



United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization



The Newsletter of UNESCO's Education Sector

Education TODAY

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Schools are no longer just places where youngsters acquire an education. They are increasingly called on to turn out responsible and tolerant citizens. Focus, a four-page special dossier, examines whether we are asking too much of schools.

EDITO

The splendid view from my office at UNESCO headquarters in Paris evokes many facets of the human activity. In the distance the Palais de Chaillot houses museums that cater to our need to understand older civilizations and to enjoy the work of creative human imagination through the centuries. On my side of the Seine soars the Eiffel Tower, a monument to science, technology and industrial progress. Closer still is the rear courtyard of the *École Militaire* where cavalry officers exercise horses in the morning and bands play on summer afternoons. Below my window is the Place de Fontenoy, named after an eighteenth century battle in the War of the Austrian Succession. It is a nice irony that UNESCO, an organization dedicated to constructing the defences of peace, is surrounded on all sides by streets named for famous military figures, three *maréchaux de France*, Frédéric de Lowendal, Maurice de Saxe and Philippe de Ségur, and one admiral, le bailli Pierre de Suffren.

Such contradictions are not unique to Paris. Any large city reminds us that Tolstoy's famous title *War and Peace* sums up the history of humankind and a basic tension of the human condition. What changes with time is the nature of war and peace. New weapons make war even more devastating and cause more casualties among civilians than among combatants. Economic and social development makes peace even more agreeable for the rich but seems to widen the gap between them and the poor. Furthermore the multiplication of civil wars and local conflicts traps large numbers of people in poverty, interferes with the economic activities of adults and prevents the education of children.

As the stakes of the choice between war and peace become higher, encouraging people to seek peace rather than war becomes increasingly important. Education cannot carry the whole burden of this task but it can make a contribution. This first issue of *Education Today* draws the lessons from UNESCO's long experience in promoting education for a culture of peace. One unsurprising conclusion is that young people learn to live together in peace as much from the atmosphere of the school and the attitudes of the teachers as from the curriculum.

John Daniel
Assistant Director-General for Education

Windows on life

A new programme helps Kosovo Albanian women to read, write and find jobs

Skander allowed his wife to attend literacy classes on two conditions: that she be accompanied by his mother and that the textbook used in class not be brought home. This is not yet another account of a far-flung Third World community. This happens in Europe – in post-war Kosovo, where the patriarchal, traditional culture continues to isolate Kosovo Albanian women to the extent that large numbers of them are illiterate.

UNESCO, UNICEF and the Kosovo Foundation for Open Society and other women's organizations involved in the literacy programme "Windows on Life" were well aware of the need to overcome such prejudice and fear to reach these illiterate women. "Until mothers themselves become literate and develop a positive attitude to learning, discrimination against girls will not disappear," says Ola Sylja, head of Drita, a women's organization.

Mere participation in the classes which started in mid-2001 was considered from the outset something of an achievement. Today, 2,250 women attend classes, divided into 130 groups, twice or three times a week. Educators are beginning to talk about a "revolution" in these women's lives. Self-confidence and awareness of civil rights issues are growing. "I was very proud of being able to vote in the last elections like everybody else," said one learner, who previously signed her ballot paper with her finger print.

The cornerstone of the literacy programme is its textbook. The UNESCO Institute for Education (UIE), working with a group of women, tailored one to the learners' needs. Adopting a participatory, learner-centred and problem-oriented approach, the textbook seeks to develop learners' communication skills, critical thinking and self-confidence, reading, writing and maths.

Themes such as the family, the body, employment, the environment, childcare, marriage, rights, the media, mothers-in-law, etc., spark off lively discussions in class. Three generations of women learn together, of which some are ethnic minorities, mainly Roma and Ashkalia. "To talk of inter-ethnic dialogue would be going too far," says Ulrike

Hanemann, a UIE consultant. "The wounds of the war have not healed yet."

And afterwards? The young women dream of jobs while the older women are more interested in acquiring practical skills for everyday life: cooking, hairdressing and sewing. The women's organizations seek to link the post-literacy courses with development projects. One such project is training the women to run their own early childhood centre.

The long-term solution, according to Hanemann, is that this small-scale course gives way to government-run lifelong learning programmes for out-of-school youth and adults. The windows on life must not close once more, says Hanemann.

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from the textbook of the Kosovo literacy programme.

Power to the people

Community learning centres, increasingly popular in Asia and the Pacific, are empowering people to take charge of their own development

Sagoutai Village in China's Guangxi Province is perched 3,500 metres above sea level. This made it virtually impossible to grow vegetables. That was until the Community Learning Centre (CLC) experimented successfully with growing turnips and, today, all families grow turnips and other vegetables.

The philosophy behind the Community Learning Centres could be summed up as – what stems from the community will last. The concept is not new, but has gained in popularity in recent years. Operating in eighteen Asian countries, CLCs are intended to mobilize and empower people to take charge of their own and their community's development. "Each learning centre is a typically home-grown phenomenon based on community-based decision-making," says Hameed A. Hakeem, Co-ordinator of the Asia-Pacific Programme of Education for All (APPEAL) at UNESCO

Bangkok. "Each community has to reflect on its own needs and find solutions that work."

Community Learning Centres are as varied as their settings. It was mainly to solve the unemployment problem during the Asian economic crisis that the CLC in Klongtoey, an urban slum near Bangkok, was set up. Participants opted for skills linked to jobs, such as the production of organic fertilizer, massage or dressmaking. The poor were able to borrow money to set up a small business and a senior citizens' club was opened. "People are now more co-operative in joining in community activities," says Vichian Suchartpongkul, a member of the CLC committee.

Some CLCs provide primary schooling. This is the case in some communities in Myanmar. To improve teaching, the CLCs introduced teachers to active learning methods and grouped

University students tackle illiteracy

Students in the Arab region help boost the development of poor communities through literacy classes

“First I didn’t feel involved because I had no experience in social work. But then I started to feel so happy. I was giving something of my heart, I was reaching out to people.”

Rabih Jamaeddine, a 25-year-old student in hotel management at Balamand University in Lebanon was amazed by the world he discovered when joining the UNILIT programme.

UNILIT stands for University Students for Literacy and invites students to participate in the development of poor communities in the Arab world, in particular through literacy classes. The need for literacy is huge: today four out of ten adults in the region are illiterate and half of all women cannot read and write. So far, five universities in Lebanon, Jordan, Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen have joined the programme to change this reality.

“Everybody wins,” says Ramzi Salamé, co-responsible for UNILIT at UNESCO Beirut. “The programme is a bridge between the privileged young adults in universities and the rest of the community who did not get a chance to discover the world of knowledge.”

Samer Annous, UNILIT field co-ordinator at Balamand University, adds that the programme also promotes social cohesion. “Rich and poor people mix and even people with different religious backgrounds and culture come together in the programme,” he says.

To prepare students for this reality they receive training before being let loose in the communities. “I learnt that I’ve to deal with people as they are my friends,” tells Rabih. “That philosophy made me overcome many obstacles”. He taught a class of adolescents about first aid and how to find a job. Jackie Najjar, 20, an education student, taught a cleaning lady at Balamand University how to read and write. “She now wants to find a better job,” Jackie reports.

The incentive for students to participate in the programme depends on the country. In some universities, students get one academic credit (equivalent to some \$250) for 40 hours of UNILIT work and in others, community work is a pre-requisite for graduation.

“It’s not the students who are difficult to mobilize but the university managers,” Salamé comments. “Our main problem is that the initiative has not become an institutionalized part of the universities. When a dean leaves the faculty the programme tends to disappear with him.”

UNESCO has provided \$5,000 to each university, mainly used to forge partnerships between university departments, education ministries and non-governmental organizations.

What’s next? Mr Salamé hopes that UNILIT will create a chain reaction to other developing countries and through North-South twinning arrangements.

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schools in clusters of five to seven to allow for exchange of experiences and resources. This enhances motivation on the part of teachers who feel supported by colleagues in other schools. “Teachers are discovering that it’s possible to teach differently and are noticing that pupils are more interested in their lessons,” says Thein Lwin, a national programme officer.

Mobilizing people, helping them assess their needs and sustaining activities are the challenges of CLCs. “It’s vital to maintain a strong participatory spirit and sense of community ownership, and this takes time,” says Hakeem, “UNESCO’s role is to develop CLC personnel’s capacity to manage and create partnerships to enhance sustainability.”

Nor does Hakeem see CLCs as a definitive model. They have set in motion a flexible and open way of providing learning to people hitherto underserved or unreached, he says. “That’s one of the CLCs’ advantages.”

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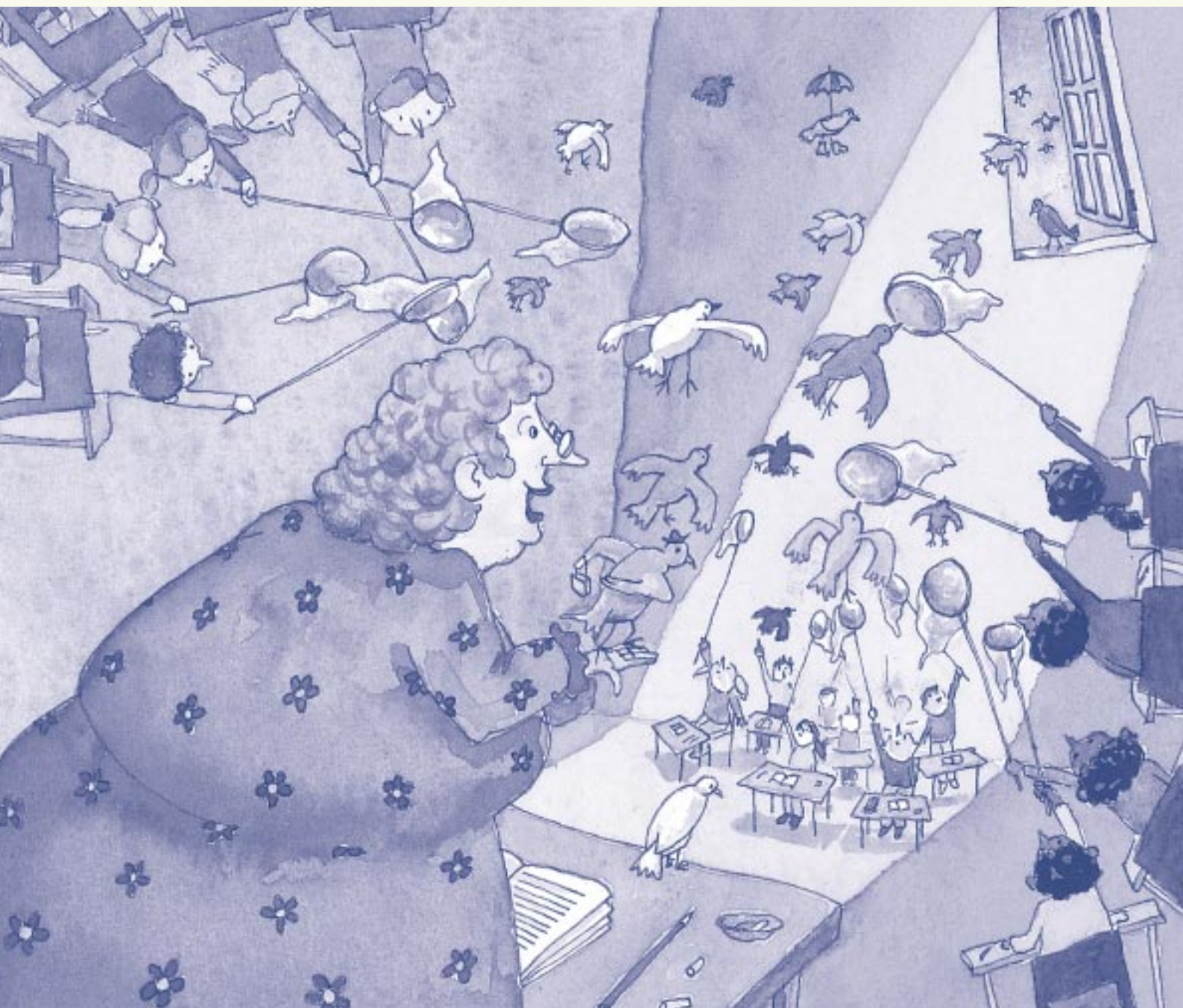


The UNILIT programme is a bridge between the privileged youth in universities and poor communities.

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Education for War or for

Schools have changed. Their success is no longer measured just by the number of children they educate but also by how good they are at turning out responsible and tolerant citizens. Today, schools are expected to instil values as well as provide knowledge. Is this very ambitious goal too far ahead of reality?



Erik Staal

Peace?

“We have to get rid of the idea that more education automatically means more peace and democracy,” says Cecilia Braslavsky, head of the UNESCO International Bureau of Education (IBE). “School attendance in Israel and Palestine is high, but it hasn’t prevented war. Knowing how to read, write, count and reel off the great names of literature isn’t necessarily an effective response to prejudice or war.”

So have schools, fuller today than ever before, failed to do their job? “Not always,” she says. “After the Second World War, Germany managed to reform its education system and change the way children were taught. Some Latin American countries, such as Bolivia, have included local Indian culture in their schools. But all these changes take a long time.”

One thing is certain however. A school’s success is no longer judged by the number of youngsters it educates, but also by its ability to turn out responsible and tolerant citizens. Schools are not expected to just provide knowledge but also to teach children to “live together” – in other words, to instil shared values that will strengthen social cohesion and links between civilizations.

Fuss about textbooks

“Nowadays, schools are no longer just places where production workers are trained, they’re also places where citizens are made, as the September 2001 International Conference on Education, in Geneva noted,” says Edouard Matoko of UNESCO’s Section of Education for Universal Values. Faced with multicultural societies, schools are required to adapt to them and open up.

The problem is that since schools are not isolated from society, they are sometimes affected by political and social tensions in their environment and even pass on certain hackneyed and partisan views, mainly through textbooks. Several years after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Russian textbook used the words “adherence” or “joining” in relation to the former Soviet

republics, while the Ukrainian and Belarussian talked about “annexation”.

Last year, Japan’s revision of history textbooks used in its schools sparked an international row and in Israel and the Palestinian Autonomous Territories history textbooks are currently being scrutinized to see how historical events are described in them.

“There’s no such thing as a completely impartial history book,” says Falk Pingel, deputy director of the Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research in Germany, and author of the 1999 UNESCO Guidebook on Textbook Research and Textbook Revision. The best way to avoid biased interpretations is to present pupils with several points of view about an event so they can make up their own minds and get free of stereotypes.

Religion – a hot potato

But stereotypes die hard, especially where religion is concerned. Here, education tiptoes along the fine line between faith and pure knowledge.

Afghanistan’s education system, which has been very much in the spotlight in recent months, is an extreme example of one where schools are barely separate from religion. Well before the arrival of the Taliban in 1995, the teaching of Islam was a big part of the curriculum, especially in the countryside, where classes were often held in mosques and in Arabic, so as to help people read the Koran.

The result was that since they were obliged to stay in their homes, far fewer girls were educated: in 1950, there were only 4,350 in primary and secondary schools compared with more than 90,000 boys. Scientific and technical subjects were considered contrary to the traditional values of Islam and scarcely taught in rural areas. The hostility aroused by the pro-Soviet regime that came to power in 1978 was partly because it tried to challenge this traditional education, which the Taliban took to an extreme.

→

INTERVIEW

Learning peace in Rwanda

Schools play a key role in building peace in Rwanda following the genocide in 1994. Interview with Professor **Romain Murenzi, Education Minister of Rwanda.**

What are the major problems in education that Rwanda faces today?

The lack of qualified teachers is a huge problem. We have considerably expanded the education system but the number of qualified teachers has not been able to follow. In primary school, 65 per cent of teachers are qualified, in secondary school, 33 per cent and in universities only 25 per cent of teachers have a PhD degree. Another major problem is the lack of textbooks – today we only have one textbook per three pupils.

Do you believe schools can help promote tolerance among pupils?

The very fact that 1.6 million Rwandan children go to school every day shows that schools sometimes can promote peace because they bring together children from different backgrounds. We have also eliminated all discrimination related to entry exams, which are now based on qualifications only. Our National Unity and Reconciliation Commission teaches people peace throughout the country. We are also going to introduce peace education in our curriculum.

In your opinion, does more education lead to more peace?

If you want to build a sustainable democracy it is important to educate people who can fight for their rights and against dictatorship. Education is also important to get people to contribute to the economy. We’re trying to establish a national literacy programme that will use primary schools as the infrastructure and primary school teachers as trainers. Our aim is to reach 80-90 per cent literacy in five to seven years.

Education for War or for Peace?

→ Keeping religion away from schools is not always the answer. France, where long-standing secular tradition has kept religion out of the state education system, leaves religious teaching to the individual religions themselves. Today, the authorities are realizing the disadvantages of this approach and are now exploring how to adapt the curriculum. "People have grown up not knowing about religion and that encourages stereotypes and leads to discrimination," says Rosa Guerreiro of UNESCO's Division of Intercultural Dialogue.

"I heard recently about a French history teacher who brought a copy of the Koran along to class one day to study some passages from it not long after the September 11 attacks in the United States," says Guerreiro. "She was shouted down by the pupils, many of whom were Muslims, who thought that as an "unclean" non-Muslim, she had no right to touch the holy book. That says a lot about the gulf of misunderstanding you can get between two communities."

But it is hard to see how schools can help with this teaching unless they show the way by, for example, allowing subjects to be taught in languages other than the official one. It would seem obvious that people learn better in their own language than in one that is foreign to them.

Disappearing languages

"Imagine Mandingo children learning to read. If the teacher talks in French instead of Mandingo, the children will have to learn how to read new words and also associate them with sounds they don't know," says former Malian Education Minister Adama Samassekou, president of the African Academy of Languages. "Things are a lot harder for those children. By denying them their own language, we are also denying them their own culture and that of their parents."

Since 1994, Mali has been using 'convergent teaching', which involves instructing children in their mother tongue during the first two years of primary school. After that, French is gradually drawn into the curriculum.

But such efforts are still few and far between. UNESCO noted on International Mother Language Day (21 February) that half of the 6,000 languages spoken in the world are in danger of disappearing. Experts say that between 50 and 90 per cent of today's languages will have vanished a century from now. The Indian model, often cited as an example of successful linguistic coexistence, is now running out of steam. Of the more than 400 languages spoken there, 67 are taught in primary schools and 80 in literacy classes. But this multilingualism has not stopped English and Hindi from slowly easing out the other languages.

Teachers' attitudes matter

The era of the all-powerful schoolteacher who solemnly delivers a stream of knowledge to be absorbed by pupils is over, at least in some countries. But by giving schools the job of instilling both values and knowledge, are we not asking too much of them?

INTERVIEW

Combating discrimination in Chile

Chile's education budget has increased tenfold in the past decade and efforts are being made to stop discrimination. Interview with the **Chilean Education Minister Mariana Aylwin**, a university teacher and historian.

What are the special problems facing Chile's education system?

The country is in the throes of the "massification" (general expansion) of education. Also, our education system continues to put content before the job of instilling social and emotional values. The relationship between teachers and pupils is still based on hierarchy, which leaves little room for pupil participation and initiative. Chilean society is also strongly biased against some sectors of the population and there is violence in our schools.

Can schools help people live peacefully together?

Chilean educational reform has set this and citizenship as broad and fundamental goals in all aspects of school life. We want to include non-violent conflict resolution

in our on-the-job training for teachers. Pilot projects, especially in school mediation, are already under way in several parts of the country. We also have a programme where schools open their doors to pupils and parents on Saturdays and Sundays. As schools get more involved with the local community, they become cultural, sporting and social meeting places.

Schools themselves may take part in discrimination instead of fighting it. How can this be avoided?

In Chile we have a system of assessing teachers which takes into account their degree of tolerance, compassion and respect for diversity, and their efforts to combat discrimination. School textbooks have been very carefully written to avoid sexist or other discriminatory content.

INTERVIEW

The risk of losing our humanity

Bosnia and Herzegovina is struggling to rebuild its education system after four years of civil war. Interview with the **Minister of Education Mujo Demirović**, a former teacher and university professor.

What particular problems does your education face?

Our country has just come out of a war, our schools are devastated and we lack modern educational facilities. The Dayton agreement imposed a series of solutions and we now have eleven education systems in the various cantons of the country which makes it hard to harmonize our education efforts.

How can schools help people live peacefully together?

Promoting tolerance among pupils is a process, not a subject that children are forced to learn in school. Teachers play an important role in setting off this process. It's easy to teach maths and biology, but it's more important to instil in children a humanitarian and positive approach to life. We have taken out all insulting words from history textbooks. The next step is to make room for diversity and convey to our pupils that we cannot move ahead with nationalist approaches.

Is it realistic to expect schools to teach tolerance in the present context?

As a teacher and a father I know that education is not the only thing that makes a man. Education makes civilizations advance but the modern world is killing the humanity in men. The high tempo in which we live and our struggle for survival and more status are putting our humanity aside. The result is non-tolerance in the form of street violence and terrorism.



Erik Staal

→ “Human rights and education for peace aren’t luxuries,” says Myriam Karela of UNESCO’s Section of Education for Universal Values. “They’re at the very roots of a school’s mission.”

But unlike other subjects, tolerance and peace cannot just be taught through textbooks, like maths or geography. Knowing the Universal Declaration of Human Rights off by heart does not mean you will have more respect for your neighbour. It is more than an extra subject. It is a state of mind acquired through lessons that target pupils’ intelligence as much as their feelings. If teachers themselves are not convinced of the virtues of non-violence, such an approach has scant chance of getting through to the pupils. It is they who must be targeted first of all because children cannot change their behaviour if they have authoritarian or aggressive teachers.

“Teachers must learn to express their own emotions to understand what motivates them,” says Claudia Harvey, head of UNESCO’s office in Kingston (Jamaica) until last December, who has set up programmes aimed at changing the style of teaching in the Caribbean. As part of a pilot project in Trinidad and Tobago, 50 teachers were asked to list their own emotional problems. Mostly rooted in childhood experiences, these

problems explained a lot of the difficulties the teachers were having with their pupils.

“Non-violence is something you learn,” says Antonella Verdiani of UNESCO’s Section of Education for Universal Values. It is learned best through imaginative games. The UNESCO guide to non-violent resolution of conflict in schools cites several experiments that have proved effective.

Happy childhood certificate

In the Colombian city of Manizales, for example, health-care workers have invented a symbolic vaccination programme to “protect” children from ill-treatment and violence. When they have been “vaccinated”, they get a “Happy Childhood” certificate that says they have been immunized against ill-treatment. They are then encouraged to “vaccinate” other children with a syringe that has no needle and contains a coloured liquid. Another example is a teaching kit in South Africa called *Peace Starts With Me*, that analyses the causes and effects of violence and explains how to control anger.

Braslavsky admits cynics will probably find these efforts over-idealistic. “But of course it’s a Utopia,” she says. “All education is Utopia. But that’s no reason to stop trying. It’s a long job but it’s worth the effort.” ●

Parliamentarians campaign for EFA

Most educationists would agree. Political will is the motor of Education for All (EFA). What better way to ensure that EFA benefits from the highest political support than through parliamentarians.

“Parliaments can stiffen the spire of political will, which is the essential basis for the drive to bring education to all,” said John Daniel, UNESCO Assistant Director-General for Education. He was speaking at the meeting organized by UNESCO Dakar to lay the foundations for a Forum of African Parliamentarians for Education (Dakar, 21-23 January 2002). “This Forum,” says Omar Sarr, Co-ordinator of the Network of Parliamentarians for Education and a Culture of Peace, “puts parliamentarians at the centre of the struggle against illiteracy and poor schooling in Africa.”

The Forum, to be launched in December this year, will review legislation, monitor progress and engage in advocacy for EFA. “It’s an ambitious initiative,” says Graciela Samuels, Chief of the Section for UNESCO Clubs and New Partnerships. “The fifty-three country members will commit themselves to setting up EFA Commissions within their Education Committees.” Armoogum Parsuramen, Director of UNESCO Dakar, hopes that this parliamentary support will result in more human and financial resources for schools and better quality education all round.

The usefulness of the Forum leaves no doubt in the mind of Ibrahim Fall, Secretary-General of the African Parliamentary Union: “Parliamentarians are the best placed to know the aspirations of the people and translate them into laws or to bring them before government,” he says.

Other regional parliaments are also adopting the education-for-all banner. Representatives of the Latin American and Caribbean parliament, PARLATINO, and UNESCO Santiago met in São Paulo, Brazil, 15 and 16 March, to explore how best to push the EFA agenda forward.

In late May, European Development Ministers will agree on an action plan on basic education. The European Union’s Resolution on Basic Education for Developing Countries in the context of the UN Special Session on Children in May goes in the same direction. “We will be pressing for action for basic education at the Special Session and at the G8 meeting in the summer,” says Glenys Kinnock, Member of the European Parliament.

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The EFA ‘doctors’

UNESCO has set up mobile teams of experts to assist countries in developing their EFA action plans. The teams will be composed of specialists in areas of expertise required by the countries concerned, ranging from educational planners to experts in girls’ education or in linguistic diversity. Each team will be co-ordinated by a UNESCO office and will cover two to three countries*. So far, sixteen countries have been designated to benefit from these teams.

“Technical work is being neglected in many countries,” says Gwang-Chol Chang of UNESCO’s Division of Educational Policies and Strategies. “Some EFA plans remain at the level of policy statements and don’t include budgetary requirements or implementation strategies.”

A UNESCO survey in 2001 showed that a majority of developing countries have weak educational planning systems and require assistance in drawing up their action plans (see interview with Simon Ellis on page 9).

The mobile teams are funded by a Norwegian grant of \$600,000. UNESCO is currently approaching other donors to help other needy countries complete their action plans by end of 2002.

*Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cambodia, Comoros, Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Haiti, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Korea DPR, Mongolia, Nepal, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Tajikistan, Thailand and Yemen

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Erik Staal



Much more on

Support Education for All Celebrate EFA Week!

How best to recall the international objective of Education for All by 2015 than through an annual reminder?

UNESCO invites organizations and individuals around the world to celebrate EFA Week each year around the anniversary of the World Education Forum (Dakar, April 2000) – this year from 22 to 26 April.

A week-long series of awareness-raising activities allow us to take stock of advances towards the goal of Education for All by 2015 and to provoke public debate on education issues.

Who should celebrate it? All individuals and organizations are encouraged to mark the occasion. UNESCO, UNICEF, UNFPA and the World Bank are, for example, joining forces to organize television debates and roundtables in several countries as well as a host of other activities.

UNESCO and the Global Campaign for Education (organizing its Global Action Week on the same dates) have launched a world-wide children's drawing competition on "What I Want to Be When I Grow Up".

3 questions to Simon Ellis of the EFA Observatory

1 Around 70 per cent of developing countries are reported to lack reliable data collection and analysing capacity to correctly prepare their Education for All plans. What is the implication of this for your work?

This is a huge challenge. The Observatory's remit is to gather statistics to measure progress towards the six EFA goals rather than to follow the development of national action plans. We try to convince countries that when they prepare action plans they should consider not only the resources they need to meet the EFA goals but also those to monitor their progress. All national plans should include a monitoring mechanism.

2 What is the role of the EFA Observatory in improving countries' monitoring capacities?

We help countries to identify their monitoring problems and what is required to improve

them. Each year we organize regional workshops to train educational statisticians and policy-makers. One problem is the turnover among participants. Many countries have problems keeping trained statisticians and information specialists.

3 What do you do about some countries reluctant to show their lack of progress in education?

Our task is to help countries and we need to get a realistic picture of their performance. Our responsibility is not only to report on how countries are doing in achieving Education for All but also to assess the progress made by the international community. The annual *Monitoring Report on EFA*, which will be a collaborative report by countries, civil society and development agencies, will aim at reflecting this reality. It will not only put forward the statistics but also explain what these statistics mean.

World tour

→ The Central Asian Education Forum, was set up in January 2002 to allow high-level decision-makers to monitor current educational reform, and strengthen partnerships and collaboration in the region. The presidency will rotate between the five countries – Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tadjekistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan – starting with Kazakhstan in 2002.

→ An informal subregional EFA working group for the Baltic countries, composed of representatives from Latvia, Lithuania and Sweden, was established in January 2002 to facilitate information sharing and foster partnerships between the Baltic States.

→ The status of EFA in the Arab States was reviewed at the third meeting of ARABEFA, the Regional Mechanism for Education for All in the Arab Region, in Beirut on 21 January. Although all the concerned countries have set up national EFA teams, the meeting called for stronger commitment to the EFA agenda.

→ In March 2002, UNESCO Santiago launched a regional network to identify innovations, conduct training and provide a platform for information exchange through publications and a web site containing an innovations databank and other tools for teachers. The overall aim of the network is to contribute to change in classroom practice and create links between innovation, research, teacher training and education policies.

→ The EFA Planning Guide, designed by UNESCO Bangkok as a working tool for educational planners and statisticians in charge of preparing the national EFA plans will shortly be available in Arabic. ARABEFA and the Arab Bureau of Education in the Gulf Countries (ABEGS), are currently putting the final touches to the Arabic translation which will be distributed in all Arab countries.

Latin America's education

An estimated 2 million primary-age children and 20 million secondary-age children in Latin America don't attend primary or secondary school according to *the Latin America and Caribbean Regional Report*, published by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics. Presenting data from nineteen countries gathered over the 1998 school year, the report stresses that, while overall enrolment has improved in the region, quality of education remains a major concern. Drop-out and repetition rates are high in several countries. In Brazil, 24 per cent of primary-school pupils and 18 per cent of secondary school students are repeaters. For every 100 children who enter primary school in Nicaragua, only 55 reach Grade 5. Argentina has the highest "survival rate", with 94 per cent of pupils reaching Grade 5.

Available (in print and PDF) from the UNESCO Institute for Statistics
e-mail: uis.resource-centre@unesco.org
web: www.unesco.org/statistics.

Draw me Peace

"If one day UNESCO resolved to involve children in building peace, it would find them of immense help in infusing new life into this society...", said Maria Montessori, an Italian educator.

UNESCO has taken up this challenge and launched a drawing and painting contest to promote a culture of peace among young children. *Draw me Peace*, open to all children aged 4 to 7, will provide an opportunity to appreciate children's vision and listen to their views on self-respect and respect for others, on sharing, tolerance, war and peace, and reconciliation.

Teachers and educators are invited to help children invent a story in pictures around six themes: respect for all life, non-violence, sharing, listening to understand, preserving the planet, and tolerance and solidarity. The deadline for participation: 30 June 2002.

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Mind your language

About half of the 6,000 or so languages spoken in the world are under threat and at least 3,000 are endangered or dying in many parts of the world, according to the second edition of the *Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger of Disappearing*, presented on International Mother Language Day (21 February).

UNESCO encourages multilingualism and has celebrated International Mother Language Day since 2000. In November 2001, the UNESCO General Conference adopted the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, encouraging the international community to protect intangible heritage including languages.

To help teachers incorporate indigenous knowledge, local languages, and inter-cultural understanding into their educational practice, UNESCO is developing guidelines and is coordinating the publication of educational materials on linguistic diversity.

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web: www.unesco.org/education/imld_2002

Pipeline to learning

Since the adoption of UN Resolution 986 in 1995 creating the "Oil for Food" Programme, UNESCO has been building or renovating schools in Northern Iraq and providing them with educational materials. This has greatly assisted in allowing over 40,000 new entrants into primary schools and over 43,000 at the secondary level.

As the lead agency for education under the Programme, UNESCO also focuses on activities relating to tertiary and technical and vocational education.

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The value of experience

Globalization is significantly influencing skills in demand and the way work is organized today. Some 40 per cent of computer scientists and programmers in the United States, for example, have no formal qualifications.

To help countries cope with these new challenges, UNESCO has updated its standard-setting document, the Revised Recommendation concerning Technical and Vocational Education. The new version was adopted last November by the Organization's General Conference.

UNESCO believes that the document will help countries develop systems that encourage coalitions between employers, government, unions, educators and local communities. To ensure that the Recommendation is understood and applied nationally, regional workshops will be organized with policy-makers from Ministries of Education and Labour.

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New push to recognize the skills of people with no formal qualifications.

Street children dream

"If I have children, I won't beat them. I'll tell them what I did so they won't turn out like me." This is how Oscar Luis Hernandez sees himself as a parent. Oscar frequents a street children shelter in Honduras. He was among the 100 boys and girls invited to express their fears and desires for the future through texts and drawings in *The White Book of our Future*.

The White Book project is launched by UNESCO in co-operation with P.A.U. Education, a Spain-based publisher. Its aim is twofold: to encourage street children to think about their lives and to raise the awareness of decision-makers, public authorities and the general public to the plight of these children. Its methodology can be used in any country. In Mali, for instance, after 200 children took part in the project, the Malian authorities promulgated (November 2001) a decree giving street children shelters a legal base.

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50 candles for UIE

June 2002 marks the 50th anniversary of the founding of the UNESCO Institute for Education (UIE) in Hamburg, Germany. Over the last half-century the Institute has gained world-wide recognition as a centre of excellence in adult education and lifelong learning. A milestone in UIE's work was the organization of the Fifth International Conference on Adult Education (CONFINTEA V) held in Hamburg in 1997, which ushered in a new vision of literacy and non-formal education.

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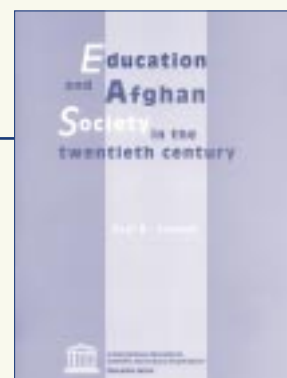


● Education for All: Guidelines for Preparing Gender Responsive EFA Plans.

These guidelines have been prepared to raise awareness among planners about a number of aspects to be considered in producing plans for the the achievement of gender equality in education. For more details, contact UNICEF or UNESCO locally, or the UNESCO Regional Bureau for Education in Bangkok; e-mail: gender@unesco-proap.org

● Education and Afghan Society in the Twentieth Century

by Saif R. Samady analyses the shaping of Afghan education, tracing the historical, socio-cultural, economic, political influences, and educational policies. (UNESCO doc. ED-2001/WS/41). Available in print and PDF version (www.unesco.org/afghanistan).



● **Making Knowledge Work – The Enhancement of Learning and Training Opportunities for Marginalized Youth through Non-formal Education.** Focusing on eight pilot projects, this booklet demonstrates how literacy and training for marginalized youth contributes to fighting poverty.

● **Shapshots of Primary and Secondary Education in Asia-Pacific** reflects the range of imaginative initiatives produced in the Asia-Pacific region and examines fourteen projects in depth. (Educational Innovation for Development, 1) 73 pp. Available from UNESCO Bangkok; e-mail: bangkok@memo.unesco.org; www.unescobkk.org

● **Understanding and Responding to Children's Needs in Inclusive Classrooms: A Guide for Teachers** is intended to help teachers cope with children with learning difficulties. It can be used on its own or as a guide for groups of teachers studying together. (UNESCO doc. ED-00/WS/34)

● **Higher Education in the Twenty-first Century: Vision and Action** This CD ROM comprises the main working documents in English and French of the World Conference on Higher Education (UNESCO, October 1998).

● **Caring for People Living with HIV and AIDS** presents essays by some twenty secondary school students in Namibia who describe their experiences about how HIV/AIDS has affected their lives. Produced by UNESCO Namibia, The Namibian Youth Paper, UNAIDS and Family Health International. Available from UNESCO Windhoek; e-mail: windhoek@unesco.org

● **A Global Perspective on Early Childhood Care and Education: A Proposed Model** by Lillemyr, Fagerli and Sobstad of Queen Maud's College of Early childhood Education (Norway). (Action Research in Family and Early Childhood – Monograph 17, 2001, UNESCO doc. ED-2001/WS/39).

● **Foundations of Child Well-Being** by Pollard and Davidson, Center for Child Well-Being, USA. This monograph looks at children's well-being holistically, integrating physical, cognitive and social-emotional dimensions. (Action Research in Family and Early Childhood – Monograph 18, 2001, UNESCO doc. ED-2001/WS/40).

Unless otherwise stated, all publications are available free of charge from UNESCO's Documentation and Information Service, Education Sector.
E-mail: oai@unesco.org

APRIL

- **Meeting of the Inter-sectoral Committee on Higher Education** • UNESCO Paris • 4 April • Contact: k.seddoh@unesco.org
- **Central Asian Regional Statistical Workshop for EFA** • Organized by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics • Istanbul, Turkey • 11 April • Contact: s.ellis@unesco.org
- **EFA Regional Statistical Workshop for English-speaking Africa** • Organized by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics • Victoria, Seychelles • 18 April • Contact: s.ellis@unesco.org
- **Joint UNESCO/UNAIDS Workshop on Combating HIV/AIDS by Education: the Case of Street Children in Southern Africa** • Organized by UNESCO and the Namibian National Commission for UNESCO • Windhoek, Namibia • 15-19 April • Contact: l.saldari@unesco.org
- **First Conference of African Counsellors on Guidance, Counselling and Youth Development in Africa** • organized by UNESCO, Italy and the International Association for Counselling Nairobi, Kenya • 22-26 April
Contacts: w.gordon@unesco.org and u.kalha@unesco.org
- **Interagency Strategic Group Meeting on Lifelong Learning** • organized by the UNESCO Institute for Education • Hamburg, Germany • 25-26 April • Contact: t.ohsako@unesco

MAY

- **Pacific Regional Statistical Workshop for EFA** • Organized by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics • Auckland, New Zealand • 2 May • Contact: s.ellis@unesco.org
- **Regional Meeting on Education for All in Latin America: the Quest for Equity** • Organized by UNESCO Santiago • Santiago, Chile • 2-5 May • Contact: m.umayahara@unesco.cl
- **Caribbean Regional Statistical Workshop for EFA** • Organized by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics • Port-of-Spain, Trinidad and Tobago • 9 May • Contact: s.ellis@unesco.org
- **Protecting the Rights of Young Children Affected and Infected by HIV/AIDS in Africa: Updating Strategies and Reinforcing Existing Networks** • organized by UNESCO and the Early Childhood Development Network for Africa (ECDNA) • UNESCO Paris • 13-17 May • Contact: b.combes@unesco.org
- **Regional Statistical Workshop for EFA in North and West Africa (French-speaking countries)** • Organized by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics • Bamako, Mali • 16 May • Contact: s.ellis@unesco.org

JUNE

- **Adult Education, Democracy and Critical Citizenship** • organized by the UNESCO Institute for Education • Hamburg, Germany • 17-19 June • Contact: m.elfert@unesco.org

JULY

- **3rd Meeting of the Working Group on Education for All** • UNESCO Paris • 22-24 July • Contact: a.singh@unesco.org

More news on
www.unesco.org/education

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