the West that other civilizations, including Islam, can find relevant and beneficial to their own efforts in building intercultural harmony within their social formation.

Another corollary limitation of the Alliance of Civilisations’ depiction of the “Islam and the West” relationship is that the “West” is somewhat stereotyped for political actions (e.g., military intervention and global war on terrorism), as though all citizens of Western nations are in favour of those policies. From a peace education perspective, it is vital to distinguish between leaders and political entities and citizens supportive of such militaristic or hegemonic policies from voices and movements within Western societies who are working visibly to transform Western states towards greater democratic accountability and a nonviolent role of their governments in the world. At the same time, such alternative perspectives also challenge the continuing

and sometimes even deepening institutional racism and other forms of cultural discrimination.

Promoting inclusivism and pluralism

In short, the Alliance of Civilisations discourse on “Islam and the West” does embrace helpful analyses of a number of root causes of violence and conflict in the world, including “Islam and West” tensions. But it is also necessary to broaden the discussion to relationships between Islam and multicultural societies. This then also calls for simultaneous transformation of societies, whether Islam or Judeo-Christian traditions, that are institutionally dominant toward realizing the potential of cultural and civilizational diversity globally. Thus the call for political pluralism in the Alliance of Civilisations High-Level Report (United Nations Alliance of Civilizations, 2006, 5.10) needs to be accompanied by a parallel call for cultural and faith pluralism in Muslim-majority countries.

In this regard, as the recent Asia-Pacific Consultation on the High-Level Report emphasized, the focus of the Report on “Islam and the West” needs to be broadened to include also the broad diversity of faiths, whether monotheistic or not (New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2007). It should be acknowledged that one of the Recommendations in the Education section in the High-Level Report (6.8) calls for the education system, including religious schools, to “provide students with an understanding and respect for the diverse religious beliefs, policies and cultures in the world”. However, it is significant that in the conceptual part of the Report, there is a lack of reflection on the theme of “exclusivism” and “inclusivism” within the theology of various faiths, including Islam and other Abrahamic faiths. As the growing movement of interfaith dialogue has shown, there is an urgent need for the education of faith communities and leaders towards greater inclusiveness and pluralism (Coward, 2000). In this special issue, Patel and Meyer focus in particular on the creative initiative of the Interfaith Youth core approach to promote religious pluralism among youth. Furthermore, interfaith

dialogue also seeks to reject exclusivist beliefs that lie at the roots of bigotry, distrust and disrespect which provides fuel for extremist attitudes and practices toward “others” identified as “false religions” (Knitter, 1995; Smoch, 2002; Religions for Peace, 2007; Toh & Cawagas, 2006; Fitzgerald & Borelli, 2006; The National Summit of Religious Leaders toward a Culture of Peace, 2005). In this regard, as advocates of interfaith dialogue point out, the complementary role played by intra-faith dialogue is indispensable. Faith communities need to look self-critically and introspectively at their own doctrines to re-interpret attitudes toward “other” faiths and to transcend extremist exclusivist views and practices.

Educating for forgiveness and reconciliation

A theme which the Alliance of Civilisations discourse can emphasize more is the need to educate for forgiveness and reconciliation (Gopin, 2001; Lederach, 1999; Helmick, 2001). These values and principles can be found within all faiths and cultures and civilizations in restoring relationships that have been fractured by conflicts, violence and injustices. However, as demonstrated by the global experiences of Truth Commissions, such as the post-apartheid Truth and Reconciliation Commission process in South Africa, practising and implementing forgiveness and reconciliation is never easy. Restorative justice requires the “victims” to forgive and reconcile with “offenders” who in turn sincerely accept their accountability and are prepared to engage in responsible restorative actions. In this regard, one creative and inspirational grassroots project is the school for forgiveness and reconciliation founded by Fr. Leonel Gomez (2006) in Colombia

Acknowledging indigenous peoples in inter-civilizational discourse

A further limitation in the Alliance of Civilisations discourse is that indigenous peoples and their ancient wisdom and knowledge is not mentioned. Yet, worldwide, long before the era of colonies

and independence to nation states, many conflicts including very violent episodes have occurred due to colonization and the underpinning racist and ethnocentric assumptions towards indigenous peoples viewed as “inferior”, “backward” or “lacking civilization”. Today, there are significant parallel conflicts continuing in modern independent societies. Due to ongoing processes of modernization and globalization, indigenous peoples in many continents face serious threats to their cultural survival as well as violations of their human rights (Bodley, 2008). Hence in educating for the dialogue of civilizations, the problems of marginalization faced by indigenous peoples need to be integrated. Consistent too with the principles of intercultural understanding and respect, learning from the wisdom of the elders with their profound and sacred sense of interdependence with all parts of the environment will benefit all humanity and nations (Suzuki & Knudtson, 1997). With the recent ratification of the International Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the presence of a permanent Indigenous Forum at the United Nations, there is clearly much scope for synergy between the Alliance of Civilisations initiative and programs and UN and other agencies and civil society organizations promoting indigenous survival and rights (UNESCO, 2006).

*Overcoming tensions between civilizational/cultural worldviews
and human rights*

Turning now to the significant dimension of building a culture of peace, there is constant referral in the High–Level Report of the Alliance of Civilisations to the need to fully and consistently respect internationally agreed human rights standards and international law. Specific rights mentioned include prohibition against torture, freedom of religion, and the right and freedom of expression and association (2.3, 5.12). As earlier mentioned, the Alliance is openly critical of violations of human rights that can arise from distorted views of doctrines of various faiths, including Islam. Hence the Alliance of Civilizations movement clearly supports human rights education.

However, from a holistic perspective of education for a culture of peace, the High Level Report can be challenged for not

discussing more fully the ongoing tension between certain faith beliefs or doctrines and human rights (Runzo, Martin & Sharma, 2003; An-Na'im, Gort, Jansen & Vroom, 1995; Sharma, 1994). These tensions apply notably in the areas of women's human rights, reproductive rights, right to sexual orientation and right to conversion or leaving a faith. In implementing education for a dialogue of civilizations, it will be essential therefore for all faiths and cultures to self-critically interpret their doctrinal positions and beliefs in order to transcend those tensions, otherwise the human rights of some sectors of society will continue to be violated. In addition, as An-Na'im (1992) argues, a cross-cultural dialogue on human rights is necessary and possible.

Uprooting structural violence

In analyzing violence and conflicts in the world, the Alliance of Civilisations High-Level Report does recognize one of the root causes to be the economic disparities between rich and poor among and within nations (pg.7). The Report argues that poverty can lead to despair, a sense of injustice and alienation that when combined with political grievances can foster extremism (pg.5). This calls therefore for an "aggressive" campaign for the "eradication of poverty" as advocated by the Millennium Development Goals.

However, there is hardly any analysis or explanation in the High-Level Report on the root causes of global poverty and the increasing disparities between rich and poor. The strategy to "eradicate poverty" is mentioned briefly in the Report's recommendations for action in the area of "migration", where wealthier nations are exhorted to "meet their commitments of increased investment in the developing world, as this, together with good governance and capacity building efforts in developing countries, would help improve economic conditions in those countries" (pg.20).

From a holistic peace education perspective, this approach to understanding the politics and political-economy of global poverty is inadequate. Certainly, within the dominant paradigm of economic "development" and globalization, increasing

investment in South countries is deemed essential for improving growth and prosperity, including poor sectors. However, there is a growing number of voices among analysts and especially civil society and people's organizations representing marginalized sectors (e.g., rural and urban poor, women, indigenous peoples, and children) who are questioning this dominant paradigm (Anderson, 2000; Shiva, 2000,2005; Bello,2009; Brecher, Costello & Smith, 2002). Through the enormous power of transnational corporations and international financial institutions, export-oriented growth policies, rapid extraction of natural resources, expansion of agribusiness, and national political and economic systems controlled by and disproportionately benefitting elites, this structural violence undermines the capacity of poor majorities to meet their basic needs despite toiling for the globalized economic machine.

In sum, education for the dialogue of civilizations also needs to integrate perspectives and pedagogies from the field known as development education or education for local and global justice. Promoting an "alliance of civilizations" would not successfully address the problem of rich-poor inequalities unless it engages in a critical dialogue on which paradigms of economic "development" serves the well-being of all peoples. Unless the logic of excessive profits, greed, over-consumerism and accompanying corruption is replaced by a global ethic proposed by, for example, the Parliament of World Religions (Kung & Kuschel, 1994) or "shared security" as advocated by the Religions for Peace (2006), or the "globalization from below" movement (e.g., World Social Forum) (Fisher & Ponniah, 2003), then the poverty and inequality that the Alliance of Civilisations is concerned about will not be effectively overcome. Increasingly influential also are the initiatives to replace orthodox indicators of economic "progress" (e.g., GNP and GDP) with alternative indicators such as Genuine Progress Index (GPI) and Gross National Happiness (Faris, 2009; van Willenswaard, 2008). The conceptual arguments as well as pedagogical exemplars for integrating local and global justice themes in the dialogue of civilizations are found in two articles in this special issue, namely Abdi and Shultz's case for a shared future through education for global social justice, and Garrone and Price's

exemplar of a culture of peace curriculum for Australian Catholic school youth including interfaith dialogue and experiential learning in South contexts to cultivate values of justice and solidarity.

Civilizations, cultures and sustainable futures

Another theme that the High-Level Report only briefly touches on in its conceptual introduction is the “destruction of the environment” (pg. 7) which is “intensifying”. However, beyond this observation, the Report does not link the ecological crisis with ongoing or potential conflicts and even wars, nor does the need to educate for sustainable futures or sustainable development feature in the recommendations for action. There is by now a wealth of evidence of social, economic and political conflicts and violence that can be attributed to contestation over the use and misuse of resources that impact adversely on the environment and the basic needs and rights of affected peoples (Klare, 2002; Barlow & Clarke, 2002). Wars over water as well as oil or other depleting resources are grim realities to be transcended.

Hence education for a dialogue of civilizations will need to synergize with education for sustainable futures that communities and agencies like UNESCO (n.d.) have been promoting under the auspices of the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development. At the Auckland Asia-Pacific response to the High-Level Report, I argued for the Alliance of Civilisations to enhance its attention to dialogue and cooperation among cultures and civilizations for environmental sustainability. In this regard, it is also relevant to note that in the interfaith dialogue movement, there is increasing awareness of the positive role that all faiths can play in building a greener world. “Green theology” perspectives across all faith communities have lent momentum to the growing field of interfaith dialogue and action in such critical areas as climate change and other aspects of the ecological crisis, including the vital underpinning principle of living more simply in order to care for the earth (Gardner, 2006; Edwards, 2006; Alliance of Religions & Conservation, n.d.; Toh

& Cawagas, 2009). Likewise, indigenous peoples have contributed much spiritual and practical wisdom for more sustainable people-nature relationships. Pigem's workshop report in this special issue provides many similar insights on how faith-based organizations are promoting education for sustainability. Last but not least, the Alliance of Civilisations can also undoubtedly benefit from dialogue and collaboration with sustainability movements such as the Earth Charter (n.d.)

Disarming and demilitarizing civilizations and cultures

Within a holistic framework of peace education, the field of disarmament education and education for nonviolence has been a central theme. In this regard, the clear commitment of the High-Level Report for nonviolent and peaceful resolution of conflicts deserves to be praised. For example, resistance groups opposing foreign occupation "should be encouraged to pursue their goals through nonviolent participation in political processes and democratic representation" (pg. 16). Leaders and governments are also questioned for using "counter-measures" against terrorism by "attacking" their adherents, since such tactics will likely only "inflare" more extremist sentiments.

Specifically on Islam, the High-Level Report also appropriately demystifies the stereotyping of "jihad" as primarily armed violence in self-defense of one's community. Rather the greatest jihad is the inner struggle of each Muslim of "good" over "evil" (pg.15). Moreover, all religions or faiths do not condone or approve the killing of the innocents (pg.10). Hence, although recognizing the unresolved Israel/Palestine conflict as a major root cause for fuelling resentment among many Muslims globally and for extremists to "justify" their acts of terrorist violence, the Report advocates for a multilateral and nonviolent peace process to resolve the conflict.

While this perspective of the High-Level Report is helpful in moving toward disarmament and demilitarization in the world, a peace education framework sees the need for the dialogue among civilizations and Alliance of Civilisations initiative to be more assertive and holistic in promoting education for nonviolence. If

the doctrine of “just war” found in a number of faith theologies, or of jihad as a self-defense remain pivotal in a believer’s worldview, it can always be exploited by extremists and opportunists to recruit followers for violent action or reaction, hence aggravating cycles of violence and counter-violence, whether conducted by on-state groups or by states (Kimball, 2003).

Education for a culture of peace on the other hand emphasizes the values, principles and strategies underpinning active nonviolent action (Smith-Christopher, 1998). In this regard, there is an ongoing movement among faiths and cultures to address the doctrinal relevance and validity of “just war” thinking and action. This is happening among Muslim peace advocates (e.g., Satha Anand) who draw on Islamic theology to argue for nonviolent conflict resolution approaches (Paige, Satha-Anand, C and Gilliatt, 1993), among Christian peacebuilders who emphasize the role-model of Christ as a nonviolent peacemaker (e.g., Dear, 2004), and engaged Buddhists like Thich Nhat Hanh (2005) and Sulak Sivaraksa (2005) who emphasized in Buddha’s words that anger, hatred and violence shall not cease with more anger, hatred and violence.

Education for the dialogue of civilizations hence draws on the spirituality of nonviolence that can be found within all faiths and civilizations, a theme that was mobilized in UNESCO’s (2005) declaration on the role of religions in the promotion of a culture of peace. This also requires not only a strong vision but crucially systematic training in the skills of nonviolent action. Hence churches, mosques, temples, synagogues, seminaries, monasteries, madrasas and other places of worship and faith-based educational institutions face the challenge of transforming themselves as learning spaces for nonviolent action. Langole’s article in this special issue reminds us of the positive lessons as well as challenges in overcoming intercultural and inter-ethnic conflicts in one African context, Uganda, while Niroula’s case study of Nepal highlights the need to promote social, cultural and educational inclusion of the marginalized Dalit people.

Demystifying media and critical media literacy

Another important theme for consideration in enhancing education for a dialogue among civilizations is the role of the media. As Ibrahim's article in this special issue indicate, media can play a negative role in promoting a culture of war rather than a culture of peace. In a UNESCO forum in Barcelona, I gave numerous exemplars whereby media has perpetuated stereotypes and representations of "others" that marginalize minorities and entire cultures (Toh, 2004a). Likewise, the High-Level Report of the Alliance of Civilisations also comments critically on the contribution that contemporary media in all its forms has made in promoting stereotypes and misrepresentations (pg. 30-31). It gives helpful recommendations for action on shaping media to present well-balanced portrayal of foreign cultures, objective reporting transcending stereotypes and misrepresentation, more accurate descriptions of culture, especially Muslims, in films and positive applications of the internet and digital media.

From a peace education perspective, these are all very relevant and essential implications for the role of education in promoting a dialogue among civilizations. However, there is a further need to critically understand the media as an institution well integrated into power structures at national and global levels. This helps to explain the biases and also the paradigms that give a selective presentation of world and national affairs, including conflicts and violence (Herman & Chomsky, 1998). Apart from bolstering the power and control of leaders and governments, dominant media can also mask the geo-strategic interests of powerful states or coalitions in terms of rationales that fuel fear, distrust and suspicion or even hatred and enmity. In capitalist societies, such media is often also dependent on the economic support of the corporate sector (e.g., advertising, shareholders) and consequently less willing to encourage critical journalism that exposes structural violence and unethical conduct.

Education for a dialogue of civilizations hence need to promote critical media literacy so that learners, viewers and readers can critically analyze information presented as "facts" and "truths" and uncover underpinning political and economic

interests shaping such representations (Van Dijk, 1995; Kellner & Share, 2007; Toh, 2004a). In this special issue, Kester has also shown how participatory pedagogical strategies are helpful for critical media literacy.

At the same, time, peace educators are now able to refer learners to a range of alternative media that are willing to take risks in presenting realities with greater independence and structural analysis and give voice to the marginalized or oppressed but without indoctrination.

Cultivating the spirituality of inner peace

Finally, in this review of the theory and practice of promoting a dialogue among civilization, it is essential to raise the critical role that peace education plays in the cultivation of inner peace (Thich Nhat Hanh, 2005; Toh, 2004b). Unless all cultures and faiths are willing to conscientiously develop the spirituality of peace within their members, all the implications for social or outer peace that a dialogue among civilizations in synergy with education for a culture of peace will be difficult to implement. Through faith and culture-based strategies including meditation, contemplation, prayers and other parallel practices drawn from the wisdom of innumerable cultures and civilizations, all learners from young to old will be facilitated in forming and sincerely practising the values of compassion, love, respect, justice, integrity, active nonviolence and reconciliation vital to the building of a peaceful world.

Conclusion

In sum, this essay has sought to acknowledge the positive contributions that the concept of dialogue among civilizations and its related movements, such as the Alliance of Civilisations, can make in promoting peaceful relations among peoples and nations of diverse cultures and civilizations. However, it has also endeavoured to show, through a detailed multidimensional analysis and practical exemplars, how inter-civilizational dialogue can be enhanced through synergistic collaboration with

the theory and practice of peace education. It is true that the High-Level Report of the Alliance of Civilisations does briefly recommend for action what it calls ``civic and peace education`` (pg. 25). Regrettably, apart from the overriding emphasis on intercultural understanding and education, the Report is lacking in giving a holistic appreciation of civic and peace education. It is hoped that proponents of projects and programs under the auspices of the dialogue among civilizations and Alliance of Civilisations will be open to integrating insights and lessons from education for a culture of peace. In this way, the dialogue of civilizations can realize more fully its potential of building a world in which diverse cultures and civilizations can live for and with nonviolence, justice, human rights, sustainability and an authentic spirituality of inner peace.

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Key Issues in UNESCO Policy on Inter-cultural Education

Linda King

Director a.i.

Division for the Promotion of Basic Education

UNESCO

Multiculturalism is a reality in most countries of the world in the 21st century. There are very few nation states where only one language is spoken, or only one set of cultural patterns or religious beliefs the norm. It is a fact that we live in an inter cultural world, interacting everyday of our lives with people who speak different languages from us, eat different foods, believe in different gods (or none at all), and who bring up their children in sometimes radically different ways. Nevertheless, most children, unless they are in culturally or religiously specific schools, interact on a daily basis with others who may hold different sets of values. Where this is recognized and positively supported, it may be considered formally as inter cultural education, where it is not, it nevertheless exists (albeit at an informal level) although in this case it is more likely that there will be negative stereotypes which circulate within the school and are reproduced through ignorance and fear of other cultures and religions.

Much has been made recently of approaches to multicultural education and intercultural education. In general terms, inter cultural education implies a proactive stance on the part of schools to bring different cultural groups together to a situation of understanding, respect and dialogue. Multicultural education often stops short of this goal, and seeks tolerance of other cultures rather than engagement and understanding. Multiculturalism as a policy may even encompass integrationist, and assimilation approaches while paying lip service to the notion of cultural diversity.

In terms of educational planning for multiculturalism, uniform solutions for educational policy are attractive in terms of administrative and managerial simplicity. Textbooks and

learning materials produced in only one language and encompassing only national references to culture (leaving out the local languages or cultures) may seem more feasible and realistic. There is the position that through a 'one size fits all' education, cultural difference may be minimized, leading, the argument goes, to greater social cohesion. But both arguments disregard the risks involved in terms of reduced learning achievement¹, loss of cultural diversity and the promotion of learning to live together in one world as a precondition for peace. On the contrary, however the challenge must be for education systems to adapt to contemporary complex realities and provide a quality education which takes into consideration learners' needs balancing these with social, cultural and political demands, and with economic development that, in turn, goes hand in hand with the eradication of poverty.

Culture and Education: The Crucial Relationship

Although education may be formal, informal or non formal, most of what we commonly refer to as education pertains to the formal schooling system taking place throughout the different learning cycles in young people's lives. School is hence the most visible educational institution, and its role is central to the transmission of knowledge and the development of competencies. It is a determinant factor in the evolution of societies and universal primary schooling is at the forefront of the Millennium Development Goals established by the United Nations to be achieved by 2015² reflecting, in turn, the importance of the Dakar Plan of Action, which emerged from the World Forum on Education for All in 2000 and which set out six major goals including universal literacy, gender equity, quality education for all, universal primary schooling, early childhood education and education for life skills.³

Increasingly, however, there has been a call for the recognition of different cultural identities in education and in broader public policies in general. Indeed, the concept of multicultural citizenship, which supplements basic human rights with that of minority and cultural rights, has come to the

forefront in the work of the major development agencies, including the World Bank and the United Nations Development Programme.⁴ While cultural, religious and ethnic identities are not necessarily new in themselves, what is more recent is their role in demanding a say in national education policy thus expressing the need for their particular views of the world to be taken into consideration within the educational context.

In discussing culture in this text, reference is made to all the factors that pattern an individual's way of thinking, believing, feeling and acting towards other members of society. It has been defined variously in UNESCO documents as "the whole set of signs by which the members of a given society recognize ...one another, while distinguishing them from people not belonging to that society"⁵ and as "the set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of a society or social group...(encompassing) in addition to art and literature, lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions and beliefs"⁶ Culture is at the core of identity and is a major component in the reconciliation of group identities within a framework of social cohesion. Language, moreover, is both the expression of a culture and the principal means through which culture reproduces itself. Linguistic diversity is a reflection often as not, although not exclusively, of cultural diversity. Both language and culture are at the core of education in different contexts and ergo of intercultural education.

In turn, culture and education are intertwined, language itself ensuring the transmission of knowledge in the school or learning context. Interculturality, on the other hand, refers to the relationships between cultures and, in this particular case, within the educational context. It presupposes cultural diversity in national settings and proposes dialogue between cultures with a view to promoting peaceful co-existence and tolerance of each other. A major challenge, nevertheless, when discussing the issue of education and culture is dealing with the inherent tension between diverse and competing world views, whether this be between groups that have recently migrated into territories previously occupied by other cultures and peoples, or between cultures and peoples that have long withstood the effects of

colonization from previous eras. Although the circumstances and conditions may be different, the underlying dialectics are nevertheless the same, namely the “toing” and “froing” between diverse knowledge systems and their relation, in turn, to the structures of power, both economic and political, within nation states. It is furthermore, this relationship of knowledge, power and political context that determines the nature of the educational system and the place it accords to diversity and multiculturalism.

UNESCO’s mandate

UNESCO, as the United Nations agency charged with monitoring and supporting the global trends in education, science, culture and communications, was mandated to support the development of “the means of communication between peoples and to employ these means for the purposes of mutual understanding and a truer and more perfect knowledge of each other’s lives”⁷. UNESCO was born with a post-War vision of utopian idealism, the key to peaceful relations between countries and peoples was, it was thought, the cultivation of knowledge and understanding. At that time, in the early forties, however, only 18 countries attended the first London Conference and only 44 came to the Constitutional Conference held in 1945. The world map still reflected the dominance of imperialism and it was only in the sixties with the achievement of independence by African states that the current configuration of UNESCO membership came into being and was able to develop its now considerable influence on the world debate on education, science, culture and communication and the interaction between these.

Cultural diversity

Stenou⁸ has analysed the major UNESCO documents in regard to cultural diversity since its creation and has found that four main periods of thinking in the Organization’s history may be observed. In the first place, in the years following the end of the Second World War, UNESCO focused on education and knowledge as the key to peace. “The idea of pluralism, diversity

or interculturality was therefore linked to that of international, not intranational, differences....” Culture itself was seen less as a question of identity than as of artistic expression. The second period witnessed the independence of many formerly colonial countries which now entered the international arena and whose justification for coming into existence as nation states lay, precisely, in their separate cultural identities. During this period, a growing resistance to the homogenizing forces of technology began to be evident coupled with a largely silent resistance to the dominance of superpowers, in the Cold War context, by small states. The third period, she contends, constituted an extension of the second period whereby the notion of culture as political power became associated with the idea of endogenous development. The link between culture and development was associated with claims by developing countries to follow their own paths for development and to have the right to receive international funding for this. Finally, the fourth and most recent period has been characterized by a link between culture and democracy, with an emphasis on the need for tolerance and understanding not only between member states but also within them. We may add to her analysis that this has been associated with accelerated globalization and corresponding demographic shifts caused by, on the one hand, increasingly mobile migratory movements and on the other, sharp drops in the fertility levels of industrialized countries coupled with the opening up market economies occasioning influxes of young immigrant labour from different cultural backgrounds into ageing, formerly monocultural and monolingual societies.

The most recent period in UNESCO’s work in regard to cultural diversity is marked by the watershed of the post 9/11 period. In particular, the General Conference of 2001 following shortly after the event itself, with all the debate and ramifications that ensued, unanimously approved the Universal Declaration of Cultural Diversity seeing this as an opportunity to reaffirm the need for inter cultural dialogue and to avoid what Huntington had seen as the inevitable clash of civilizations⁹. The focus was now on the concept of constructive pluralism and the Organization’s Medium term Strategy for 2002 to 2007 explicitly states “the idea is to channel diversity towards constructive pluralism

through the creation of state and societal mechanisms to promote harmonious interaction between cultures. ...the protection of cultural diversity is closely linked to the larger framework of the dialogue among civilizations and cultures and its ability to achieve genuine mutual understanding, solidarity and cooperation". (Stenou: 20).

The UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions approved in October, 2005 reinforced the ideas already expressed in the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity of 2001 in regard to the role of education in protecting cultural diversity, stating that diversity can only be guaranteed through respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and through educational programmes which sustain these.

Dialogue between Civilizations

The notion of dialogue between civilizations to neutralize or substitute for the supposed clash theory put forward by Huntington (op.cit) is now central to the thinking of UNESCO. The concept of "civilization" itself, moreover, is understood as "universal, plural and non- hierarchical... evolving through contact, exchange and dialogue...and is inherently inter cultural"¹⁰. There has indeed been a shift in the Organization's thinking in regard to the notion of dialogue that has been documented in several texts.¹¹

The movement for Dialogue among Civilizations has in turn motivated a considerable number of meetings and declarations which seek to move the agenda beyond merely stating the notion of goodwill between countries and cultures and towards seeking practical manifestations of that sense of community and tolerance. Hence, an International Ministerial Conference on the Dialogue among Civilizations was organized in India in 2003, a Regional Forum on Dialogue among Civilizations held in Macedonia in 2003, while in 2004, the Tirana regional Summit was convened on Inter religious and Inter ethnic Dialogue in South East Europe and finally in Hanoi in the same year, there was an Asia Pacific Conference on Dialogue among Cultures and Civilizations for Peace and Sustainable Development. Then in

2005 an International Conference on Fostering Dialogue among Cultures and Civilizations through Concrete and Sustainable Initiatives was held in Morocco whose aim was to be “a launch pad for the development and adoption of series of concrete measures and activities”.

At the Rabat Conference education was identified as a prerequisite for dialogue and inter cultural understanding. “There is a repeated appeal from governments, politicians, parliamentarians, educators, decision-makers and civil society representatives to use education as a privileged tool for fostering the dialogue among cultures and civilizations”.¹²

In particular, certain areas of education were singled out for emphasis to achieve this goal. Citizenship education, for example, whose aim is to teach young people their legal rights and obligations, and to promote their commitment to shared values, equity and justice, tolerance and respect for the Other. Multicultural education, itself, was conceived as enhancing and improving knowledge of culture, civilizations, religions and traditions through teachers' guides and curriculum models as well as the revision of national textbooks and university curricula in key disciplines such as history, geography, philosophy, social and human sciences. Particular emphasis was placed on the importance of textbook revision, for these: “present an opportunity for engaged dialogue between students, between teachers, and by extension between students and their families and ultimately between cultures”.(ibid) The need for these to be examined from a gender and a human rights perspective so as to eliminate stereotypes and promote a positive view of other cultures was emphasized.

Much of the discourse surrounding the dialogue between civilizations has been intertwined with that of the prevention of terrorism, and indeed dialogue is perceived as an essential preventative measure to undermine the bases of hatred and misunderstanding that provoke terrorist activity. In particular in 2004 the Secretary General's High Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change made specific reference to the pivotal role of education.¹³ Nevertheless we should be cautious about making assumptions in regard to the relationship, either in terms of promotion or prevention, between schooling and the

development of terrorism. Research carried out on this issue has not brought forward conclusive evidence that this is in fact the case, and it is evident that simplistic assumptions far from clarifying matters, often serve to confuse or create further intolerance or negative stereotyping.¹⁴

The Alliance of Civilizations (AoC)

In 2005, the Secretary General of the United Nations convened a High Level Group to examine ways and means to reduce world tensions and contribute to the fight against terrorism. One area which was marked out for attention was inevitably the schooling system and education in general, this being the principal institutional context where young people learn to relate to others in society and the world, and develop their personal and social identities. School is where they learn about their own history, and sometimes, the history of other countries and their society's place in the world. In particular, the Group looked amongst other topics, at issues in global and cross cultural education, media literacy, teaching about religion, peace and civic education, higher education and teacher training and the role of the internet in education.

A major recommendation of the AoC has been the importance placed on the question of World History. The need has been stressed to develop curriculum and further disseminate those curriculums already available on World History, and to train teachers able to communicate to students the commonalities in the history of the world and the multiplicities and connections contained therein. The Report on education submitted to the High Level Group found that World History research and curriculum is not as advanced in Muslim regions of the world as in North America, the Far East and Latin America and that this lacuna should be addressed by the AoC in its work. Nevertheless, despite the fact world history studies are more developed in some regions, this does not of itself guarantee understanding and tolerance of other civilizations and their histories.¹⁵ The Report also recommends further efforts in teaching about other religions in schools.

Education in multilingual contexts

Language and culture are, it is often posed, two sides of the same coin. Without language there is no culture, and language itself is the vehicle by which culture is communicated through collective memory and representation. Linguistic diversity is closely linked to cultural diversity and in many contexts also to biological diversity where loss of local languages often implies loss of local knowledge of the ecology.

Questions of identity, nationhood and power are closely linked to the use of specific languages in the classroom. In fact, the choice of language (or languages) of instruction is probably one of the most hotly debated aspects of inter cultural education occasioning widely divergent views on all sides of the spectrum. While there are strong educational arguments in favour of the use of mother tongue instruction a careful balance needs to be made between facilitating learning and providing access to broader learning contexts. Linguistic isolation from the rest of society is clearly a danger in minority language instruction, and policy makers need to be sensitive to the importance of bilingual models of instruction, and of avoiding the creation of museum cultures in ghettos on the margins of mainstream society.

In this regard, there are certain guiding principles which have been produced throughout the years of UNESCO's mandate for action in the field of languages in education and have been the subject of numerous debates and declarations. They may be understood in terms of three key positions:

In the first place, UNESCO supports mother tongue instruction as a means of improving educational quality by building upon the knowledge and experience of the learners and the teachers. Secondly, UNESCO supports bilingual and/or multilingual education at all levels of education as a means of promoting both social and gender equality and as a key element of linguistically diverse societies. And finally, UNESCO supports language as an essential component of intercultural education in order to encourage understanding between different population groups and ensure respect for fundamental rights.¹⁶

Inter cultural education

UNESCO's work on education in general, and Inter cultural education, in particular, is framed within a number of standard setting instruments and documents, the major one of which is the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) which states categorically that

Education shall be directed to the full development of human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial and religious groups and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace¹⁷

These principles are echoed in later standard setting documents, in particular the UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education (1960), the UNESCO Recommendation concerning Education for International Understanding, Cooperation, Peace and Education relating to Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (1974), The International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination (1965), and the Declaration in the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief (1981).

The 1966 International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights adds a central provision concerning the social empowerment of the individual through education by stating that "education shall enable all persons to participate effectively in a free society"¹⁸ while the 1989 Convention on Technical and Vocational Education explicitly states the need to take into consideration the cultural background of students and speaks of the importance of protecting the common heritage of mankind.¹⁹ The (1989) Convention on the Rights of the Child, one of the most influential conventions in this regard, states explicitly that "the education of the child shall be directed to...the development of respect for the child's parents, his or her own cultural identity, languages and values, for the national values of the county in which the child is living, the country from which he or she may originate, and for civilizations different from his or

her own.”²⁰ Similarly, the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and member of their Families (1990) emphasized that the teaching of the mother tongue and culture of the immigrants should be facilitated. More explicitly still, the ILO Convention 169 which addresses the needs of Indigenous and Tribal Peoples stipulates that “education programmes and services for the peoples concerned shall be developed and implemented....to address their special needs and shall incorporate their histories, their knowledge and technologies, their value systems and their social, economic and cultural aspirations...”²¹ Specifically, in regard to inter cultural relations, it is required that “educational measures shall be taken among all sections of the national community...with the object of eliminating prejudices that they may harbour in respect of these peoples” (ref).²²

Yet there is an underlying tension, though not necessarily a contradiction, between both the universality of the human right to education and the right to hold distinct identities as manifest in the phenomenon of cultural pluralism. Concepts of diversity, and indeed the reality of it, may inevitably create a need to accommodate different cultural and linguistic identities within a common national curriculum. The challenge is to be responsive to the expressed needs of specific societies. It may well be that different educational models emerge across regional, subregional and, indeed, local realities. While in some situations there may be expressed demand for an education that responds to and is inclusive of local cultural contexts, in others, this may be seen as marginalizing local communities from mainstream educational opportunities in the broader national context. Nevertheless, this need not be the case, and there are many successful examples of inter cultural education that reflect the contexts in which children are growing up.²³

The Delors Commission on Education for the Twenty First Century established by UNESCO in 1993 to determine the emerging orientations of education policy in the world, set out four basic pillars of learning essential for the future of education. These were:²⁴

- Learning to know
- Learning to do
- Learning to live together.
- Learning to be

Of these, the third pillar is arguably the most important in terms of inter cultural education and learning. By learning to live together children “develop an understanding of other people and an appreciation of interdependence-carrying out joint projects and learning to manage conflicts in a spirit of respect for the values of pluralism, mutual understanding ...and peace”.²⁵

How may these pillars be translated into inter cultural education policy as understood by UNESCO? Throughout the past sixty years of its history UNESCO has served as a global forum for dialogue between member states, and as a reflector of trends and new thinking on social, scientific and educational issues. An analysis of documents and recommendations produced over this period has led to the establishment of certain key principles in regard to inter cultural education which may be summarized as

- respect for the cultural identity of the learner through provision of culturally appropriate and responsive quality education for all,
- provision of the cultural knowledge, attitudes and skills necessary to participate fully and actively in society, and
- provision of the cultural knowledge, attitudes and skills which enable learners to contribute to respect, understanding and solidarity among individuals, ethnic, social, cultural and religious groups and nations.²⁶

As events and international politics continue to shape world history, so too will the focus of UNESCO in terms of policy which reflects the needs and concerns of member states in a changing global context. Nevertheless, the Organization’s central mandate as originally set out in its Constitution to promote world peace through inter cultural dialogue remains as crucial as ever as we move forward through the 21st century.

Endnotes

¹ Various studies have shown that children learn better when they learn in their mother tongue. See in this regard Tucker, G.R. 1997 *The Use of First and Second Languages in Education: A Review of Educational Experience*; Mehotra, S. 1998 *Education for All: Policy Lessons From High Achieving Countries*; UNICEF Staff Working Papers and Dutcher, N. 2001 *Expanding Educational Opportunity in Linguistically Diverse Societies*. Center for Applied Linguistics, Washington.

² The eight Millenium Development Goals include the achievement of universal primary education for boys and girls by 2015. See: www.un.org/millenniumgoals.

³ See UNESCO 2000 World Report. *Education for All*.

⁴ See for example, United Nations Development Program, Human Development Report 2004 *Cultural Liberty in Today's Diverse World*. New York: UNDP; and the 2006 World Bank Report: *Cultural Diversity and Delivery of Services: A Major Challenge for Social Inclusion*

⁵ UNESCO 1992 International Conference on Education 43rd session. The contribution of education to cultural development. P.5

⁶ cf UNESCO 2001 Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity

⁷ 1945 preamble Constitution UNESCO

⁸ UNESCO 2004 ed K. Stenou. Unesco and the issue of cultural diversity. Review and strategy 1946 to 2004.

⁹ Huntington, Samuel 1996 *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*. New York. Simon and Schuster

¹⁰ UNESCO 2005 Report by the Director General on the Promotion of the Dialogue among Peoples. 171/EX.40

¹¹ See in particular UNESCO 2004 *New Approaches and Concrete Actions in the Dialogue among Civilizations* UNESCO 170 EX7INF 5 (Executive Board document).

¹² UNESCO, ISESCO, ALECSO, OIC, DCCO, Anna Lindh Foundation. 2005 Background Document : International Conference among Cultures and Civilizations through Concrete and Sustainable Initiatives. Rabat

¹³ UN 2004 *A More Secure World: Our Shared Responsibility*. www.un.org/secureworld

¹⁴ cf. Douglass' analysis for the High Level Group of the Alliance of Civilizations of research findings on this issue, particularly in studies in Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, which failed to find any clear linkage.

¹⁵ Indeed, recent polls in US cited by Douglass (op.cit.) suggest that is far from being the case, although a report published by the BBC (

BBC World Service 19.02.2007) comparing attitudes in 27 different countries found striking differences in attitudes even between European countries.

¹⁶ See UNESCO 2003. Education in a Multilingual World. Ed.

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¹⁷ Art. 26.2 Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948.

¹⁸ Art. 13, International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. 1966

¹⁹ Art 3 Convention on Technical and Vocational Education 1989

²⁰ Art 29 Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989

²¹ Art 27. ILO Convention 169 concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries. 1991

²² *ibid.* Art.31

²³ See King,L. and S.Schielman 2004 *The Challenge of Indigenous Education*. UNESCO for a set of case studies on successful practice in indigenous and intercultural education in different regions of the world.

²⁴ Delors, Jacques 1996 *Learning: The Treasure within Report to UNESCO of the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century* UNESCO

²⁵ *ibid.* page 97

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Alliance of Civilizations: “Islam and West” or among Cultures Globally?

Dr. Ismail Hakki Mirici

Associate Professor

President, WCCI Turkish Chapter

Board Member, WCCI International

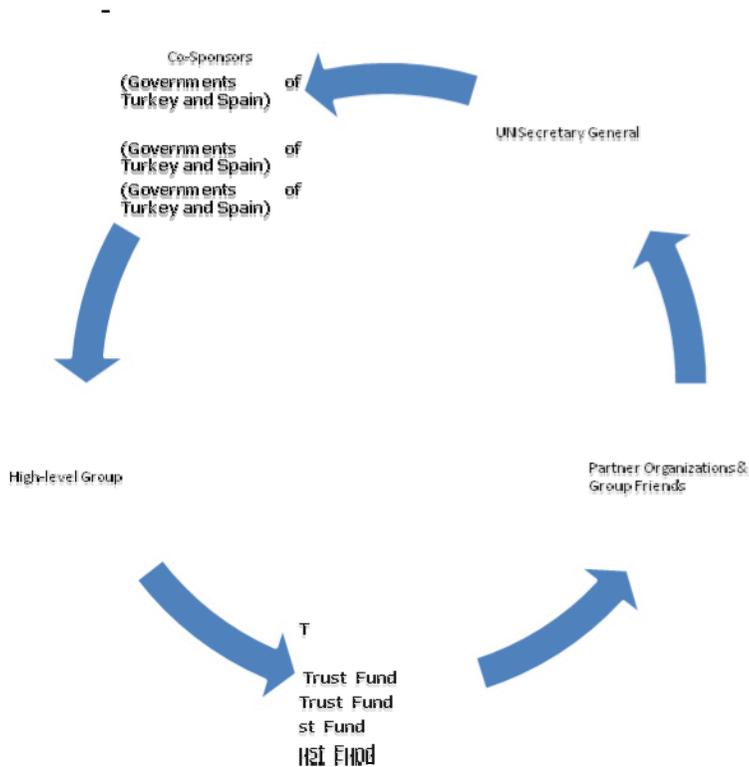
Introduction

The Alliance of Civilizations (AoC) was established in 2005, at the initiative of the Governments of Turkey and Spain, under the auspices of the United Nations. It aims to improve understanding and cooperation among nations and peoples across cultures and religions and, in the process, to help counter the forces that fuel polarization and extremism. The AoC is supported by a Group of Friends - a community of over 80 member countries and international organizations and bodies. The AoC cooperates with various partner organizations such as UNESCO, Council of Europe, League of Arab States, ALECSO, ISESCO and United Cities and Local Governments. It is co-sponsored by various academics and statesmen from different parts of the world like Professor Mehmet Aydin, State Minister of Turkish Republic (co-chair); Professor Federico Mayor, President of the Culture of Peace Foundation and former Director-General of UNESCO (co-chair); Mohammad Khatami, former President of Iran; Sheikha Mozah Consort of the Emir of the State of Qatar and Chairperson of the Qatar Bint Nasser Al Missned Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development; Dr. Ismail Serageldin, President, Bibliotheca Alexandria; Dr. Mohamed Charfi, former Education Minister of Tunisia; André Azoulay, Adviser to King Mohammed VI of Morocco; Moustapha Niassé, former Prime Minister of Senegal; Archbishop Desmond Tutu, The Rt. Hon. Archbishop of Cape Town; Hubert Vedrine, former Minister of Foreign Affairs of France; Karen Armstrong, Historian of Religion (United Kingdom); Professor Vitaly Naumkin, President of the International Center for Strategic and Political

Studies and Chair, Moscow State University; Professor John Esposito, Founding Director-Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding, Georgetown University and Editor-in-Chief of the Oxford Encyclopedia of the Islamic World; Rabbi Arthur Schneier, President, Appeal of Conscience Foundation & Senior Rabbi, Park East Synagogue; Enrique Iglesias, Ibero-American Secretary-General and former President of Inter American Development Bank; Professor Candido Mendes, Secretary-General, Académie de la Latinité; Dr. Nafis Sadik, Special Adviser to the UN Secretary General; Shobana Bhartia, Managing Director of the Hindustan Times, New Delhi; Ali Alatas, former Foreign Minister of Indonesia; Professor Pan Guang, Director and Professor, Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences.

The AoC has online facilities to introduce best resources, materials and practices on cross-cultural dialogue and cooperation projects as well a Rapid Response Media Mechanism to supply constructive database and opinion during times of increased tensions around cross-cultural issues. Based on the recommendations made in the AoC High-level Group Report, its work is structured as in the diagram below and around the following three objectives (www.unaoc.org):

Diagram 1. Structure of the Alliance of Civilizations



- Co-sponsors: Governments of Turkey and Spain)
- High-level group: The UN Secretary General established the High-level Group under the co-sponsorship of the Governments of Turkey and Spain. It is composed of 20 prominent leaders in the fields of politics, academia, civil society, international finance, and media from all regions of the world. The High-level group has met five times since 2005, in Palma de Mallorca, Spain between 26-29 November 2005; in Doha, Qatar between 25-28 February 2006; in Dakar, Senegal between 28-30 May 2006; in New York between 5-6 September 2006; and in

Istanbul, Turkey between 12-13 November 2006, respectively. Its recommendations specifically encompass strategies for developing better cooperative frameworks and partnerships that can be nurtured to achieve the goals of the Alliance. It proposes educational approaches and methods for supporting the mobility of young people to promote values of moderation, cooperation and appreciation of diversity.

- Partner Organizations and Group Friends: The AoC cooperates with various partner organizations such as UNESCO, Council of Europe, League of Arab States, ALECSO, ISESCO and United Cities and Local Governments, and is supported by a Group of Friends - a community of over 80 member countries and international organizations and bodies.

The UN Secretary General also established a voluntary Trust Fund, which was recommended in the High-level Group's report. The main objectives of the Trust Fund are to support: (a.) the projects and activities of the AoC; (b.) the activities and outreach initiatives undertaken by the High Representative in his official capacity; and (c.) the AoC Secretariat's core operational and human resources needs.

Objectives:

1. Develop a network of partnership with States, international organizations, civil society groups, and private sector entities that share the goals of the AoC to reinforce their interaction and coordination with the UN system,
2. Develop, support, and highlight projects that promote understanding and reconciliation among cultures globally and, in particular, between Muslim and Western societies. These projects should be related to the four main fields of action of the Alliance: youth, education, media and migration,

3. Establish relations and facilitate dialogue among groups that can act as a force of moderation and understanding during times of heightened cross-cultural tensions.

In pursuing these objectives, the AoC maintains and demonstrates, through its choice of activities, a universal perspective. At the same time a priority emphasis on relations between Muslim and Western societies is warranted given that cross-cultural polarization and mutual fear are most acute within and between these communities and represent a threat to international stability and security (www.unaoc.org).

AoC Activities in Turkey

As one of the two leading sponsors of the Alliance, the Turkish government has been developing and supporting several projects, and has been organizing informative and encouraging meetings in the country. Some of the meetings and the projects are as follows:

1. **The meetings organized by the co-sponsor Professor Mehmet Aydın, Minister of State**
 - Supervisors' Meeting: Professor Halil İnalçık (Bilkent University), Professor Talat Halman (Bilkent University) - Ankara, 5 December, 2005
 - AoC Information Meeting: The Ambassadors of European Union member countries Ankara, 8 December, 2005
 - Supervisors' Meeting: Professor Mehmet Akif Aydın, Professor Mustafa Fayda, Professor Bekir Karlığa, Professor Alpaslan Açıkgenç, Professor Mete Tunçay, Professor Tülin Bumin, Professor Betül Çötüksöken, Fehmi Kuru, Ali Bulaç, Kürşat Bumin- Istanbul, 9 December, 2005
 - International Convention on Migration: Opening speech focusing on the AoC- Istanbul, 8-11 December, 2006

- Press Meeting: Media representatives Ankara, 13 December, 2005
- International Conference on “Women’s Role in the AoC”: Closing remarks of the conference- Istanbul, 28-29 February, 2006
- Maltepe University Conference on AoC: Istanbul, 17 March, 2006
- 18th Islamic Conference: Presentation on “AoC, Living Together and Islam” – Cairo, Egypt, 5-9 April, 2006
- Meeting with the Islamic Conference Youth Representatives: Ankara, 14 April, 2006
- Euro-med and Foro-med Common Meeting on “AoC, Peace in the Middle East, Palestine and Iraq- Cairo, Egypt, 22-23 April, 2006
- Opening Speech on “AoC and Migration Policy” at the International Conference on “Europe, Turkish Diaspora and Migration”: Istanbul, 27 April, 2006
- Speech on “AoC and Political Values” at the NATO Parliaments Assembly- Istanbul, 2 May, 2006
- Briefing with the Representatives of the Organization of European Security and Cooperation in Europe and AoC Co-sponsors – Vienna, Austria, 4 May 2006
- Opening Speech at the Forum Istanbul on “AoC and Living Together” – Istanbul, 11 May, 2006
- Opening Speech at the “Civilizations and World Systems”- Istanbul, 12-14 May, 2006
- Various articles released in various national newspapers and several television programs on different dates between 2005- 2008

2. National Projects

These projects are accessible at

<http://www.medeniyetlerittifaki.gov.tr/projeler.htm>

A. Ministries of State

Project	Year(s)
Modernization of Turkey through the Perspective of the AoC	2009
The Conference on Ataturk's Vision of Culture and Civilization	2008
The Conference on Inter-civilization Dialog and Cultural Diversity: Media's Role	2008
The Conference on Alliance of Civilizations in accordance with Scientific Developments	2009
The Conference on Islamic Civilization and Ottoman Peace	2009
Scholarships	2008-2009
The AoC Academic Board of Publications	2008-2009
Registered Productions and Translations Concerning the AoC	2008-2009
The Project on Media Literacy	2008-2009
Protocol on Publication Ethic Principles	2008-2009
The Seminar on Education for Media	2008-2009
World Children Festival	2008-2009
Projects on Visual Arts	2008-2009
The AoC Media Award	2008-2009
Internet Website and Meeting Point of Civilizations	2008-2009
The AoC and Training Seminars	2008-2009
The World Youth and Dialogue Conference	2009
Three Cultures, Three Cities, Three Sports	2008-2009
The Human Race One Step Two Continents	2008
Meeting of Civilizations: International Antakya- Rome Cycling Tour	2008
Culture of Sport and Peace	2008-2009
The Project on Runners for the Future	2008-2009
The Week of Youth	2008
Middle and South East European Turks – Turkish Youth Exchange Program	2008-2009
Employment Focused Youth Centers	2008-2009
Social Inclusion and Employment of the Youth	2008-2010
The Youth Social Development Program – The Bridge of the Youth Culture	2008-2009

Studies on the Turkish women who are living abroad	2008-2009
Studies on struggling against Human Trade	2008
The AoC and Religious-Cultural Activities	2008-209
Activities of the Experiences on Living Together in Islam	2008
Training Program on Preparing Religious Staff for International Services	2008-2009
Student Exchange	2008-2009
International Theology Program	2008-2009
The Project on Inter-religious Relations in terms of Historical, Doctrinal and Functional Dimensions	2008-2009
Studies on informing Turkish people living abroad on the AoC	2008-2009

B- Ministry of Inner Affairs

Project	Year(s)
Projects which are harmonious with the basic principles of the AoC	2008-2009

C- Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Project	Year(s)
Regional Meetings: Central Asia, Middle East Balkans	2008-2009
Summit Meeting of Africa	2008
Struggling activities against religious, ethnic, cultural discrimination and Islamofobia	2008-2009

D- Ministry of Education

Project	Year(s)
The AoC and Educational Curriculum	2008-2009
Course books	2008-2009

Providing Universal Access/Participation to/in Elementary Education	2008-2009
Participation in the related international projects	2008-2009
Democracy Education and School Councils	2008-2009
The Portal of Accessing Knowledge	2008-2009
Introducing historical heredity and cultural values to students	2008-2009
Academic Activities	2008-2009
The Centers of Fight Prevention and Solution	2008-2009
Dialog Studies	2008-2009
Student Exchange	2008-2009
Comprehensive Student Project	2008-2009
Scholarships	2008-2009
Cultural and Educational Visits	2008-2009

E- Ministry of Labor and Social Security

Project	Year(s)
Activities related to migration and immigrants	2008-2009
Diagnosis and National Action Plan on the Employment of the Youth	2008-2009
Project on the Introduction to the Vocational Education and Employment	2008-2009
Project on Women- Men Equality in Employment and Increasing Women Employment	2008-2009
Intercultural Apprenticeship Project	2008-2009

F- Ministry of Culture and Tourism

Project	Year(s)
Exhibition of the Inter-civilization Interaction	2008-2009
Exhibition of the Culture of Living Together from Ottoman to Republic	2008
Exhibition of the Handwritten Manuscripts and Rare Works of Art	2009
Cultural Bridge Program	2008-2013

AoC Art Activities	2008
Mevlana Documentary	2008-2009
Documentary on the Anatolia Culture and Civilizations	2008-2009
2008 Frankfurt Book Fair Host Country-Turkey	2008
European Capital of Culture- Istanbul	2008-2010
The meeting of the Mediterranean Countries National Library Directors	2008
Islamic History of Science and Technology Museum	2008-2009
Tourist Guide Training	2008-2009
Youth Tourism	2008-2009
Map of Religious Tourism and Religious-Cultural Activities	2008-2009

G- Ministry of Environment and Forest

Project	Year(s)
Regional Collaborative Meetings Concerning Water	2008
Regional Collaborative Meetings Concerning Environment and Forestation	2008-2009

The activities stated above show how much the AoC is valued by Turkey. Almost every section of the Turkish government either developed or supported a project which contributes to the dissemination of the principles introduced by the Alliance.

Discussion on the Approaches of the Alliance

It is an undeniable fact that most of the global problems concerning international and intercultural relations stem from educational problems. Unfortunately, in most of the developing countries there is a serious education problem. Only a minority of people receives good quality education and consequently has greater chance to have a good career in life. However, the majority has to struggle for better educational opportunities for their families. Recep Tayyip Erdogan (2006), the Prime Minister

of Turkey, points out that terrorism and violence are fed through illiteracy. Therefore various international treaties and huge projects are aimed at overcoming the growing global illiteracy problem. Lisbon Strategies, Bologna Process, the EU Life Long Learning Projects and the PISA projects are only some of them.

When the objectives of the AoC are examined it is seen that in some documents it identifies the focus group of the civilizations as “the West” and “the Islam”. For example, Jorge Sampaio, High Representative for the AoC (2007, a), underlines the significance of bridging West-Islam divide and states that “... the emergence of the contemporary trend towards extremism is not specific problem of the relations between Western and Muslim societies”. However, Sampaio (2007,b) also points out that the Alliance deals with some major problems of our times such as how to bridge cultural and religious fault lines dividing societies; how to improve mutual respect and understanding between different communities and societies. Similarly, in the same meeting it is also stressed that the top priority of the AoC is to work in closer collaboration with all partners, both within and outside the UN system. Asian, Pacific, African, European and Latin America regional bodies need to be mobilized to make the AoC a success. When these two different conceptual approaches are compared and contrasted, it can be seen that there is a confusion of concepts in the definition of “alliance”. Is it an alliance of the West and the Islam or an alliance of different religions and cultures without special reference to a particular region for a global peace? In the same vein Zapatero, the Prime Minister of Spain (2008), maintains that “The fact is, if the Alliance of Civilizations is a concept of a strategic, global nature, it will only be a success; it will only last over time, if we are able to give it a practical, specific content”. However, this specific content must also be planned in a global scale, covering all living cultures and societies.

It cannot be claimed that religions belong to certain regions in the world. If the subject matter is Islam, it has to cover all regions of the world including the West owing to millions of Muslim citizens in the Western countries. If the subject matter is civilizations, then the discussion for the global and universal understanding of the Alliance should be based on the East, the

North, the South even the North-east, South-west, not only on the West. Zapatero (2008) focuses on the significance of the role of the Alliance saying “...it does want to contribute to isolating extremist and intolerant discourses on the part of those who try to utilize religion or culture for political purposes. It does aspire to build bridges that can help us to manage the differences existing in the world, particularly those linked to religious or cultural issues”. Therefore it should be remembered that for a global peace there must be a global understanding of the “Alliance” covering all cultures and all religions regardless of their location.

Sampio (2007, c) reports that Madeline Albright argues that the resurgence of religious feeling will continue to influence world events, and he also maintains that to promote the idea that religion is one of the principle sources of harm and violence in the world is not only unfair; it is also dangerous because it diverts our attention from the political roots of most conflicts. Erdogan, the Prime Minister of Turkey (2005), stresses the fact that in the essence of cultures or religions there can be no motives of violence and conflict. Sampio (2008) says that “to prevent polarization, confrontation, conflict and intolerance and to develop a culture of peace, understanding, tolerance and respect, we need universal values grounded on the common humanity shared by every man, woman and child on earth, regardless of linguistic, racial, religious and other differences”. Similarly, on the website of the AoC (www.unaoc.org) in the Recommended Readings page it is reported that in the Exploring Misconceptions about the Islamic World section, there is a Daily Lesson Plan on the AoC by the New York Times Learning Network. In this lesson, students learn about a United Nations initiative to create the AoC to resolve conflict between the East and West. They then discuss and dismantle a number of misconceptions about the Muslim world. Erdogan, the Prime Minister of Turkey underpins two significant facts as in the following:

1. We have to recognize humanitarian values rather than power based relations;

2. Every culture has its unique contribution through universal values to the development history of the world

Suggestions

It is not fair to claim that there is a “clash of civilizations” in the world. “Alliance of Civilizations” should be seen as an effort to establish and maintain sustainable world peace for the future generations. Surely, it is not possible to pretend that there are no conflicts in most part of the world including the East and the West. These conflicts may stem from political or economical reasons. Therefore if there is “clash”, this is not a “clash of civilizations”. This is a “clash of politicians” or a “clash of economies”. For instance, it is reported that “Spanish Prime Minister Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero has come under criticism for posing with a Palestinian scarf on his shoulders after accusing Israel of using force "abusively" to defend itself”. Despite the fact that a scarf represents Islamic beliefs, the reaction to Zapatero is against Palestinian attitude in the region and this reaction is on behalf of Israel’s policy in the Middle East; not on behalf of Christian or Jewish beliefs. Moreover, both Palestine and Israel are in the same region; one is not in the West and the other is not Islam, and when the problems between these two countries are solved, it will simply mean that the problem between Israel and Palestine is solved.

Undoubtedly, labeling some regions as “Islam” or “Christian” means underestimating the power of the loving hands of God. For instance, a big percentage of the population of Turkey is Muslim but Turkey cannot be called an Islamic country. Turkey is a young modern republic which appreciates democracy and secularism with its Muslim, Christian, Jewish and other citizens. And as the citizens of this young republic, Turkish people always value the great Statesman, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk’s motto, “Peace at home, peace in the world”. Similarly, the Western countries cannot be labeled as “Christian countries” due to their Muslim, Jewish, Hindu or other citizens. Countries have their governing systems and people living in a country have their beliefs called religion. Despite the fact that religion is a

common thick red line in the lives of human beings, countries should not be labeled in accordance with the characteristics of individuals however big portion of the population it may be.

Improving educational facilities concerning cultural diversity not only in the developing countries but also in the developed countries will be the most effective means of action for inter-cultural and inter-faith dialogue, mutual respect and understanding. Most people in the developed Western countries assume that Islam is a threat to their social life. However, in Islam, just like all other religions, fighting is forbidden. Muslims are guided to love all creatures and they are reminded that a human being is the most beloved creature of God. In the holy book of Muslims, Koran, Christ is introduced as one of the prophets who helped human beings find the way of the God. And all Muslims believe in Christ, which is not known commonly by most of those who have developed Islamofobia. Tony Blair, former Prime Minister of Britain (2006) introduces Koran through his statement "The most remarkable thing about reading the Koran - in so far as it can be truly translated from the original Arabic - is to understand how progressive it is. I speak with great diffidence and humility as a member of another faith. I am not qualified to make any judgments. But as an outsider, the Koran strikes me as a reforming book, trying to return Judaism and Christianity to their origins, rather as reformers attempted with the Christian Church centuries later. It is inclusive. It extols science and knowledge and abhors superstition. It is practical and way ahead of its time in attitudes to marriage, women and governance".

Likewise, Käser (2008) reports that "Analysis on the Media Report of the AoC illustrates that western journalists are frequently unfamiliar or only very superficially informed about Muslim culture, which often leads to misunderstandings and biased coverage focusing on marginal systems such as radical Islam while ignoring the vast majority of Muslims". Tony Blair also says (2006) "There are those - perfectly decent-minded people - who say the extremists who commit these acts of terrorism are not true Muslims. And, of course, they are right. They are no more proper Muslims than the Protestant bigot who murders a Catholic in Northern Ireland is a proper Christian."

Providing sufficient education for all, both in the developing and in the developed countries about different cultures, will contribute to internationally collaborative fight against terrorism. It should not be forgotten that terrorists cannot represent a society or a culture or a religion.

When the conflicts in different parts of the world are closely examined, besides the education based reasons, it is also possible to realize that globalization matters due to the fear of homogenization and question of identity. From this viewpoint it is safe to assume that conflicts can partially be avoided through letting each culture find itself in the diversity. From this perspective Blair (2006) points out “Which brings me to the fundamental point. ‘We’ is not the West. ‘We’ are as much Muslim as Christian or Jew or Hindu. ‘We’ are those who believe in religious tolerance, openness to others, to democracy, liberty and human rights administered by secular courts”. Therefore all political leaders, representatives of international and regional bodies, civil society groups and foundations should introduce some practical and feasible plans for promoting cross-cultural understanding globally.

Considering the global scope of the objectives of the Alliance we should focus on democracy, peace and collaboration for every single world citizen whoever s/he may be and wherever s/he may live. S/he can be a shepherd in the highlands of Sweden, a business person in Manhattan island of New York in the USA, a driver in Lagos in Nigeria or a student in Manila in the Philippines.

Conclusion

Unfortunately, it is a striking fact that in some parts of the world due to economic, social and political reasons, there are financial, educational and health problems which need urgent solution. As a result of such problems, sometimes cross-cultural problems may occur. The AoC has a significant role in building bridges between societies as well as in promoting mutual understanding and tolerance through reducing tensions and hostility within and among societies. The UN Secretary General, Co-sponsors

(Governments of Turkey and Spain), High level Group, Partner Organizations and Group Friends have exerted great effort in pursuing the objectives of the Alliance.

In light of the discussion in this study, it is safe to conclude that we need self-criticism, mutual understanding and dialogue, but the conceptualization of the problems should be revised and the general policy in the problem solving approaches of the AoC should be determined accordingly. The action plans have to focus on the consequent answer to the following question: Is this an alliance of "Islam and the West" or "among cultures globally"?

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Peace Education for Inter-ethnic and Inter-cultural Solidarity in Uganda: A Curriculum Agenda

Stephen Langole

*Institute of Peace and Strategic Studies
Gulu University*

Introduction

Uganda has a history chequered with inter-ethnic and inter-cultural tensions and conflicts, and these must have had a bearing on the violent conflicts that have been a common feature in the country. Ijuka (1989) establishes that such inter-ethnic and inter-cultural conflicts manifest as prejudices, stereotypes and other subtle or covert forms of marginalization and hatred.²⁷ Ijuka's research focused mainly on the public service but appears to mirror some other deep seated inter-ethnic "othering," stereotypes and prejudices that obtain in the wider political, social and economic realms. Aspects of these are well covered in Barongo's (1989) as well as in Pinyewa's (1989) articles.

The inter-ethnic tensions and conflicts in Uganda as will be exemplified are not in line with the need to educate for dialogue among civilizations whose importance was recognized way back in 1998, followed by the UN's proclamation of the year 2001 as the Year of Dialogue among Civilizations. Some of the highlights in the proclamation include the need for following:

Actively promote a culture of peace – respect for one another – regardless of belief, culture, language, and not fearing or repressing differences within or between societies but cherishing them as a precious asset of humanity; Encourage openness to the positive side of globalization... Globalization is not only an economic, financial and technological process; it constitutes a human challenge that invites us to embrace the interdependence of humankind and its rich cultural diversity (Toh, 2008, 2).

In the proclamation, it was also recognized that education systems need reforms and the role of religions was recognized thus:

Educational systems need to guide children and youth to understand and respect cultural and faith diversity, and to promote peace in their societies and world; Religion is an increasingly important dimension of many societies, a significant source of values for individuals, and can play a critical role in promoting an appreciation of other cultures, religions, and ways of life (Toh, 2008, 2).

This article is therefore anchored on proposing some aspects of educational reforms that can lead to the promotion of dialogue among civilizations with the hope that such reforms once realized will be holistic as to lead to inter-cultural solidarity within and beyond Uganda.

Uganda has over 50 tribes or ethnic groups. The tribes of Uganda are distinct groups of people bound together by customs, beliefs, language, tradition and practices. This article attempts to exemplify the existence of inter-ethnic or inter-cultural conflicts in Uganda and also looks at whether or not an educational intervention or interfaith intervention would help in transforming these conflicts and if the former intervention is required what kind of curriculum would be appropriate at what levels.

Inter-ethnic Conflicts in Uganda

This section will attempt to highlight some research based views concerning inter-ethnic conflicts in Uganda. In Ijuka (1989, pp. 167) inter-tribal views were sought in regard to inter-ethnic conflicts within the public service. The findings reveal mainly negative views concerning six different tribes as highlighted below²⁸:

Tribe A

“Very hypocritical. Very proud. Very submissive.”

“Give A’s (sic) money and they will be okay.”

“Very elusive. Very nice on the surface but inwardly very malicious.” “Very good diplomats because diplomats are liars. Will stay with you and then stab you on the back.”

Tribe B

“Arrogant as A’s (sic). They look at others as inferior creatures.”
“Very arrogant. They don’t believe that other ethnic groups are also people.”

Tribe C

“Outright rude and violent.”
“Rude; have little respect for law, order, discipline.”
“Very aggressive, uncultured, undisciplined, ambitious.”

Tribe D

“Conmen and gamblers”,
“More opportunistic than arrogant”;
“Very opportunistic. Like chameleons; they will take on the colour of the political party in power at the time; will sing to the tune of any ruler, however cacophonous.”

Tribe E

“What the master says – so do I say.”
“Submissive. Always following the existing (political) order as though blown by the wind.”
“Non-aligned in political matters.”

Tribe F

“Crude, rough, highly united, industrious, no nonsense.”
“Generally hot tempered, aggressive but at the same time very good people to associate with due to their openmindedness.”
“...strong, hard-working but like fighting and drinking.”

These views exemplify that the tribes in Uganda generally look at one another negatively and the sentiments have the potential to translate and often do translate into inter-ethnic tensions, suspicion, and disharmony or open conflicts.

The colonialists also created other divisive labels; the North-South Divide in Uganda with peoples of the former being

classified further as Nilotics, Nilo-Hamites or Sudanic and the latter as Bantu. The latter were recognized as more politically organized and civilized (Pinyewa, 1989). These classifications became a ground for political, social as well as economic marginalization of the North and favouritism of the South. The North, then comprising Acholi, Karamoja, Lango and West Nile basically became cheap labour reservoir for the “more agriculturally productive” south and also for recruitment of soldiers; a job taken as inferior by the Southerners.

Ironically, the top political leadership of the 1960s, 1970s and to some extent 1980s were taken by the “Northerners” with presidents Apollo Milton Obote and his former army commander, Idi Amin sharing 21 years between them from independence in 1962 to 1985. These were not peaceful periods for these leaders, since sentiments like “we are tired of Northerners” began cropping up by the Southerners who felt their formerly organized kingdoms of Buganda, Busoga, Toro and Bunyoro were desecrated (Pinyewa, 1989; Barongo, 1989).

Obote lost power to Amin in 1971. Amin’s rule exposed the fallacy of assuming that “Northerners” is a coherent group. On ascending to power, Amin, a Kakwa from West Nile, killed scores of Obote’s tribe and a related Acholi tribe, thinking they were a threat to his rule and recruited mainly his fellow West Nilers into the army. A combined force of Ugandan exiles and Tanzanian forces ousted Amin in 1979 leading to revenge killing against the West Nile tribes. A disputed general election in 1980 was to see Obote regain his presidential seat.

A Southerner, Yoweri Museveni decided to challenge the “rigged” election by waging a successful guerilla war that elevated him to the presidential seat in 1986. Museveni played on the regional sentiments, “We are tired of Northerners” (Barongo, 1989). This marked a period of perceived Southerners or Bantu dominance, which continues to the present. Meanwhile prior to Museveni’s ascendancy to power, a rift had also developed between the erstwhile close Acholi and Langi tribe. The army Commander, General Tito Okello and his ally, Bazilio Olara Okello, both Acholi, deposed Obote a Langi in 1985 culminating in killing and looting in Lango by a predominantly Acholi army.

The election patterns today indicate that the “Bantu government” is not popular to the majority of “Northerners.” Not surprisingly, the armed insurrections against the Museveni regime since 1986 are predominantly by Northerners.

The War in Northern Uganda and Inter-ethnic Conflicts

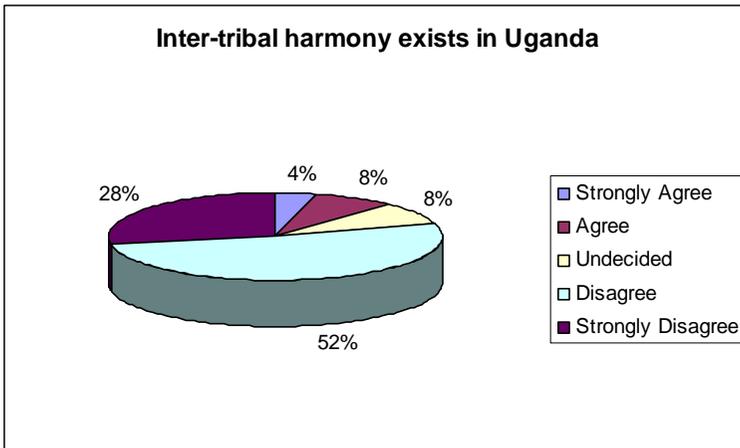
The war in Northern Uganda has also contributed to fuelling inter-ethnic conflicts. The longest of this war has been that of the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA) that is composed predominantly of the Acholi tribe. The LRA has, however, wreaked havoc in most of Northern Uganda causing tension and sometimes open hostility against the Acholi tribe with whom they are associated.

In Langole research (2007. pp. 33)²⁹ respondents’ opinions were sought on issues of relationship amongst different tribes of Uganda both within and outside Gulu University; their freedom of expression and identities. Opinions were also sought on whether the University education system enhances cultural respect, identities, solidarity.

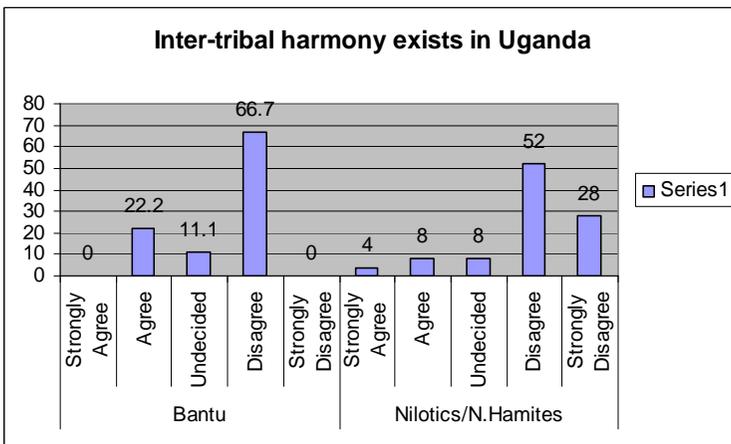
Up to 80 percent of the respondents thought there is disharmony amongst the different tribes of Uganda and 44 percent thought inter/multi-cultural education is not integrated in learning at the University. Meanwhile 52 percent thought students’ politics at the University is not free of tribal sentiments.

Relationships between neighbouring tribes were found to be quite sour too, with 76 percent of respondents thinking there is no harmony between the Acholi and Langi tribes; 64 percent thought such harmony did not exist between the Acholi and Bantu tribes while 40 percent had the same opinion about relationship between the Acholi and Lugbara tribes. Up to 40 percent of the respondents also thought inter-clan conflicts are significant in the Internally Displaced People’s Camps (IDPs) hence the units of fragmentation are intra-ethnic or intra-tribe as well.

Chart I:
Statement: There is harmony between different tribes of Uganda



Graph I:



Proportionately more Nilotics and Nilo Hamites than the Bantu tribes do not think inter-tribal harmony prevails in Uganda. (Source: Langole S. (2007). Project Development Report. UPEACE, Costa Rica).

*Formal and Informal Education
and Inter-ethnic/Intercultural Conflicts*

The History of Uganda is part of the curriculum in the formal education in the country. Hence a person who attends history class up to Senior 4 would not miss the Buganda Crisis of 1966, sometimes also called the Storming of Lubiri (The Buganda Seat) by Milton Obote's forces headed by Idi Amin, then Obote's army commander. This could later be interpreted as an affront by Northerners against Southerners that forced a whole Kabaka (King) into exile.

At the informal sector, songs can send a powerful message. Of the 1966 Buganda Crisis, the Acholi, generally good music composers, coined a very sarcastic song that can be loosely translated thus:

*The banana plantation got abruptly burnt
Kabaka you abandoned the plantation to fire
Though you may abuse Obote in the English language
You abandoned your banana
Though you abuse Obote
You abandoned your plantation
The plantation got burnt abruptly
Kabaka you abandoned the plantation*

Banana is a staple food of the Baganda and here the Acholi coined a mockery song about the desecration of a Kingdom, the unseating of a King and the burning of a staple food. It is difficult to gauge the effect of this song but definitely it sends a bad message to the Baganda. All these besides sentiments like "*ka Luloka odonyo i ker wa bitingo matafali ki wi wa me aa ki Gulu wa Kampala*" meaning should people from the other side of the river Nile (*Luloka*) come to power, they will force us to carry bricks on our head from Gulu to Kampala.

No wonder in the first few years after Museveni came to power, there were derogatory songs about *Anyanya*. *Anyanya* was a nomenclature used for Southern Sudanese rebels in the 1970s and therefore the label as applied to Northern Ugandans had the connotation about their being foreigners.

In Geography, Northern Uganda was referred to as the “Dry North” or semi arid, yet ironically some parts of Northern Uganda register very high rainfall, have lush vegetation growth and possess great agricultural potential with flat terrain allowing mechanization.

The population in the North is also sparse as compared to the South, a fact that the formal education system does not overlook and so with 21 years of Northerners rule, questions began to be posed, “How can the minority (Northerners) rule the majority (Bantu Southerners), and for that long?”

The Thematic Curriculum introduced in 2007 for Primary 1 and 2 is, however, a good one emphasizing unity with the aim stated thus: “To develop and cherish the cultural, moral and spiritual values of life and appreciate the richness that lies in our varied and diverse cultures and values.” In the curriculum preamble, the aim of education is stated as: “To promote understanding and appreciation of the value of national unity, patriotism and cultural heritage, with due consideration to international relations and beneficial interdependence” (NCDC, 2007: pp 6). Hence if these can be translated into practice then they would facilitate dialogue among civilizations.

Mechanisms to Realize Inter-ethnic Solidarity

In Ijuka (1989) different ways of dealing with ethnic conflicts are recommended by public servants with various frequencies. Out of 55 suggestions, “educational reforms and efforts” top the list with 16 of the 55 suggestions followed by “reduction of political conflict outside the public service” (10 frequencies). Other suggestions include “good, honest, sensible and selfless political leadership” (4) and inter-marriages (2).

Ijuka also recommends among others, such measures as politicization, posting people to work in areas other than where they originate, seminars and training, equitable distribution of resources and jobs, and strengthening the statutory appointing bodies.

Uganda has been having some civic education and religious education that should promote inter-ethnic and inter-cultural

solidarity. While civic education is now largely non-formal especially in preparation of voters prior to elections, Religious Education (RE) still spans from primary education level to Secondary levels as electives. One of the RE pamphlets for Ordinary Level contains themes such as “Order and Freedom in Society” with subthemes on “Justice in Society,” “Service in Society,” and “Loyalty in Society.” There is also an emphasis on Christians as bridge builders.

Christians should work tirelessly for unity. All forms of divisions based on religion, tribe or race are abnormal in Christianity. Christians have a duty of stopping such divisions... Christians should not develop a hostile attitude towards other religions. Efforts towards reconciliation with other members of religions should always go on hence acting as bridge builders (Nsamba, 1996 pp. 245-246).

The Thematic Curriculum includes interesting themes of RE that can promote inter-ethnic and inter-cultural solidarity. The Christian Religious Education (CRE) section carries the theme: “Christians Living Together in God’s Family” where pupils are expected to understand and appreciate the importance of living together in the home and the community, the nature and value of being a member of God’s family, appreciate God’s creation and the position of human beings in creation. Competencies such as respect and care for neighbours, environmental conservation practices, community service, identification of people’s needs and the need to extend a helping hand to others and so forth are expected of the pupils. The pupils are also expected to embrace values such as love, forgiveness, loyalty, joy, humility, appreciation, happiness, peacefulness, togetherness, sharing, cooperation, belonging, hope, trust, patience, kindness, endurance etc. Pupils are further expected to, amongst others, acquire life skills such as empathy, critical thinking, creative thinking, problem solving, communication, and interpersonal relationship. Similar values, life skills and competencies that pupils are expected to embrace are contained in the Islamic Religious Education section (NCDC, 2007 pp. 52-69).

The non-formal Civic Education programme would be useful in educating for dialogue amongst civilizations since it has themes ranging from nationhood, poverty eradication, democracy, governance and human rights, non-violent culture, unity and tolerance (Kimbowa, 2006).

However, the strands of peace education above seem to lack holism, are generally optional, not made attractive enough and not diffused at all levels as to engender a philosophy of peaceful living. For RE at the higher levels of education, the learning strategy is examination-based using teacher to student pedagogy with limited options of methodologies and not enough efforts is made to take education to the villages or the non-formal sector. For civic education, it is periodic, normally conducted prior to major elections, it is largely donor driven and suffers funding problems. Hence new innovations are needed towards educating for dialogue amongst civilizations.

Towards a Philosophy and Curriculum for Inter-ethnic and Inter-cultural Solidarity

Uganda seems to lack a philosophy, curriculum and learning strategies that could engender inter-ethnic and inter-cultural solidarity. A fresh breath to the whole issue, however, seems to lie in the young Thematic Curriculum as will be exemplified later. To get a realistic philosophy of life and curriculum that addresses inter-cultural and inter-ethnic solidarity requires an exploration of some holistic forms of peace education and Toh and Cawagas (2004) six themes are definitely useful. These six themes are:

- Dismantling the culture of war and violence
- Living with justice and compassion
- Building cultural respect, reconciliation and solidarity
- Promotion of human rights and responsibilities
- Living in harmony with the Earth
- Cultivating inner peace

There are already some efforts towards embracing these holistic tenets in Uganda. In my proposed curriculum for a

Bachelor of Community and Peace Education at Gulu University (Langole, 2007, pp. 63), the programme goals are stated as: "...to try to change the community values, attitudes and beliefs towards:

- Culture of peace and non-violence
- Living with justice and compassion
- Inter-cultural respect, reconciliation and solidarity
- Promotion of human rights and responsibilities
- Sustainable living
- Inculcation of inner/personal peace”

Courses were therefore proposed in line with the above themes in mind besides what the community expressed during the process of needs assessment. To build inter-cultural respect, reconciliation and solidarity also calls for a change in values, attitudes and beliefs against resorting to violence. It calls for peaceful negotiation, mediation and an understanding of diversities and differences that can then help to resolve conflicts. In other words, it calls for averting the culture of war and violence. Inter-cultural respect, reconciliation and solidarity also calls for compassion and justice. It recognizes the fact that we are all humans with needs that may not all be fulfilled and that we may have solutions to fulfilling these needs and if so, our human solidarity would be enhanced if we extend that helping hand. These needs may also be rights issues. They may be rights to economic wellbeing, rights to participation in decision making, rights to freedoms and dignity, and others. Inter-cultural or inter-ethnic solidarity also requires that we should feel responsible in upholding the rights, dignity and freedoms of others including the marginalized.

As humans, we share with all other species the responsibility of caring for the Earth that provides us with livelihoods in one way or the other. This therefore calls for a feeling of global citizenship, wise and possibly equitable use of the Earth's resources and a culture of their protection and conservation with a mind for future use and the needs of future generations. It calls for sharing and avoidance of greed or consumerism mentality at

the expense of others. All these are issues about peace but peace, they say, begins in the minds of individuals. It is difficult to extend peace if we are not at peace with ourselves. Hence, there is need to embrace personal peace that can radiate to others. We can get this inner equilibrium and tranquility through meditation, contemplation and connecting to our spirituality and to fellow humans. Hence all the six themes are interconnected.

A philosophy of life and curriculum that embraces all these themes would therefore call for courses around these themes, as well as peaceful strategies to implement such a curriculum.

Hence the proposed 3-year Bachelor of Community and Peace Education is endowed with courses such as: Democracy and Governance, Human Rights Education, Gender Dimensions in Armed Conflict, Religions and Faiths: Implications to Peace and Conflict, Cultures and Identity Issues in Peace and Conflict, Migration, Refugees and Internal Displacement. Other courses include: Community Mobilization and Advocacy, Globalization, Conflict and Peace, The Environment, Natural Resources, Peace and Security, and Sustainable Development Education. These courses, among others, try to capture all the six themes.

Curricula that instill a philosophy of unity in diversity amongst the citizenry are required but these also require a lot of political goodwill and platform, possibly involving the top leader of the country himself/herself. With that, it would be simpler to put up structures at the lower levels that can transmit and popularize such a philosophy. Peace education at all levels; from the higher institutions of learning, teacher training institutions to secondary, primary and even at pre-primary levels should be the way to go.

The young Thematic Curriculum is definitely a step in the right direction if only it could be well implemented. The curriculum is to be implemented in cycles. Cycle 1 covers Primary 1-3 and is to be implemented in the learners' vernacular except in areas where there is no predominant or local area language. The curriculum is based on selected themes. For P2, the themes include: Our School and Neighbourhood, Our Home and Community, Our Environment, Peace and Security and Child Protection. Others are Recreation, Festivals and Holidays and Christians Living Together in God's Family for Christians.

Themes for Islamic Religious Education include Reading from the Quran, Tawhiid (Faith), Moral and Spiritual Teaching, History of Islam and Fiqh (Practices) amongst others.

The curriculum is meant to be “relevant to children reflecting their everyday interests and activities...” and the expected outcomes amongst others are appreciation of culture and role played in the community (NCDC, 2007. pp. 7).

Cycle 2 for P4 and Cycle 3 for P5-P7, however, tend to depart from the peace pedagogy and revert to the traditional teacher to student centred examination based methodology.

The Pedagogy/Learning Strategies

The Ugandan P1 and P2 Thematic Curriculum is rich in proposed pedagogy with a child centred approach to learning and a progressive learner assessment as opposed to the examination based one. The content, concept and skills of subjects are rearranged within themes that are familiar to young children’s experiences and the teaching methodology emphasizes child’s activities rather than the teacher’s. This is meant to encourage participation and performance of all children. The suggested activities are intended to be enjoyable and include songs, games, acting, drawing, story telling, group or pair work etc. (NCDC, 2007 pp. 9).

Learner assessment is done by cumulatively observing and listening to children, looking at their exercise books, marking their handwriting and looking at the class work they produce with the aid of simple checklists. No separate assessment tests or examinations are set (NCDC, 2007. pp. 12).

The idea of progressive assessment is good. There had been a lot of reliance on snapshot examinations and tests based on the learners’ ability to cram and regurgitate what the teacher has “imparted” mainly through lecture or chalk and talk method. Teachers in Uganda are generally taken as fountains of knowledge and the learners are mere recipients.

To replace this “banking” approach, the learning strategies are in line with what is recommended by peace education scholars. For example, Turay recommends a mix of lectures,

drama, panel discussions, debates, socio-drama, role plays, study grouping, story telling, use of proverbs, codes and recreation methods like music, singing, dancing and games as peace education pedagogy (Turay, Ed., 2004). Others are snowball fights, the great wind blows, cat and mouse, dueling images that are all meant to be fun (Hawkins, 2006). Similar pedagogy is recommended by Toh (2004).

This author also strongly recommends the use of field visits, students exchange and various cultural activities such as simulation of rituals and the use of skilled, talented and resourceful “uneducated” people who could be invited as guest speakers. A local poet who sings his poetry on his/her harp could be invited to share the insights of his/her poems with a class. There are people in the community albeit unschooled who are teachers in their own ways and should be given the opportunity to share their skills, values and knowledge even in the formal educational settings. Uganda is also rich with the cultural heritage of storytelling. These can be very useful learning methodology.

Other Peace Education Initiatives in Uganda

Acholi Religious Leaders Peace Initiative (ARLPI) has a peace education component in their programme besides carrying out inter-tribal mediation. However, as the name suggests, there is emphasis on Acholi region and the multi-faith organization comprises the Orthodox, Catholics, Anglican and Muslim faiths only (ARLPI, 2004). This leaves out the Adventists and the mushrooming Pentecostal and Baptist churches as well as the traditionalists who are as well very influential. These limitations are, however, understandable given the fact that this body was quite a reactive one to the Northern Uganda conflict whose main field was the Acholi region and also that the Pentecostal, Adventists, Baptists are break away from the mainstream churches and appear guarded against associating with them. Meanwhile some of the traditionalists’ belief systems are world’s apart from the mainstream religious values. Nevertheless, the

work and ideas from ARLPI would be important in the process of developing a peace education curriculum for Uganda.

Bishop Nelson Onono Onweng of Northern Uganda Diocese also initiated a peace education programme through an NGO, Jamii ya Kupatakanisa (Fellowship of Reconciliation) but the programme mainly benefits a small group of students at Gulu Vocational Community Centre for Orphaned Children (UNESCO, 2002).

A project named Revitalization of Education Participation and Learning in Conflict Areas (REPLICA) also has some strands of peace education benefiting some few schools in Northern Uganda but this too is donor driven and might have phased out by the time of writing this article (BEPS, 2006). Suffice to say that a comprehensive peace education programme with government backing is needed to engender dialogue among civilizations.

Generational Issues

Mahatma Ghandi once said if you want to spread the culture of peace, start with the children. Accordingly, it is easier to socialise children in peace values than to socialize adults. This is not to say that adults should not be included in the peace education project. However, children should be specially involved as they are yet the “uncorrupted” future generations whose belief systems and values can more easily be turned around towards the culture of peace and non-violence. The youth too should be specially included as they embody a lot of energy and potential that can be channeled into the right paths. Suffice to say that despite these emphases, the entire society or community needs peace and they should be reached through peace education approaches including inter-cultural and inter-ethnic dialogue, respect, understanding and solidarity.

Summary and Conclusions

This article highlights some literature supporting the view that inter-ethnic or inter-cultural conflicts are a feature in Ugandan society and that this antagonizes the spirit of initiating dialogue

among civilizations. It notes that formal and informal education in Uganda have not been very useful in promoting the spirit of dialogue among civilizations notwithstanding that the 2-year old Thematic Curricula are steps in the right direction.

It also notes the need for developing a holistic curriculum of peace education embracing the six tenets of peace given, their interrelatedness and ability to cross-fertilize. It recommends better teaching-learning strategies and learner assessment techniques. It also notes the limitations of the current peace education initiatives and recommends a special focus on children and youth, given their potentials for learning and acting for peace. It does not, however water down the need to involve a broad section of the community given the fact that values of inter-ethnic and intercultural solidarity need to be widely diffused in Ugandan society, given its present social and cultural complexity.

It can be concluded that there is need for peace education in Uganda in its holistic form and at all levels, covering the six themes of Toh (2004) as identified above. This, however, requires the goodwill and blessing of the political leadership and other educational stakeholders. There is therefore a need for lobbying. Appropriately developed curricula that demonstrate the interconnectedness of the micro-meso-macro dynamics as a panacea for local, national, regional and global peace are very important tools to start with.

²⁷ Extract of the research report is contained in an article, "Ethnic Conflict within the Public Service" in Rupesinge K. (1989). *Conflict Resolution in Uganda*. Oslo. International Peace Research Institute.

²⁸ The research report targeted ethnic conflict in Uganda Public Service. Eleven senior officers were interviewed and of 141 questionnaires administered across the spectrum of public servants ranging from senior personnel to junior and support staff, 56 were returned. Different ethnic groups were targeted.

²⁹ This research covered 25 respondents comprising staff and students of Gulu University. They were drawn from different ranks/levels and ethnic groups.

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Possibilities and Opportunities in Dialogue among Civilizations: Inclusion of Dalits in Nepalese Society

Som Prasad Niroula

Program Coordinator

South Asia Forum for Human Rights

Nepal

In 1998, the UN General Assembly proclaimed the year 2001 as the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations. There are a number of possibilities and opportunities envisioned to be achieved in that proclamation. One which particularly concerns many marginalized groups worldwide is the possibility of “*actively promoting a culture of peace – respect for one another – regardless of belief, culture, language, and not fearing or repressing differences within or between societies but cherishing them as a precious asset of humanity*” (Toh, 2008, 2).

In 2005, the UN established The Alliance of Civilizations (AoC) as a follow-up to the Year of Dialogue among Civilizations. The AoC aims to improve understanding and cooperative relations among nations and peoples across cultures and religions, thereby helping to counter the forces that fuel polarization and extremism. While the Alliance of Civilizations appears to address global issues, many prejudices, misconceptions, and polarization take place everyday in villages, communities, and micro societies characterized by class, cultural, economic and political disparities. This paper will focus particularly on the Dalits of Nepal, how they have been excluded from mainstream Nepalese society and the initiatives undertaken by the Dalits themselves in solidarity with numerous local, national and international civil society organizations and the government to break down historical, cultural, attitudinal and structural barriers to their full participation in society. Finally, some recommendations are offered for reforms in the educational system, particularly on teachers’ training and Dalits’ access to education.

Background

The Hindu civilization is one of the oldest civilizations in South Asia. The Hindu religion started with the Indus Valley Civilization around 2600-1900 BC. Hindu culture and religious practices are diverse and widely observed in the India sub-continent - Nepal, India, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh and Pakistan. Majority of the Hindus in the present context reside in India and Nepal. They are minorities in Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh. The caste system within the Hindu religion, which is based on the notion of “pure” and “impure” has been practiced for a long time. The higher caste people (Brahmins) were considered the “pure” or clean and the Dalits (Sudras) were considered “impure.” The basis of this division was the nature of work (labor) performed by each group. The Dalits were assigned to work as tailor, blacksmith and leather worker. The caste-based discrimination and the perpetuation of “untouchability” is the severest form of discrimination in Hindu society. Namala (2006) noted that there are about 167 million Dalits facing caste-based discrimination and exclusion in its most severe forms, such as untouchability.

In 1963, the practice of untouchability was declared illegal in Nepal. Despite the legal ban, the practice of untouchability and denial of the basic human rights of people labeled as “polluted” or “impure,” a practice sanctioned by religious traditions, is the most insidious manifestation of caste-based discrimination. Caste-based discrimination denies a fraction of society access to public services including water, education, health, land, employment, social services and other resources. The segregation and exclusion of the Dalits from the mainstream of governance and institutions has been practiced since the beginning of Hindu religion and cultural practices. It is therefore crucial that the notion of untouchability and impurity is challenged through inter-community dialogue among the Dalits and non-Dalits (Brahmins, Chettri and other communities). The practice of inter-community dialogue will decrease the agony of the Dalits and promote cultural harmony among Dalits and non-Dalits.

The purpose of this paper is to briefly give an overview of the situation of the Dalits. Has Nepal ratified the international instruments of human rights? Who are the Dalits? What obligations has Nepal assumed to protect the rights of the Dalits? What are the constitutional and statutory rights of Dalits in general and their educational rights in particular? What is the nature of discrimination experienced by Dalits? Do they experience discrimination in educational institutions, especially, in schools? In addition, this paper will present a preliminary overview of the country's economic condition, the status of education, and administrative structure and division.

About Nepal

Nepal is a land-locked country bordered by India in the South, East and West and China in the North. According to the 2001 Census, the population of Nepal is 23.4 million with about 60 castes/ethnic groups. The total land area of Nepal is 147,181 sq. km. It has been divided into three geographic regions: mountains of the great Himalaya in the north, middle hills with many river valleys, and southern plains also known as Tarai. Administratively it has been divided into 5 development regions, with 75 districts which are further divided into 3914 village development committees and 58 municipalities. The 1990 constitution of the Kingdom of Nepal and the 2006 Interim Constitution guarantee fundamental human rights and an independent judiciary. Majority of the political parties have accepted liberal democratic practices as guiding principles for governance.

Agriculture is a prime factor of the national economy which provides livelihood for 80 percent out of 85 percent rural population. Agricultural productions support 40 percent of the gross national product, industry and services provide 22 percent and 38 percent respectively. In the countryside, 44 percent live below the poverty line compared to 23 percent of the urban population. The country's per capita income is \$250 (CBS, 2001).

The annual population growth rate is 2.4. The average family size is 5.45. The infant mortality rate is 66 out of 1000 live births. Maternal mortality rate is 540 out of 100,000. The average life expectancy is 59 (HMG, 2002). According to the National Human Rights Commission (2003, p. 84) about 47 percent of the children suffer from malnutrition.

The national literacy rate is 51 percent which varies between the female (39 percent) and male (63 percent). Nepal Human Rights Report (2003, p. 3) stated that the literacy and participation of the Dalits and Janajatis is almost half of the national level literacy rate. The Janajati are those ethnic groups who have their own territorial areas, mother tongue, religions, and cultures. Nepalese scholars argue that the Janajatis do not fall under the Hindu caste-based hierarchical order (NHRC, 2003 p. 94).

The social structure of Nepal is complex based on the caste structure of the Hindu religion. According to the Hindu religion, Brahma, the creator, created Brahmin from his mouth, *Kshetria* from his head, *Vaishya* from his thigh and *Shudra* from his feet. Therefore from the very beginning of creation, the *Shudras* are shown to have originated from the disrespectful part of the body of the creator, so they had to serve all other classes of people through manual work. *Kshetrias* ruled the country, Brahmins were the priests and *Vaishyas* used to handle the economy of the country. Mabuhang (2004) noted that the caste system is deeply rooted in Nepalese society since the Mall period in the 14th to the 17th century. The first Shah King (Ram Shah) formally introduced the caste system in Nepal. The first *Muluki Ain* (civil code) in 1854 codified the caste system according to the four Varna of the classical Vedic model including *Janjatiees* (ethnic) peoples also who were not Hindus. The wearers of holy thread (*Tagadhari*) are put into the highest position, followed by alcohol-drinkers (*Matwali*), Impure but touchable castes (*Chhoi chhito halnu naparne*) and Impure and untouchable castes (*Chhoi chhito halnu parne*).

According to caste categorization, the Brahmins are assigned to work as priests and advisors of the government. Chetries are assigned as rulers and serve in military. The *Matwali* (Janjaties) are assigned to work as pastoral. The Dalits, considered as untouchable, are groups of people who have different functions

like stitching cloths, blacksmith, preparing agricultural tool, and cobblers doing leather work.

According to the 2001 population census, there was a total population of 30,30, 067 male and female Dalits. Of the 13.33 percentage of the total dalit population, 58.11 percent were the Dalits who resided at the Hills. The (30 percent) of the Dalits consists of Kami (blacksmith) where the lowest population which consisted of Halokar (CBS, 2001).

Defining Dalits

The literal meaning of Dalit is a person who is oppressed. In the context of South Asia, Dalit is a common term used to address the culturally, economically and socially marginalized people or community. Gurung (1996) cited in Dahal et al (2002) prefers to mention Dalits as "caste groups." While the caste group gives a broad understanding of the categorization of different caste groups, it does not provide a deeper understanding in terms of the condition of the Dalits. According to Koirala (1996) cited in Dahal et al (2002) Dalit refers to a group of people who are religiously, culturally, socially and economically oppressed, who could belong to different language and ethnic groups. This definition is too broad since it includes all caste groups who are marginalized, like the Newari Society who are considered indigenous people. However, there are also different caste groups among the Newars. Thus it is essential to define specifically the Dalits. Bishwakarma (2001) prefers to use the term Dalit exclusively only for the so-called "untouchables." Considering the different definitions, this paper conceptualizes the Dalits as a group of untouchable people marginalized in the economic, political, social and cultural spheres in society.

The Problem of Untouchabilities

People belonging to lower castes or "untouchables" had led a miserable life for a long time. They were not allowed to acquire property, construct comfortable houses, touch higher caste

people, and education was far beyond their reach. Muluki Ain (National Code) of 1853 further formalized the caste system which created atrocities for lower caste people as they were further deprived of attending social festivals. The higher caste people invited Damai (musicians) during marriage ceremonies. But they could not touch people or food at the festivals. The lower caste people were banned from taking part in any funeral gathering of higher caste people (Brahmins and Chettries). For similar kind of crimes, there were different punishments for different castes. If a Dalit came across higher caste people, he/she had to make way for the higher caste people and salute them. The Dalits were required to use formal and polite language. According to Karel:

Many adolescents have lost friends once they have revealed their Dalit identity. They have been mistreated and humiliated in school and have refused to go back to school for fear of being called "Podes." Parents note that many children in the community drop out of school due to discrimination, financial problems and some drop out in search of jobs (Kharel, 2006: 6)

A large number of Dalits have changed their family name to look similar to the higher caste people. This process has somehow prevented the Dalits from getting humiliated for a certain period of time. The humiliation on the basis of caste is not only limited to families but also in the school and public institutions like the village development committees and temples. There are many incidents where lower caste children are barred from drinking water in schools due to the untouchable stigma on them.

Unfortunately, the education system in Nepal does not address discriminatory social and cultural values. The social structure is based on hierarchy where the high caste people have to be always respected by the lower caste. The lower caste people always have to address the upper caste people in respective words like *Hajur* and follow without question, instructions from high caste people about social practices. The conception of superiority always dominates the so-called lower caste people. There is no dialogical interaction between the higher caste and

lower caste people. The higher caste people always dominate the lower caste people in terms of social participation and interaction. The caste superiority is therefore a real obstacle for dialogical interaction among the different groups in society and in schools.

International Normative Framework on Human Rights Education

Human beings are born with certain inalienable fundamental rights. The right to equality and peaceful existence are basic and inseparable rights of every human being. The 1948 Universal Declaration on Human Rights (UDHR) identified human rights as fundamental to the achievement of peace and progress. Based on the United Nations Charter and the UDHR, various international covenants incorporated various aspects of human rights. Nepal has signed and ratified international covenants and is working to implement and assimilate them into the mainstream development effort (HRAP, 2004).

Article 13 of the International Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural rights is very clear about the state's obligation to "education for all." This covenant recognizes that receiving a primary education is a right of all children. All member states of the UN agreed that education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and the sense of its dignity, and shall strengthen the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms (UN 1967, ICESCR, Article 13). Article 5 of the CERD mentions that the State has an obligation to promote the human rights of all disadvantaged groups. This article integrates the civil and political rights, economic, social and cultural rights and shows all rights are interdependent, indispensable and indivisible. Furthermore, States have to guarantee the rights without distinction as to race, colour, nationality or ethnic origin, to equality before the law (CERD, Article 5).

Nepalese context of normative framework and fundamental rights

The government of Nepal is a state party to more than 16 international instruments of human rights. These include the major six conventions - on civil and political rights, economic, social and cultural rights, racial discrimination, discrimination against women, rights of the child and against torture. These conventions provide a normative framework on rights to education and peace education.

Nepal adopted the international human rights instruments in its domestic laws. Nepal's Treaty Act of 1990 is one of the very significant laws in Nepal, which respects international laws not only in a moral sense but also as binding laws. Section 9 (1) of the Treaty Act 1990 accords international treaties the same legal status as domestic laws. In case of conflict between the provisions of the domestic laws and the treaty, the treaty provisions do prevail over the domestic laws. Such an application is extended only to those treaties which are ratified, acceded, accepted and approved by the Parliament. Moreover, The Constitution of the Kingdom of Nepal 1990 and Interim Constitution of Nepal 2006 guaranteed the following fundamental human rights: right to equality; right to freedom; right to press and publication; rights regarding criminal justice; right against prevention and detention; right to information; right to property, cultural and educational rights; right to religion; right against exploitation; right to privacy; and rights to constitutional remedy (Constitution of Nepal, 1990 and Interim Constitution of Nepal 2006). While non -governmental organizations are promoting human rights education in non-formal and informal education, the government has not yet introduced human rights education in the formal school system. Nevertheless, the government has prepared a national action plan on human rights.

The government has committed to promote the international human rights instruments by legally ratifying the human rights conventions. Notwithstanding all these instruments, the Dalits of

Nepal are still discriminated against in almost every aspect of their lives.

Discrimination faced by Dalits

The Dalits have been marginalized in almost every activity in Nepalese society such as access to natural resources, access to economic activities and educational institutions, and participation in socio-cultural practices and political institutions.

Educational Status of Dalits

The Dalits' educational status is lowest compared with high castes Brahmin, Chhetri, Newar and Janajatis. The highest literacy rate for Brahmins is 58 percent while the Dalits' remain at 23.8 per cent).

Table- 1: Educational Status of Dalits

Caste / Ethnic Groups	Literacy Rate (among 6 years and above population)
Brahmin	58
Chhetri	42
Newar	54.8
Janajati	35.2
Dalit	23.8
Total in Nepal	65

Source: NESAC, 1998

Dalit students have been discriminated against not only by the wider society but by teachers as well. They have been facing problems of housing as well as equal participation in the classroom and outer activities. There are few cases about such discrimination of Dalit students.

*Shalik Ram Kharel threw out Binod Pariyar of Bulingar
VDC-3 of Nawalparasi district from his house after he came to*

know Binod was a Dalit boy. Binod had rented a room at Kharel's house situated near Janaki Higher Secondary School of Gaindakot to sit in the upcoming School Leaving Certificate examinations. Binod and Prakash Giri had rented the room on 13 February 2006 for two months. However after 13 days Kharel asked both students to leave the room. Kharel is an accountant at the Janaki Higher Secondary School. However Prakash Giri said Kharel threatened and accused him that he brought the Dalit boy to his house without prior information. According to Binod, Kharel had confessed that his parents do not accept even the food he serves (Jagaran Media Centre, 2008:1).

The above incident illustrates the discrimination faced by Dalit students even by members of educational institutions. Dalit students have to suffer such discrimination which impacts on their psychological well-being distracting them from concentrating on their studies. Moreover, while the government has ratified the international instrument on human rights and accepted to offer free education, the Dalits are still not entitled to free education. The students have to pay an admission fee which is a burden to the impoverished communities, particularly the Dalit community. Dalit students are barred from attending school due to financial constraints. It is difficult for the Dalits to buy school dress and school supplies like paper, notebook, and pencil.

Though there is the provision of free education to Dalit student up to the secondary level, the Dalit students of Nanda Uma Secondary School, Odraha VDC-2 have been told to attend their classes only after bringing Rs. 250 as the new admission fee. Since then, the Dalit students are tilling lands at the nearby district- Udaypur, for generating money. Khusilal Paswan, Manju Kumari Paswan, and Durgi Paswan of grade 6, 8, and 9 respectively, and dozens of others have left going to the school because of the same reason. Manju Paswan who passed the exam of grade five, quit going to the school when her mother was unable to provide her the admission fee (Jagaran Media Centre, 2008:2).

The stigma of untouchability is also a serious problem that Dalit students have to face in school from a high caste teacher.

The case described below demonstrates the discrimination against Dalit students practiced by teachers at school.

Six Dalit students of Fadkedhunga lower secondary school, Majhphant Parvat, were denied the vocational exam of cookery. They were 7 graders Anita B.K., Durga Pariyar, Tikaram Pariyar, Som Bdr. Pariyar, Narayan Pariyar and Durge Pariyar. Subject teachers Shankar G.C., Kapur Malla, Tulasi Paudel along with other students treated the Dalit students very badly. When people from every walk of life protested against their discriminatory act, the perpetrators organized a co-fest, asked excuse in public, and provided Rs. 35 thousand as compensation to the Dalit students. However, the support from one of the teachers influenced other non-Dalit students and they started abusing the Dalits with vulgar words. The Dalit students went to teachers Kapur Malla and Tulasi Paudel for support, but they were suggested to create musical environment by singing and dancing. They were termed as eaters of buffalo, non worshippers, etc. by the teachers. The Dalit students returned home without getting a chance of sitting in the cookery exam (Nepali, n.a).

Human development indicators of Dalits

The table below represents the human development indicators based on the average life expectancy and per capita and consumption in Nepalese Rupees. As indicated in the table, the situation of the Dalits is worst compared to other caste/ethnic groups. The national average life expectancy is 55 in 1998 whereas the Dalits is 42 years. Similarly, the per capita income varies between high caste and lower caste people where Dalits have almost half of the per capita income of the high caste. The millennium development goal (MDG) national need assessment report mentioned that:

About a fourth of the children of primary school-going age are out of school, but also one half of those who enroll never complete the primary level. There are several reasons for such low completion rate. If social and economic constraints are important reasons, the education environment in the schools is also a factor. (MDG, 2006)

Table- 2: Selected Human Development Indicators
by Caste / Ethnic Groups, 1998

Caste / Ethnic Groups	Indicators (1USD= NRs. 74)		
	Average Life Expectancy (in years)	Per Capita Income (in Rs.)	Per Capita Consumption (in Rs.)
Brahmin	60.8	9921	1533
Chhetri	56.3	7744	1197
Newar	62.2	11953	1848
Janajati	53	6607	6911
Dalit	42	4940	764
Nepal (average)	55	7673	11866

Source: NESAC, 1998

The Dalits' condition in terms of life expectancy, income level and consumption are the lowest compared to higher castes. This shows that the Dalits are marginalized in almost all kinds of economic activities.

Access to Resources

Most of the Dalits are deprived of land ownership. The categorization of occupational groups, the low caste people like Kami (black smith), Damai (tailor), are asked to carry out their occupations. Further, Dalits cannot compete with modern technology led by industrial productions, therefore they leave their traditional occupation. Thus, they have to depend on subsistence agriculture, which makes land their prime assets. Obviously, Dalits have a hard time sustaining their livelihoods due to lack of land ownership. The agricultural wage laborers are paid very low wages.

Table - 3: Landownership of the Dalits

Dalit Caste	Land ownership Status (%)					Total Cases
	Landless	Less than 5 Ropanies	6-10 Ropanies	11-20 Ropanies	More than 20 Ropanies	
Kami	11.2	46.5	18.8	17.1	6.5	170
Damai	28.8	55.1	11.5	3.2	1.3	156
Sarki	7.6	47.8	24.2	16.7	3.8	157
Badi	39.1	39.1	13.0	4.3	4.3	46
Dhobi	33.3	66.7				3
Doom	88.2	11.8				17
Gaine	41.2	45.1	9.8	3.9		51
Hudke	100.0					8
Kasai	23.5	73.5	2.9			34
Musahar	33.3	55.6		11.1		9
Pode	21.7	56.5	21.7			23
Total	23.0	48.7	15.6	9.6	3.1	674

Source: FEDO, 2002: 83 (Table 3)

The survey of FEDO (2002) stated that about 23 percent of Dalits are landless. The largest piece of land owned by Kami is 17.10 percent of the total land coverage. In contrast, the Hudke are 100 percent landless. Thus, the Dalits' livelihood is dependent on being agricultural laborer due to the fact that many of them do not own any land.

Dalits have been marginalized in society, in a number of ways, from sharing the available resources in the community. The higher caste people do not share the same water source with lower caste people. Most of the water sources are owned by the higher caste people in rural areas. The lower caste people have to fetch water from long distances.

Socio-cultural factors

Socio-cultural factors are important in education. Research show that social discrimination by upper caste students and teachers is a major cause of a high dropout rate of Dalit students. Rasaili stated (2004 pp. 33) that "sometimes the Dalit students can not

drink water from the same tap used by the upper castes' in schools.”

Dalits are forbidden from entering social institutions, particularly the temple. The Hindu considers the temple as a sacred place. The conflict arises in the entrance of temple between Dalits and higher caste people. While the so-called lower caste people also belong to the Hindu religion, the higher caste people continue blocking entry of the Dalits into the temples. Although they are members of the society, the Dalits are still not allowed to share food, enter the temple and are restricted from various public places and functions.

In schools, the Dalit is not accepted in a peon post because the peon has to serve water, tea and food to the teachers. In restaurants they are forced to wash utensils. Inter-caste marriage is restricted. There are numerous cases where girls and boys have to leave the village after entering into inter-caste marriage. Neither the society nor the families accept inter-caste marriages.

The higher caste people do not want to see Dalits early in the morning. They regard it is an inauspicious encounter. They believe that their days will not be good once they encounter lower caste people in the morning. Similarly, if they see a Dalit at the first instance while leaving for a long journey, they believe their work will not be completed. The high caste people have numerous superstitious beliefs against the Dalits.

The Dalits' social status is always undermined by calling them 'Ta' (thou). But the higher caste people expect to be addressed as 'Tapai' (you) by the lower caste. Similarly, the socialization process in the society teaches the rest of the people to address the Dalits as 'Ta'.

Discrimination against the lower caste people is rampant in society even though such discrimination is legally restricted. There are hundreds of prejudices on the “untouchables” influenced by cultural, religious and social contacts.

Access to Social and Political institutions

A meaningful participation of the Dalits in social and political institution would help to emancipate them from discrimination.

Lawoti (2005) acknowledges that inclusion of marginalized people in socio-political institutions and activities, like attending schools and equal sharing of the benefit of the development would make their lives better. However, the table showing the representation in government offices of the State by castes, clearly demonstrates how the Dalits are almost non-entities in government leadership.

Table -4: Number of Representatives on the Top Level of the State by Caste/ Ethnic Groups, 1999

Sectors	Caste / Ethnic Groups				
	Brahmin / Chhetri	Newar	Janajati	Dalit	Total
Constitutional Commission	181	32	4	0	235
Minister	14	6	2	0	25
General Administrator	20	3	4	0	32
Manager	159	20	36	4	265
Political Leader (Central Level)	97	18	25	0	166
Local Governor	106	30	23	0	190
National Industry & Business	7	20	0	0	42
Education Professional	75	11	2	1	96
Culture Corporation	85	22	6	0	113
Science & Technology	36	18	2	0	62
Civil Society	41	18	1	0	64
Total	1011	231	108	5	1525

Source: Neupane, 1999.

The above table indicates that high-ranking positions of government are filled by the high caste Brahmin and Chhetri, and Newar. The Dalits' participation in governance is zero except 4 managers and 1 in education. In addition, the Dalits have been restricted from certain occupations. They can perform only low paid manual jobs like cleaning and disposal of carcasses. A few Dalits are employed in the security forces as cleaners. The

participation of *Dalits* in the social and political institution is negligible. The social exclusion of *Dalits* is immeasurable in governance system.

Dalits Initiatives for Upliftment

The Dalit movement has started in Nepal after the advent of democracy in 1990. The political parties, non-governmental organizations and social organizations have joined hands to combat discrimination against “untouchables” and caste-based discrimination. The development plan of Nepal also involves mobilization of internal resources, training, sharing of experiences to bring about continuity and effectiveness in their organizations, programmes and resource identification.

There are several International non-governmental organization (INGOs) such as Action-aid Nepal (AAN), Save the Children US, Care Nepal, and Department of International Development (DFID) working in the field of development for the Dalits. Their programmes are focused primarily on social transformation by raising awareness and public campaigns; economic development; career (personality) development with improvement in education, health and living conditions; and improving the participation in decision making process. In addition, Deutche Gesellschaft fur Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ), Lutheran World Service, Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA), OXFAM International, Canadian Cooperation office Nepal (CCO-Nepal), United Nations Development agencies, Plan International and others have also conducted programmes on Dalits and other disadvantaged groups.

Likewise, there are about more than 100 Dalit organizations focused on Dalit issues in Nepal. Dalit NGO Federation (mother organizations of 101 Dalit organizations) has been working as an umbrella organization of Dalit-based organizations. Its activities mainly focus on social enhancement, cultural change, women empowerment, income generation, legal awareness, etc. Some NGOs like IIDS (Institute for Integrated Development Studies),

RSDC (Rural Self-reliance Development Centre), Atma Nirbhar Bikash Monch (Self Reliance Development Forum) have made the Dalits as their community. They are mainly focusing on poverty alleviation and improvement of living conditions of the Dalit community. Similarly, Jagaran Media Center spreads information, message and education to raise Dalits self confidence through programmes such as Face to Face, Journalism Training, KATWAL Community Radio Program, Jagaran Lekhmala (paper series), etc. Jun Utthan Pratisthan (JUP) has been working to create an equitable society regardless of caste system and its mission is to empower and integrate the Dalit community in the mainstream of national development.

Moreover, political parties in their election manifestos have made a commitment to the promotion and protection of Dalits at various level. However, the implementation of many of their commitments remains on paper. Dalits and other minority groups have insignificant presence in the government, public institutions and civil society organizations. The initiatives of governmental and non-governmental organizations to uplift Dalits in the economic, social and cultural spheres have still a long long way to go.

The official curriculum barely addresses the problem of the caste system in Nepal. The text books also portray the practice of discrimination by mentioning the different layers of social status and segregation of the community based on the caste and work entitled to different groups. The segregation and division in the curriculum further strengthen caste and prejudice towards the Dalit community. The government reformulated the curriculum after the advent of democracy in 1990 and signed the international instruments on human rights. The Human Rights Report of Nepal (2003) mentioned that the school curriculum should be amended to create awareness in society to give a respectful place to Dalits. However, the curriculum and teachers training package has not been radically formulated to eradicate the age-long caste based discrimination on Dalits.

Conclusion

Dalits make a large segment of Nepalese society. They are industrious but most of them have been leading a miserable life. They have very low access to education, to economic opportunities and are discriminated against socially, culturally, and politically. Their representation in governance is almost nil. Their per capita income is 36 percent less than higher caste people. Most of the Dalits are landless, yet their livelihood is dependent on agriculture. The governance system that makes policies and programmes does not address the needs of Dalits.

Dalit students face discrimination in schools as well as the wider community. Teachers discriminate against Dalit students by not allowing them to use the same pot to drink water at school. When they look for renting house, they are given low priority. They face discrimination from friends. They are given low priority in terms of accessing opportunities after they complete their education and go looking for jobs. This is obviously a failure of the educational institutions to provide non-discriminatory education and to formulate policies to dismantle discriminatory practices.

It is therefore most urgent that they are uplifted from such marginal existence so that they can flourish in a culture of peace and harmony. As discussed above, education is a foundation for personal and community prosperity. Thus, this paper recommends that revisions be made of the current teachers training packages to include values formation education based on the normative framework of peace and human rights education. The teachers pre-service training should be based on non-discriminatory principles in school or in community regardless of caste, class, gender and colour. The curriculum should be focused on the formation of values of love, harmony, cooperation, and promotion of the dignity of Dalits. The government should encourage the employment of Dalit teachers. Moreover, Dalits students should be provided sufficient scholarship quotas to increase their access to education.

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Cultural Diversity and Education for Sustainability

Jordi Pigem

University of Barcelona

Rapporteur of the International Experts' Workshop on Faith-based Organizations and Education for Sustainability

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Faith-based Organizations and Education for Sustainability

An International Experts' Workshop on Faith-based Organizations and Education for Sustainability was held in Barcelona in 2007³⁰ bringing together experts representing a wide range of approaches, including eight faith-based traditions (Bahá'í, Buddhist, Christian, Gandhian, Hindu, Jewish, Indigenous, and Islamic) to explore how the strengths and perspectives of faith-based organizations can be mobilized in the service of education for sustainability. This article summarizes the key discussions and outcomes that emerged during the Workshop.³¹

One of the aspects that most deeply defines a culture or civilization is the way in which it accounts for the meaning and purpose of human existence. Apart from the modern secular West (and all the societies under its influence), in most other cultures this has been provided by faith-based traditions. Therefore, most of what is said in the following pages about faith-based traditions and education for sustainability can be equally applied to education for the dialogue among civilizations.

As Prof. Mary Evelyn Tucker noted at the Workshop, religions have always helped to shape civilizations and cultures through their stories, symbols, rituals and ethics. Faith-based traditions add a broader, deeper and necessary dimension to the usually more technical and pragmatic focus of sustainable development. In fact, religions invented education and they can therefore play an essential role in education for sustainability, helping to tap into cosmologies, values, symbols, rituals and

celebrations that can inspire our journey toward a sustainable and life-enhancing world.

Cultures and religions are called to *renew and transform themselves* in order to face the unprecedented challenges of our time, to be concerned with the well-being of the whole Earth community, and to discover and embrace their ecological dimension. This requires that cultural and faith-based traditions, without losing their identity and uniqueness, learn from each other and become much more aware of our human and ecological predicament.

A Time for Radical Transformation

Sustainability is not possible unless we overcome our worship of economic growth and our subtle identification of money with fulfillment. Faith-based traditions have the possibility of presenting an alternative vision to counter the allure of endless consumption and endless economic growth, which is “devouring the planet and driving humans toward a precipice of no return.” We need positive alternative lifestyles that don’t depend on material things, and these can be most readily provided by religions. Religions have the power to open us up to something bigger than our individual selves.

In our time, as Prof. Tucker emphasized, “we are at the cusp of a big transition.” The uniqueness of this transition is widely acknowledged. As Rachel Carson wrote more than forty years ago, “we are challenged as mankind has never been challenged before to prove our maturity and our mastery, not of nature, but of ourselves.” The Earth Charter states in its Preamble that “we risk the destruction of ourselves and the diversity of life”, and therefore “fundamental changes are needed in our values, institutions and ways of living”.³² Ours is “a new axial period” calling for pluralism and planetary awareness: our human and ecological predicament requires the cross-fertilization of all religious traditions. The humility to open up to the experience of other cultures and religions, to become intercultural and interreligious, is necessary for a viable human life on a sustainable planet.

As Prof. Tucker pointed out, sustainable development is usually regarded as “an uneasy alliance of ecology and economics”. This is, however, a very narrow conception. Sustainability needs to be placed in a larger context that includes the following major elements:

- Planetary awareness
- Caring for future generations
- Nurturing bioregional cultures and local knowledge
- Expanding our ethical horizon
- Celebrating life

The world’s cultures can play a major role in fostering this fivefold emerging sensibility.³³

Planetary Awareness

According to Prof. Tucker, in our day “all traditions are realizing that our common ground is the Earth itself.” Religious traditions are being called to come together (without losing their identities) and to renew themselves. We are learning to see people and planet as not separate.

While the currently emerging planetary awareness is new in a number of ways, religions have traditionally embodied values that are akin to it. Prof. Tucker gave examples from three Asian traditions:

Confucianism acknowledges the essential kinship of all beings among themselves and with Heaven and Earth, kinship that finds its highest expression in compassion. This kinship is expressed in the famous words from Chang Tsai’s *Western Inscription* (11th century): “Heaven is my Father and Earth is my Mother, and even such a small creature as I finds an intimate place in their midst”. The human is regarded as completing Heaven and Earth, rather than separate from the Earth.

Daoism stresses the microcosm-macrocosm relation between the human and the Earth, which are seen as interacting all the time. The *qi* running through the human body is the same *qi* circulating in the Earth, and many practices related to Daoism (like *Qi Gong* and acupuncture) build on this kinship between humans and nature.

Hinduism, similarly, expresses microcosm-macrocosm awareness in the concept of *mahapurusha*, the Great Person or Cosmic Person associated with the maintenance of all life.

In the modern West, matter has been divorced from spirit, but in other traditions there is no such split. The Daoist notion of *qi* refers neither to dispirited matter nor intangible spirit.

Billy Wapoto explained that in his native Melanesian culture, rather than living by “*cogito ergo sum*” they have traditionally understood that “it is *the other* who causes my existence:” “if the other doesn’t exist, I don’t exist; if the other suffers, I suffer.” Note that in this context other is not restricted to fellow human beings: it includes the ocean, trees, stones, water and “the whole of creation.” Each native clan is specifically related to a natural feature.

Many indigenous traditions have a sense that all things are connected. The Hindu and Buddhist notion of *karma* reflects a profound sense of the interrelatedness of all things, including our relatedness to other species. The interdependence of the whole of reality is even more profoundly conveyed by the Buddhist notion of *pratityasamutpada* (“interdependent arising”). Nothing is fully independent or isolated. Our actions and intentions send ripples in all directions.

Caring for Future Generations

Prof. Mary Evelyn Tucker began her keynote speech by asking the participants “to reflect on the well-being of our children — the children of every continent and the children of every species,” to think for the long term and to envision a lively planetary civilization for those who come after us.

“Materialism has become the dominant faith of our world” and religions must now help to de-materialize our world view (Dr. Arthur Dahl). One way of countering consumerism would be to set limits to the advertising industry and to explicitly teach children and adults how to critically evaluate adverts (Rabbi Waskow). In contrast with modern individualism, traditional sustainable societies had a sense of care for ancestors and for future generations.

Nurturing Bioregional Cultures and Local Knowledge

Among the estimated 7,000 languages spoken today, most of them indigenous and tuned to the ecosystems and rhythms of a particular bioregion, nearly 2,500 are in immediate danger of extinction. Nurturing local cultures and languages is part and parcel of preserving the ecological integrity of a bioregion.

The general and abstract knowledge that we draw from contemporary science needs to be complemented with the local knowledge still preserved by traditional cultures and indigenous peoples. They can help us to rediscover a sense of belonging to our place and to reconnect with the cycles of nature and the seasons. Native culture and language “is the basis of our relation to life” (Billy Wapotro). Sustainability requires the affirmation of local, place-based cultures and languages.

There is a *core link between cultural diversity and biodiversity*. As Susanne Schnuttgen stated, education for sustainability must “take into account the cultural aspirations, identities, different ways of living, knowledge systems, values systems, religions, traditions and beliefs of all concerned,” while nurturing “the creative capacities and cultural expressions of human beings, in their multiple tangible and intangible forms, notably in seeking and imagining new ways of living together.”

Cultures and faith-based traditions should not give up their calling because the world has become secular. The belief in One Truth that should be imposed on all cultures is to a large extent a Western peculiarity. The modern, secular and scientific worldview cannot be taken, as is usually and implicitly done, as universal and superior to the views of nature from other cultures and traditions. These should be encouraged to step into an

ecological phase (if they are not there yet) and treated as fully valid forms of understanding nature and our place in the cosmos - - rather than being treated, as is often the case, as mere folklore. Embracing the pluralism that our age calls for implies that sustainability and environmental ethics must be place-based rather than universal: they should have diverse expressions according to the environmental context and the local culture, while keeping a strong sense of planetary awareness and kinship with other communities and other forms of life. We need formulations of ecojustice congenial to and emerging from every culture.

One of the outcomes of the Workshop was the need for international organizations to become more aware of the *core link between cultural diversity and biodiversity*. In fact, “sustainability” is best practiced by indigenous societies that are unfamiliar with such a term and are still rooted in their traditional culture, land and spirituality. The modern, secular and scientific worldview cannot be taken, as is usually and implicitly done, as universal and superior to the views of nature from other cultures and traditions. Approaches to sustainability that subtly impose the currently hegemonic secular worldview over local and traditional knowledge, implicitly remove people from their sense of place and their cultural identity, and therefore go against the grain of true sustainability. *Education for sustainability must nurture local knowledge and cultural diversity*. As has often been noted, we can only really care for what we love. We need awe and reverence for life, not just intellectual understanding.

Expanding Our Ethical Horizon

Social justice has been an important concern in Abrahamic religions. Now we are called to extend our notions of justice, embracing the sacredness of all forms of life and granting rights to other species, ecosystems and the Earth as whole. As Thomas Berry remarks, our moral concerns should include *biocide* and *ecocide* as well as homicide and genocide. This wider ethics calls for *solidarity* with the entire Earth, ecological sustainability, lifestyles of *sufficiency*, and a more *participatory* politics.

We must renew our notions of “progress,” “prosperity” and “development.” Much of what went under these names in the 20th century produced mixed blessings or had a boomerang effect. Dr. Mary Joy Pigozzi noted that “development” needs to embrace “well-being” and “spirituality.” One recent and significant step is to replace our zealous pursuit of a higher GDP (that knows of no other reality than money) with a more humane aspiration: Gross National Happiness, promoted in recent years by a number of international conferences and initially launched in Bhutan. Gross National Happiness has four pillars: good governance, cultural autonomy, environmental justice, and an economy providing enough for basic needs in a sustainable way. Sustainability is strongly related with our sense of place in the cosmos. We need a new relationship with ourselves, with nature and with the wider scheme of things. Fazlun Khalid, quoting Richard Tarnas, argued that since Descartes, the modern world view has desacralized the world and, while claiming not to be anthropocentric, has subtly put the human mind at the centre of all things, cutting itself off from nature and the cosmos. Religions provide a sense of belonging to the cosmos and can play a key role in shaping the new relation to the world that humanity is now called to embrace.

As a Western expert reminded us, the West has plundered the world and therefore it is hypocritical that we want to preach sustainability to other cultures. Many participants emphasized that it would be totally immoral to tell people in the poor South not to have cars and hi-tech gadgets unless we ourselves grow out of our consumerist lifestyles. On the other hand, the West is now plagued with a host of psychological problems and new illnesses. People consuming more are no happier.

For Gandhi freedom arises from *swaraj*, self-rule: learning to rule our own selves. Sustainability, likewise, must start in our own selves. “The means you use will become the ends you strive for” (Martin Buber). “Be the change you want to see in the world” (Gandhi).

Likewise, we must be honest enough to stop playing the game of denial. “Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter” (Martin Luther King). We can not wait

for presidents and “leaders” to lead us. As Bernard Combes and Mary Joy Pigozzi stated, bodies like UNESCO can push initiatives forward “but these need to be initiated by people.”

Celebrating Life

Celebration is essential, as Victoria Finlay emphasized. Having fun is a good way of countering individualism and competition. Faith-based traditions offer us a sense of beauty and harmony, often conveyed through inspiring aphorisms and stories that needs to be integrated into sustainability. Festivals and ritual celebrations can enhance our awareness of the cycles of nature, the Sun and the Moon. In the Andean region PRATEC is successfully reintroducing traditional agricultural festivities into the school calendar.

Most participants agreed that awe is necessary to achieve a sustainable life. The best of science can provide awe and wonder, but awe at the scientific, intellectual level, does not last and does not reach deep enough, while spiritual celebrations strike very deep in the heart of people. Awe at life is most fully expressed through rituals. In most indigenous cosmo-visions, harmony with the local world or bioregion is achieved and sustained by ritual activity: “without it I cannot see how to achieve sustainable living” (Jorge Ishizawa).

If religions are alive they have to keep renewing themselves, addressing the specific needs of the day. This is particularly true in our age of unprecedented challenges, in our “new axial period.” The symposia organized on the sea by Orthodox Patriarch Bartholomew are an example of both ecological and interreligious awareness.

Transforming Education from an Intercultural Perspective

We need a new education, formal and non-formal, that fosters the five values discussed above: planetary awareness, caring for future generations, nurturing cultural diversity, expanding our ethical horizon and celebrating life. The UN should support

efforts in this direction with more financial resources. There is also a perceived need to collect success stories of education for sustainability.

Many participants noted there are important obstacles when trying to introduce sustainability into formal education:

- The curriculum is already full to the brim, and teachers are severely overworked.
- The current formal educational system is geared towards quantifiable results rather than towards real learning (not to mention towards eliciting personal transformation for the sake of sustainability).
- There are vested interests in the Ministries of Education, in the schools' management boards and, last but not least, in the textbook industry.

A number of possibilities were suggested: having more dialogue with curriculum planners and writers, involving scholars and historians of religion, making contents more appealing, developing educational materials *with the children* (it's exciting for them to participate), and creating multimedia tools for children to create their own educational materials. Fazlun Khalid explained that environmental ethics is being introduced in Islamic schools, and Kirti Menon reported that the school subject "Life Orientation" allows South African children to be exposed to the teachings of different religions. On the whole, though, it seems we must "reinvent the formal system" (Bernard Combes).

As Fazlun Khalid observed, non-formal education is easier, faster, and more adaptable, free of the constraints that affect formal education. It is, in a word, more alive. Rabbi Waskow recommended informal educational activities like taking children out to the forest with spiritual books. Formal or non-formal, education for sustainability should aim at learning to transform oneself and society and to love the natural world. And we must remember that children (and all people) need to make sense of what they are learning.

The internet is a tool with many possibilities, and there are nowadays thousands of web pages devoted to sustainability. But it was noted that website-based knowledge can be abstract and

disembodied (luring us into a cyberspace that obliterates the life of specific real places) while ecology has to do with feeling rooted in the land and connecting with actual plants and animals. Besides, the World Wide Web is not truly worldwide: it only reaches the globalized world. We should never forget that in many parts of the world there is no electricity, so e-materials would be of no use there. Therefore, e-materials should be geared towards teaching sustainability to those living in highly developed areas, where there is a major use of the internet.

Most traditional cultures perpetuated sustainable lifestyles over thousands of years through oral, non-formal education. Formal education arrived with colonialism and still embodies an overt or implicit colonial drive, teaching the ways of the West with little or no respect for the local culture, history and languages, and therefore removing natives from their most direct ties with their bioregion.

As reported by Jorge Ishizawa, traditional indigenous authorities in the Andes attribute the present lack of well being and harmony in their communities to “*a generalized loss of respect among all beings*” in their local world. It is not only a matter of lack of respect between humans, but also (or mostly) of lack of respect of humans towards deities and towards nature as a whole. The local indigenous authorities see schooling as one of the major contributors to this situation: the school in the Andean region has spread the modern secularist ideology of progress and has attempted to forcibly replace traditional ways of life by Westernization disguised as modernization. PRATEC is helping local communities in the Andean region to pursue their demand for radical cultural diversity in the school. They realize that the present educational system does not prepare young people for a good and sustainable life (parents are sorely aware of this fact). The new educational pact with the central government that the rural communities are now demanding is based on what is called *Paya Yatiwi* (in Aymara, spoken in the area of Puno) and *Iskay Yachay* (in Quechua), meaning “two kinds of knowledge”. The rural communities want these “two kinds of knowledge” to be taught at school: their own and the modern project of literacy, science and technology. *Paya Yatiwi / Iskay Yachay* has three interrelated components: a) the recovery of respect in the

community (towards their deities, nature and among the community members themselves); b) learning to read and write while respecting and valuing their oral tradition; and c) teaching the “seven skills” that allow people to “pass life”, that is, to live a good and sustainable life.

Education for sustainability must clearly distinguish between two very different target groups: the 20 percent of humanity living “overdeveloped” lifestyles (including wealthy people in privileged areas of poor countries) must learn to *undevelop*, to reduce our current overconsumption and to find fulfilling lifestyles based on a much more moderate use of natural resources. But for the masses of the poor the challenge is totally different. The not-yet-overdeveloped rest of humanity, including all the poor in the South and all indigenous and traditional peoples, must learn to fulfil their needs (including running water, food security, and adequate health care) in a sustainable way and without falling into the lure of overdevelopment and consumerism. Rather than being exposed to the subtle colonialism of advertising and of series like *Dallas*, they should be offered models of non-material success. The lifestyle of the overdeveloped 20 percent of the world, besides consuming 80 percent of the Earth’s resources, generates greed and envy. In fact, as was often noted at the Workshop, not only should we, in the overdeveloped world, not preach sustainability to indigenous peoples: we should aim to learn from those who have been practicing sustainable lifestyles over the centuries.

Endnotes

³⁰ This International Experts’ Workshop on Faith-based Organizations and Education for Sustainability was held in Barcelona from 22nd to 24th March 2007, organized by Unescocat — Centre Unesco de Catalunya. Besides a number of local authorities and UNESCOCAT staff, the following twenty-one international experts participated in the Workshop: Dr. Abelardo BRENES, University for Peace / Earth Charter International, Costa Rica; Bernard COMBES, Programme for Education for Sustainable Development, UNESCO, Paris; Somboon CHUNGPRAMPREE, International Network of Engaged Buddhists,

Thailand; Dr. Arthur DAHL, International Environment Forum, Switzerland; Victoria FINLAY, Alliance for Religions and Conservation, United Kingdom; Peter GICIRA, All Africa Conference of Churches, Kenya; Jorge ISHIZAWA, Andean Peasant Technologies Project (PRATEC), Peru; Fazlun KHALID, Islamic Foundation for Ecology and Environmental Sciences, United Kingdom; Dr. Mathew KOSHY, Joint Ecological Commission, India; Kirti MENON, Gandhi Centenary Committee, South Africa; Dr. Mary Joy PIGOZZI, UNESCO High Level Panel on ESD, USA; Ranchor PRIME, Friends of Vrindavan, United Kingdom; Mayra RODRÍGUEZ, Ecumenical Forum for Peace and Reconciliation, Guatemala; Hiro SAKURAI, Soka Gakkai International, Japan/USA; Susanne SCHNUTTGEN, Division for Cultural Policies and Intercultural Dialogue, UNESCO, Paris; Michael SLABY, Earth Charter International, Sweden; Christian TEODORESCU, Ecumenical Association of Churches, Romania; Prof. Mary Evelyn TUCKER, Forum on Religion and Ecology, Harvard University, USA; Philippe VAZ, Tariqqa Al Alawiyya, France; Billy WAPOTRO, Alliance Scolaire, New Caledonia; Rabbi Arthur WASKOW, The Shalom Center, USA.

³¹ The full report of the Workshop can be downloaded at <http://www.arcworld.org/downloads/Barcelona%20Report.pdf>.

³² See www.earthcharter.org for the full text of the Earth Charter.

³³ There is a consistent overlap between the Earth Charter (widely regarded as a comprehensive and inclusive framework for sustainability) and the five core values that emerged in the Workshop. However, some differences of emphasis might be pointed out. Three of these core values seem to be sufficiently addressed by the Earth Charter. Thus, *planetary awareness* is explicitly or implicitly present throughout it; *expanding our ethical horizon* to include issues of ecological justice is, likewise, present in many of the principles and paragraphs of the Earth Charter, and *caring for future generations* corresponds to principle 4. The remaining two values are somehow less represented, not appearing in the phrasing of any the 16 principles of the Charter, but they are not missing: *celebrating life* is praised in the very last sentence of the Earth Charter, and *cultural diversity* is implicit or explicit in several subprinciples: 8b, 12b, 12d and 13f, as well as in “The Way Forward”. It is not surprising that a Workshop drawing on the culturally diverse perspectives of faith-based traditions put more emphasis on cultural diversity and celebration. Even if the creation of

the Earth Charter might be considered “the most open and participatory worldwide consultation process ever associated with the drafting of an international declaration”, from the perspective of faith-based traditions and non-Western cultures it might not have given enough relevance to cultural diversity and celebration.

War News and Media Stereotyping

Faridah Ibrahim, UKM

*Chair/Associate Professor in Journalism of the School of Media and Communication Studies
University Kebangsaan, Malaysia*

Introduction

We “witness” war every day and everywhere. In the morning papers, in the prime time news, magazines, Internet and other communication channels - war dominates the media. We watch and read about people trapped in the war zone, vehemently praying besides corpse who may be their friends or relatives and perhaps their loved ones. They were crying in helplessness, despair and anger and no one could give them a hand. This incessant and mournful event has become a never-ending story. Since the existence of man on earth, war becomes so common to everyman, synonymous to food and clothes. Surviving and dying are common. Bombing of thousands of innocent people with sophisticated weaponry is common. But no one could stop the war. It involves human dignity, right and pride and more often than not war sometimes is a justifying cause for nation to protect their territorial rights and enduring values.

War is a conflict of human justification, indignation and ego. Because of this excessive ego, man uses his strength and weapons to undermine the enemy. War does not occur by itself. One cannot fight with one self. There must be two, three or more. Human’s survival instinct and fear of threat evokes war. “Either you are with us or you are against us” is a word of utterance that indicates differences - or may be, animosities - due to different identity, the color of one’s skin, religion and culture.

And in the midst of this modern war, is the media, which help to convey news on war to millions of world population via the technologically savvy Internet and the traditional media in the form of television and the newspapers. Media coverage is integral to shaping the course of events in war and peace. With

technology that allows transborder flow of information and visuals within seconds, war news has become routine news of the day.

Without media images, nobody will know what is going on around the world. Who is at war and how many were killed and how many people are suffering. It is the media which provide minute details about the warring states and without which, everybody will be in a state of ignorance. Virtually on whose side are the media on? On one hand, one can see the media's obligation in providing news-worthy information about war around us, and on the other hand, it is as if there is a symbiosis relationship between the media and the protagonist of war, for the media is said to benefit from war reporting. What roles are the media taking especially the media in developing country such as Malaysia, which does not experience war? In whose words do the Malaysian media subscribe to in explaining war to the people. This paper looks at the use and misuse of words where reporting is concern. Through a qualitative and interpretive analysis of war news in selected Malaysian newspapers, this paper tries to identify how war is reported, from which angles and in whose perspectives.

War News: The of Media

The war between Israel and Palestine, for example, has been going on for years without any possible sign of a halt. In this war, the concept of "mine" and "yours", dispute over territorial rights, pride, dignity indignation and ego have been preoccupied in the mind of both sides. The word "struggle" is deeply-rooted in the heart and mind of "patriots", "jingoists" and "nationalists" of both sides of the warring states.

This is only a small part of a current war but there are hundreds of other wars today (Huntington 1997) occurring in different parts of the world, from a small to a big one and to the extent that we are unable to narrate the feeling and sentiment of those involved in the situation. We could hear their desperate whispers and cries of wretchedness through the mass media but

we could not truly feel their actual agony. Our feeling of understanding about war and war victims comes through watching prime time news and reading the morning papers.

Indeed, mass media has become active and powerful players in the war game. Virtually they are playing on both sides. On one side is their obligation in telling the story of war and the other side is helping the nations that are involved in war, and nations' leaders who are the protagonists of war, to create propaganda and the spirit of struggles. Since the mass media of a particular state are the important vehicles especially in disseminating the spirit of state's struggle, their role is strictly controlled and for this reason bias reporting apparently occurred.

Who are the protagonists of war? They could be the leaders of the warring states, the leader of the faction groups, fundamentalist and terrorist leaders, the army generals in some states, or even leaders of states (the so-called Police state) which send troops overseas to help exterminate war. In the midst of these wars, war correspondents doing their duties in war zones will have no choice but to receive the information subsidy given to them by these protagonists. Gandy (1982) writing about information subsidies contends that government and authorities attempt to control media access so as to exert influence over the actions of the media as well to control the flow of information.

It is indisputable that the media played a significant role in time of war, and this can be seen during the U.S-Afghanistan war and the U.S-Iraq war (the first Gulf war, Operation Desert Storm in 1991 and the most recent U.S-Iraq war in 2003). Having learnt from the gruesome truth of the Vietnam War, the U.S government has seen the media as the *sine qua non* in war coverage. In the numerous wars after Vietnam that involve the U.S, it can be seen that the government has used the media as the conduit in their psywar strategy to gain public and political support. Undeniably, war correspondents in these wars faced enormous difficulty in obtaining accurate information. As a result they became an unwilling but necessary part of the misinformation campaign.

Knightley (1991:4) contends that information manipulation has progressed since the Crimea and reached deadly sophistication in modern wars. News management in the war

has three main purposes: to deny information to the enemy; to create and maintain support for the war; and to change public opinion and perception of the war itself. Of these the third is by far the most important and the most menacing.

Most of the time, wrong, fabricated information becomes news, and this distorted news transcends through the globe providing information to the world audiences. Everyone is aware with this situation. Maslog et al. (2006) found in their study of framing analysis of the coverage of Iraq war in five Asian countries, that newspapers from non-Muslim countries, except Philippines, have a stronger war journalism framing, and are more supportive of the war compared to newspapers in the Muslim countries.

The inevitable question that was often posed is why are the Muslims the target of animosity? Why are the Muslims being misunderstood easily? And why do we keep on reading and hearing about Muslims being mercilessly slaughtered, intimidated and subjected to the worst form of aggression in various parts of the world? Congressional Quarterly (1981: 99) said that the negative image of Islam is due to ignorance of the religion and because of the historical roots:

Numerous studies and books have been documented to describe the western portrayal of Islam and the Muslims, as can be traced for instance in Edward Said's numerous books. Leon Uris in his bestseller, *The Hajj* has described the Arabs and the Palestinians as lazy, boastful, deceitful, untrustworthy, double-crossing, lustful, unreliable, murderers, thieves and rapists (Uris in Syed Arabi Idid and Rahmah 1989: 6). Since the Suez Crisis of 1956, the American media have painted a negative picture of the Arab personality (Suleiman 1968 and Belkaoui 1978 in Syed Arabi and Rahmah 1989:7).

In the age of image and image-makers, every nation and its people seem to be conscious of their public image, particularly their image abroad. Boorstin (in Faridah 1984 p.40) who made a thorough study of pseudo-events said that the United States especially has become preoccupied with creating "favorable images" of itself overseas to the extent that American images today tend to overshadow American ideals. In a study of five

world superpowers, reflected in two Malaysian newspapers (Faridah 1984), it was found that the image of the west particularly America and Great Britain, is largely an image provided by the international news agencies, Associate Press (AP) and Reuters.

Media Language

Today, western influence is no longer confined to just literature and folk culture. It has spread its roots in all forms with the proliferation of new communication technology through widespread use of television and computers, hardware and software. The dissemination of information and knowledge is inadvertently in the sophisticated language of the west especially English language. Most television programs in many countries of the world, Malaysia is without exception, are direct imports from western culture. The subtle penetration of western hegemony and propagandistic models come into play, as Boorstin noted:

Abroad, some special accidental factors have been at work; our wealth, our technological ferocity, and especially our ability to make attractive motion picture. All these have enabled us to flood with American images, the people who have never heard of American ideals, and who do not know whether we have any ideals. Our images suggest arrogance; in them we set ourselves up as a mold for the world.” (Boorstin cited in Faridah 1984:41)

After the Second World War, the media became a convenient tool for propaganda that used media language in a persuasive way. Ironically, the state of the art pertaining to the word “propaganda” has been widely used under a different brand such as advertising, strategic advertising, public relations, public speaking and persuasion, effective public speaking, strategic communication planning and to name a few (Mohd Rajib and Taylor, 2006).

Indeed, the danger that confronts us now in the age of modernization and globalization is nothing less severe than in the Second World War. The words of utterances, manipulation of words, distortion of words, words inferences and fabrication of words and meaning altogether bring about the immediate danger to the world today.

Language also has some magical powers. They could mesmerize people. Of course it comes together with the content, persuading through effective public speaking, advertising, organizing human perception, propagandizing and through all sort of means; documents, words of utterances, persuasive speaking, writings and broadcasting certain issues and events that are powerful enough to change all together the perception of the receivers. All these meanings come through words and picture.

Indeed, the pen is mightier than the sword, as the saying goes, is never far from the truth especially in today's war. Words disguise thoughts, words lie and words influence said Karl Deutsch when he spoke of communication. And it is through words, written or spoken, that the ideas, feelings, thoughts and perceptions of people become clearer. General semanticist S.I. Hayakawa (1979: 80) writing about language and meaning had said "words are more than descriptions of experience. They are evaluations."

War news that is brought to us via television and newspapers used words and vivid visual to show what is happening at the war zones. Words have become the "weapons" of today's turmoil. In modern warfare, or appropriately termed as semantics warfare, a new language was brought into being to soften the reality of war. Bombing military targets in the heart of cities was called 'denying the enemy an infrastructure', people was labeled 'soft targets', saturation bombing was labeled 'laying the carpet', when civilians are killed they are called 'collateral damage', when smaller attacks are carried out they are called 'surgical strikes' and 'friendly fire'; when civilians are killed they become 'paramilitary' or soldiers 'disguised as civilians'. A report by journalists Michael Moran (2003) points out: "Friendly fire by American forces killed one quarter of all the U.S troops who died in that war." Thirty-five of the 146 Americans killed in 1991 Gulf War were slain by their own side.

And in the recent 2003 Gulf war, 'precision bombing' landed in Turkey Saudi Arabia, Iran and killed Syrians at the Iraq-Syria border. And any Iraqi phone booth destroyed, becomes posthumously, a 'command and control structure.' (Sainath 2003).

Hence, the story of wars has taken a new face. People do not see the gruesome face of war. They are more concern for other things – whether the war will affect them economically, socially or politically. Regardless of ethnic origins and cultures, everybody is waiting to know who the winner is and who is the looser; who is powerful and who is not powerful; who is good and who is evil. The storylines range from war, conflict, catastrophe to calamities and also all inconvenient situations, are made convenient to the readers.

These are profound advantages that media practitioners possessed, who through media language, have the power to persuade, manipulate and arrange words to make the presentation of news look greater and mightier. Readers and audiences are unable to detect the false perceptive words because they are just like needles in the haystack.

This is the most insidious part of journalism today that allows reporters' prejudices permeated into the readers' mind, where the words could either change the reader's perception or else leave them in a problem world of psychoneurosis. To borrow Lippmann's (1922) famous adage: "the picture in our heads" are absolutely true. With the advent of massive and organized persuasion techniques through the mass media the world become apart. Gerbners and his associates (1986) who have conducted an extensive research and analysis, videotaping and carefully analyzing thousands of prime-time television programs and characters, found that the world portrayed on television is grossly misleading as a representation of reality.

The construction and depiction of reality have always been surrounding the debates on media credibility. During political campaign, for instance, a typical political bigotry would be the process of persuasively expressing words of indispensable meanings confidently to confuse the masses. Because rhetorical device such as words are so common to all man, thus no one pay attention to their meaning. For example, Richard Nixon's 1968

political campaign pledged to secure “the honourable peace in Vietnam”. His slogan and his actions were extremely veered and quite confusing. However, his scandalous activities, for example continued; he still mobilized his army in Vietnam while clandestine and decoy were at the top of his administrative concern and the killing of civilians in Vietnam was continuously in progress. The words *honorable peace* became meaningless and yet the American congress got up the nerve to push the war farther and farther (see Phillip Knightley in *The First Casualty* 1975).

Early American patriots were able to increase revolutionary fervor by terming a minor skirmish with the British in the Boston massacre. Adolf Hitler used the term red menace and Jewish problem. The United States Defense Department used the term “ Low-intensity conflict” and a lot more words of propaganda and persuasion has been using by the power that be via the mass media. The psychologist, Gordon Allport (1954) in *Nature of Prejudice* pointed out that it is a nature of language to divide and categorize the buzzing boom of information that comes our way every second and every day.

Understanding War from the Perspective of General Semantics

Thus far, we may reach an understanding of the way journalists report their news and how abstract terms have been used or misused. Whether the terms are being coined by the journalists to make their writing task easy or the terms are being coined by the news sources, in this case the protagonists, to soften the reality of war, the underlying truth is that words, from spoken to written, have certain magical powers. They have power to create and to destroy; to influence and to change. In times of war, words become important tools for peace negotiations and conciliations or even making promises. Words can also create animosities and annihilations (Faridah and Mohd Rajib, 2003).

According to the general semanticists, words such as *communism, capitalist, racism, terrorism, fundamentalist, conservative, capitalist, dictator*, etc. are all based on our own

perception. Human beings build words based on abstractions. To the semanticists, these abstract terms need to be clearly defined. Journalists do have an ethical obligation – in the words of the Society of Professional Journalists Code of Ethics – to ‘minimize harm.’ Hence, the act of determining the use of appropriate words in the news and news headlines should be one of the very crucial tasks undertaken by journalists in the day-to-day newsroom decisions.

On the use of abstract term, Edward Said (in Mishka Moujabber Mourani aljazeera.info) had said, “we must dissolve worlds like ‘war’ and ‘peace’ into their basic elements to a deeper understanding of what they mean. It is time to tear language, and the experiences it communicates, away from humbling over simplifications and reinvest it with nuance, depth and dimension.” Hence, abstract terms need to be defined not just from the intentional meanings but also the extensional meanings so that they are free from manipulations.

General semanticists assert that extensional orientation provides both clues and guidance in the search for adequate and precise language habits. Like scientific method, extensional orientation utilizes discovery and verification procedures. If something has been discovered in the universe, then people using similar methods of observation should be able to conform or acknowledge it (Mohd Rajib Ab Ghani, 1984).

The use of extensional orientation in everyday language could possibly avoid the bias inherent in writing and speaking. Since one would have fewer tendencies to take what is said for granted and would question the meanings of words, there would be fewer tendencies for one to judge the behaviour of others (Mohd Rajib Ab Ghani, 1984). Hence, the journalistic maxim of the 5W’s and 1H becomes an important tool in the quest for journalistic objectivity.

A staunch follower of general semantics and former U.S statesman, S.I. Hayakawa (1974) introduced three sentence types that may help reporters avoid ‘bias’ in news reports. These sentence types, derived from the fundamental teaching of general semantics (see Alfred Korzybski, 1950), are reports, inferences and judgments. While report sentence is capable of verifications,

inference could distort meanings and judgment sentence is a taboo in objective reporting.

Hayakawa's three sentences types, also known as Hayakawa's Trichotomy have been used extensively by researchers worldwide who study media language from the quantitative and qualitative content analysis perspectives (see Bois, 1957; Merrill et al., 1965; Schiller, 1981; Mohd Rajib, 1984; Faridah, 1984; Mohd Rajib and Faridah, 1987; 1990; 1996; 2000; Bell, 1991; Chau Pao Ling, 1997; Faridah, 2003). Mohd Rajib and Faridah (1996) for instance, found in their study on human rights coverage in four Malaysian leading dailies that 74.6 percent of the 2250 news analysed used facts and 'objective' sentences comprising of 'report sentence-attributed' which contained the verbs 'says/said', 'according, to', 'told/tell', 'added' and 'informed'. Chau Pao Ling (1997) studying on the image portrayal of Malaysian and international female parliamentarians found that 73.8 percent of the 516 verbs analysed used the speech verb "say" in *The Star* sample, while *Utusan Malaysia* recorded 66 percent. In another study (Faridah, 2003) on the use and misuse of media language in 891 headlines from four Malaysian mainstream newspapers found that headlines use appropriate report sentence type about 70.4 percent, while about 29.6 percent in the inference and judgment categories. This finding suggest for a sensitization program on media language and general semantics among reporters and subeditors.

In the last decades, there have been numerous studies on the nature of prejudices, stereotypes, slants or biases from the perspectives of journalism and communication, social psychology, sociology and sociolinguistics. Here, we are standing on ground that has been well-researched, but nevertheless, needs to be continued and pursued further in every possible dimension for greater understanding among mankind. According to a renowned journalism scholar John C. Merrill (1983), stereotyping and prejudices are recurrent themes in explaining the public's image of its government; a man's image of his friends; people's image of peoples of other nations; the journalist's image of foreign people and leaders. Distrust and

misunderstanding among peoples on a global scale is a common phenomenon today.

One area of prejudice and stereotyping that has long been overlooked and needs reemphasis is the use of language and words. And central to the usage of language and words is the media where their day-to-day activities and daily offerings involved the use of words to impart information in the form of news. Language and words according to a neurologist and general semanticist, Alfred Korzybski, are only maps of reality. They are not actual territories, and that the very nature of words could lead human beings astray. In other words he and his followers such as S.I. Hayakawa and Wendell Johnson believed that words are the source of human misunderstandings.

War News and Media Stereotyping

Over the millennium, the world and its people witness all kinds of wars. World war, civil war, ideological war, religious war, guerilla war, terrorism, insurgency, brutality, conspiracy and murderous expression, and others – all these are part of the human condition. “War had been literally continuous, though strictly speaking it had not always been the same war...The enemy of the moment always represented absolute evil,” says George Orwell in his book *1984*.

According to Chris Hedges, winner of 2002 Amnesty International Global Award for Human Rights Journalism, “War makes the world understandable, a black and white tableau of them and us. It suspends thought, especially self critical thought. All bow before the supreme effort. We are one. Most of us willingly accept war as long as we can fold it into a belief system that paints the ensuing suffering as necessary for a higher good, for human beings not only seek happiness but also meaning. And tragically war is sometimes the most powerful way in human society to achieve meaning” (2003: 10).

In the 1990s we witnessed various wars via the mass media: death of thousands in several warring states and millions in others. The media, both local and international, had showed war in Afghanistan, Sudan, Rwanda, Angola, Bosnia, Guatemala,

Liberia, Burundi, Algeria, border conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea, fighting in Colombia, the never-ending Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Chechnya, Sri Lanka, southeastern Turkey, Sierra Leone, Northern Ireland, Kosovo, and the latest Iraq. We also witness numerous acts of terrorism for instance 911 in America and the 7/7 bomb blast in the British capital.

Indeed, war reporting by the mass media has enormous implications for government, commerce and industry in many of these warring countries. Their local and international investments as well as bilateral relations are mercilessly shaped by news reports. Often times, because of lack of sensitivity towards local culture, media reports are bias and full of stereotypical generalizations. Of course, favourable news coverage is a key factor in determining the success or failure of a country's development efforts.

So how does a non-warring country such as Malaysia report the war? On a quick glance of media content, over a period of two months (March and April 2002) – in both print and electronic media alike - it is found that war coverage is definitely not missing in the daily news diet. The two-month period in 2002 was purposively selected because of its representation of peacetime period, months after the U-S Afghanistan war and months before the U.S-Iraq war under the administration of President George W. Bush. News about war come mostly from the international news agencies, Reuters, Agence France Presse (AFP), Associate Press (AP), to a lesser extent from the Malaysian national news agency, BERNAMA (basically non-combat military news) and also from other news agencies such as Xinhua of China, Yon Hap of South Korea, ANTARA of Indonesia, not forgetting Cable News Network (CNN) and Al-Jazeera. But of course, based on interviews with several media practitioners, the western international news agencies are the most popular among local media diet where war news are concerned. Reasons for the choice is basically the news coverage from these western agencies are very advanced with accompanying up-to-date and superb visuals, news reels and actualities.

How do we identify war news? Basically war news comprise of events pertaining to military actions and acts of terrorism.

Military actions include issues on combat, armed invasion, military talks, supplies and provisions, armed deployment and the like. We also looked at efforts undertaken by governments and leaders, and also world organizations to resolve conflicts and try to achieve peace through diplomatic talks, relations and missions. Over the period of study, about 138 or 15.8 percent out of 898 news items contained war news coverage. A closer look at the coverage of war news by these newspapers demonstrate that there are more issues pertaining to “terrorism” in the *New Straits Times* (NST) while more military news comprising of military actions and combat are covered in *The Star* (TS), *Utusan Malaysia* (UM) dan *Berita Harian* (BH) as demonstrated in Table 1.

Table 1: Types of news in four Malaysian national dailies

	NST	TS	UM	BH
Military	7 (18.8%)	23(74.2%)	23(53.5%)	12(46.2%)
Diplomatic relations	12(31.6%)	2 (6.5%)	6(14.0%)	7(26.9%)
Terrorism	19(50.0%)	6(19.4%)	14(32.6%)	7(26.9%)

Issues pertaining to “terrorism” highlighted by these papers, especially NST were more on international discussions or talks on the issues and lesser on the act itself. Some of the areas touched were efforts to define terrorism, global conference held to discuss issues on terror, the role that the United Nations should play to stop blatant aggression while other news were on acts of terrorism such as suicide bombing and bomb blast. Top coverage of war news in the Malaysian media are the long-time Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the aftermath of war in Afghanistan and also on Iraq, being the next target of the U.S to exterminate terrorism (as the world had witnessed several months later).

During this period of analysis, Malaysia came out as an active country expressing views on “terrorism” and suggesting strategies to tackle “terrorism” without aggression, and Dr Mahathir Mohamad (then, the Prime Minister) was seen to use international forum such as the OIC to champion the cause.

Countries frequently mentioned in the news pertaining to terrorism and war news were the United States, Palestine, Israel, Lebanon, Syria, Libya, Indonesia, Philippines, Iraq which was in the midst of a continuous crisis, while the Philippines was encountering problems with the Abu Sayyaf group and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and Indonesia with its Jemaah Islamiyah (JI).

The electronic media also showed similar trends as the print media during the period of study. Like the Malaysian dailies, the electronic media in this country is dependent on the dominant four international news agencies for foreign news with AFP and Reuters remaining their favourite suppliers of news, news reels, actualities and visuals. One news producer told the writers in an interview that these two agencies are popular among Malaysian media organizations because of their “more or less” unbiased coverage.

Virtually on whose side are the media on? Looking at the Malaysian media, it can be seen that the media reflect the situation of the government and the society in which they operate. The principle of non-aligned remains intact within Malaysian foreign policy and this is reflected in the mass media. Malaysia within the non-aligned group, has assumed an active and assertive role. Today in Malaysia non-aligned does not mean just a passive adherence to the sanctimonious declaration of the principles and ideas of the non-aligned philosophy. It has long been the hope of Malaysian leaders that the non-aligned movement must not remain mere ideals but must be translated into effective action to free the world from domination by the strong over the weak in all fields (Munir Majid quoting Mahathir Mohamad, 1983). The principles of non-aligned, termed simply as neutral, are reflected in the newspapers. There is a tendency within the media to combine news from the international news agencies, namely Reuters, AFP and AP and publish it under the, *Agencies*. An editor said that this is one way, the gatekeepers try to increase neutrality and reduce biases (Ahmad Tali, b 2003).

In whose words do the Malaysian media subscribe to in explaining war to the people? With the shortage of trained staff, funds and equipments, the Malaysian newspapers, like their

counterparts in most developing countries are still dependent on the dominant four international news agencies for foreign news especially war news. Only of late, after the 2003 Iraq War that the Malaysian editors see the need to train Malaysian journalists to be war correspondents. We can see that Gandy's information subsidy model is applicable here. Basically, war news sources come from the protagonist of war quoted by the news agencies. The following are several headlines that indicate this trend: *'Osama e-mail slams Saudi peace plan'*; *Britain boleh serang Iraq tanpa mandat PBB – Hoon/ translation: Britain can attack Iraq without UN's Mandate – Hoon'*; *'Bush tuntutan Yasser henti pembunuhan/translation: Bush demands Yasser to halt killing'*; *'Amaran keras Putera Abdullah kepada Powell/translation: Hash warning from Prince Abdullah to Powell'*.

Obviously most headlines, reflect what are being said in the news and sub-editors take queues from the lead paragraph to help them write the lead. However, sub-editors can choose the right words and terms and not trapped with labels and judgments. But sometimes due to insensitivity, we get such headline that could create more animosity, such as one particular headline published in *Utusan Malaysia* 13 April 2002 based on and AFP's news: *Dunia kian marah kepada Israel*, translation: "The world is angry with Israel." The question we may ask is what connotes the word 'world'? Is it representative of the whole world? After reading the whole news, we found that 'the world' means only France, Germany and couple of Southeast Asian countries as suggested in the AFP's story.

This study has shown that while care is taken by local gatekeepers to create a more presentable and objective war news by combining news from Reuters, AP, UPI and AFP and place them under 'Agencies', there are instances where the choice of "facts" in news and headlines can be badly assembled as shown in the AFP's news. By applying Hayakawa's Trichotomy, the analysis show that all the four newspapers had achieved about 55 to 66 percent objectivity in presenting their war news but the remaining 36 to 45 percent of non-objective coverage remained questionable. Using news from the international news agencies, the local media are still far from propagating world peace. It can

be seen that the option for peace journalism among local media practitioners is still at an infantile stage.

How does the options of peace journalism entail? According to Galtung (1986), the concept of peace journalism acts as a timely and welcome antidote to much of what passes for war journalism. His classification of war and peace journalism is based on four broad perspectives namely peace or conflict, truth, people and solutions. Hence, peace journalism is an alternative, not polemic. The elements of peace journalism are not new; part political analysis, part investigative journalism, part socially responsible reporting, part advocacy journalism in the interests of peace.

Peace journalism proposes that journalists take up the role as educators who could well inform and educate the public on the background, contexts and origins of global media content, providing a multidimensional setting in their reports. These, of course need training, media literacy and sensitization programs, conducted among journalists and the public.

Recommendations

Based on some observations and a prescriptive analysis of media stereotyping in war reporting, initiatives could be taken to minimize prejudices and stereotypes, based on the following approaches:

The educational approach or media literacy: This approach addresses the need to make people be critically aware of how media, especially the local and global media are organized; how they select and construct their media content, and what are the contents and why they are the way they are? Media education or media literacy helps to sensitize media audience in terms of which global players and global media that are responsible media institutions and which are not. This also applies to local media institutions and practitioners. Media literacy should begin from primary schools till the universities. In relation to this, the media and universities could help educate the masses on the roles of the media and media practitioners, both local and global.

Understanding how the media operate, will help sensitize people on the hidden agenda highlighted through selected issues. Educating the media and the masses on peace journalism should be an immediate step to be taken.

The mass media approach: Media practitioners should be sensitized on the evaluation and selection of news and entertainment. They need to develop their own model and guideline in order to package their own media content . They need to come out with their own formula in packaging foreign and local content effectively. They also need to identify (via research for instance) effective ways to package news for the IT-savvy younger generations. War reporting should not be looked from a perspective that will perpetuate more animosities and divide warring parties into two dichotomies - the good and the evil. It is the responsibility of the media and their war correspondents to highlight facts and events that could bring peace between the parties at war. War journalists should be given special training and exposure on peace knowledge and negotiations.

The societal approach: Local association at the community level and NGOs should be active in distributing information via various media and multimedia channels (e.g. Internet and Blogs) and through campaigns, to educate societies on social issues and problems with regard to efforts to institutionalize peace journalism and the role of global media and their content. Cultural, Religious and Educational Roadshows should also be organized to publicise and sensitize people on these issues.

The governmental-policy approach: The government need to review some provisions with regard to media conglomerates and mergers and identify relevant policies that will create a balanced media system that are beneficial to both the media and the audience. At the local level, the Ministry of Information need to create sensitivity programmes for the people where awareness training on media related issues, such as ownership, laws, social, economic, political and cultural influences of the media are being discussed continuously. Knowledge obtained from all these

sensitivity training enhanced society's understanding and experience, and hence will allow wiser media decisions and media consumption in the future. These sensitivity programmes should also be supported by research and development activities and statistical data should be collected continuously to gauge the effectiveness of these programmes.

The scholarly approach: Universities, scholars and researchers should team up in collaborative works and networking as well as undertake research on the various perspectives of global media. Through research and development activities, they will be able to update information and knowledge, as well as to create a data base with regard to the global media and peace journalism option. With these data they will be able to make recommendations and offer guidelines to various institutions, governmental and non-governmental bodies. An important outcome from these research activities, would be the setting up of a Peace Journalism Center in every country where monitoring of the development, operations and contents of the media, both local and global, can be done.

Conclusion

While it can be seen that peace journalism is an option that media organizations and their war correspondents could take in drawing the line between good and biased news reports, it should be noted that news and information via the media is part of a larger industrial model that is being actively perused by local governments to develop their nations' economy. A nation cannot progress and industrialise without information.

On a positive note, various research by media and communication scholars have shown that the media are the catalyst that spearheaded progress. Their important role in building a country's national image and economy can no longer be denied. The question we are here to answer today is whether the invisible baggage i.e., the culture of news and information consumption among local people, that comes with the global media cost too much? This is where media literacy comes in. It

is thus important that the media help to keep people on top of current issues. The media also are the vehicles by which people debate issues and participate intelligently in public policy discussion and make wise decisions. The media can help the NGOs and community groups as well as activists and citizens at large to sensitize people regarding global media, global journalism and peace journalism options through campaigns and advocacy efforts. The media practitioners themselves should be sensitized on the importance of packaging news. They need to develop their own model and guidelines on how to propagate peace via news and information. Media organizations should also be made aware of the use and misuse of media language vis-à-vis appropriate use of media language. They should be sent for short courses on general semantics in the media. Only then, will they know how two-value orientation, of good versus evil, could create war and turmoil in societies and among nations.

In democracies, people like to believe that what they are doing for themselves and or other people are right and what their countries are doing are generally good. To go to war, and not go to war or refrain from any kind of involvement in war - all these have their own legitimate reasons. But when the media report war, under the notion of public's right to know and upholding their social responsibility goal, the 'story of war' takes a different turn. Parties to a conflict behave differently because the media is there, and will try to influence war news coverage to their advantage. Managing public opinion and controlling people's perception in time of war, through words maneuvering becomes a matter of great concern for the protagonists of war. But the media through words monitoring can even play a greater and more noble role.

It is indisputable, taken together, the proliferation of new media technology, growing media conglomerates, professionals, norms and values and the onset of globalisation, the media is one powerful force that shape the lives and destinies of peoples and nations. And for the media, to be aware of the use and misuse of language, to be aware of what they say, what they do, how they say it and how they do it, they can achieve enough impartiality for practical purposes.

No one in this world wants to admit that he or she has a prejudice mind and are sometimes or most of the time, involve in stereotypical generalizations. Any individual or citizens of a country tend to have a strong sense of belonging to one's country and people. Whatever terms that are used be it patriotism, nationalism or jingoism, they are only words and symbols, that are considered the most sophisticated kind of language. Through an in-depth understanding of the meaning of words and languages uttered or used by the mass media, would make people or journalists more aware of the presence of prejudice and stereotypes. If people are aware of their prejudices, they are able to gauge and evaluate the intensity and try to reduce it before they express through human behavior that could be detrimental to the human race.

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(Re) Imagining a Shared Future through Education for Global Social Justice

Ali A. Abdi

*Professor, University of Alberta
Canada*

Lynette Shultz

*Assistant Professor, University of Alberta
Canada*

Introduction

The positioning of the main discourses of our time as a “clash of civilizations” has had a profound impact on local, national and global relations through processes of legitimization. We have seen this positioning reproduce many traditional logics of supremacy, including cultural, racial, geopolitical, and patriarchal. By engaging in the problematic and ontologically Eurocentric clash logics, we enter into the process whereby particular groups are transformed into signs whose production and management are intentionally obfuscated to the point where projects of terrorism and counter-terrorism, and supremacy through essentialized centre-periphery hierarchies, are fabricated and eventually dangerously naturalized. As those groups who are relegated to the periphery try to de-centre dominant forces and reposition themselves as equal members of a global society, this repositioning is seen as a threat to a “natural” order. Contrary to this perennially confrontational global perspective, what humanity needs and can achieve through constructive agency and deliberative dialogue are active and engaged civic and institutional platforms that reduce inter-group and international misunderstandings and conflicts thereby enabling the co-creation of new and more just social realities.

To achieve the much needed counter-clash and open inter-civilizational dialogue and cooperation, we must also understand and be willing to deal with the devastating injustices of, for example, deep poverty, irreversible environmental destruction, and the myriad of globalization-driven structural violences that are affecting the lives of people all over the world. As was highlighted in the UN Year of Dialogue among Civilizations, there is an urgent need for engagement within, across, and among groups that challenges the 'separatist' logics and builds a praxis of respect and multicentric appreciation for the vast diversity and difference that strengthens our world. This engagement must also work to build bridges of understanding that support peaceful interactions that go beyond the rhetoric of coexistence, and aims to achieve respectful and reciprocal relations of recognition among individuals, groups, nations and hemispheres. Recognition at both the historical and subjective levels (see Taylor, 1995; Honneth, 1995), should be more than just the objective categories of actual relationships, but must be seen as a cultural and existential need that should not be denied to any people.

By advancing a line of analysis that disavows the clash logics, one could add so much to the recognition as well as the well-being of especially those communities whose lives have been destructively re-arranged by colonialism and globalization (Said, 1993; wa Thiongo, 1993). While all the noble, counter-clash possibilities mentioned here are important and urgently needed, they will not be achieved without enlisting the critical functions of new educational programs that effectively create such civic and continental engagements. To establish such programs of education, therefore, both the concept as well as the indispensable practices of social justice must be taken into account, with the newly inclusive spaces of learning being designed for, and achieving the social justice project. And that will not be possible without making the contents of the education program inclusive of the histories, cultures and the aspirations of all. As should be known to many educational researchers, schooling, in all its facets, and along with its sister contexts of informal and non-formal learning, has been instrumental in promoting and cementing the clash thesis (Achebe, 2000; wa

Thiongo, 1986). Hence, the need to reconstruct dominant educational programs that are actually representative of one worldview, but have been masquerading as genuinely universal for too long. To do so, the radical equalization of all life perspectives (Stam and Shohat, 1994) and we would add, life needs, should be highlighted and sought on behalf of all humanity.

Relocating the Meanings and Intentions of Social Justice

In the general intersections of liberal democracies and their attached discourses, social justice may be neutralized to the extent the rationalist notions of the enlightenment could reign supreme. Here, with life chances generally seen as fitting the now sociologically mute constructions of the functionalist-structuralist system, the assumption that social justice is there to be had by anyone who needs it, becomes problematic. Perhaps more than anything else, it is so de-historicized that it ignores, not only past injustices that have realized the current explosively unequal realities of life, it also deliberately forgets the continuities of highly uneven power relations that are sustaining the weaknesses we see in the overall project of social justice. It is also the case that with the proliferation of the projects of globalization, the weaknesses in global justice are expanding across the world (Abdi, 2007), and as in the liberal democracy belief systems, the presumed 'survival of the fittest' has derailed the lives of people who have been on the wrong side of the historical outcomes (Mann, 2006; Memmi, 1991).

It is in the context of this prescription, and with equitable intercontinental dialogue and understanding not on the agenda, that liberal democracy is supposedly curing everyone's ills (see Fukuyama, 1993) that people whose historical and actual trajectories are different from those of the European metropolis, would be asked, in fact expected to fit this model of social justice definitions and dispensations. Here, Nyerere's points many years ago should still resonate with much validity when he spoke about the counter-individualistic saliency of African life vis-à-vis the systems of colonialism that have distorted both the cosmologies

and earth-bound locations of Africans themselves (Nyerere, 1968). Indeed, with the communal and selectively geriatric life management ways of the East (not only Africa, but also Asia and pre-colonial Oceania), and the pre-Columbus Americas, now replaced by the exclusively detached rule of the Western educated elite (this is sometimes called democracy, which should be a misnomer), social justice has now become, not what you have a right to, but what the system prescribes for you in the realm of the world system. Amazingly, now with the project of the global injustice a fait accompli, the victors do not seem to be interested in engaging in some dialogue to lessen these pervasive conceptual and cultural disjunctures.

In most cases, in the so-called developing world, the stunting of the counter-clash dialogue platforms, lead to mass deprivations that are firstly created by the world systems, then labeled by the same systems as backwardness and underdevelopment. Here, an interesting point is that the meanings of deprivations, why it is happening, what it means and why these people are in a worse shape than, say, those in Canada, are also almost exclusively constructed by those who, in the first place, were responsible for the problems. In attaching our analysis for the need to understand social justice in a common historical and descriptive platforms, i.e., all of us coming together to figure the issue out, we cannot discount the ideas and theories of development. Here again, though, the needed discussions on the situation have also been betrayed by the lack of inter-civilizational dialogue. Needless to add that development is itself an imposed ideology for many (Rahnema & Bowtree, 1997; Ake, 1996), that never fulfilled its promise, and interestingly here again, the space for dialogue and discussion is not open. It is now almost 20 years since there was a widespread consensus that development as a program that makes people's better is no longer inclusive and therefore, selectively invalid (de Rivero, 2001; Leys, 1996; Schuurman, 1993). Yet, the problematic promise of development was neither redefined nor re-analyzed. Majid Rahnema's pointers in this regard are instructive and are directly related to the lack of global dialogue on social justice. He writes:

In the postcolonial era, through] the banner of development and progress, a tiny minority of local profiteers, supported by their foreign patrons set out to devastate the very foundations of social life. [In the process], a merciless war was waged against the age-old traditions of communal solidarity. The virtues of simplicity and conviviality, of noble forms of poverty, of the wisdom of relying on each other, and of the arts of suffering were derided as forms of underdevelopment (Rahnema, 1997, p. x).

Here, Rahnema's points present a starkly clear case of what happens when new meanings and categories of life are constructed for people without asking the concerned people what they thought about the situation. More problematically, this is happening when the previous categories of life are no longer there. Here, therefore, the processes of de-ontologizing are extensive, and without creating a new common forum for dialogue and understanding, the project of global social justice may be farther away than ever. Interestingly, even the late John Rawls (1971), undoubtedly the justice theorist par excellence in the West, and by extension (we now understand), around the world, analyzed and critiqued the rationalities of justice, but never disavowed the need to see beyond the orthogonal structures of the case, and look for everyday reasonableness of the applications of social justice, i.e., the changing contexts and possible malleability of the case, and how that should persuade us to be more open about our intentions and applications. For Rawls (2001), therefore, justice was not to be detached from the overall project of fairness, an idea that will probably not appeal to the new apostles of the neoliberal paradigm.

Conceptualizing Education for Global Social Justice

Many educational efforts are couched in the language of social justice, but as happens with so many other popular terms, much of the exhortation may actually be superficial. For example, the lack of any real conceptualization of what justice entails, particularly global social justice is at best weak, if not entirely alien to the overall analysis. In many cases, this lack serves to

keep justice efforts marginalized at best, and more often, anemically ineffective. More than that, the lip service that is paid to global social justice does not only betray the promise, it may also falsely convince us that things are fine, and the building of just multicultural relations is on course. We suggest that, while justice must always be historically and contextually based, there is a need to critically examine issues of distribution, recognition, engagement and violence in order to turn social justice education into more effective directions and toward global justice.

How do we bring global social justice and related educational practices into the space now dominated by messages of a hopelessly divided world? Dryzek (2006) argues we are seeing a clash among discourses rather than among civilizations. Discourses, in this sense are, as Milliken (1999) presents, a shared set of concepts, categories, and ideas that become embedded in practice through enactment. The subsequent conflicts between and among discourses is, what Dryzek (2006) suggests, where we need to focus our educational efforts. The dominant discourses reflect longstanding race, class, and gendered hierarchies that continue to be reproduced through new events and responses. For example, the discourses of globalization, anti-globalization, and de-globalization reflect many of the patterns of distribution established through colonial systems and resistance to these systems held in place by an ideological foundation of scarcity, individualism, and self-interest that normalizes privileging of a few at the expense of the many. A global social justice education must then engage learners as well as educators in deliberative engagement to address this macro-level discourse and the subsequent institutional structures that so severely impact life in locales throughout the world.

Dryzek (2006) also identifies the conflicting discourses of human rights and citizenship, where universal basic rights are contrasted against counter-terror discourses which would subordinate human rights and citizenship engagements to issues of security. Similar tensions exist in cases where national, religious, or ethnic identities are set up as oppositional. In response to these conflicting discourses, Dryzek (2006), Green (2006), and Benhabib (1996) describe how an important

deliberative turn in both understandings and practices of democracy is emerging in response to current conflicts and geopolitical, social, and economic trends of globalization. With this turn, we see democratic legitimacy currently being framed in terms of engagement or participation without the effective deliberation by those who are subjected within current systems and conflicts (Abdi, 2008), as well as more generally, those who are subject to collective decisions. The needed deliberative dialogic engagements may be the critical element in creating any shared future that extends beyond essentialized identity borders, beyond logics of supremacy, toward an authentic engagement with multiple worldviews based on reciprocity and respect.

If deliberation is a key to re-imagining a shared future including global justice, we need to understand what forms the basis for such deliberation if it is to move us toward new possibilities. Adam Kahane (2007) draws on his extensive work in post conflict negotiation and processes of change in Africa, Europe, Latin America, and North America, to adamantly claim that no change will happen without engagement and deliberative dialogue that addresses both love and power. As Honneth (1995) describes, love, rights, and solidarity are key processes of reciprocity that can enable an expanded path of relationships of recognition (p. 170). Counter-clash dialogic platforms founded on human rights and citizenship provide access as well as creative and transformational possibilities in relation to normalized exclusions of the majority of worldviews. Human rights and inclusive citizenship becomes the pathway for finding shared language to make experiences of disrespect and exclusion both visible and audible. This appeal to co-created projects of resistance and re-imagining reveals the normalized clash logics as elite-serving constructions rather than necessities of a modern age.

Kahane highlights the need to engage deeply respectful relationship building, or love, to move us beyond established fatalistic logics. As Martin Luther King Jr. declared in a speech shortly before his assassination,

... What we need to realize is that power without love is reckless and abusive, and love without power is sentimental

and anemic. It is precisely this collision of immoral power with powerless morality which constitutes the major crisis of our times. (Martin Luther King, Jr., 1967)

To negate the existence of, and in fact need for power relations in social contexts, is surely a real threat to global peace. Here, violence and injustice become unrecognized and hidden behind the silent face of obedience and false appeals to rational liberal thought. It has been the denial of both influences of love and power and a claimed neutrality that allow discourses of hegemony to persist in reproducing hierarchal social relations and massive inequalities in the distribution of both material and social benefits. Mansbridge (2006) defines power as “the actual or potential causal relation between the interests of an actor or set of actors and an outcome in which cause operates specifically through the use of force or the threat of sanction” (p. 47). If power is the ability to achieve a particular purpose for oneself or one’s group, then education for social justice must help students connect with their deepest purpose rather than uncritically subscribing to an externally determined purpose imposed through obfuscation of normalized relations of inequity, exclusion and injustice. If love is about connection with people, then we need to help students connect deeply with others to positively influence patterns of social development and social justice. Deliberative dialogue as educational process engages teachers and learners in the struggle for the establishment of relations of mutual recognition and reciprocity. The interconnectedness of conditions for practical relations between self and others must be based on universal respect for human dignity and creating a social and cultural climate of extensive human solidarity, even as this means deliberating about and through the conflict and struggle related to these shifting relations (Shultz, 2008). In this, education becomes as much about unlearning as it is about learning. There is a need for students to engage in unlearning and relearning through understanding how they have been positioned in relation to dominant discourses. Deliberative dialogue provides a way for learning the limits of our own knowledge as participants are engaged in re-imagining, reconstructing and therefore, repositioning toward more just relations.

Teaching and learning through dialogue engages both educators and students in processes of critical thinking and enactment of citizenship rights and responsibilities. This is not to suggest the path is an easy one. Much of the education system as it currently exists, reflects the very same normative structures and logics existing in the wider system. The predominance of instrumental and technical educational contexts means there are few spaces for such generative dialogue or deep listening within formal educational institutions. This lack of space, coupled with a fear of engaging in identifying how power operates or in social justice processes that inevitably involve conflict if they are to be authentic, means that educators must be very committed to generative dialogic processes if they are to challenge the structural impediments to such education. However, each educator who does begin to engage in the project of global social justice stands to add to the wide transformation of creating a more just social reality.

Conclusion

In this short article, we have analytically examined the possibilities of achieving globally inclusive social platforms that can bring together people's intentions and livelihood practices so as to attain more constructive and dialogically enriching spaces that are intended for the betterment of the overall human agenda. In many instances, though, those who continually profit from the status quo would prefer the so-called 'business-as-usual' line that thrives on the logics of separation, historical essentialism, inter-civilizational conflict, and the marginalization of such noble projects as human rights and social justice. A telling point here is how even such primary contexts of life as the rights claim to the basics of life are portrayed as untenable socialist projects that want to equalize all. Apparently, social equality is, for the powerful at least, a common pathology that should be avoided as much as possible. Undoubtedly, it is on the problematic exhortations of such ideologies that conflict is created in the first place. As interestingly and by extension, those who are seeking their rights by fair, peaceful means are created as the enemy that

must be fought against, and the bogey man of clash theses is deliberately constructed and maintained.

To deal with these now selfishly globalized programs, we cannot and should not give up on the possible social justice project that may only be achieved through open dialogues and mutual understanding among peoples, states, and indeed, globally. To achieve this at a level that can have a widely diffused impact, the role of educators and educational programs cannot be underestimated. It is through learning that the all too important counter-clash possibilities may be realized. It is through the new education that we can re-launch new multicultural spaces that value all histories, achievements and aspirations. In other words, to achieve effective cases of intercivilizational dialogue involves yearning for and harnessing new capacities to learn together and learn from each other, for despite all the short-sighted desires of the current global power elite, our destiny is bound together more than ever.

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Educating for Solidarity through Dialogue Education for the Dialogue among Civilisations

Brian Garrone

*Edmund Rice Education Australia
Australia*

Damien Price

*Edmund Rice Education Australia
Australia*

Within Australian educational circles there is an increasing awareness of the need to educate young people not just to be able to thrive within the global context, but also to be able to respectfully collaborate to build a global community characterised by a commitment to justice and peace. Due to the increasing inequalities present in our world, educators are seeing the need for formal schooling to be at the forefront of forming young people who have the knowledge, skills and attitudes to vision and act for a better world. Edmund Rice Education Australia (EREA) over the last decade has begun a process of visioning what such an education could look like and implementing programs, whole school approaches and system initiatives to make it a reality. Educating for a “Dialogue among Civilisations” is seen as one of the underlying values of this new vision. This article will explore how systematic change has been undertaken, present a framework for teaching and learning and highlight some of the programs that have been implemented in the EREA community.

The Context

Edmund Rice Education Australia (EREA) is the educational system of the Christian Brothers in the Australian setting. The

Christian Brothers first set up schools in Australia in the mid 1800's and have educated both young men and women for almost 150 years. For many years the Christian Brothers' schools were characterised by academic success, strict discipline and providing opportunities for young people who were on the margins of Australian society. In 2008, EREA now comprises of over 40 schools, ranging from all boys boarding schools to Flexible Learning Centres that provide educational opportunities for young people who have disengaged from mainstream education. The system, drawing inspiration from the Irish educational liberator, Edmund Rice, has recently re-visioned its educational endeavour to focus on the "transformation of the minds and hearts of young Australians to build a more just, tolerant and inclusive community." This vision has been influenced by a new understanding of the educational philosophy of Edmund Rice and his focus on liberation through education, particularly the breaking down of unjust social structures through relationship building across faith and class divides.

Edmund Rice: Educational Liberator

Edmund Rice was an Irish businessman who was born into the strongly nationalistic and religious society of poverty stricken 18th century Ireland. The cultural and ecclesial mores of his day could have propelled Edmund into an "us – them" modality that interpreted the events of daily life in terms of blame, rejection and fear of difference and denial of any semblance of shared humanity. However, Edmund overcame this pervading culture and began a number of schools for the marginalised youth of Waterford.

The educational approach that Edmund Rice initiated deliberately challenged much of the divisive prejudice of his day. He sought to set up schools of the highest quality but welcomed into them both poor and rich, Protestant and Catholic, and established a curriculum that promoted liberation – not only from the effects of physical poverty but from the mindsets that impoverished people. Edmund's strong commitment to the education of all youth at the margins of society and to dialogue

between Catholics and Protestants was counter cultural for that time (McLaughlin, 2006). This subversive approach meant that he sought not merely to liberate individuals through education, but also to change the social structures that kept people poor and marginalised. His deep belief in the dignity of all people led him to create an education system that lifted people out of poverty while educating them towards critically engaging in and recreating the world. Edmund Rice Schools of the 21st Century have sought to draw from this inspiration and develop an educational approach that continues this founding mission while responding to the unique needs of our time.

Reading the Signs of the Times: Interfaith Dialogue

The leaders of Edmund Rice Education have realised that a commitment to interfaith dialogue is essential to educating in the 21st Century. To facilitate this development, educational leaders gathered in India recently to vision the future directions of ministries over the next six years. Prior to this gathering, participants were invited into an interfaith immersion and dialogue experience with people of a variety of faith traditions. Through this relational engagement a deep commitment to interfaith dialogue emerged:

As we entered their sacred stories, temples, places of worship and rituals, Sikhs, Buddhists, Hindus, Baha'i, Jains and Muslims invited us into their lives. With growing awareness, we pondered the common search for the Divine in these other religious traditions. We became aware also of their many ministries to the disadvantaged. Our experiences deepened our understanding of the powerful presence of the Spirit within these religions. Searching questions surfaced for some of us. The mystery of God is deeper and more inclusive than we had ever imagined. It is indeed a revelation to discover how our concepts of God had been constrained within the horizons of our own tradition. (Christian Brothers Congregational Gathering, 2008)

This immersion and dialogue set the scene for a gathering of passionate people who sought to offer the powerful possibility that Edmund Rice's educational endeavour could truly embrace the practice of "dialogue among civilisations," leading to social transformation that builds a better world for all people. This has led to a renewed commitment to a pedagogy of justice and peace across Edmund Rice Schools.

Transformational Education: A Framework

At the heart of EREA's current approach to education in the Australian setting is the value of relational solidarity leading to transformational action for a better world. A focus on an education for justice and peace is seen as fundamentally crucial if we are to prepare young people to engage positively and passionately with their communities and the world to build a culture of right relationships. A pedagogical methodology has been developed that consists of the raising of awareness, the nurturing of compassion and the engagement with action. This draws its inspiration from the peace education movement:

Raising awareness or knowledge formation entails the research and study of violent situations, their causes and consequences. Building concern is about nurturing feelings of compassion for and solidarity with victims of violence. This step aims to transform feelings of helplessness by giving the learners a chance to imagine an alternative or a preferred situation. The final step is invitation to action. The development of genuine concern prompts learners to do something about situations of violence be it on a personal level, like personal change, or on a social level, like political advocacy or actions of direct service. (Castro, Galace & Lesaca, 2005: pg 73)

This methodology has been infused into three main pedagogical practices over the last decade: service and solidarity learning opportunities; immersion and twinning relationships with the majority world; and the engagement of teachers and young people in cross-cultural and interfaith dialogue that leads to

action for justice. These pedagogical practices are placed within the context of adolescent development with its emphasis on identity formation and recognising the importance of a value based, outward looking and global ideology for young adults to feel a part of, so they too can take their place in society as future and present “makers of history” (Flacks, 1988). Some of these initiatives are briefly described.

Inter-faith Formation of Educators for a Culture of Peace

Through 2006/2007 the Multi-Faith Centre, Griffith University, organised for key educators from EREA to participate in a series of in-service workshops on “Interfaith Dialogue for Building a Culture of Peace.” These workshops facilitated the exploration and dialogue of the participants on issues and questions within and across faiths that pose challenges for building a culture of peace; raise their awareness on complex issues, problems, and conflicts of interfaith relationships and their impact on societal peace; deepen their knowledge and skills in integrating themes and principles of interfaith dialogue in their curricula and teaching learning strategies (Toh, 2005). Twenty EREA educators participated in a number of workshops with Dr Virginia Cawagas and Professor Toh Swee Hin from the Multi-Faith Centre, Griffith University with the support of Edmund Rice Education staff. A number of Aboriginal teachers and faith leaders were invited to share their knowledge, perspectives, and experiences on selected workshop themes and issues.

The final outcome of the workshops was a resource book for schools (Cawagas, Toh & Garrone, 2007). Included in this resource book were a number of modules for teachers that aim to promote justice and peace from an interfaith perspective. Each of the modules has a focus on one of the particular themes of “Educating for a Culture of Peace.” These modules were written by teachers who participated in the workshops and the ideas presented have been used with students in their schools.

Global Twinning and Immersion Programs

Increasingly schools have seen the need to engage young people with youth from the Global South so together they can explore some of the pressing issues facing the global community. Solidarity immersion programs have been organised between youth from Australia and South Africa, Timor Leste and the Philippines. These programs enable young people from these countries to come together for an extended period of time and share cultures, explore the themes of justice and peace and collaboratively work out strategies for raising awareness about our common humanity. The impact of these experiences on the lives of young people can have lasting significance in their life's choices as shared in the following reflections:

Throughout our epic journey in the African culture, our group was continually immersed in the strength and resilience shown by the South African people. Their courage was a true example of human spirit. Each moment in their presence, was an opportunity to learn. Not only to learn, but to be inspired. The people of SA, through their personal struggles, rich experiences and powerful sense of faith taught us so many lessons. They taught us forgiveness and happiness, as well as the importance of a profound spirituality. For me, my spiritual journey began here at Regina Mundi, the infamous church of Soweto. However, it did not end there, nor did it end when I left South Africa. You see, during my experience my eyes were opened to breathtaking beauty in the face of adversity. It made me realise how important their faith is to them, and how important it is to me. - Caitlin (St James College)

As we travelled through South Africa, we were captivated by the beauty of the country and the warmth of the people within it, and yet I felt a twinge of unease in the pit of my stomach which only seemed to grow as it became closer to the date we had to leave. I kept asking myself, "What can we do? How can we witness so much inequality and pain and just walk away?"

Since I've been back in Australia I've realized something. You can't walk away; you can leave a country like South Africa but it never leaves you. That feeling of unease still sits in my stomach, but it's not a feeling of despair or hopelessness. It's a

feeling of injustice, and it motivates every one of us that was involved in the immersion to continue to work for peace and global solidarity in our own communities. It's a cliché that actions speak louder than words, but the truth is that it doesn't matter how compassionate you are, if you talk endlessly about social justice but do not put your beliefs into practice. We learnt this from the passionate and dedicated young people of South Africa who work to sustain and promote a better quality of life for their communities. We learnt this from Nelson Mandela, a man who gave 27 years of his life in prison because he believed in humanity.

Don't fool yourself into being desensitised to the oppression of others. It's easy to turn off the news and forget there is a world beyond our own, but it doesn't matter if you can't see people suffering right in front of you, because those people continue to exist. It is only when we step outside ourselves that we realize we're part of a global family and we are all in this together.

You have a choice. Open your eyes. Change your heart. Live and act for justice. - Adriane (Mount Alvernia College)

Before we left the vibrant land of South Africa, I made a promise to myself. I promised that I, Mark Atkinson, would be an instrument and leader of peace. I would bring about change in my life and others' lives. Back in Australia, through small acts of kindness, I hope I have accomplished one small aspect of my promise. The next step is to inspire others to be brave and follow their own dreams, which, ultimately, will be brightening the future of our world. - Mark (St Joseph's Nudgee College)

The topic of social justice is often thrown around in conversation as a theoretical concept to be acted upon by other people, or as an institution you can throw money at and sleep better at night thinking you have contributed to the welfare of humanity.

Money can feed people. It can clothe them and buy them the necessities of life, but it is charity and it does not provide for a sustainable way to live. That doesn't mean you should sit on your hands and accept the inequality of the world, on the

contrary; compassion without action is sentimental humbug. Society requires us to contribute to humanity in different ways. Sometimes we assume that people will be so oppressed that they cannot help themselves, but building relationships in which human beings can relate to each other in global solidarity can empower them, and is at the heart of social justice. - Adriane (Mount Alvernia College)

Local Service and Solidarity Learning Programs

Each of our schools has endeavoured to initiate programs that allow for relationships between students with those on the margins of society in their local communities. These programs, usually based around a service activity, have seen our students develop long term relationships built upon reciprocity and respect with people that previously they would never have associated with. Examples have included hospitality vans with the homeless and tutoring for newly arrived refugees. The overwhelming sense from both the students and partners has been that the service activity is just the avenue for a deeper understanding, empathy and respect between each of the participants and those who they are partnering with. Each of these programs is developed with extensive preparation and debriefing of the students leading to social analysis of the causes of oppression and solutions to these uncovered injustices.

Challenges and Possibilities

Our involvement with these and similar programs have led us to recognise that the educational journey towards values development that embraces a deep commitment to justice and peace and prepares young people to have the knowledge and skills to “dialogue across civilisations” requires enormous time and energy from the entire EREA community. There is a need for an extended, ongoing period of time where students can explore social issues within a peace building framework. A direct – “hands on” and “hearts open” approach is important to bring students into direct contact with those classed as “different” to

them [economically, culturally, etc] so that a respectful and reciprocal relationship can develop that leads to an understanding and appreciation of personal and communal “story.” The presence of mentors to continually encourage the students to ask critical questions and to develop frameworks built upon justice and peace is also crucial. Finally, the EREA community needs to engage in a continual reflection upon experience in the light of a philosophy that espouses a dialogue between civilisations, between cultures, the breaking down of barriers and a belief in the dignity of all as brothers and sisters of a global family.

As educators in Edmund Rice schools we have learnt that this is indeed a journey and that we have not arrived yet – much work needs to continue to be done. The great challenge for us as educators and for Edmund Rice schools in general is not to see justice and peace education, the initiatives named above and the whole global approach towards dialogue across boundaries as “one off” events or as “feel good” pedagogical tools that are distant from real life and academic achievement. There is a real danger of either/or; that we can be schools of academic excellence or schools that promote justice and dialogue leading to a better world.

Our vision is that ultimately Edmund Rice schools will be places where justice and peace initiatives are not seen as added extras but as core to the curriculum and culture of the school. This would enable our graduates to be young men and women who are willing and skilled to take their places in society as agents of change, able to critique injustice within society and motivated to initiate and participate in interfaith dialogue and social action. The respectful engagement with others, both locally and globally, through story, relationships and combined action can go much of the way to making this vision a reality.

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A Peace Education Unit Media and Peace: Toward Dialogue among Civilizations

Kevin Kester

PhD Student, Adult Education

Ontario Institute of Studies in Education

University of Toronto, Canada

Preparatory Reading for Students:

1. Murray, John P. (2007). Children and Television: Using TV Sensibly. South Texas: Mind Science Foundation. Available at:
http://www.mindscience.org/resources/MSF10189_ChldrnTV_Gud-0407.pdf.
2. Trautman, Brian J. (2009). Military Recruiting Advertising and Media Access Undermine Peace Efforts, available at:
<http://www.afterdowningstreet.org/node/41292>.
3. Students are also asked to select two short articles from readings available at The Center for Media Literacy (www.medialit.org). Students should select and read articles that are directly relevant to the flow of class dialogue, meaning that the topic of the articles is linked with previous class readings and discussions. Students should be prepared to present key learning from the readings in class and bring reference materials for each article. Readings available at:
http://www.medialit.org/reading_room/rr3.php.

Introduction

Media heavily influences our lives and our perceptions of the world. For example, consider that by the time most US students graduate high school they will have spent nearly 15,000 hours in front of a television, compared with 11,000 hours in a classroom with a teacher (Murray, 2007). Hence, students spend more time with a television than a teacher. Also, consider that NBC (the US-based National Broadcasting Corporation) is owned by General Electric, one of the world's largest weapons producers; this relationship between television programming and weapons-production certainly informs the types of programs shown on NBC. Yet this relationship and the message embedded in it are hidden from most viewers. Certainly NBC programming will support the worldview that heavy defense spending is a necessity and that evil threats lurk in the distance (Trautman, 2009). Television and mass media, then, is clearly an influential technology that informs our worldviews, beliefs and practices.

When viewed uncritically, television and news media in particular, can give the viewer an illusion of objectivity and truth; when in reality it is produced with a specific bias according to the agencies' worldviews and agenda, including the owners, advertisers, and varying constituencies who benefit from the specific construction of events. In this way, news media has the capacity to not simply *inform* the public, but to *manipulate* viewers via the use of language, emotion, and the visual display of stories. It is important to be a critical consumer of media, to be capable of uncovering, and critically reflecting on the ideologies and cultural nuances that are embedded in the message.

Furthermore, media is only one component of the broader systems of information production and consumption that develop an individual's and collective society's worldviews, including information absorbed from parents, teachers, faith-based groups, clubs and associations. These worldviews are formed through interaction with physical, mental and emotional stimuli and experiences that define an individual's personal life as well as the

collective histories of a people. As a result, exclusive and violent beliefs and behaviors shown in the media and learned from parents and teachers assist the cultivation of cultures of violence (as conceptualized in the theoretical work of Freud, Piaget, and Bandura). These violent orientations or conflict-based worldviews include the notion that violence is a proper means of conflict resolution, the notion that competitive market ideology is the only or most advanced means of the global economic order, and the tenet that military strength is needed to protect citizens and special business interests from outside influences.

Yet other worldviews and possibilities do exist. Cultures of peace might be said to be possible through transforming conflict-based worldviews toward unity-based worldviews (Danesh, 2008) where violence is understood as a deliberate consequence of a choice, competitive market ideology is shown side-by-side with fair trade and shared commons, and military determinism is contrasted with human security and collective defense models. One might consider a dialogue among civilizations as both affirmation of the need for unity-based worldviews and as a strategy for positive and critical global transformation founded on dialogue, cooperation, and nonviolent conflict management. Moving beyond the fragmenting paradigm of competitive market-ideology, violent conflict resolution, and a clash of civilizations, a dialogue among civilizations fosters peace through transformative global dialogue for international understanding, equity and non-violence.

In conclusion, educators and learners must learn to facilitate critical awareness of the influence of mass media on framing global perspectives, international ethics and civic possibilities. Furthermore, education should prepare learners with skills to engage critically with media, including reflection, critical thinking and problem-solving skills. One example of constructive media and civil society efforts to produce and monitor peaceful media is being led by the Alliance of Civilizations (AoC). The AoC Media Fund seeks to normalize images of stereotyped groups in mass media through critical partnerships with film agencies and distribution centers (Alliance of Civilizations Forum Report, 2008). Therefore, noting the tremendous capacity of media to either support or undermine peacebuilding efforts at

local, regional and global levels, this learning unit aims to raise consciousness of, and action toward, the multiple links between culture and conflict as facilitated through contemporary media, where media is not merely the forum but also an actor.

Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 19

Level: High School and Undergraduate courses (youth ages 15-24)

Core Subject: Social Sciences, History, Geography, English, Economics, Arts, Peace and Conflict Studies

Materials: Newspapers, video camera, sample video segments from news stations, various art materials, handouts (attached)

Timeframe: 4-8 weeks (8 class hours)

Theme:

A unit addressing:
Media and Violence
Culture and Worldview
Constituencies and Prejudices
Gender and Human Rights
Dialogue and Civilizations

Core Concepts:

Various forms of violence in our lives
Impact of media violence on our lives
Instruments for mitigating violence
Global inequities as violence
Alternatives to violent conflict
Envisioning peaceful futures

Objectives:

Students will do the following by the end of the lesson:

Discuss the role of identity and worldviews in conflicts

Promote empathy, compassion and love

Reflect on the importance of cooperation and critical thinking in decision-making

Contemplate democratic processes for schools, media and civil society

Practice reflection and dialogue

Participate in critical and multicultural dialogue

Guiding Inquiry:

How do media promote peaceful or violent orientations?

What are multiple forms of violence?

How does dialogue promote cultures of peace?

Who has direct/indirect access to media decision-making and viewing?

How does gender identity influence privilege and media access?

What are ways individuals and communities can become involved locally to promote respect, multicultural dialogue and responsible media?

Facilitation strategies:

The facilitator will use the following critical and cooperative learning methods: Short introduction by teacher, Brainstorming, Group discussions, assessing violations of international human rights, Role-plays, and Group reflection. The timeframe of activities and discussions is open to the teacher's discretion to allow for issues to be addressed in a proper manner (though this unit is estimated at 8 hours).

Learning Sequence

Lesson Proper (7 weeks; students complete handouts 1-2).

Short abstract: Students create groups and are given articles to summarize from a certain assigned ideology/worldview. The students are challenged to create a 7-10 minute news production using information from newspaper articles that resemble a perceived ideology. The presentations are recorded and replayed to the class for analysis and reflective discussion.

Schedule lessons	of Activity
Lesson 1	Introduction, group making, Viewing of news segments (Handout 1)
L2	Research news networks (Handout 1)
L3	Summary writing (Handout 2)
L4	Summary writing/simulation practice (Handout 2)
L5	Practicing and run-throughs (Handout 2)
L6	Video-taping Performances (Handout 2)
L7	Viewing with all students (Handout 3)
L8	Follow-up discussion(s) and activity (Handout 3) and (Handout 4)

Lesson 1

1. Introduce activity and divide students into groups of 8 (adjust according to class size).
2. Give each group 4 articles (Headline/Local News, International News, Entertainment and People, and Business and Technology) from a select media source to summarize and present in Lessons 3-6.
3. The groups should elect a leader and delegate responsibilities to group members. The group leader is responsible for keeping track of materials and ensuring group work is accomplished in a timely manner. The different segments—Headline News, International News,

Entertainment, and Business—should be distributed (2 people per segment) to group members. Each of the groups should receive the same 4 articles so as to later explicitly illustrate the perceived differences in ideologies and worldviews.

4. Watch/read news segments of the same events from various sources (television news or newspapers). Reflect on the news segments and underlying ideologies.

Lesson 2

1. Groups are assigned a network station (e.g. Fox News, CNN, Al-Jazeera, BBC, and Christian News). The groups are asked to research the network station to answer the following queries:
 2. Who owns the station?
 3. Who advertises for the station?
 4. Who benefits from the station?
 5. Who is the target audience?
6. Allot students classroom time for research and group discussion in the computer lab(s) of the school (if available).
7. Lead a class discussion with the information each group extracted about the networks.

Lesson 3

1. Ask students to choose an ideological viewpoint, such as conservative, liberal, moderate, Christianity, Islam, Judaism, North, South, white, black, indigenous, Capitalism, Communism, Socialism, Anglophone, francophone, etc, to be included into their presentation of the news.
2. Students (in pairs) read, analyze and reconstruct the news segments according to their assigned ideologies/worldviews.
- 3.

Lesson 4

1. Students (in pairs) summarize their articles through their ideological lens.

Lesson 5

1. Groups practice presenting their news segments (first, in pairs, and then the entire group).
2. Make final preparations for videotaping (Lesson 6). **The teacher(s) will be in charge of videotaping in the next lesson at school. Inform groups that they will have only one chance to present, so they must be prepared (no stopping and restarting—this is a performance).**

Lesson 6

1. Prior to class, teacher(s) will set up a separate classroom (for videotaping) to mimic a news set. While a group is being recorded in classroom 2, the other groups will prepare in the primary classroom. Groups are recorded with each presentation between 7-10 minutes.

Lesson 7

1. View all of the performances (with DVD, VCR) and have groups take notes about the different presentations of the event(s). How do the various ideologies/worldviews affect the presentation of information/events?
2. Lead an open class discussion about the different groups' news segments. In what ways did the group presentations reflect stereotypes? How much of this originated with the broadcasting companies and how much was projected by the individual? (Ask students to write a 1-page reflection for homework to be used in the final class discussion.)

Optional adaptations: Students may make advertisements (e.g. commercials for restaurants, drinks, fitness programs) or weather information for intermission between news segments. These additional ads should add fluidity and relative content to the 4 news segments. Facilitators may also choose to create fictional breaking-news-stories from conflict regions (e.g. Israel/Palestine, Northern Ireland, Sri Lanka, China/Taiwan, India/Pakistan). Encourage students to research current issues in conflict regions.

Follow-up discussion and activity
(Handout 3)

I. **Discussion:** Through small group and whole-class discussions, dialogue on the following questions at length. (Some questions from Center for Media Literacy)

- What is media?
- What types of media do you encounter/use everyday?
- How do the media usually report on conflicts?
- How do the media paint conflicting parties?
- What makes it seem real?
- What type of person is the watcher invited to identify with?
- What ideas or values are being sold to us in this message?
- Who profits from this message?
- What did the news segments have in common (e.g. camera, angles, focus)? What did you notice watching the simulations?
- How were the news segments different (e.g. presenters, language, issues, values)?
- To what degree did the presentations of the various cultures and worldviews accurately represent that culture? And to what degree did the presentations embody previous prejudices?

- What happens when a third party appropriates the identity and suffering of another?
- What might the media do to circumvent dualistic paradigms toward inclusion and reconciliation?
- What ideologies do we subscribe to in our personal lives?
- How can the right to freedom of expression, as documented in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, be used as moral support for indoctrination and homogenization of thought in schools and media; or, conversely, how can the same right be used to justify diverse opinions and worldviews?

Facilitation of discussion: Write the collective ideas of the class from the questions above on the board. This allows students to visualize and connect a variety of views concerning media and intercultural understanding.

II. **Activity:** In their original groups, a representative from each student group draws the world as perceived through the lens of the group ideology (e.g. Islam and the Middle East, Christianity and the West, economic ideologies of the Global North and South). The drawings may be literal pictures of geography (with particular regions emphasized) or representational symbols of major cultural, religious and political themes. Each group draws with a specific colored marker on the whiteboard so as to visually differentiate between the different regions. Then have an open discussion. First have each group explain their work and receive comments/questions from other groups. Elicit similarities and differences between the groups. Second, leaving the assigned ideologies behind, proceed to an open discussion on the role that ideologies and culture play in interaction between individuals, groups and states. Where and how do ideologies divide people? Where do ideologies unite people? Can we transcend nationalistic and insular thinking toward unity-based worldviews?

Supporting Documentation

Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948): Article 19, Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers. (Available online at www.un.org.)

Hague Agenda for Peace and Justice in the 21st Century (1999): (40) *Utilize the media as a proactive tool for peacebuilding*, the media play a vital, and controversial, role in situations of violent conflict. They have the capacity to exacerbate or to calm tensions and, therefore, to play an essential role in preventing and resolving violent conflict and in promoting reconciliation. Apart from their traditional role in reporting on conflict, the media may also be used to build peace in a wide variety of alternative ways. Special attention needs to be directed towards (1) promoting objective, non-inflammatory reporting of conflict situations so that the media serves the cause of peace rather than war and (2) to further explore the use of the media in creative new ways to build peace and promote reconciliation. (Available online at www.haguepeace.org.)

The Earth Charter (2000): (14c.) Enhance the role of mass media in raising awareness of ecological and social challenges. (Available online at www.earthcharterinaction.org/content/.)

Evaluation

Suggested Evaluation Procedures:

Have students keep a reflective journal throughout the course of the peace module and on the final day of the course, give students an opportunity to share reflections with their classmates. Or a more intensive evaluation procedure may be the development of a portfolio that includes reflections, research articles, and the development of a peace-oriented project. If school structures require an examination, tests may be constructed with open-ended questions pertaining to an analysis of peace, violence and violations of human rights in the media. The instructor could also create a group evaluation that assesses problem-solving skills based on an example scenario that requires students to propose possible solutions to specific cases of violence in media.

Instructor's reflection:

What worked
What didn't
Suggestions for next time

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Student Handouts for Media and Peace

Handout 1

ANALYZING NEWS/ CRITICAL VIEWERS

Analyzing the news programs (adapted from Center for Media Literacy)

After watching the sample news program in class, answer the following questions.

Who (Who created this message?)

What (What creative techniques are used to attract my attention?)

When (When has this worldview conflicted with other worldviews?)

Where (Where is this ideology prominent in the world?)

Why (Why is this message being sent?)

How (How might different people understand this message differently from me?)

Research of news agency (i.e. BBC, Fox News, CNN, Al-Jazeera)

As the research component of this module, find background information on the news agency assigned your group. You may find information in books, magazines, etc., or on the Internet.

Who owns the station?

Who advertises for the station?

Who benefits from the station?

Who is the target audience?

Handout 4

SUGGESTIONS FOR DIALOGUE PARTICIPANTS

Dialogue invites us to engage with others in a collective process of thinking, understanding and making meaning of our world(s) of experience. Dialogue offers us the challenge of listening for understanding. Our task is not to agree or to persuade, but to open to the experience of a flow of thought and meaning. To participate in dialogue in this way is an act of courage. What makes this mode of communicating different from other discussions is, in part, the inner reflective work on the part of participants. The following are questions that may assist participants in shifting from our more familiar practices of defending our beliefs and opinions, to suspending our beliefs in order to uncover, and question, the assumption underneath them.

What am I feeling in my body?

How is my attitude affecting people?

What are the different voices trying to convey?

What voices are marginalized here?

When do my thoughts stop my ability to listen?

Am I resisting something I hear?

What are the facts? And what are feelings, memories, opinions and beliefs?

What has led me to view things as I do?

What assumptions lie beneath my question or my opinion?

What themes or patterns are emerging from what is being said?

Could I perceive things in a new way?

Can I suspend my certainty?

What am I missing that would help me to understand?

What needs to be expressed here?

What purpose would my statement or question serve?

What is no one else saying?

Building Religious Pluralism: The Interfaith Youth Core Approach

Eboo Patel

Founder and Executive Director

Interfaith Youth Core

Cassie Meyer

Director, Outreach Education & Training

Interfaith Youth Core

We often begin our Interfaith Youth Core workshops by asking the college students we work with to think about the last time they have seen religion on television, the last time they have opened a newspaper or turned on the radio to a story about religion. We ask them to generalize: What are the dominant stories of the role of religion in the world?

“Religion poisons everything,” the sharp subtitle of Hitchens’ *God is Not Great* inevitably comes up, as does Huntington’s “Clash of Civilizations.” “Religion makes you judgmental;” “All Muslims are terrorists;” “Religion is opposed to science.”

It is very easy to shout out the darker narratives. So, we ask: are there any positive stories that the students can think of? We will get some tentative thoughts about the possibility for religious groups to do good in the world, caring about things like AIDS or poverty or the environment, but these ideas are much less clear in their mind.

Now, we ask the students, how do these stories correspond to the reality of religion that they have lived? How do they correspond to the way that they are religious, or to the religious people that they know? And further, what, we ask, does it mean that the stories of religion that dominate our popular imagination

are often so distant from the lived reality of religion that these young people know?

We can, of course, point out that it is much easier for the news to tell stories of wars and conflict than of the every day, common life and common good that most of the young people we work with live out. That said, it is important to realize the disconnect here, and to ask how much the way we tell the story shapes the way the story is played out, or as Zachary Karabell has put it in *Peace Be Upon You*, his look at 14 centuries of interreligious cooperation and conflict,

...Perhaps times of death and war leave a more lasting impression than periods of peace and calm. Maybe turmoil and confrontations sear the memory more deeply. But there are consequences to our selective readings...History is a vast canvas, where it is possible to find support for nearly every belief, every statement about human nature, and every possible outcome of the present. That does make history any less important, but it is up to each of us to use it well (Karabell, 2007, 5-6).

The Interfaith Youth Core is a Chicago-based, international non-profit organization committed to working with young people and those who work with young people, to tell and build a different story about religion. What does it mean, we ask, to be living in a time of increased global interaction across differences, to be living in a time where young people are often at the forefront of this interaction? What kinds of stories, tools and skills are we giving young people to build positive relationships across those differences, particularly across religious differences?

Diana Eck (2006), looking at the reality of religious diversity, observes that it is not enough to simply have diversity, the mere existence of difference in a common civic space, but instead, that diversity needs to be actively and intentionally engaged, in what she calls *pluralism*. Similarly, Ashutosh Varshney's *Ethnic Conflict and Civic Life: Hindus and Muslims in India* (2002) points to the importance of civic engagement. Looking at demographically identical societies in India, Varshney asks: "What leads one society to remain peaceful in

times of national ethnic conflict, while the other erupts in violence?” (2002, 81) Varshney finds that it is interethnic or intercommunal networks of civic engagement, modes of association that bring together people across religious and ethnic differences for a shared investment in a given community. Intentionally building such networks, Varshney (2002) suggests, actually leads to a stronger and more peaceful civic society. Drawing from both Eck (2006) and Varshney (2002), then, we define religious pluralism in three points: (1) a respect for individual religious identity (and equally, respect for those who claim no religious identity) (2) mutually enriching relationships across religious difference, and (3) the enactment of common action for the common good.

By working with high schools, colleges and universities, civic institutions, and faith communities, Interfaith Youth Core is building a movement of religious pluralism. Our methodology takes the idea of religious pluralism and equips young people to enact it on a grassroots level, creating intentional networks of civic engagement through the following:

Story-telling. Young people who participate in interfaith dialogue are often not scholars of their religious tradition. They are, however, scholars of their own experience, the experiences of being a young person of faith, living that faith out in a religiously diverse world. Instead of having a dialogue that focuses on politics or theology, that asks, “What do Christians, Hindus and Muslims think about the nature of God?” or starting a Jewish-Muslim dialogue with Israel-Palestine, we ask young people to tell stories: the stories of the ways that they live out their faith, the ways that they have experienced tradition. Not only is story-telling an empowering practice, but it also is a pragmatic tool for dialogue: as one teller speaks, her story will often evoke a similar but different story in her listener, who is then empowered to tell his story.

Shared values. In the words of ethics philosopher Alisdair MacIntyre, “I can’t tell you what I am to do unless I first tell you the stories of which I am a part” (1984, 216). Religions themselves have stories to tell, and stories about how believers

are to act. We focus on these stories of action, and push towards the common good: What do Christians, Muslims, and Jews all think about compassion? About mercy? About justice? About hospitality? The point here is not to be reductionistic, and we very deliberately emphasize that the ways that Buddhists and Jews understand hospitality are not very different. We are not saying that all religions are the same. Instead, we are asking a question: If you believe deeply, as a religious person, in hospitality, might we not find a way to enact that hospitality collectively, even if the ways in which, and the reasons why we understand it are very different? Might we not still work together, acknowledging our differences while also enacting our shared commitment to a common civic space?

Service learning. The third piece of Interfaith Youth Core's methodology picks up on exactly this question, suggesting one of the strongest methods for interfaith interaction are those which build precisely the networks of civic engagement that Varshney (2002) points to. The practice of service-learning encourages young people not just to do service to their community, but to also learn from the community alongside which they are serving. It asks that those serving know deeply the work they are doing and why, and asks them to be invested in the well-being of the community far beyond the completion of a particular service project. When that shared investment and engagement brings together young people of different religious faith – or of no faith at all – they begin to see one another no longer as other or outside, but as partners in the common good.

These three pieces are not meant to be linear, but rather complimentary, each feeding into and reinforcing the others. Often young people will first encounter religious pluralism by first participating in an interfaith service-learning project, by first experiencing the reality of working with someone who is different than them, and only later having the opportunity to reflect and process this. Just as frequently, the students we work with have been engaged in esoteric theological interfaith dialogue, and have never stopped to think about how they might work in the world with those they are dialoguing with.

The question, “What are the stories of religion being told in the world today?” resonates with students because it allows them to place the interfaith work they are doing or are striving to do on their campuses into a larger context, a context in which their peace-building might in fact have something to say about a so-called clash of civilizations. Religious pluralism gives them a methodology to tell a new story. A case in point: In 2002, a group of three students – a Jew, a Muslim and an Evangelical Christian – were trained in the Interfaith Youth Core’s religious pluralism methodology. Their school – the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign – had been fraught with interfaith tensions to the point of near-violence. Returning to campus, the three students began a new program, Interfaith Action, which focused on bringing together students from different backgrounds for sustained, long-term service projects that strengthened the local community and allowed students collectively to explore their calls to service. Over the course of the year, the interreligious conflict all but disappeared, and Interfaith Action continues to run exceptional programs, culminating each spring in a major, campus wide interfaith service project as a part of our Days of Interfaith Youth Service Campaign. The three students involved have each gone on to become professional leaders in their respective religious traditions, and continue to foster interfaith work in their communities.

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- Visit www.ifyc.org, or contact Cassie Meyer, Director of Outreach, Education and Training at cassie@ifyc.org.

*UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL,
SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION*

Report by the Director-General on the Execution of the
Programme Adopted by the General Conference

The Dialogue Among Peoples: The Rabat Commitment

SUMMARY

This document contains the recent declaration adopted during the “Conference on Fostering Dialogue among Cultures and Civilizations through Concrete and Sustained Initiatives” held in Rabat, Morocco from 14 to 16 June 2005. This international conference was convened by six co-sponsoring organizations: UNESCO, OIC, ISESCO, ALECSO, the Danish Centre for Culture and Development and the Anna Lindh Euro-Mediterranean Foundation for the Dialogue between Cultures, and with the participation of the Council of Europe as observer. It is of note that this event represents a unique international partnership initiative.

THE RABAT COMMITMENT

*Conclusions and Recommendations of the Rabat Conference
on Dialogue among Cultures and Civilizations
through Concrete and Sustained Initiatives
Rabat, Morocco, 14-16 June 2005*

1. A broad-based expert-level “Conference on Fostering Dialogue among Cultures and Civilizations through Concrete and Sustained Initiatives” was held in Rabat, Morocco, from 14 to 16 June 2005 under the high patronage of His Majesty King

Mohamed VI. Convened by six co-sponsoring organizations – UNESCO, OIC, ISESCO, ALECSO, the Danish Centre for Culture and Development and the Anna Lindh Euro-Mediterranean Foundation for the Dialogue between Cultures – and with the participation of the Council of Europe as observer, this event represents a unique international partnership initiative. It is aimed at identifying concrete and practical steps in various domains – based on a dialogue among civilizations, cultures and peoples – that the participating organizations pledged to pursue, jointly or individually, from 2006 onwards. The Conference was attended by some 100 participants from more than 30 countries.

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2. At the opening session, senior representatives of all participating organizations set out their vision and expectations for the Conference and the practical follow-up.

3. For ISESCO, its Director-General, H.E. Dr Abdulaziz Othman Altwajri, called for enhancing dialogue among cultures and civilizations through concrete initiatives that should be integrated into the process of sustainable development. He suggested that there was a need to acquire a profound knowledge of the Other along with related history and values, and to establish relations on the basis of mutual respect and recognition of cultural and civilizational diversity. The Director-General called for a mobilization of energies and capacities in order to promote a culture of dialogue and peaceful coexistence among people and respect for their diversity. Intercivilizational dialogue should not be the monopoly of a single organization nor of an academic, cultural or political institution. It should rather draw on the contribution of multiple stakeholders from all walks of life. ISESCO stood for a constructive dialogue that interacts with the Other and shared common interests with all partner organizations.

4. For its part, ISESCO had taken a number of specific initiatives – through conferences, symposia, publications and studies – and was currently implementing a programme on

establishing chairs for dialogue in Western universities and designating ISESCO Ambassadors for the Dialogue among Civilizations.

5. For ALECSO, its Director-General, H.E. Dr Mongi Bousnina, underlined the necessity of dialogue and its efficient role in counteracting the mistaken theses of a clash of civilizations. Dialogue was at the heart of the Arab Islamic culture which encompasses dialogue and openness to others. He further reviewed various initiatives and measures that ALECSO had taken in the field of dialogue. In the field of education, prior attention should be focused on the purpose of learning to live together. This can be attained by means of textbooks and curricula, as well as through promoting the teaching of foreign languages, leading to a better knowledge of the Other. With regard to the cultural field, Dr Bousnina stressed the importance of translation and the conducting of joint cultural events in fostering mutual knowledge between cultures and civilizations. And as concerns the role of the information, ALECSO's Director General impressed the need for bending efforts towards highlighting the image of the Other in the media and finding new ways of presenting it via the Internet.

6. Representing the Director-General of UNESCO, Mr Hans d'Orville called for a bridging of the theoretical approach to dialogue with a more specific and effective implementation, based on a concrete set of actions and modalities to be pursued by all partners in their work programmes. Many activities had been undertaken in the past dedicated to fostering a dialogue; yet the practical results and impact had remained limited and insufficient. Hence, there was a need for new and more refined approaches, which UNESCO for its part is proposing: a more dedicated focus on regional and subregional constellations, a discussion of specific thematic issues which are strategic entry points for true dialogue activities, and the involvement of a broad range of stakeholders, beyond the traditional governmental representatives. As a result, such efforts will allow a more direct dialogue among peoples and communities. The search for innovative approaches will also extend to artistic creation and

creativity through an interaction between melodies and musical instruments from different cultures, to be demonstrated in a special concert during the conference. Ultimately, dialogue must contribute to peace and security by promoting collaboration through education, sciences, culture and communication.

7. Representing the Secretary-General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), H.E. Mr Saad Eddine Taib reviewed the significant efforts undertaken by his organization over the past years to spread awareness of the importance of intercivilizational dialogue in many parts of the world. He suggested that new approaches and measures were required, grounded in practical steps, to address the new global circumstances. He pointed to the rising danger of Islamophobia. New initiatives had already been launched by OIC, including with OSCE. He also noted that OIC had set up an observatory for monitoring and documenting cases of Islamophobia. Furthermore, he called for a review of textbooks and curricula in the West to counter an environment hostile to Islam. OIC was in favour of opening cultural and social dialogues with Western governments and Islamic communities in these countries with a view to building confidence and resolving practical problems. Dialogue cannot be an objective for its own sake, but must lead to real rapprochement and mutual recognition and understanding.

8. The Director of the Danish Centre for Culture and Development, Mr Olaf Gerlach Hansen, underlined the urgency of implementing a range of practical initiatives which might foster cultural diversity and universal values, bringing it from the philosophical level to concrete and sustained action, particularly in the areas of the media, culture and education. Such action must address ignorances, stereotypes and prejudices, create true dialogue instead of violence and conflict and build on the rich cultural diversity of humankind as a positive starting point. A particular challenge will be the contextualization of art and culture. He suggested that participants in the Conference serve as facilitators in their respective communities and organizations, thus advancing the implementation of the action plan of Rabat. He offered to co-organize and host in Denmark in 2006 a follow-

up conference to the Rabat conference, in the context of a major cultural festival on “Images of the Middle East”.

9. The Executive Director of the Anna Lindh Euro – Mediterranean Foundation for the Dialogue between Cultures, Mr Traugott Schoefthaler, called for engaging youth, for a dynamic understanding of universal values in the spirit of common standards to be achieved and for a particular focus on education. He underscored the necessity of going beyond traditional forms of dialogue between cultures, towards cooperation without mental and national frontiers. Priority of educational efforts should be provision of the intellectual skills necessary for dialogue, dialogue being understood as occurring between individuals and groups, each of them exercising the human right to cultural self determination. Cultural diversity should not be linked to diversity between nations, ethnic, religious or linguistic groups. As stated in the 2001 UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, dynamic, overlapping and multiple identities must be fully recognized. Mr Schoefthaler welcomed the working document for the Rabat Conference as a platform shared by all six convener organizations, and he invited the Council of Europe to join this endeavour.

10. On behalf of the Council of Europe, its Director of Education, Mr Gabriele Mazza, expressed the support of the Council for the Rabat initiative. He underlined the meaning of unity in diversity in relation to the building of a humane and democratic Europe as a political and cultural project. Contributing to the diversity and to the establishment of a democratic culture had recently been declared a priority by the 46 Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe who had reaffirmed the pivotal role of education and cultural activity for understanding, solidarity and social cohesion. The Council stood ready to pursue and intensify its efforts in favour of intercultural dialogue and cooperation, including the religious dimension. For this purpose it would continue to redeploy all the means at its disposal in crucial areas, such as education for democratic citizenship and human rights, language education,

heritage and cultural policy, media, teacher training, pupil exchanges and youth cooperation.

II

11. The Conference conducted its work in three separate workshops dedicated to concrete proposals for intercultural dialogue in the areas of education, culture as well as communication and science. The participants welcomed the background document prepared by the Steering Committee for the Conference, composed of all partner organizations, and endorsed the various action proposals contained therein. Moreover, the workshops agreed by consensus on the following set of action recommendations:

EDUCATION

12. General recommendations:

(a) Intercultural dialogue must be based on universally shared values and the principles of peace, human rights, tolerance, and democratic citizenship, forming an integral part of quality education. It must therefore be fully taken into account in curriculum renewal and improvements in content, methodology, teacher education and the learning process, also involving parents and communities. Such dialogue plays an equally important role for the revision of textbooks, the production of new educational materials and the effective use of information and communication technologies (ICTs).

(b) In curricula renewal, care should be taken to avoid oversimplifications and to raise awareness about cultural heterogeneity, its multiple dimensions and different sources and contributions.

(c) More emphasis should be given to integrating intercultural learning in pre-school education and basic education, while pursuing it at secondary school level, in

higher and continuing adult education in a lifelong learning perspective.

(d) Due attention should be paid to integrating dimensions of intercultural dialogue into non-formal education, literacy campaigns and to extracurricular activities, such as youth exchanges and encounters.

(e) Intercultural education should also be situated in relation to the phenomena of school and community violence, and the need to respect differences and to address them in participatory and empowering ways.

(f) Educational programmes should provide sufficient information, especially for young citizens, on the major religions, and highlight their shared values and ethical concerns, drawing also on history, philosophy, literature and the arts.

(g) Broader access to existing educational networks and initiatives, managed by international and regional organizations, and a much fuller and more creative use of their potential for intercultural dialogue should be pursued as a matter of priority.

13. *Specific proposals:*

(a) Clarify the concepts and reach consensus on definitions used in relation to intercultural dialogue and learning.

(b) Promote national legislation and international normative standards or instruments to guard against the defamation of the Other in school curricula.

(c) Produce guidelines on intercultural education, building on the research, publications and practice

already carried out, such as with respect to world heritage and history education.

(d) Create a resource base of materials on good practices in intercultural education which could support teaching practice.

(e) Elaborate learning materials for intercultural education and dialogue, both for scientific and teacher education purposes, and ensure their broad dissemination.

(f) Ensure that intercultural dialogue and engagement become core content of both in- and pre-service teacher education.

(g) Develop capacities of learners to acquire life skills and competencies, with emphasis on problem-solving and critical thinking, as a prerequisite for intercultural learning.

(h) Pursue studies on stereotypes conveyed in school textbooks concerning the culture of the “Other” and take action to correct them.

(i) Establish an interregional observatory on textbooks to monitor stereotyping, prejudices, inaccuracies and misconceptions in different subject areas and make provisions for corrective action.

(j) Place greater emphasis on the role of languages and their teaching as a means of intercultural dialogue and to pay particular attention to local languages, especially in mother tongue literacy; furthermore, promote the teaching of Arabic outside Arabic-speaking countries to foster understanding.

- (k) Encourage intercultural dialogue in schools through creative learning, art education, drama, role play, song and music.
- (l) Ensure intercultural dialogue across the curriculum, including physical education and sports, with emphasis on traditional games and sports, youth encounters and exchanges as an important bridge to communication between cultures and youth in particular, and within the framework and follow-up of the 2005 International Year of Physical Education and Sports.
- (m) Encourage intercultural dialogue at various levels of education, through the conduct of practical projects and exchanges as well as competitions, building on the positive results already achieved with existing initiatives such as the Mondialogo partnership.
- (n) Promote the creation of prizes rewarding excellence in intercultural exchange practices at national, subregional and regional levels and organize school-based festivals celebrating cultural diversity.
- (o) Create additional university chairs on intercultural dialogue in various countries and cultural regions.
- (p) Take full advantage of and mobilize existing networks relevant for dialogue activities specialized in dialogue within the partner organizations.
- (q) Promote youth exchanges and summer school programmes and special intercultural events.
- (r) Intensify the use of audiovisual materials and ICTs in support of interactive and participatory learning approaches to intercultural dialogue.

- (s) Launch a media education project focusing on the need to instil and apply objectivity and critical thinking.
- (t) Promote, in all these initiatives, the use of the Internet for enhanced impact and broad diffusion of materials and resources, and for intensified exchanges among teachers, students, researchers and curriculum developers.
- (u) Ensure in all these activities and initiatives the full participation of girls and women, covering the entire range from conceptualization and planning to implementation.

CULTURE

14. General recommendations:

- (a) Key concepts pertaining to the dialogue among civilizations, especially those relating to the construct of culture, civilization and religions need to be revisited by competent organizations and academic scholars in order to arrive at definitions that can genuinely form a basis to further the dialogue. Consideration should be given to place culture as a frame for local belonging whereas civilization denotes a more universal phenomenon conferring a sense of recognition. Particular focus should be on commonalities rather than on differences.
- (b) Creating the new space of a common educational platform is of considerable importance, so that cultural handicaps between teachers and students and gaps in knowledge and educational opportunities can be reduced. There is a particular urgency to tackle and ultimately eliminate ignorance, stereotypes and rejection of the Other, which requires a strong political commitment and engagement from all parties involved.

15. Specific proposals:

(a) Governments, especially in the Arab world, should more purposefully make use of bi- and multilateral cultural agreements as platforms for the promotion of intercultural dialogue.

(b) Governments should provide sufficient and predictable funding within their culture budgets for the encouragement of intercultural dialogue. These resources should be devoted to capacity-building of grass-roots cultural organizations, especially those aimed at empowering women and youth. Thus, civil society organizations should be encouraged and induced to monitor the implementation of cultural projects.

(c) International and regional organizations should identify, document and analyse “best practice” approaches and action at various levels in support of the dialogue among cultures and civilizations.

(d) The essential features of the partner organizations’ work on cultural diversity should be communicated and presented through appropriate learning materials at various educational levels, also drawing on contributions by partner organizations of the Global Alliance for Cultural Diversity.

(e) Governments and international organizations should offer programmes aimed at strengthening creativity in education, thereby also countering fundamentalist tendencies.

(f) Teaching history should also be linked to the teaching of art for children, allowing a canvassing of the world’s cultures. Special encounters should be organized to foster the ability of children to express themselves through arts and interaction without language constraints.

- (g) Public and private entities managing museums should take initiatives to make museums more inclusive and to transform them into truly multicultural spaces.
- (h) Practical measures should be taken by all actors engaged in intercultural and intercivilizational dialogue to tap the power of music and musical creativity. Live interaction between music, melodies, original instruments and artists is a promising innovative approach to further the objectives of dialogue, which international and regional organizations should more systematically promote.
- (i) Consortia should be formed between private and public partners to undertake the translation and publication of the great universal works and classics.

COMMUNICATION

16. General recommendations:

- (a) There should be full recognition that education requires communication, and communication always contains educative elements.
- (b) The education system and the media have a role to play in order to avoid parochialism and contribute to the creation of conditions for intercultural dialogue.
- (c) There is a need to set up educational and media projects focusing on mutual information and the fighting of ignorance between the West and the Islamic world.
- (d) Face-to-face dialogue plays an important role for the creation of mutual confidence and trust.

- (e) Approaches must be developed to endow media professionals with the capacity to tackle intercultural issues within multicultural societies, especially in the Western world.
- (f) In the Arab world, media should be encouraged to mirror truly the rich diversities in the region and serve all segments of the population.
- (g) A discussion should be conducted among media professionals about ethics and professional standards.
- (h) Measures should be taken to exploit fully the potential of the Internet for decentralized and diversified information flows and to enhance the opportunity for easy communications with members of other cultural and social groups irrespective of national or other boundaries.

17. *Specific proposals:*

- (a) Joint activities for communication and information professionals:
 - Twinning projects at all levels targeting managerial, technical and editorial staff as well as reinforcing “visiting journalists” programmes;
 - Joint production of broadcasts, newspapers, magazines and websites by journalists from different cultural backgrounds;
 - Providing access to content through joint distribution projects, for instance through satellite broadcasting;
 - Establishment of a satellite channel for intercultural dialogue on a non-commercial basis, to be funded by private and public sources;
 - Reporting missions to specific areas/events fostering concrete collaboration between professionals with different cultural

backgrounds, *inter alia*, through the use of scholarship programmes;

- Journalism school collaboration, including joint curriculum development, particularly in the field of multicultural reporting, as well as exchange programmes for both students and teachers;
- Establishment of an award for best media product in the area of intercultural dialogue.

(b) **Capacity-building:**

- Design of training aimed at fighting stereotypes, promoting facts-based journalism and conflict-sensitive reporting;
- Promotion of language training for media professionals to lower language barriers for successful dialogue;
- Training in the use of ICTs for dialogue, especially for and through youth;
- Empower local minority communities to use media, including ICTs, for obtaining and disseminating information aimed at learning to live together;
- Strengthening media literacy and capacities to analyse critically media messages;
- Capacity-building of information professionals to set up and access a public domain of information in diverse languages.

(c) **Research:**

- Undertake empirical studies on the portrayal of different cultures and civilizations in the media and on different forms of (self-) censorship and their impact in both Western and Arab media;

- Conduct impact analysis of major intercultural events and initiatives and disseminate results.

III

18. The partner organizations commit themselves to an implementation of the various recommendations set out above. To that end, they agreed to maintain the steering committee of the co-sponsoring organizations which had prepared the Rabat conference, with a view to ensuring the best possible translation of these recommendations into reality and to prepare the Copenhagen follow-up conference in 2006. The Council of Europe will be associated with these efforts as observer.

19. The participants in the Conference also urge the General Assembly of the United Nations, in the outcome document to be adopted at its High-Level Meeting scheduled to be held from 14 to 16 September 2005, to give full recognition to the conceptual and practical lead role performed by UNESCO and the other partner organizations in promoting the dialogue among civilizations, cultures and peoples and in bringing about practical results through education, science, culture and communications and to reaffirm UNESCO's continued lead role in this respect.

IV

20. The participants expressed their profound appreciation to His Majesty King Mohammed VI, the Government and the people of the Kingdom of Morocco for the excellent facilities and the support extended. They thanked all co-sponsoring organizations for their initiative and preparation and, in particular, ISESCO for its invaluable contribution to the organization of the Conference at its headquarters city, Rabat.

THE HANOI DECLARATION

***adopted at the Asia-Pacific Regional Conference
on Dialogue among Cultures and Civilisations
for Peace and Sustainable Development
Hanoi, Vietnam – 20 and 21 December 2004***

We, Ministers, representatives of governments, scholars, experts and cultural practitioners from more than 30 countries of the Asia-Pacific region, participating in the Asia-Pacific Conference on Dialogue among Cultures and Civilizations for Peace and Sustainable Development, held in Hanoi, a recipient of UNESCO's City for Peace Prize, on 20 and 21 December 2004, hereby adopt the following Hanoi Declaration on Dialogue among Cultures and Civilizations for Peace and Sustainable Development:

1. Convinced that peace in the twenty-first century is inextricably linked with sustainable and inclusive development, human security and a dialogue based on shared human values,
2. Celebrating the diversity of the Asia-Pacific region in terms of cultures, tangible and intangible cultural heritage, artistic expression and creativity, religions and languages which makes it one of the most dynamic and diverse areas of the world,
3. Highlighting that diverse and abundant natural resources, ecosystems and biodiversity complement the rich cultural diversity of the region,
4. Aware that throughout history a dialogue among cultures and civilizations in various forms has enriched the diversity of each culture, and strengthened cultural diversity overall;
5. Stressing that all cultures and civilizations are equal and that dialogue should be based on commonly shared values and ethical principles, such as tolerance, respect for Others, mutual

understanding, respect for cultural diversity, and adherence to non-violence and the principles of peaceful co-existence,

6. Conscious that dialogue needs to be rooted in democratic practices, the rule of law, respect for human rights and the dignity of the individual as well as in justice and equity,

7. Emphasizing that a commitment to dialogue among cultures and civilizations is also a commitment to fight terrorism, as terror rests always and everywhere upon prejudices, intolerance, exclusion and, above all, on the rejection of any dialogue,

8. Recognizing that, especially in the context of globalization, dialogue has the potential to become an engine for bolstering peace and security, reconciling conflicts, reinforcing cultural diversity and advancing sustainable development;

9. Inspired by the Global Agenda on the Dialogue among Civilizations - adopted by United Nations General Assembly resolution 56/6 of 21 November 2001 – which states, inter alia, that dialogue among cultures and civilizations is a process aimed at attaining justice, equality and tolerance in people-to-people relationships,

10. Guided by resolution of the UNESCO General Conference on “New perspectives in UNESCO’s activities pertaining to the dialogue among civilizations and cultures, including in particular follow-up to the New Delhi Ministerial Conference”, adopted at the 32nd session in October 2003 (resolution 32 C/47), which calls for a translation of global approaches into regionally relevant recommendations and concrete initiatives,

11. Commending UNESCO for its pioneering role in promoting a broad range of discussions on the subject of dialogue at global, regional and sub-regional levels,

12. Welcoming the Declaration on Dialogue among Cultures and Civilizations, adopted by the fifth Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) held in October 2004 in Hanoi,

13. Stressing the need for people everywhere to acquire a basic level of knowledge and understanding of other civilizations, cultures and religions as the best way to overcome lingering ignorances,
14. Underlining the important role policy-makers, governments, parliamentarians, actors of civil society, the academic and scientific communities, the private sector and professional associations, the media, religious and faith-based communities can play in initiating and conducting effective dialogue both within each country and within the region,
15. Determined to make dialogue a central feature of interaction in all walks of life, we resolve to adhere to the following set of specific commitments:
 16. To enhance human security in the region by tackling with a sense of urgency – and in pursuit of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) - the challenges of poverty, trade and economic development, hunger, education and gender equality, child health and diseases, agricultural development, water and sanitation, urban development and environmental degradation,
 17. To promote and to practice a culture of dialogue among nations and peoples of the Asia-Pacific region, thus increasing knowledge, appreciation, respect and compassion for “Others” and different cultures,
 18. To accord a pivotal role to education in general and to the six Education for All (EFA) objectives in particular, which in the pursuit of quality education will entail renewal of school curricula, improvement and revision of textbooks and educational materials as well as re-orientation of the training of teachers,

19. To promote inter-cultural understanding, through both formal and non-formal education and through other means, such as the media and faith-based organizations,

20. To propose the selection of “dialogue among cultures and civilizations” as one of the major themes of the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014) and inviting UNESCO, as the lead agency for this Decade, to design and implement specific activities in that regard,

21. To intensify our joint efforts in support of the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World (2001-2010), for which UNESCO also serves as lead agency, by undertaking more effective and visible dialogue-focused initiatives, especially at the community level, during the second half of the Decade,

22. To highlight the role of cultural diversity and heritage – in both tangible and intangible forms – as vectors of identities and as tools for reconciliation, and to emphasize the need for the protection of heritage and its preservation, presentation and transmission to future generations;

23. To record intangible heritage, whenever possible, in various forms to prevent its destruction or loss;

24. To strengthen the role of museums and other cultural institutions in fostering inter-cultural dialogue and mutual understanding,

25. To introduce an explicit gender perspective into activities promoting the dialogue and a culture of peace as well as empowering women fully, beginning with an expansion of universal basic education for girls and working for the attainment of the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) calling for gender equality at all levels of education by 2015,

26. To promote broad-based networking in support of dialogue for peace and poverty alleviation, involving the sharing of

knowledge and best practices and providing a source for learning and teaching at all levels,

27. To make full use of the various global networks under UNESCO auspices, such as the National Commissions for UNESCO, the Associated Schools Network (ASPnet), and the University Twinning and Networking Scheme (UNITWIN)/UNESCO Chairs Programme, as well as the regional networks like the Asia-Pacific Programme of Educational Innovation for Development (APEID), the Asia-Pacific Cultural Center for UNESCO (ACCU) and the Asia-Pacific Network for International Education and Values Education (APNIEVE) for the purpose of strengthening dialogue in the region,

28. To utilise information and communication technologies (ICTs) to bring together diverse communities, cultures, civilizations and different faiths, to advance freedom of expression and freedom of the press, and to broaden the outreach and quality of education,

29. To strengthen policies and mechanisms for regional co-operation as the natural way to tackle shared problems and to achieve sustainable development;

30. We, therefore, call, as part of the dialogue agenda, for concrete and tangible actions steeped in regional, national and local realities:

a. To intensify people-to-people cultural and scientific exchanges and partnerships in the region, involving scholars, teachers, people in religious authority, students and media practitioners;

b. as part of national education reforms to adapt educational programmes to the exigencies of quality education, in line with the precept of “learning to live together” and, to that end, to review and renew curricula,

textbooks and educational materials;

c. to develop a comprehensive statement on values education for the interrelated areas of peace, human rights and sustainable development which shall include provisions for integrating values in curricula, developing appropriate teaching resource materials and providing teacher support and training;

d. to integrate intercultural components and approaches into teacher training;

e. to strengthen the Associated School Network (ASPnet) with a view to developing more educational modules supporting dialogue, such as “Heritage in Young Hands”, and concrete intercultural exchanges on a sustained basis, such as the Mondialogo Partnership;

f. to develop jointly other teaching and learning modules, in particular for education for sustainable development (ESD), education for international and intercultural understanding (EID) and human rights education, which should also be made available on-line;

g. to promote interconnectedness through education for global citizenship and civic responsibility, particularly by imparting values and peace education;

h. to encourage regular exchanges on curriculum development among universities and institutions of higher education in the region;

i. to introduce ICTs at all educational levels and in all communities for information exchange, knowledge-sharing, capacity-building and dialogue on educational challenges in the region and to provide content in multilingual form;

- j. to use ICTs for dialogue by students both within universities and across different cultural areas, especially with a view to enhancing appreciation of the contributions by indigenous and traditional cultures to scientific and technological progress;
- k. to establish a variety of new channels and modalities for intercultural dialogue and partnerships, especially among youth, to enhance mutual understanding, to share ideas and knowledge, to support creativity and to exchange scientific and technological information;
- l. to that end, to intensify all types of networking, especially among the National Commissions for UNESCO in the region;
- m. to promote the designation of new cultural routes and other mechanisms - such as an “earthenware and ceramics route” in the region - so as to highlight the value of cultural diversity, interaction and exchange;
- n. to foster dialogue along recognized cultural routes, such as the Silk Road or the Slave Route, thereby universalising the inherent unity in human diversity;
- o. to develop responsible cultural and eco-tourism, which may contribute to the sustainable development of local areas and economies while fostering dialogue and respect for cultural diversity and heritage;
- p. to set up regional and interregional networking mechanisms linking museums as repositories of cultural heritage and to organize traveling exhibitions, artistic performances and professional exchanges;
- q. to explore the feasibility of and modalities for creating a “Regional Forum for Dialogue” bringing together all stakeholders, including representatives of women’s and youth organizations, and for organizing festivals of local

and traditional performing arts throughout the Asia-Pacific region.

31. We call on all governments of the region, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the private sector and intergovernmental and international organizations to contribute to the implementation of the Hanoi Declaration;

32. We invite in particular UNESCO to assist - in its areas of competence - in the pursuit and realization of the various proposals made at the Hanoi conference, thereby creating the conditions for an effective dialogue among cultures and civilizations in the Asia-Pacific region and for interaction with other parts of the world;

33. We enjoin all countries of the region to ensure an early ratification of the Convention on the Protection of Intangible Heritage, which is an indivisible part of cultural heritage as a whole, and we support the early finalization of new standard-setting instruments, such as the Convention on Diversity of Cultural Contents and Artistic Expressions;

34. We are thankful to the Government of Japan, to UNESCO, the Asia/Pacific Cultural Centre for UNESCO and to L'Agence Intergouvernementale de la Francophonie for having contributed to the arrangements for the Hanoi Conference;

35. We express our sincere gratitude to the Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam and to the Director-General of UNESCO, Mr. Koichiro Matsuura, for having organized the important Hanoi conference and we thank profoundly the government and people of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam and the Hanoi People's Committee for their gracious hospitality and for the excellent arrangements made.