



International Forum on Education for Non-Violence

Sintra, Portugal, 22 May 1996

Guidelines for a Plan of Action for

UNESCO Interregional Project for Culture of Peace and Non-violence in Educational Institutions

Gathered here in the beautiful city of Sintra, thanking UNESCO and the Foundation Pro Dignitate for their initiative and the local and national authorities for their hospitality, recognizing the great need throughout the world today to move together from a culture of war and violence to a culture of peace and non-violence, we the participants in the International Forum on Education for Non-Violence suggest the following guidelines for a plan of action for the UNESCO Interregional Project for Culture of Peace and Non-violence in Educational Institutions.

We dedicate our work to the promotion of a movement from the culture of war and violence which has dominated previous history to a culture of peace and non-violence characterized by values, attitudes and behaviours which privilege the nonviolent solution of conflicts, respect for human rights, democracy, intercultural understanding, tolerance and solidarity. A culture of peace calls for non-violent relations not only between states, but also between individuals, between social groups, between the state and all its citizens and between humans and the environment. Declarations and legal measures are not enough, but a culture of peace must grow out of the beliefs and traditions of the people themselves. While it does not deny the conflicts that arise from diversity, it demands non-violent solutions and promotes the transformation of violent competition through a process of healing and reconciliation into cooperation for shared goals.

Of all the frontiers where the advance to a culture of peace is needed, perhaps the most important in the long term is the development of children. In many places, children have no childhood and no schools, but are thrust directly into factories and farms or even onto the streets. And schools, themselves, often sustain and help reproduce the injustice and violence of society, including both structural and physical violence. Instead of this, schools can be a place where children feel cared for and where they can cultivate the knowledge, values and skills they need in order to create together a future world of justice and solidarity.

UNESCO has taken the lead in promoting peace and non-violence in education from its beginning when it was established to construct peace in the minds of men and women. The relevant principles have been elaborated in such documents as the 1974 UNESCO Recommendation concerning Education for International Understanding, Co-operation and Peace and Education relating to Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, the Declaration and Integrated Framework of Action on Education for Peace, Human Rights and Democracy (1995), and the 1996-2001 Medium-term Strategy of UNESCO emphasizing the building of a culture of peace. These are also reflected in the 1996 report of the UNESCO Commission on Education for the XXI Century.

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The student must be at the centre as the main actor in the establishment of a culture of peace and non-violence in schools. For this reason, the primary objective of the school must emphasize not only the traditional goals of the achievement of specific knowledge and skills, but also the development and practice of the social relations which characterize this culture. In fact, studies indicate that students learn best in a caring and cooperative environment. This requires that the education process involve not only students and teachers in an active teaching/learning relationship, but also the entire staff of the school, the parents and the surrounding community as a common and shared endeavour. This should be reinforced at all levels from the classroom to the national educational policy through a process of continuous critical reflection and reform. The principles and practices of peace and non-violence should be integrated into every aspect of curriculum, pedagogy and activities, including the very organizational and decision-making structure of the educational institution. These include cooperative learning, dialogue, intercultural understanding, and mediation and conflict-resolution strategies.

The school is not an island but should be a centre of civic life in the community. It should nurture, through its organization and practice, citizens capable of democratic participation. Recognizing the interdependence of school and community, as part of its mission, the project will also help to address the major sources of structural and overt violence in the community which impact upon the students, such as ethnic or racial discrimination, drugs and unemployment.

Although recognizing that the world today is deeply scarred by the violence of wide disparities and structural inequalities between the North and South among nations and within nations and that this project by itself cannot resolve these issues, we believe that we can make a difference. We are challenged to contribute, by means of this project to action for global justice, reconciliation and international solidarity. As the Mozambican poet Jose Craverinha emphasized and wrote during the Sintra Forum, "it is not that we must be the same, but what is fundamental is that we are together, joined hand in hand."

Não é necessário sermos iguais.
Fundamental é estarmos juntos de mãos dadas

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

1. Networking should be established which:
 - * facilitates the exchange of information, experiences, strategies among an expanding community of individuals and institutions sharing the goals of the Project;
 - * provides recognition and mutual encouragement which support the activities of the participants and links their local action to a global movement;
 - * encourages mutual understanding and learning among cultures and regions, including north and south, rural and urban;
 - * links with and supports existing UNESCO programmes, such as the Associated Schools Project and national culture of peace programmes;
 - * links with and supports existing networks, including internet, newsletters, professional associations, and regional networks focusing on education for peace and non-violence;
 - * facilitates exchanges and meetings of network participants, with an emphasis on regions of the world that have suffered from violent conflict, including regional forums which allow for mutual exchange of ideas and strategies relevant to regional realities.

2. Pilot projects should be established
 - * promoting education for non-violence and peace on the basis of creative, alternative designs of schooling which are relevant to the needs and realities of the communities and people concerned;
 - * drawing where possible upon existing resources and ongoing initiatives;
 - * in diverse educational institutions in cooperation with relevant partners in sections of society, including public, private, etc.;
 - * employing diverse methodologies and taking into account a diversity of social and cultural contexts, including multi-cultural contexts and in various regions of the world;
 - * giving a priority to situations of exclusion and violence, such as those in urban ghettos and war-torn societies;
 - * involving the community and making available the school as a resource to the community for promotion of non-violence and a culture of peace;
 - * including linkages of schools between North and South countries which promote international solidarity based on principles of intercultural respect and understanding and global justice.
3. As educational institutions cannot accomplish this task alone, partnerships should be established with a wide variety of other institutions including:
 - * parents and local community organizations to ensure that the project involves and contributes to the culture of peace in the community;
 - * local, governmental and inter-governmental authorities to ensure their support in terms of financial, human and material resources and security, while allowing the autonomy that is necessary for democratic decision-making practices by the school, including especially the students,
 - * regional and international associations of mayors, parliamentarians, Ministers of Education;
 - * local and mass media which should help publicize the activities of the schools so that they are supported by the entire community and can serve as positive role models and should help students develop their capacity for critical evaluation and use of the media;
 - * artists and cultural institutions which should help make the arts and cultural traditions an integral part of the learning experience;
 - * economic institutions, including business and labour, sharing in the goals of the project, which should support and enhance its activities;
 - * religious institutions and other organizations in the community;
 - * universities, teacher training institutions and research organizations.
4. Training of teachers, teacher educators, students, administrators and others associated with the school and its surrounding community is an essential aspect of the project
 - * based on a diversity of appropriate methodologies including those drawing on artistic creative and participatory strategies;
 - * encompassing on a continuing and sustainable basis, pre-service, in-service and life-long professional development;
 - * including exchange and development of written and audiovisual materials for training in a variety of contexts.

5. Curriculum development should include:
 - * texts and other materials promoting non-violence, culture of peace, tolerance and solidarity, human rights, gender equity, active citizenship, and care for the environment;
 - * integration of principles and strategies of non-violence and culture of peace into all subject areas and disciplines in the curriculum;
 - * taking into account local realities and traditions within a multi-cultural and international framework.
6. Research and evaluation should be built into all aspects of the project and should:
 - * provide appropriate and rigorous measures not only of overall effectiveness of actions, but also of specific methodologies and their relation to social and cultural contexts;
 - * involve the participants in the form of action research;
 - * further develop an inventory and publicize examples and case studies of best practices, expanding upon the study carried out on this subject by UNESCO and ICCCR.
 - * systematically draw upon previous research and the experiences of those who are researchers and practitioners in the field, including compilation of the scientific evidence concerning the principles and practices relevant to the project;
 - * contribute to the sustainability of actions and projects,
 - * identify resistances encountered and document the process of change, including the way that project participants gain acceptance and establish their activities.
7. Funding should be sought to support the activities of the project:
 - * from a diversity of sources including governmental, intergovernmental and private agencies;
 - * by systematic preparation and submission to these agencies project documents with detailed accounts including expected outcomes, activities and timetables of action.
8. General promotion and advocacy for the principles and practices of non-violence and a culture of peace in education should be a constant dimension of project activities, and be directed to:
 - * students and parents who should be at the centre of the project;
 - * governments and national and local authorities, including National Commissions for UNESCO as well as Ministers of Education who should be urged to develop programmes of action for the implementation of the Declaration and Integrated Framework of Action on Education for Peace, Human Rights and Democracy which they discussed and adopted at the 1994 International Conference of Education.
 - * all educational institutions, formal and non-formal, public and private and their teachers, administrators and other staff,
 - * decision-makers and opinion-leaders;
 - * the general public
9. Information and results of the project:
 - * should be widely disseminated in order to contribute effectively to a global movement for non-violence and a culture of peace.

ACTIONS SPECIFICALLY REQUESTED OF UNESCO

1. Coordination of project activities, including networking, identification, establishment and support of pilot projects, training, production of support materials, curriculum development, research and evaluation, and dissemination of information and results;
2. Facilitation of fund-raising and resource development for the project;
3. Recognition and valorisation of project and network activities which enables participants to be conscious of their local actions as part of a global peace-building mission of UNESCO and the United Nations system;
4. Integration of the project with other UNESCO activities that are complementary such as the Associated Schools Project and the Culture of Peace Programme as well as related activities of other international organizations;
5. Further development of the principles, methodologies and strategies of the project in a long-term process of continuous learning of all those participating in the project, with an emphasis on peoples and regions where it is most needed and in a way that reinforces the global movement toward a culture of peace and non-violence
6. Further promotion of national policies aimed at establishing a culture of peace and nonviolence in educational institutions,

OUR COMMITMENT TO ACTION

In a spirit of mutual support and inspiration, through the actions proposed here and others appropriate to the circumstances in our own schools and communities and in collaboration with UNESCO and others networked around the world, we commit ourselves and the mobilization of our colleagues and institutions to the long-term and continuing process of developing a culture of non-violence and cooperative learning in schools and other educational institutions as an important contribution to a global movement for a culture of peace.