

CAMINU XXII
United Nations— SPECIAL CONFERENCE ON BUILDING CIVIL SOCIETY
THROUGH EDUCATION (SCBCSTE)
Preparation Guide

Background information on the conference

Throughout years of fighting against inequalities, holocausts, and cycles of unending despair, the world has agreed upon the power of education to obtain progress and to eradicate the threats to humanity. This acknowledgement has been evidenced in the actions and goals of unilateral entities as well as worldwide organizations. Achieving universal primary education was one of the eight Millennium Development Goals established in the year 2000. The numbers were reduced significantly leaving 263 million children out of school according to UNESCO. In 2015 when the Sustainable Development Goals were set, education was again prioritized. Among the 17 topics of focus is the quality of education. Currently, countries and organizations are working in order to accomplish this ambitious and essential goal.

Education has been given special importance since it is believed that it's a tool to achieve the other goals and finally to build up civil societies. Education is portrayed as a path and as a solution to obtain general improvement. It has become of great importance and urgency to evaluate how to advocate the subject and how to control its development on an international scale.

This Special conference has 40 members which are listed below:

1. United States
2. Russia
3. France
4. United Kingdom
5. China
6. Brazil
7. Canada
8. Algeria
9. Ethiopia
10. India
11. Pakistan
12. Paraguay
13. Senegal
14. Denmark
15. Bolivia
16. Ecuador

17. Italy
18. Uruguay
19. Japan
20. Nigeria
21. Sweden
22. Kazakhstan
23. Egypt
24. Ukraine
25. Mexico
26. North Korea
27. South Korea
28. Iran
29. Cyprus
30. Turkey
31. Vietnam
32. Argentina
33. Portugal
34. Germany
35. Democratic republic of Congo
36. Israel
37. Palestine
38. South Africa
39. Switzerland
40. Spain

http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/ENGLISH_Why_it_Matters_Goal_4_QualityEducation.pdf

<http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/>

<http://uis.unesco.org/en/news/263-million-children-and-youth-are-out-school>

I. Fostering the involvement of non-state actors in education.

Background of the conflict

In the last century, education has undergone a series of changes aiming to provide a higher quality education for all. Nowadays, punishments of physical nature are forbidden, education is more inclusive and technology is being used as a tool help students in their development. Also, higher standards have been imposed when looking for a job, emphasising the importance of education. ¹

Education after World War II became a priority for many countries in Europe. There was a tremendous demand for secondary and higher education which led to the doubling or

¹ (Marden High School, 2014)

tripling of the number of universities between 1950 and 1970.² There was also a stronger influence of psychology in the teaching methods being used in order to create an environment that would fit most of the children's backgrounds. Nevertheless such educational system took a very long time before shifting from being repressive and unilateral, to becoming a progressive education.³

However, these changes in education haven't yet reached every country around the world. International wars, lack of funding, gender inequality, untrained teachers amongst other problems have inhibited the progress of education, specially in the developing countries.⁴ After the liquidation of colonialism, and as new independent countries emerged in Africa and Asia, "education was considered to be an instrument of national development and a means of crossing national and cultural barriers." There were even attempts to eradicate illiteracy but according to UNICEF statistics (2016) "in several countries in West and Central Africa youth literacy rates remain less than 50%.⁵

Development and response

Every country around the world, according to the International Human Rights law, has the obligation to guarantee quality education for free. According to the UN and the UNESCO an increase in the domestic public expenditure might help to reduce the financing gap for delivering good quality universal education but such help would be minimal. If the Government cannot afford to offer such education, how are children able to attend to schools? The answer is simple: with the help of non-state actors.⁶

Non-state schools provided the first formal education opportunities for children in nearly every country. These were often philanthropists , religious, or private organizations which were open only for the wealthy. However, nowadays non-state schools are open to a much wider range along the socioeconomic spectrum. In fact, a survey made by the World Bank showed that the share of non-state enrolments in total primary education stands at 16% in low-income countries and 12% in lower middle-income countries.⁷

It's important to point out that non-state actors are not only religious schools but they can also be non-profit schools run by NGOs or foundations, community owned schools and for-profit schools classified as enterprises. The liberty of private actors to establish and direct educational institutions goes hand by hand with the liberty of parents to choose schools other than public ones for their children.⁸ Some people believe that privatization of education poses more threats than advantages to the civil society, and according to the *Report of the Special*

² (Swink, Szyliowicz, Moumouni, Meyer, Naka, & Ipfling, 2017)

³ (Friesen, 2011)

⁴ (DEVELOPMENTGOALS.COM, 2017)

⁵ (UNICEF.org, 2016)

⁶ (Steer, Gillard, Gustafsson-Wright, & Latham, 2015)

⁷ *Ibid*

⁸ (Morales, 2017)

Rapporteur on the right to education (A/69/402), “privatization is making its intrusion at all levels of education, and the phenomenon of education as an attractive business is assuming alarming proportions, with scant control by public authorities.”⁹ In order to benefit from the increasing enrollment of non-state actors in education, there have been 5 areas identified which “provide an initial understanding of the limitations of the role and the conditions under which non-State actors may provide education services.”¹⁰

Thus, non-state actors’ involvement in education is compliant with human rights as long as they:

- Do not lead to any form of discrimination, segregation or create inequalities
- Do not lead to fee-charging private schools to be the only available option for education
- Do not undermine the humanistic mission of education
- Accomplish minimum educational standards, being adequately regulated and monitored
- Publically debate their role in line with the principles of transparency and participation.¹¹

Role of the United Nations

The United Nations is convinced that in order to achieve an optimum development of every country and the society as a whole, education plays one of the most important roles. In order to ensure education as a human right, the UN has two specialized agencies who work hand by hand, implementing different campaigns to create awareness and to prepare teachers, specially in conflict zones where access to education is more limited.

The topic of education has been present in many conventions and treaties such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (2011), the UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education (1960) among others. All of these documents underline the importance of providing a high quality education, free to all and without discrimination of any kind.

For further reference:

- <https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/102215-Non-State-Actors-in-Education-Framing-paper-Final.pdf>
- https://search.un.org/results.php?query=education&ie=utf8&output=xml_no_dtd&oe=utf8&as_occt=any&as_qdr=all&sort=score&Submit2=Search&__utma=114554307.428982711.1481670585.1493856378.1509407874.5&__utmb=114554307.1.10.1509

⁹ (Rapporteur, 2014)

¹⁰ (Dorsi, 2016)

¹¹ *Ibid*

[407874&_utm_source=google&_utm_medium=organic&_utm_campaign=organic&_utm_term=not+provided&_utm_content=GA1.2.428982711.1481670585&lang=en&rows=10&tpl=un](https://www.google.com/search?q=407874&utm_source=google&utm_medium=organic&utm_campaign=organic&utm_term=not+provided&utm_content=GA1.2.428982711.1481670585&lang=en&rows=10&tpl=un)

Future Challenges of the Conflict

The analysis of the enrollment of non-state actors is a very complex issue that shouldn't be a "black or white matter" but one of degrees, highly dependent on context. There are some developed countries where the domestic resource allocations are very equally distributed, but the problem resides in those developing countries where the financing gap is too big for the government to close it. ¹²

In that context, non-state actors would help to finance basic education provision and negative effects could be diminished as long as the Government regulates, monitors and ensures that these private providers meet minimum educational standards and that educational freedom does not lead to extreme disparities of educational opportunity for some groups in society. ¹³

Conclusion

If regulated by the Government, in accordance with international treaties, laws and declarations, non-state actors can provide many benefits to the educational system. In order to achieve the goal number 4 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) one must also take into consideration the goal number 17 which talks about partnerships. Taking these 2 goals to the specific case of the enrollment of non-state actor in education, there needs to be more partnerships between the Government and such private schools, aiming to provide the best quality education, so that the demand for primary education can be finally satisfied.

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¹² (Steer, Gillard, Gustafsson-Wright, & Latham, 2015)

¹³ (Morales, 2017)

<https://coopcatalyst.wordpress.com/2011/08/03/education-in-the-20th-century-a-reflection/>

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II. Measures to strengthen lifelong education

Background information

As stated in the Declaration of human Rights (1948), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) and others, education should be available to all, without discrimination or inequalities. In spite of all these laws and treaties, people often think that education is limited only to the International Standard Classification of Education which includes Pre-primary education, Primary, Lower secondary, Upper secondary, Post-secondary and Tertiary education.

Lifelong education is not based only on this statistical framework (ISCED) but it also finds support in non-formal education for it should be available throughout the entire life of an individual. There are efforts being made to strengthen lifelong education, focusing specially on alternative learning opportunities for adults and marginalized groups.

Development and response

Given that lifelong learning must occur naturally and voluntarily, any person who engages in this type of education must be open to new experiences. However, the subject must definitely relate to said experiences. This is because should the situation be of no interest to the person, he or she will not develop any further curiosity regarding the topic. On the other hand, if the subject somehow manages to get a glimpse of knowledge regarding a personal interest, he or she will definitely want to learn more about that topic. This can even occur subconsciously. The first step towards lifelong education is identifying one's most meaningful interests.

As actual mechanisms to strengthen lifelong education are concerned, there are quite a few basic ways that will encourage this type of learning. Once a person knows what his or her interests are, these activities and tips could further evolve into raw curiosity about a topic:

- **Reading:** Reading is a very efficient method of knowledge acquisition. However, given that some people –especially youngsters- do not like to read, the fact that they are learning about their personal interests is the only thing that keeps them engaged in a text.
- **Teaching:** Ensuring that one has actually learned in a conscious manner could be adequately done by teaching. If a subject can successfully retransmit knowledge at any given time, it means that he or she has completely understood the principles of whichever topic was chosen.
- **Starting a project:** Experimentation is not only more didactic, but more subconsciously effective. It can lead to an imperceptible understanding of concepts regarding the topic.
- **Finding ways to learn:** Trying out different methods of learning could be very important to develop simple knowledge transmission into actual lifelong learning. Finding the correct method will result in the most relatively efficient way for a person to acquire and understand the concepts of any situation.

UNESCO's top priorities include the improvement of the quality of learning. They strive to overcome barriers such as the lacking of reading material or unqualified teachers. They also seek to improve all systems used to evaluate students' knowledge to ensure that the learning processes are effective. Their ultimate goal is to boost people's cognitive development and it is perfectly observable that they are achieving this based on the mechanisms mentioned above. (UNESCO, 2017)

Role of the United Nations

UNESCO believes that “education is the most effective way to fight poverty, improve health and well-being, generate growth and promote responsible citizenship” and in order to provide education for all, an institute was created to focus specifically on lifelong education. The UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning “provides technical support to enhance lifelong learning through advocacy, networking, research and capacity- building. “

Since 2000, the UIL has witness and increasing political interest in lifelong learning, allowing them to collect laws, policies, strategies and action plan all over the globe. These documents were written taken into consideration every nation's context, giving a comprehensive overview of this new policy. Such strategies have been now implemented in 10 African countries, 7 from Asia and the Pacific, 8 from Latin America and the Caribbean

and 20 European countries. Each country has a different plan of action and more information about its progress can be found in the following link:

- <http://uil.unesco.org/lifelong-learning/lifelong-learning-policies-database/collection-lifelong-learning-policies-and>

Future Challenges of the Conflict

Since lifelong education necessarily involves the community and not only the government or an International Organization, awareness needs to be raised about the importance of this topic. If such awareness is not achieved, society won't take the benefits that programmes and institutions such as the UIL offer. Without the compromise from the civil society, the efforts made by the Government and external helpers wouldn't create a difference.

Conclusion

Therefore, the first step that needs to be taken to strengthen lifelong education is to raise awareness about the importance of this topic among adults and the young ones. Once the civil society is completely open to use non-formal education as a way to ensure education throughout one's life, the treaties, conventions and other legal documents aimed to help fostering this topic will come to action.

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III. The power of social media in shaping society beyond the school setting

Background information

The reach and usage of social media in the last decade has increased exponentially. Numbers have reached the billions regarding users and accounts. Only in Facebook and WhatsApp, 60 billion messages are sent daily. It is estimated that 3.2 billion images are shared on a regular basis. About 38% of organizations spend 20% of their income in social media advertisement.

The high numbers continue to increase as new accounts are created (500,000 everyday simply on Facebook), and coverage expands. According to experts by the year 2020, social media will encompass an “extraordinary sense of data”. For these reasons, everyday, more and more platforms are being used as a tool to reach the masses and to create connections.

Development and response

Social media has become a major component in education. It is responsible for worldwide communication and exposure to information. It provides access to infinite sources and positions without major geographical exclusion. It converts personal knowledge into common knowledge. In addition, it reflects the topics of public interest, and serves as a means to persuade, influence, and reach audiences.

Currently, more than 3 billion people through all the continents have access to the internet, directly opening a door for learning. Yet, the weaknesses of the source have been clearly evidenced. The media can be manipulated, limiting and shaping what has become the major source of knowledge. It facilitates bias and to a certain degree control of society and its direction of growth. Regardless of its humongous potential to obtain change towards improvement, the media can bring serious concerns regarding ethical matters, and access to information. Serious debate and analysis is required in order to direct social media into positively shaping society. The aim should be to solve current affairs with the help of the media through education.

Role of the United Nations

The United Nations has identified the power of social media and uses it to accomplish its goals and projects. The organization has active participation in Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Pinterest, Instagram, Snapchat, among other powerful platforms. Many campaigns are carried supporting different efforts such as the one of the UNHCR and the ACNUR, where information regarding refugees and their education is transmitted through a powerful video. The idea is to pioneer a change in society by creating awareness of social issues. Through this campaign funds can be collected, and people inspired. Slowly issues are solved and society shaped.

Future challenges of the conflict

The challenge presented consists in using the media and its power to encourage the solution of different issues. Making sure that the mean unwinds positive outcomes and changes. Lastly, viewing the potential of the media as a tool to educate masses on an international level and to promote the values for which the United Nations work constantly for. The goal is to develop ways in which to use this relatively recent development in order to shape societies into spaces of peace and well-being. The focus should be to progress through the media.

Conclusion

The media has the possibility of upbringing major transformations. As individual countries and as an international organization, it is important to evaluate the nature of the sources and to use them in a way that provide benefits.

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IV. Promoting education and programs regarding cultural and natural world heritage

Background information

As defined by UNESCO, “heritage is our legacy from the past, what we live with today, and what we pass on to future generations”. Heritage is impossible to replace or substitute for it has an immense value that should be protected at all costs. There are some places considered a World Heritage and they are located on a worldwide scale.

Human interventions and natural phenomenons have resulted in the degradation of cultural and natural world heritage sites. Specifically, climate change and environment disruption has diminished the dimensions of natural world heritages. This patterns have generated endless concern since places of immense significance are being destroyed. With the

deterioration, entire identities and years of history vanish. As well, tourism is severely affected, limiting countries' economies and consequently resources to operate. Endless efforts have been carried in order to protect these unique places, yet the issue remains present and threatening.

Conflict Development and Response

Countries have proceeded to individually protect their sites through legislations, campaigns, and funds. Yet, it has been agreed that the most effective way to protect such heritages on a worldwide scale is through education and awareness programs. This path towards a solution has been accepted as valid, feasible, and benefiting. The idea is to encourage such programs and to develop new ones with the final purpose of protecting the places and treasuring them.

Through the implementation of educational programs that address the situation of safeguarding world heritages, the aim is to include a vast percentage of the population. The more support and participation given to the matter, the more the care and the response towards the pledge for help.

Role of the United Nations

Today's world is a globalized one, full of partnerships and connections. Those relations between states and people have clearly showed that culture has the power to transform societies, either positively or negatively. For example, in some places of Africa, the UN programme for the eradication of illiteracy faced very serious impediments due to the existing culture of gender inequality.

Still, culture can be used as a tool to create open, inclusive and pluralistic societies. For this reason, the UNESCO has a great number of conventions that “ provide a unique global platform for international cooperation and establish a holistic cultural governance system based on human rights and shared values” such as The Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (2005), The Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003), The Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity (2001), The Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage (2001).

For further reference:

- <https://en.unesco.org/themes/protecting-our-heritage-and-fostering-creativity>

Future Challenges of the Conflict

As time goes by, more and more of these sites are being lost. If no action is taken immediately, they could even reach the point of total disappearance. It is essential to develop mechanisms to protect World Heritage locations. As identified, education and programs are without a doubt the ways to solutions and changes. The challenge now stands in developing such platforms that will allow for the protection of the sites.

Conclusions

Natural and cultural resources are of worldwide importance. As they have become affected, it is a collective responsibility to develop methods of protection and security. The idea is to implement programs and foster education to improve care towards the specific locations. It is important to work collectively in order to fulfill this necessity.

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